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# Our country needs artisans - more than R1bn set aside to train young people

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**THE department of higher education and training has set aside more than R1.7-billion for artisan training in its aim to attract more young people to choose artisan jobs.**

The department plans to produce 19000 competent artisan candidates by March 31 in line with the National Development Plan's target of producing 30000 competent artisans annually by 2030.

Last month, Minister of higher education and training Blade Nzimande said the Sector Education and Training Authority and National Skills Fund had committed more than R1.7-billion in the 2015-2016 financial year which would be used to assist 16250 matriculants interested in careers as artisans. He said more and more matriculants are using learnerships and apprenticeship opportunities to become artisans.

Last year, the department launched Decade of the Artisan. Speaking at the launch, deputy minister of the department Mduzuzi Manana said young people needed to know that becoming an artisan was just as good as obtaining a university degree.

Artisan careers include being a plumber, electrician, motor mechanic, chef and rigger.

Nzimande said matriculants who wanted to become artisans must study maths and science and obtain a pass mark of 50% or higher in these subjects.

"Artisan work has become much more technologically advanced and requires a higher skill level," he said.

Matriculants who do not have maths and science should not despair as they can enrol for the Generic Trade Preparation Programme offered as a bridging course at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges.

The department said that there is a lack of artisans in the country and those who are currently in the labour market would need to be replaced by 2020 largely due to retirement.

Matriculants who are interested in careers as artisans can visit the National Artisan Development Support Centre at <http://nadsc.dhet.gov.za>; contact the call centre on 011-736-4400; or e-mail copies of their qualifications to [info@eec.hipcc.co.za](mailto:info@eec.hipcc.co.za).

They can also approach TVET colleges for more information.

[macupeb@sowetan.co.za](mailto:macupeb@sowetan.co.za)

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