



**MICTSETA** |

Media, Information And  
Communication Technologies  
Sector Education And Training Authority

SHAPING SKILLS, PIONEERING INDUSTRIES, EMPOWERING FUTURES



**VAAL UNIVERSITY  
OF TECHNOLOGY**

*Inspiring thought. Shaping talent.*

## PRESS RELEASE

Attention: Editors, Journalists, Producers and Bloggers

### **MICT SETA AND VAAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY UNITE TO STRENGTHEN SOUTH AFRICA'S 4IR RESEARCH CAPACITY**

**23 October 2024 | Vanderbijlpark, South Africa** | The Media Information Communication and Technologies Sector Education Training Authority (MICT SETA) and the Vaal University of Technology (VUT) are set to host the inaugural 4IR Research Symposium and Expo, marking a pivotal moment for South Africa's Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) research landscape. Scheduled for 25-26 October 2024 at VUT's Vanderbijlpark Campus, the symposium will also see the official launch of the MICT SETA-VUT 4IR Research Chair.

The two-day event, convened under the theme "**Impact of Generative Artificial Intelligence on Future Skills**," aims to significantly contribute to South Africa's 4IR scientific research and innovation capacity. It will bring together leading scholars, industry professionals, and government representatives to explore the implications of emerging technologies, with a focus on skills development in the generative artificial intelligence (AI) space.

Mr Matome Madibana, Chief Executive Officer at the MICT SETA, underscores the importance of the event: "This symposium represents a concrete initiative by the MICT SETA to substantively contribute to South Africa's efforts of positioning itself as a key 4IR player in the global arena. It ensures that the country's curricula, innovation and skills development programmes reflect the demands of the current 4IR era".

The symposium is designed to bridge the gap between academic research and real-world applications of 4IR technologies, particularly in the context of generative AI. Students from the various MICT SETA 4IR Research Chairs, alongside renowned experts in digital innovation, will present their research and participate in dynamic panel discussions. Industry showcases of cutting-edge digital innovations will offer attendees a glimpse into the future of 4IR technologies.

VUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Stephen Khehla Ndlovu, shared his excitement about the partnership and further expressed his gratitude to MICT SETA for showing confidence in VUT as a potential partner to co-host the much anticipated and first of its kind 4IR Research Symposium and Expo. On the launch of the MICT SETA-VUT 4IR Research Chair, Prof Ndlovu remarked: "This is an important milestone, not only

for our university but for the entire research ecosystem in South Africa. By collaborating with the MICT SETA, we are strengthening our capacity to produce the high-level skills and innovative solutions that our country needs to thrive in the Fourth Industrial Revolution." He also added that VUT had ample research and innovation expertise to support MICT SETA's endeavours of contributing to the country's edifice of 4IR scientific research and innovation. The MICT SETA's broader 4IR Research Chair initiative, which has been rolled out across multiple public and private universities in South Africa provides funding for Masters and PHD students who are conducting research on various 4IR technologies. This year's symposium will serve as a platform for these emerging scholars to share their findings, exchange ideas with industry leaders, and contribute to shaping the future of South Africa's 4IR trajectory.

In addition to academic presentations, the symposium will feature a keynote address on generative AI and its potential to transform the skills landscape. The address will touch on the evolving needs of the workforce, how institutions can adapt their curricula, and the role that government, academia, and industry must play in preparing the next generation of professionals.

The official launch of the MICT SETA- VUT 4IR Research Chair will take place on the second day of the symposium, further cementing the partnership's commitment to fostering innovation in 4IR technologies.

"This partnership is about more than just research," says Madibana. "It's about building a pipeline of talent and creating the necessary infrastructure to drive long-term technological advancement in South Africa."

The discussions, presentations, and insights generated during the symposium will form the basis of a comprehensive conference report, which will be published in the months following the event. This report will serve as a valuable resource for policymakers, educators, and industry stakeholders offering recommendations for advancing Generative AI and other 4IR technologies in South Africa's skills development ecosystem.

Members of the media are hereby invited to attend and cover this milestone event.

#### **NOTE TO EDITOR:**

About MICT SETA:

The Media, Information and Communication Technologies Sector Education and Training Authority (MICT SETA) is a public entity established in terms of the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998). Its main role is to enrich industry skills set to meet the demands of rapidly changing economies, new technologies and to promote inclusive economic growth in South Africa within the Advertising, Film and Electronic Media, Electronics, Information Technology, and Telecommunications sub-sectors. For more, go to: [www.mict.org.za](http://www.mict.org.za).

About VUT:

The year 2024 marks exactly 20 years of the Vaal University of Technology. The university was first established as a college for advanced technical education in 1966 and then transitioned into a Technikon in 1979. With the restructuring of the higher education landscape, the institution became a University of Technology in 2004 and has seen significant growth in its activities and reach since that time. The university currently boasts close to 20 000 active students.

Throughout the years, VUT has and continues to offer an expansive catalogue of industry tailored undergraduate and postgraduate programmes which span the fields of Applied and Computer Sciences, Engineering and Technology, Human Sciences and Management Sciences. This is testament to the institution's dedication to education, innovation, and excellence in the field of technology. For more, go to: [www.vut.ac.za](http://www.vut.ac.za)

**MEDIA ENQUIRIES AND RSVPs:**

**For MICT SETA**

Xabiso Matshikiza  
Manager: Marketing and Communications  
011 207 2626  
[Xabiso.matshikiza@mict.org.za](mailto:Xabiso.matshikiza@mict.org.za)

**For VUT:**

Dumile Mlambo  
Head of Department: Corporate Communication  
Tel: +27 16 950 9113 / Cell: +27 78 313 5798  
Email: [dumilem@vut.ac.za](mailto:dumilem@vut.ac.za)

Ends.