Quality Enhancement Project
Institutional Submissions: Phase 1
Due Date: 1 September 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Institution</th>
<th>WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact Person</td>
<td>PROFESSOR SANDILE P. SONGCA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of submission</td>
<td>1 SEPTEMBER 2014</td>
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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

BB  Blackboard
BEd  Bachelor of Education
BCC  Buffalo City Campus
BIRP Bureau for Institutional Research and Planning
BTech Baccalaureus Technologiae / Bachelor of Technology
CAPS Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CELCAT Corbett Engineering Ltd
CHE Council on Higher Education
CLTD Centre for Learning and Teaching Development
DHET Department of Higher Education and Training
DQA Director: Quality Assurance
DVC Deputy Vice Chancellor
ECSA Engineering Council of South Africa
ED Executive Director
ED:SDSS Executive Director: Students Development and Support Services
EPs Extended Programmes
FBMSL Faculty of Business, Management Sciences and Law
FED Faculty of Education
FHS Faculty of Health Sciences
FSET Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology
GAA Governance and Academic Administration
HEDA Higher Education Data Analyser
HEMIS Higher Education Management Information System
HEQC Higher Education Quality Committee
HEQSF Higher Education Quality Sub-Framework
HoD Head of Department
HPCSA Health Professions Council of South Africa
IA Institutional Audit
ICT Information and Communication Technology
IMC Institutional Management Committee
IPET Initial Professional Education of Teachers
1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Briefly describe the features of your institutional context that are most salient to the success of your students.

The Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) was introduced by the Council on Higher Education (CHE) at a time when Walter Sisulu University (WSU) was grappling with finalizing the action plans to address the 30 recommendations from the Institutional Audit (IA) project. In his wisdom the Administrator who ran the university from November 2011 to April 2014, after consultations with the CHE IA office, incorporated the outstanding work of the Walter Sisulu University’s Eight Projects of the Turnaround Framework from April 2013. The eight projects have successfully addressed some of the shortages of physical facilities and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) needs at WSU. When the Administrator left WSU at the end of April 2014 the newly established Council and Management were left with a new university under a new divisional management system.

Walter Sisulu University (WSU) will maintain its traditional role as an institution of higher learning, where theoretical and other intellectual pursuits are combined to serve her specific role as a Developmental University, ascribing to itself the imperative of making a significant contribution to regional, national and continental development. The vision of WSU is to be a leading African comprehensive university focusing on innovative educational, research and community partnership programmes that are responsive to local, regional and national development priorities, cognizant of continental and international imperatives.

Recently WSU has embarked upon a major turn-around strategy in order to improve its effectiveness and sustainability, and especially the success of her students. The turn-around strategy has eight component projects, all of which are aimed at improving the access and success of students. These include institutional governance, the academic enterprise, student governance, finance, information and communication technology, human resources, teaching and learning technology and physical infrastructure.

**Institutional Governance Project**

The purpose of the institutional governance project is to transform the model of WSU from a centralized system of governance to a divisional governance and management model suitable for a single, comprehensive, multi-campus WSU, that will ensure stability and coherence by centralising accountability for its core functions, policies, systems, processes and procedures, and decentralising accountability for the execution of those functions, processes and procedures across its academically distinct and geographically dispersed campuses, with change management interventions to sustainably embed this transformation.

**Academic Enterprise Project**

The purpose of the academic enterprise project is to improve learning and teaching by improving academic governance and management, student and staff performance and by improving the programme and qualification mix (PQM). The academic enterprise project therefore aims to establish an academic enterprise that
is characterised by good academic governance and management, excellent staff and student performance and a high quality and financially viable PQM that is relevant to socio-economic development. There is particular focus and substantial investment in enhancing academics as teachers through support for higher degrees and postgraduate qualifications in the practice of higher education.

**Student Governance Project**

The student governance project aims to enhance scholarship, citizenship and leadership of WSU students, to enhance participative and responsible student life, wellness and student governance. Stable and good student governance, student wellness and student life on and off campus experiences provide a conducive environment for learning and teaching. This project therefore aims to make a happy, balanced, healthy and secure student out of each WSU student. There are a number of programmes that focus on the personal and learning development of students and these form part of this project.

**Finance Project**

The finance project, on the other hand, was set up to establish an integrated and highly functional financial system, balancing efficient service with sufficient compliance and controls. Efficient financial systems provide the capacity for financial resources to enhance the learning and teaching enterprise and all the academic support services through the efficient funding of the running costs for classes, tutorials, laboratories, field and work integrated learning experiences.

**Information and Communication Technology Project**

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) today is among the most powerful tools for efficient and effective service delivery in all business sectors, particularly higher education. The information and communication technology project aims to audit, plan, devise and implement an integrated and up-to-date ICT domain ensuring business information, communication and contingency. This will provide the basis for enhancement of learning and teaching and the support thereof through ICT enhanced methodologies. The software that is currently part of our ICT arsenal includes the e-learning platform Blackboard (WiSeUp), the Higher Education Data Analyzer (HEDA) and the electronic academic time-tablers (ITS and CELCAT).

**Human Resources Project**

One of the challenges faced by WSU and other higher education institutions is the mobility of academic staff. The mobility of academic staff is defiant of international boundaries. There are twenty three to twenty five public universities in South Africa alone, and a plethora of private ones. Academic teaching staff is in serious shortage the world over. Institutions poach from one another in the sector. The purpose of human capital management project is to provide a stable, high performing workforce that is working in synergy and in the best interest of WSU. This project has a special focus on academic staff and scarce skills in order to ensure that there is always a diversified workforce attending to learning and teaching.

**Teaching and Learning Technology Project**

Teaching and learning technology hardware and software tools are as important as
the implementation of an integrated and up-to-date ICT domain. The domain on its own falls a little short of the desired impact on learning and teaching without the hardware and software tools. The aim of the teaching and learning technology project is to install modern teaching and learning technology tools and ensure ubiquitous and effective use to improve student throughput. The integration of connectivity, audio-visual tools will allow lecturing academics to tap into a wide diversity of world wide web learning and teaching resources, affording students the most up to date information and access to international specialists.

**Physical Infrastructure Project**

Without a doubt, one of the most debilitating limitations of WSU is a gross lack of physical infrastructure and the state of disrepair of existing infrastructure. The purpose of the infrastructure project is to strategize and execute efficient physical infrastructure and resource planning, expansion, maintenance and utilization. The main focus areas include the provision of new infrastructure for learning, teaching, academic support and residences. New residences are coming up for WSU’s Mthatha and Buffalo City campuses and these will be followed by Butterworth and Queenstown campuses on an even larger scale. A new academic building is coming up at the Nelson Mandela Academic Hospital in Mthatha for the Faculty of Health Sciences. There are new libraries at the Butterworth and Buffalo City Campuses. New auditoria as teaching venues for large classes have been completed at Butterworth and Buffalo City campuses with the Mthatha 500 sitter auditorium being renovated and the Mthatha great hall being expanded to accommodate 1500 seated individuals. There is the consolidation of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology (FSET) Project at the Buffalo City Campus (BCC) which will form part of future expansion and consolidation of academic facilities that will improve the teaching and learning environment. This overall expenditure of more than R850 million has improved the physical infrastructure of WSU

**1.2 Indicate how the submission was prepared, including the names and designations of the people involved with producing various sections of the submission.**

The Quality Enhancement Project Steering Committee (QEPSC) was established by WSU. The purpose of the QEPSC is to determine the data collection, integration, consolidation and the preparation of the submission. The steering committee met and delegated the preparation of the submission to six teams as listed on table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Writing teams</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Focus Area 1: Enhancing academics as teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 Focus Area 2: Enhancing Student Support and Development
Director: CLTD (Mr. V Dwayi)
Executive Director: Student Development and Support Services (Ms. Z Dotwana)
Acting Director: Student Development and Support Services (Ms. N Nohako-Mtiki)
Student Counsellors

