

# Steel industry lags behind in skills development

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In the past ten years, an average of 1 700 engineers have graduated each year

**T**he South African steel industry lacks technical and engineering skills and training given that, from 1998 to 2007, only 12,9% of the students enrolled across all engineering courses at universities and technikons achieved a degree or diploma (41 480 of the almost 321 460 enrolments).

This was highlighted in the 'Steel Industry Survey' for 2009, undertaken by executive search firm Landelahni Business Leaders, part of the Landelahni Recruitment group. Participants included seven of the eight companies in the large iron and steel industries.

This included 28 296 employees of about 33 000 in the sector.

The survey reported a pass rate of 16,6% in the total number of students enrolled at university for an engineering degree from 1998 to 2007. Although the pass rate had increased from 14% in 2006, the international pass rate of 25% showed that South Africa was still lagging.

Landelahni Business Leaders CEO **Sandra Burmeister** says that, although there has been a rise in engineering graduates over the past three years and an effort to increase artisan

training, the skills shortage will continue because there are still insufficient technical skills available.

However, the number of graduates in the electrical, chemical, mechanical and metallurgical engineering disciplines, which create the skills pipeline for the steel and manufacturing sectors, has increased over the past three years, she says.

This has been attributed to the industry's efforts to increase the number of bursaries on offer and to attract students to certain

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