



**INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT  
SELF-EVALUATION REPORT  
2023**

# Contents

Contents .....	2
Stellenbosch Academy of Design and Photography .....	3
Criteria for a good submission .....	4
The Self-evaluation Report 2023.....	5
1. Preparation of the Self-Evaluation Report .....	5
2. Institutional Profile.....	5
2.1 Most recent registered student headcount is presented with reference to: .....	10
a. Faculty/college .....	10
b. Race (African, Coloured, White, Indian).....	10
c. Gender (male, female, other) .....	11
d. Home Language (s).....	12
e. Nationality .....	13
f. Quintile School Background .....	14
g. Student Accommodation (residence; institutional oversight; private).....	18
3. Reflection on the 16 Standards .....	34
4. Overall reflection on process and outcome.....	34
5. Portfolio of Evidence .....	34
Sixteen standards to be addressed in the SER .....	37
Standard 1: .....	37
Standard 2: .....	37
Standard 3: .....	38
Standard 4: .....	38
Standard 5: .....	40
Standard 6: .....	40
Standard 7: .....	40
Standard 8: .....	41
Standard 9: .....	42
Standard 10: .....	42
Standard 11: .....	42
Standard 12: .....	42
Standard 13: .....	43
Standard 14: .....	43
Standard 15: .....	43
Standard 16: .....	43

# Stellenbosch Academy of Design and Photography

41 Techno Ave, Techno Park, Stellenbosch, 7600

## Endorsement

I, Dr Safia Salaam (ID 7406270194089), confirm that the Self-Evaluation Report has been prepared with appropriate participation by all constituencies, and that the report has been endorsed by the executive authority of the institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Salaam', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Dr Safia Salaam**

**Academic Head**

**Date: 30 December 2023**

## Criteria for a good submission

- *Complete* in referring to all 16 Standards
- *Structured* to support the SER, be referring specifically to Standards (and Guidelines)
- *Covering the whole range of types of documents from input to outcome*, for example, a policy, an implementation plan, evidence of actual implementation (for example in modules, programmes, departments and faculties), evidence of monitoring and evaluation of the policy and its impact, evidence of reflection, and evidence of adjusting the policy and implementation (for example, by providing more resources) based on the monitoring, evaluation and reflection.
- *Coherent* in terms of the argument and reflection in the SER
- Quantitative data (such as success and throughput rates) should be *interpreted and reflected on*, and not just presented
- All quantitative judgements should be supported by evidence
- All submissions should be *digital*; no paper-based evidence will be accepted
- Both *textual and audio-visual evidence* is acceptable but should be of *reasonable quality* and should use standard desk-top technology to open and view, but it does not have to be production standard. For example, to replace the on-site campus tour usually conducted during a physical site visit, a set of videos is recommended. Such videos should be accompanied by a text or voice-over which responds to the Standards and relates what is seen in the video to the Standards and Guidelines and to the self-reflection
- Easily *accessible* in terms of hyperlinks open to the CHE and audit panel members
- *Transparent* in terms of the names of the supporting documents.

The template is intended as a tool to facilitate the process for institutions, but also to ensure alignment and quality control to facilitate the work of the audit panels. The template is flexible, but institutions should flag and motivate when and why they deviate from the template.

# The Self-evaluation Report 2023

## 1. Preparation of the Self-Evaluation Report

Please describe the process involved in the preparation of the self-evaluation report, including details of any meetings and workshops that accompanied the drafting, the range of participatory involvement (formal entities, *ad hoc* groups, etc.), and the process of formal institutional approval.

Public universities need to provide the time frame of the self-reflection period and motivate why this time frame was chosen. The time frame should be chosen to provide a context or a backdrop leading up to where the institution finds itself now. Please ensure that the time frame includes 2020 and the responses around the pandemic. A time frame of between 3 and 7 years is recommended to allow patterns and trends to emerge. For private institutions, the time frame is determined by their DHET registration dates.

The 2023 self-evaluation report (herewith referred to as the 'SER') has been prepared and developed by multiple stakeholders at the Stellenbosch Academy of Design and Photography (herewith referred to as the 'Academy') over the last 4 years as this SER makes use of evidence and data gathered and produced within this time period. As requested by the CHE, this SER includes 2020 and COVID-19 in terms of the Academy's response to the pandemic.

The participatory involvement which has contributed towards the SER includes all quality assurance structure's reports, quarterly staff workshops, IQA reports, EQA reports and workshops which specifically focused on the SER Manual and Supplementary Guide. CHE SER and QAF workshops, along with the CHE Good Practice workshop contribute to overall knowledge which in turn provides direction for the functioning of the institution and quality assurance practices.

The final writing up of the SER has been collated, reviewed and completed by the Academic Head in conjunction with the Academic Integrity Committee, the Leadership Committee and the Board of Governors as these quality assurance structures have in-depth knowledge of the Academy and oversee core functions. The final approval of the SER has been signed off by the Board of Governors.

## 2. Institutional Profile

The narrative should be supported by analyzed and audited institutional data, including HEMIS for public institutions or HEQCIS for private institutions, CHE, SAQA, DHET and other credible sources. Page 33-34 of the *Manual for Institutional Audits 2021* details the types of data to be provided in the institutional profile. Verified and audited data should be interpreted (pointing out trends and patterns) and should be reflected on in terms of the notion of *fitness of purpose*. The institutional profile forms the background to Standard 1 and to the differentiation of institutions.

The Academy is 20 years old this year which by default offers a significant depth of

history. The Stellenbosch Academy of Design and Photography began with a vision of offering full-contact mode private higher education within the visual communication context. Accredited offerings started in 2004 with a Diploma in Graphic Design and Photography which was later replaced with the current BA in Visual Communication in 2005 (the name changed from a BA in Applied Design to BA in Visual Communication within Category A to line up with the CESM structures and NQF levels in 2013). The Diploma was discontinued with the last student graduating in 2005. The institution has progressed to offering 4 accredited programmes namely a Higher Certificate in Drawing, a Higher Certificate in Commercial Photography, a BA Degree in Visual Communication and a BA Honors in Visual Communication.

The institution is committed to playing an active role in enacting initiatives, processes and policies that prioritise transformative approaches towards equity, inclusivity and sustainability. Within this commitment, the Academy values high-quality higher education with its differentiation being within the fields of Visual Communication.

The Academy has a single site of delivery (41 Techno Ave, Techno Park, Stellenbosch) where the 4 programmes are offered within specialized studio and classroom spaces. The site is positioned on the outskirts of Stellenbosch, within the Techno Park which was designed as an innovation park for those with larger spatial needs. The building itself is double story, spacious and boasts inspiring mountain and farmland views. The location of the Academy attracts students from all over South Africa as Stellenbosch is seen as a student town. A free morning and afternoon bus service to and from Stellenbosch central is available for students who do not have their own transport as there is limited public transport to the Techno Park

The Academy does not offer student accommodation to fee paying students. As Stellenbosch takes on a large portion of the accommodation of students studying at the University, there are many private accommodation options. Students are directed towards the most successful options by informing them at Campus Days and through general emails as many students choose to live in Stellenbosch even if they are from Cape Town.

All of the programmes have a strong focus on practical knowledge and learning within visual communication which requires studios with the relevant equipment for directed learning to take place. The learning environment is a key focus across the various programmes and subjects. Studios include computer labs, photography studios, printmaking studios, graphic design and art direction studios, drawing studios, and maker studios.

Theory is taught as an integral part of the development of the student as a visual communicator. Lecture theaters of varying sizes are used for the learning and teaching of the different theory subjects as class sizes and the teaching methodologies influence where and what is taught.

The Academy is currently in a review cycle of the mission, vision and values which are at the core of the institution. The review cycle is every 8 to 10 years with the process taking at least a year to develop and implement. The current strategic planning review process began in 2022 with directed research by internal and external stakeholders. The research pool included both current and past students and current staff across managerial, academic and administrative positions.

Workshops were then held in June 2023 with the Board of Governors as this quality assurance structure is tasked with conceiving the new mission, vision and values based on the reviewed strategic goals. Once the Board had signed off on the final mission and vision, time was allocated for the introduction of these newly revised directives to be discussed and put out for comment. In order for the vision and mission to be fully integrated into the Academy, buy in through stakeholder engagement is needed.

The current mission statement reads as follows:

‘As a Private Higher Educational Institution, the Academy is committed to providing students with an exceptional standard of education and a solid foundation upon which to build a successful professional future in the visual communication industries.’

The new mission statement can be read below. It was developed in 2023 with the aim of gradual implementation.

To produce **industry ready graduates** with **adaptive capacity**, who interpret, synthesize and respond to deep contexts **using** visual communication for **sustained** impact and who **contribute to current discourses**.

We are committed to:

- designing innovative programmes,
- building extraordinary learning environments, and
- fostering open networks and partnerships,

Which enables our graduates to build a successful professional future in visual communication.

The current Vision Statement reads as follows:

‘Our Vision is to build towards a self-sustaining, landmark higher educational institution that consistently develops graduates who are highly motivated critical thinkers and innovators who use all forms of visual communication to positively impact our economic, social and environmental spheres within local, national and global surroundings.’

The current vision has served the Academy well in that it has guided the curriculums across all programmes to develop graduates who are critical thinkers. The success of this can be seen in the employability and career paths of alumni, and their success in

the creative industries. Over the past 4 years the data indicates that 34% of alumni are employed within the visual communication industries while 35% (20% freelance and 15% self-employed) of alumni are either freelancing or have started their own businesses. Many freelancers have the ability to work online in South Africa for international companies as their quality of experience and knowledge competes well on a global level.

21% of the data could not be sufficiently verified and therefore has been classified as N/A. Additional methods of data capturing will be put in place in the future as it is presumed that some of this data sets are employed or self-employed which is valuable data that requires meaningful interpretation.

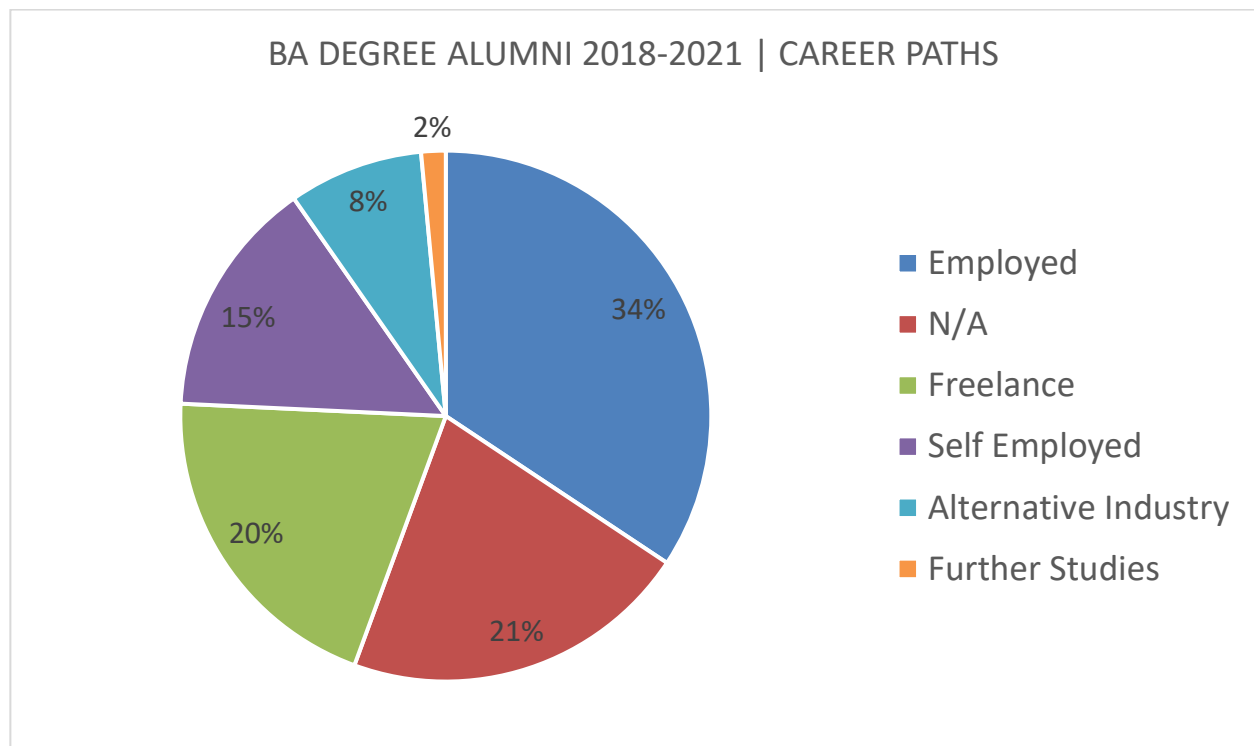


Figure 1: 2018 - 2021 Alumni Career Paths

All programme coordinators are tasked with reviewing their curriculums in terms of their alignment to the vision & mission of the institution, especially regarding innovation and critical thinking as these are attributes which can only be developed over time. The lower NQF programmes see these attributes as foundational tools which lead to high level thinking within the higher level NQF programmes.

The new vision statement can be read below. It was developed in 2023 with the aim of gradual implementation.

The preferred higher education platform in visual communication launching world leaders in critical thinking and innovation.

The current Values:

Human behavior and the way in which we do things / Students, Staff and Stakeholders

<b>Academic Excellence:</b> We are resolute in maintaining a high standard of learning and teaching.
<b>Accountable:</b> Answerable for our performance, actions and behaviour.
<b>Adaptive: Resilience</b> and versatility in changing times.
<b>Community:</b> Engage in communities of practice with relevant stakeholders.
<b>Extraordinary:</b> Staff, students and graduates who have successful professional futures in a radically changing society and world of work.
<b>Reflexive:</b> To ensure constant quality improvements throughout the institution
<b>Respectful:</b> We encourage discourse and engaging with respect
<b>Supportive:</b> Academic development and psycho-social support
<b>Sustainable:</b> We put the Sustainable Development Goals in the centre of all that we do.
<b>Transformative:</b> Our ability to transform positively in all areas of digital, social, curriculum, research/knowledge, governance, funding and environment.

The reviewed Values:

GOAL: **Inclusivity** (a guided approach of embracing and valuing diversity)

Guiding values:

- **Respectful**
- **Supportive**

GOAL: **Integrity** (a quality of honesty and strong moral principles)

Guiding values:

- **Accountable**
- **Adaptive**

GOAL: **Innovation** (introduction of new ideas, methods or things)

Guiding values:

- **Reflexive**
- **Extraordinary**

There are currently 269 enrolled students and 50 staff members. The majority of student data presented below has been gathered and reported on by the Admissions Committee. A link to the report can be accessed [here](#). Relevant data from the report is used by the marketing team to develop future student marketing strategies.

All student and staff data are stored on the Student Information System / Learner Management System, namely Student Manager. The system is password protected and has defined access control per user therefore access to personal information is limited to suit specific staff job requirements. The data is pulled from the system for all EduDex submissions and DHET Annexure A Annual reports. The data submitted for 2023 has been submitted to EduDex but will only form part of the 2023 DHET Annual Report and has therefore not been verified by the auditors. The Academy completes the annual financial year end in December each year.

