



University of the Free State

GRADUATE EXIT SURVEY

Employability Report on the 2021 Graduating Cohort

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



UFS

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ACRONYMS

BS	Business School
D	Doctorates
Dip	Diploma
DIRAP	Directorate for Institutional Research and Academic Planning
EC	Eastern Cape Province
ECS	Executive Committee of the Senate
EDU	Faculty of Education
EMS	Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences
FS	Free State Province
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDS	Graduate Destination Survey
GES	Graduate Exit Survey
GP	Gauteng Province
HC	Higher Certificate
Hons	Honours Degree
HSC	Faculty of Health Sciences
HUM	Faculty of the Humanities
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal Province
LAW	Faculty of Law
LP	Limpopo Province
M	Masters
NAS	Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences
NC	Northern Cape Province
NW	North West Province
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PGDip	Postgraduate Diploma
QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
SA	South Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
T&R	Faculty of Theology and Religion
UFS	University of the Free State
UGD	Undergraduate Degree
WC	Western Cape Province
WIL	Work-integrated Learning

1. INTRODUCTION

The University of the Free State (UFS) conducts the yearly Graduate Exit Survey (GES) to get feedback from the most recent graduating class about their academic and campus experiences as well as their plans for the future. GES relates to several strategies of the UFS, in particular the UFS Strategic Plan 2018–2022 and the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2019–2024. Concerning the former, the current report focuses on items from the survey questionnaire that are related to graduate employment and is, therefore, most relevant to the second goal of the strategy, which is to renew and transform the curriculum. This second goal includes a focus on graduate employability. Regarding the Learning and Teaching Strategy, the report supports priorities one, to foster the development of graduate attributes, and three, to ensure a responsive curriculum, as both pertain to graduate employability.

This report focuses on the employment of UFS graduates disaggregated by (a) demographic information, (b) first-generation status, and (c) the qualifications and faculty from which the qualification was conferred. Concerning faculty, the rationale for the separate analyses of the BS and ODL was that they both bring different kinds of student experiences, i.e., the BS targets the working-age population while ODL targets distance students. This report also focuses on the fields of employment as well as details about the location of employers within South Africa (SA), Africa, and the world. Furthermore, it reports on graduate educational plans and institutional reputation.

1.1. Context of the report

Since 2020, the COVID pandemic has wreaked havoc and upended our lives and routines. However, many countries have since relaxed the restrictions imposed to control the pandemic, including SA. The availability of vaccines has helped curb the spread of the pandemic, and in doing so, many people have resumed their routines. We have entered the post-COVID world, where, in spite of the challenges, most economies can be characterised as recovering. However, the recovery has not progressed in a linear way but rather has been asymmetrical and slowed by unforeseen political constraints. The Russia-Ukraine War and the resultant supply-chain disruptions, rising global inflation, and increasing commodity prices have undermined the economic growth projections of most countries. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2022) projects that the global 2022 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth is around 3% and will remain so in 2023. Another political development that has the potential to constrain global trade and economic recovery is the China-Taiwan conflict (He, 2022). Thus, the post-COVID era remains turbulent as global events continue to destabilise the already vulnerable domestic economies.

The SA domestic economy has also faced many major setbacks in its recovery. In addition to the global events, SA has experienced massive power blackouts, rising fuel and food prices, large-scale unrest and looting, and periodic blockades of key domestic transport routes (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2022). Nonetheless, the official unemployment rate in South Africa fell marginally in the first quarter of 2022, from 35.3% in the fourth quarter of 2021 to 34.5% in 2022, according to Statistics South Africa's (StatsSA) first Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS). However, despite the decline, youth unemployment at the corresponding ages of our graduates remains high in South Africa at 63,9% for those aged 15–24 and 42,1% for those aged 25–34 years.

Cognisant of the global and domestic economic challenges, this report presents UFS graduate employability and graduates' educational plans. A comparative analysis was conducted to demonstrate the difference between the 2020 and 2021 graduate cohorts.

2. DATA COLLECTION

The survey was conducted online through EvaSys where a self-administered questionnaire was sent to students once verified to graduate. Data was collected from the 2021 graduating cohort from December 2021 to May 2022. Graduates were from all three UFS campuses, namely Bloemfontein, QwaQwa, and South Campus. A total of 1592 respondents completed the survey out of 10 540 eligible. This comprised a 15% response rate. It is important to note that the graduates responded to questions they were comfortable to answer and as a result, total responses in the figures and tables below vary based on the responses to particular questions being analysed. Microsoft Excel was used to analyse data.

The survey is conducted through a self-administered questionnaire that is completed online on the EvaSys platform, which is a web-based survey management system. The survey was collected from the 2021 graduating cohort where 1592 respondents completed the survey out of 10562 eligible. Thus, a 15% response rate was achieved. The survey respondents were graduates from all the seven UFS faculties namely:

- Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (EMS), including the Business School (BS)
- Faculty of Education (EDU), including Open and Distance Learning (ODL)
- Faculty of Law (LAW)
- Faculty of the Humanities (HUM)
- Faculty of Theology and Religion (T&R)
- Faculty of Health Sciences (HSC)
- Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (NAS)

Table 1 shows the distribution of survey respondents by faculty. EDU (498) recorded the largest proportion of respondents, followed by HUM (345), NAS (309), and EMS (178).

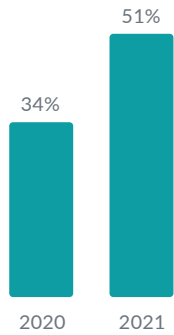
Table 1: Response rate by faculty

Faculty	Number of respondents
Economic and Management Sciences	178
Education	489
Health Sciences	56
Law	102
Natural and Agricultural Sciences	309
The Humanities	345
Theology and Religion	26



GES: Employability Analysis for the 2021 cohort

Employment



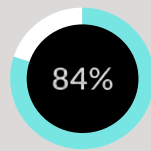
Graduate employment increased from 34% in 2020 to 51% in 2021.

Unemployment

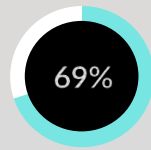


Graduate unemployment decreased from 43% in 2020 to 37% in 2021.

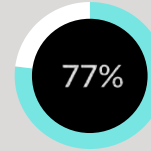
Employment by race



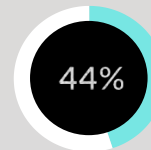
More than 4 out of 5 white graduates were employed in 2021



Coloured graduates comprised the third most employed group at 69%

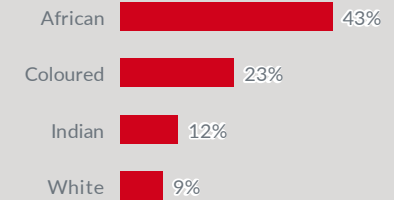


Indian graduates comprised the second most employed group at 77%



African graduates comprised the least employed group at 44%

Unemployment by race



43% African graduates were unemployed and searching for jobs compared to 23% Coloured, 12% Indian and 9% white graduates.

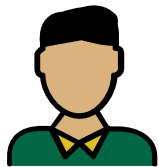


50%

Female graduates were employed

39%

Female graduates were unemployed

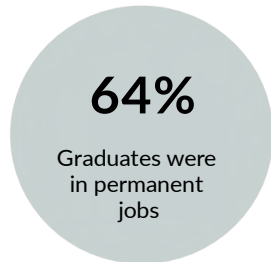


52%

Male graduates were employed

35%

Male graduates were unemployed



85%

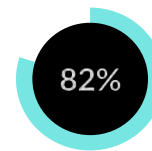
Graduates were in full-time employment



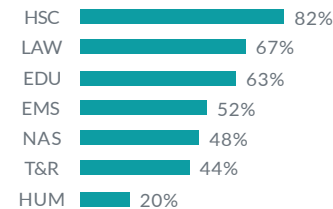
68%

Graduates were in jobs directly related to their qualification

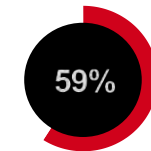
Employment by faculty



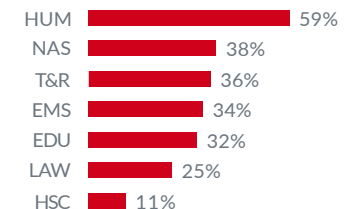
Health Sciences (82%) recorded the highest employment rate among the 7 UFS faculties



Unemployment by faculty



Humanities (59%) recorded the highest unemployment



4. KEY GES HIGHLIGHTS

4.1. Employment and unemployment highlights

- **Figure 2:** Graduate employment has increased to 51% in the 2021 cohort, from 34% in 2020.
 - Graduate unemployment has decreased from 43% in the 2020 cohort to 37% in 2021.
- **Figure 3:** More than 4 out of 5 white graduates (84%) were employed, compared to 77% of Indians, and 69% of Coloured graduates.
 - Fewer than 3 out of 5 African graduates (44%) were employed.
 - Conversely, 43% of African graduates were unemployed and searching for jobs, compared to 9% of white, 12% of Indian, and 23% of Coloured graduates.
- **Figure 4:** Half of the female graduates in 2021 were employed, compared to 52% of males.
 - On the other hand, 39% of female graduates were unemployed, compared to 35% of males in the 2021 cohort.
- **Figure 5:** Employment rates by age indicated that the older groups of graduates (above 35 years) were highly employed at 86%, followed by 31–35-year-olds at 72%. Graduates aged 30 years and younger were below the institutional average of 51% concerning employment.
 - Unemployment was very high among graduates aged 21–25 (56%) and 26–30 (48%).
- **Figure 7:** First-generation graduates were below the institutional average regarding employment at 44%, compared to 56% of non-first-generation graduates. Thus, 42% of first-generation graduates were still searching for jobs, compared to 33% of non-first-generation graduates.
- **Figure 9:** Undergraduate degree holders were highly unemployed at 56%, compared to 36% at Honours level, 26% Doctoral graduates, 20% of Postgraduate Diploma graduates, and 15% of Masters graduates.
- **Figure 13:** The largest share of the employed graduates were working in the Free State (29%), Gauteng (24%), and KwaZulu-Natal (11%). Thus, these three provinces employed 64% of UFS graduates.
- **12.2:** Outside of South Africa, SADC countries employed the largest share of graduates working in international countries.

4.2. Cross-faculty highlights

- **Figure 11:** Health Sciences (82%) recorded the highest employment rate among the UFS faculties, followed by Law (67%), Education (63%), and Economic and Management Sciences (52%).
 - Humanities had the highest rate of unemployment (59%), followed by Natural and Agricultural Sciences (38%), Theology and Religion (36%), EMS (34%), and EDU (32%).
- **Table 7:** Institutionally, 64% of employed graduates were in permanent jobs. EDU (74%) had the largest share of graduates in permanent employment, while HUM (26%) had the lowest share of permanently employed graduates.
- **Table 8:** Institutionally, 85% of employed graduates were working full-time. HSC (98%) recorded the highest number of graduates in full-time employment, while HUM (73%) had the lowest share of graduates in full-time employment. However, a notable number of graduates from ODL (25%), HUM (14%), and EDU (14%) were employed part-time.
- **Table 9:** Institutionally, 68% of employed graduates were in jobs related to their qualifications, and just 8% were in unrelated jobs. EDU (89%) and HSC (85%) recorded the largest share of graduates that were working in jobs directly related to their qualifications. However, a worrying number of Humanities graduates (22%) were employed in jobs unrelated to their qualifications.
- **Table 10:** Nearly half of the employed graduates in Humanities (48%) were earning less than R10 000 per month. The highest proportion of graduates earning more than R30 000 per month came from Business School (39%), Health Sciences (36%), and Law (34%). These figures are not surprising, given that the Business School targets the working-age population, while both Health Sciences and Law offer professional degrees with clear career pathways.

4.3. Graduates educational plans

- **Figure 14:** For all graduates planning to continue with their studies, 41% are doing so in 2022, while 42% will do so in 2023.
- **Figure 15:** Many graduates plan to do their postgraduate studies (Honours 42%, Masters 18%, Postgraduate Diploma 14%, and Doctoral 12%).
- **Figure 16:** 3 out of 4 of the 2021 cohort plan to pursue further studies directly related to their qualifications.
- **Figure 17:** Most graduates (66%) suggested that they would return to the UFS to further their studies.

