

# Annual Learning and Teaching Report 2023 | Discussion document

Enhancing quality, visibility,  
and impact of learning and  
teaching in the age of AI

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VISION **130**  
*Renew and Reimagine  
for 2034*

UNIVERSITY OF THE  
FREE STATE  
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE  
VRYSTAAT  
YUNIVESITHI YA  
FREISTATA



UFS  
CENTRE FOR TEACHING  
AND LEARNING (CTL)

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## Executive Summary

*“...The development of AI is as fundamental as the creation of the microprocessor, the personal computer, the Internet, and the mobile phone. It will change the way people work, learn, travel, get health care, and communicate with each other. Entire industries will reorient around it. Businesses will distinguish themselves by how well they use it.”*

*- Bill Gates, 2023<sup>1</sup>*

This quotation by Bill Gates emphasises the transformative impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is going to have on the world. AI and its implications for teaching and learning in higher education took centre stage in 2023, following the launch of ChatGPT in November 2022. ChatGPT, a chatbot developed by OpenAI based on large language models, revolutionised our approach to higher education, prompting a re-evaluation of our teaching methodologies, assessment practices, and student learning experiences. In Section 4 of this report, we reflect on the potential of AI to enhance the quality of our work across the focus areas within the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL).

The Directorate for Institutional Research and Academic Planning (DIRAP) supplied the data for the initial three sections of this report, which concentrate on institutional and faculty-level information regarding teaching and learning, including the trends observed in enrolments, graduations, and success rates over the past five years.

### ***Learning and teaching context at institutional level***

The University of the Free State (UFS) consistently surpassed its enrolment targets until 2021. However, in 2022, the University experienced a shortfall of 435 students compared to the target, and by 2023, this deficit escalated to 2179. The decline in enrolments can be attributed to a combination of under-enrolment among undergraduates and a reduced intake of first-time entering students in 2023 compared to 2022 (although the target for first-time enrolments in 2023 was still exceeded).

Focusing on first-time entering students, it is noteworthy to mention the increase in Admission Point (AP) scores among incoming students. Since 2019, there has been a 17% rise in the

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<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://www.gatesnotes.com/The-Age-of-AI-Has-Begun>

number of students entering the University with an AP score of 30 or higher. This is particularly significant as the majority of first-time entering students originate from quintile one to three schools, with 66% of students entering in 2023 coming from these lower quintile schools. Such schools often lack resources, potentially limiting students' exposure to laboratories, computers, or even libraries. This has implications for the support we offer students and the assumptions we make regarding their prior knowledge and learning experiences.

Examining the graduate data provided in the report, there was a 15% decrease in the number of undergraduate graduates from 2022 to 2023, while the number of postgraduate less than masters graduates increased by 9%. Notably, the graduation rate of postgraduate less than masters students (calculated as the number of graduates divided by the number of enrolments in any given year) peaked at 62% in 2023. This suggests a healthy balance between the enrolment of students in postgraduate less than masters courses and their subsequent graduation.

### ***Student success at the UFS***

The UFS has made significant strides in success rates over the past decade, with the overall success rate improving from 77% in 2013 to 83% in 2022. Moreover, the achievement gap between White and African students narrowed from 11% in 2013 to 7% in 2023. Success rates have also seen an increase within each racial group since 2013, with African students experiencing an 8% increase, Coloured students an 11% increase, Indian/Asian students a 15% increase, and White students a 4% increase.

When examining institutional success rates specifically for the past three years, it becomes evident that although there have been notable improvements over the last decade, success rates have remained relatively stable in recent years. At the faculty level, however, there were significant decreases in success rates from 2021 to 2023 in the faculties of Economic and Management Sciences (by 13%) and Theology and Religion (by 6%). Conversely, the faculties of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, and Health Sciences exhibited noteworthy increases in success rates over the past three years, both showing a rise of 6%.

### ***Learning and teaching at faculty level***

In 2023, African female undergraduate enrolments experienced growth across all faculties (except Education) and comprised the largest demographic group in terms of both race and gender across all faculties, including Health Sciences for the first time. The majority of

departments in all faculties witnessed higher undergraduate module pass rates in 2023 compared to 2022.

Most faculties saw a decrease in enrolments for postgraduate less than masters programmes, although the faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences recorded its highest number of such enrolments in five years in 2023. This is a result of intentional efforts in the faculty to meet the objectives stated in Vision130 to produce more masters and PhD students. Moreover, while most faculties reported a decrease in the number of graduates, the faculties of Economic and Management Sciences and Natural and Agricultural Sciences saw their highest number of graduates in five years in 2023.

### ***Quality learning and teaching in the age of AI***

Section 4 provides an overview of the initiatives and structures supporting the advancement of learning and teaching at the UFS. This encompasses a review of the impact and scope of High Impact Practices (HIPs), such as the A\_STEP tutorial programme, academic advising, academic literacy modules, and the UFSS transitional module. Additionally, it highlights the contributions of the Blended Learning Innovation Services and Support (BLISS) team in fostering student and staff training and participation in blended learning endeavours, strategically positioned to facilitate staff development and support.

Further reflections incorporate UFS students' engagement, the institution's utilisation of data analytics to bolster student success initiatives, considerations on facilitating student access to higher education through recognition of prior learning, and updates on large-scale institutional endeavours aimed at enhancing quality and student success, such as the graduate attribute project. Each sub-section within Section 4 concludes with a brief reflection on how AI can be utilised to enhance the quality of work within the respective focus area.

These reflections highlight the potential of AI to enhance equity in learning and teaching spaces. The adoption of new technologies summarised in this report, visibly affirms the commitment of all stakeholders (faculties and support services) at the UFS to quality learning and teaching that will continue to promote social justice.

### ***Structure of the report***

The report provides an overview of learning and teaching in four sections:

- Section 1 uses demographic data on enrolments and graduates to enable an institutional reflection about the learning and teaching context.
- Section 2 focuses on institutional performance in relation to student success.
- Section 3 provides data to enable reflections on learning and teaching in faculty contexts.
- Section 4 provides an overview of institutional learning and teaching initiatives.

Each section of the report starts with a key findings summary that provides the reader with a brief overview of the main findings in the analysis that follows. For the executive summary, only selected findings were highlighted.

### ***A note on data used for this report***

Even though masters and doctoral figures are included in the broader institutional overview, the focus of the report is on undergraduates and postgraduate students completing a qualification less than a masters. The reasoning for this is twofold, first, the latter two groups are where the majority teaching and learning in group settings take place, and second, modules extending beyond a year do not give an accurate picture of enrolment, throughput, retention, and graduation when combined with more traditional teaching and learning circumstances found in the lower qualifications.

It is also important to highlight that this report combined audited data from 2019-2022 with unaudited data of 2023.

## List of Definitions

- **Full-time equivalent (FTE):** An FTE total takes account of a student's course load. So a student carrying a standard fulltime curriculum would equal 1 FTE student, and a student carrying a half-load would equal 0.5 FTE students. Success rates are calculated by dividing the system's FTE degree credit total by its FTE enrolled student total. An FTE degree credit calculation follows the same method as an FTE enrolled calculation, but takes account only of the courses passed by students.
- **Graduation rate:** A calculation based on the number of students who have graduated in a particular year, irrespective of the year of study, divided by the total number of students enrolled at the universities/faculties, in that same year. Graduation rate is used as a proxy for throughput rate.
- **Module pass rate:** Calculated through dividing the number of students who pass modules by the number registered for respective modules. Module pass rates were calculated in the first semester of 2018, which means there could be some slight variations in the 2017 data after auditing took place during June/July.
- **Postgraduates less than masters:** Honours degrees or postgraduate diplomas at a level short of a Masters qualification.
- **Retention rate:** Cohort of students who returned the following year in the same education level (3 & 4 year B degrees only) from year 1 to 2.
- **Success rate:** The amount of successful FTEs divided by the amount of registered FTEs.

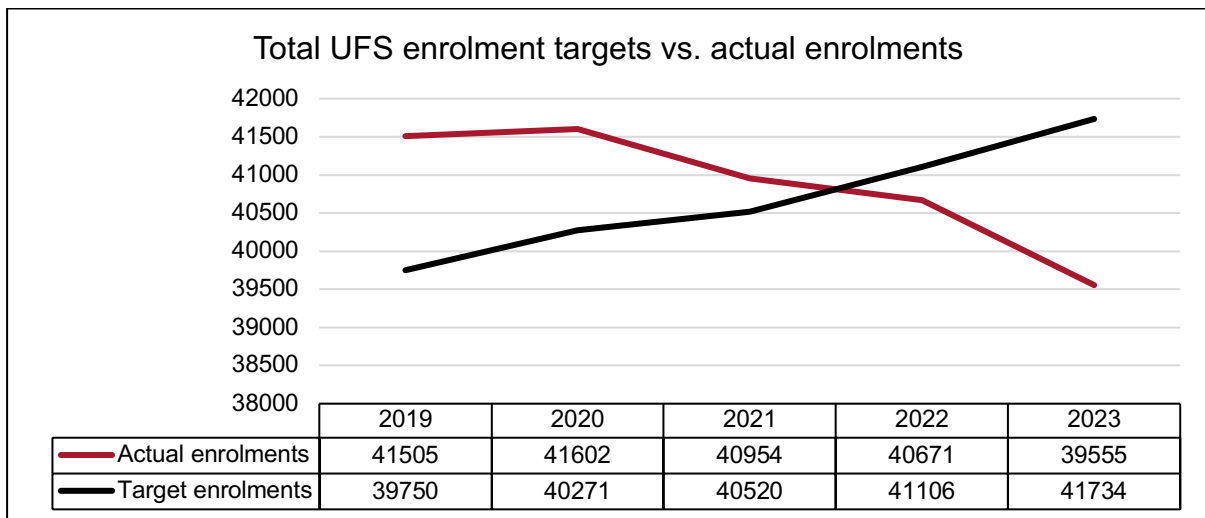
# **Section 1**

## **Learning and Teaching Context at Institutional Level**

## 1.1 Key findings on Section 1

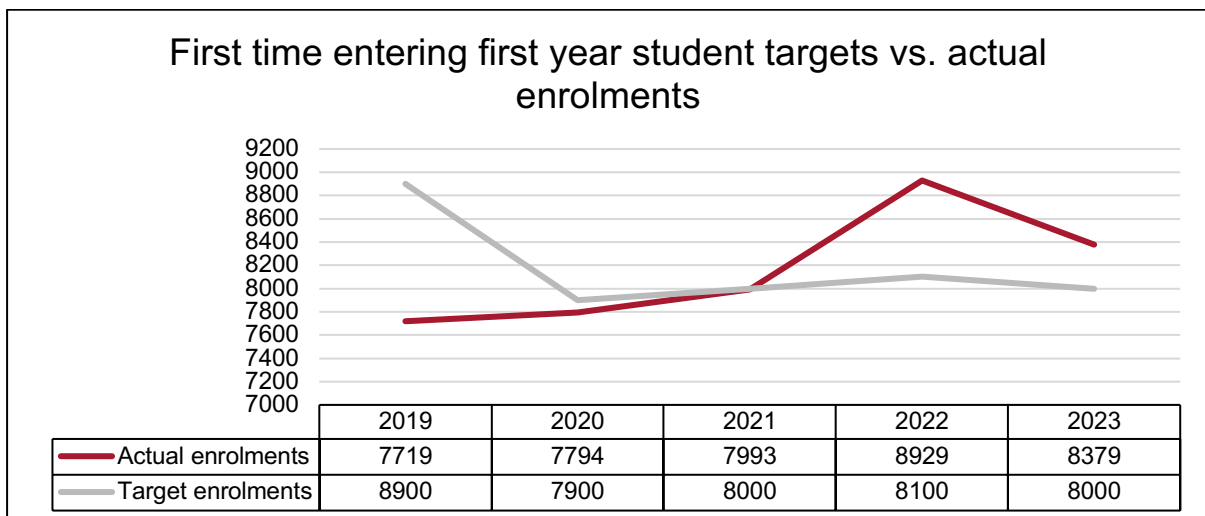
- Between 2019 and 2021, the UFS exceeded its target enrolments, however, in 2022 fewer students were enrolled than anticipated and in 2023 this gap widened, with even fewer students enrolled. The gap in enrolments were mainly from a drop in undergraduate enrolments in 2023, despite first-time entering enrolments exceeded its target.
- Undergraduate enrolments for all race and gender groups decreased from 2022 to 2023, however, when looking back over the last five years and comparing only 2019 and 2023 data, African females (which make up the largest proportion of undergraduate enrolments) was the only group with more enrolments in 2023 than in 2019.
- In 2019, African females made up 52% of undergraduate enrolments, this increased to 57% in 2023. African females also made up most of the postgraduate less than masters enrolments in 2023 (46%), an increase of 5% from 2019.
- Since 2019, the proportion of first-time entering students with an AP score between 30 and 36 increased with 14%. In 2023, 63% of our first-time entering students had an AP score of 30 or more.
- Two thirds of students who enter the UFS are from quintile 1 to 3 schools.
- Almost half (45%) of students entering the UFS for the first time are between 20 and 22 years of age.
- The number of undergraduate graduates decreased with 15% from 2022 to 2023.
- The number of postgraduate less than masters graduates increased with 9% from 2022 to 2023 but is still lower than the number of graduates we had five years ago.
- The graduation rate of postgraduate less than masters students (number of graduates divided by the number of enrolments in any given year) has increased to 62%, the highest it has been in five years.

## 1.2 Enrolment targets vs. actual targets



**Figure 1: Total UFS enrolment targets vs. actual enrolments**

**Figure 1** shows that, up until 2021, the actual enrolments have exceeded targets. From 2022, the UFS did not meet the enrolment target. In 2022 the University enrolled 435 students below the target, and in 2023 this number grew to 2179.



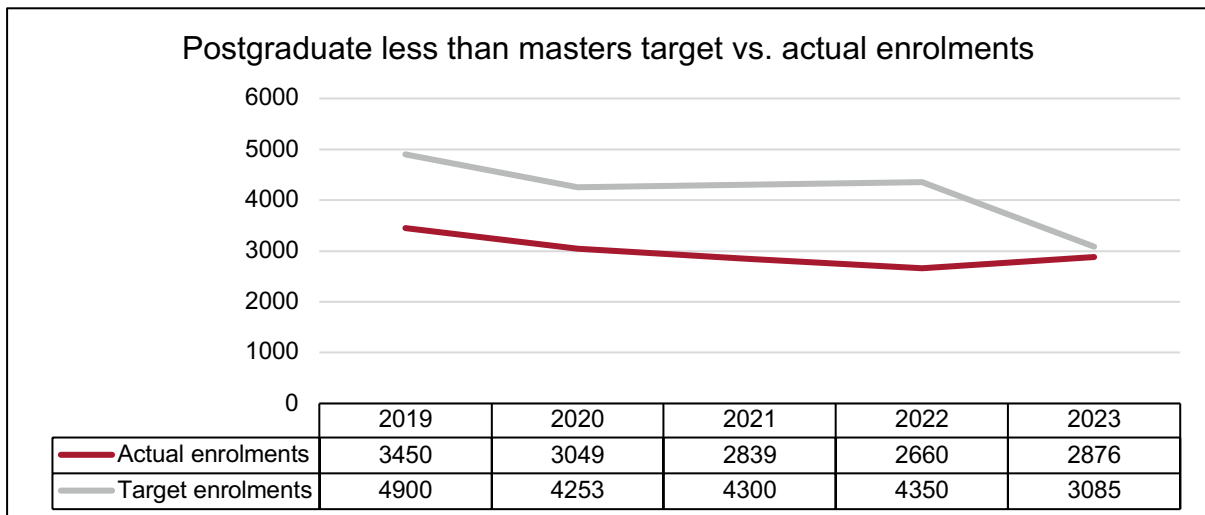
**Figure 2: First time entering students target vs. actual enrolments**

When considering first-time entering students only, the UFS were under-enrolled from 2019 - 2020 after which actual enrolments started to exceed the targets. In 2023, actual enrolments exceeded the target by 379 (see **Figure 2**).



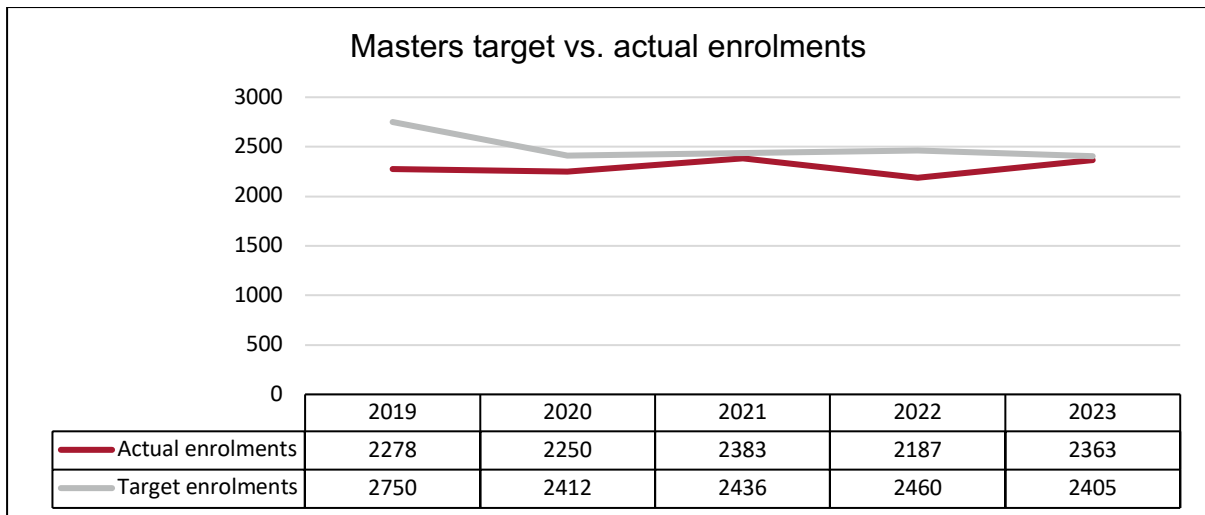
**Figure 3: Undergraduate target vs. actual enrolments**

Since 2018, there has been a consistent over-enrolment of undergraduate students against the set targets. However, in 2023 the actual undergraduate enrolments were below the set target for the first time when 1984 fewer students were enrolled than the target (see **Figure 3**).



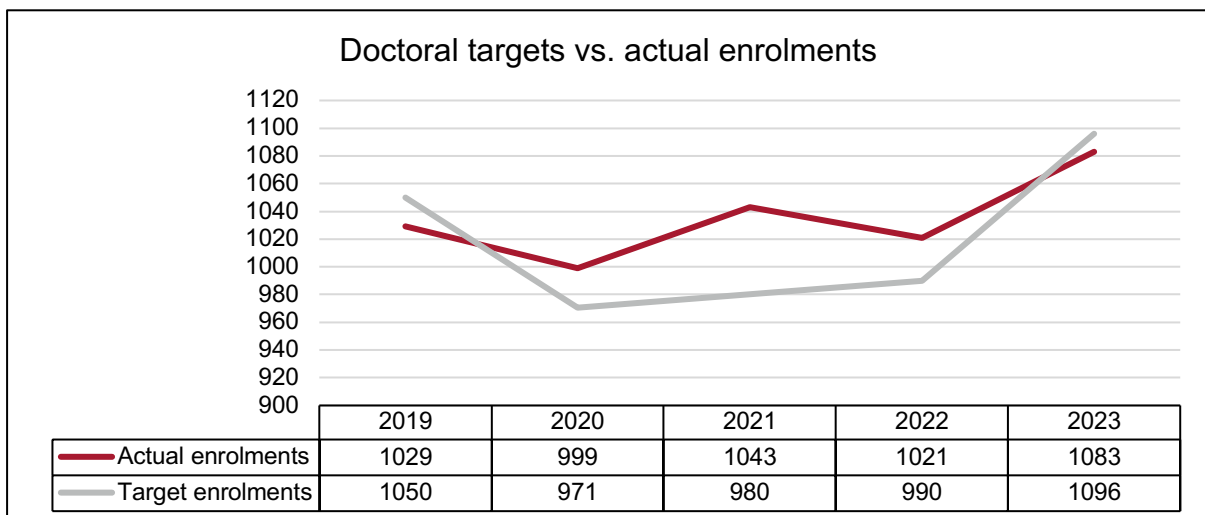
**Figure 4: Postgraduate less than masters target vs. actual enrolments**

**Figure 4** shows that the postgraduate less than masters enrolments have been steadily declining between 2018 and 2022. In 2023, there was a slight increase in the number of enrolments but the target was still not met despite the target being lowered from 2022 to 2023.



**Figure 5: Masters target vs. actual enrolments**

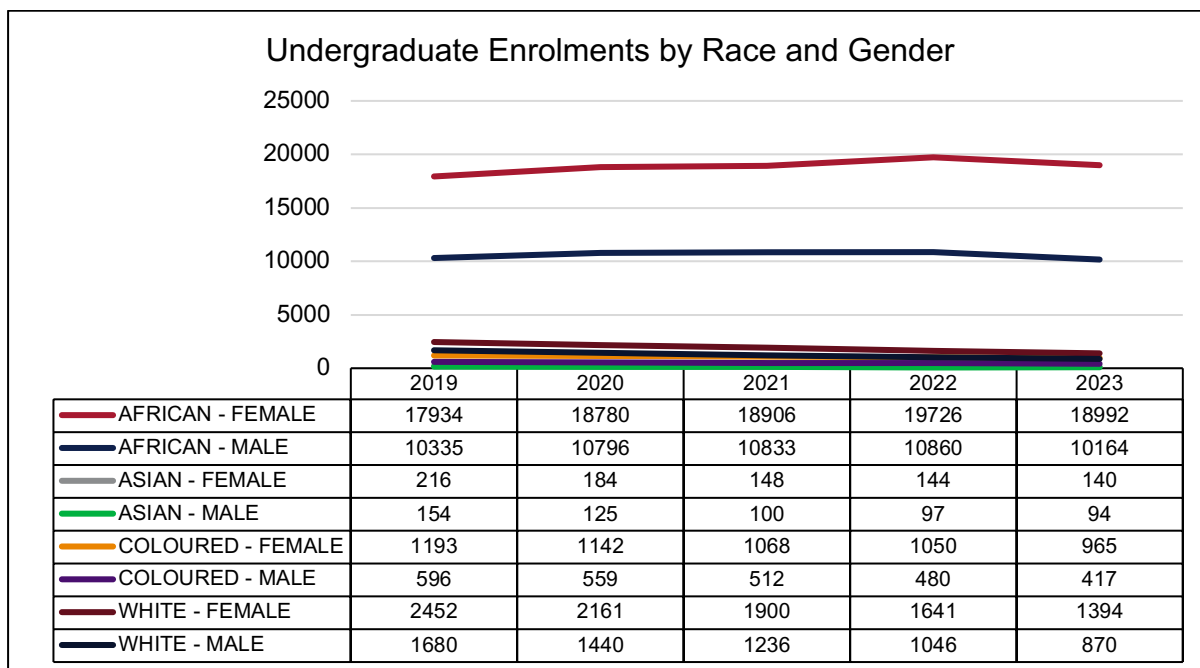
**Figure 5** shows that Masters enrolments have remained relatively steady over the last five years. In 2023, although the actual enrolments were still slightly below the target, the gap has decreased from 2022 to 2023.



**Figure 6: Doctoral target vs. actual enrolments**

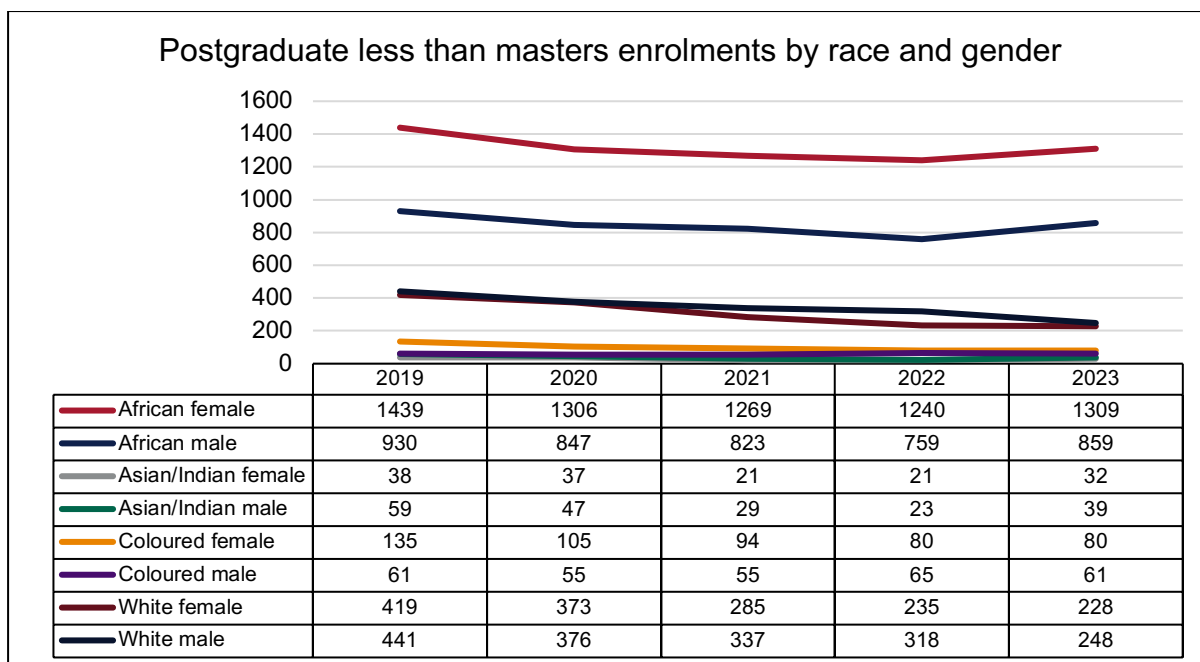
Over the last five years the number of doctoral enrolments remain consistent between about 1000 and 1100. The targets were lowered between 2020 and 2022 which led to a slight over-enrolment, however with the target increased again in 2023 the enrolments were slightly below the target (although the gap is very small, see **Figure 6**).

### 1.3 Enrolments by race and gender



**Figure 7: Undergraduate enrolments by race and gender**

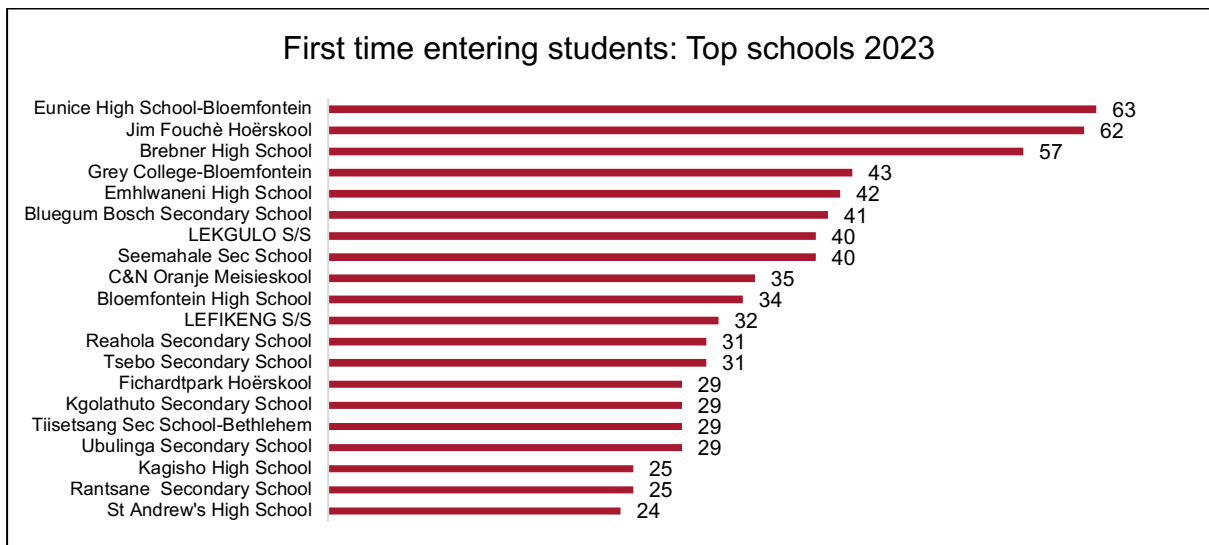
**Figure 7** shows that when comparing 2019 with 2023 data, the number of enrolments dropped for all race and gender groups except the number of African females, which increased. There was a steady increase in the number of African males from 2019 – 2022 but in 2023 the number of enrolments dropped to its lowest in the last five years. The number of all other race and gender groups steadily declined from 2019 to 2023. When considering the proportion of different race and gender groups, African females have consistently made up the largest proportion of undergraduate enrolments over the last five years and has increased from 52% of all undergraduate enrolments to 55% between 2019 and 2023. The percentage of other race and gender groups remained relatively consistent over the last few years except for white students (males and females combined) which in 2023 made up 9% of the total undergraduate enrolments compared to 12% in 2019.



**Figure 8: Postgraduate less than masters enrolments by race and gender**

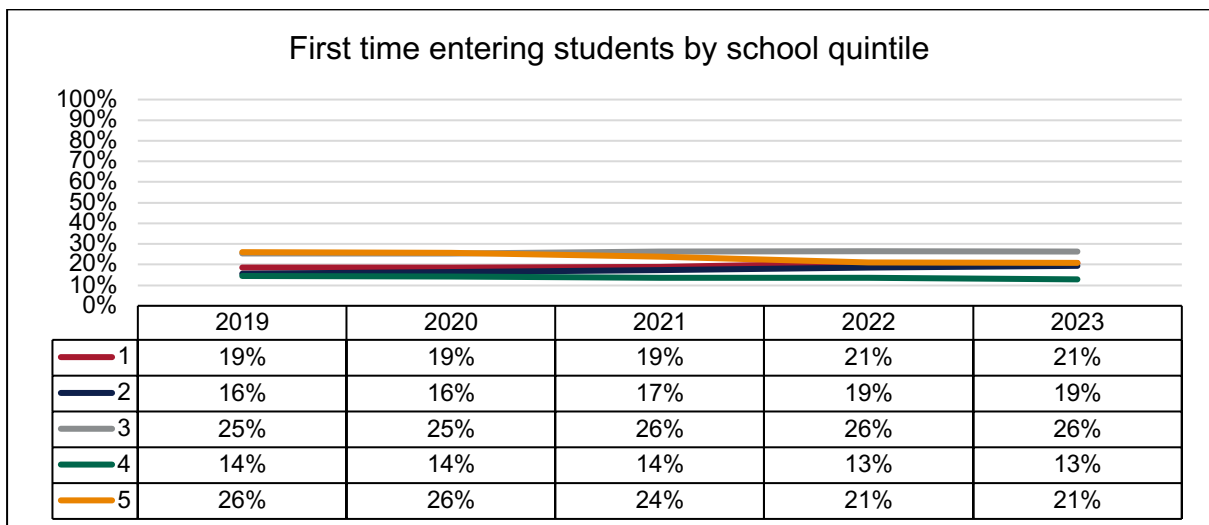
**Figure 8** shows that for all race and gender groups, the number of postgraduate enrolments in 2023 were lower than five years ago. The trends are a little different between groups, however. The number of African females and males, as well as Asian/Indian females and males steadily dropped from 2019 to 2022 but show an increase between 2022 and 2023. Contrarily, Coloured males, as well as white females and males just continued to drop from 2022 to 2023 (Coloured females remained consistent between 2022 and 2023).

## 1.4 First time entering students



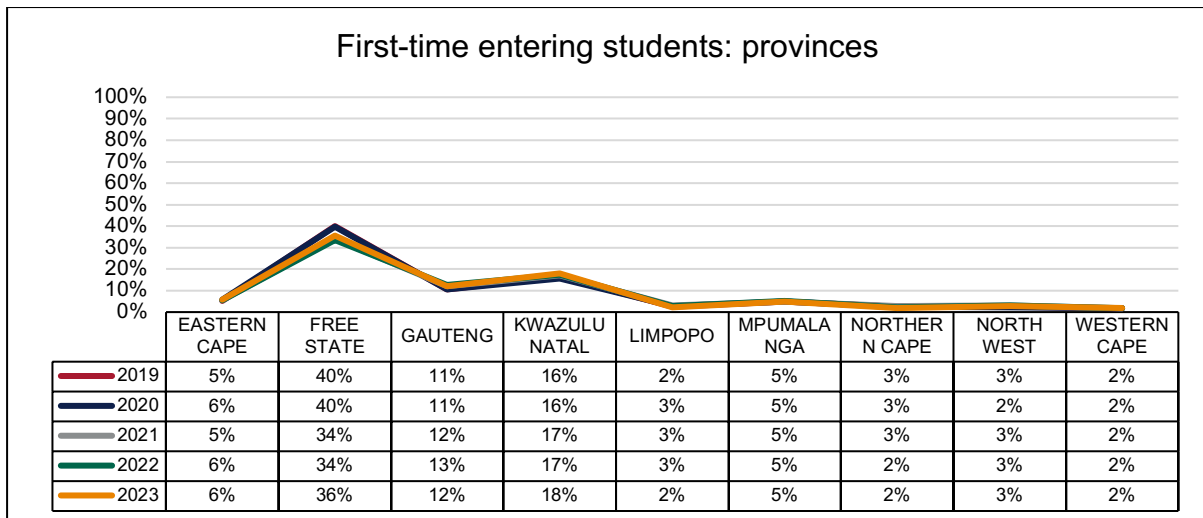
**Figure 9: First time entering students: Top 20 schools 2023**

The top 20 feeder-schools of 2022 are represented in **Figure 9**. Of these top 20 schools, all are situated in the Free State province, except Emhlaneni High School and Ubulinga Secondary School, which are both situated in KwaZulu Natal.



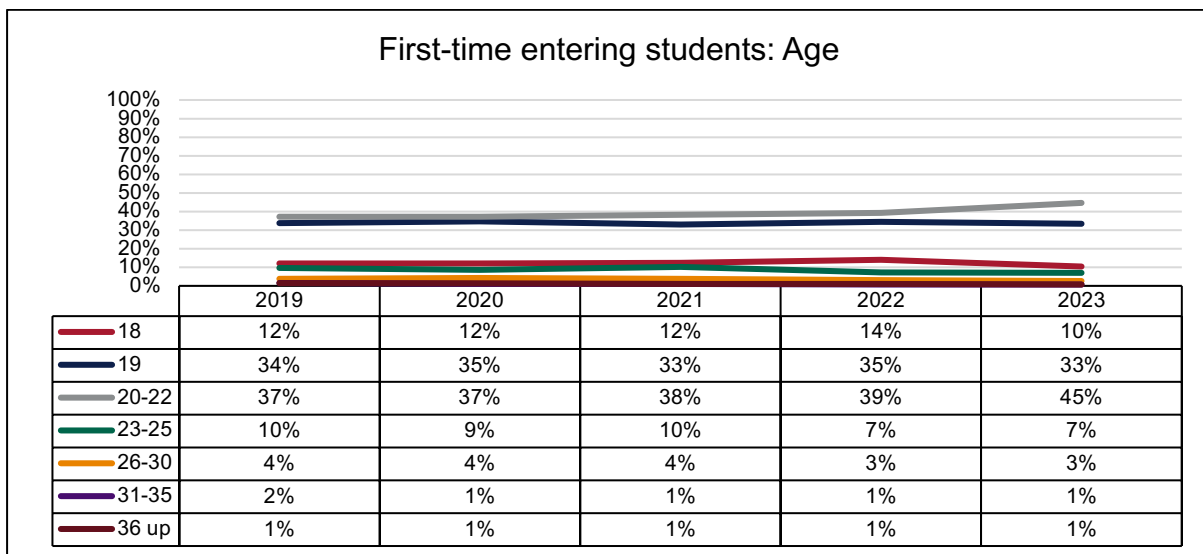
**Figure 10: First time entering students by school quintile**

Around 18% of school data is not linked to a quintile. Of those that are linked to a quintile, **Figure 10** shows that most first-time entering students in 2023 come from quintile three schools (26%). This is followed by quintile one and five (21%), quintile two (19%), and quintile four schools (13%). First-time entering students from lower quintile schools (quintile 1-3) increased from 60% to 66% from 2019 to 2023.



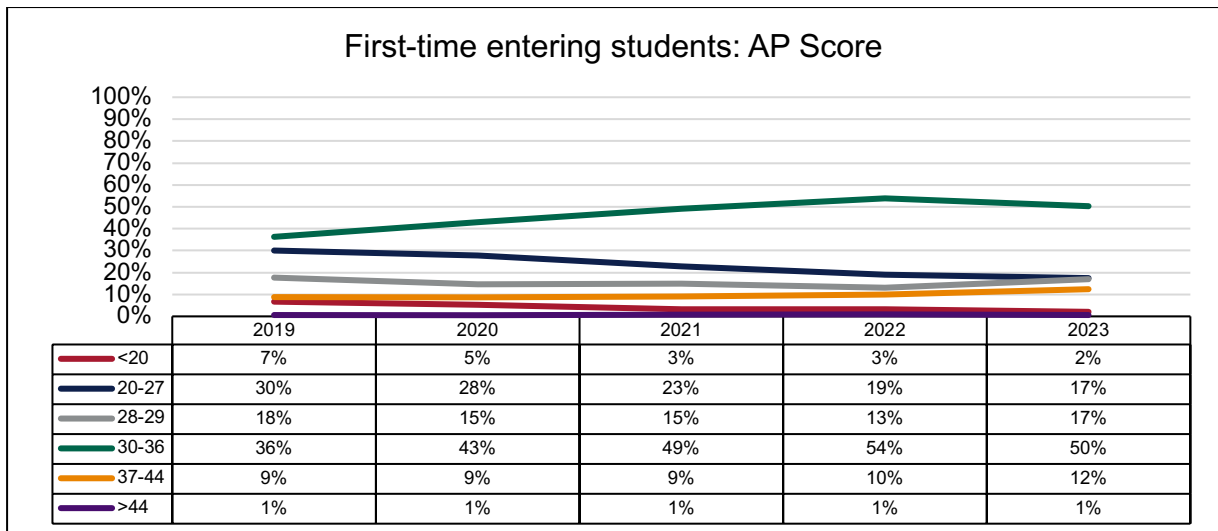
**Figure 11: First time entering students: Provinces**

**Figure 11** shows that the majority of first-time entering students come from the Free State province (36%), followed by KwaZulu Natal (18%), and Gauteng (12%). The percentage of first-time entering students from the Free State has declined since 2019, while there has been a slight increase in the percentage of students from KwaZulu Natal and Gauteng. Around 15% of first-time entrants are not linked to a province.



