

NELSON MANDELA
UNIVERSITY

Medical School Launch

30 November 2021



“Our goal is to provide quality medical and healthcare training that speaks to multiple challenges.”

– Former Vice-Chancellor, Professor Derrick Swartz

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THE VISION

As the new Medical School launches, Nelson Mandela University pledges to harness all its knowledge and expertise to the historic task of creating an inclusive and sustainable tomorrow for all.

South Africa's 10th Medical School is opening at a time when humanity requires fresh thinking, new ideas and radical innovations to decisively break from the deadening hand of our collective past. We place ourselves at the service of radical change, as it is our sincere belief that such transformation can only be achieved in the context of a sustainable, inclusive and equal society.

We do not have a clear map of the road ahead but, as we step into this future, we draw inspiration from Madiba's words of wisdom: "Courage is not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it".

"This is an historic milestone as we look forward to collaborating with all our partners, internally and externally, in producing fit-for-purpose, service-oriented and civic-minded medical professionals committed to making a difference in the lives of the disadvantaged."

**– Nelson Mandela University Vice-Chancellor,
Professor Sibongile Muthwa**



MEDICAL SCHOOL OVERVIEW

With social justice at its core, Nelson Mandela University's new Medical School is set to forever change the healthcare landscape of South Africa and the lives of those it serves.

One of the key strategic growth areas for the institution and surrounding community, the Medical School is being intentionally and collectively driven as a beacon of hope on the Missionvale Campus in Gqeberha.

When the first 50 students started in March 2021, a decades-long dream was fulfilled not only for the University, but also for the area around the campus, Nelson Mandela Bay Metro and the Eastern Cape province.

The programme is unique in South Africa, as its comprehensive primary health care approach focuses on the four pillars of medicine: disease prevention, health promotion, treatment and rehabilitative medicine. This strong community-based ethos aims to develop socially-conscious medical doctors who can compete globally, but who also have a deep passion to change the lives of poor communities.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Sibongile Muthwa envisages the Medical School becoming a catalyst for change.

"This is an historic milestone as we look forward to collaborating with all our partners, internally and externally, in producing fit-for-purpose, service-oriented and civic-minded medical professionals committed to making a difference in the lives of the disadvantaged," says Prof Muthwa.

The country's 10th Medical School is now poised to meet its mandate of being in service of society, among those with the greatest need for the provision of good health care.

As the late Nelson Mandela famously said: "Health cannot be a question of income; it is a fundamental human right".

“The positioning of our new Medical School in Missionvale is genius.”

– Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences,
Professor Zukiswa Zingela





COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

In line with its ethos of working together for the greater good, Nelson Mandela University partners with numerous stakeholders to be in the service of society.

In the Medical School this is expressed through external partnerships with the community, other academic institutions, professional bodies and state entities on regional, provincial and national tiers. Internally, the school collaborates using the University's interprofessional education collaborative practice model.

The Faculty of Health Sciences has been developing partnerships with the departments of Health and Higher Education and Training to facilitate the new medical programme.

“There are many different stakeholders that we need to interact with to make sure that we reach our vision and goal, and all of them are important in their own way,” says Health Sciences Executive Dean Professor Zukiswa Zingela.



“We ... want to learn from and collaborate with our community, sharing knowledge and adding value.”

– Missionvale Campus Director, Sharon Masiza

ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSFORMATION

A primary health care orientation lies at the heart of Nelson Mandela University's new MBChB programme, deliberately chosen to help address the needs of South Africa: training doctors who are sensitised to the nation's challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality, and who at the same time have rigorous clinical skills which equip them to work anywhere on the continent, or in the world.

The University's interprofessional education and collaborative practice (IPECP) model further builds bridges between disciplines relevant to primary health care.

It is a holistic approach and, internationally, the ideal of inclusive and equitable health for all is enshrined in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals.

Primary health care also has a strong focus on reaching out and educating to prevent disease, and the MBChB programme takes the students out to visit clinics, centres and residents from their first year.

