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**Abstract**

Many higher and further education institutions in South Africa are struggling to survive in a context of financial stringency, declining student enrolments and increasing competition. For some of these institutions merging or amalgamation with other institutions in the near future is becoming a strong likelihood. The perceptions of staff who will be directly affected by these processes seem to be very important, as knowledge and understanding of those perceptions will empower decision-makers and ensure that effective management of the merging process can be accomplished. This investigation focused on staff perceptions of possible merging of three institutions in the Free State Province, which had been identified for possible merging with other institutions. The results indicate that staff is not opposed to the idea of institutional combinations or merging, but that careful consideration needs to be given to particularly personal factors and that staff fears will have to be addressed in the process to ensure effective merging. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Driekie Hay, E-mail:

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