4.4. Institutional reputation

- **Figure 19:** 86% of 2021 graduates would recommend the UFS to others, while 6% indicated that they would not.
- **Figure 20:** The top reasons why graduates would recommend the UFS have to do with two core functions of the institution, namely learning and teaching and research. These are:
 - Good academic reputation
 - High quality of academic staff
 - Supportive academic environment
 - Good research resources
 - Availability of a wide range of academic programmes
- **Figure 21:** Demonstrates that 76% of graduates were very satisfied and satisfied with the UFS as a whole.

5. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made regarding improving UFS graduate employability:

- **University-Industry collaboration:** faculties should develop strong partnerships with local, provincial, national, and global industry stakeholders. Faculties that recorded the highest unemployment could consider establishing or expanding advisory boards to assist in the identification of employment opportunities.
- **Postgraduate studies:** faculties should encourage undergraduate students to pursue postgraduate studies given that those receiving undergraduate degrees recorded the highest unemployment compared to those with postgraduate degrees..
- **Entrepreneurship and innovation:** an entrepreneurial mindset includes the ability to see opportunities, marshal resources, and create value. Thus, faculties should infuse entrepreneurship into the curriculum.
- **Upskill and reskill:** graduates should be encouraged to utilise existing platforms such as LinkedIn Learning to promote lifelong learning.
- **Graduate attributes:** Promote and infuse graduate attributes into the curriculum. The UFS Learning and Teaching strategy (2019-2024) comprises various propositions and the approved UFS graduate attributes that should be considered in curriculum development.
- **Remote/hybrid work:** the UFS should ensure that graduates have the requisite skills for this type of work environment. Among other things, this could position UFS graduates in a manner that makes them stand out in the job market.
- **Review programmes to ensure viability:** the UFS has a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that students not only succeed in their studies but also in their careers and lives post-university. Thus, the University should review programmes to ensure relevance, viability, and value for money regarding students' career prospects.

6. GRADUATE PLANS AFTER GRADUATION

Figure 1 demonstrates that most graduates (50%) plan to work after graduation while, 35% plan to further their studies.

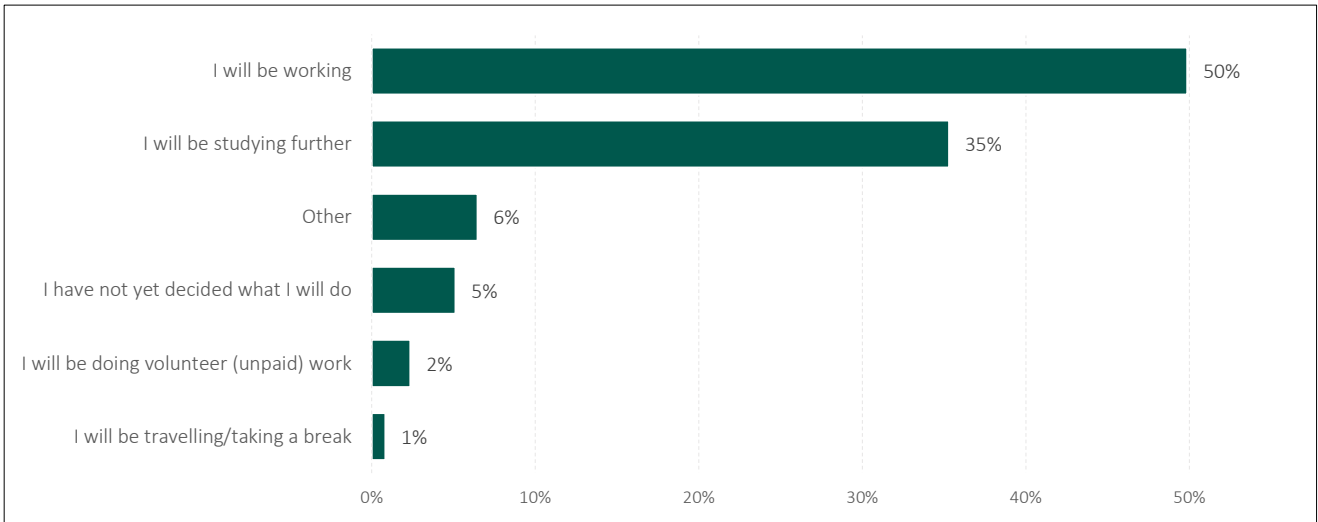


Figure 1: Plans after graduation (n = 1558)

7. EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF ALL RESPONDENTS

Graduates were considered to be employed when their employment status indicate that (a) they were already working, or (b) have accepted a position/job offer. On the other hand, those who indicated that they were currently searching for jobs were considered to be unemployed.

7.1. 2020–2021 graduate employment and unemployment

The 2020 national lockdowns affected many aspects of the global and national economies. Thus, many companies decided to lay off workers to cut costs. Furthermore, new job opportunities for graduates were severely limited. However, notwithstanding the challenges, positive changes have emerged recently, including regarding UFS graduate employability. Figure 2 shows that 51% of the 2021 graduates were already employed or accepted a job offer by the time of their graduation, compared to 34% in 2020. Thus, UFS graduate employment has increased by 17 percentage points. Graduate employment of the 2021 cohort is comparable to the years before COVID. For example, in the 2018 cohort, 50% of graduates were employed.

Conversely, the number of graduates searching for jobs (unemployed) decreased from 43% in 2020 to 37% in 2021. Although the UFS unemployment rate (37%) is higher than the national unemployment rate (34.5%), it should be noted that GES is collected from new graduates who have just completed their studies and have only had a few months to search for jobs. Thus, DIRAP is piloting the Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) to find out, among other things, what happens to unemployed graduates and how long they wait before getting jobs.

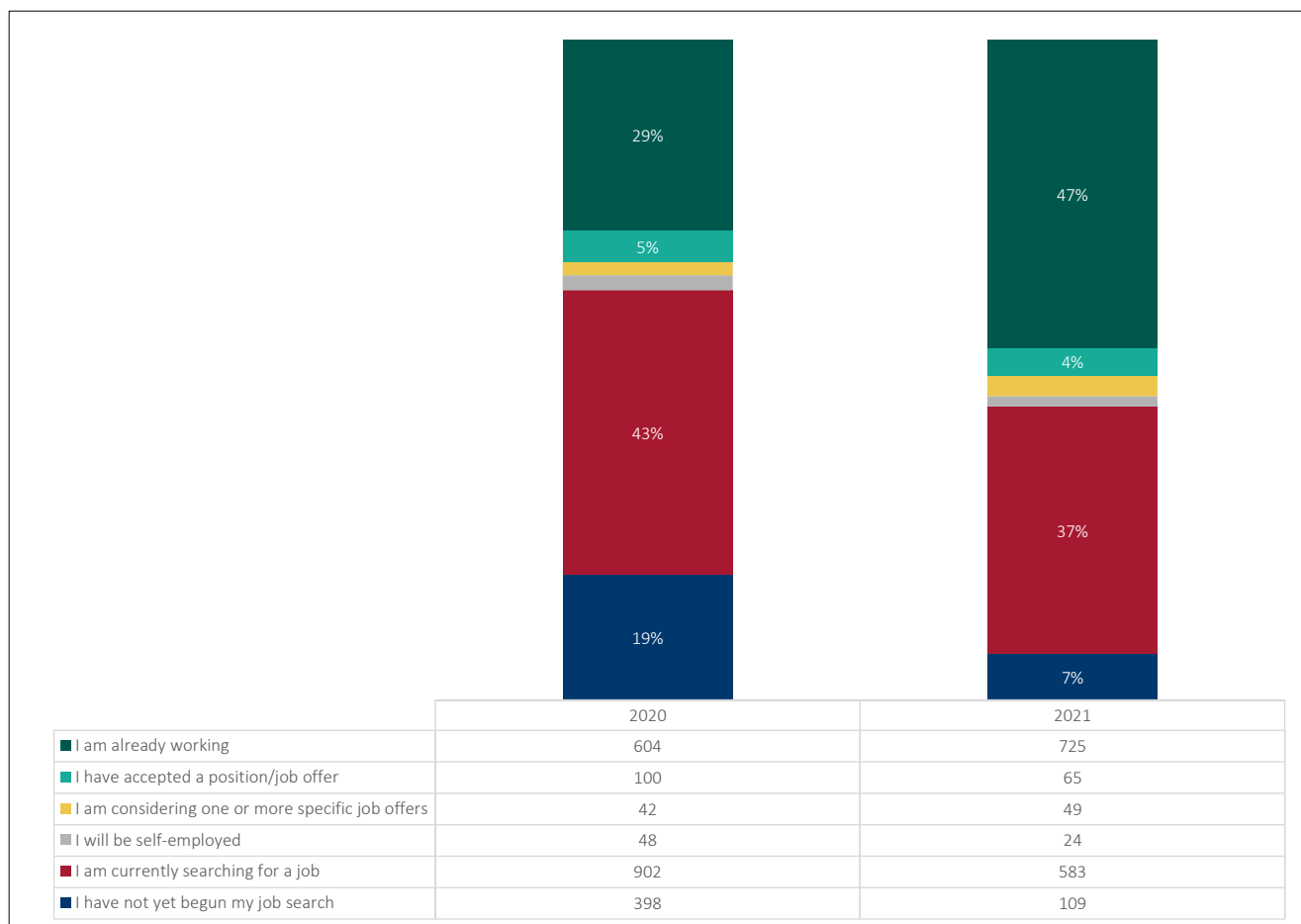


Figure 2: Employment status of all respondents in 2020 and 2021

8. EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

8.1. Race

Employment by race demonstrates that 44% of African 2021 graduates were already working or had accepted a job offer in the 2021 cohort (see Figure 3). This represents a notable increase from 24% in 2020. However, African graduates' employment was still below the 2021 institutional average of 51% (see Figure 2). For Coloured graduates, 69% were employed which is a noteworthy improvement from 49% in 2020. The overwhelming majority of Indian graduates (77%) were employed in 2021. Impressive employment figures were recorded for white graduates at 84% in 2021. Conversely, 43% of the African graduates were still searching for jobs in the 2021 cohort, which is a notable decline from 50% in the prior year. However, African graduate unemployment was higher than the institutional average of 37%. Unemployment was very low among white graduates (9%) in the 2021 cohort. The cohort of 2021 Coloureds and Indian graduates recorded 23% and 12% unemployment, respectively. However, in the interpretation of these results, it is important to consider the difference in sample sizes as 81% of the 2021 respondents to this question were African.