4 Focus Area 3: Enhancing the Learning Environment
Acting Executive Director: Operations and Information Technology (Mr. G Labuschagne)
Director: Facilities (Mr. D Barnard); Director: Library and Information Services (Ms GN Danster); Projects Office (Mr. S Mnyaiza)
Director: Centre for Learning and Teaching (Mr. V Dwayi); Director: Information and Communication Technology

5 Focus Area 4: Enhancing course and programme enrolment
Acting Director: BIRP (Dr NN Mabovula)
Acting Director: Governance and Academic Administration (Mr C Nyangeni) Campus Rectors Deans
Director: Centre for Learning and Teaching (Mr. V Dwayi), Director: Information and Communication Technology

6. Other Areas that affect student success
ED: SDSS (Ms Z Dotwana)
Acting Chief Operating Officer (Mr G Labuschagne)

The Team Leaders were requested to make their first draft submissions to the DQA by Monday, 4 August 2014. The process would then go via the DVC who, after scrutinizing the submission would follow the following time frames until the final submission is sent to the CHE on Friday, 29 August 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Deadline Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QEP Submission Writing Team to submit a revised document to the DQA.</td>
<td>7 August 2014 (Thursday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft QEP report to be submitted to the DVC (copied to the DQA). QMD staff to have coded the evidence.</td>
<td>15 August 2014 (Friday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft (QEP) report to be presented to the QEPSC meeting (10h00 – 14h00).</td>
<td>21 August 2014 (Thursday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Draft QEP document to be submitted by the DVC to a Special IMC and Special SENEX for discussion and approval.</td>
<td>27 August 2014 (Wednesday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalization of the QEP document by the DQA and the DVC and submission to the CHE.</td>
<td>29 August 2014 (Friday)</td>
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</table>
2. **FOCUS AREA 1: ENHANCING ACADEMICS AS TEACHERS (3-6 pages)**
(Including professional development, reward and recognition, workload, conditions of service and performance appraisal)

2.2 **Which aspects of your institution’s Strategic Plan relate to this focus area? (Please be specific by quoting from the Strategic Plan).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KPA</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Expected Outcome</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1: Learning and Teaching (Read, Section 4.2.1. on Learning and Teaching Development Plan, including Strategic Initiatives, Measures/Indicators and Timeframes) | 2: To promote learner-centred teaching, active enquiry and critical thinking. | 2.1. To promote a culture of learning and teaching that fosters the development of self-directed learning, analytical skills and critical thinking. | 2.1.1. Improved OBE compliant culture of learning and teaching and self-directed learning  
2.1.2. Improved throughput rates |
| 2: Research Development (Read Section 4.2.2. on Research Development Plan, including Strategic Initiatives, Measures/Indicators and Timeframes) | 4: To create an enabling environment that empowers staff and students to conduct research. | 4.1. To promote academic commitment to scholarship and creativity. | 4.1.1. Staff committed to scholarship and creativity |
| 3: Human Capital Management (Read Section 5.2 on Human Resources Development, including Strategic Initiatives, Measures / Indicators. Timeframe is ongoing) | 8: To attract and retain high quality academic and support service staff | 8.1. To develop and implement a comprehensive plan for human resource development | 8.1.1. Attained equity targets |
| | | 8.2. To develop and enhance administrative leadership in both academic and non-academic units. | 8.2.1. Human resource development plan  
8.2.2. Staff development  
8.2.3. Improved staff performance  
8.2.4. Enhanced staff professionalism and integrity |
| | | 8.3. To sensitise staff to appreciate, respect and | 8.1.1. Improved administrative leadership |

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1 WSU Strategic Plan 2008-2017, p28-29, p40  
2 A Comparison study of University Benchmarks with available information of WSU, p6-8  
3 Articulation possibilities are indicated in a number of WSU programme prospectuses  
4 WSU Strategic Plan 2008-2017, p30  
5 WSU Strategic Plan 2008-2017, p32, p45
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4: Staff Recruitment and Retention</th>
<th>8: To attract and retain high quality academic and support services staff</th>
<th>8.1: To develop and maintain an affirmative staff recruitment plan, consistent with the University’s mission Strategic Initiatives: Develop a staff recruitment strategy</th>
<th>8.1.1: Attained equity targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5: Employment Relations</td>
<td>8: To attract and retain high quality academic and support services staff</td>
<td>8.4: To sensitize staff to appreciate respect and embrace diversity and change</td>
<td>8.4.1: Tolerance and unity in diversity 8.4.2: Co-existence of staff from different backgrounds and orientations 8.4.3: Emergence of a new culture and identity</td>
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<td>8.5: To provide a supportive environment to all staff</td>
<td>8.5.1: Retention of staff 8.5.2: Improved performance of staff 8.5.3: Improved labour relations</td>
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<td>8.6: To provide staff development to enhance instructional delivery to meet the needs of a diverse student population</td>
<td>8.6.1: Improved throughput and success rates in all programmes. 8.6.2: Retention of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6: Organisational Development &amp; Culture</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.3: To develop and enhance administrative leadership in both academic and non-academic units</td>
<td>8.3.1: Improved administrative leadership in academic and non-academic units. 8.3.2: Improved performance of these units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.6: To provide staff development and enhance instructional delivery to meet the needs of a diverse student population</td>
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### 2.2 What successful activities do you currently have in place related to this focus area? What evidence do you use to conclude that they are successful? (Do not provide detailed evidence, just a description of the type of evidence you collect and a short summary of the results.)
Various activities have been identified as part of the strategy for the promotion of excellence in teaching and learning. This is supported by policies to promote Teaching and Learning. The activities contained in the strategy are funded by the Teaching Development Grant.

Professional development of academic staff by means of workshops and funding of qualifications in higher education studies. Eighty nine (89) academic staff attended professional development workshops in 2012, seventy two (72) in 2013 and one hundred and twenty five (125) in 2014. Five (5) academic staff completed the Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education and Training (PGDHET) in 2012, three (3) in 2013 and five (5) in 2014. Some faculties indicated that throughput rates and research output (e.g. conference proceedings and journal articles) improved after staff had improved their qualifications especially those that studied towards their Masters and Doctoral Degrees.

There is a programme of the uptake of e-learning skills for the integration of technologies in learning and teaching. During 2012, 93 academics attended basic e-learning level; 45 academics attended intermediate level and 57 academics were mentored on the use of our learning management systems [integration of multimedia materials in Blackboard (BB)]. In 2013, 39 academics attended the basic e-Learning level; 13 academics were mentored on the BB tools; 4 lecturers were trained in the integration of multimedia materials in BB; 17 lecturers were given lap tops; 1247 students were trained in BB. In 2014, 55 academic attended the basic e-learning workshop and 450 students have been trained in BB. The activity is deem to have been successful, as staff are better capacitated to use technology and teaching tools in delivering their teaching, and students are given a wider and more flexible range of learning opportunities.

Six Short Learning Programmes (SLPs) were approved in 2012 and they have been successfully implemented since 2013 with notable impact.

Academic support was provided by CLTD and QMD where programme reviews did take place. While capacity still needs to be increased the immersion of academic departments and the support units, the process has raised the awareness of programme accreditation requirements.

Analysis and review of the workload policy has enabled a more equitable workload distribution with the objective that staff will be able to develop capacity as teachers, with due acknowledgement that there are also other areas of equal importance, namely research and community engagement that staff have to contribute to.

