



**EMPLOYER AND LEARNER EXPERIENCE OF THE PHLEBOTOMY
TECHNIQUES LEARNERSHIP FUNDED BY THE HWSETA:
A CASE STUDY OF AMPATH TRUST**

REPORT WRITTEN BY
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TRUST**

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The views expressed in this report are those of the Author and not those of the HWSETA.
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PREFACE

An evaluation project consisting of eight single case studies was conducted on the learnership programme of the Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA). The aim of conducting this project was to evaluate the implementation of the learnership programme, its outcomes, and its impact.

The source document that was used for identifying the eight case studies was the SETA Quarter Monitoring Report (SQMR) for the financial year 2013/14. The SQMR of the financial year 2013/14 was the most recent as the project commenced in September 2014. From this SQMR, the report that was used was that of the certificated unemployed learnerships only. This was based on the evaluation approach that was utilised which was summative. Summative evaluation is conducted at the end of a project/intervention because it reviews whether the objectives of a project/intervention have been achieved, (www.evaluation toolbox.net). It is important to note that the report on the certificated unemployed learnerships contained learnerships whose certifications were reported in 2013/14. This therefore means that the certifications may have occurred in previous years but were only reported to the HWSETA in 2013/14.

The learnerships that were evaluated were those that were linked to occupations classified by the HWSETA Sector Skills Plan (SSP) 2014/15 as requiring scarce and critical skills. The certificated unemployed learnerships reported in the SQMR 2013/14 that were linked to such occupations included the following learnerships:

1. FET Certificate in Phlebotomy Technique
2. FET Certificate in Pharmacist Assistance
3. FET Certificate in Social Auxiliary Work
4. FET Certificate in Child and Youth Care Work
5. FET Certificate in General Nursing: Auxiliary
6. FET Certificate in General Nursing: Enrolled
7. Diploma in General Nursing: Bridging
8. Advanced Certificate in Diagnostic Radiography

One employer was identified as a single case study from each of these learnerships.

An in-depth inquiry of these case studies was conducted between September and November 2014. Individual reports are being compiled for each single case study. Once all eight reports have been completed, a report on all eight case studies will be compiled.

This report provides an evaluation of the learnership that was implemented by Ampath Trust. This employer is evaluated as a single case study.

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EMPLOYER AND LEARNER EXPERIENCE OF THE PHLEBOTOMY LEARNERSHIP FUNDED BY THE HWSETA: A CASE STUDY OF AMPATH TRUST

ABSTRACT

This is an evaluation study that aims to review the FETC: Phlebotomy Techniques (NQF level 4) learnership offered by Ampath Trust. This employer was evaluated as a single case study in order to obtain in-depth information about the implementation of this learnership programme, its outcomes, and its impact. Ampath Trust provided the employer's perspective of the learnership and the learners employed in this learnership provided the learner perspective. This report therefore presents the findings of the evaluation study conducted on Ampath Trust as a case study.

The objectives of the study included the following:

1. To evaluate whether the implementation of the learnership by the HWSETA was effective and efficient in the view of the employer.
2. To evaluate the importance/relevance of this learnership to the sector and to Ampath Trust.
3. To evaluate the outcome/impact of the learnership in Phlebotomy Techniques.
4. To evaluate the sustainability of the learnership in Phlebotomy Techniques within Ampath Trust.

This study was both qualitative and quantitative. Convenience sampling was used to identify the case study. Two Skills Development Facilitators, three Learnership Coordinators, and one Workplace Supervisor/mentor represented Ampath Trust. Ten learners whose certification was reported to the HWSETA in 2013/14 by Ampath Trust provided learner views for the case study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participants who represented the employer. Two focus group discussions were held with the learners.

The findings of this study, therefore, are derived from the analysis of all interviewed participants. From the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

- The learnership was implemented *effectively* by the HWSETA
- The learnership was not consistently implemented *efficiently* by the HWSETA
- The learnership is important to the sector and to Ampath Trust
- The outcome/impact of the learnership was good for both Ampath Trust and its learners.

- The learnership programme in Phlebotomy Techniques was found to be sustainable.

The recommendations of this study are therefore as follows:

1. The HWSETA should record the date of issue of certificates so as to be able to identify the cause of the delay in the reporting thereof and thus address it.
2. It is recommended that Ampath aligns its recruitment and selection process to that of the HWSETA.
3. Since the reason for the learners who dropped out of the programme was religious beliefs that did not agree with the curriculum for Phlebotomy Techniques, it is recommended that Ampath Trust assesses this in its selection processes.
4. The selection process of Ampath Trust should be taken as a best practice model for the selection of learners for learnerships.
5. The HWSETA should conduct a survey to evaluate whether all employees have the same experience of receiving tranches late, and also look into the effects these delays have on employers.

INTRODUCTION

This is an evaluation study that aims to review the learnership of Phlebotomy Techniques offered by Ampath Trust. This employer was awarded a learnership by the HWSETA to offer occupational training in FETC: Phlebotomy Techniques (NQF level 4). This learnership is registered by the HWSETA with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). According to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA, 2012) the purpose of this qualification is to develop learner competence in performing Phlebotomy Techniques within the Pathology environment. The HWSETA career guidance booklet provides a more detailed description of what Phlebotomy Techniques involve. The booklet states that the primary function of Phlebotomy is a science of drawing blood. The primary function of a Phlebotomy Technician is to obtain patient blood specimens by venepuncture or micro-techniques. A Phlebotomy Technician aids in the collection and transportation of other laboratory specimens, and may be involved with patient data entry. A Phlebotomy Technician also draws blood for transfusions, donations, and analysis.

Amphat Trust was evaluated as a single case study in order to obtain in-depth information about the implementation of this learnership programme, its outcomes, and its impact. In order to conduct a proper review, Amphat Trust provided the employer's perspective of the learnership and the learners employed in this learnership provided the learner perspective. This report therefore presents the methods used to conduct the evaluation, the findings drawn through those methods, the interpretation of the findings, the conclusions drawn from the findings, and the recommendations. The actual evaluation of this learnership will be conducted through the interpretation of the findings and the conclusions drawn from these findings.

1.1 Background to the Study

Learnerships can be defined as work-based learning programmes that lead to NQF registered qualifications. They are directly related to an occupation or field of work, (SAQA webpage). Learnerships can also be described as formal learning programmes that link theoretical learning and structured work experience to prepare employees and those outside of work with the skills and knowledge required to perform competently in an occupation for which there is a clear demand. Their primary aim is to ensure the provision of skills to the unemployed or employed unskilled individuals. The primary purpose of learnerships is to provide learners with an efficient introduction to the world of work. Learnerships are considered as preparation for further learning.

