



DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
INYUVESI YASETHEKWINI YEZOBUCHWEPHESHE

2026 QUARTER 1 ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Prepared by
Ms Phumzile Xulu
Engagement Practitioner

Submitted by
Professor Fulufhelo Nemavhola
Deputy Vice-Chancellor:
Research Innovation and Engagement

ENVISION2030

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This report presents a consolidated overview of engagement activities undertaken by the Durban University of Technology (DUT) during the first quarter of 2026, aligned with ENVISION2030 and institutional priorities. The report is framed through the Quad-Helix Partnerships model, reflecting the university's integrated approach to collaboration across academia, industry, government, and communities in advancing research, innovation, knowledge exchange, and societal impact.

During the reporting period, DUT demonstrated strong institutional performance across its core focus areas. The university recorded over 900 research output units, reflecting sustained research productivity across faculties. This was complemented by significant progress in research development initiatives, including the successful submission of NRF applications and the strengthening of a cohort of NRF-rated researchers. Flagship engagements such as the CSIR/DSI Strategic Industrial Bioinnovation Partnership (SIIP) Bioremediation initiative, implemented through the Institute for Water and Wastewater Technology (IWWT), demonstrate the university's ability to translate research into industry-relevant and environmentally impactful solutions.

A significant institutional milestone during the reporting period is the awarding of eight South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI) Chairs to DUT by the National Research Foundation (NRF), under the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) Decadal Plan. This positions DUT among the

nationally recognized institutions advancing research capacity, innovation, and skills development, particularly within Universities of Technology and historically disadvantaged institutions.

Financial sustainability and partnership strength are reflected in the generation of approximately R46.1 million in third-stream income, secured through collaborations with government, industry, and national funding agencies. This includes major contributions from innovation funding instruments, Work-Integrated Learning programmes, and research grants, reinforcing the university's ability to leverage external partnerships to support research, innovation, and student development.

Innovation and entrepreneurship continued to gain momentum through structured institutional platforms. The Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and Rapid Incubation (CSERI) attracted 238 applications for its 2026–2027 incubation programme and continues to support 38 active enterprises, contributing to job creation and enterprise growth. Key innovation outputs include the advancement



The newly appointed DUT Research Chairs with Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Engagement at DUT, Professor Fulufhelo Nemavhola, along with the Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Prof Blade Nzimande and NRF Board Member, Ms Funeka Khumalo





Delegates at the launch of the Data Lakehouse Initiative

“ DUT awarded 8 NRF SARCHI Chairs under DSTI Decadal Plan ”

of an algal-based wastewater remediation technology and the expansion of structured incubation pipelines supporting over 38 active enterprises. Complementing this, the Technology Transfer and Innovation (TTI) Directorate advanced intellectual property development, prototype support, and commercialization pathways, including the progression of patent applications and innovation pipelines supported through national funding instruments.

Student development remained a central focus, with strong participation in entrepreneurship and innovation platforms. Notable engagements include participation in initiatives such as the EDHE and Mr Price Foundation Waste Innovation Challenge, as well as institutional entrepreneurship competitions, which have strengthened innovation capability, enterprise development, and student leadership.

Community engagement initiatives continued to deliver meaningful social impact through targeted programmes addressing local needs. A key example is the flood preparedness project implemented in partnership with community stakeholders, which supported vulnerable communities through the development and distribution of multilingual safety materials and emergency preparedness resources. Additional initiatives in agricultural training, youth development, and educational outreach further strengthened the university's contribution to inclusive development and community resilience.

Internationalization efforts enhanced DUT's global footprint through strategic engagements and partnerships. Participation

in the Times Higher Education Africa Universities Summit 2026 provided a platform for thought leadership and institutional positioning, while initiatives such as DUT Meets the Diplomatic Corps and Collaborative Online International Learning programmes strengthened global partnerships, mobility opportunities, and knowledge exchange.

Across faculties and institutional units, the university demonstrated a strong culture of collaboration, innovation, and responsiveness. This is reflected in initiatives such as the Cybersecurity Laboratory and Data Lakehouse, industry-linked teaching and learning programmes, and interdisciplinary research collaborations that integrate teaching, research, and engagement.

Despite these achievements, the report highlights challenges related to capacity constraints, infrastructure limitations, funding gaps, and system implementation. However, these challenges present opportunities to strengthen institutional systems, expand partnerships, and enhance innovation and research capacity.

Looking ahead, DUT will focus on consolidating its achievements while accelerating strategic initiatives in research development, innovation, entrepreneurship, and global engagement. Through a coordinated and integrated approach, the university is well positioned to build on its current momentum and further strengthen its role as an engaged, innovative, and impact-driven institution aligned with national priorities and global development agendas.



1. INTRODUCTION



This report provides a consolidated overview of engagement activities undertaken by the Durban University of Technology (DUT) during the first quarter of 2026, reflecting the institution's continued commitment to advancing its strategic objectives under ENVISION2030. The reporting period was characterized by coordinated institutional efforts across research, innovation, teaching and learning, industry collaboration, community engagement, and internationalization, demonstrating a holistic and integrated approach to engagement.

DUT continues to position itself as an engaged University of Technology, leveraging its role as an anchor institution to strengthen partnerships across academia, industry, government, and communities. Through these Quad-Helix engagements (academia, industry, government, and communities), the university advances applied research, fosters innovation and entrepreneurship, enhances student development, and contributes to addressing socio-economic and environmental challenges at local, national, and global levels.

The report is structured around key focus areas that collectively illustrate the breadth and depth of institutional engagement. These include research engagement and output, national and international partnerships, industry collaboration, community and social engagement, and innovation and entrepreneurship. Across these areas, the university has demonstrated strong performance in securing research funding, expanding collaborative networks, advancing applied research projects, and strengthening capacity development initiatives for both staff and students. This is further evidenced by the awarding of eight NRF SARCHI Chairs to DUT under the DSTI Decadal Plan, reinforcing the university's growing national research leadership.

Significant progress is also reflected in the university's innovation ecosystem, with structured incubation programmes, technology transfer initiatives, and student entrepreneurship platforms supporting the development of market-relevant solutions and enterprise growth. These efforts are complemented by sustained community engagement programmes that respond to identified societal needs, promote inclusive development, and strengthen partnerships with local communities and organizations.

Internationalization remains a key strategic priority, with expanded global partnerships, staff and student mobility programmes, and participation in international research platforms enhancing DUT's global footprint and contributing to knowledge exchange and academic collaboration. These engagements position the university within global knowledge systems while ensuring that locally grounded solutions remain globally relevant.

The report further highlights the university's ability to secure and diversify third-stream income through strategic funding partnerships with government agencies, industry, and international organizations. These funding streams support research development, student



Prof. Ralph Berchtenbreiter, Munich University of Applied Sciences, Germany during a guest lecture hosted by the Department of Hospitality and Tourism

support, innovation, and institutional sustainability, reinforcing DUT's capacity to deliver on its strategic mandate.

Overall, the activities presented in this report demonstrate a coordinated and impact-driven approach to engagement, underpinned by strong institutional systems, strategic partnerships, and a commitment to excellence. The report provides insight into the university's contributions during the quarter while also laying the foundation for continued growth, strengthened collaboration, and enhanced impact in subsequent reporting periods.

“ The report is structured around key focus areas that collectively illustrate the breadth and depth of institutional engagement. ”



2. KEY FOCUS AREAS AND INITIATIVES



2.1 RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT

2.1.1 Highlights of Research Programmes, Grants, and Publications

During the first quarter of 2026, the Durban University of Technology (DUT) continued to strengthen its position as an engaged, research-intensive university through sustained growth in research funding, postgraduate development, scholarly outputs, and strategic research infrastructure. The university's research ecosystem reflects a deliberate integration of teaching, research, innovation, and community engagement, underpinned by ENVISION2030 priorities and a strong commitment to socially responsive and globally relevant knowledge production.

DUT demonstrated strong performance in securing competitive national research funding, particularly through the National Research Foundation (NRF). A total of 47 applications submitted in the previous cycle resulted in 16 successful awards across key funding instruments, including early-career and established researcher support programmes.

The university currently hosts a robust cohort of NRF-rated researchers, spanning internationally recognised scholars, established researchers, and emerging academics, reflecting both depth and sustainability in research capacity. This is strengthened by an active Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme, supporting over 80 active fellows and a growing pipeline of emerging researchers contributing to institutional outputs and innovation.

Further strengthening institutional research capacity, DUT has been awarded eight South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI) Chairs by the National Research Foundation (NRF), under the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) Decadal Plan for Universities of Technology and Historically Disadvantaged Institutions. These Chairs form part of a nationally selected cohort aimed at advancing high-impact research, innovation, and critical skills development, positioning DUT within a strengthened national research ecosystem.

Institutional research productivity remains strong, with a combined output exceeding 900 Research Output Units (ROUs) across journal articles, book chapters, conference proceedings, and books. The Faculty of Management Sciences and the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment continue to lead in volume of outputs, while all faculties demonstrate consistent contributions to the university's overall research performance.

A key institutional milestone during the quarter was the continued implementation of the Clarivate (Converis/Pure) research management system, representing a significant advancement in research governance, data integrity, and reporting efficiency. The system enhances institutional capability in managing research outputs, ethics processes, and researcher profiles, while improving visibility and alignment with national reporting requirements.

While implementation remains on track, capacity constraints within Information and Communications Technology (ICT) have





Vivian Chiamaka Nwokorogu, a Doctoral Researcher, won 1st Prize for Best Poster Presentation at the African Metabolomics Conference 2026

been identified as a potential risk, with mitigation measures being actively pursued to ensure full rollout and optimal functionality.

Across faculties and research units, a strong emphasis on applied, interdisciplinary, and community-engaged research is evident:

- The Faculty of Accounting and Informatics and Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment advanced applied research through industry-linked projects, laboratory-based innovation, and preparation for curriculum-integrated research initiatives.
- The Faculty of Health Sciences strengthened its research agenda through community-based participatory research, psychosocial health initiatives, and institutional research ecosystem development.
- The Faculty of Management Sciences contributed significantly through interdisciplinary research addressing governance, environmental sustainability, and disaster risk, with strong integration of teaching, research, and community engagement.
- The Faculty of Applied Sciences demonstrated steady growth in research outputs, postgraduate development, and international collaboration, with emerging strengths in public health, sport science, and statistical modelling.
- The Faculty of Arts and Design recorded strong research performance, including international exhibitions, creative research outputs, and increased doctoral enrolments, reflecting a maturing research culture within practice-based disciplines.

Specialised research units further contributed to institutional impact:

- The Institute for Water and Wastewater Technology (IWWT) produced high-impact publications in areas such as water purification, environmental monitoring, and biotechnology, with a strong presence in top-tier journals.