## 2.1 Most recent registered student headcount is presented with reference to:

### a. Faculty/college

The Academy has a single campus situated 41 Techno Ave, Techno Park, Stellenbosch, Western Cape.

### b. Race (African, Coloured, White, Indian)

The overall demographic profile of the student body for 2023 indicates that 88% of the student cohort are defined as white. The Academy is working hard at diversifying the student demographics for both internal institutional gain and in order to meet the needs of the creative industry. It is believed that a better proportioned demographic mix of students allows for a richer exchange of cultures, voices and differences which aligns with the Social Transformation mandate that the Academy is striving towards.

With an aim to reach the Social Transformation goals set out in the Transformation Policy, the Academy recognizes that multiple touch points must be addressed. In order to shift the demographic ratio, the Academy must be seen as a desirable institution to study at by a more diversified group of students. and Visual Communication needs to be recognized as a viable industry for employment. The programmes must be financially accessible to applicants through scholarships, and the institution must be transformed enough to offer an excellent educational experience for a diversified student cohort.

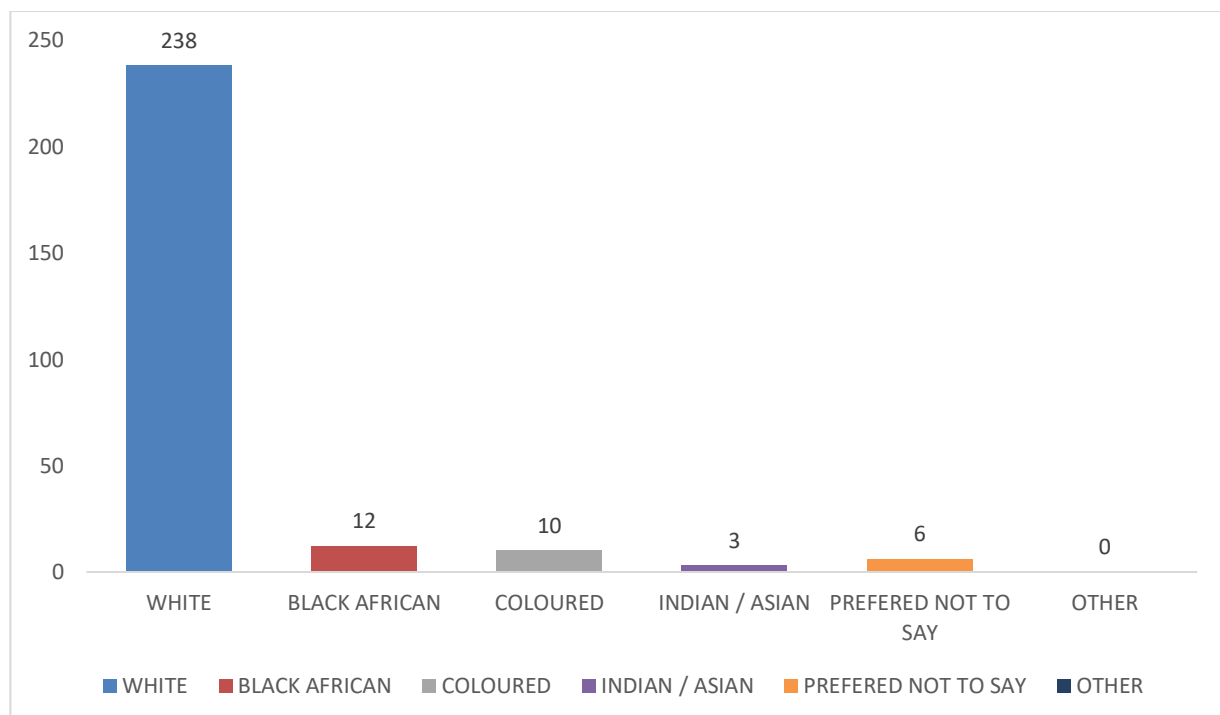


Figure 2: Demographic Profile of All Students Enrolled in 2023

For the past few years, the Academy sets aside an annual bursary budget of

approximately R which is aimed at South African students, primarily of colour and who are in financial need. The Higher Certificate programmes are utilised as feeder programmes into the BA Degree for many scholarship applicants as this allows for students to enter higher education through a highly nurtured and academically supported door.

The ultimate aim of the scholarship program is to open up access to higher education in the creative fields for South African applicants who have financial need and have been previously excluded access to higher education ([link to policy](#)). As the scholarship program has only been offered to more candidates for the past few years, it is still in a reflexive phase. The processes, criteria and approach towards scholarships is reviewed annually with the aim of offering the best possible solutions for qualifying students.

As we can see in the data below, the student demographics for the Higher Certificate in Drawing programme indicate a 44% demographic of students of colour. All 4 of these students have full scholarships. Statistically 90% of our Higher Certificate scholarship students apply for the BA in Visual Communication. With the knowledge of each student's academic track record and drive to succeed, scholarships are then granted for the full 3-year duration with a 100% graduation rate.

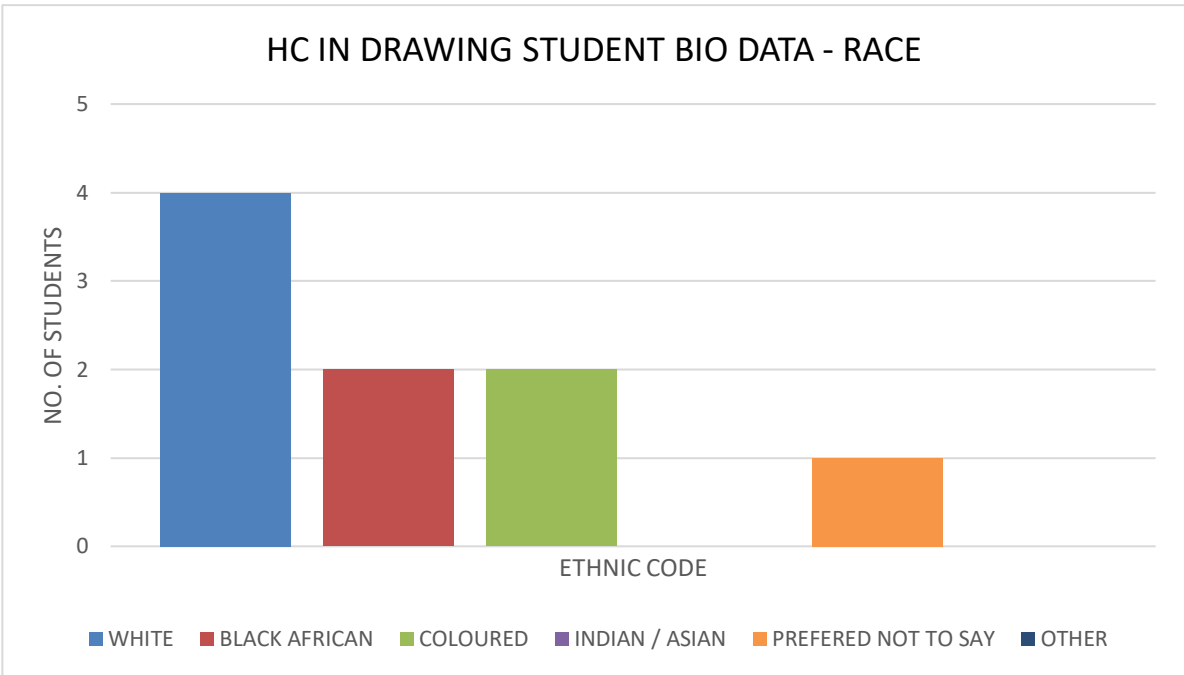


Figure 3: Higher Certificate in Drawing Student Data: Demographics

**c. Gender (male, female, other)**

The Academy has had a 74% female student cohort for 2023. This is above the 55% trend across programmes at public universities in South Africa. The high percentage of female students has required the development of strong institutional support regarding

campus security, health and wellness related to female needs.

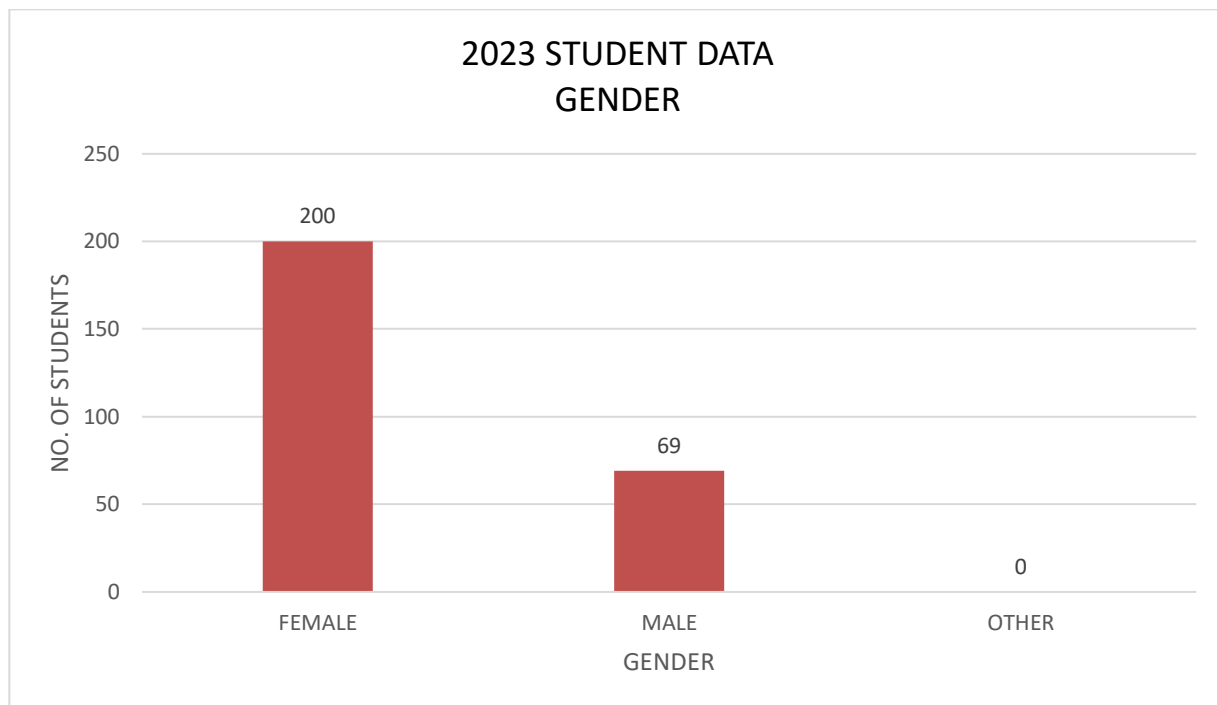


Figure 4: Student Data: Gender

The data set is not a true reflection for any student who identifies as 'other' as the current Learner Manager System, Student Manager has not captured this data directly. The new online application portal will capture this data more accurately in the future.

#### d. Home Language (s)

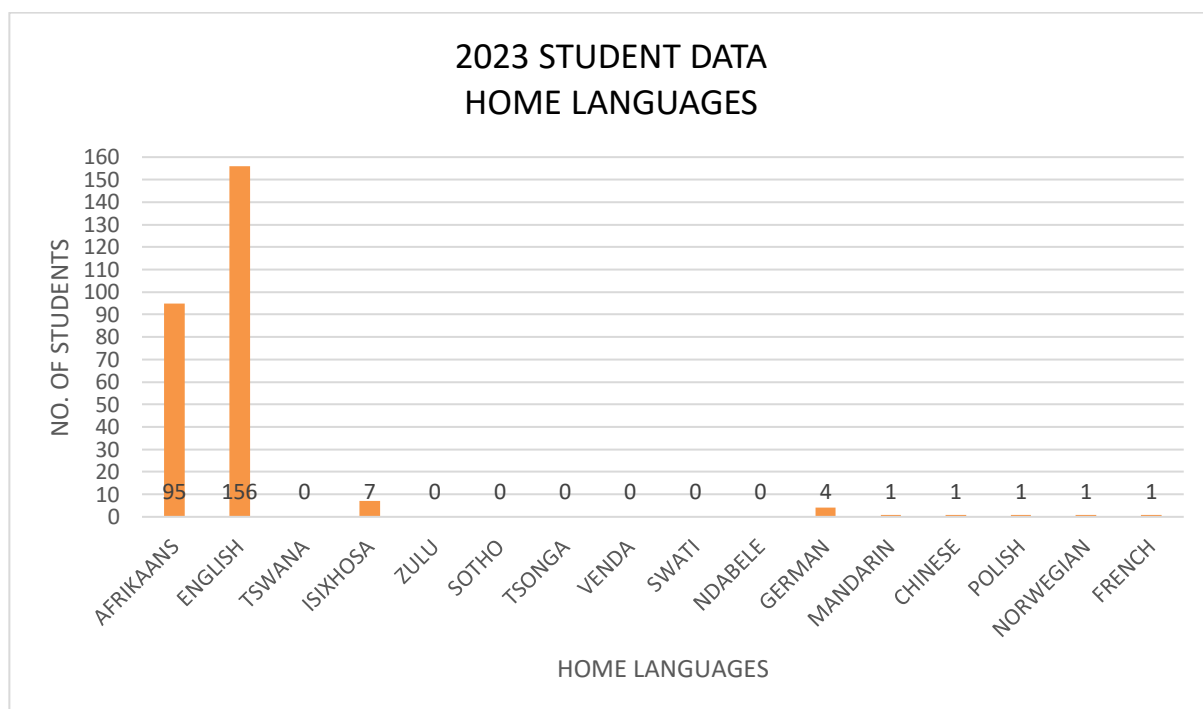


Figure 5: Student Data: Home Language

The Academy is accredited with English as the language of tuition. 58% of the current students have indicated that English is their first language while 35% are Afrikaans speaking. The Academy aims to celebrate diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds whilst maintaining a consistent approach towards the language of tuition. For this reason, all languages are celebrated within social settings as they are recognized as the representation of identity and culture. All classes are offered in English, but staff and student engagements are encouraged to diversify across languages in order for all stakeholders to celebrate their unique identities and cultures.

Code switching is a teaching tool where the lecturer makes use of multiple languages in order to connect with the students in their mother tongue within an educational environment. This approach is only possible when the lecturer can speak multiple languages. Staff diversity in terms of language allows this to be a useful teaching and learning tool. Many lecturers and students engage in Afrikaans as 35% of the student body are Afrikaans speaking. Code switching takes place in informal or one on one engagements so as not to be exclusionary in group settings.

With the shift in staff, many conversations across the Academy are taking place in isiXhosa. While this language is not in the majority it does help native language speakers find their place within the Academy.

### **e. Nationality**

The student nationalities in 2023 indicate that 93% of the cohort are South African while 4% are from neighboring Southern African countries.