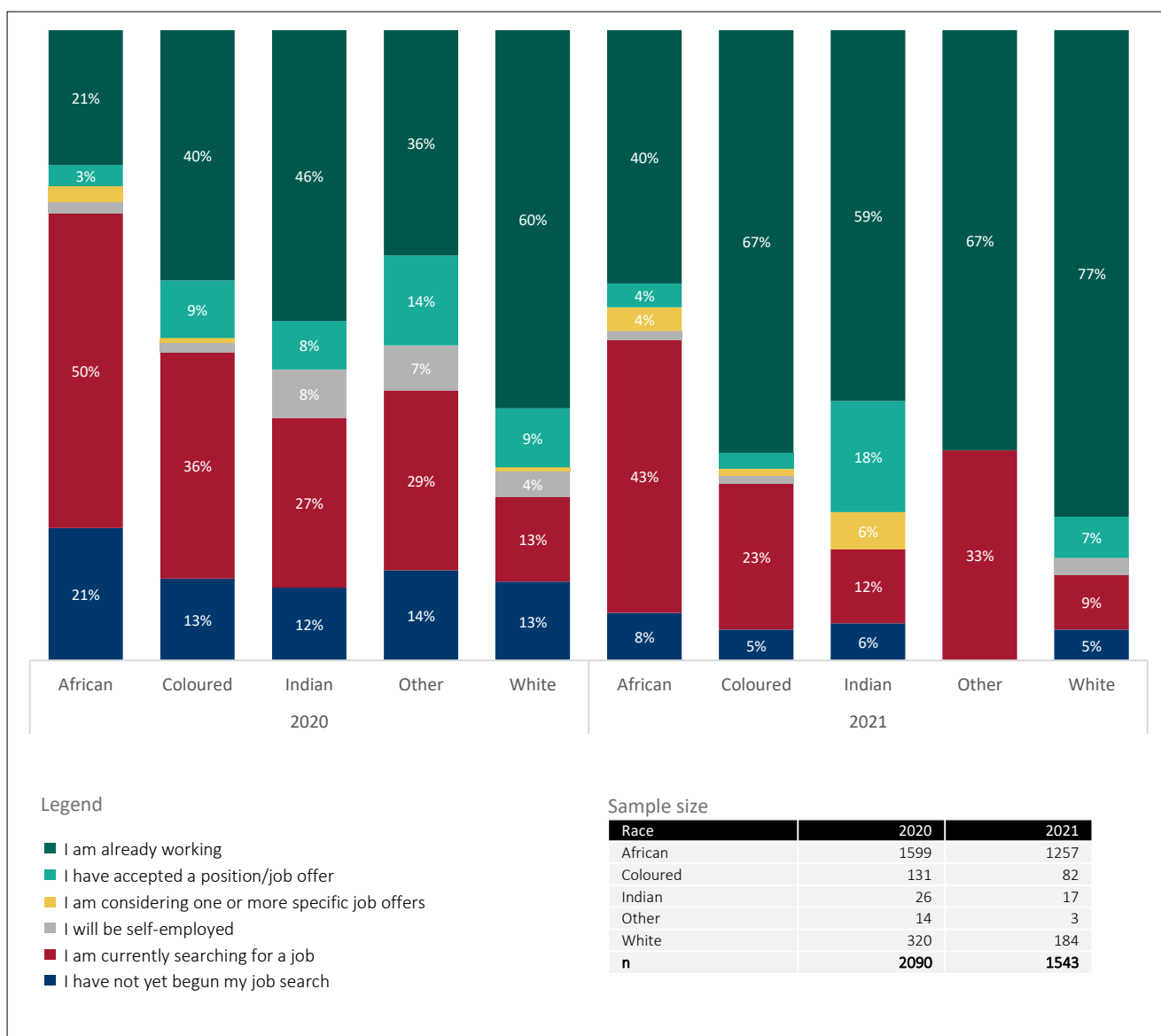


Figure 3: Employment status by race in 2020 and 2021

8.2. Gender

Gender equality in employment has improved considerably. As shown in Figure 4, half of the female graduates were employed in the 2021 cohort, compared to 52% of males, which is a notable improvement from the 2020 cohort, where 29% of female graduates were employed, compared to 41% of males. Thus, the gender difference in graduate employment has decreased from 12% to just 2%. Almost 2 in 5 female graduates (39%) were unemployed in the 2021 cohort. This is a notable reduction from 47% in 2020. Unemployment of male graduates stayed the same (35% in 2021 from 34% in 2020).

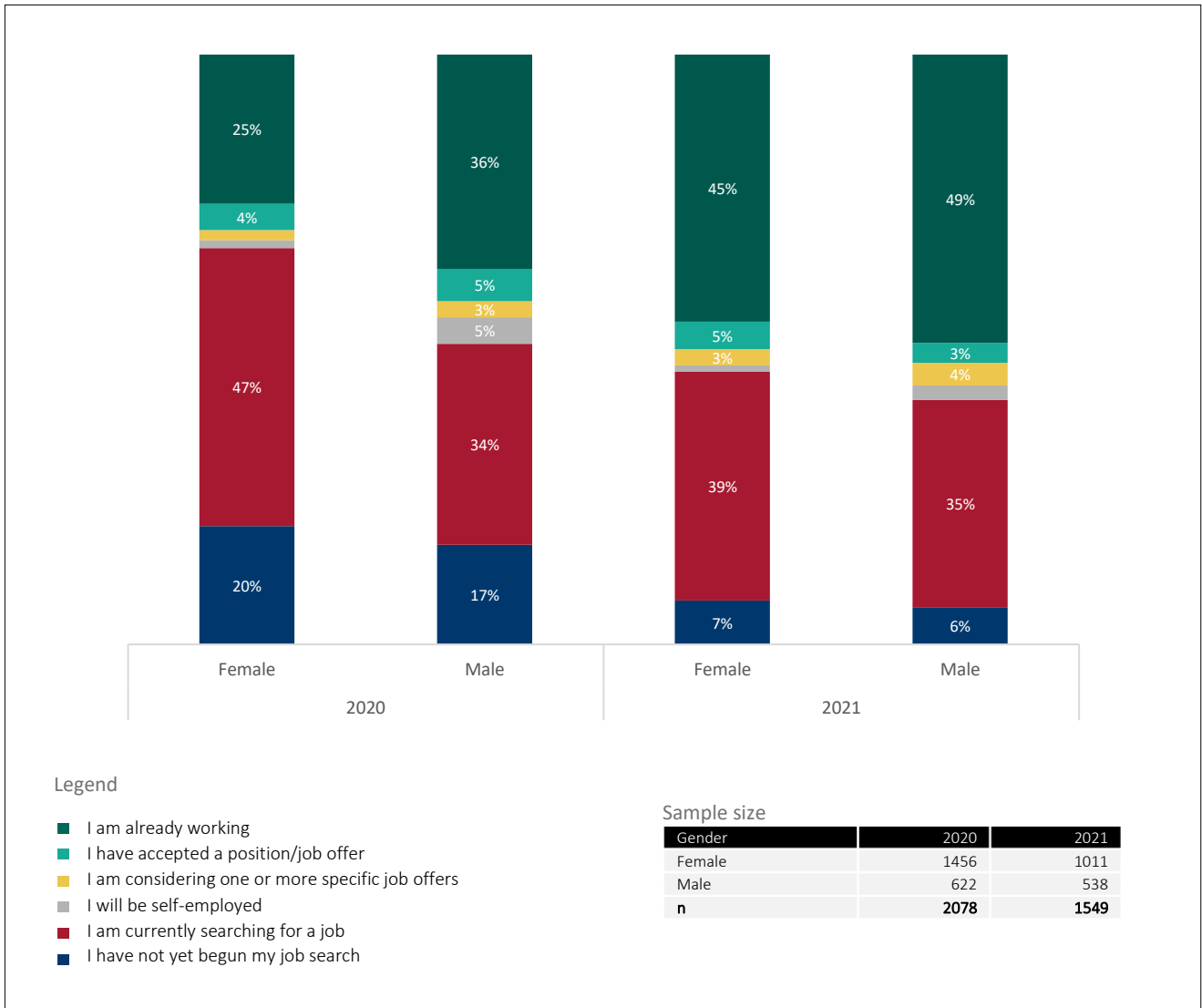


Figure 4: Employment status by gender in 2020 and 2021

8.3. Age cohort

The StatsSA results of 2022 quarter one demonstrated that unemployment was much higher among the youth, compared to those above 35-year-olds (StatsSA-QLFS, 2022). [Figure 5](#) also shows that the younger graduates from the 2021 cohort (those aged 30 years and younger) were highly unemployed compared to older graduates (those 31 years and older). 56% of graduates aged 21 to 25, and 48% of those aged 26 to 30, were unemployed, meaning that employment among younger graduates was substantially higher than the institutional average of 37%. The group least affected by unemployment was the above 35-year-olds (8%) in 2021.

Notably, 38% of the 2021 graduates 20 years and younger had not begun to search for jobs. The reason could be that a large share (67%) were receiving their higher certificate qualifications (see [Table 2](#)) and 100% planned to continue with their studies (see [Table 3](#)). Additionally, their sample size was very small (13).

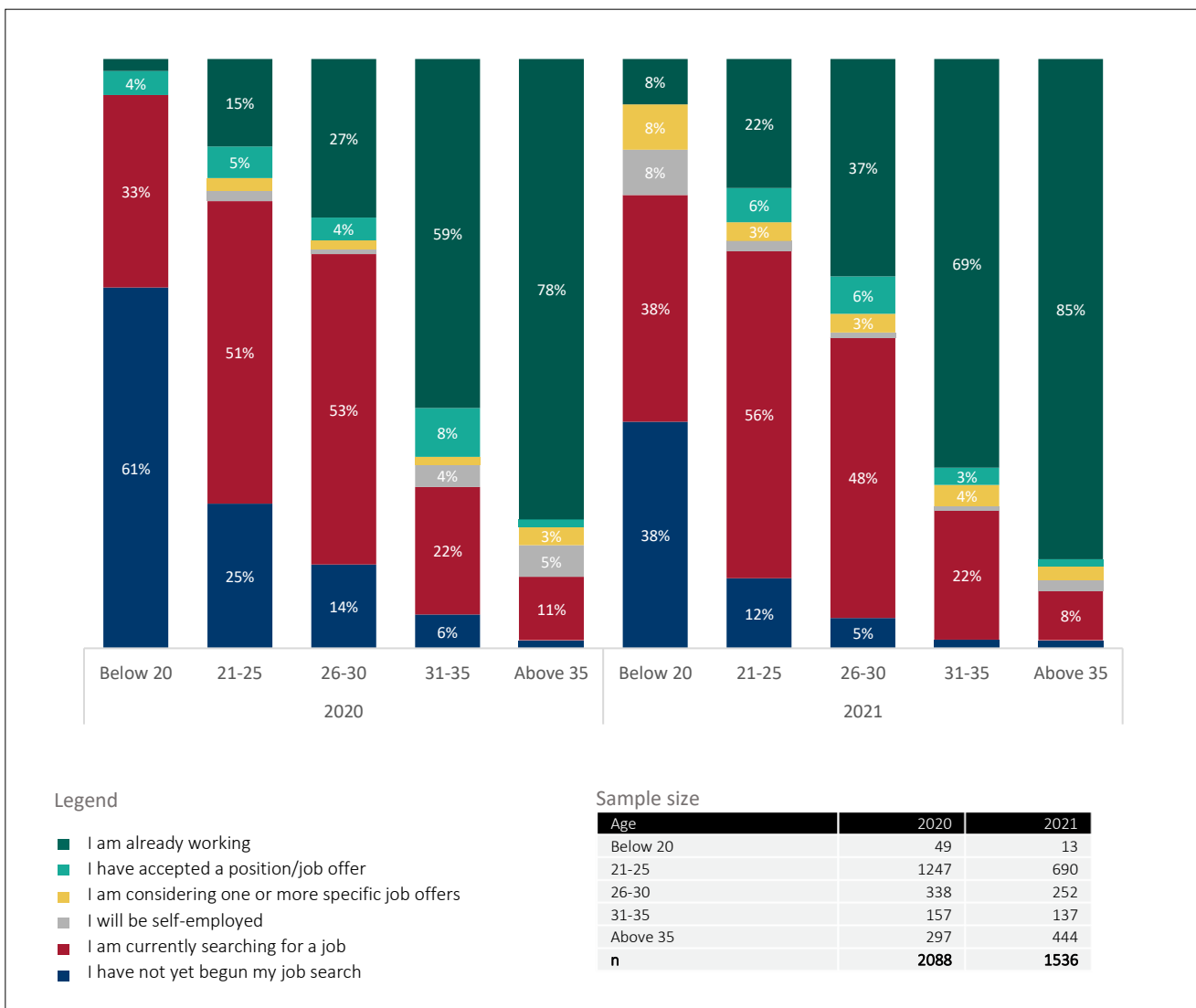


Figure 5: Employment status by age in 2020 and 2021

Table 2: Age cohort and qualification received

Qualification	Below 20	21-25	26-30	31-35	Above 35	Average
Diploma (Dip)	0%	0%	1%	1%	4%	1%
Higher Certificate (HC)	67%	6%	9%	12%	26%	13%
Undergraduate Degree (UGD)	33%	77%	53%	19%	13%	49%
Honours (Hons)	0%	13%	8%	9%	3%	9%
Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)	0%	3%	12%	20%	17%	10%
Masters (M)	0%	2%	16%	26%	25%	13%
Doctorates (D)	0%	0%	2%	11%	12%	5%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
n	15	699	253	137	445	1549

Table 3: Age cohort and plans after graduation

Plans after graduation	Below 20	21-25	26-30	31-35	Above 35	Average
I have not yet decided what I will do	0%	7%	4%	2%	4%	5%
I will be doing volunteer (unpaid) work	0%	3%	3%	1%	1%	2%
I will be studying further	100%	39%	32%	28%	32%	35%
I will be travelling/taking a break	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
I will be working	0%	44%	53%	59%	56%	50%
Other	0%	5%	7%	9%	7%	6%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
n	15	697	246	138	443	1539

8.4. Nationality

Figure 6 shows that the vast majority of graduates were South Africans (92%). Just 3% were from Lesotho and the rest (5%) were from other countries in Africa and beyond. Among South African graduates in 2021, 50% were employed, while 38% were still searching for work. There was no substantial difference concerning the employment of 2021 graduates from Lesotho (48%) and South Africa. However, a large share of graduates from other countries (62%) were already working or had accepted a job offer.