- The Technology Transfer and Innovation (TTI) supported research aligned to strategic national priorities, including energy, biomaterials, and food systems, while advancing intellectual property and commercialisation pathways.
- The Confucius Institute (CI) expanded research collaboration through agriculture-focused innovation and international partnerships, particularly in sustainable technologies with local application potential.

Postgraduate education continues to be a key driver of research productivity, with strong enrolment and supervision across faculties, particularly in science and technology disciplines. Growth in doctoral enrolments, increased thesis submissions, and structured postgraduate support initiatives signal a strengthening research pipeline aligned to future output and impact targets.

DUT enhanced its research visibility through participation in international conferences, collaborative research platforms, and strategic publications. Institutional processes supporting conference participation, abstract submissions, and global engagement have been strengthened, ensuring alignment with governance frameworks while positioning DUT within international research networks.

2.2 RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

2.2.1 National Collaborations

During the first quarter of 2026, DUT strengthened its national research partnerships through a diverse portfolio of collaborations spanning government, industry, higher education institutions, and professional bodies. These partnerships reflect the university's commitment to advancing applied, interdisciplinary, and socially responsive research aligned with national development priorities and the strategic objectives of ENVISION2030.

DUT's collaboration with national science and innovation entities remains a key driver of impactful research. A notable highlight is the advancement of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Department of Science and Innovation Strategic Industrial Bioinnovation Partnership Programme (SIIP) Bioremediation initiative, implemented through IWWT. This flagship collaboration positions DUT at the forefront of environmental sustainability research, contributing to bioremediation, resource recovery, and circular economy solutions. The strength of these partnerships is further reflected in national funding support, including National Research Foundation (NRF)-funded postdoctoral fellowships, specialized space science fellowships, and postgraduate bursaries awarded through CSIR and other national funding bodies.

At faculty and departmental level, national collaborations continue to drive research relevance, professional engagement, and knowledge exchange. Partnerships with institutions such as the University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of the Free State, Stellenbosch University, North-West University, University of Pretoria, and other higher education institutions have enabled joint research initiatives, co-supervision of postgraduate students, and shared access to specialized research infrastructure. These collaborations are complemented by strong linkages with professional bodies,

including the South African Institute of Government Auditors and the South African Institution of Civil Engineering, fostering engagement on critical issues such as public finance, infrastructure development, and governance.

Engagement with government departments and municipalities further reinforces DUT's role as an engaged university contributing to public sector innovation and service delivery. Collaborative initiatives with eThekweni Municipality, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Higher Education and Training, among others, have focused on areas such as climate change adaptation, agricultural innovation, waste management, and skills development. These partnerships enable the translation of research into practical interventions that address local and national socio-economic challenges.

The university also continues to strengthen industry collaboration as part of its national research ecosystem. Partnerships with organizations such as the Mr Price Group, Gemelli Clothing, and Serenity Healthcare, alongside engagements with Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), support applied research, curriculum innovation, and student experiential learning. The national launch of the Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE)–Mr Price Foundation Waste Innovation Challenge, hosted by Innobiz DUT in partnership with Universities South Africa, represents a significant milestone in advancing green entrepreneurship and circular economy innovation at a national level.

Research collaboration is further reflected in interdisciplinary and community-engaged initiatives addressing complex societal challenges. Projects within health sciences, public management, engineering, and applied sciences demonstrate strong alignment between research, teaching, and community engagement. These include participatory research on psychosocial wellbeing, climate change and heat impact studies linked to national and BRICS agendas, and applied research in precision agriculture, data science, and environmental sustainability.

DUT's national research partnerships also extend to internal institutional collaboration, strengthening integration across faculties

and support units. Strategic engagements between the Research and Postgraduate Support unit, faculties, and internationalization platforms have enhanced coordination of research activities, supported academic participation in national networks, and improved institutional alignment with national research and innovation systems.

Collectively, these national collaborations have contributed to enhanced research outputs, increased postgraduate opportunities, strengthened funding pipelines, and improved institutional visibility. More importantly, they reflect DUT's growing role as a key contributor to South Africa's knowledge economy, supporting evidence-based practice, policy development, and sustainable development outcomes.

2.2.2 International Collaborations

DUT's international research agenda continues to gain momentum through strategic partnerships with universities, industry, multilateral networks, and global organizations. These collaborations reflect a deliberate effort to position the institution as a globally relevant, locally responsive university, advancing knowledge production, innovation, and sustainable development in alignment with ENVISION2030.

DUT's participation in global higher education platforms continues to enhance its international visibility and thought leadership. Notably, the university contributed to the Times Higher Education Africa Universities Summit held in Nairobi, where institutional leadership participated in high-level discussions on the role of Universities of Technology in advancing the African Union Agenda 2063. This engagement reinforced DUT's positioning as a leader in applied research and innovation, emphasizing the importance of translating research into societal and economic impact within both African and global contexts.

Strategic partnerships with global knowledge and publishing institutions have further strengthened research capacity and scholarly output. Collaboration with Elsevier has enabled the co-development of a comprehensive research capacity development programme, equipping academics and postgraduate students with advanced skills in academic writing, peer review processes, and ethical publishing practices. These initiatives are complemented by international publication platforms, including special issue collaborations linked to global conferences, which continue to enhance the visibility of emerging scholars and institutional research outputs.

At faculty and departmental level, international collaborations are diverse and multidisciplinary, spanning research, teaching, postgraduate development, and innovation. Partnerships with institutions across Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Americas have supported joint research initiatives, co-publication, and academic exchange. These include collaborations with universities in countries such as the United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Malaysia, China, Brazil, Russia, Canada, the United States, India, and Türkiye, among others. These engagements have



Guests at the launch of the EDHE – Mr Price Foundation Waste Innovation Challenge





Guest Panelists Professor Maina Mwangi (Executive Dean of the School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at Kenyatta University) and Professor Colin Stanley (Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research, Innovation, and Partnerships at the Namibia University of Science and Technology); with DUT Representatives: Dr Lavern Samuels, Dr Nomcebo Mthombeni, Professor Eric Oscar Amonsou (Associate Professor of Food Technology) at the THE Africa Universities Summit 2026

enabled interdisciplinary research in areas such as climate change, urban resilience, digital technologies, biotechnology, sustainable agriculture, and education.

DUT's participation in global research consortia and networks continues to strengthen its contribution to addressing complex global challenges. Collaborative projects linked to BRICS, international water research networks, and climate adaptation studies have advanced knowledge production in areas such as environmental sustainability, water security, and ecosystem resilience. These initiatives demonstrate the university's capacity to engage in globally significant research while addressing context-specific challenges within the Global South.

International collaboration has also extended to global health and policy platforms, with academic staff contributing to international advisory structures and technical working groups. These engagements enhance DUT's influence in shaping evidence-based policy and practice, particularly within public health and development-focused research domains.

The university's internationalization strategy further supports student and staff mobility, curriculum innovation, and global learning experiences. Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) initiatives, benchmarking visits, and academic exchange programmes have strengthened teaching and learning, while providing students with exposure to global academic environments. Participation in international entrepreneurship programmes and innovation platforms has also enhanced student development, supporting the growth of globally competitive graduates.

Industry-linked international collaborations continue to create opportunities for applied research, skills development, and innovation. Partnerships with international institutions and organizations have supported research in emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, digital health, and sustainable materials, while also facilitating technology transfer, joint innovation initiatives, and commercialization pathways.

Collectively, these international collaborations have strengthened DUT's global research footprint, enhanced institutional visibility, and expanded opportunities for funding, knowledge exchange, and postgraduate development. More importantly, they reinforce the university's role as an engaged and globally connected institution, contributing to both local impact and international scholarship.

2.2.3 Research Impact

A defining feature of DUT's research ecosystem is its growing ability to translate scholarly activity into meaningful societal, economic, and institutional impact. During the reporting period, research initiatives increasingly demonstrated alignment with real-world challenges, reinforcing the university's commitment to engaged scholarship and the advancement of ENVISION2030 priorities.

Research impact is evident across multiple domains, including community empowerment, industry application, and policy-relevant knowledge production. Targeted initiatives such as the Juncao training programme have directly contributed to capacity development within local communities by equipping emerging farmers with sustainable agricultural skills. Similarly, industry-linked

programmes, including workplace-based language and integration initiatives, have enhanced productivity within multinational environments while contributing to research on cross-cultural workforce development and localization.

The university's research influence has also been strengthened through strategic participation in global platforms and networks, which have facilitated knowledge exchange, partnership development, and increased institutional visibility. Engagements at international summits and subsequent institutional collaborations have supported the advancement of joint research initiatives, funding opportunities, and innovative teaching and learning approaches, including digitally enabled international learning models.

At faculty and departmental level, research impact continues to be driven through applied, interdisciplinary, and community-engaged scholarship. Across disciplines, research is increasingly integrated into teaching and learning, enabling the development of contextually relevant, research-informed solutions. This is particularly evident in areas such as environmental sustainability, public health, governance, and industry innovation, where research outputs contribute to both academic knowledge and practical application.

The strengthening of research capacity remains a key enabler of impact. Institutional initiatives such as the Doctoral Mentoring Programme have enhanced academic capability in securing competitive funding and producing high-quality research outputs. In parallel, the Institutional Research Ethics Committee continues to play a critical role in enabling impactful research through an efficient and responsive ethics review process, ensuring that research is conducted with integrity while supporting timely implementation.

Emerging areas of research, particularly within applied sciences and technology-focused disciplines, demonstrate growing potential for

long-term impact. While some domains are still in developmental phases, ongoing postgraduate research, collaborative partnerships, and targeted capacity-building initiatives are expected to significantly enhance research outputs, citation impact, and industry relevance over time.

These efforts reflect a maturing research ecosystem in which outputs are increasingly translated into tangible outcomes, contributing to community development, industry advancement, and evidence-based practice. This trajectory positions DUT as a key contributor to knowledge production and innovation within both national and global contexts.

2.2.4 ENVISION2030 Alignment

DUT's research and engagement activities are deliberately structured to maintain a clear line of sight to the institutional priorities articulated in ENVISION2030. Across faculties, research units, and support divisions, engagements with industry, government, communities, and global partners are aligned to advancing innovation, sustainability, and societal impact, while strengthening the university's position as an engaged and entrepreneurial University of Technology.

This alignment is evident in the design and implementation of research partnerships and programmes that integrate teaching, learning, and community engagement. Collaborative initiatives with industry partners, government departments, and international institutions such as agricultural training programmes, workforce development initiatives, and applied research projects demonstrate how research is translated into practical solutions that address socio-economic and environmental challenges. These engagements contribute directly to capacity development, skills transfer, and the advancement of sustainable livelihoods, particularly within local communities.



