

Baseline Study on Students' Perceptions and Attitudes towards the HWSETA Post-graduate Research Bursary Programme (*Mpho Phago – Researcher; and Sikhumbuzo Gcabashe Reviewer*)

The Health and Welfare Sector Training Authority (HWSETA) Postgraduate Bursary Programme under review was implemented in 2013. The postgraduate bursary programme has three aims. Firstly, to increase the volume of research conducted in the health and welfare sector. Secondly, the programme seeks to increase the number of researchers in the health and welfare sector. Finally, the bursary programme aims to build academic and research partnerships with various universities.

The main objective of the study was to determine learners' perceptions and experiences towards the HWSETA Post-Graduate Research Bursary Programme.

The study used a concurrent mixed methods approach (i.e. questionnaires and in-depth interviews). The participants included bursary recipients and bursary programme implementers at the HWSETA and the respective universities.

The bursary programme was implemented according to the Discretionary Grant Policy of the HWSETA. However, there was no groundwork conducted to assess what the bursary programme aims to achieve and how best to implement and achieve the goals of the bursary programme. More effort needs to be made to achieve the equity and development imperatives. Advertising should continue at a national level using print media. However, the advertisement should also be released simultaneously to the universities.

Students who participated in the study felt strongly that the bursary programme is one of the important contributors to addressing skills and research gaps, especially among the disadvantaged communities.

This baseline study and the bursary programme directly contribute to national policy and the strengthening of the link between SETAs, Government policy objectives and the universities.

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The full study is available at: http://www.hwseta.org.za/?page_id=474

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