higher education & training
Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Jean Skene
Acting Chief Director: University Planning and Institutional Funding
Department of Higher Education and Training

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2000 TO 2015 FIRST TIME ENTERING UNDERGRADUATE COHORT STUDIES FOR PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

HEMIS DATA COLLECTION

- HEMIS collects unit record data rather than aggregated or tabular data. Universities are required to submit audited data to the Department in a specified format by the 31st July each year for the prior academic year. This enables universities to identify all their graduates for the prior year having completing their final examinations and where applicable supplementary examinations and to audit their data before submission to the Department. The data submitted to the Department are a subset of the data from the universities' production database.
- The Department has provided the universities with PC software which enables them to validate their data and correct critical errors prior to submitting to the Department.
- Universities are required to have their data audited by their external auditors before submitting to the Department at the 31st July each year. Once the department receives the final audited data, further validations and checks are undertaken before aggregated tables data are published.

METHODOLOGY

- Cohort studies are the study of first time entering undergraduate students, who are tracked over a 10 year period to determine the percentage of students that have dropped out from their studies or who have completed their studies. The purpose of extending the study over a 10 year period is to take cognisance of the distance education method of educational provisioning.
- Records are extracted from the HEMIS database for the base year data and filtered to only render the first-time entering undergraduate students. This includes students enrolled for three and four year undergraduate programmes. Only South African citizens are tracked, all the records containing non-valid South African National Identity numbers are removed from the dataset. The South African Identity number is used to track the progress of students.

METHODOLOGY

- The data for the base year consist of data fields for race, gender, field of study, graduation status, qualification type and the South African Identity number. Subsequent years do not need all these fields and only includes graduation status, qualification type and South African Identity number. It is assumed that the other fields remain the same throughout the study.
- The second level of data cleaning is eliminating duplicate South African Identity numbers. The records are evaluated according to the following logic;
  - The graduation status reflects a finish within the logical period of three years or four years depending upon the qualification type, not earlier. An earlier finish indicates a non-first-time entering student that was wrongfully enrolled as a first-time entering student and the record is removed from the tracking process.
  - Where there are multiple fields of study, one is selected by choice should both records seem legitimate.

METHODOLOGY

- The third level of data cleaning looks at the multiple graduation status. Records are cleaned by removing the graduations after the first graduation status. This is to eliminate multiple graduation counts and false dropout counts.
- The dataset is now ready for the calculations to be done. The calculations are done for all qualification types combined (three and four year qualifications) first and then it is done for the three and four year qualifications separately.
- Dropouts are calculated by counting all the blank fields from one year in the table. Blank fields represent no student record and are regarded as a dropout. The total number of graduates in prior years has to be subtracted from this total to get the final dropout number. The difference between the sum of dropouts + graduates will be students who are still studying.

METHODOLOGY

- If a student drops out from one university and enters another institution then the student is not treated as a dropout. A student who changes courses is not treated as a dropout and student who dropouts and returns at a later stage is accounted for in the study, and is not counted as a dropout.

- For the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) cohort study, data from NSFAS are matched with the filtered HEMIS data following the same criteria as with the mainstream cohort. The year in which the student received the loan does not influence the cohort, neither the number of years the student received a loan. All first time entering undergraduate students, who received a loan during their studies, are tracked, irrespective of the loan year or number of years.

METHODOLOGY

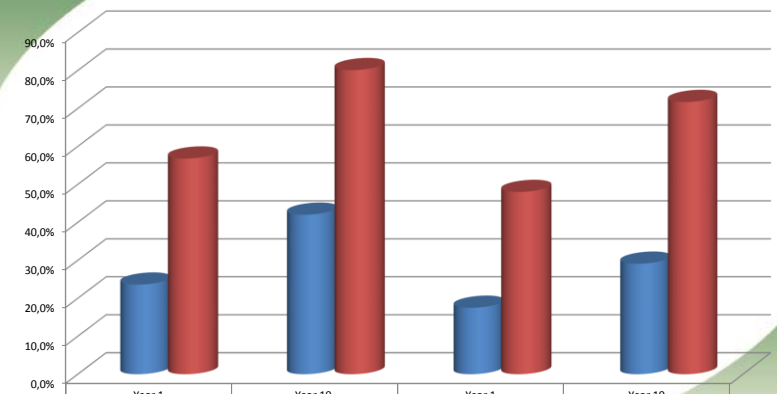
- During 2003 to 2005 the public higher education landscape underwent a transformation with the merger of a number of institutions taking place. During this process the number of public higher education institutions decreased to 23. At this time there were instances where course codes and entrance categories were changed and South African Identity numbers were not useable. In this study these records were taken out of the equation.