Institutional portfolios further reinforce this alignment through structured and coordinated engagement approaches. The Research and Postgraduate Support function ensures that research development, ethics processes, and capacity-building initiatives are guided by evidence-based planning and institutional compliance frameworks, while embedding the university's Lived Values Framework. Similarly, internationalization and partnership platforms support stewardship through responsible governance of collaborations, strengthen systems and processes through standardized engagement frameworks, and expand sustainability through pipeline-based partnership development.

Innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives continue to play a central role in advancing ENVISION2030 priorities. Programmes driven through innovation platforms and industry-linked partnerships enable the development of entrepreneurial skills, support technology transfer, and facilitate the commercialization of research outputs. These initiatives contribute to positioning DUT as an innovation-driven institution while enhancing graduate attributes aligned with creativity, problem-solving, and global competitiveness.

At faculty level, research and engagement activities are increasingly aligned to key strategic themes, including sustainability, industry relevance, and global competitiveness. Applied research in areas such as sustainable agriculture, textile innovation, environmental management, and health sciences reflects a strong commitment to addressing real-world challenges while contributing to knowledge production. Postgraduate development and emerging research collaborations further support the strengthening of institutional research capacity and long-term impact.

Collectively, these aligned efforts demonstrate a coherent and integrated approach to research and engagement, ensuring that institutional activities are not only responsive to immediate needs but are also strategically positioned to contribute to long-term transformation, innovation, and societal advancement in line with ENVISION2030.



Winners of the MICT SETA National Skills Challenge Hackathon KZN Regionals 2026

2.3 RESEARCH EVENTS AND CONFERENCES HOSTED BY DUT

DUT continues to utilize research events and conferences as strategic platforms to advance knowledge exchange, strengthen partnerships, and enhance institutional visibility across national and international research ecosystems. These engagements are deliberately structured to connect academic scholarship with industry, government, and global partners, while strengthening research capacity and student development.

During the reporting period, the university hosted a series of targeted research development and academic engagement platforms. The Research and Postgraduate Support unit, in collaboration with Postgraduate Librarians, delivered structured workshops focused on academic writing, research tools, thesis development, and the ethical use of artificial intelligence in research. These engagements supported postgraduate students and academic staff in improving research quality, publication readiness, and responsible research practices. In addition, the Institutional Research Ethics Committee hosted its Annual Reviewers Awards Ceremony in February 2026, recognizing excellence in ethical review processes and reinforcing institutional research governance.

At faculty level, a range of academic and industry-linked engagements contributed to knowledge exchange and curriculum innovation. The Faculty of Arts and Design hosted ongoing scholarly platforms such as Talk Friday sessions and interdisciplinary colloquia, fostering creative research dialogue and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Across faculties, guest lectures and industry engagements including collaborations with private sector partners in marketing and retail provided students with direct exposure to industry expertise, strengthening the integration of theory and practice.

Several high-impact institutional and collaborative events further strengthened DUT's research and innovation ecosystem. International Tech DUT Day, hosted in February 2026, brought together global partners, including participants from international programmes such as TechWomen, alongside academic staff and students. The event facilitated laboratory visits, academic exchanges, and mentorship opportunities, enhancing internationalization-at-home and strengthening global research networks.

Specialized research units played a significant role in hosting technically focused engagements with international and national partners. The IWWT hosted an intensive laboratory training programme in January 2026 with the Technical University of Mombasa, focusing on wastewater treatment, algal biotechnology, and environmental monitoring. This was complemented by guest lectures delivered in February 2026 by international experts in wastewater modelling and economic sustainability, strengthening advanced research capability and international collaboration in water research.

The university also hosted sector-focused and collaborative research platforms that



Delegates at the SA IORAG National University Roadshow hosted at DUT

strengthened national and international partnerships. The NRF–IORAG Roadshow, hosted at DUT, brought together researchers in ocean and water studies from across KwaZulu-Natal institutions to promote collaboration in marine and maritime research. In addition, national dialogue platforms in food and nutrition research engaged partners such as the University of the Witwatersrand and SECTION27, contributing to policy-relevant discussions on improving school food environments.

Looking ahead, DUT is set to host several flagship conferences and international engagements that will further strengthen its research profile and partnerships. These include the 2nd Biennial Interdisciplinary Conference on Business and Information Management (BICONBIM), scheduled for October 2026 at Sun City, bringing together academics, students, and industry partners in business, ICT, and accounting. The Faculty of Accounting and Informatics will also host the International DataScientia Workshop in July 2026 in partnership with the University of Trento, as well as contribute to the 10th International ICTAS IEEE Conference planned for October 2026. In the built environment, DUT will co-host the 4th Construction Business and Project Management Conference in June 2026 in collaboration with the University of Cape Town, Tshwane University of Technology, the University of Greenwich, and the Federal University of Technology Akure, strengthening international research collaboration in construction and infrastructure development.

These engagements demonstrate a structured and forward-looking programme of research events that not only facilitate knowledge dissemination but also actively build partnerships, strengthen research capacity, and position DUT within key national and global research networks.

2.4 INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

2.4.1 Collaborations with Industry Leaders and Organizations

DUT continues to strengthen its position as an engaged and entrepreneurial University of Technology through sustained collaboration with industry leaders across sectors including

manufacturing, retail, healthcare, technology, agriculture, and infrastructure. These partnerships are deliberately structured to integrate teaching, research, and innovation, ensuring that academic programmes remain responsive to industry needs while contributing to skills development, applied research, and socio-economic impact.

During the reporting period, the university expanded its portfolio of strategic industry partnerships, engaging with organizations such as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, SAPPI, Mondi, Illovo Sugar, uMngeni Water, Toyota Boshoku, Tiger Brands, IBM SkillsBuild, SYSPRO, ASSA ABLOY, and the Mr Price Group, among others. These engagements span collaborative research projects, industry-based student placements, guest lectures, and joint innovation initiatives, contributing to the co-development of solutions in areas such as sustainable resource management, manufacturing optimization, digital transformation, and environmental sustainability.

A key highlight is the partnership with Samsung, through which the DUT Business School secured a multi-year funded programme to deliver training in coding, programming, and artificial intelligence. The Samsung Innovation Campus initiative supports unemployed youth and graduates, enhancing digital skills, improving employability, and strengthening DUT's contribution to workforce development within the technology sector. This engagement reflects a strong alignment between industry needs and institutional priorities in innovation, entrepreneurship, and inclusive skills development.

Faculty-level collaborations further demonstrate the depth and diversity of industry engagement. Within engineering disciplines, partnerships with organizations such as Toyota Boshoku, SAFAL Steel, and SYSPRO support postgraduate research, access to specialized technologies, and real-world problem-solving in areas including packaging optimization, logistics systems, and digital enterprise solutions. The provision of industry-grade software licenses and exposure to operational environments significantly enhances student learning and practical competence.

In the chemical and process engineering domains, collaborations with industry partners including Feltex, Talbot, and Hygienic Tissue Mills support staff development, student training, and industry-based research projects, while site visits and experiential learning





The signing of the MoU between Department of Chiropractic and the KwaZulu-Natal Athletics

opportunities provide direct exposure to industrial processes. Similarly, in applied sciences, partnerships with organizations such as Resource Link Coatings and M&S Colorchem support research into sustainable materials and environmentally responsible production processes.

The health and applied professional disciplines have also strengthened their industry linkages. Collaborations with the Gauteng Department of Health, the National Health Laboratory Service, and Dermalogica provide structured opportunities for student placements, internships, and professional development, enhancing clinical training and sector readiness. Engagements with KwaZulu-Natal Athletics further demonstrate the integration of academic expertise with community and professional practice.

Within business and management disciplines, partnerships with organizations such as the Chartered Institute for Business Accountants, the Foschini Group, and Mastafaa Extraits support career development, industry exposure, and student employability through training sessions, recruitment initiatives, and participation in national innovation challenges. These engagements are complemented by collaborations with Sector Education and Training Authorities, which contribute to funding opportunities and support Work-Integrated Learning programmes.

Innovation and entrepreneurship-focused collaborations continue to expand through engagement with national stakeholders and industry partners. Initiatives led through the Technology Transfer and Innovation environment include partnerships with organizations such as SAPS, SAPPI, and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health, focusing on areas such as agro-processing, biomass valorization, and sector-based innovation. These engagements contribute to the development of commercially viable research outputs and support the university's transition towards an innovation-driven institutional model.

Across all faculties, industry collaboration is further reinforced

through advisory boards, internship placements, and curriculum-aligned partnerships, ensuring that academic programmes remain relevant to labour market demands. These structures play a critical role in aligning graduate attributes with industry expectations while strengthening long-term institutional partnerships.

Taken together, these collaborations reflect a comprehensive and integrated approach to industry engagement, in which partnerships are leveraged to advance research, enhance teaching and learning, and contribute to innovation and economic development. This positions DUT as a key partner within industry ecosystems, capable of co-creating knowledge, developing talent, and addressing complex societal and industrial challenges.

2.4.2 Industry-Specific Projects and Research

DUT's industry collaboration is further strengthened through the implementation of targeted, industry-specific projects that integrate research, teaching, and innovation to address real-world challenges. These initiatives are developed in partnership with industry, government, and community stakeholders, enabling the co-creation of solutions while enhancing student learning, research output, and sector relevance.

During the reporting period, the university hosted the MICT SETA Regional Hackathon in March 2026 in partnership with the Media, Information and Communication Technologies Sector Education and Training Authority and the Moses Kotane Research Institute. The hackathon brought together participants from across KwaZulu-Natal to develop innovative digital solutions addressing practical challenges in areas such as financial inclusion, tourism safety, and student entrepreneurship. DUT students from the Faculty of Accounting and Informatics achieved top recognition, securing all leading positions with solutions focused on smart financial systems, intelligent navigation, and secure digital marketplaces, demonstrating strong technical capability and innovation potential.

In the engineering and built environment disciplines, several applied research projects were implemented in collaboration with industry and government partners. The Intelligent Smart Grid Design with Renewable Energy Integration project, developed within Electrical Power Engineering, focuses on advancing energy systems through renewable integration and will be embedded into teaching and learning from April 2026. In Architecture, community-centred projects such as the Re-Imagining Umbilo Police Station and Umbilo Park initiatives were undertaken in collaboration with local stakeholders, focusing on safety, sustainability, and inclusive urban design. These projects engaged students directly in applied research, incorporating site-based analysis, environmental assessment, and design thinking methodologies to develop contextually relevant solutions.