According to the Sector Skills Plan (2014-15), the HWSETA has 18 learnerships that are registered with DHET. These include:

Table 1: HWSETA learnerships

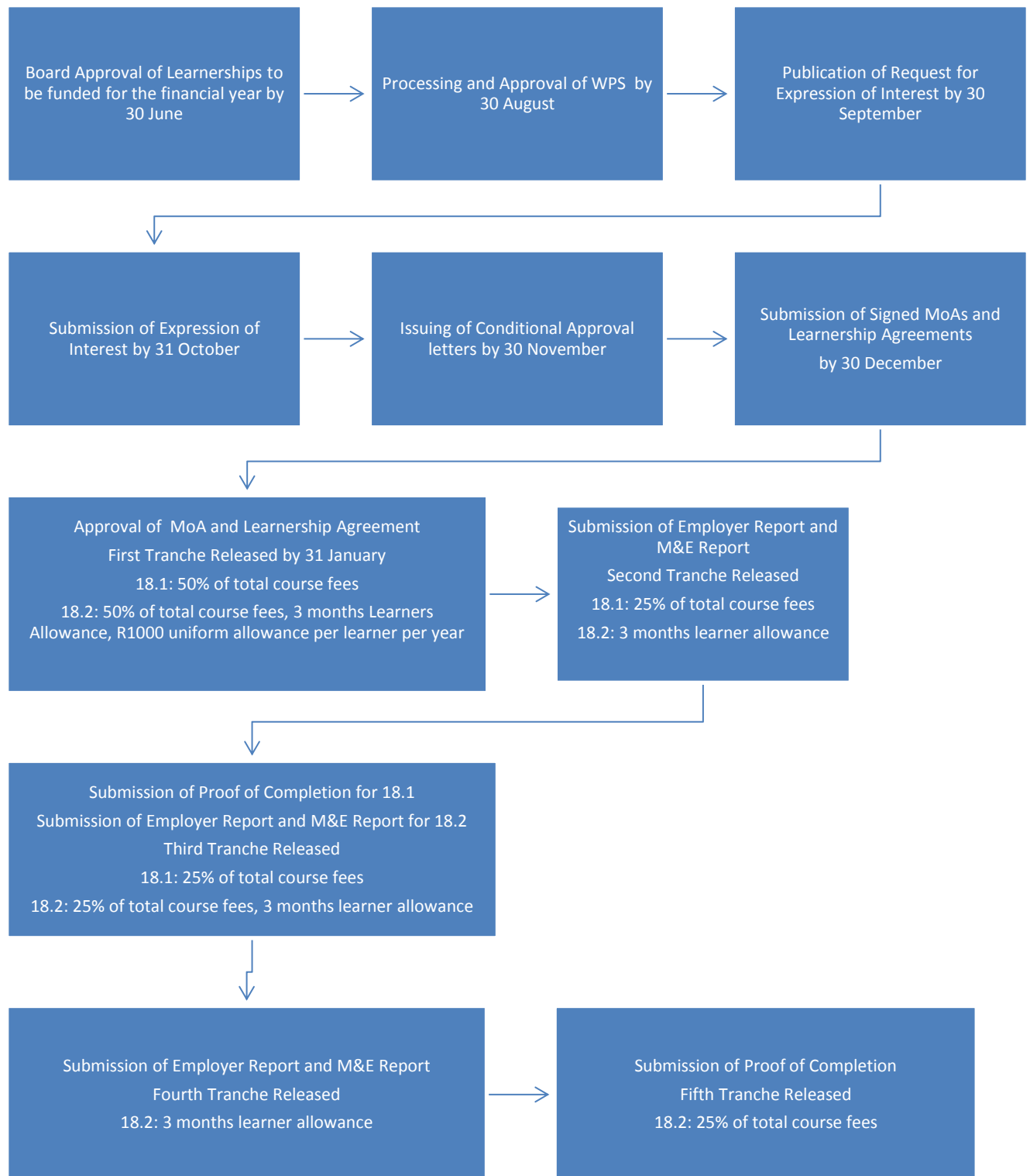
HWSETA REGISTERED LEARNERSHIPS					
	LEARNERSHIP TITLE	NQF LEV EL	LEARNERSHIP CODE	SAQA QUALIFICA TION ID	PROFESSIO NAL BODY
1	NC: Ancillary Health Care	1	11 Q 110011 31 125 1	49606	HWSETA
2	NC: Theology and Ministry	2	11 Q 110017 30 120 2	48891	HWSETA
3	NC: Pharmacist Assistance	3	11 Q 110002 13 120 3	72049	SAPC
4	NC: Community Health Work	3	11 Q 110016 27 120 3	64769	HWSETA
5	FETC: Pharmacist Assistance (Post Basic)	4	11 Q 110001 08 120 4	72050	SAPC
6	FETC: General Nursing (Enrolled)	4	11 Q 110003 00 132 4	17168	SANC
7	FETC: General Nursing (Auxiliary)	4	11 Q 110008 20 132 4	17152	SANC
8	FETC: Social Auxiliary Work	4	11 Q 110012 00 180 4	23993	SACSSP
9	FETC: Child and Youth Care Work	4	11 Q 110014 35 155 4	602009	SACSSP
10	FETC: Phlebotomy Technique	4	11 Q 110006 28 134 4	59345	HPCSA
11	FETC: Counselling	4	11 Q 110018 69 140 4	49256	HWSETA
12	FETC: Community Development (HIV/AIDS Support)	4	11 Q 110015 18 135 4	50063	HWSETA
13	FETC: Public Awareness Promotion of Dread Disease and HIV/AIDS	4	11 Q 110008 20 132 4	74410	HWSETA
14	ND: Medical Technology	5	11 Q 110005 00 120 5		HPCSA
1	ND: General Nursing:	5	11 Q 110004 00 256	17169	SANC

HWSETA REGISTERED LEARNERSHIPS					
	LEARNERSHIP TITLE	NQF LEV EL	LEARNERSHIP CODE	SAQA QUALIFICA TION ID	PROFESSIO NAL BODY
5	Bridging		05		
1 6	ND: Primary Health Care (Post Basic)	6	11 Q 110009 23	17165	SANC
1 7	ND: Medical/Surgical Nursing (Elective – Critical Care/Operating Theatre)	6	11 Q 110010 17 360 6	17165	SANC
1 8	ND: Diagnostic Radiography	6	11 Q 110031 00 360 6	65069	HPCSA

Learnerships have been funded by the HWSETA annually since its establishment in 2002. According to the Sector Skills Plan 2014 -15, 10845 learnerships were completed between April 2005 and March 2013. These learnerships were supported by employers in the sector as well as the HWSETA. From the 10845 learnerships completed, 273 were learnerships in Phlebotomy Techniques. The Sector Skills Plan 2014-15 also points out a change in its policy on learnership funding made by the HWSETA during the financial year 2012/13. This change involved the promotion of placement of learners in employment upon completion of the learnerships. The aim was to ensure that learnerships had an impact that could be measured against the actual employment of learners. One of the indicators of this study measures the implementation of this policy.

Learnerships are rolled out by the HWSETA in line with the process outlined below:

Diagram 1: Process Description of the learnership programme of the HWSETA



The learnership awarded to Ampath Trust was administered through this process.

1.2 Purpose of the study

- To understand the experiences of Ampath Trust and its learners as they went through the learnership.
- To examine the worth, merit, and significance of the learnership programme through a single case study.
- To assess the outcomes and impact of funding Ampath Trust to offer a learnership in Phlebotomy Techniques.