Training of lecturers on assessment and moderation as well as National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and Curriculum and Assessment Statement (CAPS). Some faculties indicated that throughput rates improved after staff had successfully completed the training on assessment and moderation.

Encouraging and assisting staff to attain higher qualifications, especially Masters
and Doctoral Degrees. Study subsidy on tertiary studies is available to all staff in terms of an approved Study Subsidy Policy.\(^6\) Success is proven through completion of studies and there is no further subsidy for repeated courses.

- There is a once off lump sum payment in recognition of attainment higher qualification, in terms of an existing approved policy.\(^7\)
- There were instances where academic staff were employed with M+4 level qualification. They have been placed at a level lower than the minimum grade of P8. Elevation to grade P8 is done on attainment of a Masters’ degree, which is the minimum qualification for a lecturer.
- There is a single salary scale for WSU for each of the grades P5 to P17.\(^8\) Benefits have also been harmonised, particularly as far as Medical Aid, Pension / Provident Fund and Group Life Insurance contributions are concerned. There are signed agreements to that effect.\(^9\)
- Performance Contracts were being signed by executive management, but that has not been filtered down to lower levels. It is not clear that there has been any success or not in that regard.

### 2.3 What activities related to this focus area have you initiated during the past three or four years that have not been as successful as you had hoped? In what ways were they unsuccessful? What do you think might be the reasons for the lack of success?

- The establishment of the CLTD to champion academic development was very successful in designing and implementing structures, systems and processes for academic staff development.\(^10\) However, professionalization of teaching as a strategy to improve low throughput rates could not be enforced to all academic departments, despite breakthroughs in some areas. The measuring of teaching effectiveness has to date not been sufficiently acknowledged and, coupled with the absence of an institution wide Performance Management System has resulted in teaching effectiveness not being duly acknowledged as part of an annual performance review with linked to remuneration. Current review of WSU Appointments and Promotions Policy will address this area from 2015.
- Transforming curricula and enabling staff to adjust to the restructuring, inclusive of service learning, could not see much work post-merger. This was despite some pockets of excellence about service learning in particular as experienced at the Mthatha campus.
- The mainstreaming of Problem Based Learning, from the Faculty of Health Sciences flagship to other faculties, could not be sustained. Some work was done with partner universities from the Netherlands and Australia, including the development of a concept document.\(^11\) However the whole exercise was constrained by the lack of curriculum development capacity at faculty level.

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\(^6\) WSU Study Subsidy Policy  
\(^7\) WSU Policy on Recognition of Higher Qualifications  
\(^8\) WSU Salary scales  
\(^9\) WSU Harmonization Agreement  
\(^10\) CHE Institutional Report to WSU  
\(^11\) Concept Document for Curriculum Reform
The programme on Vice Chancellor’s Teaching Excellence Awards commenced in 2011 with the actual awards made in 2012. However this programme could not be sustained due to the resignations of staff from the CLTD, who had been appointed on contracts.

Despite these constraints at institutional level, faculty initiatives in acknowledging staff and students performance has continued. It is however not uniformly applied and implemented but means that in some cases the groundwork has been done and that a starting point has been established from where progress can be made.

Projects on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning were conceptualised and implemented during 2009-2012, but could not be sustained during 2013-2014 due to the resignation of teaching development specialists who were championing these programmes at faculty level.

Not much progress was made about the strategy for programme articulation possibilities between programmes. Still more work needs to be done about how technikon type and traditional university type programmes could articulate under the comprehensive identity and as part of WSU responsiveness.

There are however, some programmes where reasonable progress has been made and cases of such articulation possibilities are indicated in some programme prospectuses, most notably that of FSET.

Most of the points outlined above were also constrained by the lack of an integrated quality management strategy. Although some work was done in this area by means of the WSU NUFFIC NPT project, challenges were experienced in sustaining the project within units expected to champion such a strategy.

Tertiary studies that have been subsidised have in some cases not been linked to the staff members’ functional areas and this has resulted in poaching internally and externally.

Moneys paid for uncompleted studies have not been recovered.

Publication of research findings in SAPSE accredited journals has not been sufficiently realized

- The data remained in theses and dissertations
- Insufficient participation in workshops that train staff in translating research findings into actual journal articles. Insufficient collaboration across disciplines.

Working across disciplines for cross-pollination of ideas, i.e. inter-departmental collaboration in teaching

- Staff simply concentrate in the areas of expertise
- Staff at WSU come from different institutional cultures and it will take time for a single WSU culture to emerge.

Despite having a policy on the Evaluation of Teaching the surveys that students should conduct at the end of each academic period on course and lecturer evaluation has not been conducted across all faculties and by all staff.

The evaluation of lecturers by self, peers and HoD are not consistently done as a result of the university not having a Performance Management system in place and as a result most of these evaluations are voluntary.

Some academic departments have struggled to meet DHET targets in terms of research output, which in part, was the result of many contract staff that are currently employed.
2.4 What activities have you recently implemented or are you planning to implement in the next 12 to 18 months related to this focus area? Why have you chosen these particular activities? What is the need or problem they are intended to address?

- The following programmes have been identified as part of both the institutional strategy for learning and teaching development, and also in terms of the recently approved Ministerial Policy for the Management of a Teaching Development Grant 2014/15 to 2016/17. The main thrust of the strategy is to improve the current student success rates in line with the DHET enrolment and performance targets for WSU.

PROGRAMME 1: DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS AND TEACHING: A university-wide programme for professionalising teaching and teachers as the mechanisms for improved student success and graduation rates.

- The main targets for this programme are
  - Recognition and promotion systems and processes for excellence in teaching and learning
  - Faculty based activities for professional development in discipline areas
  - Number of academic staff nominated for Vice Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
- The main activities are
  - Faculty to participate in professional development workshops, including registration for a Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education and Training (PGDHET).
  - To support academic staff members who register for senior degrees in their specific disciplines (Masters and Doctorates).
  - To participate in continuous professional developmental workshops, seminars and colloquia in discipline specific areas (institutional, regional, national and international levels)
  - To appoint competent and qualified specialist for promotion, monitoring and support provisioning in lecturer development.

PROGRAMME 3: ENHANCING THE STATUS OF TEACHING AT UNIVERSITIES: A university wide programme that enhances the status of teaching, and teaching and learning development, for improved student success and graduation rates.

- The main targets for this programme are
  - 30% of academics participating in professional development workshops until all academics are trained
  - 10% (Masters) and 5% (Doctorates) of academics completed qualifications in higher education studies until 65% PhD.
  - Increasing satisfaction levels in professional teaching
- The main activities are

12 WSU’s submission in terms of the Teaching Development Grant 2014/15 to 2016/17
The WSU PhD project in collaboration with University of Fort Hare and University of Venda was launched in 2014 and continues for 5 years.
- Funding from Human Resources, CLTD and Research development grant and the National Research Foundation (NRF).
- Many promising academics are supervised by experienced supervisors in WSU towards higher degrees.

PROGRAMME 4: RESEARCHING TEACHING AND LEARNING: A university wide programme that promotes and monitors the integration of research in teaching and learning for improved student success and graduation rates.

- The main targets for this programme are
  - Scholarship of learning and teaching (SoLT) projects at faculty level
  - Initiate research on the teaching and learning in the departments
- The main activities are
  - Research seminars on SoLT at faculty level
  - SoLT based papers and publications at faculty level

PROGRAMME 6: UNIVERSITY PRIORITY PROGRAMMES: A range of programmes on curriculum development for enhanced student learning with a view to increasing the number of graduates with attributes that are personally, professionally and socially valuable.

