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**AN EVALUATION OF HWSETA GRADUATE INTERNSHIP  
PROGRAMME**

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The views expressed in this report are that of the Author and not that of the HWSETA.  
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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>APP</b>	<b>Annual Performance Plan</b>
<b>CATI</b>	<b>Computer Aided Telephonic Interviews</b>
<b>DHET</b>	<b>Department of Higher Education and Training</b>
<b>DOL</b>	<b>Department of Labour</b>
<b>ETQA</b>	<b>Education and Training Quality Assurance</b>
<b>HWSETA</b>	<b>Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority</b>
<b>MERP</b>	<b>Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting Plan</b>
<b>MOA</b>	<b>Memorandum of Agreement</b>
<b>NSDS</b>	<b>National Skills Development Strategy</b>
<b>QCTO</b>	<b>Quality Council for Trades and Occupations</b>
<b>RIME</b>	<b>Research Information Monitoring and Evaluation</b>
<b>SAQA</b>	<b>South African Qualifications Authority</b>
<b>SDP</b>	<b>Skills Development Planning</b>
<b>SDSC</b>	<b>Skill Development Standing Committee</b>
<b>SQMR</b>	<b>SETA Quarterly Monitoring Report</b>
<b>SSP</b>	<b>Sector Skills Plan</b>
<b>TBA</b>	<b>Theory-Based Approach</b>
<b>UIF</b>	<b>Unemployment Insurance Fund</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### BACKGROUND

This programme pursues skill development by providing workplace experience to unemployed graduates who have already acquired their qualifications. The HWSETA contracted a number of varied organizations in the health and welfare sector to broaden the workplace capacity as the practical training space of graduates through an internship. Considering the specific focus to the unemployed graduates, the main goal of this programme is to increase unemployed graduate's prospects of finding employment. The programme is informed by the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) III (2012, p.5) which promotes the work-based learning programmes such as internship "*to facilitate the journey individuals make from school, college or university, or even from periods of unemployment, to sustained employment and in-work progression.*". To this end, the evaluation study seeks to assess the appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness of the HWSETA graduate internship programme towards achieving its goal as it relates to HWSETA Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting Plan (MERP) and NSDS III.

### OBJECTIVES

The study pursued three objectives when evaluating the HWSETA graduate internship programme. These objectives were aligned with the evaluation criteria as follows:

- 1) **Appropriateness:** the study sought to establish the extent to which the programme's conception and planning speaks to the strategy of the HWSETA, its stakeholders and beneficiaries;
- 2) **Efficiency:** the study sought to measure the extent to which the programme was able to use allocated resources and time to produce outputs;
- 3) **Effectiveness:** the study sought to determine the extent to which set targets of the programme were achieved across the results chain using predefined standards of the organization.

## **DESIGN OF THE EVALUATION**

The evaluation study adopted Theory-Based Approach (TBA) to explicitly bring forth the programme's theory and logic. A variety of research methods, such as the mixed method, was used to collect and analyze data.

## **RESULTS**

The HWSETA internship programme was found to be appropriate to the HWSETA strategic goals, stakeholders, and beneficiaries. The programme performed well against transformative and equity indicators for the race, gender, age, and support for the rural. This highlights the responsiveness of HWSETA graduate internship programme, as an intervention, in redressing inequities linked to class, race, gender, and age as identified in NSDS III.

Concerning efficiency, the findings illustrate that a gap exists between planning and implementation. On average in each financial year, the programme was delayed by seven months. The latter implies the programme was implemented inefficiently. However, findings showed a statistical significance in the difference of means in duration between financial year 2012/13 and 2015/16. The implication of this finding is that the decrease in overall duration is not by chance but due to mechanisms associated with the improvements in processes and activities of the programme.

The gap between planning and implementation from inefficiency affected the level of delivery (outputs) for this programme. An average of 50% (1109) of graduates on internships completed the programme from the entire population enrolled (2238) against the standard of success indicator at 80%. This constitutes implementation failure because the performance level of the programme was below-set standard thus not effective.



In terms of results (outcomes), the study found that 57% (324) of graduates in the sample (572) tracked for the tracer study found employment. Of all tracked graduates (572) that had entered and completed the internship programme in the NSDS III sample, 57% found employment, 20% furthered their studies, with only 12% that volunteered post the programme. This finding indicates that more than half of the graduates in the NSDS III sample progressed mainly to employment. While this performance of the programme accounts for more than half of learners finding employment in the sample it is far below the standard of success set at 80% employment rate. The performance of the programme in influencing outcomes (i.e. employment) beyond the intervention was not effective.

Nonetheless, the contribution of the programme towards the outcomes signals that improvement in efficiency and implementation performance could lead to better outcomes. This was evident from the findings that focused on those who found employment. Of the 324 graduates in the NSDS III sample that found employment after completing an internship programme:

- 70% (225) were employed on a permanent contract
- 75% (243) of graduates in the NSDS III sample found employment in the public sector
- 68% (220) of graduates were absorbed to employment by the same host employer organization that had provided the work placement for internship
- 86% (279) of graduates found employment in an occupation aligned to the qualification they had obtained
- 46% of graduates were earning R12 800 or below
- More than half (>50%) of the graduates had their employer contributing to either pension, UIF, or medical aid.
- On average, it took each graduate 4 months and 6 days to find employment after programme completion.

- On average, graduates with qualifications in Medical technology (24 days before programme completion) and clinical engineering (18 days after programme completion) found employment in less than a month.
- On average, graduates from Mpumalanga (26 days) and Gauteng (29 days) found employment in less than a month.
- On average, graduates with qualification required by the statutory body to undergo internship found employment 2 months and 24 days earlier than their counterparts
- On average, graduates with a qualification at intermediate level skill found employment 4 months and 18 days earlier than those at the high-level skill. The latter finding was influenced by social sector dynamics.
- On average, graduates with absorbed by the same employer organization found employment 4 months and 6 days earlier than their counterparts

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study established that the HWSETA graduate internship programme is appropriate to the strategy of the HWSETA, its stakeholders and beneficiaries; but is not efficient in its implementation. However, improvement in efficiency is already being observed from one financial to the next. Failure of the programme in achieving the set target (ineffectiveness) is explained by its prioritization of qualifications in the social sector that are not required by the statutory body to undergo an internship. The latter accounts for 84% of the entire sample yet evidence shows that a proportion of 70% graduates from the sample with qualifications in the health sector were employed compared to 55% of those from social sector. It is recommended that unemployed graduates with qualifications from the health sector be prioritized at 80% level from recruitment.

# 1. BACKGROUND TO HWSETA GRADUATE INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

## 1.1. Strategic value and focus of the programme

This programme pursues skill development by providing workplace experience to unemployed graduates who have already acquired their qualifications. The HWSETA contracted a number of varied organizations in the health and welfare sector to broaden the workplace capacity as the practical training space of graduates through an internship. Considering the specific focus to the unemployed graduates, the main goal of this programme is to increase unemployed graduate's prospects of finding employment. The programme is informed by the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) III (2012, p.5) which promotes the work-based learning programmes such as internship *"to facilitate the journey individuals make from school, college or university, or even from periods of unemployment, to sustained employment and in-work progression."*

The graduate internship programme pursues skill development by providing workplace experience to unemployed graduates from universities and TVETs as a response to *"inadequate linkages between institutional and workplace learning...reducing the employability and work readiness of the successful graduates"* (NSDS III 2012, p.6). Thus, the latter is a graduate internship programme that constitutes of students who have already acquired their professional degree qualifications before participating in the programme. It is important to note that the student internships *"which are offered to a person who are enrolled at a tertiary education institution and required practical experience as part of their study programme"* (DPSA 2010, 8) were excluded from this study. Lastly, internships linked to graduate professional development which are *"a requirement for professional registration with professional bodies or councils"* (DPSA 2010, 8) were included in this study.

The HWSETA strategic objective stating, *"fund experiential learning across the sector to ensure work-ready graduates contribute to effective delivery of health and social development services in the strategic period"* (HWSETA APP 2017/18, B-14) characterises internship programme as a strategic programme. The outcomes of

HWSETA graduate internship programme for the unemployed graduates are reported in indicator 5 as “*percentage of qualified unemployed learners [graduates] funded by the HWSETA finding employment within 6 months of completion in the reporting period*” (APP 2015, 14). This indicator ensures accountability for funding through reporting of programme outputs and learning through establishing the outcomes. As such, the contribution of HWSETA graduate internship programmes for the unemployed towards NSDS III outcome 4.2.1 is monitored and evaluated.

## **1.2. Objectives of HWSETA graduate internship programme**

The key objective of the HWSETA graduate internship programme is;

- 1) To enter into partnerships with employer organizations in the health and social development sector to broaden the workplace capacity as the training space of graduates in an internship programme
- 2) To facilitate the placement of unemployed graduates with an employer for a period of 12 months to gain workplace experience in the qualification obtained.
- 3) To contribute towards work-readiness and employability of beneficiaries upon programme completion

## **2. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION STUDY**

### **2.1. Objectives of the evaluation study**

The study pursued three objectives when evaluating the HWSETA graduate internship programme. These objectives were aligned with the evaluation criteria as follows:

- 1) **Appropriateness:** the study sought to establish the extent to which the programme’ conception and planning speaks to the strategy of the HWSETA, its stakeholders and beneficiaries. The assessment will be against the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting Plan (MERP) 2011-2016 derived from the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) III.

- 2) **Efficiency:** the study sought to measure the extent to which the programme was able to use allocated resources and time to produce outputs;
- 3) **Effectiveness:** the study sought to determine the extent to which set targets of the programme were achieved across the results chain using predefined standards of the organization.

## **2.2. Intended users and stakeholders of the evaluation study**

The key intended users of the report are primarily HWSETA and its stakeholders to better account for the programme purpose and its contribution towards outcomes to primary beneficiaries. HWSETA, particularly the Skill Development Programme (SDP) division, would benefit from the report as a feedback mechanism that will assist in the improvement of the programme for the future. Insights from the study will serve as part of the programme's learning about their planning and execution of the project.

## **3. SCOPING OF THE STUDY**

The following sub-sections illustrate how the key evaluation questions, indicators, and data sources were selected in the study. The evaluation approach of the study is also included in this section.

### **3.1. Evaluation questions and criteria of the study**

Evaluation questions shaped the evaluation design of the study. Each result-chain stage had evaluation questions. As a result, the domains of evaluation prioritized by this study consist of planning (design), implementation, and results (outcomes). The evaluation

questions are linked to each of these three programme stages and evaluation criteria as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Evaluation questions of the study by programme stage and evaluation criteria

Programme stage	Evaluation questions	Evaluation Criteria
<p>Planning</p> <p><i>The synergy between national policy, HWSETA strategic objectives, and operational programmes to beneficiaries</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is the programme aligned to national and organizational strategic objectives?</li> <li>▪ Is the programme's conception responding to the needs of policy and beneficiaries?</li> </ul>	<p>Appropriateness/Relevance</p> <p><i>seeks to establish the extent to which the programme' conception and planning speaks to National and organizational strategic objectives and the needs of the learners who were its beneficiaries</i></p>
<p>Implementation</p> <p><i>Inputs/resources to the programme, activities and processes as conversion of inputs/resources to outputs</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is the programme implemented efficiently to meet its planned targets at output level?</li> </ul>	<p>Efficiency</p> <p><i>the extent to which the programme was able to use allocated resources and time to achieve targets</i></p>
<p>Results (outcomes)</p> <p><i>The success of the programme as it relates to performance indicators</i></p>	<p>Did the programme achieve its objectives as reflected through set targets across the results chain?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Were graduates employed six months after the completion of the HWSETA internship programme</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Were graduates absorbed to employment by the host employer organization after programme completion?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Was the employment of graduates aligned to the sector and occupation of the qualification obtained?</i></li> </ul>	<p>Effectiveness</p> <p><i>The degree to which set targets of the programme were achieved across the results chain.</i></p>
<p>Stakeholder engagement and involvement in planning, implementation, and results</p>	<p>Will the programme be able to maintain its operations, services and benefits during its lifetime?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Has the number of employer organization's application to the programme's Expression of Interest (EOI) increased or remained the same in each year?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Has the number of decommissions decreased or remained the same in each year?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Has the number of learners placed within host employer organizations increased or remained the same in each year?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Has the funding value for the programme increased or remained the same in each year?</i></li> </ul>	<p>Sustainability</p> <p><i>Assesses the level of ownership and commitment by all stakeholders in the success of the programme</i></p>

### **3.2. Evaluation Approach**

The evaluation approach used for the study was Theory-Based Approach (TBA) because of its suitability to link processes and activities of the theory of the programme. The implication is that the processes and activities of the programme intervention are logical components interacting as means and ends to realize the claims of the programme theory implicit to design (Public service commission 2008). However, at result (outcome) level, the Pathway Approach was employed for the exploration of graduates in the transition from HWSETA graduate internship programme to employment, unemployment, furthering studies/training, and volunteering. This was important to understand graduate progression from programme completion to the labour market.

