



MEDIA RELEASE **PSA condemns closure of DHET's Pretoria offices following non-payment of rent**

DATE 9 March 2022

EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA), as a major Union representing employees of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), is deeply disappointed following reports that two of the Department's offices in Pretoria were closed, and staff evacuated after the Department seemingly failed to pay rent.

The DHET and the Department of Public Works must be held accountable for this unfortunate and disruptive situation. It is an embarrassment to government that some of its entities are failing to fulfil their financial obligations to service providers. The situation will negatively affect service delivery and the morale of staff members. The DHET is expected to carry out its mandate of providing support to higher-learning institutions without hinderance or failure. Therefore, situations of this nature should not occur. The DHET must ensure that it fulfils its obligations on time to avoid such fiascos.

It must further be noted that the DHET's head-office building was previously already declared non-compliant with occupational health and safety regulations and progress to secure alternative accommodation is dismally slow. The relocation of the office cannot be delayed any further.

The PSA maintains that government departments must own buildings and account for such maintenance and safety. The PSA implores the Minister of Higher Education and Training to engage his colleagues at the Department of Public Works to resolve the matter urgently.

END

