FINAL REPORT ON THE INTERNSHIP BASELINE STUDY

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SUBMITTED BY SAGDA

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ACRONYMS

SETA   Sector Education and Training Authority

ASGISA   Accelerated and Shared Growth in South Africa

CV   Curriculum Vitae

ERS   Enterprise Resource Systems

DPSA   Department of Public Service Administration

ETDP SETA   Education Training and Development Practice

FET   Further Education and Training

HBU   Historical Black University

HEI   Higher Education Institution

HR   Human Resources

HRD   Human Resource Development

HRDCSA   Human Resources Development Council of South Africa

IT   Information Technology

JHB   Johannesburg

JIPSA   Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition

KPA   Key Performance Area

merSETA   Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services

NMMU   Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

NSDS   National Skills Development Strategy

NYDA   National Youth Development Agency

PALAMA   Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy

PE   Port Elizabeth

PFMA   Public Finance Management Act

SAGDA   South African Graduates Development Association

SAP   IT software

<u>DEFINITIONS</u>

Apprenticeship – a system of training a new generation of practitioners of a structured competency in a basic set of skills.

Employability: Successful completion of the internship programme demonstrating understanding and application of the technical and soft skills required for a relevant position that one would be considered for.

Intern: A graduate with no or little practical working experience in the specific discipline seeking to enter the corporate world or organisation through a structured bridging programme.

Internship – a temporary position with an emphasis on on-the-job training rather than merely employment, and it can be paid or unpaid.

Internship Programme: refers to a programme bridging graduates that have completed a tertiary qualification from an institution into a workplace.

Intention to Resign: The intern's propensity to leave the employer organisation as a result of their experience and perception of the training and exposure during the internship programme.

Job Readiness - Job search skills required to secure employment

Learnership – a training programme that combines theory at a college or training centre with relevant practice on-the-job.

On boarding interventions (induction, job description, mentoring, etc.): mechanism that organisations use to help interns settle within and to accelerate the transition from tertiary education to work.

Mentor: An employee with workplace experience, which implies competence in a particular skill who is willing to undergo mentorship training and execute the mentoring role for an intern or a number of interns

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study, conducted by the South African Graduates Development Association (SAGDA), sought to review current strategies utilised by tertiary institutions to prepare graduates for work; to conduct a baseline study of how internship programmes are currently implemented among employing organisations partnering with the ETDP SETA, the merSETA, and the NYDA; and to contribute towards standardization of best practices to influence internship policy in South Africa.

Registered in 1997, SAGDA is a non-profit organisation, whose overall objective is to strengthen civil society through the empowerment of graduates for social transformation. SAGDA is dedicated to building skills that will enable graduates to participate in the country's socio-economic mainstream, respond to social development needs in our communities and enable them access to the world of work. SAGDA partners with private and public Universities, FET colleges, Sector Education and Training Authorities, municipalities and companies to champion the empowerment of graduates through high impact programmes. SAGDA has the following key programmes:

- Preparing graduates for the world of work
- Research
- Promoting rare professions and scarce skills (Career Management)
- New venture creation

ETDP SETA

The Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA) is a vital link in terms of the various South African SETAs that were set up between 1998, when the Skills Development Act was first promulgated, and when the SETAs began operating in the year 2000. For this reason the declared vision of the ETDP SETA has been to promote and facilitate the development and improvement of the skills profile of the education, training and development sector so that it will benefit not only employers, but employees and the full range of workers as well.

Ultimately, this SETA is also a vital link for the economy in South Africa as a whole, because it will result in a better educated and informed workforce with valuable workplace experience and ethics.

In general, the ETDP SETA has had a mission to promote, facilitate and develop education, training and development as a whole. Its aims has been to:

- ensure that the skill levels of employees and workers are constantly raised and improved,.`
- ensure that there is a healthy balance between supply and demand in the labour market across all sectors,
- ensure that there are diverse and flexible routes that allow for all levels of both initial and later in-service education and training of the full spectrum of workers and employees involved in education and training,
- make certain that a wide variety of different career paths are available to South Africans seeking employment,
- improve the general quality of education and training – from college courses to every variable short course an establishment might seek to offer,
- administer the required levy grant system efficiently,
- effectively improve internal and external communications so that national human resources and skills development progress as rapidly as possible,
- encourage dialogue and interaction between everyone in the sector – both private and public – in terms of training delivery and the transfer of skills,
- make sure that employees, as well as employers benefit from good quality training that leads to a higher productivity rate, and
- encourage harmonious mutual dependencies between employers and their employees.

merSETA

The merSETA is one of the 21 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) established to promote skills development in terms of the Skills Development Act of 1998 (as amended). The 21 SETAs broadly reflect different

sectors of the South African economy. The merSETA encompasses Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services.

The various industry sectors are covered by five chambers within the merSETA:

- Metal and engineering
- Auto manufacturing
- Motor retail and component manufacturing
- Tyre manufacturing
- Plastics industries

Together the five sub-sectors comprise approximately 44000 companies, with a workforce of approximately 600 000. The total levy income is approximately 600 million rands

The merSETA, like all other SETAs, plays a central role in making sure that the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) is fulfilled. merSETA does not collect levies but instead receives collected levies from the Department of Higher Education and Training. Seventy percent of the levies are disbursed as grants and 10% is kept for administration. merSETA does not train, instead it facilitates the process of training by paying grants, registering moderators and assessors, identifying scarce skills, accrediting providers, monitoring the quality of training and implementing projects to close the skills gap.

NYDA

The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) is a South African based agency established primarily to tackle challenges that the nation's youth are faced with. The NYDA was established by an Act of Parliament, Act no 54 of 2008. The institution was established to be a single, unitary structure, established to address youth development issues at National, Provincial and Local government level. The existence of the NYDA should be located within the broad context of South Africa's development dynamics. Similar to many developing countries, South Africa has a large population of youth, those between the ages 14-35; represent 42% of the total population. Given the youthful nature of the South African population much of the socio economic challenges faced by the nation, that is, poverty, inequality and joblessness,

poor health, etc., are borne by the youth. The gravity of challenges South Africa is faced with, require multi - pronged efforts, that simultaneously promote the development of sustainable livelihoods, reduce poverty, inequality and prioritise the development of policies which create an enabling environment for youth development.

The NYDA plays a lead role in ensuring that all major stakeholder's, that is, government, private sector and civil society , prioritise youth development and contribute towards identifying and implementing lasting solutions which address youth development challenges.

METHODOLOGY

A literature review of international and local publications on internships was conducted. Government Policy documents, the SAGDA Strategy Document and the Sector Skills Plans were also consulted. Twelve qualitative focus group interviews were conducted with 76 current and past interns in four provinces. In-depth interviews were also conducted with 22 interns. Another set of in depth, one-one-one interviews was conducted with Career Guidance managers in seven HEIs and with seven internship managers in three provinces. A quantitative electronic survey was administered on 434 interns via email, after it was first piloted with 29 merSETA interns and feedback provided in a group meeting with 12 of them. The total response rate was 55.5 % (241 interns). The quantitative statistics in this report thus refer to the responses of the 241 interns in the final sample. Of these 64% (147 interns) were funded by the ETDP SETA, 19% (44 interns) were funded by merSETA-registered companies, and 16% (36 interns) were placed by the NYDA.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 1: To review current strategies utilised by tertiary institutions to prepare graduates for work:

Most institutions have a Job Readiness programme, which they monitor and evaluate. However, participation is not compulsory. As a result, only 52.2 % (127 interns) had participated in any Job Readiness programme while still at

the tertiary institution. In the qualitative interviews, the Career Guidance officers reported that only about 25 to 33 % of students use their services.

Secondly, institutions partner successfully with employing organisations to inform students about internship and work opportunities using different mediums, such as Career Days, campus notice boards, and the intranet.

In the third place, while CV Writing, Interview Readiness, etc., are offered as part of the course curriculum or by the Career Centre, students are often taught the proper writing technique and do not necessarily send out their CVs to try and get work experience while still studying.

Finally, they are not taught Networking Skills, which are essential to securing a job both in the recession and in a generally highly competitive market. As a result, many still graduate with absolutely no work experience, which increases their chances of ending up unemployed.

For those who participate in the Job Readiness programmes, many found them to be useful in preparing them for the interview process, i.e. getting into the internship, which is a useful intervention considering that 70.5% (169 interns) were interviewed for their internships.   However, there was no direct correlation between the Job Readiness curriculum and the value of the internship experience itself.   This shows that the real value of the work experience and occupational specialization occur when interns are actually in the employer organisation itself.

The biggest challenge facing the Career Centres is insufficient human and financial resources to increase the effectiveness of their offerings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that job readiness skills must be applied and not merely theoretical. Students must be encouraged to send out their CVs from their first year, so they can get real interview opportunities and gain work experience before they graduate.   This will help increase their opportunities for employment when they graduate.

Secondly, in addition to CV Writing and Interview Readiness Skills, students should be taught Job Searching and Networking Skills, as relying solely on the traditional method of posting one's CV on the internet no longer suffices.

Thirdly, it is strongly recommended that more human and financial resources be provided to tertiary institutions to help them provide a wider range of services with more effectiveness for their graduates. This can be achieved with the assistance of SETAs and with increased corporate sponsorship or investment into such interventions, which help reduce unemployment.

OBJECTIVE 2: To conduct a baseline study of how internship programmes are currently implemented among employing organisations partnering with the ETDP SETA, the merSETA, and the NYDA:

a) Advertising and Recruitment

Internship programmes are well advertised across the country, as information is often available through word-of-mouth, campus advertising, and on the internet. The increased penetration of electronic media has provided access to information even for rural students.

Standard recruitment and selection practices are generally used as fair and transparent mechanisms for screening candidates. Consequently, interns from different regions, genders, and disciplines are able to participate. Most probably due to the technical nature and related safety requirements of their work, merSETA interns are the highest interviewed (95% versus the NYDA's 75% and the ETDP SETA's 62%), in order to better align the candidate's skill set to the requirements of the particular engineering and manufacturing organisation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that SETAs and organisations identify more internship, employment, and entrepreneurship opportunities for graduates in small towns and rural areas.

 It is further recommended that efforts to recruit graduates with disabilities be increased, as only 5% (12 interns) reported any form of disability in this sample of 241.

b) Alignment with Career Goals and Organisational Objectives

Most interns take internships to obtain workplace skills and professionalism (Business Etiquette) and to put into practice the theory they have been taught. The majority of interns are placed in the department that correlates with their qualification. However, because they are in entry-level positions, many end up doing more general office administration activities instead of meaningful work. Because of the high number of unemployed graduates, organisations can hire a graduate to merely get an extra set of hands to increase productivity even if that work could have been done by someone who has no tertiary qualification.

In areas where there is a need for expert technical skills, i.e. finance, engineering, health, logistics, supply chain management, there is better alignment between the interns' qualifications and their work activities. Consequently, 69.5 % (167 interns) felt more than 50% of their work activities were aligned with their qualifications. In the humanities and related fields, there was less direct alignment between work activities and qualifications, e.g. a graduate who has studied Criminology and Political Science processing bursary applications for educators.

Finally, there are many who are doing work that is only a small section of the full qualification, e.g. a Public Relations graduate working as a Personal Assistant. Others feel they are doing the odd job here and there but have no full responsibility, which makes them feel that their work is not really important.

Nevertheless, even in those instances where there was little or no alignment between the qualifications and work conducted, the internship experience helped the participants to learn professionalism and to clarify what work they want to do or not in future. It also helped them understand themselves better or consider pursing further studies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Employing organisations must have a clearly identified need for an internship programme. This need must be linked to the requirements of the industrial sector, their Human Resources Development Strategy, their Organizational

Growth Strategy, and their Transformation Strategy, for example, Enterprise Development.

Secondly, organisations must have rigorous strategies and policies regarding the selection of interns and mentors, the allocation of work activities, their monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and their absorption plans.

c) Internship Interventions

Whereas HEIs conduct Job Readiness programmes to prepare interns for the workplace, employing organisations welcome them by having basic on-boarding interventions, e.g. job descriptions (64%; 154 interns:), induction (80%; 193 interns), and mentoring programmes (76%; 183 interns). However, the job descriptions are not always implemented as envisaged, and the induction programmes are not standardized.

Skills development and training is offered mostly on the job (more than 80% of instances) instead of in formal, structured workshops (less than 30% of instances). This is because interns are seen as transient, and organisations prefer to up skill permanent employees. Moreover, organisations tend to avoid the hassles associated with administering skills training programmes and the related accreditation processes. Nevertheless, an overwhelming majority of interns felt that their "soft" or generic work attractions skills had improved greatly in the course of the internship (e.g. time management, interpersonal skills, problem solving, etc.). HIV/AIDS Awareness seems to have been more available than the other courses. This is probably because, due to the current epidemic in the country, many organisations have Health and Wellness Days.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that appropriate mentors be selected and trained, so they can guide, support, and advise graduates, as they navigate their way in the work place, thus enhancing the value of the internship. Mentoring should be much more than signing attendance registers. It should contribute effectively to performance development and to enhancing absorption rates. Structured mentoring must be budgeted for and the time demands it makes on employees must be taken into account.

Skills development is an important component of bridging the gap between the tertiary institution and the work place. More structured organisation specific soft skills training must be provided to help graduates adjust from student life to the business world. Graduates with positive attitudes and better work attraction skills have a higher chance of employability compared to technical ability alone.

It is also strongly recommended that entrepreneurial skills training be a compulsory offering in all internship programmes. Where interns show real interest in pursuing this route, their acumen and potential must be assessed and they must be places in appropriate incubating entrepreneurship programmes.

It is further recommend that more individualized and relevant technical skills training be provided to broaden the internship experience rather than reinforce old skills. Jobs specific technical skills training increases productivity by enhancing the interns' contribution, the effectiveness of the practical training, and job satisfaction.

d) Support for Career Path

The majority of interns felt that they had received support for their career path by being exposed to both internal (63%; 152 interns) and external (63%; 152 interns) work opportunities. Very little was done during the internship to expose them to entrepreneurial opportunities (31%; 74 interns). This reflects the traditional underestimation of entrepreneurship as a career development and employment generating instrument.

While most co-workers were very supportive, helping interns learn how to use new systems and programmes, there were also instances where co-workers were hostile, as they felt threatened by graduate interns who have higher qualifications than them. This was sometimes a reflection that the co-workers were not involved in the identification of experiential training opportunities for interns. At times it reflected the tensions caused by the instability of the work place due to the recession.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that to increase the effectiveness of the internship and the pride of interns, more efforts be made to expose interns to senior management and talent managers by showcasing their work.

It is also strongly recommended that workers be involved in the identification of experiential training opportunities for interns in line with the organisation's Human Resources Strategy and intern employment policy. Adequate support from co-workers and the genuine interest of mentors enhance the receptiveness of the organizational climate.

e) Absorption Rates

Of the 44% (106 interns) who had already completed their internships, 42% (45 interns) are still unemployed. Among those who were absorbed into permanent jobs the biggest cohort is from the NYDA. It would appear that those companies that partner with the NYDA have a strong intention to absorb the interns when they take them.   In instances where the internship is 12 months or less, interns complain about the short duration, citing that they often have to take a second internship to get a total of at least two years' work experience as is required by the market place.

The low absorption rates reflect that many organisations take interns without the long-term goal of employing them.   The low rates also reflect the continuing mismatch between the supply from tertiary institutions (especially HBIs) and the skills demands of the workplace in the current economy: graduates with technical, science and engineering qualifications are in higher demand than those in the Humanities. However, matriculants often lack the requisite Maths and Science skills for pursing these careers.

Of the 11% (27 interns) who had resigned from previous internships, the majority were placed by the NYDA (25% vs. the merSETA's 9% and the ETDP SETA's 7%). However, 43% of the interns placed by the NYDA had received permanent employment opportunities as opposed to 33% for the merSETA and 29% for the ETDP SETA.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that fair and transparent criteria be set for intern absorption/employment. Interns should be informed of these quite early on. This will help them work harder towards meeting organizational goals and to raise alarms where progress is impeded. They will expect more of their mentors and more rigour in the implementation of monitoring, evaluation and selection mechanism. Some interns in Limpopo and Gauteng, for instance, were very disappointed that full employment was offered based on political affiliation instead of qualification and skill.

Secondly, mentors must be more effective in their role of assisting interns fulfill their career goals by actively exposing them to as many employment opportunities as possible.

f) Funding

The fact that some interns are paid directly by the SETA while others are not, results in the lack of standardization of stipends. merSETA interns (Manufacturing and Engineering) tend to earn higher than ETDP SETA interns (Humanities and Social Sciences). What was disheartening was that there are interns earning R1 041 per month, which is far below the minimum subsistence level of R1 500. It is not surprising therefore that 45 % of interns stay at home with their parents. However, how one feels about the amount of the stipend is relative according to one's age, qualification, geographic location, or career goals. There were instances where earning a high stipend was less important than getting relevant practical work experience, especially in the manufacturing and engineering sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering that 34.4% (83 interns) interns have children, spend large sums on food and transport, and help support other family members, there is a need to calculate and standardize fair and realistic stipend amounts. Because of their socio-economic background, some interns are forced to be breadwinners. Therefore, it is recommended that standardized stipend amounts be set according to qualifications, geographic location, and industry to ensure fairness and minimize the economic exploitation of interns.

g) Monitoring and Evaluation

HEIs review their performance in aligning their Job Readiness programmes with the requirements of the job market. They undergo peer review exercises and others conduct research to understand the growing demand for technology in the market place. Others are asking the SETAs to help them assess the demands of the market place. Some FETs are monitored by the government, the company-based recruitment agencies, and the students themselves.

In the workplace most organisations provide mentors to monitor and evaluate the interns' work performance, progress and acquisition of relevant skills. However, while the majority of interns feel they have opportunities to ask questions, receive and give feedback, the delivery of the monitoring is inconsistent. The ETDP SETA interns reported that they got the most mentoring (81%; 119 of 147 interns) compared to the merSETA's 63% (28 of 44 interns) and the NYDA's 71% (26 of 36 interns). Nevertheless, the ETDP SETA interns also reported the least overall Enjoyment of the Internship (72%) compared to 76% for the merSETA and 78% for the NYDA. The ETDP SETA interns also reported the lowest average Internship Value score (69%) compared to 72% for the merSETA and 76% for the NYDA. This is because much of the mentoring activities were the administrative signing of the monthly attendance registers and the quarterly reports, instead of the mentor ensuring a focused work scope to enable the acquisition of relevant knowledge and the development of a career path.

