Mangosuthu University of Technology

Administrator: Prof L.R van Staden
5-Year Development Plan
2024 - 2028

Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) stands at a critical crossroads, facing substantial challenges that demand immediate attention while presenting opportunities for transformative change. The institution's 5-Year Development Plan (2024-2028) outlines a comprehensive strategy to address systemic issues across governance, financial management, academic quality, and organisational culture.

The university has experienced significant turbulence in its governance structures, marked by recurring conflicts between the Council and Executive Management. These tensions have manifested in frequent senior staff suspensions and the absence of essential policy instruments, undermining the institution's stability and effectiveness. In response to these challenges, the appointment of Professor Lourens Van Staden as administrator represents a crucial intervention to restore proper governance and management practices.

Financial instability has emerged as a pressing concern, with troubling discoveries of financial mismanagement, including ghost employees and payroll irregularities that have severely impacted the university's cash flow. These financial challenges have highlighted the urgent need for more robust financial controls and regular auditing procedures. The development plan emphasises the importance of implementing comprehensive financial recovery strategies to ensure the institution's long-term sustainability.

The recent institutional audit by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) revealed significant areas requiring improvement across the university's core functions. The audit findings indicate necessary enhancements in quality teaching and learning, research output, and student support services. These challenges are compounded by an organisational culture characterised by limited freedom of expression and an inadequate transformation agenda, creating an environment that hampers progress and innovation.

The university's relationship with its stakeholders has been strained by insufficient engagement and communication, leading to a breakdown in trust between management and key constituencies, including staff unions and the Student Representative Council (SRC). This deterioration in stakeholder relations has created additional obstacles to implementing necessary reforms and improvements.

The development plan proposes a series of strategic interventions to address these challenges. The priority is strengthening governance structures by implementing robust frameworks that ensure clear role separation and enhanced accountability mechanisms. This governance reform must be accompanied by the introduction of stringent financial controls and the development of a comprehensive financial recovery strategy to stabilise the institution's finances.

Academic excellence forms another crucial pillar of the recovery strategy, focusing on enhancing teaching quality, research output, and student support services. The plan advocates for significant investment in faculty development, curriculum modernisation, and strengthening research capabilities. These academic improvements must be supported by cultivating a more positive organisational culture that promotes inclusivity, transparency, and accountability.

The development plan emphasises the importance of stakeholder engagement in achieving these objectives. Regular consultation with all university constituencies will be essential for building trust and ensuring broad-based support for reform initiatives. This collaborative approach will be particularly crucial in developing and implementing a new strategic plan that aligns with MUT's mission and vision while setting clear, measurable targets for improvement.

The successful implementation of these reforms will require sustained commitment from all levels of the university community. The 5-Year Development Plan provides a clear roadmap for transformation, but its success will depend on the ability of university leadership to foster a collaborative environment and maintain focus on strategic objectives. With proper execution, these initiatives have the potential to transform MUT into a leading institution that exemplifies innovation, entrepreneurship, and academic excellence.

The path forward for MUT will not be without challenges, but the comprehensive nature of the development plan, combined with clear strategic recommendations and a focus on stakeholder engagement, provides a strong foundation for positive change. By addressing governance issues, strengthening financial controls, improving academic quality, and fostering a more inclusive organisational culture, MUT can work toward achieving its goal of becoming a respected and influential institution in South Africa's higher education landscape.

2. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

2.1. Introduction

Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) has faced significant challenges, including governance issues, financial mismanagement, and leadership instability. This analysis draws on independent assessors' reports, the terms of reference for the administrator, the HEQC institutional audit, administrator technical team reports, and other public documents to provide a comprehensive overview of the current situation at MUT.

2.2. Governance and Leadership

MUT has experienced persistent governance and leadership challenges. The independent assessor's report highlighted issues such as conflicts between the Council and Executive Management, frequent suspensions of senior staff, and a lack of critical policy instruments. The report also noted that the Council often overstepped its mandate, leading to a dysfunctional governance structure. The appointment of an administrator, Professor Lourens Van Staden, was a response to these ongoing issues to restore effective governance and management.

2.3. Financial Management

Financial mismanagement has been a recurring problem at MUT. The independent assessor's report revealed irregularities such as ghost employees and payroll discrepancies[3]. These issues have contributed to cash-flow problems and undermined the institution's financial stability. The terms of reference for the administrator include addressing these financial irregularities and implementing measures to ensure sound financial management.

2.4. Institutional Audit

The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) conducted an institutional audit of MUT, which provided a detailed assessment of the university's academic and administrative functions. The audit identified several areas needing improvement, including the quality of teaching and learning, research output, student support services, and the need to foster a quality and accountability culture.

2.5. Organisational Culture

The organisational culture at MUT has been described as problematic, with issues such as a lack of freedom of expression and a non-existent transformation agenda1. The independent assessor's report emphasised the need for a cultural shift to promote inclusivity, transparency, and accountability. The administrator's role includes fostering a positive organisational culture that supports the university's strategic objectives2.

2.6. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement has been insufficient, with reports indicating a lack of consultation with key stakeholders, including staff unions and the Student Representative Council (SRC)[1]. This has led to tensions and a lack of trust between the university's management and its stakeholders. Improving stakeholder engagement is crucial for building a collaborative environment and ensuring the successful implementation of reforms.

2.7. Strategic Recommendations

- **Strengthen Governance Structures**: Implement the recommendations of the independent assessor's report to ensure a clear separation of roles between the Council and Executive Management. Establish robust governance frameworks to enhance accountability and transparency.

- **Enhance Financial Management**: Address financial irregularities by implementing stringent financial controls and conducting regular audits. Develop a comprehensive financial recovery plan to stabilise the university's finances.