TBA was primarily embedded in the quantitative research paradigm for quantifying data to generalize about the outcomes of HWSETA internship programmes for the unemployed graduates. The evaluation design of the study was cross-sectional since it focused on cross-sectional data collected through tracer studies in 2015 and 2016 from the sample of graduates reported as completions between the financial year 2011 and 2016 (only including quarter 1 and 2 of 2016). The use of TBA requires that the intervention is framed in the results framework after the theory of change and logic has been clearly defined. The latter is preceded by problem analysis from which an objective tree is formulated to inform programme theory and logic (theory of action).

### **3.3. Problem analysis**

The HWSETA SDP divisional submissions to the Skill Development Standing Committee (SDSC) and HWSETA board display the rationale behind problem analysis as the premise of HWSETA graduate internship programme as an intervention (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: The problem analysis of HWSETA graduate internship programme for the unemployed

Problem Level	Problem statements
CONSEQUENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“One of the key challenges facing young graduates is making a smooth transition from the higher learning environment into the real world of work (HWSETA submission 2015, 1)...</i></li> </ul>
CORE PROBLEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Lack of workplace experience as recruitment requirements stipulate this even in the most junior position... [due to] higher employer expectations as they [graduates] are expected to ‘hit the ground running’ with very little support in the workplace” (HWSETA submission 2015, 1)</i></li> </ul>
ROOT PROBLEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Most curriculums do not include the workplace experience component” (HWSETA SDSC 2013, 1).</i></li> </ul>

In essence, the problem analysis posits that the training and educational institutional setting compromises graduate at curriculum development. Thus, the intervention of internship programme *“bridging graduates that have completed a tertiary qualification from an institution into a workplace.”* (NYDA 2014, 10), is a response that addresses the core problem rather than the root problem.

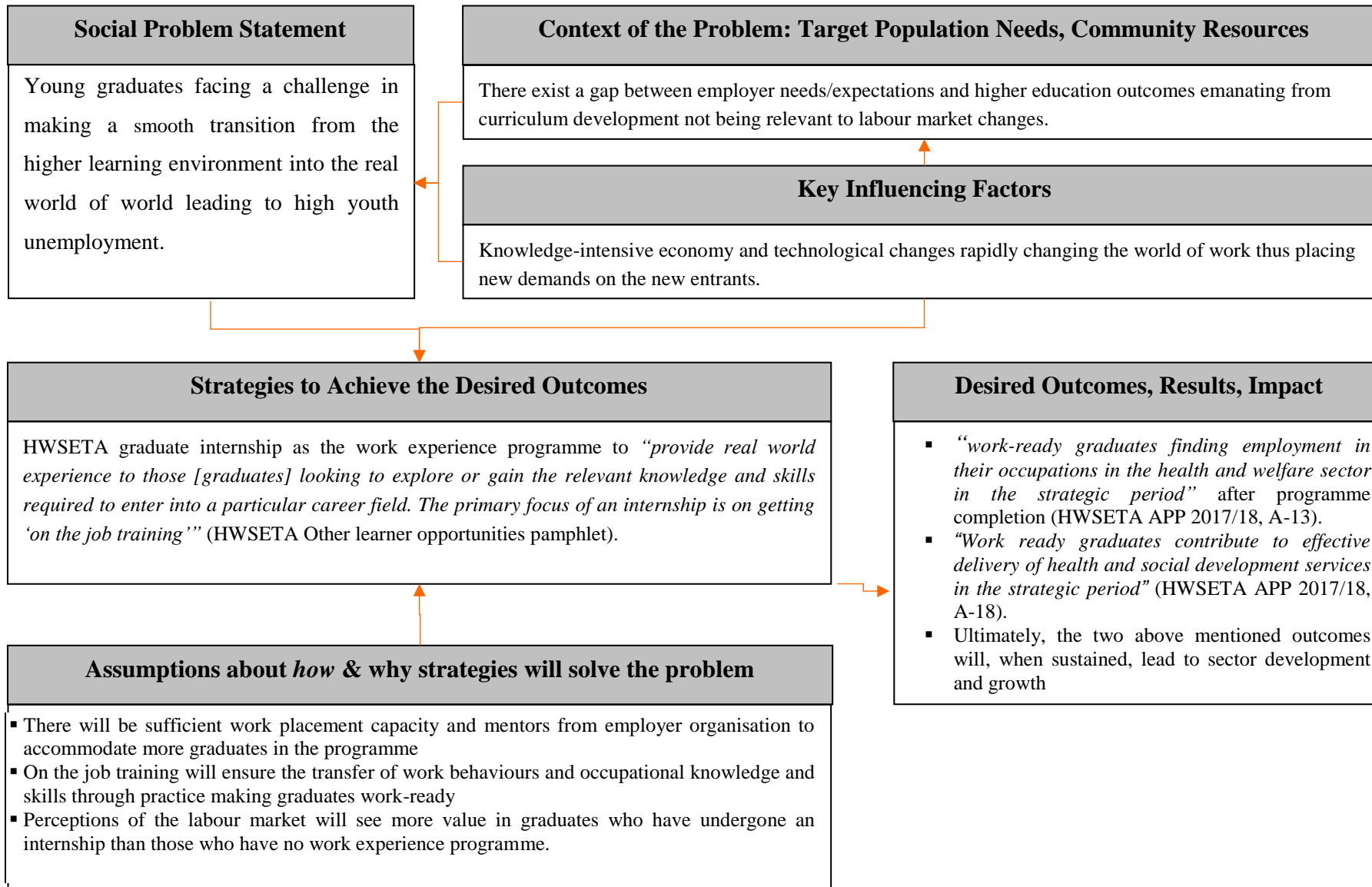
### **3.4. Theory of change and logic of the HWSETA graduate internship programme**

By definition, *“the theory of change is about the central processes or drivers by which change comes about...theory of action [program logic] explains how programs or other interventions are constructed to activate these theories of change”* (Patricia and Funnell (2011, xix). The implication is that theory of change derives its solution from the core issue of the problem identified.



The HWSETA graduate internship programme, as an intervention, is strategically aligned to HWSETA goal 5 stating “*encouragement of the use of workplace-based skills development in the health and social development sector*” (HWSETA APP 2017/18, A-11). According to the Department of labour (DOL pamphlet), internship programme builds up graduates with work behaviors (attributes) and occupational skills through practical application of theoretical knowledge on-the-job training. Griesel and Parker (2009, 1) concur with the latter definition of an internship programme and its contribution towards increased employability “*in the sense that they [graduates] have the attributes, capabilities and dispositions to work successfully*”. Thus, implicit to the HWSETA graduate internship programme theory is the claim that graduates would acquire the necessary attributes and occupational practical skills through their work-based experience leading to employment in the labour market. Figure 4 below shows assumptions and drivers of the HWSETA internship programme’s theory of change.

Figure 1: Assumptions and key influencing factors of HWSETA graduate internship programme's theory of change



### **Theory of Change**

HWSETA graduate internship programme will provide a workplace experience to young graduates against their qualification obtained building their work behaviours and occupational competence through practical application of theoretical knowledge on-the-job training. This will result in work/job readiness of graduates increasing their chances of finding employment. The employment of these young graduates after completing their programme will see them being directly involved in the provision of health and social development services. Thus adding value through their acquired work behaviours and occupational competence contributing towards effective delivery service. The will translate to productivity in the economic activities of the sector and its development.

Adapted from: <http://www.setoolbelt.org/resources/1998>

### **3.5. Results framework: results chain and logframe**

World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group (2012, 7) defines a results framework as

An explicit articulation (graphic display, matrix, or summary) of the different levels, or chains, of results expected from a particular intervention—project, program, or development strategy... [it] captures the essential elements of the logical and expected cause-effect relationships among inputs, outputs, intermediate results or outcomes, and impact.

The results framework is descriptive and operating as an analytical tool integrating the planning, execution, and evaluation of a program. As such, it anticipates external factors while accounting for logical relationships through sequential processes leading to specific results of the programme (Norad 1999, 99). See Table 3 below.

Table 3: Results framework of HWSETA graduate internship programme for the unemployed graduates

RESULTS CHAIN	RESULTS FRAMEWORK			
	Indicator of success	Data sources	Assumption	Risks & Mitigation
<u>IMPACT</u> Health and welfare sectoral development and growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ % of health and welfare sector contribution to GDP</li> <li>▪ Satisfaction levels of the public by health and social development services sector</li> <li>▪ Increased household livelihoods of the beneficiaries</li> </ul>	HWSETA SSP & STATS SA  HWSETA impact assessment database		
<u>OUTCOME</u> Increased employment of graduates from HWSETA graduate internship programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Percentage of graduates previously funded by HWSETA in an internship programme finding employment in the reporting period</li> </ul>	Tracer Study database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employment meeting basic conditions of employment as per Labour employment Act</li> <li>▪ Employment of the graduates is sustained within health and social development sector on long-term basis</li> <li>▪ That there will be reliable contact details of beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shifting of graduates to other professions or occupations outside qualification obtained and internship completed</li> <li>▪ The latter could be mitigated by enforcing retainment policies across the sector.</li> </ul>
<u>OUTPUT</u> Increased number of work-ready graduates from completion of internship with qualifications in health and social development sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number of unemployed graduates funded by HWSETA completing an internship programme in the reporting period</li> </ul>	HWSETA SQMR database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On the job training transfers work behaviours and occupational knowledge and skills to unemployed graduates through practice making graduates work-ready thus increasing their chances of finding employment</li> <li>▪ Standards of mentoring graduates of good quality and uniform across host employers</li> <li>▪ Employers in the labour market will see the value-add in graduates who have undergone an internship than those who have no work experience programme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Market may prefer graduates with an internship from a particular host employer to others. Thus, consistent monitoring and evaluation of graduate attributes from different host employers should be conducted to ensure uniformity prior to programme completion.</li> </ul>

RESULTS CHAIN	RESULTS FRAMEWORK			
	Indicator of success	Data sources	Assumption	Risks & Mitigation
<p><u>ACTIVITIES</u></p> <p>Conduct recruitment &amp; placement of unemployed graduates with host employer organisations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of unemployed graduates recruited and funded by HWSETA internship programme in the reporting period</li> </ul>	<p>HWSETA SQMR database</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is sufficient work placement capacity and mentors from employer organisation to accommodate unemployed graduates and utilize all budgeted funds in the programme</li> <li>Harmony and cooperation between HWSETA, graduates, and host employers in complying with MOA conditions exists and is sustained.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MOA conditions may not be adhered to sufficiently or timely. Thus monitoring should be on continuous basis using indicators.</li> </ul>
<p><u>INPUTS</u></p> <p>Approved funding of HWSETA internship programme by HWSETA APP/Board/Exco</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value (Rands) of the APP allocated budget to HWSETA internship programme in the strategic period</li> <li>Number of approved HWSETA Board submissions of HWSETA internship programme in the strategic period</li> <li>Number of MoAs for the HWSETA internship programme as assurance of committed funds</li> </ul>	<p>APP documents, SDP and Finance division databases</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All parties honour their commitments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy changes in the HWSETA mandate may occur.</li> <li>This could be mitigated by having continuous communication between DHET and HWSETA about changes in the SETA landscape.</li> </ul>

### **3.6. Data sources and evaluation methods**

The evaluation of the HWSETA graduate internship programme used secondary and primary data. There were three data sources of secondary data. First, performance data of the programme reported in the Seta Quarterly Monitoring Reports (SQMR) databases were used as the masterfile. SQMR is the official performance information-reporting database of HWSETA. The study focused on the unemployed graduates in HWSETA internship programmes reported as both entered (enrolments) and completions between financial year 2011/12 and 2016/17 (only for quarter 1 and 2) to account for NSDS III period. Second, documents from the HWSETA board secretariat such as HWSETA board and SDSC submissions, and MoAs were used as data sources. Third, financial data from finance division accounting for the HWSETA graduate internship programme from financial year 2011/12 to 2016/17 (only for quarter 1 and 2).