1.3 Evaluation Questions

- What actually occurred when rolling out the learnership?
- What was the outcome of the learnership?
- What feelings and perceptions did learners have about the learnership?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To evaluate whether the implementation of the learnership by the HWSETA was effective and efficient in the view of the employer.
2. To evaluate the importance/relevance of this learnership to the sector and to Ampath Trust.
3. To evaluate whether the HWSETA supported a learnership that provided employment for learners when they completed their training.
4. To evaluate the outcome/impact of the learnership in Phlebotomy Techniques.
5. To evaluate the sustainability of the learnership in Phlebotomy Techniques within Ampath Trust.

1.5 Evaluation Indicators

Indicator 1:

Name of indicator: Percentage of learners placed on the Phlebotomy Techniques learnership offered by Ampath Trust between 2011 and 2013 in terms of learners who were Black, learners who were female, and learners with disabilities.

Precise definition: The outcome indicator measures the percentage at which placement targets for learnerships in Phlebotomy Techniques were met. These

targets require 85% of learners placed in a learnership to be Black, 54% to be female, and 4% to be persons with disabilities.

Indicator 2:

Name of indicator: Percentage of learners who obtained a qualification in Phlebotomy Techniques after receiving training from a learnership offered by Ampath Trust between 2011 and 2013.

Precise definition: The outcome indicator measures the percentage of learners who successfully went through the 18 months training in Phlebotomy Techniques; wrote the board exam of the HPCSA, and were thus awarded a qualification in Phlebotomy Techniques.

Indicator 3:

Name of indicator: Percentage of learners who received permanent employment at Ampath Trust after obtaining a qualification in Phlebotomy Techniques through a learnership offered by Ampath Trust between 2011 and 2013.

Precise definition: The outcome indicator measures the percentage of learners who received permanent employment at Ampath Trust after having gone through the six months working experience and being awarded a qualification in Phlebotomy Techniques by the HPCSA.

1.6 Data Source

The case study had four data sources, which included the following:

1. The SQMR 2013/2014 provided information on the learnerships that reported certification of learners.
2. The Seta Management System (SMS) provided information on the registration of the certificated learnership reported by Ampath Trust between April 2013 and March 14.
3. The learners reported by Ampath Trust as having been certificated in Phlebotomy Techniques between April 2013 and March 2014 provided the perspective of learners on the implementation of the learnership, its outcomes, and impact.
4. Employees of Ampath Trust who participated in the Phlebotomy Techniques learnership provided the perspective of the employer on the implementation of the learnership, its outcomes, and impact.

2. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

This study is both qualitative and quantitative. The evaluation method that has guided the development of this study is the case study evaluation. Anderson (2010) states that the object of case study evaluation is not to find out how often something occurs in a population but rather what occurred, why it occurred, and what relationship exists between

observed events. It is important to note that the case study evaluation that was used for this study is descriptive. This therefore means that this case study evaluation focused on what occurred.

2.1 Evaluation Design

According to Albright, et al (1998), case study evaluation is designed to document what happened in a programme and whether it had an impact, expected or unexpected. According to Perry (2000), the case study as a design allows researchers to study the phenomenon/intervention in context. It also allows for the characterisation of processes. For evaluators of the learnership programme, the case study evaluation design made it possible for the administration process of learnership to be studied and characterised within the context of the employer.

2.2 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis defines what the case is in the case study, (Perry 2000). The case study is the employer, Ampath Trust, and the case is the Phlebotomy Techniques learnership programme.

2.2 Identification of the Case Study

According to the SQMR 2013/14, four employers reported certification of unemployed learners in Phlebotomy Techniques. These employers were therefore the target population for this study. To identify an employer who was going to be evaluated as a case study, convenience sampling was used. This type of sampling was used because it promoted easy access to participants. Letters requesting the four employers to participate in the study were sent via email. The first employer to reply accepting participation in the study was to be selected as the case study. Ampath Trust was the first employer to accept participation in the study for the learnership in Phlebotomy Techniques and was therefore selected as the case study.

Two Skills Development Facilitators, three Learnership Coordinators, and one Workplace Supervisor/mentor represented Ampath Trust. Ten learners whose certification was reported to the HWSETA in 2013/14 by Ampath Trust provided learner views for the case study.

2.3 Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two SDFs, three Learnership Coordinators, and one Workplace Supervisor/mentor. Semi-structured interviews allowed for focused, conversational, and two way communication. The participants were allowed to ask questions of the interviewer. The interviews took 60 to 90 minutes. An interview

schedule was used as a framework for posing questions, and a tape recorder was used to record the interviews.

Two focus group discussions were conducted. One focus group was conducted with six learners and another was conducted with four learners. These group discussions gave learners an opportunity to share their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards the learnership programme. Each focus group discussion took 60 to 90 minutes. An interview schedule was used as a framework for posing questions, and a tape recorder was used to record the discussions.

2.4 Data Analysis

The recorded data from the interviews and focus groups was transcribed and then analysed using the content analysis. Babbie (2001) defines content analysis as the study of recorded human communication, the process of transforming raw data into a standardised form. The form of analysis is descriptive.

2.5 Limitations

First, the SQMR was taken as a reliable source for identifying the case study but proved to have a limitation with regards to the reporting of the end date of the training period. The SQMR recorded a training period of 12 months instead of the 24 months that was reported by the employer. The incorrect end date recorded gave an impression that it took Ampath Trust up to 17 months to report the certifications. Please refer to the table below:

Table 2a: Registration, completion, and certification from the SQMR/SMS

Number of learners	Registration Date	Completion Date	Duration of training	Date Certification reported to HWSETA	Duration of Certification
5	11 January 2011	11 January 2012	12 months	10 June 2013	17 months
9	12 January 2011	12 January 2012	12 months	7 June 2013	17 months
8	22 March 2011	22 March 2012	12 months	7 June 2013	15 months

Table 2b: Registration, completion, and certification as reported by Ampath Trust

Number of learners	Registration Date	Completion Date	Duration of training	Date Certification reported to HWSETA	Duration of Certification
5	11 January 2011	11 January 2013	24 months	10 June 2013	5 months
9	12 January 2011	12 January 2013	24 months	7 June 2013	5 months

Number of learners	Registration Date	Completion Date	Duration of training	Date Certification reported to HWSETA	Duration of Certification
8	22 March 2011	22 March 2013	24 months	7 June 2013	3 months

The report given by Ampath Trust about the training period was confirmed by learners who went through the learnership programme. This report therefore based its findings on the training period captured on table 2b. It remains uncertain how the HWSETA obtained this information incorrectly. This matter requires to be investigated and corrected so that training periods for Ampath Trust are captured correctly.

The second limitation was the non-generalisability of the findings of this study. Since this was a case study evaluation, findings can only be transferred to another setting and not generalised, (Anderson 2010).

The third limitation was the inability to include the learner from the Free State Province. Learners on this learnership were trained in the Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal (KZN), and Free State provinces. Data was collected in the Gauteng and KZN provinces because in the Free State there was only one learner. It would not have been cost effective to travel to the Free State to interview only one learner.