- **Improve Academic Quality**: Focus on enhancing the quality of teaching and learning by investing in faculty development, updating curricula, and improving research output. Implement the recommendations of the HEQC audit to ensure continuous quality improvement.

- **Foster a Positive Organizational Culture**: Promote a culture of inclusivity, transparency, and accountability. Engage with all stakeholders to build trust and ensure their active participation in the university's decision-making processes.

- **Develop a New Strategic Plan**: Formulate a new strategic plan that aligns with MUT's mission and vision. Set clear targets for improvement and hold the Executive Management accountable for achieving these targets.

2.8. Conclusion

MUT is at a critical juncture, with significant challenges that must be addressed to ensure its long-term sustainability and success. By implementing the recommendations from various reports and fostering a collaborative and transparent environment, MUT can overcome its current challenges and achieve its strategic objectives.

3. MUT: STRATEGIC INTENT

Transforming Mangosuthu University of Technology into a 4th Generation University

3.1. Introduction

Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) stands at a pivotal moment in its history. To remain relevant and competitive in the rapidly evolving landscape of higher education, MUT must transform into a 4th generation university. This transformation involves embracing innovation, fostering entrepreneurship, integrating technology, and enhancing community engagement, unlocking new opportunities for its students, staff, and the broader Umlazi community.

3.2. Embracing Innovation and Entrepreneurship

A 4th generation university is characterised by its strong emphasis on innovation and entrepreneurship. MUT can foster a culture of innovation by:

> **3.3.1.** **Establishing Innovation Hubs**: Creating dedicated spaces where students, faculty, and industry partners can collaborate on innovative projects. These hubs should have state-of-the-art technology and resources to support research and development.

> **3.3.2.** **Entrepreneurship Programs**: Introducing programs encouraging students to develop entrepreneurial skills. This can include courses on business development, startup incubation, and access to mentorship from successful entrepreneurs.

> **3.3.3.** **Research and Development**: Increasing investment in research initiatives that address real-world problems. Encouraging interdisciplinary research can lead to groundbreaking discoveries and innovations.

3.3. Integrating Advanced Technology

To become a 4th generation university, MUT must integrate advanced technology into all aspects of its operations:

> **3.3.1.** **Digital Learning Platforms**: Implementing robust digital learning platforms that offer flexible and personalised learning experiences. These platforms should support online courses, virtual labs, and interactive learning tools.

3.3.2. Smart Campus Infrastructure: Developing a smart campus with interconnected systems that enhance the efficiency and sustainability of university operations. This includes smart classrooms, energy-efficient buildings, and advanced security systems.

3.3.3. Data Analytics: Utilizing data analytics to improve decision-making processes. By analysing student performance, resource utilisation, and research outcomes, MUT can make informed decisions that enhance educational quality and operational efficiency.

3.4. Enhancing Community Engagement

A 4th generation university actively engages with its community to drive social and economic development:

3.4.1. Community Partnerships: Building strong partnerships with local businesses, government agencies, and non-profit organisations. These partnerships can provide students real-world learning opportunities and contribute to community development projects.

3.4.2. Service Learning: Incorporating service learning into the curriculum, where students apply their knowledge to address community challenges. This benefits the community and enhances students' practical skills and civic responsibility.

3.4.3. Public Outreach Programs: Develop programmes that promote lifelong learning and provide educational resources to the broader community. This can include workshops, public lectures, and online resources accessible to all.

3.5. Strengthening Academic Excellence

To support its transformation, MUT must also focus on strengthening academic excellence:

3.5.1. Curriculum Modernisation: Regularly updating the curriculum to reflect industry trends and technological advancements. This ensures that graduates are well-prepared for the demands of the modern workforce.

3.5.2. Staff Development: Investing in the continuous professional development of staff by providing opportunities to engage in research, attend conferences, and collaborate with industry experts enhances their teaching and research capabilities.

3.5.3. Student Support Services: Enhancing support services to improve student retention and success rates. This includes academic advising, mental health services, and career counselling.

3.6.   Conclusion

Transforming the Mangosuthu University of Technology into a 4th generation university is a multifaceted endeavour that requires strategic planning, investment, and collaboration. MUT can position itself as a leader in higher education by embracing innovation and entrepreneurship, integrating advanced technology, enhancing community engagement, and strengthening academic excellence. This transformation will benefit the university and contribute to the social and economic development of the broader community. Through these efforts, MUT can ensure that it remains relevant and competitive in the ever-evolving landscape of higher education.

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

4.1.   Location of the Implementation Plan with the Institutional Planning Framework

The Five-Development Plan is one of the key deliverables of the Administrator and, by its nature, will outlive the period of administration, which is scheduled to end in January 2025. The recommendations of previous assessors' reports and administration periods did not yield the requisite improvements.

The reasons for failing to sustain improvements are varied and are largely attributed to the prevailing culture at the university that mitigated the effective implementation of recommendations, poor policy environment, governance and management weaknesses and certain vested interests that actively worked against effecting change at the university.

Significantly, many of the recommendations were not embedded within institutional planning frameworks to the extent that the institutional strategic plans ignored the recommendations and proceeded to identify goals and objectives almost to the exclusion of addressing the shortcomings purposefully and intentionally.

Failing to embed the recommendations into the strategic plan and associated annual performance plans removed the Council and management's responsibility and accountability to ensure that the recommendations are implemented, monitored, evaluated, and reported.