In terms of primary data, the quantitative primary data from the telephone tracer study of graduates that had completed HWSETA graduate internship programme was conducted in 2015 and 2016. The graduates tracked had both enrolled and completed their internship programme between 2011 and 2016. As a result, a combination of tracer study 2015 and 2016 sample was reported as NSDS III sample in this report. This primary data were merged with secondary data and analyzed. The following sub-subsections indicate how each data source was used methodically.

### **3.7. Population and sample of the study**

A total number of 2238 graduates were reported on SQMR as entered (enrolled) into HWSETA graduate internship programme since 2011 (see Table 4). The latter represents the graduate placement capacity through host employers in the health and social development sector. Of the graduates entered, 1109 (50%) completed the internship programme. For assessing the outcomes of the HWSETA internship programme, a number of graduates (1109) who completed the internship programme constitute the population of the study. Of the graduates that completed the

programme, 52% (581) were tracked through tracer studies conducted in 2015 and 2016. The latter is referred to as the NSDS III sample of the population.

Table 4: Graduates reported in SQMR as having entered and completed HWSETA graduate internship programme within NSDS III period [2011 to 2016] and tracked in tracer study 2015/16 and 2016/17

<i>financial year reported on SQMR</i>	<i>No. of graduates entered into an internship</i>	<i>No. of graduates who completed an internship</i>	<i>% of graduates who completed an internship</i>	<i>No. of graduates who completed an internship and were tracked</i>	<i>% of graduates who completed an internship and were tracked</i>
<i>financial year 2013/14</i>	291	258	89%	150	58%
<i>financial year 2014/15</i>	405	370	91%	236	64%
<i>financial year 2015/16</i>	1175	478	41%	194	41%
<i>financial year 2016/17</i>	367	3	1%	1	33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2238</b>	<b>1109</b>	50%	581	52%

The tracer studies from 2015/16 and 2016/17 were conducted telephonically through the computer-aided telephonic interviews (CATI) tool to administer a close-ended questionnaire. The latter was crucial to improving accuracy and quality of data collected. Use of Pathway approach allowed for identifying graduate trajectories after programme completion.

### 3.8. Document review and analysis

To understand the context and rationale behind an intervention of HWSETA graduate internship programme, documents such as SDP submissions to HWSETA board and SDSC were used. In addition, documents such as the Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between HWSETA and Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), and financial data from HWSETA finance division were used to determine the scope of the intervention (using annual and NSDS III targets), and resource allocation through funds expended thus far (from 2011 to quart 1& 2 of



2016) by HWSETA. Through document review, controls, targets, and standards were identified and used to measure efficiency and effectiveness of the intervention. The latter is crucial since the conversion of resources from input to output reflects the direct performance of the organization.

#### **4. DESCRIPTIVE FINDINGS**

The analysis accounts for all the commitments that were made for the HWSETA graduate internship programme for the unemployed graduates from financial year 2011/2012 to 2016/17 (quarter 1 and 2 only). This section consists of five subsections relating to key thematic evaluation findings namely planning and design of the programme, efficiency of the programme, and implementation of the programme, programme performance based on outcomes, and patterns and implications of employment as an outcome. The evaluation findings from different data sources will be presented in an integrated manner.

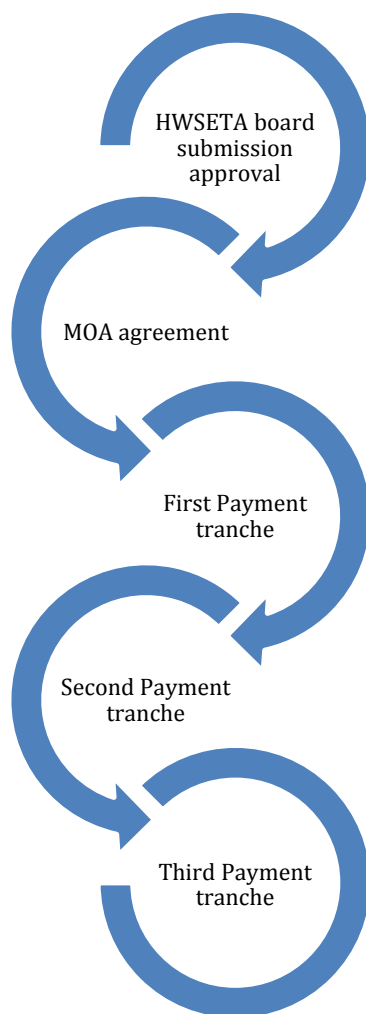
##### **4.1. Planning and design of the programme**

Document review and analysis indicates that the design of HWSETA graduate internship programme for the unemployed graduates is consistent with HWSETA MERP and NSDS III objectives. HWSETA APP 2017/18 (A-18) show that HWSETA internship programme was designed as a direct response to HWSETA strategic goal 5 stating “*encouragement of the use of workplace-based skills development in the health and social development sector*” (HWSETA APP 2017/18, B-32). This goal is aligned with the strategic objectives of NSDS III, HWSETA MERP and SSP. The alignment is premised on work-based training designed to allow access to occupations by graduates as new entrants to the sector and entrenching professionalization and productivity of employees. This shows a harmonious cascading of strategic objectives from national policy to organization policy.

## 4.2. The efficiency of the programme

Transformation of resources from input to outputs ‘final product or services’ takes place through activities and processes. Efficiency measures “*how well resources were utilized [transformed or consumed] in pursuit of the result*” (Ile et al. 2012, 77) through the processes and activities of the programme. This section seeks to establish the extent to which the HWSETA graduate internship programme was able to transform approved allocated economic resources through processes and activities (as shown in Figure 2 below) in pursuit of programme outputs.

Figure 2: Key planning and implementation activities of HWSETA graduate internship programme



The key processes of the HWSETA graduate internship programme constitute of planning (conceptualization and design) and implementation (see Table 5 below). This study, as an evaluation, completes the life cycle of the programme. Conceptualization and design of the programme is best captured through the HWSETA board submission by the SDP division. The latter is specific to the planning of the organization at both conceptual and economic level. As such, the HWSETA board submission approval of the intervention represents a key stage of planning internally. The MOA communicates the logic of the programme operations from design to implementation plan from which targets, timeframes and standards are explicitly stated. The signing of the MOA signals the end process of planning between HWSETA and relevant external stakeholders involved. The first payment tranche preceded by MoA signing indicates the first key stage of the implementation phase. More activities related to implementation are detectable through the second and third payment tranches that require certain activities (milestones) to be satisfied prior to make payment transactions (see Table 5 below).

Table 5: Key planning and implementation process aligned with activities of the HWSETA graduate internship programme application for each financial year of the NSDS III period

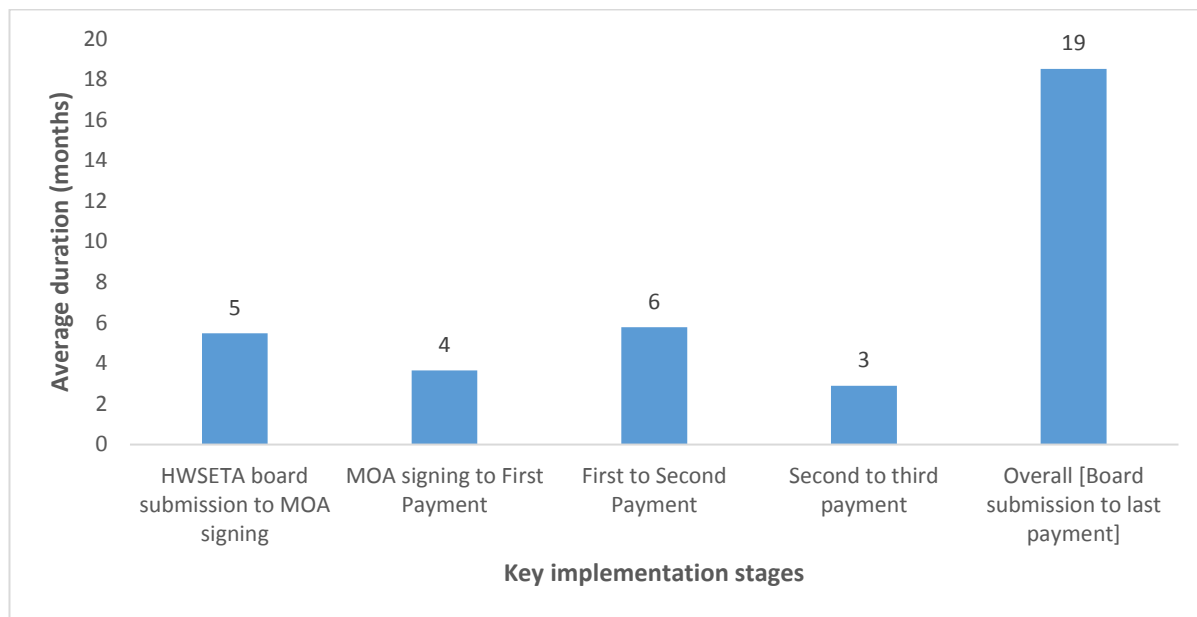
<b>Programme stages</b>	<b>Key Process</b>	<b>Requirements to be fulfilled</b>	<b>Time duration (months) targeted for processes and activities</b>
<b>PLANNING PHASE</b>	HWSETA Board submission approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation and Submission of the programme proposal by SDP to HWSETA board</li> </ul>	1 month  [from conceptualization to submission for approval at HWSETA Exco/Board]
	Signing of MOA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submission and signature of MAO</li> <li>▪ Submission of internship agreements</li> <li>▪ Submission of graduates certificates from Higher Education institution</li> <li>▪ Project plan detailing how placement is going to happen and who the relevant Mentor/s for the graduate will be.</li> </ul>	2 months  [from submission approval to signing the MOA]

