



UNIVERSITIES  
SOUTH AFRICA

# **National Graduate Destination Survey Project Research Colloquium on Skills Planning**

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# Introduction

- ♦ Internationally, Graduate Destination Surveys (GDS) are seen as important planning tools in higher education.
- ♦ National Graduate Destination Survey (NGDS), approach and methodology builds on CHEC (2010) and VUT (2012) studies
- ♦ NGDS project timeline is 3.5 years (February 2017- Sept. 2020) with three main outcomes:
  - i. research data on the employment options graduates are exploring when they exit the University
  - ii. the employment decisions and choices made by students after graduation
  - iii. changes in employment or non-employment of graduates in the medium to long term, based on external factors and labour market dynamics



# Problem Statement

- ♦ Australian Graduate Centre doing this annually since 1972, significantly shaped Australian HE in terms of:
  - responsiveness to the labour market needs and better, more informed decisions by students on their educational choices.
- ♦ In South Africa, GDS surveys are not done with any regularity.
  - HSRC one of few organisations that have undertaken a comprehensive GDS over the past decade.
  - HSRC launched a tracer study in 2005 of graduates and 'leavers' from 7 HEIs in South Africa.
  - CHEC study involving 4 HEIs in WC in 2010 and VUT in 2012, led by Andre Kraak
- ♦ USAf investigation revealed a number of HEIs do exit surveys at graduation ceremonies for planning, QE and reporting purposes



# Alignment with HRD Objectives

1. Examine the extent of career choices and advancement of graduates both quantitatively and qualitatively.
  - Trace the career advancement of 90,000 respondents i.e. 50% out of an approximate 180,000, via exit surveys at 26 participating universities in 2017.
2. Investigate how career outcomes impact on choices made by graduates as they navigate the labour market into employment.
  - how graduates identify and construct opportunities in the formal/informal economy, as part of their identity formation
3. Investigate the notions of both advancing economic development and the 'public good' in HE, specifically,
  - how graduates see themselves as productive citizens and contributors to economic and social development.



# Project Scope and Activities

- ♦ Massive venture, planning and implementation will take about 3 years to complete.
- ♦ 2017 graduates at 26 universities from **certificate to PhD** in all fields of study, to determine employment status at:
  - At the point of graduation from December 2017 – April 2018
  - One year after graduation, from January 2019.
- ♦ Timetable and preparatory work prior to the implementation of NGDS would take between about 3-6 months.
- ♦ Project to commence between February – April 2017 with the first cohort of graduates in 2017, from all Universities.
- ♦ The project will conclude with the launch of the Final Report, several sub-system regional reports and a Colloquium in 2020.



## Project Scope and Activities (2)

- ◆ For planning and implementation, 26 Universities categorised into 6 organisational units, grouped as follows:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Group: Gauteng and Limpopo involving SMU, TUT, UJ, UP, Wits, VUT, UL, UniVen and MPU as an observer institution
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Group: Western Cape and Northern Cape involving UWC, UCT, US and CPUT with SPU as an observer institution
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Group: Eastern Cape involving UFH, WSU, NMMU and RU
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Group: KwaZulu/Natal involving UKZN, UniZul, DUT and MUT
  - 5<sup>th</sup> Group: North West and Free State: Involving UFS, CUT and NWU.
  - 6<sup>th</sup> Group: UNISA
- ◆ Executing the online component of NGDS will occur for the above groups from January – April 2019.



## Project Scope and Activities (3)

- ♦ A national call-centre established through an agency agreement, undertake three primary tasks:
  - i. improving the contact details of graduates
  - ii. managing the online and telephone interview process of the NGDS
  - iii. hand over a complete national data base of the respondents comprising questionnaire answers for all 26 institutions.
- ♦ For the online survey a respondent return rate of 25% would be targeted across all 26 institutions.
- ♦ Each Survey Group 10000-15000 graduates, which suggest that about 4000 respondents are needed.
- ♦ CHEC's GDS about 1000-2000 returns can be achieved online, 2000-3000 graduates in each of the 6 Groups may need to be interviewed telephonically.
- ♦ Largest logistical task and cost in the entire project, about 18000 – 22500 telephone interviews nationally.



# Resource Requirements

- ♦ A Project Coordinator providing intellectual leadership, project administrative coordination and general oversight functions across the research project remunerated at a 50% load.
- ♦ A Project Manager appointed on a full-time basis for this task on a three year contract.
- ♦ A Database Manager/Consultant appointed on a 50% contract to oversee the design, implementation and maintenance of dbases
- ♦ An econometrician, on a 25% appointment for three years, reporting to the Project Coordinator.
- ♦ 6 Senior Researchers for the various survey groups on a 50% appointment for two years.
- ♦ 5 Research Assistants who are either PhD or postgraduate students to assist Senior Researchers and Project Coordinator





## Resource Requirements (2)

- ◆ A national call centre that will be managed by an external service provider, to undertake three primary tasks:
  - i. Improving the contact details of graduates;
  - ii. Managing the online and telephone interview process of the NGDS; and
  - iii. Compiling and handing over a complete national data base of the respondents, comprising all the NGDS questionnaire responses.
- ◆ USAf to investigate options for the call centre and selected research components of the NGDS by external service providers.



# Implementing Organisation & Project Management

- ◆ A NGDS Steering Committee with members drawn from:
  - Department of Higher Education and Training, Universities South Africa, Council on Higher Education, South African Technology Network, higher education, labour market and big data experts, reporting to the USAf Exco and Board.
- ◆ The National Project Coordinator working under the auspices of USAf will report to this Committee and its Chair.
- ◆ Steering Committee will be responsible for approving each of the roll-out phases and their associated expenditures.
- ◆ Director: Operations and Support at USAf will provide:
  - strategic leadership and management on this project
  - internal and external reports to its management and governance structures as required.