- In 2013, two new universities, Sol Plaatje University (SPU) in the Northern Cape Province and the University of Mpumalanga (UMP) in Mpumalanga Province, were established as comprehensive universities with their first intake of students in 2014. A third comprehensive university, Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) was established in 2014, and opened its doors in 2015 to its first cohort of students. The MEDUNSA campus of the University of Limpopo was incorporated into SMU. The first cohorts of SPU and UMP are included in the 2014 first time entering cohorts.

CONTACT AND DISTANCE MODE

- The cohort studies reveals in very stark terms that students entering into distance higher education, while gaining access to higher education, have a very low chance of success.
- It is acknowledged that students entering into distance education are most likely to be studying part time, and therefore will take longer than the minimum time to complete the qualification. Taking this into account ten years of data is required.
- The latest year for which 10 years of data is available is 2007, therefore while the tables all show the cohort data up to the 2015 cohort, the 2007 cohort is taken as a point of comparison

CONTACT AND DISTANCE MODE



	2000		2007	
	Year 1	Year 10	Year 1	Year 10
Contact	23,6%	42,0%	17,5%	29,1%
Distance	56,8%	80,1%	48,0%	71,7%

CONTACT AND DISTANCE MODE

- While the drop out rates has improved (decreased) for both contact and distance mode of delivery, the dropout rate for distance education is unacceptably high. The extremely low throughput in distance tuition qualifications after 10 years of study is a cause for grave concern, especially given that the proportion of enrolments in distance education are high.
- Distance education and new open learning modes have been identified as a possible way to enable growth in the higher education sector and to create greater access to post-secondary education studies at universities and technical and vocational education and training colleges. However, access without a reasonable chance of success is not productive for the individual or the country.
- It will be important to understand the factors influencing the poor throughput rates in distance education. The public distance education providers, particularly UNISA, must undertake research to understand the underlying causes of the high dropout rate and to indentify interventions that must be implemented to improve it.

QUALIFICATION TYPES

- **National total % dropout and graduates for 3 year diplomas in contact tuition**

NATIONAL TOTAL: CONTACT									
Intake year	DROPOUTS (%)								
(Year 1)	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
2000	27.5	36.3	40.7	44.9	45.4	46.8	47.1	46.4	46.1
2001	29.1	43.7	46.5	47.4	51.3	51.6	51.2	51.0	49.7
2002	38.5	45.0	41.4	49.4	51.3	51.2	51.1	49.6	48.8
2003	23.1	33.0	38.1	43.6	44.7	44.6	43.0	42.1	41.5
2004	24.5	35.7	38.2	42.8	43.5	42.3	41.9	41.4	40.0
2005	23.8	33.3	34.3	37.2	37.4	37.1	36.4	35.2	35.2
2006	22.5	31.0	29.7	32.4	33.0	32.8	31.7	31.8	31.0
2007	22.2	28.8	26.9	31.0	31.3	31.0	30.7	30.0	30.1
2008	21.4	27.9	27.5	30.5	31.1	31.0	30.3	29.9	
2009	19.6	26.6	26.3	28.5	29.5	29.4	29.2		
2010	18.1	25.7	22.4	26.2	27.5	27.1			
2011	17.4	23.2	19.7	23.2	23.9				
2012	17.7	23.8	20.9	23.0					
2013	18.6	24.6	19.7		Data not available				
2014	20.4	24.1							
2015	17.1								