Programme stages	Key Process	Requirements to be fulfilled	Time duration (months) targeted for processes and activities
<b>IMPLEMENTATION PHASE</b>	1st payment tranche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Payment processes from SDP to Finance division</li> </ul>	<p>1 month</p> <p>[from signing the MOA to making the actual 1<sup>st</sup> payment tranche]</p>
	2 <sup>nd</sup> payment tranche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submission of employer progress report</li> <li>▪ M&amp;E visit conducted by an HWSETA official before the fourth month after implementation</li> <li>▪ Graduate attendance registers</li> <li>▪ Proof of stipend payment to the graduates</li> </ul>	<p>4 months</p> <p>[from 1<sup>st</sup> Payment to 2<sup>nd</sup> Payment tranche]</p>
	3 <sup>rd</sup> payment tranche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submission of employer progress report</li> <li>▪ Graduate attendance register</li> <li>▪ Proof of stipend payment to the learners</li> </ul>	<p>4 months</p> <p>[from 2<sup>nd</sup> Payment to 3<sup>rd</sup> Payment tranche]</p>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	All requirements	<b>12 months</b>

### 4.3. The time duration between key programme planning and implementation phases

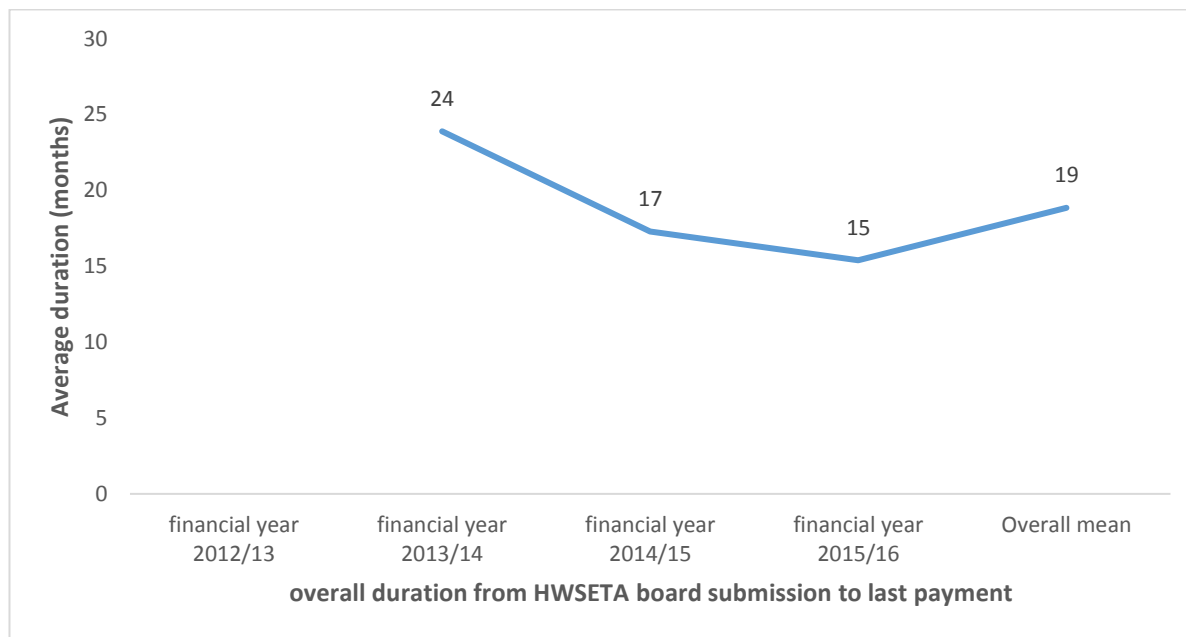
The findings of the study indicate that, on average, it took 19 months to plan and implement the HWSETA graduate internship programme for the unemployed (see Figure 6 below). This is equivalent to one year and seven months. Thus, on average in each financial year, the programme was delayed by seven months. The planning phase of the programme as shown in Table 5 took an average of five months to complete. This meant the planning phase was delayed by two months when considering that it should have been finalized within three months. However, on average, the implementation phase of the programme took nine months as anticipated in the design. The findings illustrate that a gap exists between planning and implementation (between the signing of the MOA and payment of the first tranche) and accounts for four months of delay prior to the implementation phase.

Figure 3: Duration of planning and implementation stages of HWSETA graduate internship programme within the NSDS III period



Findings further illustrate that there was an improvement in the efficiency of the HWSETA graduate internship programme from one financial year to the next. Figure 4 illustrates that while the programme is delayed by seven months on average, a statistical significance in the difference of means was observed between financial year 2012/13 and 2015/16. The implication of this finding is that the decrease in overall duration is not by chance but due to the mechanism associated with the improvements in the processes and activities of the programme. If this progress is maintained, the programme could be completed within 12 months in the next financial years to come.

Figure 4: Overall duration of HWSETA graduate internship programme from board submission to last payment by financial year



Delays in each financial year directly affect the time and number of new unemployed graduates that HWSETA can fund and place with host employer organizations on annual basis. Thus, efficiency does have an influence on the effectiveness of the programme.

#### 4.4. Financial resources expended

Table 6 and 7 below show the total value of funding committed (an allocated budget that was approved) to a graduate internship programme for the unemployed graduates within NSDS III period by HWSETA as R 185 220 000.00. On average, HWSETA allocated R37 million in each financial year of the NSDS III period to a graduate internship programme. Overall, 71% of the total value of funds committed have been utilized (transformed or consumed) thus far by the programme towards the realization of outputs. On average, R26 million (71%) of R37 million committed funds was utilized by the internship programme in each financial year of the NSDS III period. In essence, funds expended in the programme have not yet met a minimum standard of success that is 80%. However, it is the view of this study that 80% of the funds committed would be expended by the end of financial year 2017/18.

Table 6: Value of funding committed, expended, and outstanding as per reports of SDP division since the inception of HWSETA graduate internship programme within NSDS III period

The financial year of MOA commitment	No. of graduates approved for MOA	MOA committed value (Rands)	Expended funds (Rands) reported by SDP division	Balance outstanding according to SDP division	% of the value of funding utilized from MOA approved value (SDP)
2012/13	300	R 18 000 000.00	R 16 900 000.00	R 1 100 000.00	94
2013/14	600	R 33 360 000.00	R 28 305 000.00	R 5 055 000.00	85
2014/15	1167	R 60 960 000.00	R 51 880 000.00	R 9 080 000.00	85
2015/16	580	R 33 540 000.00	R 23 086 000.00	R 10 454 000.00	69
2016/17	667	R 39 360 000.00	R 10 980 000.00	R 28 380 000.00	28
<b>Overall total</b>	<b>3314</b>	<b>R 185 220 000.00</b>	<b>R 131 151 000.00</b>	<b>R 54 069 000.00</b>	<b>71</b>

Table 7: Value of funding committed, expended, and outstanding as per reports of the finance division since the inception of HWSETA graduate internship programme within NSDS III period

The financial year of MOA commitment	No. of graduates approved for MOA	MOA committed value (Rands)	Expended funds (Rands) reported by Finance division	Balance outstanding according to Finance division	% of the value of funding utilized from MOA approved value (Finance)
2012/13	300	R 18 000 000.00	R 16 994 500.00	R 1 005 500.00	94
2013/14	600	R 33 360 000.00	R 28 305 000.00	R 5 055 000.00	85
2014/15	1167	R 60 960 000.00	R 52 330 000.00	R 8 630 000.00	86
2015/16	580	R 33 540 000.00	R 23 581 000.00	R 9 959 000.00	70
2016/17	667	R 39 360 000.00	R 10 980 000.00	R 28 380 000.00	28
<b>Overall total</b>	<b>3314</b>	<b>R 185 220 000.00</b>	<b>R 132 190 500.00</b>	<b>R 28 380 000.00</b>	<b>71</b>

As shown in Table 6 and 7 above, there were differences in funds expended as reported by HWSETA SDP and finance division. Overall, as seen in Table 8 below, the finance division paid 0.79% more than the total value submitted by SDP for HWSETA graduate internship programme within NSDS III period. This difference amounts to a total of R 1 039 500.00. This difference should be accounted for considering that SDP submits information to finance division for disbursement of funds. The factors responsible for exceeding expected funds submitted by SDP should be determined.

Table 8: Difference in funds expended in HWSETA graduate internship programme between SDP and Finance division reports

<b>The financial year of MOA commitment</b>	<b>The difference in funds expended between SDP&amp;Finance division</b>	<b>% Difference in funds expended between SDP&amp;Finance division</b>
<b>2012/13</b>	R 94 500.00	0.56
<b>2013/14</b>	R 0.00	0.00
<b>2014/15</b>	R 450 000.00	0.87
<b>2015/16</b>	R 495 000.00	2.14
<b>2016/17</b>	R 0.00	0.00
<b>Overall total</b>	<b>R 1 039 500.00</b>	<b>0.79</b>

#### **4.5. Programme implementation performance**

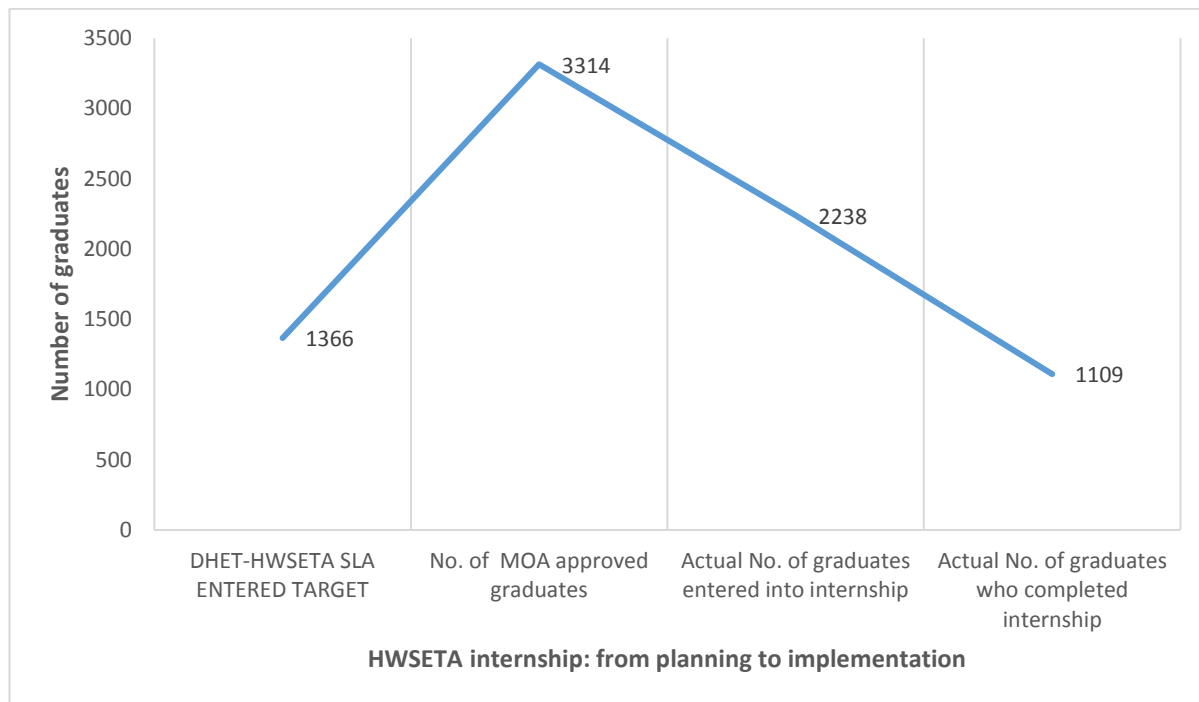
This section assesses the extent to which implementation processes and activities were aligned to programme design as it relates to programme theory and logic, and the extent to which set targets were achieved. The following subsections present findings of the key objectives and other factors that were predetermined as controls for operations.



#### 4.6. Workplace capacity of HWSETA graduate internship programme

Key to the objectives of the HWSETA graduate internship programme was to increase and broaden the workplace capacity as the training space of unemployed graduates. The indicator of the latter is the total number of graduates entered (enrolled) in the HWSETA internship programme within the NSDS III period. Figure 5 shows graduates planned for (targeted) between Department of Higher education and training (DHET) and HWSETA as per Service Level Agreements (SLAs) within the NSDS III period, internal MOA targets by HWSETA, and actual enrolments and completions.

