higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Student Support Services Manual

Concise Version

This summary of the Student Support Services Manual was devised to assist all people associated with the Student Support function at a college. It can therefore be seen to belong to everyone – because ultimately we all support students whether directly or indirectly.

This booklet will help the college to facilitate training and to allow critical information about student support to permeate all ranks and divisions with no exclusion, so that they too can appreciate the role they play in supporting students.

The distribution of this booklet is mainly directed to all divisions of the institution which have a pastoral and parental role.

We wish you all of the best.

1. PRE- ENTRY SUPPORT

Ensure Career Guidance is in place

Publicity and marketing drives are planned and implemented

Publicity material like posters, brochures and flyers are available

Staff members are available to advise students

Open days are hosted at each campus

Special attempts are made to target unemployed youth

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Every college must **have an admission policy** which is determined through consultation with the academic board and with the approval of the College Council.

2. THE REGISTRATION PROCESS

2.1. Reception: The student receives –
- Information on different venues
- Program
- Checklist
- Registration form
- Bursary application form
- Code of Conduct
- Information on selection and

2.2 Selection and placement tests are done

2.3. The registration and bursary application forms are completed and handed in with the required documents

2.4. The program is approved and the student is informed **or the program is not approved** and another suitable course is suggested.

2.5. Payment of the registration fee takes place.

2.6. Registration takes place
• **A student** registration **card** or a proof of registration **is issued**

2.7. The Orientation program is ready for implementation.

Orientation is part of the timetable. It is NOT an add-on.

3. THE STUDENT ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

3.1 An orientation committee is elected from various campus constituencies to plan, oversee and evaluate orientation.

3.2 All Staff members (managerial, academic, administrative, student support) **have accepted orientation as part of the academic program.**

3.3 Students informative **orientation booklets are prepared.**

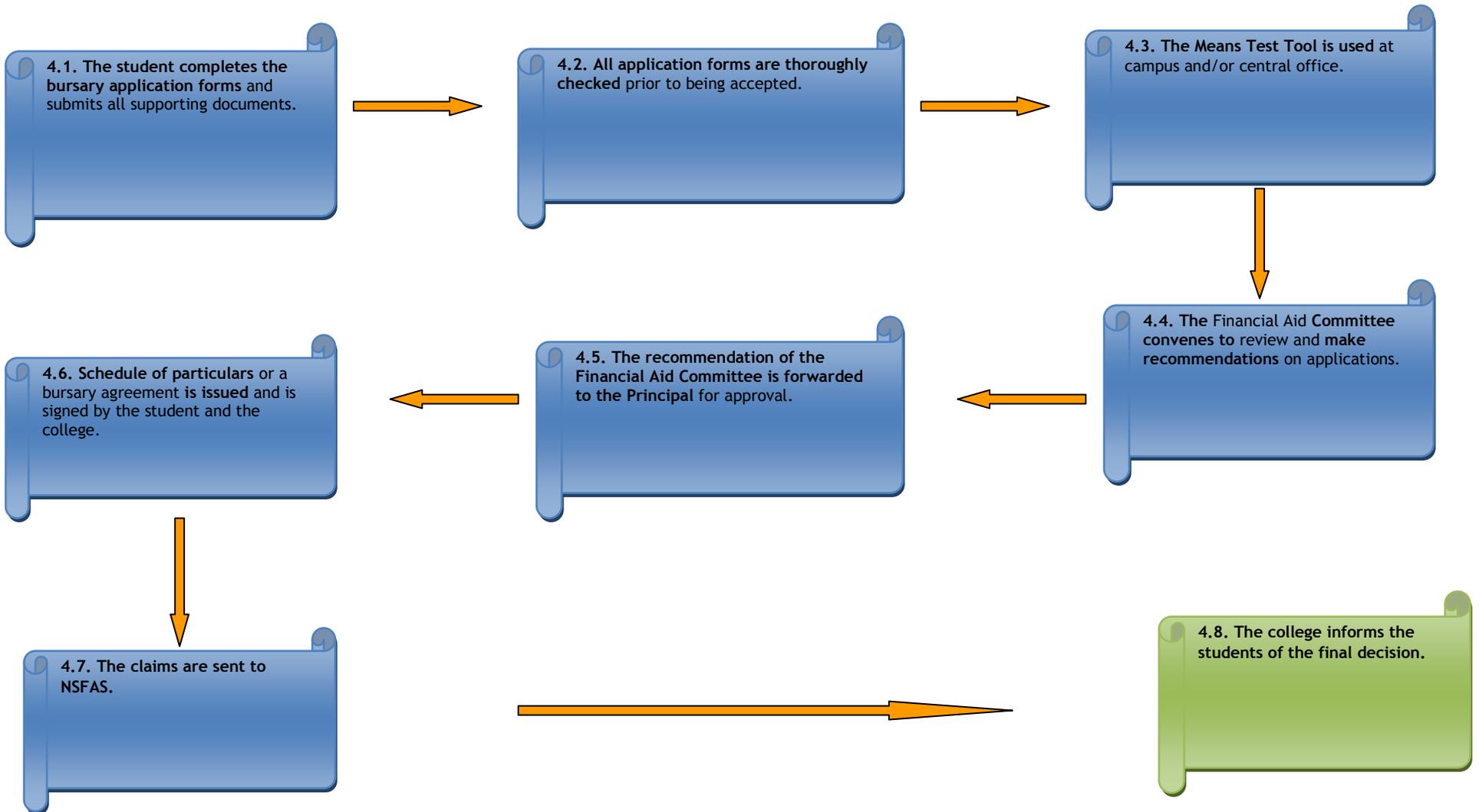**3.4 Student leaders have been trained** regarding their role.