QUALIFICATION TYPES

Intake year	GRADUATES (%)							
(Year 1)	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
2000	16.8	28.2	35.2	38.9	41.5	43.5	44.9	46.1
2001	16.2	26.3	31.7	35.8	38.1	39.8	41.1	42.3
2002	16.4	25.5	32.5	36.3	38.6	40.3	41.8	43.0
2003	18.8	31.3	38.6	42.7	45.1	46.9	48.5	49.7
2004	18.5	30.5	38.5	43.1	45.8	48.0	49.5	51.0
2005	19.6	33.2	42.5	47.7	50.9	53.0	54.9	56.5
2006	21.1	36.0	45.6	51.2	54.5	56.8	58.9	60.6
2007	20.8	35.5	46.0	52.0	55.7	58.5	60.7	62.3
2008	19.1	34.7	45.5	52.0	56.0	58.9	61.0	
2009	19.0	35.6	46.8	53.8	58.0	60.7		
2010	21.9	39.1	50.8	57.2	61.0			
2011	23.2	41.6	53.7	60.2				
2012	23.6	41.7	53.5	Data not available				
2013	24.2	42.6						
2014	24.8							

QUALIFICATION TYPES

- **National total % dropout and graduates for 3 year diplomas in distance tuition**

NATIONAL TOTAL: DISTANCE									
Intake year	DROPOUTS (%)								
(Year 1)	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
2000	70.5	74.0	77.3	77.5	80.1	81.3	80.8	80.1	80.7
2001	67.8	72.4	73.8	77.0	79.4	80.1	79.1	79.7	79.5
2002	58.8	61.9	68.5	72.0	72.1	71.9	72.2	71.6	71.2
2003	60.7	72.3	77.4	77.8	78.0	77.6	77.1	76.3	75.6
2004	66.8	77.0	78.6	78.8	79.6	79.0	78.5	77.5	76.6
2005	61.8	73.6	74.4	75.9	75.9	75.5	75.1	74.1	75.4
2006	63.9	71.5	75.3	76.2	75.9	76.2	75.4	76.4	76.5
2007	55.0	63.6	66.4	67.6	68.5	67.6	69.1	69.5	70.4
2008	54.6	62.4	65.6	68.1	68.1	70.2	70.4	71.6	
2009	43.7	54.6	59.4	60.4	64.0	65.1	66.4		
2010	40.0	53.8	56.7	61.4	62.9	64.0			
2011	40.4	50.4	58.6	61.2	64.4				
2012	36.0	53.6	58.5	62.2					
2013	43.7	56.8	63.7	Data not available					
2014	34.1	46.4							
2015	36.7								

QUALIFICATION TYPES

Intake year	GRADUATES (%)							
(Year 1)	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
2000	3.3	4.9	6.7	7.8	8.9	9.7	10.4	11.1
2001	4.6	6.5	8.0	9.4	10.3	11.2	12.0	12.8
2002	13.2	14.5	16.4	17.4	18.5	19.4	20.2	21.1
2003	6.9	8.1	9.5	10.7	11.8	12.7	14.1	15.2
2004	4.5	5.8	7.6	8.8	10.1	11.4	12.6	13.8
2005	2.2	4.0	5.8	7.8	9.8	11.4	13.0	14.3
2006	2.7	4.4	6.5	8.7	10.6	12.5	13.9	15.3
2007	4.0	7.1	9.9	12.5	15.3	17.6	19.6	21.0
2008	1.5	4.4	7.6	10.9	13.9	16.3	18.2	
2009	2.0	6.4	10.7	14.9	18.5	20.9		
2010	4.0	8.2	13.0	17.5	20.8			
2011	3.8	8.8	14.2	18.7				
2012	2.3	6.5	12.9	Data not available				
2013	2.5	9.5						
2014	6.7							

QUALIFICATION TYPES

- **National total % dropout and graduates for 3 year degrees in contact tuition**