- The main targets for this programme are
  - Student profiling system for identifying learners at risk of academic success and the recommendation of the on time intervention programmes and services
  - Curriculum development programmes focussing on service learning and problem based learning in line with the institutional vision and mission of a developmental university in a rural environment.
  - Establishment of e-Learning Centres for the integration of technology in teaching and learning.
  - Promote the use of ICTs in learning, teaching and research - the use of ICTs enhances teaching, learning and research.
  - Use social networking platforms (WhatsApp, Facebook, etc) in teaching and learning.

OTHER PLANNED ACTIVITIES

- Project on Improvement of Academic Staff Qualifications Profile making use of funds available from the Education, Training and Development SETA. The activity is chosen to support staff in attainment of Masters and Doctoral degrees.
- Training of all management staff on labour law and employee relations management to assist them in dealing with staff matters in partnership with the Human Resources Department.
- Implementing the Scarce Skills Policy as a measure of staff retention targeted on the retention of scarce skills.
- Working towards a co-ordinated staff development programme to ensure that
staff members embark on studies that are directly related to their functional areas. Departments will draw up comprehensive plans that are aligned with their staff developmental needs recommend initiatives for further studies by staff.

- Finalize and populate the organizational structure and complete the harmonization of conditions of service to sustain a stable workforce.
- Performance Management is positioned in the Institutional Functional arrangement.\(^\text{13}\)
- Collaborative research is encouraged in areas of Teaching and Learning and staff are encouraged to work as a team on a single project across disciplines and faculties. It is hoped that this enable staff to learn from one another, research and publish together.

### 2.5 What are the challenges or problems related to this focus area that still need to be addressed in your institution?

- Support structures and systems. Staff who are responsible for academic staff development to be appointed in permanent positions and also to be recognised as academic members of the community. The WSU Appointments and Promotions Policy will take care of this plan but the finance and other resource needs are likely to constrain the policy objectives.
- A workload policy that ensures the responsibility of staff to generate income through the teaching input and output units as part of ensuring the financial viability of programmes is balanced with the requirements of staff development, course reviews and contribution to curriculum development with due acknowledgement that staff also have set targets to achieve in terms of contribution to research output and community engagement.
- The staff workload policy will be reviewed as part of overall academic business process re-engineering to align it with the demands of the teaching and learning environment presented by the divisional management model.
- The main challenge is that studies are left to individual plans instead of departmental plans and needs that are in line with the university’s plans.
- There is also reluctance in utilising SETA funds due to the extensive documentation required before confirmation of payment is received.
- There has to be a consistent approach to internal research grant support and synergy between available support funds.
- Reward and Recognition programmes do not attract any promotion and added responsibility. A comprehensive Promotions Policy needs to be finalised as well serious attention being given to the Scarce Skills Policy.
- University needs, processes and policies need to be streamlined to be able to synergise with developmental needs and conditions of service.
- The university needs to have permanent staff more than temporary staff so that we can have equitable conditions of service.
- Lack of the Performance Management System as a management tool intended to develop staff and improve performance rather than a punitive measure.
- Many departments do not have Professors and/or Senior lecturers. They are

\(^{13}\)Turnaround Strategy Document, Draft 1 of Version 2
served by one or two lecturers and part-time and/or contract lecturers, and this may compromise quality and results with low throughput and pass rates.

- Part-time and contract lecturers are not always available for consultations with undergraduate students, and they have limited ability in providing professional guidance to post-graduate students.
- Some departments remain reliant on retired academic staff members to function.
3. **FOCUS AREA 2: ENHANCING STUDENT SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT.** (Including career and curriculum advising, life and academic skills development, counselling, student performance monitoring and referral)

3.1 **Which aspects of your institution’s Strategic Plan relate to this focus area?** (Please quote from the strategic plan)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KPA 1: Learning and Teaching. (Read, Section 4.2.1. on Learning and Teaching Development Plan, including Strategic Initiatives, Measures/Indicators and Timeframes)</th>
<th>Goal 3: To promote excellence in undergraduate and postgraduate studies.</th>
<th>Objective 3.2: To improve student access and success rates.</th>
<th>Expected outcomes: 3.2.1. Improved access; 3.2.2. Improved throughput and success rates.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KPA 9: Student Experience (Read, Section 4.2.1. on Learning and Teaching Development Plan, including Strategic Initiatives, Measures/Indicators and Timeframes)</td>
<td>Goal 9.1. To promote holistic student development and welfare</td>
<td>Objective 9.1.1. To promote student academic development programmes</td>
<td>Expected outcomes: 9.1.1.1. Student academic development programmes; 9.1.1.2. Infrastructure for student personal development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Objective 9.2 To promote student personal development and welfare</td>
<td>Expected Outcome 9.2.1 Infrastructure for student personal development; 9.2.2 Student personal development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Objective 9.5 To improve the quality of student services in line with Affordable best practice.</td>
<td>Expected Outcome 9.2.1 Infrastructure for student personal development; 9.2.2 Student personal development</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Objective 9.2 To promote student personal development and welfare</td>
<td>Expected Outcome 9.2.1 Infrastructure for student personal development; 9.2.2 Student personal development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHE Institutional Audit Recommendation 4**

The HEQC recommends that Walter Sisulu University strengthens its reporting and monitoring mechanisms in all areas with special focus on student success, throughput and graduation rates and ensure that the appropriate divisions take responsibility for the implementation of policies and plans.

**CHE Institutional Audit Recommendation 22**

The HEQC recommends that Walter Sisulu University firmly implements its academic exclusions policy.

**WSU Turn Around Framework Project 2 Objective 2.5**

Further implement student tracking and interventions, to ensure better success, throughput and graduation rates.
3.2 What successful activities do you currently have in place related to this focus area? What evidence do you use to conclude that they are successful? (Do not provide detailed evidence, just a description of the type of evidence you collect.)

- Rule G7, the academic exclusion rule was implemented in 2012.
- A number of student services in line with Affordable best practice have been implemented;
- 24 library services, WIFI in and around libraries and other hotspots;
- physical infrastructure.
  - Student performance rates improved at institutional level, from 78% to 80.0% on success rates and from 18% to 19% on graduation rates (HEMIS data).
- There are 25 extended programmes
  - Results indicate that students in the Extended Programmes (EP) are increasingly achieving better results in their studies.
  - In 2013 the post examination success rate of the EP in the first year of foundation courses for 2013 was 81% which represents an increase of 10.4% against 2012 and 75% in regular courses representing an increase of 6.8% from 2012.
- New students’ are exposed to Orientation at the beginning of each year. The event is aimed at introducing the new students to the university life and culture academic support programmes and the student life logistics and activities
- The success of the activities is measured by the attendance of students.
  - Academic Advisors conduct workshops for new students on topics that are intended to assist them in coping with university life demands. The topics include adjusting to university life, study skills, time management and exam preparation skills etc.
- The availability of the time for students is often hampered by the need to attend lectures as the Academic Advisors are not time-tabled.
  - Academic Advisors conduct workshops for the final year students so as to prepare them for the world of work. The workshops include employability skills: Good CV writing, interview skills, communication skills, etc.
  - entrepreneurial skills: Business Plan writing, presentation skills, networking, communication skills etc.
- The Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Programme is an intervention which is offered for the high-risk as well as gateway courses at first year level. The process starts by requesting faculties to identify and submit their high-risk courses as well as their gateway courses. The academically competent senior students are recruited,
selected, trained and appointed to be the Peer Assisted Learning Leaders (PALLs). The training involves: facilitation of learning, exposing students to collaborative learning (peer-to-peer interaction in problem solving) and infusing study skills in learning. The PALLs involvement assists junior students by facilitating learning so that they too can be able to navigate through historically difficult courses. The student PALL ratio is 1:50.