In evaluating their own experiences, the majority of interns in this study reported that the internship had helped them realize that they are competent and employable. They also felt that they were getting practical experience, even though it might not have been very relevant. Given the high rate of unemployment, the perceived Value of the Internship is quite high at an average of 72.3% average for the total sample. It is a fact that getting paid while looking for job opportunities is better than staying at home. Most disliked was the amount of the stipend, which slightly more than half the total (51.5%; 124 interns) felt was too low.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the SETAs be more involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the internships. This emphasizes the need for the SETAs to go beyond focusing on numerical targets towards gathering more qualitative data from site visits.

OBJECTIVE 3: To contribute towards standardization of best practices to influence policy.

Despite the serious challenges organisations experience in their efforts to absorb interns in the current recessionary climate, from this study we can suggest the following model of best practices for organisations to implement successful internship programmes:

1. Identify your organisational objectives for the internship programme, and get buy in from the senior managers and co-workers.
2. Develop a robust internship strategy and policies in line with the organisational goals.
3. Have a designated intern manager who liaises with SAGDA, to procure unemployed graduates, and with the SETA directly, to ensure alignment with the SETA or industry's skills development strategy. The designated manager will also help interns know the person to go to when necessary.
4. Identify housing and relocation needs and assist where necessary.
5. Assign and train mentors who are motivated to help the interns in their career development, i.e., ensure mentors do more than sign attendance registers. They must offer career guidance, provide challenging work assignments and constructive feedback to improve the confidence of their mentees.
6. Hold orientation sessions for all involved (interns and mentors), in order to clarify roles and responsibilities.
7. Provide interns with real work assignments that are related to their studies and career goals, not just doing administration and filing. Ensure there is variety of work activities and enough work for the interns. Rotate them so they enhance their skills and experience by being exposed to different management styles and work activities. The importance of this cannot be overemphasised.

8. Provide interns with a job description and make sure that it is properly adhered to. This helps ensure that relevant work is assigned, improves the mentoring process, and enhances performance monitoring in line with set organisational goals.
9. Offer stipends that are fair and realistic, considering that due to the high inflation and the ever rising cost of food and fuel, interns must earn enough to provide for themselves and their dependents.
10. Encourage team involvement to improve social and networking skills.
11. Hold information sharing forums where new interns can learn from ex-interns who have been recently hired as permanent employees in the company in the past three years.
12. Bring in speakers from your company's executive ranks for interns to learn more about the company and make career decisions, as they are able to access their role models. Such interaction also ensures buy-in from senior management, thus aligning the internship's contributions to the company's goals.
13. Offer training both in work-related (for example, computer language) and in general skills areas (for example, time management). Both are necessary for interns to derive optimum value out of the internship and to improve their employability.
14. Showcase intern work through presentations or exhibitions, so potential departments can employ talented interns.
15. Provide opportunities to teach and develop entrepreneurial skills. Expose graduates with high potential in this regard to opportunities for incubation or assist them through the organisation's enterprise development strategy.
16. Conduct focus groups/surveys to get feedback from the interns and mentors, so as to improve satisfaction and get information about what the competition is doing.
17. Conduct exit interviews to gather feedback on the interns' experience and assess their interest in being hired by the host company full time.
18. Invite SAGDA and SETA officials to visit interns on site for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERNSHIP STUDY

High levels of youth unemployment in South Africa have become a cause for great concern over the past decade. In 2008 the unemployment rate for youth between the ages of 25 – 34 was 21.5% (Kruss, 2012, p15). The current unemployment rate of the same age bracket stands at 36% (Stats SA, 2013, Q2). The reasons for this predicament are multiple fold. In the background is the legacy of "separate development" whereby the Apartheid government and colonialism in all its forms in South Africa disadvantaged black people by barring them from attaining meaningful education and therefore from acquiring the skills that would be needed to thrive in a changing economy. These foundations of poor basic education, which is a big problem facing us even today, means that the basic competence on which further skills could be developed is often lacking. One other and more obvious reason for the increase in the rate of unemployed youth is the global economic recession.

The market failures in the national system for skills development have been evident since the 1970s, as South African firms experienced critical constraints in responding to new technological challenges and hence to global competitiveness. The technological capability approach stresses that what is critical in developing countries is the learning process within firms, the ability to master the tacit elements of new technology imported through foreign direct investment or through acquiring new physical plant and equipment. Is a country able to produce not only *more* skills, but a higher *level* of skills across the workforce, and more significantly, a different *kind* of skills to respond to new information intensive technologies, the new organisation of production and the management of knowledge networks (Kruss, 2012, p1). New "communicative" skills, such as, the ability to work in teams, problem solving, driving quality improvement, and to comply with safety regulations are stressed. The knowledge and capabilities that are built through experience and not simply the formal education-based skills built through institutional learning are equally significant. Whether a country advances in skills formation to promote comparative advantage, or avoid deep recession in the current global economy, will depend largely on the national systems for experience-based skill and technological learning (Kruss, 2012, p1).

Post-1994 the debate shifted dramatically towards promoting equity and widening access to opportunities, while simultaneously addressing the "skills crisis" (Kruss, 2012, p2). The National Enterprise Survey (1998) and World Bank Surveys (1999) revealed that services sector firms experienced greater shortages than manufacturing, while large firms by far experience the greatest skills constraints (Daniels, 2007, p13). Moreover, the most skills intensive (defined as managerial, professional, and technical) the position, the harder it was to find suitably qualified individuals, especially in the service-related skills, such as accounting, marketing, financial, legal, and even craft-related trades (Reza , 2007, p13). They also emphasised that the higher the position, the fewer the representation of black people. Consequently, the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) and the Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) identified unemployment and skills training as key in the national development agenda.

The post-1994 government's response to the shortage of appropriate skills and the resultant increase in unemployment predicament has, in fact, been multi-pronged. Firms were required to embark on an intensive training agenda to improve the skills of the workforce at all levels. This was promulgated through a plethora of strategies, plans, and Acts, such as the National Skills Development Strategy, the Skills Development Act and the National Skills Fund, which encourages companies to pay skills levies and then claim some money back upon submitting evidence that their employees were trained according to set targets. Other important Acts are The Employment Equity Act, which emphasis the inclusion of black people (especially Africans) and women into the economy, as well as the Black Economic Empowerment Act, which encourages companies to increase the numbers of their black employees, managers, shareholders, and service providers.

Other steps undertaken by the government to address the skills deficit were focused on the education system itself. For example, the Department of Higher Education and Training undertook an extensive exercise of changing the shape, size, and scope of public higher education. The FET landscape was transformed when the Further Education and Training Act (98 of 1998) came into effect, resulting in 50 new FET colleges in 2001.

While very positive gains have been made over the past 15 years, the challenges facing the government's efforts to improve the overall skills base have been many. For instance, the governments' efforts to upgrade skills have been linked with the National Qualification Framework (NQF). This requires co-ordination for registration and accreditation between the training providers, the SETAs, and the Department of Education. The resultant long delays frustrate training providers and discourage companies from implementing workplace skills training programmes. This situation has very adverse effects on the entire skills development process as currently designed and allows qualified individuals very little transferability associated with their newly acquired skills.

Another challenge is that while only SETAs are institutionally empowered to effect this change, they lack capacity to conduct demand forecasting to inform sectoral and national strategies, and this has generally been recognized as a major weakness (Kruss, 2012, p5). There is a need to train both the unemployed and the employed, from the low to the high-skilled. It is therefore imperative that SETAs spend their budgets to develop general and specific training programmes. It cannot be stressed enough that training for the unemployed is a public good in the classic sense, which means that the market is unlikely to provide it, so the government must take the lead in this regard (Daniels, 2007, p 34).

The majority of the unemployed youth are 15 – 34 years old, which suggests that they are recent graduates *(Graduate Unemployment, 13)*. Against this background, (all those with degrees, diplomas and certificates) it is no wonder therefore that the increasing rate of unemployed graduates in a skills-constrained economy is a matter of great concern. However, it is important to note that while the number of *degreed* graduates in particular has doubled over the past 15 years, their unemployment rate has fallen. Even after the financial crisis, unemployment among *degreed* graduates remains as around 5% (CDE Insight, 2013, p1).

The problem of unemployed graduates in South Africa can be described as structural in nature. There appears to be an ongoing, almost intractable, mismatch between the types of workers demanded by the market and those supplied by tertiary institutions *(Graduate Unemployment, I)*. Evidence

abounds that African graduates or students studying at Historically Black Universities (HBUs) tend to graduate in fields of study with lower employment prospects, often because they do not meet the minimum requirements for enrolling in mathematics, science and engineering. Consequently, there is a shortage of artisans and technically trained workers, for example, electricians, technicians, mechanics, etc. Engineers and scientists also list high on the list of scarce skills.

Given the above challenges, the inability to support young people to make the school-to-work transition is probably the biggest challenge in the labour market. To this effect, the signing of the National Skills Accord by Government, organized business, organized Labour and Community organizations in July 2011, is one of the most important factors in achieving the objective of facilitating work-placement for FET college students and graduates. In terms of this Accord, there is a strong commitment by the Business sector to expose lecturers to the current needs of industry, thus improving their capacity to offer relevant courses and programmes. This, it is hoped, will gradually decrease the discord between the curriculum, skills training, and productivity, which leads to graduate unemployment. Furthermore government continues to pursue this goal by prioritizing internships in the NSDSIII (2011- 2015).

Within the above context, therefore, this study looks at a specific cohort of unemployed graduates, who have qualifications from both universities and FETs and are serving in internship programmes. Whereas the government generally puts emphasis on numerical targets, the overall purpose here is to capture qualitative information about the lessons that can be learnt from how the internship programmes are implemented as well as the positive gains derived from the graduates' experiences. It is hoped that some of the indicators will be incorporated into future monitoring and evaluation efforts.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

By focusing on interns nationwide in the ETDP SETA (Education Training and Development Practice), the merSETA (Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services) , as well as those placed by the National Youth Development Agency's (NYDA) JOBS programme in various firms, this research hopes to achieve the following:

➢ To review current **strategies** utilised by **tertiary institutions** to **prepare graduates** for internship or work;
➢ To conduct a baseline study of how internship programmes are currently implemented among employing organisations partnering with the above-mentioned three organisation;
➢ To identify the role of SETAs in terms of facilitation of work experience;
➢ To assess the **viability** and **effectiveness** of the ETDP SETA, the merSETA, and the NYDA in providing the required **work experience**, and
➢ To contribute towards **standardisation** of **best practices** to influence **policy.**

The above objectives will be achieved by investigating the following three stakeholder groups:

1. Higher Education Institutions- HEIs (Traditional and Comprehensive Universities),
2. Employers (host companies or organisations), and
3. Interns (ETDP SETA, merSETA and NYDA)

2.1 HEIs

The study considers the role that HEIs play in preparing their graduates for internships or work. Here factors such as the following are considered:

- The design and implementation of programmes that are in place to prepare graduates for productive job search, work, or internships
- Administration
- Monitoring and Evaluation

2.2 HOST ORGANISATIONS

Regarding the second stakeholder, host organisations in which interns are placed, the study considers factors such as the following:
- Variation within host organisations registered with the three funding organisations
- Administration and management of internships
- Alignment with the host organisation's objectives
- Preparedness of the workplace
- Workplace interventions
- Absorption rates

2.3 INTERNS

In this study those interns whose stipends are paid directly by the ETDP SETA are generally considered as placed in the Humanities, Social Sciences or related Services fields.

Those interns in merSETA-registered companies are generally considered as placed in SETI (Science, Engineering, Technology, and Innovation) or manufacturing fields. The latter are paid directly by the organisations in which they work.

Those graduate interns placed by the NYDA's JOBS programme, are spread between both the Humanities and National Sciences, as the NYDA works with organisations across the different economic spectra to help the youth access employment opportunities. The NYDA, like the merSETA, neither monitors implementation nor pays the interns directly, as it is not involved in the internship programme once the intern has been placed to meet set numerical targets.

Therefore, with regards the perspectives and experience of the interns themselves, the study compares internship programmes in the three organisations by investigating factors, such as,

- The demographic profile of the interns
- How they know of the internship programmes
- Internship alignment with career goals
- Support for career path
- Funding
- Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms

This study occurs against the backdrop of nationwide participation numbers captured in the table below:

SETA	2010-2011		2011-2012		TOTAL TARGETS	TOTAL ACTUAL
	TARGETS	ACTUAL	TARGETS	ACTUAL		
ETDPSETA	160	247	600	223	760	470
merSETA	250	353	200	379	450	732

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Internships, apprenticeships, learnerships, are all terms used to define gaining of work experience before being employed full-time. Internships are meant to enable the transfer of learning and knowledge by providing participants with an opportunity to apply what they have learnt in the classroom to the "real world" and to work experiences that may prove useful in finding full-time employment thereafter. Participating in an internship has proven useful in the graduates' success in their initial jobs and employees with internship experience earn more. (Callanan & Benzing, 2004)

Furthermore, a study conducted to determine the top 10 characteristics required by employers in the USA revealed that they pick those interns who display the following: (1) enthusiasm; (2) willingness to learn; (3) commitment; (4) good communication skills; (5) receptiveness to constructive criticism; (6) trustworthiness; (7) ability to prioritize; (8) problem solving skills; (9) adaptability, and (10) an appropriate energy level. Participating in an internship enhances these, thus giving interns an advantage in the highly competitive search for permanent employment positions.

In essence while the obvious benefits for interns might be the enhancement of technical skills and career opportunities, the modern workplace also emphasizes the importance of generic skills such as communication, quantitative analysis, problem-solving skills, information technology skills and the ability to work with others. The lack of these generic work-attraction skills has been identified as one of the factors attributing to the high rate of unemployment among black graduates in South Africa.

For the employing organisation the benefits of internship programmes include (1) project completion; (2) enhanced capabilities and reputation of the organisation; (3) efficiencies due to cheaper labour; (4) potential screening (evaluating qualifications without long-term employment obligations) and recruitment of the best interns; (5) perhaps an inflow of ideas (for example best practices from the university to the company. Moreover, (6) interns who get full-time jobs stay longer (higher retention rates). While they might differ

in duration, sector or occupation, main motives are, of course, country dependent. Nevertheless internships are often seen as a "win-win" proposition. They play a role in providing organisations and prospective applicants with ample opportunities to get to know and to impress each other in a more natural setting. For both the intern and the organisation it is a screening process to achieve a better match between the skills of the intern and the requirements of the workplace climate.

The American studies we found largely refer to internships which are part of undergraduate degree programmes, in professions where on-the-job or experiential training is required in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation, for example Business Studies.

By far the most pertinent and recent international studies we found were "Determinants of Internship Effectiveness: An Exploratory Model" (Narayanan, V.K., Paul Olk et al, 2010) from Portugal and "Making the Most of an Internship: An Empirical Study of Internship Satisfaction" (D'Abate, C.P., Mark Youndt et al, 2009) from the USA. These are discussed briefly below.

The first study involved 65 students in a Portuguese University, who interned in Industrial Management and Manufacturing companies. The relevance for us was that the focus was on all three stakeholders, the university, the intern, and the host organisation. The other point of relevance is that being manufacturing organisation the above companies are comparable to the merSETA (Manufacturing and Engineering) organisation in our study. The findings were that the most important role for universities was to provide Project Awareness--making sure students know where and how to get internships. In South African this could be translated to Career Days and Job-Readiness Skills training. The conclusion was that there was no direct correlation between the university's academic curriculum and the success of internship. It was mostly the companies' processes and actions that enhanced intern satisfaction, not the universities. With regard to companies, the findings were that just because an intern is involved in implementing a project does not mean the intern is satisfied. A more focused scope that enables the learning of specific knowledge is more important. The host company's role is to create the context, but the active role of the mentor and intern is more important. Consequently, factors resulting in intern satisfaction were a focused scope of

the project, feedback, and mentoring. Even though the work area/project was most likely selected by the host organisation, interns were highly satisfied if they felt they were learning new skills, had a mentor who was interested in their development, and the organisation's culture was enabling for learning to take place.

The second study, "Making the Most of an Internship," involved 111 students, who were enrolled in the Department of Management and Business in a college in the USA, and had taken an internship before completing their degrees.   This group can perhaps be comparable with the ETDP (Social Sciences) interns in our study. The results indicated that intern satisfaction was dependent on the following two factors: characteristics of the job (specifically skill variety, task significance and feedback) and characteristics of the work environment (in particular, learning opportunities, supervisor support, and satisfaction with the organisation). The findings of the two studies therefore support each other. Of interest is that none of the contextual variables (flexible work hours, distance of commute, paid vs. unpaid, desirable location) displayed relationship with internship satisfaction. The reason could be that interns know that they are temporary employees and do not expect the same ideal circumstances as permanent workers. They are only there to learn as best as they can. Nonetheless, the measurement of the intern's overall job satisfaction is important because there is a direct link between job satisfaction and absenteeism or the intent to leave. More job satisfaction thus translates into more commitment to the organisation and lower absenteeism.

We also found that according to the *Journal of Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities National Internship Program*, students who underwent a semester long internship with the federal agency were more likely to consider the federal government as a future employer than they were previously. This shows that in government departments internships might open jobs avenues that interns might not have considered previously, which might be useful in light of the 10 000 vacant positions in our government.