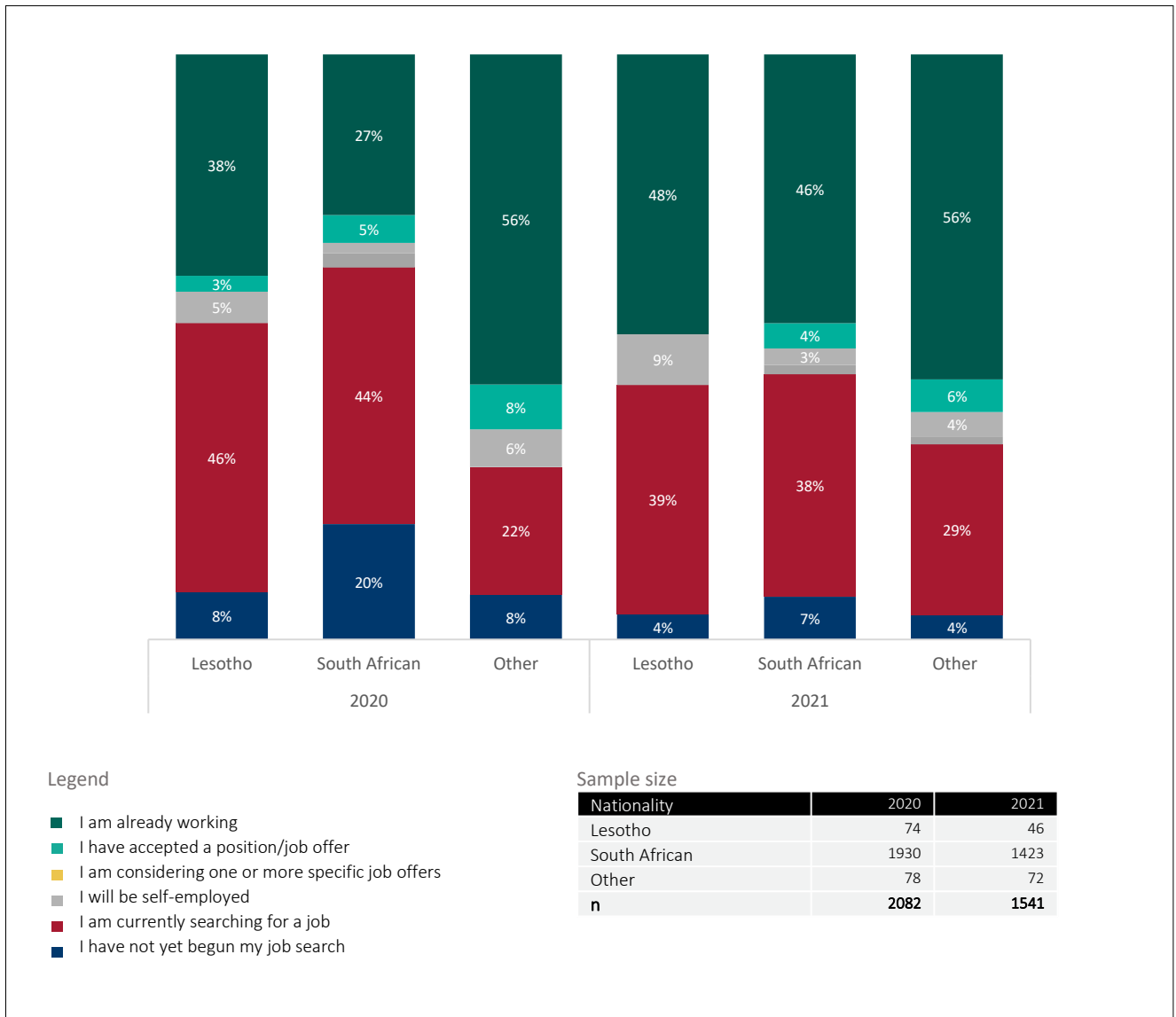


Figure 6: Employment status by nationality in 2020 and 2021

9. EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF FIRST-GENERATION GRADUATES

9.1. Are you the first person in your family to have gone to university?

Graduates were asked if they were the first in their families to go to university, and 45% of the 2021 cohort indicated that they were first-generation students. **Figure 7** demonstrates that employment was notably higher for non-first-generation graduates, at 56%, compared to first-generation graduates (44%). Conversely, unemployment was higher among first-generation graduates at 42%, compared to 33% of non-first-generation. Thus, first-generation graduates have challenges in getting jobs after graduation. Hirudayaraj and McLean (2018) establish that even with identical credentials, first-generation graduates have challenges in getting jobs compared to better-connected non-first-generation graduates. The reasons were that “lack of college education in the family affects the graduates’ career decision-making, familiarity with corporate culture and expectations, preparedness for the corporate sector, and restricted access to people with the ability to ease their entry into the sector” (Hirudayaraj and McLean, 2018:91)

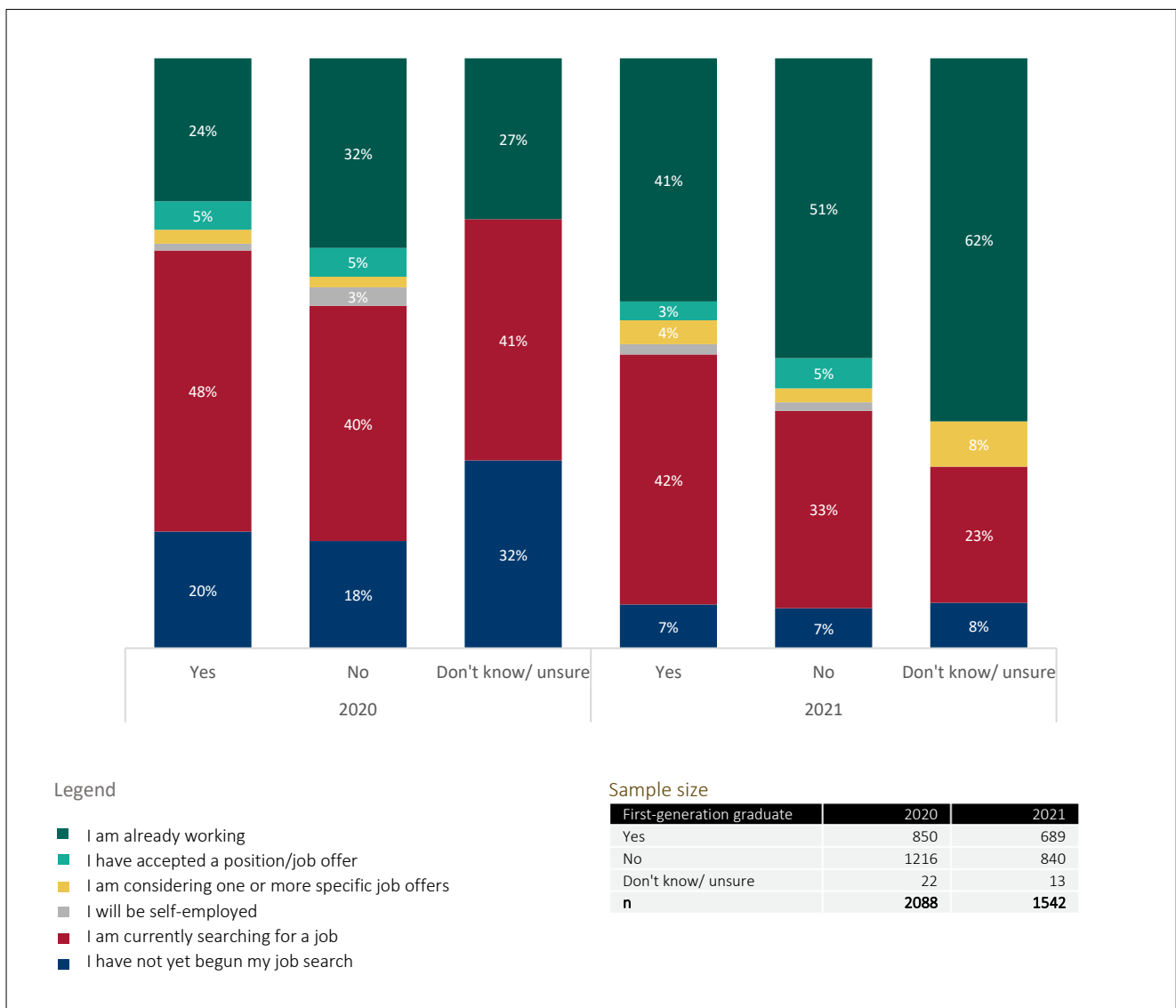


Figure 7: Employment status by first-generation status in 2020 and 2021

9.2. When you started studying at the UFS, was it the first time you registered at a university?

Of the 2021 graduating cohort who responded to the survey, 81% had entered higher education for the first time through the UFS (first-time entering graduates), and the remaining 19% had transferred to the UFS from elsewhere. Figure 8 shows that a large share of transfer graduates were already employed (73%), compared to 45% of first-time entering graduates. However, it should be noted that most transfer graduates were receiving postgraduate qualifications (72%) (see Table 4). Generally, those with postgraduate qualifications had higher employment rates compared to those with undergraduate qualifications.

Unemployment was higher among first-time entering graduates (42%), compared to 21% for transfer graduates. This is not surprising given that the majority of first-time entering graduates (72%) were pursuing undergraduate degrees. This may suggest that the hiring landscape is changing, jobs that traditionally required undergraduate degrees may now require a postgraduate degree as a minimum.

However, there was a notable increase in employment of the first-time entering graduates, from 28% in 2020 to 45% in 2021 and the concomitant drop in unemployment from 47% in 2020, to 42% in 2021.