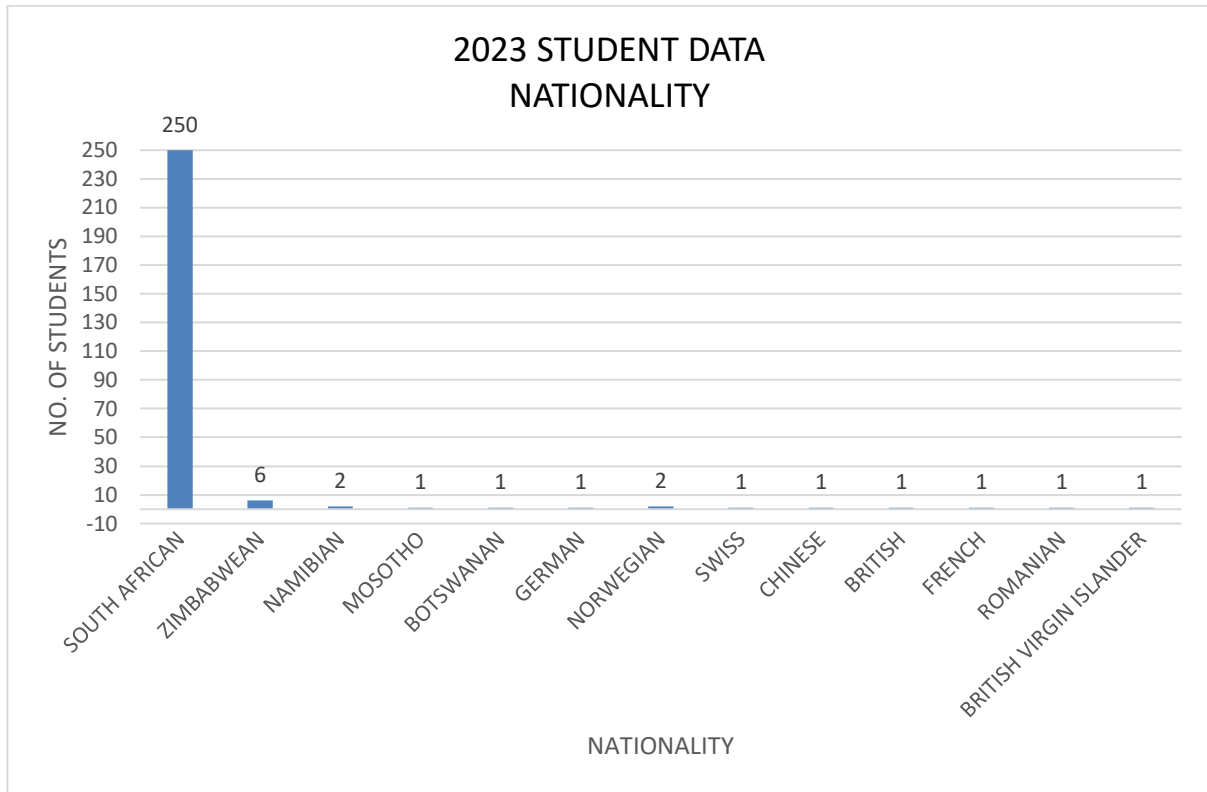


Figure 6: Student Data: Nationality

## f. Quintile School Background

From the below pie-chart it can be seen that of the 269 currently enrolled students at the Academy; 52% are from Quintile 5 schools, 28% are N/A meaning the students are from schools that do not fall within the Quintile system, 14% are NIL (not in list) and therefore from schools that fall outside of the SA national school list. The smaller segments show that students who are from schools in Quintiles 1- 4 make up 5% of the student body.

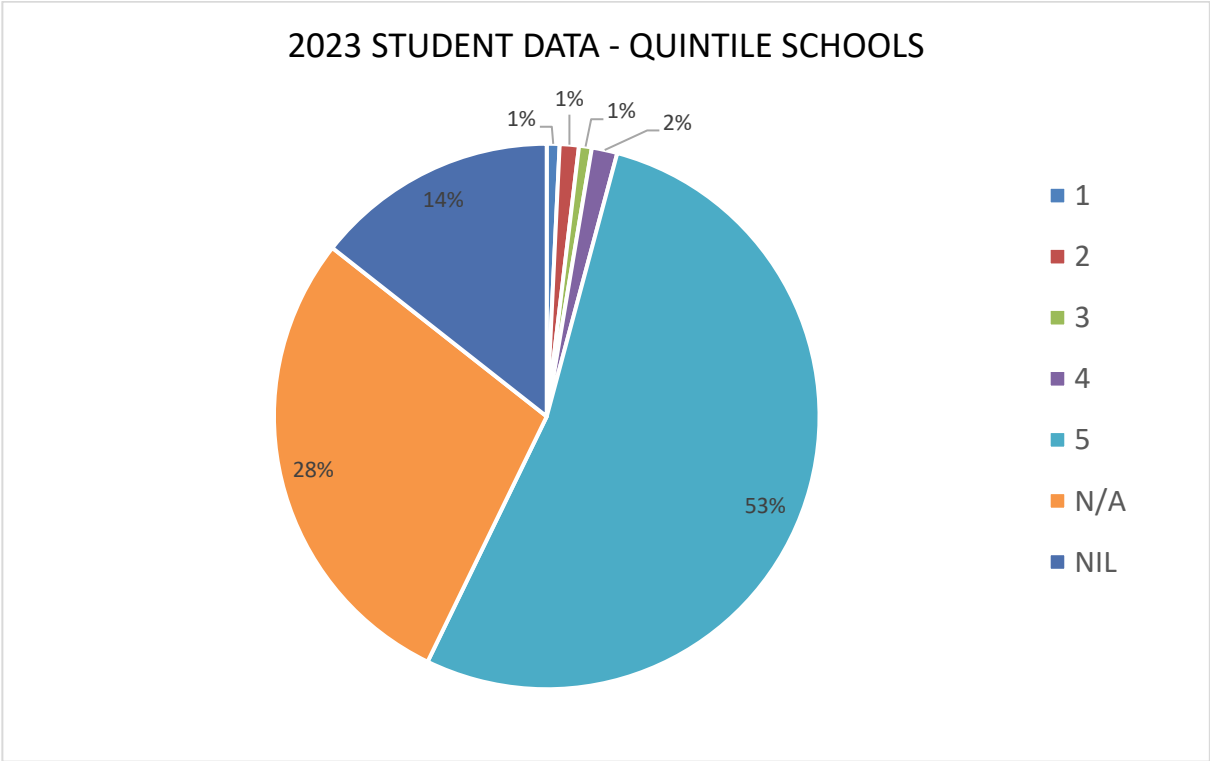


Figure 7: Student Data: Quintile Schools

58% of students come from quintile schools. 53% of the overall student enrollments come from quintile 5 schools which is hugely contrasted with the 1% quintile 1, 1% quintile 2, 1% quintile 3 and 2% quintile 4 schools.

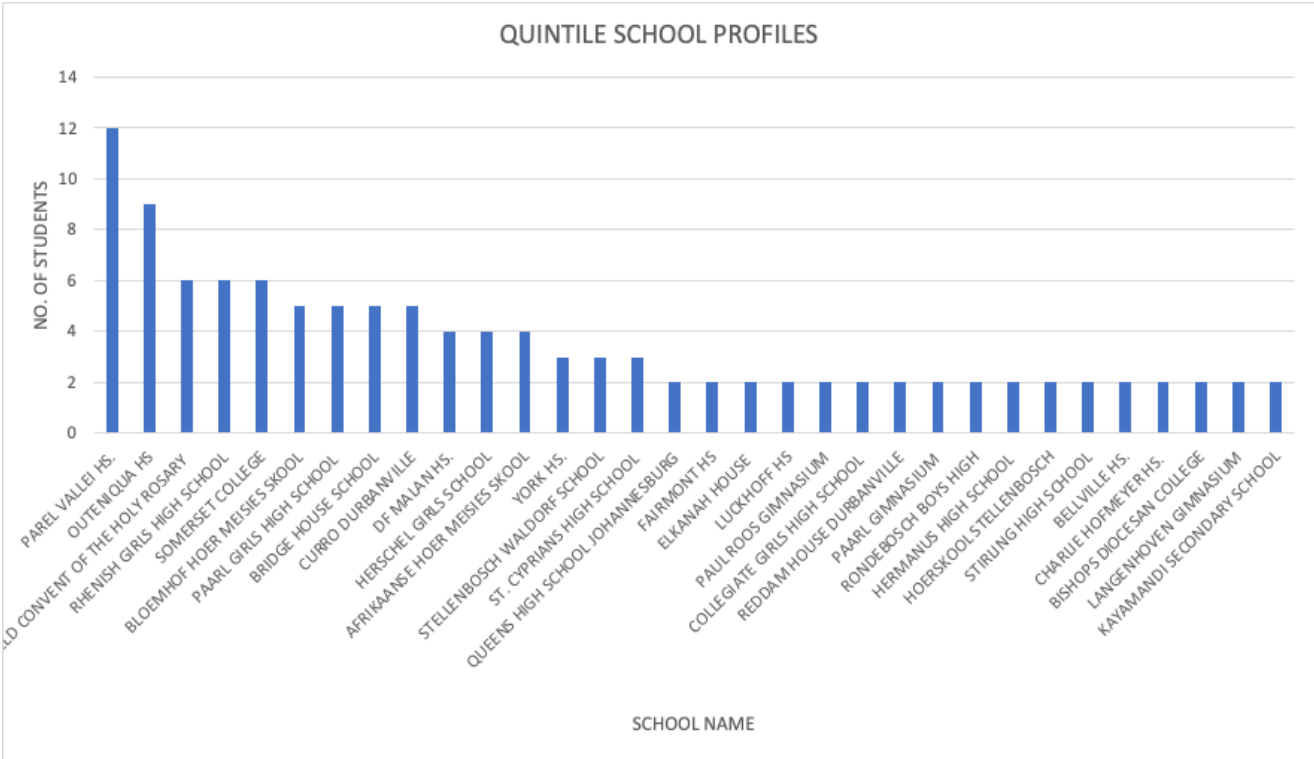


Figure 8: Student Data: Quintile School Profiles (excluding single student intakes)

The highest current quintile school feeder into the Academy is Parel Vallei High School,

which is co-ed and located in Somerset West, within an 18km radius from the Academy.

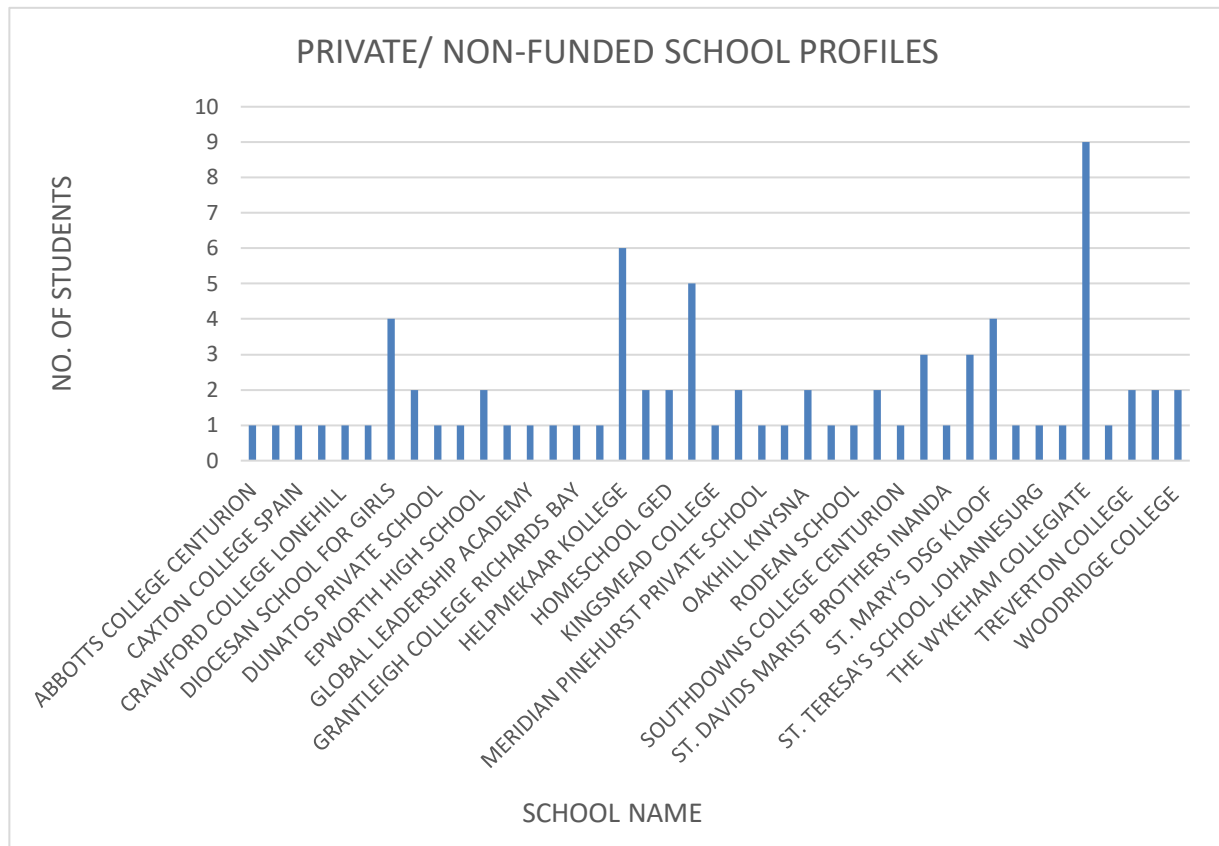
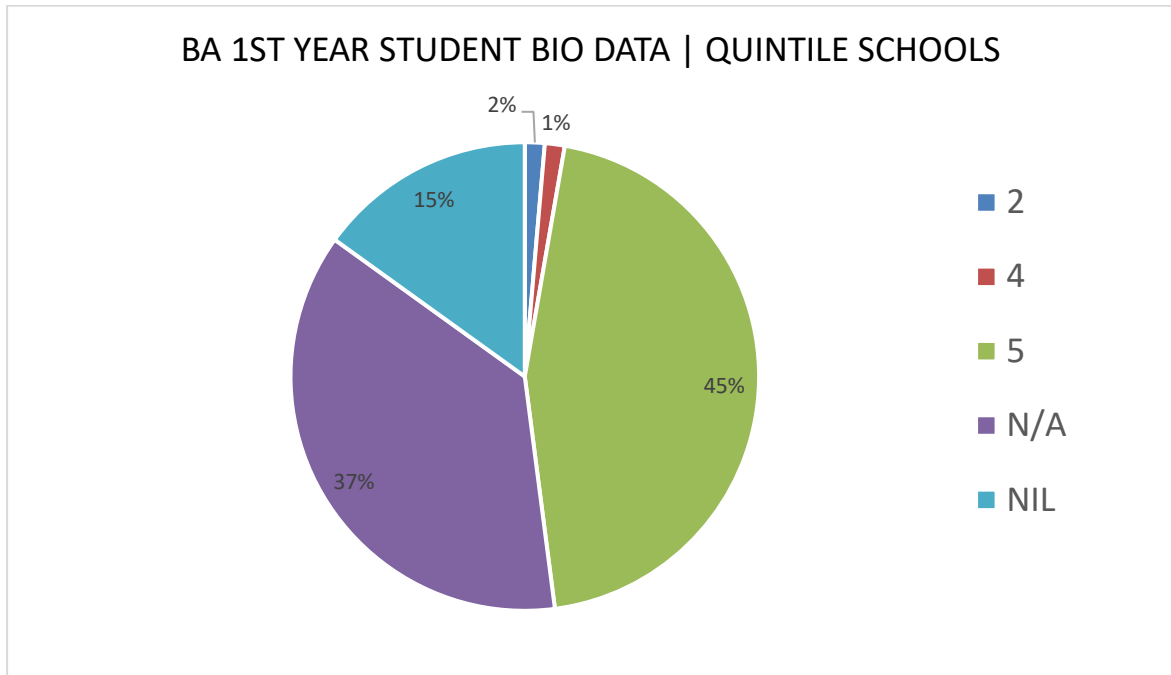


