TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword 3

Abbreviations and acronyms 4

.

How to use this manual 5

Baseline college self-audit 8

SECTION 1: PRE-ENTRY AND ENTRY SUPPPORT

Topic 1: Pre-entry career guidance and placement 15

Topic 2: Student registration 23

Topic 3: Financial aid for NC(V) 35

Topic 4: Student conduct 43

Topic 5: Student orientation 53

SECTION 2: ON-COURSE ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Topic 6: Building a system for academic support 65

Topic 7: Academic support in the classroom 75

Topic 8: Providing work experience 87

SECTION 3: ON-COURSE PERSONAL SUPPORT

Topic 9: Student health and well-being 101

Topic 10: Leadership development for students 115

Topic 11: Student development 125

Topic 12: Parental involvement 133

SECTION 4: EXIT SUPPORT

Topic 13: Preparing students for work or further study 145

Topic 14: Job placement 157

Topic 15: Graduate tracking 171

FOREWORD

The Department of Education began implementing the National Certificate (Vocational) NC(V) programmes in FET Colleges in 2007. The Department has projected growth of 43% to 46% a year in FET College enrolments until 2014. This means close to one million students will enrol in colleges in 2014.

These developments necessitated the development and publishing of a Student Support Services (SSS) Framework, which was completed in April 2008. The SSS Framework provides guidelines to support students in achieving academic success. This manual aims to assist FET Colleges with the practical implementation of the SSS Framework.

Student Support Services play an integral part in the academic achievement of students at FET Colleges. Although SSS is acknowledged as a college-wide responsibility, SSS officers and academic lecturers must be actively involved in implementing the integrated SSS systems in their college. The manual will guide colleges and steer students towards academic and personal success.

The manual is divided into 15 topics dealing with pre-entry and entry support, on-course academic and personal support, and exit support. It encompasses a compendium of good practices evident in colleges, universities, schools and other sites involved in active teaching and learning.

The Department would like to extend its special gratitude to Danida for funding the development of the SSS Framework and the SSS Manual. Its continued support, through the Support for Education and Skills Development II (SESD) Programme, culminated in the development and distribution of the manual.

The provincial and college student support services staff shared best practice in the development of the Student Support Services Framework and this manual. The FET College management teams and principals opened their doors to the researchers and provided valuable information on student support services at FET Colleges.

The Department further extends its gratitude to the research team involved in the development of the manual, namely Jeanne Gamble (project research leader), Filistea Barnard, Carel Garisch, Lynn Hewlett, Marianne Spies, Vanessa Taylor and Kathy Watters for their hard work.

I encourage the FET College management teams and principals to integrate the manual into colleges' strategic planning. I urge you to allocate adequate funds and human resources to student support services. I have no doubt the manual will lead to the development of an integrated student support services system that will ensure that colleges become efficient and effective in assisting young people to achieve academic success and to access the world of work.

Penny Vinjevold
Deputy Director-General: Further Education and Training

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CDC	Curriculum Development Committee
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CV	Curricula Vitae
Danida	Danish International Development Assistance
DoE	Department of Education
DoL	Department of Labour
FET	Further Education and Training
HR	Human Resources
IPC	Inter-provincial Committee
LPU	Linkages and Partnership Unit
MIS	Management Information System
NC(V)	National Certificate (Vocational)
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NSFAS	National Financial Aid Scheme
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PDE	Provincial Department of Education
QMS	Quality Management System
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SESD	Support for Education and Skills Development
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SMS	Short Message Service
SoP	Schedule of Participants
SRC	Student Representative Council
SSACI	Swiss South African Cooperation Initiative
SSO	Student Support Officer
SSS	Student Support Services
VET	Vocational Education and Training

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

Introduction

The FET College sector has undergone major and dramatic changes in the past decade. From limited beginnings as technical institutions that offered part-time classes and block release or evening classes, colleges have been transformed into responsive, multi-site institutions that offer a broad range of programmes to the young people of South Africa.

A transformation of this magnitude is never easy. It is one thing to promulgate policy changes on paper and quite another to introduce and maintain educational practices that give effect to policy injunctions. Perhaps the most crucial challenge which colleges have had to face has been the shift in student population: multiple language groups in one classroom; different age groups and therefore different students' needs on one campus; higher levels of cognitive demand in new programmes and thus a wider range of academic support needs, to name but a few of the consequences of the shift in student population.

In order to give guidance on how to achieve effective support from pre-entry to exit a Student Support Services Framework was introduced by the National Department of Education in 2008. It was recognised that the Framework needed to be supported by a more detailed manual on student support services, particularly in relation to the National Certificate (Vocational) or NC(V) programmes that were introduced in 2007. With sponsorship from the Danida-funded Support to Education and Skills II Programme (SESD II) a team of researchers was commissioned to produce such a manual. Researchers drew on resources inside and outside the college sector to obtain information and examples that could inform good practice.

Given that colleges are at different stages of student support development particular attention was paid to the progression from effective start-up to more advanced forms of practice.

Aim of the manual

By showing a pathway that leads from access to academic success and employability[1], the manual strives to be enabling rather than prescriptive. The principle of integration, which is at the core of the Student Support Services Framework, breaks the separation between student support as something that student support officers do and academic support as the responsibility of lecturers. Integration means that student support activities are no longer separate elements but work together to form a cohesive system, which places academic support at the centre of college work. Student support is not a stand-alone or peripheral activity but becomes an integral part of the quality management system (QMS). This is best practice.

The diagram below shows how all aspects of student support are integrated into a system which has academic success and employability at the centre, and which eventually leads successful students to the world of work or further study.

1 We borrow a part of this phrase from the title of the book *Access to success: literacy in academic contexts,* edited by Shelley Angelil-Carter and published by University of Cape Town Press in 1998.

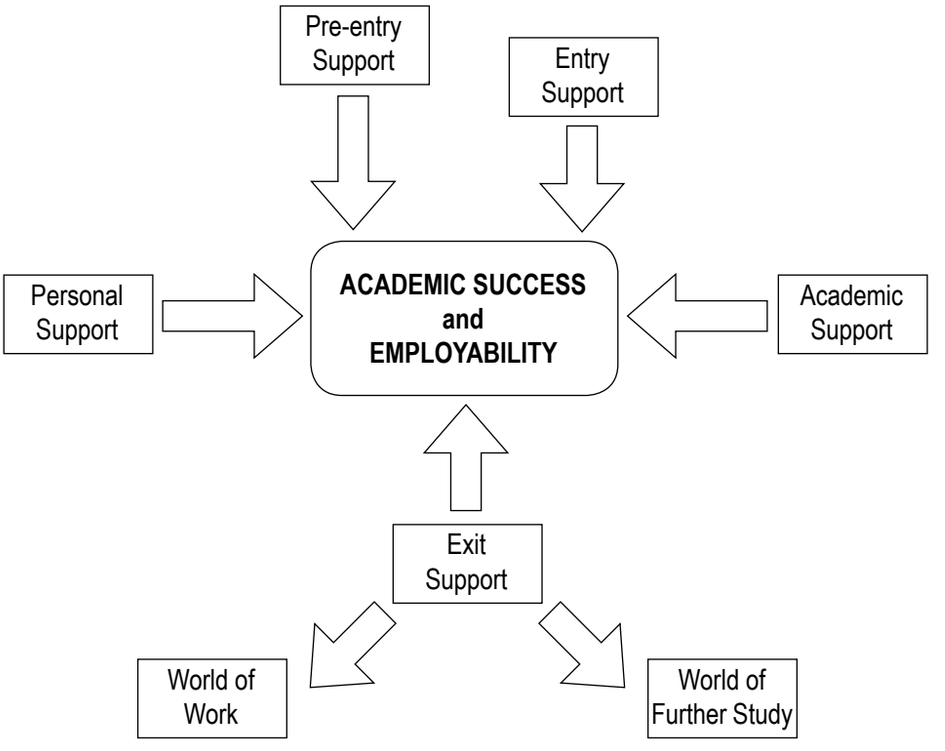


Figure 1: An integrated student support system

In an integrated approach each component of student support takes on a specific form:

- **Selection and placement** no longer take place on a 'first come, first served' basis to fill the given programme allocation. Assessment and placement tools assist in ensuring that prospective students have the basic knowledge of English and mathematics or mathematical literacy skills that will enable them to cope with academic learning material.

  They also take into account the students' interests and abilities and are crucial starting points towards achieving academic success.
- **Contracting, registration, finance and code of conduct** are not administrative tasks but the start of an ongoing relationship between the college and each student until final graduation and beyond.
- **Orientation** is not a procedural information-giving session, but an opportunity to make a positive first impression that becomes a lasting impression which recruits students as members of the college who want to be there.
- **Academic support** does not refer only to computer-based remedial interventions, but is foundationally about staff who:
  - Are well prepared and have planned the academic year, term, week, day and lesson
  - Know their students and can identify 'at risk' academic behaviour and intervene or refer appropriately.
- **Personal support** is an integral part of academic support as no student can perform well when experiencing problems with physical, emotional and social health and well-being. Student development for all students and for SRC leadership builds students into rounded, confident people who can achieve success within a broader culture of institutional health and well-being. Parental involvement is crucial to academic success.
- **Exit support** paves the way for students to prepare for labour market entry or further study.

The manual has multiple purposes and can be used in a variety of ways:

- As a guide to good practice that deals with different categories of student support.
- As a reference source for assistance with particular topics.
- As a self-audit tool that enables colleges to identify the level and effectiveness of their own practices.
- As a planning tool for improvement of practice.
- As a prompt for the development of quality management indicators.
- As induction aid for new staff members.
- As a monitoring and review aid.

How the manual works

The topics have been written in a standardised and interactive manner, with each topic following the same format. The 'getting started' section discusses the steps that need to be taken to ensure that the college has a basic practice in place. The 'doing more' section offers suggestions about further activities that can be implemented to extend and deepen practice. Each topic concludes with a 'planning for the future' section, based on an audit exercise that helps colleges to determine their current level of practice in greater detail before deciding what they need to do to improve their practice.

Some colleges already have advanced practices in place. The idea is not for them to change their practices to fit in with what the manual says but rather that they should use the manual to think about what they do and what they can still do better. In other colleges some practices are in place but new areas need to be tackled. For these colleges the manual provides information that is both helpful and motivational.

The manual is intended for all staff and not just for student support specialists. The role of life orientation specialists is particularly relevant and they must be active participants in the planning activities of student support activities. Colleges will get most use out of the manual if they form a committee or team to read and discuss the topics systematically, either in the order presented or selected to suit the college's context.

The planning task that concludes each topic will help you to decide what you are going to do in the next six months, year or longer to bring your college closer to achieving the key deliverables set out on pages 14 – 16 of the Framework booklet. It is also hoped that provincial FET Chief Directorates or FET Directorates will work with the colleges in their province to determine current needs and make plans for improvement. In this way the manual will truly support the Framework.

It should be noted that the manual has been written in a way that prevents the information from becoming out of date too quickly. It therefore does not include details that may change from year to year. While examples of actual policies and forms are used for purposes of illustration, these are not intended as blueprints for practice. The responsibility for ensuring that policies, codes of conduct and other relevant documents adhere to legal and procedural requirements remains that of each college.

BASELINE COLLEGE SELF-AUDIT

Before working through the manual each college needs a baseline understanding of its current student support services, the staff that it has available to offer support to students, and the financial and infrastructural resources that can be used for this function. If this groundwork is not done carefully, planning becomes what people often call 'pie in the sky' or, even worse, daydreaming.

In this section you are asked to complete three tasks. The first one requires you to answer 20 questions about how student support currently happens in your college. The second task asks you to draw a picture of your college and to indicate who is available at the central office and on the campuses to offer various types of student support. The third task asks you to give an indication of the resources currently available to student support services.

TASK 1: 20 QUESTIONS THAT YOUR COLLEGE MUST ANSWER

BASELINE SELF-AUDIT OF CURRENT STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES IN ..... COLLEGE.						
Look at the areas of student support listed in the first column of the audit set out below and then circle the number between 1 and 6 that best describes your college's current practice in this area. **A rating of 1 or 2 is LOW** **A rating of 3 or 4 is AVERAGE** **A rating of 5 or 6 is HIGH**						
Pre-entry and entry support						
1. **Selection and placement tests** for new students happen on each campus.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Guidance is given on the **financial implications of programme registration** and information about financial assistance is available.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Assistance is given with **contract completion and registration**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Contracting takes place around the **code of conduct**, as part of the registration process.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Students undergo initial **orientation** to the college environment and services.	1	2	3	4	5	6
On-course support						
6. **Whole-year curriculum planning** is the basis of all academic support activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. The SSO incorporates **aspects of the life orientation curriculum** into academic support activities (e.g. study methods, time management etc.).	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. The SSO convenes meetings with **life orientation and other lecturers** to plan the student support activities for the year.	1	2	3	4	5	6

9. **'Catch-up' interventions** are integrated into the timetable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Students have access to a **library or resource centre** where they can find information, read and work quietly, and conduct Internet searches.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. **Counselling and referral** on issues of physical, emotional and social health and well-being are consistently available to students on all campuses	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. **Leadership development for SRC members** takes place every year.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. **Student development** through sport, culture and recreation happens on each campus.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. The college actively encourages **parental involvement** that supports students to achieve academic success.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Exit support						
15. The college offers a **job placement service** to help students to enter the labour market.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Students are **prepared for self-employment** and entrepreneurial activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Students **are prepared for formal employment**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Students are **provided with relevant information** on how to access higher education.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. A system is in place for **tracking** students after they leave.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. An **alumni structure** keeps in contact with past students.	1	2	3	4	5	6

After completing the audit and adding up the score, place your college in the appropriate category given below.

20-40	41-80	81-120
START-UP PRACTICE When a college offers limited support to students or where support is *ad hoc* rather than planned and systematic.	DEVELOPING PRACTICE When a college has been offering student support for some time and has achieved some success but now needs to extend the scope and depth of what it offers.	ADVANCED PRACTICE Where a college is confident that its medium- to long-term intervention has achieved success and is sustainable. It wishes to build on this success by introducing new components.

Lowest possible score: 20 Highest possible score: 120

This is your **baseline rating** which gives an indication of the student support services that your college is currently providing. Now proceed to the second task.

TASK 2: WHO PROVIDES STUDENT SUPPORT IN YOUR COLLEGE?

- Complete the following table and indicate **who is available** to offer student support in the following categories. (Give name of person and job position).

Pre-entry and entry support	
Academic support	
Personal support	
Exit support	

If you are unsure which activities fit into each of these categories, you can consult the contents page of the manual (p. 2).

- Now **draw a rough diagram of your college structure** in the block on the next page. Show the central office or corporate centre and all the campuses and skills centres.

College structure:

This will show you whether your college offers the same level of support on all campuses or whether some campuses offer only limited support.

TASK 3: STUDENT SUPPORT RESOURCES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

- Give a rough estimate of how much money your college has available in one year to achieve the activities listed under topics 1 – 15.

Overall student support services budget for one year	

- Tick which of the following **infrastructural resources** your college has available?

Resources	**Available?**		**On each campus?**	
A large **venue** and sub-venues for registration	Yes	No	Yes	No
Adequate **computer and data-capturing systems** for registration and financial aid	Yes	No	Yes	No
Adequate **photocopying facilities**	Yes	No	Yes	No
Adequate **classroom space**	Yes	No	Yes	No
Enough **practical or simulation training facilities**	Yes	No	Yes	No
A **library, resource centre or open learning centre** with computer and Internet facilities for students	Yes	No	Yes	No
Remedial academic support programmes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Counselling facilities that are private and student-friendly	Yes	No	Yes	No
A **meeting room** or office for the SRC	Yes	No	Yes	No
Sports fields	Yes	No	Yes	No
A **canteen or cafeteria** for students	Yes	No	Yes	No
A **resource centre** for students	Yes	No	Yes	No
A **career guidance office** and facilities	Yes	No	Yes	No

Use the open blocks to add any other resources that your college has, but which are not included on the list.

At this point you may be feeling proud of the student support services offered by your college or you may be feeling lukewarm or even disheartened about the enormity of the task that lies ahead for your college. Remember that student support service systems are built over long periods of time. The important thing is to identify where there are needs or limitations and to tackle these areas one at a time. This is what the manual helps you to do in the 15 topics that follow. In each topic you will do a more detailed self-audit which may confirm or question the introductory self-audit.

We now proceed to Section 1 on Pre-entry and Entry Support.

SECTION 1

PRE-ENTRY AND ENTRY SUPPPORT

Topic 1: Pre-entry career guidance and placement

Topic 2: Student registration

Topic 3: Financial Aid NC(V)

Topic 4: Student conduct

Topic 5: Student orientation

TOPIC 1

PRE-ENTRY CAREER GUIDANCE AND PLACEMENT

In this topic we look at pre-entry career guidance and placement. The aim is to help each college and campus to ensure that the career guidance provided is of a high and consistent standard. We discuss two stages of practice which we have called:

- Getting started
- Doing more

The following steps are important aspects of pre-entry career guidance and placement.

Step 1: Making prospective students aware of career options

Step 2: Assessment and placement of prospective students

In the final section there is an opportunity to complete an audit of current practice at your college or campus. This will help to identify areas in which practice can be improved or deepened and to plan for this.

Why is pre-entry career guidance and placement important?

The starting point for all prospective college students is to make career choices that match their interests, abilities and aptitude. It is important that they enrol for the right programmes and courses. The ultimate goal of correct selection and placement is for students to be adequately prepared in terms of knowledge, skills and motivation so that they can develop further in their chosen fields. They do so by getting and keeping a job or by being on the right path for further studies. Lack of informed career planning and decision-making may result in wasted money, frustration, discontent and hardship.

The focus of pre-entry career guidance and placement of prospective students in NC(V) programmes is to assist them to successfully:

- Select correct subject combinations.
- Gain focus, clarity and confidence in respect of career, academic and job searches.
- Choose careers, and associated education and training programmes that match their needs, interests and aptitude.
- Develop a plan to meet their academic, career and life goals.
- Activate such plans.

For prospective students to be in a position to know what to study, where to study and what kinds of support they can expect, they need to have access to relevant information in three key areas:

1. Information about the world of work

Students need to know which occupations and jobs are best suited to their interests, values and skills, and they have to understand what kind of qualifications and personal attributes are required.

They may have an interest is one thing but they also have to know whether there is a demand for these occupations and jobs, and how changes in the labour market will affect their chosen occupational field.

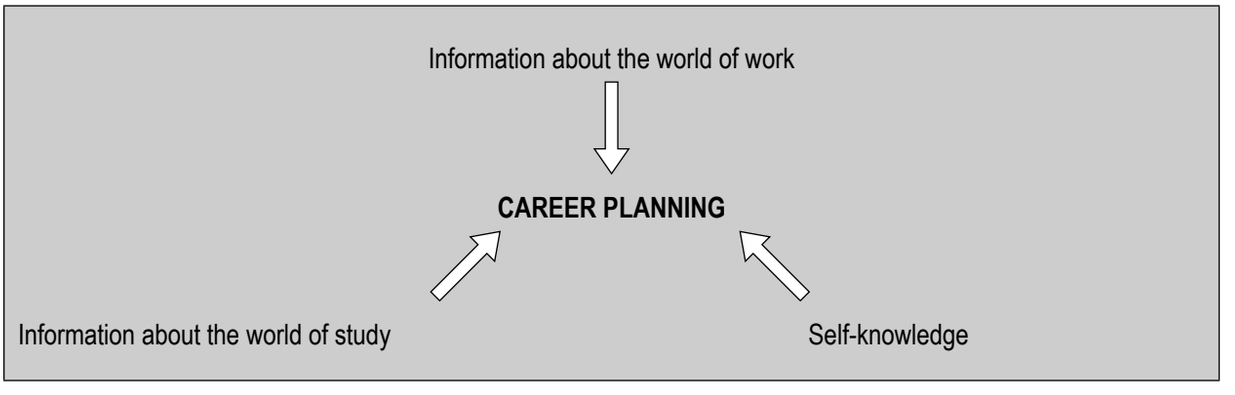
2. Information about the world of college study

Career guidance helps students to find out which courses will complement their choices and what the entrance requirements for these courses are. They also need to know what costs will be involved to attain the specific qualification and what options are available to attain further qualifications on completion of their college studies. An early understanding that the college offers various types of support programmes, for example, career guidance and counselling, academic support, health and well-being, life orientation and financial aid, is crucial.

3. Knowledge of themselves

It is of critical importance that students know who they are in terms of interests, personality attributes, abilities and motivations. Only if such information is available can they explore and end up in careers in which they are interested and for which they have the required aptitude.

The diagram below shows the inter-relationship between the three forms of knowledge and information. Together, they provide a basis for sound pre-entry career planning.



GETTING STARTED

STEP 1: Making prospective students aware of career options

The first step is to ensure that policies and procedures for career guidance and counselling are in place. Planning includes a time schedule that stipulates when prospective students will be invited to the college to be assessed and when they will receive their assessment results. While assessment should be available at regular intervals during the year, it is especially near the end of the year and at the beginning of the next year during registration that the demand will be high. When assessment is done at the beginning of the academic year, it becomes part of the registration process and all staff members are involved.

Colleges employ various strategies for reaching out to prospective students in their surrounding communities. These include the following:

- Presentations that focus on unemployed youth. A special effort must be made to target this group.
- School visits are undertaken during the course of the year as part of the college's recruitment drive to raise awareness about careers and related job opportunities, and programmes offered by the college. The benefits of enrolling for such college programmes are addressed and prospective students are informed about what support

services and financial aid they can expect. Publicity material like posters, brochures and flyers are available.

- Open days or career days are hosted at colleges, usually in August and September. This is a key mechanism for providing the above types of information to prospective students and their parents or guardians. Information is presented by means of displays with posters, brochures and videos, and all staff members are on hand to provide additional information and clarification.
- Publicity and marketing drives are done via media such as local or regional radio programmes and newspapers to advertise the college's programme offerings and to alert prospective students and their parents to the benefits of enrolling for these programmes and the nature of student support services provided.

To fully appreciate the critical role and impact of career information provision, it is important to remain mindful of the fact that, in some instances, prospective students and their parents are getting first-time exposure to career information. Other prospective students know what they want to study and where they want to study. When they approach the college for information, their enquiries are more focused on details about programme and course offerings, application and registration, and availability of financial assistance rather than requesting assistance with career planning and choice making.

Now look at the following summary before proceeding to the next step.