NATIONAL TOTAL: CONTACT									
Intake year	DROPOUTS (%)								
(Year 1)	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
2000	19.7	20.2	23.8	26.7	27.8	28.8	29.3	29.3	29.6
2001	16.4	21.6	25.7	28.5	30.3	31.6	31.9	31.6	31.5
2002	16.2	21.7	24.8	27.8	29.8	30.4	30.6	30.0	29.8
2003	17.5	21.7	25.1	28.5	30.2	30.6	30.2	29.9	30.0
2004	16.2	21.0	24.5	27.1	28.1	28.1	28.0	28.0	27.4
2005	14.8	18.8	21.1	22.7	23.3	23.8	23.9	23.4	23.9
2006	14.7	17.7	19.4	20.4	21.1	21.5	21.2	21.5	21.4
2007	14.0	17.2	18.0	19.8	20.7	20.8	21.4	21.3	21.5
2008	13.1	16.2	17.4	18.3	18.9	19.5	19.6	19.7	
2009	16.5	19.2	20.5	20.8	22.1	22.4	22.4		
2010	14.1	17.5	18.2	19.6	20.0	20.2			
2011	13.8	16.3	18.3	19.3	19.8				
2012	13.1	17.6	18.8	19.3					
2013	15.3	18.5	17.9	Data not available					
2014	15.3	16.9							
2015	11.8								

QUALIFICATION TYPES

Intake year	GRADUATES (%)							
(Year 1)	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
2000	25.7	44.6	55.2	60.1	62.9	64.3	65.2	66.1
2001	26.2	43.3	53.2	58.0	60.3	61.9	62.9	63.5
2002	26.4	44.2	54.7	59.4	61.9	63.2	64.2	65.0
2003	25.4	43.7	53.6	58.5	60.9	62.4	63.4	64.3
2004	26.6	44.8	55.6	60.3	62.9	64.4	65.6	66.4
2005	29.4	49.0	59.8	64.8	67.5	69.0	70.1	71.0
2006	29.6	49.7	61.4	66.7	69.5	71.4	72.6	73.7
2007	28.1	48.2	60.8	66.6	69.8	71.7	73.0	73.9
2008	29.1	49.9	62.6	68.8	71.8	73.6	74.9	
2009	25.0	45.6	58.4	64.7	68.2	70.3		
2010	27.9	49.4	62.4	68.4	71.6			
2011	28.6	50.2	63.3	68.9				
2012	29.1	50.4	63.1	Data not available				
2013	30.4	51.7						
2014	31.1							

QUALIFICATION TYPES

- **National total % dropout and graduates for 3 year degrees in distance tuition**

NATIONAL TOTAL: DISTANCE									
Intake year	DROPOUTS (%)								
(Year 1)	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
2000	36.0	45.2	51.5	55.6	59.2	60.8	63.7	64.4	64.8
2001	32.3	45.6	52.5	57.6	60.8	63.7	64.7	65.6	65.7
2002	39.9	52.9	60.7	64.5	67.9	69.6	70.5	70.6	71.0
2003	35.1	50.7	58.2	63.4	66.5	67.8	67.8	68.1	68.7
2004	37.8	51.0	58.3	62.2	64.6	65.2	66.0	66.6	65.9
2005	36.3	52.6	58.2	61.0	62.5	64.4	65.6	64.5	65.7
2006	39.1	49.8	54.6	57.2	59.1	60.7	59.6	61.8	62.7
2007	38.9	47.3	52.6	55.4	57.9	57.1	60.2	61.1	62.5
2008	36.4	46.0	50.1	53.8	53.8	57.5	58.9	60.3	
2009	29.3	41.8	47.8	48.6	53.5	55.0	57.5		
2010	31.8	44.1	47.1	53.2	55.5	58.6			
2011	34.3	40.8	49.1	53.2	56.8				
2012	28.8	42.6	48.1	52.9					
2013	31.6	44.0	52.0	Data not available					
2014	26.4	38.3							
2015	28.7								