- The Writing and Reading Centres, at the Buffalo City Campus, in particular, have seen an increase in the number of BTech students utilizing the centre. This can be attributed mostly to buy-in from lecturers involved, and possibly the fact that in that level of study there is a lot more writing required from such students than in undergraduate studies.

- Concerning Student Performance Monitoring the following activities can be reported: development and approval of WSU Students Exclusion Policy/Rule G7, development of WSU strategy on student performance monitoring and academic development, implementation of procedures on study advice, evaluation of teaching/courses, and assessment for student learning.

- Establishment of management information systems (MIS) including Integrator III, Higher education Data Analyser (HEDA) and the WSU Blackboard e-learning platform named WiSeUp. Higher Education Data Analyser (HEDA) is an MIS system with student tracking and monitoring module which has been purchased by the institution.

- Establishing student development structures through academic, religious, political, cultural and community partnership societies. The recognition of all structures is done by the SRC together with Student Affairs. These structures are governed by the SRC Constitution approved by Council and are funded from SRC budgets. For structures to function, a Programme of action is submitted and approved. Evidence for success is concluded from the implementation of their Programme of action and budget expenditure. Improvements have been made to sporting infrastructure in Butterworth (Tennis courts and Cricket pitch) and NMD (Tennis courts). Subsequently more students are participating in these sporting codes.

### 3.3 What activities related to this focus area have you initiated during the past three or four years that have not been as successful as you had hoped? In what ways were they unsuccessful? What do you think might be the reasons for the lack of success?

- A strategy and supporting policies are in place for the support of student learning. The strategy funded by the Teaching Development Grant.
- WSU has partnership arrangements with local high schools in order to assist in the regional challenge of under prepared students.
- There is management of access as part of programme delivery (epistemological access).
- Throughput rates are to be measured and monitored at faculty, programme and course levels. WSU has initiated a student tracking and monitoring system, but this still remains a pilot that is implemented only in one School.
due to staff shortage and the required capacity in relevant units.

- Inadequate student support systems; resource centres and ICT infrastructure. Computer laboratories that were established by means of the NUFFIC NPT Project in 2008, and also funded by means of the Teaching Development Grant, still do not fully address the current institutional challenges.

- Leadership development programmes have been initiated, however, due to the consolidation of the Mthatha campus, it is difficult to implement those activities due to change management issues. Mthatha Campus use different structures in the Zamukulungisa and NMD sites; Zamukulungisa is an extension of the Eastern Cape Technikon while NMD is the main campus of the former University of Transkei, which was a traditional university. Consolidation is experiencing teething problems but in time the situation will improve once staff is also consolidated.

- WSU has not been able to establish Student Centres (Infrastructure) due to lack of funds.

- Concerning student Performance Monitoring in particular, the following challenges can be reported,
  - Capacity at the institutional planning and academic office (BIRP) to roll out tracking and monitoring systems in all the faculties.
  - Data cleansing project has to be prioritised in order to establish clean data in the student management information systems.
  - Academic management capacity to implement student performance monitoring and tracking system at course/module, programme and departmental levels.
  - Not all faculties are implementing student tracking and monitoring as required.
  - Challenge, integration of WiSeUp, ITS and HEMIS

### 3.4 What activities have you recently implemented or are you planning to implement in the next 12 to 18 months related to this focus area? Why have you chosen these particular activities? What is the need or problem they are intended to address?

The following programmes have been identified as part of the institutional strategy for learning and teaching development, and also in terms of the recently approved Ministerial Policy for the Management of a Teaching Development Grant 2014/15 to 2016/17. The main thrust of the strategy is to improve the current student success rates in line with the DHET enrolment and performance targets for WSU.

PROGRAMME 2: TUTOR AND MENTOR PROGRAMME: A student academic support programme, through tutorship and mentorship, which is linked to the development of a new generation of academics.

- The main targets for this programme are
  - Increase the number of university courses/modules with student academic
• Increase the number of senior students participating in student assistantship programme.
• Increase the number of first year and undergraduate students participating in academic advising programme.

• The main activities for this programme are
  • To develop a credible tutorship programme (2nd year up to post grad level); mentorship programme (Faculty of Health Sciences) and peer assisted learning (first year level) programme for each faculty.
  • To appoint and train student assistants for the tutorial, PAL and mentorship programme on annual basis
  • To embed a yearlong first year orientation programme in academic departments; this is normally a first year induction programme which is extended over a year by means of academic advising workshops (see below).
  • To provide academic advice to all undergraduate programmes (this is an extension of first year student induction programme involving one-on-one sessions and group workshops on academic advice, namely, time management; general study skills; work placement opportunities, etc).
  • Students’ learning needs to be ascertained by means of credible profiling and tracking and monitoring systems and tools. This will serve as a data management and developmental research for relevant intervention programmes to be developed in response to students needs and programme delivery requirements.
  • To train relevant staff to design, develop and coordinate all the programmes as listed above.
  • We have recently established a new SRC Constitution which gave a clear structure to student structures, societies and student governance. The previous SRC Constitution had glaring gaps that led Student Governance to a collapse as evidenced by a year when the SRC failed to call for SRC elections. The intention of the SRC Constitution is to ensure the smooth running of operations in Student Governance. We are now slowly turning the tide on frequent and wildcat strikes that students were waging.

• Concerning Student Performance Monitoring, the following plans are envisaged,
  • Build capacity at BIRP, MIS Office
  • Employ academic development consultants at faculty level to provide academic support on student performance monitoring and tracking (this activity to be implemented by means of the teaching development grant)
  • Build academic management capacity to monitor student performance and promote academic development by targeting students at risk.

• Rollout the Reviews of Support Services Policy and Procedures with the aim of introducing and implementation of periodic self-assessment of academic support, student support and administrative units of the university.
• Introduce and implement the evaluation of the whole quality of student life
experience through reports on the feedback received from developed surveys such as Academic Support (L&T), Administrative Support, Student Engagement, Student Environmental Experience and Student Support Services Questionnaires.

- Resuscitation of the Student Quality Literacy Project with the aim of enhancing student engagement and participation in all university structures that promote quality enhancement through their student governance and established student development structures.

### 3.5 What are the challenges or problems related to this focus area that still need to be addressed in your institution?

- **Support structures and systems.**
  - Staff who are responsible for academic staff development to be appointed in permanent positions and also be recognised as academic members of the community.
  - The WSU Appointments and Promotions Policy which is currently under review will take care of this plan but the finance and other resource needs are likely to constrain the policy objectives.

- **Concerning Student Performance Monitoring, the following institutional challenges will be addressed,**
  - Performance management of academic leadership and management.
  - Data consistency when using HEDA.
  - Development of a supportive environment for teaching and learning.

- **Alignment of the SRC constitution with the national constitution**
  - We still have to introduce independent candidates as being eligible to stand for SRC Elections.
  - Currently independent candidates are not eligible to stand for SRC Elections and that is a violation of the SA Constitution.
  - The consultative process is unfolding
4. **FOCUS AREA 3: ENHANCING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.**
   (Including teaching and learning spaces, ICT infrastructure and access, technology-enabled tools and resources, library facilities)

4.1 Which aspects of your institution’s Strategic Plan relate to this focus area? (Please quote from the Strategic Plan).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KPA 11: Infrastructure Management and Development</th>
<th>Goal: To provide and maintain appropriate and adequate infrastructure</th>
<th>Objective 11.2. To provide and improve incrementally the physical facilities of the University.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Objective 11.4. To support all university operations with efficient and effective Information and Communication Technology (ICT) services</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Objective 11.5. To ensure that all physical structures are compliant with legal and environmental requirements</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Objective 11.6. To provide all staff and students with appropriate learning and teaching, residential and recreational facilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>KPA 12: Innovation and Technology</th>
<th>Goal: To develop, adapt and apply appropriate technology</th>
<th>Objective 12.1. To introduce students and staff to the latest learning and teaching technology</th>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Objective 12.3. To develop a plan that will promote the use of appropriate technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 What successful activities or facilities do you currently have in place related to this focus area? What evidence do you use to conclude that they are successful? (Do not provide detailed evidence, just a description of the type of evidence you collect).