Figure 9: Student Data: Private/ Non-Funded School Profiles

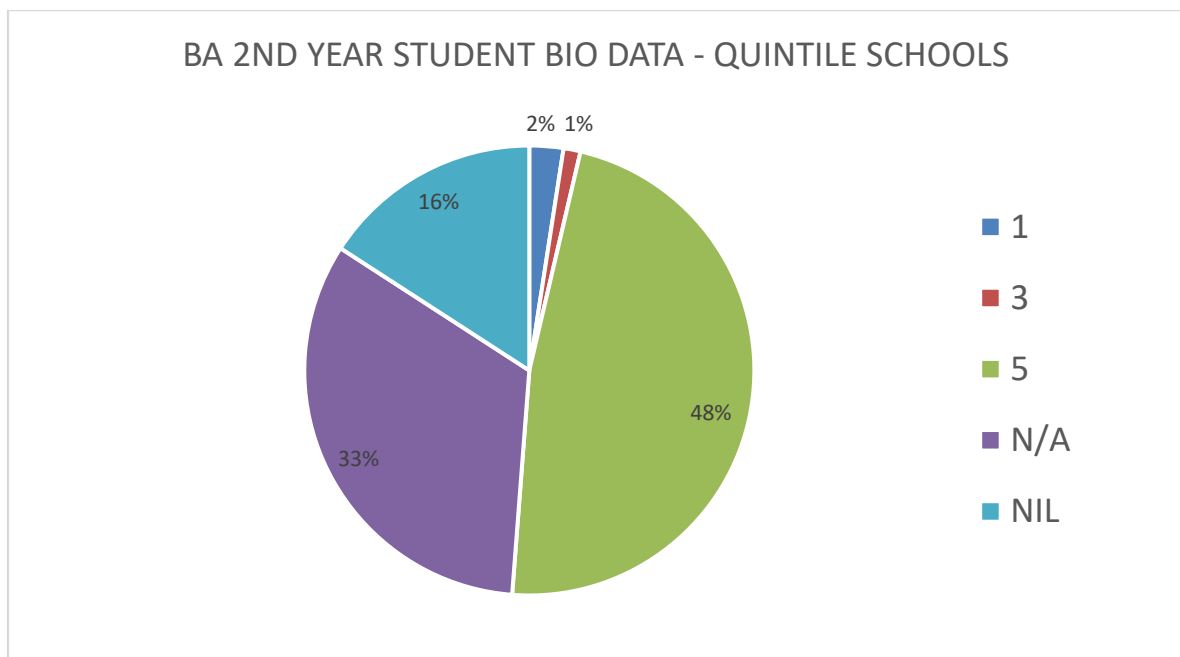
The highest private feeder school is Wykeham Collegiate which is a private girls' school situated in Clarendon, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. There are currently 9 students across the 4 programmes from this school. The second highest feeder school is Helpmekaar Kollege which is a private Afrikaans medium co-educational high school situated in Braamfontein, Gauteng.



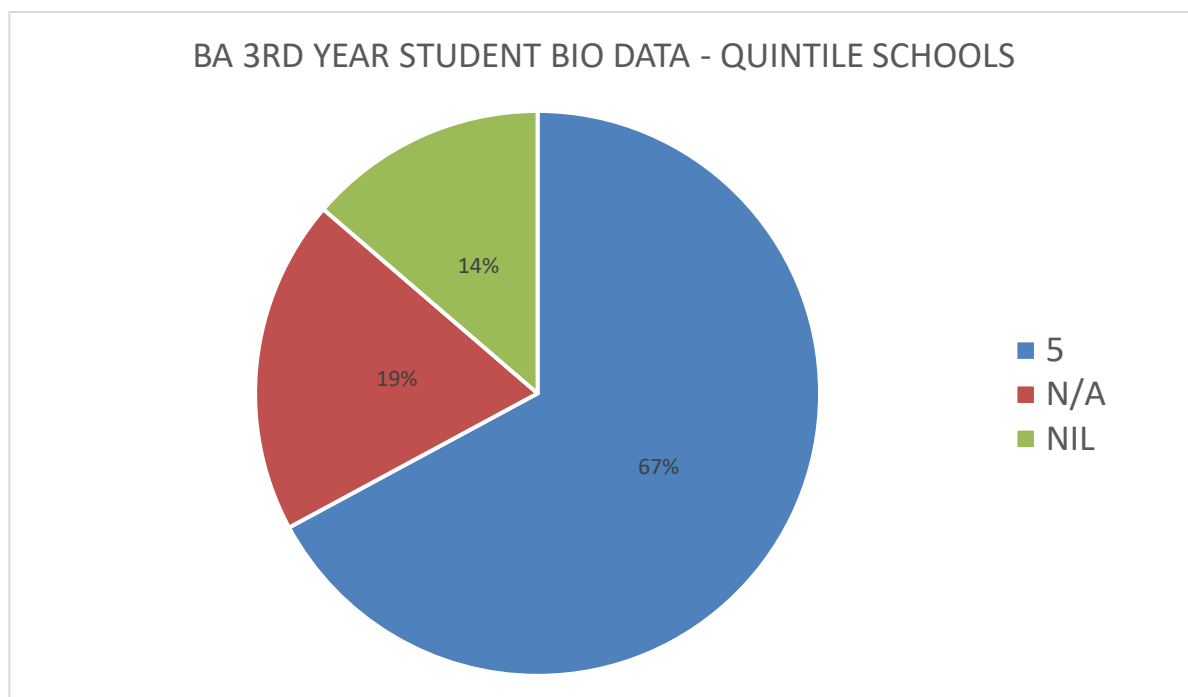
*Figure 10: 2023 BA Degree 1st Year Student Quintile Schools*

The Academy has formed strong relationships with local quintile schools who have students who qualify for bursaries as they fulfil both criteria related to economic need and previously excluded backgrounds. Art school teachers are requested to recommend applicants through a reference letter which forms part of the bursary application (see the policy).

The intake of scholarship students aligns with the Academy's Transformation Policy where the student body is celebrated as having the potential to bring in a diversity of ideas, styles and approaches into the Academy.



*Figure 11: 2023 BA Degree 2nd Year Student Quintile Schools*



*Figure 12: 2023 BA Degree 3rd Year Student Quintile Schools*

Evidence of transformation in terms of student intake can be seen when we compare the quintile school data sets across the 3 years of the BA in Visual Communication programme. A large amount of funding and intent to create change can be attributed to the shift in student enrollments from the lower quintile schools.

It is also interesting to note that the 3<sup>rd</sup> year group enrolled during COVID-19, which may have some bearing on the confidence of students to succeed under the unprecedented learning conditions. The entire BA Degree intake in 2021 came from schools which were well equipped to pivot during a pandemic. These students attended schools which were able to offer a quality education under adverse contexts.

### **g. Student Accommodation (residence; institutional oversight; private)**

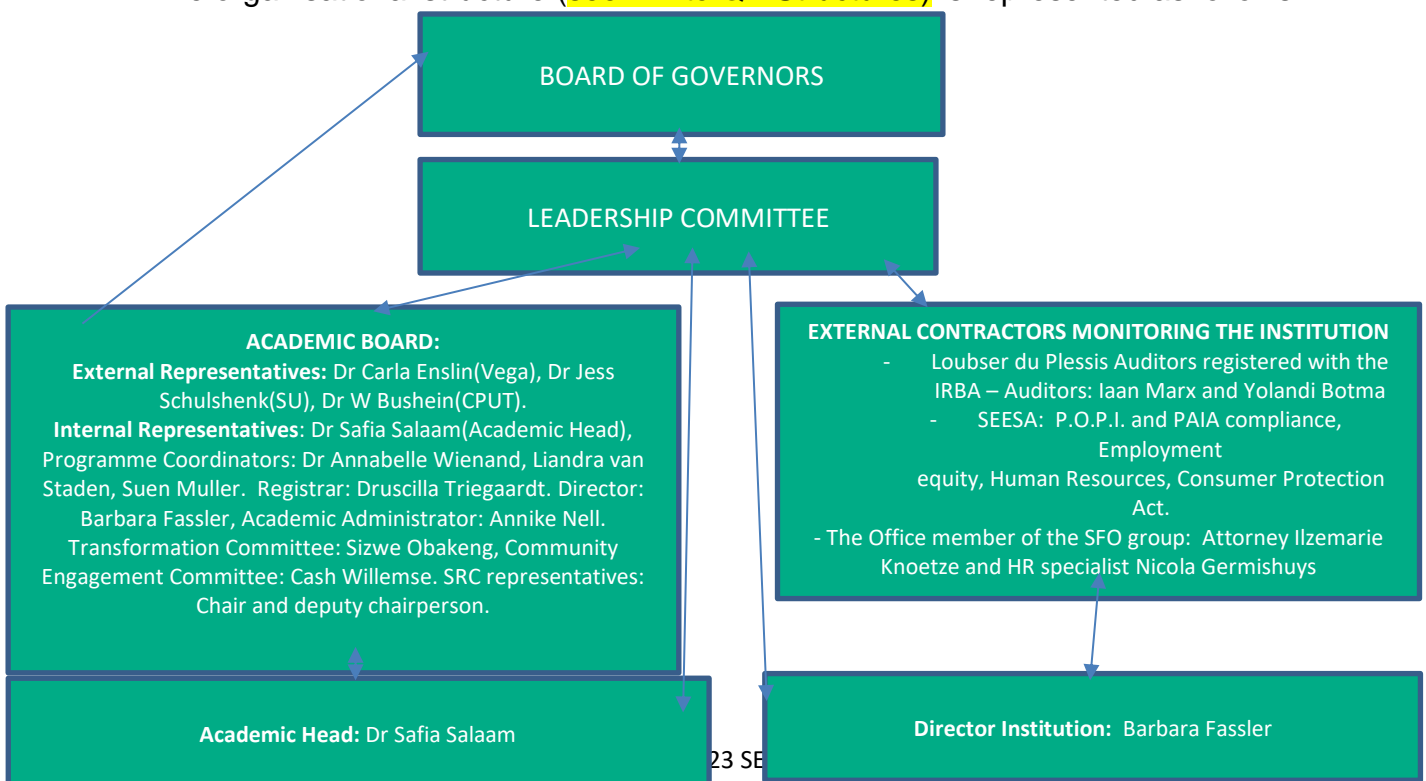
The Academy does not offer student accommodation per se.

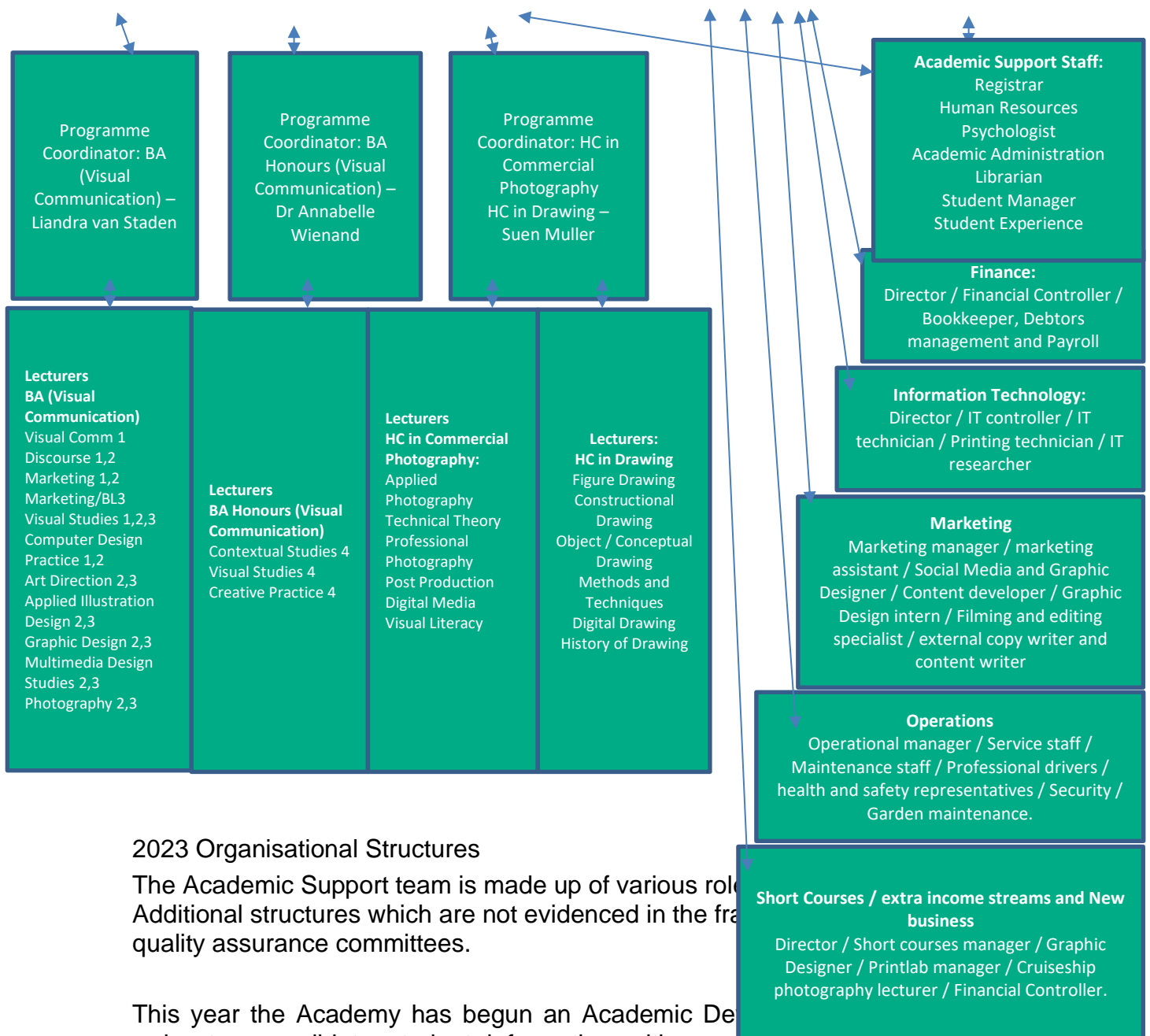
Accommodation is offered to full bursary students, but the house can

## **2. Organisational structure, name and number of faculties/colleges, schools, departments, units, academic support structures;**

The Academy has a single site of delivery for the 4 different programmes that are offered within the campus.

The organisational structure ([see link to QA Structures](#)) is represented as follows:





## 2023 Organisational Structures

The Academic Support team is made up of various roles. Additional structures which are not evidenced in the framework are part of the quality assurance committees.

This year the Academy has begun an Academic Development Committee in order to consolidate student information with regards to support and academic interventions. The committee has met weekly in order to communicate consistently regarding student issues with the aim of developing meaningful academic support. Students who have academic or psychological challenges must submit their documentation to the committee which they would have received from their specialised doctor.