QUALIFICATION TYPES

Intake year	GRADUATES (%)							
(Year 1)	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
2000	3.4	7.9	12.5	15.7	17.8	19.6	21.5	22.7
2001	2.5	6.0	10.2	13.5	15.9	17.8	19.6	21.4
2002	3.2	6.1	9.6	12.0	14.0	15.8	17.1	18.3
2003	2.1	5.1	8.6	11.5	13.9	15.9	17.7	19.0
2004	1.7	5.1	8.4	11.8	14.4	16.5	18.3	20.2
2005	1.5	5.0	9.6	13.0	15.8	17.8	20.0	21.6
2006	2.2	6.8	11.3	15.0	17.7	20.3	23.0	24.9
2007	2.0	6.6	11.5	15.1	19.1	22.1	24.5	26.6
2008	2.5	7.2	11.8	16.7	20.9	24.0	26.7	
2009	2.8	7.8	13.6	19.0	23.1	26.6		
2010	2.0	7.5	13.6	18.3	22.6			
2011	1.7	7.9	13.9	19.5				
2012	1.9	7.7	14.6					
2013	3.4	12.9						
2014	4.2							

Data not available

QUALIFICATION TYPES

- **National total % dropout and graduates for undergraduate degrees with a minimum duration of 4 years or more (Contact)**

NATIONAL TOTAL: CONTACT									
Intake year	DROPOUTS (%)								
(Year 1)	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
2000	21.0	25.3	30.2	32.9	32.7	33.8	34.3	33.9	33.8
2001	19.8	26.7	30.1	32.7	34.6	35.5	34.9	34.9	34.1
2002	17.2	24.1	26.6	30.2	31.9	31.9	31.6	30.8	30.4
2003	16.7	22.7	25.0	28.3	29.5	29.5	28.9	28.8	28.3
2004	13.6	18.6	21.8	23.8	24.8	24.7	24.4	24.5	24.0
2005	12.5	16.9	19.6	21.6	22.1	22.4	22.4	21.8	22.0
2006	13.4	17.2	19.0	20.3	21.2	21.3	20.7	21.0	20.4
2007	12.7	15.7	17.6	19.5	20.0	19.9	20.0	19.8	19.5
2008	11.1	14.0	15.6	17.2	17.4	18.2	17.8	17.8	
2009	12.8	15.6	16.8	18.0	19.2	19.1	18.9		
2010	11.3	13.9	15.4	17.4	18.1	18.2			
2011	10.5	13.0	15.0	16.5	16.9				
2012	9.8	13.7	15.5	16.5					
2013	10.4	13.5	14.3						
2014	10.9	12.2							
2015	9.3								

Data not available

QUALIFICATION TYPES

Intake year	GRADUATES (%)						
(Year 1)	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
2000	33.3	44.3	52.5	55.9	57.8	59.2	60.3
2001	32.0	43.5	51.5	54.8	56.7	58.0	59.1
2002	33.8	47.1	55.0	58.4	60.5	61.9	62.9
2003	35.4	49.2	57.5	61.1	63.0	64.3	65.3
2004	37.6	53.4	63.0	66.8	68.8	69.9	70.8
2005	39.5	56.2	65.5	69.2	71.0	72.4	73.3
2006	39.7	55.9	65.7	69.7	71.8	73.5	74.6
2007	40.3	57.3	66.7	71.0	73.3	74.7	75.8
2008	42.2	59.6	69.3	73.6	75.7	77.2	
2009	40.7	57.8	67.5	72.0	74.3		
2010	43.0	59.9	69.8	73.9			
2011	44.1	61.1	71.1	Data not available			
2012	45.4	61.6					
2013	45.9						

QUALIFICATION TYPES

- **National total % dropout and graduates for undergraduate degrees with a minimum duration of 4 years or more (Distance)**