3.5 The Student Orientation Program is implemented
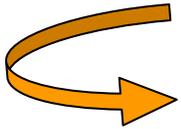
Ensure that a Financial Aid System is in **place** – and that the Financial Aid Committee is properly constituted.

4. BURSARY APPLICATION PROCESS

4.1. **The student completes the bursary application forms** and submits all supporting documents.

4.2. All application forms are thoroughly **checked** prior to being accepted.

4.3. **The Means Test Tool is used** at campus and/or central office.

4.4. **The** Financial Aid **Committee convenes to** review and **make recommendations** on applications.

4.5. The recommendation of the **Financial Aid Committee is forwarded to the Principal** for approval.

4.6. Schedule of particulars or a bursary agreement **is issued** and is signed by the student and the college.

4.7. The claims are sent to NSFAS.

4.8. The college informs the students of the final decision.

5. ON - COURSE ACADEMIC SUPPORT

The building and maintenance of an effective **academic support system is a whole-college responsibility,** under the leadership of the Academic Head. It does not rest with a single individual or department.

5.1 Academic support system is planned

- **A thoroughly planned timetable is developed and adequately addresses all the learning components of the curriculum.**
- **Lecturers make an overall year plan for each subject that they teach, so that they have an 'at a glance' picture of how all the curriculum components fit together.**
- **The plan is discussed with the students at the beginning of the year so that they know how the year will unfold and why there is no time to waste.**

5.2 Identify Students academic needs

- **An early diagnostic baseline assessment is done** in each class within the first two or three weeks of the college year.
- **A systematic analysis is undertaken** to identify common errors and areas of under-achievement.
- **Lecturers have regular meetings** to exchange information about areas of low academic achievement and **to plan collaborative remedial interventions** across common areas of need.
- **Each lecturer sets aside a regular time slot** when students can make an appointment **to discuss** areas where they are experiencing **performance difficulties.**

5.3 "Catch Up" is built into the academic support system

- **Lecturers decide** at the beginning of the year **what kind of remedial support they will provide and they build this into their year plan.**
- **One catch-up period per week is viewed as part of the overall teaching strategy** and not as something that is only considered when poor results have been achieved.
- **Catch-up periods are planned** and well structured
- **A variety of activities are included** so that those students who are keeping up can work on their own and go further.
- **Lecturers monitor progress and give positive feedback** so that students experience a sense of achievement.

6. ACADEMIC SUPPORT IN THE CLASSROOM

Lecturers have to help students to "crack the code" that opens up learning.