Step 1: Making prospective students aware of career options
• Career guidance is in place. • Assessment sessions are scheduled, especially during the last quarter of the year and the beginning of the next year during registration. • Staff members are available to advise students. • Special attempts are made to target unemployed youth. • The college or each campus visits schools to inform learners. • Open days are hosted at each campus. • Publicity material like posters, brochures and flyers are available. • Publicity and marketing drives in the media are planned and implemented.

STEP 2: Assessment and placement of prospective students

Students need to know and understand who they are and what their interests, personality attributes, abilities and motivations are. These are fundamental factors influencing an individual's occupational preferences. Only if such personal information is available can it be ensured that they explore and eventually end up in careers they are interested in and for which they have the required aptitude.

All colleges should conduct selection and placement tests/assessment for new students. The selection and placement tests identify prospective students who have the basic fundamental knowledge of English and mathematics or mathematical literacy skills to cope with the demands of the academic learning material.

Career assessments or placement tests are the mechanisms for soliciting such information. All students who apply at the college for NC(V) enrolment need to be assessed. Assessment usually covers three areas: literacy and mathematics competence, and career interests.

Assessments take place on each campus as part of open days. In addition, they are available from the second semester until the end of November. They can also take place at the start of the next year during the registration process, with late applications accommodated at specially arranged times.

After the assessment tests are done, the results are indicated on a form. The assessment results together with the information contained in prospective students' application forms are the basis for choices about the placement of students in NC(V) programmes and subjects.

It is important to make sure that a match exists between the results and the student's programme choice. If the results indicate that the preferred programme will not be suitable for the student, another programme that is more suitable must be chosen. Once the correct programme has been decided on, the registration process can be completed.

Look at the summary of step 2

Step 2: Assessment and placement of prospective students
• Selection and placement assessments are conducted for all applicants. • Assessment is part of the registration process that starts in August/September of the previous year. • Assessment takes place on each campus. • Assessment results are indicated on a specific form. • Reports of assessment tests are shared with lecturers.

We have now discussed the two basic steps that a college must take to build an effective pre-entry career guidance selection and placement system for all students. In the next section you can read about a few more things that can be done.

DOING MORE

Providing information to as wide an audience as possible is a key area of this aspect. Look at the following ways in which this could be done:

- Campuses have open learning centres where prospective students can access information on a walk-in basis. Offering such a career information service has obvious resource implications for campuses. It requires the following resources:
  - A resource room with relevant material to assist students to make informed decisions. A career section in a resource centre will also suffice in the initial stages
  - Computers and Internet facilities
  - An information bank on career opportunities, employers, bursaries, educational institutions, academic programmes, information on sources for help and a database of youth organisations

- Industry representatives are invited to open days to do presentations on what their industries offer.

- A course placement interview which involves the discussion of suitable options takes place after the results of the assessment tests are available. Interviews are conducted by persons who are knowledgeable about the programmes offered by the college. Parents or guardians are encouraged to be present as their involvement is viewed as critical. The more informed they are, the more inclined they will be to become involved in the student's career planning and to provide ongoing support in the home.

- In cases where interests and choices do not match the available programmes, students are referred for additional career counselling and testing so that the best information is available to make the correct decision regarding career choice.

Look at the summary of 'doing more' in terms of pre-entry career guidance selection and placement.

Pre-entry career guidance selection and placement: Doing more
• An open learning centre or career information office or desk is available. • Industry representatives do presentations at open days. • Programme selection interviews are done by staff members and parents or guardians are encouraged to be present. • Students who are uncertain about programmes are referred for further career advice**.**

Before you leave this topic you have a chance to measure to what extent the current practice at your college or campus reflects the best practices put forward in this topic. This will provide you with a basis for future planning.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The first task in this section is an audit of current pre-entry career guidance practices at your college or campus. If you are a lecturer you must think about practices at your campus. If you are a campus manager or academic manager you can think about the system at your campus or college. If you are a student support services specialist you can think about the specific services on the campus or campuses where you offer services.

TASK1: AUDIT

Look at the elements listed in the first column of the profile and then circle the number between 1 and 6 that best describes your college's current practice. **A rating of 1 or 2 is LOW** **A rating of 3 or 4 is AVERAGE** **A rating of 5 or 6 is HIGH**						
Making prospective students aware of career options						
1. **Career guidance** is in place.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. **Selection and placement tests** are scheduled.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Special attempts are made to focus on **unemployed youth**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. The college or each campus **visits schools** to inform learners of NC(V).	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. **Open days** are hosted at each campus.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. **Publicity material** like posters, brochures and flyers are available.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Publicity and marketing drives **in the media** are planned and actioned.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Selection and placement of prospective students						
8. **Selection and placement tests** in mathematics, literacy and career interests are conducted for all applicants.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Selection and placement is done **on all campuses**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Selection and placement assessment **is part of the registration** process at the end of the previous year and the start of the new academic year. All staff is responsible.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. **Assessment results** are indicated on a specific form/report.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Reports of assessment tests are **shared with all lecturers**	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Doing more						
13. An **open learning centre,** career information office or desk is available.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. **Industry** representatives do presentations at open days.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. **Course selection interviews** are done by suitable staff members and **parents or guardians** are encouraged to be present.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Students who are uncertain about courses are referred for **further career advice**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						

TASK 2: FINAL SCORE

Write the sub-total for each step in the space provided below and add up the total.

Step 1: Making prospective students aware of career options	
Step 2: Selection and placement of prospective students	
Doing more	
TOTAL:	

Place your total in the appropriate block below.

Overall rating for pre-entry career guidance

LOW	AVERAGE	HIGH
16 – 32	33 - 64	65 - 96

Lowest possible score: 16 *Highest possible score: 96*

TASK 3: PLANNING

The final task requires you to think about how current practice can be improved or deepened as a whole-institution response. Look at your ratings carefully and select three priority needs. The next step is to work out how to address these needs. Money, people and resources may not be readily available so you need to do some strategic thinking:

- Who needs to be involved in deciding how to address the identified needs and how will you get buy-in?
- Is there a committee or forum at campus, college or provincial level to which a proposal or motivation can be submitted so that the matter can be discussed more widely?
- What can realistically be done in the short-, medium- and long-term?

Write down the answers to some of these questions in the space below and then think of ways in which the suggestions can be taken forward. Planning for effective pre-entry career guidance and placement starts here.

TOPIC 2

STUDENT REGISTRATION

In this topic we look at registration. The aim is to help each college and campus to ensure that the registration process is of a high and consistent standard. We discuss two stages of practice which we have called:

- Getting started
- Doing more

The following steps are important aspects of effective student registration.

Step 1: Preparing for successful registration
Step 2: Implementing the registration process

In the final section there is an opportunity to complete an audit of current practice at your college or campus. This will help to identify areas in which practice can be improved or deepened and to plan for this.

Why is the efficient administration of registration important?

A college which has invested in implementing efficient contracting processes makes a strong contribution towards the academic success of its students. Administrative processes that are transparent, user-friendly and streamlined allow students to settle down to their studies more readily.

The students' first experience of the college is of being welcomed into an organised, student-focused environment where everything is done to help them become successful members of the college community. This leads to a sense of pride in and belonging to their new college and motivates them to become involved in their academic work when the academic timetable commences.

GETTING STARTED

STEP 1: Preparing for successful registration

The Further Education and Training Colleges Act No 16 of 2006 states that every college must have an admission policy which is determined by the council of the college after consultation with the academic board and with the approval of the members of the Executive Council. The admission policy may not unfairly discriminate in any way and must provide appropriate measures for redress of past inequalities. The council may, subject to applicable policy, determine: admission requirements; the number of students admitted; the minimum requirements for readmission; and refuse readmission. The council must ensure that a disability policy is in place that provides adequate access and support structures for students with disabilities. Other aspects that can be included are: the application procedure; academic requirements; policy and procedure for international students; and the appeal process in the case of refusal of admission.

The application forms need to be as simple and reader-friendly as possible. They make provision for:

- A student number
- Personal information of the student

- Contact details of both the student and their parents or guardian
- Course registration, including subjects and levels
- Highest level of education
- Student support
- Medical information
- Sport achievements and hostel accommodation, if applicable.

Both the student and their parents or guardian have to sign the 'declaration and undertaking' section of the form.

It is important to relate college performance to schooling background as the quality of education varies from school to school. International research shows that parents' educational status, especially of the mother, is a crucial determinant of educational success of the child. Region of origin can be a good proxy for socio-economic status which is another important determinant of educational performance. As it is currently necessary to improve the collection of student data to ensure the tracking of students, it is important that colleges collect the following additional information on the application forms during registration:

- Schooling background
- Parents' educational status
- Region of origin.

Bursary application forms must be prepared and ready to be handed out to prospective students with the registration forms. The code of conduct must also be handed to students and their parents or guardians to allow enough time to read through the document. Information on the selection and placement tests that have to be completed must be available to inform prospective students and their parents or guardians of this important process.

Dates for registration, application for bursaries, and for the selection and placement tests must be finalised and made available to prospective students and their parents or guardians.

A checklist can be prepared which will be marked by the student and the college before the registration form is submitted to ensure that the required documents are included and that the application is complete. This avoids unnecessary delays. Look at the example below of such a checklist.

REGISTRATION CHECKLIST FOR STUDENTS (EXAMPLE/SPECIMEN)

Please note that the college will not consider incomplete applications. If any question is left unanswered or certified documents are not enclosed or the agreement is not signed, it will cause a delay as the form will be returned to you for completion. Before submitting your application, please complete the checklist below. Please tick the box next to each point to indicate that you have checked it. (Yes, No, N/A – not applicable)

Item	**Applicant**		**College Controller**	
• Did you enclose a certified copy of your identity document or birth certificate?	YES	NO	YES	NO
• Did you enclose: (a) a certified copy of your National Senior Certificate or (b) a certified copy of your latest progress report if Grade 12 results are not applicable or (c) an original Academic Record and a Certificate of Conduct or certified copies of other certificates if you studied at an academic institution other than a school	YES	NO	YES	NO
• Did you enclose a certified copy or original proof of your residential address?	YES	NO	YES	NO
• Have you completed all the applicable sections on the application form?	YES	NO	YES	NO
• Did you sign the declaration of agreement?	YES	NO	YES	NO
• If you are under 18 or not liable for the payment of your own fees, did your parents/guardian sign the declaration?	YES	NO	YES	NO
• Have you completed your bursary application form and supplied the following documents? i) Certified copies of Student ID (x2) ii) Certified copies of latest academic results (x2) iii) Certified copy of death certificate of parents/guardian, if applicable iv) Certified copy of salary advice slip of both parents or guardians v) Certified copy of affidavit letter of unemployment, if applicable vi) Proof of residence (water and electricity or any other account)	YES	NO	YES	NO
• Have you included the required deposit for (a) your programme and (b) residence (if applicable)?	YES	NO	YES	NO
• Did you indicate the name of the hostel on the application form if you wish to be considered for a place in a residence? (NB: Accommodation in the residence is subject to availability and payment of a deposit.)	yes / no / n/a		yes / no / n/a	
• All international students: have you applied for a study permit in your home country or are you in possession of one: **You must produce a valid study permit before you will be allowed to register.**	yes / no / n/a		yes / no / n/a	

For office use	**Name and surname of staff member (please print)**	**Signature**
Control list and application form controlled by:		
Placement test done by (where applicable)		
Means test done by (where applicable)		

Now look at an example of a college checklist that can be prepared to ensure that the required documents for student registration have been submitted and that the acceptance process has been completed.

EXAMPLE/SPECIMEN

COLLEGE CHECKLIST **PLEASE TICK THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK**			
STUDENT NAME:	**CAMPUS:**		
Student number:			
A) APPLICATION/REGISTRATION FORM			**OTHER COMMENTS**
Completed	**YES**	**NO**	
DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:			
i) Certified copies of identity document (x2)	YES	NO	
ii) Certified copies of latest academic results (x2)	YES	NO	
iii) Selection and placement test	YES	NO	
iv) Selection and placement assessment results	YES	NO	
B) BURSARY APPLICATION FORM (DoE FET Colleges Bursary Scheme)			
Completed	**YES**	**NO**	
DOCUMENTATION ATTACHED:			
i) Certified copies of Student ID (x2)	YES	NO	
ii) Certified copy of both parents/guardian identity document	YES	NO	
iii) Certified copy of death certificate of parents/guardian, if applicable	YES	NO	
iv) Certified copy of salary advice slip of both parents or guardian	YES	NO	
v) Certified copy of affidavit letter of unemployment, if applicable	YES	NO	
vi) Proof of residence (water and electricity or any other account)	YES	NO	
C) ACCEPTANCE/APPROVAL			
i) Preliminary acceptance based on information from student support officer	YES	NO	
ii) Letter of preliminary acceptance hand delivered/posted	YES	DATE:	
iii) Final acceptance letter hand delivered/posted	YES	DATE:	

It is the collective responsibility of all staff to present the administrative process positively to prospective students and their parents or guardians. It is extremely important that all staff is involved in the busy week in January when students register and apply for bursaries before the academic year starts.

Staff members need to receive a roll-out plan the previous year to ensure the smooth running of the programme during this very busy week. Look at an example of such a plan:

STUDENT REGISTRATION ROLL-OUT PLAN FOR STAFF (EXAMPLE/SPECIMEN)

Function	Who is responsible	Location
1. Person to contact NC(V) students accepted or provisionally accepted the previous year to inform them when registration will be completed at the start of the academic year		RECEPTION
2. Person responsible for putting up directions to the various locations, for example, results, means tests, registration, data capturers, payments, photo capturing (if done on first day)	SRC/Senior Students MARKETING	VARIOUS
3. Welcoming of prospective students on the campus before they are directed to the venues:	SRC/Senior students MARKETING	STUDENT RECESS AREA/PARKING AREA
4. New students directed to respective departments for career info	SRC/Students MARKETING	VARIOUS
5. Current students directed to table to collect history enrolment forms to see whether student qualifies to register again. (Depending on pass rate or outstanding fees)		ROOM 5 TABLE 1
6. Staff member responsible for selection and placement tests NC(V)		ROOM 6
7. Staff member responsible for means tests NC(V)		
8. Staff member responsible for bursary information		STUDENT SUPPORT
9. Staff members responsible for programme guidance		ROOM 5 TABLES 2,3,4,5
10. Staff members responsible for registration of students:		ROOM 5 TABLES 2,3,4,5
11. Staff members responsible for giving information on hostels		
12. Staff member(s) responsible for directing student(s) to hostel (where applicable)		
13. Staff members responsible for escorting/directing students to the administration department with comprehensively completed registration forms for enrolment	SRC	VARIOUS
14. Staff members responsible for enrolling students		CAMPUS HEAD'S OFFICE – RECEPTION
15. Staff members responsible for issuing receipts/proof of student registration		CAMPUS HEAD'S OFFICE – RECEPTION

A programme with easy steps, times and venues for students and their parents or guardians must be available. The Student Representative Council (SRC) or senior students have a very important role to play in welcoming all newcomers. They need to direct and assist them throughout each day**.**

An administrative process which is unfriendly, difficult or complicated will have a negative impact on students and their parents or guardians.

Look at the following summary:

Step 1: Preparing for successful registration
For intake at the end of the previous year as well as at the start of the academic year : • An admission policy must be in place. • User-friendly college application forms must be available. • An application checklist for students and their parents must be available. • An application checklist for the college must be available. • Student code of conduct must be available. • Bursary application forms must be available. • Information on the selection and placement tests must be available. • Dates for the registration and bursary application processes, and the selection and placement tests must be available. For intake at the start of the academic year: • The involvement of all staff in the contracting processes must be planned. This includes academic, administrative, financial, managerial, marketing and student support staff. • Staff must receive a roll-out plan and be informed of their roles and functions at the end of the previous year. • A layout plan of the building must be in place. • Signs and posters which indicate venues must be printed. • A programme with easy steps, times and venues must be prepared for students and their parents. • SRC members or senior students must be trained for their role.

STEP 2: Implementing the registration process

At the end of the previous year*:*

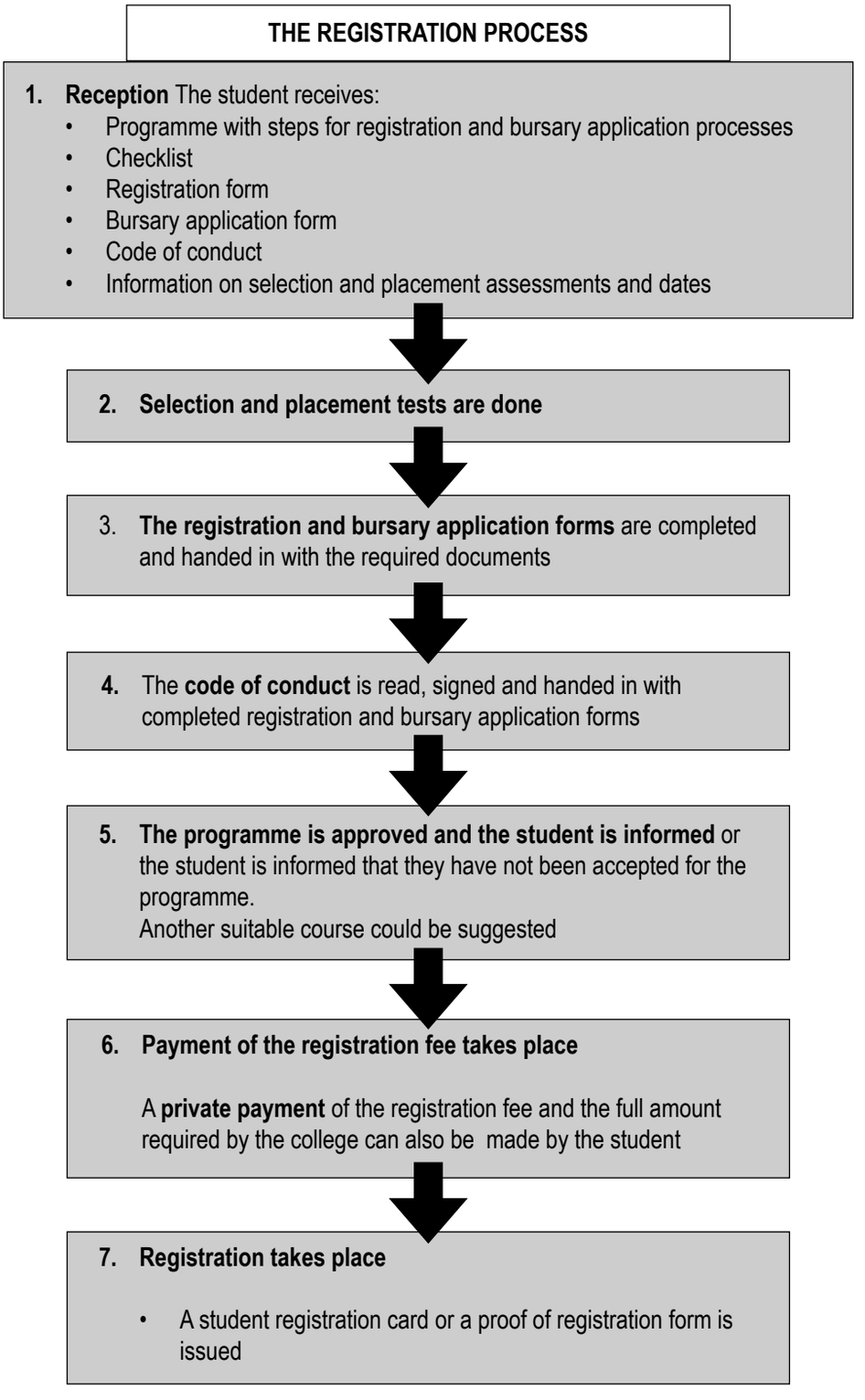
If marketing has been successful and prospective students visit the campus at the end of the previous year, reception will advise them about the registration and application for bursaries processes.

There are two groups of possible applicants:

- Successful applicants who have completed their application and bursary forms, signed the code of conduct, have done their selection and placement tests and have been accepted for the course they wish to take the following year, receive a letter of acceptance by the end of November. They have not been entered in the student registration system and are given a date when they should return in January the following year to complete registration.

Provisionally accepted applicants who have not yet been accepted into a specific course or are on a waiting list, receive letters of provisional acceptance by the end of November. They will be advised when to visit the campus in January to possibly complete the registration process.

At the start of the academic year:
The following diagram shows the full cycle of registration at the start of the academic year.



Look at the following summary.

Step 2: Implementing the registration process
• **At the end of the previous year:** Students receive the necessary correspondence informing them of acceptance or provisional acceptance as well as dates for registration. • The process for the **start of the academic year** is in place. • **Proof of registration** can be issued.

We have now discussed two steps that colleges and campuses can take to provide effective registration services. In the next section you can read about a few more things that can be done.

DOING MORE

All colleges strive towards streamlining their processes to register students as efficiently and as fast as possible. Some suggestions are:

- Working towards increasing the intake at the end of the previous year. In this way the number of students who arrive at the college for the first time at the start of the academic year is minimised.
- Arranging for a South African Police Services officer to be available on the campus during registration or at certain times during registration to certify documents on the spot and make it easier for parents and students who have travelled long distances. Extra equipment like a photocopying machine is essential to making this possible.
- Issuing student cards as proof of registration. Facilities for photo capturing will be needed.

Look at the following summary:

Doing more: Successful registration
• Marketing and advertising is done the previous year to increase the number of students who register before the start of the academic year. • The South African Police Services is requested to supply an officer for every campus to certify documents. • A photocopying machine is available. • Facilities are available for photo capturing for student cards.

Before you leave this topic you have a chance to measure to what extent current practice in your college, campus or classroom reflects the best practices put forward in this topic. This will provide you with a basis for future planning.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The first task in this section is an audit of current registration procedures in your college or campus. If you are a lecturer you must think about registration processes of your students. If you are a campus manager you can think of how your campus handles registration. If you are a student support services specialist you can think about registration on the campus or campuses where you offer services.