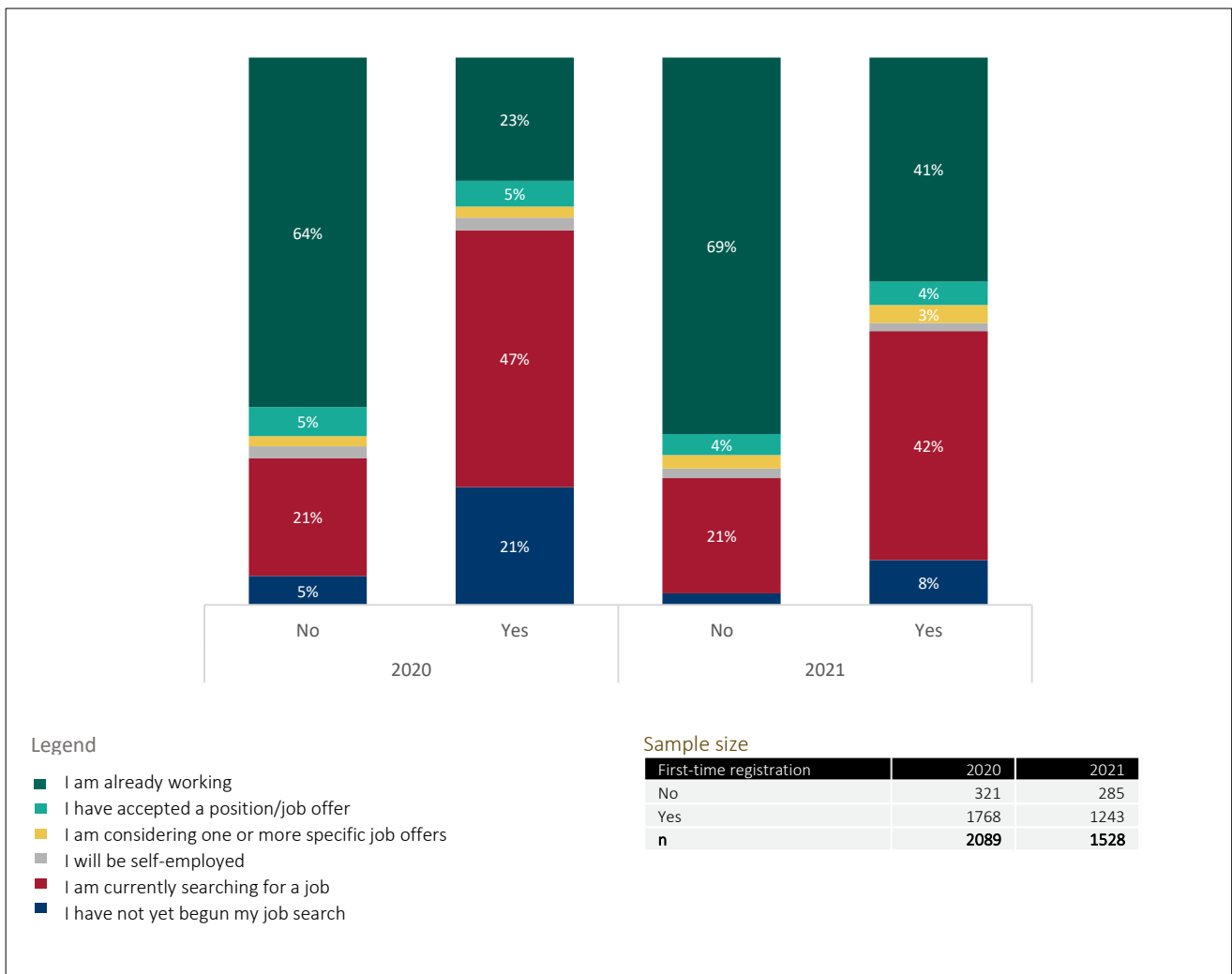


Figure 8: Employment status by first-time university registration in 2020 and 2021

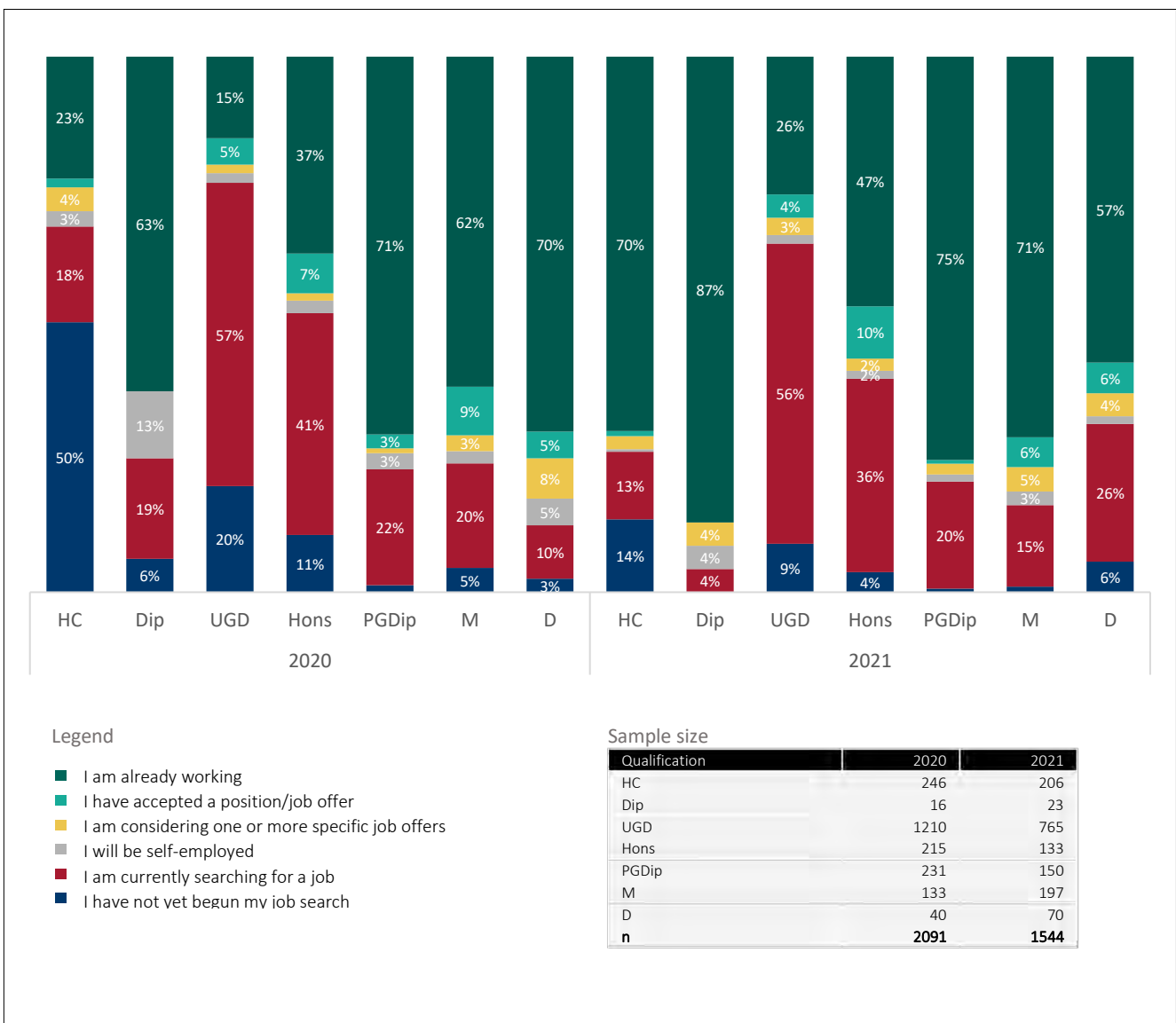
Table 4: First-time university registration by qualification

Qualification	No	Yes	Average
Dip	1%	1%	1%
HC	15%	13%	13%
UGD	11%	58%	50%
Hons	10%	8%	9%
PGDip	20%	8%	10%
M	30%	9%	13%
D	12%	3%	4%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%
n	289	1256	1545

10. EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND QUALIFICATION

10.1. Which qualification are you receiving at this graduation ceremony?

Figure 9 demonstrates that the highest employed graduates by qualification in the 2021 cohort were those receiving a Diploma (87%), followed by Masters graduates (77%), Postgraduate Diplomas (76%), Higher Certificates (71%), Doctorates (63%), and Honours qualifications (57%). Those receiving Undergraduate Degrees recorded the lowest graduate employment at only 30%. These results should be understood in the context of uneven sample sizes where half of all respondents were at Undergraduate Degree level (765). Unsurprisingly, Undergraduate Degree holders recorded the highest unemployment (56%), followed by Honours (36%), Doctoral (26%), and Postgraduate Diplomas (20%). It is concerning that unemployment has more than doubled among Doctoral graduates, from 10% in 2020 to 26% in 2021.



10.2. Was the programme for which you are receiving your qualification your first choice?

Figure 10 demonstrates that graduates who had gained entry to their preferred programmes reported higher employment rates (59%), while 30% were still searching for work in 2021. However, only 31% of the graduates who could not get into their first-choice programmes were employed. Furthermore, a concerning number of them were still searching for jobs (53%). Similar trends were observed in 2020. Thus, getting into their first-choice programme improves the probability of graduates finding work.

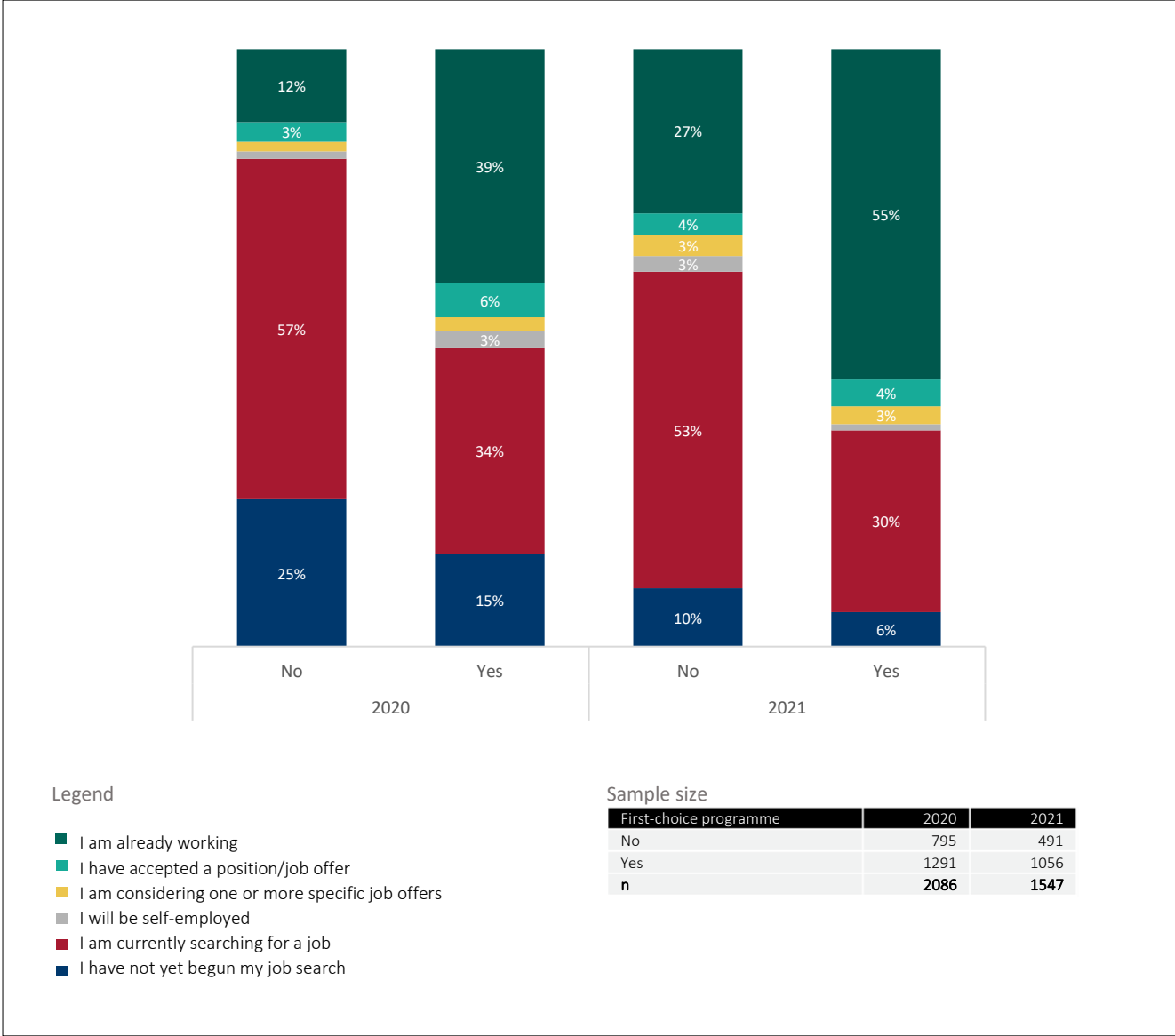


Figure 10: Employment status by first-choice programme in 2020 and 2021

11. EMPLOYMENT BY FACULTY

11.1. Employment status by faculty

Figure 11 demonstrates that Business School graduates (91%) were highly employed, followed by Health Sciences (82%), Law (67%), Education (63%), and Economic and Management Sciences (52%). Natural and Agricultural Sciences (47%), Theology and Religion (44%), and Humanities (20%) have improved significantly from their 2020 results. However, they were still performing below the institutional average of 51% in graduate employment. To address graduate unemployment, faculties have designed strategies and projects to improve their graduate employability. These include work-integrated learning (WIL), LinkedIn Learning platform, industry partnerships, collaboration with the UFS Career Services, redesigning the curriculum, and entrepreneurship and innovation, just to name a few.