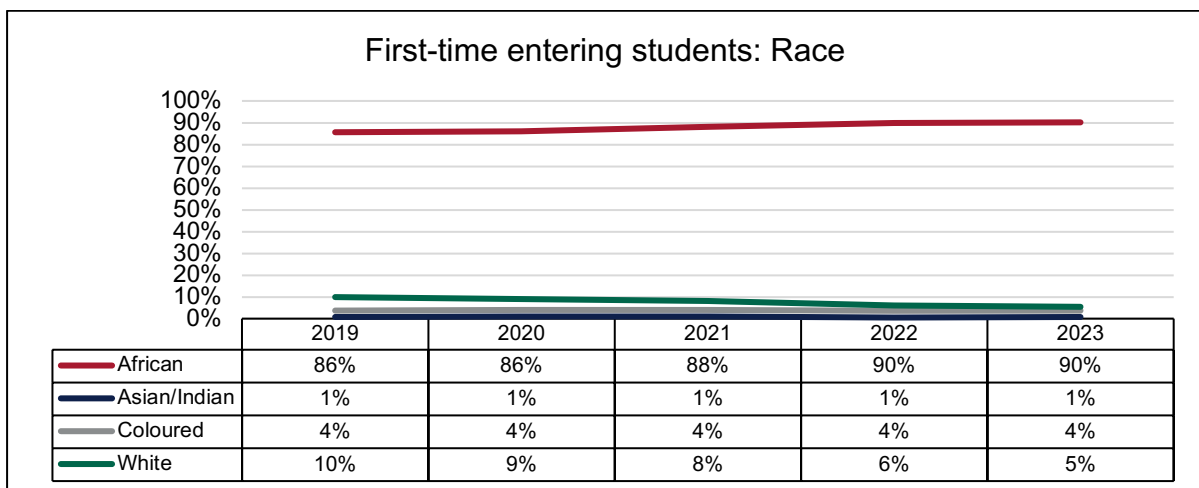
**Figure 12: First time entering students: Age**

In 2023, fewer than half (43%) of first time entering students were 18 to 19 years old, while 45% entered between the ages of 20 and 22, and 7% between the ages of 23 and 25. The percentage of students entering between the ages of 18 and 19 has declined from 2019 (46%) to 2023 (43%, see **Figure 12**).



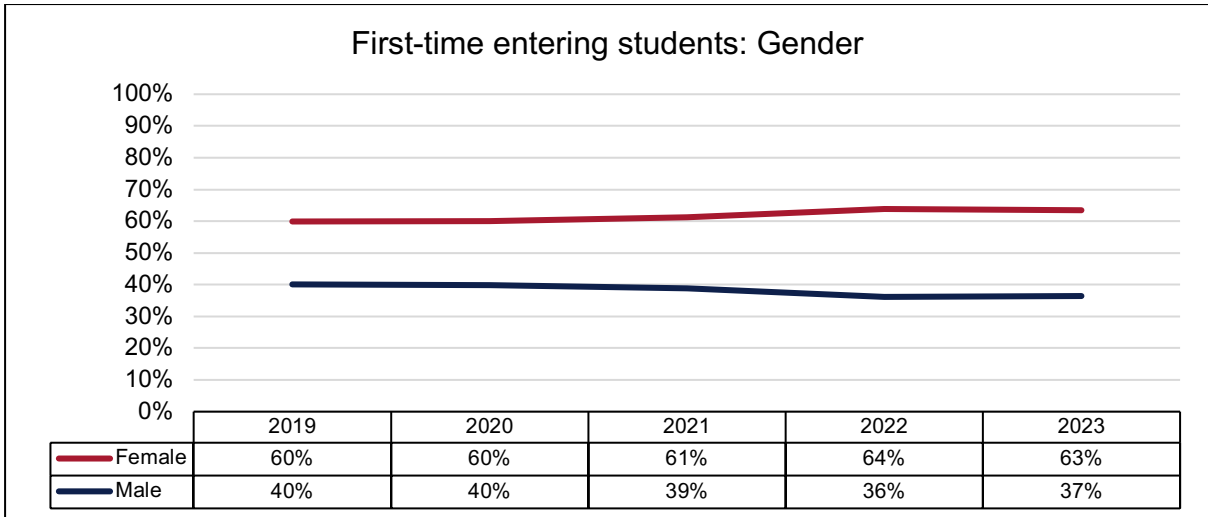
**Figure 13: First time entering students: AP scores**

**Figure 13** shows that the majority of first-time entering students' AP score has been between 30 and 36 since 2019, although this percentage has increased notably over the last five years from 36% in 2019 to 50% in 2023. In 2023, 63% of first-time entering students had AP scores of higher than 30. Correspondingly, the percentage of students who enter the university with AP scores below 30 has declined over the last five years. In 2019, 54% of first-time entering students had an AP score below 30, in 2023 this has decreased to 36%.



**Figure 14: First time entering students: Race**

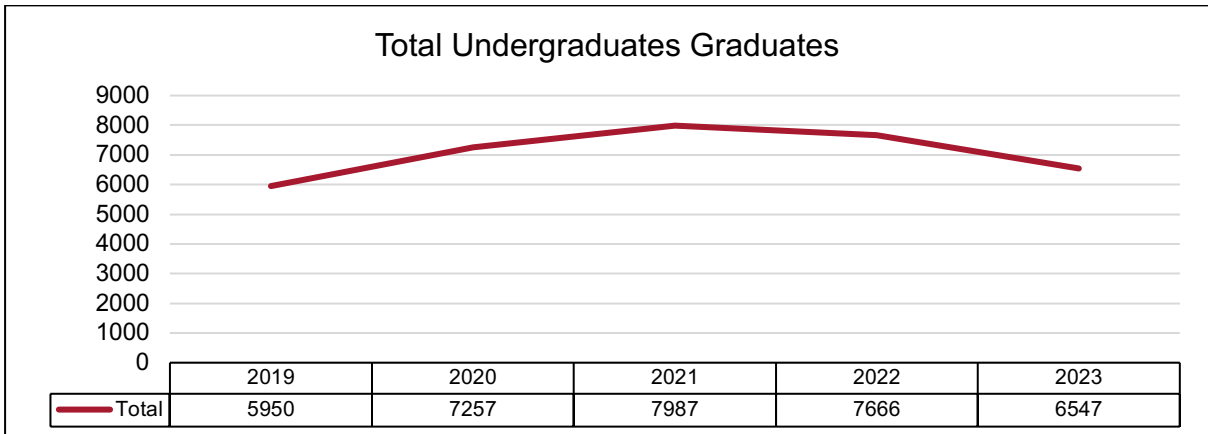
African students make up the majority of first-time entering students and the percentage of African students increased by 4% between 2019 and 2023. Conversely, the percentage of White first-time entering students decreased by 5%. The representation of the remaining race categories (Coloured and Indian/Asian students) remained consistent over the last five years (See **Figure 14**).



**Figure 15: First time entering students: Gender**

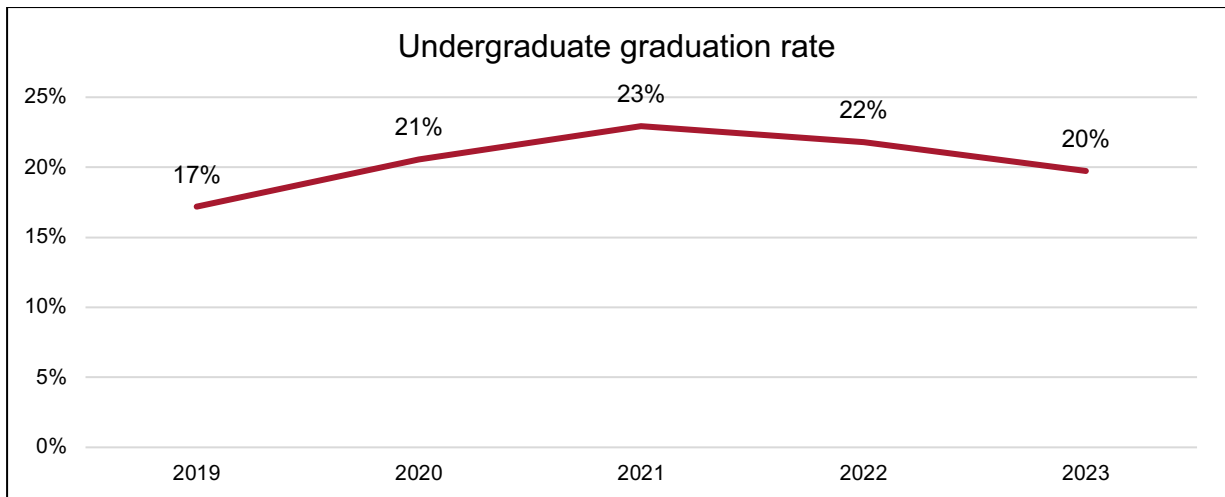
**Figure 15** shows that the percentage of female students has increased from 60% to 63% between 2019 and 2023, while the percentage of male students has declined from 40% to 37%.

### 1.5 Graduates



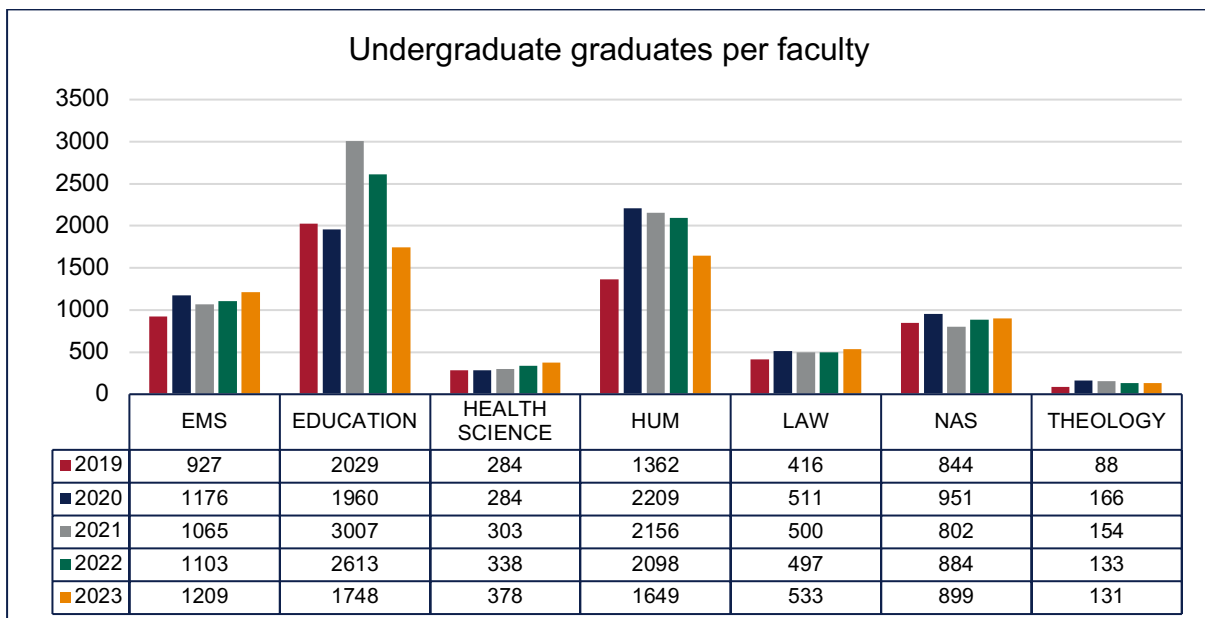
**Figure 16: Total undergraduate graduates**

**Figure 16** shows that the number of undergraduate graduates has steadily increased from 2018 to 2021 after which it declined in 2022 and continued to decline in 2023. In 2023, there were 1119 fewer undergraduate graduates than in 2022.



**Figure 17: Undergraduate graduation rate**

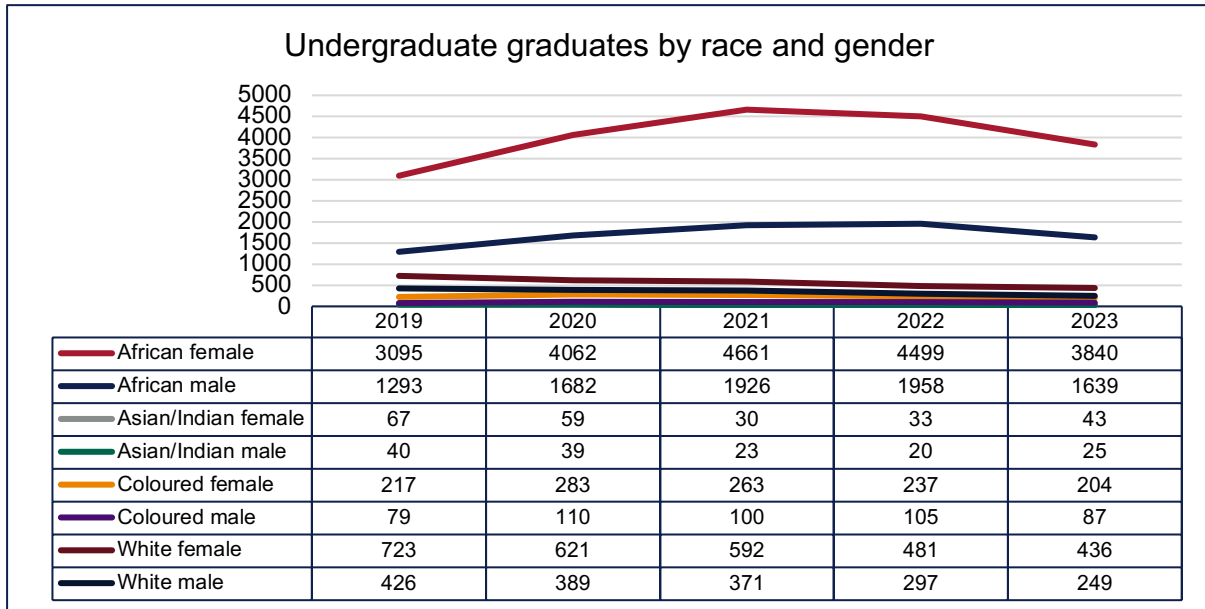
If one considers the graduation rate, which is the calculation of graduations in relation to enrolments, the UFS' undergraduate graduation rate increased from 17% in 2019 to 23% in 2021 and then decreased to 22% in 2022 and to 20% in 2023 (see **Figure 17**). Graduation rate is calculated by dividing the number of graduates of a given year by the number of enrolments of the same year. In 2023, both the number of undergraduate enrolments and the number of undergraduate graduates declined, however, as the decreased graduation rate shows, the number of graduates declined more than the enrolments.



**Figure 18: Undergraduate graduates per faculty**

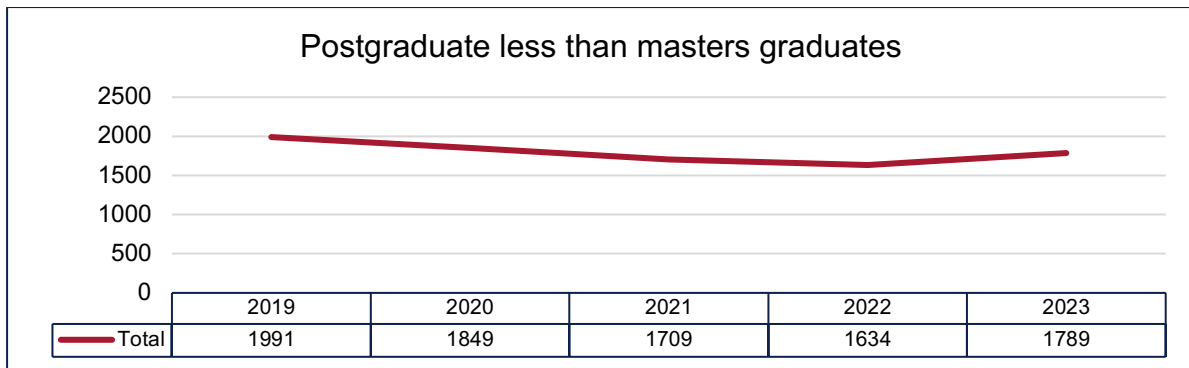
As can be seen in **Figure 18**, the number of undergraduate graduates decreased between 2022 and 2023 in the faculties of Education, the Humanities, and Theology and Religion, while increasing in the faculties of Economic and Management Sciences, Health Sciences, Law and

Natural and Agricultural Sciences. The biggest decrease in graduates was in the Education faculty, with 865 fewer undergraduate students graduating in 2023 than in 2022. When considering the last five years, and comparing 2019 and 2023 data, the number of undergraduate graduates increased in all faculties except the faculty of Education.



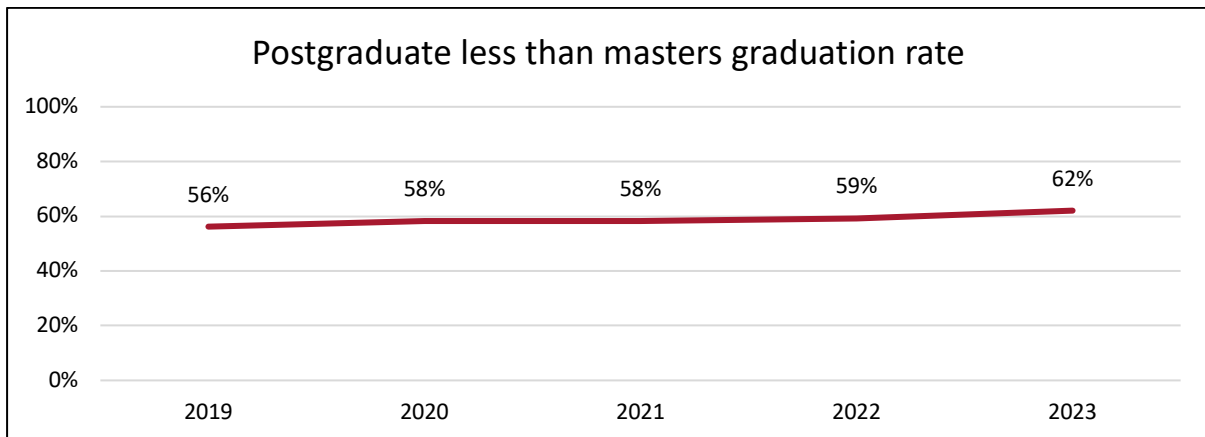
**Figure 19: Undergraduate graduates by race and gender**

**Figure 19** shows that the majority of undergraduate graduates are African females with this group consistently growing between 2019 and 2021. However, there was a slight decrease in this group between 2021 and 2022 and then another decrease from 2022 to 2023. In 2023, 659 fewer African females graduated than in 2022. The number of African male graduates increased from 2019 to 2022 and declined in 2023 with 319 graduates. When comparing 2019 and 2023 data, the number of African female and male graduates, as well as Coloured male graduates increased while the number of graduates for all other race and gender groups decreased.



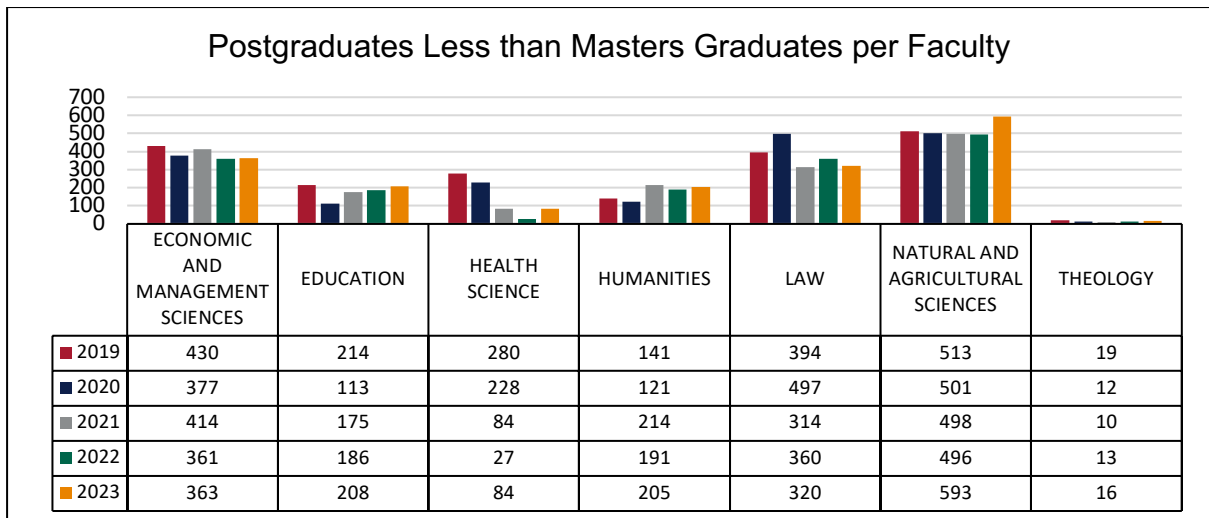
**Figure 20: Total postgraduate less than masters graduates**

**Figure 20** shows that the number of postgraduate less than masters graduates consistently declined from 2019 to 2022, with this number increasing in 2023. In 2023, 155 more postgraduate less than masters students graduated than in 2022.



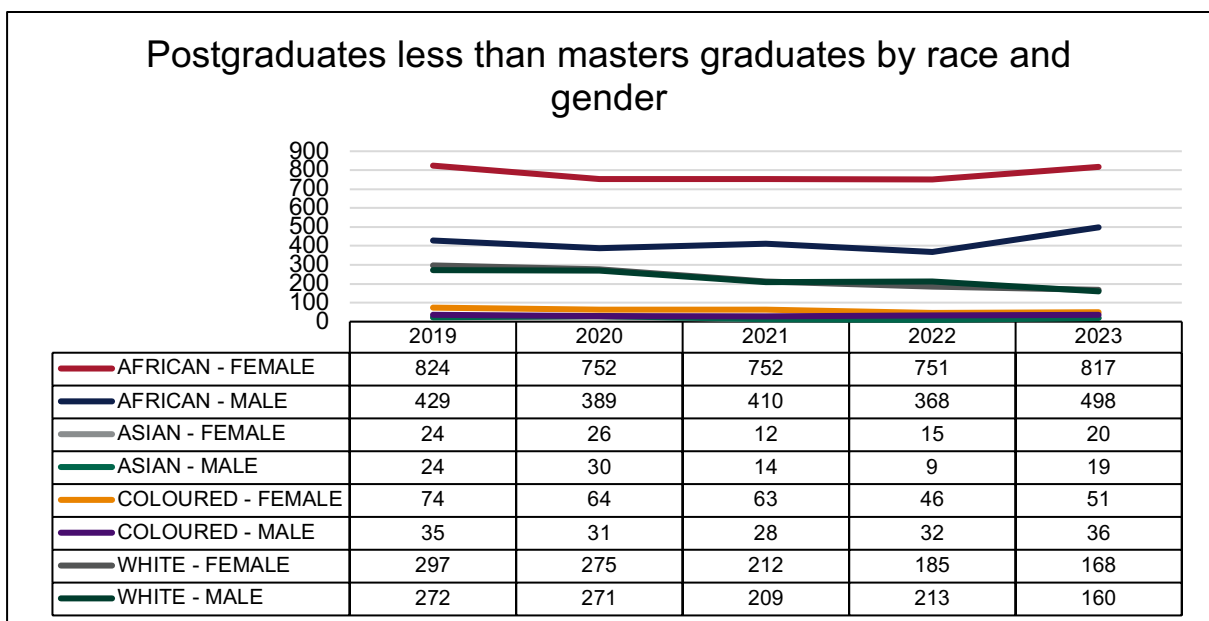
**Figure 21: Postgraduate less than masters graduation rate**

The graduation rate (see **Figure 21**) considers the relationship between the number of enrolments and number of graduates. The postgraduate less than masters graduation rate has steadily increased from 2019 to 2023 from 56% to 62%. The number of postgraduate enrolments declined from 2019 to 2022, and increased again slightly in 2023 and although the number of graduates also declined from 2019 to 2022, the decline was slighter than the decline in enrolments. Despite an increase in both enrolments and graduates in 2023, the graduation rate increased which means that the increase in the number of graduates was greater than the increase in enrolments. Aligned with Vision130, we want to increase our postgraduate intake which may mean a decrease in graduation rate for a while until the increased intake graduates.



**Figure 22: Postgraduate less than masters graduates per faculty**

**Figure 22** shows the number of postgraduate less than masters graduates between 2019 and 2023. From 2022 to 2023, the number of graduates increased in all faculties except the faculty of Law. When comparing 2019 and 2023 data to have a longer term view, the number of postgraduate less than masters graduates increased in the faculties of the Humanities and Natural and Agricultural Sciences and declined in the remaining faculties.



**Figure 23: Postgraduate less than masters graduates by race and gender**

**Figure 23** shows that African females are the most represented group of postgraduate less than masters graduates. All racial and gender groups show a decline in graduates in the last five years, except African males and Coloured males. When only comparing 2022 and 2023, the number of graduates increased in all race and gender groups except white students (both male and female).



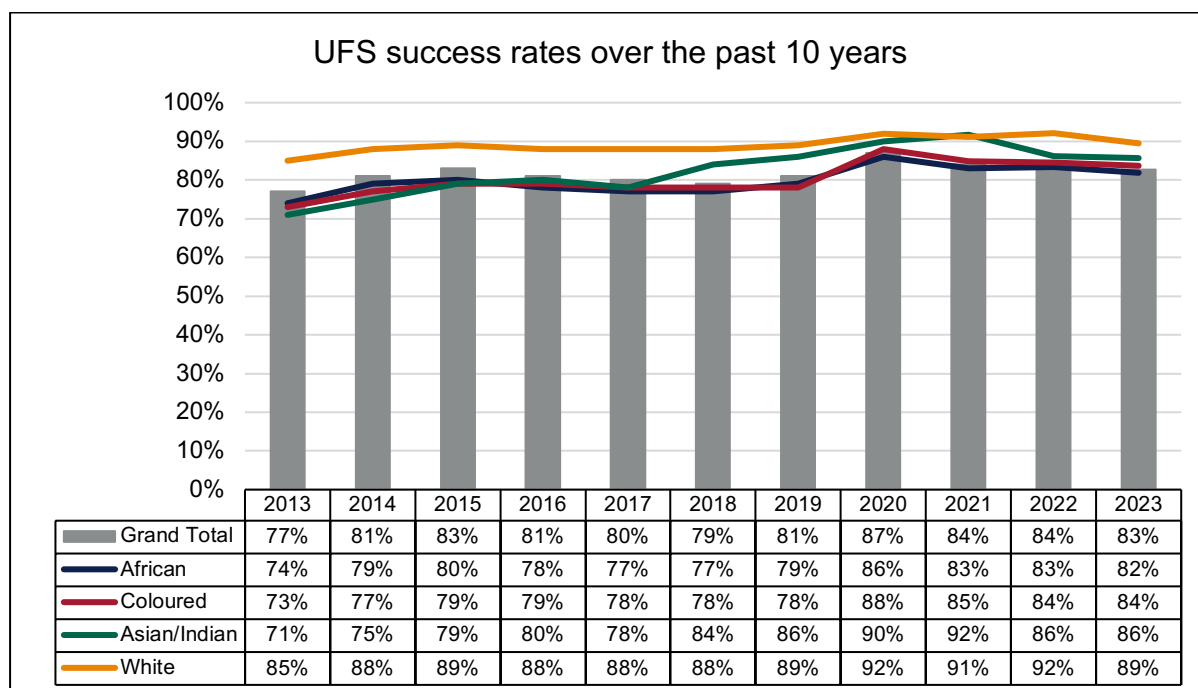
# **Section 2**

## **Student Success at the UFS**

## 2.1 Key findings on Section 2: Student success at the UFS

- Over the last ten years, the UFS success rate has improved from 77% in 2013 to 83% in 2023.
- The overall institutional success rate (including all qualification levels) remained relatively stable between 2021 and 2023 (between 84% and 83%), thereby normalising the inflating effect responses to the COVID-19 pandemic had on success rates in 2020.
- Since 2013, the success rate for African students increased by 8%, 11% for Coloured students, 15% for Indian/Asian students, and 4% for White students.
- The achievement gap between White and African students decreased from 11% in 2013 to 7% in 2023.
- On a faculty level, the undergraduate success rate decreased notably in the faculty of Economic and Management Sciences from 83% in 2021 to 70% in 2023. The undergraduate success rates also decreased in the faculties of Law, as well as Theology and Religion (with 2% and 6% respectively). On the other hand, the faculties of Education, Health Sciences, and Natural and Agricultural Sciences had the highest success rates in three years in 2023.
- The postgraduate less than masters success rates were the highest in three years in 2023 in the faculties of Economic and Management Science, Education, and Health Sciences, with Health Sciences showing a 7% increase. The faculties of the Humanities, Law, and Theology and Religion achieved their lowest success rates in three years in 2023, with a notable decrease of 22% in Theology and Religion.
- In terms of retention, both mainstream and extended programme students show an 88% retention rate from year one to year two, the highest for both pathways in five years.

## 2.2. Institutional success rates



**Figure 24: UFS institutional success rates over the past 10 years**

Over the last ten years, the UFS success rate has improved from 77% in 2013 to 83% in 2023.

**Figure 24** shows institutional success rates by racial groups. Between 2013 to 2023, success rates of African students increased by 8%, Coloured students' success rates increased by 11%, Indian/Asian students' success rates increased by 15% and White students' success rates increased by 4%. The achievement gap between White and African students decreased from 11% in 2013 to 7% in 2023.

The definition institutions are required to report on nationally by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) is used to report on the success rate. That implies the number of successful Full-time Equivalent Enrolments (FTEs) divided by the number of registered FTEs. Conditional formatting in the tables in this section of the report, rank the success rates of each faculty over time through colours: Red = lowest success rate of the three relevant years, and green = highest success rate of the three relevant years.

**Table 1: FTE success rates**

		2021	2022	2023
<b>All courses</b>	<b>Overall UFS success rate</b>	84%	84%	83%
<b>(including M &amp; PhD)</b>	African	83%	83%	82%
	Coloured	85%	84%	84%
	Indian/Asian	92%	86%	86%
	White	91%	92%	89%
<b>All courses</b>				
	<b>Overall success rate</b>	84%	85%	83%
<b>(excluding M &amp; PhD)</b>				
<b>Postgraduate less than masters</b>				
	<b>Overall success rate</b>	82%	83%	83%
	African	80%	82%	82%
	Coloured	85%	79%	83%
	Indian/Asian	70%	77%	85%
	White	89%	91%	91%
<b>Undergraduate</b>				
	<b>Overall success rate</b>	84%	85%	83%
	African	83%	84%	83%
	Coloured	85%	85%	84%
	Indian/Asian	92%	90%	90%
	White	93%	93%	93%

**Table 1** shows institutional success rates by qualification level and race. The overall institutional success rate (including all qualification levels) decreased by 1% from 84% 2021 to 83% in 2023. For postgraduate less than masters the success rate increased from 82% in 2021 to 83% in 2023. The overall achievement gap decreased from 8% in 2021 to 7% in 2023. The achievement gap for postgraduate less than masters and undergraduate students were 9% and 10% respectively in 2023.

**Table 2: Undergraduate success rates by faculty**

	2021	2022	2023
Economic and Management Sciences	83%	70%	70%
Education	90%	93%	94%
Health Sciences	91%	95%	97%
Humanities	83%	87%	84%
Law	86%	87%	84%
Natural and Agricultural Sciences	78%	83%	84%
Theology and Religion	86%	80%	80%

**Table 2** shows undergraduate success rates per faculty over the last 3 years. The faculties of Education, Health Sciences, and Natural and Agricultural Sciences obtained the highest success rates in 2023. In the faculty of Economic and Management Sciences the success rate dropped from 83% in 2021 to 70% (a decrease of 13%) and then remained at 70% in 2023. A similar trend can be seen in the faculty of Theology and Religion. In the faculties of Humanities and Law the success rate increased from 2021 to 2022 but then decreased again in 2023.

**Table 3: Undergraduate success rates by race and gender**

	2021	2022	2023
African female	87%	86%	85%
African male	77%	79%	78%
Indian/Asian female	92%	91%	92%
Indian/Asian male	91%	89%	88%
Coloured female	88%	86%	86%
Coloured male	78%	81%	79%
White female	95%	95%	94%
White male	88%	91%	90%

**Table 3** shows the undergraduate success rates by race and gender. For all race and gender groups except African, Coloured, and white males, the highest success rate was achieved in 2021. In the mentioned three race and gender groups, the highest success rates were achieved in 2022.

**Table 4: Postgraduate less than masters success rate by faculty**

	2021	2022	2023
Economic and Management Sciences	73%	73%	76%
Education	92%	93%	95%
Health Sciences	91%	94%	98%
Humanities	91%	95%	90%
Law	69%	69%	68%
Natural and Agricultural Sciences	89%	94%	92%
Theology and Religion	93%	88%	71%

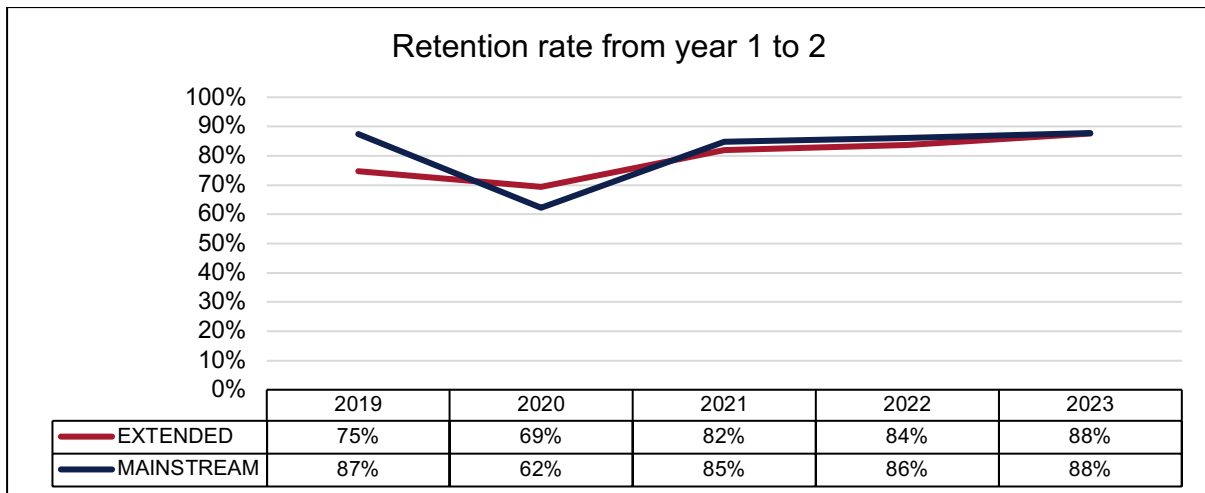
Turning to the success rates of postgraduate less than masters level, **Table 4** shows that when comparing success rates over the last three years, the highest success rates for postgraduate less than masters were achieved in 2023 by the faculties of Economic and Management Sciences, Education, and Health Sciences. In the faculty of Economic and Management Sciences an opposite trend is seen for postgraduate less than masters students than for undergraduate students, where the success rate declined over the last three years. In the faculties of the Humanities, Law and Natural and Agricultural Sciences, the highest success rates were achieved in 2022, while the highest success rate was achieved in 2021 in the faculty of Theology and Religion. In the faculty of Theology and Religion, the success rate decreased with 22% from 2021 to 2023.

**Table 5: Postgraduate less than masters success rates by race and gender**

	2021	2022	2023
African female	83%	84%	84%
African male	75%	77%	78%
Indian/Asian female	76%	87%	92%
Indian/Asian male	66%	64%	79%
Coloured female	89%	83%	89%
Coloured male	76%	74%	75%
White female	93%	96%	94%
White male	86%	88%	87%

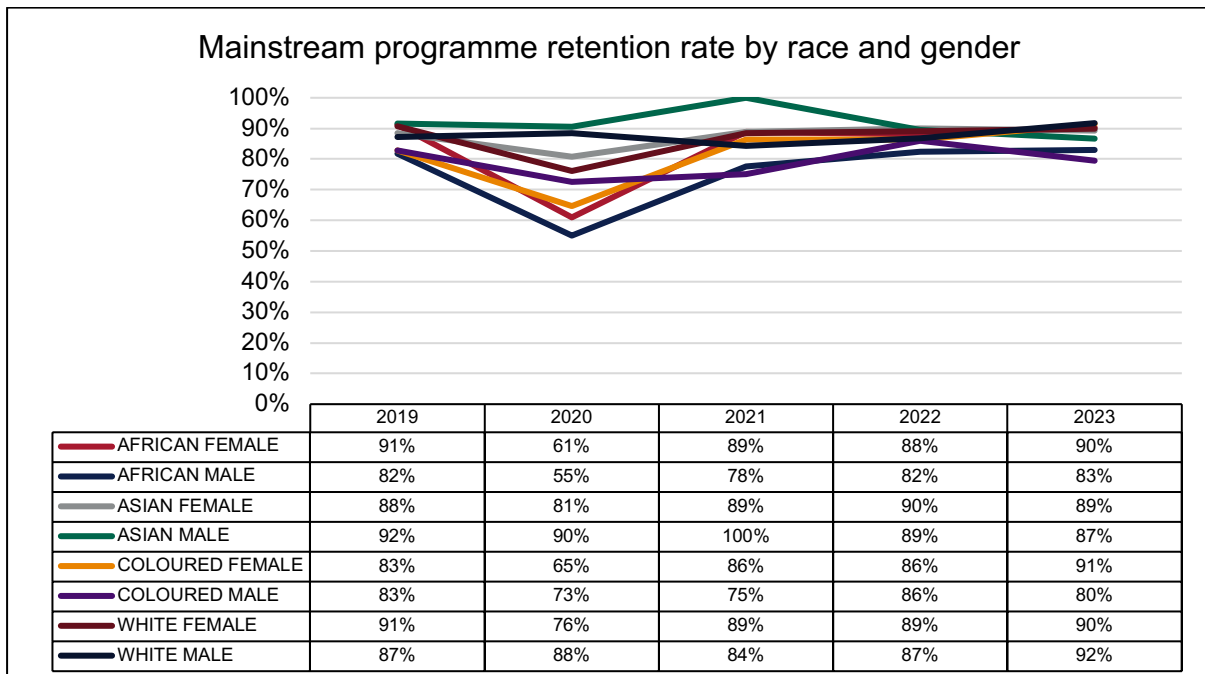
In **Table 5**, success rates for postgraduate less than masters students are shown by race and gender from 2021 to 2023. African males, Indian Asian males and females, and Coloured females achieved the highest success rates in 2023. African females, and white females and males achieved the highest success rates in 2022. Coloured males achieved the highest success rates in 2021.

## 2.3 Undergraduate retention



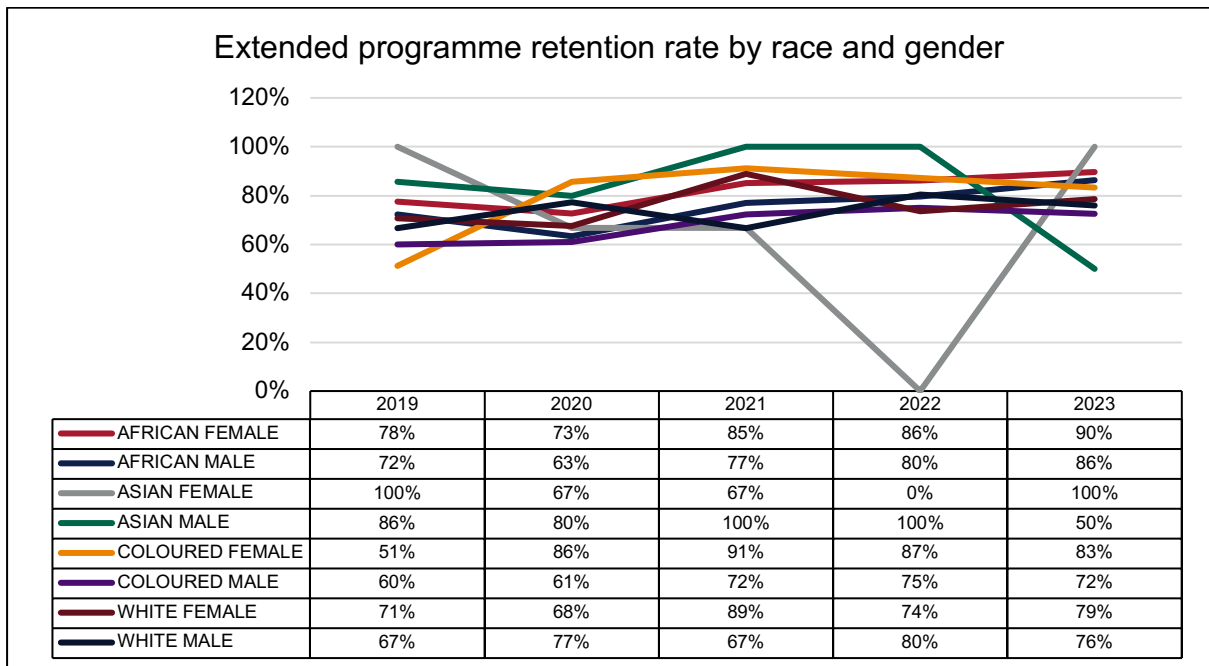
**Figure 25: Retention rate from year 1 to 2 by pathway**

**Figure 25** shows that the retention rates of extended and mainstream programme students. The retention rates of both extended and mainstream students decreased from 2019 to 2020 but then gradually increased every year from 2021 to 2023. In 2023, the retention rate was 88% for both extended and mainstream students.



