



# PwC Education Newsletter | April 2022

Welcome to our first edition of the PwC Education Newsletter. Happy reading!

In this edition, you can look forward to key messages from our PwC Africa Government and Public Sector services leader, Jacques Eybers and our PwC Global Education and Skills Leader, Sally Jeffrey. We also welcome our recently appointed Advisory Lead for Education in Advisory, Thaaniya Isaacs who joins us from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme where she fulfilled the role of Governance Risk and Compliance Chief. We share insights from our key recent events and thought leadership publications and some details about our forthcoming initiatives. *A very exciting inclusion in this edition is the Spotlight on UJ showcasing the incredible strides made in Reimagining the future of research and innovation.*

## A word from our leaders in the industry...



**Roshan Ramdhany**  
Partner: South  
Africa Education  
Industry  
Leader

Dear Education Partner,

Welcome to the first edition of PwC's education industry newsletter. While we embrace 2022 with immense gratitude and enthusiasm, it's important that we reflect on some of the achievements of the past year.

Universities quickly adopted new working practices and delivery models in response to the significant disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the South African context, many universities can also be applauded for their research outputs, which contributed significantly to the country's rapid response to the pandemic. At the same time, the 2021 academic year was completed for the most part, despite the carryover of 2020 academic activities in some instances.

However, as universities start to look beyond the pandemic, the challenges that have arisen have also brought into focus a number of opportunities for individual institutions to forge a new way forward based on their unique differentiators, strengths and strategic missions. Those institutions that will be most successful will be the ones that radically shift from the old ways of teaching and learning to new ones, and that place future students at the heart of their planning and delivery.

I trust that you will enjoy our first newsletter. Happy reading!



**Sally Jeffrey**  
Partner and PwC's  
Global Education  
Network Leader

Education has been modernising at a comfortable relaxed pace for many years, resisting with a healthy degree of scepticism the revolution in teaching possibilities presented by technology. Institutions have furthermore been slow to embrace student centricity — particularly those top-ranked institutions whose students are firstly thrilled to be admitted and secondly smart enough to do well, regardless. Publicly funded institutions and generously endowed universities have had little incentive to push for operational efficiencies with their disruptive effect on the gentle pace of academic life. All this is known and has been respectfully and affectionately tolerated. But the pandemic has been a shock to the system — highlighting student well-being as a significant concern, putting high-stakes pressure on the financial health of many institutions, accelerating change, and quieting resistors.

I see my colleagues world-wide working hard to support our clients through these challenging times, and that is why we forged an alliance with Times Higher Education in 2021 that spans all our major markets. We wanted to focus on academic leadership; academics have found themselves governing operations in a crisis that would test any deeply experienced business recovery consultant. The round tables that were held in Africa, the UK, the UAE and Australia explored the themes of leadership and have sparked an impactful debate on the urgent upskilling needs of faculty and university administrators, from basic digital acumen to interpersonal skills, business financial planning and risk management. We will be publishing these findings over the next 12 months.

PwC's New Equation strategy has come at a good time. It has helped us focus on how academia can support building trust and delivering sustained outcomes, with particular emphasis on the imperative around climate change and achieving net zero targets. There is now a major focus on metrics and impact monitoring — and much of the science is still relatively blunt. In our recent CEO survey, the second-highest barrier to ESG effectiveness was the lack of reporting standards and regulations complexity, and the fifth was difficulty in quantifying potential ROI. The business community and government policy makers need researchers to lean in and address some of these persisting issues, and present innovative solutions. Post COP26, it's very clear that the clock is ticking.

The second point I'd like to make is around talent development to support businesses setting ambitious ESG targets. In a recent presentation I made at COP26 to university presidents from the Universitas 21 group, we had a great discussion around the imperative for transversal skills. In addition to an evolving range of technical skills that most universities are generally on top of, they are still struggling with delivering the interdisciplinary experience required for developing these transversal skills. We have grouped these transversal skills into three main areas:

- 1) cognitive,
- 2) social and emotional, and
- 3) adaptability and resilience.