6.1 Teaching for learning success

- The lecturers create an environment for active learning.
- Lecturers must be knowledgeable about their subject.
- The lecturer is clear about and emphasises the objectives of each class.
- The lecturer provides opportunities for students to give feedback on their understanding and difficulties.
- Lecturers adapt their teaching in response to feedback.

6.2 Working effectively with language for teaching and learning

- Lecturers become aware of students' language difficulties and build this awareness into their teaching.
- Lecturers clearly emphasise the main points of each lesson.
- Key words and concepts are presented orally and in written form.
- Students are able to speak before written work is done.

6.3 Integrating learning resources into the classroom

- Each student is provided with a full set of textbooks.
- Students must be guided on how to use textbooks effectively and must see them being used actively in classrooms.
- Students need guidance on how to use the Internet effectively and ethically.
- Students must be encouraged to use dictionaries as well as spell checking and grammar functions available on the software used by the college.
- Lecturers need to bring knowledgeable people into the classroom to help bridge the gap between the world of work and college.

6.4 Academic support tutorials

- **Tutorials are planned around specific tasks** and activities that deepen understanding.
- **Tutorials provide opportunities for students to talk** about the subject.
- **Tutorials focus on developing useful ways of approaching understanding** of the subject.

6.5 Designing appropriate learning tasks and activities

- Outcomes, **activities and assessments are aligned to maximise learning.**
- **Lecturers expose students to the** full range of **cognitively challenging activities.**
- **Language used** for instruction **is clear** and unambiguous.
- **Tasks are** written down and **explained orally.**
- **Assessment criteria are clear** and communicated to students when the task is given out.
- **Mark allocation** for different activities **is clear**.

Work experience equips students **with** foundational, social, technological and technical **competences which employers look for in** intermediate-level **employees**. It is essential that colleges do not view Work Experience as an add-on function.

7. PROVIDING WORK EXPERIENCE

7.1 Preparing to provide work experience

7.2 Providing work experience in simulated and actual workplaces

- **Practical application**, which includes simulated or actual work experience, **is part of the culture** and service delivery ethos **in the college.**
- **Work experience is provided in every programme** through simulated training or exposure in actual workplaces.
- **Practical and simulated training sessions** and periods of student placement in actual workplaces **are included in the college timetable.**
- **There are suitable practical training facilities for each programme** which support planned practical and simulated training activities.

- **Staff members with suitable qualifications**, experience and training **are appointed to deliver practical** and simulated **training.**
- **Lecturers keep up with industry developments** through visits or periodic placement in relevant workplaces.
- **Policies, procedures** and implementation guidelines **are established to support practical** and simulated **training** and encourage the exposure of students and staff to actual workplaces.
- **There is a system for managing practical** and simulated **training.**

- **Students are given** the necessary **information** and preparation to engage adequately in the practical activities designed **for their programme.**
- **All students are provided with simulated work experience.**
- **Reflection and evaluation is used to build better practice** in relation to practical training and work experience.

Students who are responsible in the way they **manage their studies** and are able to prioritise their studies along with other issues in their lives **are much more likely to achieve better grades** than those who do not have these coping skills.

8. STUDENT HEALTH AND WELL- BEING

8.1 Planning for successful promotion of health and well-being

- **Learning takes place in a safe and supportive environment.**
- **Policies and strategies are in place** with a sound knowledge of all relevant legislation.
- **Responsible staff members are well selected**, qualified, competent and dedicated.
- **Regular training is provided** to improve the knowledge and skills of staff.
- **Staff members keep to ethical standards** and are role models and mentors.
- **Regular fire drills are held in all campuses** as part Health & Safety policy

8.2 Dealing with problems

Counseling
- **A private, confidential** and accessible **counseling room is available** at each campus.
- **Professional**, knowledgeable **counseling staff can handle a range of problems** and guide students.
- **The counseling service is student centered**, confidential and works on an appointment basis.