**Figure 26: Mainstream programme retention by race and gender**

**Figure 26** shows mainstream programme retention rates by race and gender. While all groups showed a decrease in retention in 2020, retention rates increased gradually from 2021 to 2023 for all race and gender groups except Asian/Indian females and males.



**Figure 27: Extended programme retention rate by race and gender**

**Figure 27** shows retention rates of extended programme students by race and gender. Most race and gender groups show fluctuations in retention over the last 5 years. When only comparing 2019 and 2023, retention rates increased in all race and gender groups, except Indian/Asian males.

# **Section 3**

## **Learning and Teaching at Faculty Level**

## 3.1 Economic and Management Sciences

### 3.1.1 Key findings for Economic and Management Sciences

- For Economic and Management Sciences, undergraduate enrolments increased steadily between 2019 and 2023, with sharp increases on all campuses between 2021 and 2022 with a further increase in 2023 (except on the South campus where there was a sharp decline in undergraduate enrolments between 2022 and 2023). In contrast, all postgraduate enrolments declined between 2021 and 2022 and declined further in 2023.
- Regarding first-time entering students, if comparing 2019 and 2023 enrolments, there has been an increase in the number of African enrolments in the mainstream programmes on the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses.
- The number of graduates (excluding masters and doctoral) was the highest in 2023 than it has been in five years.
- Undergraduate module pass rates improved from 2022 to 2023 in all departments except Industrial Psychology and Public Administration.
- All but two departments achieved the highest postgraduate less than masters module pass rates of the past 3 years in 2023, although both of these (Industrial Psychology and UFS Business School) achieved higher pass rates in 2023 than in 2022. This means that all departments achieved higher pass rates in 2023 than in 2022.

### 3.1.2 Enrolments

**Table 6: Count of full-time enrolments for Economic and Management Sciences by campus and degree level**

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
BFN	Undergraduate	3824	3841	3964	4442	4564
	Postgraduate less than Masters	737	700	767	660	616
	Masters	296	296	319	305	305
	Doctoral	101	104	94	88	79
QWA	Undergraduate	726	877	1013	1086	1279
SOUTH	Undergraduate	733	787	722	772	557

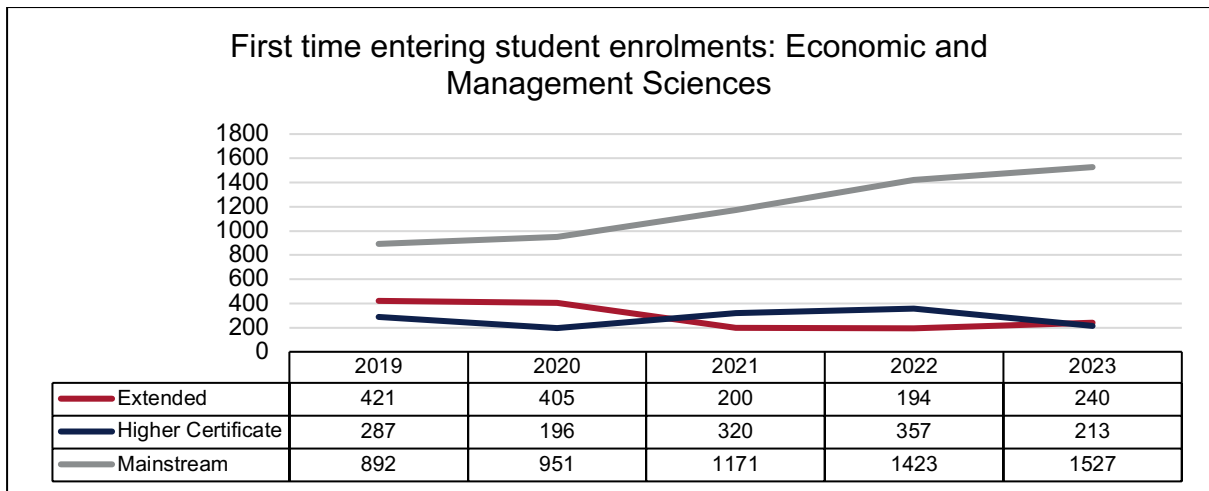
**Table 6** shows the number of enrolled students by campus and degree level for the last five years. The darkest shaded cells indicate the highest student numbers, with the colour lightening as the numbers decrease. For Economic and Management Sciences,

undergraduate enrolments increased steadily between 2019 and 2023, with sharp increases on all campuses between 2021 and 2022 with a further increase in 2023 (except on the South campus where there was a sharp decline in undergraduate enrolments between 2022 and 2023). In contrast, all postgraduate enrolments declined between 2021 and 2022 and declined further in 2023.

**Table 7: First time entering undergraduate enrolment for Economic and Management Sciences**

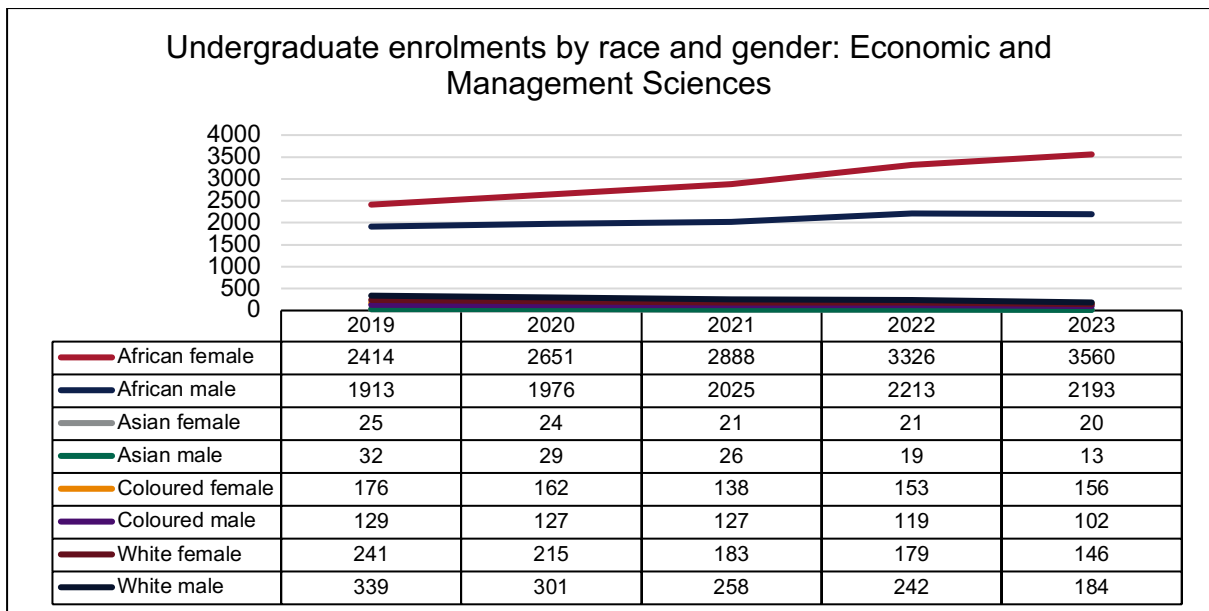
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
BFN Campus Extended	African	2			10	1
	White			1	1	
BFN Campus Mainstream	African	628	689	839	1041	1065
	Asian	6	14	6	7	6
	Coloured	52	39	53	60	47
	White	119	103	67	89	58
QQ Campus Extended	African	227	189	130	65	158
	Asian			1		
	Coloured			1		
	White			1		
QQ Campus Mainstream	African	78	99	187	219	345
	Coloured		1		1	
	White		1			
South Campus Extended	African	173	187	55	110	61
	Asian	2	1			
	Coloured	5	10	5	2	16
	White	12	18	6	5	3
South Campus Mainstream	African		1	10		1
	Coloured			1		
	White	1				
<b>Total Extended</b>		<b>421</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>239</b>
<b>Total Mainstream</b>		<b>884</b>	<b>947</b>	<b>1163</b>	<b>1417</b>	<b>1522</b>

**Table 7** shows the number of first-time entering students by race, campus and programme (pathway) for the last five years. When comparing 2019 and 2023 enrolments, there has been an increase in the number of African enrolments in the mainstream programmes on the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses.



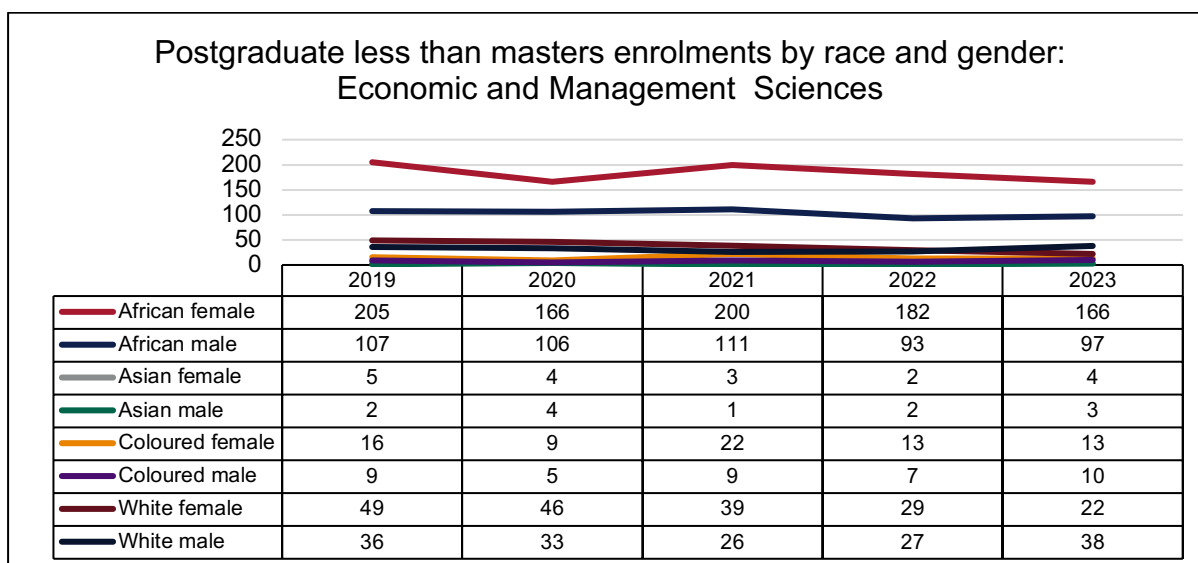
**Figure 28: Economic and Management Sciences first time entering enrolments**

**Figure 28** shows the total count of first-time entering student enrolments in the extended, mainstream and higher certificate programmes in the faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. While there was a decrease in the number of enrolments between 2019 and 2022 for extended programmes, there was an increased intake in 2023. The number of higher certificate enrolments increased between 2020 and 2022 and then decreased in 2023. There was a steady increase in the number of mainstream enrolments over the last five years with 2023 showing a 71% increase in mainstream enrolments compared to 2019.



**Figure 29: Economic and Management Sciences undergraduate enrolments by race and gender**

When comparing the undergraduate enrolments by race and gender in the faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, **Figure 29** shows a decline in all race and gender groups from 2019 to 2023, except African females and males, which increased.



**Figure 30: Economic and Management Sciences postgraduate less than masters enrolment**

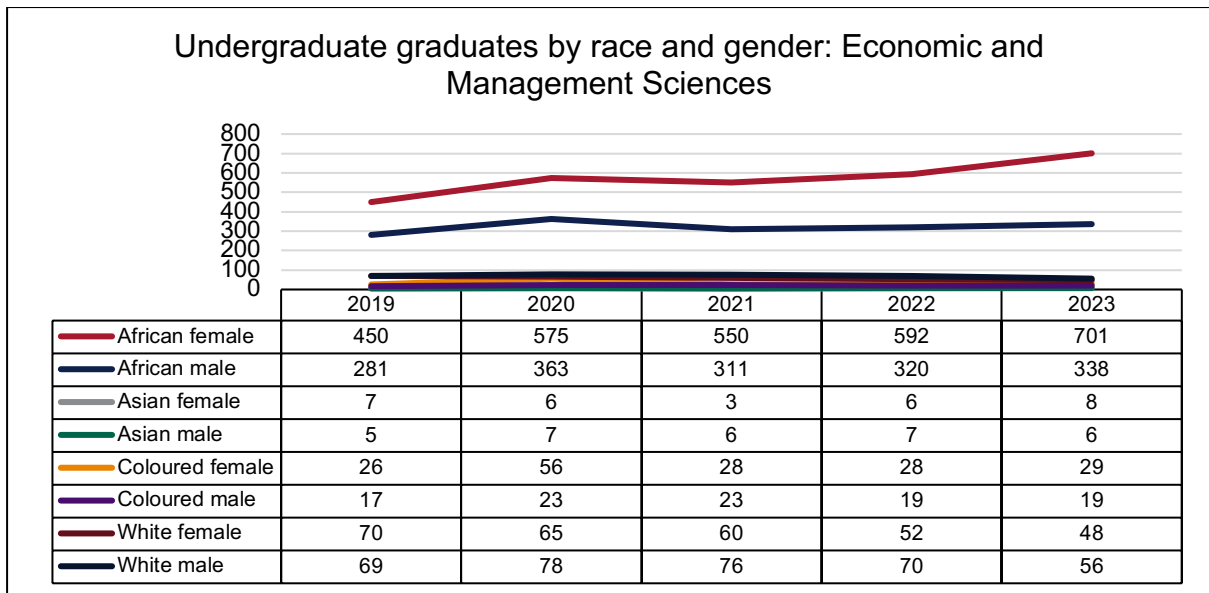
**Figure 30** shows postgraduate less than masters enrolments in the faculty of Economic and Management Sciences from 2019 to 2023 by race and gender. There has been a decrease in all race and gender enrolments between 2019 and 2023 but there were slight increases in enrolments of Asian/Indian males, Coloured males, and white males.

### 3.1.3 Graduates

**Table 8: Number of Economic and Management Sciences graduates (excl. masters and doctoral)**

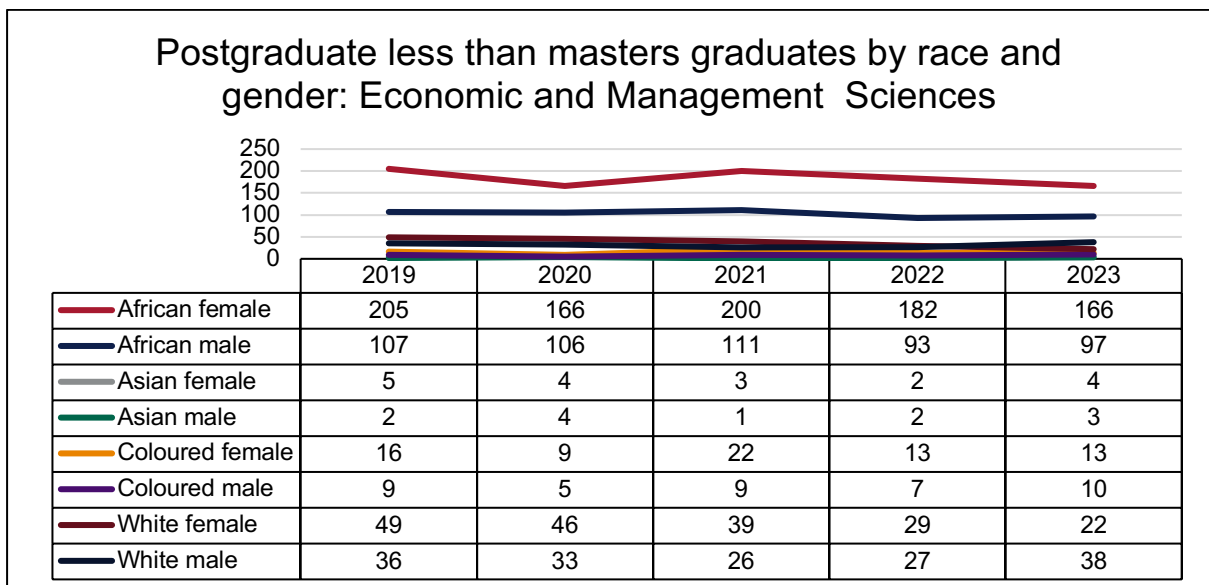
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
BFN	1178	1369	1200	1161	1184
QQ	61	89	114	137	162
SOUTH	118	95	165	166	226
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1357</b>	<b>1553</b>	<b>1479</b>	<b>1464</b>	<b>1572</b>

**Table 8** shows the number of graduates by campus (excluding masters and doctoral graduates) between 2019 and 2023. The number of graduates steadily increased on the Qwaqwa and South campuses over the last five years, while the number of graduates increased on the Bloemfontein campus between 2019 and 2020 and decreased from 2021 to 2023. The total number of graduates (including all campuses) increased over the last three years after a decline between 2020 and 2021.



**Figure 31: Economic and Management Sciences undergraduate graduates by race and gender**

**Figure 31** shows the number of undergraduate graduates by race and gender in the faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. The number of African (both female and male) graduates increased between 2019 and 2023. African female graduates in particular showed a steep increase between 2022 and 2023. Coloured (female and male) and Asian/Indian (female and male) graduates increased between 2019 and 2023, while white graduates (female and male) decreased from 2019 to 2023.



**Figure 32: Economic and Management Sciences postgraduate less than masters graduates by race and gender**

**Figure 32** shows the number of postgraduate less than masters graduates by race and gender in the faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. There has been fluctuation in African graduates (both females and males) between 2019 and 2023. When only comparing 2019

and 2023 data, there has been a decrease in all race and gender groups except for slight increases in Asian/Indian, Coloured, and white males.

### 3.1.4 Module pass rates

**Table 9: Undergraduate module pass rates of academic departments within Economic and Management Sciences**

	2021	2022	2023
Business Management	88%	69%	72%
Economic and Management Sciences	83%	81%	86%
Economics	84%	63%	69%
Industrial Psychology	88%	59%	59%
Public Administration and Management	92%	83%	76%
School for Accounting	71%	63%	69%
UFS Business School	84%	82%	87%

Success rates of the seven departments in the faculty of Economic and Management Sciences over the last three years are shown in **Table 9**. All but two of the departments show highest pass rates in 2021, while all but two departments show the lowest pass rates in 2022. When only comparing 2022 and 2023, all departments showed an increase except Industrial Psychology (which shows a decline of less than 1%), and Public Administration and Management (which shows a decline of 7%).

**Table 10: Undergraduate module pass rates of Economic and Management Sciences by race and gender**

	2021	2022	2023
African female	87%	73%	73%
African male	78%	64%	65%
Indian/Asian female	93%	72%	83%
Indian/Asian male	91%	88%	84%
Coloured female	87%	72%	77%
Coloured male	76%	67%	64%
White female	95%	85%	88%
White male	90%	85%	85%

**Table 10** shows undergraduate module pass rates by race and gender for the last three years. There has been a decrease in the module pass rates across all racial groups (for both females and males) between 2021 and 2023. When only comparing 2022 and 2023, all but Indian/Asian males and Coloured males show an increase in module pass rates.

**Table 11: Postgraduate less than masters module pass rates of academic departments within Economic and Management Sciences**

	2021	2022	2023
Business Management	90%	95%	96%
Centre for Development Support	67%	75%	83%
Economic and Management Sciences			80%
Economics	61%	56%	64%
Industrial Psychology	85%	78%	80%
Public Administration and Management	92%	92%	96%
School for Accounting	60%	62%	69%
UFS Business School	86%	77%	84%

**Table 11** shows the module pass rates for postgraduate less than masters modules in the eight departments in Economic and Management Sciences. In 2023, all but two departments show the highest module pass rates of the last three years. Industrial Psychology's pass rate is lower than in 2021 but higher than in 2022, as is the case with the UFS Business School.

**Table 12: Postgraduate less than masters module pass rates of Economic and Management Sciences by race and gender**

	2021	2022	2023
African female	73%	74%	72%
African male	68%	62%	71%
Indian/Asian female	92%	50%	100%
Indian/Asian male	58%	38%	94%
Coloured female	82%	75%	89%
Coloured male	74%	57%	86%
White female	89%	90%	98%
White male	84%	85%	92%

**Table 12** shows the postgraduate less than masters module pass rates in the faculty of Economic and Management Sciences by race and gender for the last three years. All race and gender groups, except African females, had the highest module pass rates in 2023.

## 3.2 Education

### 3.2.1 Key findings for Education

- Undergraduate enrolments decreased on all campuses from 2022 to 2023.
- Postgraduate less than masters and masters enrolments decreased from 2022 to 2023 on the Bloemfontein campus but doctoral enrolments increased. All postgraduate enrolments increased from 2022 to 2023 on the Qwaqwa campus.
- From 2022 to 2023 the number of first-time entering enrolments in mainstream programmes decreased notably for all racial groups on the Bloemfontein campus but increased on the Qwaqwa campus.
- Postgraduate less than masters enrolments declined over the last five years in the faculty of Education for all racial groups, except African females that continued to increase every year from 2019 to 2023.
- The number of graduates decreased from 2022 to 2023, in fact, 2023 had the lowest number of graduates in five years.
- Undergraduate module pass rates peaked in 2023 in all but two departments/ schools in the faculty of Education.
- Module pass rates peaked in 2023 for postgraduate less than masters modules in all departments/ schools except in Languages in Education which decreased with less than 1% from 2022 to 2023.

### 3.2.2 Enrolments

**Table 13: Count of full-time enrolments in the Faculty of Education by campus and degree level**

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
BFN	Undergraduate	4082	4620	5038	5229	4676
	Postgraduate less than Masters	203	205	265	237	234
	Masters	169	202	182	173	158
	Doctoral	158	140	144	148	152
QWA	Undergraduate	3477	3920	3739	3511	3087
	Postgraduate less than Masters	119	83	92	97	112

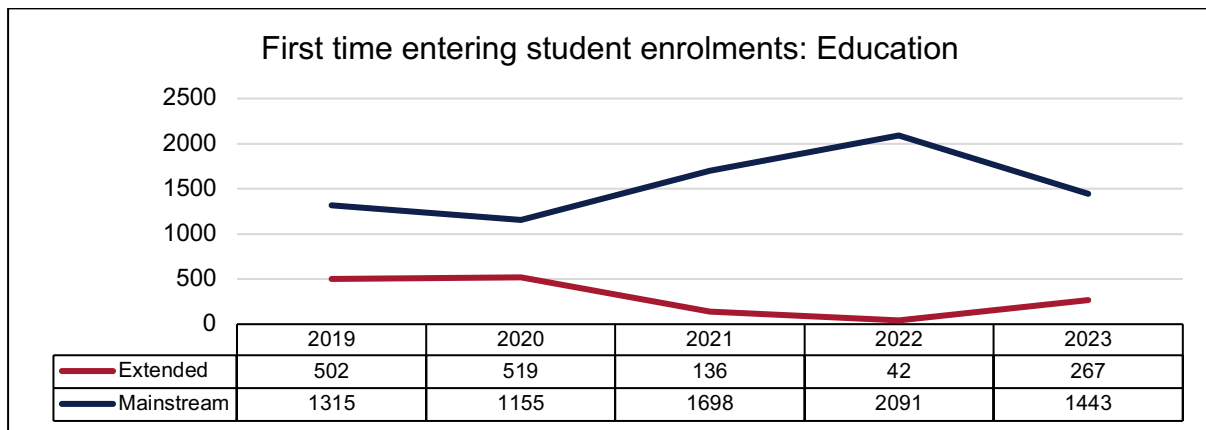
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	Masters	32	49	61	65	73
	Doctoral	16	21	24	25	28
SOUTH	Undergraduate	3402	2493	1916	1684	1097

The darkest shaded cells in **Table 13** indicate the highest student numbers, with the colour lightening as the numbers decrease. Undergraduate enrolments decreased on all campuses from 2022 to 2023. When comparing 2019 and 2023 data, the number of undergraduate enrolments increased on the Bloemfontein campus and decreased on the Qwaqwa and South campuses. Postgraduate less than masters and masters enrolments decreased from 2022 to 2023 on the Bloemfontein campus but doctoral enrolments increased. All postgraduate enrolments increased from 2022 to 2023 on the Qwaqwa campus.

**Table 14: First time entering undergraduate enrolment for Education**

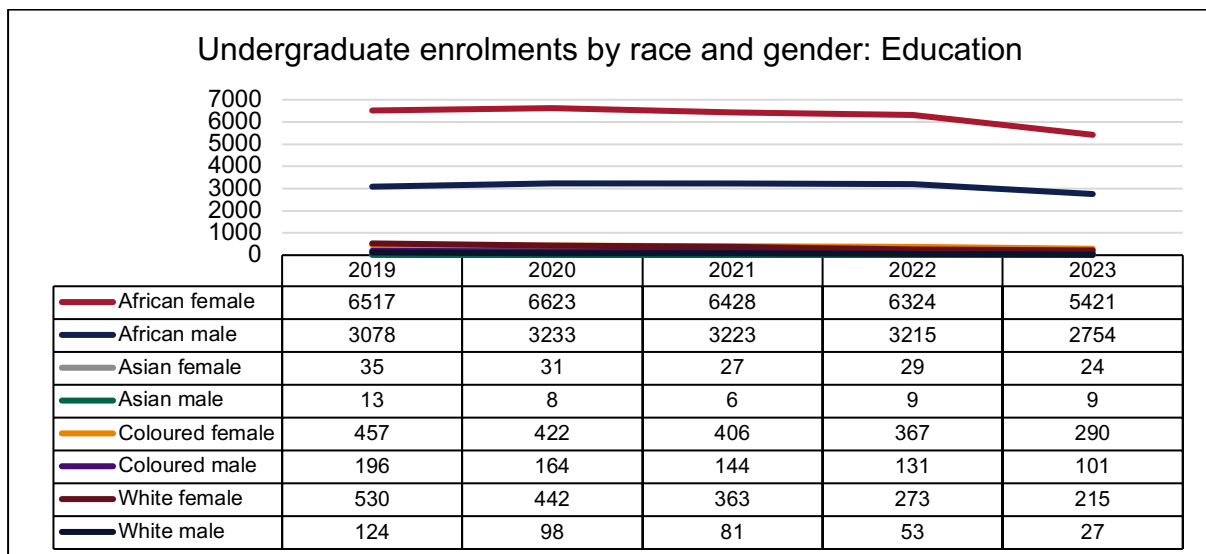
Campus & Pathway	Race	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>BFN Campus Extended</b>	African	229	224	28	18	136
	Asian		1			
	Coloured	9	12	3	1	8
	White	7	5		4	1
<b>BFN Campus Mainstream</b>	African	589	680	1001	1324	626
	Asian	5	2	3	3	2
	Coloured	54	32	48	74	35
	White	54	65	52	39	21
<b>QQ Campus Extended</b>	African	255	275	104	19	121
	Asian	1	1			
<b>QQ Campus Mainstream</b>	African	603	373	581	631	656
	Asian	1	1	1		
	Coloured				1	
	White			1		
<b>South Campus Mainstream</b>	African	4		7	15	76
	Asian					1
	Coloured				1	9
	White					15
<b>Total Extended</b>		<b>501</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>266</b>
<b>Total Mainstream</b>		<b>1310</b>	<b>1153</b>	<b>1694</b>	<b>2088</b>	<b>1441</b>

**Table 14** shows the number of first-time entering students by race, campus and pathway for the last five years. The number of extended programme students on the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses declined over the last five years (all racial groups). The number of African first-time entering mainstream students on Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa increased, while the number of first-time entering Asian, Coloured, and white students decreased over the last five years.



**Figure 33: Education first time entering student enrolments**

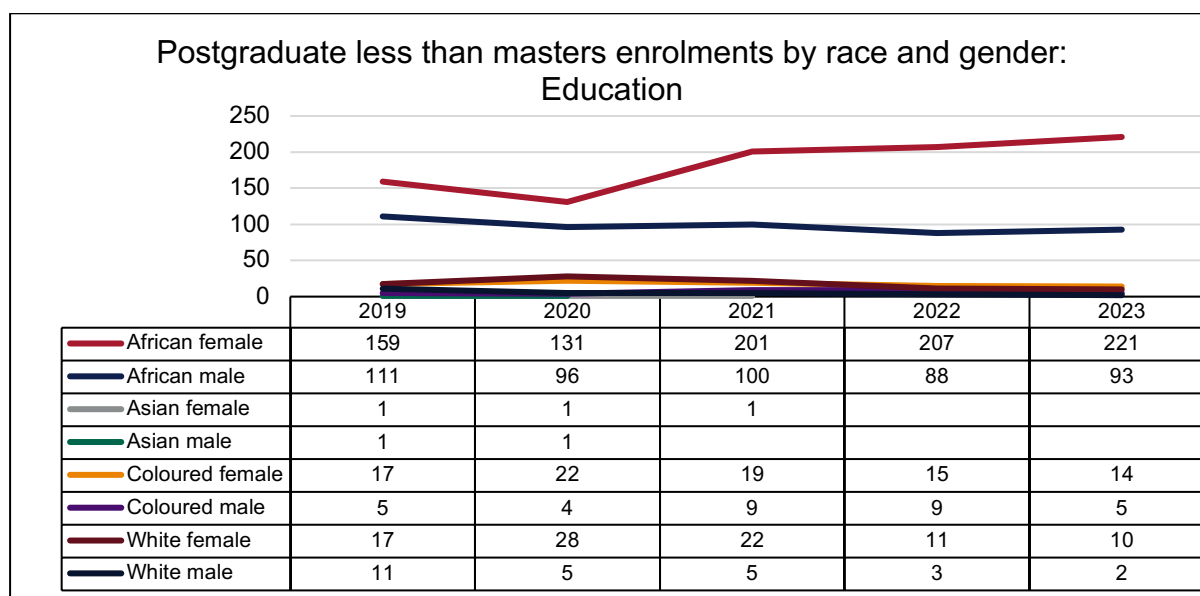
**Figure 33** shows that the number of extended degree students decreased from 2019 to 2022 and increased again in 2023. The number of mainstream students increased between 2020 and 2022 and decreased again in 2023.



**Figure 34: Education undergraduate enrolments by race and gender**

**Figure 34** shows undergraduate enrolments in the faculty of Education split by race and gender over the last five years. The number of enrolments for all race and gender groups

declined between 2019 and 2023 although this decrease was proportionally bigger for white and Coloured students than for African and Asian/Indian students.



**Figure 35: Education postgraduate less than masters enrolments by race and gender**

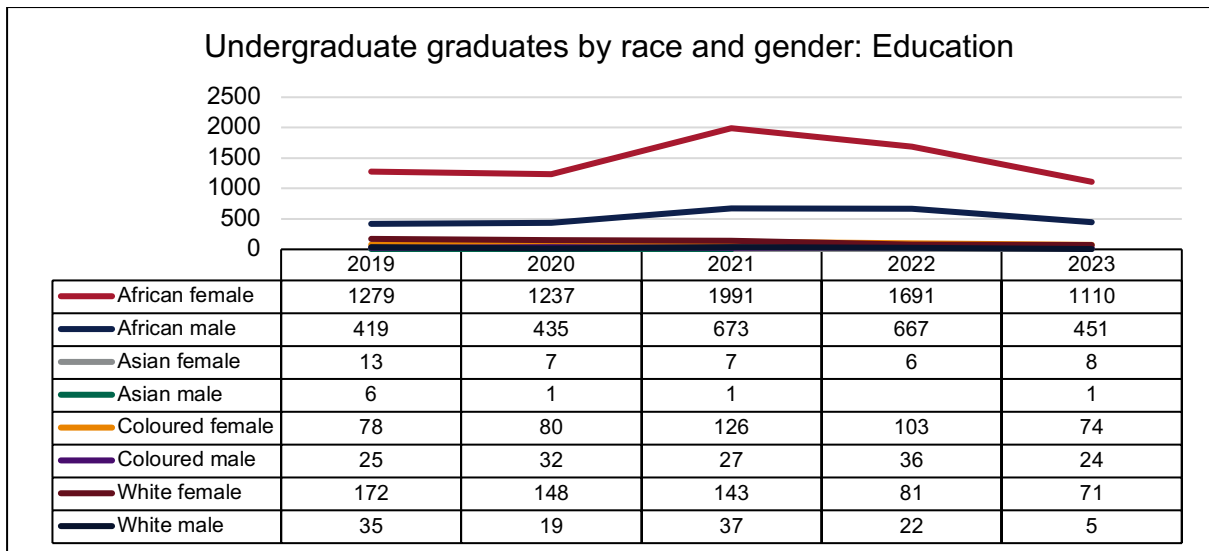
Postgraduate less than masters enrolments declined over the last five years in the faculty of Education for all racial groups, except African females that continued to increase every year from 2019 to 2023 and Coloured males of which the same number of enrolments (5) can be seen in 2023 as in 2019 (see **Figure 35**).

### 3.2.3 Graduates

**Table 15: Number of Education graduates (excl. masters and doctoral)**

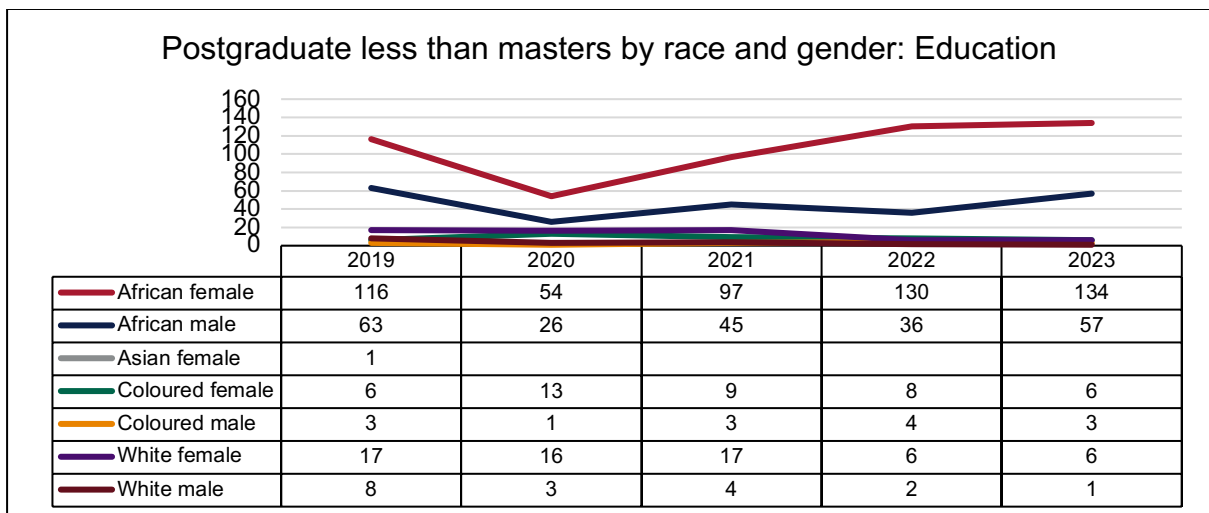
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
BFN	603	712	1185	1212	931
QQ	549	785	1071	1110	692
SOUTH	1091	576	926	477	333
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2243</b>	<b>2073</b>	<b>3182</b>	<b>2799</b>	<b>1956</b>

**Table 15** shows the number of graduates in the faculty of Education (excluding masters and doctoral graduates) over the last five years. The number of graduates increased on the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses from 2019 to 2022 after which it decreased from 2022 to 2023. The number of graduates fluctuated on the South campus although there was also a decrease from 2022 to 2023. Overall, the number of graduates decreased from 2019 to 2023, with the lowest number of graduates in five years seen in 2023.



**Figure 36: Education undergraduate graduates by race and gender**

**Figure 36** shows the number of undergraduate graduates in the faculty of Education between 2019 and 2023 split by race and gender. All racial and gender groups, except for African males show a decrease from 2019 to 2023.



**Figure 37: Education postgraduate less than masters graduates**

**Figure 37** shows the number of postgraduate less than masters graduates in the faculty of Education between 2019 and 2023 split by race and gender. The number of African female graduates increased from 2019 to 2023, while all other race and gender groups decreased (except Coloured females which remained at 6 in 2019 and 2023).

### 3.2.4 Module pass rates

**Table 16: Undergraduate module pass rates of academic departments within Education**

	2021	2022	2023
Childhood Education	92%	93%	95%
Curriculum Studies and HighEdu	93%	86%	92%
Education Dean	90%		
Ed Manage Policy and Comp Ed			96%
Education Foundations	86%	90%	94%
Languages in Education	94%	94%	95%
Math Nat Science and Tech Edu	87%	89%	94%
Open Distance Learning	90%	87%	85%
Social Science & Commerce Educ		95%	95%

**Table 16** shows module pass rates per department/ school over the last three years. The highest pass rates are shown in green, followed by yellow, while the lowest pass rates are shown in red. Undergraduate module pass rates peaked in 2023 in all but two departments/ schools in the faculty of Education.

**Table 17: Undergraduate module pass rates for Education by race and gender**

	2021	2022	2023
African female	91%	92%	94%
African male	81%	85%	91%
Indian/Asian female	98%	89%	92%
Indian/Asian male	68%	71%	70%
Coloured female	92%	92%	93%
Coloured male	82%	88%	94%
White female	96%	93%	93%
White male	86%	86%	94%

**Table 17** shows undergraduate module pass rates in the faculty of Education split by race and gender for the last three years. All race and gender groups, except Indian/Asian females and males, and white females show the highest module pass rates in 2023.

**Table 18: Postgraduate less than masters module pass rates of academic departments within Education**

	2021	2022	2023
African Languages		92%	
Childhood Education	92%	90%	100%
Curriculum Studies and HighEdu		92%	95%
Ed Manage Policy and Comp Ed			94%
Education Dean			93%

	2021	2022	2023
Education Foundations	88%	88%	92%
Languages in Education	95%	94%	94%
Math Nat Science and Tech Edu	92%	92%	96%
Social Science & Commerce Educ		90%	90%

**Table 18** shows postgraduate less than masters module pass rates per school/ department in the faculty of Education. The module pass rates peaked in 2023 in all departments/ schools except in Languages in Education which decreased with less than 1% from 2022 to 2023.

**Table 19: Postgraduate less than masters module pass rates for Education by race and gender**

	2021	2022	2023
African female	92%	92%	94%
African male	82%	87%	94%
Indian/Asian female	33%		
Coloured female	92%	94%	93%
Coloured male	77%	83%	71%
White female	94%	85%	90%
White male	89%	100%	100%

**Table 19** shows postgraduate less than masters module pass rates in the faculty of Education by race and gender for the last three years. African females and males, as well as white males had the highest pass rates in 2023, while Coloured students (both male and females) had the highest pass rate in 2022. Indian/Asian and white females had the highest pass rate in 2021.