As an illustration, consider the issue of re-designing business models for a sustainable supply chain. Students need to be able to see the bigger picture, connect the dots, and understand the cross-border socio-economic impacts and geo-political risks. They need to appreciate the power of activism and of media and communications to create and destroy demand for their products and services. And they also need to learn how to learn, and keep learning, and control what can be controlled in this VUCA world. I have to wonder if our slowly evolving brains and senses will be able to come to terms any time soon with the unprecedented demand for visual processing and collaboration that we are being confronted with. This, amid hybrid environments consisting of a mix of real and simulated scenarios, fed by endless streams of data. Building resilient students is more important now than ever.



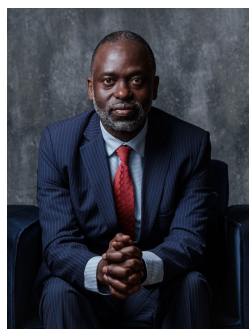
**Jacques Eybers**  
Partner and PwC  
South Africa Public  
Sector Leader

Government and public sector institutions in South Africa, and indeed the world, have been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Be it the surge in demand for health care services, requirements for government fiscal intervention or changes in the way education is delivered, the challenges for many have been immense. Government is plagued with challenges that include rising inflation, pressure on the fiscus, a strained healthcare system, increasing demand for affordable energy and the negative economic impact caused by load-shedding, supply chain issues, corruption, and political instability. Despite these obstacles, the government and public sector (G&PS) remains at the heart of transforming our country and changing the lives of its people.

We at PwC are inspired and guided by the pockets of excellence within the public sector that are making a real, tangible difference in various sectors. We cannot ignore the serious challenges that we currently face, and which will be exacerbated unless we instate, in some instances, drastic and urgent measures to address them. Top of mind is the dire situation of over 1.4 million job losses in 2020 in South Africa, with a significant increase in the unemployment rate impacting on poverty, food security, and access to basic services, and more especially the disconnect between what the government can actually provide and the increasing needs of its people. There is tremendous pressure on the G&PS to reignite growth and job creation.

Our education institutions are being called upon to take the lead in building the skills and capabilities necessary to meet the needs of the workforce of the future. We commend the higher education institutions who have committed to exploring innovative and cutting-edge alternatives as they embark on their digital transformation journey. Our world has changed; we can no longer work as we did before, we can no longer use the same talent to be successful, and we can no longer manage our talent in the same way. We have to skill our students and staff to enable a future fit, productive workforce with the right capabilities and structure for a digital workplace and technology-driven institutions. While we continue to bridge the gap between academia and business needs, let us also commit to building our communities to develop a culture of lifelong learning.

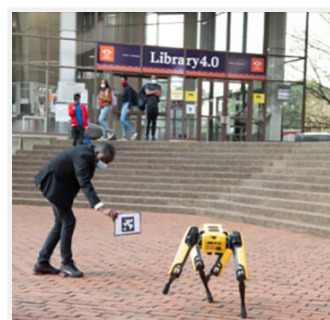
## Spotlight: University of Johannesburg



**Prof. Tshilidzi  
Marwala**  
Vice-Chancellor and  
Principal of the  
University of  
Johannesburg

The University of Johannesburg (UJ) prides itself on a culture of innovation. As its tagline in recent years will tell you, the institution is constantly reimagining the future. The last two years, weathering a pandemic unlike anything we have seen in our collective history while adapting to unprecedented digital shifts, has been a demonstration of UJ's tenacity and adaptability. Across the world, nations and institutions alike have realised that the tomorrow they may have been imagining, is already with us. UJ has led the charge actively.

UJ has positioned itself as a leading Pan-African university with a strategic objective to shape the future of South Africa in partnership with government and industry leaders. The rankings are but one testament of the great strides the institution has made. There are some notable achievements. In the 2022 Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings, UJ climbed five places from position 439 to 434 in the world, the only university in South Africa that improved and moved up the table. According to the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings, UJ is now ranked in the first position in the world for Decent Work and Economic Growth. UJ also featured among the global Top 100 in the various United Nations 39 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and was ranked in the Top 100 for six specific SDGs. The StuDocu World University Ranking 2021 commended UJ for its efforts to enable remote learning with an impressive score of nine out of a possible ten — one of only two South African universities to do so.