Figure 5: Total number of graduates planned for, entered (enrolled) and completed the HWSETA graduate internship programme within the NSDS III period [2011-2016]



As seen above in Figure 5, DHET-HWSETA SLAs targeted a total number of 1366 unemployed graduates within the NSDS III period. HWSETA was able to establish partnerships with stakeholders in the health and welfare sector with a capacity to place 3314 graduates. The latter represents the workplace capacity that is twice the size of the DHET-HWSETA SLA target. Of the 3314 graduates, only 2238 (68%) were actually entered to the programme mainly due to decommissions of other stakeholders. In this respect, the performance of the programme as it relates to workplace capacity was not effective against MOA set targets since actual enrolments were below the standard of success (80%). Of the 2238 unemployed graduates entered, only 1109

(50%) have completed the programme within the NSDS III period. Therefore, the output rate of the programme's outputs within NSDS III against actual enrolments is 50% and below the standard of success (80%). The latter implies that the programme performance was not effective in producing an adequate number of work-ready graduates.

In contrast, the programme performance may be seen to be highly effective having achieved 64% more of actual enrolments when measured against the DHET-HWSETA SLA target. However, the position of this study disagrees with this view for the following reasons. First, the latter assessment will be misplaced considering that the standard of success is not a number but a percentage. Therefore, graduates completing the programme must account for all those that had been entered (enrolled) irrespective of whether the total number is either below or above the target value. Lastly, it is rational to conduct the assessment and judgment of programme performance against the MOA set targets that informed resources allocation through authorization of the board. As such, accountability for funds expended must be accounted for in its entirety. Importantly, setting high HWSETA internal targets through the MOAs above those of DHET-HWSETA SLAs signal either that HWSETA is competent in its role of facilitating the placement of graduates or targets are set too low for easy achievement showing a false image of success.

#### 4.7. Transformation and equity targets

The HWSETA strategic plans and APPs are consistent in setting transformation and equity targets in the internship programme for unemployed graduates. Findings in Table 9 below show that all transformation and equity targets were overachieved at both enrolment and completion stages of the programme with the exception of 5% set target for people with a disability that was underachieved. However, HWSETA solely funded work experience of learners with disability in financial 2013/14 as a direct intervention. It was the decision of this study not to include the workplace experience of learners with a disability because they were not recruited as graduates since they had not obtained qualifications. Instead, a separate monitoring and evaluation study on this cohort of learners with a disability will be conducted to illustrate the commitment, performance, and results of the intervention.

Table 9: Performance of HWSETA graduate internship programme against transformation and equity imperatives at enrolment and completion stages within the NSDS III period

	Race	Gender	Disability status	Youth	Geography	Sector
<b>Target</b>	85% Black	60% Women	5% People with disability	70% youth	20% from rural areas	80% in health and welfare sector
<b>Enrolment</b>	94% Black	74% Women	0.1% People with disability	92% Youth	43% from rural areas	95% of graduates with qualifications in health and welfare sector
<b>Completion</b>	94% Black	72% Women	0.1% People with disability	90% Youth	43% from rural areas	99.5% of graduates with qualifications in health and welfare sector

Implications of findings shown in Table 9 underscore the responsiveness of HWSETA graduate internship programme as an intervention in redressing inequities linked to class, race, gender, and age as identified in NSDS III to improve access to training and skills development opportunities for better labour market outcomes. With the average age of 28 year-olds unemployed graduates recruited, the programme remains relevant as an intervention that seeks to instill work behaviors and capacitate graduates with occupational competence.

#### **4.8. Recruitment, selection, and placement of the unemployed graduates**

As shown in Table 9 above, 95% of graduates recruited and enrolled in the programme already had qualifications in health and welfare sector. Of the graduates that enrolled and completed (1109) the programme, 75% and 7% of them had obtained a Bachelor of Social work and Bachelor of pharmacy respectively (see Figure 6 below). In essence, HWSETA internship programme for the unemployed graduates is predominantly an intervention in the social sector because 75% of graduates that enrolled and completed the programme had already obtained a qualification in the social sector (see Figure 7 below). Importantly, unemployed graduates recruited had obtained qualifications mainly (90%) in high-level skills. The latter indicates that regardless of skill level, work behaviors and on-the-job-training remains crucial to the labour market particularly in the social sector. Lastly, the targeting of graduates with qualifications predominantly in the health and welfare sector (>95%) makes the intervention more focused. The latter implies that the returns on investment will be localized within the health and welfare sector.

Figure 6: Distribution of graduates across the population and sample of those who entered and completed the internship programme within the NSDS III period by qualification

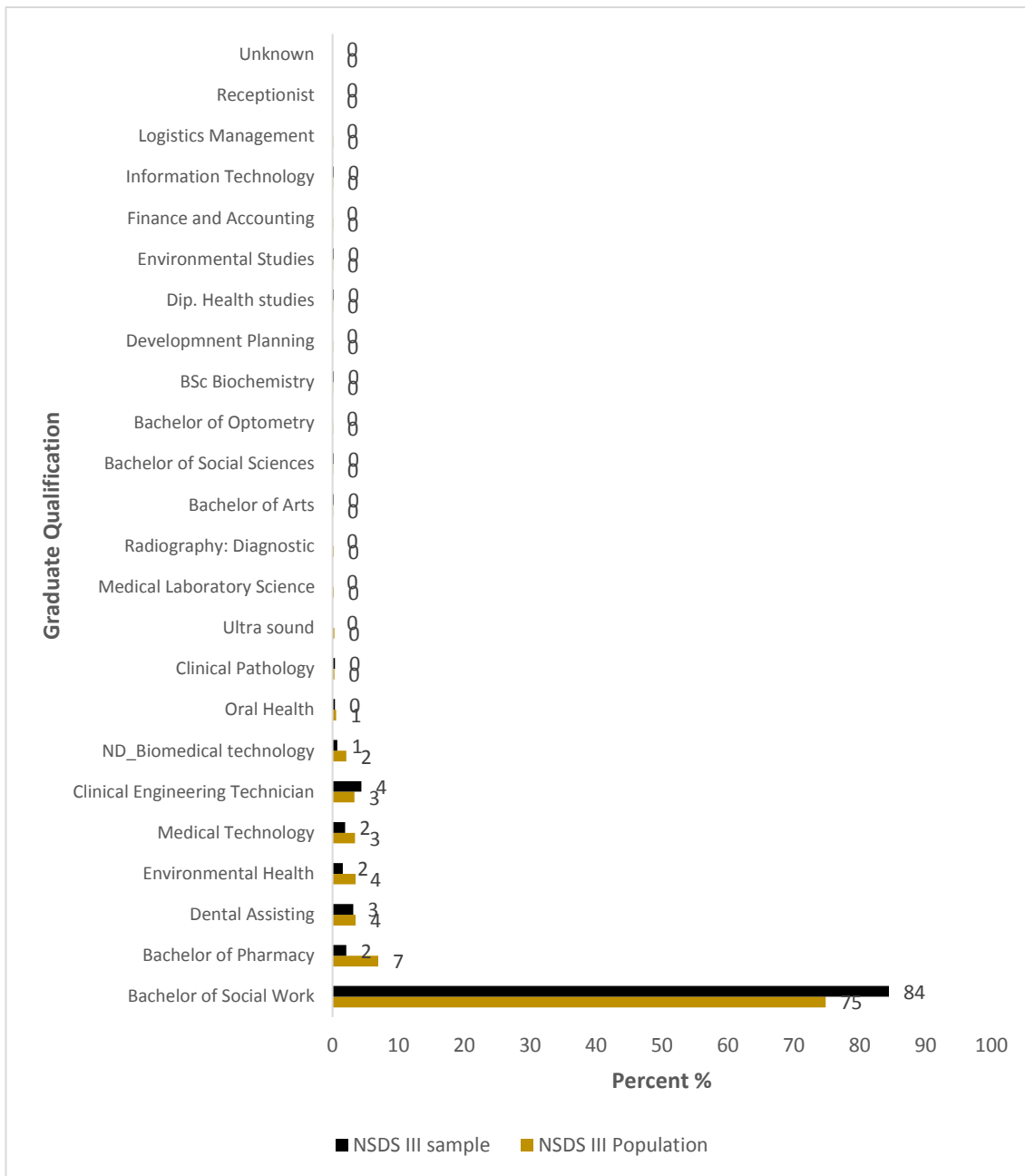


Figure 7: Distribution of graduates across the population and sample of those who entered and completed the internship programme within the NSDS III period by qualification sector

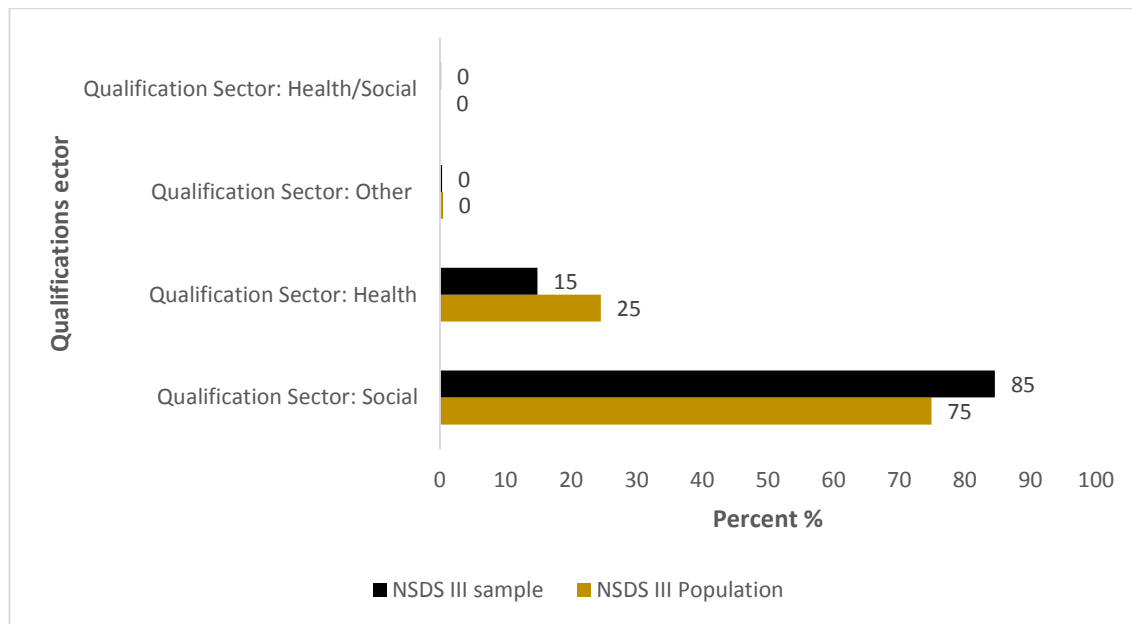


Figure 8: Distribution of graduates across the population and sample of those who entered and completed the internship programme within the NSDS III period by qualification skill level