To this end, the Five-Year Development Plan will form the point of origin that informs all planning within the university and will be operationalised in the university's strategic plan and subsequent annual performance plan. In this manner, the Department of Higher Education and Training, the University Council and key stakeholders can track the implementation of the recommendation.
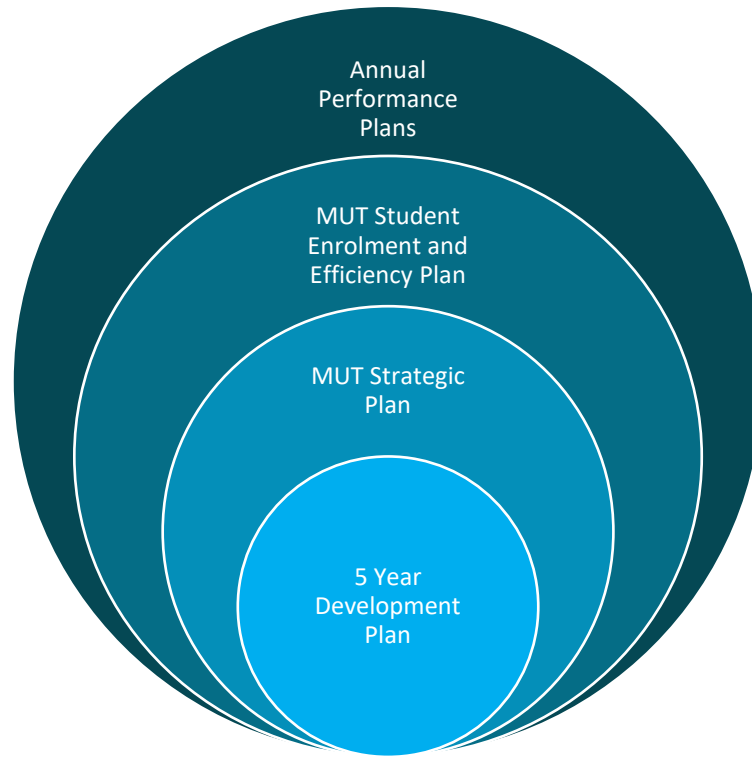
Figure 1: Nested Planning Conceptual Framework

4.2. Five-Year Development Plan Organising Framework

The Five-Year Development Plan is informed by the previous assessors' reports, the Administrator's terms of reference and the HEQC institutional audit report. The following elements emerged as the key elements emanating from a thematic analysis of the reports:

- Governance

- Leadership and Management

- Academic Project

- Financial Turnaround

- Human Resources

- Infrastructure and Maintenance

- Digitalisation

Figure 2: Five-Year Development Plan Organising Framework

5. GOVERNANCE

5.1. Background

The dysfunctional governance at the university documented in the Pityana/Favish Assessor Report (2018), the Staak Assessor Report (2022), and the HEQC Institutional Audit Report (2024) reveals an institutional unwillingness or an incapacity to restore proper governance and management.

The Pityana/Favish Assessor Report (2018) points to diminished governance and deinstitutionalisation, a deeply divided university at war with itself and trapped in an "iron cage of parochialism, an ineptitude management, an inefficient Senate, and a Council gone rogue".

The Staak Assessor Report (2022) demonstrates that little had changed in the preceding three years as factions and deep divisions were still prevalent at the university, which had become a highly politicised space compromising multiple competing agendas that stifled critical debate and an almost non-existent work ethic.

The HEQC Institutional Audit Report (2024) found that in focus area 1: Governance, Strategic Planning, Management and Leadership Support the Core Academic Functions, the university needs substantial improvement in two out of four standards and makes eleven recommendations.

5.2. Statement of the Problem

In restoring proper governance and management, the university must be governed by a Council comprising respected and professional members beyond reproach, supported by sub-committees with the requisite expertise, led by suitably qualified and experienced executive management, with relevant policies and procedures within a regulatory and compliance framework.

5.3. Implementation Plan

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year)					Success Indicators	Oversight Responsibility
		22	23	24	25	26		
Establishment of Working Groups (WG) to assume the role of Council sub-committees	Administrator	✓					• WG terms of reference • WG minutes of meetings • WG recommendations to the administrator	Administrator
MUT Institutional Rules	Registrar		✓				• Approved Institutional Rules	Administrator
Administrator Governance Meetings	Administrator	✓					• Administrator/Management minutes of meetings • Administrator approvals	Administrator
Council Installation	Administrator			✓			• Properly constituted Council • Establishment of Council Sub-Committees	Administrator

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year)					Success Indicators	Oversight Responsibility
		22	23	24	25	26		
Revision of governance and compliance policies and procedures	Registrar		✓	✓	✓	✓	• Revised governance and compliance policies	Administrator / Council
Craft a new institutional strategic plan (ISP) that addresses the recommendations of the assessors, administrator, and HEQC.	Vice-Chancellor			✓	✓		• New Institutional Strategic Plan.	Council
Develop and align the 2026-2031 Student Enrolment and Efficiency Plan (SEEP) to the ISP.	Vice-Chancellor			✓	✓	✓	• New Student Enrolment and Efficiency Plan.	Council

5.4.   Critical Success Factors

5.4.1.   Council Reconstitution and Development

- Strict adherence to the institutional statute in new Council appointments
- Implementation of probity assessments for potential Council members
- Clear delineation of roles and responsibilities
- Comprehensive induction program for new Council members
- Effective monitoring systems for role fulfilment

5.4.2.   Leadership and Management Framework

- Merit-based senior leadership appointments
- Clear reporting structures and accountability measures
- Implementation of performance management systems
- Strong policy development and enforcement mechanisms
- Regular leadership development programs

5.4.3.   Policy Framework and Compliance

- Comprehensive policy review and development
- Clear implementation guidelines
- Regular compliance monitoring
- Integration of policies across all levels
- Strong enforcement mechanisms

5.4.4.   Risk Management and Controls

- Comprehensive risk assessment framework
- Clear mitigation strategies
- Regular monitoring and reporting
- Strong internal control systems
- Clear accountability measures

6. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

6.1. Background

There appears to be a dearth of leadership and management at the university. While this may be a function of inordinately long periods that senior executives are in acting positions, it does not derogate from incumbents, whether permanent or in an acting capacity, executing their duties and fiduciary responsibilities. The oft-repeated trope of "lack of capacity" is frequently advanced for poor performance, failing to meet deadlines and sub-standard submissions.