TASK 1: AUDIT

Look at the elements listed in the first column of the profile and then circle the number between 1 and 6 that best describes your college's current practice. **A rating of 1 or 2 is LOW** **A rating of 3 or 4 is AVERAGE** **A rating of 5 or 6 is HIGH**						
1. An a**dmission policy** is in place.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. User-friendly **registration forms and bursary application forms** are available.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. The **code of conduct** is handed out with the application forms.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Information about **selection and placement tests** is available.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. The **appropriate checklists** for students and their parents or guardians and for the college are in place.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. A **programme** with simple, easy steps**,** times and venues is prepared for prospective students and their parents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. **Dates** for registration, bursary application, and selection and placement tests are available.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. The involvement of **all staff** is planned. They receive a **roll-out plan** for the January intake and are informed of their roles and functions at the end of the previous year.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. A **layout plan** of the building as well as signs and posters which indicate venues are in place.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. **SRC members or senior students** are appointed and trained for their role.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Implementing registration						
11. Students who applied during the previous year receive **correspondence** regarding their application by November.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. The **registration process** at the start of the academic year is in place.	1	2	3	4	5	6

13. Proof of registration can be issued.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Student information is captured on the college registration system.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Doing more						
14. Marketing and advertising has resulted in an **increase in registration numbers before the start of the academic year**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. The **South African Police Services** is available on campuses for certification of documents and a **photocopying machine** is available.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Facilities are available to issue **student cards**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						

TASK 2: FINAL SCORE

Write the sub-total for each step in the space provided below and add up the total.

Step 1: Preparing for registration	
Step 2: Implementing registration	
Doing more	
TOTAL:	

Place your total in the appropriate block below.

Overall rating for registration

LOW	AVERAGE	HIGH
16 - 32	33 - 64	65 - 96

Lowest possible score: 16 *Highest possible score: 96*

TASK 3: PLANNING

The final task requires you to think about how current practice can be improved or deepened as a whole-institution response. Look at your ratings carefully and select three priority needs. The next step is to work out how to address these needs. Money, people and resources may not be readily available so you need to do some strategic thinking:

- Who needs to be involved in deciding how to address the identified needs and how will you get buy-in?
- Is there a committee or forum at campus, college or provincial level to which a proposal or motivation can be submitted so that the matter can be discussed more widely?
- What can realistically be done in the short-, medium- and long-term?

Write down the answers to some of these questions in the space below and then think of ways in which the matter can be taken forward. Planning for effective registration starts here.

TOPIC 3

FINANCIAL AID – NC(V)

In this topic we look at the administration of the DoE FET College Bursary Scheme. The aim is to help each college and campus to ensure that the bursary procedure is of a high and consistent standard. We discuss two stages of practice which we have called:

- Getting started
- Doing more

The following steps are important aspects of effective bursary application procedures.

Step 1: Preparing for the start of the bursary application process

Step 2: Administering and awarding the bursaries

In the final section there is an opportunity to complete an audit of current practice at your college or campus. This will help to identify areas in which practice can be improved or deepened and to plan for this.

Why is the efficient administration of the bursary process important?

The provision of student financial aid through the Department of Education FET College Bursary Scheme is critical to access FET colleges. It provides an opportunity for the following groups of students to be enrolled for NC(V) programmes:

- South African citizens who are registered or intend to register for NC(V) programmes;
- Talented students who can show evidence of good academic achievement and who stand to benefit from financial assistance
- Financially needy students with academic potential
- Unemployed youth

In short: deserving students who are committed to intense vocational study and who complete all forms accurately and timeously.

The Department of Education requested the National Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to administer and manage the DoE FET Colleges Bursary Scheme and NSFAS has adapted the Means Test Tool for the FET college sector t. The Means Test Tool should be used only as a guide when awarding bursaries to students.

Colleges are to administer bursaries according to the example of the Bursary Administration Schedule shown below. The minimum percentage of the college's allocation has to be claimed on specified due dates.

EXAMPLE/SPECIMEN: Annual Bursary Administration Schedule

Activity	Responsibility	Date
Student bursary applications open	Colleges	September/October
Provisional college allocations finalised	DoE and IPC	November
Close of student bursary applications	Colleges	March
25% of allocation claimed from NSFAS	Colleges	April
50% of allocation claimed from NSFAS	Colleges	June
75% of allocation claimed from NSFAS	Colleges	August
100% of allocation from NSFAS	Colleges	September
Bursary preparation workshops	DoE and PDE	First two weeks of October
Provisional allocations finalised	DoE and IPC	November
College provisional allocations finalised	DoE and IPC	November

It is important that colleges adhere to the Bursary Management Schedule, submit their claims on time and receive their financial allocation as early as possible. A streamlined NC(V) bursary process will have a great impact on the financial well-being and the successful administration of the college. This will also influence the academic success of the students.

To do this, colleges must ensure that the bursary application process is professional, efficient and not lengthy. Mechanisms must be in place to control and monitor when forms go out, when they are returned and that the quality of the returned forms is of a high standard and accurate.

As it is important for the financial well-being of the college to receive the financial allocation at the specified times the following goals are important:

- To ensure that students who apply for bursaries are accepted
- To minimise the risk of students' bursary applications being declined after they have been registered, are attending classes and are unable to pay their tuition fees
- To minimise the risk of students being registered, but not returning their bursary application forms, and being unable to pay their tuition fees.

GETTING STARTED

STEP 1: Preparing for the start of the bursary application process

It is critical that the bursaries are marketed as the Department of Education Further Education and Training Colleges Bursary Scheme (DoE FET Colleges Bursary Scheme). It is important for the name of the scheme to be presented in a consistent manner to avoid confusion with other bursaries that may be on offer. The bursary scheme should be used as a possible access tool to NC(V) programmes and should be advertised as such to students. Care should be taken not to guarantee students bursaries when recruiting, since bursary awards are subject to a specific bursary administration process.

During the marketing and advertising process students must be made aware of all important documents to submit with the applications as well as the closing dates for the submission of application forms. Colleges must communicate the bursary process through internal and external newsletters and posters, meetings and other means.

A Bursary or Financial Aid Committee must be elected and the following should be represented:

- Management,
- Student support services
- Finance
- Student administration
- Student Representative Council (SRC).

Each college must nominate a dedicated staff member for the administration of the bursaries; student support staff members are recommended.

The generic application forms, which have been designed by NSFAS for consistency with the means test, should be prepared so that they are ready to be handed out with application forms when requested.

Now read the summary of what has been discussed and then go on to the next step.

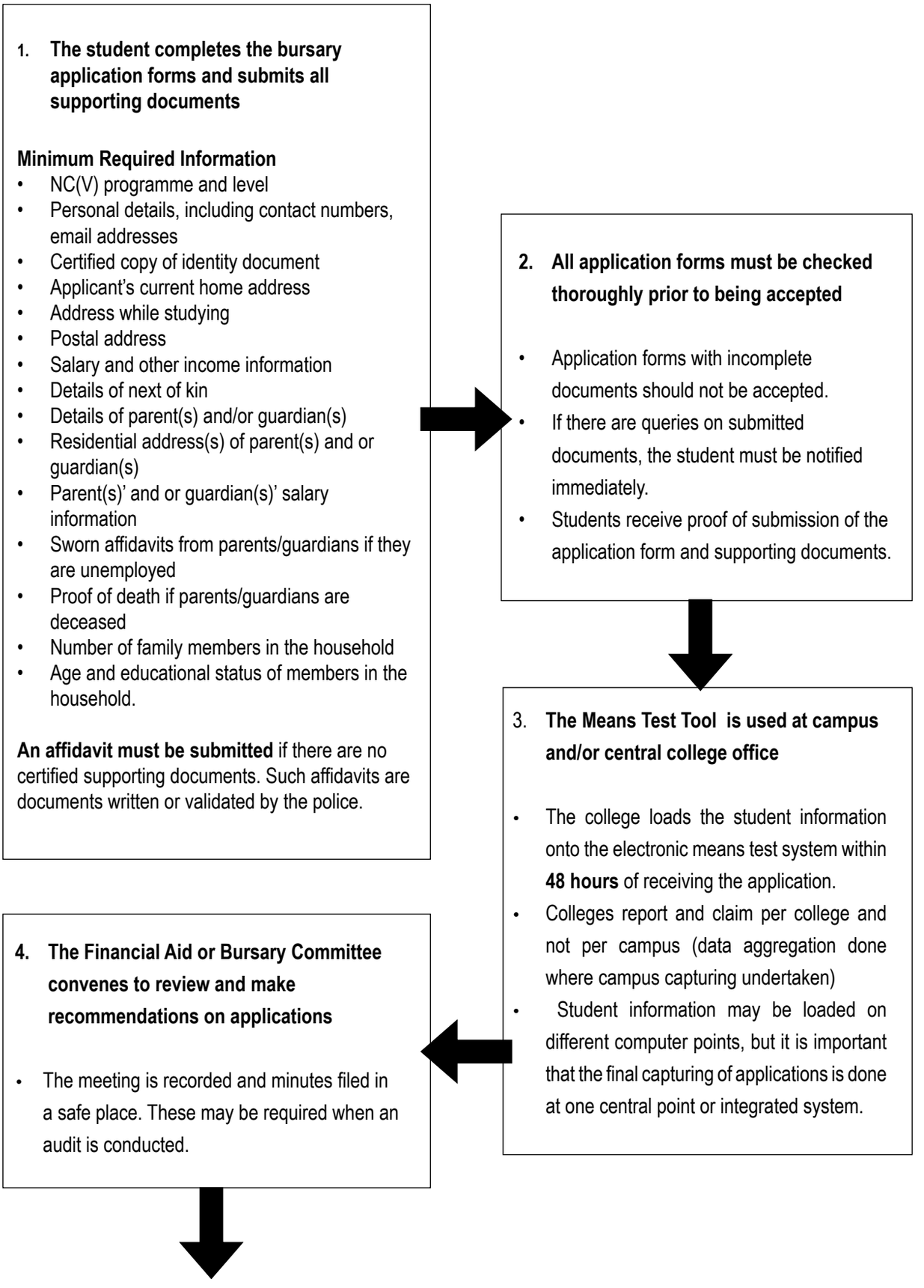
Step 1: Planning for the start of the bursary application process
• A Bursary or Financial Aid Committee is appointed. • Accurate marketing and advertising of the bursary scheme is done. • Each campus appoints a staff member for the administration of the bursaries. • The bursary application forms are prepared.

STEP 2: Administering and awarding bursaries

The process of administering and awarding bursaries to NC(V) students takes place in eight consecutive steps. Each of these steps is linked to the next and together they ensure a successful bursary application process. The eight steps are:

1.Completing the bursary application forms and submitting all supporting documents
2.Checking the application forms
3.Using the Means Test Tool as a guide
4.Reviewing of the applications by the Financial Aid Committee and making recommendations
5.Forwarding the recommendations to the CEO and approving
6.Signing of the Schedule of Particulars (SoP) by students who have been awarded bursaries by the college
7.Sending the claims to NSFAS
8.Informing the students of the final decision. The college makes the final decision on awarding or rejecting applications. NSFAS processes the payment for SoPs that have been submitted.

Look at the following flowchart to see the specific information regarding each of the above steps:



5. Recommendation of the Financial Aid Committee forwarded to the CEO for approval

- CEO reviews and approves Bursary Committee recommendations.
- The total claims submitted by college to NSFAS should not exceed college's allocation.
- It is important for the CEO, as the college's chief accounting officer, to validate the process through their signature. An imprint of their name and the date on which the signature was appended to the report should accompany it.

6. Schedule of particulars or bursary agreements should be signed by the student and the college.

- It is important for successful applicants to sign a Schedule of Particulars (SoP), as this is the only document the college is expected to submit to NSFAS in support of its claim.
- Only students who have been awarded bursaries are required to sign the SoP.

7. The claims are sent to NSFAS

- A covering letter stating the amount allocated to the college, the amount claimed, balance, control list, SoPs and certified copies of identity documents should be submitted to NSFAS.

8. The college informs the students of the final decision

- A list of successful and unsuccessful bursaries is sent to the College Financial Aid Office for student notification.
- The financial aid officer should inform both successful and unsuccessful applicants, in writing, about the outcome of their applications.
- Awards must be made within college allocations.
- Students should be made aware of their rights, roles and responsibilities, for example, notification of other bursaries or change of address.

The procedure to administer and award bursaries must be in accordance with the Department of Education guidelines.

Look at the following summary of step 2.

Step 2: Administering and awarding bursaries
• The bursary application process is successfully completed for each applicant within the deadlines. • Regular review of procedures is done.

Before you leave this topic you now have a chance to measure to what extent current practice in your college or campus reflects the best practices put forward in this topic. This will provide you with a basis for future planning.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The first task in this section is an audit of the current administration of the DoE FET College Bursary Scheme at your college or campus. If you are a lecturer you must think about the situation at your campus. If you are a campus manager or student support services specialist you can think generally about the planning, awarding and administering of bursaries on the campus or campuses where you offer services.

TASK 1: AUDIT

Look at the elements listed in the first column of the profile and then circle the number between 1 and 6 that best describes your college's current practice. **A rating of 1 or 2 is LOW** **A rating of 3 or 4 is AVERAGE** **A rating of 5 or 6 is HIGH**						
Planning for the start of the bursary application process						
1. A **Bursary or Financial Aid Committee** is functional.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Accurate **marketing and advertising** of the bursary scheme is done.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Each campus appoints a **staff member for the administration of the bursaries**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. The DoE FET Colleges Bursary Scheme **application forms** are prepared.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Administering and awarding the bursaries						
5. **The bursary application process** is successfully completed for each applicant within the specific deadlines.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. The college adheres to the **deadlines** for claiming bursary funds from NSFAS.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Regular **review** of procedures is done.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						

TASK 2: FINAL SCORE

Now write the sub-total for each step in the space provided below and add up the total.

Step 1: Planning for the start of the bursary application process	
Step 2: Administering and awarding the bursaries	
TOTAL:	

Now place your total in the appropriate block below.

Overall rating for financial aid

LOW	AVERAGE	HIGH
7 – 14	15 - 28	29 - 42

Lowest possible score: 7 *Highest possible score: 42*

TASK 3: PLANNING

The final task requires you to think about how current practice can be improved or deepened as a whole-institution response. Look at your ratings carefully and select three priority needs. The next step is to work out how to address these needs. Money, people and resources may not be readily available so you need to do some strategic thinking:

- Who needs to be involved in deciding how to address the identified needs and how will you get buy-in?
- Is there a committee or forum at campus, college or provincial level to which a proposal or motivation can be submitted so that the matter can be discussed more widely?
- What can realistically be done in the short-, medium- and long-term?

Write down the answers to some of these questions in the space below and then think of ways in which the matter can be taken forward. Planning for effective bursary procedures starts here.

TOPIC 4

STUDENT CONDUCT

In this topic we look at how student conduct is approached. The aim is to help each college and campus to ensure that students know what behaviour is expected of them and what the consequences of misbehaviour are. We discuss two stages of practice which we have called:

- Getting started
- Doing more

The following steps are important aspects of effective contracting.

Step 1: Drawing up a code of conduct and disciplinary procedures

Step 2: Signing the code of conduct

Step 3: Implementing the code of conduct and disciplinary procedures

In the final section there is an opportunity to complete an audit of current practice at your college or campus. This will help to identify areas in which practice can be improved or deepened and to plan for this.

Why is a code of conduct and disciplinary procedures important?

The Further Education and Training Colleges Act No 16 of 2006 states that every student at a public college is subject to a code of conduct, and disciplinary measures and procedures which are determined by the council, subject to provincial policy.

A code of conduct and disciplinary procedures can be of great help to colleges to ensure that students adjust well to life on campus and that conflict is kept to a minimum. This is possible because these documents will ensure that students know which values the college holds dear, exactly what behaviour the college expects from them and the consequences of misbehaviour.

A college which has invested in successfully drawing up and implementing a code of conduct and disciplinary procedures makes a strong contribution towards academic success for its students. It also prepares students to be responsible citizens of our country.

The code of conduct sets standards for behaviour and aims to:

- Promote responsible and disciplined behaviour
- Create a safe learning environment for all who are involved in the teaching and learning process
- Develop respect for self, others and the environment as a strong value

Disciplinary procedures are in place only for those few students who disrupt the educational process. These students who do not accept the standards set by the code of conduct will be involved in the disciplinary procedure. They do, however, have a choice. If they choose to adapt their behaviour, there will be no consequences and they will not be involved in any disciplinary procedures.

In the next section you will get an opportunity to assess whether your college has the necessary procedures in place to ensure the successful implementation of the code of conduct

GETTING STARTED

STEP 1: Drawing up a code of conduct and disciplinary procedures

According to the FET Colleges Act of 2006 the code of conduct, and disciplinary measures and procedures may only be determined after consultation with the academic board and the Student Representative Council of each college.

A committee is appointed to draw up the documents and it will consider the expectations of behaviour regarding the many aspects of student life. Areas that must be included are racism and any form of unfair discrimination, violence and harassment, especially sexual violence and sexual harassment. Colleges will be able to identify and include areas that are of specific concern to them. If, for example, a college has identified attendance or classroom behaviour as such areas, it can clearly spell out the behaviour it expects from its students regarding these issues.

Thought must be put into the consequences of inappropriate behaviour. It is not useful to describe behaviour that is expected, if there is no direct, appropriate consequences should behaviour be unacceptable. So, for example, it can be stated that distracting or disrespectful conduct in class, including the use of cellphones or other entertainment devices during lectures will lead to oral and final written warnings. Cheating or assisting another student to cheat during a test, assessment or examination could lead to a final written warning or expulsion. Students then clearly understand that they may not use their cellphones in class or cheat during tests and examinations, and that there will be consequences if they do.

During the drawing-up phase of the code of conduct, the SRC is invited to send representatives to be part of the committee that draws up the draft. This draft document is circulated among all constituencies for comment before final acceptance. In this way the code of conduct is not seen as an instrument that has been forced on students by the authorities and conflict on the campus can in many instances be avoided. A comment could be included in the final code of conduct that the SRC was involved in drawing it up, because students change and those coming in need to know that their predecessors were part of the whole process.

It is quite difficult to change a code of conduct once it is established, as agreement is needed from all parties before any changes can be effected. It is very useful to lay out procedures in the code of conduct as to how changes can be made at a later stage, should they be necessary.

Now read the summary of what has been discussed and then go on to the next step.

Step 1: Drawing up the code of conduct and disciplinary procedures
• The college has a code of conduct and disciplinary procedures which comply with legal requirements. • Standards for behaviour for all aspects of student life are clearly set out in the code of conduct. • Specific areas of concern are included in the code of conduct. • Consequences of undesirable behaviour are clear and workable. • The disciplinary procedure to be followed, when student behaviour warrants it, is clearly set out. • The SRC has been part of the process of drawing up the code of conduct. • Procedures have been laid out for any changes to the code of conduct.

STEP 2: Signing the code of conduct

When a student signs the code of conduct, in many cases it will be the first contract they have ever signed which in itself is a learning experience. The student learns that by putting their signature on the contract they agree to:

- Abide by the standards of behaviour that the college expects
- Accept the consequences of misbehaviour

Before students sign the code of conduct, it is important that they have an opportunity to read it and discuss the content with one another so that they do not sign a document that they do not understand. It is wise to distribute the code of conduct with application forms when prospective students visit the campus.

The signing of the code of conduct, and by implication the disciplinary procedure, takes place during registration. A prospective student should not be accepted at the college and placed on the college system unless the code of conduct has been signed. Students who refuse to sign the code of conduct should not be accepted at the college, because it suggests that they cannot abide by the expected standards of behaviour or the disciplinary procedures when their behaviour is unacceptable.

Once students have signed the code of conduct, all aspects must be discussed with them. This has implications for the disciplinary process as one of the international norms for correct procedure is that the college must ensure that clear standards of behaviour are provided and that these standards are communicated to students and that they understand them. Orientation offers an excellent opportunity for a session where a senior member of staff discusses the content of the code of conduct and the implications of misbehaviour, and answers any questions that students might have.

The code of conduct should be signed annually.

Look at the following summary.

Step 2: Signing the code of conduct
• Prospective students should have an opportunity to read the code of conduct before signing it. • The college code of conduct and disciplinary procedures are accepted and signed by all new students and their parents or guardians if they are 18 or younger. • A student who refuses to sign the code of conduct should not be allowed to register. • The code of conduct and disciplinary procedures are discussed with students during orientation.

Now go on to the next step.

STEP 3: Implementing the code of conduct and disciplinary procedures

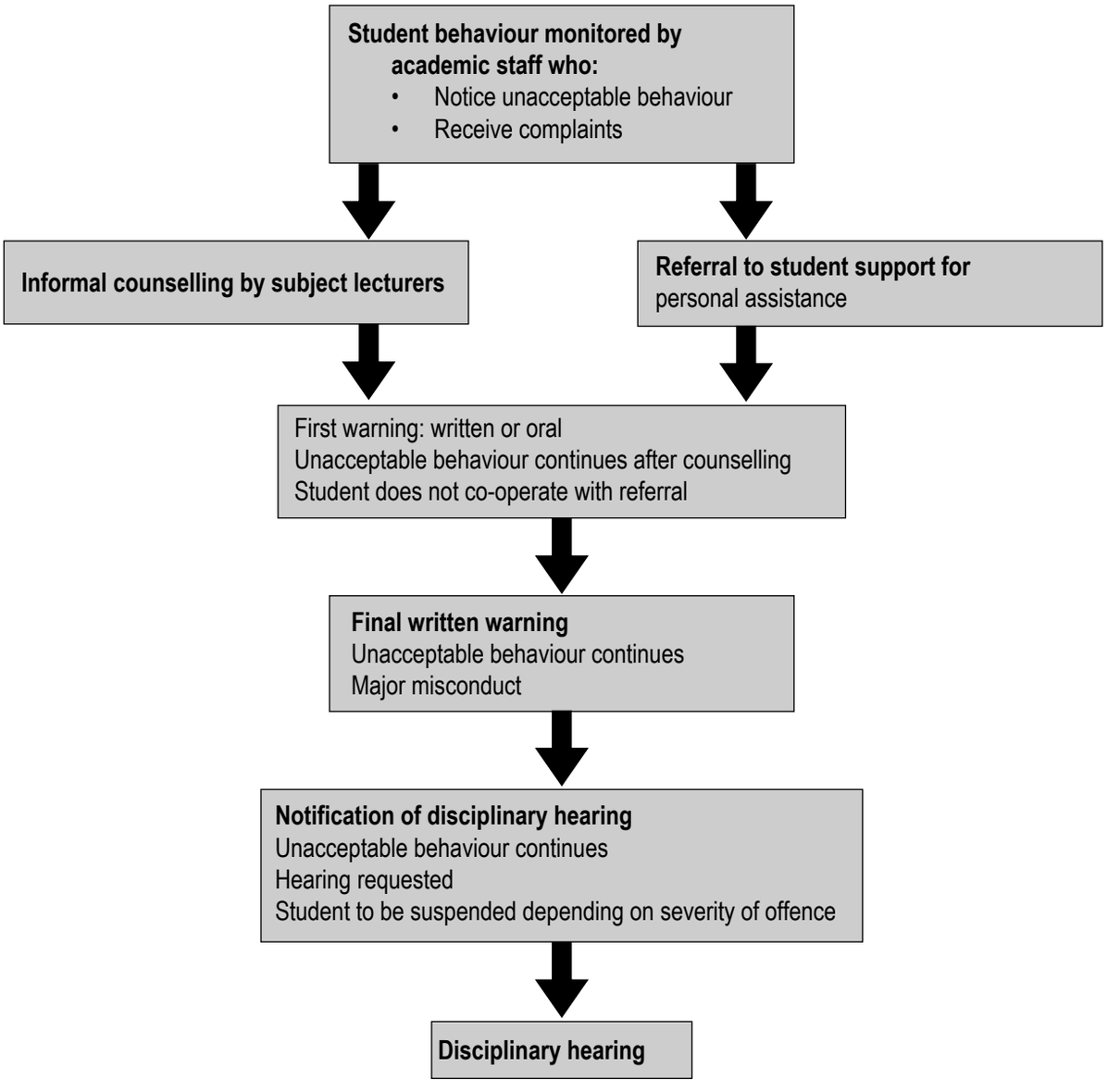
All students are aware of the standard of behaviour expected by the college because they have signed the code of conduct and have attended discussions regarding behaviour and misbehaviour. However, when a staff member notices a student's unacceptable behaviour or it is reported to them, interventions can take place to support the student to change their behaviour:

- The lecturer can either counsel the student informally or refer them to student support and the student can adjust their behaviour.