NATIONAL TOTAL: DISTANCE									
Intake year	DROPOUTS (%)								
(Year 1)	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
2000	35.9	52.1	58.4	63.6	66.8	68.7	70.1	70.1	71.5
2001	43.0	53.6	59.6	64.2	66.4	68.7	69.7	69.9	69.5
2002	33.8	47.2	52.9	56.5	59.5	60.5	61.0	60.9	60.8
2003	43.3	54.5	61.1	62.6	65.2	65.2	64.1	63.7	63.1
2004	40.8	50.8	56.8	60.1	62.0	62.2	62.4	62.5	60.8
2005	29.5	43.2	48.1	51.0	52.9	54.3	55.4	54.0	56.0
2006	45.3	52.9	57.4	58.7	58.4	58.8	57.9	59.3	59.9
2007	41.8	49.8	51.6	53.0	53.9	52.8	54.6	55.3	55.4
2008	40.2	46.9	47.8	48.1	48.2	50.4	49.7	49.9	
2009	31.3	39.7	42.1	42.4	46.3	47.0	46.9		
2010	28.3	38.5	40.2	44.8	45.6	46.1			
2011	30.6	37.3	44.3	46.0	47.6				
2012	27.8	42.1	45.1	47.8					
2013	35.2	43.7	47.1	Data not available					
2014	29.4	38.6							
2015	30.9								

QUALIFICATION TYPES

Intake year	GRADUATES (%)						
(Year 1)	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
2000	11.8	15.4	17.5	19.2	20.6	21.5	22.4
2001	7.9	11.4	14.5	16.7	18.0	19.8	21.2
2002	18.9	22.1	24.7	26.5	28.0	29.3	30.8
2003	10.5	14.1	17.9	20.1	22.0	23.7	25.5
2004	9.3	13.7	17.1	20.2	22.3	24.2	26.3
2005	8.5	13.9	18.6	22.2	25.1	27.9	30.7
2006	5.6	10.8	15.7	20.0	23.4	26.6	29.3
2007	5.8	11.6	17.9	22.9	27.3	31.0	33.6
2008	6.8	13.9	22.0	28.3	33.5	37.5	
2009	7.4	16.7	25.4	32.2	36.9		
2010	6.2	16.1	26.6	33.6			
2011	5.4	16.3	26.5	Data not available			
2012	4.0	15.2					
2013	6.1						

QUALIFICATION TYPES

- It is noted that students entering degree studies have better throughput rates than their counterparts entering 3 year diploma and the students entering degree studies of 4 or more years outperform their counterparts entering 3 year degree studies.
- The 4 or more year degrees include programmes such as law, engineering and medicine. Competition for places are high and students with high level results in their school leaving qualifications are accepted into these programmes.
- It is noted that the throughput rates of the African and Coloured students are markedly lower than that of their Indian and White counterparts and as a result this is of major concern to the department. This is a major transformation issue for the system.

SPECIFIC QUALIFICATIONS

- The cohort study also covers three specific professional and/or technical qualifications, the Bachelor of Education, the engineering qualifications and the MBChB.
- The MBChB qualification has very high throughput rates when compared to all other qualifications. We still need to expand this study to look at the throughput by population group and gender, however it is not expected that the results of such a study would differ significantly as it is recognised that the entry requirements for the MBChB are demanding and only school leavers with excellent school leaving results gain access.
- In comparision the Bachelor of Education, which is the four year professional qualification for teaching, shows a much lower throughput rate than the MBChB. Furthermore it is showing a decline in year 4 between 2000 and 2013 and this needs to analysed further.

SPECIFIC QUALIFICATIONS

- The engineering qualifications are broken into 3 year qualifications (mainly diplomas) and the 4 year professional qualification. The 3 year qualifications have a much lower throughput rate than the 4 year professional qualification. All cohorts in the 4 year professional engineering degree, while having a lower throughput rate than their counterparts in the MBChB, have higher throughput rates than those of the Bachelor of Education.
- Students in the life and physical science cohorts outperform their counterparts in the general 3 year qualifications but have significantly lower throughput rates than students in the 4 year life and physical science degrees.
- These cohort studies are limited because they do not provide disaggregated data by mode of delivery, population group and gender. Such work is necessary to really identify blockages to success and to ascertain effective interventions to work towards improved success and efficiencies in the system.