It is not only in the rankings that the University has made great strides. The University has continued to participate and contribute to discussions and intellectual debates in public spaces on COVID-19 and social justice. From 2019 to 2020, the total number of

accredited research publications increased by 25% while the number of NRF-rated professors increased by 10%, and the institution was on an upward trajectory. Last year, 3-D printers were used to produce PPE nationally. This is one of several areas where the University has ensured that it is at the forefront of this battle with the disease. Additionally, it has been at the forefront of innovation. This year, the Institute for Intelligent Systems (IIS) unveiled an agile four-legged, animal-mimicking robot with artificial intelligence (AI) named Spot. This marks an important milestone in developing robotics and advancing academic training at the university. The robot can be used by industries in sectors like disaster management and mining. The robot came with sensing equipment to help navigate the terrain with unprecedented mobility. In recent years, UJ has transformed its curriculum in line with the shifts presented by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). For example, it has introduced a compulsory AI course and has just introduced a masters programme in AI. The academic staff have been at the forefront of this shift and have demonstrated their ability for innovation and creation through new and exciting modes of teaching and learning.

The University's achievements against a seemingly insurmountable backdrop have ensured that UJ is indeed an international university of choice, anchored in Africa and dynamically shaping the future.

## What has been happening in our neck of the woods...

### Thought leadership

We grow through what we know! Key to ensuring that we are able to transform the education sector is ongoing research and knowledge sharing. In the recent past, PwC has published a number of articles/blogs to share the latest innovation and insights.

#### Vice-chancellor survey 2021: Passing the resilience test

PwC conducted a survey with South Africa's Vice-Chancellors of public universities. This is the second year that such a survey was conducted and the purpose was to ascertain the changes made whilst still in the pandemic and the challenges faced by the universities.

VCs believe the greatest threats facing their institutions are political instability, rising student debts, decline in state funding and rising costs for universities.

[Find out more](#)



#### Press Release: The importance of embedding faculty support in African universities' digital transformations

Our Roundtable discussion, proudly held in collaboration between PwC Africa and Times Higher Education, brought together a panel of senior leaders from academia and industry in Africa to discuss challenges and the importance of getting faculty members to align with recent educational shifts. Hosting this Times Higher Education roundtable, a first on the African continent, is our effort to continue building trusted relationships and fostering greater collaboration between PwC Africa, the institutions of higher learning and society at large. Higher education institutions can no longer view themselves as islands of excellence. They need to collaborate both locally and internationally with other institutions, not just to learn but — more critically than ever before — to contribute to global knowledge.





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[Find out more](#)

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## A human-led and tech-powered solution enables a successful online schooling experience

COVID-19 has had a devastating effect on education around the world. A full 18 months into the pandemic, it's estimated that more than 1.5 billion students around the world have been affected by lockdowns and school closures. Even before the global crisis hit, Valentre Institute, an online high school, was ready to change the game.

Through a collaborative engagement with PwC and Salesforce, Valentre Institute is fully committed to using Salesforce and Education Cloud as its platform for the future. For PwC and Salesforce, the Valentre engagement has been living proof that Salesforce can provide a powerful platform to drive modern, online education. For Valentre, the future has never been brighter.

At a time when educational institutions are under increased pressure to transform both their student and employee experience, the school is now eyeing huge international markets. The future of education is now and is here.

[Find out more](#)

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## Reaching YES: Addressing the Youth Employment and Skilling (YES) challenge: Preparing youth for the future

PwC in partnership with UNICEF, as part of the Generation Unlimited (GenU) initiative launched by the UN Secretary General in 2018, has committed to contributing to skilling and connecting the world's 1.8 billion young people 10-24 years old to opportunities of employment, entrepreneurship and social impact. Youth are being left behind at an alarming rate.

While the number of youth ages 15-24 has grown 30% over the last 20 years, their participation in the labour force has decreased by approximately 12% (ILO, 2020). Of those that are employed, many are in the informal economy holding jobs that are commonly characterised by low pay, hazardous working conditions, and little job security. Of the youth with formal employment, many are underemployed, or their skills do not align with employers' needs. In addition to losing youth from our labour force, youth unemployment and underemployment may also have broader societal implications, including helping to deepen polarisation, eroding institutional trust, and generating social unrest.