- After an oral or first written warning the student can adjust their behaviour.
- After a final written warning is given, the student can adjust their behaviour.

The intention at each stage of this route is to promote desirable behaviour and enhance a positive learning environment. If the student does not adjust their behaviour after many interventions, the final step in the disciplinary process is a disciplinary hearing.

Look at the following diagram and see the route a college can follow to promote desirable behaviour and attempt to prevent a student from attending a disciplinary hearing.



It is in every college's interest to ensure that all appropriate procedures and documents regarding the disciplinary hearing are in place and regularly reviewed. If colleges do not comply with the law, legal action with all the risks and costs as well as a negative impact on the reputation of the college is the result.

A disciplinary hearing which follows the correct procedure will ensure that:

- Justice is done and seen to be done
- There is consistent and just treatment for all
- Trust in the college is maintained
- Students know what is expected of them
- Conflict is prevented and peace maintained.

The procedure follows a logical path to ensure that the charge is explored and both parties have an opportunity to present and explain their situation. It is interesting to note that a hearing decision is based on the principle of the balance of probabilities as opposed to a court hearing which works on the basis of beyond all reasonable doubt.
Universal norms that are used as the basis of the disciplinary procedure include:

- The provision of clear standards of conduct by the college, and ensuring the communication and understanding of such expectations by those affected
- A party being advised in good time when alleged misconduct takes place
- Proper investigation into the alleged misconduct and the accused student also being advised of such an investigation
- The accused student being given the opportunity to participate in the investigation
- The accused student being provided with the opportunity to state their case
- The right of the accused to challenge the accuser and to contest any evidence presented
- Being properly informed of the outcome of any investigation
- Right to appeal.

A student, or their parents, has the right to appeal against formal disciplinary action imposed by the college as a final process in the college's disciplinary procedure. An appeal is not a re-hearing, but an objective review of the decisions made by the college. Therefore a student or parents wishing to appeal must fully motivate the grounds for appeal in writing with any additional or new evidence.

The code of conduct, disciplinary procedures and the appropriate forms should be reviewed and adjusted at regular intervals to ensure that current developments in education and the law are accommodated. It is advisable to include the SRC in the review procedure as it offers it the opportunity to bring concerns or requests from the student body to the discussion.

Look at the following summary of step 3.

Step 3: Implementing the code of conduct and disciplinary procedures
• Academic staff members, specifically subject lecturers, maintain discipline and orderly classroom behaviour and monitor student behaviour. • Academic staff members initiate interventions to promote positive behaviour in the correct way. • A fair disciplinary hearing is held according to correct procedures.

We have now discussed three steps that colleges can take to ensure the successful implementation of the code of conduct and disciplinary procedures. In the next section you can read about a few more things that can be done.

DOING MORE

Areas that need regular attention are:

- Adding new policies
- Informing students, staff and parents or guardians.

Some colleges write specific policies that make certain areas very clear. Examples of such policy areas are: attendance; substance abuse; academic expectations; dress code; plagiarism; HIV/Aids; and student pregnancy. An example could be that students be required to attend no less than 80% of lectures to be admitted to the year-end examinations. These policies could be listed in the code of conduct.

When students sign the code of conduct, they sign acceptance not only of the code of conduct but also of all the policies included on the list. A policy that has not been signed by the student has no legal standing, including all listed applicable policies. Students and their families need to be as fully informed as possible about the code of conduct and the disciplinary procedures. It is a good idea to write a policy booklet and make it available to families. Parents/guardians can also be invited to a meeting at the campus where these policies and procedures are discussed and parents/guardians can be sure about the behaviour expected from their children and the consequences of misbehaviour.

Now read the summary.

Code of conduct : Doing more
• The college writes specific policies and these are referred to and listed in the code of conduct. • When the student signs the code of conduct, they sign acceptance of all the policies. • A policy booklet is available for students and their parents or guardians. • Parents/guardians attend a meeting at the campus where the code of conduct, the disciplinary procedures and college policies are discussed.

Before you leave this topic, you have a chance to measure to what extent current practice in your college, campus or classroom reflects the best practices put forward in this topic. This will provide you with a basis for future planning.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The first task in this section is an audit of current contracting practices at your college or campus. If you are a member of the academic staff, you can think about your own practices of monitoring student behaviour and the consequences of misbehaviour. If you are a campus manager you can think about the whole process of student behaviour and discipline. If you are a student support services specialist you can think about the students who are referred to you for intervention.

TASK 1: AUDIT

Look at the elements listed in the first column of the profile and then circle the number between 1 and 6 that best describes your college's current practice. **A rating of 1 or 2 is LOW** **A rating of 3 or 4 is AVERAGE** **A rating of 5 or 6 is HIGH**						
Drawing up a code of conduct and disciplinary procedures						
1. The **college has a code of conduct and disciplinary procedure** which comply with legal requirements.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. **Standards for behaviour** for all aspects of student life are clearly set out in the code of conduct.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Specific areas of concern, for example, **absenteeism and substance abuse** are included in the code of conduct.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. **Consequences** of undesirable behaviour are clear and practicable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. The **disciplinary procedure** to be followed when student behaviour warrants it is clearly set out.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. The **SRC** has been **part of the process** of drawing up the code of conduct and there is a comment in the final code to inform students that their predecessors were part of the drawing–up process.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Procedures have been laid out for any later **changes** to the code of conduct.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Signing the code of conduct						
8. Prospective students have an opportunity to **read the code of conduct** before signature.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. The code of conduct and disciplinary procedures are **accepted and signed by all new students** and their parents or guardians if they are 18 or younger.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. A student who **refuses to sign** the code of conduct is not allowed to register.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. The code of conduct and disciplinary procedures are **discussed with students**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Implementation of the code of conduct and disciplinary procedures						
12. Academic staff members, specifically subject lecturers, maintain discipline and orderly classroom behaviour, and **monitor student behaviour**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Academic staff members **initiate interventions to promote positive behaviour** in the correct way.	1	2	3	4	5	6

14. A fair **disciplinary hearing** is held according to correct procedures.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Doing more						
15. The college writes **policies** for specific problem areas and these are referred to and listed in the code of conduct. Students sign acceptance of all policies.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. **Parents/guardians** receive as much information as possible about the code of conduct, disciplinary procedures and college policies, for example, through a policy booklet and campus meeting.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						

TASK 2: FINAL SCORE

Now write the sub-total for each step in the space provided below and add up the total.

Step 1: Drawing up a code of conduct and disciplinary procedures	
Step 2: Signing the code of conduct	
Step 3: Implementation of the code of conduct and disciplinary procedures	
Doing more	
TOTAL:	

Place your total in the appropriate block below.

Overall rating for student conduct

LOW	AVERAGE	HIGH
16 – 32	33 – 64	65 - 96

Lowest possible score: 16 *Highest possible score: 96*

TASK 3: PLANNING

The final task requires you to think about how current practice can be improved or deepened as a whole-institution response. Look at your ratings carefully and select three priority needs. The next step is to work out how to address these needs. Money, people and resources may not be readily available so you need to do some strategic thinking:

- Who needs to be involved in deciding how to address the identified needs and how will you get buy-in?
- Is there a committee or forum at campus, college or provincial level to which a proposal or motivation can be submitted so that the matter can be discussed more widely?
- What can realistically be done in the short-, medium- and long-term?

Write down the answers to some of these questions in the space below and then think of ways in which the matter can be taken forward. Planning for the effective implementation of a code of conduct starts here.

TOPIC 5

STUDENT ORIENTATION

In this topic we look at student orientation. The aim is to help each college and campus to ensure that their orientation programme functions at optimum standards. We discuss two stages of practice which we have called:

- Getting started
- Doing more

The following steps are important aspects of effective academic support in the classroom.

Step 1: Establishing the principle of orientation

Step 2: Preparing for the orientation process

Step 3: Implementing the orientation programme

In the final section there is an opportunity to complete an audit of current practice at your college, campus or in your classroom. This will help to identify areas in which practice can be improved or deepened and to plan for this.

Why is orientation important?

Academic success for its students is the goal that every college community strives for. Success as an NC(V) student at an FET College begins with participation in a well-planned and implemented orientation programme. The orientation programme has as its aim the improvement of academic and social integration to enable students to make the transition from their previous worlds to the world of the FET College. If there is not a structured, well co-ordinated orientation programme, students will take longer to adjust to academic life on the new campus.

For all new students there is a risk of not coping with life on campus and not succeeding academically. Academic success is more possible if new students meet new people, find out about the expectations of and issues supporting academic life, and learn to find their way around the campus early and have some fun in the process.
Attendance must be compulsory for all new students. If orientation is well advertised as a step towards success during the advertising phase the previous year, at open day and during registration, students will understand the difference it will make to their studies and personal well-being.

Orientation follows registration and must be seen as an integral part of the academic timetable. As registration often continues into the academic term to accommodate students who apply at the start of the academic year, orientation could be moved to the end of the first academic week or even later to allow most of the new Level 2 NC(V) students to attend. Late comers will have to be accommodated at a session later in the term at a special time decided on by the Orientation Committee.

Orientation is more than a few days of activities. It is an ongoing process to ensure that Level 2 students attend different events during the year. Colleges could adjust the timetable by shortening periods by 5 – 10 minutes once a week to accommodate a session for this important educational intervention.

Orientation as the best possible start to the academic year and as an ongoing process cannot be successful if the whole college community – every staff member on every campus - does not accept ownership. They have to reach

out and join hands so that together they can make a difference to the potential success rates of NC(V) students. As Dr Peter Dietsche, from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, said at the 2008 Southern African Conference on the First-Year Experience of University Students: '*At the end of the day, it is people that make a difference in how students experience an institution. So it is very important for people to be a supportive mechanism in institutions.'*

Benefits of an integrated approach to orientation

- The students will be ready to start their academic year, fully prepared in every way.
- They will feel excited, quite at home and proud to be part of the student community of this particular college.
- They will not only know their lecturers, many of their peers and the college layout but also what is expected of them and who to contact with a problem.
- They will also know that many other challenges will be discussed with them during the year at specific times on their timetable.
- They can walk confidently through the college doors on the first day of academic classes.

In the next section you will get an opportunity to see how well your college is prepared for orientation.

GETTING STARTED

STEP 1: Establishing the principle of orientation

The first step is to ensure that the principle of orientation is firmly established and is part of the college system. Academic success for students is the main goal of the orientation process. The core aspects of orientation are that students should feel welcome at the college and receive the necessary information to start the academic year successfully. Orientation should ensure just that.

Important principles that must be accepted by management and staff are that orientation is integrated into the timetable and that it takes place in two phases: the initial phase at the start of the academic year as well as throughout the year.

The involvement of all staff is an absolute necessity to ensure that the programme is well organised and that the mission and vision is embedded and becomes standard practice.

Now read the summary of what has been discussed and then go on to the next step.

Step 1: Establishing the principle of orientation
• Orientation is in place and is part of the timetable. It is not an add-on. • All staff members (managerial, academic, administrative, student support) have accepted orientation as part of the academic programme. • Orientation consists of two phases: a first phase at the start of the academic year and a second ongoing phase which stretches over a longer period of time. • A culture of organisation and preparedness is visible during orientation. • The college mission and vision have become standard practice.

STEP 2: Preparing for orientation

The second step in the process is to prepare for orientation. What should this look like?

Planning needs to be completed during the previous year and because it is the teamwork of all staff that will bring success, everyone needs to feel positive about orientation and they must understand their roles before the start of the academic year. New staff members must be informed of their duties when the college opens for staff.

It is important that an Orientation Committee is elected for each campus and sets the goals that it plans to reach. Students will make an effort to attend orientation if its importance is explained to them at every possible opportunity during the advertising and registration processes.

A clear programme with realistic time slots for each session must be drawn up and included in timetables. The quality and variety offered is important, and outside experts from the community can be invited to take part in the programme to support the staff. Examples are lectures, talks, outside experts, plays, PowerPoint presentations, videos etc.

The SRC or a special group of student leaders work together with the staff in welcoming and guiding the newcomers.

A booklet informing students of every aspect of orientation which they receive during registration will not only motivate them to attend all sessions, but ensure that the process is well organised and runs smoothly.

Look at the following summary.

Step 2: Preparing for orientation
• An orientation committee is elected from various campus constituencies to plan, oversee and evaluate orientation. • Clear goals are set by the committee. • A well-balanced programme is drawn up and included in timetables. • The programme includes variety in presenting information. • Orientation is well advertised to prospective students during advertising campaigns, open day and registration. • Student leaders have been trained regarding their role. • Students receive an informative orientation booklet at registration.

Now go on to the next step.

STEP 3: Implementation of the programme

The programme consists of sessions that ensure students receive basic information, and get to know their surroundings and the people important to them. It is important for students not only to get to know the people who they will be spending a great deal of time with and the values that they represent, but also to receive information about the course that they have enrolled for.

They need to spend time with people who will inform them of all the support structures available to them, from the SRC and the code of conduct to student support and finances. They also need to receive a **personal timetable,** an **assessment and moderation timetable**, a **year planner,** and their **textbooks** and **stationery** to be able to start academic classes and be taken on a campus tour to familiarise them with their new surroundings.

For administrative purposes time must be spent to ensure that all documents are in order and that absenteeism is recorded and immediately addressed. Special arrangements must be in place to ensure that latecomers are accommodated.

The programme will be incomplete if it does not provide for fun, enjoyment and relaxation. This includes information on sport, clubs and social activities during the year as well as a variety of fun events during orientation. It could include: sport challenges; a welcoming tea, barbecue or dance; impromptu choirs, rap and song groups or talent shows.

It is important to plan for a regular opportunity to review the process and make decisions about adding new and different aspects for the following year.

Look at the following summary of step 3 and then go on to the next step.

Step 3: Implementing the programme
• Welcoming session: the campus manager welcomes the students and introduces management, administrative and maintenance staff, and explains their functions. • Values session: the college mission, vision and values are discussed. • Academic course session: Students meet academic staff and other students involved in their registered course and receive course information. • Student support session: the student support officer introduces academic and student support structures and systems. • Financial session: the financial officer discusses financial matters. • Disciplinary session: the code of conduct and disciplinary action are discussed. • The SRC is introduced and explains its role and duties to the students. • A student development session where clubs, sporting activities and social events are introduced. • Fun, social event or events, for example, a sport challenge or a welcoming dance are arranged. • Books and information session where stationery, books, a year planner and timetables are handed out. • Document session**:** all necessary documents are signed and a register is kept. • Campus tour session: Students familiarise themselves with the campus layout during a guided tour – the lecture halls, facilities etc. • An attendance register is kept and action planned for absentees. • Provision is made for latecomers who have missed orientation. • A review of orientation by all constituencies has been planned as well as steps on how to improve the weak areas and add new ones.

We have now discussed three steps that colleges or campuses can take to provide successful orientation. In the next section you can read about a few more things that can be done.

DOING MORE

There is much more that can be done to make orientation a truly enriching experience for students.

More academic sessions are added. Examples are:

- A speaker who points out the challenges of studying at an FET College helps the students to take a good look at their new world and how to be academically successful.
- Practical challenges that could affect students during the first term are discussed. Some suggestions are how to change courses, how to get help if lectures are not understood or the first test or assignment results are bad. Campuses can add issues which they know affect their students to help them to know what problems can arise and how to solve them.

A special feature is the symbolic event that signifies the students' acceptance into the college community. This could be a special ceremony devised by the college with special features, for example, music, a choir, an oath or candles.

Parents or guardians are invited to a session where they are welcomed and certain important issues like the code of conduct and academic expectations are discussed with them. Refreshments could also be served.

Advisory or help desks will allow students to find early solutions and also show them that the college has a culture of supporting students. They are manned by staff who advise, answer questions or direct to suitable sources.

Useful publications are available for each student. This could be a student diary with all the necessary college information that a student would need for the year in one booklet. A course booklet is another important publication as it includes information about the course content, assignments and the dates when they should be handed in, excursions and other useful information.

Continuous or ongoing orientation will cover topics that are most important in the lives of students and are not covered in life orientation. A variety of general issues for Level 2 students are suggested, but colleges could add issues that affect their particular students.

A choice can, for example, be made from the following topics:

- Academic competencies: organising and study skills; time management; and plagiarism
- Independence issues: how to: work unsupervised; prioritise studies; and think independently
- Financial knowledge: how to manage money and a budget
- Personal mastery: ownership of life and studies; healthy relationships; and peer influence
- Personal health: sexual health; safety at simulated and workplace training; and good nutrition
- Behaviour issues: how to behave in practical training environments and workplaces
- Good citizenship: good employee; interpersonal skills; human rights culture; and gender sensitivity

Now read the summary.

Implementing orientation : Doing more
• A session for problematic academic issues: possible problematic situations that often occur during the first few weeks are discussed and solutions offered. • A session for the challenges of academic success at an FET campus where the focus is on what successful Level 2 students look like. • A symbolic event that signifies the students' acceptance into the college community is included. • A parental involvement session is included. • Advisory or help desks are available. • Students receive a student diary and a course booklet. • An ongoing programme is drawn up.

Look at two possible programmes which colleges could use during orientation:

EXAMPLE/SPECIMEN 1:

ORIENTATION PROGRAMME: GETTING STARTED		
DAY 1		
TIME	**ACTIVITY**	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**
8.00	Welcome and introductory session	
8.45	Values session	
9.15	Student support session	
10.00 – 10.30	**BREAK**	
10.30	Campus tour	
11.30	Books, stationery and timetable	
12.30 – 13.15	**LUNCH**	
13.15 – 14.30	Academic course session	
DAY 2		
8.00	Thought for the day	
8.10	SRC session	
8.45	Disciplinary session – code of conduct	
10.00 – 10.30	**BREAK**	
10.30	Financial aid or bursaries session	
11.30	Year planner and student development session	
12.00	Document session	
12.30 – 13.15	**LUNCH**	
13.15 – 14.30	Fun event	

EXAMPLE/SPECIMEN 2:

ORIENTATION PROGRAMME: DOING MORE		
DAY 1		
TIME	**ACTIVITY**	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**
8.00	Welcome and introductory session	
8.45	Values session	
9.15	Academic success on an FET campus	
10.00 – 10.30	**BREAK**	
10.30	Campus tour	
11.30	Books, stationery, student diary and course booklet	
12.30 – 13.15	**LUNCH**	
13.15 – 14.30	Academic course session	
DAY 2		
8.00	Thought for the day	
8.10	Student support session	
9.00	Disciplinary session – code of conduct	
10.00 – 10.30	**BREAK**	
10.30	Financial aid or bursaries session	
11.30	Year planner and student development session	
12.00	Document session	
12.30 – 13.15	**LUNCH**	
13.15 – 14.30	Fun event	
DAY 3		
8.00	Thought for the day	
8.10	SRC session	
9.00	Continuous orientation session: timetable and topic one	
10.00 – 10.30	**BREAK**	
10.30	Session for problematic issues	
11.45	Symbolic event	
12.30 – 13.15	**LUNCH**	
13.15 – 14.30	Fun event	

Before you leave this topic you have a chance to measure to what extent current practice in your college, campus or classroom reflects the best practices put forward in this topic. This will provide you with a basis for future planning.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The first task in this section is an audit of current orientation practices in classrooms in your college or campus. If you are a lecturer you must think about the campus practices. If you are a campus manager you can think of the wide picture of orientation. If you are a student support services specialist you can think generally about orientation on the campus or campuses where you offer services.

TASK 1: AUDIT

Look at the elements listed in the first column of the profile and then circle the number between 1 and 6 that best describes your college's current practice. **A rating of 1 or 2 is LOW** **A rating of 3 or 4 is AVERAGE** **A rating of 5 or 6 is HIGH**						
Establishing the principle of orientation						
1. Orientation is regarded as an integral part of the **academic timetable.**	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. **All staff members** accept orientation as part of the academic timetable	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Orientation **consists of two phases**: a first phase at the start of the academic year and a second ongoing phase which stretches over the year	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. The **mission and vision** of the college is embedded in orientation. The words of the mission and vision have become standard practice	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. **A culture of being organised and prepared is visible during orientation**	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Planning for orientation						
6 An **orientation committee** has been elected	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Clear **goals** have been set by the committee	1	2	3	4	5	6
8 A **programme** has been drawn up and included in timetables	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Orientation has been **well-advertised** as an important first step towards academic success	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Each **campus** is prepared for the orientation of its students with certain aspects shared by the college	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. All staff members received **information** at the end of the previous year regarding the programme, its goals as well as their specific duties.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. **The SRC or student leaders** have been trained regarding their role	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. A structured, coherent **orientation booklet** is available for students at registration	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						

Implementing the programme						
14 The programme includes a **wide variety of sessions**	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. A daily **attendance register** is kept and action planned for absentees	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Provision is made for **latecomers** who have missed orientation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. **Review** of orientation takes place	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Doing more						
18. **More academic sessions** have been added	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. **A symbolic event or moment** has been planned which indicates that students are accepted members of the college student community	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. **Parental involvement** has been included	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. An **ongoing orientation programme** has been planned and included in timetables	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. **Advisory or help desks** are available	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. Students receive a student diary, course booklet, assessment timetable, textbooks and an NC(V) student package	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. Each student receives **an ongoing orientation** programme	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						

TASK 2: FINAL SCORE

Now write the sub-total for each step in the space provided below and add up the total.