Furthermore, Table 5 gives an idea of why unemployment was high in the Humanities (59%). The overwhelming majority of Humanities graduates (83%) received undergraduate degrees, and as established in Figure 9, undergraduate degrees recorded the highest unemployment compared to other qualifications. In addition, Table 6 shows that the majority of Humanities graduates (84%) were within the age groups highly affected by unemployment, i.e., 21 to 30 years of age (see Figure 5). A comparable study conducted by Mncayi (2016) among graduates from a SA university found that unemployment was higher among younger graduates from humanities with majors in the arts courses.

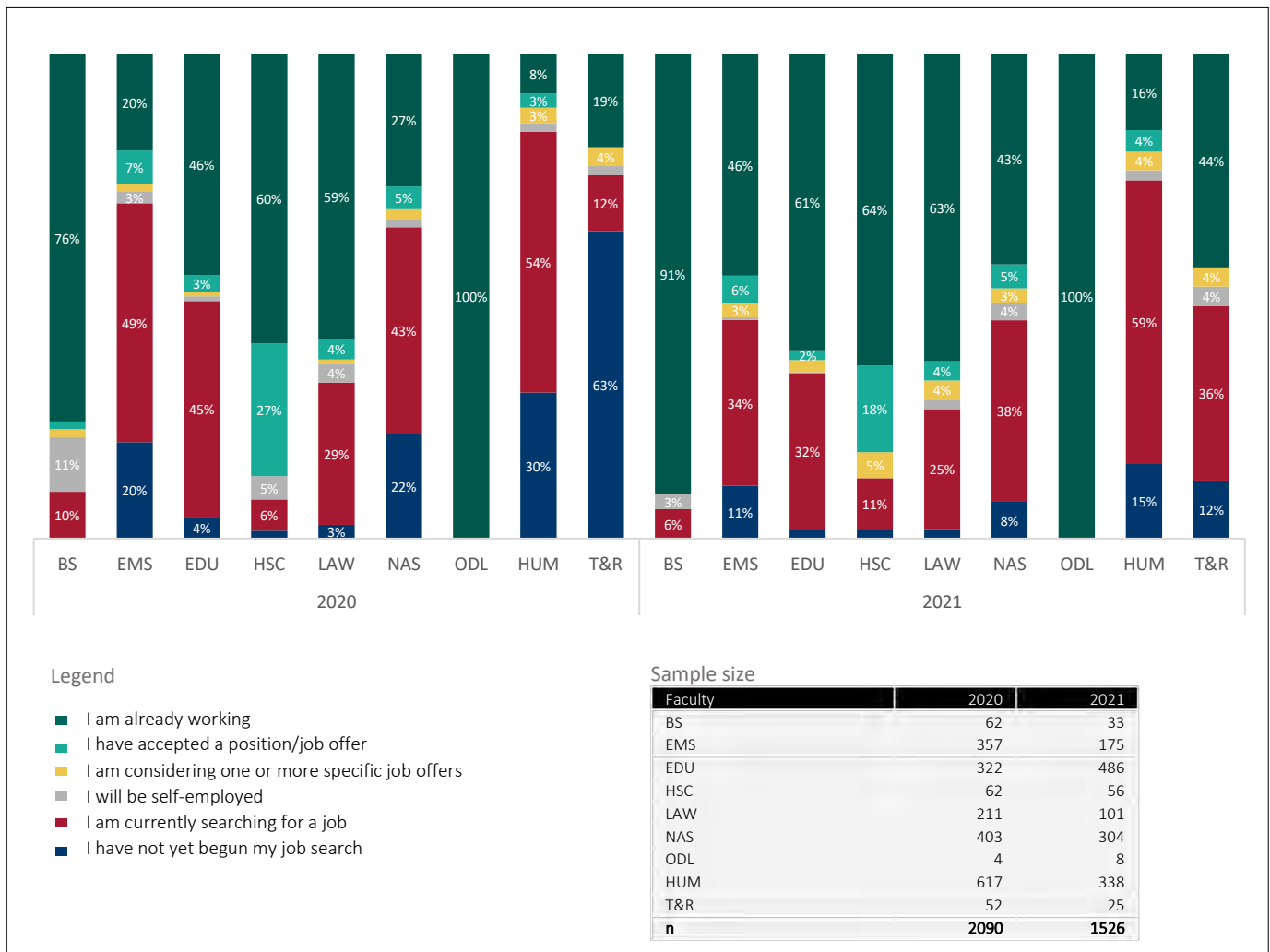


Figure 11: Employment status by faculty in 2020 and 2021

Table 5: Qualification received by faculty

Qualification	BS	EMS	EDU	HSC	Law	NAS	ODL	HUM	T&R	Average
HC	3%	12%	29%	0%	0%	0%	50%	10%	42%	14%
Dip	0%	0%	2%	0%	3%	0%	25%	1%	12%	1%
UGD	30%	49%	48%	19%	41%	39%	13%	72%	0%	49%
Hons	0%	19%	4%	13%	5%	15%	0%	6%	0%	8%
PGDip	58%	7%	11%	17%	35%	5%	13%	2%	0%	10%
M	6%	10%	3%	44%	15%	31%	0%	6%	31%	13%
D	3%	3%	3%	7%	1%	10%	0%	3%	15%	5%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
n	33	178	484	54	102	309	8	345	26	1539

Table 6: Qualification received by age cohort

Age	BS	EMS	EDU	HSC	Law	NAS	ODL	HUM	T&R	Average
Below-20	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	4%	1%
21-25	0%	59%	32%	25%	31%	50%	14%	65%	35%	45%
26-30	12%	12%	16%	13%	29%	15%	0%	19%	8%	16%
31-35	21%	7%	7%	27%	11%	10%	29%	6%	0%	9%
Above 35	67%	20%	45%	36%	30%	26%	57%	8%	54%	29%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
n	33	177	481	56	101	309	7	341	26	1531

11.2. Is your job permanent or temporary?

Table 7 establishes that most of the employed graduates (64%) were in permanent jobs. However, Humanities (26%) recorded the lowest number of graduates in permanent employment. This is concerning given that the Faculty also recorded the highest graduate unemployment (see Figure 11). Conversely, the Faculty recorded a concerning number of graduates in temporary jobs (44%). Therefore, not only does Humanities have the lowest employed graduates, but many of those employed are in temporary jobs.

Table 7: Employment type by faculty - permanent versus temporary

Job type	BS	EMS	EDU	HSC	Law	NAS	ODL	HUM	T&R	Average
Permanent	89%	56%	74%	58%	68%	65%	100%	26%	64%	64%
Temporary	7%	34%	19%	38%	28%	26%	0%	44%	21%	26%
Don't know/Unsure	4%	10%	6%	4%	4%	9%	0%	30%	14%	10%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
n	28	98	360	48	72	176	8	119	14	923

11.3. Is your job full-time or part-time?

Table 8 shows that an overwhelming number of graduates were in full-time employment (85%). Only a small fraction were in part-time jobs (10%). However, a notable number of graduates from ODL (25%), HUM (14%), and EDU (14%) were employed part-time.

Table 8: Employment type by faculty - full-time versus part-time

Full-time/ Part-time	BS	EMS	EDU	HSC	Law	NAS	ODL	HUM	T&R	Average
At least 8 hours per day	100%	86%	83%	98%	94%	88%	75%	73%	80%	85%
Less than 8 hours per day	0%	9%	14%	2%	4%	6%	25%	14%	7%	10%
Don't know/Unsure	0%	5%	3%	0%	1%	6%	0%	13%	13%	5%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
n	28	97	353	48	72	177	8	124	15	922

11.4. Is your job related to the qualification you are receiving?

There are two commonly adopted approaches to understanding underemployment, namely the time-based approach and the insufficient employment situation approach. In the former, underemployment means those employed but working fewer hours than they wished for, and in the latter, it refers to a “situation where workers find themselves in professions or jobs where their skills, training, and experience are underutilised” (Beukes, Fransman, Murozvi, and Yu, 2016:34). Over-qualification and skills mismatch are part of the inadequate employment situation approach. Table 9 measures the inadequate employment situation approach concerning the UFS graduates. In particular, it monitors the extent to which an employed graduate’s job is related to their qualification. Institutionally, 68% of employed graduates were in jobs related to their qualifications and 19% were in partly related jobs. However, a concerning number of Humanities graduates (22%) were employed in jobs unrelated to their qualifications.

Table 9: Relationship between qualification and employment by faculty

Employment relation	BS	EMS	EDU	HSC	Law	NAS	ODL	HUM	T&R	Average
Directly related	29%	59%	89%	85%	62%	61%	100%	31%	47%	68%
Partly related	57%	24%	6%	15%	27%	27%	0%	32%	40%	19%
Unrelated	14%	12%	2%	0%	10%	8%	0%	22%	0%	8%
Don't know/Unsure	0%	5%	3%	0%	1%	4%	0%	16%	13%	5%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
n	28	97	353	47	71	171	8	120	15	910

11.5. Please indicate the monthly salary range of your accepted job offer

Table 10 demonstrates that nearly half of employed graduates in the Humanities (48%) were earning less than R10 000 per month, which is significantly higher than the institutional average of 17%. The Business School (39%), Health Sciences (36%), and Law (34%) recorded a large share of graduates earning more than R30 000 per month. These figures are not surprising, given that the Business School targets the working-age population, while both Health Sciences and Law offer mostly professional degrees with clear career pathways.

Table 10: Monthly salary range by faculty

Monthly salary	BS	EMS	EDU	HSC	Law	NAS	ODL	HUM	T&R	Average
Less than R 10 000	4%	19%	10%	0%	25%	14%	0%	48%	20%	17%
R 10 001 – R20 000	7%	26%	35%	13%	14%	23%	38%	12%	13%	25%
R 20 001 – R30 000	18%	13%	29%	21%	13%	20%	63%	8%	27%	21%
More than R 30 000	39%	16%	6%	36%	34%	22%	0%	6%	0%	15%
Don't know/Unsure	0%	9%	5%	6%	1%	4%	0%	16%	20%	7%
I prefer not to say	32%	16%	14%	23%	13%	17%	0%	9%	20%	15%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
n	28	97	353	47	71	172	8	116	15	907

12. EMPLOYERS

Figure 12 demonstrates that the top fields of employment recorded were education (45%); agriculture and environment (8%); accountancy, banking, finance, and auditing (7%); government and public services (6%); and healthcare (6%). As shown in Table 1, the Faculty of Education had the largest share of respondents to the GES. Therefore, it is not surprising that education is the most popular field of employment.