NSFAS

- **National total % dropout and graduates for students who received DHET NSFAS funding (contact and distance)**

NATIONAL TOTAL: CONTACT + DISTANCE									
Intake year	DROPOUTS (%)								
(Year 1)	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
2005	16.0	22.4	25.9	28.6	29.5	29.5	29.1	27.8	28.2
2006	17.1	22.0	23.8	26.5	27.2	27.5	26.3	26.8	26.1
2007	17.4	20.6	22.0	25.1	26.4	26.2	26.6	26.0	25.9
2008	14.6	18.5	20.0	23.0	23.8	24.9	24.6	24.3	
2009	14.1	17.9	19.4	21.2	23.3	23.7	23.2		
2010	12.4	16.8	16.6	20.8	22.5	22.0			
2011	13.3	17.2	19.2	22.4	22.8				
2012	12.0	18.6	19.3	20.3					
2013	13.2	17.1	14.4	Data not available					
2014	13.0	12.9							
2015	8.8								

NSFAS

Intake year	GRADUATES (%)							
(Year 1)	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
2005	13.4	33.4	46.3	52.9	56.7	59.1	61.2	63.0
2006	13.9	34.6	47.3	54.2	58.3	61.0	63.3	65.2
2007	13.1	33.4	46.9	54.3	59.0	62.1	64.5	66.2
2008	13.2	34.4	48.7	56.6	61.2	64.4	66.6	
2009	14.6	36.6	50.8	58.9	63.5	66.4		
2010	17.1	39.5	54.1	61.9	66.2			
2011	15.6	38.3	52.8	60.4				
2012	16.4	39.8	54.3	Data not available				
2013	18.1	45.0						
2014	20.4							

NSFAS COHORT STUDY

- Two studies were undertaken, one looking at DHET NSFAS funding and the other the Thuthuka funding. In comparing the dropouts and throughputs of the students who received DHET NSFAS funding with the students who received Thuthuka funding, a stark difference is noted.
- 30% of the students in the 2007 cohort who received Thuthuka funding had graduated after 3 years of study, 75.8% after 6 years of study, and 81.2% after 10 years of study. These throughput rates were slightly lower than in those of the 2006 cohort. In comparison 54.3% of students in the 2007 cohort who received DHET NSFAS funding had graduated after 6 years of study, and 66.2% after 10 years of study, up from the 2006 cohort.
- This study has shown that the throughput of students who as some point in time received financial assistance have performed better than the national cohort.

CONCLUSION

- The report shows that there is a marked difference in the dropout and throughput rates in contact and distance education and highlights the need for further research to properly understand the reasons behind the very poor chances of success for students registered on distance education programmes. If it is contemplated that in order to reach the NDP targets of 2030, distance and open learning could be utilised to grow enrolments in the system, interventions will need to be identified that will ensure that access to higher education is matched with a reasonable chance of success.
- Transformation imperatives in the system are also challenged by the differential success according population groups, with African and Coloured students fairing very poorly when compared to their White and Indian counterparts.
- The differential performance by gender, with female students outperforming male students in all undergraduate cohort studies has also been highlighted in the study.

CONCLUSION

- In most instances there has been an improvement in the throughput rates and it should be noted that a number of interventions have been implemented by the Department and other role-players to address the high dropout and low throughput rates in recent years. These interventions range from:
  - increased NSFAS funding;
  - significant investments in infrastructure, including student housing;
  - foundation provision to enable extended programmes;
  - teaching development grants (phasing out December 2017) directed towards activities to enhance student success, for example the first year experience programmes implemented by many universities; academic development programmes and tutorial and mentoring programmes;7
  - going forward in 2018 the University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG).

CONCLUSION

- Further analysis is required for the population and gender cohort studies by mode of tuition.
- The specific studies on the qualifications will also be analysed further by mode of tuition
- The specific studies by the classification of educational subject matter, that is by Business and Commerce, Humanities, etc will also need to be analysed by mode of tuition.
- Going forward it has been agreed that the DHET and CHE colleagues will meet to engage further on the studies to ensure that our results are as close as possible taking into account differences in methodology.

THANK YOU