From the international studies we referred to above, the most common challenges facing interns are (1) the work load: neither task monotony, having too little nor too much is good for the intern; (2) supervisor not showing enough interest in the intern's work; (3) the fear of asking questions; (4)

intern's work not being used; (5) adjusting to a new lifestyle, (6) competition with other interns. In addition, internships, like temporary positions, (7) tend to offer few or no benefits to interns (Because they are "peripheral," they receive little commitment from the employer and less attention from organisation policies and programmes). Furthermore, their temporary positions tend to be characterised by (8) limited autonomy, (9) limited decision-making influence, and (10) less co-worker support than permanent employees. (Summarised from "Building a Premier Internship Program: A Practical Guide for Employers," by Mimi Collins)

Unlike in the developed Western countries, in South Africa there are generally no expectations of such lofty benefits as flexi-hours and re-location assistance. In other words, while the international literature helped us to consider best practices in implementing a successful internship programme, the challenges faced by interns, the relevant intern attributes, and the benefits for all stakeholders, we remained very mindful of our local socio-economic environment. Even though some of the factors described above might be considered as global, we customised the design of our questions not only to see the extent to which the above are applicable in South Africa, but also to see how our particular history of Apartheid, with its characteristic racial and class distinctions, might yield different findings. None of the studies we read investigated factors such as race and class differences. However, in South Africa, where many white executives have demonstrated a very strong resistance to issues redressing past economic imbalances, these factors were worth interrogating. Moreover, the transformation officers under whose auspices the internship programmes are often located, might themselves be black managers whose decision-making powers are limited. In fact, in a speech delivered on 4 Oct. 2012, Dr. Blade Nzimande, the Minister for Higher Education and Training, said that 55% of black graduates from Stellenbosch University were unlikely to find a job in their first year after receiving their degrees, compared to 12% of white students. Similarly, 29% of black graduates from the University of Witwatersrand could not procure employment in their first year after graduation, compared to 7% of their white counterparts. "Most black youngsters do not have the family and other connections into the labour market that are generally enjoyed by whites and the few more affluent blacks," he noted. Thus historical inequality and poverty continue to determine access to education and permanent employment. Nzimande said this was despite the efforts of the government to transform education. Therefore we looked at the Youth Employment Accord which was

signed in April 2013 which stipulates that, there is a need to improve education and training opportunities for the gap grouping between school-leaving and first employment. This requires, amongst others:

- Second-chance matric programmes for those who have not passed or have poor results
- Expanding the intake of Fet colleges as part of building a stronger vocational and technical skills base among young people to complement the current focus on academic training
- Developing stronger roles for Setas and other institutions to help address the challenges faced by young people in sector and workplace training programmes
- Expanding the targets in the National Skills Accord, including for State-owned Companies

With regards to work exposure, young people will be connected with employment opportunities, through amongst others support for job placement schemes and work-readiness promotion programmes for young school leavers and provide young people with work experience.

- All state departments are expected to introduce a focused internship programme, aiming at employing interns over a period of time equal to 5% of the total employment of the departments

- State-owned enterprises will develop placement opportunities for Fet and University students who need work experience as part of completing their studies.

- Private sector companies will be encouraged to provide a range of work-exposure programmes, which include vacation programmes, summer internships, job shadowing as well as employment of young people in permanent jobs.

- Large local companies will be engaged to make firm and clear commitments.

We also considered whether gender imbalances and sexual harassment are being addressed in our local work environments, as traditional patriarchal systems are still embedded in our culture. In addition, we sought to assess the extent to which companies enhance HIV/AIDS education, an issue which might not be as pressing in the USA. Moreover, the effects of the global recession as well as the high levels of unemployment in South Africa might yield particularly local findings with regards to factors such as absorption rates.

There are very few published studies evaluating internship programmes in South Africa. Yet the Department of Public Service Administration did through cabinet approved the Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategy for the Public Service, which included an Internship Framework and a Scarce Skills Strategy in 2002. Their framework seeks to establish an effective and efficient internship programme aimed at bridging the gap between academic study and competent performance in the workplace by offering structured internship opportunities to students and unemployed youths that will enable them to gain practical work experience over a maximum of 12 months. A DPSA Internship Policy was formulated and some of the objectives of the framework include:

- To resolve the general shortage of qualified and skilled people in the workforce by encouraging graduates to equip themselves with the necessary practical experience.
- To assist in meeting the strategic staffing needs of the public service by providing practical and accelerated work experience programmes that expose interns to specific occupations.
- To provide unemployed graduates with valuable work experience and skills to enhance their employability.
- To address the problem of youth unemployment, especially tertiary (university and technikon) graduates by providing them with work experience opportunities in the public service.
- To provide opportunities to gain some practical experience for students who are required to do this to earn credits towards a qualification.
- To improve equitable access to public sector employment for rural and marginalised groups such as women and the disabled.
- To contribute to lifelong learning.

- To increase awareness among students of job and career opportunities in the public service.

Most of the reports researched provide only quantitative data, listing the number of interns per year, but not qualitative information in terms of implementation processes, challenges, successes, satisfactions of interns, etc. Some of the most relevant evaluation of South African internships were those provided by A. Pop (2009), D. Grayson (2012), as well as S. Buhlungu and A. Metcalfe (2001). They investigate the experience of the interns as well as those of the managers/employers with particular focus on the role of mentorship, skills training and management of the programmes. These studies have not only influenced our approach but validated and verified many of our findings

4. METHODOLOGY

Our general approach was to combine mixed research methods incorporating desktop, literature reviews, as well as qualitative and quantitative research methods, so as to maximize the accuracy of our results.

4.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

We reviewed some international and local studies on internships in order to understand challenges, successes and best practices regarding implementation. A general review of key local documents and policies was conducted to understand the current situation regarding programmes to alleviate youth unemployment in South Africa.

These documents included the following:

- The SAGDA Strategy
- National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) II and III
- Human Resources Development Strategy—SA
- ETDP SETA research reports
- ETDP SETA Sector Skills Plans
- ETDP Strategy Documents
- DPSA Internship Policy
- Youth Employment Accord April 2013

4.2   QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

4.2.1 Qualitative Survey Instruments

a. Discussion guides were designed and administered in 12 intern focus groups and in key-informant interviews.
b. These discussion guides were subsequently modified for one-on-one key informant interviews with seven employers (internship managers).
c. Another set of discussion guides was designed and administered to key informants in seven HEIs career guidance offices.

Although much effort was put into getting respondents in provinces where the funders had the most participants, qualitative interviews were ultimately conducted with those interns, managers, and HEI career officers who responded to our invitation, which was distributed as widely as possible. Moreover, as this was the qualitative part of the research the quality of the interviews in assisting the researchers to understand the context better was much more important than the quantity of the interviewees.

4.2.2 QUESTION AREAS

The question areas in the discussion guides can be broadly outlined to cover the following:

a. **Knowledge of Internship**

➢ Existing challenges and successes in the process of applying for and accessing internships.
➢ Existing challenges and successes in the preparedness of interns as a result of Job Readiness programmes administered by the HEIs

b. **Alignment of Internship with Career Goals**
➢ Existing challenges and successes in meeting learning objectives and clarifying career goals.
➢ Existing challenges and successes in deriving value from exposure to meaningful work, networks, etc.

c. **Workplace Interventions**
➢ Existing challenges and successes in deriving value from the administering of induction programmes, mentoring and skills training.

d. **Monitoring and Evaluation**
➢ Existing challenges and successes in the provision of feedback and in conducting performance appraisals.
➢ How the above might affect the overall impact of the internships on the graduates

4.3 SAMPLING

<u>Sampling of interns for focus groups</u>

Databases were provided by ETDP SETA, merSETA and NYDA in Excel spreadsheets. The databases comprised of 928 females and 550 males which was equal to 1478. Due to the fact that the databases were not clean, they comprised of matriculants who were employed as interns and others who were still students doing the final years for apprenticeship. However, the study focused mostly on graduates who were interns as they were the ones who could easily get employed after the internship period.

A total of 12 focus group interviews comprising 76 interns were conducted with both urban and rural/semi-urban interns. All the interns with whose accurate contacts we had been furnished in the targeted area were invited by sms or telephonically, and a total of 10 were confirmed for each focus group. The groups comprised of current and/or past interns with degrees or diplomas in various qualifications. Each focus group interview was two hours long.

__See Appendix A for table of qualitative samples of focus groups, one on one interviews with interns, key informant interviews and one on one interviews with managers.__

4.4 INCENTIVES

Interns were compensated for travel expenses and/or their time. They were also offered light refreshments at the end of the interviews. In addition they were also given free, expert advice on Job Searching techniques. This often took another 30 minutes or so after the formal group interviews.

4.5 LIMITATIONS

Due to various challenges—for example, personal emergencies, other weekend commitments, traffic delays, very bad (wet and cold) weather in P.E., Johannesburg and Pretoria on the chosen dates, some who had confirmed did not come. In Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape, more than the confirmed number came, because they thought the focus group would be an opportunity for another internship.

4.6 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

To achieve the aims of the quantitative survey, the findings from the qualitative were analyzed into themes to help design quantitative instruments. The quantitative research underwent the following steps:

4.6.1 Sampling Frame

In the initial step, the funding organisations provided lists of intern cell phone numbers and email addresses, predominantly cell phones. We subsequently sent bulk sms (short message service) messages to intern cell phone numbers to ask for return of email addresses. It was necessary to send multiple waves of reminder sms messages to generate a final email list. In total, between sms returns and initially-provided emails, the researchers gleaned a total sampling of 434 email addresses to which an invitation email for the survey was sent.

4.6.2 Pilot Study

During the total process of the sms requests, the researchers used a sub-sample of 29 merSETA interns as a pilot study, to which the survey was initially distributed. Data was collected from the sample so that inferences can be made about some demographics, characteristics, experiences, attitudes and behaviors of the intern population in this study. The pilot study was conducted to test the suitability of the survey questionnaire. Thereafter, a group feedback meeting was held with 12 of the respondents. The pilot garnered valuable feedback that was used to improve the final survey for mass distribution. The feedback provided insight on the interns' interest in the questions, the inferred meaning, the continuity and flow, and amount of time required to complete the questionnaire.

4.6.3 Final Sample

Following the pilot study, the researchers completed the gathering of email addresses and distributed an invitation to all emails. At closing of the survey on 25 June 2013 a total of **241 completed responses** were recorded (a total response rate of 55.5%). As four interns did not indicate what organization pays for their internship, the total will be calculated as 237 when we distribute the statistics across the three funding organizations.

4.6.4 Special considerations

- In every case where text box results (with free text relating to multiple choice options) were of a substantial number, a table, with actual responses as given by respondents, is attached as an appendix. In each case a summary of the responses is given.
- Not all 'completed' responses have all the questions answered.
- A small number of respondents who did not have access to desktop or laptop computers reported problems when they tried to complete certain parts of the survey with mobile devices. In particular, Blackberry devices did not display the tables relating to the Section on Workplace 'Soft' Skills Development correctly.

4.6.5 Demographics of the interns

Race and Gender

In this sample of respondents, merSETA has a greater balance of male and female interns than NYDA and ETDP SETA. Whilst NYDA has a higher percentage of female interns at 72%, ETDP SETA has a greater number of females within the sample of interns. Therefore all the organisations did have a strong representation of females than males. Out of 241 respondents the gender split in our sample, shows that females are participating more than their male counterparts. All the organisations have a strong representation of African interns compared to Coloured, Indian and White. According to Table 1 and Table 2 below which show the breakdown of race and gender, African females are by far the largest group at 56.8% (137 interns), with African males as the second largest group at 32% (77 interns).

Table 1: Interns by race and gender combinations

Race		African	Coloured	Indian	White	Total
Female	Number	137	14	2	2	155
	%	56.9	5.8	0.8	0.8	64.3
Male	Number	78	7	1	0	86
	%	32.3	2.9	0.4	0.0	35.7
Total	Number	215	21	3	2	241
	%	89.2	8.7	1.2	0.8	100.00

Table 2: Percentages of gender by organisation (SETA) (Total: NYDA = 39, ETDP =154, merSETA = 44)

Organisation	Female	Male
NYDA	72%	28%
ETDP	66%	34%
MerSETA	52%	48%

Age

There is a stronger representation of interns at ages 23 to 28 in all the organizations. However, ETDP SETA has older interns as 31% of them are 29 years and older compared to 20% of NYDA and 6% of merSETA. Although youth and adults must be given access to skills development, the young people are the most disadvantaged when it comes to access to education and training. Therefore it is important that particular attention must be given to the training of our youth for current and future employment. The age distribution shows that the internship is correctly targeting recent graduates, given that most graduates complete their degrees between ages 21 and 26. The interquartile range of the age of interns is 23 to 28 (161 out of 241 interns) which indicates the range of the middle 50% of interns. Graph 1 shows the distribution of intern ages.

Graph 1: Histogram of age of interns
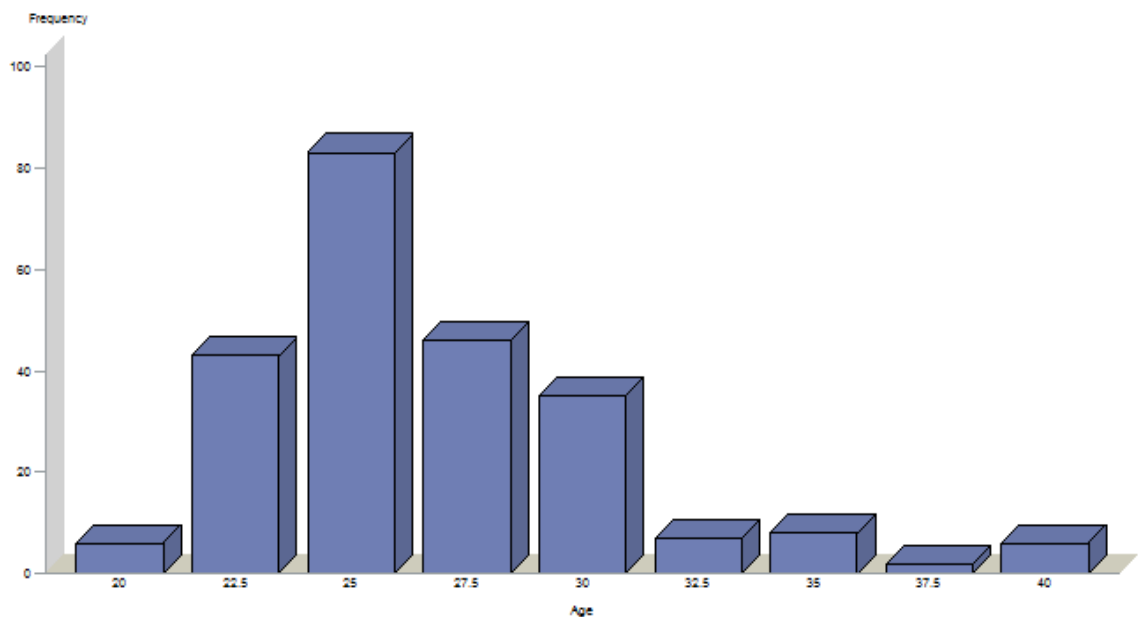
Disabilities

Only 12 of the interns (5%) indicated some form of disability within the whole sample. Graph 2 below showing percentages of disabled or partially disabled interns**. (95% = 229 and 5% = 12)**
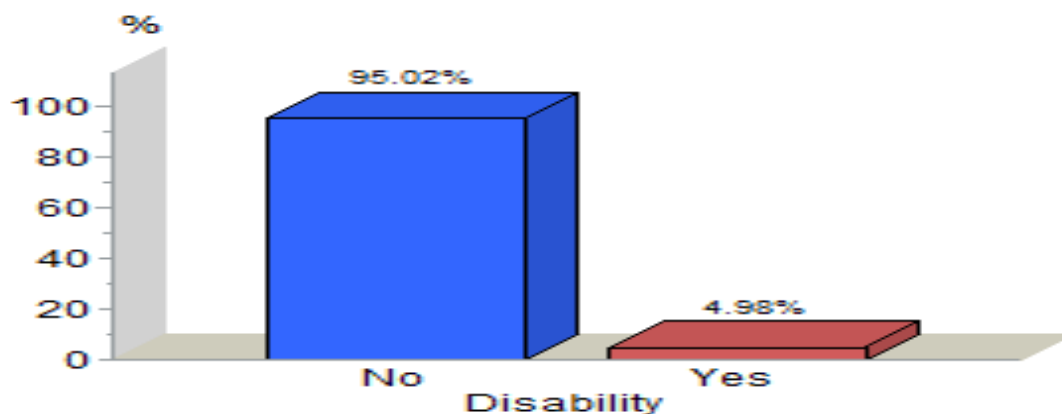
<u>**Graph 2: Percentage of disabled or partially disabled interns**</u>

Marital status and dependents

Amongst all three organisations the interns are mostly single and have never been married. However, there are 83 interns out of 241 (34.4%) that have children. ETDP SETA shows a much higher occurrence of interns with children at 41% which is 34 interns followed by NYDA at 25% which is 21 interns. merSETA is low at only 16% which is 13 interns**.** Table 3 below is the marital status of the interns.

<u>**Table 3: Marital status of Interns**</u>

Marital Status	%
Divorced/ Separated	0.4(n=1)
Living with partner	4.2(n=10)
Married	5.0(n=12
Single, never married	90.4(n=218)

Table 4: Interns with children by organisation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	Children	
	No	Yes
NYDA	75%	25%
ETDP	59%	41%
MERSETA	84%	16%

Highest Qualifications Obtained

The distribution of highest qualification among the interns shows that merSETA has the highest number of diplomates at 55% and NYDA has large percentage of those with degrees. ETDP SETA has a higher number of interns with certificates at 25% that could mean they graduate from FET Colleges. Even though it has interns with diploma and degrees, it even has within its cohort 16% of them with postgraduate qualification. Graph 3 below shows the highest qualification distribution among interns.

