

City Power empowers engineering students

City Power has employed 24 electrical engineering students as part of its contribution to give unemployed youth much needed work experience.



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“The response we received from the advertisement was overwhelming. Almost 200 qualified engineers came to our head office in Johannesburg to apply. It was disheartening to see how many of our young people are sitting at home with degrees, unable to find work and unfortunately we could only take 24 learners this cycle,” City Power managing director Siculo Xulu.

In a statement on Monday, 17 October, Xulu said the employment of the 24 students is a response to National Treasury’s call for companies to improve work experience skills for unemployed youth.

“We need to find a way to incorporate the remaining qualified applicants and we challenge other utilities and private sector to consider taking graduates which we could not employ,” said Xulu.

City Power aims to produce certified engineers over the next three years.

The provision of this on-the-job training will not only benefit students with required experience and addressing the issue of shortages of work ready skills in the country, it will also benefit them as the utility responds quicker to service disruption,

improved performance efficiencies while ensuring skills transfer.

The utility has partnered with the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) on a special joint initiative known as Road to Recruitment.

"There are not enough professional engineers in the country, this initiative is not just good for City Power or ECSA, ultimately it will raise the competency levels of engineers in the country. We need other energy utilities to join the cause by providing on-the-job training," said Xulu.

The absence of professionalised engineers in the country is what drove ECSA and National Treasury to pledge allegiance with City Power to rectifying this shortfall. The programme is designed to challenge other utilities to follow suit and hire young minds to assist in elevating the sector through professionalisation.

National Treasury has allocated R7.7m for the programme, which will be used as remuneration for the learners during the course of three years. The programme is designed for individuals who wish to be registered as professional engineers and by participating in the programme learners will become recognised as professional ECSA members.

In order to qualify for professionalisation, applicants must possess accredited qualifications in the engineering field.

"Employers are increasingly requiring registration with ECSA as a prerequisite for appointment to certain engineering positions. Graduates that have not registered with the professional body will find it difficult to find jobs in the engineering sector."

"This programme is not only a job opportunity for previously unemployed youth but also elevates learners existing qualifications. The successful implementation of this programme may encourage National Treasury to give us more funding for a larger intake next year," said Xulu.

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