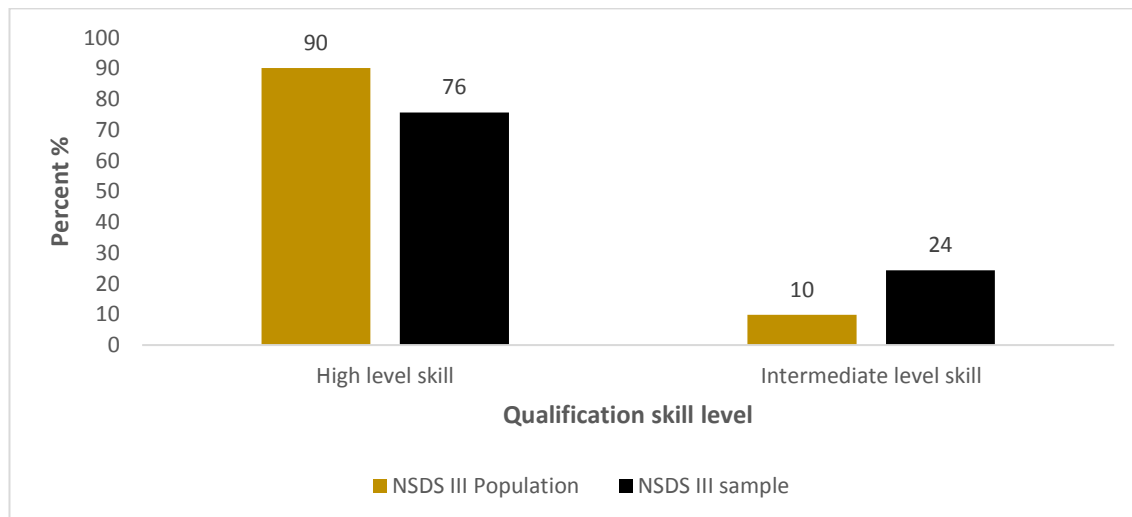
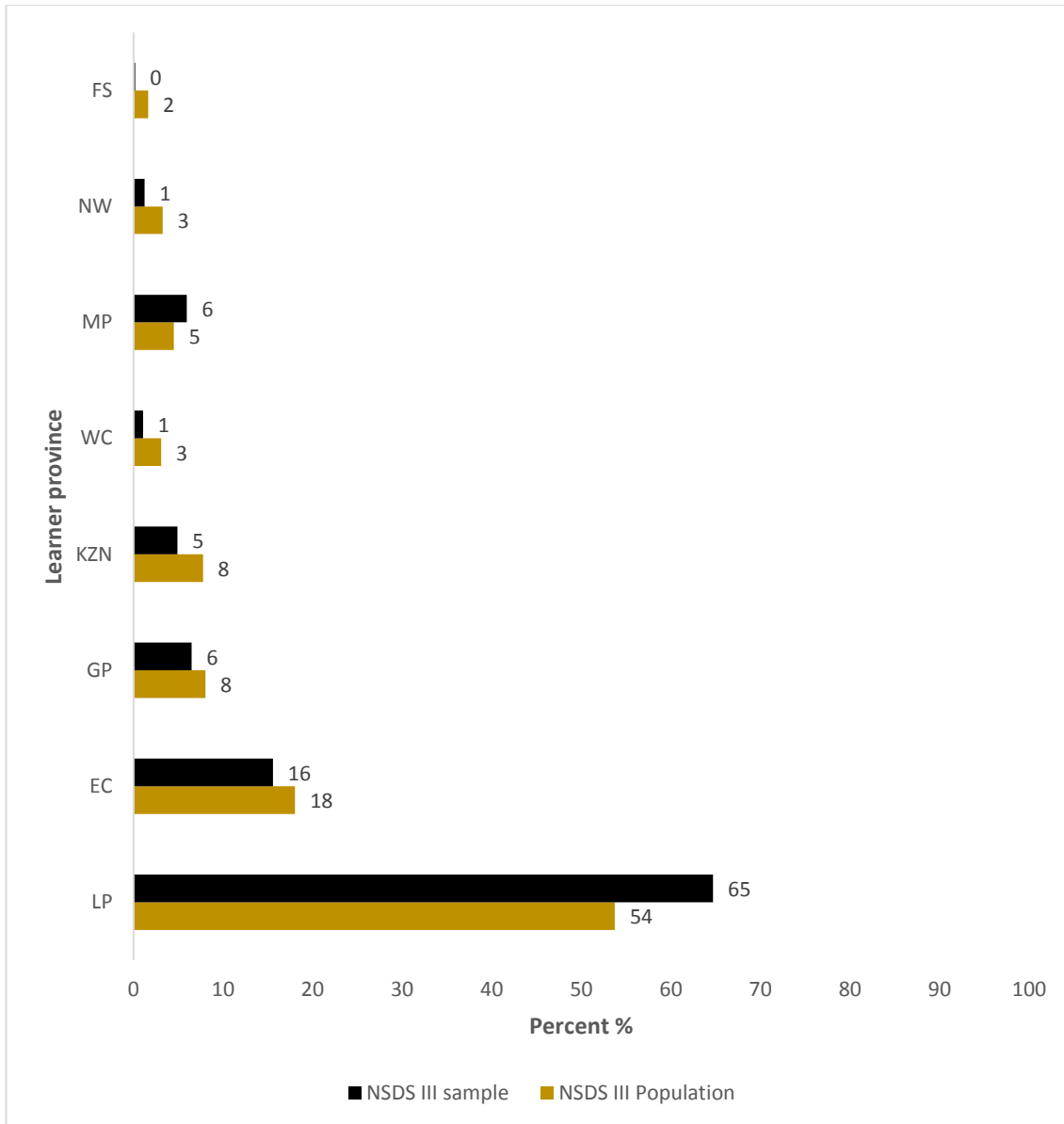


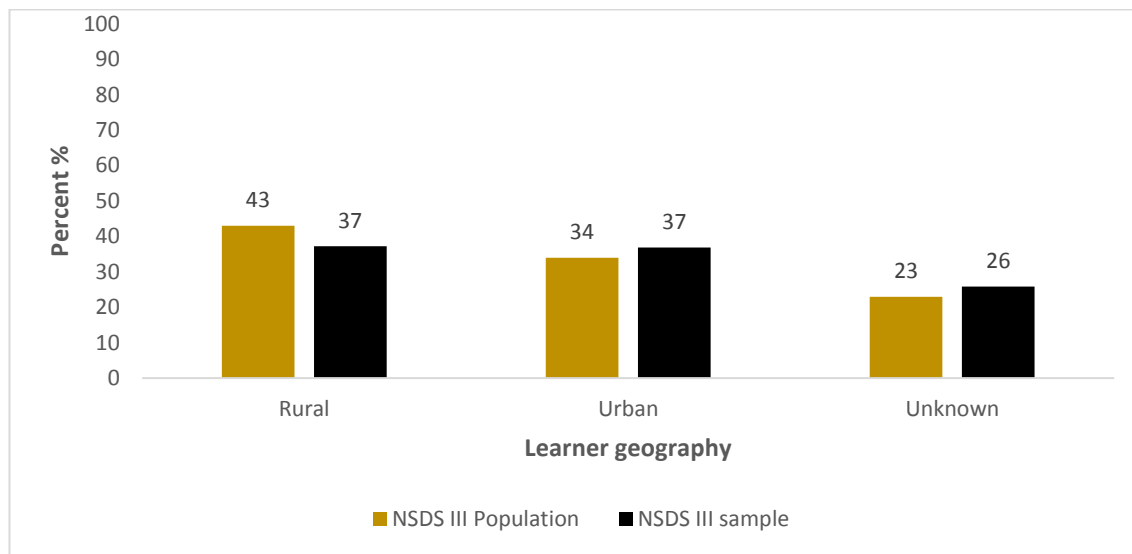
Figure 9 below shows that majority of graduates that entered and completed the programme were coming from Limpopo (54%) and Eastern Cape (18%), Gauteng (8%), and KwaZulu-Natal (8%).

Figure 9: Distribution of graduates across the population and sample of those who entered and completed the internship programme within NSDS III period by province



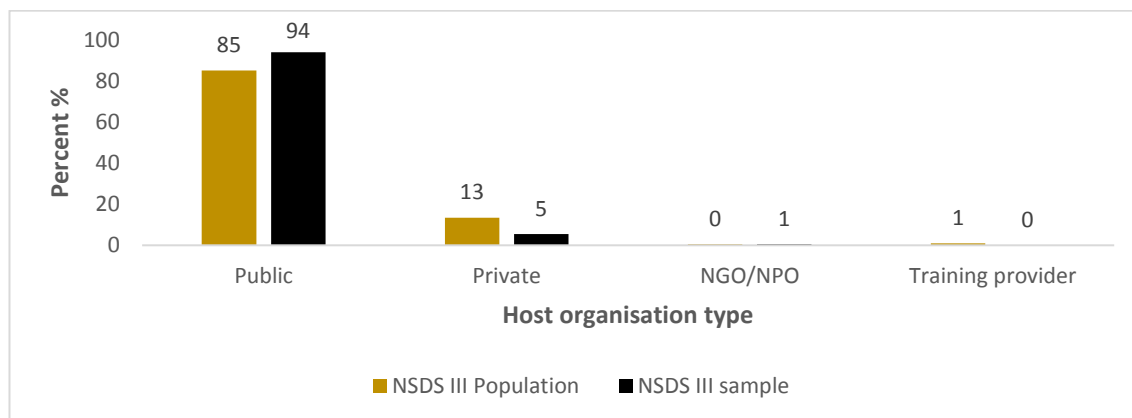
The predominance of graduates from Limpopo and Eastern Cape explains the fact that the majority of the graduates that entered and completed the programme were coming from rural areas (43%) as shown in Figure 10 below.

Figure 10: Distribution of graduates across the population and sample of those who entered and completed the internship programme within NSDS III period by geography



In terms of graduate placement, as shown in Figure 11 below, 85% of graduates were placed with host employer organizations belonging to the public sector.

Figure 11: Distribution of graduates across the population and sample of those who entered and completed the internship programme within the NSDS III period by host organization type



In summary, the demographic information illustrates that the unemployed graduates that entered and completed the programme were predominantly the African rural youth with qualifications in social sector at high skill level placed with host employers in the public sector.



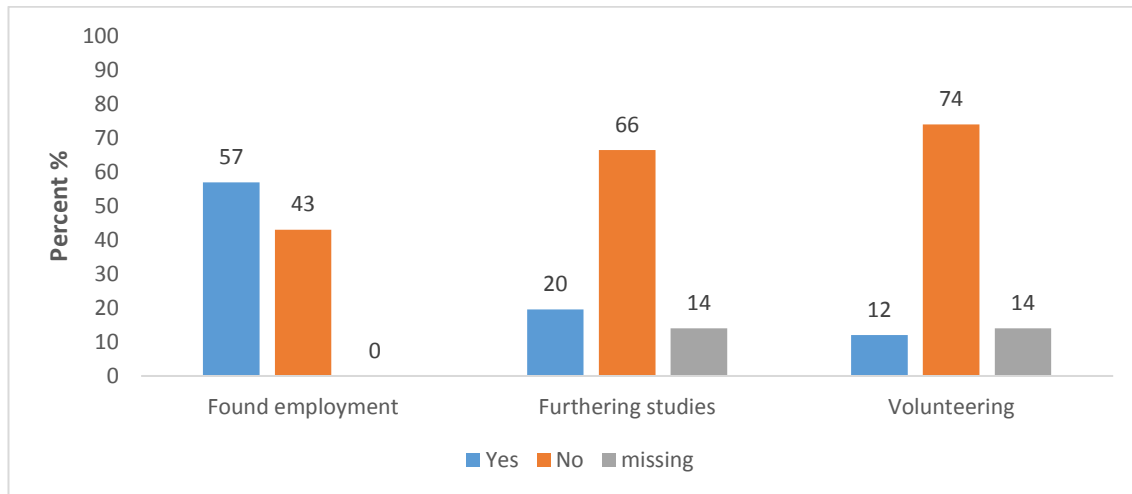
#### 4.9. Programme outcome performance

The outcome statement of the HWSETA graduate internship programme for the unemployed graduates is “80% of HWSETA funded work-ready graduates finding employment” (APP 2016, 12). The findings of evaluation outcomes are based on the sample data.