Referrals from specialised doctors will always have recommendations and accommodations based on the student's diagnosis. It is the committee's job to review and discuss the ways in which the Academy can accommodate each student by designing their own personalised educational plan. The accommodations fall within the scope and context of the higher education programme and may include extra time for a written exam, writing making use of a computer or being in a smaller venue for those

with sensory issues.

The Academic Development Committee members include:

- The Registrar
- The institutional Educational Psychologist
- The Academic Head

The current academic support structure has seen good results in terms of increased throughput rates, and students completing their studies through various adversities. In 2023 the graduating cohort across the 4 programmes has seen 6 parents pass away. Each of these students have been offered emotional, psychological and academic support from the committee, their lecturers and the Academy at large with the result that all of them have graduated ([link to ADC presentation](#)).

The Academy begun the Academic Integrity Committee (AIC) in 2022 with the aim of ensuring a highly reflexive quality assurance system focusing on academic functions. In 2023 the committee met weekly in order to offer consistent communication between the role players and address all of the areas which fall under the committees' responsibilities. These areas include teaching, learning, assessment, moderation and student surveys.

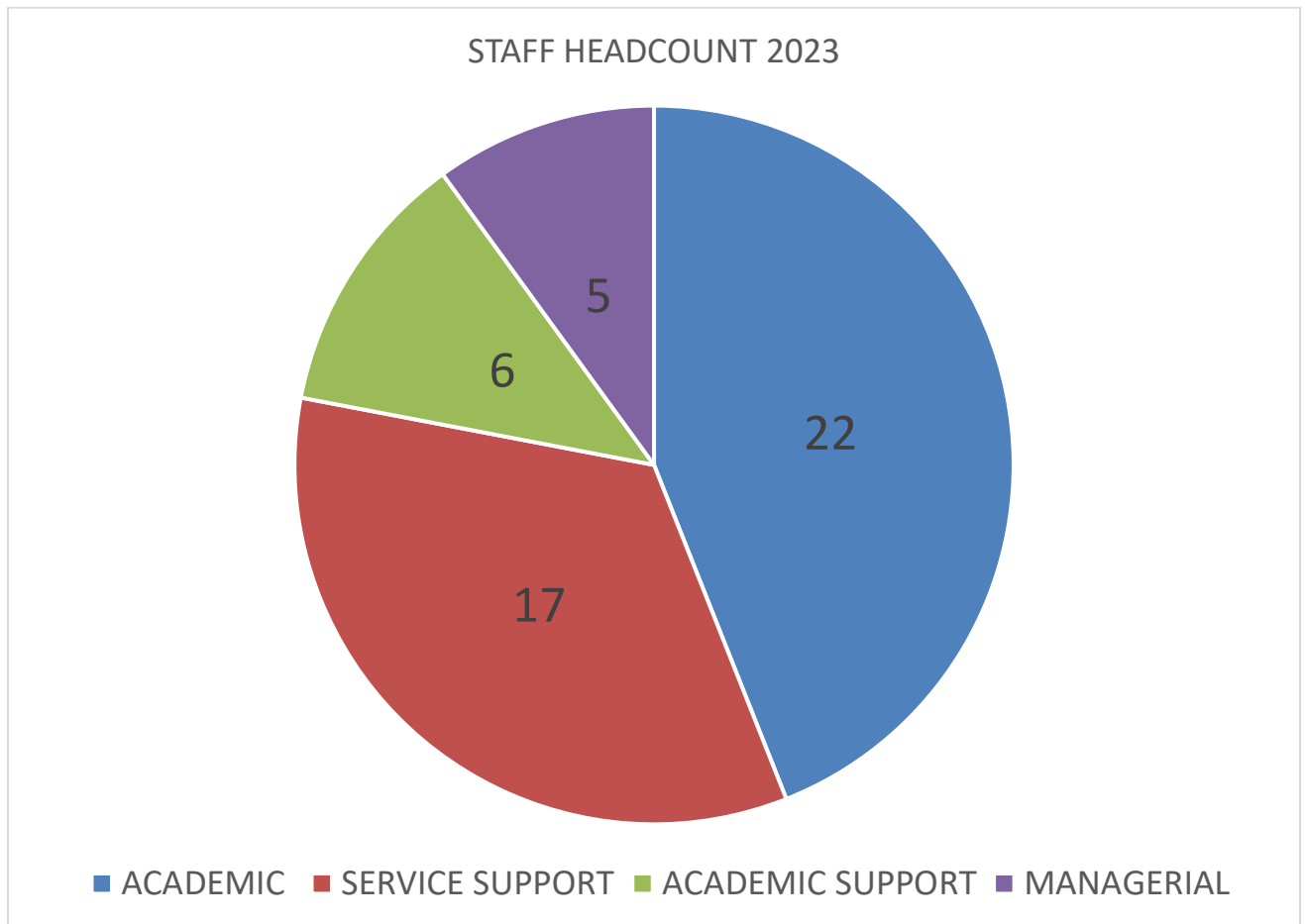
The AIC plays a role in student academic support through reviewing Marks Appeals, Plagiarism cases, AI cases and non- submissions of projects. When a case is unclear due to academic learning challenges or psychological issues, the case is referred to the Academic Development committee ([Student Appeals documentation 2023](#)).

The AIC committee members include:

- Academic Head
- Programme Coordinator: Honours
- Programme Coordinator: Higher Certificates
- Programme Coordinator: BA Degree
- Registrar (when needed)

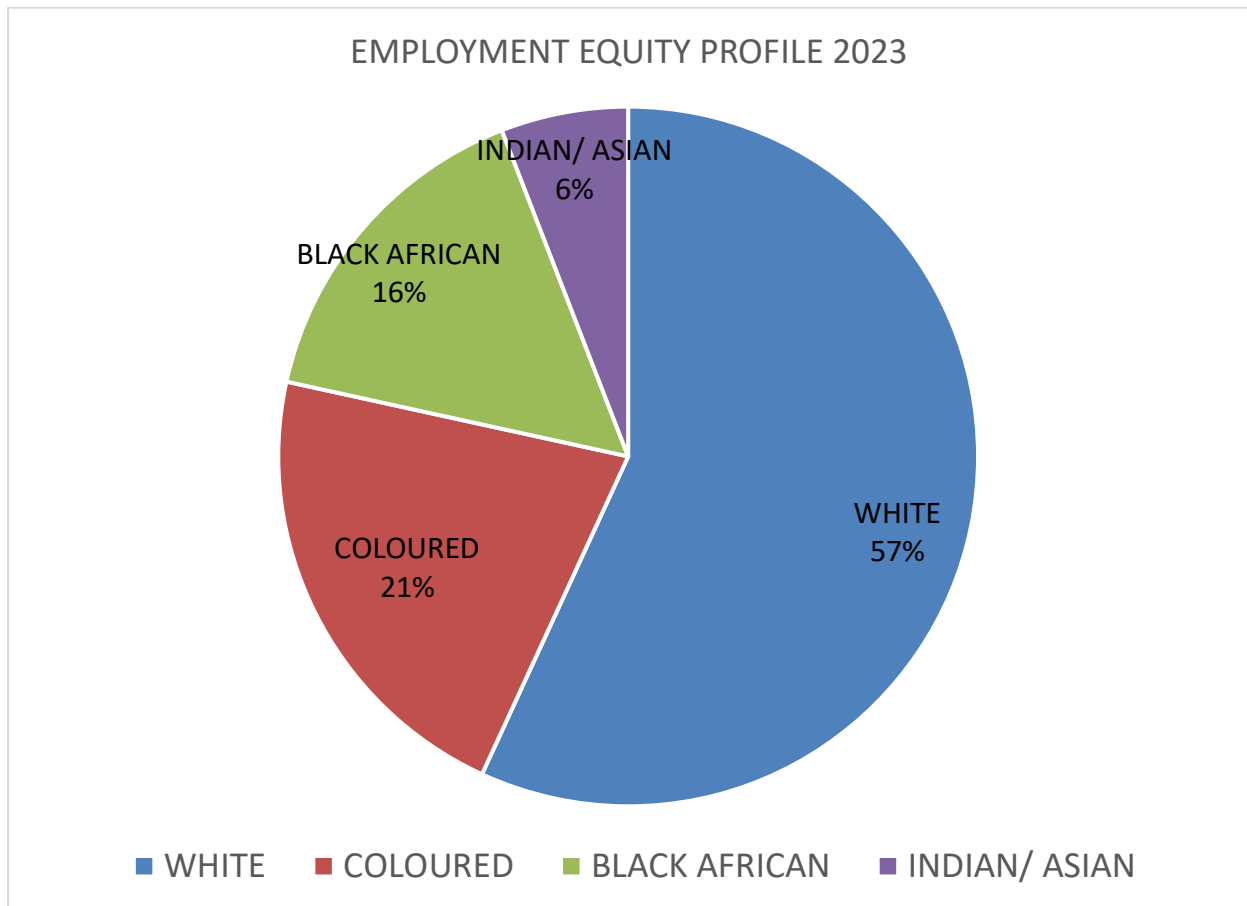
### **3. Staff headcount (managerial, academic, academic support, service support), as well as the employment equity profile;**

The Academy employs 50 staff with the following headcount:



*Figure 13: Staff Headcount, June 2023*

From February 2022 the managerial positions have been held by an all-female team, with the Director of the Academy being one of those who fulfil managerial and leadership roles. This core team engages in various committees as these quality assurance structures engage the full workings of the Academy.



*Figure 14: Employment Equity Profile, June 2023*

The above employment equity profile was taken in June 2023. The Academy takes all student and staff data sets for the annual DHET report from this month in order to offer consistent insights.

The Academy has seen a high staff turnover since January 2022 which aligns with international employee trends. This high staff turnover has been due to mental/ or physical health issues, inadequate qualifications with no intent to study further, retirement or new employment opportunities.

The high staff turnover has forced the HR department to review and refine all aspects relating to employment, hiring and resignations. The process has been positive in that the processes and procedures are better defined. The HR department will undergo an internal review in the beginning of 2024 with the aim of improving the department as the Academy’s staff cohort has grown exponentially over the 21 years. A full time HR specialist, who was previously our HR advisor will be joining the institution in 2024.



Figure 15: 2022/23 Reasons for Staff Resignations

In order to ensure that the hiring process aligns with the HR and Transformation Policies, all newly developed hiring review tools, advertising platforms and workload allocation models will be part of the review to ascertain whether they are working and offering the desired outcomes (see HR Report).

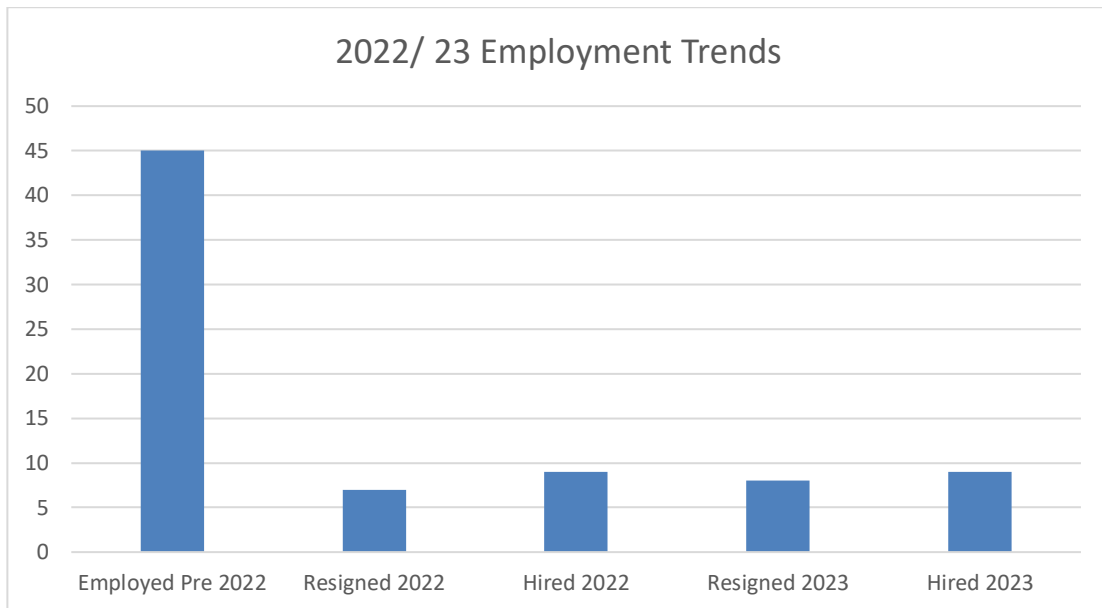


Figure 16: 2022/ 23 Employment Trends

The opportunities which have been afforded to the Academy with the employment of new staff have allowed for a younger and more diverse cohort. The qualifications of staff have been a major employability factor allowing the Academy to bring in highly educated staff who are at the forefront of their careers. The Academy has hired 17 new staff members in the past 2 years, 10 of whom have postgraduate level qualifications including 3 Masters, and a PhD.

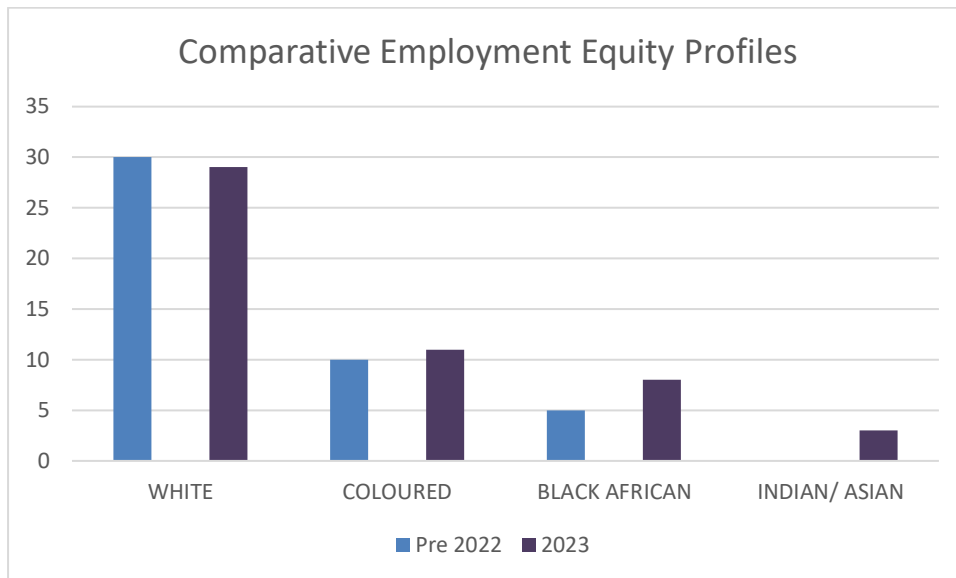


Figure 17: Pre 2022 vs 2023 Employment Equity Staff Profiles

In order to align with the aims of the Academy’s Transformation Policy, great effort has been placed in advertising on different platforms to what has traditionally been used in order to diversify the pool of candidates. The staff complement, and most specifically academic staff, aims to ensure that students are exposed to a diversity of ideas, styles and approaches, and that there is experience in the particular requirements of the mode of delivery and areas of specialisation.