Graph 3: Highest qualifications of interns
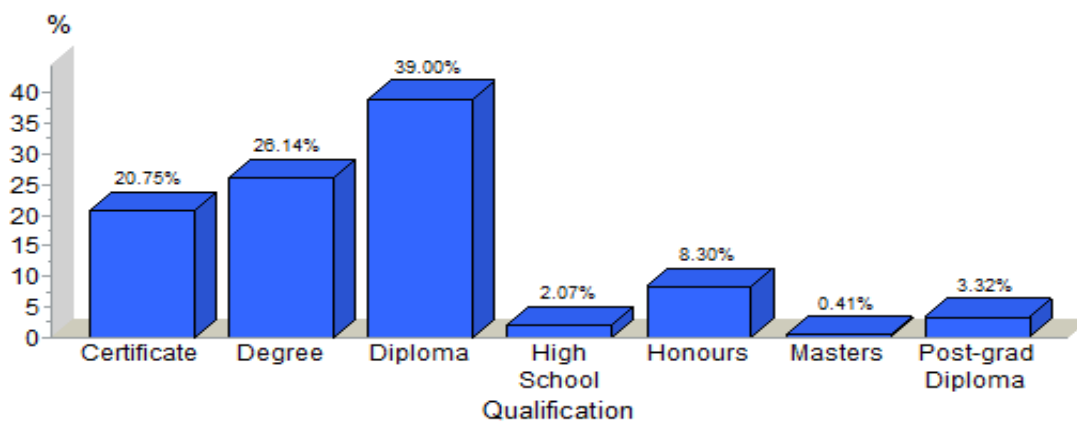
Table 5: Highest qualification by organisation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	Highest Qualification						
	High School	Certificate	Diploma	Degree	Post-grad Diploma	Honours	Masters
NYDA	.	14%	50%	31%	3%	3%	.
ETDP	2%	25%	35%	22%	4%	11%	1%
MERSETA	2%	7%	55%	27%	2%	7%	.

Highest Qualification – Institution

Highest qualifications were obtained from a wide variety of institutions with the following five as the most common given answer:

- Tshwane University of Technology   25
- Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University   17
- University of Johannesburg   16
- Walter Sisulu University   16
- University of Venda   9

For a full list of institutions as entered by the respondents please see Appendix B.

Provinces

All three organisations are well represented in Gauteng, which is the economic hub of South Africa. ETDP SETA has more internship opportunities (77%) in rural and small towns than NYDA (53%) and merSETA (46%). Distribution of intern home provinces can be seen in Table 6 and Graph 4 below.

Table 6: Interns by province

Province	%
Eastern Cape	22.5(n=54)
Free State	5.4(n=13)
Gauteng	37.5(n=90)
KwaZulu-Natal	6.3(n=15)
Limpopo	4.6(n=11)
Mpumalanga	12.1(n=29)
North West	0.4(n=1)
Northern Cape	4.6(n=11)
Western Cape	6.7(n=16)

Graph 4: Distribution of interns per province.
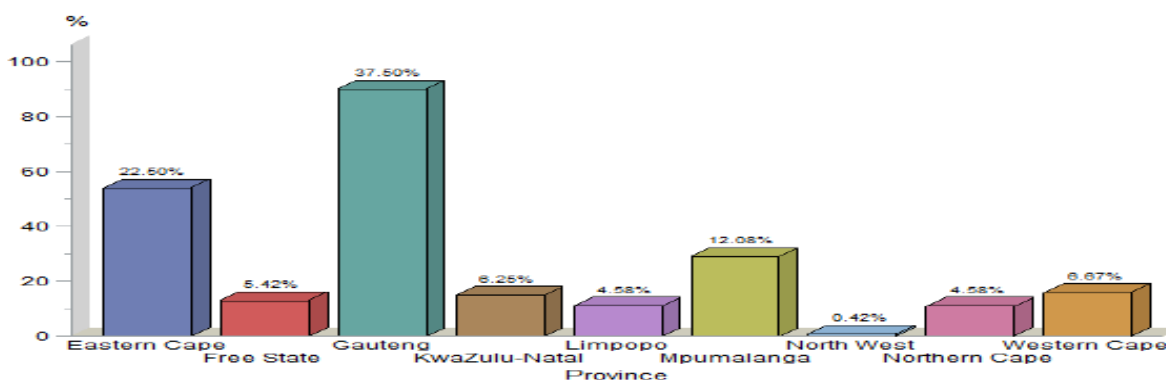
Type of Location

Respondents were asked to choose a type of location where the internship is carried out. Table 7 below shows the responses as entered by interns. The fact that the distribution of interns includes towns and rural areas is somewhat encouraging, as again it shows evidence of the government's efforts to decentralise opportunities in line with its commitment to the development of rural and small towns. Graduates from HBUs and rural or peri-urban areas, who are strongly represented in this sample, are typically not exposed to many corporate companies, and they are somewhat unable to deal with the interview in the selection process in a mature way. Consequently, these graduates are less successful in being short listed *(Graduate Unemployment, 22)*. In addition, if appointed, they are somewhat overwhelmed by the largely Euro-centric corporate culture, resulting in the reduction of confidence, which in turn curbs ambition or upward mobility. The ability to enter into internships therefore helps develop a mindset of work-readiness based on industry requirements.

Table 7: Type of location

Type of Location	%
Large City	31(n=75)
Rural	13(n=31)
Town	56(n=135)

Table 8: Percentages of the type of location by organisation. (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	Type of Location		
	Large City	Rural	Town
NYDA	47%	6%	47%
ETDP	23%	15%	62%
merSETA	54%	7%	39%

Internship Completed Status

The number of interns who have completed their internships as opposed to interns still serving in the internships is shown in Table 9 and Graph 5 below.

Graph 5: Internships completed versus still serving.

Completed internship 44.12%
Currently serving 55.88%
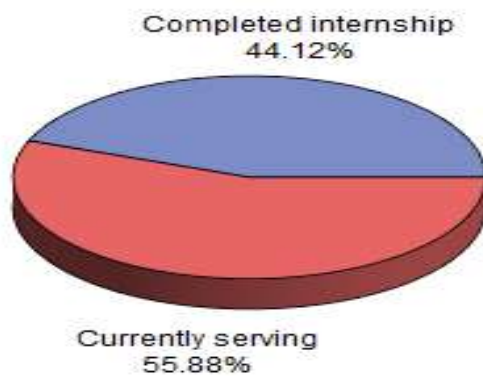
Table 9: Internship completed versus still serving by organisation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	Completed internship	Currently serving
NYDA	53%	47%
ETDP	49%	51%
merSETA	20%	80%

5.2.10 Relocate for Internship & Return to Original Province after Internship

This question asked whether the respondent had to relocate provinces to accept the internship. The next question only showed to respondents who answered 'yes' in this question. Table 15 below details the occurrence of interns who had to relocate and also the return rate to the original province.

Table 10: Need to relocate and return to original province rate

% relocating for the internship	22%
Of those who relocated, % returning to original province after internship	36%

Table 11: The need to relocate for internship by organisation. (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	Need to relocate in order to accept Internship	
	No	Yes
NYDA	58%	42%
ETDP	85%	15%
merSETA	73%	27%

These relocation statistics reflect the national trend of influx towards areas that offer better opportunities for work. The majority of the interns who relocate do not return to their home province for that reason. For those who have dependents and parents in the lower socio-economic bracket, there arises the need to spend the stipend in two different provinces: some in the province in which one works (basic living expenses) and the rest in the province of origin (supporting dependents and other family members). Commuting between the two provinces also presents additional transport costs.

5.2.11 Challenges of Relocating

This question only showed to respondents who answered 'yes' to relocating in the previous question. Twenty-three respondents provided responses on difficulties encountered while relocating for the internship. The most common challenging factors were accommodation (16) and transport cost (4). Other responses mentioned included difficulties during the first months of internship, commuting to home province during weekends and leave periods, difficulties in adapting to new cultural/workplace environment as well as relocation costs.

Where the challenge was accommodation, one of the interns in the in-depth interviews mentioned how, because arrangements were not made for her, she ended up sleeping in the police station on her first night, and then called up a stranger with whom she had exchanged numbers in the taxi, to help provide her with accommodation for the subsequent nights until she found her own two weeks later.

5.2.12 Year of Internship Completion

Table 12 and Graph 6 below show the distribution of which year internships will or have completed.

Table 12: Year internship will be completed

Year of Internship Completion	%
2011	12.9
2012	23.2
2013	35.2
2014	5.2
2015	22.8

Year of Internship Completion	%
2016	0.9

Graph 6: showing completion year
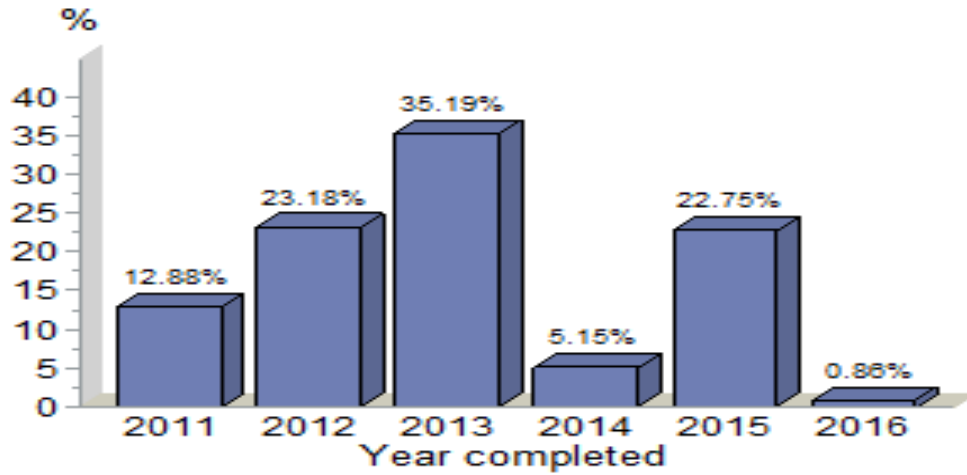
Table 13: Year of completion across organisations (Total; NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

	Year Internship was/will be completed					
Organisation	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
NYDA	14%	25%	53%	6%	.	3%
ETDP	13%	29%	16%	5%	36%	1%
merSETA	9%	7%	77%	7%	.	.

5. STUDY FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The Graduate Intern Agreements that the ETDP SETA utilises for formalising the commitment between the SETA, the intern, and the host employer succinctly captures the purpose of the programme as follows:

To ensure that the Internship Programme is implemented as a planned, structured, coordinated and managed programme that seeks to provide work experience to young graduates where a designated mentor supports an intern during the duration of the internship programme; and

To serve as a practical programme and assist with the continuous development for future appointment in the labour market and is directed at young graduates who have completed their studies and are unemployed.

The Legal framework that covers this ETDP policy is the:

- Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997;
- Labour Relations Act (Act 66 of 1995, as amended 2002);
- Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998);
- Occupational Health and Safety Act (Act 85 of 1993);
- Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (Act 130 of 1993) ;
- The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS III, 2011 – 2016) and
- Determination on Interns in the Public Service – Department of Public Service and Administration, March 2011.

Finally, the ETDP SETA states its internship programme objectives as seeking to achieve the following:

- To contribute in responding to South Africa's pressing challenges that are impacting on the ability of our economy to expand and provide increased employment opportunities;
- To contribute in the creation of a skilled and capable workforce for inclusive growth path;
- To promote workplace skills development and exposure to sustainable employment opportunities;

- To foster skills transfer with bias to addressing the government's transformational and developmental imperatives

The merSETA internship programme does not seem to have such an articulated SETA-specific internship strategy document, but can be assumed to be sharing the same purpose and objectives as the ETDP SETA. While not managing its internship programme directly, merSETA urges its constituent companies to offer unemployed graduates opportunities to participate in the labour market.

Finally, the third key stakeholder in this study is the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), which does not have an internship programme of its own, but assists unemployed youth to find employment or training opportunities in the many companies with which it has partnered.

5.2 GETTING INTO THE INTERNSHIP

5.2.1 Job Readiness / Preparedness

Almost 53% (127 interns) indicated that they took part in a job- readiness programme as shown in Table 14 below.

Table 14: Interns who took part in a job-readiness programme

Job Readiness Programmes	%
No	47.3(n=114)
Yes	52.7(n=127)

Table 15: Job Readiness programme provided by organisation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	Job Readiness Programme Provided	
	No	Yes
NYDA	49%	51%
ETDP	44%	56%
merSETA	61%	39%

5.2.1.1 Job Readiness Programme – Facilitation

This question only displayed to interns who responded 'yes' to the previous question. Table 16 below details how the job readiness programme was

facilitated. A slight majority received job readiness preparation as part of the courses they were studying (51.2%; 65 interns).   In certain faculties, for example, Management Sciences, Communication, and some Engineering departments, CV and Cover Page Writing are a compulsory module in the curriculum.   The remaining 48.8% (62 interns) attended workshops that were provided by the institution for this purpose.   In the qualitative interviews conducted with the Career Managers in the HEIs, the findings are that participation ranges from 21% to about 33%.

Table 16: Facilitation of job-readiness programme

Facilitation of Job Readiness Programme	%
As a normal part of the course I attended at the tertiary institution	51.2(n=65)
In a workshop specifically organized for this purpose by the tertiary institution	48.8(n=62)

Table 17: Manner in which job readiness programme was implemented by organisation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

| Organisation | Manner in which Job Readiness Programme was implemented | |
	As a normal part of the course	In a workshop specifically organised by tertiary
NYDA	54%	46%
ETDP	54%	46%
merSETA	38%	62%

5.2.2 Advertising and Recruitment

Research conducted within the organisations sampled found out that they use a variety of media to attract and recruit interns. They mainly used word-of-mouth (29%), tertiary / campus notice boards (27%) , as students are mostly on campus for most of the learning activities), and websites (15%) as shown in Figure 6. Traditional newspapers are also a way in which internship opportunities are advertised, as one interviewee shared that the internship was advertised in the newspaper while he was working at Boland College as a temp.

Graph 7: Internship advertising medium (how interns found the internship)

- Friend/Colleagues
- Newspaper
- My tertiary institution
- Internet/website
- Social Media
- Radio
- Other
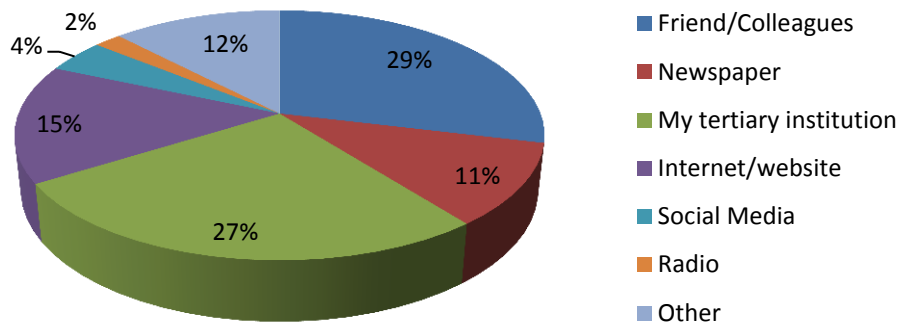
5.2.3 Interviewed for Internship

More than two-thirds of the interns (70.5% = 169 interns) were interviewed for the internship. Due to the technical nature and related safety requirements of their work, merSETA interns are the highest interviewed (95% vs. the NYDA's 75% and the ETDP SETA's 62%), in order to better align the candidate's skill set to the requirements of the particular engineering and manufacturing organisation. Graph 8 shows the interns who were interviewed for the internship.

Graph 8: showing interns interviewed

No
29.49%

Yes
70.51%
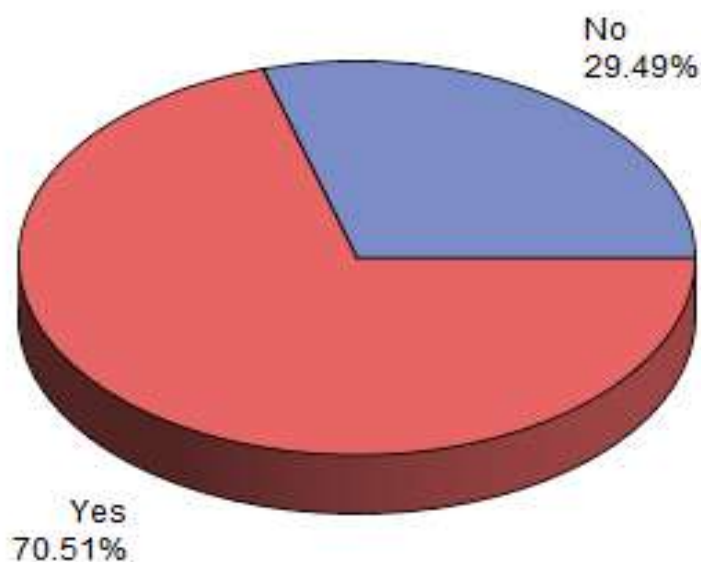
Table 18: Interns who were interviewed by organisation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	Interviewed for internship	
	No	Yes
NYDA	25%	75%
ETDP	38%	62%
merSETA	5%	95%

5.2.4 Commencement of Internship after Application

Most of the interns interviewed commence internship employment in less than six months after graduating. After uploading their CVs on the internet or submitting them in person as required, applications are also processed fairly quickly, as almost half of the respondents commence within three months after applying. Table 19 below shows the time between applying for the internship and starting.

Table 19: Commencement of Internship

Commencement Of Internship After Application	%
1 – 3 months	45.7(n=110)
4 – 6 months	13.8(n=33)
6 – 12 months	4.7(n=11)
Less than one month	30.6(n=74
More than one year	5.2(n=13)

5.2.5 Commencement of Internship after Graduation

The majority of interns started the internship within six months of graduating 111(46%) or within twelve months 53(22%). However, ETDP SETA has the lowest scores in this regard (56%), which is only 86 interns compared to 89% of merSETA which is 39 and 72% of NYDA which is 30 out of the 39 interns. Table 20 and Graph 9 below shows the actual distribution.