##### 4.9.1. The main graduate trajectory from programme completion

Figure 12 below shows that of all graduates that had entered and completed the internship programme in the NSDS III sample, 57% found employment, 20% furthered their studies, with only 12% that volunteered post the programme. This finding indicates that more than half of the graduates in the NSDS III sample progressed mainly to employment.

Figure 12: Distribution of graduate responses across the NSDS III sample showing their status in employment, furthering studies, and volunteering after programme completion



#### 4.9.2. Characteristics of employment

Of the 324 graduates in the NSDS III sample that found employment after completing an internship programme, 70% were employed on a permanent contract, 19% on a fixed-term contract, and 11% on a part-time contract (see Figure 13). Similarly, as shown in Figure 14, 75% of graduates in the NSDS III sample found employment in the public sector. These findings suggest that public sector predominantly employs graduates on permanent contracts.

Figure 13: Distribution of graduates that found employment after completing an internship programme across the NSDS III sample by type of employment contract

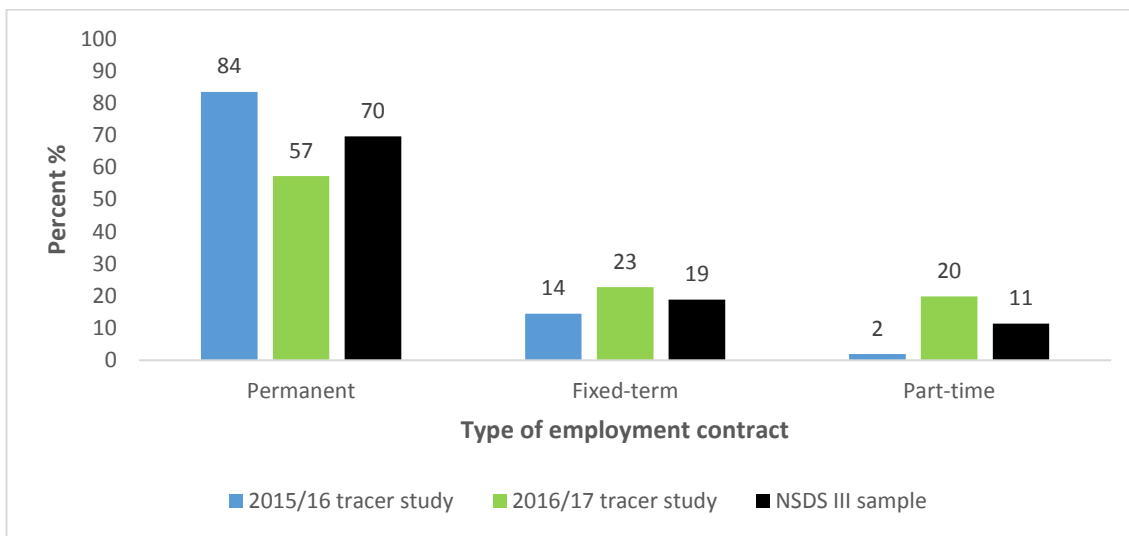
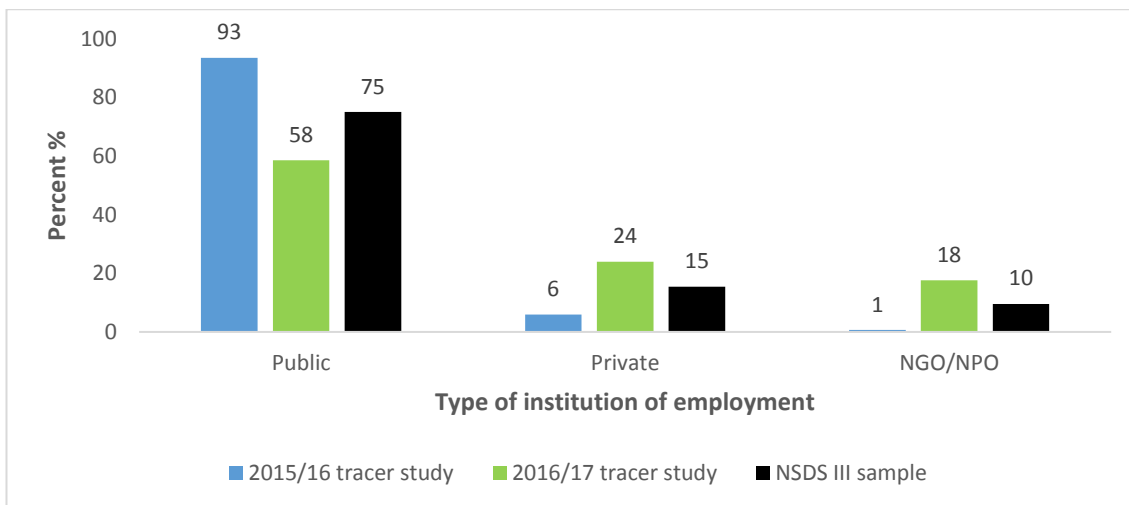
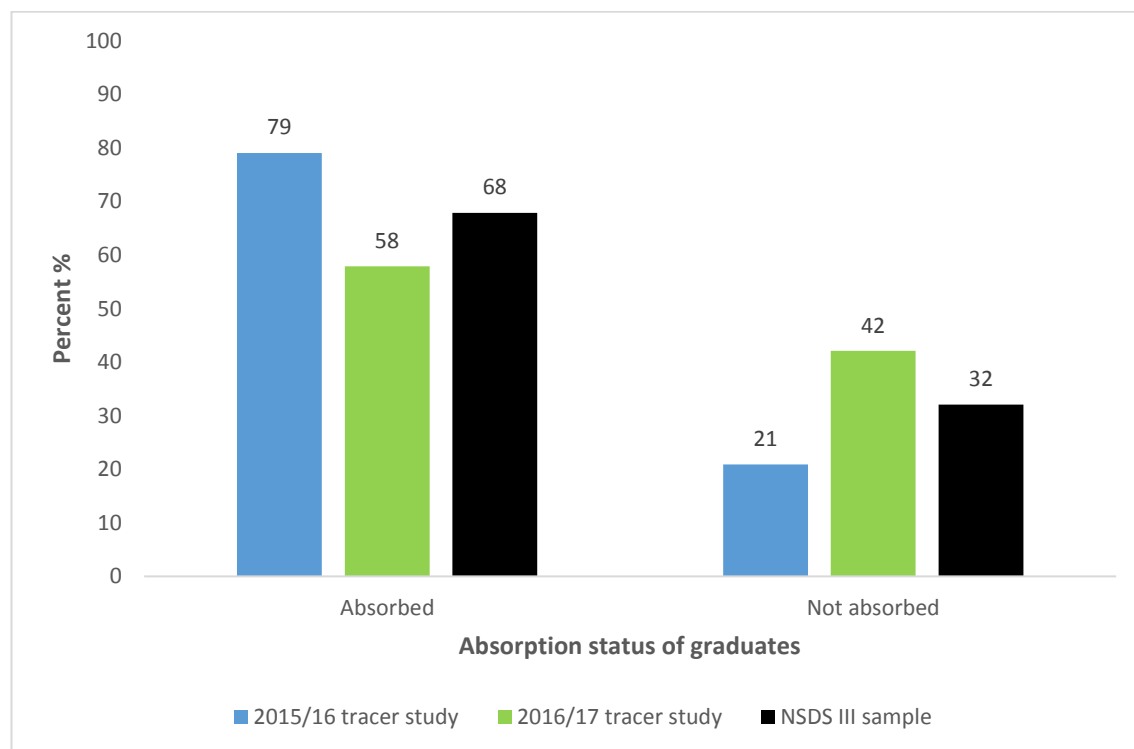


Figure 14: Distribution of graduates that found employment after completing an internship programme across the NSDS III sample by type of institution of employment



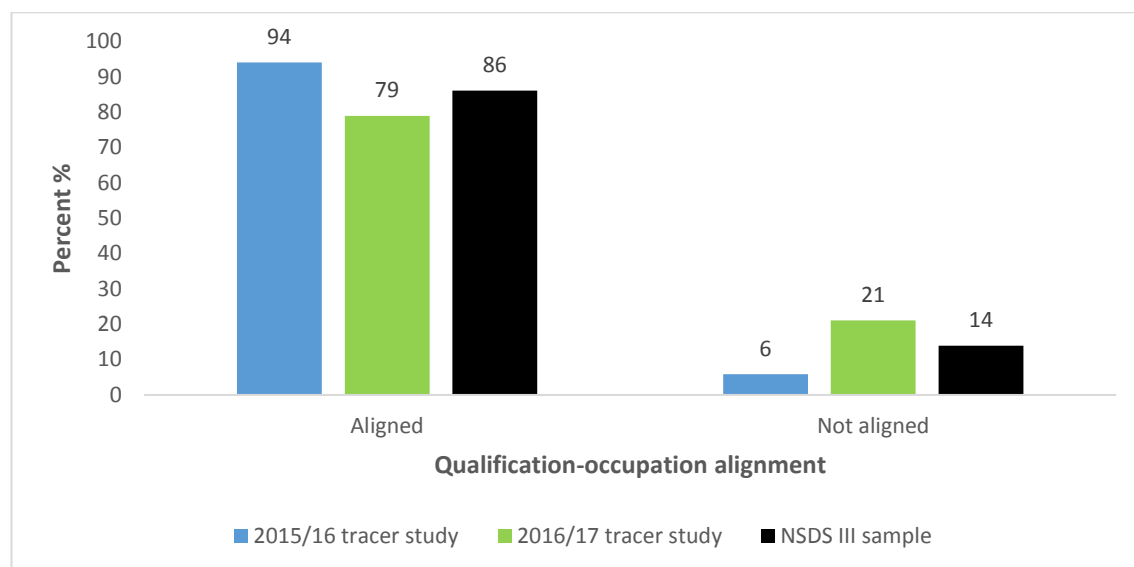
Of the 324 graduates in the NSDS III sample that found employment after completing an internship programme, 68% of graduates were absorbed to employment by the same host employer organization that had provided the work placement for an internship (see Figure 15 below). The implication of these findings is that in the main public sector organizations provide placement capacity (85%), and absorbs graduates upon completion.

Figure 15: Distribution of graduates that found employment after completing an internship programme across the NSDS III sample by absorption status of host employer organizations



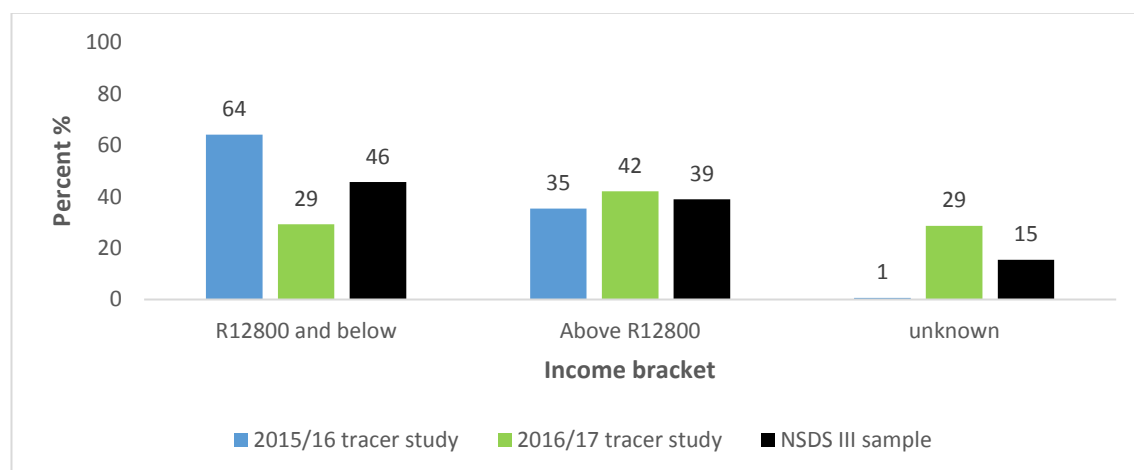
Of the 324 graduates in the NSDS III sample that found employment after completing an internship programme, 86% of graduates found employment in an occupation aligned to the qualification they had obtained (see Figure 16 below). Alignment of occupational employment to the qualification obtained implies that graduates would be able to translate their knowledge and occupational competence acquired from an internship programme.