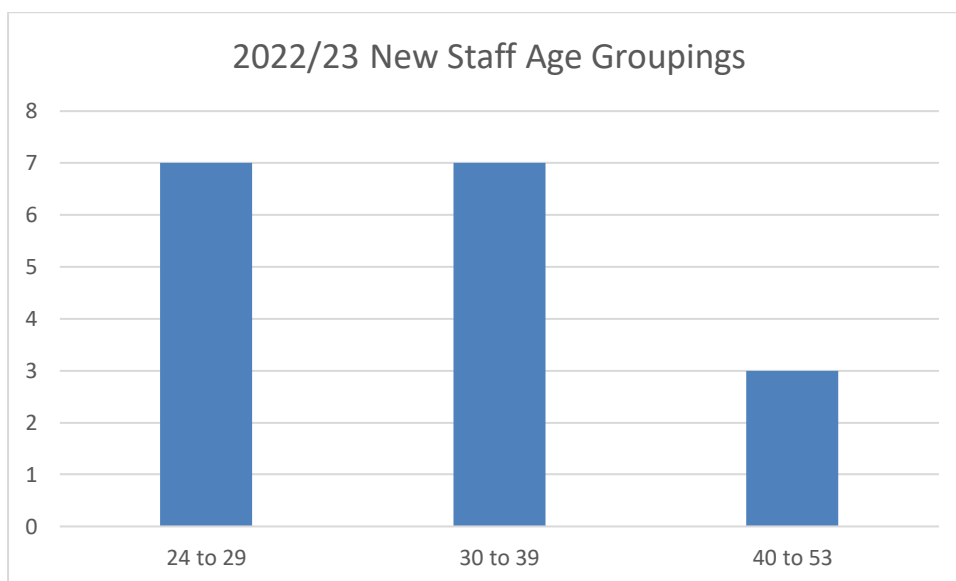
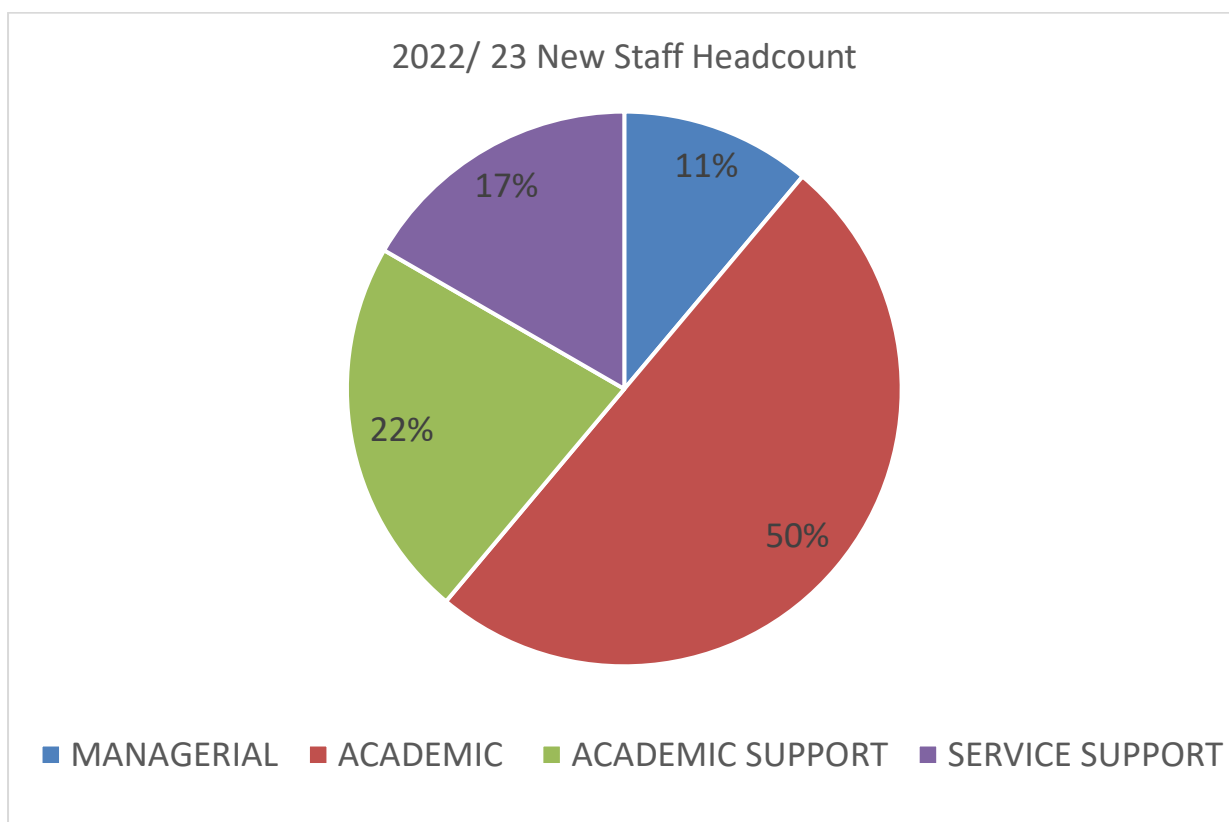


Figure 18: 2022/23 New Staff by Age Grouping

82% of the new staff fall within the ages of 24 and 39. The younger age groups of new staff are intended to support the future growth of the Academy and fulfil sustainability goals. The new lecturers have a range of teaching experience with the institution taking on the responsibility to upskill where it is needed.



*Figure 19: 2022/ 23 New Staff Headcount*

In the above graph we can see that 50% of the new hires are academic lecturers, which indicates that the employment placements are of a high level. These same employment positions require an Honors, Masters or PhD as they are academic.

#### **4. Student throughput and completion rates per year of first registration and per programme;**

The BA Degree is the only 3-year programme offered at the Academy, making the throughput rates from first to third year important indicators used for reviewing the success of the programme. The throughput data from 2021 and 2022 led to specific programme reviews which included the effectiveness of academic support and the impact of class sizes and teaching practices specifically in first year.

The review was led by the programme coordinator and included all lecturing and academic support staff in order to understand the reasons for the decrease in the first-year throughput rates. The workshops and reviews resulted in curriculum changes for the first-year major subject so that the class sizes can be smaller for a more conducive lecturer to student ratio (see BA Degree 2022 Programme Report).

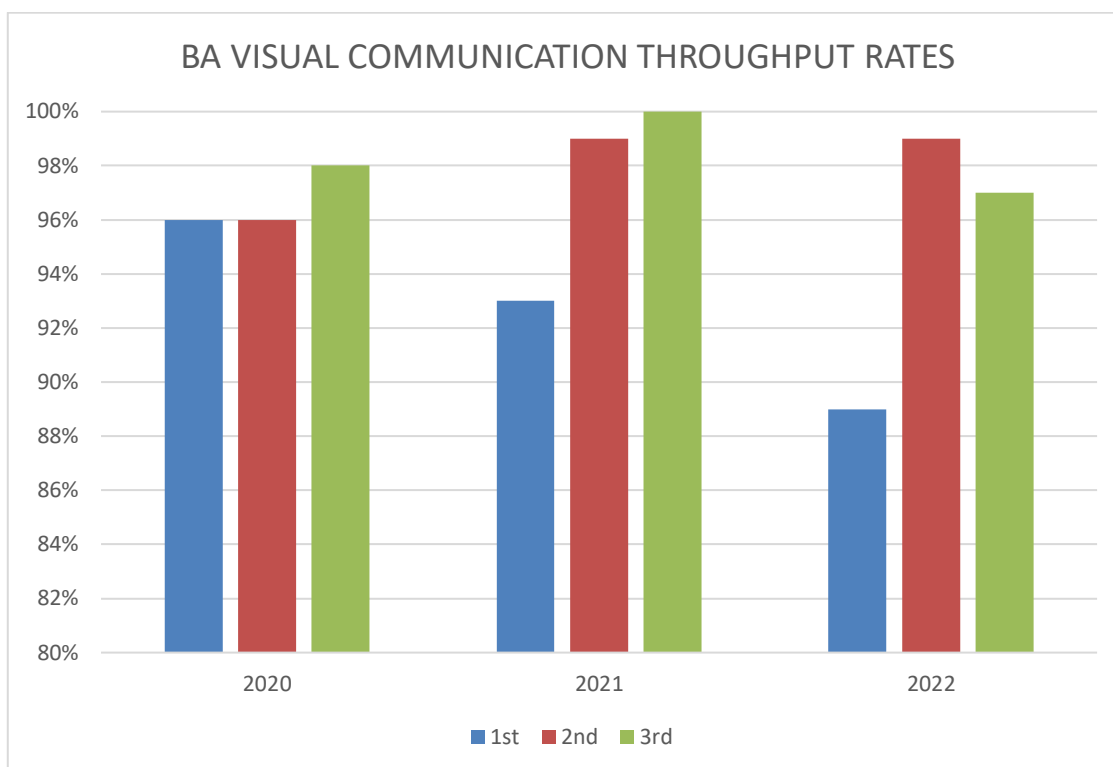


Figure 20: BA Degree in Visual Communication Throughput Rates

Covid had an enormous effect on first year throughput rates in both 2021 and 2022. In part the effects of schooling under adverse circumstances leading into unfamiliar environments and uncertainty had an emotional effect on many of the students. Due to the emotional and psychological impact that COVID-19 had on students, the institutional Educational Psychologist's employment contract was increased to a 2-day fulltime contract in 2023 in order to offer more developed educational support.

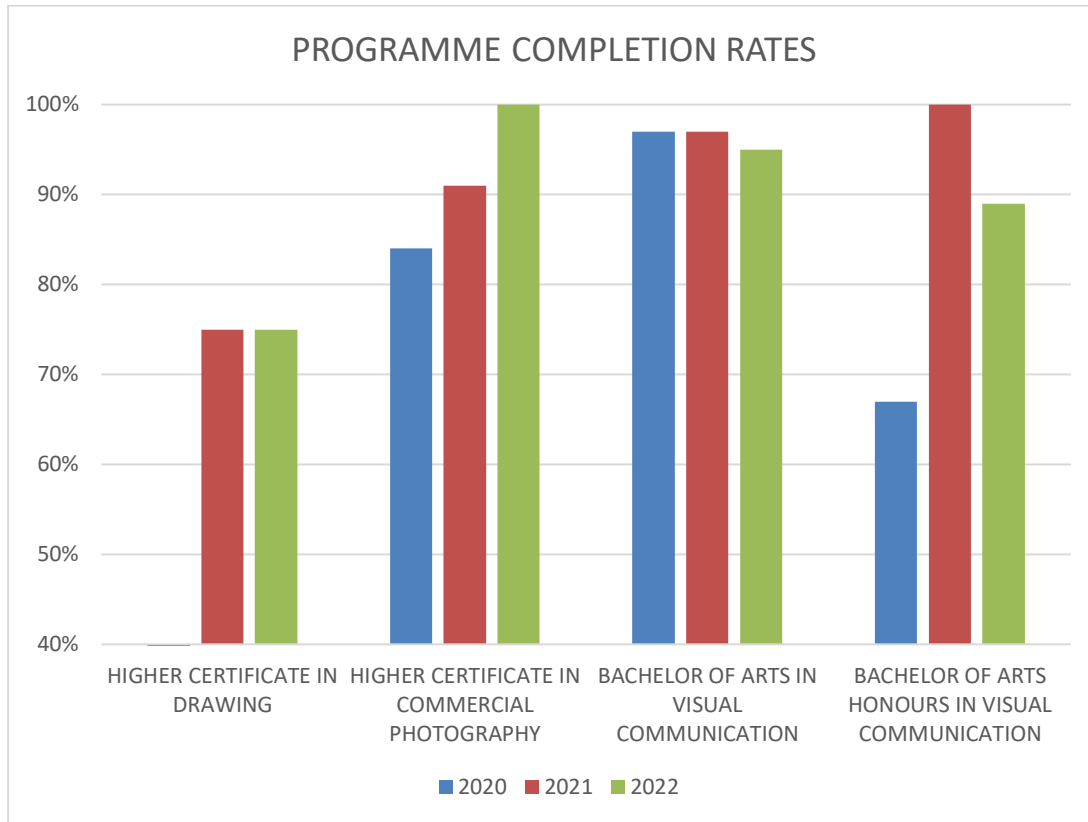


Figure 21: All Programme Completion Rates

The completion rates across programmes reflect a combination of trends.

The Higher Certificate in Drawing was first offered in 2021 and had a class of 8 students of which 6 completed the programme. The same number of students enrolled and graduated in 2022 and 2023. Each year the reasons for non-graduation have varied but some teaching staff have also changed each year.

The current aim has been to bring together the most appropriate team of lecturers for the level of programme, under the guidance of a well-qualified Programme Coordinator. The consistency of an experienced lecturing team will bring better insights and further developed teaching, learning and assessment, and a greater ability to lessen the dropout rate.

The Higher Certificate in Commercial Photography has consistently increased their throughput rates over the past 3 years. COVID-19 did not seem to have any adverse effects on the throughput rates as the programme is robust and well developed. The programme has undergone 3 lecturer changes for 2023 but the quality of lecturers brought in, and their ability to develop the curriculum has had positive effects on the students and the throughput rate.

The BA Degree in Visual Communication indicates a mature programme through the consistent throughput rates even though this data was taken during incredibly turbulent times. The lecturing staff and the Academy at large were able to pivot through COVID-19 restrictions with the students still be able to learn and complete their degree with a high level of education.

2020 was the first year that the Honours in Visual Communication was offered at the

Academy. Due to Covid restrictions one international student returned home, one was a lecturer and only did one of the three subjects due to teaching load and the third student did not continue due to having a child and needing to be a home. The following year had a 100% throughout rate, which indicates the level of review and reflection that took place in order to improve the programme's teaching, learning and assessment methodologies.

## **5. Academic staff/student weighted ratio;**

The ratio of staff to students is kept at a maximum of 25 students to 1 lecturer for practical subjects and 80:1 for theory subjects.

When a class exceeds this ratio for practical subjects, a second lecturer has been employed in a teaching assistant role. All large theory classes have at least 2 tutors to assist with the marking load and offer smaller break away tutoring sessions in order to maximize learning.

## **6. Research performance and impact;**

The academy does not only place an emphasis on written research outputs but also practical outputs as many staff as practicing designers or artists.

The Academy values new knowledge and innovation which is celebrated both in research/ practical outputs and also within the Academy context of curriculum design and teaching methodologies. As the Academy is currently undergoing the SER, focus is being placed on internal research and innovation.

A future focus will be for staff to once again have time to engage in research outputs as these developments are highly valued. The Academy offers a minimum of 12 days research over and above their 30 days leave to engage with research within their field of study and practice-led research work.

## **7. Community engagement projects and reach.**

Community engagement forms an integral part of the social engagement of the institution (see 2023 Community Engagement Report). The Academy actively engages in a range of community-based projects with the following focus areas:

1. Collaboration projects
2. Value exchange projects and
3. Entrepreneurial projects

Community engagements include meaningful interactions with people within the surrounding areas, engagements with the visual communication industries and with organisations whose focus is to uplift the communities primarily within the Stellenbosch area and also in other areas in the Western Cape. Community engagement projects are held either within a specific subject and project or outside of curriculum, by various role players within the Academy. The aim of community engagement at the academy is to develop student attributes such as critical thinking, innovation, value-driven researchers,

astute strategists, problem solvers, compelling communicators, responsible citizens, and effective negotiators.