Table 20: Duration before commencement of internship after graduation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

	Time after Graduation before Internship Commences					
Organisation	**Less than 6 months**	**6 -12 months**	**13 - 18 months**	**19 - 24 months**	**2 - 3 years**	**More than 3 years**
NYDA	47%	25%	11%	3%	3%	11%
ETDP	30%	26%	12%	5%	15%	11%
merSETA	47%	42%	.	.	7%	5%
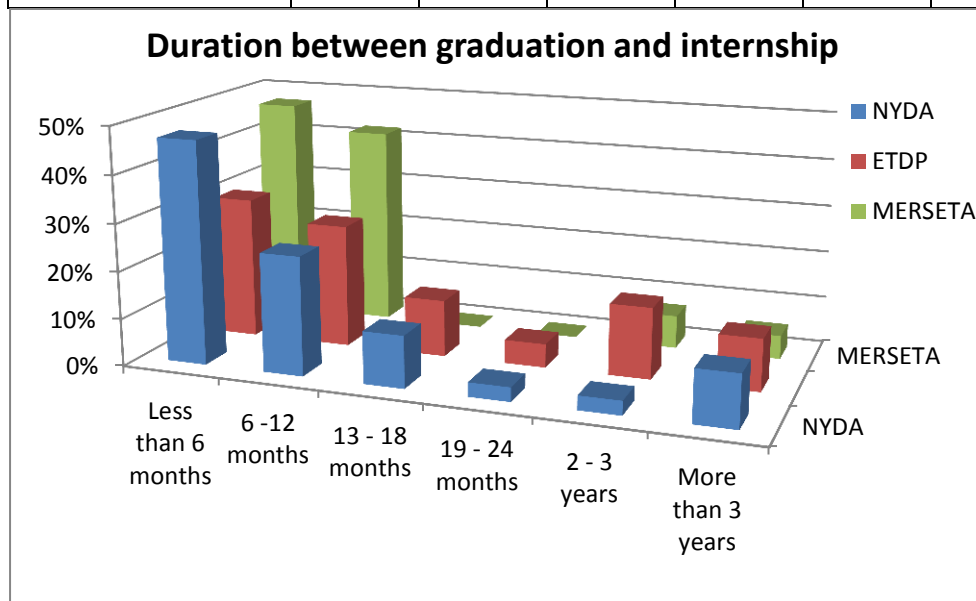
 Graph 9: Duration between graduation and internship

5.2.6 Internship Duration

The average internship for all three organisations last for 12 months. However, a third of the ETDP SETA internships are for 36 months (3 years), which helps meet the desired 2-3 years of the preferred minimum working experience before full time employment. The typical duration of internships is shown in Table 21 and Graph 10 below.

Graph 10: Internship durations
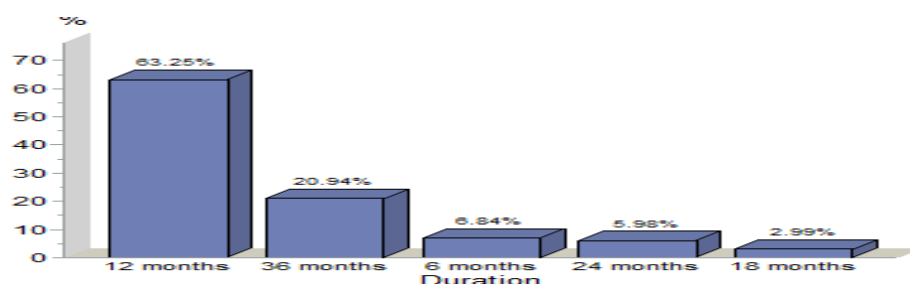
Table 21: Percentages of duration of internship by organisation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	Duration of Internship				
	6 months	12 months	18 months	24 months	36 months
NYDA	14%	77%	3%	3%	3%
ETDP	3%	53%	2%	9%	33%
merSETA	11%	86%	2%	.	.

5.3 PREPAREDNESS OF THE WORKPLACE

5.3.1 Induction Programme

Eighty percent (193 interns) of the respondents had undergone an induction programme. Induction programmes differed between organisations based on duration of one day to five days. According to the focus groups, the Department of Health interns were taken to different hospitals as they were paramedics and were told about what is expected of them, how they should comply with the Batho Pele principles, and what was to be achieved at the end of the internship. The induction was done in order to introduce the interns to other staff members and explain what the organisation does, etc. Some interns were not introduced to every department but got opportunities to introduce themselves to other co-workers gradually. Photos of some interns who worked in the factories were taken and put on notice boards and on the intranet as part of introducing them. For a few, the induction happened at the end of the internship, as the people facilitating it were only conducting it to meet their KPA requirements. Table 22 to Table 23 below details the prevalence of induction programmes.

Table 22: Induction given by organisation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	Induction Given	
	No	Yes
NYDA	17%	83%
ETDP	22%	78%
merSETA	15%	85%

Table 23: Duration of induction (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Induction Durations	%
1 Day	53.2
2-5 Days	42.5
More than 1 week	4.3

5.3.2 Job Description

Sixty-four percent (154 interns) mentioned that they received job descriptions. According to the focus groups, in some organisations, a job description was called a work plan. However, their stipulations, including projects and timelines, were usually not followed properly or implemented as envisaged. Where interns had to rotate between different units to ensure cross training, some departments would provide them with job descriptions, whilst others did not. Other interns were even confusing the difference between a job description and the contract that they signed when they joined the companies. All three organisations did provide their interns with job descriptions, as indicated in Table 24 below.

Table 24: Job Description Supplied to Interns by Organisation (NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	No	Yes
NYDA	31%	69%
ETDP	36%	64%
merSETA	39%	61%

5.3.3 Mentoring

The majority of organisations assigned mentors to ensure that the internship is valuable by monitoring and evaluating the interns' work performance, progress and acquisition of relevant skills. In certain organisations mentors are highly skilled and experienced professionals who have a passion for knowledge transfer.

Some internship programme managers were also mentors and had undergone training, e.g. ETDP SETA internship programme managers training at PALAMA.

This could also explain why the ETDP SETA interns felt more mentored than the rest. More of them interacted with their mentors daily compared to the other groups (66%), that is, compared to 63% for merSETA and 30% for NYDA.

Table 25: Mentoring received by interns

% Interns who felt that they have been significantly mentored during internship	76%
Of those who were significantly mentored, % who said the mentor and supervisor was the same person	64%

Table 26: Interns who felt they were mentored by organisation (NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

	Interns who felt they were mentored	
Organisation	**No**	**Yes**
NYDA	29%	71%
ETDP	19%	81%
merSETA	37%	63%

5.3.4 Equipment

We used the presence of basic equipment necessary for interns to do their work and the support they received from co-workers as the two basic indicators to assess the general extent to which the organization had anticipated their coming. The preparedness of the workplace was generally very good for a large majority of interns (82.3%; 200 interns), as reflected by the statistics. Almost all merSETA interns (95%) had the required equipment, probably because of the mechanical nature of the manufacturing entities in which they work. In comparison, only 77% of merSETA interns had it, meaning that almost a quarter of the latter group did not have all the necessary equipment for the work they were doing. Overall, however, most of the interns received the equipment that they required to perform their work even though in some instances it was not enough.

Table 27: Equipment needs met by organisation   (NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

	Equipment needs met	
Organisation	**No**	**Yes**
NYDA	11%	89%
ETDP	23%	77%
MERSETA	5%	95%

Equipment requirements met
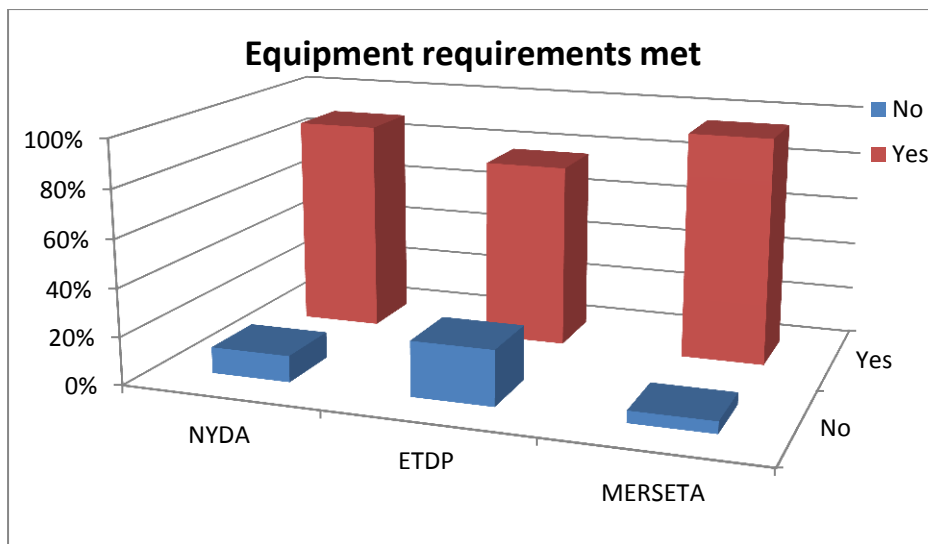
Graph 11: Equipment requirements by organisation

5.3.5 Support from Co-workers

For the most part, co-workers were quite supportive, as demonstrated by the fact that 175(72.7%) indicated this to be the case. From the focus groups, we found that interns felt very welcomed and were generally encouraged to ask questions. As one of them said, "*The people here are very professional. They treat you with respect as a graduate and allow you to ask questions and speak your mind. I like that. In the previous company one was treated as though one must just step aside because one does not know anything about the work*." (PE intern).

Some co-workers would assist with work related issues, such as sharing equipment, showing interns how to use computers or particular software programmes, how to submit documents for requesting signatures from superiors or for family leave. Others would even assist by giving advice on personal social issues as biological parents would, e.g., preparing for the coming new-born baby, dating troubles, etc.

On the negative side, there were co-workers who do not allow interns to express their opinions freely, as some do not welcome new suggestions, since they have been working in that particular organisation for a very long time. So, they might make an utterance, such as, "*Listen here, girly, we have been here for the past 25 years, Just do as we tell you*." Others might not honour their promises towards the interns; "*Even though my mentor would ask them to*

teach me a certain system, they would just give me filing work when I get to their working stations", JHB interns. *"Other co-workers felt threatened by our existence."* In such instances, interns were seen as people who came to steal jobs as some were highly qualified; therefore co-workers were unfriendly. Sometimes when co-workers complain regarding their own personal and work issues, interns would be affected negatively. A co-worker would, for instance, say, "*I hate this job, I should have stayed in sales,"* thus discouraging interns from approaching them for any support. At times the supervisors and co-workers would demotivate them by saying, *"that intern likes to ask questions."*

One manager in the Eastern Cape, who had to face some of these challenges had this to say, *"I must say that the graduates were very badly received at the corporate offices (HR, Finance, Supply Chain). Because they are better educated than the permanent employees, the permanent employees were very threatened and did not welcome the graduates at all. I had to take them out of there and place them in the office-based education unit, where they were better received."*

5.4 SETTLING INTO THE INTERNSHIP

5.4.1 Alignment of qualification and internship work

5.4.1.1 Reasons for Taking Internship

The biggest reasons for taking internship relate to learning workplace skills and professionalism in order to prepare for full time employment (84.2%). There are some who wanted to earn a living, and feared staying at home and idling or just being unemployed. In this sample the option for serving the community was coming mostly from interns that were working for the Department of Health as paramedics. This can be seen in Table 28 below. The question was captured with a sliding scale between 0 and 100.

Table 28: Reasons quoted for taking internship

Reasons quoted	Mean	Std Dev	Min	Max	N
I was unemployed and ready to grab any work opportunity	67.7	33.8	0	100	204
I wanted an appropriate opportunity to work in my field of study	80.1	28.9	0	100	202

Reasons quoted	Mean	Std Dev	Min	Max	N
To equip self with prac. skills in line with the knowl. and theory I had been taught	82.1	29.4	0	100	205
I wanted to change course and explore a new area of interest	29.2	30.2	0	100	185
I wanted to serve the community	60.2	35.0	0	100	197
I wanted to get work experience while looking for a permanent job	75.7	33.0	0	100	197
I wanted to earn money while looking for work	50.6	35.2	0	100	193
I wanted to prepare for opportunities by learning workplace skills & professionalism	84.2	28.8	0	100	201
Other	29.5	44.7	0	100	63

5.4.1.2 Activities Performed At Work

This was structured as a multiple choice question where respondents could choose more than one option if they wanted. Figure below shows the distribution of answers. A very large number of respondents indicated that they performed 'general office administration'. Of the 241 respondents, 145 (60%) chose this option. A wide variety of other tasks were indicated by respondents, the most common of which are:

- Project coordinating
- Data capturing
- Training & teaching (incl. student support, exam invigilating, organising events for students)
- Marketing
- IT support

Others, because of being placed in entry level positions, were only expected to do general administration and filing. One gave this example: "*I'm in the IT Dept—serving the support services. This is a totally administrative job, for example keeping stock of IT equipment, ensuring delivery and sufficient number of items in various locations across the organisation. Yet, my qualification is in IT Software Development, but here I'm doing only administration*"- (PE Intern).

Figure 1: Activities performed by interns
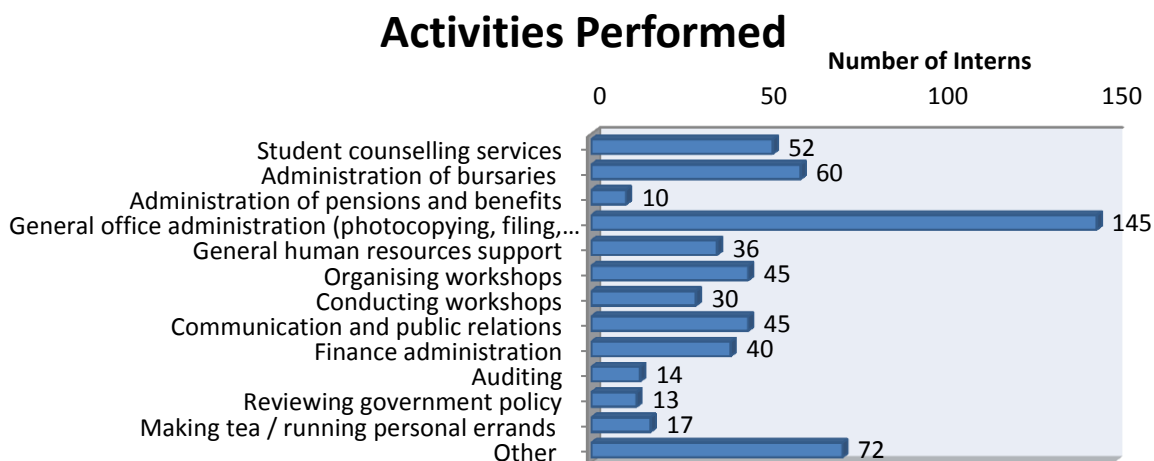
5.4.1.3 Meaningful Variety of Activities

Most interns did conduct a variety of activities in the work that they did. Most of the NYDA and ETDP SETA interns experienced this variety most of the time or always (66% and 64% respectively), whilst merSETA (61%) had the lowest variety, as their work in their Engineering/ Manufacturing job was probably more technical. Paramedics (NYDA) were providing counseling to patients who were attempting to commit suicide, while also saving lives in emergency situations as expected. Other interns helped relieve the work pressure in supply chain to meet the 30- day payment deadlines. This kind of work made a difference in people's lives by ensuring clients' expectations were generally met.   Interns who were in strategic departments, for example, innovation units, indicated that they did work that was challenging. Those in operation units often felt the work was very repetitive and it was not harnessing their talents. The variety of activities as experienced by interns are shown in Tables 29 and 30 below.

Table 29: Variety in activities

Meaningful variety of activities	%
Most of the time	38.1
Sometimes	30.7
Always	30.3
Never	0.9

Table 30: Variety of activities by organisation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

	Variety of Activities			
Organisation	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never
NYDA	20%	46%	34%	.
ETDP	32%	40%	27%	1%
merSETA	37%	24%	39%	.
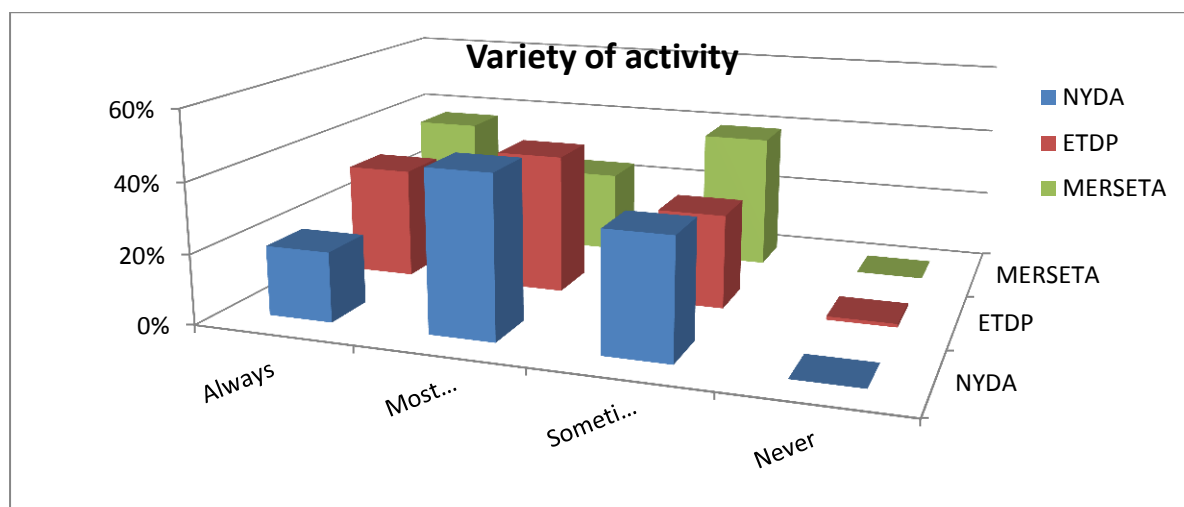
Graph 12: Variety of activities by organisation

5.4.1.4 Alignment of Internship Work with Qualification

Respondents answered whether they felt the internship work aligned with their qualification. merSETA has almost half of the interns who felt that their work is aligned with qualification. In areas where there is a need for expert technical skills, i.e. finance, engineering, health, logistics, supply chain management, there is better alignment between the interns' qualifications and their work activities. Consequently, 69.5 % (167 interns) felt more than 50% of their work activities were aligned with their qualifications. In the humanities and related fields, there was less direct alignment between work activities and qualifications. There are some who are doing work that is only a small section of the full qualification.

To increase alignment between the interns qualifications and work activities, most employers communicate their goals and objectives to interns even if only

verbally during the interviews.   In the case of the Department of Health (NYDA), the HRD Strategy has organisational goals where internship implementation is aligned to each unit.   According to the focus group interviews conducted, the areas of Finance, Engineering, Health (paramedics), Logistics and Supply Chain are more aligned with internships offered, partly because there is a need within those companies for such expert skills. In other words, only a person with a financial qualification can work in a finance job.