Figure 16: Distribution of graduates that found employment after completing an internship programme across the NSDS III sample by qualification-occupation alignment status



Further assessment of graduates employed after completing the internship programme indicates in Figure 17 that, predominantly, 46% of graduates were earning R12 800<sup>1</sup> or below.

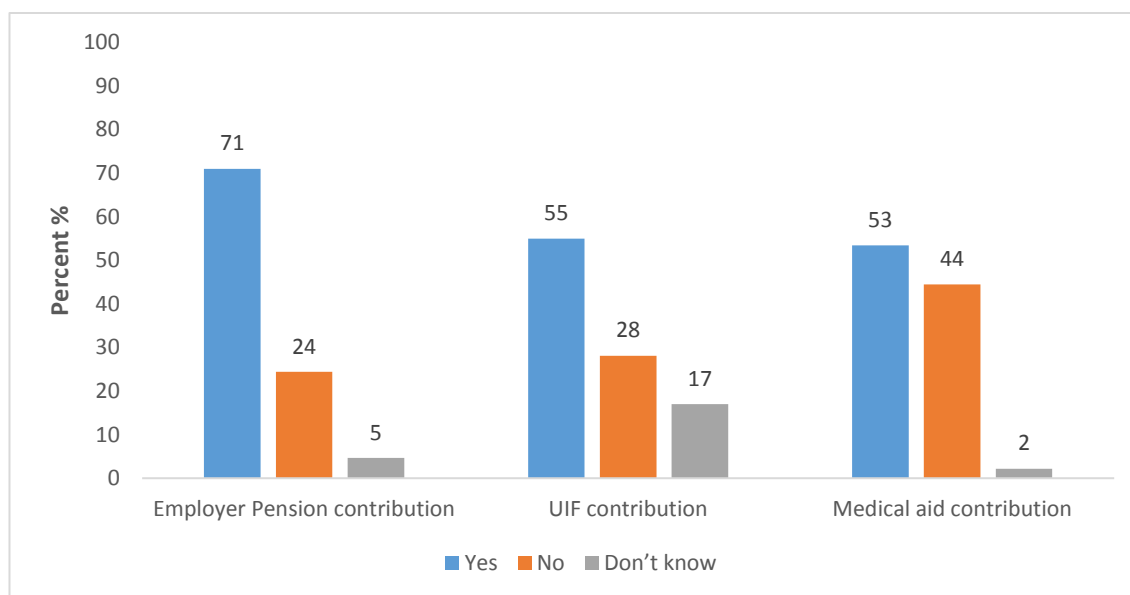
Figure 17: Distribution of graduates that found employment after completing an internship programme across the NSDS III sample by income bracket category



<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of comparison, adjustment to income categories was made between 2015/16 and 2016/17 tracer study samples due to differences in questionnaire categories. Category ‘Above R15 000’ from 2015/16 was made an equivalent to new category ‘Above R12 800’ since this was the only approximate category from the 2016/17 questionnaire design

Of the 324 graduates in the NSDS III sample that found employment after completing an internship programme, more than half (>50%) of the graduates had the employer contributing to either pension, UIF, or medical aid. However, 71% of graduates had their employers contributing to a pension.

Figure 18: Distribution of graduates that found employment after completing an internship programme across the NSDS III sample by employer contribution to pension, UIF, and medical aid



#### 4.9.3. Patterns and implications for employment as an outcome

Findings below (Table 10) show that most factors associated with employment of graduates are at the institutional level. These factors include learner qualification, qualification sector, qualification skill level, ETQA organization, and internship type as it relates to or not. In essence, institutional mechanisms in health and social development sector explain (correlation is not causation) employment outcomes better than demographic features of the learners.

Table 10: Association between different factors and learner employment status from the NSDS III sample of the internship programme

Factor	NSDSIII internship sample	
	P value	Status
Learnership qualification	<b>0.0000</b>	Strongly Significant
Qualification Sector	<b>0.009</b>	Strongly Significant
Age	<b>0.0000</b>	Strongly Significant
Gender	<b>0.075</b>	Insignificant
Race	0.305	Insignificant
Employer organization	0.127	Insignificant
Province	<b>0.0000</b>	Strongly Significant
Learner geography	<b>0.000</b>	Strongly Significant
ETQA organisation	<b>0.001</b>	Strongly Significant
SAQA Skill equivalent	<b>0.000</b>	Strongly Significant
Internship type by statutory body	<b>0.000</b>	Strongly Significant

Only factors found to have statistical significance in terms of correlation with employment status were explored further.

#### 4.9.4. Qualification-related factors and their correlation to employment status

The study assessed whether qualifications acquired by interns prior to the programme could explain the time it took for a learner to find employment after completing the internship programme. Table 11 illustrates that, on overall mean, it took each graduate 4 months and 6 days to find employment after programme completion. Further, findings show that significant variation exists in the distribution of learners by qualification as it relates to the time it takes to finding employment since  $F=1.99$  is greater than 1. On

average, graduates with qualifications in Medical technology (24 days before programme completion) and clinical engineering (18 days after programme completion) found employment in less than a month. In addition to the qualifications that saw graduates finding employment in less than four months and 6 days, graduates with qualification in Environmental health found employment in 3 months and 9 days after programme completion. All these qualifications are in the health sector by design.

Table 11: Distribution of graduates employed across the NSDS III internship programme sample by qualification

<i>Learner qualification</i>	<i>Mean (Months)</i>	<i>standard deviation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
<i>Bachelor of Social work</i>	4.6	7.6	260
<i>Biomedical Technology</i>	11	18.2	3
<i>Clinical Engineering Technician</i>	0.6	2.7	25
<i>Dental Assisting</i>	9.5	7.8	2
<i>Environmental Health</i>	3.3	8.4	6
<i>Medical Technology</i>	-0.8	12.4	9
<i>Pharmacy</i>	4.5	8.2	10
<i>Other qualifications</i>	6.4	5.8	5
<b><i>Overall mean</i></b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>320</b>

When qualifications were characterized by sector, on average, graduates with qualifications in the health sector found employment two months and 6 days earlier than those in the social sector (see Table 12 below).

Table 12: Distribution of graduates employed across the NSDS III internship programme sample by qualification sector

<i>Qualification sector</i>	<i>Mean (Months)</i>	<i>standard deviation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
<i>Health sector</i>	2.4	8.0	59
<i>Social sector</i>	4.6	7.6	261
<b><i>Overall mean</i></b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>320</b>

In terms of qualification skill level, Table 13 shows that on average graduates with a qualification at intermediate skill level found employment four months and 18 days earlier than those with high skill level.

Table 13: Distribution of graduates employed across the NSDS III internship programme sample by qualification skill level

<i>SAQA skill level</i>	<i>Mean (Months)</i>	<i>standard deviation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
<i>High level skill</i>	6.1	8.2	189
<i>Intermediate level skill</i>	1.5	5.9	131
<b><i>Overall mean</i></b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>320</b>

The difference of means between SAQA skill level qualifications is strongly significant (Pvalue=0.0000) statistically. Thus learners that had qualifications at the intermediate level skill, on average, found employment in 4 months and 18 days earlier than learners that had qualifications at higher intermediate level. The latter finding was further assessed by qualification sector. Findings revealed that there was no statistical significance in the difference of means of the time it took to find employment between high and intermediate skill level for those with qualifications in the health sector. In contrast, significance in the difference of means was strong between high and intermediate skill levels for those with qualifications in the social sector.



Table 14: Distribution of graduates employed across the NSDS III graduate internship programme sample by employment sector

<i>Employment sector</i>	<i>Mean (Months)</i>	<i>standard deviation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
<i>Health sector</i>	2.2	8.0	62
<i>Social sector</i>	3.7	6.7	222
<i>Other sectors</i>	11.2	9.3	36
<b><i>Overall mean</i></b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>320</b>

As shown in Table 14 above, there was no statistical significance between the difference of means of health and social sector. However, each of these sectors (health and social) means was statistically different from other sectors of employment. On average compared to health and social sector, it took learners 9 and 8 months respectively to find employment in other sectors.

The descriptive statistics showed 16% of graduates who completed an internship programme with a qualification required by the statutory body to undergo a workplace-based training completed the programme. NSDS III sample for an internship only has 9% of these learners. Further, findings show a statistical significance of the association between internship type and employment of learners. Of those employed, there was also a strong statistical significance in the difference of means between learners with qualifications requiring an internship and their counterparts (Table 15). Learners with qualifications requiring internship found employment 2 months and 24 days earlier than their counterparts.

Table 15: Distribution of graduates employed across the NSDS III graduate internship programme sample by employment sector

<i>Internship type</i>	<i>Mean (Months)</i>	<i>standard deviation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
<i>Not a requirement to the statutory body</i>	4.7	7.6	273
<i>Statutory body requirement</i>	1.8	8.2	47
<b><i>Overall mean</i></b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>320</b>

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

There are three key aspects of the evaluation study of the HWSETA graduate internship programme. These aspects include evaluating the appropriateness of planning and design, efficiency of implementation and performance, and the effectiveness of the programme across the results chain.

Document review and analysis indicates that the design of HWSETA graduate internship programme for the unemployed is consistent with HWSETA MERP and NSDS III objectives. The alignment underscores the responsiveness of HWSETA graduate internship programme in facilitating the transition from higher education to the world of work by providing workplace opportunity for beneficiaries. Concerning efficiency, the findings illustrate that a gap exists between planning and implementation. On average, in each financial year, the programme was delayed by seven months. However, improvement in the efficiency of the programme's implementation activities and processes from one financial year to another was due to deliberate efforts of implementers. While the funds expended were not at 80% standard of success at the time the study was conducted, it was at reasonable levels (71%).

The performance of the programme relates to the achievement of set targets for the programme outputs premised on 'broadening the workplace capacity as the training space of graduates' and ensuring that recruited graduates 'gain workplace experience in the qualification obtained' within 12 months. The performance of the programme as it relates to workplace capacity was not effective against MOA set targets since actual enrolments were below (68%) the standard of success (80%). These findings imply that the programme performance was not effective in producing an adequate number of work-ready graduates. The primary reason for implementation failure both at workplace capacity and completions was due to higher levels of decommissions by stakeholders from the programme.

The effectiveness of the programme's 'contribution towards employability of beneficiaries upon programme completion' was (57%) below the standard of success (80%). Failure of the programme in achieving expected levels of employment is explained by its prioritization of qualifications in the social sector that are not required by the statutory body to undergo an internship. The statutory body requirements for certain graduates to undergo an internship create market demand due to the waiting period of 12 months for graduate supply.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Our recommendation is that HWSETA addresses the following three issues in order to improve the effectiveness of the programme in the coming years;

- 1) Improve partnership relationships with employers to broaden workplace capacity to enroll and sustain graduates as beneficiaries until programme completion
- 2) Improve the communication between SDP and Finance in relation to the disbursement of funds to ensure that there are no unaccounted funds within the programme
- 3) Prioritize unemployed graduates with qualifications from the health sector during recruitment to ensure increased levels of employability
- 4) At the conceptualization stage ensure that there is a common understanding across all parties on the development of targets and the success of the cohort over the 12 month period

## 7. REFERENCES

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