3. DESCRIPTION AND INTEPRETATION OF FINDINGS

The findings are described in terms of what happened and also the normal processes involved in the implementation of a learnership programme. The description of the findings for this study will be outlined in line with the identified and emergent themes for the study. The identified and emergent themes include the following:

Diagram 2: Identified and emergent themes

IDENTIFIED THEMES

1. Profile of the participants
2. Contracting for the learnership
3. Training Experience
4. Outcome/impact of the learnership
5. Sustainability of the learnership

EMERGENT THEMES

1. Goals for participating in the learnership
2. Recruitment, Selection, and Enrolment of learners
3. Induction
4. Learner Support
5. Funding of the Learnership by the HWSETA

3.1 The profile of the participants

Table 3: Profile of Enrolments for Phlebotomy Technician Learnership

Province	Number of Learners Enrolled	Number of learners dropped out	Number of learners completed
Gauteng	15	0	15
KZN	8	2	6
Free State	1	0	1
Total	24	2	22

Ampath Trust enrolled 24 learners for the learnership in Phlebotomy Technician. From this number, eight learners were trained in KwaZulu Natal (KZN); 15 in Gauteng; and one learner in the Free State province. Two learners from the KZN training site dropped out of the programme. The total number of learners who completed the learnership was 22.

Table 4: Profile of the participants

CATEGORY OF PARTICIPANTS	PROVINCE		TOTAL
	KWAZULU NATAL	GAUTENG PROVINCE	
Learners	4	6	10
SDF	1	1	2
Learnership Coordinators	1	2	3
Mentors/workplace supervisors	1	0	1
TOTALS	7	9	16

Two groups of learners, four from KZN and six from Gauteng, were interviewed using two focus group discussions. These learners were enrolled in the Phlebotomy Technician learnership between January and March 2011; qualified in November 2013; and were employed on a permanent basis by Ampath Trust on 1 December 2013 (See table 2b).

Ampath Trust was both the employer and training provider. Therefore facilitators, mentors, and learnership coordinators were all employees of Ampath Trust. The personnel who participated in the study included two SDFs, three Learnership coordinators, and one Workplace Supervisor/mentor.

3.2 Goals for Participating in the Learnership

On the one hand, the employer listed the following goals for participating in the learnership:

1. To provide an opportunity for the unemployed so that they may improve their skills and therefore have better employment opportunities
2. To enable Phlebotomists to work for Ampath.
3. To give back to the community by providing training and employment.

The goals of the employer for offering the learnership are honourable as the employer is not focusing on profit making but on skills development and community upliftment.

On the other hand, learners indicated two goals for participating in the learnership. These included:

1. To empower themselves
2. To obtain a job

The goals of the learners focus solely on individual persons instead of also focusing on making a meaningful contribution to the community. The lack of focus beyond themselves may be attributed to the high level of youth unemployment in South Africa which results in a desperate need for a job.

3.3 Recruitment, Selection and Enrolment of learners

The employer indicated that the recruitment process for learnerships generally starts in June each year. It pointed out that the process begins before the Expression of Interest for learnerships is issued by the HWSETA because the recruitment and selection process takes very long.

The employer explained that its strategy is to recruit unemployed learners for the learnerships. This strategy is based on the employer's belief that learnerships should be for people who are unemployed. The second reason was attributed to the fact that the employer incurred losses when offering learnerships to employed persons. These losses included the following:

- i) The salary that has to be paid by the employer even though the employee is on a learnership.
- ii) Inability to claim tax rebates from SARS.

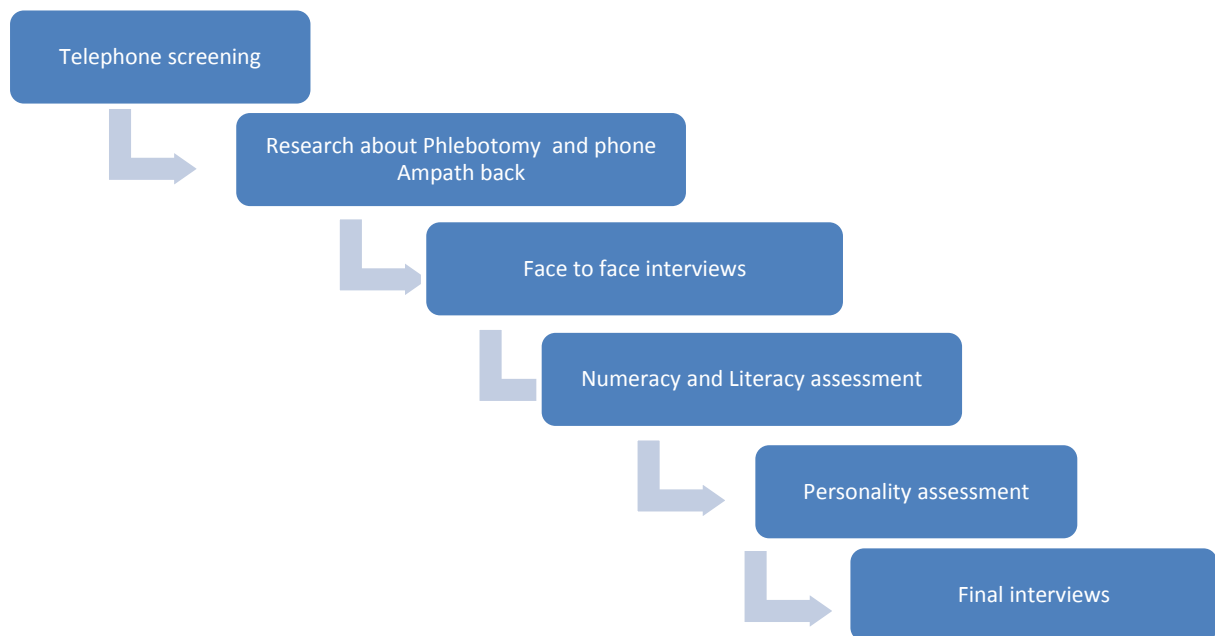
Based on these reasons, the employer allocates one space for employed persons on each learnership. It is therefore clear that as much as the HWSETA offers learnerships for both unemployed and employed persons, Ampath Trust is only interested in learnerships for unemployed persons.

From the perspective of learners, the recruitment process began with the advertisement of the learnership which was issued by Ampath Trust on its website and in the Daily News. The learners generally complained about the advertisement saying that it was not clearly defined.

An advertisement issued in 2010 by Ampath Trust indicated the following information: Date the advertisement was issued; knowledge competence; behavioural competence; general requirements, such as the date of commencement of learnership; information about psychometric test; due date for submission of applications; and submission of applications online. A copy of the advertisement is attached as annexure 1. This advertisement appears to provide a clear guide of who should apply, how to apply, and by when to apply. An assumption can be made that what may have confused these learners may have been the online application that they had to submit.

Some learners reported hearing about the learnership by word of mouth. These learners complained about the limited publicity of the learnership. In its own defense, the employer reported having placed the advertisement on its website and also having published it in local newspapers.