### 3.3 Health Sciences

#### 3.3.1 Key findings for Health Sciences

- The number of undergraduate enrolments consistently increased between 2019 and 2022, after which it declined slightly in 2023. Postgraduate less than masters and masters enrolments peaked in 2019. Doctoral enrolments peaked in 2020.
- For the first time in 2023, African female undergraduate enrolments were the highest (slightly higher than white female enrolments which were the highest from 2019 to 2022).
- The number Health Sciences graduates (excluding masters and doctoral graduates) steadily declined between 2019 and 2022, after which there has been an increase between 2022 and 2023.
- African (female and male) graduates increased over the last five years, while the number of graduates of other race and gender groups fluctuated.
- The majority of departments showed the highest undergraduate module pass rates in 2023. When comparing module pass rates for the last three years, only Optometry had the lowest pass rate in 2023 (although this was still 94%).
- A total of 6 departments had a 100% postgraduate less than masters module pass rate in 2023 of which 4 also had a 100% pass rate in 2022. The department of Medical Physics is the only department that had a lower pass rate in 2023 (86%) than in 2022 (87%).

#### 3.3.2 Enrolments

**Table 20: Count of full-time enrolments of the faculty of Health Sciences by campus and degree level**

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
BFN	Undergraduate	1621	1663	1721	1752	1741
	Postgraduate less than Masters	612	324	94	36	94
	Masters	483	453	451	466	445
	Doctoral	100	106	92	82	91

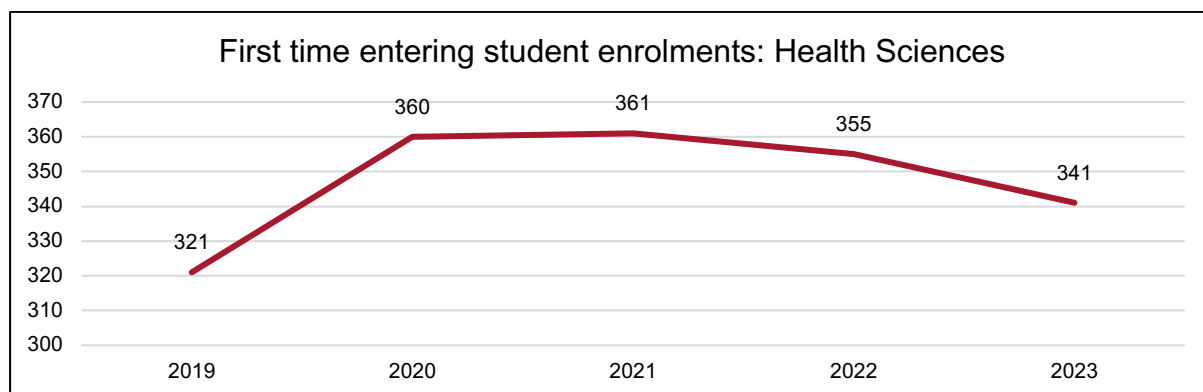
**Table 20** shows the number of enrolments in the faculty of Health Sciences over the last five years. The darkest shaded cells indicate the highest student numbers, with the colour

lightening as the numbers decrease. The number of undergraduate enrolments consistently increased between 2019 and 2022, after which it declined slightly in 2023. Postgraduate less than masters and masters enrolments peaked in 2019. Doctoral enrolments peaked in 2020.

**Table 21: First-time entering undergraduate enrolment for Health Sciences**

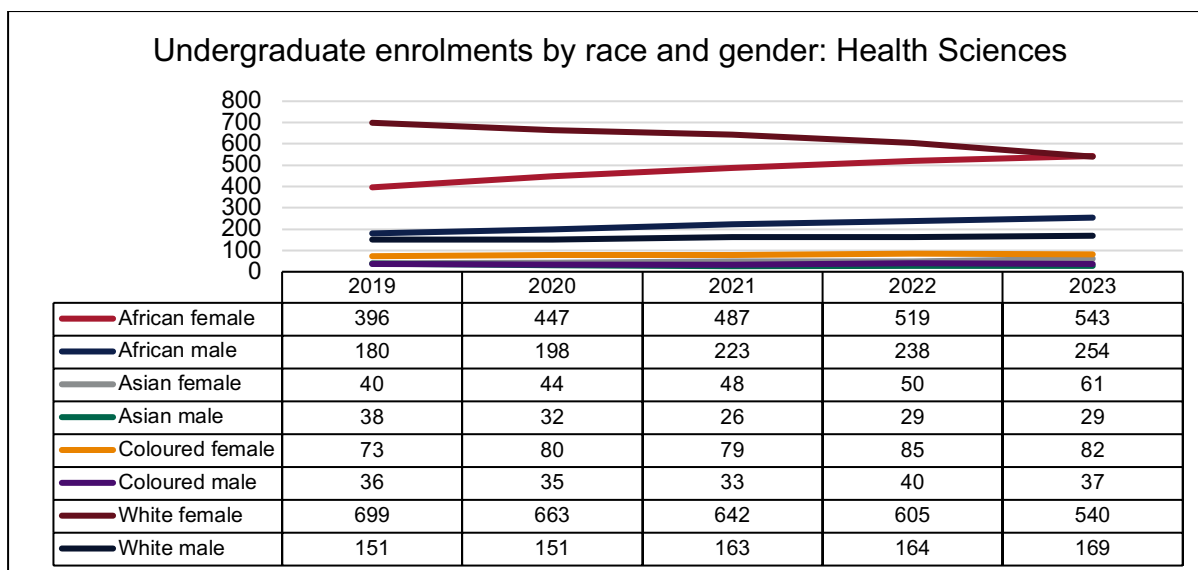
Campus & Pathway	Race	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>BFN Campus Mainstream</b>	African	124	145	169	161	163
	Indian/Asian	16	13	16	17	23
	Coloured	14	25	20	23	14
	White	163	173	152	151	135
<b>Total Mainstream</b>		<b>317</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>335</b>

**Table 21** shows the number of first-time entering undergraduate enrolments in the Faculty of Health Sciences. The number of first-time entering African enrolments increased between 2019 and 2021 after which it decreased in 2022. From 2022 to 2023 there was again a slight increase. Asian/Indian and Coloured student enrolments fluctuated over the last five years, but if comparing 2019 and 2023 data, Asian/Indian student enrolments increased, while Coloured enrolments remained 14. White student enrolments increased from 2019 to 2020 after which it steadily declined until 2023.



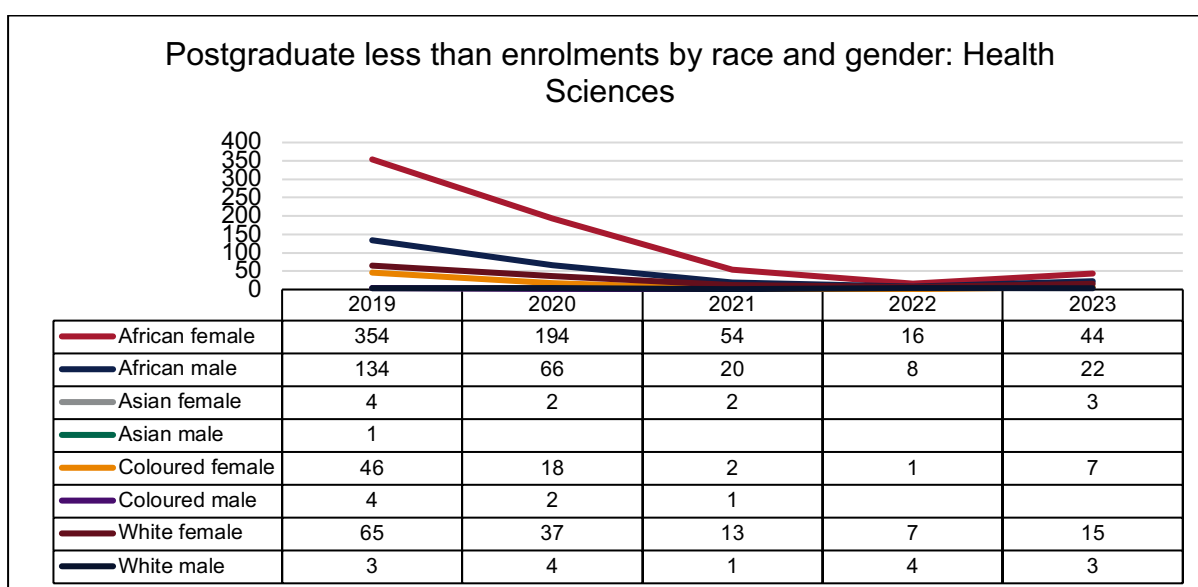
**Figure 38: Health Sciences first-time entering student enrolments**

**Figure 38** shows that the total number of first-time entering student enrolments in the faculty of Health Sciences increased notably from 2019 to 2020, after which it stabilised and then started to decline in 2022.



**Figure 39: Health Sciences undergraduate enrolments by race and gender**

**Figure 39** shows the number of undergraduate enrolments in the faculty of Health Sciences over the last five years split by race and gender. For the first time in 2023, African female enrolments were the highest (slightly higher than white female enrolments which were the highest from 2019 to 2022). African female and male, Asian/Indian female, Coloured female and male, as well as white male enrolments increased from 2019 to 2023. Asian/ Indian male and white female enrolments decreased.



**Figure 40: Health Sciences postgraduate less than masters enrolments by race and gender**

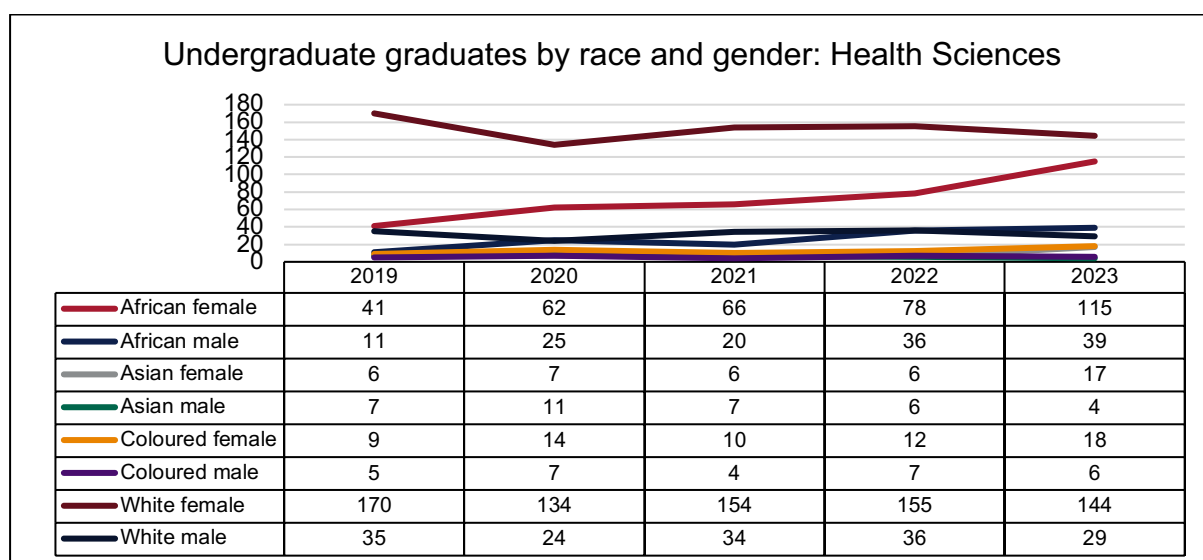
**Figure 40** shows postgraduate less than masters enrolments by race and gender in the faculty of Health Sciences between 2019 and 2023. Enrolments in all race and gender groups declined significantly over the last five years.

### 3.3.3 Graduates

**Table 22: Number of Health Sciences graduates (excl. masters and doctoral)**

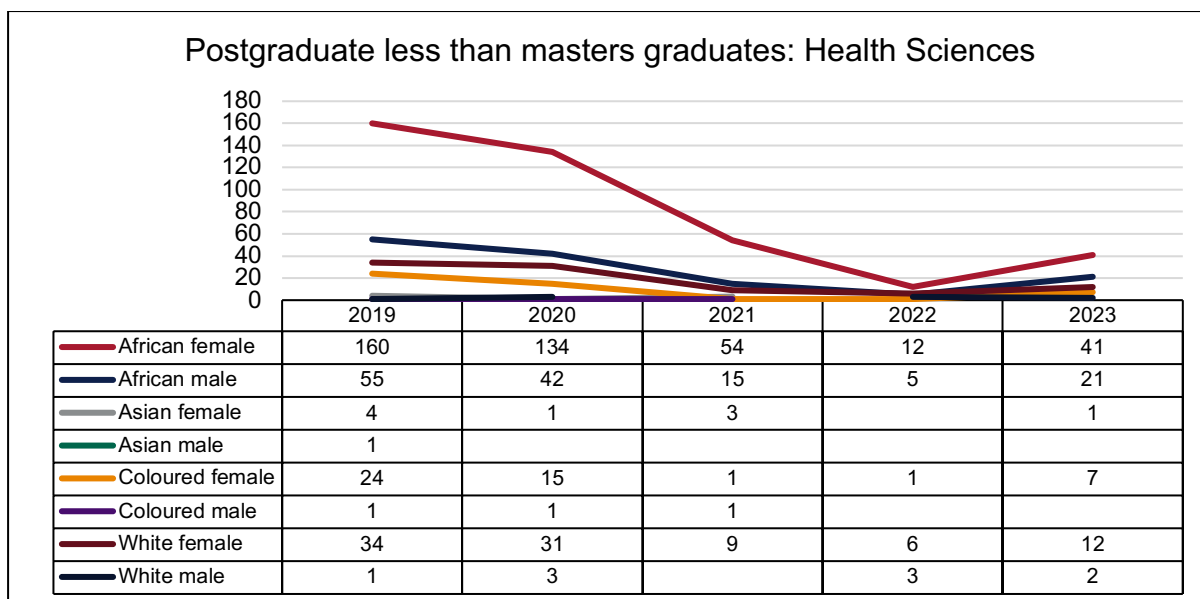
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
BFN	564	512	387	365	462

**Table 22** shows that the number Health Sciences graduates (excluding masters and doctoral graduates) has steadily declined between 2019 and 2022, after which there has been an increase between 2022 and 2023.



**Figure 41: Health Sciences undergraduate graduates by race and gender**

**Figure 41** shows the number of undergraduate graduates in the faculty of Health Sciences between 2019 and 2023 split by race and gender. African (female and male) graduates increased over the last five years, while the number of graduates of other race and gender groups fluctuated.



**Figure 42: Health Sciences postgraduate less than masters graduates by race and gender**

**Figure 42** shows the number of postgraduate less than masters graduates in the faculty of Health Sciences between 2019 and 2023 split by race and gender. The number of graduates declined for all race and gender groups between 2019 and 2022, but increased again from 2022 to 2023 (except white males).

### 3.3.4 Module pass rates

**Table 23: Undergraduate module pass rates of academic departments within Health Sciences**

	2021	2022	2023
Anatomical Pathology	76%	80%	89%
Basic Medical Sciences	69%	73%	76%
Biostatistics	51%	47%	50%
Community Health	99%	99%	99%
Exercise and Sport Sciences	85%	90%	90%
Family Medicine	97%	99%	100%
Haematology and Cell Biology	96%	99%	97%
Health Sciences General	97%		
Internal Medicine	55%	70%	96%
Medical Microbiology	95%	93%	97%
Medical Physics	86%	80%	90%
Nutrition and Dietetics	94%	94%	97%
Obstetrics and Gynaecology	60%	97%	99%
Occupational Therapy	97%	95%	96%
Office of the Dean: Health Sci	98%	99%	98%
Oncology	89%	89%	100%
Optometry	97%	96%	94%

	2021	2022	2023
Paediatrics and Child Health	59%	97%	99%
Pharmacology	93%	88%	90%
Physiotherapy	98%	98%	99%
Psychiatry	74%	78%	75%
School of Biomedical Sciences	55%	46%	46%
School of Nursing	93%	95%	97%
Support SHRS		97%	98%
Surgery	58%	69%	98%

**Table 23** shows undergraduate module pass rates for the last three years in the faculty of Health Sciences per academic department. The majority of departments showed the highest pass rates in 2023. When comparing module pass rates for the last three years, only Oncology had the lowest pass rate in 2023 (although this was still 94%).

**Table 24: Undergraduate module pass rates for Health Sciences by race and gender**

	2021	2022	2023
African female	77%	84%	87%
African male	67%	77%	81%
Indian/Asian female	72%	81%	83%
Indian/Asian male	78%	74%	79%
Coloured female	75%	79%	86%
Coloured male	67%	73%	77%
White female	88%	88%	90%
White male	78%	81%	83%

**Table 24** shows undergraduate module pass rates in the faculty of Health Sciences over the last three years split by race and gender. For all race and gender groups, pass rates increased from 2021 to 2022 and again from 2022 to 2023.

**Table 25: Postgraduate less than masters module pass rates of academic departments within Health Sciences**

	2021	2022	2023
Basic Medical Sciences	98%	100%	100%
Community Health	0%	0%	
Haematology and Cell Biology			91%
Medical Microbiology	100%	100%	100%
Medical Physics	78%	87%	86%
Nutrition and Dietetics	90%	88%	100%
Office of the Dean: Health Sci	76%	64%	100%
Pharmacology	50%	100%	100%

	2021	2022	2023
School of Biomedical Sciences	81%	100%	100%
School of Nursing	33%		97%

**Table 25** shows postgraduate less than masters module pass rates in academic departments within the faculty of Health Sciences over the last three years. A total of six departments had a 100% module pass rate in 2023 of which four also had a 100% pass rate in 2022. The department of Medical Physics is the only department that had a lower pass rate in 2023 (86%) than in 2022 (87%).

**Table 26: Postgraduate less than masters module pass rates of Health Sciences by race and gender**

	2021	2022	2023
African female	85%	85%	97%
African male	88%	86%	95%
Indian/Asian female	100%	100%	73%
Indian/Asian male	100%		
Coloured female	91%	100%	100%
Coloured male	100%	0%	100%
White female	91%	100%	99%
White male	75%	90%	86%

**Table 26** shows module pass rates for postgraduate less than masters students over the last three years in the faculty of Health Sciences. Coloured females and males had a 100% pass rate in 2023, followed by a pass rate of 99% for white females, 97% for African females and 95% for African males. White males and Asian/Indian females were the only race and gender groups that showed a decreased pass rate from 2022 to 2023.

## 3.4 Humanities

### 3.4.1 Key findings for the Humanities

- Undergraduate enrolments increased on the Bloemfontein and South campuses from 2019 to 2022 and then decreased from 2022 to 2023. On the Qwaqwa campus undergraduate enrolments have been steadily declining from 2019 to 2023.
- The number first-time entering extended programme students decreased on all campuses for all racial groups from 2022 to 2023. The number of African students enrolled in mainstream programmes increased on the Qwaqwa and Bloemfontein campuses over the last five years.
- For the last five years African female enrolments were significantly higher than all other groups, in 2023 this number was even more than double the number of the second largest group (African males). The number of white female and male students declined every year from 2019 to 2023.
- For postgraduate less than masters enrolments, only African females consistently showed an increase in enrolments every year from 2019 to 2023.
- The total number of graduates (excluding masters and doctoral) on all campuses decreased from 2022 to 2023.
- Of the 21 departments, 13 show the highest undergraduate module pass rates in three years in 2023.
- Of the 19 departments, 8 departments showed the highest module pass rates of the last three years in 2023, while 7 achieved the lowest pass rate in 2023.

### 3.4.2 Enrolments

**Table 27: Count of full-time enrolments of the faculty of the Humanities by campus and degree level**

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
BFN	Undergraduate	5259	5467	5530	5745	5681
	Postgraduate less than Masters	196	213	268	250	239
	Masters	316	260	291	283	325
	Doctoral	158	167	174	160	160

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
QWA	Undergraduate	2663	2390	2075	1934	1648
	Postgraduate less than Masters	8	9	12	18	33
	Masters	9	13	14	14	25
	Doctoral	13	11	16	13	16
SOUTH	Undergraduate	642	662	776	777	618

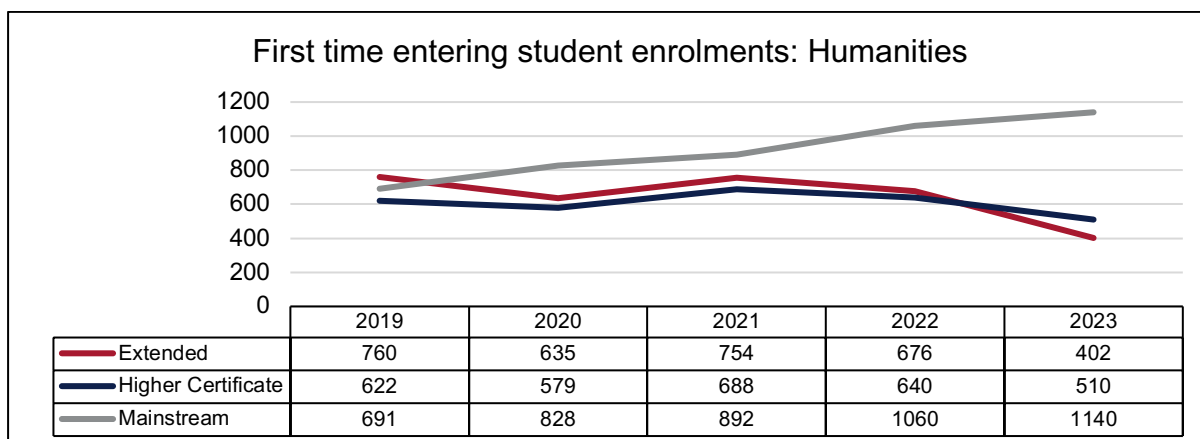
**Table 27** shows the number of enrolments in the faculty of the Humanities between 2019 and 2023. The darkest shaded cells indicate the highest student numbers, with the colour lightening as the numbers decrease. Undergraduate enrolments increased on the Bloemfontein and South campuses from 2019 to 2022 and then decreased from 2022 to 2023. On the Qwaqwa campus undergraduate enrolments have been steadily declining from 2019 to 2023, while postgraduate less than masters, masters, and doctoral enrolments increased over the last five years. On the Bloemfontein campus the number of postgraduate less than masters students increased from 2019 to 2021 and then decreased from 2021 to 2023 while masters and doctoral enrolments fluctuated. In 2023, the highest number of the last five years of masters students were enrolled on the Bloemfontein campus.

**Table 28: First-time entering undergraduate enrolments for the Humanities**

Campus & Pathway	Race	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
BFN Campus Extended	African	314	460	527	270	181
	Asian	3	3	1		
	Coloured	19	38	20	22	21
	White	22	17	14	15	13
BFN Campus Mainstream	African	430	554	648	768	819
	Asian	2	3		1	1
	Coloured	22	37	41	46	55
	White	76	77	77	46	38
QQ Campus Extended	African	397	113	182	364	185
	Asian	1		1	1	
	Coloured	2	2	1	1	
QQ Campus Mainstream	African	160	149	115	197	218
	Asian				1	1
	Coloured		1	2	1	
	White			2		

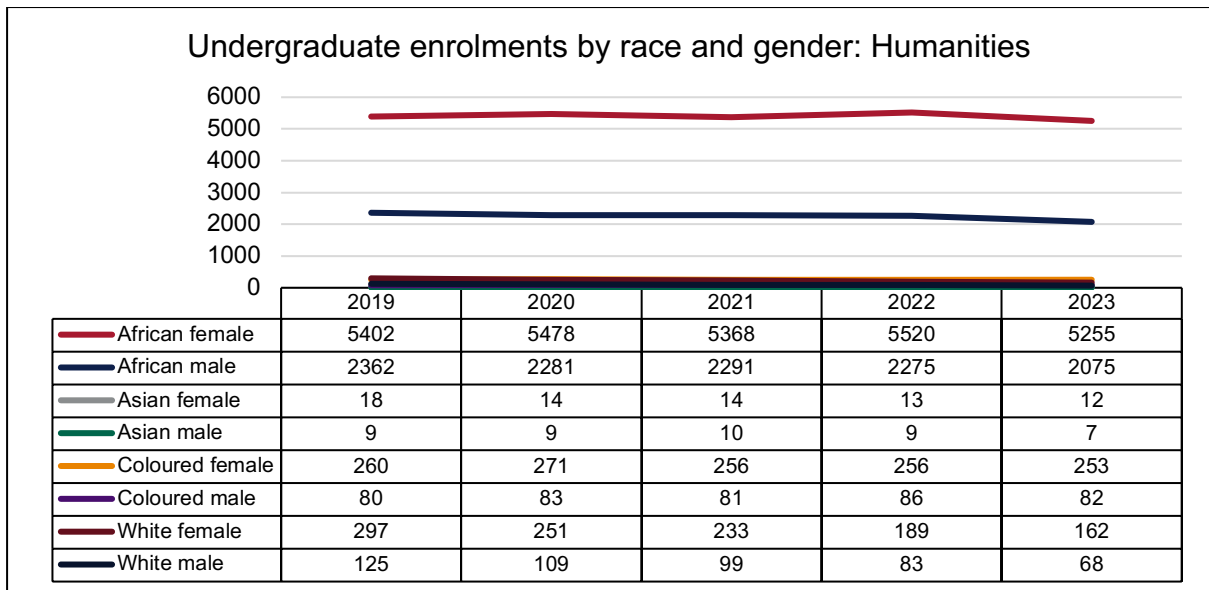
Campus & Pathway	Race	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
South Campus Extended	African			6		
South Campus Mainstream	African			2		
	Coloured			1		
	White			1		
<b>Total Extended</b>		<b>758</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>752</b>	<b>673</b>	<b>400</b>
<b>Total Mainstream</b>		<b>690</b>	<b>821</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>1060</b>	<b>1132</b>

**Table 28** shows first-time entering undergraduate enrolments in the faculty of the Humanities over the last five years. The number of extended programme students decreased on all campuses for all racial groups from 2022 to 2023. The number of African students enrolled in mainstream programmes increased on the Qwaqwa and Bloemfontein campuses over the last five years.



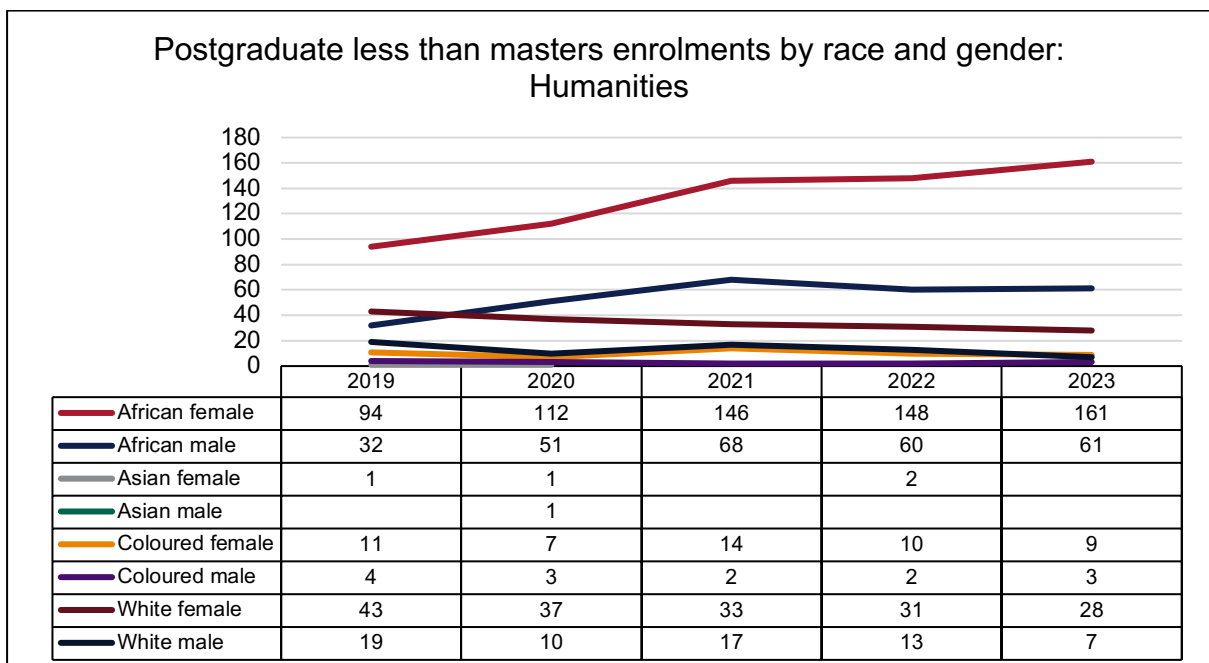
**Figure 43: Humanities first-time entering student enrolments**

**Figure 43** shows the number of first-time entering student enrolments in the faculty of the Humanities per pathway over the last five years. Mainstream enrolments steadily increased every year over the last five years, while enrolments in extended programmes declined between 2021 and 2023. Higher certificate enrolments also declined between 2021 and 2023.



**Figure 44: Humanities undergraduate enrolments by race and gender**

**Figure 44** shows the number of undergraduate enrolments in the faculty of the Humanities between 2019 and 2023 split by race and gender. For the last five years African female enrolments were significantly higher than all other groups, in 2023 this number was even more than double the number of the second largest group (African males). The number of white female and male students declined every year from 2019 to 2023.



**Figure 45: Humanities postgraduate less than masters enrolments by race and gender**

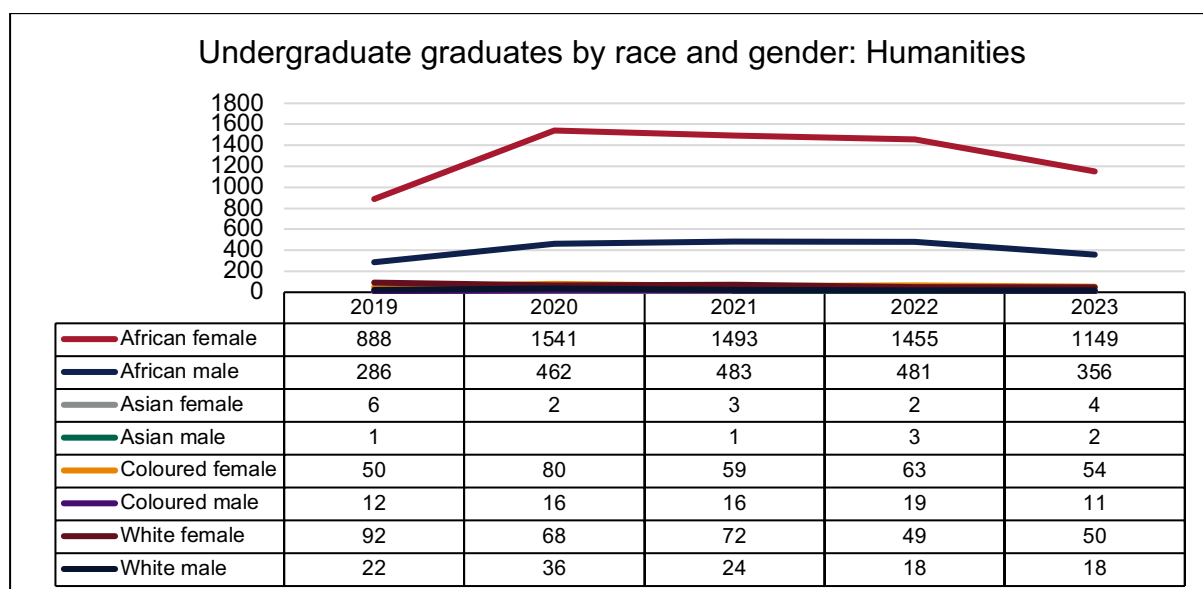
**Figure 45** shows the number of postgraduate less than masters enrolments in the faculty of the Humanities between 2019 and 2023 split by race and gender. Only African females consistently showed an increase in enrolments every year from 2019 to 2023.

### 3.4.3 Graduates

**Table 29: Number of Humanities graduates (excl. masters and doctoral)**

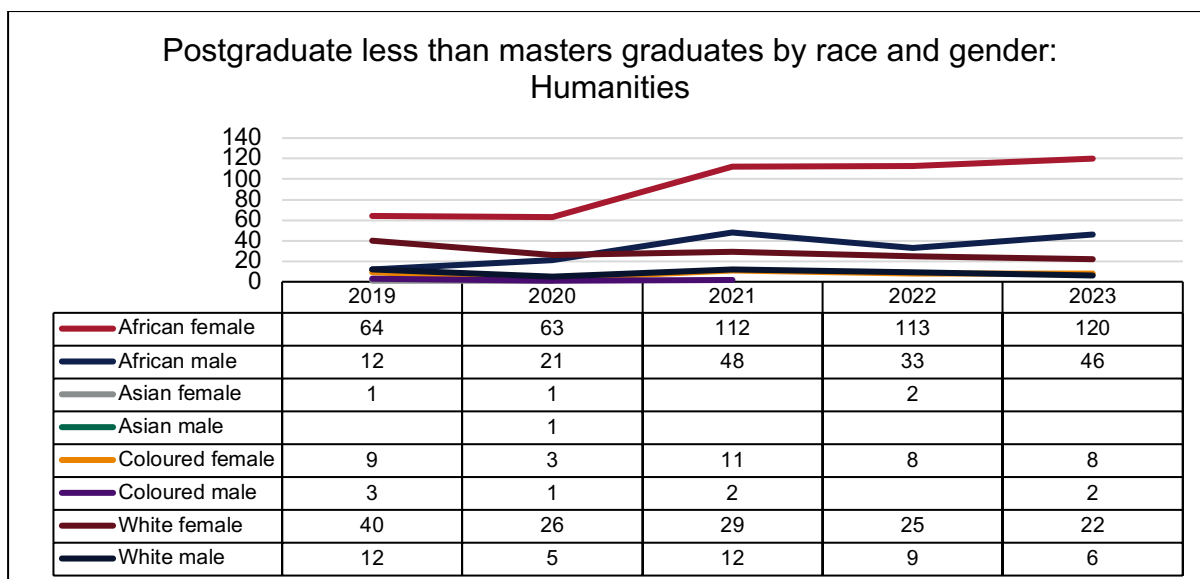
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
BFN	844	1348	1296	1231	1166
QQ	293	534	590	514	238
SOUTH	366	448	484	544	450
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1503</b>	<b>2330</b>	<b>2370</b>	<b>2289</b>	<b>1854</b>

**Table 29** shows the number of graduates (excluding masters and doctoral) in the faculty of the Humanities over the last five years. The total number of graduates decreased from 2022 to 2023.



**Figure 46: Humanities undergraduate graduates by race and gender**

**Figure 46** shows the number of undergraduate graduates in the faculty of the Humanities over the last five year split by race and gender. There was an increase in the number of undergraduate graduates in all race and gender groups (except white females) from 2019 to 2020. From 2020 to 2023 all race and gender groups show a decline in the number of graduates (except Asian/Indian females that showed an increase from 3 to 4 between 2021 and 2023).



**Figure 47: Humanities postgraduate less than masters graduates by race and gender**

**Figure 47** shows the number of postgraduate graduates in the faculty of the Humanities over the last five years split by race and gender. The number of postgraduate less than masters graduates declined for all race and gender groups (except for African females and males) between 2019 and 2023.

### 3.4.4 Module pass rates

**Table 30: Undergraduate module pass rates of academic departments within the Humanities**

	2021	2022	2023
African Languages	94%	93%	96%
Afrs Dutch German French	69%	67%	76%
Anthropology	75%	80%	76%
Centre for Africa Studies	91%	90%	91%
Communication Science	87%	89%	91%
Criminology	82%	82%	85%
Drama and Theatre	94%	95%	88%
English	71%	76%	84%
Fine Arts	93%	93%	96%
Governance and Political Trans	90%	89%	96%
Hebrew	81%	81%	92%
History	81%	84%	73%
History of Art and Image Stud	58%	62%	71%
Linguistics and Language Pract	80%	84%	90%
Odeion School of Music	83%	74%	89%
Philosophy and Classics	77%	84%	76%
Political Studies and Governan	79%	73%	79%
Psychology	88%	90%	77%

	2021	2022	2023
Social Work	85%	90%	89%
Sociology	82%	82%	86%
South African Sign Language	92%	90%	86%

**Table 30** shows undergraduate module pass rates over the last three years in the faculty of the Humanities per academic department. Of the 21 departments, 13 show the highest pass rates in 2023. Five departments had the lowest pass rates in 2023 (Drama and Theatre, History, Philosophy and Classics, Psychology, and South African Sign Language). The Odeion School of Music showed the biggest increase in success rate from 2022 to 2023 (15%).

**Table 31: Undergraduate module pass rates for the Humanities by race and gender**

	2021	2022	2023
African female	86%	87%	85%
African male	76%	78%	80%
Indian/Asian female	88%	83%	82%
Indian/Asian male	78%	79%	68%
Coloured female	84%	84%	84%
Coloured male	75%	79%	73%
White female	91%	91%	89%
White male	81%	84%	79%

**Table 31** shows undergraduate module pass rates for the faculty of the Humanities over the last three years by race and gender. All race and gender groups show a decrease in module pass rates from 2022 to 2023, except African males.

**Table 32: Postgraduate less than masters module pass rates of academic departments within the Humanities**

	2021	2022	2023
African Languages	92%	90%	93%
Afrs Dutch German French	92%	82%	64%
Anthropology	77%	92%	96%
Centre for Africa Studies	72%	50%	67%
Communication Science	93%	99%	96%
Criminology	100%	92%	100%
Drama and Theatre	95%	94%	100%
English	84%	94%	83%
Governance and Political Trans	100%	93%	93%
Greek Latin and Classical Stud	100%		
Hebrew	100%	75%	100%

	2021	2022	2023
History	83%	44%	43%
History of Art and Image Stud	67%	100%	94%
Linguistics and Language Pract	82%	79%	66%
Odeion School of Music	60%	100%	100%
Philosophy and Classics	94%	56%	75%
Political Studies and Governan	67%	82%	93%
Psychology	94%	96%	89%
Sociology	100%	56%	100%
South African Sign Language	81%	81%	80%

**Table 32** shows postgraduate less than masters module pass rates for the last three years in the faculty of the Humanities by academic department. Of the 19 departments (excluding Greek Latin and Classical Studies for which data is only available in 2021), 8 departments showed the highest module pass rates in 2023. A total of 7 showed the lowest pass rate in 2023.

**Table 33: Postgraduate less than masters module pass rates of the Humanities by race and gender**

	2021	2022	2023
African female	90%	91%	89%
African male	90%	82%	88%
Indian/Asian female		93%	
Coloured female	99%	93%	98%
Coloured male	100%	78%	93%
White female	97%	99%	90%
White male	85%	78%	94%

**Table 33** shows postgraduate less than masters module pass rates for the last three years in the faculty of the Humanities by race and gender. All race and gender groups show an increase from 2022 to 2023, except white females and African females.

## 3.5 Law

### 3.5.1 Key findings for Law

- On the Bloemfontein campus, the number of undergraduate, masters, and doctoral enrolments increased over the last five years (from 2019 to 2023), while postgraduate less than masters enrolments steadily decreased.
- For first-time entering students, the number of extended programme enrolments declined over the last five years, while the number mainstream enrolments increased over the last five years.
- Postgraduate less than masters enrolments declined from 2019 to 2023 for all race and gender groups, except African females that show an increase.
- The number of graduates (excluding masters and doctoral) has fluctuated over the last five years, but there was an overall increase from 2019 to 2023.
- The number of African female and male undergraduate and postgraduate less than masters graduates increased over the last five years while all other groups show a decline in numbers.
- Two departments achieved its the lowest undergraduate module pass rates in 2023 (Private Law and Public Law), while Mercantile Law achieved its highest pass rates in three years, in 2023.