Step 1: Establishing the principle of orientation	
Step 2: Planning for orientation	
Step 3: Implementing the programme	
Doing more	
TOTAL:	

Now place your total in the appropriate block below.

Overall rating for orientation

LOW	AVERAGE	HIGH
24 - 48	49 – 96	97 - 144

Lowest possible score: 24 *Highest possible score: 144*

TASK 3: PLANNING

The final task requires you to think about how current practice can be improved or deepened as a whole-institution response. Look at your ratings carefully and select three priority needs. The next step is to work out how to address these needs. Money, people and resources may not be readily available so you need to do some strategic thinking:

- Who needs to be involved in deciding how to address the identified needs and how will you get buy-in?
- Is there a committee or forum at campus, college or provincial level to which a proposal or motivation can be submitted so that the matter can be discussed more widely?
- What can realistically be done in the short-, medium- and long-term?

Write down the answers to some of these questions in the space below and then think of ways in which the matter can be taken forward. Planning for effective orientation starts here.

SECTION 2

ON-COURSE ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Topic 6: Building a system for academic support

Topic 7: Academic support in the classroom

Topic 8: Providing work experience

TOPIC 6

BUILDING A SYSTEM FOR ACADEMIC SUPPORT

In this topic we look at building a system for the provision of academic support. The aim is to help each college and campus to ensure that academic support is systematically provided to all students, with additional support available to those who need it most. We discuss two stages of practice which we have called:

- Getting started
- Doing more

The following steps are important aspects of an effective academic support system.

Step 1: Planning for a system of academic support

Step 2: Building 'catch up' into the system

Step 3: Identifying students' academic needs

In the final section there is an opportunity to complete an audit of current practice at your college or campus. This will help to identify areas in which system building can be improved or deepened and to plan for this.

Why is a system of academic support important?

All students need academic support and development, this does not mean that each student must get special attention over and above what lecturers are able to provide in their daily teaching. It means that we need to adopt a broad approach to academic support and think of it as part of the curriculum, or as part of what happens in classrooms and workshops every day. Academic support can only be part of the 'mainstream' of teaching and learning when it is systematically planned. Such planning includes special interventions in areas of low achievement but this is by no means the only component.

A pre-emptive step to academic support would be to ensure that the regular teaching timetable for all subjects is planned in a way that facilitates teaching and learning in all components of the curriculum. A **well-thought out college timetable** is the first and foremost requirement for learning effectiveness.

In addition to timetabling, the college must develop and entrench a standardised **college-wide system of assessment and moderation**, as required by the Internal Continuous Assessment (ICASS) and Integrated Summative Assessment (ISAT) components of the curriculum. The purpose is to ensure that, through thorough assessment planning and assessment systems, students are well aware at the start of each academic year of the assessment requirements. This contributes to greater awareness and, in general, to greater preparation on both the part of the lecturer and the student.

In order to understand how academic support works as part of the curriculum we first look at the idea of curriculum more closely. Any curriculum can be broken up into three components. Firstly, there is the *intended* curriculum which describes what is to be taught and learned. Then there is the *implemented* curriculum, or the actual teaching and learning that take place. Finally, there is the *assessed* curriculum which seeks evidence that the intended outcomes have been achieved.

The term that best sums up all these aspects of a curriculum is often called **'opportunity to learn'.** Opportunity to learn (OTL) has a number of dimensions. Some of them are:

- **Content coverage**: the topics and sub-topics actually taught during the course of a college year
- **Content emphasis**: the amount of time or class periods devoted to particular topics or sub-topics
- **Pacing**: whether teaching progresses at an appropriate pace for a particular level of teaching and learning, and across levels (for instance, across NC(V) levels 2, 3 and 4)
- **Coherence (or sequencing)**: whether content is systematically and logically presented so that sequential steps are not missed.
- **Level of cognitive demand:** whether there is opportunity for conceptual development from lower order (factual recall and recognition) to middle order (comprehension and application) to higher order (thinking and problem solving), with the top layer underpinned by the lower layers.

When all the above components are planned and actually happen, lecturers are providing mainstream academic support to all students. However, local and international research suggests that in institutions where teachers or lecturers do not work closely together across levels and subjects, the curriculum is often little more than a repetitive cycle of basic skills instruction. In such a curriculum certain concepts and skills are taught over and over. As the pace is slow, critical parts of the content are often left out or they are covered in a very superficial manner. Instead of benefiting from the slow pace, students who are already struggling often fall further and further behind and there is no time to 'catch up'.

Creating opportunity to learn is the foundation of academic support that should be available to all students. For this form of academic support very good planning is required.

GETTING STARTED

Step 1: Planning for a system of academic support

Planning for academic support starts with an overall year plan for each NC(V) subject. The year plan provides the basis for the more detailed plans for assessment and lesson plans that must be included in lecturers' portfolios. The year plan is important because it:

- Puts all the components of a subject curriculum together. It includes both the teaching of concepts and practical tasks that help students to work with concepts.
- Provides an opportunity to plan for content coverage and emphasis, coherence and pacing. It does so by allocating time slots (in weeks) for each topic in terms of its weighted overall value and then in terms of the subject outcomes under each topic.
- Builds in time slots for the collection of evidence of achievement in terms of observation-based, task-based and test- or examination-based assessment.

It is absolutely crucial that both lecturers and students know how the year will unfold and how each lesson period will be used. In that way everyone understands the importance of time on task. Lecturers know how they should sequence and pace their delivery and students know how much time they have for the mastery of each subject outcome. This **foundational** form of academic support is part of the normal course of teaching and learning.

Now read the summary of what has been discussed so far and then go on to step 2.

Step 1: Planning for a system of academic support
• A thoroughly planned timetable is developed and adequately addresses all the learning components of the curriculum. • Lecturers make an overall year plan for each subject that they teach, so that they have an 'at a glance' picture of how all the curriculum components fit together. • The year plan shows the order in which topics will be covered and there is an overall logic and coherence. • The year plan also shows how much time is to be spent on each topic so that all content is adequately covered. • When assessment will take place and what form the assessment will take is clearly marked out so that both lecturers and students know what they are working towards. • The plan is discussed with the students at the beginning of the year so that they know how the year will unfold and why there is no time to waste.

Step 2: Building 'catch-up' into the academic support system

When lecturers develop their year plans they know that their students will not all work at the same pace and that some will need more support than others. That is why it is important to build remedial or 'catch-up' slots into the system.

The place and time of **'catch-up' interventions** are contested issues. Some lecturers argue that the content curriculum is already time-intensive and that class or workshop time cannot be used for remedial or catch-up work. Others argue that remedial work only succeeds if it is part of the formal timetable. All practitioners interviewed at higher education level were clear that any form of remedial work has to be integrated into the mainstream curriculum. At higher education institutions various models are used.

- ***Foundational models are used for 'high risk' learners***
  In a foundational model compulsory introductory courses are offered that are directly related to mainstream programmes. They provide 'gateways' into mainstream subjects and they are credit-bearing in the sense that they are taken instead of one of the other subjects. They may also be offered in the form of intensive tuition before the academic year starts. Diagnostic tests are used to identify students in need of pre-course subject preparation.

- ***Catch-up models are used for 'high-risk' subjects***
  Catch-up models are used to improve the average class performance in high-risk subjects. Subject departments or lecturers set realistic targets that all students try to meet (for instance, a 10% improvement on average performance or improvement to at least 60%). The pace is monitored and regular assessment points are built in to diagnose when students are not reaching the required standard. When students are not progressing as they should, compulsory additional tuition sessions or academic support tutorials are built into the programme (for example, on Saturdays). This should be available to all students. The aim is to revise, supplement and reinforce content or topics covered in class. In this way support is built in over the full year.

- ***Slower stream models (similar to 'catch-up' models)***
  In slower stream models students cover the curriculum at a slower pace over a longer period of time. For example, they may take a year to cover a half-year course. Students who are diagnosed at the outset as potentially in need of extra time and additional reinforcement will complete fewer courses each year to accommodate this model.

Colleges may find that foundational or slower stream models require complex timetabling; therefore the catch-up model is best suited to the needs of under-achieving students in FET colleges. There are currently two main catch-up interventions in use which can both be used effectively for 'high-risk' subjects. The first is the academic support tutorial and the second is computer-based remedial interventions. Although academic support tutorials are usually provided in addition to mainstream classes or lectures, they must be included in the year plans for each subject so that they form part of the overall curriculum. Computer-based foundational or catch- up opportunities are scheduled as part of class time.

The academic tutorial is more fully discussed in the next topic. Here we briefly explain **five golden rules** that ensure effective use of computer-based remedial programmes in a blended learning approach.

The five golden rules of computer-based catch-up programmes

1. Before giving students the opportunity to work on remedial programmes, subject lecturers work through these programmes to identify:
   - Topics or tasks that fit in with subject content covered in class in their particular subject.
   - Topics or tasks that offer foundational support in their particular subject.
   - Appropriate starting levels and progression pathways for students with different abilities and learning challenges.
2. One class period per week is dedicated to catch-up tasks and activities time. This is built into the year plan when content coverage is initially planned. It is seen as an essential part of the curriculum and not as an add-on. The catch-up period is used to reinforce foundational learning or to provide extra practice in topics covered in class during that week.
3. Subject lecturers accompany students to the computer room during the catch-up period. They introduce the topics to be covered and monitor students' work. The lecturer is on hand to answer questions and to explain content where necessary. For both lecturer and students this is an ordinary class period which aims to give an opportunity for revision and further practice.
4. Lecturers keep a record of the progress made by individual students and are able to direct students who make good progress to advanced exercises (so that they do not become bored).
5. For the last 10 minutes of each class the lecturer reviews some of the learning points that emerged during the class and praises students who made good progress or who achieved good test results. This motivates students to work hard in each class.

When used in this way computer-based learning programmes are not something that students undertake in their own time, usually without feeling very motivated and with little assurance that anyone cares about whether they improve or not. Lecturers use these programmes strategically and make it part of their teaching practice.

Look at the summary of step 2 before going on to the next step.

Step 2: Building 'catch up' into the system
• Lecturers decide at the beginning of the year what kind of remedial support they will provide and they build this into their year plan. • Including one catch-up period per week is viewed as part of the overall teaching strategy and not as something that is only considered when poor results have been achieved. • Catch-up periods are planned and well structured so that the tasks and activities really help students who have fallen behind. • A variety of activities are included so that those students who are keeping up can work on their own and go further. • When computer-based remedial programmes are used the five golden rules are followed. The subject lecturer assumes responsibility for effective use of remedial programmes. • Lecturers monitor progress and give positive feedback so that students experience a sense of achievement.

Step 3: Identifying students' academic needs

Early identification of academic support needs is crucial. By the time it comes to the mid-year or final examinations it is often too late to remedy the situation. While the assessment tools used during orientation are helpful in showing areas where students are capable and interested, they do not fully identify academic support needs. In every subject area it is essential that students complete a diagnostic baseline test within the first week or two of the academic year. This is not a multiple-choice test where students can try to guess the answers. It is a written test or practical task where students must explain the reasons for their answers. It is only when the reasoning is made explicit that the lecturer can see how each student will cope with the demands of the subject.

Lecturers need to spend time on systematically analysing the errors made by students to identify areas where most students are not performing to the required standard. Once common areas of under-performance have been identified this becomes the basis for determining where content emphasis needs to be placed, what must be included in academic support tutorials and where additional testing is needed.

This is a different approach than dealing with students on an individual or on an *ad hoc* basis. Each college needs to build a systematic academic support system that is available to all students. As part of this system lecturers allocate specific times when students can make an appointment to discuss individual areas of academic difficulty (for example, from 2 to 4pm on a Tuesday afternoon). Academic support does not mean that lecturers should be available at all times. Students must learn to trust the system that is set up and to be disciplined in the expression of their academic support needs. Of course this will only happen if there is a clearly communicated system and if the system works well.

A final part of putting the academic support system in place is to ensure that there are regular meetings between lecturers who deal with a particular level of students, Student Support Service Officers (SSOs) and counselling specialists whom the college may employ. Through such information exchanges a complete picture of students can be developed that makes academic support a whole-college responsibility which does not rest with a single person or department.

Now look at the summary of step 3.

Step 3: Identifying students' needs
• Early diagnostic baseline assessment is done in each class within the first two or three weeks of the college year. • A systematic analysis is undertaken to identify common errors and areas of under-achievement. • Lecturers have regular meetings within and between programmes to exchange information about areas of low academic achievement and to plan collaborative remedial interventions across common areas of need. • Each lecturer sets aside a regular time slot when students can make an appointment to discuss areas where they are experiencing performance difficulties. • The building and maintenance of an effective academic support system is a whole-college responsibility, under the leadership of the Academic Head. It does not rest with a single individual or department.

We have now discussed 3 steps that a college can take to build an effective academic support system for all students. In the next section you can read about a few more things that can be done.

DOING MORE

When academic support and development are part of the mainstream of teaching and learning it often achieves specialist status through the establishment of a curriculum development unit. At higher educations institutions such units are usually staffed by full-time specialists in curriculum, materials development and assessment. At colleges such units are made up of experienced lecturers under the leadership of the Academic Manager or Academic Head. In our discussion we call it the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC).

The purpose of a CDC is to build a core team of people to take overall responsibility for the implementation of the college's curriculum. The team meets on a regular and timetabled basis, usually for at least one class period per week but they meet more often towards the end of the year when planning for the next year needs to be put in place. The CDC has three main tasks.

1. The first task is to **co-ordinate curriculum activities across the programmes offered by the college.** This is done through a college year plan that shows all the important submission dates, for example, subject year plans, portfolios, internal and external examination and moderation dates. The college year plan shows the 'big picture' of how the overall college curriculum will work during the year and then the subject year plans break this down into the detail appropriate for each subject (as we discussed in step 1). Some CDCs consolidate the year plan and all curriculum instructions in a booklet which is handed to each lecturer at the start of the college year. This ensures that everyone knows what the bigger picture is and lecturers start the year in a prepared and professional manner.

2. The second task is to **moderate the standard of assessment**. When lecturers do not yet have a great deal of teaching experience they often find it difficult to set assessments and tasks that provide for the full range of levels of cognitive and practical demand. CDCs set up moderation sub-committees for subjects that are offered across the three NC(V) levels. Dates are set when assessment tasks and examination papers must be submitted to each

sub-committee. The sub-committee members meet to go through the assessments and then they give feedback to individual lecturers.

3. The third task of the CDC is to **contribute to the professional development of lecturers**. Lecturers benefit from expert opinion on their assessment tasks and those lecturers who serve on moderation committees, in turn, deepen their own practice by learning from others.

   CDCs also co-ordinate joint materials development projects, which they undertake internally or contract out.

   A further area which could be explored would be for CDCs to arrange sessions with subject examiners and moderators, where standards of task setting and marking are discussed through the use of exemplars.

Here is a summary of 'doing more'.

Building a system for effective academic support: Doing more
• Under the leadership of the Academic Manager a Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) takes overall responsibility for the implementation of the college curriculum. • The CDC meets regularly and plans the academic year in advance. They work out a map of activities and dates that affect the whole college. • The CDC moderates the standard of assessment in a developmental way by setting up moderation committees for subjects that are offered across the three NC(V) levels and then monitoring the activities of these committees. • The CDC contributes to the professional development of staff through joint moderation and other activities.

Before you leave this topic you have a chance to measure to what extent current practice in your college, campus or classroom reflects the best practices put forward in this topic. This will provide you with a basis for future planning.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The first task in this section is an audit of current academic support systems in your college or campus. If you are a lecturer you must think about your own academic support practice and also about those of colleagues who teach on the same NC(V) programme, or in the same subject area. If you are a campus manager or academic manager you can think of the academic support system under your control. If you are a student support services specialist you can think generally about the academic support systems on the campus or campuses where you offer services.

TASK 1: AUDIT

Look at the elements listed in the first column of the profile and then circle the number between 1 and 6 that best describes your college's current practice. **A rating of 1 or 2 is LOW** **A rating of 3 or 4 is AVERAGE** **A rating of 5 or 6 is HIGH**						
Planning for a system of academic support						
1. The building and maintenance of an effective academic support system for all students is **a whole-college responsibility**, **under the leadership of the academic manager**. It does not rest with a single individual or department.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. College **timetable** is constructed to accommodate all components of the curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Each subject lecturer makes a **year plan** which includes both conceptual and practical activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Assessment year plan is available to students.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Time slots for different forms of **assessment** are indicated on the year plan.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Lecturers within an NC(V) programme discuss their plans to ensure that there are **no bottle-necks or duplication of dates**. The academic manager co-ordinates and approves the outcomes of these discussions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. The **plan is presented to students** at the start of the year (preferably during orientation) so that they know what lies ahead and are ready and motivated to start working at the pace and in the sequence necessary to achieve the plan.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Students are required to **diarise** important test, examination and additional catch-up tutorial dates, and to plan their time accordingly.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Building 'catch-up' into the academic support system						
9. **Reinforcement and catch-up sessions** (by way of academic support tutorials or computer-based remedial programmes) are **built into the year plan.**	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Including at least one catch-up period per week in the teaching timetable is viewed **as part of the overall teaching strategy** and not as something that is only considered when poor results have been achieved.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Catch-up periods are **planned and well structured** with a variety of activities for different levels of student achievement.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. **Subject lecturers assume responsibility** for effective use of remedial programmes.	1	2	3	4	5	6

13. The college ensures that lecturers who are involved in catch-up sessions have the **required subject knowledge and teaching experience** to handle these sessions effectively.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Lecturers **monitor progress and give positive feedback** so that students experience a sense of achievement.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Identifying students' academic needs						
15. **Early diagnostic baseline assessment is done in each class** within the first two or three weeks of the college year.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Diagnostic test results are **systematically analysed** to identify common areas of under-achievement.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Lecturers have regular meetings within and between programmes to **exchange information** about areas of low academic achievement and to **plan remedial interventions across common areas of need.**	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Lecturers set aside **regular time slots** when students can make an appointment to discuss areas where they are experiencing academic performance difficulties.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Doing more						
17. Under the leadership of the academic manager a **Curriculum Development Committee** (CDC) takes responsibility for and plans the overall college curriculum before the year starts.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. The academic year plan for the college provides the basis for **subject year plans** made by individual lecturers and all lecturers follow this system.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. **Moderation sub-committees** are in place for subjects that are offered across the three NC(V) levels. Lecturers submit their tests and examinations to these committees for moderation and receive developmental feedback.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. **Professional development activities** for lecturers are in place to help them to improve their teaching and assessment practices.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						

TASK 2: FINAL SCORE

Write the sub-total for each step in the space provided below and add up the total.

Step 1: Planning for a system of academic support	
Step 2: Building 'catch-up' into the academic support system	
Step 3: Identifying students' academic needs	
Doing more	
TOTAL:	

Place your total in the appropriate block below.

Overall rating for building an effective academic support system

LOW	AVERAGE	HIGH
20 – 40	41 – 80	81 - 120

Lowest possible score: 20 *Highest possible score: 120*

TASK 3: PLANNING

The final task requires you to think about how current practice can be improved or deepened as a whole-institution response. Look at your ratings carefully and select three priority needs. The next step is to work out how to address these needs. Money, people and resources may not be readily available so you need to do some strategic thinking:

- Who needs to be involved in deciding how to address the identified needs and how will you get buy-in?
- Is there a committee or forum at campus, college or provincial level to which a proposal or motivation can be submitted so that the matter can be discussed more widely?
- What can realistically be done in the short-, medium- and long-term?

Write down the answers to some of these questions in the space below and then think of ways in which these issues can be taken forward. Planning for building an effective system for academic support starts here.

TOPIC 7

ACADEMIC SUPPORT IN THE CLASSROOM

In this topic we look at academic support in the classroom. The aim is to help each college and campus to ensure that the learning support provided in the classroom is of a high and consistent standard. We discuss two stages of practice which we have called:

- Getting started
- Doing more

The following steps are important aspects of effective academic support in the classroom.

Step 1: Teaching for learning success
Step 2: Designing appropriate learning tasks
Step 3: Working effectively with language for teaching and learning
Step 4: Integrating learning resources into the classroom
Step 5: Academic support tutorials

In the final section there is an opportunity to complete an audit of current practice at your college or campus, or in your classroom. This will help to identify areas in which practice can be improved or deepened and to plan for this.

Why is academic support in the classroom important?

In further and higher education lecturers are facing similar challenges. As more students enter further and higher education there seems to be more teaching challenges facing lecturers in their classrooms. Most students are not prepared for learning beyond school, some have gaps in their knowledge and skills, and sometimes the gap between good students and weaker students seems too big to manage in one class. At the same time, lecturers are under pressure to improve throughput and the quality of their teaching, and keep up to date with their subjects. They feel that they have less time to do things well and yet they must contribute to improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Lecturers have to pay greater attention to not only knowing and teaching their subject well, but also to creating better learning in their classrooms. This means they have to think more about teaching in ways that focus strongly on providing a supportive academic learning environment in all their classrooms. Academic support in South African universities used to mean providing additional classes for students who experienced difficulties in mainstream classes. This worked when you had small numbers of students needing additional assistance and these tutorials were necessary. But as numbers increase and access widens this focus has to shift to looking at all classes as academic support classes because most students need a more supportive learning environment in mainstream classes if they are to be successful. What we are calling academic support in this manual is really just good teaching practice that allow the maximum number of students possible to gain access to the knowledge that lecturers are providing. Having students attend classes regularly is a start, but it is not enough. Lecturers have to help students to `crack the code' that opens up learning. Fortunately, there are many people working on what we can do in classes to help crack the code to enable success. This topic provides some ways of doing this.

GETTING STARTED

STEP 1: Teaching for learning success

The first step is to ensure that all lecturers do their best to create the best possible learning environment and opportunities in their classrooms. What would this look like?

One of the key things we know about becoming academically literate in any subject is that students cannot write what they are not able to say. They have to have some experience of `talking' their subject. They also have to become active learners and not passive consumers of information. To do this, lecturers need to expand the kinds of learning experiences that they create in classrooms. This also means that lecturers must be up to date and informed about their subjects.