Industry-linked capstone and project-based learning initiatives continue to play a central role in strengthening applied research. Collaborative projects with Tiger Brands within Mechanical and Industrial Engineering addressed real-world production and operational challenges, while partnerships in chemical and process engineering supported industry-based projects, site visits, and applied research exposure. These engagements ensure that academic programmes remain aligned with industry needs while contributing to problem-solving and innovation within the manufacturing and processing sectors.

The TTI continues to advance high-impact, sustainability-focused research projects in partnership with industry and government stakeholders. Key initiatives include bio-brick development in collaboration with Illovo Sugar, plastic pyrolysis projects with eThekweni Municipality, biodigestion initiatives with SAPPI and Mondi, and agro-processing research involving madumbe starch production with Tyrotek Pty Ltd. These projects demonstrate strong alignment with circular economy principles, resource efficiency, and sustainable industrial development.

Within applied sciences and health-related disciplines, industry-integrated projects are contributing to both research and skills

development. Food and Nutrition has partnered with Mayo Macs to deliver industry-based product development projects, enabling students to design and present food innovations to industry panels, with pathways to internship opportunities. Similarly, Sports Studies has implemented a project-based learning initiative in partnership with SAIL South Africa, engaging students in the design and implementation of community-based recreational programmes that promote water safety, physical activity, and inclusive participation, while strengthening research and evaluation capacity.

The university has also advanced sector-focused research and policy engagement through collaboration with government and research bodies. Contributions to spatial planning research with the South African Cities Network and involvement in the review of the KwaZulu-Natal Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Bill demonstrate the integration of academic expertise into policy development and governance processes. In agriculture, collaboration with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture supported the delivery of mushroom production training, enabling skills transfer and the development of sustainable agricultural enterprises.

In addition, data science and digital skills initiatives have been strengthened through externally funded programmes. A National Research Foundation-supported project is enabling the delivery of Data Science and Artificial Intelligence training to undergraduate students, while partnerships with professional bodies have expanded training opportunities for external participants, contributing to broader skills development within the digital economy.

Through these initiatives, DUT continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to applied, industry-relevant research that addresses practical challenges while strengthening student capability and institutional innovation. This approach reinforces the university's role as a key partner in driving sector development, supporting evidence-based solutions, and contributing to sustainable economic growth.



Attendees at the TTI TVET Workshop on The Green Hydrogen Production held at Thekwini TVET College, Melbourne Campus



2.4.3 Knowledge Transfer and Technology Commercialization Efforts

DUT continues to strengthen its knowledge transfer and technology commercialization agenda through structured engagement with industry partners, applied research initiatives, and innovation-driven programmes that translate academic outputs into practical solutions with market and societal relevance. These efforts reflect the university's commitment to advancing innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development in alignment with ENVISION2030.

During the reporting period, multiple initiatives demonstrated the effective transfer of knowledge from academia to industry and community contexts. The Confucius Institute, in partnership with agricultural stakeholders, advanced the Chinese+Agriculture Training and Entrepreneurship Project through the introduction of Juncao technology. This low-cost, sustainable mushroom production system supports smallholder farmers and promotes agripreneurship, with strong potential for commercialization in both local and export markets.

Within the Technology Transfer and Innovation, a growing pipeline of innovation is evident, with over 20 research projects currently progressing toward commercialization. These projects are supported through internal funding mechanisms designed to enable the transition from research to market-ready solutions, while previously incubated outputs continue to advance through pre-commercialization phases. This structured pipeline reflects a maturing innovation ecosystem within the university.

Faculty-led initiatives further illustrate the application of research to real-world challenges and product development. In Chemical Engineering, a solid waste management project has progressed to prototype development, with implementation planned within campus infrastructure, demonstrating the translation of student-led research into practical sustainability solutions. In addition, the development of an artificial intelligence-based e-tutoring system reflects innovation in educational technology, enhancing student learning while demonstrating the application of digital solutions within higher education.

In applied sciences, several research-driven product development initiatives are advancing towards potential commercialization. Within Chemistry, projects include the development of sustainable sanitary products derived from banana fibre materials, as well as agricultural pest repellent technologies supported through national innovation funding. In Horticulture, collaboration with Andermatt Madumbi (Pty) Ltd focuses on the development and testing of biostimulant products to enhance crop resilience under drought conditions, contributing to food security and sustainable agricultural practices.

Knowledge transfer is also embedded within teaching and learning through industry-linked projects, workshops, and collaborative platforms. A notable example includes the Lean Canvas and Design Thinking workshop hosted in March 2026 in collaboration with Mancosa, which introduced academics and postgraduate students to structured approaches for problem-solving, innovation, and entrepreneurship. These engagements support the integration

of experiential and problem-based learning methodologies into curricula, strengthening the development of industry-relevant skills.

Across faculties, knowledge transfer is further supported through industry partnerships that enable co-supervision, student projects, and applied research. In Textile Science and Apparel Technology, ongoing collaborations with industry partners support research into sustainable processing techniques and natural dye innovations, with potential pathways toward commercial application. Similarly, engagement with professional bodies and international partners across disciplines contributes to the exchange of knowledge, strengthening academic programmes and enhancing student competencies.

Work-Integrated Learning and cooperative education initiatives continue to play a central role in facilitating knowledge transfer between the university and industry. Through structured placements, internships, and project-based engagements, students are exposed to real-world environments where theoretical knowledge is applied in practice. These partnerships ensure that graduates are equipped with the skills, adaptability, and experience required to contribute effectively within professional contexts.

The cumulative effect of these efforts is the development of a robust ecosystem in which research, innovation, and industry engagement are closely integrated. This positions DUT to not only generate knowledge but to actively translate it into technologies, products, and practices that contribute to economic development, industry advancement, and societal benefit.

2.5 COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

2.5.1 Community Outreach and Development Programmes

DUT's community outreach and development programmes continue to reflect a strong commitment to socially responsive engagement, with initiatives designed to address local needs, empower communities, and contribute to sustainable development. These engagements are implemented through collaborative partnerships with community organizations, schools, government stakeholders, and international agencies, ensuring that research, teaching, and innovation are translated into meaningful societal impact.

During the reporting period, student-led and institutionally supported initiatives demonstrated significant impact in advancing community development and social transformation. Notably, a Master's student from the Faculty of Accounting and Informatics was recognised through the 100 South African Shining Stars Award for leadership and community impact through the Men Carve Organisation. This initiative focuses on mentorship, youth development, and social transformation, reflecting the role of student-led engagement in driving sustainable community change.

Educational outreach programmes further strengthened community engagement through partnerships with local schools and international stakeholders. The Confucius Institute, in collaboration with the DUT Community Engagement Office,



TTI Eskom EXPO Young Innovators visiting the DUT Labs

implemented Mandarin language courses at a rural agricultural school, expanding access to global language competencies and intercultural communication skills. This initiative will be complemented by the facilitation of HSK Examination Services, supporting over 30 learners in obtaining internationally recognised language certification and enhancing opportunities for further study and career mobility.

Community-based innovation and youth development were also advanced through the Technology Transfer and Innovation portfolio. Engagement with the Eskom Expo for Young Scientists provided a platform for learner innovation, with DUT supporting the incubation of high-potential projects and facilitating intellectual property protection. This initiative strengthens pathways for young innovators to develop, protect, and potentially commercialize their ideas, contributing to long-term socio-economic impact.

A flagship example of community-engaged research is the Springfield Civic and Ratepayers Association Flood Preparedness Project, implemented in partnership with the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality and local communities. This multi-phase initiative, led collaboratively by academic departments and the Co-operative Education Unit, focuses on disaster preparedness within flood-prone areas. Recent phases have included the development and distribution of multilingual flood safety booklets and emergency preparedness kits, with targeted support for vulnerable groups such as the elderly and persons with special needs. The project demonstrates a sustained, partnership-based approach to community resilience, integrating technical expertise, community knowledge, and student involvement.

Faculty-led social responsibility initiatives further illustrate the integration of innovation and community impact. The Textile Science and Apparel Technology department's sensory weighted blanket project focuses on the development of assistive products for neurodivergent children using recycled textile materials. This initiative combines sustainability with inclusive design, addressing specific community needs while providing students with opportunities to engage in socially responsive innovation.

In addition, global partnerships are contributing to community-focused educational development and well-being. Collaboration with UNESCO MGIEP has introduced the SEEK (Social Emotional Education: Knowledge to Practice) programme, supporting student and staff well-being through structured engagement with social and emotional learning. Initial sessions have demonstrated positive engagement and highlight the potential for integrating well-being frameworks into teaching and learning environments.

These programmes illustrate a coherent and sustained approach to community engagement, where partnerships are leveraged to address societal challenges, strengthen local capacity, and create opportunities for inclusive development. Through these initiatives, DUT continues to advance its role as an engaged institution, contributing to community resilience, social innovation, and human development.

2.5.2 Partnerships with Local Communities and Organizations

DUT continues to strengthen its community engagement footprint



through sustained partnerships with local organizations, schools, government entities, and community-based structures. These collaborations are designed to advance inclusive development, enhance student learning through real-world exposure, and contribute to addressing socio-economic challenges within surrounding communities.

During the reporting period, the university expanded its engagement with local schools and youth development initiatives. The Faculty of Accounting and Informatics actively partnered with secondary schools through career guidance programmes, academic showcases, and skills development initiatives, supporting learner readiness for higher education. This was complemented by collaboration with organizations such as Man Carve, which addresses food insecurity through the distribution of food parcels to students, staff, and community members, and the Technovation Girls Mentorship Programme, delivered in partnership with Mbasane Women in IT and Sastri School, which empowers young women to develop technology-driven solutions aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Academic departments have also deepened partnerships that integrate teaching, research, and community engagement. The Department of Town and Regional Planning has collaborated with the Nazareth Conservancy in Marianhill, incorporating the site into undergraduate modules as a live case study for research and planning design, with site visits and stakeholder engagement strengthening experiential learning. Similarly, the Department of Radiography has partnered with organizations such as St Thomas Home for Children, CANSA, and ICON Oncology to support community-based health education, awareness campaigns, and structured student engagement in public health initiatives.

Professional and skills-based programmes continue to benefit from strong community and industry-linked partnerships. In Somatology, collaboration with Environ supports clinical training through on-site industry engagement, while partnerships linked to internship and placement programmes enhance student employability and workplace readiness. These engagements ensure alignment between academic training and community and industry needs.

The Confucius Institute continues to expand its community partnerships through collaboration with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture, local schools, and community-based venues such as Musgrave Farmers Market and Ocean Mall. These engagements support agricultural training, cultural exchange, and language development, while strengthening intercultural understanding and community participation.