The Pityana/Favish Assessor Report (2018) boldly asserts that the university needs a wholesale leadership and management review. The report further asserts that there are embedded attitudes of non-performance, mediocrity, and lack of capacity.

While acknowledging the high number of acting and their lengthy tenure may impact performance, the report recommends a thorough check of qualifications and skills audit of managers at all levels, introducing formal performance management systems and implementing measures to hold executives accountable.

The Staak Report (2022) alludes to a severe lack of capacity in management and underperformance in key portfolios, especially in the operations environments, resulting in deteriorating infrastructure. The report further states that submissions to the Council left much to be desired, corroborated by the Working Group's experiences with the quality of management's submissions. In addition, the report states that the impression is that work ethic is lacking as staff engage with their work with minimal enthusiasm.

The HEQC IA Report (2024) recommends that the leadership reposition the university within the national higher education landscape and ensure awareness and buy-in at all university levels. Echoing the previous Assessor's Reports, the HEQC further recommends that the leadership improves the institutional culture concerning values, attitudes, interaction styles and regard for the university.

6.2. Statement of the Problem

The appointment of visionary and capable academic and administrative leaders and managers is central to the long-term sustainability of MUT.

6.3. Implementation Plan

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year)					Success Indicators	Oversight Responsibility
		22	23	24	25	26		
Appointment of Vice-Chancellor.	Administrator			✓			• Vice-Chancellor's assumption of duty	Administrator
Appointment of Senior Executives.	Administrator			✓			• Senior Executives' assumption of duty	Administrator
Skills audit and qualification verification of all levels of management.	Human Resources				✓		• Completed skills audit. • Completed qualification verification.	Vice-Chancellor
Sign performance contracts at levels 1-4.	Vice-Chancellor				✓		• Signed performance contracts.	Council Vice-Chancellor
Fill all Management acting positions.	Vice-Chancellor				✓		• Management vacancies filled.	Vice-Chancellor
Compulsory academic and administration leadership and management capacity development.	Vice-Chancellor/ Human Resources				✓		• Completed development programmes	Vice-Chancellor

7. ACADEMIC PROJECT

7.1. Background

The university faces challenges in key areas, including teaching and learning quality, research output, staff qualifications, and student success rates. The transition to digital learning modalities and the need for stronger industry partnerships have become increasingly important. This strategy addresses these challenges while building on MUT's technical education and community engagement strengths.

The current academic landscape at MUT is characterised by:

- Predominantly undergraduate programs with limited postgraduate offerings
- A need for enhanced teaching and learning methodologies
- Below-target research output and staff qualifications
- Strong technical training foundation but requires modernisation
- Growing demand for digital and hybrid learning options

The HEQC audit and assessors' report identified several critical areas requiring intervention:

- Teaching and Learning Quality
  - Inconsistent teaching methodologies
  - Limited integration of technology in education
  - Need for curriculum renewal and modernisation
- Academic Staff Development
  - Below-target staff qualification levels
  - Limited research output
  - Need for continuous professional development
- Student Success
  - Below-benchmark throughput rates
  - High dropout rates in certain programs
  - Limited academic support structures

- Quality Assurance
  - Inadequate quality management systems
  - Need for stronger monitoring and evaluation
  - Limited feedback implementation mechanisms

7.2.   Statement of the Problem

The centrality and complexity of the academic project require that the university purposefully and intentionally address learning, teaching and assessment practices urgently via a robust quality management system, a relevant programme and qualification mix, an optimal academic profile, workload and resource allocation model, academic staff development, supportive and conducive infrastructure and the adoption of digital technologies.

7.3. Implementation Plan

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year)					Success Indicators	Oversight Responsibility
		24	25	26	27	28		
Develop the CHE/HEQC Quality Improvement Plan.	DVC Academic	✓					CHE/HEQC approved Improvement Plan implemented.	Vice-Chancellor / Senate
Design and implement an improved Quality Management Plan.	DVC Academic / DIPR		✓	✓	✓	✓	Improved QMS.	Vice-Chancellor
Develop a responsive and relevant programme and quality mix.	DVC Academic		✓				Revised PQM.	Vice-Chancellor / Senate
Develop and implement the next iteration of the Student Enrolment and Efficiency Plan.	DVC Academic / DIPR		✓	✓	✓	✓	DHET approved Student Enrolment and Efficiency Plan.	Vice-Chancellor / Senate / Council
Develop and implement an optimal academic profile and workload model.	DVC Academic		✓				Approved academic profile and workload model.	Vice-Chancellor
Develop and implement a robust staff development plan to address: • Qualification improvement • Digital technologies and innovation	DVC Academic			✓	✓	✓	Staff development plan and implementation schedule.	Vice-Chancellor

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year)					Success Indicators	Oversight Responsibility
		24	25	26	27	28		
• Research output • Academic credibility								
Develop an appropriate resource allocation model.	DVC Academic / CFO / SD: HR		✓				Approved resource allocation model	Vice-Chancellor / Council
Optimise academic oversight and governance structures.	Vice Chancellor		✓	✓			Reworked governance and oversight structures remit.	Vice-Chancellor / Senate
Update and, where necessary, develop new academic policies and procedures.	DVC Academic		✓	✓			Revised and updated policies and procedures	Vice-Chancellor / Senate
Improve student success • External validation of assessment • Improved efficiency indicators • Increased successful WIL placements • Graduate employability • Student support, co-and-extracurricular programmes	DVC Academic		✓	✓	✓	✓	Improved student learning outcomes, satisfaction indices and employability.	Vice-Chancellor