Peer Counseling
- **A** manageable **team of peer counselors is available** at each campus.
- The appointment process is in place and **proper training** and in-service training **is provided**.
- **Peer counselors sign a** binding **code of conduct** and regular meetings are held with the SSO.
- **A confidential, safe record-keeping system is in place.**
- **A peer counselor is always on duty according to a timetable.**

Referral System
- **A** well-functioning **referral system** with a list of helpful institutions known to the SSO **is in place**.
- **Records are kept** of all referrals.
- **There is a procedure to follow** when support is requested.

8.3 Partnerships with communities and other organisations

- **Partnerships are formed with** other **organisations.**
- A detailed **list with the names of** the **organisations**, contact numbers and contact person **is available**.
- **The SSO** meets with all these people and **networks regularly**
- **Programmes to assist needy students are running.**

SRC Training is an ongoing exercise. Workshops are presented throughout the year **to ensure that SRC members are equipped for their roles.**

9. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR STUDENTS

9.1 Planning for successful leadership development for the SRC

- **There is an SRC in place** with clear roles and responsibilities.
- **The** whole **college community understands why an SRC is needed,** who may be elected and the term of office.
- **There is a policy on stipends for SRC members.**
- **There is a procedure for handling students' requests.**

9.2 Organogram, portfolios and responsibilities

- **Each SRC member has a portfolio** for which they are responsible with a clear job description.
- **Each SRC member knows what their responsibilities** are and that they need to invest in people.
- **There is an implementation plan for the tasks** and responsibilities of the SRC.
- **Duties are distributed among all members.**

9.3 The election of the SRC

- **An election committee handles the election process** according to a fixed procedure.
- **Notice of the election is given well in** advance.
- **The election process is fair and transparent.**
- **Equality is** strongly **built into the process.**
- **The process is confidential** and anonymous.

9.4 Inauguration and code of conduct of the SRC

- **A formal inauguration** function **takes place** soon **after the election** of the SRC.
- **The newly elected SRC members sign a code of conduct.**
- **All newly elected SRC members receive training and attend workshops**

9.5 Meetings and equipment

- **An executive committee is elected at the first meeting and meets** on a monthly basis.
- **Proper meeting procedures are followed.**
- **The SRC has an office with sufficient equipment.**
- **Planned activities are submitted with a budget.**

Participation in sport and recreational activities, make students feel part of the campus community and **may lead to academic success.**

10. STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

### 10.1 Planning for successful student development

- **The** whole **college community understands why student development is needed.**
- **There is a budget allocated** for student development.
- **There are procedures** in place **which encourages student development.**
- **As far as is possible students with disabilities are included in sport**

10.2 Sport

- **There is a balance between sport and academic work.**
- **Creative and innovative ideas are generated,** with sport opportunities other than normal sports.
- **Partnerships are formed** with organisations.
- **Sport facilities** as well as a first-aid kit **are available**