Innovation and entrepreneurship platforms further contribute to community partnership development. CSERI participated in national initiatives such as the Waste Innovation Challenge, promoting circular economy solutions and supporting student and community innovation. These engagements are complemented by broader entrepreneurship and innovation platforms that bring together academic, policy, and community stakeholders to explore pathways for economic development and social impact.

The TTI has also strengthened engagement with agricultural and rural communities, including partnerships with sugarcane producers, Indigenous Knowledge Systems practitioners, and emerging farming groups. These collaborations focus on developing practical, scalable solutions in agro-processing, sustainable farming, and resource utilisation, with the potential to support livelihoods and local economic development.



Department of Video Technology hosting High School learners for Experiential Learning

Digital inclusion and skills development remain a key focus of community engagement. Through partnership with the National Electronic Media Institute of South Africa, the university delivered mobile digital literacy training to over 600 participants, including students and Early Childhood Development practitioners, while additional programmes in digital entrepreneurship have strengthened skills development and income-generating potential within communities.

Community-engaged research and innovation are further demonstrated through partnerships that respond directly to specific social needs. The Textile Science and Apparel Technology department, in collaboration with Beyond Limits, is implementing projects focused on developing assistive products for neurodivergent individuals. This partnership ensures that research outputs are informed by community needs while enhancing student learning through socially responsive design and innovation.

These partnerships demonstrate a sustained and integrated approach to community engagement, where the university works collaboratively with local stakeholders to co-create solutions, build capacity, and support inclusive development. Through these engagements, DUT continues to strengthen its role as an anchor institution within its communities, contributing to social cohesion, economic participation, and long-term development outcomes.

2.6 INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

2.6.1 Collaborative Agreements with International Universities and Institutions

DUT continues to strengthen its global engagement through formalised partnerships with international universities, multilateral networks, and strategic academic platforms. These collaborations are anchored in Memoranda of Understanding, structured mobility programmes, and joint research initiatives that enhance teaching, learning, and research while positioning the university within global knowledge systems.

During the reporting period, the Faculty of Accounting and Informatics expanded its international footprint through formal agreements with partner institutions in West Africa, Indonesia, the United States of America, and China. These partnerships support collaborative teaching, joint research, and academic development, contributing to the globalization of curricula and strengthening institutional capacity.

At departmental level, structured academic collaboration has been advanced through initiatives such as the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project established between the Department of Industrial Engineering and Hochschule München University of Applied Sciences in Germany. Commencing in March 2026, this initiative enables joint teaching delivery, cross-cultural learning, and shared academic engagement between institutions, enhancing student exposure to international perspectives.

In the public management and governance disciplines, international partnerships continue to support academic exchange, research

collaboration, and curriculum development. Engagement with the University of Public Service in Hungary has facilitated joint research initiatives and staff mobility, while broader academic exchanges across Malaysia, Brazil, Russia, and Zimbabwe have contributed to knowledge exchange and comparative insights into governance systems.

The Confucius Institute has further strengthened institutional partnerships through strategic engagements with universities in China, including ongoing collaboration with Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University and emerging partnership discussions with Tiangong University. These engagements support student and staff exchange, joint research in textiles and agriculture, and the advancement of specialized training programmes such as Juncao technology. In addition, participation in the “DUT Meets the Diplomats” engagement created opportunities to strengthen relationships with consular representatives from multiple countries, supporting the expansion of DUT’s international partnership network.

Student and staff mobility programmes continue to play a central role in advancing internationalization. During Quarter 1, DUT hosted 22 incoming exchange students, including participants from Fulda University of Applied Sciences, supported through structured orientation, academic integration, and administrative support. Outbound mobility was facilitated through DAAD-funded exchange opportunities, enabling DUT students to participate in semester programmes in Germany, while Erasmus+ KA171 inter-institutional agreements have been submitted to support future staff and student exchanges with multiple partner universities.

At research level, specialized units continue to drive high-impact international collaboration through participation in global networks and research consortia. The IWWT maintains partnerships through platforms such as the BRICS Network University, the Global Water Microbiome Consortium, the Water Joint Programming Initiative, and the South Africa–Sweden University Forum, alongside



Sydney Khanyile a Master's student in Chemical Engineering is conducting research at the University of Valladolid in Spain through the Erasmus+ Programme





DUT attendees at the Global Entrepreneurship Camp hosted by Suranaree University of Technology, Thailand

collaborations with institutions such as Sultan Qaboos University in Oman. These partnerships support joint research, knowledge exchange, and access to international funding opportunities in water and environmental sustainability.

Discipline-specific partnerships further strengthen DUT's global academic engagement. The Department of Textile Science and Apparel Technology maintains collaboration with HAW Hamburg University of Applied Sciences and is expanding partnerships within Africa, including engagement with institutions in Ghana to support joint research and academic exchange. In the maritime sector, DUT is participating in the ERASMUS+ AfEMarET project, coordinated by the World Maritime University, which brings together African and European institutions to advance maritime education and training. This initiative focuses on curriculum development, digital and green transitions, and long-term capacity building aligned with the evolving needs of the Blue Economy.

Through these formalised partnerships, DUT continues to expand its global network, enhance mobility opportunities, and strengthen its contribution to international research and academic collaboration. This positions the university as an active participant in global higher education, capable of leveraging partnerships to advance knowledge, innovation, and institutional development.

2.6.2 Student and Faculty Exchange Programmes

Student and staff mobility remain a key mechanism through which DUT advances internationalization, strengthens academic collaboration, and enhances global learning experiences. These exchange programmes provide opportunities for students and academics to engage with international institutions, access diverse learning environments, and contribute to cross-cultural knowledge exchange.

During the reporting period, student mobility initiatives continued to expand, enabling learners to access international academic and entrepreneurial platforms. A notable example includes a

Master's student from the Department of Industrial Engineering participating in a three-month exchange programme at DBBW Ravensburg in Germany, gaining exposure to international academic practice and applied learning environments. Similarly, participation in global entrepreneurship platforms was advanced through the Global Entrepreneurship Camp hosted by Suranaree University of Technology in Thailand, where DUT student entrepreneurs engaged in intensive training, collaborative learning, and business development activities. These experiences strengthened entrepreneurial capability, innovation thinking, and cross-cultural collaboration, with participants returning with refined business concepts and enhanced enterprise readiness.

Student mobility is further supported through structured academic pathways and international education initiatives. Programmes facilitated through the Confucius Institute, including the Chinese Bridge (汉语桥) Competition and HSK-linked opportunities, continue to create pathways for learners to access scholarships and study opportunities in China. These initiatives expand access to global education while strengthening intercultural competencies and academic progression.

Staff mobility and academic exchange also continue to play a critical role in strengthening institutional partnerships and research collaboration. During the reporting period, an academic from the Department of Construction Management and Quantity Surveying undertook a visiting scholar engagement at Takoradi Technical University in Ghana, delivering lectures and engaging in strategic discussions to advance research collaboration and institutional partnership development. These engagements contribute to knowledge exchange, curriculum development, and the strengthening of long-term academic networks.

In addition to formal exchange programmes, collaborative arrangements across institutions continue to support student mobility through co-supervision, shared research facilities, and access to specialized infrastructure. Students within scientific disciplines have benefited from research opportunities at partner

institutions such as the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, enabling continuity of research and enhanced productivity through shared expertise and resources.

Emerging and developing exchange opportunities are also contributing to institutional growth. Efforts to formalize exchange agreements, including partnerships with national institutions such as the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, are expected to further strengthen structured student and staff mobility, professional development, and collaborative learning opportunities.

At an individual level, student exchange experiences continue to demonstrate tangible impact on academic and professional development. Exposure to international learning environments has enhanced student confidence, academic performance, and contributions within their respective departments, reinforcing the value of mobility programmes in developing globally competent graduates.

Through these mobility initiatives, DUT continues to expand its global engagement footprint while strengthening the quality and relevance of its teaching and learning. These programmes play a critical role in preparing students and staff to operate within global contexts, while reinforcing the university's commitment to international collaboration, knowledge exchange, and academic excellence.

2.6.3 Global Research Initiatives and International Conferences

DUT continues to strengthen its global research presence through active participation in international research initiatives, global networks, and academic conferences. These platforms provide opportunities for knowledge exchange, collaborative research development, and the positioning of institutional research within international scholarly and industry discourse.

During the reporting period, the Faculty of Accounting and Informatics contributed to global research engagement through participation in international collaborations and conference platforms. The Faculty's partnership with the International DataScientia Group reflects a sustained commitment to global data science research, with DUT scheduled to host the 2026 edition of the International DataScientia Conference in July. This engagement positions the university as an active contributor to international dialogue in data science, artificial intelligence, and digital innovation.

Global research collaboration is further strengthened through participation in international research networks addressing sustainability and development challenges. The Confucius Institute continues to serve as a local hub within the Juncao Technology Global Network, an initiative endorsed by the Food and Agriculture Organization. Through this platform, DUT connects local agricultural communities with international expertise, supporting knowledge transfer in sustainable mushroom production and contributing to global efforts in food security and environmentally responsible agriculture.

In the built environment and spatial planning disciplines, international research collaboration continues to generate high-impact scholarly outputs. The Department of Town and Regional Planning is engaged in a joint research initiative with the Bartlett School of Planning at University College London, focusing on land management, land value, and equitable spatial transformation within the eThekweni Municipality. This collaboration has produced a co-authored journal article accepted in an accredited international journal and supported the submission of a grant application to expand the research programme.

Academic participation in international conferences continues to enhance DUT's contribution to global knowledge exchange. The Department of Industrial Engineering has played a leadership role in global academic discourse through its involvement in the IEOM International Conference, contributing to research discussions in industrial engineering and operational management. These platforms enable the dissemination of research findings, engagement with international peers, and the strengthening of collaborative networks.

Emerging research areas are also being positioned within global platforms to enhance visibility and impact. Within Textile Science and Apparel Technology, ongoing research in sustainable textile processing, natural dye technologies, and circular economy approaches is being prepared for presentation at international conferences and forums. These initiatives aim to benchmark research against global standards, strengthen collaboration opportunities, and contribute to international discourse on sustainable production systems and industry innovation.

These engagements demonstrate DUT's growing participation in global research ecosystems, where institutional knowledge is shared, tested, and advanced through international collaboration and scholarly exchange. Through sustained involvement in global initiatives and conferences, the university continues to enhance its research visibility, contribute to international knowledge production, and strengthen its position within the global higher education landscape.



Halimat Yusuf Lukman PhD student, who won 2nd place in the commercialisation pitch competition at the African Metabolomics Conference



2.7 INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

2.7.1 Innovation Hubs and Startup Incubators

DUT continues to strengthen its innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem through the development of structured platforms that support student innovation, enterprise development, and the commercialization of research. These initiatives are anchored in dedicated innovation hubs, incubation programmes, and applied learning environments that enable the translation of ideas into viable enterprises and technologies.

