

HEDSA 2025 BIENNIAL CONFERENCE
Neurodiversity matters: Recognising and valuing differences
Coastlands Umhlanga Hotel and Convention Centre
DRAFT CONFERENCE PROGRAMME*
[HEDSA 2025 Biennial Conference Registration Form](#)

CONFERENCE DAY 1 WEDNESDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2025	
Programme Director: Ms. Nicole Morris	
08:30 -10:00	Registration
10:00 – 10:10	Opening and Welcome <i>Ms. Nicole Morris</i> <i>Dean of Students, Sol Plaatje University</i>
10:10 -10:20	Welcome Address <i>Prof Nana Poku</i> <i>Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)</i>
10:20 – 11:00	Keynote Address <i>Honourable Dr. Mimmy Martha Gondwe, DHET Deputy Minister and MP</i>
11:00 – 11:10	Comfort Break
Session 1: Championing Neurodivergent Inclusion	
11:10 - 11:20	Session Introduction Championing Neurodivergent Inclusion: The Importance of Self-determination and Supported Decision Making. <i>Session Chair</i>
11:20 - 11:40	Presentation Centre for Neurodiversity - collaboration with teachers, families, communities and other stakeholders to advance the knowledge, skills and support of neurodiverse individuals, in South Africa and globally. <i>Prof. Maximus Sefotho</i> <i>Director: Centre for Neurodiversity- University of Johannesburg.</i>
11:40 - 12:20	Neurodivergent student experiences. <i>Student representatives</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transitioning into PSET institutions and disclosure. Learning environments that allow to neurodivergent students to succeed. Understanding barriers to social dynamics, sensory environments, executive function demands, and residences environments. Students as partners to drive inclusive practice: proposals for enhancing the experience for neurodiverse students at PSET institutions. <i>Student representatives</i>
12:20-12:45	Questions and Discussions
12:45 - 13:45	LUNCH
Session 2: Critical Neurodiversity Studies	
13:45 - 13:50	Session Introduction <i>Session Chair</i>
13:50 - 16:15	Research Presentations <i>Researchers</i>
16:15 - 16:30	Questions and Discussions
16:30	End of Day 1

HEDSA EXCO

Dr. Nosiphiwo Delubom (Chairperson, NMU); Dr. Leila Abdool Gafoor (Vice-Chairperson, Wits); Ms. Charity Morrison (Secretary, UFS);
Mr. Phwayinkosi Mjadu (Interim Treasurer, UniZulu); Dr. Maria Ramaahlo (Publicity & Communications, UJ);
Mr. Nceba Nyanda (Co-opted member, Lovedale TVET College)

CONFERENCE DAY 2 THURSDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2025	
Programme Director: Mr. Phiwayinkosi Mjadu	
08:30 – 8:45	Conference Announcements and Introduction of the Keynote <i>Mr. Phiwayinkosi Mjadu</i> <i>HEDSA KZN Regional Chairperson and Interim HEDSA Treasurer</i> <i>Disability Unit Coordinator: University of Zululand</i>
08:45 - 9:30	Keynote Address <i>Dr. Lindiwe Mokotjo</i> <i>Umalusi Executive Council Member and Head: Academic Development Support Literacies (UJ)</i>
09:30 - 10:00	Message of support – President of the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals <i>Mr. Jerome September</i> <i>Dean of Students, University of the Witwatersrand</i>
10:00-10:30	Questions and Discussion
10:30 -11:00	REFRESHMENT BREAK
Session 3: Neurodivergent-Affirming Practices	
11:00 – 11:15	SESSION INTRODUCTION <i>Session Chair</i>
11:15 -12:20	Panel Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neurodiversity-affirming practice and distinguish them from traditional, deficit-based frameworks within PSET settings. • Universal design that supports an accessible environment for neurodivergent students • Equipping academics with pedagogical tools to enhance curriculum outcomes. • Approaches to universal design that supports an accessible academic and co-curricular environments for neurodivergent students.
12:20 – 12:45	Questions and Discussion
12:45 - 13:45	LUNCH
Session 4: Digital Transformation and Capacity Building	
13:45 - 14:15	Presentation Integrating AI to support social-emotional learning and student well-being for neurodivergent students.
14:15 -14:30	Questions and Discussion
14:30 -16:30	Access4All Project Presentation and Feedback <i>Dr. Marcia Lyner-Cleophas, Head: Disability Unit, Stellenbosch University</i> <i>Ms. Edwina Ghall, Manager of the Disability Service, University of Cape Town</i>
16:30 – 17:30	Delegates free time
17:30 – 20:00	HEDSA Wellness Night Dress code: Casual (HEDSA t-shirts to be provided to delegates) Group Photo
20:00	End of Day 2

HEDSA EXCO

Dr. Nosiphiwo Delubom (Chairperson, NMU); Dr. Leila Abdool Gafoor (Vice-Chairperson, Wits); Ms. Charity Morrison (Secretary, UFS);
Mr. Phiwayinkosi Mjadu (Interim Treasurer, UniZulu); Dr. Maria Ramaahlo (Publicity & Communications, UJ);
Mr. Nceba Nyanda (Co-opted member, Lovedale TVET College)

CONFERENCE DAY 3 FRIDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2025	
08:30 – 10:30	<p>Workshop Reasonable accommodation guidelines for neurodivergent students (CPD Points applied for) <i>Dr. Leila Abdool Gafoor, Head: Disability Unit, University of the Witwatersrand and Vice-Chairperson: HEDSA</i></p>
10:30 -11:00	REFRESHMENT BREAK
11:00-13:30	<p>Annual General Meeting: Agenda</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome and opening 2. Apologies 3. Minutes of previous meeting 4. Matters arising 5. Reports <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1 Chairperson's report 5.2 Treasurer's report 5.3 Regional reports 6. Approval of the revised HEDSA Constitution 7. Election of the Treasurer 8. Vote of Thanks 9. Close of Conference
13:30 -14:30	LUNCH
14:30	Close of Conference- Delegates Depart

***Programme is subject to change**

HEDSA EXCO