### 3.5.2 Enrolments

**Table 34: Count of full-time enrolments of the Faculty of Law by campus and degree level**

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
BFN	Undergraduate	2673	2939	2905	3009	2939
	Postgraduate less than Masters	927	914	713	765	751
	Masters	106	143	190	171	167
	Doctoral	23	34	49	61	55
SOUTH	Undergraduate	206	76	1	1	

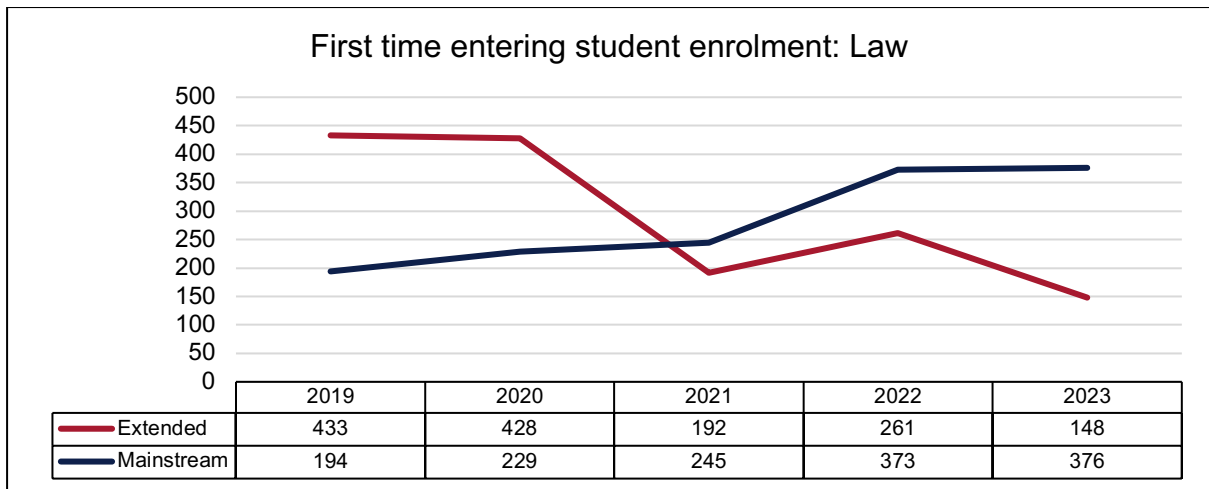
**Table 34** shows the number of full-time enrolments in the faculty of Law by campus and degree level over the last five years. The darkest shaded cells indicate the highest student numbers,

with the colour lightening as the numbers decrease. On the Bloemfontein campus, undergraduate enrolments increased between 2019 and 2022, but then decreased from 2022 to 2023. Postgraduate less than masters enrolments decreased from 2019 to 2023, while masters and doctoral enrolments increased from 2019 to 2023. On the South campus, the number of undergraduate enrolments decreased with the phasing out of Varsity College enrolments.

**Table 35: First-time entering undergraduate enrolment for the Law faculty**

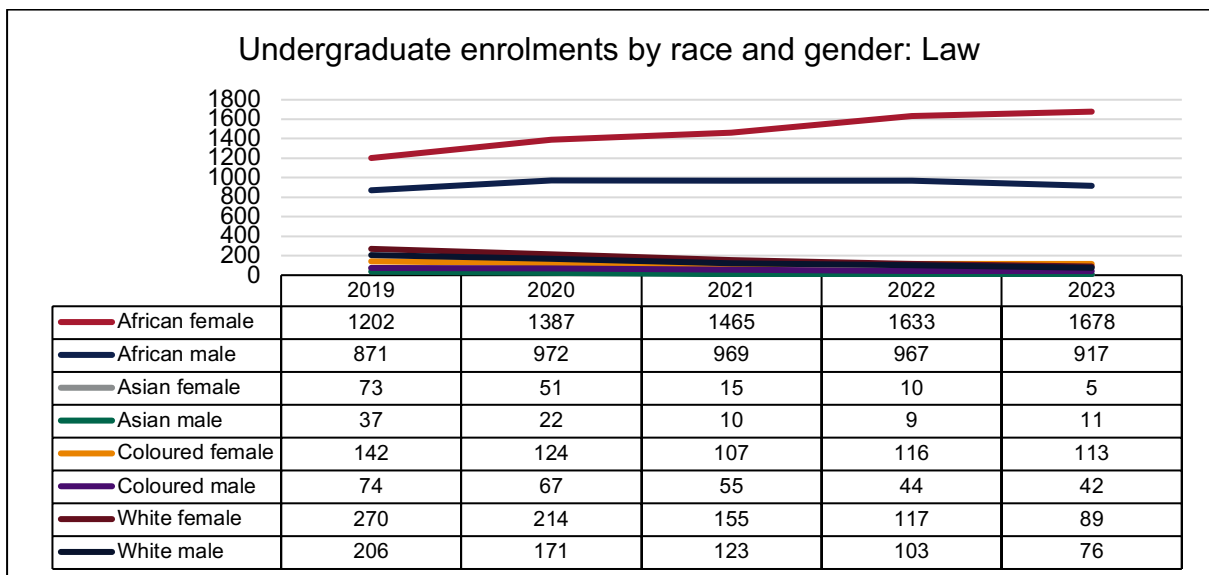
<b>Campus &amp; Pathway</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>BFN Campus Extended</b>	African	397	389	169	246	137
	Indian/Asian	1	1	1	1	1
	Coloured	20	21	15	8	9
	White	14	16	6	6	1
<b>BFN Campus Mainstream</b>	African	153	204	216	336	340
	Indian/Asian	2	1	1	3	1
	Coloured	17	10	15	22	19
	White	21	14	11	11	16
<b>South Campus Extended</b>	African			1		
<b>South Campus Mainstream</b>	African			1		
<b>Total Extended</b>		<b>432</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>Total Mainstream</b>		<b>193</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>376</b>

**Table 35** shows the number of first-time entering undergraduate enrolments in the faculty of Law between 2019 and 2023. The number of extended programme enrolments declined for all race and gender groups, while the number of African enrolments in the mainstream programme on the Bloemfontein campus increased.



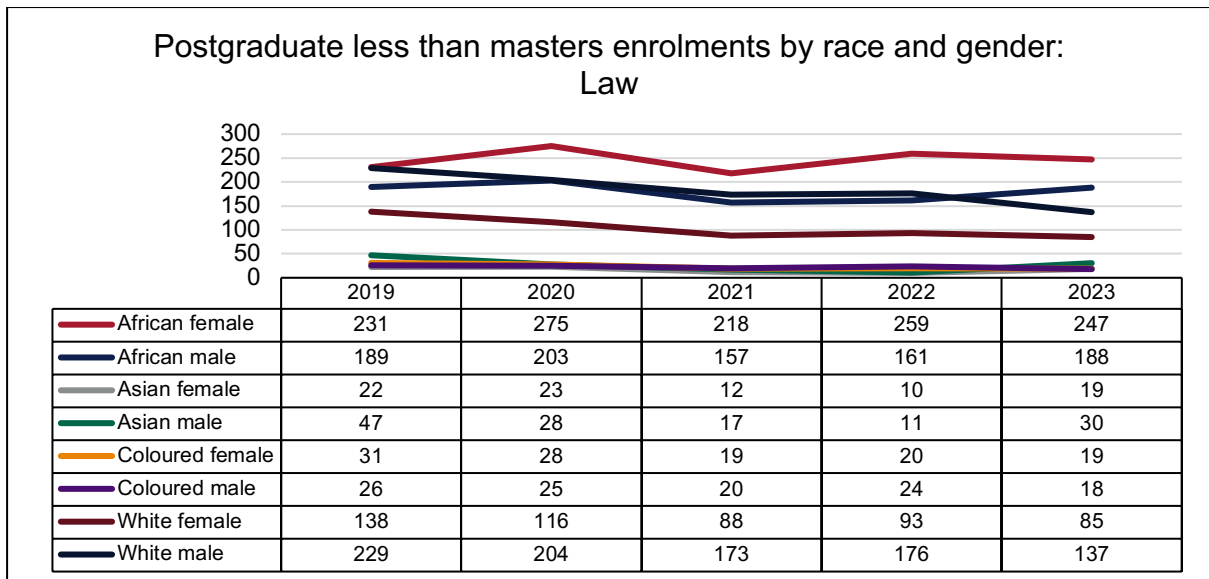
**Figure 48: Law first-time entering enrolments**

**Figure 48** shows the total number of first-time entering enrolments in the faculty of Law for the mainstream and extended programmes. The number of extended programme enrolments declined between 2019 and 2023, while the number of mainstream enrolments increased for the same period.



**Figure 49: Law undergraduate enrolments by race and gender**

**Figure 49** shows the number of undergraduate enrolments in the faculty of Law between 2019 and 2023 split by race and gender. Undergraduate enrolments increased for African students (females and males) and declined notably for all other race and gender groups over the last five years.



**Figure 50: Law postgraduate less than masters enrolments by race and gender**

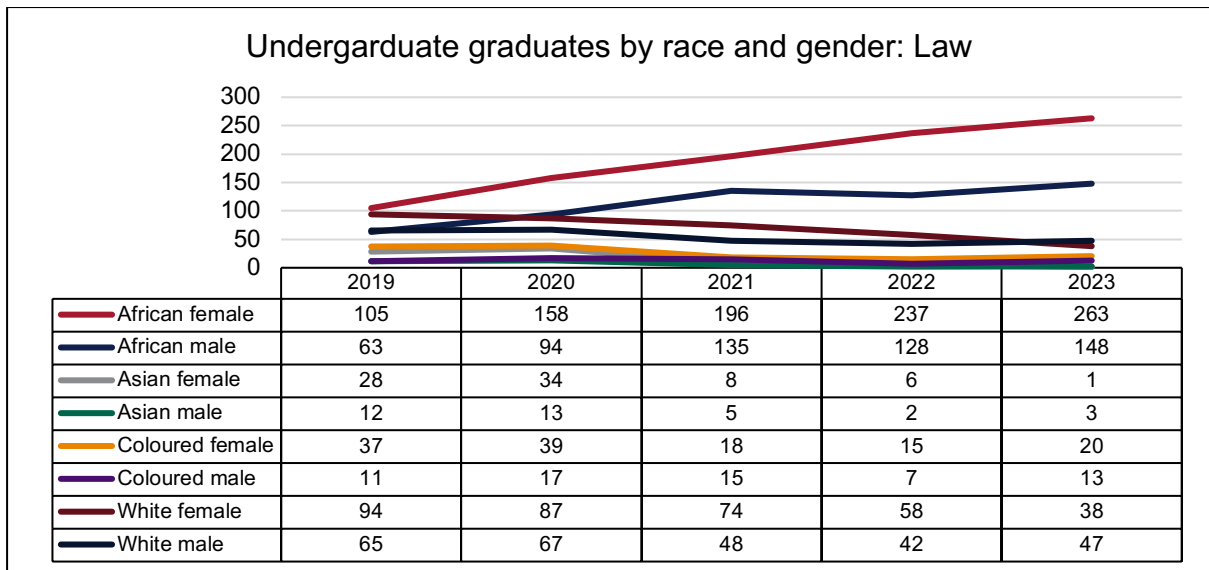
**Figure 50** shows the number of postgraduate less than masters enrolments in the faculty of Law between 2019 and 2023 split by race and gender. Enrolments fluctuated for all racial groups but if only comparing 2019 and 2023 data, enrolments decreased for all race and gender groups, except African females that show an increase.

### 3.5.3 Graduates

**Table 36: Number of Law graduates (excl. masters and doctoral)**

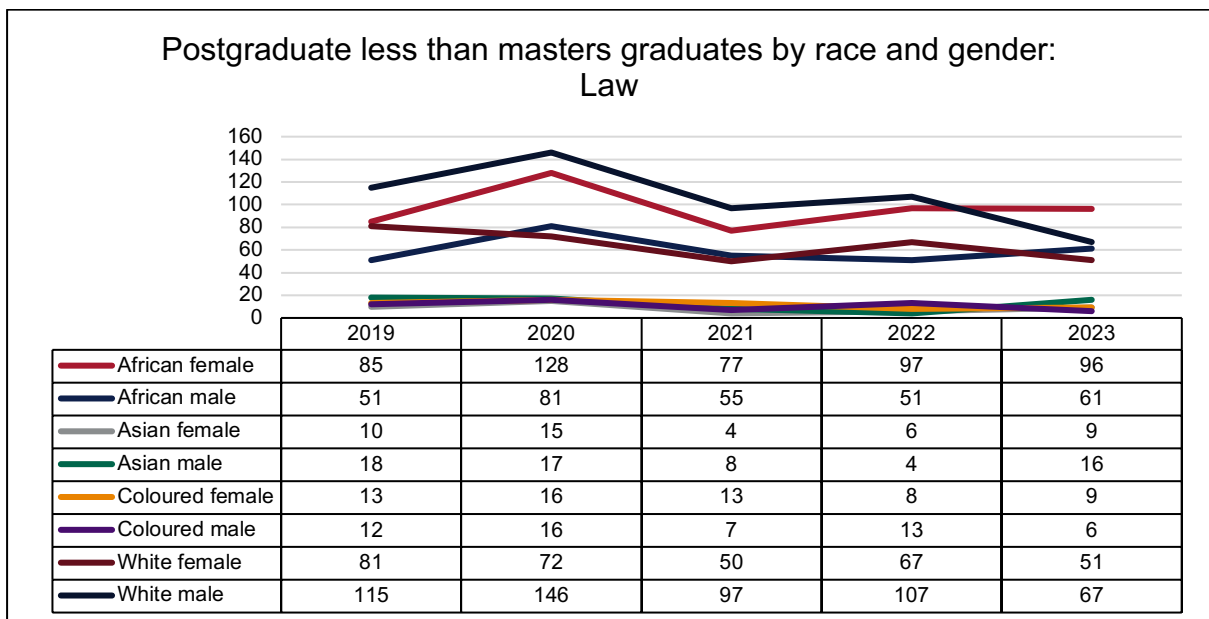
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
BFN	699	926	811	857	853
SOUTH	111	82	3		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>1008</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>853</b>

**Table 36** shows the number of graduates in the faculty of Law (excluding masters and doctoral) for the last five years. The number of graduates on the Bloemfontein campus has fluctuated, but the total number of graduates in the faculty increased when comparing 2019 and 2023 data (despite the continued decrease of South campus graduates).



**Figure 51: Law undergraduate graduates by race and gender**

**Figure 51** shows the number of undergraduate graduates in the faculty of Law between 2019 and 2023 split by race and gender. The number of African female and male graduates increased over the last five years while all other groups show a decline in numbers.



**Figure 52: Law postgraduate less than masters graduates by race and gender**

**Figure 52** shows the number of postgraduate less than masters graduates in the faculty of Law between 2019 and 2023 split by race and gender. All groups show some fluctuation over the last five years. When only comparing 2019 and 2023 data, the number of graduates increased for African females and males, and decreased for all other race and gender groups.

### 3.5.4 Module pass rates

**Table 37: Undergraduate module pass rates of academic departments in the faculty of Law**

	2021	2022	2023
Criminal and Medical Law	88%		
Mercantile Law	87%	88%	89%
Office of the Dean: Law	70%	88%	80%
Private Law	84%	83%	80%
Public Law	88%	85%	82%

**Table 37** shows the undergraduate module pass rates over the last three years in the faculty of Law per academic department. Two departments show the lowest pass rates in 2023 (Private Law and Public Law), while Mercantile Law shows its highest pass rates in three years, in 2023.

**Table 38: Undergraduate module pass rates for Law by race and gender**

	2021	2022	2023
African female	87%	87%	85%
African male	82%	82%	80%
Indian/Asian female	99%	99%	80%
Indian/Asian male	97%	94%	90%
Coloured female	90%	84%	85%
Coloured male	82%	78%	85%
White female	96%	93%	86%
White male	89%	90%	88%

**Table 38** shows undergraduate module pass rates for the last three years in the faculty of Law split by race and gender. All race and gender groups, except Coloured females and males, achieved the lowest pass rates in 2023.

**Table 39: Postgraduate less than masters module pass rates of academic departments in the faculty of Law**

	2021	2022	2023
Mercantile Law	79%	82%	76%
Office of the Dean: Law	64%	61%	62%

**Table 39** shows the postgraduate less than masters module pass rates over the last three years in the faculty of Law per academic department. The pass rate in Mercantile law decreased with 6% from 2022 to 2023.

**Table 40: Postgraduate less than masters module pass rates of Law by race and gender**

	2021	2022	2023
African female	58%	56%	59%
African male	51%	50%	50%
Indian/Asian female	58%	92%	79%
Indian/Asian male	51%	62%	69%
Coloured female	90%	69%	63%
Coloured male	67%	61%	56%
White female	82%	88%	83%
White male	79%	76%	77%

**Table 40** shows postgraduate less than masters module pass rates for the last three years in the faculty of Law split by race and gender. African females and males, as well as white males show an increase in pass rates from 2022 to 2023, all other race and gender groups achieved lower pass rates in 2023 than in 2022.

## 3.6 Natural and Agricultural Sciences

### 3.6.1 Key findings for Natural and Agricultural Sciences

- Undergraduate enrolments increased on the South campus over the last five years, while this number decreased on the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses. The quality of enrolments also increased as the average AP score was higher in 2023 than five years ago.
- All postgraduate enrolments (on both Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses) increased from 2022 to 2023. This is a result of intentional efforts by the faculty to increase the number of masters and PhDs we produce in alignment with Vision130.
- Overall, the number of first-time entering students in mainstream programmes, as well as extended programmes increased over the last five years.
- The total number of graduates (excluding masters and doctoral) increased from 2019 to 2020 after which it declined again in 2021. From 2021 to 2023 this number has again steadily increased, with 2023 producing the highest number of graduates in five years.
- In the majority of departments, the highest undergraduate module pass rates in three years were achieved in 2023.
- Ten departments achieved higher postgraduate less than masters module pass rates in 2023 than in 2022.

### 3.6.2 Enrolments

**Table 41: Count of full-time enrolments in the faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences by campus and degree level**

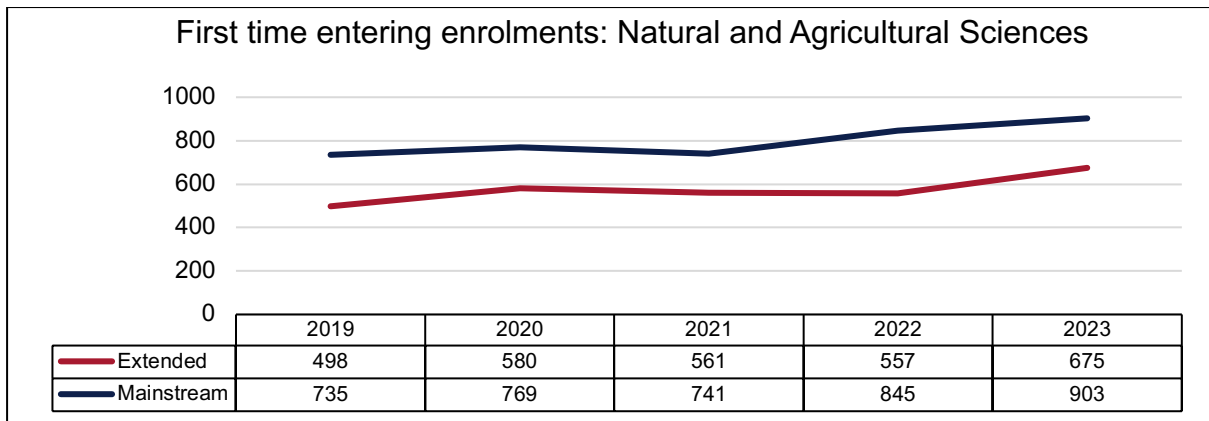
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
BFN	Undergraduate	3993	4029	3887	3712	3638
	Postgraduate less than Masters	678	666	686	651	746
	Masters	830	836	847	726	795
	Doctoral	397	364	393	383	414
QWA	Undergraduate	713	680	645	580	544
	Postgraduate less than Masters	32	38	26	23	31
	Masters	45	48	49	44	48
	Doctoral	41	33	38	35	38
SOUTH	Undergraduate	325	445	427	442	569

**Table 41** shows the number of enrolments in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences by campus and degree level between 2019 and 2023. The darkest shaded cells indicate the highest student numbers, with the colour lightening as the numbers decrease. Undergraduate enrolments increased on the South campus over the last five years, while this number decreased on the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses. When comparing 2019 and 2023 data, postgraduate less than masters and doctoral enrolments increased on the Bloemfontein campus, while masters enrolments decreased. On the Qwaqwa campus, postgraduate less than masters and doctoral enrolments decreased, while masters enrolments increased. All postgraduate enrolments (on both Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses) increased from 2022 to 2023.

**Table 42: First-time entering undergraduate enrolment in the faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences**

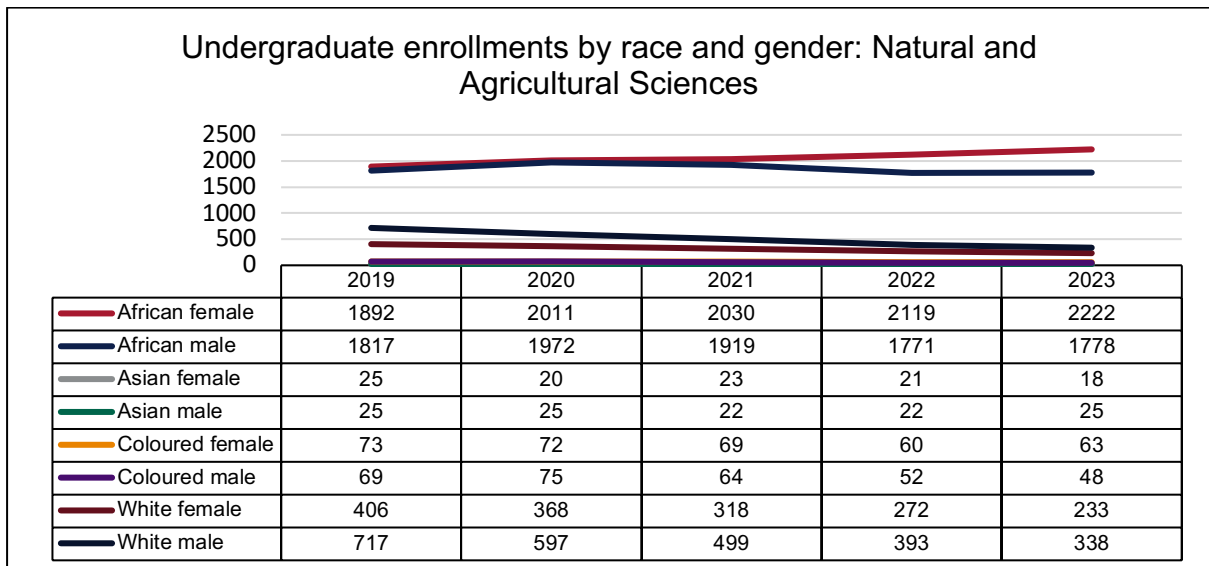
<b>Campus &amp; Pathway</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>BFN Campus Extended</b>	African	11	3			
	Coloured	1				
<b>BFN Campus Mainstream</b>	African	434	520	524	655	716
	Asian	6	13	8	10	11
	Coloured	21	21	16	19	26
	White	213	168	159	125	112
<b>QQ Campus Extended</b>	African	175	138	141	143	149
	Asian		1	2		
	Coloured			1	1	1
<b>QQ Campus Mainstream</b>	African	54	41	32	33	33
	Coloured	1				
	White		1			
<b>South Campus Extended</b>	African	262	374	370	359	481
	Asian	1	3	3		3
	Coloured	8	11	8	9	12
	White	40	50	35	38	25
<b>Total Extended</b>		<b>489</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>671</b>
<b>Total Mainstream</b>		<b>729</b>	<b>764</b>	<b>739</b>	<b>842</b>	<b>898</b>

**Table 41** shows the number of first-time entering undergraduate enrolments in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences by campus and pathway for the last five years. From 2019 to 2023, the number of first-time entering mainstream enrolments increased for all race and gender groups (except white students) on the Bloemfontein campus and South campuses, while mainstream enrolments decreased on the Qwaqwa campus. The number of extended programme enrolments increased on the South campus for all racial groups (except white students) over the last five years, while extended programme enrolments on the Qwaqwa campus decreased.



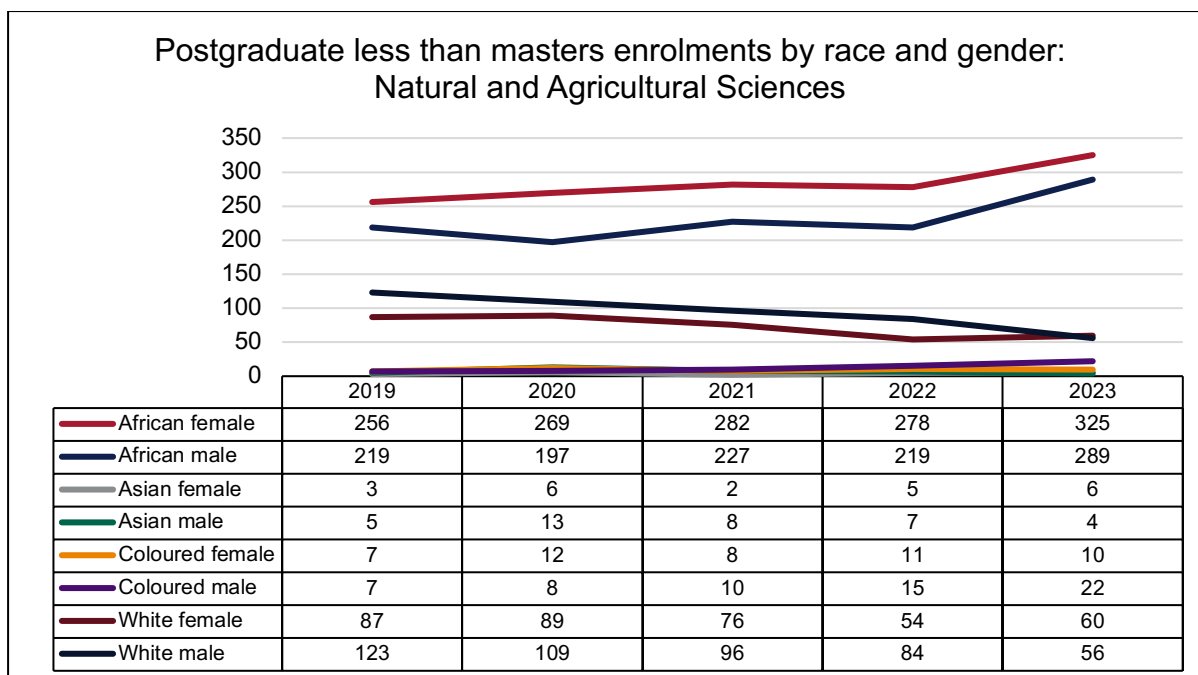
**Figure 53: Natural and Agricultural Sciences first time entering enrolments**

**Figure 53** shows the total first time entering student enrolments in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences from 2019 to 2023. The number of both mainstream and extended programme enrolments increased from 2019 to 2023.



**Figure 54: Natural and Agricultural Sciences undergraduate enrolments by race and gender**

**Figure 54** shows the number of undergraduate enrolments in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences from 2019 to 2023 split by race and gender. African female enrolments increased between 2019 and 2023, while enrolments of other race and gender groups declined (except Indian/Asian males which stayed constant). Most notably, there was a steep decline in the number of white male and female enrolments during this time.



**Figure 55: Natural and Agricultural Sciences postgraduate less than masters enrolments by race and gender**

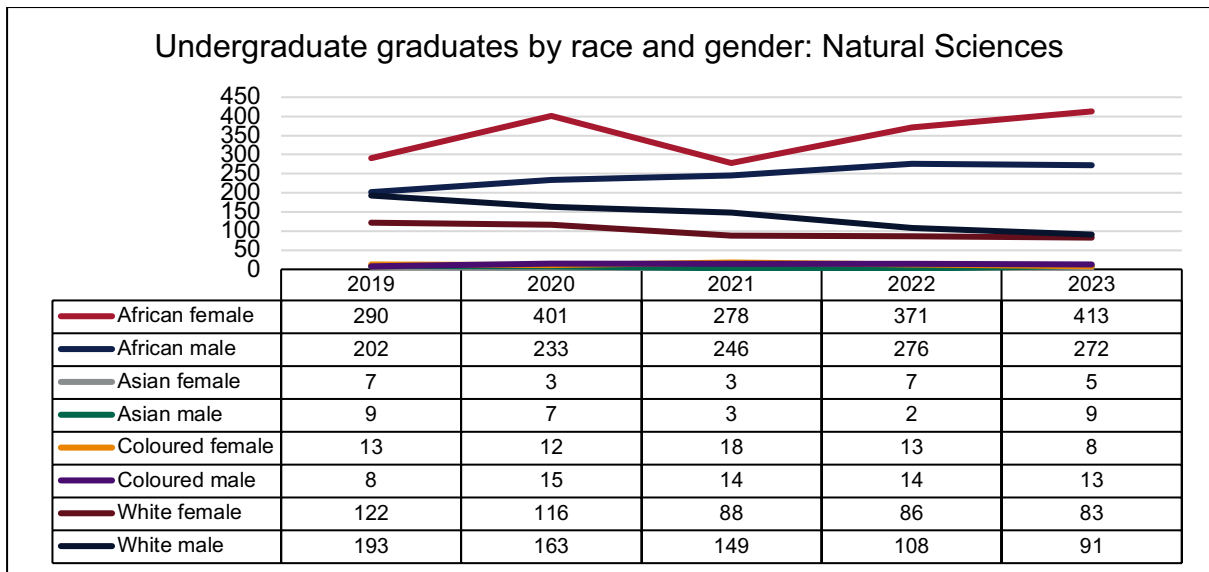
**Figure 55** shows the number of postgraduate less than masters enrolments in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences from 2019 to 2023 split by race and gender. The number of African female and male, Asian/Indian female, Coloured female and male enrolments increased over the last five years. Asian/Indian male, as well as white female and male enrolments decreased. White male enrolments more than halved from 2019 to 2023.

### 3.6.3 Graduates

**Table 43: Number of Natural and Agricultural Sciences graduates (excl. masters and doctoral)**

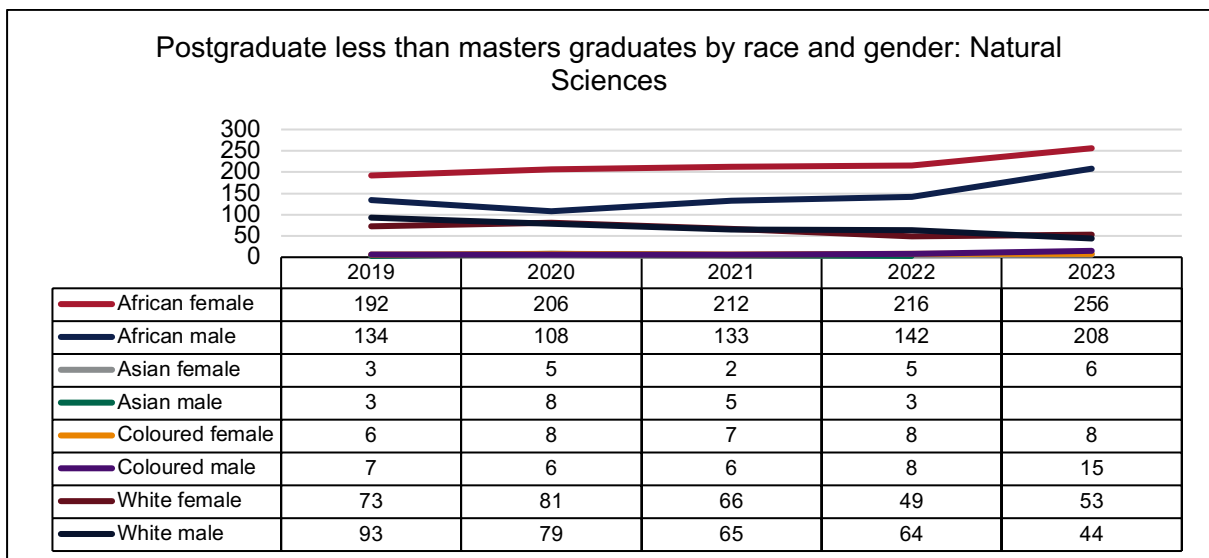
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
BFN	1251	1335	1206	1294	1375
QWA	106	117	94	85	114
SOUTH				1	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1357</b>	<b>1452</b>	<b>1300</b>	<b>1380</b>	<b>1492</b>

**Table 43** shows the number of graduates (excluding masters and doctoral) on the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses between 2019 and 2023. The total number of graduates increased from 2019 to 2020 after which it declined again in 2021. From 2021 to 2023 this number has again increased, with 2023 producing the highest number of graduates in five years.



**Figure 56: Natural and Agricultural undergraduate graduates by race and gender**

**Figure 56** shows the number of undergraduate graduates in the Faculty of Natural Agricultural Sciences between 2019 and 2023 split by race and gender. The number of African female and male, and Coloured male undergraduate graduates have increased over the last five years, while the number of White female and male undergraduate graduates notably declined for the same period.



**Figure 57: Natural and Agricultural postgraduate less than masters graduates by race and gender**

**Figure 57** shows the number of postgraduate less than masters graduates in the Faculty of Natural Agricultural Sciences between 2019 and 2023 split by race and gender. There was an increase in the number of graduates for all race and gender groups between 2019 and 2023, except white students (male and female) that showed a decline.

### 3.6.4 Module pass rates

**Table 44: Undergraduate module pass rates of academic departments within Natural and Agricultural Sciences**

	2021	2022	2023
Agricultural Economics	87%	93%	93%
Animal and Wildlife and Grassland	81%	87%	90%
Architecture	93%	95%	96%
Centre for Sustainable Agriculture	92%	95%	96%
Chemistry	78%	83%	86%
Computer Science and Information	71%	72%	80%
Genetics	77%	89%	90%
Geography	83%	88%	94%
Geology	79%	86%	95%
Mathematical Statistics a Act	77%	71%	78%
Mathematics and Applied Mathematics	52%	59%	52%
Microbial Biochemistry Food Biotech	74%	82%	86%
Office of the Dean: Natural S	82%	81%	87%
Physics	72%	73%	80%
Plant Sciences	79%	86%	86%
Quantity Surveying and Construction	84%	86%	78%
Soil Crop and Climate Sciences	80%	90%	86%
Zoology and Entomology	71%	73%	72%

**Table 44** shows the undergraduate module pass rates over the last three years in the faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences per academic department. In the majority of departments, the highest module pass rates were achieved in 2023 and the worst pass rates in 2021. Only the departments of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics, and Quantity Surveying and construction achieved the lowest pass rates in 2023.

**Table 45: Undergraduate module pass rates for Natural and Agricultural Sciences by race and gender**

	2021	2022	2023
African female	79%	81%	84%
African male	69%	74%	78%
Indian/Asian female	87%	88%	89%
Indian/Asian male	88%	81%	86%
Coloured female	80%	85%	86%
Coloured male	74%	78%	82%
White female	92%	93%	93%
White male	85%	89%	89%

**Table 45** shows the undergraduate module pass rates in the faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences over the last three years by race and gender. All race and gender groups, except Indian/Asian males, achieved the highest success rates in 2023.

**Table 46: Postgraduate less than masters module pass rates of academic departments within Natural and Agricultural Sciences**

	2021	2022	2023
Agricultural Economics	83%	86%	81%
Animal and Wildlife and Grassland	92%	100%	95%
Architecture	97%	100%	94%
Centre for Environmental Management	90%	92%	86%
Centre for Sustainable Agriculture	89%	98%	96%
Chemistry	78%	83%	86%
Computer Science and Information	69%	87%	85%
DiMTEC	81%	86%	89%
Genetics	99%	94%	98%
Geography	88%	98%	98%
Geology	95%	97%	86%
Institute for Groundwater Stu	78%	88%	77%
Mathematical Statistics a Act	87%	96%	93%
Mathematics and Applied Mathematics	81%	59%	62%
Microbial Biochemistry Food Biotech	99%	98%	97%
Physics	98%	89%	100%
Plant Sciences	95%	92%	93%
Quantity Surveying and Construction	80%	83%	87%
Soil Crop and Climate Sciences	86%	100%	100%
Urban and Regional Planning	70%	84%	80%
Zoology and Entomology	97%	85%	91%

**Table 46** shows the postgraduate less than masters module pass rates over the last three years in the faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences per academic department. Of the 21 departments, 6 obtained the highest module pass rates in 2023, while 6 achieved its lowest pass rate in 2023. Ten of the 21 departments showed an increase in pass rate from 2022 to 2023.

**Table 47: Postgraduate less than masters module pass rates for Natural and Agricultural Sciences by race and gender**

	2021	2022	2023
African female	89%	92%	93%
African male	77%	86%	86%
Indian/Asian female	100%	100%	97%

	2021	2022	2023
Indian/Asian male	81%	71%	69%
Coloured female	83%	96%	98%
Coloured male	85%	74%	80%
White female	97%	99%	96%
White male	89%	94%	91%

**Table 47** shows the postgraduate less than masters module pass rates in the faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences over the last three years by race and gender. African females and males, as well as Coloured females achieved the highest pass rates in 2023 of all three years. Indian/Asian females and males, as well as white females achieved the lowest pass rates in 2023.

## 3.7 Theology and Religion

### 3.7.1 Key findings for Theology and Religion

- The number of undergraduate enrolments increased over the last five years, as well as doctoral enrolments. Postgraduate less than masters and masters enrolments decreased from 2019 to 2023.
- For first-time entering students, the number of extended programme and higher certificate enrolments decreased from 2022 to 2023, while the highest number of mainstream enrolments in five years was recorded in 2023.
- The number of graduates (excluding masters and doctoral) peaked in 2020 after which it declined from 2020 to 2021 and again from 2021 to 2022. In 2023 there was an increase of 1 graduate from 2022.
- All departments achieved higher undergraduate module pass rates in 2023 than in 2022, while an opposite trend is seen for postgraduate less than masters module pass rates for which 3 of the 4 departments achieved its lowest pass rates in three years in 2023.

### 3.7.2 Enrolments

**Table 48: Count of full-time enrolments in the Faculty of Theology and Religion by campus and degree level**

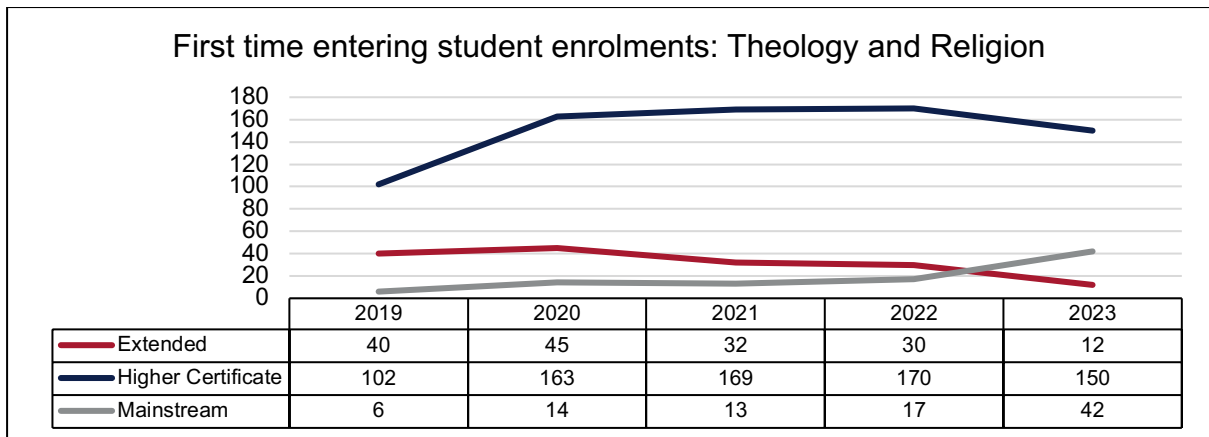
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
BFN	Undergraduate	277	389	464	502	538
	Postgraduate less than Masters	31	16	15	23	27
	Masters	50	51	49	43	30
	Doctoral	42	43	43	47	50

**Table 48** shows the number of full-time enrolments in the Faculty of Theology and Religion by campus and degree level from 2019 to 2023. The darkest shaded cells indicate the highest student numbers, with the colour lightening as the numbers decrease. The number of undergraduate enrolments increased steadily over the last five years, as well as the number of doctoral enrolments. The number of postgraduate less than masters and masters enrolments decreased from 2019 to 2023.