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year)					Success Indicators	Oversight Responsibility
		24	25	26	27	28		
Conducive support infrastructure • Physical infrastructure, water and electricity availability • Digital and technology infrastructure • Student residences	DVC Academic / DVC Resource and Planning		✓	✓	✓	✓	Appropriate, relevant and available infrastructure.	Vice-Chancellor

7.4. Critical Success Factors

7.4.1. Leadership Commitment

- Clear vision and direction
- Resource allocation
- Change management support

7.4.2. Staff Engagement

- Buy-in from academic staff
- Active participation
- Continuous feedback

7.4.3. Resource Availability

- Adequate funding
- Infrastructure support
- Technology Resources

7.4.4. Stakeholder Support

- Industry partnerships
- Community engagement
- Government support

7.4.5. Quality Culture

- Institutional commitment
- Continuous improvement
- Performance monitoring

8. FINANCIAL TURNAROUND

8.1. Background

Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) operates within the sustainability framework defined by the Financial Sector Conduct Authority: "The ability of an entity to conduct its business in a manner that primarily meets existing needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs." Currently, MUT faces significant challenges in meeting this definition of sustainability.

The university's financial position as of December 2023 shows:

- Total current assets: R1.7 billion

- Student debt: R407 million (with low collectability)

- Restricted grants: R822 million

- Current liabilities: R350 million

- Available reserves: R120 million (approximately 9% of annual budget)

- Annual costs: R1.3 billion

- Third-stream income: R11 million (1.3% of Council controlled income)

The latest audited financial statements as of December 2023 reveal that MUT is under severe financial pressure. Current assets total R1.7bn, but R407m is student debt with a low likelihood of collectability. Claims against these assets include restricted grants of R822m and current liabilities of R350m, leaving only R120m (or 9% of the annual budget) in reserve. The situation is expected to worsen due to increasing costs, insufficient government grants, and low tuition fees. Additionally, high-interest income from 2023 is unlikely to be maintained.

MUT has been balancing its budget by overclaiming from NSFAS, resulting in a reported R111m deficit in 2023, masked by an R113m surplus on student residences. With a new proposed cap on NSFAS claims, there is a potential R50m problem in 2024. The cost of the current organisational structure, where support and admin staff costs exceed those of academic staff, further exacerbates financial pressures.

8.2. Statement of the Problem

8.2.1. Operational Deficits

- R111 million deficit in Council controlled income (2023)
- Masked by R113 million surplus from student residences
- Unsustainable NSFAS claiming practices

8.2.2. Structural Issues

- Support and admin staff costs exceed academic staff costs
- Below-market tuition fees
- High-cost external student accommodation (R400 million)
- Fixed-rate loans at 11-13% interest
- Growing Post Retirement Medical Aid liability (R40 million)

8.2.3. Financial Pressures

- Increasing costs (CPI or higher)
- Student residence lease escalations at 7%
- Growing student debt provisions
- Government grants not keeping pace with inflation
- Potential R50 million reductions in NSFAS income (2024)

8.3. Implementation Plan

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year)					Success Indicators	Oversight Responsibility
		22	23	24	25	26		
Re-work the budget to reduce dependency on NSFAS overclaims	Vice-Chancellor			✓			• A break-even budget not dependent on over-claims	Administrator
Lobby the DHET to increase tuition fees to the average fees charged by similar institutions	Vice-Chancellor				✓		• New fee mandate with the DHET	Administrator
Revise the organisational structure to release potential cost savings into the budget.	Human Resources				✓		• A new organisational structure • Calculated savings factored into the budget	Vice-Chancellor
Conduct a complete re-valuation of the PQM and factor changes into the budget	DVC Academic					✓	• A new approved PQM	Vice-Chancellor

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year)					Success Indicators	Oversight Responsibility
		22	23	24	25	26		
Establish reasons for current throughput rates and implement interventions to approve	DVC Academic					✓	• Revised teaching and learning strategy for improvement of throughput rates	Vice-Chancellor
Enhance third stream income to be at least 5% of Council controlled income	Vice-Chancellor				✓		• Third stream income plan	Vice-Chancellor
Establish a formal Treasury function within the Finance Dept	Vice-Chancellor			✓			• A Treasury function that will enhance interest income	
Refinance current fixed-interest loans	CFO				✓		• New variable interest loans agreement	
Investigate the possibility of buying out the current Post Retirement Medical Aid liability	CFO				✓		• A capped PRMA liability	
Develop a plan to finance the building of MUT owned on—campus or near-campus residences.	Vice-Chancellor and CFO					✓	• A building plan for new residences	

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year)					Success Indicators	Oversight Responsibility
		22	23	24	25	26		
Engage with NSFAS to establish the "real" amounts due to MUT and ensure that the funds are paid across	Vice-Chancellor				✓		• Formal agreement with NSFAS re amounts owing	

8.4. Critical Success Factors

8.4.1. Financial Management

- Accurate costing systems

- Effective treasury management

- Sustainable debt management

- Revenue diversification: Management should explore all possibilities to increase third-stream income, ensuring that expenses recorded against these activities are genuine and there is no leakage.

8.4.2. Operational Efficiency

- Optimized organisational structure: Aligning personnel needs to a structure that suits the university's size and shape can result in significant cost savings over time.