10.3 Cultural activities

- **There are opportunities for students to participate** in competitions or events.
- **Students who excel are recognised.**
- **There are community outreach programmes.**
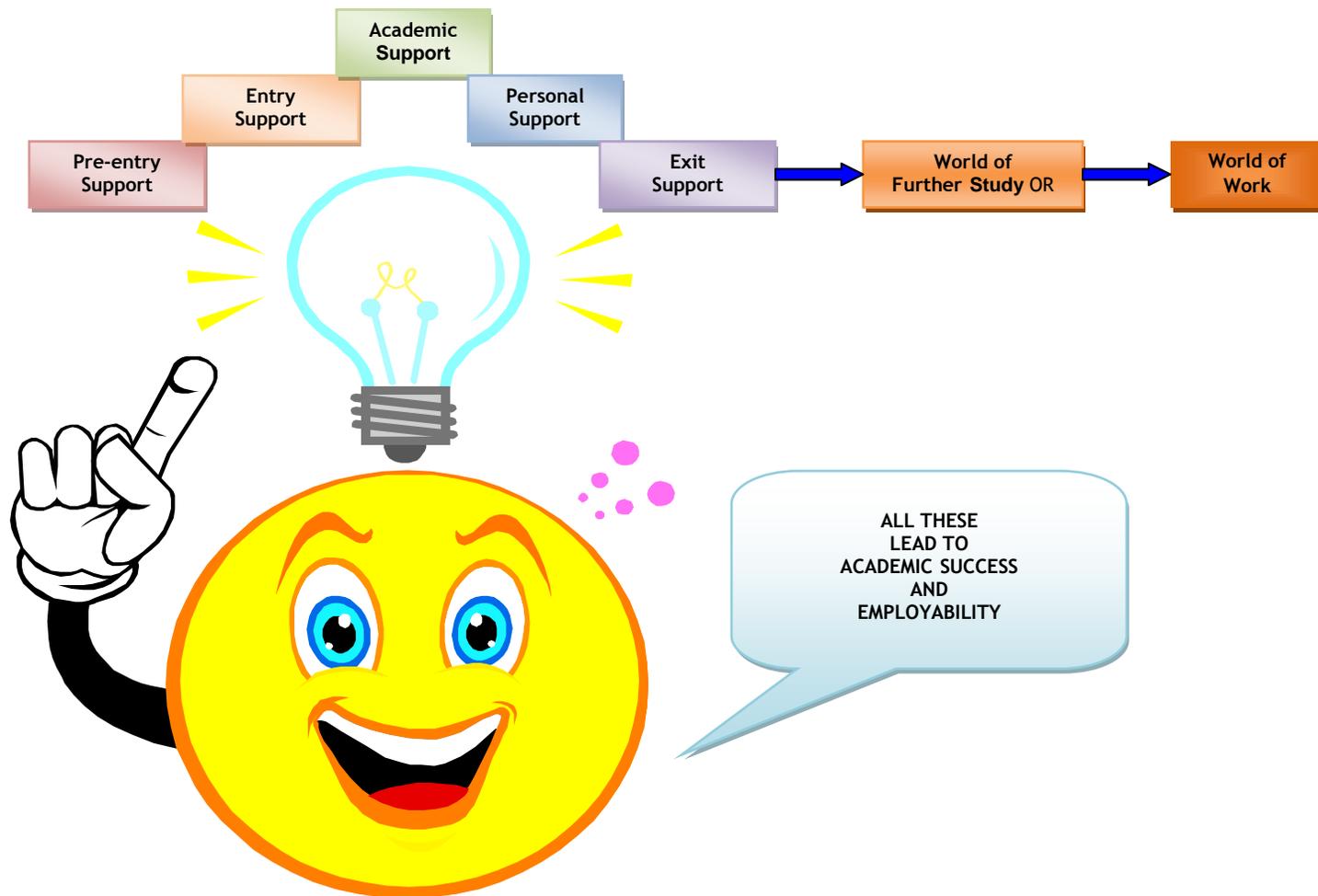
Parental support is often **a key factor in maintaining student's motivation** and achievement.

11. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

11.1 Involvement in the entry and orientation process

- **A least one parent accompanies the student when they enroll** at the college.
- **The selection and placement process is discussed with the parent and student.**
- **The results of the placement tests or assessments are discussed with the parent** as well as the reasons for placing the student in a particular programme.
- **The parent signs the registration documents.**
- **A parent information booklet is handed to the parents** to read at home.
- **The parent is also oriented about** college life **and what is expected of them.**

11.2 Involvement in the academic process

Reporting on academic progress should cover the following.
- **The student's progress** in each subject according to potential.
- **The student's attendance** rate.
- **The student's** potential and developing **talents or interests.**
- **Specific difficulties** the student may have.
- **The student's behaviour.**
- **The student's relationship** with lecturers and other students.
- **The support the parent can give** the student and the lecturers.

11.3 Involvement in college activities

- **Parents are involved in college activities** such as sport days, cultural activities, and open days and caring for needy students.
- **Parents are invited to the prize-giving** or end-of--year **function**.

11.4 Keeping parents informed

- **There is a two-way communication system** at the college
- **There is a** workable **method in which the college communicates with the parents** to keep them informed

Support will be needed at exit level to enable students to deal with the challenges of their job choices.