At a strategic level the overarching successful activity in this regard was the incorporation of the thirty Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) Institutional Audit (IA) committee recommendations into the Walter Sisulu University Turnaround Framework with 8 Projects in April 2013. The following projects have successfully addressed some of the shortages of physical facilities and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) needs at WSU.

**Project 5: Audit, plan, devise and implement an integrated and up-to-date Information and Communication technology (ICT) domain ensuring business information, communication and contingency**

For this activity an expert was appointed to do a complete ICT Efficiency and Infrastructure audit in 2012-13. The following activities are evidence of the implementation of project 5 above.

- Upgrade of the WSU network and bandwidth - Implementation of SANREN (done except for Queenstown Campus)
- Harmonization of systems
- Upgrade of the ITS software from ITS version 13 to Integrator 3. (done)
• Upgrade of staff computers (90% done)
• Implementation of Blackboard
• All Health Resources centres were linked to the WSU network
• Successfully conducted an evaluation of the existing hardware and upgrade & replaced the hardware where necessary (upgraded the main server centre)

Project 7: Teaching and learning technology equipment:

To install modern Teaching and Learning Technology and ensure its ubiquitous and effective use (in technique and content) to improve student throughput.

• Computer laboratories were upgraded
• Tooling Robot for the Mechanical Engineering academic department was acquired
• Mass catering equipment was acquired for the Hospitality academic department in Mthatha Campus
• Wi-Fi was introduced to all campus libraries
• Additional equipment was acquired for the School of Engineering

Project 8 – physical infrastructure & refurbishment projects

a. Resource Centre improvements
   • New library built at the Butterworth Campus.
   • Expansion of the libraries at various sites in Buffalo City Campus.
   • Library special collections section was built at the Mthatha Campus.

b. Teaching infrastructure Development
   • Additional lecture auditoria built in Butterworth and Buffalo City Campus.
   • Sound equipment provided at lecture theatres in Mthatha Campus.

c. Student learning experience enhancement
   • Additional student bookshops were started in all campuses.
   • Student reprographics facilities were made available.
   • Driving academies were initiated for students in Mthatha and Queenstown Campuses

d. Student accommodation
   • Additional accommodation for health science students was done at the Madzikane kaZulu, Port Elizabeth and Tsolo hospitals.

4.3 What activities or facilities related to this focus area have you undertaken or put in place during the past three or four years that have not been as successful as you had hoped? In what ways were they unsuccessful? What do you think might be the reasons for the lack of success?

a) Sound systems at the Mthatha Campus that were stolen. This was due mainly to lack of adequate security measures in the lecture theatres.

b) Centralization of the time-table system that has not taken off due mainly to
4.4 What activities or facilities have you recently implemented or acquired or are you planning to implement or acquire in the next 12 to 18 months related to this focus area? Why have you chosen these particular activities or facilities? What is the need or problem they are intended to address?

a) Resource centre expansions
   - Library extensions – Butterworth Campus phase 2.
   - Mthatha Campus’ Sasol library phase 2 – 24hr WIWO, 24hr reading room.
   - Joint library development for East London between WSU, UFH and UNISA

b) Teaching infrastructure improvement
   - Faculty of Health Sciences – teaching and learning facility at the Nelson Mandela Academic Hospital (NMAH)
   - Madzikane kaZulu Hospital expansion – multi-purpose centre with library, computer laboratories, chat rooms and lecture venues.
   - New Medical Orthotics and Prosthetics lab at the NMAH
   - Renovation of the 500 seat auditorium in Mthatha Campus (NMD Site)
   - Extension of the Mthatha Campus (NMD Site) great hall
   - Additional auditorium at Mthatha Campus (Zamukulungisa Site)
   - Renovation of the Botany Dept research laboratory
   - Consolidation of the FSET operations in Buffalo City Campus (BCC)

c) Student learning experience enhancement
   - Conversion of Old Library in Butterworth Campus into WIWO,
   - Wi-Fi expansion, for instance to residences
   - Accessibility, management and control of printing in labs (Pharos system)

d) Student accommodation expansion
   - Building of a 240 bed residence at Mthatha Campus, NMD Site
   - Building a new student accommodation at Buffalo City Campus (Potsdam Site)
   - Improvement of the state of student residences

e) Technology enhancement
   - Expansion of teaching with technology initiatives.
   - Implementation of the CELCAT timetable system to interface with the ITS system.
   - Training in the effective use or software (turnitin, Endnote, Libqual, etc) to improve research capacity.
   - Upgrade the video conferencing facilities for the University at all campuses.
   - Evaluate and upgrade the back-up and disaster recovery hardware and processes.
• Conduct an evaluation of the existing hardware and upgrade or replace the hardware where deemed necessary

4.5 What are the challenges or problems related to this focus area that still need to be addressed in your institution?

• Ventilation systems are in urgent need of repair - in one case, lectures are being given to ±300 students in a venue with poor ventilation.
• Funding required for refurbishment of teaching facilities in line with 21st century teaching methods and technology.
• Additional student residences are required and the existing ones are in dire need of refurbishment and outstanding maintenance needs are clearly evident.
• Squatting in residences
• Funding for the Upgrading of student computer labs and existing computer hardware.
5. **FOCUS AREA 4: ENHANCING COURSE AND PROGRAMME ENROLMENT** *(Including admissions, selection, placement, readmission refusal, pass rates in gateway courses\(^{14}\), throughput rates, management information systems)*

5.1 **Which aspects of your institution’s Strategic Plan relate to this focus area?** *(Please quote from the Strategic Plan.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KPA 1: TEACHING AND LEARNING</th>
<th>Goal 1: To review and design relevant undergraduate and strategic post graduate academic programmes that: Will equip students with life and work skills.</th>
<th>Objective 1.1: To offer a comprehensive range of undergraduate and selected postgraduate programmes that are responsive to the needs of the community</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Objective 1.3.: To design programmes that promote entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Objective 1.5: To promote the learning and acquisition of life skills that contributes to academic and professional success as part of a well-balanced life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goal 3: To promote excellence in undergraduate and postgraduate studies.</td>
<td>Objective 3.1: To promote a flexible curriculum design that allows for articulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Objective 3.2: To improve student access and success rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Objective 3.4: To develop methods that encourage the use of relevant technology in teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Objective 3.5: To achieve enrolment targets as set out by DHET</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 **What successful activities do you currently have in place related to this focus area? What evidence do you use to conclude that they are successful?** *(Do not provide detailed evidence, just a description of the type of evidence you collect).*

In planning its course and program enrolment, WSU is guided by a number of factors including the Strategic Plan which inter alia involve the following: Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM), National Qualifications Framework (NQF), (CHE’s) Higher Education Quality Sub-Framework (HEQSF), formally approved qualifications, subject offering types/curriculum, the higher education growth and development priorities used for enrolment planning, the capacity of the institution in terms of both physical and human resources, the focus areas, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and research.