In a bid to respond to some of the key challenges, we published a report that outlines three global youth skilling 'gaps' that impede youth from gaining the skills they need. Furthermore, it provides actionable steps that government and corporate levels could take to address these gaps.

The report emphasises that despite the youth upskilling challenge being a global issue, it must be addressed at the national and local levels, because each country, industry, and locality is unique.

[Find out More](#)

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## Blog: World Teachers' Day 2021: "Teachers at the heart of the education recovery"

The role of teachers has become more critical and complex than at any time in the past. Now, more than ever, teacher leadership and teacher contributions are critical in remote learning, supporting vulnerable populations, the

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reopening of schools and the adjustment of the school curriculum to mitigate learning gaps.

Teachers, at the heart of the education recovery, will be challenged to lead their learners in novel, innovative ways while tending to their own vulnerabilities, fears, and frustrations. To ensure that teachers are able to play a meaningful and impactful role as drivers of the education recovery, there is dire need to ensure that the Education Department, together with key government departments, prioritises and funds plans to strengthen teachers' capacity to meet the current and evolving challenges facing our schools.

[Find out more](#)



## Events

Keeping ahead of the curve and riding the wave is important to us. To ensure that we are able to connect with our clients and important stakeholders, we've committed to hosting a number of events during the year. Our events showcase the latest innovations, thought leadership in the education sector and most importantly, create a platform to hear from you and to get your thoughts, perspectives and needs! In the recent past, we've hosted some events which brought together the very best minds of both global and local thought leaders to share experiences vital to shaping the future of education. Take a look at what's been happening.

### PwC 27th Annual Virtual Education Conference

COVID-19 has presented perhaps the greatest challenge the education system has seen in recent history. While the pandemic has upended education operating models, it also presents a vital opportunity to accelerate positive change. Institutions have had to adapt to new technologies and evolving student demands, embed agile working systems, build a dynamic learning environment for staff and students that embraces innovation, and align their governance models to encourage new ways of working. In order to succeed, academic and research institutions will have to reimagine a different future for education if we are to keep working together for a collaborative future.

On 6 and 7 September 2021, PwC hosted their 27th Annual Education Conference themed: "Working together for a collaborative Future". A historic first-ever virtual conference in 27 years. Speakers included Minister Blade Nzimande, Blair Sheppard, Jason Goliath and Sally Jeffrey. [Find out more and listen to the session recordings](#)



## PwC Africa and Times Higher Education (THE) Africa Roundtable Event

Higher education institutions can no longer view themselves as islands of excellence. They need to collaborate both locally and internationally with other institutions, not just to learn but — more critically than ever before — to contribute to global knowledge.

Our recent, invitation-only roundtable discussion, held in collaboration between PwC and Times Higher Education, brought together a panel of senior leaders from academia and industry in Africa to discuss challenges and the importance of getting faculty members to align with recent educational shifts. Hosting this Times Higher Education roundtable, a first on the African continent, is our effort to continue building trusted relationships and fostering greater collaboration between PwC Africa, the institutions of higher learning and society at large. [Listen to the roundtable recording.](#)

As part of PwC's global partnership with THE, we produced a series of roundtable discussions about how universities can support leadership to innovate. These sessions included experts from industry and academia in the Middle East, Africa, Australia and Singapore.



In partnership with



Digitally transforming faculty development and increasing access to African higher education

2 August 2021

## Corporate Social Responsibility Programmes

Building trust in society and solving important problems is the very DNA and the basis on which PwC operates. We understand that the South African economy and education landscape have significant room for growth in order to succeed in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. As our social responsibility, we are able to meaningfully contribute to changing lives through skills development and training opportunities for our graduates of South Africa's universities, TVET colleges, learners at schools as well as the unemployed youth to meet the present and future needs of the economy and society.