During the reporting period, innovation capacity was advanced through specialized infrastructure and applied learning platforms within faculties. The Faculty of Accounting and Informatics continues to drive digital innovation through facilities such as the Cybersecurity Laboratory and Data Lakehouse, which provide students and researchers with opportunities to engage in emerging technologies, data-driven solutions, and applied digital innovation. These platforms support experiential learning while strengthening capability in high-demand technological fields.

Institutional incubation programmes continue to play a central role in supporting entrepreneurship development. CSERI launched its 2026–2027 incubation cycle in February 2026, attracting 238 applications from a diverse pool of community members, students, and alumni. Following a competitive selection process, shortlisted candidates participated in a structured pitching programme, with 55 entrepreneurs presenting business concepts aligned to innovation and socio-economic impact. The programme currently supports approximately 38 micro, small, and medium enterprises through targeted business development interventions, including productivity

training in partnership with Productivity SA, business systems development facilitated by Quantilytix, and quality management training delivered with JRS Solutions. These engagements provide entrepreneurs with practical tools to improve operational efficiency, scalability, and competitiveness.

TTI continues to strengthen its role as a central innovation hub, implementing a structured incubation framework that supports the full innovation lifecycle. This includes funding mechanisms, innovation selection processes, onboarding of innovators, technology development support, intellectual property protection, and pathways for commercialization through start-ups and spin-off enterprises. As part of this pipeline, a patent application is currently in progress for an algal-based wastewater remediation technology, demonstrating the university's commitment to developing sustainable, market-ready solutions for environmental challenges.

Innovation and entrepreneurship are further advanced through sector-specific and community-linked programmes. The Chinese + Agriculture Training and Entrepreneurship Project, implemented through the Confucius Institute, continues to serve as a flagship initiative integrating technical training with enterprise development. The mushroom production course forms part of an incubation-style model designed to equip participants with both production and business skills, with planned expansion to include structured incubation pathways, access to micro-finance, and market linkage opportunities.

Student innovation pathways are also supported through national and institutional platforms. TTI continues to mentor emerging innovators through programmes such as the Eskom Expo Young Innovators initiative, providing structured incubation support and guidance on intellectual property protection. In addition,



participation in national platforms such as South African Innovation Week has enabled institutional representatives to explore collaboration opportunities, strengthen industry linkages, and position DUT within broader innovation ecosystems.

Across the institution, innovation is increasingly embedded within teaching, learning, and research, supported through partnerships, incubation programmes, and applied project-based learning. While some institutional units have focused on building foundational platforms during the reporting period, these efforts are expected to support the expansion of innovation-led initiatives and collaborative ventures in subsequent cycles.

Through these integrated platforms and programmes, DUT continues to build a dynamic innovation ecosystem that supports entrepreneurship, advances technology development, and contributes to inclusive economic growth. This positions the university as a key enabler of innovation-driven development, capable of nurturing talent, supporting enterprise creation, and translating research into sustainable impact.

2.7.2 Entrepreneurship Programmes and Competitions

DUT continues to advance entrepreneurship development through a wide range of structured programmes and student-focused initiatives designed to build innovation capability, support enterprise creation, and embed entrepreneurship within teaching and learning. These programmes are implemented across faculties and institutional platforms, ensuring that students are exposed to entrepreneurial pathways from entry-level awareness through to incubation and enterprise development.

During the reporting period, entrepreneurship awareness and capacity-building initiatives were scaled across multiple campuses and disciplines. The Innobiz Centre, in collaboration with the TTI, participated in the First-Year Orientation Programme, introducing new students to the university's entrepreneurship ecosystem, including incubation pathways, business development support, and commercialization opportunities. These engagements reached over 270 students across Durban and Midlands campuses and positioned entrepreneurship as a viable and transformative career pathway.

Targeted faculty-level engagements further strengthened student participation in entrepreneurship programmes. The Department of Civil Engineering and Geomatics hosted an entrepreneurship awareness session in March 2026, introducing students to Innobiz support services, including business start-up development, compliance and financial management, seed funding opportunities, and intellectual property processes. Across the Faculty of Health Sciences, departments actively promoted participation in interfaculty entrepreneurship competitions and workshops, contributing to increased student engagement in innovation-driven initiatives.

Entrepreneurship development programmes have also been expanded through national and multi-stakeholder platforms. Following the national launch of the EDHE x Mr Price Foundation Waste Innovation Challenge, DUT hosted an institutional engagement session bringing together stakeholders from

Universities South Africa, the Small Enterprise Development and Finance Agency, industry representatives, government, and student innovators. This platform strengthened coordination across partners and reaffirmed Innobiz as the central structure for entrepreneurship at DUT, while also launching the DUT Interfaculty Entrepreneurship and Innovation Challenge to identify and support emerging innovators.

Student entrepreneurship is further supported through structured training and incubation-linked programmes. The Mushroom Agripreneurship Training Programme, hosted in February 2026, equipped participants with practical skills in enterprise development within the agricultural sector, including production, value addition, and market readiness. Similarly, initiatives such as the Student Women Economic Empowerment Programme (SWEEP) workshop created platforms for strengthening women's participation in entrepreneurship, leadership, and innovation, engaging over 70 participants across institutional and external stakeholder groups.

Institution-wide entrepreneurship activation has been strengthened through large-scale engagement initiatives. During March 2026, the Innobiz Centre engaged approximately 774 students through workshops, awareness sessions, and discipline-specific entrepreneurship training across faculties, including Finance, Marketing, Human Resources, Engineering, and Textiles. Additional campus activation campaigns reached over 280 students, generating strong interest in the 2026 incubation intake and expanding the pipeline of potential student entrepreneurs.

Structured incubation readiness and enterprise development support were further advanced through targeted capacity-building interventions. The Gap Analysis Workshop engaged 46 incubated student entrepreneurs, providing tailored mentorship in business compliance, financial management, and market positioning, while follow-up programmes supported ongoing enterprise development and incubation readiness. Complementary initiatives, such as the One Res One Garden Human Rights Day project, integrated entrepreneurship with social responsibility, engaging over 100 students in sustainability-focused activities linked to empowerment and community development.

Discipline-specific entrepreneurship pathways continue to support innovation within specialized fields. In Textile Science and Apparel Technology, student entrepreneurs are participating in structured programmes such as the Student Entrepreneurship Programme and the Durban Textile and Leather Incubator, enabling business development within the textile and apparel sector. In Chemistry, undergraduate students have actively participated in national innovation competitions and are progressing to international competition platforms, demonstrating the advancement of student innovation from local to global engagement.

Across these initiatives, DUT continues to embed entrepreneurship within the student experience, creating structured pathways that support awareness, skills development, incubation, and enterprise growth. These programmes collectively contribute to the development of innovation-driven graduates, strengthen the university's entrepreneurship ecosystem, and support inclusive economic participation in alignment with ENVISION2030.



2.7.3 Technological Advancements and Patents

DUT continues to advance its innovation agenda through the development of technologies, prototypes, and intellectual property that demonstrate the practical application of research and the growing maturity of its innovation ecosystem. These advancements reflect a strong institutional focus on translating knowledge into solutions that address governance, industry, and societal needs.

During the reporting period, technology-driven innovation was further strengthened through faculty-led and student-led initiatives. The Faculty of Accounting and Informatics continues to advance digital innovation through platforms such as the Data Lakehouse, which supports applied solutions in data management, governance, and fiscal accountability. This initiative demonstrates the integration of advanced data systems into institutional and broader sector applications.

Student-led innovation continues to gain momentum, with postgraduate research increasingly contributing to technological development and commercialization pathways. Within the Department of Somatology, a Master's student has secured funding to develop a prototype based on an innovative concept and is currently progressing through the TTI incubation programme. This reflects the strengthening of structured pathways that support the transition from research ideas to market-ready solutions.

Internationally recognised technologies are also being adapted and applied within local contexts through institutional partnerships. The Confucius Institute continues to facilitate the transfer and local implementation of Juncao Technology, a patented agricultural innovation focused on sustainable mushroom production. Through this engagement, DUT supports knowledge transfer and practical application of globally developed technologies to address local agricultural and economic development needs.

At an institutional level, TTI continues to drive intellectual property development and protection. Several patent applications are currently under review in collaboration with Adams and Adams, while additional provisional patents were filed during the first quarter of 2026. These developments demonstrate ongoing progress in building a pipeline of protected innovations, supporting commercialization potential, and strengthening DUT's contribution to technology development.

These advancements reflect a growing institutional capability to generate, protect, and apply innovation, with increasing emphasis on student participation, industry relevance, and sustainability. This trajectory positions DUT to expand its portfolio of technological solutions, strengthen intellectual property outputs, and contribute meaningfully to innovation-driven economic development.

“DUT continues to advance entrepreneurship development through a wide range of structured programmes and student-focused initiatives designed to build innovation capability, support enterprise creation, and embed entrepreneurship within teaching and learning.”

3. THIRD-STREAM INCOME



DUT continues to strengthen and diversify its third-stream income through strategic partnerships with national research funders, industry, government, and international collaborators. These funding streams support postgraduate development, research innovation, student support, and entrepreneurship initiatives, while advancing the objectives of ENVISION2030 and enhancing institutional sustainability.

FUNDING SOURCE / PARTNER	UNIT / FACULTY	AMOUNT (ZAR)	PURPOSE / CONTRIBUTION
DUT Internal Scholarships	RPS	R2,312,769	Masters and Doctoral student support
CSIR Bursaries	RPS	R330,000	Postgraduate research support
Ernst & Ethel Eriksen Bursary	RPS	R25,000	Doctoral support
Advancement & Alumni Donors	Advancement and Alumni Relations	R903,258	Student support and institutional initiatives
NRF SARCHI Grant	Engineering & Built Environment	R2,000,000	Research chair and research development
DSTI–TIA Seed Fund Programme	TTI	R7,760,961	Innovation development and commercialisation
NIPMO–DSTI OTT Grant	TTI	R4,428,909	Intellectual property and technology transfer capacity
IWWT Research Grants	IWWT	R6,485,000	Water and environmental research
SETA Funding (WIL support)	Co-operative Education Unit	R17,553,000	Student internships and graduate support
New funding agreements across international partnerships (IBSA), national funding bodies (NRF), and short learning programmes)	Multiple Units	R4,356,399.9	Skills development, training, and short courses
TOTAL: R46,155,296.90			

Table: Summary of Third-Stream Income (Quarter 1: 2026)

The total confirmed third-stream income secured during the first quarter of 2026 amounts to approximately R46.1 million, reflecting a strong and diversified funding base across research, innovation, teaching, and community engagement activities. In addition, significant support from the National Research Foundation through postgraduate scholarships and postdoctoral fellowships continues to strengthen institutional research capacity, although these contributions are not fully quantified in monetary terms within this reporting period.