- Improved programme and qualification mix: Eliminating loss-making programs and expanding profitable ones, coupled with improving student throughput, can enhance financial stability. This requires a full costing analysis and strategic planning to ensure the employability of graduates

- Enhanced student throughput

- Cost-effective student accommodation

8.4.3. Revenue Enhancement

- Market-aligned tuition fees: MUT needs to regularise tuition fees to align with the average of similar universities. This will require permission from the DHET and increase NSFAS claims for tuition fees, helping address the overclaims for accommodation.

- Increased third-stream income

- Improved NSFAS recovery: MUT must adjust its claims from NSFAS to recover only the actual cost of leasing external student accommodation. Revising the financial system to provide accurate costing information, especially for student accommodation.

- Enhanced government funding

9. HUMAN RESOURCES

9.1. Background

Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) is committed to achieving its strategic intent of becoming the leading University of Technology in Africa that fosters innovation and entrepreneurial excellence. However, the Human Resources (HR) function has been identified as underperforming, thereby hindering the university's progress towards this goal.

Human Resources (HR) is a cornerstone of any institution, particularly in a university setting where the quality and effectiveness of the academic, research, and administrative functions depend significantly on the talent and engagement of staff. In a university like Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT), the HR department is critical in fostering an environment that supports academic excellence, innovation, and institutional growth. HR is responsible for attracting, developing, and retaining talented academic and administrative personnel, ensuring they are well-equipped to perform their duties and motivated and aligned with the institution's mission.

The HR department is tasked with key functions such as recruitment, performance management, staff development, labour relations, employee well-being, and organisational development. Additionally, in a university focused on innovation and entrepreneurship, HR should cultivate a culture of creativity, agility, and continuous improvement. HR also plays an essential role in developing leadership capabilities within the university, ensuring a pipeline of skilled and visionary leaders to drive the university's strategic objectives.

Effective HR management ensures that MUT can maintain high staff satisfaction and engagement, reduce turnover, and ensure that the university remains competitive in attracting top talent. In a context where higher education institutions must adapt rapidly to changing technological and educational trends, HR becomes a key strategic partner in ensuring that staff have the necessary skills and mindset to lead these changes.

However, as identified, the HR function at MUT is underperforming, failing to meet the institution's needs and impeding its progress toward achieving its strategic vision. Addressing the deficiencies in the HR department is critical for building a solid foundation that will support MUT's aim of becoming the leading University of Technology in Africa, fostering innovation and entrepreneurial excellence.

9.2. Statement of the Problem

The current state of the Human Resources function at the University demonstrates the following challenges:

- **Lack of Strategic Direction**: The HR Department lacks a clear strategic framework aligned with the university's vision, resulting in fragmented and inconsistent service delivery.

- **Capacity Constraints**: Persistent claims of inadequate staffing levels have been used to justify underperformance; however, the underlying issue is more complex and involves inefficient staff utilisation.

- **Poor Service Delivery**: HR processes, including recruitment, training, performance management, and employee relations, are slow and unresponsive, leading to dissatisfaction among staff and stakeholders. Assignments given to HR are rarely delivered on time, impacting overall institutional performance.

- **Limited Staff Development**: There is insufficient focus on professional development and upskilling for HR staff, contributing to the department's lack of effectiveness and innovation.

The HR department must transform to support the university's strategic intent. This transformation will address current weaknesses and position HR as a key enabler of the university's future success.

9.3. Implementation Plan

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year)					Success Indicators	Oversight Responsibility
		24	25	26	27	28		
Develop and Implement HR Strategy Aligned with University Goals	Senior Director: HR						Approved HR aligned to institutional goals and objectives	Vice-Chancellor
• Conduct a comprehensive HR audit to assess current performance and needs. Develop a 5-year HR strategy aligned with the university's strategic intent.		✓					HR Audit	
• Finalise and implement HR strategy and policies for talent management, performance, and succession planning with KPIs for the HR function.			✓				Update and relevant policies and KPI	
• Monitor and evaluate progress on the implementation of the HR strategy. Adjust based on feedback and performance data.				✓			Monitoring and evaluation reports with improvement plans.	

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year) 24	25	26	27	28	Success Indicators	Oversight Responsibility
• Refine HR strategy and begin preparation for the next strategic cycle. Focus on sustainability and innovation in HR practices.					✓		Refined HR strategy aligned to the next strategic pam	
• Review the next 5-year HR plan based on evaluation and the university's evolving needs.						✓		
Strengthen HR Capacity	Senior Director: HR							Vice-Chancellor
• Assess capacity and skills gaps within the HR department. Design and implement staff development programmes. Recruit additional HR personnel as needed.		✓					Skills gap conducted	
• Continue training and professional development for HR staff. Initiate mentorship programs for new HR hires.			✓				Professional and capacity building programmes	
• Evaluate the impact of staff development initiatives. Adjust training programs based on				✓			Monitoring and evaluation reports with improvement plans.	

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year)					Success Indicators	Oversight Responsibility
		24	25	26	27	28		
performance data and new industry trends.								
• Explore opportunities for automation and digital transformation in HR processes to enhance capacity and efficiency.					✓		Digitalised and automated documentation and workflows.	
• Fully integrate technology into HR operations, ensuring that processes are agile and scalable and support innovative practices.						✓		
Improve Service Delivery	Senior Director: HR							Vice-Chancellor
• Review current HR processes and identify bottlenecks. Develop a service delivery improvement plan, with a focus on responsiveness and customer service.		✓					Service delivery improvement plan	
• Implement process improvements in key areas (e.g., recruitment, onboarding, performance management). Establish service-level agreements (SLAs).				✓			Re-engineered business process utilising digitalisation and automation.	