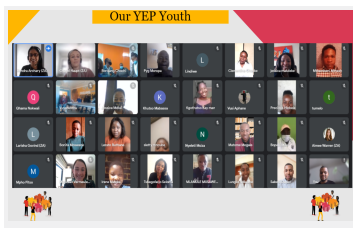
### Youth Accelerator Programme (YAP) - SA Youth

PwC partnered with Harambee in 2019 to appoint our first intake of matriculants into our Consulting graduate programme, **Foundation for the Future**. The first cohort of three matriculants successfully completed the Foundation for the Future 2020 graduate programme alongside university graduates. Their ability to deliver consulting services confidently in their appointed business units speaks to the quality of the graduates and the strength of the programme mentorship.

Due to the success of the pilot programme partnership and the increasing need for youth employment in South Africa, PwC Advisory recognises the value of this partnership and the need to continue with it. The team are excited to welcome four more Harambee participants into Advisory Consulting on a short-term internship as they prepare to join the 2022 Foundation for the Future programme.

With the focus being on unemployed youth with entrepreneurial skills, the four interns have demonstrated strong digital capabilities, eagerness to learn and agility. As they progress through the skills mastery programme, they receive on-the-job mentorship to embed their learning and enhance their skills. To read more about Foundation for the Future please click [here](#).

'I learnt that I love to be surrounded by people who encourage me and I'm glad that PwC is the home where I receive that.' — Bongani Zondi



## Youth Engagement Programme (YEP) - SA Youth & YES4Youth

This programme seeks to empower and support youth development through covering key themes (Personal Mastery, Team Mastery, Business Mastery, Tech and Finance Mastery) that enable young people to have successful entry into business. The Youth Engaged Programme fits squarely into our #BeyondCSR Programme Purpose to make a tangible impact on youth employment in South Africa.

This programme kicked off in September 2021 and will run until April 2022 (6 months), where 36 students will be mentored and trained on various topics. Mentoring sessions and training sessions are taking place virtually.



## Empowering society - one child, one school, one community at a time - Ivory Park Primary School (IPP)

To this end, we've embarked on a journey to support Ivory Park Primary School (IPP), based in Tembisa, on a permanent basis. Due to the immediate environment and circumstances facing the learners, they don't have the same opportunities as other learners in South Africa. We want to change their situation by making a difference, showing that we care, and working together. These values govern our actions and determine our success.

In an effort to increase opportunities for success and in line with living our purpose and making a difference, we've started working on the following initiatives:

- Assist with the basic needs of the children e.g. school uniforms (this has already kicked off with the Umbono Shoe Drive campaign);
- Fix the ratio of teachers to students by appointing additional teachers/teachers' assistants;
- Partner with other stakeholders to implement a robotics curriculum; and
- Assist with the completion of the staff meeting room.



## Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Work-Based Experience (WBE) Programme

The unemployment rate is 54%. To meet the present and future needs of the economy and society, we want to meaningfully contribute to changing lives through skills development and training opportunities for university and TVET college graduates in South Africa.

The TVET WBE programme offers learners a blend of work-based experience and technical/soft skills training to assist them to make informed and individually appropriate social, educational and vocational choices. Additionally, to provide them with the business skills to be successful in a highly competitive working world and to make them more employable for the Future World of Work

In 2018, PwC in partnership with Absa, launched the first annual TVET WBE programme. The programme provides on-site work-based experience for students from TVET colleges over a 3-week period. Furthermore, a number of these learners were offered learnerships resulting in permanent employment at PwC for some.

In 2020, with the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown, we embarked on the first ever virtual WBE programme for TVET colleges in SA, reaching over 550 students from the EWC. Our 2021 virtual WBE programme was set to reach an unprecedented 1500+ students over two days. PwC is committed to being part of the solution and will continue offering support to the TVET colleges.



## You've got this

The Skilled for the Future (Sfff) and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Work Based Experience (WBE) programmes were conceptualised to provide students/learners with a blend of work-based experience, soft skills training and mentoring that enables healthy and informed social, educational and vocational choices.



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In response to PwC's vision to build trust in society and solve important problems, the traditional programmes for both Skilled for the Future and TVET WBE were revised to contribute to Government's efforts in supporting continued learning for students/learners during and after the pandemic lockdown.

The gap identified is the absence of psycho-emotional support and skills to process the plethora of online content. The uncertainty regarding the academic year and plans for completion has created fear, panic, anxiety and other emotional challenges which need to be managed to ensure that students/learners are resilient and agile to manage the expectations.