Community engagement is key in several other Mandela University initiatives on Missionvale Campus. The psychology clinic gives people living nearby access to mental health care and the Law Clinic gives access to legal aid. A medicinal garden was started to provide traditional healers with plant material as well as research purposes, and tons of fresh produce is grown in the aquaponics project on the campus. The flagship Foundation Phase in the Faculty of Education is sited here along with educational entities such as the Centre for the Community School, STEM in Action and the Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training.

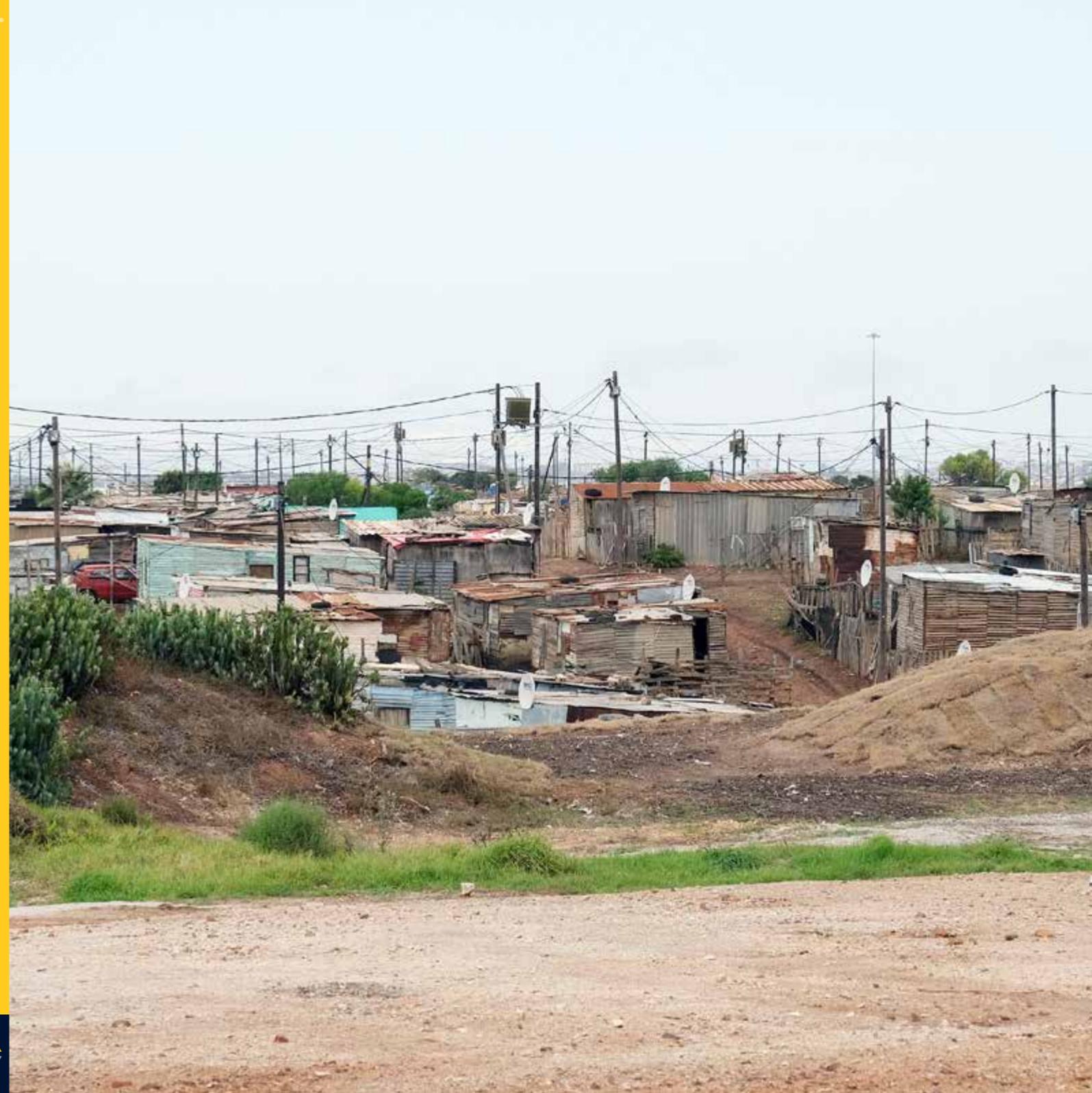
To enable transformation, the University advocates a process of co-creation, placing agency within the hands of those it serves.