The employer described the selection process as outlined in the diagram below:



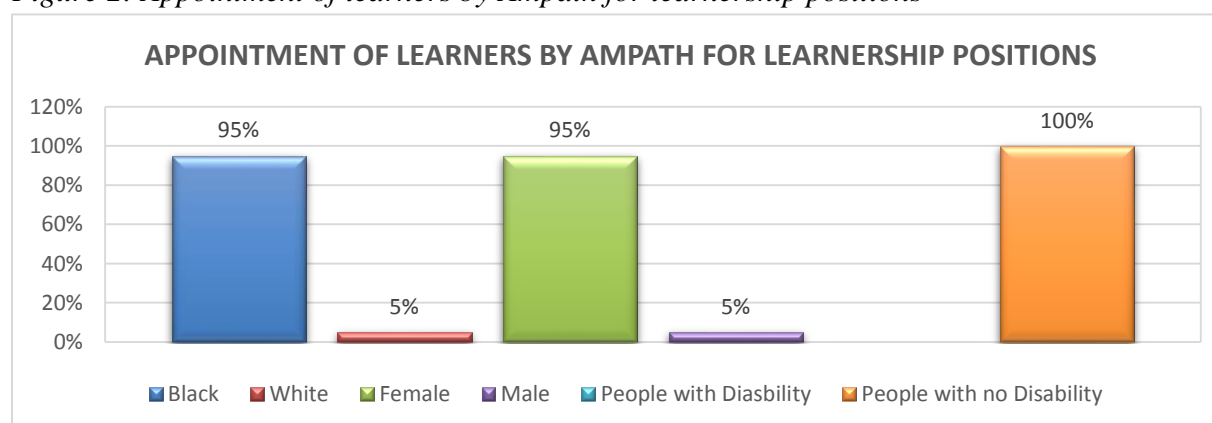
The first step in the selection process is telephone screening. The purpose of this exercise is to assess communication skills, interest in Phlebotomy, and employment status. At the end of telephone screening, learners are given a task to find out what Phlebotomy Technology is and then phone back. The next step is face-to-face interviews which are conducted to assess in more depth the interest in a Phlebotomy Technician. Numeracy and Literacy assessments are conducted for candidates who have been successful in face-to-face interviews. A personality test is then conducted to assess stress levels. What is assessed specifically is whether the candidate can work with patients, empathise, and show

compassion. The last step is the final interview. Candidates who are unsuccessful are given feedback on their performance by a psychometrist.

This selection process clearly shows why the employer starts the process way before the HWSETA publishes the Expression of Interest for learnerships. This process can be considered as a benchmark for all employers who work with patients because it concludes a thorough assessment of candidates checking whether they are fit to work with patients. Even learners who have gone through this process agree that it is necessary to ensure that candidates who enter the programme will be able to complete it. This is evidenced by the low drop-out rate in this learnership group (please refer to table 3).

The appointments made by Ampath for this learnership were as follows:

Figure 2: Appointment of learners by Ampath for learnership positions



The HWSETA requires learners to be appointed in learnership positions in line with the minimum targets set by the National Skills Development Strategy III. Below is a table that lists and evaluates whether Ampath Trust managed to meet these targets.

Table 5: Minimum targets for placement of learners in learnership positions

NSDS III	AMPATH		EVALUATION
Category	Target	Placement	
Black	85%	95%	Met minimum target
Female	54%	95%	Met minimum target
Disability	4%	0%	Did not meet minimum target

3.4 Contracting for the learnership

The process of contracting involved the HWSETA, Ampath Trust, and the 24 learners. The role played by the HWSETA involved publishing Expressions of Interest (EoI) as an

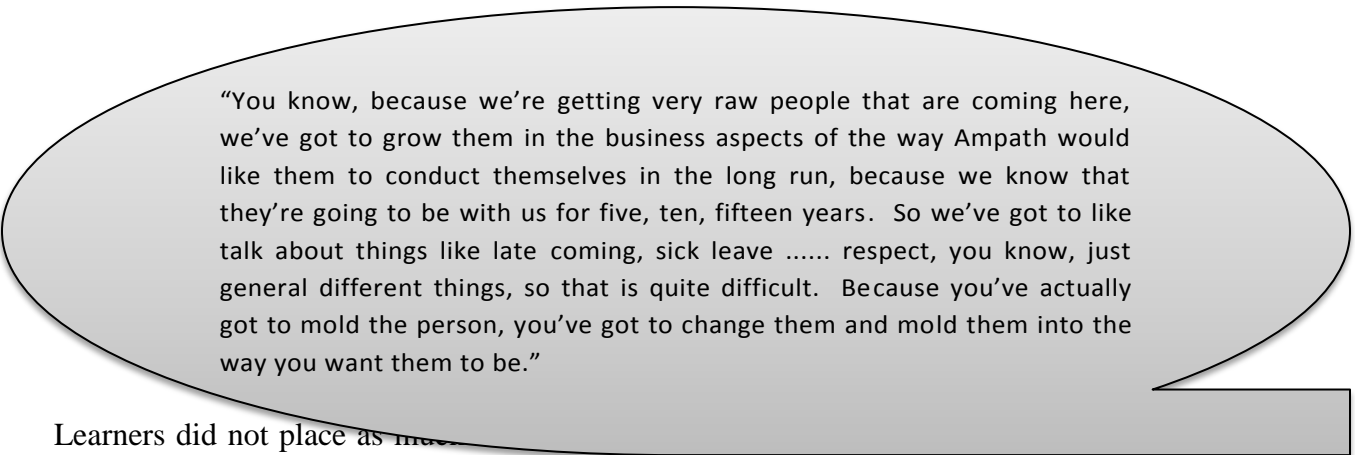
advertisement in national newspapers and on the HWSETA website (www.hwseta.org.za). The HWSETA also sends a message by email to all employers with approved Workplace Skills Plans (WSPs) that the Expression of Interest has been published. The HWSETA receives the learnership application forms and issues letters of conditional approval. The HWSETA receives the signed Memorandums of Agreement (MoAs) and learnership agreements, processes and approves the learnership applications, and releases the first tranche.

When Ampath Trust explained how it found out about the advertisement, it was clear how much it appreciated receiving an email from the HWSETA informing it that the Expression of Interest had been published. The employer viewed the Expression of Interest on the HWSETA website and was of the impression that it gave clear guidance.

The role played by Ampath Trust involved completing and submitting the learnership application forms to the HWSETA. It also involved receiving the conditional approval letter from the HWSETA; completing and signing the MoA and learnership agreements; facilitating signing of learnership agreements by learners; and submitting the signed MoA and learnership agreements to the HWSETA.

3.5 Induction

Once learners have been placed on a learnership, they undergo a three-day induction. During the induction, learners are introduced to the policies of the company and to the learnership programme. They are introduced to the culture of the company. The employer placed a great deal of value on the induction process and had the following to say:



“You know, because we’re getting very raw people that are coming here, we’ve got to grow them in the business aspects of the way Ampath would like them to conduct themselves in the long run, because we know that they’re going to be with us for five, ten, fifteen years. So we’ve got to like talk about things like late coming, sick leave respect, you know, just general different things, so that is quite difficult. Because you’ve actually got to mold the person, you’ve got to change them and mold them into the way you want them to be.”

Learners did not place as much emphasis on the way the training was; say was;



“We were told what to do and what not to do”.

Ampath Trust comes across as an employer that is driven by professional ethics. The value that it places on organisational culture, professionalism, caring for patients, and having compassion gives one a feeling that Ampath Trust provides a good environment for nurturing young professionals.