A pre-requisite for getting the learning process started is a full set of carefully selected **textbooks for each student**. Subject specialists are required to make the appropriate selection from the list of Department of Education approved textbook titles. Procurement of textbooks should ideally happen at the end of the previous year, but at the very least must be available to students immediately the new academic year begins. All other provisioning of resources is over and above the compulsory provision of textbooks.

Students can dialogue with themselves, through journals, portfolios and answering reflective questions, where they write about what they are learning. They can dialogue with others in a classroom as part of a lecture where lecturers give them questions or tasks to discuss in pairs or small groups. They can present their answers to the class (gaining opportunities to develop their skills for speaking to groups) and they can write for each other and get feedback from each other. They can also dialogue with visitors to the classroom. Another active learning strategy is to watch or listen to someone modelling or demonstrating how to do something, either live or through use of various media. Students also have to 'do' things in the class to learn. They can work with problems or case studies or demonstrate how to do things.

To create active classrooms lecturers have to ask questions and be aware of the different types of questions they can ask. The skill of asking the right kind of question is central to good teaching. Lecturers can ask lower order questions (usually factual questions) that require an answer based on facts or definition. These are questions at the lowest level of cognitive processes. More complex or middle-order questions require students to comprehend and apply what they understand. Divergent or higher-order questions ask students to synthesise, evaluate or predict different outcomes. Evaluative questions require judgement and ask students to analyse an answer at different levels. The main point is that lecturers must vary the questions they ask and the levels of cognitive challenge they require in order for students to be provided with opportunities to learn. Lecturers should not stick only to questions that seek information. They must make sure they move up to analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Lecturers must also create opportunities to get feedback on how much students actually understand and on the effectiveness of their teaching before examinations. They need to ask for specific feedback. There are many strategies for doing this, usually called classroom assessment techniques. In the last few minutes of the class lecturers can ask

students to write “The most important thing I learned today and what I understood least”. You can also pass around a large envelope with a question about the content covered during the class. Each student writes a short answer, puts it in the envelope and passes it on. This gives quick and immediate feedback so that the lecturer can make adjustments before teaching the next class. There are many different ways of doing this but the most important thing is to make it `safe' for students to give feedback that is anonymous and quick to process. Such diagnostic assessment identifies students' strengths and weaknesses and helps lecturers to adjust their teaching accordingly.

An important principle of assessment is that the methods of teaching a course (and the tasks used) must be aligned with the outcomes of the course and the assessment tasks. This alignment allows for greater clarity about what is expected.

Finally, lecturers must be clear about what they are trying to achieve in each class. They should have a set of outcomes for each class so that they are clear about what they want students to know and understand, and what they want them to be able to do with this information. Students are often confused about what the main point of the lesson is and about what information is central. Sometimes this is because lecturers have not been very clear themselves.

Now read the summary of what has been discussed so far and then go on to the next step.

Step 1: Teaching for learning success
• Each student is provided with a full set of textbooks. • Be clear about and emphasise the objectives of each class. • Make sure to provide opportunities for students to give feedback on their understanding and difficulties. • Lecturers must be knowledgeable about their subject. • Lecturers adapt their teaching in response to feedback. • Lecturers create an environment for active learning.

STEP 2: Designing appropriate learning tasks and activities

We will start by thinking about the design of the tasks for assessment. A task that gives students feedback on their learning achievements is called *formative assessment*. These tasks help students to identify how they are progressing and what they need to do to perform better. Formative assessment may carry a mark, for instance, when it is done as part of a portfolio, but it does not always have to be marked by lecturers. Students can also do self- or peer-formative assessment tasks. A formative assessment task does not have to be a test but it must provide opportunities to do the kinds of activities and tasks that will be set in final examinations. It could be a similar task to the one used in the final examination or one that helps students do the work necessary to prepare for final examinations. Students must always receive feedback on formative assessment tasks that indicates clearly whether they are meeting the criteria. This means that lecturers have to spell out clearly, in writing, the criteria they are using to judge success and what they consider to be good, adequate and poor performance. This must be done when the task is given to students so that they know on what they need to focus.

Summative assessment is when lecturers design a task to sum up what a person can do and to evaluate their competence or performance. This usually happens in a final examination. Lecturers must provide both types of assessment tasks –

ones that give students feedback on how they are performing along the way and ones that provide a final assessment. Final marks are a combination of both.

However, tests and examinations are not the only times when lecturers have to think about designing tasks. They also have to think about learning tasks for use in the classroom. These are tasks that require students to prepare for classes and for homework or revision.

Whatever the purpose of the task, there are some important principles to remember when designing tasks and activities.

Look at the following summary.

Step 2: Designing appropriate learning tasks and activities
• Outcomes, activities and assessment are aligned to maximise learning. • Lecturers expose students to the full range of cognitively challenging activities. • Language used for instructions is clear and unambiguous. • Mark allocation for different activities is clear. • Assessment criteria are clear and communicated to students when the task is given out. • Tasks are written down and explained orally.

Now go on to the next step.

STEP 3: Working effectively with language for teaching and learning

All students face the challenge of learning the specialist language of the subject they are studying. To be academically successful they have to learn to speak and write as technicians, engineers or administrators. They have to learn to become like the professionals they want to become. In addition to learning the specialist languages of their subjects, most students are also learning in a language in which they are not most fluent and confident. They may face difficulties in hearing what is being said, working out what is being stressed and knowing how to write and spell new words and concepts. All lecturers must be aware of these difficulties and take steps to try and make their teaching and language comprehensible to students.

For students to become literate in the language of their subject and confident users of the language of instruction there are a few key things that all lecturers have to know about language and academic literacy. Students must learn to speak before they can write. Lecturers must create opportunities for students to speak in class. This should preferably be in pairs or small groups before asking them to talk in front of the whole class. Being asked to complete a short task or to prepare answers to questions, give students a chance to practise speaking the language of the subject. They also become more confident using the language of instruction.

Lecturers must pay particular attention to vocabulary. They need to identify the key words and concepts that are introduced or revised in a class and take care to highlight the definitions, spelling and pronunciation of these words. When giving examples to explain the words and concepts, lecturers need to give clear examples that are understandable

to all students. They must be careful not to use anecdotes, stories and jokes that may not be familiar or accessible to all students.

Students rely on lecturers to make their language accessible. This means that lecturers need to modify their language to be clear and to the point without simplifying the content that they are teaching. Often this means repeating key points in different ways or using alternative words and examples. Being clear about the objectives of a lesson and providing clear instructions, both by saying it and writing it, assists students to follow what is being said. It is also very useful for students if lecturers supplement what they say with written material, such as clearly written notes on boards, overhead transparencies, PowerPoint slides or handouts.

It is also important to remember that students with fluent conversation skills are not necessarily good at writing in the technical language of the subject. Students must be pushed to write as much as possible and lecturers need to create opportunities for writing even if they do not personally mark all the pieces of writing they set. Students can write for each other or write for the whole class. Lecturers can then randomly select one or two pieces on which to comment. Lecturers must also provide as much written feedback and correction as is possible in large classes, or they can build in written responses using email and instructional technology.

Look at the following summary of step 3 and then go on to the next step.

Step 3: Working effectively with language for teaching and learning
• Lecturers become aware of students' language difficulties and build this awareness into their teaching. • Lecturers clearly emphasise the main points of each lesson. • Students are able to speak in class in non-threatening ways. • Key words and concepts are presented orally and in written form. • Students are able to speak before writing.

STEP 4: Integrating learning resources into the classroom

The main learning resources that lecturers use are textbooks. It is often a challenge to get learners to use them effectively and to use them to prepare for classes. If students are to use them well lecturers must make connections between the classroom and the textbook, and use the book frequently in class, for instance, by referring to charts, graphs and information in the book and pointing out key information. Many textbooks also have questions and reviews so it is useful to require students to complete these and come to class with written answers. Lecturers can provide incentives for completion of tasks in the form of marks that contribute to continuous assessment.

The Internet is another key resource for students and lecturers. Students must be guided on how to use it effectively and ethically. Lecturers need to give students guidance on how to select sites that provide reliable information in the subject areas in which they are working. Students need to be guided on how to identify authors (and organisations), currency of materials, their usefulness and, very importantly, their credibility. Students must also be taught how to reference Internet sources and how to use and include material in ways that are not just `cut and paste'. If they simply 'cut and paste' they should be penalised.

Lecturers need to keep dictionaries in the class and encourage students to use them. In addition, it is useful to demonstrate to learners how to use the spell checking and grammar functions available on the software used by the college. If lecturers do not insist that students hand in professional work then they will not do so.

People are also learning resources. Seek out and invite guest speakers, successful former students and people involved in dealing with current issues in different subject areas to come and speak to students. Encourage students to help to identify these people.

Now read the summary of step 4 and then continue to the next step.

Step 4: Integrating learning resources into the classroom
• Students must be guided on how to use textbooks effectively and must see them being used actively in classrooms. • Students need guidance on how to use the Internet effectively and ethically. • Students must be encouraged to use dictionaries as well as spell checking and grammar functions available on the software used by the college. • Lecturers need to bring knowledgeable people into the classroom to help bridge the gap between the world of work and college.

STEP 5: Academic support tutorials

Academic support tutorials must be provided in addition to mainstream classes or lectures. The purpose of academic support tutorials is to enhance student learning and to assist students to perform better in all their mainstream classes. Tutorials can take a variety of forms. They can:

- Assist with deeper understanding of the classroom content
- Deepen specific knowledge and skills that form the basis for learning in all subjects, for instance, better approaches to writing, reading, and revision of maths
- Teach specific skills and knowledge for performing better, for instance, accessing information for projects and assignments.
- Give opportunities for application of knowledge in the form of tasks, case studies or scenarios.

Experience has shown that when academic support tutorials are carefully planned around doing specific tasks, are taught well and push students to work productively, successful students join them as well as weaker students. This is the best possible outcome as it does not make them `ghettoes' for students who are struggling. They become productive learning spaces for all students and are less intimidating than big classes. In all cases, tutorials must be classes that enhance and deepen learning and not simply repeat what has been presented (and perhaps not been understood) in class. Often, when students struggle with what lecturers have presented in class, it is because they need assistance with learning how to approach the subject differently and assistance in identifying what skills and approaches they need to put in place to help them to learn and understand. These tutorials also offer more opportunities for students to talk. This helps them to become more confident in speaking the language of the subject which they must do if they are to understand and write better.

Look at the following summary.

Step 5: Academic support tutorials
• Tutorials are planned around specific tasks and activities that deepen understanding. • Tutorials provide opportunities for students to talk about the subject. • Tutorials are not just a repeat of what has been done in class. • Tutorials focus on developing useful ways of approaching understanding of the subject.

We have now discussed five steps that lecturers can take to provide effective academic support in the classroom. In the next section you can read about a few more things that can be done.

DOING MORE

Lecturers constantly need to develop their teaching practice and their subject expertise if they want to be on top of their profession. Some of this can be done by accessing appropriate resources. The Internet is a good source of information as many universities have made their academic staff development material available on their sites. Some of the keywords that lecturers may use for searching for relevant materials are suggested below:

Keyword	Explanation
CATs	Classroom assessment techniques. Ways of getting feedback on students' understanding.
Plagiarism	What it is, how to explain it to students and how to set assignment tasks that make it difficult for students to plagiarise.
Large-class teaching	Strategies for making large classes more interactive.
Blooms taxonomy	Different levels of cognitive challenge and types of questions that work at these different levels.
Constructive alignment	How to align outcomes and knowledge with teaching approaches and assessment.
Forms of assessment	Examples of summative, formative and diagnostic assessment
Using textbooks effectively	Tips for integrating textbooks and reading into classes.
Criterion-referenced assessment /grids	Examples of how to develop criteria for assessment. Checklists and grids for doing assessments.

These keywords will also throw up information that is aimed at students and to which students can be directed.

Colleagues who teach the same subject need to discuss their subjects and ways of teaching on a regular and timetabled basis. Lecturers also need to talk to colleagues who specialise in teaching and curriculum issues.

All colleges should work towards creating a teaching centre or academic development centre where teaching staff can ask for advice, receive support, develop their teaching practice and share learning with others.

Now read the summary.

Academic support in the classroom: Doing more
• Create academic development centres for professional development of teaching staff. • Develop own teaching skills and knowledge using available resources. • Develop an academic staff development policy that outlines steps to help staff to be professionals in their subject area and in teaching their subject.

Before you leave this topic you now have a chance to measure to what extent current practice in your college, campus or classroom reflects the best practices put forward in this topic. This will provide you with a basis for future planning.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The first task in this section is an audit of current academic support practices in classrooms in your college or campus. If you are a lecturer you must think about your own classroom practices and also about those of colleagues who teach on the same NC(V) programme, or in the same subject area. If you are a Campus Manager or Academic Manager you can think of all the teaching staff under your control. If you are a Student Support Services specialist you can think generally about the teaching practices on the campus or campuses where you offer services.

TASK 1: AUDIT

Look at the elements listed in the first column of the profile and then circle the number between 1 and 6 that best describes your college's current practice. **A rating of 1 or 2 is LOW** **A rating of 3 or 4 is AVERAGE** **A rating of 5 or 6 is HIGH**						
Teaching for learning success						
1. Lecturers are **knowledgeable and up to date** in their subject areas.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. All students have a **textbook** for each subject.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. The college has a **timetable** that facilitates teaching and learning for success.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Students and lecturers are aware of the **assessment systems** in place and the **assessment schedule** for the year.	1	2	6	4	5	6
5. Lectures provide opportunities for **student feedback and interaction**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Lecturers **adapt their teaching** in response to learner feedback.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Tasks done in class and given to learners are **recorded systematically**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Lecturers clearly **emphasise the main points** of each class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Lecturers use **different types of questions** to ensure learners are exposed to a range of cognitive challenges.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						

Designing appropriate learning tasks and activities						
10. Course content and learning outcomes **align** with teaching activities and what is expected in assessments.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Students are given tasks that expose them to **a range of cognitive challenges**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. The **language** used in tasks and activities is clear and unambiguous.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. The **breakdown of marks is clear** in all assessment tasks.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. **Assessment criteria are set up** when the task is designed and clearly communicated to students.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. Students are given **feedback** on formative tasks before being required to do summative assessments.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Working effectively with language for teaching and learning						
16. Students have opportunities to **speak** in pairs or small groups before speaking in front of the whole class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Key concepts and information are presented **orally and in written form**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Students have **opportunities to use key concepts** while doing tasks that are typical of the subject.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Students have opportunities to **speak the language of the subject before writing.**	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Key concepts are presented **several times** using different languages and examples.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. **Concrete examples** are used to illustrate main points.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Integrating learning resources into the classroom						
22. Students are taught how to use the **Internet** appropriately and ethically.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. Students are encouraged to use **dictionaries** as well as **spell checking and grammar functions** available on the software used by the college.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. **Textbooks** are actively used in classrooms.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Academic support tutorials						
25. Tutorials focus on carefully **structured** tasks that assist with greater understanding of the subject.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. Tutorials provide an opportunity for students **to speak the language of the subject**.	1	2	3	4	5	6

27. Tutorials assist students in how to **approach learning in the subject**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Doing more						
28. There are **opportunities for staff to develop** and share their knowledge and teaching experiences.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. The college provides **teaching and curriculum support to lecturers.**	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. The college has **a policy on academic staff development.**	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						

TASK 2: FINAL SCORE

Write the sub-total for each step in the space provided below and add up the total.

Step 1: Teaching for learning success	
Step 2: Designing appropriate learning tasks and activities	
Step 3: Working effectively with language for teaching and learning	
Step 4: Integrating learning resources into the classroom	
Step 5: Academic support tutorials	
Doing more	
TOTAL:	

Place your total in the appropriate block below.

Overall rating for academic support in the classroom

LOW	AVERAGE	HIGH
27 - 54	55 – 108	109 - 162

Lowest possible score: 27 *Highest possible score: 162*

TASK 3: PLANNING

The final task requires you to think about how current practice can be improved or deepened as a whole-institution response. Look at your ratings carefully and select three priority needs. The next step is to work out how to address these needs. Money, people and resources may not be readily available so you need to do some strategic thinking:

- Who needs to be involved in deciding how to address the identified needs and how will you get buy-in?
- Is there a committee or forum at campus, college or provincial level to which a proposal or motivation can be

submitted so that the matter can be discussed more widely?

- What can realistically be done in the short-, medium- and long-term?

Write down the answers to some of these questions in the space below and then think of ways in which the matter can be taken forward. Planning for effective academic support in the classroom starts here.

TOPIC 8

PROVIDING WORK EXPERIENCE

In this topic we look at providing students with work experience. The aim is to help each college and campus to ensure that the work experience they provide for students through simulated training and placements in actual workplaces is of a high and consistent standard. We discuss two stages of practice which we have called:

- Getting started
- Doing more

The following steps are important aspects of providing work experience:

Step 1: Preparing to provide work experience

Step 2: Providing work experience in simulated and actual workplaces

In the final section there is an opportunity to complete an audit of current practice at your college or campus, or in your classroom. This will help to identify areas in which practice can be improved or deepened and to plan for this.

Why is work experience important?

To succeed in the world of work, college graduates need a range of abilities. They need some knowledge of how businesses operate and of business etiquette. They need communication and language (usually English) skills and they need skills in dealing with customers. They also need to at least have a basic knowledge of and ability to use the technology of their trades, and to be able to apply their trade knowledge and skills to real workplace situations. For instance, in an electronic repair environment they not only need to be able to solder and read a circuit board, they also need to be able to diagnose faults and repair them. To operate effectively in real workplaces, college graduates need to be able to grasp and solve problems experienced by customers. They also need to be able to work independently and in teams. Very importantly, they need an aptitude for and interest in the work they are doing, as well as a willingness and ability to learn new things. Being able to work carefully and safely is also important, especially in work environments that are dangerous with heavy current or equipment that can cause life-threatening injuries.

This is what employers say they are looking for when they hire intermediate-level employees. Employers broadly look for four types of competence: foundational, social, technological and technical. *Foundational* competence refers to language and number skills; *social* competence refers to teamwork and an ability to deal with clients; *technological* competence refers to the use of workplace technology; and *technical* competence refers to trade knowledge and an ability to apply it practically when solving trade-related problems in real work situations. Even though technological and technical competence are highly valued by employers, many rate foundational and social competence as being more important. For most employers, business success rests on good communication, teamwork and effective client interaction.

To operate effectively in real work environments students thus need more than trade knowledge and skills. They also need communication, number and social skills. In addition, they need to be able to apply the knowledge and skills they have in real work situations under real work conditions. The process of translating knowledge and skills from a training environment into a real world one needs to be supported as this does not happen automatically. Providing practical

training that is limited to students just practising the different tasks or processes that make up the jobs they are learning to perform is not enough. Colleges also need to provide students with the chance to practise what they have learnt in real-work situations in which they are required to draw on the full range of employability competencies. This kind of practice is what is understood by work experience. Work experience can be provided through simulated training or experience in actual workplaces.

It is essential that colleges do not view work experience as an add-on function. Work experience is a vital step in the process of preparing students to function effectively in the real world of work as employees or entrepreneurs. It gives them the opportunity to apply what they are learning about theoretically and practically in real work situations.

GETTING STARTED

STEP 1: Preparing to provide work experience

The first step focuses on laying the foundations for a curriculum that includes the provision of work experience in simulated or actual workplaces and thus prepares students to operate in real work environments. What would this look like?

Firstly, your college needs to make sure that practical application that includes simulated training and experience in actual workplaces becomes a fully established part of its culture and curriculum. Your college needs to develop an environment that supports practical application. Practical application thus needs to be included in your college's vision and mission. It also needs to be planned and budgeted for in your college's strategic plans. Furthermore, policies and implementation guidelines that support practical application need to be developed. It is particularly important that these are in place to support actual workplace exposure for students and lecturers.

Secondly, practical application needs to be planned for and should be included in subject and programme plans. The time allocated to practical application and the activities planned must at least match the specifications in NC(V) subject and assessment guidelines. Along with theory lessons, all practical activities and assignments should ultimately contribute to the development of subject outcomes. Some practical activities will take place in classrooms and others in practical training rooms. Simulated training is a requirement of all NC(V) programmes as are projects and assignments that require students to engage with or visit actual workplaces. Work experience in actual workplaces is only stipulated for some programmes, like tourism, but it is certainly an option that should be encouraged for all programmes. It is important to plan simulated or actual workplace experience so that the following three components are included:

COMPONENT 1	**COMPONENT 2**	**COMPONENT 3**
Practical training which helps students to develop task and process skills through **continuous repetition**.	Simulated training which exposes students to the sequence of work and business operations in **real-world scenarios**	Work experience in actual workplaces where students are exposed to business operations and the sequence of work in **real companies**

Practical application that focuses on reinforcing theoretical knowledge and developing task and process skills is usually thought of as 'practical training'. To perfect a work task or process, like turning a thread on a lathe, making a white sauce or sending a fax, a student will need to have the task or process explained and shown to them. They then need to be given the opportunity to individually and repetitively practise it. Repetition is important because it reinforces the knowledge and skills being developed. It also develops speed and dexterity. However, if students are to operate adequately in the world of work practical training needs to go further than just teaching them to perform a task or process.

In the real world of work, each task or process is part of a bigger whole and a business is made up of a number of wholes. For instance, a company will usually have a number of departments each of which has a particular function. There will be a number of jobs in each department which together combine to make up the department. Each job will also consist of a number of tasks that link together in a sequence. A stock controller, for example, needs to carry out a sequence of tasks that will result in the business having the stock it needs at all times. To operate in the world of work, students need to understand how each of the tasks and processes they have learnt fit together in a sequence to make up the whole. A team effort is also usually needed to achieve the whole and being able to work in teams is thus an essential part of work in the real world. In real working environments, work is also pressured and unpredictable and students ultimately need to learn to perform under these conditions.

Part of the process of developing competent work-ready students is to give them an opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in situations that occur in actual workplaces. It is this kind of application that builds work experience as it helps students to develop an understanding of how businesses operate; the sequence of work in a job, how each job fits into the business as a whole and the dynamics of interacting with supervisors and managers to whom they are accountable. Communication and teamwork are important features of gaining experience in an actual workplace.