The focus areas where the bulk of our students are enrolled in are: Health Sciences, Science Engineering and Technology, Education and Business and Management Sciences. Moreover, the course and programme enrolment is further determined by

\(^{14}\) “Gateway courses” are those courses that have a large impact on students’ ability to progress. Typically they are prerequisites for other courses, and often they have large enrolments. At many universities, examples of gateway courses are first year Mathematics and Economics. In some cases, if students fail a gateway course they automatically have to extend their studies by one or two semesters.
the need to create access and increase the student participation rate in higher education, the need to improve success and graduation rates, and the need to contribute through research to knowledge production in the chosen areas of study.

Each year, in determining the student enrolment, the performance of the institution against the Minister’s approved enrolment targets is maintained and analysed. The projected targets, quotas and actual enrolment figures for each year are adhered to. As a university we offer mainly undergraduate programmes with targeted postgraduate programmes in some faculties as they are offered in selected strategic areas while building capacity.

Output in all programmes is gradually improving each year. Faculties such as the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology (FSET) have increased enrolment in scarce skills areas such as engineering, maths and technology. Postgraduate enrolment and output is gradually improving on a yearly basis in the Faculty of Education (FED) and the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS). In faculties where there is demonstrable capacity, both students and staff are trained in research and others have their skills developed through staff development initiatives. Such student and staff development programmes are aimed at ensuring that all of them become professional educators and learners.

To enhance throughput rates at WSU, Problem Based Learning (PBL) strategies have been cascaded from the Faculty of Health Sciences to various faculties. PBL is a student-centred pedagogy in which students learn about a subject through the experience of problem solving. This teaching strategy provokes academics into revisiting their conceptions of both learning and teaching in higher education. For example, in the Faculty of Business, Management Sciences and law, (FBMSL) case studies form an essential part of subjects such as Management, Accounting, Auditing, Financial Management etc. There are elements of PBL in most programmes, which need to be developed further and then consolidated into an integrated PBL per department. Based on FBMSL workshops, the School of Public Relations, Media & Marketing identified a hybrid approach and is currently selecting courses most suited to PBL. These will infuse PBL into the curriculum.

In the Faculty of Education (FED), the School of Initial Professional Education of Teachers (IPET) reported that in all their re-curriculated Bachelor of Education (BEd) programmes, the 4th year students prepare a research paper in which they identify problems as per the research guidelines. This is an eight (8) credit bearing module that links theory to practice. Students are expected to submit a research paper at the end of the second semester. In the School of Social Sciences and Development Studies (SSDS), PBL was launched in the Department of Philosophy.
The Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology (FSET), Problem Based Learning (PBL), as a methodology of teaching is currently being considered in all schools. Representatives of schools participated in institutional workshops and information sessions on PBL. In FSET the Schools of Engineering and Computing also participated in a series of PBL workshops during March 2012, under the NUFFIC project. The workshops were facilitated by a panel of external experts from the Netherlands. The investigation of PBL as a teaching methodology also forms part of the Strategic Plans and objectives of all the departments in the FSET.

In line with this position WSU plans to increase the percentage of postgraduate enrolments and postgraduate qualifications. For an example, new postgraduate programs (MCom, MPM and LLM) have recently been approved by the DHET and the institution is preparing submission of these new programs to the CHE/HEQSF for accreditation. Permission has been received to register students for MCom in July 2014. The MPM and LLM will commence in January 2015. A number of WSU’s programs have been deemed aligned as Category A and BIRP is busy submitting corrections for Category B. All is done so that these programs meet the set standards.

- Cross cutting skills are offered for most programmes as credit bearing modules as well as infused in some modules- Programme structures indicate this
- Undergraduate students are taught basic research skills and implement them- programme structures indicate this, they have to conduct research and complete a research paper/project
- Fourth year Bachelor of Education (B Ed) students conduct research come up with a research paper, which is an 8 credit module as part of their B Ed programme- programme structure indicate this, copies may be made available and the students’ results
- In the Bachelor of Psychology and Bachelor of Social Sciences student do Research Methodology and have to conduct research and complete a research project- programme structure indicate this, copies may be made available and the students’ results
- To equip Teacher Education students to be able engage in all aspects of the school environment- SBE logbooks and files, SBE observation workbooks
- Internal Programme reviews: with the assistance the Quality Assurance Officer assigned to the Faculty of Education, one programme at a time is identified for internal review- there is evidence to this effect

5.3 What activities related to this focus area have you initiated during the past three or four years that have not been as successful as you had hoped? In what ways were they unsuccessful? What do you think might be the reasons for the lack of success?
BIRP has initiated various activities that included data cleansing and employment of permanent staff members for the unit, however, because of the university turnaround strategy some activities were placed on hold. As a unit, the BIRP is divided into three sections, Management of Information System (MIS), Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) and Institutional Research (IR). The accuracy of the information captured in this subsystem is of utmost importance as it is used for statutory reporting purposes hence data cleansing. In fact, it is essential for this unit and all those responsible for the running, processing and/or maintaining information on the system to be conversant in all areas pertaining to HEMIS data management information system and submission to external bodies such as DHET.

BIRP although still struggling to get full time permanent staff members for this unit, commends the university management for going an extra mile in assisting the department/unit to secure permanent employment of a qualified person responsible for the Management of Information System (MIS). This employment has yielded huge benefits to the WSU community as it is providing management information to all levels of management, supporting strategic decision-making, planning and quality processes. MIS closely oversees the preparation and management of HEMIS information, submits HEMIS Data to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), co-ordinates the collection, analysis and interpretation of institutional data and dissemination of information to various stakeholders.

This incumbent is responsible for data cleansing throughout the institution as it has been proved that the data that we are constantly submitting is muddled with errors hence the appointment of this person. Although at the moment we still submit HEMIS data to the DHET without accurately verifying the correct classification of our programmes, WSU together with MIS are working around the clock to correct this anomaly. Among various reasons why this is made a priority is that, part of DHET strategy is to fund students that are enrolled for an approved program and this has serious implications on the government subsidy that WSU generates hence, the BIRP requested the inclusion of the PQM module in the newly acquired institutional software systems.

- Concerning links with schools used for School Based Experience (SBE), there are still negative attitudes of some of the principals and teachers who act as mentors of our students during SBE, however most appreciate the knowledge and skills that our students bring to their schools during SBE
- Although there is use of teaching methods that are responsive to the students’ diverse learning needs and styles, there is need for more training of lecturers
- Although there is marketing to attract students of high quality to Maths, Science, Technology and Consumer Sciences Education, it is still difficult to attract candidates with endorsement for Bachelor degree
• When the Faculty motivated for the establishment of the SBE Unit, with staff that will plan, organise and implement all the activities of SBE, this was not approved because new posts could not be created
• SBE monitoring, supervision, assessment has proved to be a challenge as there is a high students to lecturer ratio, since most of the lecturers are part-time and are unable to participate during SBE
• There is a need to improve throughput and pass rates especially in 1st and 2nd year; students take time to get used to the manner in which teaching and learning takes place in HEI as compared to schools
• Identifying students at risk is a priority; in some programme/modules/courses, the number of students is very high and this does not make it easy to identify struggling students early in the year
• Enrich students learning experiences; the learning environment is sometimes not conducive
• Challenges were encountered in implementation academic exclusion. It transpired that the implementation of the rule was not uniform across campuses and faculties. Some students complained that the appeal process was inconsistent. Consequently, the Office of the Registrar facilitated the establishment of a standardized framework for the appeal process in all faculties and campuses. The standardization of the appeal process was approved by the Senate meeting held on 27 November 2013.

5.4 What activities have you recently implemented or are you planning to implement in the next 12 to 18 months related to this focus area? Why have you chosen these particular activities? What is the need or problem they are intended to address?