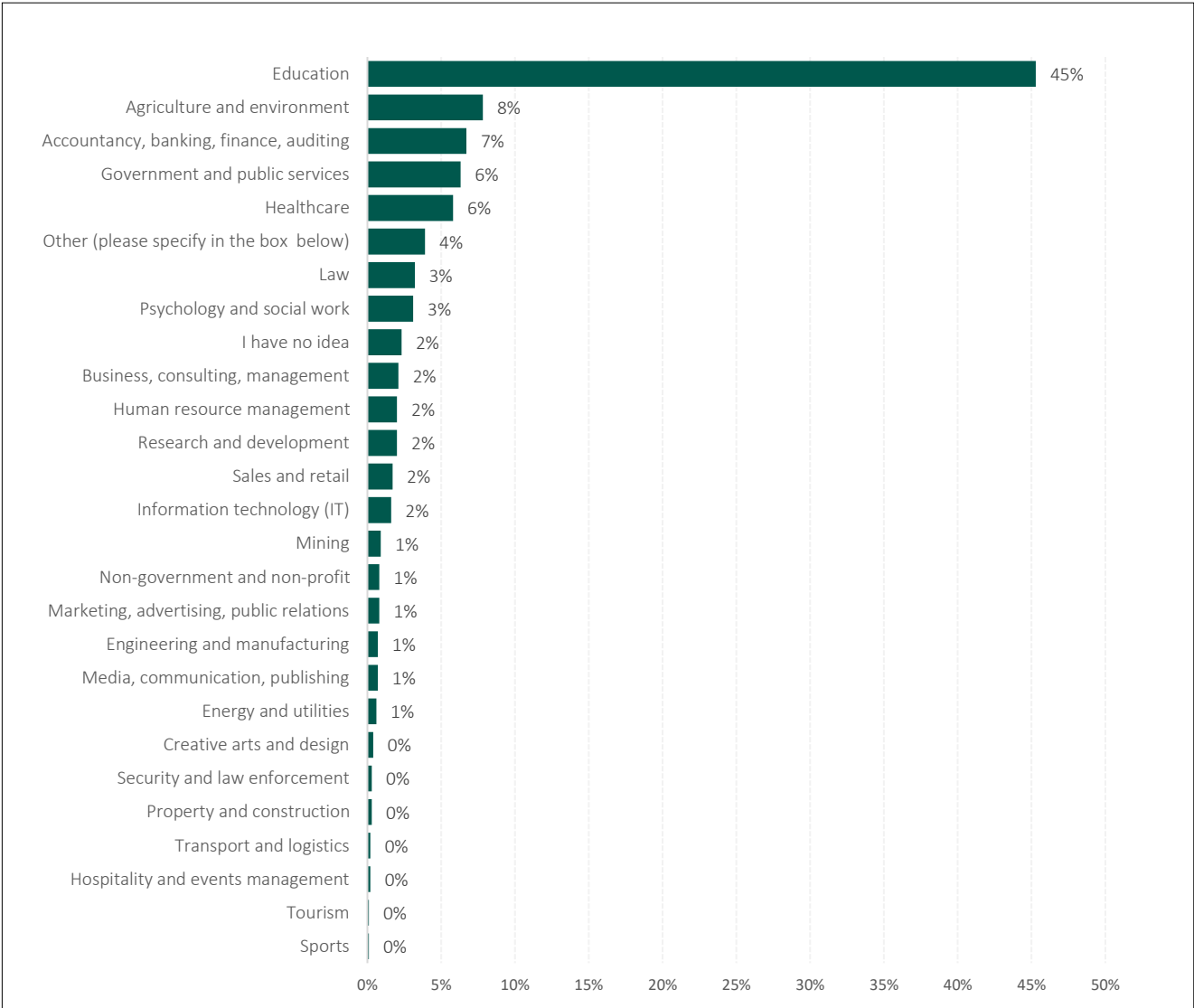


Figure 12: Fields of employment (n = 998)

12.1. Employer province

Figure 13 shows that the largest proportion of employed graduates in South Africa (SA) were working in the Free State (29%), followed by Gauteng (24%), and KwaZulu-Natal (11%). The smallest share of graduates were employed in the North-West (2%).

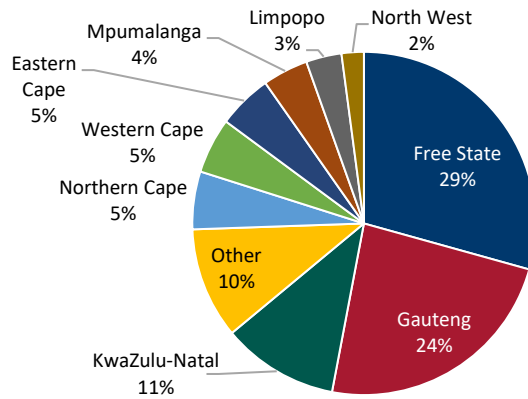


Figure 13: Employer province in South Africa (n = 955)

12.2. Employer country

As shown in Figure 13, a notable number of graduates selected other (10%). These were graduates who indicated that they were working outside South Africa, predominantly in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, such as Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Countries of employment outside SADC but on the African continent include Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda. However, it should be noted that, in terms of nationality, these were international students returning to work in their home countries.

UFS graduates are also finding employment outside Africa in Australia, Bahrain, China, Iraq, Kuwait, New Zealand, and the United States. Some graduates reported that they were going to work remotely for international companies. Although only a negligible number of graduates reported working remotely, this is an important opportunity to improve UFS graduate employability. Since 2020, many companies globally have changed their human resource (HR) model to allow for remote or hybrid work, and the UFS should therefore ensure that graduates have the requisite skills for this type of work environment.

13. FURTHER STUDY AND INSTITUTIONAL REPUTATION

13.1. When will you be furthering your studies?

Figure 14 shows that the majority of graduates (41% and 42%) plan to continue their education in 2022 and 2023, respectively.

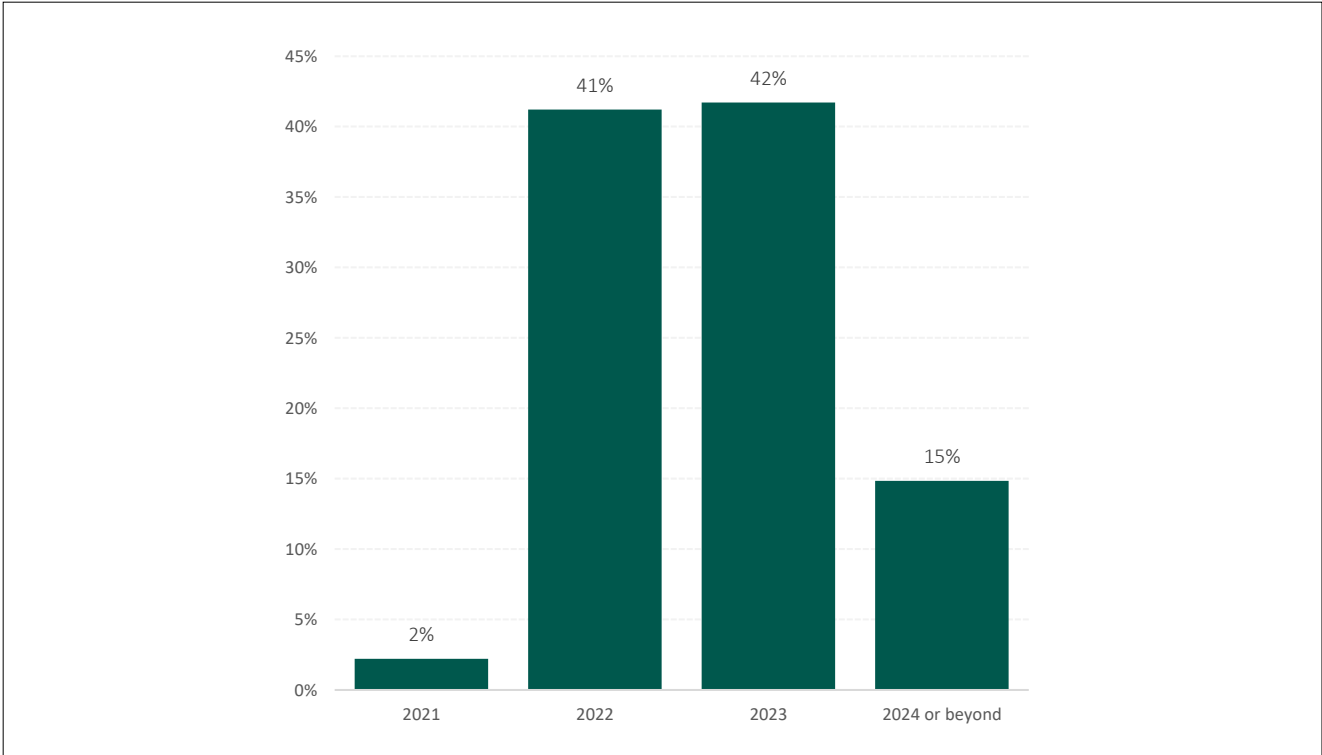


Figure 14: When will you be furthering your studies? (n = 1172)

13.2. Which qualification will you be/are pursuing?

Figure 15 demonstrates that a large share of graduates were planning to pursue an Honours degree (42%), followed by Masters (18%), Postgraduate Diploma (14%), Doctoral (12%), and Undergraduate Degree (11%).

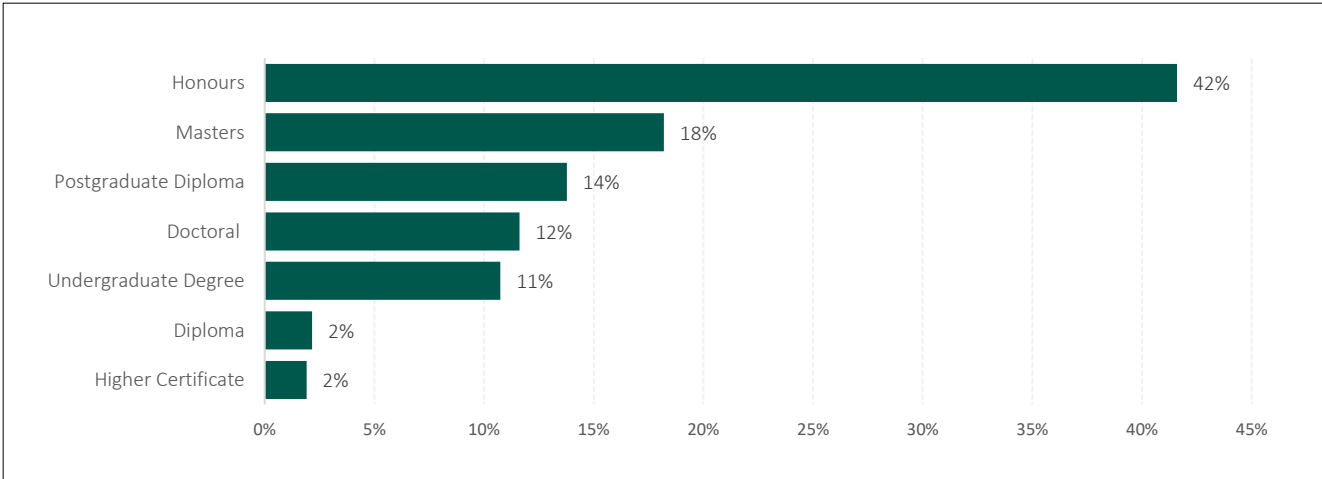


Figure 15: Which qualification will you be/are pursuing? (n = 1154)

13.3. Are your further studies related to the qualification obtained?

As shown in [Figure 16](#), 3 out of 4 of the 2021 cohort plan to pursue studies directly related to their qualifications. This shows good curriculum design and vertical progression. Only 4% plan to continue with studies unrelated to the qualification obtained.

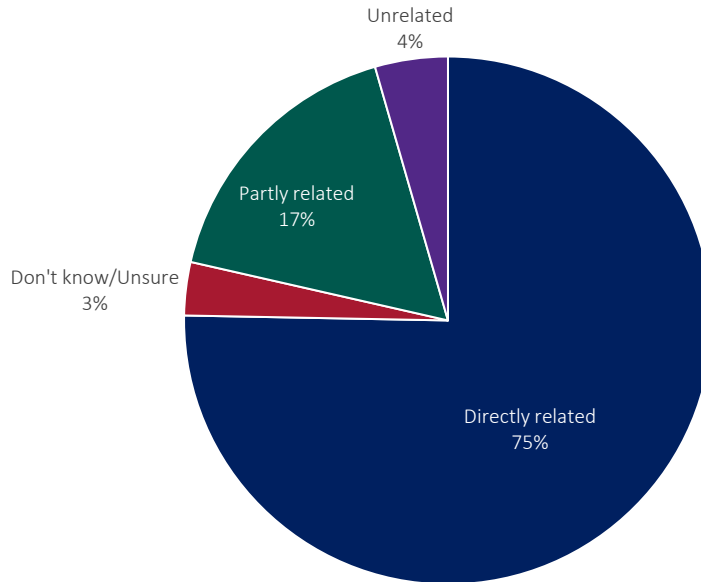


Figure 16: Are your further studies related to the qualification obtained? (n = 1166)

13.4. Where will you be furthering your studies?

[Figure 17](#) demonstrates that most graduates (66%) would return to the UFS to further their studies. However, institutional data from DIRAP indicates that of the 10 540 graduates from the 2021 cohort, only 2262 returned to the UFS in 2022. Thus, the actual return rate is 21%. There are many reasons why graduates may opt to stay at the same university for their further studies. For example, familiarity with the environment makes the application process much more straightforward, and the university already has students' details and academic records (Craig, 2017). Furthermore, faculties are always keen to retain their students for further studies. In addition, the cumbersome process associated with moving to a new university is avoided. There are also financial advantages to staying in the same university, city or town.

