

Seta boss probed on unbacked qualifications

■ No record of Mofokeng's degree raises questions about efficiency of municipalities

Wiseman Khuzwayo

THE POLICE are investigating a case of fraud against the chief executive of the sector education and training authority (Seta) for local government, alleged to have lied about his matric qualification and a bachelor's degree in administration.

Inspector Roleen Maré of the Bedfordview police confirmed last week that the unit was probing charges against Sidwell Mofokeng, appointed to

his position in 2006.

This case raises questions about the effectiveness of this Seta, which has the vital task of alleviating skills shortages and bolstering municipalities - the backbone of service delivery.

A copy of Mofokeng's matric certificate, which Business Report has, shows he passed matric in 1983 with an E aggregate.

But John Makgoga of the Education Department said the photocopy of Mofokeng's certificate was not issued by the

unit and was thus not valid.

Mofokeng's abridged CV also shows that he completed a bachelor's degree in administration from the University of Natal (now the University of KwaZulu-Natal) in 1985.

Kroll, a verification firm, said it could not find records of the qualification.

Asked to comment on these allegations, Mofokeng denied that he was being investigated but said he was aware that someone had "illegally laid a

charge against him".

This is not the first time that Mofokeng has been involved in controversy at the Seta.

In 2005 he was found guilty on two charges of misrepresentation and forging a signature and was dismissed.

However, this ruling was set aside on appeal and he was reinstated as learnership manager despite objections from the then chief executive of the Seta, SSW Nkosi.

Mofokeng is also alleged to

have controversially suspended staff in the Seta's human resources department.

The Seta's board has appointed a subcommittee to look into the suspensions and to investigate the matter of Mofokeng's qualifications.

Keith Goodsell, the chairman of the board, was unwilling to comment, saying the matter was sub judice.

Qualifications fraud is rife among job seekers and companies also find that applicants lie

about their work experience.

"The Professional Assignments Group's (PAG's) personal credentials verification organisation says that 34 percent of job applicants falsify their experience, education and abilities, while 33 percent give inaccurate dates of employment," according to Lawrence Wordon, the managing director at the recruitment group.

Wordon added that 30 percent of people exaggerated their accomplishments, while

11 percent misrepresented their true reasons for leaving their previous employer.

"So far this year, 15 percent of the criminal checks submitted by PAG came back positive, 17 percent of the qualification checks submitted came back unconfirmed (fraudulent), 30 percent of the credit history requests came back with a negative history (defaults and judgments), while 7 percent of ID verification checks came back as incorrect," he said.