

New R3.2 billion private university launches in South Africa



Private Afrikaans higher education institution, Akademia, has officially launched its next massive campus build with a sod turning ceremony at the group's site in Mooiplaats.

The ceremony took place on Friday, 28 November, and marks the start of the first construction phase of the building development project.

The project is the largest of its kind in the history of the Afrikaans language and cultural communities in terms of higher education, and carries an estimated investment value of R3.2 billion.

The project is being co-developed by the Solidarity Movement, in partnership with Kanton.

This first phase of the development, with an investment volume of R1.8 billion, will commence in January 2026.

Phase one of the project represents the core of the future campus.

This includes numerous lecture halls, advanced laboratories, dedicated research spaces, staff spaces, and various support facilities.

Other infrastructure highlights in this phase include:

- A 2,500 square metre student centre as the social hub of the campus;
- Residences for about 750 students, after which the capacity will be expanded to 1,500 during the second phase;
- An entry point to the academic campus, Die Poort (the gate), which consists of eight arches of 18 meters each;
- An amphitheatre with a capacity for 1,500 people as a cultural and gathering space.
- A chapel plaza surrounded by water canals and gardens
- A dome structure of glass and steel (20 meters high and 32 meters in diameter) will add to the classic architectural building plan.

The main contractors for this phase are JC van der Linde and Venter Bouers, who were also responsible for the successful delivery of the Sol-Tech campus.

According to Henk Schalekamp, managing director of Kanton, the chosen main contractors' experience, expertise, discipline, and shared values attest to their designation as the team to handle this complex development.

This campus development was first announced in August 2024 and mass earthworks took place in July 2025. The sod-turning ceremony represents the official launch of the construction phase.

The project is expected to be completed over the next few years, and from 2028, Akademia will use the completed infrastructure and study home as a long-term tenant.

The new Akademia campus forms part of the education group's wider and growing reach in South Africa.

The institution was founded in 2012, and over the past thirteen years, the institution has grown to five faculties (undergraduate and postgraduate), more than 3,800 students (full-time on campus and after-hours over distance).

Earlier this year, it **opened its full-time campus in Paarl.**

According to Marthinus Visser, managing director of Akademia, the sod turning ceremony signals the next significant expansion of the Afrikaans university system.

The group provided a wider timeline of the project:

- January 2017 to December 2018 – Identify a suitable location and land
- January 2019 to August 2019 – Developmental due diligence examination
- January 2021 to February 2024 – Acquire development rights
- July 2021 to February 2024 – Obtain consent after completion of environmental impact assessment
- May 2024 – Buy the land for R50 million
- January 2024 to December 2024 – Concept development
- November 2024 to December 2025 – Capital raising and financing

- June 2025 to December 2025 – Mass earthworks
- January 2026 to December 2027 – Start of the construction phase

Concept Pictures of the Campus