3.6 Training Experience

Ampath Trust appointed personnel for offering the training. To be appointed, the personnel had to meet specific requirements. Categories of the personnel appointed as well as the requirements are outlined in the table below:

Table 6: Categories of personnel appointed to offer training

CATEGORY OF PRACTITIONER	REQUIREMENTS	PRACTITIONER/ LEARNER RATIO
Facilitators	Registered Nurse Employees of Ampath Trust Registered assessor Ability to develop and design assessment tools Train the trainer certificate	Facilitator/ Learner ratio 1:15
Assessors	Registered assessors	No assessor/learners ratio
Moderators	Registered moderators	No moderator/learner ratio
Mentor/Workplace Supervisors	Registered Nurse, or Phlebotomist Technician with 5 years' experience	Mentor/Learner ratio 1:1

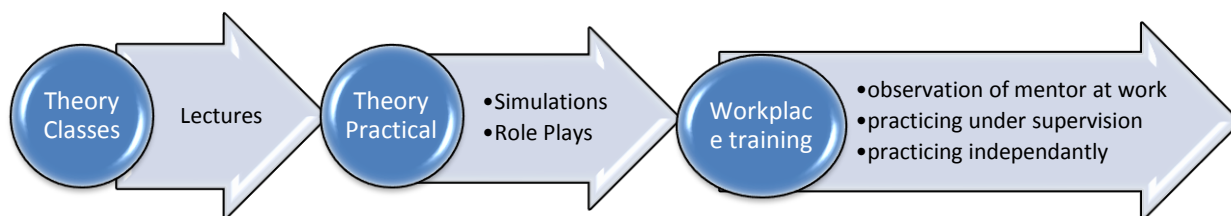
All requirements had to be met. The exception was with the Train the trainer certificate. Candidates who applied for the facilitator position but did not have the Train the trainer certificate were appointed and then taken for training before they could conduct any class.

The training team used by Ampath is a complete team for training and the practitioner/learner ratios are ideal for producing good learners as the facilitator will be able to pay attention to each of the learners, and the mentor/workplace supervisor will be able to provide undivided attention.

The programme was designed to cover a period of 24 months. Training on theory and practice in the workplace covered 18 months of this period. The HPCSA board exam was written in the 18th month and the remaining six months were spent on practice in the workplace. The six months of practice in the workplace can be classified as some form of internship. An internship is an opportunity offered by an employer to potential employees to work for a limited period of time, (Cambridge Dictionary on line).

Training on theory and practice was integrated. Learners attended classes for two weeks and attended the workplace for another two weeks throughout the training period. This can be illustrated as follows:





One learner explained how role plays were conducted as follows:

“They give you, like a *yoh*, it’s like your case, let’s say you have to do like a blood culture collection. You, it’s like a drama kind of like a thing. It’s like you have a patient, you have to do the whole procedure. As if you are with the patient. And then the facilitator will be there marking you as when you are doing the procedure, the whole procedure. And then she will tell you what you missed, or what you have to, ja. And then you have to do it again, on what you missed.”

Assessment programme was

According to the rules of the qualification, a learning programme should offer 19 units standards. This therefore means that Ampath Trust offered the programme as 19 modules. Assessments were conducted when training was completed on each module. For the theory component, tests were written and for the workplace practice component progress reports were written. Feedback was provided for each of the assessments conducted. The passing mark for all assessments was 100%. Learners were given three chances for re-assessments.

Regarding the quality of the training the learners had the following opinions and perceptions of how they experienced it:

“In class, they explain in detail what we, before even we start the module they explain what the module is about.”

“And either way, if you don’t understand they give you that time to make sure that you understand at the end of the day by asking questions”.

“When you ask questions and all that. You’re always more than welcome to go, even after the class, to go and ask if you don’t understand. The explaining is very thorough.”

“With the test as well, you have to get 100 percent otherwise you rewrite it till you get everything correct. “

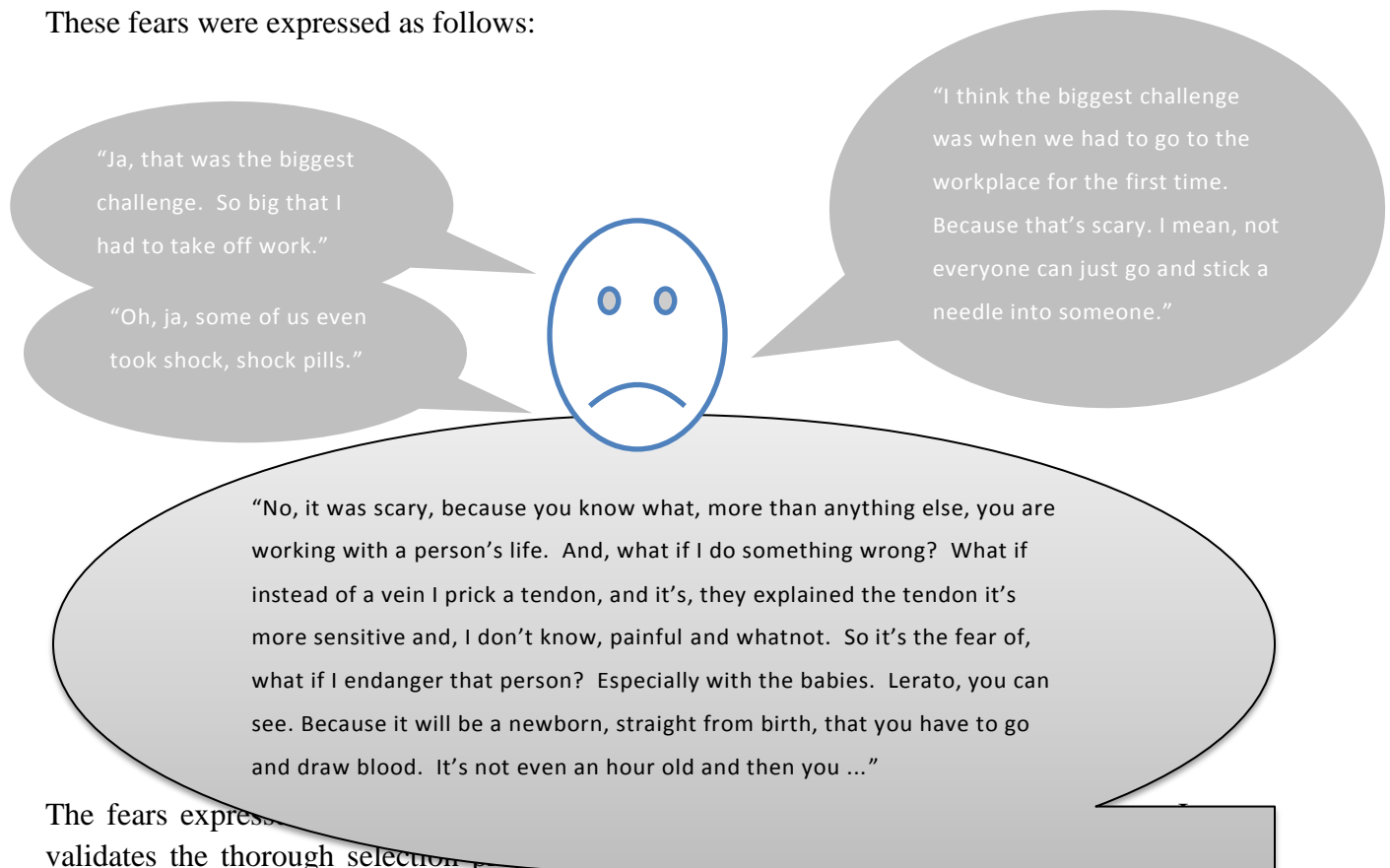
“I can say, Ja, classes prepared us as much as it could for the practical”