**Table 49: First-time entering enrolment in the faculty of Theology and Religion**

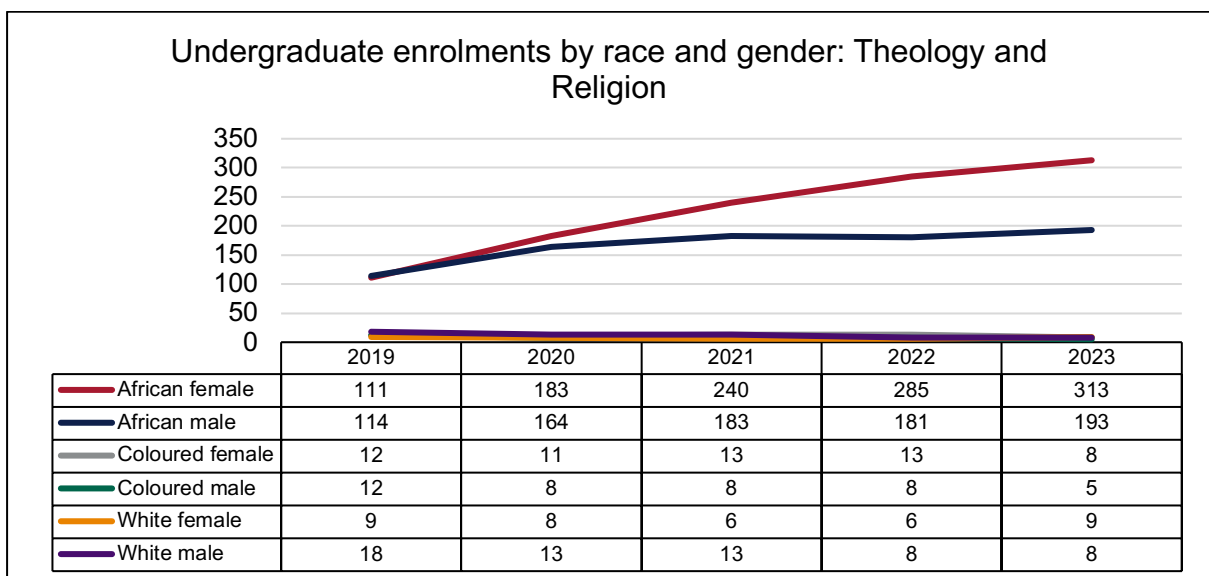
Campus & Pathway	Race	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
BFN Campus Extended	African	35	40	27	29	11
	Coloured	3	3	1		
	White	2	1	4	1	1
BFN Campus Mainstream	African	4	9	12	12	40
	Coloured		2		2	
	White	2	3	1	3	2
<b>Total Extended</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Total Mainstream</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>42</b>

**Table 49** shows the first-time entering student enrolments in the faculty of Theology and Religion per campus and pathway between 2019 and 2023. The number of extended programme enrolments decreased for all racial groups and decreased overall from 40 to 12. The number of African enrolments in the mainstream increased from 4 to 40 over the last five years.



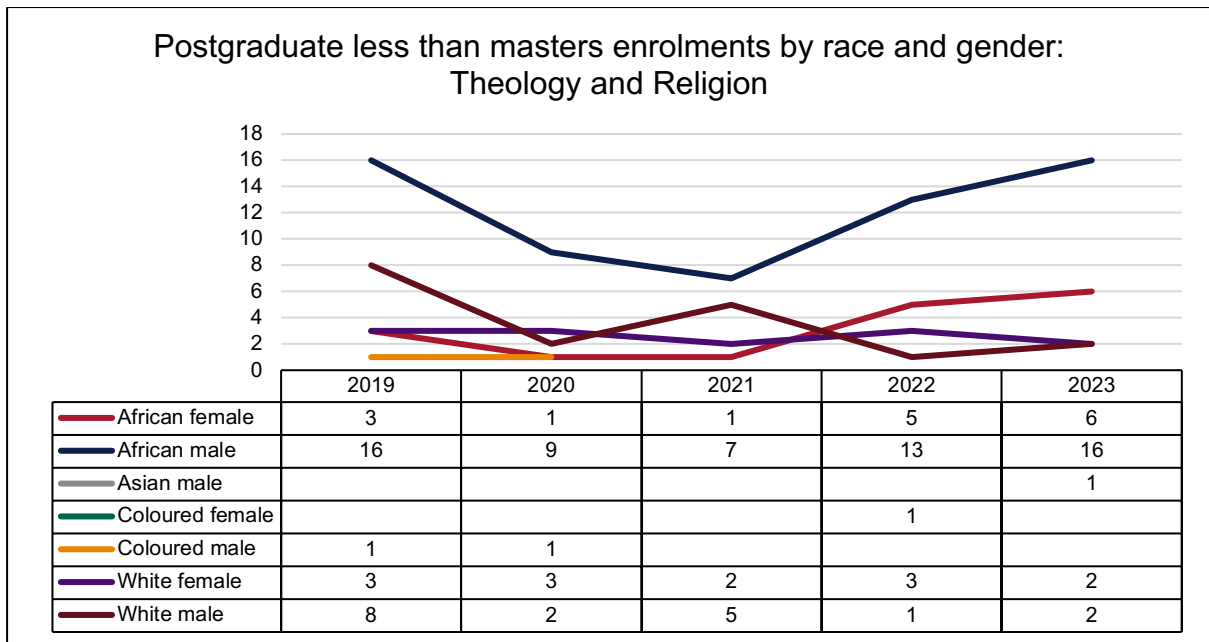
**Figure 58: Theology and Religion first time entering student enrolments**

**Figure 58** shows that the number of extended programme, higher certificate, and mainstream programme enrolments in the faculty of Theology and Religion all increased over the last five years. The number of extended programme enrolments decreased, while mainstream and higher certificate enrolments increased from 2019 to 2023. Higher certificate enrolments peaked in 2022 after which it declined from 2022 to 2023. Mainstream enrolments peaked in 2023 at 42 students (increased from 6 students in 2019 and more than doubled from 17 students in 2022).



**Figure 59: Theology and Religion undergraduate enrolments by race and gender**

**Figure 59** shows the number of undergraduate enrolments in the Faculty of Theology and Religion by race and gender for the last five years. The number of African (female and male) undergraduate enrolments increased notably over the last five years, while other racial groups represent quite small numbers.



**Figure 60: Postgraduate less than masters enrolment by race and gender**

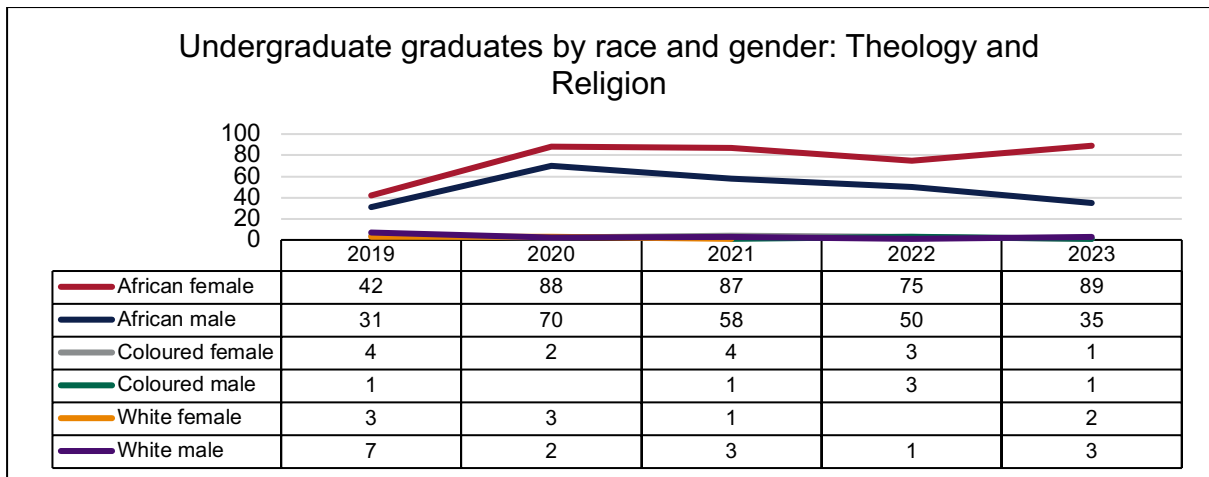
**Figure 60** shows the number of postgraduate less than masters enrolments in the faculty of Theology and Religion by race and gender for the last five years. Most race and gender groups show a general increase between 2022 and 2023, except Coloured and white females.

### 3.7.3 Graduates

**Table 50: Number of Theology and Religion graduates (excl. masters and doctoral)**

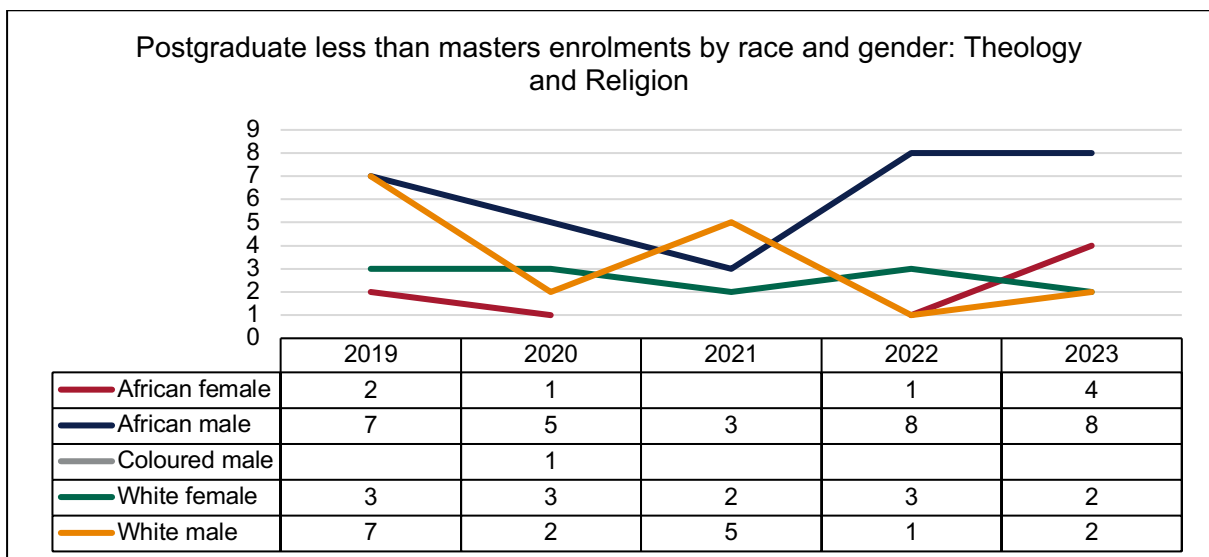
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
BFN	107	178	164	146	147

**Table 50** shows that the number of Theology and Religion graduates (excluding masters and doctoral) for the last five years. The number of graduates peaked in 2020 after which it declined from 2020 to 2021 and again from 2021 to 2022. In 2023 there was an increase of 1 graduate from 2022.



**Figure 61: Theology and Religion undergraduate graduates by race and gender**

**Figure 61** shows the number of undergraduate graduates by race and gender for the last five years. The number of African female and male graduates increased from 2019 to 2023, the other race and gender groups represent small numbers.



**Figure 62: Theology and Religion postgraduate less than masters graduates by race and gender**

**Figure 62** shows the number of postgraduate less than masters graduates by race and gender for the last five years. The numbers for all race and gender groups are quite small for postgraduate less than masters graduates and there has been some fluctuation in these numbers over the last five years. When only comparing 2019 and 2023 numbers, there was an increase in African female and male graduates and a decrease in other race and gender groups (except Coloured males which stayed constant at 0).

### 3.7.4 Module pass rates

**Table 51: Undergraduate module pass rates of academic departments within Theology and Religion**

	2021	2022	2023
Historical and Constr Theology	78%	71%	75%
Office of the Dean: Theology			78%
Old and New Testament Studies	89%	68%	69%
Practical and Missional Theology	85%	81%	85%
Religion Studies	84%	83%	90%

**Table 51** shows undergraduate module pass rates in the Faculty of Theology and Religion over the last three years per academic department. All departments achieved higher module pass rates in 2023 than in 2022.

**Table 52: Undergraduate module pass rates for Theology and Religion by race and gender**

	2021	2022	2023
African female	86%	79%	82%
African male	77%	67%	72%
Indian/Asian male			0%
Coloured female	96%	70%	78%
Coloured male	97%	62%	58%
White female	84%	80%	92%
White male	91%	93%	92%

**Table 52** shows the undergraduate module pass rates in the Faculty of Theology and Religion by race and gender. All race and gender groups, except Coloured and white males achieved higher pass rates in 2023 than in 2022.

**Table 53: Postgraduate less than masters module pass rates of academic departments within Theology and Religion**

	2021	2022	2023
Historical and Constr Theology	100%	83%	55%
Old and New Testament Studies	100%	89%	82%
Practical and Missional Theology	77%	76%	80%
Religion Studies	83%	100%	50%

**Table 53** shows postgraduate less than masters module pass rates in the Faculty of Theology and Religion over the last three years per academic department. An opposite trend can be seen for postgraduate less than masters pass rates compared to undergraduate pass rates.

Of the 4 departments, 3 achieved the lowest pass rates in 2023 with only 1 department (Practical and Missional Theology) achieving a higher pass rate in 2023 than in 2022.

**Table 54: Postgraduate less than masters module pass rates for Theology and Religion by race and gender**

	2021	2022	2023
African female	80%	89%	88%
African male	78%	76%	54%
Indian/Asian male			0%
Coloured female		0%	
White female	100%	100%	100%
White male	100%	100%	100%

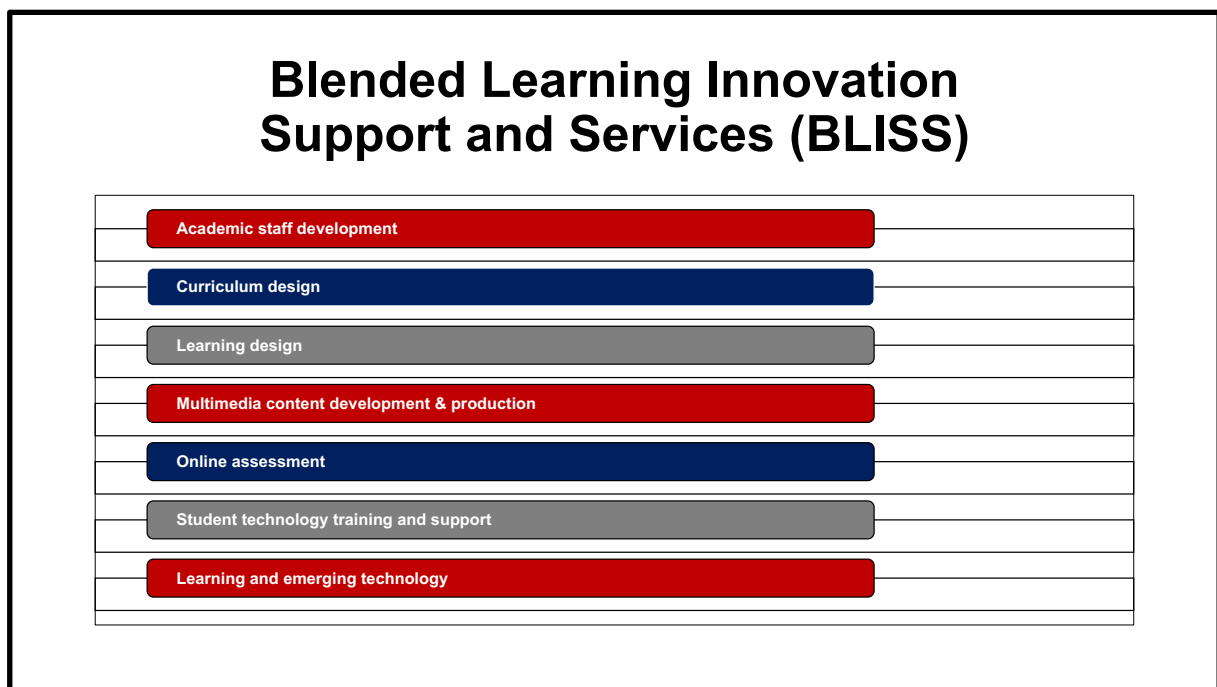
**Table 54** shows the postgraduate less than masters module pass rates in the faculty of Theology and Religion by race and gender. White females and males show a 100% pass rate in all three years, while there was a 0% pass rate for Indian/Asian students in the only two years in which there were enrolments in this racial group. The module pass rate for both African males and females decreased from 2022 to 2023.

# **Section 4**

**Quality learning and teaching in  
the age of AI**

## 4.1. Enhancing Blended Learning Innovation Services and Support (BLISS)

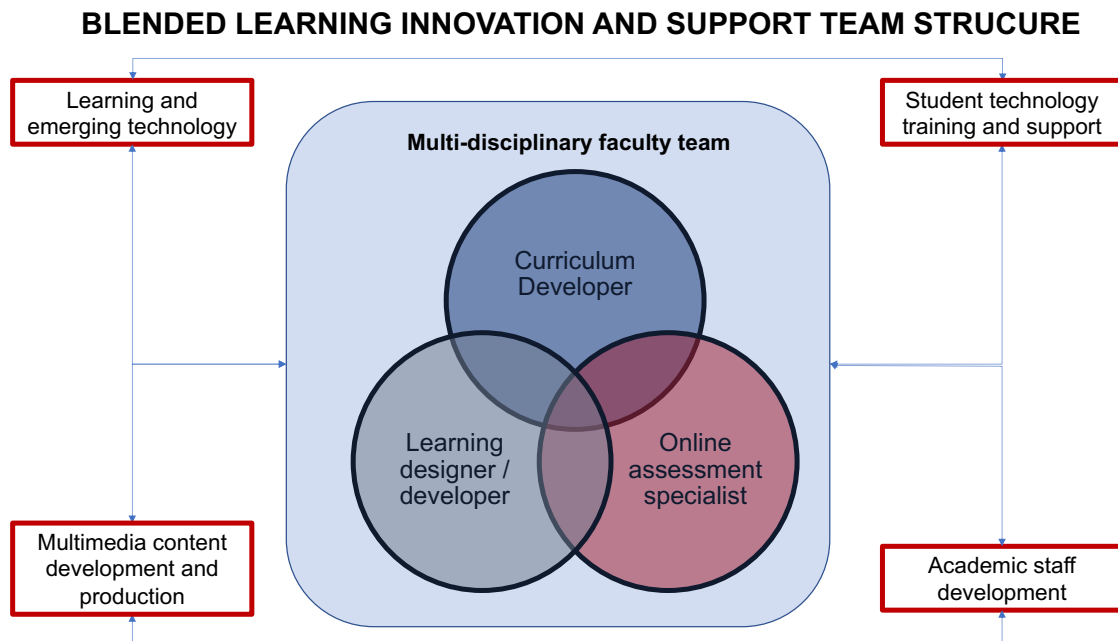
The Blended Learning Innovation Services and Support (BLISS) focus area in CTL was approved and established in July 2022. The majority of 2023 was spent on the implementation and stabilisation of the proposed new BLISS structure. This focus area has the primary goal of providing holistic, integrated services and support within a new blended learning future at the UFS. The new BLISS focus area allows for the deployment and delivery of services ranging from curriculum and learning design, content production and development, online assessment, staff and student training and development, as well as the maintenance and review of a rapid changing educational technology environment. **Figure 63** provides an overview of the support services towards staff and students within this focus area.



**Figure 63: Overview of services within the Blended Learning Innovation Support and Services Focus Area**

As part of the functioning of this focus area, multidisciplinary teams will be deployed to provide faculty and campus specific support. Teams comprised of specialists in the areas of curriculum design, learning design and online assessment will have to work collaboratively in a faculty team context to support blended learning initiatives. These teams will co-opt (based on needs in a specific faculty or campus) services and support from other specialist services in the focus area such as academic staff development, multimedia content development and

production, student technology training, learning and emerging technology. The structure of these teams is illustrated in **Figure 64**.

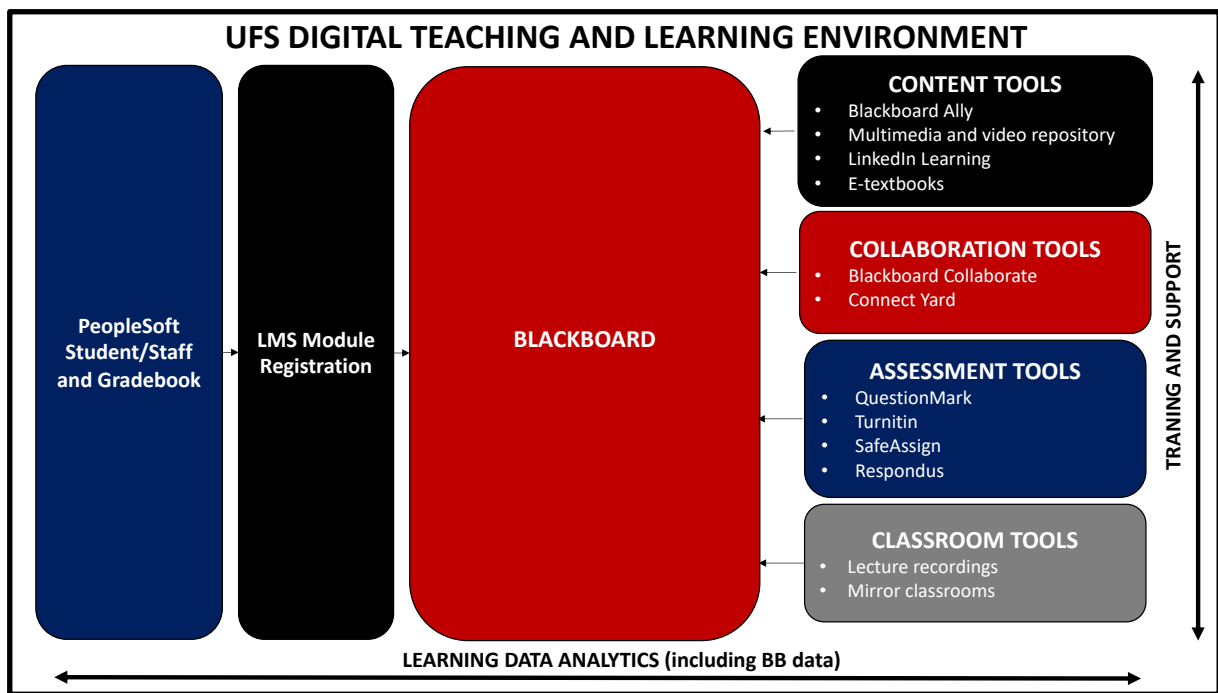


**Figure 64: Blended Learning Innovation Support Services Team Structure**

As part of the implementation of the proposed faculty-based team structure, Digitalisation funding (for a three-year period) was allocated at the end of 2023 to CTL for the appointment of additional capacity in the areas of online assessment, curriculum design and learning technology support.

#### 4.1.1. Learning and Emerging Technology

The UFS has an integrated digital learning and teaching environment that consists of various technologies and systems. This digital learning and teaching environment is illustrated in **Figure 65**.



**Figure 65: UFS Digital learning and teaching environment**

During 2023 various large scale institutional technologies were piloted, reviewed and approved through the Educational Technology and Learning Space Committee (ETLS), as well as the Central Information Technology Committee and Rectorate. Institutional projects approved include the following:

1. Approval of Panopto as institutional multimedia content and video repository. Panopto allows for the creation, manage, and deliver accessible content across teams, classrooms, and campus with an easy-to-use platform.
2. Finalisation of tender process and the approval of the Cirrus with Sumandi Elementum as online assessment system for the UFS. This specialised online assessment system is used world-wide, as well as by the University of Pretoria and North-West University. This new online assessment system will be implemented in 2024 and will replace QuestionMark as official institutional online assessment system.
3. During 2023 Feedback Fruits was piloted within the School of Accountancy as well as the UFSS module. After this pilot implementation, the institutional implementation of Feedback Fruits was approved. This technology assists academics to develop diverse, engaging learning activities such as interactive videos, discussions, assessment, and peer feedback in Blackboard.
4. Approval of the pilot implementation of Class 2.0 (upgraded version of Blackboard Collaborate) for 2024. This virtual classroom platform prioritises the enablement of active learning, collaboration, and engagement in online classrooms and virtual

instructor-led training. During 2024, this virtual classroom platform will run concurrently with the Blackboard Collaborate.

5. Approval to start with a formal review of the official institutional Learning Management System during 2024.
6. Approval for the review and use of ConnectYard as communication platform for the UFS. ConnectYard provides an engagement platform that seamlessly integrates with, Blackboard along with numerous other learning systems and allows for anytime, anywhere communication and collaboration across a wide variety of social and mobile technologies.
7. Procurement and implementation of LinkedIn Talent Insights to assist in the talent development and retention strategy of the UFS.

In addition to the institutional technologies outlined above, **Table 55** shows a list of technologies and proposals that served and were accordingly approved in 2023 at the ETLs.

**Table 55: Projects/ requests approved by the ETLs in 2023**

<b>Project/Request</b>	<b>Short description</b>	<b>Custodian</b>
Attendance Tracking	In the Faculty of Health Sciences, students must attend 80% of class sessions and 100% of clinical sessions, with attendance data playing a crucial role in accreditation and exam admission committees using it to regulate student access to examination opportunities. The faculty is thus looking for a system assisting in tracking student activity on various learning and teaching platforms and activities. Approval was granted to gather requirements to all faculties in need of a similar attendance management tool.	Health Sciences
IPC Africa	Enhancing Infection Prevention and Control in Africa through the use of virtual reality.	Health Sciences
Classroom Engagement Tools	Classroom engagement tools like Kahoot, Mentimeter, and Poll are requested by faculties. These tools are considered essential for creating dynamic and interactive learning environments. Approval was obtained to pilot and test these technologies in different disciplines.	Various Faculties
Panda Pilot	Panda, a web-based app to support mental wellness.	School of Accountancy
RadPrimer	RadPrimer, presented by Elsevier, is a globally recognised interactive electronic educational platform for diagnostic radiology, offering registrars a fully interactive and adaptable	Health Sciences

<b>Project/Request</b>	<b>Short description</b>	<b>Custodian</b>
	learning experience that can be self-paced to manage individual cognitive loads.	
Leapfrog	Leapfrog Geo is a geological modelling software developed by Seequent, a New Zealand-based company specialising in geoscience software and solutions. Leapfrog Geo is designed to assist geologists, geophysicists, and other earth scientists in the creation and visualisation of geological and geophysical models.	Departmental Clinical Imaging Sciences
FORDISC and ADBOU	FORDISC, an interactive Windows-based program, classifies adults by ancestry and sex using standard measurements, incorporating new features such as expanded measurements, groups including Howells' worldwide cranial data, data import capabilities, outlier checks, and an improved pictorial guide; meanwhile, ADBOU utilizes transition analysis to estimate age based on skeletal indicators.	Department of Clinical Imaging Sciences
d-Base 2019	dBASE is a 32-bit rapid application development (RAD) environment for creating powerful database applications and data-driven web applications. It features flexible interactive database administration tools, an advanced third-generation object-oriented programming model, and a high level of backward compatibility.	Department of Animal Science
Remark OMR	Remark OMR's primary function is to scan and capture the optical marks on the multiple-choice scoring sheets and then save this into an output file for further analysis. A recommendation was made by ETLIS to engage with faculties on the relevant needs and capacity to continue with this service.	ICT
Spectrum	Spectrum Eyecare Software is a specialised computer program tailored for eyecare professionals, offering comprehensive tools for efficient practice management, including patient management, appointment scheduling, clinical charting, billing, inventory management, and reporting.	Health Sciences
Micromine	Micromine is a software solution designed for geological and mining industries. It is a powerful software that enables exploration and mining companies to efficiently capture, manage, and interpret critical mining and geological data. The software offers a comprehensive suite of tools for geological modelling, mine design, resource estimation, and production data management.	Geology Departmental
Cami reader	Cami Reader is a complete reading and language system that helps learners/students become fluent and proficient readers.	School of Accountancy
MusicPlay Online	MusicPlay Online is software that allows access to music education curricula, including lesson plan ideas, songs, various methods, and	Odeion School Of Music

<b>Project/Request</b>	<b>Short description</b>	<b>Custodian</b>
	sequences for teaching general music education and recorder.	
Beth's Notes	A key approach used in teaching Music Education subjects that provides relevant resources and materials.	Odeion School Of Music
Teachers Pay Teachers	Teachers Pay Teachers is a platform where teachers can upload lesson plan ideas, PowerPoint presentations, and printable for all school and extracurricular activities.	Odeion School Of Music
Listen & Learn Music	Rachel Rambach Listen and Learn Music is a platform where songs and activities can be found within various categories. These resources answer to the skill development of music learners and students as they can be adapted in whichever educational setting the lecturers or students find themselves.	Odeion School Of Music
Smartsheet.com	Smartsheet allows users to capture and track your plans, resources, and schedules. Smartsheet offers a rich set of views, workflows, reports, and dashboards to adapt to your needs – from projects to multi-faceted company-wide initiatives.	School of Accountancy
VideoScribe	Videoscribe is a whiteboard animation software that will be used to create videos on lecture material.	School of Accountancy
Waking Up Subscription	Waking Up is Meditation tool that can help more than just relieving stress, sleeping better, or improving your focus. It's more like a whole new operating system for your mind. It can open the door to a deeper understanding of yourself and a new way of being in the world.	School of Accountancy
Slido	Slido is commonly used for conferences, webinars, workshops, and meetings, and is designed to enhance engagement and participation among attendees. With Slido, organisers can create interactive sessions allowing attendees to ask questions, vote on topics, and provide feedback through mobile devices or laptops.	Social Sciences and Com Education
Blender	Blender is a free and open-source 3D computer graphics software tool set used for creating animated films, visual effects, art, 3D-printed models, motion graphics, interactive 3D applications.	Quantity Surveying and Construction Management
Funding and sustainability of educational technology	Funding and sustainability of educational technologies within Higher Education Institutions have become a critical issue to ensure innovation and implementation of technologies in a budget-constrained environment. Currently no guidelines within the UFS exist concerning how provisioning should be made for the procurement and licensing of educational learning technologies within project, departmental and institutional ICT budgets	CTL

<b>Project/Request</b>	<b>Short description</b>	<b>Custodian</b>
ETLS Submission Template	In collaboration with stakeholders (CTL/ICT Services/Finance) a template was designed for ETLS submissions. This will guide the evaluation of all submissions that serve at ETLS (and are referred to CITC and Rectorate) going forward.	CTL

During 2023 concept approval was obtained at ETLS, CITC and Rectorate for the pilot implementation of 4 mirror classrooms across all three campuses of the UFS. For the establishment of these classroom R16 million of the DHET infrastructure grant and R1 million of Digitalisation funds were earmarked for the project. For the pilot implementation, Barco weConnect was approved (in 2023) as the formal mirror classroom solution. At the end of 2023 (after the appointment of the service provider) it was announced that the Barco executive team took a strategic decision to pivot the company's focus and discontinue their weConnect suite which prompted an urgent investigation for alternatives in 2024.

#### 4.1.2. Learning design

In 2023 a total of 5914 modules made use of Blackboard as a teaching tool. In addition 576 co-curricular and support organisations were made available on the LMS for use by various faculties and support services across campuses. To understand trends in the use of the LMS, an analysis of the longitudinal use of the system will be prioritised for 2024/2025.

To support academic staff in the adoption and use of Blackboard (as outlined above), a dedicated team consisting of learning designers and developers are allocated to faculties to train, consult and support staff in the meaningful use and integration of the Learning Management System (LMS). During 2023, faculty design teams supported faculties with 5173 individual staff consultations and queries.

Various institutional training sessions provide training on Blackboard use, blended learning, and assessment. In 2023, the training schedule was adapted to include 4 new workshops that focused more on blended learning and teaching to support lecturers in the transition to the blended learning approach. A total of 773 people attended the institutional training during 2023, with 526 attendees in semester 1, and 247 attendees in semester 2. In addition, 1171 staff members attended faculty-specific training workshops and interventions related to Blackboard and other educational technologies (e.g., Turnitin, SafeAssign and Respondus).

Given approvals of new learning technologies (as outlined in **Section 4.1.1**) learning design teams will be focused on the implementation and change management of various new technologies (Feedback Fruits, Class 2.0, Panopto) in 2024.

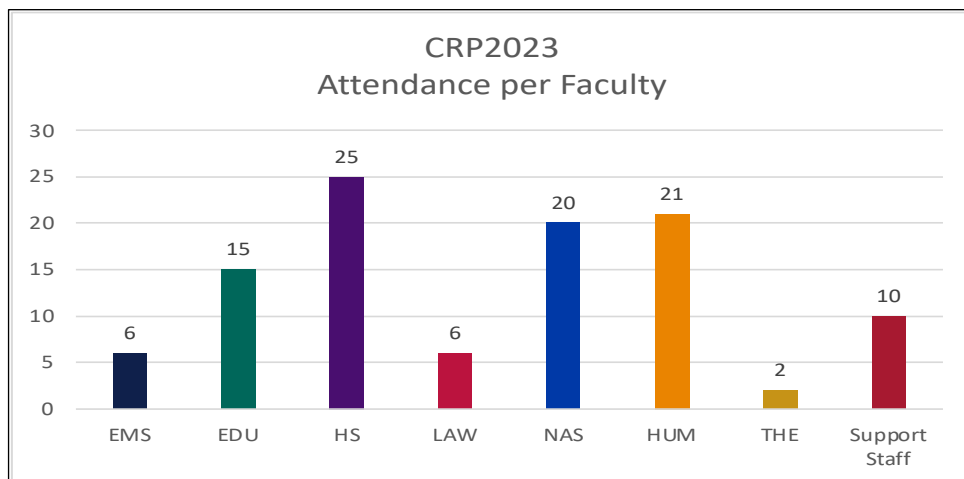
Following consultations regarding faculty-specific needs pertaining to the format and provisioning of study guides, a proposal in this regard was submitted to the Academic Committee of Senate in 2023. The committee approved minimum requirements pertaining to the content and format of study guides. A further decision was approved that as of 2025 all study material will be delivered in an electronic format via the LMS. Printing of materials will be ad hoc. Given that full implementation of this decision is only in 2025, 2024 will be used as a transition year with the necessary academic development initiatives and other support measures to be put in place.

Learning design capacity development remains a priority within the institution, especially in the light of talent development and retainment of staff. During 2023, the capacity development program went through an accreditation process to be registered as an official UFS short learning program. This approval was granted by the Academic Committee of the Senate in June 2023. EDTP Seta funding for the delivery of one cohort (40 participants) was secured at the end of 2023. This intake and program delivery will take place in the first semester of 2024.

One of the projects that was absorbed within CTL as part of the BLISS amalgamation projects, is the design and development of engineering modules in an advanced diploma for TVET colleges (as funded by the DHET). Content development has been outsourced by the UFS to SAIDE, with digitalisation support provided by the UFS learning design teams. All modules (7) in this diploma were completed and quality assured in 2023. As part of the project close-out, a launch event was hosted in October 2023. The importance of the event was emphasised by the attendance of the Deputy Minister of Higher Education.

#### 4.1.3. Curriculum design

The Curriculum Renewal Programme (CRP) aims to create an environment for academic staff to redesign their modules by considering the purpose, their students, and the UFS context through good curriculum design. Two CRP cohorts were presented during 2023. The programmes were done face-to-face over five full days during the June and November examinations respectively.



**Figure 66: CRP attendees per faculty (2023)**

**Figure 66** shows the CRP attendance numbers per faculty. In total 105 people attended the CRP, whilst 90 of those received certificates of completion. The Faculty of Health Sciences had the largest number of attendees with 25 of their lecturers attending the CRP in 2023.

In addition to attendance numbers outlined above, an additional condensed programme of the CRP was presented to a cohort of academic staff (8) in the Faculty of Education. This was done based on a special request by the Faculty of Education and presented in July 2023.

Overall, feedback pertaining to the CRP is positive. After completion, participants experienced that they have learned something that they can apply, but also have developed tangible outputs that they can use in their learning and teaching. The biggest challenge for attendees remains workload of the programme and creating space and time for academics to uninterruptedly work on quality curriculum design and development.

Presenting and facilitating the CRP is quite time and human resource intensive. In ensuring that the necessary capacity is available to facilitate these workshops, additional presenters were trained and capacitated in 2023.

During 2023, the Curriculum Renewal Program went through the accreditation process to be registered as an official UFS short learning program. This approval was granted by the Academic Committee of the Senate in 2023. EDTP Seta funding for the delivery of one cohort (40 participants) was secured at the end of 2023. This intake and programme delivery took place in the first semester of 2024.

As part of curriculum renewal and innovation, collaboration between the International Office, relevant faculties (Economic and Management Sciences and the Humanities) and CTL continued in 2024 pertaining to the iKudu project, as well as the development of an institutional strategy for the implementation of COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) within the UFS.

During 2023, curriculum designers focused on finalising the development of the Grade R and ECCE diplomas (Faculty of Education). During the first semester of 2023, 8 modules in the ECCE programme and 7 modules in the Grade R programme were finalised and quality assured, with an additional 7 modules in the ECCE programme and 7 modules in the Grade R programme during the second semester.

#### 4.1.4. Online assessment

An online assessment team within BLISS is responsible to support and consult with academic staff in the design and development of innovative online assessments. Since 2015, the UFS has been using Questionmark for high-stakes assessments, as well as Blackboard for various forms of continuous and formative assessments.

In terms of Questionmark, a total of 147 modules made use of the assessment platform with 1026 assessments delivered in 2023. **Table 56** provides a breakdown of the use of Questionmark in different faculties during 2023.

