HEITSA
Higher Education Information Technology South Africa
UNITE • COLLABORATE • TRANSFORM



Company Overview

Higher Education Information Technology South Africa (HEITSA) is a distinguished nonprofit company (NPC) officially recognised as a Public Benefit Organisation (PBO). Tasked with representing 26 public universities across South Africa, HEITSA is a pivotal entity that fosters the enhancement of IT standards and practices.

Through collaborative efforts, HEITSA facilitates the sharing of expertise and insights among its members, promoting mutual support mechanisms. The organisation is committed to driving innovation, improving operational efficiencies, and contributing to advancing the higher education sector through strategic IT initiatives.

Purpose and Objectives

HEITSA's purpose is to collectively lead the application of digital capabilities to transform Higher Education in South Africa. It endeavours to do so by means of the following objectives:

1

PROMOTE AND ADVANCE THE ENABLEMENT OF DIGITAL CAPABILITIES WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION

The governance and application of ICT has become a strategic pillar in the digital transformation and improvement efforts of organisations. This is particularly relevant in the Higher Education sector.

2

PROMOTE AND ENHANCE PROFESSIONAL IT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A critical component for digital improvement as well as transformation is ensuring that the ICT teams are adequately skilled to navigate the challenges of the sector. Emerging and disruptive technologies further render timeous reskilling of ICT teams an absolute necessity.

3

REPRESENT THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION IT SECTOR

The challenges of the South African Higher Education sector are unique, and benefit could be derived from a consolidated and coordinated voice for the sector.

Our Five Pillars

To achieve these objectives, the following five pillars have been established to incorporate the association's strategic goals and initiatives.

Collaboration

- Facilitate opportunities to network with peers.
- Provide platforms to share knowledge, e.g. webinars, peer-to-peer conversations, online forums and physical events.
- Support Special Interest Groups which have specific purpose and documented terms of reference.
- Coordinate co-funded projects between universities. Include relevant university stakeholders to ensure improved communication.
- Engage with external stakeholders to explore collaboration opportunities.

Capacity Development

- Arrange appropriate skills development opportunities, including technical and managerial.
- Advanced relevant management and leadership skills are needed to navigate the sector.
- Coordinate study tours to various organisations.
- Facilitate coaching, mentorship and knowledge transfer across the sector.
- Support common grant funding applications across the sector.
- Support new CIOs and IT directors joining the sector with their onboarding journey.

Cost Effectiveness

- Negotiate beneficial contracts with vendors on behalf of all South African universities.
- Raise sponsorship for events and meetings to reduce the financial burden on individual universities.
- Promote best practices for procurement activities. These include, but are not limited to, academic pricing, participating in nationally negotiated academic contracts, etc.

Resource Sharing

- Promote shared services across universities to avail capabilities which are not readily available.
- Provide mechanisms to avail common resources to the wider community.
- Investigate mechanisms to share expertise between institutions.
- Provide blueprints for frameworks, policies and models that work in the South African as well as international context.

Insights

- Provide benchmarking services across the sector to enable universities to have a point of reference around specific areas.
- Research areas that are of common interest to institutions.
- Provide relevant IT-related statistics and analysis pertaining to the higher education sector.
- Investigate innovative digital solutions for higher education.

2025 Highlights

2025 was the first year of our new 2025 – 2027 strategic plan. The business strategy was successfully executed, with significant progress made across our key objectives. ***Below are some of our highlights.***

Collaboration

HEITSA continued to unite IT professionals across South Africa's public universities through meaningful engagement and shared learning. Our Autumn General Institutional and Spring General Institutional Meetings each brought together 64 attendees from 17 universities, while the National Annual Technology Event (NATE) welcomed 162 delegates from 23 institutions. The Unified Communications and Audio-Visual Special Interest Group grew as a vibrant community with 125 participants from 23 universities, and the ERP Working Group convened two focused sessions to support institutions navigating complex system challenges. HEITSA also launched a successful local study tour model, offering "Cybersecurity Monday" and "Artificial Intelligence Tuesday," both of which were fully subscribed and provided hands-on exposure to emerging technologies.

Capacity Development

Developing ICT leadership and capability remained a core pillar in 2025. The Annual Leadership Institute engaged leaders from 13 universities, while the international study tour to Perth, Australia, enabled eight delegates from four institutions to learn from global peers. HEITSA reinstated the Skills Development Committee, which met five times, conducted sector-wide training needs assessments, aligned results with service providers, and produced a coordinated training schedule tailored to university requirements.

Cost Effectiveness

Collaborative procurement continued to deliver substantial financial and operational value. In 2025, universities benefited from eleven active frameworks spanning software, services, security, devices, and research. Long-standing agreements with Microsoft, Adobe, Anthology, Oracle, Info-Tech, Digital Fabric, Datacentrix, Torque IT, and Khipu Networks were expanded and refined, while new frameworks with Canva and Chebelo Pele Consulting broadened the sector's cost-effective options. The cumulative value of these agreements remains significant, with individual universities realising hundreds of thousands of rands in cost savings by making use of these sector-negotiated frameworks. These frameworks remain a crucial mechanism for securing favourable pricing, reducing administrative workload, and ensuring consistent sector-wide vendor engagement.

Resource Sharing

HEITSA's Corporate Partnership Programme grew to thirteen active partners across all tiers, each contributing expertise, solutions, and direct support to the community. Eight partners sponsored HEITSA's 2025 events, while partners collectively delivered 30 webinars with 886 attendees, published 31 articles, and offered free training at NATE. Shared services continued to support institutional capability, with Security Scorecard retained by 15 universities and CyberAlliance assisting with cybersecurity policy and maturity development.

Insights

HEITSA once again provided clarity on the sector's strategic priorities through the 2025 Top 10 IT Challenges, grouped into Technology and Infrastructure, Strategy and Transformation, and People and Skills. Cybersecurity remained the top concern for the third consecutive year, while Artificial Intelligence rose significantly to second place, reflecting its growing importance across institutions. Throughout the year, HEITSA's office addressed numerous ad hoc queries from the sector, documenting outcomes to ensure they remain accessible and support ongoing institutional decision-making.

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