The Technology Transfer and Innovation portfolio is a major contributor to third-stream income, securing over R12 million through national funding instruments that support innovation development, intellectual property management, and commercialisation pathways. The Co-operative Education Unit has further strengthened the university's income base through SETA funding exceeding R17 million, directly supporting Work-Integrated Learning opportunities and enhancing graduate employability.

Research-intensive units such as the IWWT continue to attract substantial grant funding, reinforcing DUT's leadership in applied

environmental research and its contribution to sustainability and resource management. At faculty level, additional income is generated through industry partnerships, bursaries, internships, and short learning programmes, which not only contribute financially but also strengthen curriculum relevance and industry alignment.

The Advancement and Alumni Relations Unit continues to play a key role in mobilising donor funding to support student development and institutional priorities, reflecting sustained external confidence in the university's impact and strategic direction.

In addition to the quantified income reflected above, the university continues to benefit from substantial externally funded postgraduate and postdoctoral support, which significantly strengthens research capacity and academic development. During the reporting period, a total of 220 postgraduate scholarships were supported through national funding instruments, alongside 21 postdoctoral fellowships. While these contributions are not reflected in monetary terms within this section, they represent a critical investment in human capital development, research output, and institutional sustainability.



4. ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES



During the first quarter of 2026, DUT recorded significant achievements across research, innovation, teaching and learning, community engagement, and internationalization, reflecting strong institutional performance and alignment with ENVISION2030. These milestones demonstrate the university's continued progress in advancing academic excellence, strengthening partnerships, and delivering measurable impact across multiple domains.

In the area of academic and research excellence, the university achieved notable progress in staff development, research output, and postgraduate advancement. Academic promotions across faculties reflect a strengthening of institutional capacity and leadership, while research-intensive units such as the Institute for Water and Wastewater Technology continued to produce high-impact publications and postgraduate graduations. The university recorded over 900 research output units, reflecting strong research productivity across faculties and contributing significantly to institutional performance. This includes high-impact research outputs and publications within specialized institutes such as water and environmental research, strengthening DUT's contribution to global knowledge systems. DUT was awarded eight NRF SARChI Chairs under the DSTI Decadal Plan, marking a significant milestone in strengthening institutional research capacity and national recognition, particularly within the Universities of Technology sector.

Institutional performance is further reflected in the university's ability to secure and diversify funding streams. During the reporting period, DUT generated approximately R46.1 million in third-stream income, demonstrating strong success in attracting external funding from government, industry, and international partners. This includes significant funding secured through national innovation instruments supporting technology development and commercialization, as well as Work-Integrated Learning funding that directly supports student placement and employability.

Innovation and digital capability were further strengthened through the establishment of key infrastructure and platforms. The launch of the Cybersecurity Laboratory in partnership with industry, alongside the Data Lakehouse initiative, reflects the university's commitment to advancing digital transformation, data-driven decision-making, and applied ICT innovation. These platforms provide students and researchers with access to real-world digital environments, strengthening both academic delivery and applied research capability.

Student achievement and leadership continue to be a defining feature of the institution's impact. Recognition of student excellence through national awards, entrepreneurship competitions, and innovation platforms highlights the success of DUT's student development ecosystem. A notable example includes a student entrepreneur being recognised as the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial winner of the Global Student Entrepreneur Awards, demonstrating excellence in innovation, enterprise development, and leadership. Additional achievements include recognition for leadership and community impact, as well as strong performance in innovation challenges focused on sustainability and digital solutions.

Entrepreneurship and enterprise development initiatives have also delivered strong results during the reporting period. The Centre

for Social Entrepreneurship and Rapid Incubation continues to support emerging enterprises, with incubates achieving recognition at provincial and national levels. For example, incubated enterprises have participated in platforms such as provincial entrepreneurship competitions and innovation showcases, gaining exposure, market access, and opportunities for business growth. Institutional platforms such as Innobiz have further expanded their reach, engaging large numbers of students in entrepreneurship awareness, training, and incubation programmes.

Internationalization milestones further reflect the university's expanding global footprint. Key achievements include participation in global summits, expansion of Collaborative Online International Learning initiatives across multiple faculties, and strengthened diplomatic and institutional engagements through platforms such as International Tech DUT Day and DUT Meets the Diplomats. These initiatives have enabled structured engagement with international partners, facilitating collaboration, mobility, and global knowledge exchange.

Community engagement and social impact initiatives continue to demonstrate meaningful outcomes through sustained partnerships and applied programmes. A notable example is the flood preparedness initiative implemented in partnership with local community structures, which has supported vulnerable communities through the development and distribution of multilingual safety materials and emergency preparedness resources. Additional programmes in youth development, agricultural training, and educational outreach have further contributed to inclusive development and community resilience.

Institutional innovation and technology development have advanced through the expansion of incubation programmes, innovation funding, and intellectual property development. For example, the advancement of patent applications and the development of technologies such as sustainable wastewater treatment solutions reflect the university's commitment to translating research into practical, scalable innovations. These efforts are supported through structured innovation platforms that enable the progression from concept development to commercialization.

These achievements reflect a dynamic and forward-moving institution, characterized by strong collaboration, innovation, and impact. The university continues to build momentum across its strategic priorities, demonstrating its capacity to deliver on its mandate as an engaged University of Technology while contributing to sustainable development and socio-economic transformation.

5. IMPACT AND CONTRIBUTIONS



DUT's engagement activities during the first quarter of 2026 have delivered measurable impact across academic, societal, economic, and global domains, reflecting the institution's commitment to advancing the strategic objectives of ENVISION2030. These contributions demonstrate the university's role as an engaged institution that not only generates knowledge but actively translates it into meaningful outcomes for society, industry, and the broader economy.

In the academic and research domain, institutional efforts have contributed to strengthening knowledge production, research capacity, and postgraduate development. The achievement of over 900 research output units reflects sustained research productivity, while ongoing supervision, international publication, and grant development initiatives continue to enhance DUT's research profile and global academic standing. Applied research across disciplines, including areas such as sustainable infrastructure, environmental management, and emerging technologies, is contributing to both national development priorities and global knowledge systems.

The university's impact is further reflected in the development of globally competent and work-ready graduates. Through experiential learning, project-based approaches, and industry-linked programmes,

students have developed critical skills in problem-solving, collaboration, innovation, and entrepreneurship. For example, student participation in entrepreneurship incubation programmes has resulted in enterprise development outcomes, including job creation and sustained employment within small and medium enterprises supported through institutional platforms.

Significant contributions have also been made in advancing innovation and economic development. The university's entrepreneurship ecosystem has supported the growth of emerging enterprises, with incubated businesses demonstrating measurable outcomes such as job creation, business sustainability, and turnover growth. Innovation and technology development initiatives, including intellectual property advancement and prototype development, are contributing



Guests and Attendees at the KwaZulu-Natal Diplomatic Corps Engagement hosted by DUT



to the creation of market-relevant solutions and strengthening pathways for commercialization.

Community engagement initiatives have delivered tangible social impact through programmes that address local needs and promote inclusive development. For instance, training programmes in sustainable agricultural practices have equipped community members with skills for income generation and food security, while community-based projects such as disaster preparedness initiatives have strengthened resilience in vulnerable communities. These engagements are further supported by educational outreach programmes, cultural exchange initiatives, and youth development platforms that expand access to learning opportunities and enhance social inclusion.

At a global level, DUT's contributions are reflected in its participation in international partnerships, research collaborations, and mobility programmes. These engagements have strengthened global knowledge exchange, enhanced institutional visibility, and supported the development of internationally relevant research and teaching practices. Initiatives such as international exchange programmes, collaborative research projects, and participation in global academic platforms continue to position the university within international higher education and research networks.

The university's activities have also contributed meaningfully to broader development frameworks, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Africa's Agenda 2063. Through integrated approaches that combine teaching, research, innovation, and community engagement, DUT is contributing to priority areas such as quality education, economic growth, sustainable cities, climate action, and partnerships for development.

Institutionally, these contributions have strengthened systems, partnerships, and capacity to deliver impact at scale. Enhanced coordination across units, improved engagement models, and strengthened stakeholder relationships have enabled more integrated and sustainable delivery of programmes. This is further supported by diversified funding streams, including third-stream income, which provide critical resources for sustaining and expanding institutional impact.

These impacts collectively demonstrate DUT's ability to translate its strategic intent into measurable outcomes. The university continues to build a responsive and forward-looking engagement model that not only advances academic excellence but also contributes meaningfully to societal transformation, economic development, and global knowledge production.



6. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



While the university recorded significant achievements during the first quarter of 2026, a number of institutional challenges were identified across research, teaching and learning, innovation, and engagement. Importantly, these challenges also present strategic opportunities for strengthening systems, enhancing capacity, and expanding institutional impact.

CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Capacity constraints in academic, research, and ICT environments, including limited doctoral-qualified staff and technical support.	Strengthening staff development pipelines, increasing doctoral qualifications, and investing in strategic recruitment to enhance supervision capacity and system implementation.
Delays in system implementation, particularly within research management platforms due to ICT capacity limitations.	Accelerating the rollout of integrated digital systems to improve data management, research visibility, and evidence-based decision-making.
Infrastructure and resource limitations, including laboratory constraints, overcrowded teaching spaces, and insufficient specialised facilities.	Strategic investment in infrastructure and optimisation of existing facilities to support research growth, improve teaching environments, and enhance student experience.
Funding constraints for research dissemination, postgraduate support, and engagement initiatives.	Expansion of third-stream income through strengthened industry, government, and international partnerships to enhance financial sustainability.
Operational inefficiencies and delays, including postgraduate processes, industry coordination, and student placement systems.	Streamlining administrative processes and strengthening coordination mechanisms to improve turnaround times and programme delivery.
Limited participation in innovation and commercialisation activities across some faculties, and slow progression of innovations to market readiness.	Strengthening the institutional innovation ecosystem through targeted support, improved incentive structures, and expanded collaboration with national innovation agencies.
Constraints in scaling community engagement initiatives and measuring long-term impact.	Enhancing monitoring and evaluation frameworks and deepening partnerships with community and government stakeholders to scale impact.
Limited funding for international mobility and conference participation, restricting global exposure.	Expanding virtual engagement platforms and strengthening international partnerships to increase access to global collaboration opportunities.
Emerging technological shifts, including the growing role of artificial intelligence, requiring new institutional competencies.	Leveraging digital transformation and AI to enhance research development, teaching innovation, and institutional efficiency.
Coordination challenges across complex stakeholder environments, including industry, government, and community partners.	Strengthening Quad-Helix engagement models to improve alignment, collaboration, and integrated programme delivery.