**Table 56: Use of Questionmark per faculty (2023)**

<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Modules</b>	<b>Assessments</b>
Humanities	33	238
NAS	25	374
Education	48	102
EMS	16	138
Theology	0	0
Law	4	13
Health Sciences	15	155
Support Services	6	6
<b>Total =</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>1026</b>

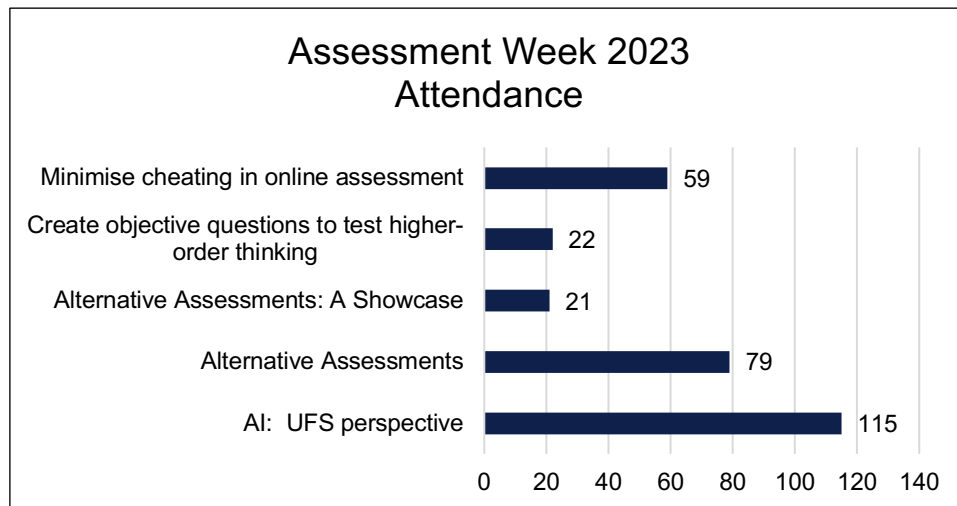
Due to the expiration of the Questionmark contract at the end of 2024, an online assessment system review was approved in 2022. In the past few years, the usability of Questionmark has been identified as a possible constraining factor in further roll-out, given that academic staff is heavily reliant on the team for set-up and deployment of assessment. At the same time, educational needs pertaining to online assessment have expanded, given their experiences during COVID-19 and alternative assessment methods. In 2022, a faculty needs analysis was conducted to understand how online assessments are being used within the institution, as well as to understand some of the challenges that academics face in implementing online assessment practices. The needs identified in 2022, formed the basis of evaluation criteria that was used in a formal tender process to review various online assessment platforms. During 2023, the online assessment system review was completed, and the following recommendations were proposed:

1. Approval for Cirrus with Sumadi Elementum to be procured as the online assessment system at UFS for a three-year period. This recommendation is based on the following criteria: Maturity of the system (as per functionality and technical analysis); large-scale higher education implementation internationally and nationally (University of Pretoria/Northwest University); change management required; as well as support available and SLAs.
2. With the approval of Cirrus and Sumadi Elementum, a clause was included detailing the support workflow path will be included with the successful letter or contract. The clause indicates the UFS's request to work directly with the system developers and owners (Cirrus/Sumadi Elementum) for user and technical support instead of working through the South African distributor (OneConnect). The distributor will be engaged with for non-system-related communication or issues, such as contract discussions and roadmaps, etc. This fosters a direct link to the system developers to ensure that support is provided timeously.
3. An extension of the Questionmark contract for a maximum of a one-year period to allow for migration of question banks and data.

The proposed recommendations were approved at the different UFS committees (ETLS, CITC and Rectorate), the last approval or acknowledgement being from the UFS Tender Committee, which served in November 2023.

Due to concerns about AI and more specifically, ChatGPT in higher education an Assessment week was organised in the beginning of March 2023. The aim of the week was to provide information and start discussions on AI and assessment at the UFS. The five-day programme

included three online sessions and two face-to-face workshops presented by CTL staff and UFS lecturers. Staff were also invited to join a webinar hosted by The Open University, UK on AI and assessment during the Assessment week. In total, 296 people attended the five different sessions hosted by CTL, attendance numbers per session can be seen in **Figure 67**.



**Figure 67: Assessment week 2023 attendance**

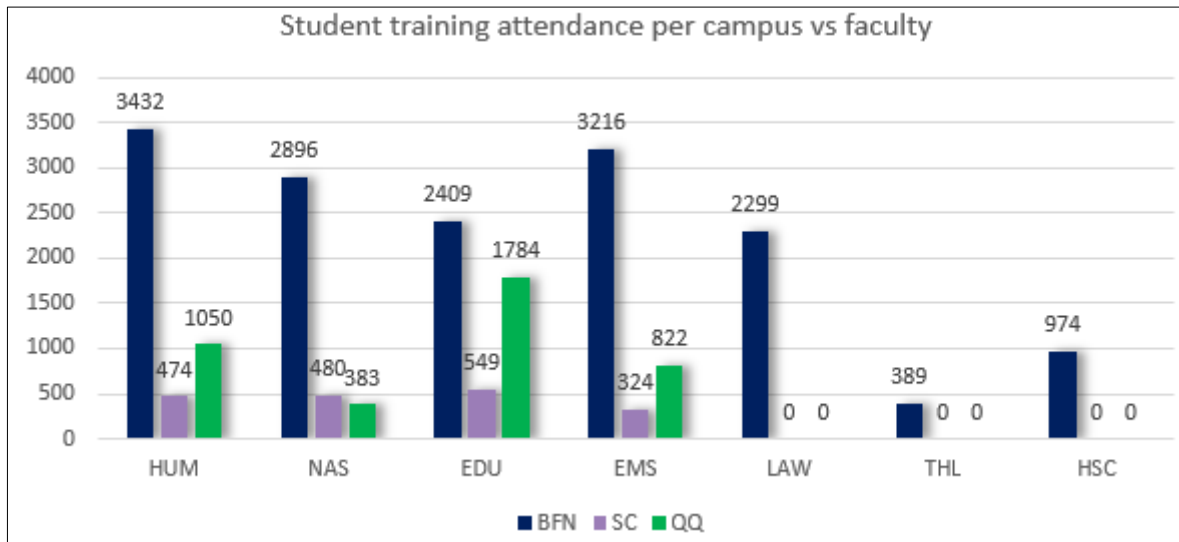
An internal CTL reading- and discussion group has been established in 2023. The focus of this group has been primarily on AI language tools and their impact on teaching and learning. Seven (7) monthly sessions were hosted, including a session facilitated by Dr Carl S Moore of the US.

#### 4.1.5. Student technology training and support

To provide more intentional and focused Blackboard orientation and training to especially first-year students, various training strategies and approaches were deployed in 2023. These included:

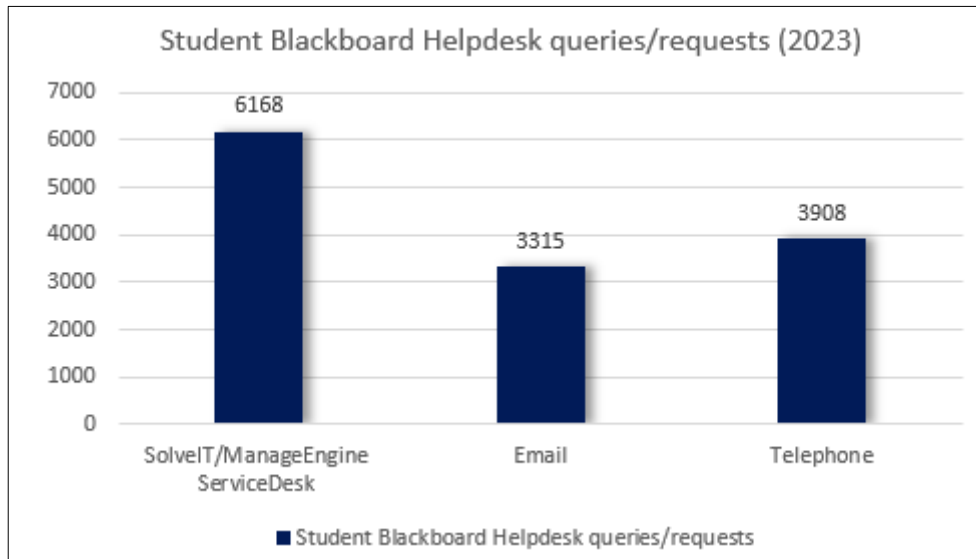
- Institutional Blackboard training and orientation sessions in both a face-to-face and online format.
- Faculty-based student training sessions for either a specific faculty cohort or as part of module orientation (per request from lecturers).
- Integration of student training as part of high-impact practices such as the University First Year Support Services (UFSS).

In addition to the training and support outlined above, various online support materials and resources are available to all students. A total of 21 572 students were trained across all academic levels and campuses. Training was provided through 362 face-to-face sessions and 96 online training sessions. **Figure 68** provides an overview of the number of students trained per faculty and campus.



**Figure 68: Number of students trained per faculty and campus**

Throughout the year, student support in the use of Blackboard and other UFS-approved learning technologies is provided through the student helpdesk. A total of 13 391 student queries were resolved, this includes student queries received through the online ticketing system, email, and telephone (see **Figure 69**). Additionally, with the successful migration and implementation of a new ticketing system, ManageEngine ServiceDesk, during the second semester 1090 student queries were resolved on first contact demonstrating the helpdesk's dedication and proficiency in providing timely assistance.



**Figure 69: Number of student helpdesk requests in 2023**

The Student Success Portal at the UFS plays a vital role in fostering student success by providing a comprehensive platform for academic student support and engagement. The portal provides students with all the information they need to improve their academic and employability skills, including workshops and training to achieve these. During 2023, 8130 students made use of resources and materials on the portal.

#### 4.1.6. Multimedia content development and production

During 2023 the multimedia content development and production team were reorganised into a centralised service provide multimedia and graphic design support structure. The team is positioned on the South Campus, but provides services and support across all three campuses of the UFS. During 2023, a total of 679 multimedia artifacts and 8954 graphic design artifacts (including photographs) were produced.

In addition to the existing studio infrastructure on the South Campus, additional funding (as part of the DHET infrastructure grant) were secure during 2022/2023 to allow the set-up and implementation of a mobile multimedia studio to allow for the delivery of services across all campuses. Equipment for these studios were procured and implemented in 2023.

#### 4.1.7. Academic staff and leadership development

Various academic leadership development initiatives were presented throughout 2023. This includes workshops and webinars on a range of topics pertaining to course design, classroom/online teaching, assessment, and student engagement. A total of 773 people attended the institutional training during 2023, with 526 attendees in semester 1, and 247 attendees in semester 2.

In addition to the general staff development initiatives listed above, two face-to-face sessions were presented as part of the New Academic Staff Orientation (NASO) program in 2023. The aim of the NASO programme is to welcome new academic staff members; orientate new staff to policies, practices, and procedures; assist in creating communities/networks; understand the UFS culture; retain staff; and to contribute to quality learning and teaching at the UFS. A total of 54 new staff members attended these orientation sessions (an increase of 25 from 2022 to 2023). Furthermore, new academic staff were welcomed monthly with a presentation at the Human Resources onboarding sessions to explain how CTL can assist academic staff at the UFS.

To support academic staff with the development of teaching portfolios (as per the UFS academic performance framework), four teaching portfolio workshops were presented from April – July 2023. A total of 103 staff members attended these workshops.

#### 4.1.8. Academic leadership development

The UFS Academic Leadership Programme (ALP) is a one-year programme that aims to develop and capacitate academic leaders at the UFS and is contextualised not only within the international and South African higher education environment but is aligned to UFS strategic priorities. The program addresses needs expressed by faculties and UFS academic leaders. Participants are nominated by the deans of the different faculties across campuses.

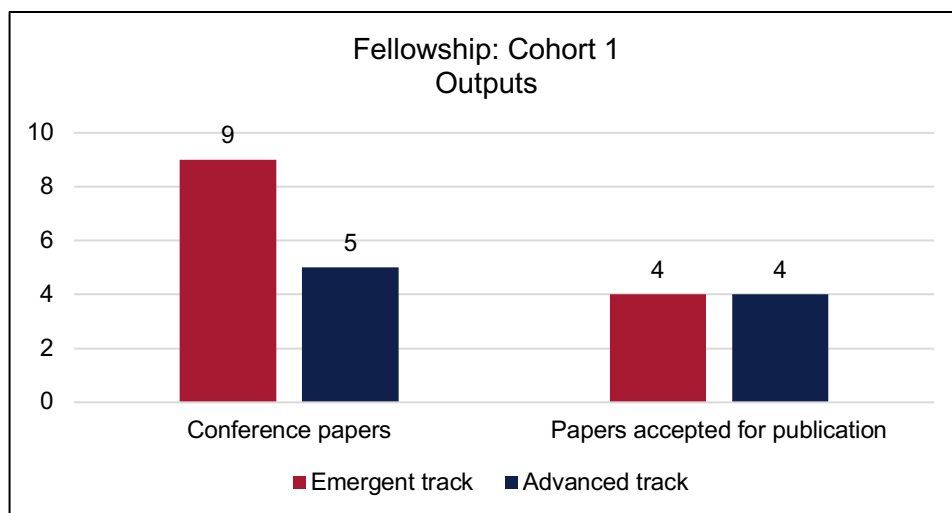
The programme was re-introduced in 2021 after a break in activities due to COVID-19 and the subsequent period of remote working. The second cohort was welcomed during July 2022 to and concluded in June 2023 (23 participants). The third cohort commenced in July 2023 and will end in June 2024 (23 participants). The programme consists of a weekend retreat, as well as continuous workshops throughout the year.

#### 4.1.9. UFS Learning and Teaching Fellowship

The UFS Learning and Teaching Fellowship aims to support and develop scholars in the field of learning and teaching. The fellowship is a two-year programme with two tracks, namely emerging and advanced scholars.

The first cohort of 14 fellows ended their programme in August 2023. The second cohort of 15 fellows was introduced in September 2022, whilst the third cohort of 14 fellows was introduced in September 2023. Cohort 2 will conclude in 2024 and cohort 3 in 2025. The two programmes thus overlap and will run concurrently.

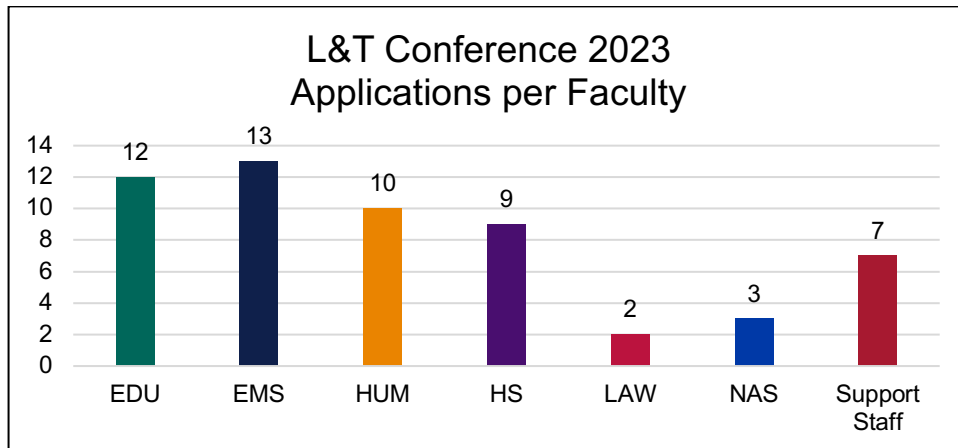
As part of the fellowship, attendees are exposed to various development opportunities in the form of workshops and writing retreats and they are expected to deliver certain outputs. Fellows in the emergent track are expected to submit and present a Scholarship of Teaching and learning (SoTL) paper at a local conference, while fellows in the advanced track are expected to publish at least one SoTL article in an accredited journal. Fellows receive monetary support for individual needs, e.g., language editing, printing, etc. Furthermore, the outputs are incentivised once a fellow publishes an article or presents at a conference. **Figure 70** shows the outputs of cohort 1. In total 14 conference papers were delivered and 8 articles were accepted for publication.



**Figure 70: Fellowship Cohort 1 outputs**

#### 4.1.10. UFS Annual Learning and Teaching Conference

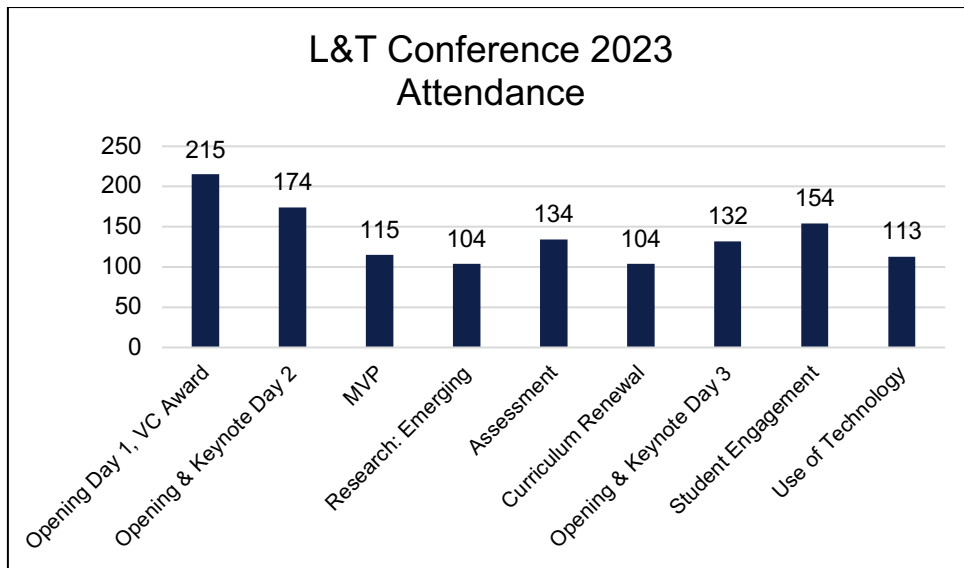
The UFS Annual Learning and Teaching Conference was held in September 2023 with the theme: "Quality blended learning and teaching: enhancing graduate attributes through assessment." A total number of 56 abstracts were received for inclusion in the conference programme. **Figure 71** shows the number of abstracts received per faculty, including 7 entries from support staff members.



**Figure 71: Learning and Teaching Conference abstract submissions per faculty**

Abstracts were received from staff across all three campuses of the UFS, including 49 abstracts from the Bloemfontein campus, 5 abstracts from Qwaqwa campus and 2 abstracts from the South Campus. Of the 56 abstracts, 54 were accepted through a blind review process and presented at the conference.

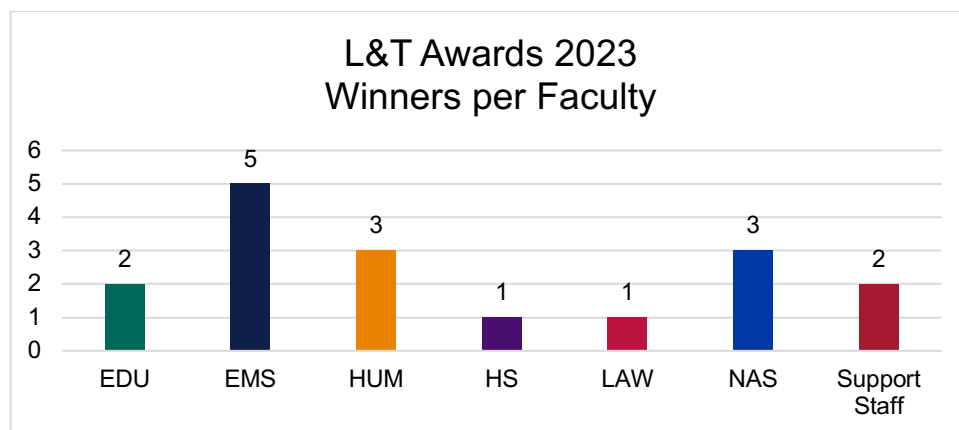
There were 162 pre-conference workshop attendees, while a total of 1245 people attended the different online conference sessions (including presenters and CTL staff who acted as moderators). **Figure 72** shows the attendance of different conference the sessions over three days.



**Figure 72: Learning and Teaching Conference Attendance 2023**

#### 4.1.11. Annual UFS Learning and Teaching Awards

The UFS Learning and Teaching awards ceremony was held in October 2023 as a formal dinner in the Centenary Hall on the Bloemfontein campus. During the proceedings of the evening, 17 learning and teaching awards, as well as 18 Khothatsa awards were conferred. Award winners represented 6 faculties as per **Figure 73**.



**Figure 73: Learning and Teaching Award winners per faculty**

**Table 57** provides a full list of different learning and teaching award categories and winners within each of these categories for 2023.

**Table 57: Learning and Teaching award categories and winners (2023)**

<b>Vice-Chancellor's Award</b>		
First place	Prof Gerhard Bosman	NAS
Second place	Dr Lizemari Hugo-Van Dyk	HS
<b>Most Valued professional</b>		
First place	Dr Rosaline Sebolao	HUM (TLM)
Second place	Dr Annemie Grobler	EDU (TLM)
<b>Research: Emerging</b>		
First place	Mahlaga Molepo	Support (Library)
Second place	Prof Alta Koekemoer Prof Cobus Rossouw Elmarie Goodchild Kobus Swanepoel (team entry)	EMS
<b>Innovation Categories</b>		
<b>Innovating my curriculum through assessment</b>		
First place	Rentia Engelbrecht	HUM
Second place	Dr Frelét de Villiers Willem Ellis (team entry)	HUM
<b>Innovating my curriculum through the use of technology and/or online tools</b>		
First place	Bennie Botha Prof Champion Nyoni (team entry)	HS
Second place	Grey Stopforth	LAW
<b>Innovating my curriculum through a redesign or renewal of my module</b>		
First place	Lindi Heyns	NAS
Shared	Dr Elizabeth Maritz	NAS
<b>Innovating my curriculum through student engagement and/or motivation</b>		
First place	Jana Lamprecht Charlotte Malan (team entry)	EMS
Second place	Prof Alta Koekemoer Prof Cobus Rossouw Elmarie Goodchild Kobus Swanepoel Celesté Britz (team entry)	EMS
<b>Departmental Award</b>		
Bloemfontein campus	Department of Business Management	EMS
<b>Best Conference Paper</b>		
Qwaqwa campus	Dr Henry Nichols Dr Eleanor Bernard (team entry)	EDU Support (CTL)
Bloemfontein campus	Jana Lamprecht Charlotte Malan (team entry)	EMS

The CTL initiated the Khothatsa project in 2019 to give recognition to the importance of the pedagogical relationship between staff and students. Khothatsa means "to inspire" in Sesotho. The project started with a call to students to write about how their lecturers have

inspired them. After receiving students' submissions lecturers are asked to reply. As part of the UFS Learning and Teaching Awards, recognition is given to both students and staff that take part in this project. A list of students and staff who received recognition in 2023 is provided in **Table 58**.

**Table 58: Khothatsa project staff and students**

<b>Lecturer, Faculty and Campus</b>	<b>Nominated by student</b>
Prof Jannie Pretorius Faculty of Education, Bloemfontein	Asavela Gxilishe
Thabiso Motsoeneng Faculty of Education, Qwaqwa	Thabiso Hlahla
Prof Renate Rebello Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Bloemfontein	Andani Mutavhatsindi
Mothepane Mbongo Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Qwaqwa	Reneilwe Mudau
Khanya Motshabi Faculty of Law, Bloemfontein	Yizozodwa Dlamini
Rev Jacob Mokhutso Faculty of Theology and Religion, Bloemfontein	Thembinkosi Masango
Dr Wessel Wessels Faculty of Theology and Religion, Bloemfontein	Judidy Ngwenya
Refiloe Tsetsana CTL, Qwaqwa	Ahlumile Nqaba
Awethu Badlezana CTL, Qwaqwa	Mathapelo Tshabalala

#### 4.1.12 Reflection on how AI can improve the quality of work in this focus area

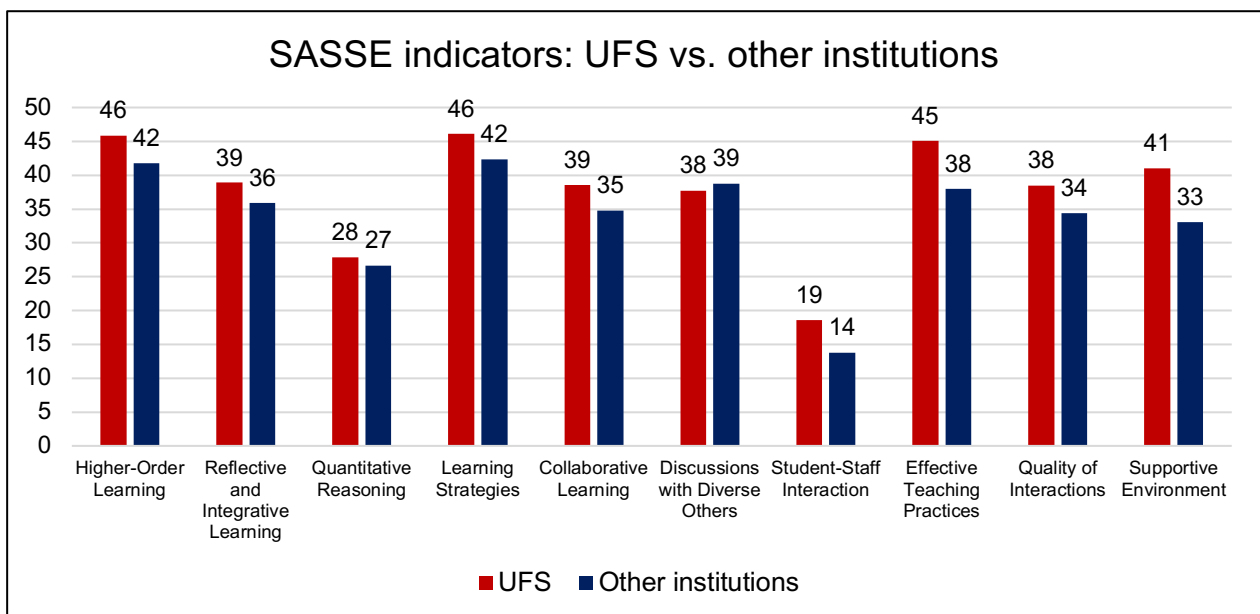
In addition to the role that AI can play in automation and efficiency of administrative processes, the role that this technology can play in learning and teaching design is becoming more evident. AI tools are more and more integrated into various learning and teaching platforms and software. These AI tools can contribute to elements of course design such as creating course structures, creating of rubrics, multiple choice assessments and the design of assessments and assignments. Although the technology can assist with the original design of these elements, reflecting on quality, contextualisation and integration of these elements will be still require human engagement. Going forward, the team will focus on designing interventions and support for academic staff in the use of these AI tools in the design of their learning and teaching.

The design of multimedia and graphic artifacts have also been made more accessible with various AI technologies and platforms. Currently teams of multimedia and graphic designers are investigating how these artifacts can be used within the work in the team.

## 4.2. Evidence-Based Change

### 4.2.1. Student engagement

The national South African Surveys of Student Engagement (SASSE) administration took place between September and November 2023, with seven participating institutions. The UFS had just over 4,300 undergraduate participants. **Figure 74** shows the ten SASSE indicators. In comparison with the other six participating institutions, the UFS students show higher average scores in most indicators, with noticeable differences in seeing the UFS as a supportive environment, the quality of teaching they experienced in 2023, and their engagements with staff. These findings mirror those of 2022, where the UFS also scored higher on all indicators, particularly these three, in comparison with six other institutions. Although the UFS shows higher averages than other institution for all indicators, when comparing 2023 data with 2022 data, there was a decline in the discussions with diverse others (from 41 to 38 out of 60) while the rest of the indicators remained relatively stable. Considering the UFS profile (as discussed in Section 1) we need to be cognisant of the implications of a student body that is becoming less diverse.



**Figure 74: UFS 2023 SASSE results compared to other participating institutions' results**

In 2023, the SASSE administered at UFS included a qualitative question, asking students: *What would enable you to continue to postgraduate studies?* Responses include having funding, doing well in their current degree, and the passion they have for their field. A few of the UFS students' responses to this question are shared below:

*"If I get a bursary I will do my postgraduate studies."*

*“I want to obtain a master’s degree because I want to be part of the research team within my career field and come up with articles that will change lives and perspectives of others.”*

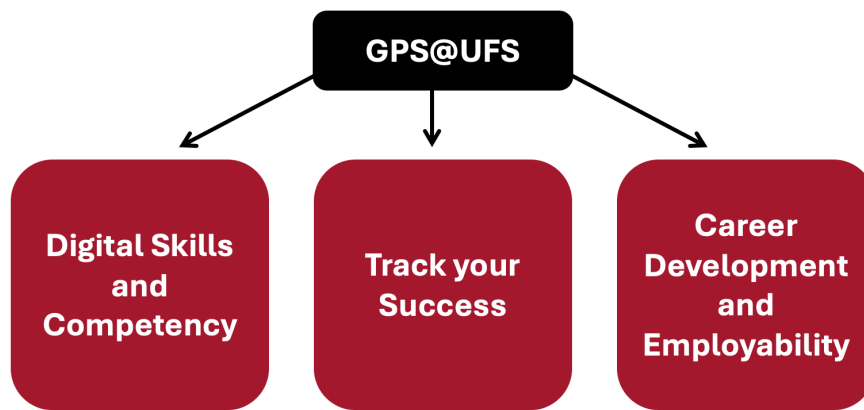
*“To increase employment chances because there are limited opportunities in my field with only a degree.”*

#### 4.2.2. Data analytics

The Evidence-Based Change (EBC) focus area in CTL provides data analytic support to several initiatives, including text analytics to support academic advising, the National Benchmark Test (NBT) algorithm, the Siyaphumelela project, and the GPS@UFS project.

The UFS has been part of the Siyaphumelela network (funded by the Kresge Foundation and which seeks to broaden evidence-based student success strategies across South Africa) for almost 10 years. Data analytics form an integral part of the work we do as part of the Siyaphumelela network. In 2023, EBC hosted a regional network session on evidence-based student success which included 5 universities and TVET colleges from the Free State, North West, and Northern Cape provinces. Other data analytic work EBC is involved in as part of Siyaphumelela includes participation and input in the development of a Business Intelligence (BI) Strategy (led by ICT services), using data analytics to identify high-impact modules (modules with high enrolments and high failure rates).

In 2022, the data analytics work previously done as part of the No Student Left Behind initiative led to the conceptualisation of the Track Your Success project that forms part of the larger GPS@UFS project (see **Figure 75**) which aims to equip students with essential digital skills, academic support, and career readiness tools for success in their studies, as well as their transition to employment. GPS@UFS consists of three large-scale projects involving several CTL focus areas, as well as other UFS departments (such as Career Services). Funding support for GPS@UFS was received from the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation. EBC provides data analytic support in all three projects and is responsible for overall monitoring and evaluation of the project.



**Figure 75: Overview of the GPS@UFS project**

Project 1 of GPS@UFS, Digital Skills and Competency is reported on in **section 4.5.4**. Project 2, Track your Success, is a high-tech-high-touch approach where data analytics are used to inform a contact centre, where trained peer advisors contact students directly to identify and respond to students' support needs. The peer advisors capture data, which in turn is analysed to inform analytics and to refine the process. In 2023, 7498 students were identified as 'at-risk' and were subsequently contacted and referred. These students were able to pass more than 70% of their modules.

Project 3 of GPS@USF, Career Development and Employability, which aims to integrate career development efforts at the UFS and to be transformative and intentional about advancing employability of UFS graduates. This project is a collaboration between Career Services, CTL, and the UFS Alumni Office. From 2022 to date, 1308 students completed the career development programme. Additionally, 1370 students completed at least 2 work-readiness tutorials, and we supported the placement of 308 students in meaningful employment (a contract of at least 12 months and 40 hours per week).

#### 4.2.3 Reflection on how AI can improve quality of work in this focus area

AI plays an integral role in the work EBC does and the affordances it provides are particularly helpful in the data analytics work that we do. AI algorithms excel at analysing large datasets, uncovering complex patterns and correlations that might be difficult or time-consuming for humans to identify. This can help us to pinpoint critical factors we need to focus on and enables us to design and implement more targeted interventions. It also helps us to save time in evaluating the impact of our interventions. Additionally, AI can streamline and automate administrative processes, such as data collection, report generation and even some elements of student communication.

### 4.3. Advising, Access and Success

In an era where digital platforms have become integral to educational engagement and student success, our student access with success practices have been intentional in the adoption of technologies to facilitate support for success. Leveraging the learnings from the COVID-19 pandemic equitable opportunities for success for students have been enabled. As a focus area, we firmly believe that for institutions of higher learning to optimise student access, support and success, the hybrid and collaborative support of a learning and teaching center ensures efficient, effective, and quality services.

#### 4.3.1 Academic Advising

Academic advising has become a prominent campus intervention where students' personal and academic aspirations are aligned with the identification of desired career pathways. Existing as a '*golden thread*' that supports student success, academic advising at the UFS strives to facilitate for students a meaningful academic experience that will translate into success beyond graduation. Carried out primarily by faculty (i.e. Curriculum Advisors) and Central Academic Advising (i.e. Central Advisors), academic advising has multiple means of representation to ensure all students are reached and not left behind. **Table 59** demonstrates the key activities that formed part of academic advising initiatives during the 2023 academic year as well as the reach of each.

**Table 59: Key activities that informed academic advising in 2023**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Reach (no. of students)</b>
Student Appointments (individual with advisors and success coaches via telephone calls)	Central Advisors: 593 Success coaches: 7858
GPS ChatBot: WhatsApp/Telegram	Access programme: 1870 First Years: 8626 Seniors: 2066
Online advising reach (Facebook, Instagram, Kovsie Advice)	Facebook: 1534 Instagram: 2696 Kovsie Advice: 225
Group advising (incl. workshops)	Advising Learning Community: 531 Workshops: 1784
Peer Advisors training and webinars (incl. tutors, RC's, TA's, mentors and success coaches)	Training: 1104 Webinars: 1062
<b>Total</b>	<b>29 949</b>

The empirical evidence stemming from the advising practices facilitated by the Central Advising office in collaboration with the varied spectrum of student support services and faculties at the UFS it is clear that academic advising has moved from being an emergent practice to a resilient high-impact practice. In a true effort to provide quality student support

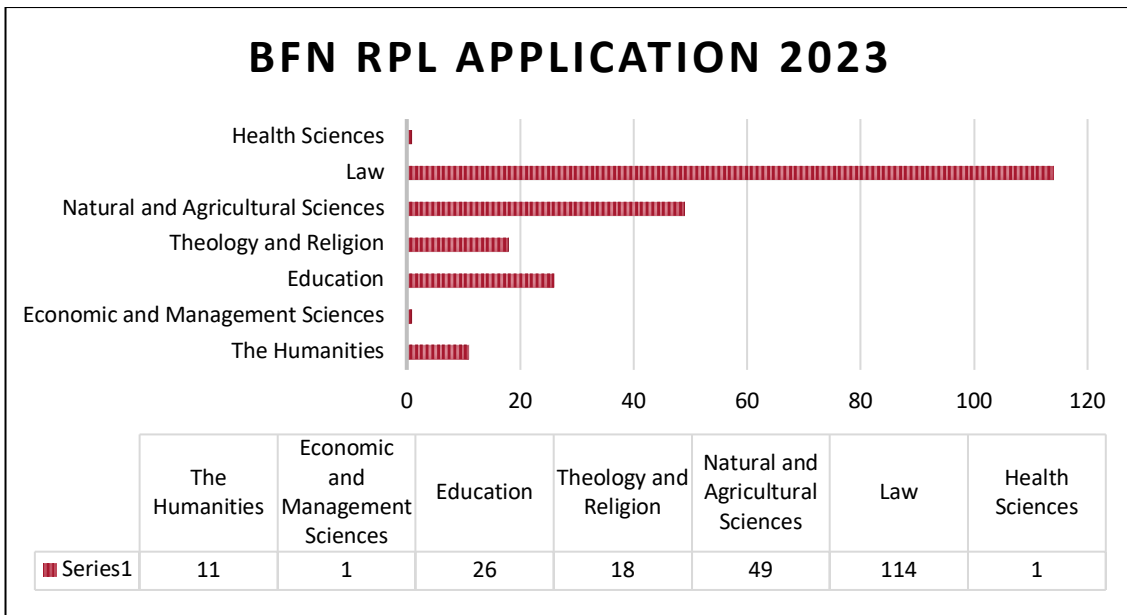
services and contribute to enhancing student access with success, it continues to be evident that academic advising at the UFS has been elevated as a critical star in the constellation of student support for the benefit of all students.

The University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG) collaborative grant, led by the Central Advising Office has contributed to several milestones in advancing the practice in South Africa during 2023:

- 128 Professional Academic Advisors trained to date through the Academic Advising Professional Development Short Learning Programme.
- 15 of the 26 university institutions in South Africa were trained and participated in the sittings. These institutions include UCT, UFS, WSU, UKZN, UJ, NMU, UWC, UV, VUT, DUT, CUT, UP, Sol Plaatje University, NWU, and CPUT.
- Eletsa, the South African association for academic advisors' membership has 116 members, with 110 participants in the 2023 National Academic Advising Seminar.

#### 4.3.2. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

As a process of identification, assessment and acknowledgement of an individuals' prior knowledge, skills, competencies and work experience, RPL at the UFS is a flexible access pathway that promotes opportunities of equitable access with success. Having received 209 applications for postgraduate access across seven faculties on the Bloemfontein campus during the 2023 academic year,— the majority (114) were from the faculty of Law and the faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (49). (**Figure 76**). The Qwaqwa campus received 8 applications across three faculties (Education, Economic and Management Sciences and Humanities) for undergraduate access. A total of 158 applications across both campuses were recommended for RPL after the initial review.



**Figure 76: Breakdown of RPL applications processed on the Bloemfontein campus in 2023**

#### 4.3.2 Reflection on how AI can improve the quality of work in this focus area

In improving the facilitation of advising, access with success in an era of AI, leveraging efforts in being efficient, personalised, and student-centered requires multidimensional efforts. For AAS as a focus area, enhancing the overall quality of our support offering via with AI, student support in the post-pandemic era have shown significance and impact in being data-driven, personalised, accessible and scalable in offering equitable opportunities to succeed.

Leveraging on being high tech and high touch, AI systems in academic advising, such as Kovsie2Bot, chatbot, have enabled advisors learn, collaborate and adapt based on feedback and outcomes, allowing for iterative improvements in advising practices over time while meeting student needs. It is a worthwhile consideration for the future of student support to prioritise the ethical considerations of AI. Student support practitioners should ensure that AI algorithms and systems are fair and unbiased, avoiding reinforcing existing disparities or stereotypes in their facilitation of access for success initiatives.

#### 4.4. Student Learning and Employability

The Student Learning and Employability focus area coordinates tutorials and senior student support initiatives. The following sections provide feedback on the Academic Student Tutorial and Excellence Programme (A\_STEP), #SecureTheGrad, LinkedIn Learning for students and Diamond League.

#### 4.4.1 A\_STEP

With 469 trained tutors, tutorial attendance continues to grow steadily. In 2023, student attendance frequency reached 86,433. There is a difference of over 44% in tutorial attendance between the first and second semesters, with higher attendance recorded in the first semester.

The program takes pride in its diversified approach to tutorials. A\_STEP continues to implement blended tutorials, primarily offering face-to-face group sessions supplemented by online platforms. The program has responded to various needs, including offering test and exam bootcamps, which significantly impacted modules in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. Additionally, A\_STEP has partnered with the GPS @UFS on the "Track Your Success" project, where Success Coaches focus on individual student needs and refer them to one-on-one tutorials.

Recently, A\_STEP reactivated its partnership with residences to maximise student support on the Bloemfontein campus.

In 2023, the Qwaqwa campus hosted a lecturer onboarding workshop focusing on effective tutorial design. Continued partnerships between focus areas within CTL, and trusted stakeholders, such as faculties, the Academy for Multilingualism and CUADS help the programme to facilitate efficient student support.

#### 4.4.2 Translanguaging Tutorial Project

The translanguaging tutorial project has been running for 3 years, with more modules becoming part of the project in 2023. A total of 36 modules across 5 faculties signed up to be part of the project. In 2023, tutors were trained in the principles of translanguaging, positioning them to lead and conduct tutorials that enable the use of multiple languages as a vehicle to better understand academic content.

Three different approaches were employed to incorporate multilingualism in the tutorials:

1. Tutors explained concepts to students in various languages based on their individual needs. This approach allowed for personalized language support and facilitated better comprehension.
2. Students were given the opportunity to explain and break down concepts to one another using a language they were comfortable with and understood well. This peer-to-peer approach promoted collaborative learning and a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

- Tutor groups were divided according to language proficiency, allowing students to work in language-specific groups. This approach catered to the diverse language backgrounds of the students and created a supportive learning environment.

In all these approaches, tutors ensured that English, as the language of instruction (target language), was consistently used to ensure that the entire group comprehended the concepts discussed. This practice ensured inclusivity and promoted participation in the tutorial discussions.