The following examples illustrate how interns can have a variety of reasons for dissatisfaction even in the same organisation.   These are commonly shared sentiments in the same organisation: *"I'm in the Internal Communications unit. I studied Media Communications and Culture and majored in Public Communication. Internal Communications was one of the modules I studied, but not something I wanted to pursue in my career. I wanted to pursue Public Relations, which I'm not doing now as I'm very office bound. I thought I'd be given a project to manage—nothing big, but just so I can see where my strengths or weaknesses are, even if its writing press releases or something like that. What I didn't expect to find was that everything is outsourced. I mean, literary everything. So, I don't get a chance to practice any of my skills. Now all the skills I was thought at school are dying out."* – (PE intern).

Others are frustrated by not being given full responsibility for any projects. They feel they are doing work that is not really important or the odd job here and there, even though they know that they can execute their work quite successfully when given a real opportunity. Here's a clear example, *"I thought I'd be given my own suppliers to be responsible for, which is to initiate the transaction, negotiate prices, and make sure everything is delivered on time, and so on. That's what we learnt in the book at school. What usually happens here is someone who's permanent in Supply Chain might just give me two suppliers or so to follow up, if things were not delivered. I do deal with suppliers in that sense, but not completely, as I'm never given full responsibility that is important. I don't think they'd give me my own suppliers even if I asked, as everyone already has their own suppliers and there are none to allocate to me. I know, however, that I'm totally capable of managing my own suppliers if I were to be given a chance"* – (PE intern).

In some instances interns have to only do work aligned to their mentor's deliverables, which is not necessarily for their own career growth and fulfillment. For example, *"Our mentor has made it very clear that we are in his unit, so, we have to do what he wants done first before we can consider doing the things that we want to do. Even our mentor knows that we don't love what we do. We might leave here without ever doing what we want or love, as they made it very clear when we started that we must do what our mentor is doing".* – *(*PE intern). The results are shown in Table 31 and Table 32.

Table 31: Meaningful alignment of work with qualification

Aligned with qualification	%
0 – 25%	8.2
26 – 50%	22.3
51 – 75%	30.9
76 – 100%	38.6

Table 32: Alignment between qualification and internship work by organisation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	0 - 25%	26 - 50%	51 - 75%	76 - 100%
NYDA	11%	34%	20%	34%
ETDP	8%	20%	35%	37%
merSETA	5%	18%	28%	49%

5.4.2 Skills Development

One of the key benefits of internships is that they offer that much needed opportunity to learn generic or "soft" skills. As Table 33 below demonstrates, an overwhelming majority of interns believe their "soft" skills improved significantly in the course of doing their work. Except for HIV/AIDS training, less than a third of the interns were actually trained in structured skills development workshops that the employers organized.

The skills list in the survey is not exhaustive (for example, 66.7% attended other workshops not listed in the survey), but merely reflects a sample of the most common offerings. While only 43% of interns attended HIV/AIDS workshops organised by the organisation, it is encouraging to note that this was the most attended course.

Table 33: Workplace "soft " Skills development

Skills	In the course of doing my work as an intern	In a skills training workshop that the organisation arranged
Basic computer skills (for example Microsoft Office Programs)	92.03%	26.81%
Time Management	91.16%	21.77%
Meeting Management	86.67%	24.17%
Minute Taking	86.49%	20.72%
Telephone Etiquette	92.48%	17.29%
Presentation Skills	81.51%	29.41%
Interpersonal Skills	87.59%	25.55%
Proficiency in English	89.26%	26.45%
Leadership Skills / Decision Making	82.31%	33.85%
Working in teams	87.50%	29.86%
Business / report writing	88.79%	24.14%
Event Management	81.71%	26.83%
Conflict Management / Problem Solving	81.20%	36.75%
Confidence / Assertiveness	89.17%	27.50%
Entrepreneurship	80.00%	30.77%
HIV/AIDS Awareness	67.09%	43.04%
other —(specify)	44.44%	66.67%

With regards to technical skills, most interns learnt these in the workplace depending on the work conducted in their units. So the skills acquired in this regard range from basic computer skills, quality management, servicing a car, fitting tyres to using international business computing systems, such as SAP. One interns said, *"Maybe one learns new ways of formatting information. I've learnt to understand how SAP is critical to integrating ERS (Enterprise Resource Planning) and engineering in the organisation."* A few of the Psychology interns who were providing counseling services, were able to attend an advanced course on counseling. Overall, however, while most interns were positive about the acquisition of "soft" skills (team work, self-confidence, etc.), not many reported that their technical skills had been developed as seen on Table 34 below:

Table 34: Other technical skills mentioned

These responses shown here were entered by respondents
Basic computer skills, time management, confidence, working in team, efficiency, minute's writing, telephone etiquette and meeting management.
All above obtain in previous working experience
Accounting
Learn how to Investigate.
I am unable to see the box via my BB. However, I have learnt the following skills: Meeting Management, Minute Taking, Report writing, Even management and HIV/ AIDS awareness.
I have managed to learn or significantly improve my Basic Computer Skills, Time Management, Minute taking, Telephone etiquette, Interpersonal Skills and Working in teams but the was no formal training workshop offered to me. I have managed to learn this on a daily basis while performing my duties.
Mentees breakfast, ADvTECH Intro
Mentoring and Coaching

5.4.3 Career Goal Clarification

It is very clear that all interns in the three organisations felt that the internship opportunities helped them focus on what they want to do in the future. For instance, some of the interns identified that their strengths are as doers (operational) and others as thinkers (strategic) within the work environment. That is, they prefer to implement versus to manage the project. Interns in humanities qualifications were less likely to do work that is optimally aligned with their expectations. It is, therefore, not surprising that they were least likely to be interested in pursuing further opportunities in the same field or in their chosen career ETDP SETA (50%) compared to merSETA (59%) and NYDA (69%).

Table 35: Career goal clarification

Career Goal Clarification	%
I became more interested in further opportunities in a related field	32
I became more interested in only a specific area of the broad field	7
I became more interested my chosen career and keen for opportunities in the same field	55
I realized that it was not the career for me	2
Other (please specify)	4

Table 36: Clarification of goals during internship (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	Clarification of Career goals during Internship				
	I became more interested in further opportunities in a related field	I became more interested in only a specific area of the broad field	I became more interested in pursuing my chosen career and more keen for further opportunities in the same field	I realized that it was not the career for me	Other
NYDA	14%	9%	69%	3%	6%
ETDP	38%	7%	50%	2%	3%
merSETA	26%	10%	59%	.	5%

5.4.4 Support for Career Path

5.4.4.1 Opportunity for Employment - Internal

Interns were asked if they felt that the internship exposed them to employment opportunities as detailed in Tables 37, 38, 39 and Table 40 below. In all organisations, a total of 152 out of 241 (63%) felt that they were exposed to internal and external opportunities for employment. However, only 75 out of 241 (31%) of interns felt that they were exposed to entrepreneurial opportunities.

Table 37: Opportunities for employment - Internal

Opportunity for Employment – Inside organisation	%
No	38
Yes	63

Table 38: Employment opportunities (internal) by organisation (NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	No	Yes
NYDA	34%	66%
ETDP	36%	64%
merSETA	45%	55%

5.4.4.2 Opportunity for Employment – External

Table 39: Opportunities for employment - External

Opportunity for Employment – Outside organisation	%
No	37
Yes	63

Table 40: Employment opportunities (external) by organisation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	No	Yes
NYDA	29%	71%
ETDP	38%	62%
merSETA	41%	59%

5.4.4.3 Opportunity for Employment – Self / Entrepreneurial

Table 41: Opportunities for employment - Self or Entrepreneurial (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Opportunity for Employment – Self / Entrepreneurial	%
No	69
Yes	31

Table 42 Entrepreneurial employment opportunities by organisation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	No	Yes
NYDA	66%	34%
ETDP	71%	29%
merSETA	63%	37%

5.4.4.4 Acceptance of Permanent Position

In order to measure interns' satisfaction with their hosts, they were asked whether they would consider or already did accept a permanent position within the host organisation. Even though 72% (174 interns) versus 28% (67 interns) agreed, it was found that NYDA interns at 83% were the most likely to accept a permanent position and have also turned out to have the highest absorption rate. However, though the percentage is quite high for NYDA, the actual number of interns is very low compared to ETDP SETA and merSETA.

Table 43: Interns who would accept a permanent position in host organisation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	Would accept permanent position in host Organisation	
	No	**Yes**
NYDA	17%	83%
ETDP	31%	69%
merSETA	29%	71%

5.4.5 Funding

5.4.5.1 Funding Organisation

The research conducted indicated that only the ETDP SETA pays its interns' stipends directly. The merSETA-registered companies pay their interns themselves and the NYDA only places interns in various organisations, which also pay the interns directly.

Table 44: Organisations paying for the internship

Internship Organisation		
	Frequency	**%**
Corporate (NYDA)	36	16
ETDP SETA	147	64
merSETA-registered company	44	19
Other	3	1

The 'R 4 001 – R5 000' bracket accounts for 43% (104 interns), with the 'R2 000 – R3 000' bracket accounting for 36% (86 interns) of the stipend distribution making a total of 79% (190 interns) of all stipends falling into either one of the two categories. In total, 88.8% (214 interns) earn R5 000 or less.   The largest internship originating organisation (ETDP SETA) pays R3000 for most of its interns. This is reflected in the lower bracket (R2000 – R3000) which is showing a 51.9% rate (125 interns) among ETDP SETA interns. Overall, those interns funded by the ETDP SETA (and those in government generally) earn less than those in private companies, whether these are merSETA-registered or as a result of the NYDA placements.

Table 45: Stipend received per organisation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	Amount of Stipend received						
	Less than R2000	R2 000 - R3 000	R3 001 - R4 000	R4 001 - R5 000	R5 001 - R7 000	R7001 - R10 000	Over R10 000
NYDA	6%	14%	9%	43%	17%	9%	3%
ETDP	2%	52%	10%	35%	2%	.	.
merSETA	5%	2%	.	73%	7%	5%	7%

5.4.5.2 Stipend Cover

In order to determine the level of satisfaction with the amounts of their stipends, interns were asked whether they felt that the stipend covered all their basic costs of living as shown in Tables 46 and 47 below. Nearly two-thirds (62.6%; 151 interns) say the amounts do not cover their basic needs. However, ETDP interns are by far the most dissatisfied with their stipends (71%; 104 interns), compared to merSETA (54%; 24 interns) and NYDA (43%; 15 interns).

From the qualitative research, it transpires that how one feels about the amount of the stipend is relative, according to one's age or geographic location. Some of the older interns seemed particularly frustrated by the small stipend amounts, "*R3000. It's nothing really. I mean compare my age with that.*"— 29 year old, Western Cape. In contrast a young intern had this to say "*My stipend is R3000, and yes it does cover my basic expenses.*"—20 year old, Western Cape). Again, in the same province, earning R2000 more, another intern said, "*My stipend is R5000 a month, for which I'm very grateful. It's just enough to cover my basic living expenses*—22 year old, Western Cape.

Frustrations due to geographic differences are evident in statements, such as, this one made by an intern in P.E., who felt the R12 000 before deductions is too little: "*Some of us are breadwinners. How can we be expected to live on so little? I know someone with the same qualifications as me who earns R24 000 in a bank in Johannesburg.*"

Table 46: Stipend cover of basic living costs

Stipend Cover	%
No	62.6 (n=151)
Yes	37.4 (n=90)

Table 47: Stipend cover by organisation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	Did the Stipend cover all expenses?	
	No	Yes
NYDA	43%	57%
ETDP	71%	29%
merSETA	54%	46%

5.4.5.3 Stipend Use

Much of the stipend is spent on food, transport, and clothing, as the need to develop a working wardrobe is a necessary part of the transition from school to work. It is also encouraging to note that 34.4% spend their stipends on obtaining a driver's or learner's license or owning their own car. The high cost of transport, whether one uses public taxis and buses or drives a car (high petrol price), is a concern that many interns raised.   "*My stipend is R3000. It mainly covers petrol and toiletries*"—29 year old, Western Cape, is a comment that was made many times, hence the need to investigate more closely why transport costs are such an important item.
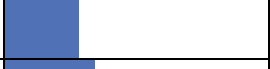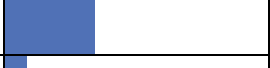
 Almost a quarter of respondents (22.4%) travel more than 30 km to get to work, and about 11% take more than an hour to get to work.   Further disaggregation shows that 48.1% of those who commute by public taxi take more than one to get to work. Table 48 below shows what interns used their stipend for.

Table 48: Stipend use

Answer	Bar	%
Medical insurance or other related benefits (life insurance, dental, etc.)		12.8%
Food		88.7%
Accommodation/ rent		57.4%
Transport / Making vehicle purchase payments		79.5%
Tuition		13.3%
Study materials (stationery, textbooks)		14.9%

Outstanding student fees/loans		11.3%
Clothing		66. 7%
Entertainment		28.2%
Driver's / Learner's License		34.4%
Other (specify)		8.2%

5.4.5.4 Mode of Transport

From the statistics below, it transpires that merSETA interns tend to travel longer distances to work than their counterparts. This is probably because engineering and manufacturing companies or factories tend to be away from the Central Business Zone (CBD). Consequently, more of them own cars compared to the other groups. This is not surprising given that merSETA interns tend to earn more than their counterparts overall. The biggest majority of interns travel by public taxi, which as a result of the current high petrol price, have also had to increase prices over time. Typical modes of transport used by interns are shown in Table 49 and Table 50 below.

Table 49: Modes of transport

Transport	%
Bus	11
Lift from someone else	9
Own car	8
Public taxi	62
Train	1
Walking	9

Table 50: Daily travel time by organisation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	Daily Travel Time			
	Less than 15 minutes	16 - 30 minutes	31 - 60 minutes	More than 60 minutes
NYDA	14%	43%	31%	11%
ETDP	12%	42%	35%	12%
merSETA	7%	49%	34%	10%

5.4.5.5 Cost of Commuting

To gain a deeper understanding of the cost, commuting interns were asked how much they spend on average on travel during a month. Results shown in Table 51 below indicate that a quarter of respondents pay R501 to R800 per month to travel.

Table 51: Travel costs per month

Travel Cost per month	%
Less than R200 per month	9
More than R800 per month	15
R201 to R500 per month	51
R501 to R800 per month	25

5.4.5.6 Residence

Accommodation, which we had anticipated to be a high cost item, turned out to be the fourth on the list of items on which interns spend their stipends. Since nearly two-thirds (62.6%) of respondents say the amounts do not cover their basic needs, it is therefore no surprise that almost half (45%) stay in their parental homes to keep this cost down. Among those residing at home with their parents, 47% are female and 39% are male. What is evident from the statistics concerning accommodation is that the majority of those who stay at home with their parents are ETDP interns (52%), who, as we have seen also tend to be the ones earning the least.

Table 52: Residence type by organisation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

	Residence Type				
Organisation	Alone	In a residence with friends	In a residence with romantic partner	In a residence with siblings / relatives	In parental home
NYDA	9%	29%	9%	23%	31%
ETDP	18%	8%	5%	18%	52%
merSETA	29%	15%	2%	17%	37%

5.4.5.7 Stipend Use on Support

Interns use a portion of their stipend to support their families, mostly their parents (60%) and siblings (52%). Those who have children (29%) obviously

need to support them as well. More than a tenth (14%) also support other relatives as seen in Table 53 below

Table 53: Stipend used to support others

Support used on	Bar	%
Parents		60%
Siblings		52%
Children		29%
Relatives		14%
romantic partner		11%

5.4.5.8 Salary after Internship

In order to ascertain whether completing an internship helps graduates increase their salaries, interns who have completed their internships were asked what their current salary is. Even though salaries were received, a large number of completed interns are unemployed 42.8% of the 44.12%.

Another finding is that from the statistics it is evident that if interns get employment they generally earn more after an internship. The amount of those who earn above R5000 per month increased for all three organizations after partaking in the internship, with some even earning more than R15 000 monthly.

Among those who are working, 51% of those placed by the NYDA earn more than R5 000, compared to 46% in the same salary bracket after merSETA internships. However, it is important to note that more merSETA interns earn above R10 000 (26%) compared to their NYDA counterparts (17%). Only 5% of ETDP interns earn more than R10 000 after completing their internships.

Table 54: Salary after internship completion (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	Salary after Internship					
	Currently unemployed	Less than R5 000	R5 001 - R7000	R7 001 - R10 000	R10 001 - R15 000	More than R15 000
NYDA	34%	14%	24%	10%	10%	7%
ETDP	47%	20%	13%	15%	4%	1%
merSETA	43%	11%	14%	6%	17%	9%
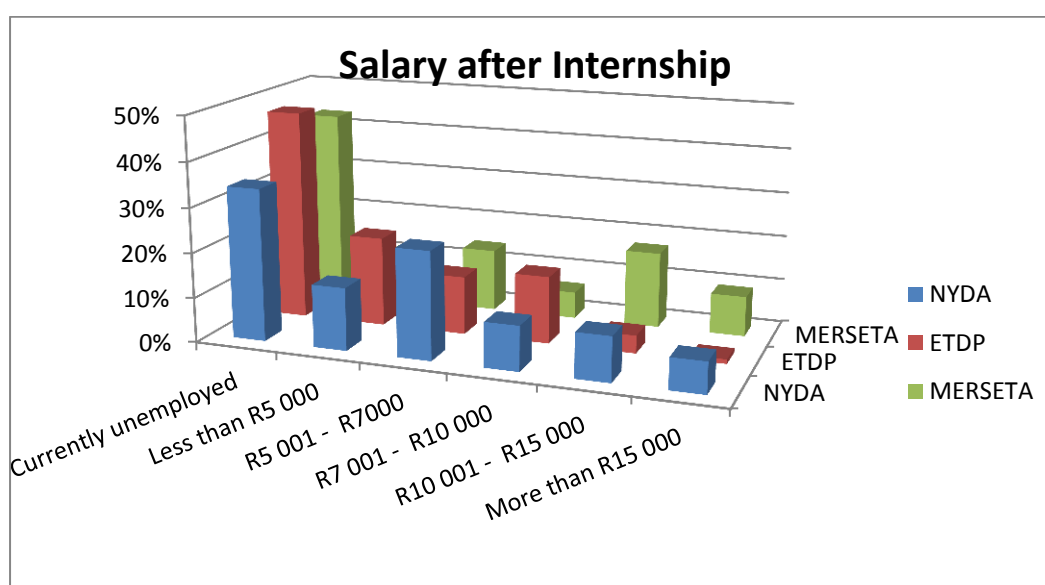
Graph 13: Salary after internship

5.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

5.5.1 Monitoring and Evaluation within HEIs

Institutions encourage the organisations that they work with to review their performance in order to be aligned to the demands of the global techno-savvy market place and align their Job Readiness programmes with the requirements of the job market. Some institutions have regular peer review exercises after which departments are notified if there is no alignment. Faculties in the University of Pretoria, for instance, are accountable to various professional bodies that have requirements within the curriculum. Therefore, providing those requirements helps in monitoring their alignment. The Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch did conduct research in order to understand the

growing demand of technology within the market place. The demands of the marketplace are also monitored through research feedback from the annual peer reviews done by the Department of Higher Education and by senior management in companies that advertise job opportunities within the campuses.