From these opinions it is clear that learners were quite satisfied with the quality of training they received from Ampath Trust. From a skills development perspective, the quality of training described by the both the employer and learners meets the minimum standards for training

Learners experienced the following challenges during the training:

1. Fear of going to the workplace for the first time
2. Conducting phlebotomy technique procedures, especially on younger patients like babies.
3. Fear of conducting the procedure incorrectly

These fears were expressed as follows:



The fears expressed by the learners validates the thorough selection process. It is important it is for a learner to choose the right career. Sometimes people enter into scholarships/learnerships not because they like the career but because they are receiving an opportunity for sponsored education.

3.7 Learner Support

Learners could not hide their gratitude to Ampath Trust when they described the kind of support they received during their training. One learner even rated the support to be 100%. These learners narrated experiences they had of the support they received.

Other types of support were described by two learners as follows:

"It was 2011 in January ...And then with me ...I was pregnant and I have to go on maternity leave. So I went on maternity leave for two months and returned in March. So luckily there was a group that joined us in the month of March, so then I joined this group. Eventually we were able to catch up to the January group and we became one group again. Like at the end, when we was done with the course ...during the preparation for the Board exam, then we became one group."

"I think we got a lot of support from the depots where you work at, and when, at any time you needed to call them, they were always available to help you. And even at some stage you were at the place where you were exposed to more procedures and could not cope, they would send you to another depot that has less procedures. So you get experience."

In addition to the support described by learners, Ampath Trust indicated that it has a psychologist who attends to learners who find it difficult to adjust to the nature of work. The psychologist also saw learners who had personal problems. The psychologist attended to learners over two to three sessions.

Ampath Trust should be applauded for the support it gives to its learners as it is way above the norm.

3.8 Funding of Learnerships by the HWSETA

Ampath Trust described the relationship it has with the HWSETA as a good one. Ampath Trust considered itself lucky to have a very good relationship with the HWSETA.

"The relationship is fine. I have no issues. You know what, we are very lucky, Ampath has a very good relationship with the Health and Welfare SETA."

The employer indicated that although it sometimes has to wait a while for tranches to be released, it always received the agreed amount and because of this it is satisfied.

"So sometimes we wait a while for the tranches. But other times we don't, so it all depends on how busy the SETA is at that time. But we always get what we, you know, what we're supposed to get, as stated on the MOA. So the funding hasn't been too much of a problem.

The employer reported two challenges it experienced with the learnership funding:

1. The Expression of Interest is issued late in the year (between September and October). With reference to the process description outlined in the background section of this report, the Expression of Interest for learnerships is scheduled to be issued by 30 September. If delays are experienced, the Expression of Interest is issued during the first week of October.
2. The approval period for learnership applications takes about three to four months. Ampath Trust ends up taking the risk of appointing learners before the learnership application is approved. The approval is sometimes granted when training has already started. The process of approving learnership agreements begins in October and ends by 30 January so the process takes four months. It is designed that way. Please refer to the process description outlined in the background section of this report.

It is important to note that the HWSETA caters for a large number of employers who have their own recruitment and selection processes, with varying timelines, for appointing learners into learnerships. Perhaps Ampath Trust should consider aligning its recruitment and selection processes to the administration process of the HWSETA.

Learners did not have much to say about the learnership funding but expressed gratitude to the HWSETA for giving them the opportunity.

"For a student money is never enough but we are grateful to the HWSETA for the opportunity"

3.9 Outcome/Impact of the learnership

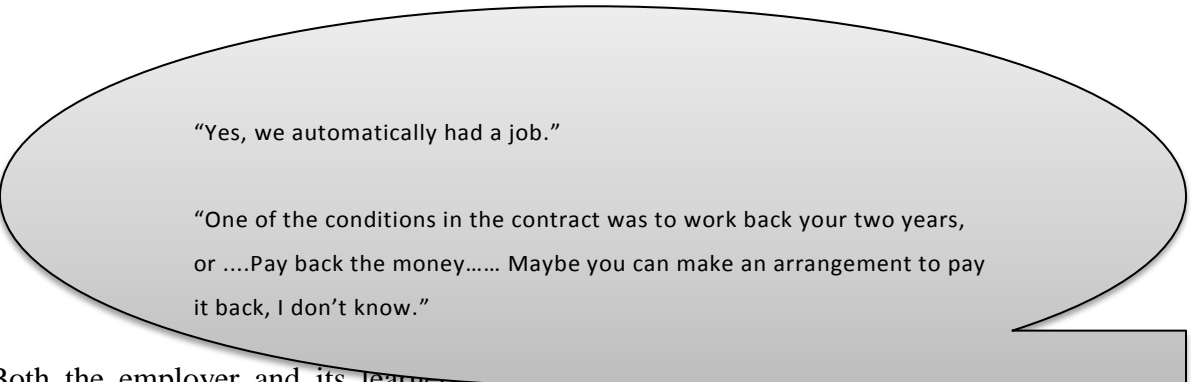
The learnership programme resulted in two learners dropping out of the programme. One learner speculated that the reason these learners dropped out was due to their religion.

This points out that the selection assessment did not cover religious beliefs that may not agree with the curriculum. Ampath Trust needs to consider assessing religious beliefs during the selection process.

The employer indicated generally the reasons why learners drop out of the programme. Three reasons mentioned were illness, wrong career choice, and non-adherence to the rules of the learning programme

In total, therefore, 22 learners completed the learnership in Phlebotomy Techniques in November 2013, received permanent employment in December 2013 and were certificated in February 2014. Learners reported that the contract for employment they signed was for permanent employment. This contract bound learners not to tender any resignations within the first two years of employment based on the fact that they benefited from free education for two years. Should a person resign, s/he would be liable to pay back the learnership funding s/he received. Ampath Trust indicated that there is an amount they add on the learner allowance and the term on the contract refers to that money they sponsored.

Below is how the learners expressed the outcome of the learnership:



"Yes, we automatically had a job."

"One of the conditions in the contract was to work back your two years, orPay back the money..... Maybe you can make an arrangement to pay it back, I don't know."

Both the employer and its learners gained a positive impact from participating in the learnership. The employer was grateful for the opportunity to train the learners into the caliber of employees it desired. The employer also appreciated obtaining skilled employees especially in Phlebotomy Techniques. It was very grateful for tax rebates received from SARS for each unemployed learner on the learnership.

Learners described how the learnership rescued them from lack of purpose and despair. They described a good emotional wellbeing now that they had a qualification. They also described their future as a bright one.