#### 4.4.3 #SecureTheGrad

#SecureTheGrad since its inception in 2022, has gained much momentum in the student community. The purpose of the initiative has been to support senior students by promoting student engagement, learning, and progress. It aims to create well-rounded students who are responsible and will, in turn, become productive citizens when they exit university. Within the initiative, webinars are hosted to provide senior UFS students with an opportunity to network within the campus community and with external stakeholders to foster a sense of belonging. Allowing students to access the support services (navigating campus, access to academic support, career development, wellness, and personal development) available at the university for them to succeed holistically.

The webinars and seminars hosted aim to provide senior UFS students with an opportunity to network within the campus community as well as with key partners. In addition, the initiative aims to enable students to plan their professional development, establish realistic expectations aligned with the university, and foster a sense of belonging that enhances an experience towards graduation and transitioning into the world of work.

Table shows the registration and attendance numbers for the various topics under each theme in 2023.

**Table 60: #SecureTheGrad attendance in 2023**

2023 Webinar attendance and registration summary by themes				
Theme	Topics	Date	Attendance	Registrations
Orientation: Registration and Advising	Get Ready for registration Part 1	01-Feb	242	1024
	Get Ready for registration Part 2	15-Feb	102	227
Orientation: Registration and Funding	Funding and Accommodation Webinar	03-Feb	188	549
Academic Support	Academic Support	09-Mar	132	203

2023 Webinar attendance and registration summary by themes				
Theme	Topics	Date	Attendance	Registrations
Career and Wellness	Choosing a career path	09-May	183	236
	Careers Pop-up (Qwaqwa)	19-May	73	42
Orientation: Registration and Advising	Ultimate Academic Success	20-Jul	80	199
Academic Support	Public speaking seminar in collaboration with FALAS	28-Jul	70	78
Career and Wellness	UFS Alumni women & careers	10-Aug	112	121
Orientation: Funding	Exploring Funding opportunities	07-Sep	220	699
Academic Support	Against all odds	12-Oct	137	179
	<b>Total</b>		<b>1182</b>	<b>3557</b>

#### 4.4.4 LinkedIn Learning for students

Since 2021, the UFS has provided LinkedIn Learning for free to all registered students. LinkedIn Learning is an online course provider platform that serves to enhance the culture of e-learning among students. The platform provides students with short courses they can complete and videos that will assist them to grow and develop in areas outside their degree. Topics covered on LinkedIn Learning include financial literacy, social media, and even music theory. It offers a plethora of courses students can search and choose from.

Furthermore, students can enjoy individualised courses as the platform provides interactive learning experiences that cater to different learning needs and levels to enhance the culture of learning. In the second semester there were about 50% activated seats (15 727). In September, we reached a total of 22 084 activated seats.

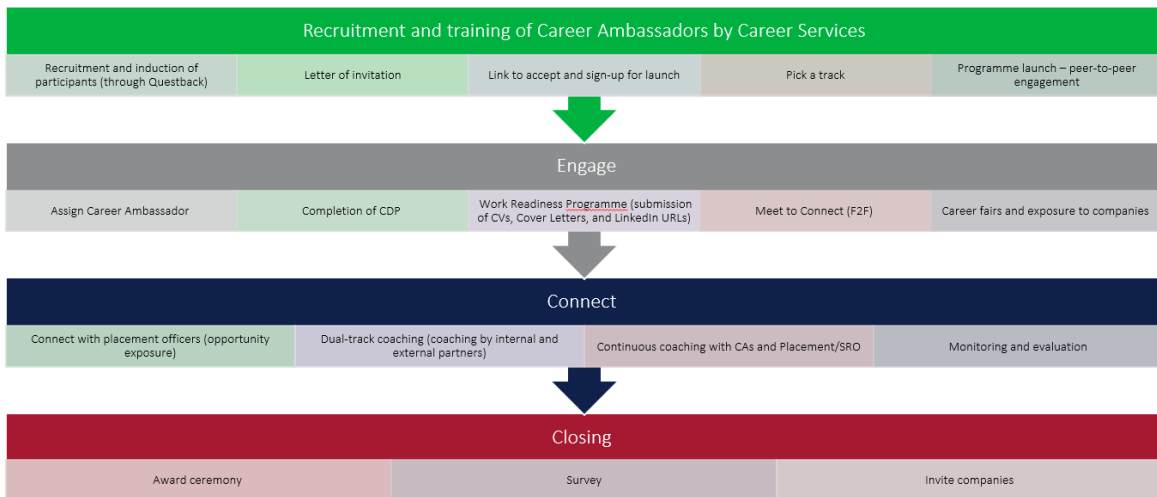
#### 4.4.5 Diamond League

The programme is aimed to equip emerging and current UFS alumni with the essential skills required to excel in the working world. This is done through personalised peer mentorship and career development programme (CDP) with self-paced work-readiness tutorials, virtual career expos, and dual-track coaching. The Diamond League programme was launched in 2020 for graduate recruiters to have access to 250 top-achieving students who have been prepared for the world of work through the programme.

The programme is offered to senior A\_STEP tutors in the final year of studying or those doing their postgraduate studies. This is for their professional development. In 2023, seven career

ambassadors (student assistants) were appointed to assist with peer-to-peer mentoring and reviewing the activities of the Diamonds. **Figure 77** illustrates the four steps to employability that guide the activities of the programme.

## Four STEPS TO EMPLOYABILITY



**Figure 77: Diamond league programme**

The students who are referred to as Diamonds in the programme were required to complete Career Development activities and also attend the Career Development Programme Reflection and Networking Session that took place in April 2023. The purpose of the session was to provide Diamonds with networking skills through facilitation and peer-to-peer engagement by the guest speaker and Career Ambassadors.

### 4.4.6 Reflection on how AI can improve the quality of work in this focus area

A\_STEP has initiated the integration of AI to streamline and enhance processes. AI is thoughtfully employed to harness its ethical benefits. Specifically, AI is utilised for attendance collection, capturing, and reporting, alongside optimising the operations of the tutorial programme. The following are practical ideas of how AI can assist in tutorial work moving forward:

- **Analysis of Qualitative Data:** Utilise AI for the analysis of qualitative data, including texts and student comments. Apply sentiment analysis to understand emotional polarity in tutorials, as well as training and tutorial evaluations.
- **Development of an AI Assistant Tutor:** Provide support for shy students to ask questions without feeling anxious and enhance inclusivity in learning.

- **Forecasting Attendance and Tutorial Sessions:** Utilise AI and machine learning to forecast attendance (both student and session frequency) and tutorial sessions. Predict attendance for upcoming weeks or months to aid in planning and resource allocation.

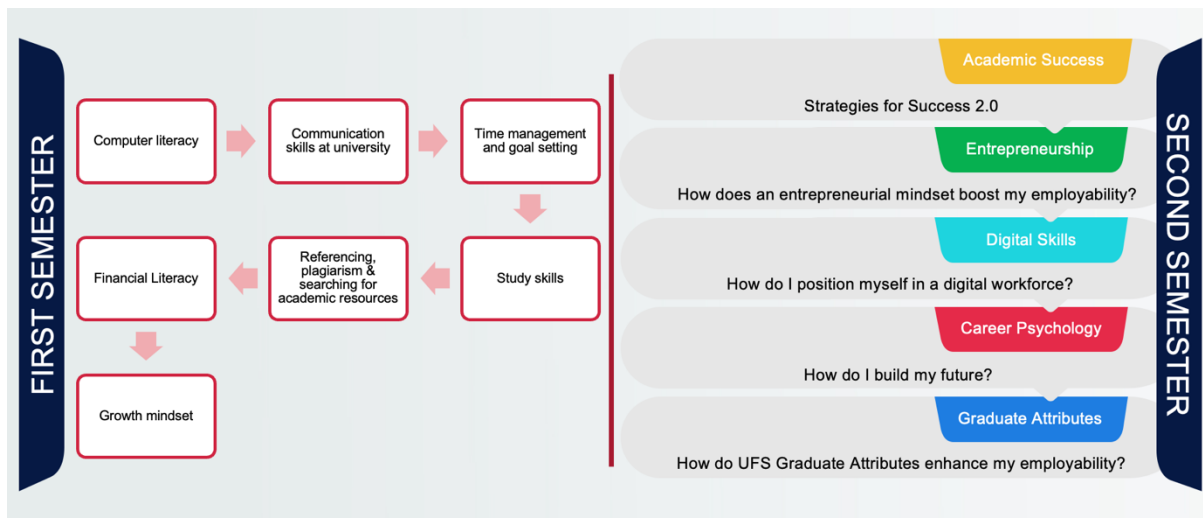
The use of AI can also assist to optimise our #SecureTheGrad processes especially with data capturing, analysis and visualisation to establish webinar trends from the previous years to date and be able to make predictions of future engagements. Furthermore, the use of AI can also assist with automation and that will greatly assist with tracking attendance of the webinars.

## 4.5. Student Transition, Development and Success

In this section of the report, the 2023 experience of the four projects (UFSS, Graduate Attributes, EDED, Digital Skills and Competencies Learning Pathway) residing in the Transition, Development and Success Focus Area in CTL are described.

### 4.5.1. First Year Transition: UFSS

UFSS1504 is a compulsory module, aimed at providing support and strategies to assist students to successfully transition into higher education. This is done through considering and addressing some of the many variables that can affect how students transition into and through their first year. In addition to this, the overarching themes of the module are academic success, entrepreneurship, and employability. The focus of the first semester is academic success skills (e.g., study reading, time management, goal setting, referencing and plagiarism etc.), while the focus of the second semester is on how students can make the most of their undergraduate studies to prepare for the world of work. Students who pass SCLL1508 or SCNS1508 in the extended programme register for UFSS1522 in their second year (instead of the year-long UFSS1504) and only complete the second semester content of UFSS. The synopsis of content in both semesters is shown in **Figure 78**.



**Figure 78: Content taught in UFSS1504 (both semesters) and UFSS1522 (second semester)**

We have more than 8500 students and a 79% pass rate, with 42% of our students achieving a distinction. This is a skills module, so the number of distinctions is a positive indicator of the support provided to students to develop the skill. The students who do not pass the module are typically the students who do not engage and do not submit assessments.

In 2023, we conducted an impact analysis on students' 2018-2022 first year academic performance and found that UFSS addresses epistemic equity, enabling students to start strong on an equal footing by providing them with the skills they need to succeed academically; students' UFSS marks on average contributed 25 times more to their average final marks than their AP score and 20 times more than their school quintile status.

Furthermore, in 2023, we presented a paper at the Scholarship for Teaching and Learning (SoTL) in the South Conference on the Hyflex model employed in the mode of delivery of UFSS and received positive feedback on an approach to address supporting students through various means of delivery – face-to-face, online synchronous, and online asynchronous to address challenges such as late registration, schedule clashes, and student protests. This model also allowed students to work through content more than once, as well as addressed different learning preferences. The attendance of students in the first and second semester, along with the interpretation of the data, is indicated in **Figure 79** and **Figure 80**.

## 2023 First Semester Attendance data (engagement)

	DAY 1		DAY 2		DAY 3		
	Orientation	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6
Face-to-face	1815	1561	1822	1732	1611	1597	1423
Online	889	889	875	875	699	699	699
Catch up f2f	464	384	346	292	320	312	294
Catch up online	946	946	642	642	630	630	630
Asynchronous	3411	3204	3087	2899	3009	3004	3174

Fridays, over a period of three weeks

Figure 79: First semester 2023 UFSS attendance data

The high face-to-face attendance at the beginning of the year can be attributed to students learning to navigate university. The online attendance was mainly due to timetable clashes, or students still sorting out accommodation and registration. The majority of students who attended catch up classes (face-to-face or online) were students who registered late. The asynchronous attendance was as a result of students catching up on missed classes, reviewing content, or preparing for assessments.

## 2023 Second Semester Attendance data (engagement)

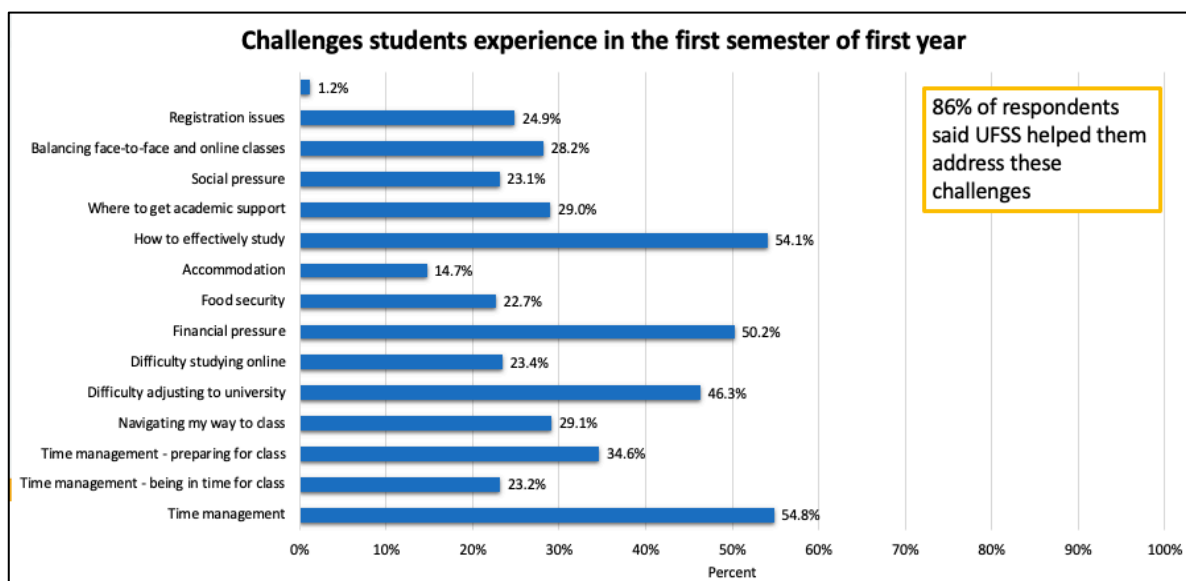
	DAY 1		DAY 2		DAY 3	
	Orientation	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5
Face-to-face	255	255	288	280	243	228
Online	1532	1532	1371	1371	1274	1315
Catch up f2f	30	34	Disruption	Disruption	13	13
Catch up online	721	721	566	566	704	704
Asynchronous	4108	4699	4356	4495	4336	4607

Fridays, over a period of three weeks

Figure 80: Second semester 2023 UFSS attendance data

In the second semester, there is a marked preference for online learning. This could be due to students being more comfortable with online learning by the second semester, as well as the timing of the winter school which takes during the recess period.

Finally, we asked students to tell us about the challenges they experience in their first semester, as seen in **Figure 81**.



**Figure 81: Challenges students experience in the first semester of first year**

You will note study skills, financial pressure, adjusting to university and time management as key themes. When we asked students if UFSS helped them to address these challenges, 86% of the students said it did. Again, this affirms that the mode of delivery was successful in aiding students in transitioning into university.

Additionally, in 2023, FeedbackFruits was piloted as a plugin to Blackboard to enhance asynchronous engagement. In addition to student engagement with a module; the tool also provided the Teaching Assistant Programme with a new way of evaluating Teaching Assistants and providing them with constructive feedback. This same tool can be used in any sort of tutorial set-up.

**Table 61** shows a breakdown of the FeedbackFruit tools piloted within UFSS, including student feedback (where applicable) and lecturer comments. Student feedback was obtained through surveys and focus groups.

**Table 61: Breakdown of FeedbackFruit tools piloted**

FeedbackFruit Tool	Student feedback	Lecturer comments
Interactive Video	71 students completed the survey. 88% of respondents indicated that the tool greatly contributed to their learning of the particular content. Examples of feedback include:	In the past the UFSS module uploaded asynchronous videos on Blackboard and made use of the Statistics tracking function to track which students accessed the video. This is the method that we then used to capture attendance

FeedbackFruit Tool	Student feedback	Lecturer comments
	<p><i>It was a good experience because it gave me the idea of what the questions will be and my mind will therefore generate answers and it helped me to reflect what was done in the UFSS class and what topic i need to improve more on</i></p> <p><i>Question cards we very important because they helped me apply what i had learnt in the videos . I feel like the opportunity to reflect was a brilliant idea to let the team know what was the obstacle during the lesson and allow the UFSS team to know what to fix.</i></p> <p><i>It helped me to know if i was following during class</i></p> <p><i>Helps me understand the content more</i></p> <p><i>It helps me to understand better what I haven't understood during the session</i></p> <p>There were students that did not appreciate having question cards throughout the video. This may have been distracting for the student which may have been why they would have preferred the question cards at the end of the videos. Examples of feedback include:</p> <p><i>I didn't love it, it would have been better to have the questions at the end of the video</i></p> <p><i>I have experienced difficulties in answering the questions</i></p>	<p>for students who attended classes asynchronously. However, the statistics tracking only provides data on whether or not students accessed the video, and not how much of the video they watched.</p> <p>With the Interactive Video tool in FeedbackFruits, the UFSS team was able to upload the videos with question cards. Students who opted to attend asynchronously could then complete question cards for participation purposes and to gauge understanding of the content. And the tool tracks whether students have watched the video completely. Students were then instructed that they need to complete the cards and watch the video in order to be granted the attendance for the class.</p> <p>UFSS1504/1522 is a continuous assessment module and attendance counts 20% towards the final mark. The interactive videos were part of a formative assessment process, and students' participation and engagement contributed to the students' final mark.</p>
Skill Review	<p>100 UFSS1504/1522 Teaching Assistants were evaluated using the Skills review. They were evaluated on their marking and class facilitation. Examples of feedback include:</p> <p><i>Similar to the older method but better because it could also give feedback on the comments you made and see areas for improvement.</i></p> <p><i>... gives me an opportunity to have a productive discussion with the evaluator, thereby contributing to my teaching and marking skills.</i></p> <p><i>...I am able to go back as many times as I want to see my feedback</i></p>	<p>The UFSS team made use of a Microsoft Excel sheet to evaluate Teaching Assistants (TAs) in previous years and would email the comments to the TA. In using the Skill Review tool, we found that TAs enjoyed using this tool because of how interactive it is. They were able to respond to feedback they received. In addition to this, the core team was able to see if the TA has viewed the feedback and how much of it they have viewed. One of the major advantages of this tool is that it does not require a submission on Blackboard – thus it could also be used for live oral presentations in class.</p>

FeedbackFruit Tool	Student feedback	Lecturer comments
	<p><i>and it also gives me an opportunity to listen to voice notes making it simpler for me to understand what I should work on or eliminate.</i></p> <p>Examples of reviewer feedback:  <i>I appreciate the active participation that the platform allows when evaluating TAs. They can comment on the report and seek clarity where needed. This has made the the evaluation process much faster and more efficient. I also like that the TAs were able to download the reports and attach them to their CVs as proof of their experience.</i></p> <p><i>Using FF was amazing because it saved time and allowed us to attach images, record our screen or send voice recordings to better articulate feedback. Loved using this tool.</i></p>	<p>The one issue we faced with this tool is that some students (TAs) did not pull through to the LTI therefore could not be reviewed. We logged this issue with the FeedbackFruits team, and they spoke with the programmers, and they were able to rectify this issue within a day. The FeedbackFruits team was not able to clarify the reason for the error but were able to attend to it in a short amount of time.</p>

#### 4.5.2. Developing graduate attributes

The UFS strives to ensure that its graduates display attributes that are aligned to both national imperatives and the institutional ethos. At the UFS, graduate attributes include, amongst others, ensuring the inculcation of relevant skills, competencies, knowledge and attitudes essential for success in the workplace, regionally, nationally, continentally and globally. This is particularly important, given that the current context demands that a graduate should be resilient and adaptable and able to navigate complex, uncertain environments and futures to be able to make an impactful contribution to societal and economic development.

The nine graduate attributes of the University of the Free State are critical thinking, problem solving, oral communication, written communication, ethical reasoning, community engagement, entrepreneurial mindset, and digital skills and competencies, as shown in **Figure 82**.



**Figure 82: The 9 UFS Graduate Attributes**

*Staff-facing initiatives for staff to be aware of graduate attributes*

The 9<sup>th</sup> graduate attribute, Digital Skills and Competencies, was approved by the ECS in 2023 and more information about it will be provided in **section 4.5.4**. Furthermore, in 2023, the next phase of the Graduate Attributes Project, *the Action Plan*, was introduced to four of the seven faculties, namely the Faculty of Theology, the Faculty of Economic Management Sciences, the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences. The purpose of the Action Plan was for the faculties to respond to the analysis reports of the curriculum mapping they had received, by committing to intentionally integrate the graduate attributes into degree programmes by options ranging from focusing on specific attributes, to participating in the Curriculum Renewal Programme, to re-curriculation. These same faculties, as well as the Faculty of Law, also participated in workshops to map the new graduate attribute, Digital Skills and Competencies, into their degree programmes. Faculties were then given until the first semester of 2024 to provide their Action Plans and Digital Skills and Competencies Mapping.

A new curriculum mapping template was launched in 2023 – this template had been created to clean the data as part of the capturing process, as well as produce an analysis of the extent to which each graduate attribute was developed in the degree programme. The Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Law worked on Curriculum Mapping in 2023. Both faculties reported that the new template was much easier to work with, reduced the chance of human error in data collection of this nature, and were excited about the quick turn around on feedback should there be a sufficient number of maps submitted for a programme analysis. In

future, this will result in a database and dashboard for faculties to have readily available live data for departmental reviews, publications, and conference presentations.

### *Student-facing initiatives for students to be aware of graduate attributes*

First-year students are introduced to graduate attributes in UFSS1504 and UFSS1522, and receive a development plan for them to reflect and work intentionally on these attributes. The attributes are also woven into the Career Development and Employability Pathway for students, an initiative funded by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation and piloted in 2023. The purpose of this was to clearly articulate to students the value of investing in their degree to intentionally and strategically work towards their future career goals. Part of this pathway is the EDED module, which was approved to roll out to students as an off-curricular, credit-bearing module in 2023 (more on this in **section 4.5.3**). Funding was secured to present this module for free to students. Additionally, the Digital Skills and Competencies graduate attribute was launched in 2023 as a learning pathway for students to work through and receive certificates upon the completion of each level in the pathway (more on this in **section 4.5.4**).

#### **4.5.3. ePortfolio development among students: EDED**

Graduates must be able to exhibit a variety of abilities such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and teamwork, as well as use these graduate attributes in a variety of career scenarios. This means that efforts should be undertaken to strengthen young people's workforce connection. Graduates must have the required competencies and attributes for companies to choose them. To address this need, as well as have students reflect on their development of graduate attributes through their undergraduate experience, CTL rolled out a module called Enterprising your Degree: ePortfolio Development (EDED).

The EDED module promotes the development of electronic portfolios, or ePortfolios, which are structured collections of student work, demonstrations, and artifacts that provide evidence of students' learning development, success, and skill set. The overarching aim of the EDED module is to prepare final-year and postgraduate students for the workplace. This is achieved by teaching students how to evaluate their skillset and market themselves to employers, investors, and peers. Another important aspect of this module is to help students create their own website showcasing evidence of their skills, and create an outstanding professional LinkedIn profile. Students are also taught to think about how they make career decisions, to put together a future work plan, and to create a CV that can be used to apply for work.

In 2023, 649 students registered for the first semester of EDED, and 507 students registered for the second semester of EDED. Of the 649 students registered in the first semester, 427

were retained; of the 507 students registered in the second semester, 397 were retained. The students that deregistered reported challenges preventing them from attending classes, engaging with content, submitting assessments, timetable clashes, and time management. Even though the module format was changed in 2023 to move from weekly classes to a summer school and winter school format (face-to-face and online synchronous, as well as asynchronous self-paced), challenges with time management and managing the rest of the academic workload persisted. Despite the challenges, there was still an increase in retention rate in 2023 compared to 2022, and there was a higher pass rate. In 2023, 75% of the students passed the first semester module, and 73% passed the second semester. It was promising to see similar performance results between the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campus, proving an equitable experience of the module across both campuses.

In terms of retention, in both semesters, the majority of students were from the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, and the majority of students were final year undergraduate students. This module was made available to postgraduate students as well, with 22 Honours students, 22 Masters students, and 1 PhD student registered in the first semester, and 30 Honours students, 22 Masters students, and 5 PhD students registered in the second semester.

#### 4.5.4 Digital Skills and Competencies Learning Pathway for Students

Students need to acquire the digital skills required to function in a blended learning environment and the world of work, as well as acquiring discipline-specific digital specialisations. The UFS settled on the following definition of digital competency: “Digital competency includes the ability to engage with, use and create technologies to enable learning and working in a digital society.”

Conducting a comprehensive literature review, including a review of 25 existing digital frameworks around the world, revealed that although there were existing frameworks for an undertaking of this kind, there were very few examples of implementation – and certainly not in a higher education context. So, it was up to the UFS to map their own pathway to digital literacy. With the objective of creating a digitally literate student cohort, the UFS developed an implementation plan that addressed:

- Inclusion of *all* stakeholders – from internal administration to academic staff and students.
- All aspects of a student’s academic journey – from when they apply to when they graduate, become alumni, and beyond.

- Critical success factors were clearly defined, and these included deep consultation and collaboration, alignment and co-creation of solutions and outcomes.
- The end product needed to be evolutionary, flexible and able to keep pace with rapidly changing technologies.

Many frameworks focus on computer literacy or digital skills related to a specific industry. It was important that the UFS framework addressed all the facets of digital skills and competencies that would be needed for a student to be successful in their studies, as well as in the world of work. Thus, the UFS Framework for Digital Skills and Competencies consists of four themes addressed at three levels, namely ICT Proficiency; Digital Citizenship; Information, Data and Media Literacy; and Digital Creation. Each of these themes are defined as follows:

ICT Proficiency	The competent use of hardware and software to perform functions on a digital device.
Digital Citizenship	The development of responsible digital conduct, related to your conduct online, the responsible use of tools, legal implications, and your digital wellbeing.
Information, Data and Media Literacy	The development of search strategies, analysis, comparison, evaluation, responsible use, responsible sharing, and effective storage of information, data and media sources.
Digital Creation: problem solving, creativity and innovation in a digital space	The ability to edit existing digital content and create new content to express yourself through digital means.

Levels one to three are more or less aligned to a student’s academic journey from first year through to third year and level four (which is being developed in 2024) will address industry specific skills (for example Pastel for Accounting students). The UFS Framework is a living document, which means that it will be updated as technology evolves.

With the competency framework and levels determined, the team started work on the development of the resources that would be used to teach and evaluate the different competencies at each level. A backwards curriculum design approach was used. This meant starting with the desired outcomes, then determining what evidence of learning would look like and then developing the learning activities. Many of the lessons learned during COVID were also incorporated into the design – learning materials needed to be downloadable, internet and/or data requirements needed to be minimal, videos needed to be short, fun, and stimulating and evaluation had to reflect that the student had *worked* through the content and mastered the requisite competence.

The Level One themes are embedded in UFSS for all first-year students. Much of the programme is asynchronous and voluntary – however, evidence to date has shown strong student engagement across the pathway and students receive certification for levels they have completed. In 2023, 10011 students engaged with the pathway, with 6132 of those students receiving a Level 1 certificate. Engagement was measured not only through the accessing of content, but through participation in at least one assessment.

In the CTL external review in 2023, the Digital Skills and Competencies pathway received commendations for its innovation and potential impact on the employability and work readiness of students. The team was invited by SAGEA to present a webinar on Digital Skills as part of SAGEA’s Graduate Attributes Series and received positive reviews from the 52 companies in attendance. Additionally, the SAGEA team indicated that this webinar was voted most significant for 2023 and the content was put forward as a blog contribution to The International Network of Employers and University Career Services (INEUCS).

#### 4.5.5 Reflection on how AI can improve quality of work in this focus area

It is important to note that these four projects are not standalone projects, but rather work in alignment with each other to optimally support students in their transition from first year through to graduation and into the workplace. As a result, AI considerations are factored in in the following ways:

1. In UFSS, students learn basic digital skills and competencies (Level 1 of the pathway), and also learn about the power of their own voice as critical thinkers and problem solvers. They are made aware that they need to develop the graduate attributes to become employable, and that the use of AI should be ethical. That means that they consider plagiarism and referencing, as well as what it means to have their own voice developed and heard, as opposed to replaced by AI.
2. In EDED, students conduct a skills audit, and where they are required to upskill in order to enhance their employability, they are encouraged to do so. This may also include using AI in responsible ways to aid their efficiency in, e.g. searching for resources using Elicit AI or Research Rabbit.
3. In the advanced levels of the digital skills pathway, students are taught how to use AI in responsible and ethical ways – with the emphasis first on the mastering of discipline specific skills and graduate attributes, so that the use of AI is about working smarter and evolving with the changing times, as opposed to, as one student put it in an EDED class “blocking and replacing their own thinking”.

## 4.6. Academic Language and Literacy Development

### 4.6.1 Academic Literacy Modules

CTL's Academic Language and Literacy Development (ALLD) focus area enrolled 10 882 students in the academic literacy modules (EAL/GENL) during 2023 across all three campuses. The total average pass rate was 82%. Student evaluations of the modules show that 96.8% of students believe that the module was helpful in helping them develop their academic literacy abilities. 97% of students also responded positively when asked whether they use the skills taught in the academic literacy module in their other modules. Finally, 98% of students felt that their facilitators were well-prepared and familiar with the academic literacy content. Some qualitative data also boasts positive student experiences:

*"[The modules] align with my degree of study, of which it [sic] they have helped a lot when it comes to my academic writing skills as an academia."*

*"I like the fact the lessons were intellectually stimulating."*

*"[The modules] don't just equip you for the coming academic years, but they also help me to solve real-life situations. For example, I used to boost when writing my assignments and speaking with other people I've learned to hedge in order to avoid offending people."*

The ALLD's internal quality assurance practices include regular and consistent training for facilitators, peer support for facilitators in the form of mentor groups, moderation of assessment practices, peer observation, observation of teaching, quality marking rubrics, closing the feedback loop with regular student and facilitator feedback, and curriculum based on sound pedagogical and field-specific research.

### 4.6.2 The Write Site

The Write Site, which forms part of the ALLD, supported 8,152 students through workshops and individual consultations on both the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses. Student feedback has been very positive, with one student commenting that '*My write site session was wonderful, it's help[ed] me a lot, I think from now on all my assignment marks will increase*' and 95% of students agreeing that would recommend the Write Site to other students. The South Campus Write Site also officially opened in 2023 and we look forward to growing it throughout 2024.

The ALLD team remains research active. In 2023, the team produced 7 articles/book chapters, and 6 ALLD colleagues presented at local and international conferences.

#### 4.6.3 Other achievements

Other achievements of the ALLD during 2023 include:

- The initiation of the Online Writing Lessons (OWL). The OWL will be one of the first South African open-access academic literacy resources. It is part of our vision to create a portal of downloadable content for students, both at the UFS and other institutions, who may need extra writing support. Downloadable PDFs will accompany the videos.
- The QQ Write Site's involvement in the decoloniality essay competition on the QQ campus, which was recognised by the organisers of the Indigenous Knowledge Systems Biennial seminar.
- The popularity of the Write Site's workshop on how to detect the use of AI in student writing.

#### 4.6.4 Reflection on how AI can improve quality of work in this focus area

2023 was a difficult and exciting year in terms of learning how to navigate the complexities of using artificial intelligence to teach students how to read, write, and think critically. The difficulty came in trying to understand what AI can do in terms of reading and writing (especially large language models such as ChatGPT) – and watching it improve with each passing day. This raised several concerns about the extent to which students would come to rely on AI – not as a supplementary tool to help them learn, but as a crutch. Our excitement, on the other hand, came from learning more about the various ways in which AI can be used to improve our own processes.

The ALLD team has worked hard to determine some ways in which the new age of AI in higher education can be navigated – such as how to identify AI from student compositions. But there is still much to learn about its use in teaching and learning, while not short-circuiting crucial learning processes. These learning processes are especially important in the field of academic literacy since academic writing encompasses much more than merely producing text. “It requires intellectual curiosity, engaging with and synthesising multiple sources of information, evaluating that information, and structuring one’s thoughts that will bear the stamp of an idiolect, and the pulse of an entity that is undeniably and incorrigibly alive” (Joubert, 2023<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>2</sup> Joubert, M.A. (2023). Slowing down academic writing. <https://saalt.org.za/let-us-march-on-diligently-and-focus-on-the-art-of-academic-writing/>

## 4.7. Quality self-evaluation

### 4.7.1. Programme and Departmental Reviews

Participation in quality reviews remains a crucial strategy employed by the university to promote a culture of excellence across the institution. The quality review process begins with departments conducting self-evaluations, encouraging institutional stakeholders to take responsibility and ownership of the quality and improvement of their respective functional areas. External experts are then invited to offer insights, feedback, and recommendations to enhance the quality of academic programmes and the practice of academic departments and support units. The reviews further gather inputs from various stakeholders, including students, staff, potential employers and other relevant external parties. This comprehensive assessment approach helps academic departments, centres and support units to identify, from multiple perspectives, their areas of strengths and areas in need of improvement, which facilitates continuous improvement of the quality of learning and teaching, research, community engagement, and support services.

**Table 62** shows the academic departments/centres and/or support services units of the university participated in quality reviews during the 2023 academic year according to the annual quality review cycle of the university.

**Table 62: Departments/ centres and/or support services units reviewed in 2023**

Faculty/Unit	Department
Faculty of Humanities	1. African Languages
	2. Philosophy and Classical Studies
	3. Political Studies
Faculty of Economic & Management	4. Industrial Psychology
Faculty of Natural & Agricultural Sciences	5. Plant Sciences
	6. Genetics
Support Services	7. Centre for Health Systems Research and Development
	8. Directorate for Research Development
	9. Centre for Teaching and Learning

## 4.8. Qwaqwa initiatives

The CTL on the Qwaqwa campus has five focus areas, which implement initiatives similar and aligned to the ones provided on the Bloemfontein campus, albeit with tweaks and changes relevant for the rural Qwaqwa environment. These initiatives are discussed next.

#### 4.8.1. The student decoloniality essay writing competition

Decolonisation is an important element included in the institutional aims and strategies (such as the Integrated Transformation Plan and the UFS Learning and Teaching Strategy). In 2023 this essay competition now boasted an added poetry section. In 2023, a total of 29 entries were received for the essay category and 26 for the poetry category. The essay applicants attended an essay writing workshop, while the poetry applicants attended a poetry writing workshop. A booklet with the overall winner entries was published in hard and soft copy format and distributed across the campus.

#### 4.8.2. A\_STEP tutorial lecturer training

A new initiative was launched in 2021 to train lecturers who form part of the A-STEP tutorial programme and implemented for the third time in 2023. This need was identified based on feedback from previous years' tutors, as well as students. The aim of the training is to guide lecturers in good tutorial design practices, which would engage students and optimally impact learning. For 2023, one training session day was hosted off-campus in Clarens, where all relevant lecturers were invited to. Approximately 15 lecturers attended.

#### 4.8.3. Qwaqwa student success task team

A task team was established in 2019 on the Qwaqwa campus to see how smaller, evidence-based teaching and learning projects could impact student success. This initiative has continued ever since, although the smaller projects change for each year.

In 2023, five projects were included:

- Evidence-based workshops for decision-making.
- Priority student tracking and nudging (findings presented at the Siyaphumelela 2023 conference).
- CLASSE mini (completed in 10 modules).
- Blackboard retention centre as tool for tracking and nudging teaching activities (implemented in ENGL1624 module).

- One-on-one tutorial support for 'at-risk' students (implemented in BIOL2644, 5 tutors appointed).

#### 4.8.4. The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Community of Practice

The Qwaqwa SoTL group redesigned its approach for 2022, as meetings could be held face-to-face once again. A blended approach was ultimately followed, with one-hour online workshop sessions, and two-hour work sessions per month. This new blended design continued in 2023.

For 2023, 32 members across all four faculties and CTL were part of the SoTL group. 8 online and 8 face-to-face sessions took place. From this group, one team institutional learning and teaching award was awarded. Conference presentations emanating from this group were: 4 at the UFS LT conference, 1 at the Siyaphumelela conference, 1 at the Annual UKZN AMS Colloquium, and 4 at the SoTL 4 The South conference. One long-term SoTL member completed her CTR for her PhD in Higher Education successfully. Evaluation results from this group indicate the value of creating structure and rhythm, the value of meeting face-to-face, and to guide the members through the progress with their projects. Simultaneously, the structure must be set-up in a manner to support the principles of good practices in SoTL, such as integrating certain elements in the planning: a research design or model, including aims and timelines of when to present findings publicly, and to discuss possible institutional or further-reaching SoTL initiatives. An article was published by the SoTL coordinator, exploring this SoTL CoP framework.

#### 4.8.5. SoTL 4 The South Conference

A collaboration between the Faculty of Humanities on Qwaqwa and CTL saw a successful Bi-Annual international SoTL in the South Conference hosted at Golden Gate. Keynotes were presented by Prof Heila Lotz-Sisitka, Prof Kasturi Behari-Leak and Prof Francois Strydom. The conference saw 5 panel discussions, 151 abstracts received and 97 presented in the end. In total it was attended by 153 participants, with 16 attendees of the post-conference writing retreat.

#### 4.8.6. An evidence-based reflection on the Qwaqwa academic staff experiences of 2023

Since 2021 we have circulated a survey to academic staff on the Qwaqwa campus to gain insights into the challenges and support needs based on their own experience, perceptions and the context. A report is then shared with the Vice-principal, academics, and the assistant deans.

For 2023, the survey was tweaked, and consisted of Likert-type questions, as well as open-ended questions, with a 13% response rate of the entire sample (all permanent and non-permanent academics on Qwaqwa). Especially useful was the open-ended answers.

The first question related to support available on campus. Evident in these results was especially the perceived lack of support for wellness and research. The second question was related to challenges experienced overall. Almost 50% of academics were impacted by campus disruptions. More than 70% indicated that their students did not attend classes diligently and 40% felt their students were not engaged in their learning. Furthermore, 46% experienced timetable issues, which included a perceived lack of venues on campus (42%). Most academics seemed satisfied with the communication from their line managers. Almost 40% felt that their workload was not manageable. Additionally, participants had to rate their top three work challenges in 2023, of which campus disruptions, poor class attendance from students, workload, student lack of engagement, and timetable issues were the five mentioned by the majority, in that order. Another question focused on workload, and the results indicate that 74% of academics could spend adequate time on their teaching. However, only 28% could spend enough time on engaged scholarship, and 36% on their research.

Four main themes emerged from the qualitative datasets related to work challenges:

1. An uncondusive environment: Water; Internet/Network/Wi-Fi; Electricity;
2. Timetable/Venue issues;
3. Concern around student attendance of classes / student engagement; and
4. Issues related to student protests.

#### 4.8.7. How can AI improve the quality of our work on Qwaqwa

For AI to become an ally in what lecturers, students and support staff try to achieve on a campus such as the Qwaqwa campus, basic aspects such as uninterrupted electricity provision, regular updates of computers and laptops in student laboratories, and development of basic computer skills and overall digital skills for both staff and students need to be prioritised first. Many students still do not have their own laptop devices, do not have internet

or data at home, and especially many first years don't even know the basics of using a computer. Most importantly, collecting information from online sources and using it productively and ethically, is still a big concern. Once all these aspects are addressed, and a cultural shift in terms of what a university can now provide in an age of free and malleable information, AI can become a wonderful ally in teaching, in conceptualisation of research, in communicating across different channels in short spaces of time, in analysing data for short-term immediate use, and perhaps even completing tasks such as marks capturing and analyses, avoiding registration mistakes, creating a suitable viable timetable, and thus freeing up time for innovation, creativity, and relationship building.

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