Certain institutions like the University of Limpopo, have recently contacted the SETA's management to assist them monitor their curriculum and the demands of the marketplace. In the case of FETs, they get monitored by the government and the recruiting companies on their campuses and the students themselves. Surveys are conducted where graduates/ students are asked about what they view as important in making sure that they are properly skilled for the workplace. In some institutions, the students are able to provide feedback and comments on their websites and evaluation forms. The results of the surveys are used to improve the systems. Almost all the institutions mentioned that their reviews have been impressive and their reviewers have appreciated the good work.

5.5.2 Monitoring and Evaluation within organisations
Mentoring as a way to do monitoring and evaluation

The majority of organisations assigned mentors in order to monitor and evaluate the interns' work performance, progress and acquisition of relevant skills. A mentor is the one expected to provide work for the interns. They are often the ones who give feedback and report on progress. From the interns' perspective, the lack of mentorship skills and mentorship time are other challenges that if addressed properly could increase absorption rates. The interns' experiences of mentoring were very revealing with regards to the variation in the efficiency of delivery thereof. In a set of two questions interns were asked if they felt they were significantly mentored during their internship. If they answered 'yes' to this question they were asked whether their mentor was the same person as their supervisor. Most interns were able to differentiate between mentors (somebody who holds your hands so that you can learn the organisational ropes and has an open door policy) and their bosses/ supervisors who were guiding them in their day-to-day work. While the majority of interns see their direct supervisor (the person to whom they

report) as their mentor, there were some who did not consider the supervisor as the mentor, as no mentoring was taking place.

Where the mentors were too busy, disinterested, or unavailable the interns had to be responsible with the freedom they got. They learnt to scout for work to do and could come and please as they go, as long as they submitted their work on time. This perhaps also reflects the mentors' different management styles. In some instances, the internship programme managers were also mentors and had undergone training, e.g. ETDP internship programme managers training at PALAMA. This probably explains why the ETDP interns felt more mentored than the rest. More of them interacted with their mentors daily compared to the other groups (66%), that is, compared to 63% for merSETA and 30% for NYDA. In addition, more of them had longer sessions than the other groups, i.e. 37% of ETDP interns had sessions that were more than an hour long, compared to 30% for NYDA and 22% for merSETA. It is evident therefore, that the ETDP mentoring programme was better delivered.

As most of the interns felt good about the mentoring, despite the variety of management styles, levels of preparedness, availability and interest, the following questions were asked to get empirical data on how much time mentoring activities take and what mentoring entails exactly, so that, depending on the circumstances and mentee ratios, mentors can plan their time effectively and commit fully to their responsibilities once appointed.

For the most part, the mentors/supervisors were easily accessible and friendly, but often provided oral instead of formal/written feedback regarding work performance. As one intern in Johannesburg said, "*If I did something good, my mentor would just acknowledge that and say thank you, but there was no real performance appraisal.*" While some interns used such opportunities to voice their concerns about their work, in many instances, interns and supervisors were merely filling in the monthly forms for attendance and for payments to be processed. Some mentors also assisted with personal issues, e.g., advising on personal relationships, helping interns get learners licenses with their stipends or serving as referees for applications for further studies.   For those interns whose mentors worked with them closely, the regular positive feedback seems to have increased their confidence and their view of themselves as competent and employable.

Regularity of Mentor Meetings

Table 55: The regularity of mentor meetings by organisation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	Daily	2 - 3 Times a Week	Once a Week	2 - 3 Times a Month	Once a Month	Less than Once a Month	Never
NYDA	30%	25%	15%	5%	20%	.	5%
ETDP	66%	6%	12%	11%	2%	2%	.
merSETA	63%	13%	13%	8%	.	4%	.

Duration of Mentor Meetings

The typical duration of mentor meetings is shown in Table 56 below.

Table 56: Duration of mentor meetings (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	Less than 30 minutes	30 - 60 minutes	1 - 2 hours
NYDA	25%	45%	30%
ETDP	22%	41%	37%
merSETA	17%	61%	22%

Content of Your Mentoring Sessions

Respondents could pick multiple options in this question. Results are shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Content of mentor meetings
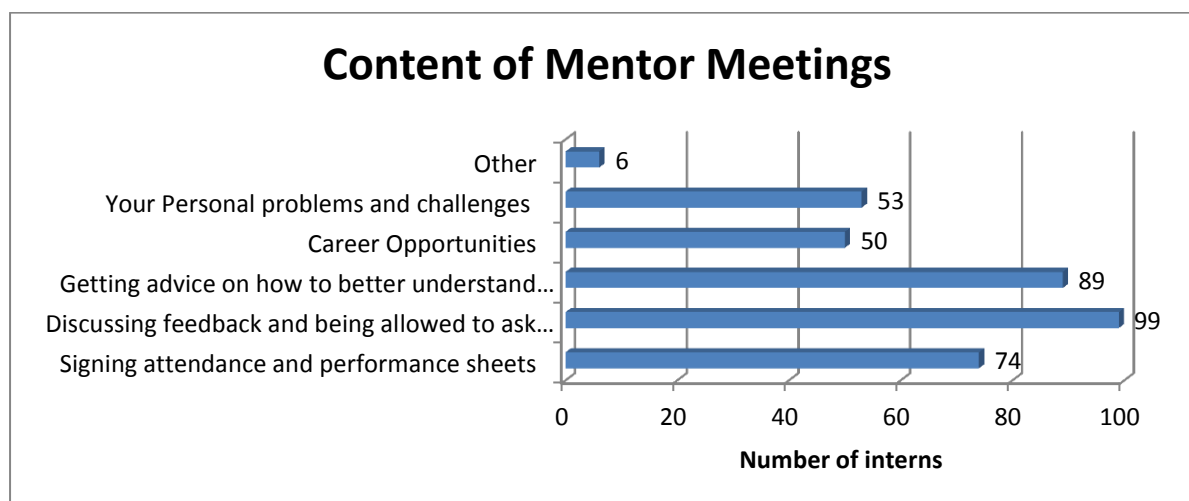
In some cases where there is a strong alignment between the internship programme and the organisational goals, a full day of annual evaluation sessions is conducted. Various issues are then discussed, including if monthly interns report were submitted or not, number of interns employed permanently and challenges encountered within the internship. Some of these reports and performance appraisals are submitted to the top level management.

From interviews held with managers, it transpired that the longer the company runs an internship programme, the better developed its administration thereof becomes. It is therefore necessary to put in place well-structured monitoring and evaluation systems across the board. These could include SETA officials doing spot checks on some of the internship sites.

5.5.3 Internship Likes

5.5.3.1 Show of Appreciation for Performed Work

When asked if they felt employers expressed appreciation for their work, the interns answered as detailed in Table 57 below.

Table 57: Show of appreciation expressed to interns

Answer	Bar	%
Provided relevant training in work-related/technical skills		66
Brought in speakers/senior executives for you to learn more about the organisation		34
Enabled you to sit in board meeting or other decision-making forums		48
Showcased your work through presentations/exhibitions		30
Increased your stipend		15
Gave you a certificate/award		21
Gave you a send-off party		9
Other (please specify)		11

Figure 3: Verbatim Responses

Responses, shown here verbatim, were entered by respondents
Host organisation did none of the above, but ETDP provided (recently) training in career guidance & increased stipend to R5000
I always get words of appreciation from my mentors and superiors from my Section, it is always in an informal way though. I am always appreciated by the Thank you word which is good
letter of completion
making examples of the work I did
Performance appraisal
showed appreciation of my contribution
SPECIAL BONUS
The current one shows none of the above. But the previous one was perfect. Almost showed all of the above mentioned
Took us to a 'Breaking Barriers to Entry into the Public Sector workshop provided by the PALAMA ....which I appreciated so much.

5.5.3.2 General Satisfaction with Internship

In addition to investigating the effectiveness of the mentoring system as a monitoring and evaluation mechanism, interns were also asked how much they enjoyed the internship, their likes and dislikes, as well as to evaluate the overall value of the internship experience.

5.5.3.3 Internship Enjoyment

Interns could indicate what aspects of their internship they felt they enjoyed most as seen in Table 58 below.

Table 58: Internship enjoyment

Variable	Mean	Std Dev	Min	Max	N
Interacting with interns / other employees	73.4	31.1	0	100	195
Communicating/ interacting with clients / customers in general	64.7	36.2	0	100	190
Helping students make better informed career choices	74.9	27.9	0	100	193
Helping the organisation to meet its business objectives	76.0	29.2	0	100	193
Rubbing shoulders with influential/experienced decision-makers	57.6	34.5	0	100	193
Initiating and completing a project my team had started	70.9	32.1	0	100	188
Getting an opportunity to obtain relevant practical experience	82.0	27.7	0	100	191

Variable	Mean	Std Dev	Min	Max	N
The freedom to use own initiative and creativity to get work done	75.4	31.1	0	100	192
Learning work ethics and professionalism	79.7	26.9	0	100	192
Realising that I am competent and employable	83.6	27.1	0	100	192
Earning an income	71.5	31.0	0	100	190

Although the average "enjoyment score" is about 75%, NYDA interns enjoyed their internships slightly more than the rest. Probably because they are in workplaces where they are more likely to be absorbed.   Even though ETDP interns enjoyed the internship slightly less than the rest, overall   interns truly relished the realisation that they are competent and employable (83.6%), even more than the opportunity to obtain relevant practical experience (82%). Third in place was the opportunity to learn work ethics and professionalism (79.7%). This shows that the increased levels of confidence and self-esteem upon confirming their ability to function successfully in the work environment should not be underestimated.

Table 59: Average 'Enjoyment' score per organisation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	Average Enjoyment score per Organisation
	Score (0 - 100)
NYDA	78
ETDP	72
merSETA	76

5.5.4 Internship Dislike

This question was asked to help us better understand areas that need improvement. The low stipend amount caused the most dissatisfaction, followed by not being able to use all of one's skills, doing work that is not related to one's studies, and doing work that is tedious and or repetitive. In short, in addition to paying a reasonable amount, ensuring that interns make the most of their skills in areas related to their studies is very important.

Interns could indicate what aspects of their internship they felt they disliked as seen in Table 60 below.

Table 60: Internship dislike

Variable	Mean	Std Dev	Min	Max	N
Doing work that is not related to my studies/interests	45.7	33.5	0	100	190
Not being able to use all of my skills	47.9	33.7	0	100	190
The tasks were tedious and/or repetitive	43.1	33.2	0	100	190
There were times when there was no work for me to do	41.4	35.8	0	100	187
The stipend was too low	51.5	33.4	0	100	187
There was nepotism	27.1	32.5	0	100	186
Communicating with clients	36.5	36.5	0	100	187
Sitting in meetings without adding value	34.2	34.4	0	100	185
Writing meeting minutes	27.6	32.3	0	100	186

Table 61: Average 'Dislike' score by organisation (Total: NYDA=39, ETDP= 154, merSETA= 44)

Organisation	Average 'Dislike' score per Organisation
	Score (0 - 100)
NYDA	43
ETDP	37
merSETA	45

5.5.5 Internship Value

The availability of career/employment opportunities is very important, hence the need to ensure that the internship programme is aligned with the organisation's and HR/ talent management strategy. This is followed in importance by the amount of the stipend (by which they mean they were happy to be getting paid instead of staying at home). In third place are the

ability to meet /network with many people and the support and guidance from co-workers (ranking slightly higher than mentoring received as not all interns were mentored, but all had co-workers).

Given the challenges faced by the ETDP (humanities and social sciences) interns as discussed above, it is not surprising that their average internship value (69%) was lower than merSETA's 72%.

In order to help identify factors that make for a successful and satisfactory internship experience, interns indicated the areas they perceived as providing significant value as shown in Table 62 below.

Table 62: Internship value

Variable	Mean	Std Dev	Min	Max	N
Mentorship that you received	72.0	32.8	0	100	191
Support and guidance from co-workers	72.7	30.1	0	100	190
Team involvement within your unit	71.4	32.0	0	100	190
Overall supervision in your internship	69.2	31.8	0	100	188
Overall acquisition of new technical skills	69.1	32.8	0	100	189
Overall formal provision of "soft" skills training (in a workshop)	67.4	32.4	0	100	190
Overall formal provision of "soft" skills training (in course work)	68.9	31.6	0	100	187
Level of challenge of the work performed	64.1	32.7	0	100	189
Availability of career information/advice	70.5	32.1	0	100	187
Availability of career/employment opportunities	74.2	30.9	0	100	185
Availability of opportunities to meet/network with many people	72.7	30.8	0	100	185
Opportunities to share experiences with other interns	70.3	32.4	0	100	186
Opportunities to give feedback/ concerns to the organisation	70.0	32.4	0	100	186
Amount of stipend	73.0	29.9	0	100	187
Duration of internship	67.0	35.0	0	100	183
Your professionalism and work readiness as a result	69.9	32.5	0	100	188
Your preparedness to be a manager in the future	72.7	33.1	0	100	186

ETDP interns valued their internship the least (69%) compared to their counterparts, i.e. merSETA.

6. DISCUSSIONS

<u>GETTING INTO THE INTERNSHIP</u>

<u>Job Preparedness</u>

HEIs have been playing an important role in preparing students for the world of work. For example, CV writing and interview readiness training have been offered through their career development units. Career Days help students become more knowledgeable about career options and opportunities that are available in the market place. However, it is important that students get career guidance during their schooling years, especially from Grade 10 to 12. In some instances Job Readiness was offered as part of the core curriculum for the partial fulfillment of academic qualifications. Although the Job Readiness programmes do not necessarily prepare graduates for the specific work they do in the internships, many graduates who participated felt confident that they know what to expect in an interview. Participating in Job Readiness programmes is voluntary. As a result less than half the students take advantage of them.

<u>Advertising and Recruitment</u>

It is evident from our findings that internship opportunities are widely advertised. Even though a wide variety of mediums are used, the most common means of advertising are word of mouth and notice boards within tertiary institutions. Access to the internet and telecommunication, including mobile devices, has made it easier to get information even in the rural areas. The employing organisations have partnered with the HEIs to advertise internship opportunities during Career Week and Job Expos.

The objective of increasing inclusivity in internships is being met as seen in the demographics of our respondents. The largest group of interns (132 out of 241) is between the ages of 24 and 28, which means that internships are able to attract young people who have recently graduated. A large majority of them are African (89.2%), and many of those are women (64%). This shows that internships are attracting previously disadvantaged individuals. Finally the fact that even unemployed graduates outside the major cities, and outside Gauteng Province are able to participate shows that the opportunities are also

available in more rural areas throughout the country. Since only 5% of the interns mentioned that they have some form of disability. This is below the national target of proportional representativity of 10%.

While internship opportunities are available throughout South Africa, we found that 22% of the interns had to relocate to another province to access an internship. Of those who relocated, only 36% returned to the original province after the internship. This shows that because the industries are less extensively developed in some provinces, the available internships are not sufficient for the graduates in those areas. There are more opportunities to be exposed in a wider range of careers in Gauteng than in other provinces.

The objective of broadening access to the youth is being met not only through extensive advertising but also through fair recruitment and selection processes, such as, interviews. The fact that 70.51% of the interns in our study were interviewed attests to that. Most of the interns interviewed in our sample commence internships less than six months after graduation, which means that once the application process is activated the response rate is fairly quick. This reflects that there is adequate planning for human resources required as well as good administration of internship programmes where interns start work promptly.

PREPAREDNESS OF THE WORKPLACE

Many employers have implemented best practice on-boarding mechanisms, such as, job descriptions, induction and mentoring. A total of 64% in our sample were given job descriptions. However, there is no direct correlation between getting one and the actual work that interns perform. Many of them end up spending a lot of time doing filing and administration work.

The induction happened in different ways. For some it was a mere walkabout to be introduced to everyone in the organisation, whilst for others it was a day-long or even longer event. In certain organisations, for example, the University of Limpopo, the formal induction programmes is attended by Executives, Senior Management, and mentors. Combining interns and permanent staff for induction does help to ensure the buy in that is required from senior

management and co-workers and to create a more conducive environment that helps align the internship to the organisation's goals.

With regards to the conditions of employment, we found that the basic conditions are met for the majority of interns. This is judging by the fact that 76.6% qualify for leave days and 82.3% have the required equipment to perform efficiently in their jobs, while 72.7% have the necessary support from their co-workers. Nevertheless, because there was insufficient buy in from the co-workers, or because some interns were better educated than them, there were a few instances where the organizational culture was hostile towards interns.

It was encouraging to find that very few interns experience racial or gender discrimination in the work place. This shows that diversity management in the workplace has improved. There were, however, a few interns who felt that it was unfair when permanent staff members speak to each other in Afrikaans while the black interns do not understand the language. In the factory environment male employees like to flirt with female interns, making them to feel sexually harassed.