12. EXIT SUPPORT

12.1 Preparing and supporting students to obtain formal employment

Classroom-based support
- **Students are** formally **exposed to work-readiness** preparation as part of NC (V) level 2 Life Orientation. Aspects covered include career planning, job search skills, development of CVs and letters of application, conduct in the workplace, and workplace legal aspects.
- **Student support service staff complement, classroom teaching** and learning **through presenting particular topics** or facilitating practical workshops on particular topics – if the required expertise and experience is available.

Direct engagement with exit-level students
- **One-on-one exit interviews are conducted with students** as per individual request for information or assistance, for example, preparing a CV, coaching for job interviews and ensuring that job applications are realistic
- **A job placement service is provided**: either providing information to students about job advertisements and opportunities or directly recommending students to employers according to employer requests and job requirements

12.2 Preparing and supporting students for self-employment

12.3 Preparing and supporting students who want to study further

Student support personnel participation involves the following:

- **Becoming familiar with** the general principles underpinning **entrepreneurship** and entrepreneurship education as well as with the nature and content of entrepreneurship education offered at the college –to better understand the needs of students at exit level.
- **Supporting** classroom-based **preparation of students for self-employment** by either presenting certain aspects (expertise permitting) on a guest lecturer basis or facilitating outside expertise on a guest-lecturer basis.
- **Responding to requests for information** or assistance from exit-level students – either directly or **through sourcing the required expertise** from elsewhere (inside or outside the college).
- **Developing and maintaining** collaborative **relationships** and partnerships **with** entrepreneurship development **individuals, organisations and government** departments.

- **Relevant** and up-to-date **information is available** or can be obtained **to address students' information needs about options for further study.**
- **Student support** personnel **may** on occasion **have to liaise** directly **with** student affairs personnel at **higher** or further **education institutions or** providers of **DoL-linked programmes**.

Without support from their colleges, **students** generally struggle to break into the job market and frequently **end up in employment that is unrelated to their training.**

Establishing job placement as a service

- **The goals for the job placement** service **have been developed** and a plan is developed annually to meet these.
- **The college provides the physical and financial resources** needed **to implement its job placement plan** (for instance, office space, computers and telephones).
- **The college develops a graduate job placement** (and tracking) **policy.**
- **The job placement service is located in the student support office.**
- **Job placement** (and tracking) **is carried out as one of the responsibilities of campus-based student support** officers or by a placement and tracking officer.
- **The college develops job placement relationships** with employers from different industries.
- **The college evaluates its placement service annually** and the findings inform the placement plan developed for the following year.

System development

- **A database** supporting job placement **is established.**
- **Forms** and templates **are developed** that support effective job placement operations and management.

Placing students in jobs

- **Students are** fully **informed about the rules** and procedures **for job placement** service.
- **Students apply** and register **for placement.**
- **Students are** successfully **matched with employers** and job requirements.
- **Student support officers stay in contact with students referred to employers** to get feedback about their success and the reasons for such outcomes.
- **Job placement reports are prepared** on placement results.

Tracking shows that there is a good match between the **training** and support provided by a college **and the needs of its local and regional economy.**

14. GRADUATE TRACKING

14.1 Establishing a graduate tracking function

- **The college** has agreed to **establish a tracking function.**
- **The college develops** an annual **tracking plan** that lists its objectives and outlines how these will be achieved.
- **The tracking function is located in the student support department.**
- **Tracking responsibilities are carried out by campus-based student support** officers.
- **The college provides the physical resources** and budget it needs **to implement its** tracking **plan.**
- **The college is developing a tracking** (and job placement) **policy.**
- **The college evaluates its tracking function annually** and the findings inform the tracking plan developed for the following year.

14.2 Developing systems and tools for tracking graduates

- **A tracking database is developed** to manage the tracking information collected on graduates.
- **Tracking forms** and templates **are developed** to manage and report on tracking.

14.3 Tracking graduates and using tracking information to improve college efficiency

- **Tracking activities are carried out according to** an annual tracking **plan.**
- Information is kept on each graduate tracked and updated as soon as new information is collected.
- **Findings are presented in tracking reports.**
- **Findings are considered by relevant college managers,** academic staff and the college council.
- **The college is starting to use tracking information** to improve programme delivery and student support.