The Community Engagement learning environment cultivates an attitude and attributes with students to build careers as visual communicators that make a difference in the world around us. Community engagement is directed from initiatives and engagements that range from informal and unstructured activities to formal and structured academic programmes addressing and meeting community needs.

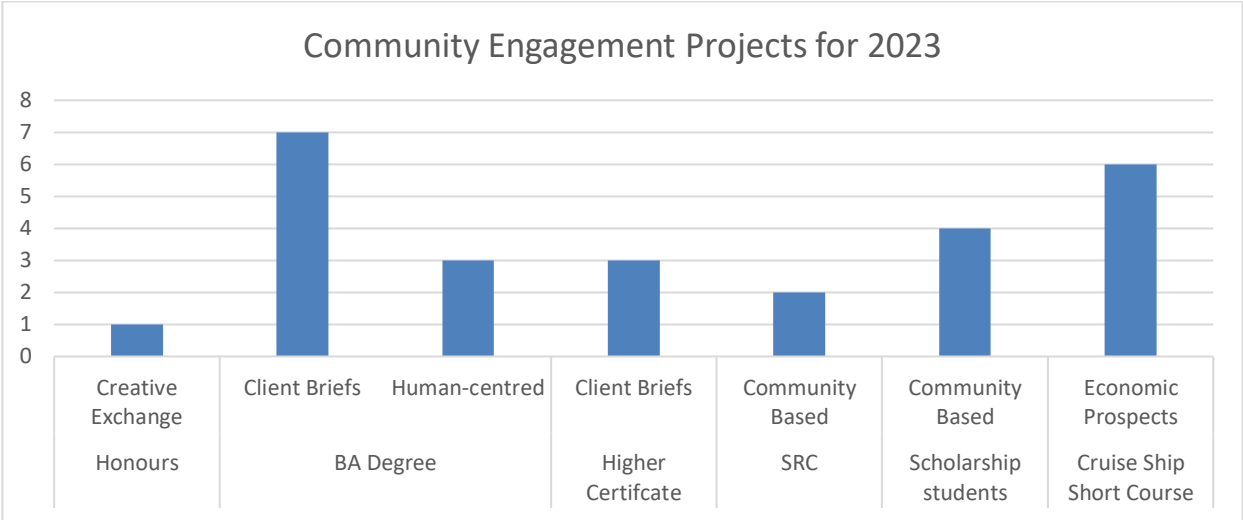


Figure 22: Community Engagement Projects for 2023

All community projects are evaluated prior to the project roll-out. All staff are expected to undergo a self-evaluation to determine whether the project aligns with the institutional mission and vision, as well as if the project aligns with the Ethics Policy. The engagement is required to have operational and pedagogical implications for cultivating student attributes. Community engagement projects have the ability to address pressing contextual and social challenges as well as fulfilling the process of educating students to be leaders for change.

COVID-19 had an effect on student’s and staff’s ability to engage in person with socially engaging in person projects. The social constraints did not prevent industry-based projects or live briefs from being part of the curriculum.

Over the past 2 years the Academy has been able to re-engage in social projects. 2 projects which are worth mentioning would be the 2<sup>nd</sup> year BA Degree group project which falls within the subject of Discourse. For the past 2 years the students have researched a small community within the area called Jamestown. The community requested research to be done on specific themes such as safety and security, youth, sport, history, and arts with the aim of understanding the strengths and weaknesses experienced by and within the community. The students had to do field research as groups and then translate their findings into digital visual representations of each theme.

The research was then presented back to the community. The second iteration of the project made use of the previous research and students were tasked with designing websites for each theme.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> set of projects form part of the graphic design curriculum which teaches students about activated human-centered design. For 2 years in a row the projects have involved specific spaces within Kyamandi which is an under resourced community on the outskirts of Stellenbosch.

The first project had 2<sup>nd</sup> year students work with a group of female entrepreneurs who run their food businesses from shipping containers. The students researched the needs of the businesswoman, designed visual branding and made suggestions to the outdoor furniture and structures that could bring in a sense of joy to the community, and increase business. The students painted the structures and redecorated the spaces through consultation processes which has resulted in financial growth for each of the woman.

The second significant community engagement project was offered in 2 parts. The first was a collaboration between a paint company and 3<sup>rd</sup> year graphic design students. The company wanted the students to complete a branding campaign for them which falls within the Academy's community projects as a live brief. In order to expose the students to the project the company offers a workshop where the students were taught the properties of the paints.

The same company agreed to sponsor paint which was used to revamp the outside of a creche in Kayamandi. The students consulted with the crèche to understand their needs and designed happy child appropriate images to paint on the outside walls. The designs were applied by the students. The aim of the project was to beautify the creche in order to make the children excited with the space that they engage with on a daily basis.

### **Center for Regenerative Design & Collaboration**

[Center for Regenerative Design & Collaboration](#) the Academy's partner in a plastic-to-brick programme where our institution's plastic waste is upcycled into construction bricks and other useful products. CRDC, or Center for Regenerative Design & Collaboration, has a mission to create appreciating value from the world's plastic waste by converting it into RESIN8™, an Eco-Aggregate that improves concrete. Founded in 2018, they currently have operations in Costa Rica, the USA, South Africa, the UK, Australia, Mexico, New Zealand, and Samoa.

### **Community arts project by Usisipho Ngxubaza and Academy students**

Usisipho Ngxubaza ([usisipho000@gmail.com](mailto:usisipho000@gmail.com)) is working with young woman in Kayamandi and our Drawing and Illustration students from the Academy's scholarship house. Usisipho grew up in Kayamandi, a township in Stellenbosch, and she is deeply passionate about bringing change into her community through arts and creativity. Ngxubaza hosts art classes that take place twice a week for young women in Kayamandi.

During these classes, the participants practice drawing and learn more about the visual arts. Students from Stellenbosch Academy assist as instructors and tutors for the young women attending these classes.

### **Cruise Ship Photography**

The Academy offers a short course in Cruise Ship photography. This is an area where we have empowered candidates from the community who cannot afford the full course fees to complete the course, and only once they have secured work on an actual ship, do they pay the balance of their course fees to make it feasible for them. The social impact of this initiative is a difficult area to quantify, due to the high amount of young people who do not have opportunities to work locally. With this initiative the Academy is making this route to job security possible, and if candidates pass the entrance interview, they can gain access to this opportunity. For example, our operations manager Francois Mouton recently got a young man in to assist for two days, and he is now on the course and the institution is happy that he is an ideal fit for the cruise ship job – he went from no job at the age of 23 to a potential future that will empower him whilst travelling the world. Two notable examples of this course are Thando Dyantyi who worked at the Academy before and is now heading up the media on one of the biggest cruise ships. There is also Oyama Mahlamvu, one of our HC candidates, who joined a cruise ship this year and is loving his job and seeing the world.

### **The E’Bosch Heritage Project**

The Academy assists the E’Bosch Stellenbosch Heritage Project (<http://www.ebosch.co.za/>) through the provision of photography, filming of events, and designing of their booklets. The Stellenbosch Heritage Project (SHP) seeks to unite the people of Stellenbosch; to create a community who:

- know one another
- appreciate one another
- respect one another

The project aims to turn Stellenbosch into a town where both residents and visitors are made to feel welcome, at home and secure. The dream is for every Stellenbosch resident to enjoy the freedom of the town and to feel like an honorary citizen, with the space and opportunities to flourish.

Each community and interest group in the broader Stellenbosch can participate and contribute to the Stellenbosch Heritage Project. Communities are invited to not only participate in all the activities of the Stellenbosch Heritage Project but to organise an event that all the other communities can participate in. Members of the following communities are taking part in the activities: Cloetesville, Devon Valley, Ida's Valley, Jamestown, Kayamandi, Klappmuts, Kylemore, Lanquedoc, Pniël, Raithby, Vlottenburg, Wemmershoek, Stellenbosch Central, the Student Community, Senior Citizens, Muslim Community, and the Farming Community.

Loxion Foundation

Scholarship students are working with the local social entrepreneur, Paul Khambule, on projects with youth in Kayamandi. The multi-talented students engage with the community but also with the organisation of the events, gaining valuable professional experience while engaging with the local community.

The students have assisted in photographic documentation of soccer tournaments and other cultural events such as poetry sessions. They are also currently assisting with visual communication work, designing posters for events, creating a website, a logo, and generating social media content for the Loxion Foundation.

### 3. Reflection on the 16 Standards

Please provide an evidence-based description of how the institution meets each of the standards for institutional audits. The responses must take into account the specific guidelines contained in the *Manual for Institutional Audits 2021* (pages 13-24), with respect to each of the standards and their guidelines.

Please note that the Guidelines are intended to assist institutions to interpret the Standards and direct responses are not required for each and every one of the Guidelines. The outcomes of the institutional audit are based on the 16 Standards.

**Guideline 13.4 is the only Guideline that needs a specific response. The focus of this reflection should be on the institution's response to the emergency arrangements during 2020 for the pandemic and plans for learning, teaching and assessment going forward from 2021 onwards.**

**For each one of the 16 standards** (repeated at the end for convenience), please include a self-evaluation of the extent to which the institution meets or exceeds the standard. In so doing, keep in mind the following yardsticks, which are located within a fitness of purpose framework based on differentiation in the higher education system:

- (i) your institution's *fitness for purpose*
- (ii) the *value for money* it provides to its students and other stakeholders, and
- (iii) its capacity for and success with *transformation*.

The following guiding questions may be used:

- What goals are the institution trying to achieve?
- How is it trying to achieve these goals?
- What plans, procedures and resources are designed to achieve these goals?
- How is the implementation of the plans of procedures managed?
- How does the institution monitor and evaluate that it has achieved its goals?
- What plans are already in place for improvement?

### 4. Overall reflection on process and outcome

Provide an overall short narrative on the process and outcomes of the self-evaluation report.

### 5. Portfolio of Evidence

The portfolio of evidence should not be submitted as separate documents. Hyperlinks to supporting documents should be provided in the text of the SER to a single cloud-based repository.

- Supporting evidence **related to the Standards** to demonstrate how quality is managed (design, implementation, and M&E, and measuring impact, closing the quality loop)
- Information can only be regarded as *evidence* if it is used to substantiate statements or judgements, inclusive of the self-evaluation
- There should be a direct link between the narrative text in the SER and the PoE

to support it (in-text hyperlinks may be best to achieve this)

► Both **quantitative and qualitative information/evidence**

1. The *vision, mission and goals*, a description of the institution's context and a brief statement on when and how these documents were established and approved, and how regularly they are revised
2. The institution's *strategic plan, operational plans and annual performance plans* and a brief statement on when and how these documents are established, revised and approved as well as a description of how they are implemented in support of quality management
3. The institution's most recent DHET-approved *programme and qualification mix or registration certificate*.
4. A description of the *process followed to conduct the institutional self-evaluation* (role and responsibilities of the steering group; how information was collected; involvement of stakeholders, especially staff and students)
5. Design, implementation, M&E, measuring impact, closing the quality loop with improvement plans, adjustments, change management
6. For example, a policy, an implementation plan, evidence of actual implementation (for example in modules, programmes, departments and faculties), evidence of monitoring and evaluation of the policy and its impact, evidence of reflection, and evidence of adjusting the policy and implementation (for example, by providing more resources) based on the monitoring, evaluation and reflection.

**Areas to be covered:**

**Basic elements which should be covered the PoE:**

To be covered by policies, implementation plans, evidence of actual implementation (for example in modules, programmes, departments and faculties), evidence of monitoring and evaluation of the policy and its impact, evidence of reflection, and evidence of adjusting the policy and implementation (for example, by providing more resources) based on the monitoring, evaluation and reflection.

**For teaching and learning at undergraduate and postgraduate level**

- a. Enrolment planning, recruitment and (re-)admission of students, including credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) and articulation; (please note that special attention will be focused on articulation policies and practices)
- b. Design and development of curricula and learning materials;
- c. Delivery of all aspects of learning, teaching, and assessment, including learning material, Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) and curricular community engagement, as well as the mode of provision (e.g. contact, blended, fully online, distance, etc.); (please note that special attention will be focused on WIL policies and practices, as well as mode of provision, especially during 2020 and 2021)
- d. Integrated academic support, such as academic orientation, tutoring and advising;
- e. Student support and related psycho-social services for the holistic well-being, safety and security of students (including, for example, mentoring and counselling, opportunities for social-, cultural- and sporting engagement, where

relevant); (please note that special attention will be focused on GBV policies and practices)

- f. Appropriately conceived student governance structures that function;
- g. Mechanisms for student appeals and complaints at various levels of the institution;
- h. Mechanisms for evaluating student satisfaction and the student experience;
- i. Student assessment, including internal moderation and external examination;
- j. Procedures for appointing internal and external examiners;
- k. Certification of qualifications;
- l. Offering of short courses and part-qualifications;

#### **For research**

- a. The development and support of researchers at various levels in the academic career path, including the use of reward structures;
- b. The inclusion of research ethics as part of the programme;
- c. The evaluation and impact of the research output, using quantitative and qualitative performance measures;
- d. Research supervision is *not* being covered in this round of audits due to the recent National Review (NR) of the doctoral qualification. Once the NR process has been completed, postgraduate supervision will be re-introduced into institutional audits.

#### **For community engagement**

- a. Philosophy, scope, and purpose of the institution's social engagement with the community;
- b. Compliance with the legislative environment in working with vulnerable communities;
- c. The ethics of the engagement and the protection of communities from exploitation by researchers;
- d. Safety and security for staff, students, and the community;
- e. The impact and sustainability of the community engagement.

#### **For quality assurance**

- a. The use of self-reflection and improvement plans following previous external quality assurance activities (where relevant) such as CHE audits, the QEP process and HEQC decisions regarding accreditation and national reviews;
- b. Internal quality assurance plans, processes, reports, reviews, self-reflection, and improvement plans.

## **Sixteen standards to be addressed in the SER**

### **Focus area 1: Governance, strategic planning, management and leadership support the core academic functions**

The four standards in Focus Area 1 concentrate on the role that an institution's *governance, strategic planning* (as contained in its *vision, mission and strategic goals*), *management and academic leadership* play in its quality management in order to enhance the likelihood of student success and to improve the quality of learning, teaching and research engagement, as well as accommodating the results of constructive, integrated community engagement. These standards are:

#### **Standard 1:**

*The institution has a clearly stated vision and mission, and strategic goals that have been approved by appropriate governance structures, subject to comprehensive stakeholder engagement.*

The strategic goals of the Academy are developed through stakeholder engagement and the Board of Governance.

The Academy is currently between 2 visions and missions as the Board of Governance has been developing the 2024 to 2028 strategy which included a reviewed and redesigned vision, mission and values.

The current vision and mission have been designed through workshops

#### **Standard 2:**

The stated vision, mission and strategic goals align with national priorities and context (e.g. transformation, creating a skilled labour force, developing scarce skills areas and a critical citizenry and contributing to the fulfilment of national goals as informed by the NDP and related national planning), as well as sectoral, regional, continental and global imperatives (e.g. Africa Vision 2063 or the Sustainable Development Goals).