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year) 24	25	26	27	28	Success Indicators	Oversight Responsibility
• Continuously monitor service delivery performance against SLAs. Address gaps and ensure consistency across all HR services.					✓		Service delivery monitoring and evaluation	
• Conduct regular reviews of HR processes to identify further improvement opportunities. Ensure all services are digitised where possible.					✓		Reviews of HR processes	
• Sustain improvements and introduce new service innovations that respond to emerging needs within the university						✓	Introduction of HR innovation.	
Foster Innovation and Entrepreneurial Culture in HR	Senior Director: HR							Vice-Chancellor
• Embed innovation and entrepreneurial principles in HR practices (e.g., performance management, rewards, recognition). Introduce programs to support staff entrepreneurship.		✓					Adoption of service metrics to track HR practices	

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year)					Success Indicators	Oversight Responsibility
		24	25	26	27	28		
• Develop and implement HR-driven initiatives to foster a culture of innovation among university staff. Create awards for innovation within HR.			✓				Build innovation into HR practice	
• Measure the impact of innovation initiatives and recognise staff contributions to entrepreneurial activities. Align HR support to broader university innovation initiatives.				✓			Monitor and evaluate innovation efforts for return on investment.	
• Build partnerships with external organisations for collaborative innovation and entrepreneurship programs.					✓		Successful internal and external partnership agreements and programmes	
• Institutionalise innovation within HR as a key driver of university success. Focus on sustaining an entrepreneurial culture across the university.						✓	Performance metrics to determine effective and efficient HR services	
Enhance Employee Engagement and Retention	Senior Director: HR							Vice-Chancellor

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year)					Success Indicators	Oversight Responsibility
		24	25	26	27	28		
• Conduct an employee satisfaction survey. Develop an employee engagement plan with targeted actions to improve satisfaction and retention.		✓					Employee satisfaction surveys and improvement plans.	
• Implement employee engagement initiatives, including recognition programs, wellness activities, and professional growth opportunities.			✓				Employee engagement programmes.	
• Measure the impact of engagement initiatives and adjust strategies as needed. Increase focus on leadership development and coaching.				✓			Monitor and evaluate initiatives and implement improvement plan.	
• Refine engagement and retention strategies to respond to changing staff needs. Focus on leadership succession planning and long-term retention strategies.					✓		Refined engagement initiatives	
• Evaluate and ensure sustainable engagement practices that align						✓	Refined engagement initiatives	

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year)					Success Indicators	Oversight Responsibility
		24	25	26	27	28		
with the university's mission of innovation and excellence.								

9.4. Key Success Factors:

9.4.1. Strong Leadership: The transformation of HR will require strong leadership and commitment from senior management to ensure alignment with the university's strategic goals.

9.4.2. Stakeholder Engagement: Regular consultation with staff, faculty, and other stakeholders will be critical to ensuring that HR reforms meet the needs of the broader university community.

9.4.3. Ongoing Evaluation: Continuous monitoring, evaluation, and adjustment of HR practices will ensure that the department remains responsive to the changing needs of the university and the evolving higher education landscape.

This comprehensive plan is designed to build an HR department that is efficient and responsive and an enabler of MUT's ambition to lead in innovation and entrepreneurial excellence in Africa.

10. INFRASTRUCTURE AND MAINTENANCE

10.1. Background

Under his Terms of Reference, the Administrator commissioned a full audit of the University's infrastructure. The recently received report indicates that arrear maintenance of R162 million needs to be addressed over the next five years. This amount does not include the usual annual planned maintenance but purely the arrear maintenance.

10.2. Statement of the Problem

Some of the maintenance shortfalls are severe, and failure to address them soon could result in entire buildings being condemned. MUT will not be able to cater to this level of expenditure from their existing budgets and will have to apply to the DHET to reallocate some infrastructure funding to cover this dire need.

The university also faces a perennial water supply problem, partly due to municipal supply issues and partly to sabotage. The students brought this problem to the attention of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee, and the university needs to be seen to be acting. Failing to resolve students' toilet and shower needs would breach the university's contract with the students.

10.3. Implementation Plan

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year)					Success Indicators
		22	23	24	25	26	
Lobby the DHET to re-direct non-mission-critical infrastructure funding to address the maintenance shortcomings identified in the Resources report	Vice-Chancellor			✓			
Implement the recommendations in the infrastructure report	Vice-Chancellor / DVC Resources and Planning				✓	✓	
Appoint a project manager to assist with plan development, procurement and implementation of maintenance plan	Vice=--Chancellor				✓		

10.4. Critical Success Factors

10.4.1. **Addressing Arrear Maintenance**: Securing re-allocating infrastructure funding from the DHET to cover the R162 million needed for arrear maintenance is crucial. This will prevent further deterioration and potential condemnation of buildings.

10.4.2. **Ensuring Water Supply Independence**: Implementing a system of boreholes supplying tanks with water, which is then purified, could make the university independent of municipal water supply. With a budget as low as R30 million, this system should become a priority to prevent academic disruptions caused by water shortages.

10.4.3. **Effective Budget Management**: Ensuring that there is a dedicated budget for both arrear and planned maintenance, as well as for the water supply system, will be essential. This may involve applying for re-allocation of existing infrastructure funds.

11. DIGITAL STRATEGY

11.1. Background

The Mangosuthu University of Technology lacks a comprehensive digital strategy to leverage modern technology to enhance its educational offerings, administrative processes, and overall student experience. With only basic information and communication technology infrastructure, the university is falling behind in an increasingly digital academic landscape.

In addition, the rise of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) simultaneously presents significant threats and opportunities for MUT, as it does for all educational institutions. There are early indications that while students have become early adopters of GAI about learning, teaching and assessment, university policies and practices appear to lag behind, raising questions about assessments' authenticity, reliability and validity.

However, integrating GAI into the university's digital strategy represents a transformative opportunity to enhance educational experiences, streamline operations, and foster innovation across campus. By leveraging AI-powered tools, the university can create personalised learning pathways for students, automate administrative tasks, and augment research capabilities.