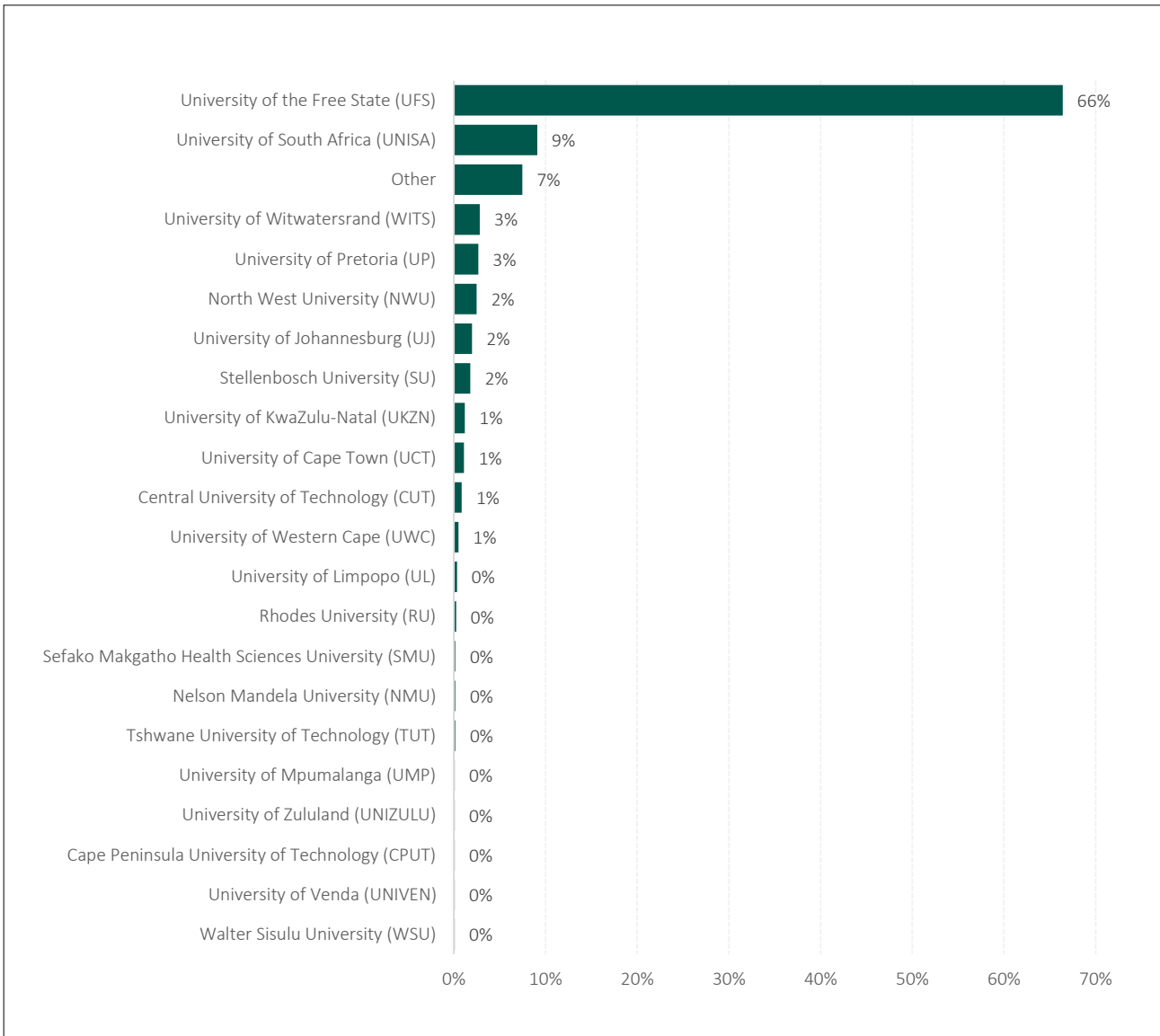


Figure 17: Where will you be furthering your studies? (n = 1164)

13.5. Where is this institution located?

Given that 66% of graduates indicated that they would return to the UFS to further their studies (see Figure 17), it is not surprising that the Free State province remains a popular choice (see Figure 18). Institutions in Gauteng (16%) were also popular choices for many UFS graduates.

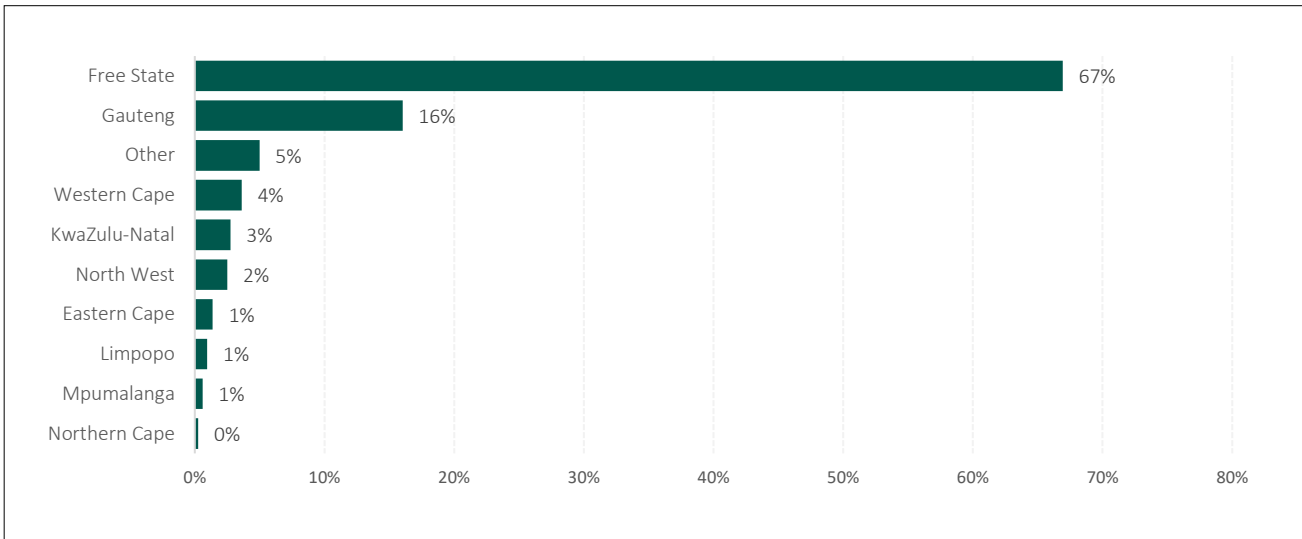


Figure 18: Location of institution (n = 1161)

13.6. Would you recommend the UFS to others?

Graduates are best placed to give an informed view of an institution given their experiences. Thus, it is impressive that an overwhelming number of UFS graduates (86%) would recommend the institution to others (see Figure 19). This demonstrates that the UFS maintains a good reputation among its graduates.

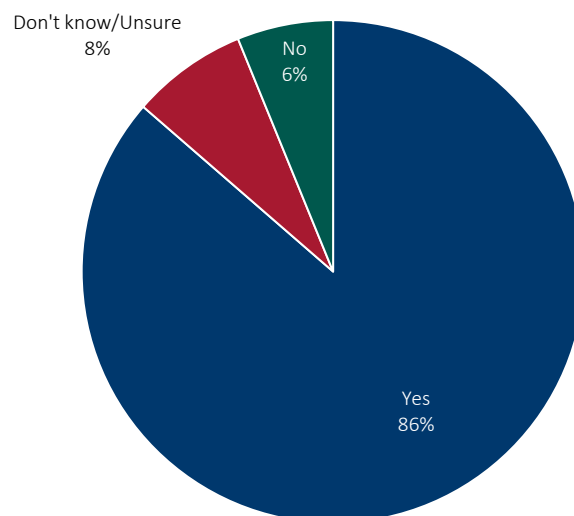


Figure 19: Would you recommend the UFS to others (n = 1490)

13.7. Indicate why you would recommend UFS to others

Figure 20 shows the top reasons why graduates would recommend the UFS have to do with two core functions of the institution, namely learning and teaching, and research. These are:

- Good academic reputation
- High quality of academic staff
- Supportive academic environment
- Good research resources
- Availability of a wide range of academic programmes

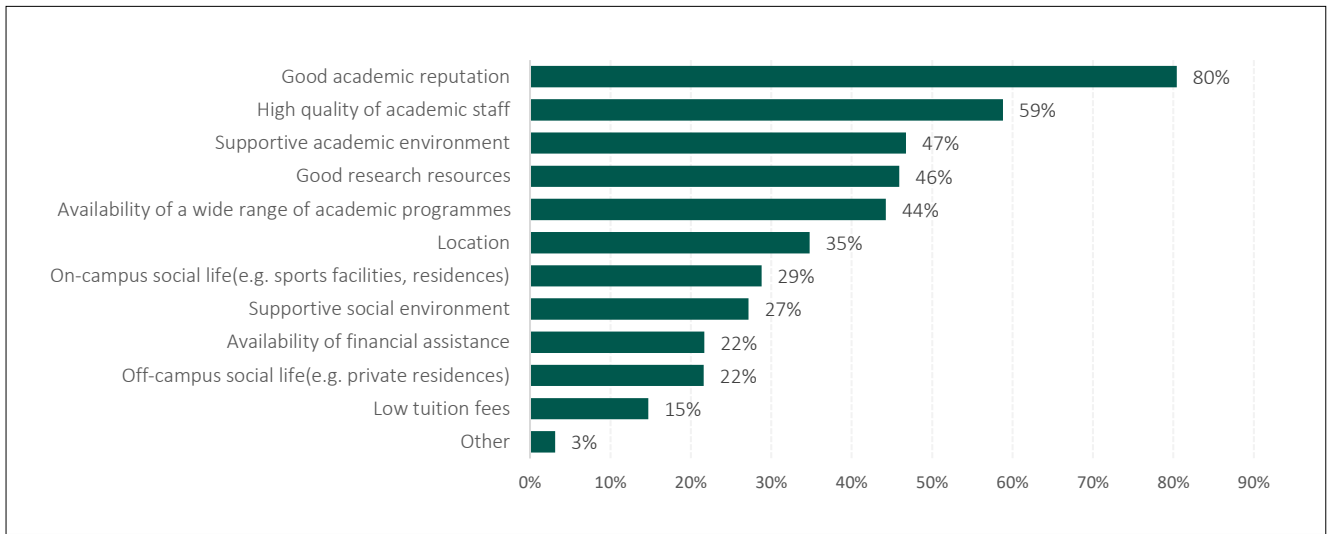


Figure 20: Indicate why you would recommend the UFS to others (n = 1435)

13.8. How satisfied are you with the UFS as a whole?

Figure 21 below shows high levels of satisfaction among graduates with regard to the UFS as a whole. As shown in the graph below, 76% of graduates were satisfied or very satisfied. This may further explain why the majority of graduates would recommend the UFS to others (see Figure 19).

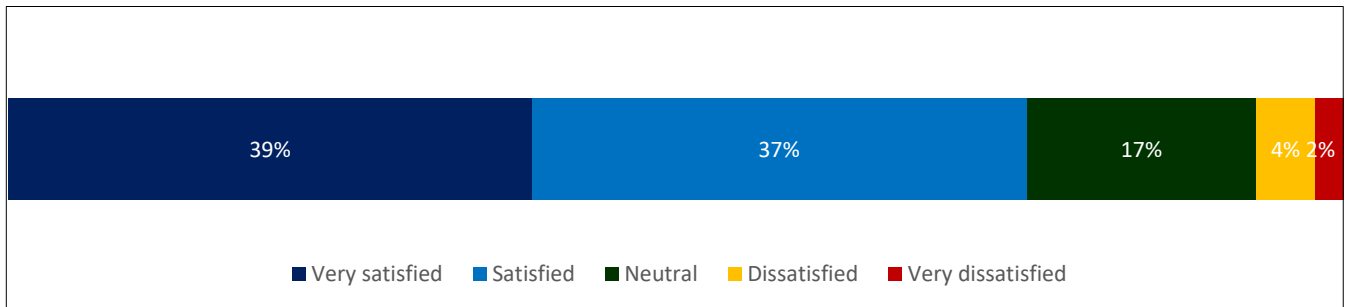


Figure 21: Satisfaction with the UFS as a whole (n=1568)

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