BIRP is the custodian of the Higher Education Data Analyser (HEDA) as a result there is improvement in relation to the software in the institution as a whole. This software has a number of facilities and modules responsible for enhancing integrated academic planning and reporting process. The Management Information using the HEMIS data reporting module of HEDA consists of a library of reports in the form of tables, graphs and multi-dimensional reports that are very useful for reporting purposes. These reports are based on HEMIS data and provide lecturers, Head of Departments, Deans and the Institutional Management Committee (IMC) with a clear view of what data is submitted to DHET.

The correctness of HEMIS data is enhanced through the visibility of HEMIS data throughout the institution. The following other operational datasets form part of the HEDA integrated database include, student application data, research data, financial data and student data. HEDA dashboard allows managers to monitor the contribution of the various entities such as visual presentation of performance measures. After securing HEDA and BIRP staff members trained, faculties and other data users were trained by the trained BIRP staff. Various activities are being
performed using this system and integrator pro, such as student tracker, business plan generator, enrolment planning, time sheets, budgeting, performance evaluation, tuition fee, research and many other areas.

Early identification of students at risk has been made possible through the analysis of student's results immediately after capturing of examination results. HEDA system managed by our MIS unit engage faculties by forwarding data to departments and faculties so as to provide students with intensive appropriate remedial support programmes. This strategy has managed to improve the student output and access in the institution.

In partnership with our institutional Information and Communication Technology (ICT) unit, the BIRP is responsible for the training of WSU staff members and students in various software appliances contracted and some purchased by the ICT department. BIRP staff members have also been trained by the institutional ICT and they are now happy to report that they are able to use software such as Oracle discover and Valpac for data submission purposes.

Furthermore, the BIRP management has initiated HEMIS staff to be trained in ITS Integrator 3 in order to equip them with skills and knowledge in order to maintain the reporting systems, which are critical to successfully administer student data and operation access. To fast track registration and admission processes, integrator 3 is able to sort applications in merit sequence on the basis of matriculation results, or in the case of present students, on the basis of the average results in previous examinations at the institution. The training which BIRP staff members have undergone, among other things, will assist in speeding up the registration process, allowing lecturers and student to commence their classes smoothly.

Now that the new Academic Structure and Architecture have been approved, and in order to enhance course and programme smooth enrolment, BIRP is responsible for Academic structure of all academic qualifications of the university/ study programs offered up to courses/modules that form part of the curriculum program. HEMIS staff members have been trained to manage the subsystem so as to be able to manage and maintain the academic structure. This is critical for the administration of the student management system. In the HEMIS system (where WSU data is stored) information captured in the academic structure reflects the rules as set by the academic management in the institution. To enable student success, rules must correspond with the official documentation of the institution, such as calendars, yearbooks or prospectus.

Recently, the BIRP has forged partnerships with local schools so as to improve
student access in critical learning areas. For example, winter school programmes are now in place. In order to increase registration, learners enrolled in the Winter School were furnished with application forms for admission into university programs and those who have applied will be given first preference during the student selection process for 2015. This is one of the recruitment strategies initiated through WSU management. The schools which were allowed to attend the winter school classes in turn undertook to encourage learners to give priority to WSU upon the completion of their school education.

- Alignment of all Teacher Education programmes with the Policy on Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualification (MRTEQ); this is a National requirement
- Align all other programmes in the Faculty of Education with the HEQSF; this is a National need
- Design and implement programmes that respond to National priorities; Also an National need
- Recruit more lecturers for Maths, Science and Technology; this is a Provincial and National need
- Use teaching methods that are responsive to the diverse student learning needs and styles in order to enhance throughput and pass rates
- Create opportunities for students and staff to develop and demonstrate their creativity and innovativeness in order to enhance the competences of both staff and students
- Strengthen students’ work-based learning experience; this is a requirement in most of the Teacher Education programmes and some of the Social Sciences programmes
- Use of Peer Assisted Learning (PALS), tutors to help to improve student success
- Improve students access and success rate; this is key to the mandate of the university
- Promote the use of ICT in learning, teaching and research; this will enhance these activities

5.5 What are the challenges or problems related to this focus area that still need to be addressed in your institution?

Several challenges have frustrated pass rate and throughput in some courses/subjects such as science related subjects. With the injection of funds through extended programs, access and throughput rates are gradually improving. The university, because of lack of resources, finds itself in a rather awkward position to attract high performing and achieving grade 12 students as they are enticed and given bursaries by established universities. WSU also finds it hard to recruit and target highly qualified and appropriate academics due to the position and location of the institution although it works hard to market itself. Infrastructure is also a challenge although much work has been done to solicit infrastructure funding. Be
that as it may, through the turnaround of the institution, these problems are being addressed.

- Acquisition and upgrade facilities to meet infrastructural needs
- Most students do not complete their qualifications on time
- Shortage of teaching venues, especially for large classes
- Lack of teaching and learning resources, especially in the Natural & Consumer Sciences as well as Technology Education
- Most students are held back from progressing through the years because they fail major subjects; in Teacher Education this holds them back because these are pre-requisite for them to go out for School Based Experience
- Providing resources for teaching and learning, especially for Consumer and Naturals Sciences Education as well as Arts and Culture Education. These need specialised equipment for practical lessons; lack thereof render the qualification not to be of the required standard and the graduates end up not achieving all the competences and exit level outcomes
- Placement of students for School Based Experience; there are not enough schools around our sites for placement of students. The whole SBE is challenging in planning, organising, monitoring, supervision and assessment
6. OTHER AREAS THAT AFFECT STUDENT SUCCESS
(Areas that do not fall within the four focus areas)

6.1 Briefly describe other activities your institution is undertaking to promote student success (beyond the four focus areas).

The internal programme reviews are conducted under the auspices of the Quality Management Directorate (QMD) once in a five year cycle. The Internal Programme Review Processes and Procedures Policy (IPRPPP) and the Quality Management and Assurance Policy (QMAP) are meticulously applied in quality promotion at WSU.

The Quality Management Directorate (QMD) also conducts internal reviews for programmes that are periodically accredited by external bodies like the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) for the MBChB degree, the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) for Engineering technologists and technicians, the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants for accounting degrees, the South African Council for Quantity Surveying Professions (SACQSP) for building programmes and the South African Council for Project and Construction Management Professions (SACPCMP) for programmes in the Built Environment, to mention just a few. When these external accrediting bodies come to WSU for their independent accreditation the departments that offer such programmes are re-accreditation.

Student Leadership, in partnership with Faculties, has introduced Academic Awards in their Annual Programme of Action as a mechanism to promote academic excellence. Best performers are recognized and receive financial rewards for their effort in 2 of the 4 campuses. The same will be rolled out to other campuses in the next year.

6.2 What other challenges or problems does your institution face in promoting student success?

Although there is a Senate approved document entitled the “Guidelines to control and monitor the attendance of scheduled classes by academic staff and students”, its implementation needs monitoring to ensure that staff and students adhere to the guidelines.

Frequent and often violent student unrest and prolonged industrial action by unionized staff members have taken a lot of time over the past few years. This necessitates a re-scheduling of the academic year that impacts negatively on student performance. Student unrest, for example, mainly emanates from insufficient NSFAS funding and the administrative processes in its implementation. There is always a backlog of students who didn’t receive funding in the previous year due to varied
reasons but are not able to register with their debts still outstanding.

The lack of proper access control into the lecture rooms makes it easy for students to disrupt classes, more often without following agreed upon processes to address challenges.

Insufficient funding from the National Students Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to assist needy students as well as abject poverty and hunger are some of the key challenges that are faced by WSU’s students and they adversely affect student success.