SETTLING INTO THE INTERNSHIP

There is a range of reasons why employers take interns. While all want to meet the objectives of the SETA by providing unemployed graduates with experiential learning and opportunities for employment, some organisations have clearly identified tasks that have to be performed; whereas, in others the tasks are not always clear. Because there is a requirement for expert skills within the manufacturing industries, the need to bring in interns who can help the organisation meet its production target is more pronounced. This means that these interns are more likely to be in the appropriate units and performing work activities that are more aligned to their qualification and career goals.

Misalignment between the interns' career goals and the organisation's objectives is a very big problem. It affects many issues and eventually corrodes the confidence of some of the interns at the end of their internship. When they do not get the relevant and practical workplace required, they end up feeling that they are not ready for full-time jobs.

For the humanities interns, on the other hand, those who can demonstrate that they have or are able to learn critical thinking, communication, team building skills, etc., in addition to their basic qualification tend to be less confined in their ability to work in areas outside their career interests. Consequently, they are more likely to work in positions that do not directly advance their career goals but expose them to the wider world of work so they can "find themselves", that is explore options that might finally lead them to better job satisfaction later.

While many employers implement the correct human resources selection practices, for example, interviews and job descriptions, they do not always stick to the promises they make. Some interns, because of being placed in entry level positions, are only expected to do general administration and filing.

This makes them very unhappy and disgruntled as they end up doing work that is not challenging and is related to neither their interest nor their qualifications. (With regards to job descriptions, there seem to be some confusion between the initial contract signed when joining a company and a work plan provided by the mentor or supervisors when the interns join a certain department.)

Where there is no alignment between the intern's career goal and the organizational objectives a number of challenges arise. These include not doing what is written in the job descriptions, or idling because of lack of sufficient work. Sometimes co-workers become hostile towards the interns because they do not understand the role of the interns, who are sometimes better qualified than they are.

Our findings indicate that skills development occurs in the transfer of both "soft" and technical skills. An overwhelming majority of interns reported that their "soft" or generic skills, for example time management, telephone etiquette, etc., had improved significantly in the course of the internship. However, less than a third acquired these skills in structured training workshops. Some of those who attended were lucky to do so as replacements when the permanent employees could not attend. This shows that despite the discretionary grants and other benefits that companies can claim from the SETAs for skills training, many of them do not offer formal skills training

programmes for their interns. Part of the problem is that the bureaucracy and administrative inefficiencies in the delivery of accredited skills training is discouraging. Therefore organisations do not put much emphasis on formal training for interns, whom they generally see as transient in any case. It was encouraging to find that structured workshops on HIV/AIDS Awareness were the most conducted in formal settings. This is necessary in our country where the fight against HIV/AIDS is one of government's priorities.

With regards to funding, whilst 88.8% of interns earn R5 000 a month or less, overall, ETDP SETA interns earn less than those in private companies, whether they are merSETA registered or as a result of the NYDA placements.   Our findings also revealed that there are geographic differences in the stipend amounts. For instance, in Mpumalanga there were interns earning R1 041 per month, which is below the minimum subsistence level of R1 500 per month. This is because in some instances the interns are paid directly by the organisations instead of the SETAs. In certain instances, interns with the same qualifications earn more in Gauteng than they do in other provinces. There is no consistency in the stipend amounts.

The bulk of the stipend is spent on food, transport, and clothing, in that order. Transport ranks among the high cost items, because many interns travel long distances to work and some take more than one public taxi. It is therefore not surprising that two thirds of the interns (62.6%) felt that the stipend does not cover their basis living costs. As a result, 44.6% of them still stay at home with their parents. Our findings also revealed that while 90% of interns are single 34.4% of interns have children. Because of the breadwinner status that many have had to adopt as a result of their family background, 60% of the interns use their stipends to support their parents and 52% also support their siblings.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

There is a fair amount of Monitoring and Evaluation across the board. Higher Education Institutions are conscious of the need to align their Job Readiness programmes with the demands of the market place. As a result they have numerous measures, including peer reviews and research surveys, to ascertain this alignment. The biggest challenges they face are lack of human and

financial resources needed to maximize their capacity to deliver effective Job Readiness programmes.

Some of the interns expressed dissatisfaction as a result of the monotony of their work activities. While about 60% of them have a range of variety in the work they perform most of the time or always, there is a need to increase the variety to optimize the application of theory learnt at school, accelerate the acquisition of new skills, and ensure maximum internship satisfaction.

In our sample 15% of those who had resigned from previous internships cited dissatisfaction with the internship as the primary reason. It is therefore important to ensure optimum satisfaction in order to reduce drop out.

Nonetheless, even for those interns whose work activities were not optimally aligned with their interests, there was some value in the clarification of career goals through the internship opportunity. There is a pressing need to ensure alignment between the internships' qualifications and the critical skills required by the organization.

There also has to be stricter monitoring and evaluation of the complex issues associated with getting into the internship. There needs to be a more cohesive effort to ensure that the interview, the selection, and the job description maximize alignment between what the intern and the organisation want to achieve.

In 76% of the instances, mentors were appointed to monitor and report on the progress of each intern. The mentors were meant to help maximize the value of the internships, to enhance career growth, and to ensure skills development and training. To a large extent this was achieved successfully.

However, while two-thirds (63 %) of the interns had been exposed to opportunities for employment both within and outside their organisations, only 31% had been exposed to opportunities promoting entrepreneurship.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

GETTING INTO THE INTERNSHIP

Job Readiness for HEIs

It is **recommended** that Job Readiness must be applied and not be merely theoretical. In addition to the CV writing and interview readiness skills, students should be taught Job Searching, Networking Skills, and workplace etiquette. They must be encouraged to job shadow or volunteer in areas of their future careers, so they can see quite early on whether that is indeed a career they would like to pursue.

It is **recommended** that more students should be encouraged to start engaging these services from the first year, not in the final semester of the final year, as most of them tend to. That way they can start applying for work study opportunities early in their student careers to get vacation work and other opportunities, which can help reduce their being unemployed at the end of their studies. Building up the requisite work experience while still a student helps, as that impresses potential employers, who prefer graduates with work experience.

Advertising and Recruitment by Employing Organisations

It is **recommended** that opportunities be exploited to increase internships in the rural areas and in other provinces to address the shortage of critical skills throughout the country. Inclusive growth should of necessity close the economic divides between the various geographic locations.

It is **recommended** that stronger efforts be made to recruit unemployed graduates with disabilities in order to send a positive, inclusive message to students with disabilities and to the disabled community that equal opportunities exist for such interns. This will help raise the aspirations of students with disabilities in HEIs to apply for internship opportunities.

It is **recommended** that more planning goes into ensuring that the interview, selection, and job description and other on-boarding interventions maximize alignment and overall satisfaction for both interns and employing organisations.

PREPAREDNESS OF THE WORKPLACE

It is **recommended** that inductions be conducted more systematically and more effectively by involving mentors and/ or senior managers to ensure the clarification of roles and responsibilities, acceptance by co-workers, and for interns to learn more about the company and make career decisions.

It is **recommended** that where possible interns must rotate from one department to another in order to learn holistically about a certain career and be able to choose what they feel comfortable doing later on in a salaried position.

SETTLING INTO THE INTERNSHIP

To improve alignment between interns' career goals and the organizational goals, it is **recommended** that as part of the selection process, prospective interns should write a letter of motivation.

It is **recommended** that internships must necessarily be linked to the needs of the industry in general or of the organisation in particular, in order to address the required productivity levels. In other words, internships must not happen in a vacuum with no systematic process of aligning to strategic organisational goals or the sector's trajectory.

It is **recommended** that SETAs develop faster and more efficient processes for enabling the provision of skills training.

With regards to funding, it is **recommended** that well-calculated and realistic stipend amounts be set. These should consider factors such as dependents, transport costs, student loans, and further studies.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

It is **recommended** that the organisations and SETAs work more closely to create exposure to entrepreneurship as a means of reducing further unemployment at the end of the internship.

It is **recommended** that SETAs partner with HEIs to formulate strategies that help them meet the goals of producing more and better prepared graduates.

It is **recommended** that mentors be more cognizant of the time that is required to execute their responsibilities and that they undergo proper training before they assume this role.

It is also **recommended** that mentors be encouraged to play more active roles in ensuring that the interns' career path is supported. For example, expose them to networking opportunities, showcase their work to senior management to motivate them, invite Human Resources officials to visit interns on site for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

In addition, it is **recommended** that where possible mentors within organisations should expose interns to entrepreneurship opportunities to reduce the risk of further unemployment at the end of the internship.

With regards to the employers, there is still a need to evaluate and monitor the alignment between their internship programmes and their organizational goals. To increase absorption rates, it is **recommended** that organisations align their internship programmes with the industry needs.

To better understand the issues that cause dissatisfaction among interns within organisations, it is **recommended** that more exit interviews be conducted (currently only 44% had exit interviews) by independent Human Resources officials instead of the mentors themselves.
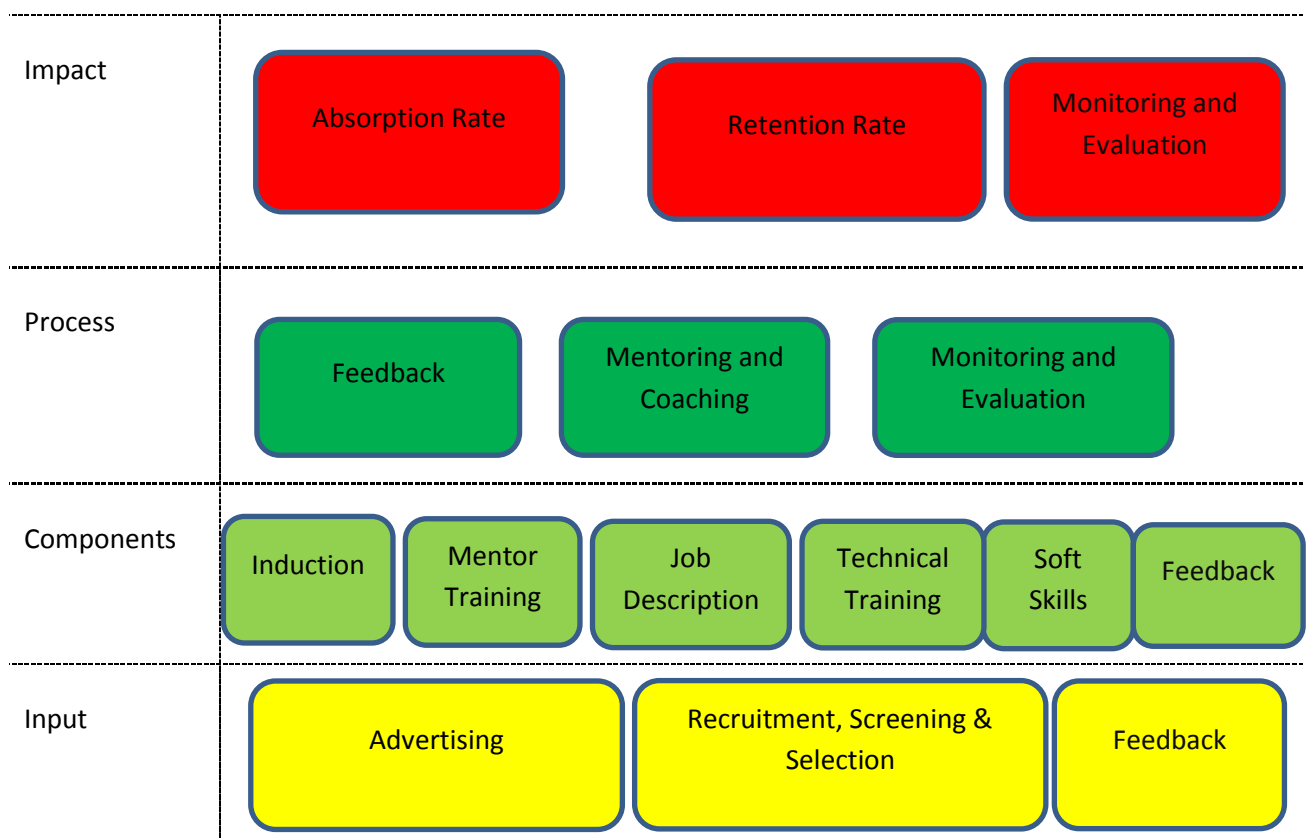
In order for SETAs to have an effective monitoring and evaluation programme, it is **recommended** that they have proper databases about their interns and what happens to them after the internship. This might mean establishing online databases in which interns are encouraged to update their contact and employment information.

To improve networking and employment opportunities, it is **recommended** that SETAs encourage past interns to formulate alumni organisations and continue to further the aims of the programmes.

As part of the monitoring and evaluation process, it is **recommended** that SETAs provide an online mechanism and sms number for interns to express concerns and ask for support. To that effect, it is **recommended** that a central person must be appointed in the SETA's office to address their concerns.

The employment market generally requires a minimum of two-years of working experience before considering someone for a full-time position. Currently 70% of interns are in programmes that are 12 months long or less. As a result at least 15.7 % of the interns have had more than one internship in an attempt to amalgamate their minimum work experience to the two years that is required. It is therefore **recommended** that internships be two years long to enable interns to gain substantial work experience.

Figure 4: Model for increasing effectiveness in Internships

Impact	Absorption Rate		Retention Rate		Monitoring and Evaluation
Process	Feedback		Mentoring and Coaching		Monitoring and Evaluation
Components	Induction	Mentor Training	Job Description	Technical Training	Soft Skills / Feedback
Input	Advertising		Recruitment, Screening & Selection		Feedback

8. CONCLUSION

Based on this research, it can be concluded as follows:

With regards to **getting into the internship**, more financial resources must be deployed to Career Development units in the HEIs, so they can maximize their role of assisting students prepare for the world of work. They must also encourage them to start seeking employment opportunities quite early in their tertiary studies, as this helps to reduce their chances of being unemployed upon graduation. The internship opportunity is a win-win proposition for both the interns and the organisations, as they have ample opportunities to get to know and to impress each other in a more natural setting.

Although the majority of the interns commenced internship within the first 12 months after graduation, ETDP SETA had the lowest score at 56% versus 89% of merSETA and 77% of NYDA. It meant that some of the interns were not employed when they got a chance to partake in the internship.

To **improve alignment** between interns' skills and organizational goals, it is important for interns to conduct the necessary due diligence and research to ensure the best fit for themselves in the organisations in which they are interested. The fact that merSETA interns were the most interviewed at 95% versus the NYDA's 75% and the ETDP SETA's 62%), meant that they were better aligned to the engineering and manufacturing organisations.

Internships have a positive value in providing the required work experience for the majority of the interns. If the aim is to increase the country's skilled human resources for future employability, then we should take seriously the potential of the internship pipeline to help achieve that goal. In the urgent pursuit to reduce unemployment, SETAs and government agencies (for example NYDA) should make sure there is proper alignment between work activities and career goals for interns. In a country riddled by lack of skills, we cannot afford to waste the potential to train interns and develop their skills and talent.

It is important for organisations to be prepared for the intern. The mentor's role in ensuring overall intern satisfaction is very important. Mentors provide induction, mentorship and other important interventions to increase the success of the interns. ETDP SETA interns felt more mentored than the rest.

Many of them interacted with their mentors daily compared to the other groups. Mentors should be trained to optimize the value of the internship by ensuring that the interns' career development goals are enhanced in a conducive environment. Similarly, interns must be trained to be assertive enough to voice out their opinions in order to make the internship valuable for themselves.

In order to make sure that interns do settle within organisations, a good balance of technical and "soft skills" training is necessary to develop both theory and practice in the workplace. In addition to teaching effective networking skills, these organisations must also put more effort into assisting interns with career choices that are aligned to the market. Mentors, managers, and interns must all be involved in designing skills programmes that help meet the long-term requirements for appropriate high-level and managerial skills. Both mentors, in particular, and the organisation, in general, must create more opportunities to expose interns to entrepreneurship, as this can help reduce further unemployment.

In terms of the **career goal clarification**, it is very clear that all interns in the three organisations felt that the internship opportunities had offered them focus on what they want to do in the future. Interns with humanities qualifications were less likely to do work that is optimally aligned with their expectations. It is not surprising that they were least likely to be interested in pursuing further opportunities in the same field or in their chosen career. In all organisations, a total of 152 out of 241 (63%) felt that they were exposed to internal and external opportunities for employment.

Only 31% (75 out of 241) of the interns felt that they were exposed to **entrepreneurial opportunities**. This shows that there is still a strong need to promote entrepreneurial opportunities to alleviate high levels of unemployment at the end of the internship.

With regards to **funding**, it is very clear that those interns funded by the ETDP SETA (and those in government generally) earn less than those in private companies, whether these are merSETA-registered or as a result of the NYDA placements.

Nearly two-thirds (151 interns) or 62.6% say the stipend amounts do not cover their basic needs. However, ETDP SETA interns are by far the most dissatisfied with their stipends as careers in the humanities tend to be the least financially rewarded. Therefore there is a need to standardize the stipends based on market requirements.

Most of the ETDP SETA interns had longer **mentorship** sessions than the other groups. For those interns whose mentors worked with them closely, the regular positive feedback seems to have increased their confidence and their view of themselves as competent and employable.

Taking part in **two or more internship opportunities** is caused by high levels of unemployment and by the requirements of the job market where a working experience of two to three years is required before being hired for a full time employment.

 Interns showed an interest in **studying further,** thirty eight percent planned to pursue further studies and 35% of those who had completed the internship did actually pursue further studies during the internship. Since a third of the interns are showing such an interest, government should help reduce unemployment by making postgraduate funds allocation accessible to them.

Overall the interns truly relished the realisation that they are competent and employable, even more than the opportunity to obtain relevant practical experience. Although the average "enjoyment score" is about 75%, NYDA interns enjoyed their internships slightly more than the rest. That is because they are in workplaces where they are more likely to be absorbed. Third in place was the opportunity to learn work ethics and professionalism.   This shows that the increased levels of confidence and self-esteem upon confirming their ability to function successfully in the work environment should not be underestimated.

Finally, there is a need for the SETAs and government agencies, for example, NYDA, to be more involved in **the monitoring and evaluation** of the internships. This emphasises the need for the SETAs to go beyond focusing on numerical targets towards gathering more qualitative data. There is also a need for the Department of Higher Education and Training to which SETAs

report their internship targets to not only capture but also analyse the data it receives.

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