These challenges and opportunities collectively highlight the importance of continued strategic investment in capacity development, infrastructure, system optimization, and partnership expansion. By addressing identified constraints while actively leveraging emerging opportunities, DUT is well positioned to strengthen its engagement model, enhance institutional performance, and expand its impact across academic, societal, and economic domains.



7. FUTURE OUTLOOK



Looking ahead to the next quarter, DUT will focus on consolidating the gains achieved during the first quarter of 2026 while accelerating key strategic initiatives across research, innovation, teaching and learning, and engagement. The university remains committed to strengthening its position as an engaged University of Technology through coordinated efforts that enhance capacity, deepen partnerships, and expand institutional impact in alignment with ENVISION2030.

A key priority will be the continued strengthening of the research ecosystem. This includes the implementation of integrated research management systems, expansion of research capacity development programmes, and enhanced support for external funding applications and National Research Foundation rating processes. The planned hosting of an institutional Sustainability Conference will further provide a platform to advance research dialogue aligned with global sustainability agendas, while strengthening collaboration across disciplines and sectors.

Innovation and entrepreneurship will remain central to the university's strategic focus. Efforts will be directed towards advancing funded innovation programmes, including the progression of proof-of-concept development, prototype advancement, and commercialization readiness within the TTI portfolio. In parallel, entrepreneurship platforms such as the CSERI and Innobiz will continue to expand incubation programmes, strengthen alignment with international standards, and enhance support to student and community-based enterprises.

The university will also prioritize the expansion of industry and community partnerships to strengthen applied research, experiential learning, and socio-economic impact. Faculties will continue to implement project-based learning and design thinking initiatives in collaboration with industry, government, and community stakeholders. For example, departments within the Built Environment will sustain collaborative projects and prepare for major academic engagements such as the Construction Business and Project Management Conference, while community-based initiatives in areas such as health, agriculture, and sustainability will continue to be scaled to deepen impact.

Internationalization efforts will focus on strengthening global partnerships, enhancing mobility opportunities, and expanding collaborative research platforms. Key priorities include the implementation of Collaborative Online International Learning programmes, participation in global networks, and the formalization of strategic partnerships with institutions such as Tiangong

University. In addition, planned international engagements and conferences, including the hosting of the Data Scientia Workshop, will further position DUT within global academic and research networks.

Capacity development and institutional strengthening will remain a key area of focus. Faculties will prioritize staff development through doctoral qualification pathways, strategic recruitment, and workload optimization to support research and teaching demands. In parallel, efforts to improve infrastructure, enhance administrative processes, and strengthen coordination across units will support more efficient programme delivery and institutional performance.

Student development will continue to be advanced through participation in entrepreneurship competitions, innovation challenges, and experiential learning platforms. Initiatives such as the Interfaculty Entrepreneurship Competition, the Waste Innovation Challenge, and global entrepreneurship programmes will provide students with opportunities to develop innovation capability, gain recognition, and transition into enterprise development pathways.

At a disciplinary level, faculties will continue to drive specialized initiatives aligned with institutional priorities. These include the expansion of doctoral academies, strengthening of research niches, integration of artificial intelligence within teaching and research, and the development of new academic programmes and short courses. For example, initiatives such as the planned development of commercialization platforms within the textile sector and the expansion of maritime short courses demonstrate a strong focus on aligning academic programmes with industry and economic needs.

Overall, the strategic outlook for the upcoming quarter reflects a strong emphasis on implementation, integration, and impact. By building on existing momentum and addressing identified challenges, DUT is well positioned to enhance its engagement model, strengthen its global and local partnerships, and expand its contribution to knowledge production, innovation, and socio-economic development.



8. CONCLUSION



The first quarter of 2026 reflects a period of strong institutional performance, strategic alignment, and integrated engagement across the Durban University of Technology. The breadth of activities captured in this report demonstrates the university's continued commitment to advancing research excellence, strengthening teaching and learning, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship, and deepening partnerships across local, national, and international contexts.

Across faculties and institutional units, meaningful progress has been achieved in enhancing research productivity, expanding collaborative networks, and strengthening postgraduate development. The university's ability to generate over 900 research output units and secure approximately R46.1 million in third-stream income underscores both the scale and impact of its academic and research enterprise. These achievements are complemented by sustained efforts in innovation development, student entrepreneurship, and the translation of research into practical and socially responsive solutions.

Institutional impact is further reflected in the university's engagement with communities, industry, and global partners. Through applied research, community-based programmes, and international collaborations, DUT continues to position itself as an engaged University of Technology that contributes meaningfully to socio-economic development, knowledge production, and global academic discourse. The collective contributions of faculties and units demonstrate a strong culture of collaboration, innovation, and responsiveness to societal needs. Milestones such as the awarding of eight NRF SARCHI Chairs further affirm DUT's growing national

research standing and long-term commitment to innovation and capacity development.

While notable progress has been achieved, the report also highlights the importance of addressing ongoing challenges related to capacity, infrastructure, funding, and system implementation. These areas remain critical to sustaining momentum and enabling the university to fully realize its strategic objectives. At the same time, the identification of these challenges has created opportunities for institutional strengthening, improved coordination, and expanded impact.

Overall, the progress achieved during this reporting period provides a strong foundation for continued growth and development. DUT is well positioned to build on this momentum through strengthened partnerships, enhanced investment in research and innovation, and deeper integration of engagement across its core functions. As the university advances its ENVISION2030 agenda, it continues to demonstrate its role as a dynamic, responsive, and impact-driven institution committed to contributing to national development priorities and global sustainability goals.



Authors: Prof Fulufhelo Nemavhola – DVC RIE
Ms Phumzile Xulu – Engagement Practitioner
Ms Phumeza Msongelwa – Community Engagement Liaison

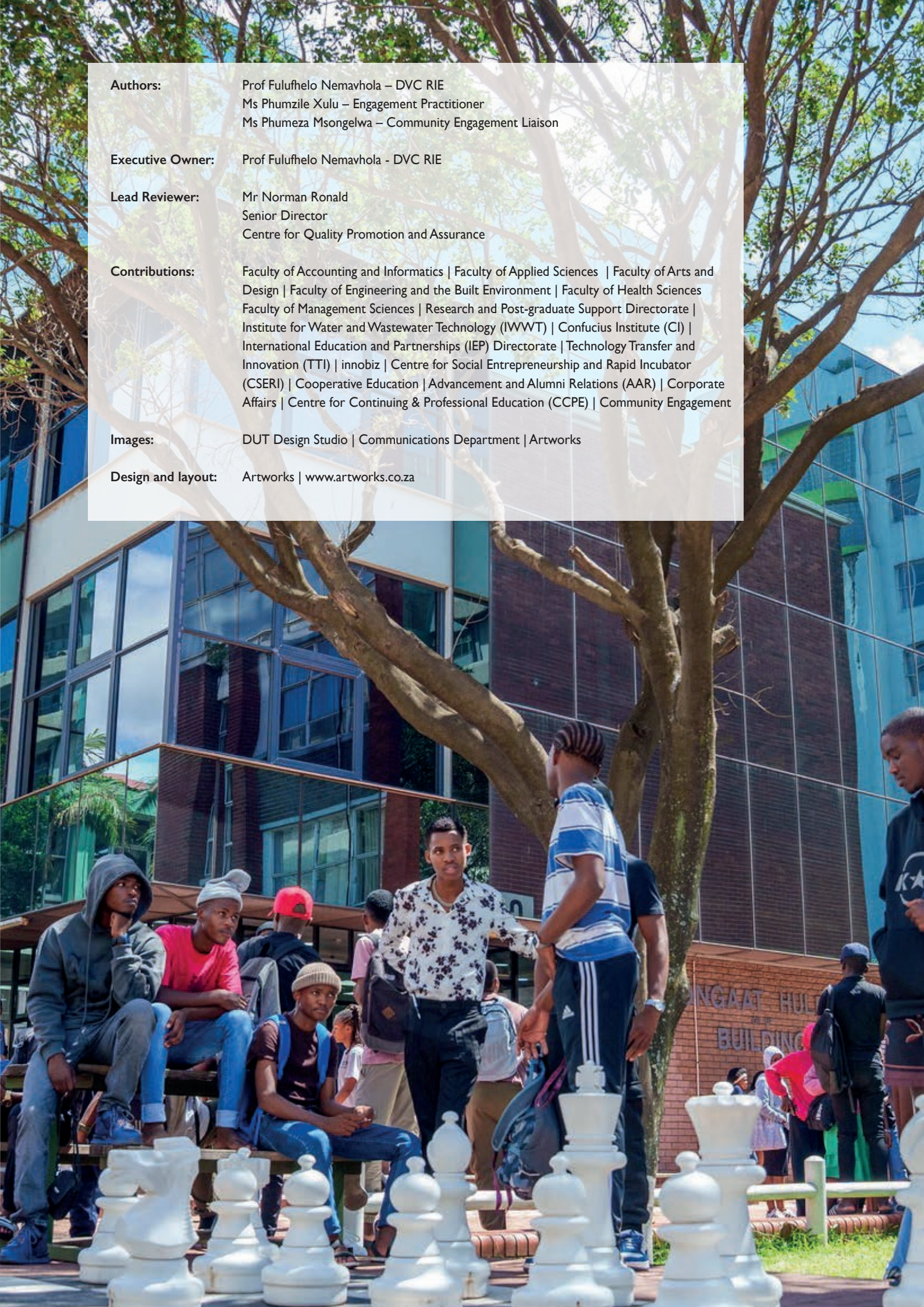
Executive Owner: Prof Fulufhelo Nemavhola - DVC RIE

Lead Reviewer: Mr Norman Ronald
Senior Director
Centre for Quality Promotion and Assurance

Contributions: Faculty of Accounting and Informatics | Faculty of Applied Sciences | Faculty of Arts and Design | Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment | Faculty of Health Sciences | Faculty of Management Sciences | Research and Post-graduate Support Directorate | Institute for Water and Wastewater Technology (IWWT) | Confucius Institute (CI) | International Education and Partnerships (IEP) Directorate | Technology Transfer and Innovation (TTI) | innobiz | Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and Rapid Incubator (CSERI) | Cooperative Education | Advancement and Alumni Relations (AAR) | Corporate Affairs | Centre for Continuing & Professional Education (CCPE) | Community Engagement

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