The vision and mission align with the development of a skilled labour force within an area of scarce skills, namely visual communication. The Academy aims to continue to develop students who are critical thinkers with a focus on leadership.

Offering of the resources, cruise ship course

**Standard 3:**

*There is demonstrable strategic alignment between the institution's quality management system for core academic activities across all sites and modes of provision, and its vision, mission and strategic goals, as well as its governance and management processes.*

Over the 20 years, the Academy has conducted external programme reviews in order to reflect and review the academic programmes and activities. Each review has included a panel of external experts in education and visual communication making the feedback reliable and valued. Feedback has always fed back into the Academy and changes have been put in place where areas of vulnerability have been highlighted.

The question that is being raised by the SER and the CHE in totality is that these types of reviews, along with accreditation reviews and site visits have privileged the academic programmes and activities, and omitted to review the institution at large. At the beginning of 2022 a new Academic Head joined the academy whose initial job was to review the entire institution in relation to the quality management systems that support an institution of higher education.

The review showed that the programme offerings were of a high standard and that all reviews and data related to this area of the institution were in alignment with processing timelines. The areas which had not developed to the same standards were the encompassing quality management structures, process and procedures. A strategic plan was put in place to create structure which allows for better governance and quality assurance. Clearer lines of communication have been developed to offer transparency and a stronger sense of community.

Areas which have been changed dramatically include the bringing together of the student management system (SMS) and learner management system (LMS), overarching administrative structures and systems which allow for clearer communication, an online admission system which is assessable by multiple users (and connected to the SMS and LMS) and consistence engaging committees which offer high level insights into the functions of the Academy.

The review of the vision and mission has allowed for a higher level of directive for the Board of Governance and the development of core strategies.

**Standard 4:**

*There is a clear understanding of and demonstrable adherence to the different roles and responsibilities of the governance structures, management and academic leadership.*

As the overarching governing structures, management and academic leadership has been realigned over the past 2 years, the roles and understanding across the Academy is also developing.

2023 has been an incredible year for the exploration and reviewing of the roles and responsibilities of governance structures, management and academic leadership. With the initial structures and roles in place, each team and role player was tasked with improving the functionality of their scope. As the year has progressed various processes have been trialled, reviewed and shifted in order to optimise the outputs that the Academy is striving for.

The amount of change that has occurred over the year has created a level of anxiety for some, and great excited at the same time as the team is beginning to see the rewards of clearer processes and procedures. The Academic Head began with instilling the narrative of looking forwards into the following year so that the entire team develops a sense of what is to come, and everyone can participate in the planning of the future. The 2024 Year Planner was sent out to all staff in July 2023 in order to solidify the process. A workshop has been held in the December QA session where the entire team has been taken through the events for the year so that everyone has an overall understanding. Focus areas are registration, orientation, campus days, QA workshops, CHE site visit, Graduate Showcase etc. [\(see 2024 Year Planner\)](#)

There has been a specific focus on the Admissions Committee as this is a fundamental function of the Academy and requires clear evidencing. The committee chair was changed at the beginning of 2023 which allowed for a review of all processes, procedures and documentation. The online application process went live this year which forced a review of lines of communications, roles that each committee member has within the application process and the storing of documentation. The team has spent the year putting processes in place, reviewing them and shifting as needed. There will be a documented review written by the committee chair in January 2024 which will outline the strengths and weaknesses for the year, and what the process will be for 2024. All 2024 application documentation has been request for completion in December 2023 in order for the team to be working proactively rather than in the moment.

The Academic Team has also developed well this year as there have been clear structures put in place namely the Academic Integrity Committee and Academic Development Committee. Both committees have met weekly from term 2 which has created a level of communication and continuity which has resulted in valuable record keeping. Outside of these meetings, the Programme Coordinators and the Registrar have developed lines of communication which supports the students

## **Focus area 2: The design and implementation of the institutional quality management system supports the core academic functions**

The four standards in Focus Area 2 concentrate on how the *design and implementation of an integrated quality management system* in the institution enhances the likelihood of student success and improves the quality of learning, teaching and research, as well as accommodating the results of constructive, integrated community engagement within the context of the institution's mission. These standards are:

### **Standard 5:**

A quality assurance system is in place, comprising at a minimum of:

- (i) governance arrangements
- (ii) policies
- (iii) processes, procedures and plans
- (iv) instructional products
- (v) measurement of impact, and
- (vi) data management and utilisation

as these give effect to the delivery of the HEI's core functions.

### **Standard 6:**

Human, infrastructural, knowledge management and financial resources support the delivery of the institution's core academic functions across all sites of provision along with the concomitant quality management system, in accordance with the institution's mission.

### **Standard 7:**

*Credible and reliable data (for example, on throughput and completion rates) are systematically captured, employed and analysed as an integral part of the institutional quality management system so as to inform consistent and sustainable decision-making.*

In the beginning of 2022, a review was done on the credibility and reliability of data used within the Academy's quality assurance systems. Based on the review two significant areas of the institution have been redeveloped namely the reviewing and formalising of the quality assurance structures and moving all student data systems onto a single digital platform.

Formal committees have been put in place where minutes to meetings are captured and reports are written based on the scope of the information tabled within each committee. The aim is for all information to funnel into the appropriate committee, for the information to be reviewed and informed decisions to be made. All committees are responsible for

writing reports which are fed both up into higher committees and back into the Academy. Consistent reliable communication is key to improving systems.

A good example of this in practice can be viewed through the process that was taken to review the Student Teaching and Learning survey for 2023. The 2022 survey reviews lecturers which, according to the Academic Integrity Committee, gave skewed data as students compounded subject and lecturer data. The committee redesigned the questions with the assistance of the Academic Administrator who then proceeded with the data capturing. Once the data was captured it was sent out to the Programme Coordinators and Human Resources for review. The Programme coordinators were tasked with writing a report on the overall outcomes of the data with areas which need to be addressed. This report was then sent out to the students, lecturers and Leadership Committee. It will also form part of the Programme Coordinators report to the Academic Board for March 2024. ([see BA Teaching and Learning Report 2023](#))

In previous years the Student Management System and the Learner Management System were 2 different platforms which did not

**Standard 8:**

Systems and processes monitor the institution's capacity for quality management, based on the evidence gathered.

### **Focus area 3: The coherence and integration of the institutional quality management system supports the core academic functions**

The four standards in Focus Area 3 concentrate on the coherence and integration of the various components comprising the institutional quality management system and how these work in concert to support the likelihood of student success and improve the quality of learning, teaching and research, as well as accommodating the results of constructive integrated community engagement in accordance with the institution's mission. These standards are:

**Standard 9:**

An evidence-based coherent, reasonable, functional and meaningfully structured relationship exists between all components of the institutional quality management system.

**Standard 10:**

Evidence-based regular and dedicated governance and management oversight of the quality assurance system exists.

**Standard 11:**

Planning and processes exist for the reasonable and functional allocation of resources to all components of the institutional quality management system.

**Standard 12:**

The quality assurance system achieves its purpose efficiently and effectively.

## **Focus area 4: Curriculum development, learning and teaching support the likelihood of student success**

The four standards in Focus Area 4 concentrate on how effectively the institutional quality management system enhances the likelihood of student success, improves learning and teaching and supports the scholarship of learning and teaching. These standards are:

### **Standard 13:**

An effective institutional system for programme design, approval, delivery, management and review is in place.

**Guideline 13.4 is the only Guideline that needs a specific response. The focus of this reflection should be on the institution's response to the emergency arrangements during 2020 for the pandemic and plans for learning, teaching and assessment going forward from 2021 onwards.**

### **Standard 14:**

There is evidence-based engagement at various institutional levels, among staff, and among staff and students, with:

- a. curriculum transformation, curriculum reform and renewal
- b. learning and teaching innovation; and
- c. the role of technology (1) in the curriculum, (2) in the world of work, and (3) in society in general.

### **Standard 15:**

The students' exposure to learning and teaching at the institution across all sites and modes of provision is experienced by them as positive and enabling of their success.

### **Standard 16:**

Institutions engage with and reflect on the employability of their graduates in a changing world.



# Privacy Notice

Version	02 09 2021
Date of revision/frequency of revision	Annually or as required
Previous revision	none
Keywords	Personal information, privacy notice

The commencement date of the Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act, 2013 was the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2020 and it came into full effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2021. The POPI Act determines how organisations collect, process, store and dispose of personal data.

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) respects and protects the privacy of individuals and the institutions that it works with. The CHE is committed to keeping all personal information secure and confidential. This CHE Privacy Notice applies to all persons (both natural and juristic, like companies and closed corporations) whose personal information the CHE collects, regardless of form and medium. Personal information includes information about the CHE's employees, peer academics, Council and governance committee members, service providers, public and private higher education institutions and students (including past and present students, past and present staff members and other stakeholders), government departments, state entities and other related institutions that the CHE interacts with in the execution of its mandate as a national quality assurance body.

In addition to this general notice, specific privacy policies and practices are described in more detail in the CHE's Privacy Policy, Records Management Policy and Cyber Security Policy. These can be made available on request in line with the POPI Act.

This privacy notice explains the CHE's personal information handling practices in relation to its mandate within the higher education sector.

## 1. What is personal information?

The Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (POPIA) protects personal information of natural and juristic persons. The Council on Higher Education is required to comply with the minimum conditions set out in the Act. "Personal information" as defined in the POPIA, means information relating to an identifiable, living, natural person, and where it is applicable, an identifiable, existing juristic person, such as:

- Information relating to the race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, national, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental health, well-being, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth of the person.
- Information relating to the education or the medical, financial, criminal or employment history of the person.
- Any identifying number, symbol, e-mail address, physical address, telephone number, location information, online identifier or other particular assignment to the person.
- The biometric information of the person.
- The personal opinions, views or preferences of the person.
- Correspondence sent by the person that is implicitly or explicitly of a private or confidential nature or further correspondence that would reveal the contents of the original correspondence.
- The views or opinions of another individual about the person.
- The name of the person if it appears with other personal information relating to the person or if the disclosure of the name itself would reveal information about the person.

Personal information includes special personal information, which is a particular category of personal information. Special personal information includes religious or philosophical beliefs, race or ethnic origin, trade union membership, political persuasion, health or sex life or biometric information.

## **2. What information does the CHE collect?**

The CHE collects and holds a broad range of personal information in records relating to:

- Communication from members of our governance structures, the public or organisations addressed to us.
- Correspondence from other quality assurance bodies, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), the Department of Higher Education and

Training (DHET) and organs of state or other organisations, including higher education institutions, both public and private.

- Current and past students within the higher education sector.
- Current and past staff members in public and private higher education institutions.
- Employment and personnel matters relating to staff, peer academics, Council and governance committee members of the CHE.
- Administration of programmes and related activities which the CHE is responsible for:
  - Institutional Audits
  - Programme Accreditation
  - Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework Management
  - Research Monitoring and Advice
  - National Standards and Reviews
  - Corporate Services
    - Finance
    - Procurement
    - Human Resources.

### **3. How does the CHE collect the information?**

The CHE collects personal information in a variety of ways. These include:

- Correspondence
- Institutional submissions
- Paper-based forms and attendance records
- Online (web-based forms, online meeting recordings and e-mail), and
- Phone calls, faxes, online meetings and face to face meetings.

The CHE mostly collects personal information directly. However, in some situations it also collects information from other organs of state or organisations. For example, institutional submissions for quality assurance purposes typically include information on past and current students and staff of a higher education institution.

Certain third-party service providers may collect or check information from or about you on behalf of the CHE. This happens, for example, in cases where the CHE commissions work to be carried out by peer academics.

The CHE works with public bodies or organs of state such as the South African Qualifications Authority, Quality Council for Trades and Occupation, Umalusi, Universities South Africa (USAf) and national government departments, public

and private higher education institutions and state-owned entities, which may collect or check information from or about you on behalf of the CHE.

The CHE only collects personal information where that information is reasonably necessary for, or directly related to, one or more of our legally mandated functions or activities.

#### **4. What mandates the CHE to collect information?**

The CHE's mandates are derived from legislation. For the CHE to execute its functions and activities, it requires access to personal information.

The Higher Education Act (Act No. 101 of 1997, as amended) mandates the CHE to:

- Advise the Minister responsible for higher education and training on any aspect of higher education at the request of the Minister.
- Arrange and co-ordinate conferences.
- Promote quality assurance in higher education, audit the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions, and accredit programmes of higher education.
- Publish information regarding developments in higher education, including reports on the state of higher education, on a regular basis.
- Promote the access of students to higher education institutions.

In terms of the National Qualifications Framework Act, the CHE as the sole Quality Assurance Council (QC) for higher education is mandated to:

- Comply with any policy determined by the Minister in terms of section 8 (2)(b).
- Consider the Minister's guidelines contemplated in section 8(2)(c).
- Collaborate with the SAQA and QCs in terms of the system contemplated in section 12 (1)(f)(i).
- Develop and manage the Higher Education Qualification Sub-Framework (HEQSF) and make recommendations thereon to the Minister.
- Advise the Minister on matters relating to the HEQSF.
- Consider and agree to level descriptors contemplated in section 13 (1)(g)(i) and ensure that they remain current and appropriate.
- Develop and implement a suit of policies and criteria, to facilitate the implementation of the HEQSF and the NQF, and to protect their integrity.
- Develop and implement the policy for quality assurance and ensure the integrity and credibility of quality assurance.

- Maintain a database of learner achievements and related matters for the purposes of this Act and submit such data in a format determined in consultation with the SAQA for recoding on the National Learners' Records Database contemplated in section 13(1)(l).
- Conduct or commission and publish research on issues of importance to the development and implementation of the sub-framework; and inform the public about the HEQSF and NQF.

## **5. The CHE takes your privacy and the security of your personal information seriously**

The information gathered and processed will not be provided to anyone outside of the CHE, unless consent is given, or the CHE is reasonably expected to provide such information as part of executing the mandate of the CHE.

The CHE may collect and process sensitive information (such as race or gender information) if it is needed for fulfilling our mandate or if it is required to comply with applicable law.

The CHE has implemented reasonable security safeguards based on the sensitivity of the personal information to protect it from loss, misuse and unauthorised access, disclosure, alteration or destruction. For example, the CHE regularly monitor its systems for possible vulnerabilities and attacks. The CHE can, however, not guarantee that information may not be accessed, disclosed, altered or destroyed by breach of any of our physical, technical or managerial safeguards.

## **6. The CHE will inform you if your privacy is ever compromised**

Although the CHE cannot prevent all security threats, it has measures in place to minimise the threat to your privacy should something happen. The CHE will let you know of any breaches which affect your personal information unless the CHE is obligated in law not to do so.

## **7. You have the right to know what kind of personal information the CHE has about you and to correct it**

You have the right to:

- ask what personal information the CHE holds about you;
- ask what information was provided to any other third party about you; and

- to update, correct or delete any out-of-date or incorrect personal information the CHE holds about you.

Should you have any questions regarding this notice, please contact us via [Bhengu.N@che.ac.za](mailto:Bhengu.N@che.ac.za)