In simulated training students are given the opportunity to carry out full sequences of work in situations that occur in real-work environments. A business simulator, for instance, mirrors the functions and operations of an actual business. During a business simulation training session, each student takes on a job in the business and together they play out scenarios based on actual work situations. Simulation is an integrated approach to learning that develops values, leadership, teamwork, written and spoken communication skills as well as specific task and process outcomes. As such it develops all four employability competencies. Simulated training is one of the best ways to prepare students for the world of work. It gives students a chance to deal with problems practically and tasks in real production time but in a controlled environment where the risk of making a mistake is not great. This helps students to build the competence and confidence they need to cope with pressure and unpredictability in actual workplaces.

The ideal path to follow when providing students with work experience is simulated training followed by time spent in actual workplaces where students may shadow company employees or engage in supervised practical activities. In this way they are exposed to the way actual companies operate, the sequence of work in different jobs, and how company employees work together and engage with clients. Students also get to experience normal production and service pressures under 'real-time' conditions. There are many advantages of this sort of work experience. The case below illustrates some of these.

Case: FET College Project[1]

Four colleges are participating in a pilot project which involves the annual placement of NCV engineering students in workplaces for f exposure and work experience. The first group of NCV Level 2 students were placed for one week during 2008. Team members' feedback on their experience was extremely positive. Some of their comments include:

- I learnt a lot and really enjoyed it.
- I got a clear picture of how the outside world works.
- The first day was dedicated to induction and safety procedures. We learnt about the importance of safety in the workplace and the importance of protective clothing and protection against noise.
- We were treated like real employees and clocked in every day.
- I learnt about work ethics and about being responsible and punctual.
- I got a chance to turn a thread and was shown how a CNC machine works.
- I learnt about different types of welding.
- I now see my course in a whole new light. I realised that to succeed I must put in more work.
- I wasn't sure what I would do when I finished college, now I know. I am in the right career.

While there is no doubt that students benefit tremendously from work experience in actual workplaces, it is unlikely that colleges will ever be in a position to find work placements for all their students. Good practice shows though that when simulated training is well planned and effectively provided it can be an adequate substitute for actual workplace experience. These days there are also software and PowerPoint presentations available that bring processes and operations alive in the traditional classroom context. While this does not replace time spent in workshops and simulators it can help to reduce the amount of time that needs to be spent in special-purpose environments and result in efficient use of infrastructure and resources.

Simulated training also has some advantages over training in actual workplaces. One of these is that through simulation students can be exposed to a greater variety of work situations than in an actual workplace. Work specialisation and sub-division can limit the opportunities that students will have to gain work experience in an actual company. Students may, for instance, spend their time in one section where they are exposed to a small part of company operations. They may also only get experience doing a few tasks that would make up one job.

The plan developed for each programme thus needs to include practical activities that give students the opportunity to:

- Practice and perfect the different tasks and processes that make up the trades they are learning; and
- perform these tasks and processes in real production time through simulated and/or actual work situations which involve whole work sequences, teamwork and some unpredictability.

An important part of preparing to provide work experience is timetabling the practical training activities planned for each college programme. This includes periods of placement in actual workplaces. When timetabling simulation sessions, enough time needs to be given to each session for these to have the desired impact. Time is needed for students to become immersed in the situation they are simulating and for full cycles of work to play out. Experience indicates that no simulation session should be less than two hours; an ideal time is at least three hours. One college that runs a very

successful business simulator provides one simulation slot per week for NC(V) Level 2 students, which consists of two consecutive two-hour sessions. The Level 3 students at this college do two sessions of simulation per week, one of three hours and one of two hours. This college suggests that, when preparing its timetable, a college should first timetable its simulation sessions, as these will be longer than normal lessons, and then build other classes in around these.

To be able to deliver the practical training activities planned for each programme your college will need to ensure that it has practical training facilities that can support theme. Most programmes will require a specialised practical training facility that can be used for practical and simulated training. For instance, engineering programmes need workshops, hospitality programmes need kitchens and business programmes need business simulators. These facilities need to be sufficiently equipped to meet the practical training requirements of the programme. 'Sufficiently equipped' does not mean that all the equipment in every practical training facility should be brand-new and 100% aligned with what would be found in related industries. It also does not mean that engineering workshops are equipped with sophisticated training simulators or high-technology diagnostic instruments. While it would be ideal if this were the case, the high cost of the equipment and constant technological advancements in industry mean that colleges are always likely to be under-equipped and to some extent lag behind what is found in industry.

With this reality in mind, colleges need to make creative use of the practical training facilities and equipment they do have and use visits to and placements in industry as a way to supplement the exposure they can provide students with on site. As a start each college needs to determine the minimum equipment requirements for each practical training facility and at the very least try to meet these. A plan and budget for the further development of each facility then needs to be put in place as well as a financing strategy. An equipment upgrading strategy should also be developed for each facility to ensure that it does not fall too far behind its industry.

As far as possible each practical training facility should also be set up to match actual work environments found in industry. This means that they need to be similar to these in terms of look and layout. They should also take account of the health and safety standards that are applicable in each industry. Even a minimally equipped practical training facility can be organised in a way that has the feel of a real workplace. The equipment, for instance, could be arranged in the room in the way it would be found in a business rather than a classroom. In industry, workplaces are set up to facilitate the flow of work. While this sort of arrangement may not have students' work stations all facing the lecturer it will make it more possible for the lecturer to simulate work flows that would occur in real workplaces. If it is not appropriate for a whole workshop to be organised as a business would be, one section could perhaps be set up to model a real business and simulations could be done here.
To help create an industry feel, relevant industry signs and notices, like safety and quality signs, could also be displayed on the walls. Students could also be required to report to practical and simulated training sessions dressed for work. For instance, engineering students could wear overalls and safety boots and business students could wear business clothes. When setting up practical training facilities, colleges need to ensure that they do not inadvertently discriminate against female students in traditional engineering trades by, for instance, not providing them with toilet facilities or expecting them to wear overalls and boots designed for men.

Your college also needs to appoint lecturing staff who have the expertise to teach the practical activities planned for each college programme. There needs to be at least one lecturer per practical training facility. These lecturers not only need

to have trade expertise and industry experience they also need to have an understanding of the educational process by which students develop practical competence and work readiness in practical and simulated training environments. It is important that staff understand what simulation entails, why it needs to be included and how it is different to practical training in its traditional sense.

Colleges that are running successful business simulators stress that a particular kind of lecturer is needed to cope with simulated training. This person needs to be a process and learning facilitator rather than a traditional teacher. They need to have some business experience and be able to cope with a more informal approach to working with students which includes a high noise level and a lot of moving about. It is also important that college lecturers keep up with industry developments through visits to or periodic placement in relevant workplaces.

Lastly, your college also needs to set up a system for managing practical and simulated training. While practical and simulated training should be managed as part of overall academic delivery and will thus fall under the systems established for this, academic policies and procedures need to explicitly deal with how practical and simulated training will be provided and managed. It is likely that each programme manager or senior lecturer will take overall responsibility for all the training provided within their programme, including practical and simulated training. Day-to-day management of practical and simulated training and of practical training facilities will often be carried out by the lecturers providing this training. If your college has a number of workshops and business simulators it might be necessary to appoint a workshop coordinator and a business simulation coordinator.

Now read the summary of what has been discussed and then go onto the next step.

Step 1: Preparing to provide work experience
• Practical application, which includes simulated or actual work experience, is part of the culture and service delivery ethos in the college. • Work experience is provided in every programme through simulated training or exposure in actual workplaces. • Practical and simulated training sessions and periods of student placement in actual workplaces are included in the college timetable. • There are suitable practical training facilities for each programme which support planned practical and simulated training activities. • Staff members with suitable qualifications, experience and training are appointed to deliver practical and simulated training. • Lecturers keep up with industry developments through visits or periodic placement in relevant workplaces. • Policies, procedures and implementation guidelines are established to support practical and simulated training and encourage the exposure of students and staff to actual workplaces. • There is a system for managing practical and simulated training.

STEP 2: Providing work experience in simulated and actual workplaces

This step is concerned with providing practical application that includes work experience. What would this look like?

Students need to be given an overview of the practical components that make up the programme they are studying,

including how work experience will be provided. It is also important that they understand how their practical work will be assessed and what criteria will be used to judge the quality of their work. If the programme includes periods of placement in actual workplaces, students need to be thoroughly briefed about this well in advance. For instance, they need to be given information on the company they will be placed with, what they will be required to do while in the workplace, how they will be monitored and assessed, and the rules and arrangements for the placement, including transport, and health and safety. A logbook system is generally a favoured monitoring tool to achieve this.

The lecturers delivering the practical training components of each programme need to have an understanding of the process by which students develop practical competence and work readiness. When students are learning to perform tasks and processes it helps if lecturers first explain to them what to do and show them how to do it. This will give them an example to copy when they try to do it on their own. It is also important that lecturers help students to understand the concepts and principles that apply to what they are doing practically. They can do this through tying what students are doing practically back to the general rules and principles that apply to the action. It is important that every student in every programme is given the opportunity to individually, independently and repetitively apply their knowledge and skills to the tasks and processes they are learning to perform until they can perform these confidently.

When basic practical skills have been developed students then need to be given the opportunity to hone and reinforce their knowledge and skills through work simulations that expose them to business operations and work procedures in the industries they are training for. Lecturers need to create, set up and manage scenarios that would be found in real workplaces during which students carry out the tasks and processes they are learning to perform as part of full work sequences. These work scenarios need to be played out in real production time and allow for unpredictable situations to arise that students will need to resolve. Simulated training scenarios should also be used to develop teamwork and communication skills, and give students experience of dealing with customers.

When doing simulated training, colleges need to find a way to balance simulation with outcomes development. NC(V) programmes require substantial work to be covered and evidence is needed of outcomes achieved. This can easily shift the focus away from simulation to de-contextualised development and evidence collection. It is important to remember that work experience is an essential step in the process of developing knowledge and skills for application in the real world of work, and that simulated learning should not be sacrificed in the interests of ticking off curriculum outcomes attained.

Setting up and running a simulated workplace

The steps to follow in planning and setting up a simulated workplace are: (1) Examine the subject guidelines. (2) Choose a workplace to simulate and give your business a name. (3) Look at how to match 1 and 2 and on the basis of this decide which sections and/or departments to include and what skills will be covered in each. (4) Arrange your facility in a way that it will support the kind of workplace you are planning to simulate. (5) Develop job descriptions for each section and department. A job description provides a good basis for simulating a job as it would include a list of job-related tasks.

Once a simulated workplace has been set up there are three phases in the process of doing simulated training with students. During Phases 1 and 2 students are given the preparation they need to be able to work in the simulated

workplace. Phase 1 is orientation during which students are given an introduction to the different aspects of the workplace they are going to simulate. Phase 2 is infrastructure building which involves giving students an overview of work processes and procedures in the simulated workplace and of the documents used. Phase 3 is when the simulated workplace runs. During this process each student takes on a role in the workplace and plays this out according to the scenario provided by their lecturer. Experience shows that for a simulated workplace to operate in a seamless way, attention needs to be given to the orientation and infrastructure building phases.

Some lessons about business simulation from colleges that have experience providing this

- Just do it. It is not necessary to have everything in place before starting. Equipment can be basic and second-hand. Job descriptions and other supporting documents can be developed over time.
- Do not try to do too much in the beginning. If the business goes bankrupt it is okay. It is important that the lecturer does not do all the work in the business just so it succeeds. If it fails, students will learn from the experience.
- A simulated business is not static. Lecturers should change and improve it on the basis of their experience of what is working well and what is not.
- In a proper simulated business the business should keep running and each new student group should take over from the last. Keeping the business operating should always be the first priority. Outcomes are developed through the process of running the business and assessment occurs in a continuous cycle with all outcomes being assessed sooner or later. As students work through different departments they practise different skills and will be assessed on these before they move to the next department. This means that students are not all being assessed on the same thing at the same time but by the end of the process they will have been assessed on everything.
- Simulation lecturers need to plan the year's simulation programme in advance with subject lecturers so that they can agree on when different outcomes will be covered.

Simulated training should if possible be followed by experience in actual workplaces. This is discussed further in the 'doing more' section below.

The last sub-step in the process of providing adequate work experience for students is review and evaluation. Practical and simulated training and placement in actual workplaces should rest on building better practice through reflection and evaluation. Reflection and evaluation need to be an integral part of training delivery and should include students, academic staff and employers who host students.

Look at the following summary before going on to 'doing more'.

Step 2: Providing work experience in simulated and actual workplaces
• Students are given the necessary information and preparation to engage adequately in the practical activities designed for their programme. • All students are provided with simulated work experience. • Reflection and evaluation is used to build better practice in relation to practical training and work experience.

DOING MORE

'Doing more' focuses on providing work experience for students through periods of placement in actual workplaces. What would this look like?

While it may not be possible for a college to provide all its students with work experience in actual workplaces, it is nevertheless strongly encouraged that before they graduate each student spends some time in an actual industry-relevant workplace. Ideally, these industry placements should be organised for students by their college. Experience shows that students not only struggle to find their own work placements but they may organise these with the wrong type of business. If the college is unable to offer work placements to all students it could provide these to a pre-determined percentage of students as an incentive. Criteria related to performance, class attendance and attitude could be set and students could be required to apply to be accepted into the work placement programme provided for each college programme.

Placement in actual workplaces will only be possible if employers are willing to host students. Securing and maintaining the commitment of employers to the process of hosting students is thus essential for the success of a placement programme. Ideally, placement partnerships need to be developed with a variety of employers in each industry in which programmes are provided. These partnerships will form the foundation of the placement programme provided for each college programme. Your college needs to look at all the employers it currently has relationships with and see whether any of these could be developed to include student placement. It also needs to look at how to build new placement partnerships. There are various strategies to follow, including working with industry representatives who serve on the college council, setting up an advisory board for each industry sector, and college representatives serving on industry forums and business chambers.

If placement in actual workplaces is provided in addition to a full programme of practical and simulated training, additional time will need to be allocated for practical activities. To accommodate the extra time needed it is advisable that student holidays are used for work placements. Work placement periods need to be included in the college timetable even if they occur during holiday periods. A placement programme needs to be developed to guide the experience of students while they are in a workplace. The activities that form part of the programme should be included in a logbook that students complete during their placement. The logbook will provide evidence of learning and can form part of these students' assessment. If a structured work placement programme is being provided, students will need to be monitored and supported by their lecturers while they are in workplaces.

There are clearly a number of tasks associated with providing students with placements in actual workplaces which include: finding placements for students; developing student logbooks; preparing students for their placements; monitoring students while they are in workplaces;, and developing and managing placement partnerships. It would be useful if a database of employers who host students was developed as this would help the college to manage the placement process. Your college will need to decide how to handle each task and allocate responsibilities between staff. The ideal situation would be for it to establish a job placement office and appoint one or more placement officers. The placement office would be responsible for securing placements for students while they are studying and after they have graduated and managing the employer placement database. To ensure a coordinated approach, the placement office would need to work closely with the academic staff members from each college programme who are involved in on-course student work placement.

Topic 14 looks at how to manage student job placement and employer work placement partnerships in more detail.

Look at the following summary.

Work experience: Doing more
• A programme of placement in actual workplaces is provided for the students in each college programme. • The college has established and actively develops work placement partnerships with a variety of employers in each industry in which programmes are provided. • There is a system for managing student on-course work placements as well as the partnerships developed to support these.

Before you leave this topic you now have a chance to measure to what extent current practice in your college, campus or classroom reflects the best practices put forward in this topic. This will provide you with a basis for future planning.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The first task in this section is an audit of current work experience practice in your college or campus. If you are a lecturer you need to think about how work experience is currently being provided in your NC(V) programme and how it can be improved. If you are a campus manager or academic manager you need to think about this in relation to all the teaching staff and programmes under your control. If you are a student support services specialist you can think generally about how work experience is provided on the campus or campuses where you offer services, and how to improve the relationship between on-course work placement and exit job placement activities.

TASK 1: AUDIT

Look at the elements listed in the first column of the profile and then circle the number between 1 and 6 that best describes your college's current practice. **A rating of 1 or 2 is LOW** **A rating of 3 or 4 is AVERAGE** **A rating of 5 or 6 is HIGH**						
Preparing to provide work experience						
1. **Practical application** which includes simulated or actual work experience is part of the culture and service delivery ethos in the college.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Work experience is provided **in every programme** through simulated training or exposure in actual workplaces.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Practical and simulated training sessions and periods of student placement in actual workplaces are included in the **college timetable**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. There are suitable practical training **facilities** for each programme which support planned practical and simulated training activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6

5. **Staff with suitable qualifications, experience and training** are appointed to deliver practical and simulated training.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Lecturers **keep up with industry developments** through visits to or periodic placement in relevant workplaces.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. **Policies, procedures and implementation guidelines** are established to support practical and simulated training, and the exposure of students and staff to actual workplaces.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. There is a **system** for managing, monitoring and evaluating practical and simulated training.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Providing work experience in simulated and actual workplaces						
9. Students are given the necessary **information and preparation** to engage in the practical activities designed for their programme.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. All students are provided with **simulated work experience.**	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. **Reflection and evaluation** is used to build better practice in relation to practical training and work experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Doing more						
12. A programme of **placement in actual workplaces** is provided for the students in each college programme.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. The college has established and actively develops **work placement partnerships** with a variety of employers in each industry in which programmes are provided.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. There is a **system** for managing student on-course work placements as well as the partnerships developed to support these.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						

TASK 2: FINAL SCORE

Write the sub-total for each step in the space provided below and add up the total.

Step 1: Preparing to provide work experience	
Step 2: Providing work experience in simulated and actual workplaces	
Doing more	
TOTAL:	

Place your total in the appropriate block below.

Overall rating for graduate tracking

LOW	AVERAGE	HIGH
14-28	29-56	57-84

Lowest possible score: 14 *Highest possible score: 84*

TASK 3: PLANNING

The final task requires you to think about how current practice can be improved or deepened as a whole-institution response. Look at your ratings carefully and select three priority needs. The next step is to work out how to address these needs. Money, people and resources may not be readily available so you need to do some strategic thinking:

- Who needs to be involved in deciding how to address the identified needs and how will you get buy-in?
- Is there a committee or forum at campus, college or provincial level to which a proposal or motivation can be submitted so that the matter can be discussed more widely?
- What can realistically be done in the short-, medium- and long-term?

Write down the answers to some of these questions in the space below and then think of ways in which the matter can be taken forward. Planning for providing work experience effectively starts here.

SECTION 3

PERSONAL SUPPORT

Topic 9: Student health and well-being

Topic 10: Leadership development for students

Topic 11: Student development

Topic 12: Parental involvement

TOPIC 9

STUDENT HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

In this topic we look at health and well-being. The aim is to help each college and campus to ensure that health and well-being is of a good and consistent standard. We discuss two stages of practice which we have called:

- Getting started
- Doing more

The following steps are important aspects of effective health and well-being.

Step 1: Planning for successful promotion of health and well-being

Step 2: Dealing with problems

Step 3: Partnerships with other organisations

In the final section there is an opportunity to complete an audit of current practice at your college or campus. This will help to identify areas in which practice can be improved or deepened and to plan for this.

Why are health and well-being important?

The aim of student health and well-being is to assist the student to become independent, both academically and personally. The student is assisted to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to make a successful transition from school to work.

The guiding principle of health and well-being is preventive, with the focus on maintaining a healthy body, a healthy lifestyle and good eating habits as well as responsible physical behaviour. A healthy mind, emotional and social well-being as well as successful relationships with self and others are as important. As the need arises, remedial or corrective action can be taken.

Student health and well-being improve the quality of life and wellness of the whole campus community. The aim is to make use of students' potential to empower them to become more aware of their physical and emotional strengths in order for them to make informed choices about their thought patterns and physical behaviour.

Students who are responsible in the way they manage their studies and are able to prioritise their studies along with other issues in their lives are much more likely to achieve better grades than those who do not have these coping skills. Student health and well-being focuses on programmes which will assist students to manage their studies and personal lives in a positive way and to prevent problems from arising.

Personal problems very often manifest as disciplinary problems. Regularly missing classes and poor performance are indicators that a learner may have a problem. Strategies have to be in place to assist and guide students to cope with problems and to help them to take responsibility for their studies and personal lives.

GETTING STARTED

STEP 1: Planning for successful promotion of health and well-being

The first step is to ensure that all the requirements for the promotion of student health and well-being are in place and part of the college system. What would this look like?

Preventative programmes:

A safe and supportive environment

Student support is most importantly about support. Everything is planned and done to provide the best support for the student. Equally important is creating an environment which is non-threatening to the student and where they feel very safe.

There are certain critical, non-negotiable values that underpin preventive programmes.

- **HUMAN DIGNITY**. It is the right of every student to be treated with dignity. They also need to be encouraged to treat others with the same dignity.
- **RESPONSIBLE AND POSITIVE CITIZENSHIP**. The college is a place where students are prepared for adult life. When they leave the college they will be able to make a valuable contribution to their places of work and communities.
- **ETHICAL LIVING**. Students have to learn to do the right things - not because they are afraid of the law or of being punished, but because that is what responsible, positive people do.
- **SELF DEVELOPMENT**. Students participate actively in their own development. They are encouraged to widen their horizons and learn more about themselves, the world they live in and the people around them.

Programmes to support health and well-being

The guiding principle of health and well-being is that of **prevention**.
There are some very important aspects to keep in mind when planning and implementing preventive programmes to promote healthy living. Most students at the college are in their adolescent developmental years. This means that they are going through a period of continuous development and growth. In this stage they look critically at the world and themselves. Appropriate support programmes are presented to guide students through this time so that they are stimulated and encouraged to grow as individuals and to develop their personal strengths.

The range and depth of students' needs are noticed and understood and their needs are met. Programmes also include strategies to prevent behaviour that has a negative effect on them as well as coping skills, and the handling of trauma and crises.

Trust is one of the most important aspects in the relationship between the student and the student support officer (SSO). To establish a continuous trusting relationship, students need to feel that there is a sound knowledge and understanding of them as people.

Another important factor is that student support services are available and accessible to everybody, including students with disabilities. The college has to reflect an attitude of inclusiveness and accessibility. Students come from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. Provision has to be made for these differences. Students have to be able to reach a counsellor's office during tea and lunch breaks.

