

WorldSkills South Africa launches an Aircraft Maintenance Academy in Durban



WorldSkills South Africa (WSZA) has partnered with Elangeni TVET College and Starlite Aviation to launch a historic public-private partnership WSZA Aircraft Maintenance Academy at Elangeni TVET College, Inanda Campus in Durban, KwaZulu Natal Province.

The Aircraft Maintenance Academy was launched by the Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Nomusa Dube-Ncube on Friday, 05 June 2026, marking the significance milestone in strengthening aviation skills development and advancing South Africa's technical and vocational training agenda.



The launch brought together representatives from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), WorldSkills South Africa, the Transport Education Training Authority Seta (TETA), Starlite Aviation, TVET colleges, industry partners, reaffirming a collective commitment to building a future-ready skills pipeline for the aviation sector. The programme commenced with a ribbon-cutting ceremony led by the Deputy Minister, followed by a walkabout of the Aircraft Maintenance Academy facilities, showcasing a specialised training environment for aircraft maintenance and aviation engineering.

The Academy is the first of its kind within the public domain to offer specialized training in aircraft maintenance, it represents a groundbreaking step in skills development for the aviation industry in the country. Speaking at the launch, the Deputy Minister Dube Ncube highlighted the significance of technical and occupational careers. "Nations are built by skilled people; a country cannot industrialise without artisans. This why the Department of Higher Education and Training continues to prioritise artisan development, TVET strengthening and industry partnerships".

“Elangeni TVET College possess the institutional capacity to host the academy, while Starlite Aviation brings technical expertise, aviation resources and occupational alignment. The establishment of this academy is also closely aligned with the National Development Plan 2030 target to produce 30 000 artisans annually”, Deputy Minister Dube-Ncube said. Starlite Aviation, a strategic partner of WSZA since 2017, has been instrumental in providing industry expertise and training support required to develop the Academy's facilities and technical capability.

The academy is equipped with industry-standard facilities where students will have an opportunity to learn from experienced instructors gain practical exposure using modern aviation technology and equipment. Accredited in Aircraft Maintenance, the academy will offer training programmes where apprentices and learners will have access to industry-standard training equipment, including aircraft components, tooling systems and practical learning environments supported through a combination of state investments and private partnerships.



The long-term impact of the Academy will be far-reaching. It will contribute to the growth of South Africa's aviation industry by ensuring a steady supply of qualified aircraft maintenance technicians. In doing so, the Academy will support job creation, economic growth and the development of a globally competitive workforce while strengthening the role of TVET colleges in high demand occupations.

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