"I was unemployed for 3 years before getting this opportunity. This learnership gave me purpose. I now have something to do every day"

"It feels good to get a good qualification."

"It's a good feeling, makes you feel proud. It also made mum proud."

"I am happy about the learnership. It gave me a sense of pride."

The employer reported that the learnership improved their lives in terms of having an income, medical insurance, and provident fund. The learnership was deemed to have improved the family lives of the learners, particularly their children. The employer narrated a story of a learner who was impacted by the learnerships:

"We had a lady that was working in McDonald's in Cape Town, she came here, she did the programme, she's still in Ampath. People manage to buy houses, people manage to buy cars, they can have children that they can support, they can send to school. They get medical aid. So, I mean, say now if they get ill afterwards, they've got medical aid, they've got provident fund. So they know they're saving towards their retirement. They are happy individuals. They just feel like they're part of a purpose, and they're helping people at the same time."

The value the learnership placed on the field is that it will have practitioners who have more specialised technical skills in drawing blood specimens thus improving techniques for drawing blood. The 22 learners who qualified will contribute to the economy of the country.

3.10 Relevance and Sustainability of the learnership

The employer shared the value placed by Ampath Trust on the occupation and indicated that Phlebotomist Technicians were a great help. The employer also shared its future plans which involve the expansion of training from Gauteng, KZN, and the Free State to the Eastern Cape and Western Cape provinces. The employer also informed the researchers that this learnership is part of the 5-year strategy of Ampath Trust.

This means that there is scope for growth in this field.

4. Conclusions of the Case Study

4.1 Conclusions based on the purpose of the study

First, the case study evaluation of the learnership in Phlebotomy Techniques was conducted in order to understand the experiences of Ampath Trust and its learners. The findings of the study have disclosed that it was a good experience for both Ampath Trust and the learners. The only challenge posed by the Ampath Trust was the month in which the Expression of Interest was issued by the HWSETA. Ampath Trust indicated that it was issued too late in the year and recommended that it be issued in June instead.

Second, this case study evaluation was conducted to examine the worth, merit, and significance of the learnership in Phlebotomy Techniques. The findings of this study disclosed that Ampath Trust placed much value on this learnership and identified the significance of this occupation in the medical field. The future plans of Ampath Trust which signify growth in the field also show the value and significance of this learnership.

Third, this case study evaluation was conducted to assess the outcomes and impact of funding Ampath Trust to offer a learnership in Phlebotomy Techniques. The findings of this study disclosed the expected outcomes and impact of the learnership in Phlebotomy techniques which were in the form of obtaining an occupational certificate, obtaining permanent employment, improving the learners' lives and those of their families, obtaining tax rebates, and gaining skilled employees.

4.2 Conclusions based on evaluation indicators

The first indicator of this study aimed to measure the percentage at which minimum targets for the learnership in Phlebotomy Techniques were met. The minimum targets required 85% of learners placed on the learnership to be Black, 54% to be female, and 4% to be persons with disabilities. The findings of this study have yielded that Ampath Trust met the minimum target for Black learners as well as that of the female learners. The minimum target for persons with disabilities was however not met. It is important to note that people with disabilities in South Africa make up 7.5% of the total population (Stats SA, 2014). It therefore is understandable when certain learnerships do not meet the minimum targets.

The second indicator of this study aimed to measure the percentage of learners who successfully went through the 18 months training in Phlebotomy techniques, wrote the board exam of the HPCSA, and were thus awarded a qualification in Phlebotomy

Techniques. The findings of this study have yielded that Ampath Trust enrolled 24 learners on the Phlebotomy Technician learnership but 22 learners obtained a qualification in Phlebotomy Technician. Therefore 92% of learners obtained a qualification in Phlebotomy Technician and 8% dropped out.

The third indicator of this study aimed to measure the percentage of learners who received permanent employment from Ampath after obtaining a qualification in Phlebotomy Technician. The findings of this study yielded that all 22 learners who obtained the qualification were given permanent employment by Ampath Trust. Therefore, 100% of learners who obtained a qualification in Phlebotomy Techniques received permanent employment from Ampath Trust. This study also raised a critical question of the legality of the employment contract signed by these learners which requires to be investigated by the HWSETA.

4.3 Conclusions based on the objectives of the study

The objectives of this study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, outcome, and sustainability of the learnership programme for Phlebotomy Techniques. The findings of the study yielded the following:

1. The learnership programme was implemented *effectively* as the policies and agreements of the learnership were adhered to. This is evidenced in the expressed good relationship with the HWSETA.
2. The learnership programme is not always implemented *efficiently* as Ampath Trust reported that the tranches were sometimes delayed. This needs to be assessed through a larger sample to see whether it is the general experience of all providers.
3. The learnership programme is relevant for the sector and Ampath Trust. This is evidenced by the plans of Ampath Trust to expand training in Phlebotomy Technician to other provinces.
4. The outcomes and impact of the learnership have proven worth and significance as there are gains for both Ampath Trust and learners.
5. The learnership for Phlebotomy Technician is sustainable as Ampath Trust has committed to the continuity of this learnership.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of this study are therefore as follows:

1. The HWSETA should investigate how the end date of training is recorded incorrectly on the SMS and SQMR and then correct this error so that training periods for Ampath Trust are captured correctly.
2. It is recommended that Ampath aligns its recruitment and selection process to that of the HWSETA.
3. Since the reason for the learners who dropped out of the programme was religious beliefs that did not agree with the curriculum for Phlebotomy Techniques, it is recommended that Ampath Trust assess this issue in its selection processes.
4. The selection process of Ampath Trust should be taken as a best practice model for the selection of learners for learnerships..
5. The HWSETA should conduct a survey to evaluate whether all employees have the same experience of receiving tranches late, and also look into the effects these delays have on employers.

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ANNEXURE 1: Ampath Vacancy - Learner Phlebotomy Technician

Current Vacancies

Page: | 1 | 2 |



2010/588 - Learner Phlebotomy Technician: Central Services

AMPATH HAS A VACANCY FOR A

FROM

KNOWLEDGE COMPETENCIES

- Matric or Grade 12 with English, Biology/Life Sciences and Maths.
- Must demonstrate a high level of attention to detail.
- Excellent communication skills in English.

BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES

- Strong customer service orientation and empathy for patients.
- Must be a team player.
- Must have the ability to deal with conflict situations.
- Must be willing to comply with all applicable legislation and ethical guidelines.
- Must be self-disciplined in order to work and study concurrently.
- Must be able to deal with stressful situation effectively

GENERAL

- All applicants must be willing to undergo psychometric assessments.
- The Learnership will commence in January
- Highly competitive allowance offered.

MUST BE WILLING TO UNDERGO A FULL SELECTION PROCESS

INTERESTED PERSONS TO APPLY ONLINE NO LATER THAN

PLEASE STATE THE POSITION YOU WOULD LIKE TO APPLY FOR.

ALL APPLICATION FORMS TO BE SUBMITTED ONLINE ONLY.
NO LATE APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

AMPATH IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER AND ALL APPOINTMENTS
WILL BE MADE
ACCORDING TO THE COMPANY'S EMPLOYMENT EQUITY TARGETS AND
PLAN

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