"We see individual well-being as intimately connected with community health – the principle of South Africa's much-lauded ubuntu where the concept of community is one of the basic building blocks of a thriving society. However, this ideal can only be achieved in the context of social equality in wider society," says Medical School Director Professor Fikile Nomvete.



“Visiting people in their homes,
standing with them where they are
and listening to the story of their
lives, yields an invaluable experience
no textbook can give.”

– Medical School Director, Professor Fikile Nomvete



“High-tech equipment and facilities ... create authentic learning experiences, which are contextually responsive and help to ‘future-proof’ our doctors-in-training.”

– Senior Learning Experience Designer, Ra’ees Khan

SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE FUTURE

The new programme has called for extensive funding: R127-million from the Government’s Infrastructure and Efficiency Fund has been invested in the establishment of the Medical School to date.

Careful attention has been given to the resource-constrained environment in which the University operates and the Faculty of Health Sciences has focused on renovating and upgrading existing facilities at Missionvale Campus and local hospitals. So far, no building has been erected from scratch.

Staff have been recruited from all over South Africa and internationally from doctors, specialists and professionals wanting to be part of the medical school. A significant number have moved to Gqeberha, with many more in the pipeline as the programme develops. While the human and capital investment for the new medical school is significant, so will the returns be for public health and research.

The infrastructure includes lecture halls, laboratories for physics, chemistry, physiology and anatomy and over 60 offices for medical school staff members.

A sophisticated Information and Communications Technology (ICT) drive is preparing medical students to work in an increasingly digital world. A dedicated ICT team supports students and staff to enhance learning and teaching, with students having access to state-of-the-art equipment and making extensive use of online learning resources.

There has also been a sizeable investment in global technology, including state-of-the-art equipment for interactive anatomical education, radiology, surgery and research.

The supporting ICT strategy stretches beyond Missionvale Campus into hospitals, community health care centres and clinics in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro. Later, it will extend further afield to parts of the Eastern Cape and beyond.



“There will be a focus on primary and preventative health care, with interprofessional education and collaborative practice (IPECP) an essential building block.”

– Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences,
Professor Dalena van Rooyen



STRONG DEMAND FOR MEDICAL PROGRAMME

The new medical programme is in demand with more than 5500 applications received for the initial class of 50 students in 2021, and the same number again for the 2022 intake of 80 students.

Selection guidelines included looking for high-performing students, in particular pupils from quintile 1 to 3, or non-fee-paying schools in the Eastern Cape.

With transformation in education, and specifically in medical education, pertinent, the University was also looking for students who were not only representative of the country's population, but who also reflected the demographics of this province.

Graduates must also be able to reach across the language groups of the Eastern Cape, which are predominantly English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa.

Take a virtual tour around the new campus, view a photo gallery and more at the website: medicalschoo.mandela.ac.za

For further information, e-mail: medicalschoo@mandela.ac.za

With school contact, exhibitions and face-to-face initiatives being limited, the student recruitment team is supporting prospective students via online platforms.



“It’s been a long journey to finally do medicine and I am overwhelmed with emotions to know that I actually made it from more than 5 500 applications.”

– **First-year medical student, Potsiso Pako**

TRIBUTES

When the story of Nelson Mandela University’s new Medical School is told, it cannot leave out the contribution of two icons of health in Missionvale: the late Professor Lungile Pepeta, and the late Sister Ethel Normoyle.

Tragically, disease felled these trailblazers of community medical care over the past year. Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences Prof Pepeta died of COVID-19 complications in August 2020, and cancer took Missionvale Care Centre founder and director Sister Ethel just over a year later on August 16, 2021.

Before she died in her homeland of Ireland, Sister Ethel had been ready with open arms to welcome the first cohort of medical students, sharing Prof Pepeta’s vision of excellence in primary health care in service of society.

Change the World

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