By thoughtfully incorporating generative AI, the university can position itself at the forefront of technological innovation in higher education, improving student outcomes, operational efficiency, and its competitive standing in the academic landscape.

The current digital deficiency impacts various aspects of university operations, including:

- Teaching and learning effectiveness
- Administrative efficiency
- Student engagement and satisfaction
- Research Capabilities
- Internal and external communication
- Competitive positioning among peer institutions

11.2. Statement of the problem

Developing a robust digital strategy is crucial for the university to modernise its approach, improve operational efficiency, and provide students with the technological skills needed in todays and tomorrow's workforce. Creating a feasible, scalable, and cost-effective plan that addresses these issues while working within the university's current technological capabilities and resource constraints.

11.3. Implementation Plan

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year)					Success Indicators	Oversight Responsibility
		24	25	26	27	28		
• Visioning • Define a clear vision for the digital transformation.	DVC R&P		✓				A vision for digital transformation	Vice-Chancellor
• Set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound and resourced (SMARTR) goals			✓				Digital transformation goals and objectives	
• Current State Analysis • Conduct a thorough assessment of the existing IT infrastructure, administrative processes, and teaching methods.			✓				Gap analysis	
• Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis).			✓				Swot analysis	

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year)					Success Indicators	Oversight Responsibility
		24	25	26	27	28		
• Stakeholder Engagement • Involve academics, students, administrative staff, and external experts to gather insights and expectations.			✓				Stakeholder engagement plan and implementation schedule	
• Develop a Digital Strategy Framework that aligns with the university's mission and goals: • Digital Learning Technologies: Identify and integrate technologies that enhance learning and teaching, such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), virtual labs, and online collaboration tools.			✓				Digital strategy framework.	
• Administrative Digitalisation: Streamline administrative processes through automation and digital tools (e.g., student information systems, digital records management).				✓			Digitalised and automated processes.	

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year)					Success Indicators	Oversight Responsibility
		24	25	26	27	28		
• Infrastructure Upgrade: Enhance IT infrastructure to support new technologies, ensuring robust internet connectivity and cybersecurity measures.				✓	✓	✓	Infrastructure upgrade plan and implantation framework.	
• Staff and Student Development • Assessment of digital needs			✓	✓	✓	✓	Staff and student development plan and implementation schedule	
• Develop a digital literacy programme			✓					
• Workshop hybrid/hyflex pedagogies, assessment strategies and student engagement			✓	✓	✓	✓		
• Expand the teaching and learning innovation to support staff and student				✓	✓	✓		
• Change Management • Develop a clear communication plan			✓				Change management plan and implementation plan.	

Action	Responsible Person /Office	Time Frame (Year)					Success Indicators	Oversight Responsibility
		24	25	26	27	28		
• Create change champions			✓					
• Provide regular updates on progress, successes and challenges			✓					
• Arrange change management workshops			✓	✓	✓	✓		
• Funding and Resources • Develop a detailed budget for each phase of digital transformation	DVC: R&P CFO		✓					Vice-Chancellor
• Seek partnerships with technology companies for in-kind donations and discounted services.			✓	✓	✓	✓		
• Investigate revenue generation through digital offerings				✓	✓	✓		
• Conduct cost-benefit analysis for technology investments.				✓	✓	✓		

11.4. Key Success Indicators

11.4.1. Managing and upgrading outdated legacy systems

11.4.2. Providing sufficient funding and investment in technology, infrastructure, change management and training

11.4.3. Addressing digital skills gaps.

11.4.4. Effective data management, accuracy, security and privacy.

11.4.5. Managing cultural barriers to innovation and digital adoption.

11.4.6. Sustainability and scalability to ensure whole university transformation.

CONCLUSION

The challenges facing Mangosuthu University of Technology represent a critical juncture in the institution's history, demanding decisive action and unwavering commitment to reform. The findings presented in this report highlight systemic issues across multiple domains – from governance and financial management to academic quality and organisational culture – that require immediate and sustained attention. However, these challenges also present an unprecedented opportunity for transformative change that could position MUT as a leading institution in South African higher education.

The appointment of an administrator and the development of this comprehensive five-year plan mark the beginning of a crucial transformation journey. The success of this transformation will depend on several key factors: the steadfast implementation of robust governance frameworks, the establishment of stringent financial controls, the enhancement of academic quality, and the cultivation of a more inclusive and transparent organisational culture. These elements must work in concert to create sustainable, long-term change.

The recognition that meaningful reform cannot occur in isolation is central to MUT's recovery. The active engagement and support of all stakeholders – from the Council and Executive Management to faculty, staff, students, and community partners – will be essential. Building trust through transparent communication and collaborative decision-making processes will be crucial in ensuring the successful implementation of the proposed reforms.

The financial recovery plan, enhanced governance structures, and improved academic quality measures provide a solid foundation for MUT's renaissance. However, the true measure of success will be the institution's ability to move beyond mere compliance to achieve genuine excellence in teaching, research, and community engagement. This requires structural changes and a fundamental shift in organisational culture and mindset.

Looking ahead, MUT has the potential to emerge from its current challenges as a stronger, more resilient institution. If implemented with diligence and commitment, the recommendations outlined in this report can serve as a catalyst for positive change. The focus must shift from planning to action, with clear accountability mechanisms and regular progress monitoring against defined objectives.

The path forward will undoubtedly present new challenges, but with strong leadership, stakeholder commitment, and a shared vision for the future, MUT can realise its aspirations of becoming a centre of excellence in technology education and innovation. The next five years will be critical in determining whether this potential can be fully realised, implementing this development plan not just as an opportunity but as an imperative for the institution's future success and sustainability.