The "You've got this!" initiative forms part of our Skilled for the Future, TVET and New world. New skills. programmes which aim to support students/ learners with their emotional and social health. In an effort to assist students/ learners during this difficult time, PwC has launched a series of online content pieces which will help students/learners to manage the uncertainty surrounding the academic year and their plans for the future.

[Find out more](#)



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## PwC Graduate Programmes

The upskilling of youth in South Africa has been a priority for PwC for many years, with a shift from focusing on in-demand skills to building capabilities for the workplace of the future. In our Advisory business we have consolidated our internship programmes into four key graduate programmes that align to our business model and client needs. Following an intensive onboarding induction programme our graduates experience formalised business unit rotations where they apply the skills they have learnt on complex client projects.

Our core business continuously develops the potential of our people's skills to assist in transforming business, to ensure that we continuously provide insight and value to our clients. Key to our skills development process is coaching and mentoring, with each graduate receiving on the job support to embed a culture of learning. Technology and digital skills have become more relevant in our complex and ambiguous business environment leading to our graduates across all areas of our business becoming proficient in these capabilities.

Today's challenges are unlike any we've experienced before. They require something more than the expected. People who bring their full humanity to every opportunity and the imagination to see things from different perspectives through an innovative combination of expertise and technologies. We bring this way of thinking to every client opportunity. It's where ideas step out of the ordinary and take shape in solutions that set PwC apart. This is The New Equation. At PwC we create careers that matter, where our graduates are inspired to deliver exceptional value as part of a community of solvers coming together in unexpected ways to solve the world's important problems.

The PwC recruitment process is stringent across the variety of graduate programs to assess our graduates' best fit to our business and also to ensure that PwC is their employer of choice. PwC has introduced Fasset and TVET programmes across a variety of our business areas creating opportunities for non-traditional recruitment, allowing the development of graduates with diverse educational qualifications.

In parallel, our Advisory practice is running a youth mentorship programme in collaboration with SA Youth and Yes for Youth. SA Youth is part of the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention — a coordinated national action plan to tackle youth unemployment. The PwC youth mentorship programme focuses on skills mastery through mentorship and acts as a feeder into PwC's Consulting graduate programme.

We have developed schools and university vacation programmes within our Assurance

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business ensuring candidates are fully informed at the start of their career explorations. We are pleased with the progress made by our graduates who regularly progress to Manager within four years of joining the firm. PwC has been recognised as the Employer of Choice by SAGEA from 2018 to 2021.

To become part of the solution we invite you to help us solve these important problems and collectively build a better and brighter tomorrow for our future leaders!

## How can PwC help you?

### Tax Administration Online Short Course

Tax administration impacts both individuals and business entities. This interactive online short course can be accessed on all devices and provides a comprehensive understanding of tax administration in South Africa. The PwC Tax Administration online short course is now available and is fit for people working in finance positions as well as students at a tertiary level.

[Find out more](#)



### Having trouble with Transforming your institution?

PwC is geared to assist education institutions with their strategic intent. The COVID-19 pandemic, and subsequent lockdown, forced many of our institutions to hastily transition from face-to-face to virtual curriculum delivery, highlighting both challenges and opportunities for the future. Our range of services include:

- Digitalisation and harnessing the power of data - from the student experience to back office automation and optimisation
- Financial sustainability, revenue diversification and cost optimisation
- Organisation alignment and culture transformation, readying institutions for the demands of the [workforce of the future](#)
- Curriculum transformation
- Cybersecurity, helping you stay ahead
- ESG - helping you achieve your net zero goals
- Repurposing and optimising capital infrastructure

In addition, the transfer of EDC from social development to Basic Education and the need to embrace greater use of technology in learning and teaching has brought forth the need for upskilling and/or reskilling of our workforce to ensure that we are able to adequately tackle the ever-increasing needs and demands of the future world of work.



## Upcoming publications and events in 2022

Watch this space for upcoming content from the PwC education industry such as:

- #2 Higher Education Newsletter
- 28th Annual Higher Education Conference
- 2022 Vice Chancellor Survey Report
- Webinars - Research based online learning and impact on performance outcomes
- Thought leadership - Ethnographic study: Student experience

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