Different ways in which to approach preventive programmes	
Programme	**Comments**
• **Healthy living and lifestyle habits** as well as emotional and social well-being strategies are promoted.	This should be the accepted way of life for the whole college community.
• The **life-orientation curriculum** covers preventive programmes extensively.	Work closely with the life-orientation lecturer and address these issues in the life-orientation periods.
• **Awareness days/weeks** in collaboration with relevant departments or role players are always helpful in preventive programmes.	Involve as many outside stakeholders and service providers as possible. Market these days/weeks very well so that students are aware of them and participate.
• **Motivational workshops and seminars** can be valuable if they are well organised and well marketed.	These workshops and seminars must not interfere with class attendance and should be held when students can participate without missing classes. They can be aimed at a specific group and not the whole college at once. If workshops are aimed at the whole campus/ college and form part of an awareness day, then students cannot miss classes.
• When a counsellor picks up a trend while engaging in one-on-one counselling, a **support group** can be started.	It gives different students with the same kinds of problems the opportunity to talk about these issues and find ways to work on them with their peers.
• Well-managed **competitions** are valuable ways to make students aware of positive behaviour.	It is important to have prizes that motivate students to participate.
• **Creative and innovative ways** need to be explored to present these programmes, because students have full academic programmes.	Efficient referral systems should be in place for preventive programmes.

Policies and strategies

To be able to provide a service that promotes academic success, policies and documents, as part of a well developed quality management system, are in place to guide health and well-being. The following policies need to be included:

- Counselling policy
- Referral policy
- HIV/Aids policy
- Substance use
- Student pregnancies

All counselling and referrals should be approached within the prescriptions of the relevant Acts. The following Acts are important and everybody must be well aware of their content:

- The Child Care Act, 1983 (Act 74/1983) as amended
- Prevention of Family Violence Act, 1993 (Act 133/1993)
- Sexual Offences Act, 1957 (Act 23/ 1953) as amended
- Medicines and Related Substances Control Act (Act 101/1965)
- Medicines and Related Substances Control Amendment Act (Act90/1997).

Before a preventive health and well-being service can be rendered certain strategies are very important. The whole college community is involved in providing support. This means all the lecturers, students, parents and other stakeholders are part of promoting health and well-being. Sometimes these people see a possible problem before the SSO and can bring it to the attention of the SSO. A common vision for promoting a healthy college community has to be shared by everybody with a clear understanding of the underpinning principles.

Regular meetings with all role players, including students, are important. Communication with everybody involved also helps the college to stay in touch with the needs of the students, including those of disabled students. It is also a way of making sure the quality of the service improves continuously.

Regular audits of existing resources are important. This will ensure that the needs for the service are met. This will also guide planning that has to be done to improve the service. Planning includes the continuous developing of material and content. This material is used during workshops, awareness days/weeks and in life-orientation classes.

The service rendered has to be what the students want. Research, surveys and investigations are done on a regular basis involving the whole college community who is asked to contribute and make suggestions. Extensive and ongoing consultation with key stakeholders at all levels is helpful to stay in touch with the needs of the students. It is also important to develop additional mechanisms and pathways that allow differently abled students to become integrated into the student body.

Staff

The most important thing to do before this service can be rendered is to appoint well- selected, qualified, competent and dedicated staff. Staff appointed to do counselling must be solely responsible for this task and not form part of academic staff or be responsible for any other admin tasks. Only a qualified person, who is well informed about legislation and policies, may counsel students with emotional, personal, interpersonal and intra-personal problems and develop preventive programmes. An untrained staff member who likes to listen to people or has a helping tendency or is a final-year college student cannot be officially assigned this function. Unqualified people do more harm than good and this leads to mistrust of student support in general.

If it is impossible to appoint one of the above and a staff member is appointed to deal with student support, this person must have applicable training, knowledge and skills and be qualified as a counsellor with an accredited institution. It is therefore very important that this person attend courses, workshops and regular training sessions to help them to qualify and keep up to date with the newest trends in student support.

A sound knowledge of ethical standards is vital. People who assist students in preventive programmes have to be role models and mentors who "practise what is preached". It is important that these people are mature and healthy, both mentally and physically.

This person is able to develop preventive programmes, give guidance, do trauma intervention and assist in crises. Other important knowledge and skills include first aid, drug and substance use and HIV/Aids.

As an alternative, the following staff can be appointed as a temporary measure to assist the Student Support Officer:

- Psychology, social work or primary health care nursing students who finished their formal training and need to do a practical term or internship
- Students who completed their internship as psychologists, social workers or primary health care nurses and have to do a year of community service.

Now read the summary of what has been discussed and then go on to the next step.

STEP 1: Planning for successful promotion of health and well-being
• Preventive programmes, underpinned by critical values, are presented in a safe and supportive environment.
• Programmes to support adolescent health and well-being help individual growth, fulfil the needs of the student and address healthy lifestyle habits as well as emotional and social well-being.
• Policies and strategies are in place with a sound knowledge of all relevant legislation.
• Staff members are well selected, qualified, competent and dedicated.
• Regular training is provided to improve the knowledge and skills of staff.
• Staff keep to ethical standards and are role models and mentors.

STEP 2: Dealing with problems

Counselling

Although the focus of health and well-being is on prevention some students experience a variety of problems. To support students in this area ensure a well organised and professional counselling service that is able to handle any problem from minor issues to trauma is in place.

There are some important aspects to look at when starting a student counselling service. A private counselling room on each campus is of the utmost importance. Counselling can never be done in an open office where other students or staff members can hear the conversation. It is better if this room is not in the student centre but rather in the administration building. The reason for this is that some students do not feel comfortable seeking help and do not want other students to know that they are seeing a counsellor. Take care not to put up a sign that says "Counselling Room". Also make sure that there is no noise, so that proper communication and especially listening can take place, and that the counselling room is easily accessible to all students.

The student is allowed to talk about a range of problems from everyday hassles to those that are seriously affecting their ability to function. The counsellor cannot decide whether a student's problem is valid or not. If the student took the

time and trouble to make and keep the appointment, then the problem **is** valid. Sometimes students will discuss an issue and only in the last five minutes of the session mention the real problem. A skilled counsellor will pick up the real problem and plan follow-up strategies. The student has to understand the reason and aims of counselling and must have realistic expectations when seeking support. The counsellor cannot perform miracles. Talking about a problem does not solve it.

To find a workable solution to a problem takes time, patience and dedication, and sometimes a lot of talking. The student has to be guided through the steps of problem solving and decision-making. The student gets an opportunity to look for possible solutions, to test them and to decide on the best solution for their problem. More than one counselling session is often necessary. Therefore the counsellor cannot provide quick fixes to problems. Students have to be guided to find their own solutions and to understand clearly their own role in the solution. Telling the student what to do does not support long-term solutions. The counsellor is a sounding board for the student to find their own workable ways to deal with their problem.

There are critical, non-negotiable factors underpinning counselling. Without them it is not possible to render a successful counselling service. The student is the most important person in the counselling process and should be assisted in every possible way. Therefore the whole counselling service has to be student centred and geared towards meeting the needs of the students. To be able to do this, the service has to be seamless. It is very important that counselling staff are available when students need them, especially during student tea and lunch breaks, as well as before the start of the day and after classes. Scheduled counselling sessions must always be recorded in writing, capturing the points of the discussion and agreement reached.

The conduct of staff members should always be professional. If a staff member makes a promise it has to be kept at all costs. Students should not have to visit the counsellor repeatedly because the counsellor does not keep a promise or is not available at the appointed time. At the same time, **students cannot see counselling staff during class time unless there is a crisis**. Total acceptance of the students is essential. The student is entitled to be handled with respect and dignity. A counsellor can never allow their own value or belief system to influence their conduct towards the student. A counsellor is always ethical. If a counsellor does not keep to the ethics of counselling, it can lead to a total breakdown of trust. Students can drop out of college because of this and unethical behaviour may even lead to legal action.

Some basic ethical principles	
Principle	**Comment**
Respect the student's integrity and guard their welfare throughout the relationship.	The focus is on supporting the student and this message has to be conveyed all the time.
Counsellors have to be very cautious about **physical contact** with students.	It is best never to touch or hug students. In some situations a touch on the hand or arm can convey support.
When results of tests and evaluations are given it has to be given very **sensitively**.	Always make time available to discuss the results with the student and make sure they understand the implication of the results.

Notes and records of students are **locked away** in a secure place at all times.	Only the counsellor has access to records.
All counselling takes place in **confidentiality** whether the student made the appointment or was referred by a lecturer or student.	The importance of confidentiality cannot be emphasised enough. All information that the student divulges is held in the strictest confidence and may only be repeated with the consent (preferably written) of the student. There are three situations where an exception can be made: • When there is clear and imminent danger to the student (suicide) • When there is clear and imminent danger to another (homicide) • When there is any report of molesting, sexual abuse or abuse.
To regulate the service it is important that students are seen by **appointment** only even when giving feedback.	This will prevent students from coming to the offices unannounced and then being unable to see the counsellor.

Crisis situations are handled as and when they are presented.

The checklist below shows some signs that indicate that the student needs counselling. Lecturers, other staff members and fellow students should be on the lookout for these and encourage the student to seek help.

SIGNS	YES	SIGNS	YES
Thoughts of pulling out of college.		Self-mutilation like cutting.	
A sense that something is wrong.		Thoughts of harming themselves.	
Physical signs of emotional stress.		New or worrisome feelings, like excessive crying or being anxious.	
Problems with sleeping.		Concentration problems.	

Peer counsellors

Peer counsellors are a very valuable source of help to counsellors with the counselling process. Some students feel more comfortable speaking to a fellow student about their problems and issues since they share and understand their world and are faced with similar challenges.

It is of the utmost importance to manage this system very well for it to be successful. Peer counsellors are often the first port of call. They must never be allowed to handle big issues or problems. Their function is to become aware of problems, to help the student with a problem, to vent feelings and to refer to the SSO.

The peer counsellor can help the young person with a range of problems. Students feel more at ease expressing their concerns and anxieties to a fellow student rather than an adult. Students will go to a fellow student to seek out

information or ask a question, rather than make an appointment with a counsellor or lecturer, to ask a question. Peer counsellors are in contact with students most of the time and they can help to be positive role models for younger students and build confidence in students who feel unsure and uncertain of themselves. They are in a position to be a brother or sister, to provide support and sometimes friendship. They can support students who feel socially alienated and help them to adapt to cultural and sub-cultural differences. They can listen and motivate students and help those who feel that peer pressure is a particular challenge.

Some students find it difficult to make choices or stick to the choices they make. Peer counsellors guide them in this process and motivate them to take ownership of their decisions. Peer counsellors are in a position to challenge students' beliefs and ideas and thus assist them to become responsible and manage their academic, personal and social life in order to achieve academic success.

How to plan, appoint and manage peer counsellors?

The SSO firstly has to decide how many peer counsellors will be on each campus. Too many counsellors will make the management and control of the service very difficult.

Appointment process
• Advertise the positions. • Interested students apply on a prescribed application form. • Conduct interviews. • Appoint the number of counsellors decided on for each campus. • Preference is given to level 3 and 4 students.
Training process:
• The elected peer counsellor signs a code of conduct which is binding. Any transgression of this code of conduct will lead to removal from the function as peer counsellor. • Peer counsellors are trained in basic counselling skills as well as ethics and confidentiality. The training can be provided by: the SSO, the Department of Education (if available) or an outside organisation that trains lay counsellors. • In-service training is provided to cover all practical aspects of counselling. The SSO oversees this training. • Weekly meetings are held with the SSO to address issues, look for trends and plan preventive programmes. During these meetings, problems experienced by the counsellors are discussed. The peer counsellors are also encouraged and motivated during these meetings and ongoing training is provided. • Records of all counselling done by peer counsellors is kept.
Other important factors:
• There should always be a peer counsellor on duty and available for students in need. Peer counsellors are on duty according to a roster. • The service is well marketed. Everybody on campus has to know about the service: how it works and who the peer counsellors are. • It must be kept in mind that peer counsellors are firstly students with academic responsibilities. Their duties as peer counsellors must not be so demanding that they do not have enough time to spend on their studies.

Referral

When a counsellor is not equipped or trained to handle a given situation, referral to an appropriate professional should be made. Counsellors cannot work with students who place too much demand on their own personality structures. It can do a lot of harm to the counsellor and the student if a counsellor tries to manage a problem for which they are not qualified or do not have enough experience.

Referrals should not create problems for students. Some important questions have to be answered before a student is referred.

QUESTIONS	ANSWER
1. **When** will the student go to counseling? Counselling sessions should not be organised during class time. The student cannot miss classes repetitively to attend therapy sessions. Students can miss class only in crisis situations.	
2. **How much** will it cost? Most professional counsellors and therapists require a fee. It should be very clear what the expected fee is and who will be paying the bill **BEFORE** the student is referred.	
3. **Where** is the therapist or person being referred to situated? If students need transport fare to get to the person they are referred to, make sure they can afford it. Also take travelling time into consideration. A student cannot miss classes to travel to a therapist and back.	

When a student is referred there are some very important factors to consider. Keep a list of helpful institutions with names, telephone numbers and procedures for crisis situations at hand. Update the list regularly and use it. Know the community and available sources and use them. Be familiar with the people you use as referrals. Network with them as often as possible. Know where they are situated and how to get there. Make sure of their procedure for scheduling, the therapeutic procedure, length of sessions and their financial policies. Inform the student being referred about these procedures and policies and always adhere to them.

Discuss the possibility of referral with the student before making any appointments. Inform the student why it is best to be referred and what the expected results are. Give the student some time to think about it and to make a decision with as much available information as possible. In a crisis situation the counsellor needs to be more directive and often makes the decision on behalf of the student. Once the decision is made the counsellor facilitates the follow through and helps the student to do what is necessary to establish a meaningful working relationship with the therapist. Maintain contact with the student by asking how they are doing. Records of all referrals need to be kept in a safe place.

Requests for support

Some students cannot seek help. It can be that they cannot acknowledge to themselves that they have problems or they just cannot bring themselves to ask for help due to a sense of pride, feeling ashamed or losing their nerve. If a lecturer, peer counsellor or a friend realises that this is the case they can request support for a student. A student has to be aware of the request. No student can be forced to go for help, unless their life is in danger or they pose a threat to

other people's lives. There has to be a prescribed procedure to handle requests for support. Everybody in the college (lecturers, admin staff and students) must be informed about this procedure.

Now read the summary of what has been discussed and then go on to the next step.

STEP 2: Dealing with problems
Counselling • A private, confidential and accessible counselling room is available at each campus. • Professional, knowledgeable counselling staff can handle a range of problems and guide students. • The counselling service is student centred, confidential and works on an appointment basis. **Peer Counselling** • A manageable team of peer counsellors is available at each campus. • The appointment process is in place and proper training and in-service training is provided. • Peer counsellors sign a binding code of conduct and regular meetings are held with the SSO. • A confidential, safe record-keeping system is in place. • A peer counsellor is always on duty according to a timetable. **Referral System** • A well-functioning referral system with a list of helpful institutions known to the SSO is in place. • Records are kept of all referrals. • There is a procedure to follow when support is requested.

STEP 3: Partnerships with other organisations

To be able to render an effective and comprehensive service, partnerships with other organisations are very important. The SSO must have a detailed list of available resources in the area where the college is situated. The list has to be updated continuously. The SSO must also network with the community, departments and other organisations to make sure all relevant resources are identified and used. The name of a contact person, contact details and position must be on the list. Make sure to meet all the people and streamline ways of forming partnerships

Work with these people when organising awareness days/weeks, and motivational workshops and seminars. They can also assist in training peer counsellors and presenting programmes in life-orientation classes.

Some organisations to consider are:
• The national and provincial Departments of Welfare, Health and Education and other relevant departments • Research councils and institutions • Relevant non-governmental organisations • Youth organisations • Relevant professional bodies • District support teams • Educators, parents and students

A number of students attending the college come from very difficult home situations. Below are some of the programmes that the college may offer:

- **Food programmes**. Some students do not have enough to eat. The SSO must be informed about these students and find ways to help them by providing meal tickets. Co-operation with welfare organisations, the community and more privileged students can be helpful in this regard. Keep in mind that this can be a very sensitive issue to some students. A programme like this needs to be handled with great sensitivity and confidentiality.
- **Assistance to child-headed households**. There might be students that come from households where there are no adults. The SSO has to be aware of whom these students are and develop plans to assist them where possible.
- Each college (and sometimes each campus) has its own unique challenges. The SSO has to know the **background and needs** of students very well. Programmes are planned to address these needs in collaboration with other organisations.

Now read the summary of what has been discussed.

STEP 3: Partnerships with communities and other organisations
• Partnerships are formed with other organisations. • A detailed list with the names of the organisation, contact numbers and contact person is available. • The SSO meets with all these people and networks regularly. • Programmes to assist needy students are running**.**

We have now discussed three steps that the college can offer to promote effective health and well-being. In the next section you can read about a few more things that can be done.

DOING MORE

It is suggested that the health and well-being is handled through a well-established referral system where a local clinic or hospital has the comprehensive services of qualified social workers and primary health care or psychiatric nurses.

A toll-free telephone line where students in need can talk anonymously to a counsellor during certain hours of the day can also be considered in order to make the counselling service comprehensive.

A buddy system can also be very helpful. Buddies are students who have recovered from bad habits and help other students to move away from bad habits such as alcohol and drug abuse, immorality issues, harassment and defiant behaviour. They are not peer counsellors. Their participation is voluntary. They become involved with one student at a time and assist, guide and support the student to break a habit.

Now read the summary.

Health and well-being: Doing more
• A toll-free telephone line is available for students in crisis • A buddy system is in place

Before you leave this topic you have a chance to measure to what extent current practice in your college, campus or classroom reflects the best practices put forward in this topic. This will provide you with a basis for future planning.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The first task in this section is an audit of current health and well-being practices in your college or campus. If you are a student support services specialist you can think generally about the practices on the campus or campuses where you offer services.

TASK 1: Audit

Look at the elements listed in the first column of the profile and then circle the number between 1 and 6 that best describes your college's current practice in respect of these key elements constituting the requirements for successful promotion of health and wellbeing. **A rating of 1 or 2 is LOW** **A rating of 3 or 4 is AVERAGE** **A rating of 5 or 6 is HIGH**						
Planning for successful promotion of health and well being						
1. Preventive programmes are presented in a **safe and supportive environment** with critical values underpinning these programmes.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Programmes to support **adolescent health and well-being**, help individual growth and promote healthy lifestyle habits are readily available to students with disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. **Policies and strategies** are in place with a sound knowledge of all relevant acts.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. **Staff members are** well selected, qualified, competent and dedicated.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. **Regular training** is provided to improve knowledge and skills of staff.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Staff members keep to **ethical standards** and are role models and mentors.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Dealing with problems: Counselling						
7. There is a private, confidential and accessible **counselling room** at each campus.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Counselling staff can handle a **range of problems**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Staff members are **knowledgeable** and can guide students to find their own workable solution.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. The counselling service is **student centred**.	1	2	3	4	5	6

11. It is a **seamless service** and readily accessible to students.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Staff members are **professional** and conduct themselves ethically.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. The service is very **confidential.**	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Counselling works on an **appointment basis.**	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Dealing with problems: Peer counsellors						
15. There is a well marketed, manageable team of **peer counsellors at each campus**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. A peer counsellor **appointment process** is in place and functions well.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Peer counsellors sign a binding **code of conduct**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Proper **training** and in-service training is provided.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Regular **meetings** are held between the SSO and peer counsellors.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. A confidential, safe **record-keeping system** is in place.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. There is always a peer counsellor on duty according to a **roster**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Dealing with problems: Referrals						
22. A well-functioning **referral system** with a list of helpful institutions is in place.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. The SSO **knows the people** used as referrals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. **Records** are kept of all referrals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. There is a **procedure** to follow when support is requested.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Partnerships with other organisations						
26. **Partnerships** are formed with other organisations.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. A detailed **list** with the names of the organisation, contact numbers and contact person is available.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. The SSO meets with all these people and **networks regularly**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. There are **other programmes** running to assist needy students.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Doing more						
30. **A toll-free telephone line** is available for students in crisis.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31. There is a **buddy system** in place.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						

TASK 2: FINAL SCORE

Write the sub-total for each step in the space provided below and add up the total.

Step 1: Planning for successful promotion of health and well-being	
Step 2: Dealing with problems: Counselling	
Dealing with problems: Peer counsellors	
Dealing with problems: Referrals	
Step 3: Partnerships with other organisations	
Doing more	
TOTAL:	

Place your total in the appropriate block below.

Overall rating for health and well-being at your college

LOW	AVERAGE	HIGH
33 - 66	67 - 132	133 - 198

Lowest possible score: 33 *Highest possible score: 198*

TASK 3: PLANNING

The final task requires you to think about how current practice can be improved or deepened as a whole-institution response. Look at your ratings carefully and select three priority needs. The next step is to work out how to address these needs. Money, people and resources may not be readily available so you need to do some strategic thinking:

- Who needs to be involved in deciding how to address the identified needs and how will you get buy-in?
- Is there a committee or forum at campus, college or provincial level to which a proposal or motivation can be submitted so that the matter can be discussed more widely?
- What can realistically be done in the short-, medium- and long-term?

Write down the answers to some of these questions in the space below and then think of ways in which the matter can be taken forward. Planning for student health and well-being starts here.

TOPIC 10

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR STUDENTS

In this topic we look at leadership development for Student Representative Councils (SRCs). The aim is to help each college and campus to ensure that the leadership development for student representative councils is of a high and consistent standard. We discuss two stages of practice which we have called:

- Getting started
- Doing more

The following steps are important aspects of effective leadership development for the student representative council.

Step 1: Planning for successful leadership development for the Student Representative Council (SRC)
Step 2: Organogram, portfolios and responsibilities
Step 3: The election of the SRC
Step 4: Inauguration and code of conduct of the SRC
Step 5: Training and development of the SRC
Step 6: Meetings and equipment

In the final section there is an opportunity to complete an audit of current practice at your college or campus. This will help to identify areas in which practice can be improved or deepened and to plan for this.

Why is leadership development for the Student Representative Council important?
Every educational institution needs a leadership body to be the link between the students, campus management and lecturers. It also creates opportunities for students to develop new skills and to get exposure to leadership opportunities. An SRC is also an integral part of student life.

SRC members need to support the student support efforts at campuses. The focus of the SRC must be on assisting and therefore members must have portfolios with clear job descriptions, so that they know what is expected of them. This also helps them to plan their work and make sure that they reach their aims and objectives. The college/campus management, the lecturers and the SRC work closely together. Students on the SRC are also assisted to attain their full potential. Appropriate opportunities have to be identified, which will help students to develop and grow. In the process their awareness of self and others is increased.

To make an impact, the approach followed by the SRC has to be whole-college directed. All relevant role players and communities have to be involved. The members keep their eyes and ears open and pick up trends or concerns before they become problems. They assist in developing preventive programmes in co-operation with the SSO to address these issues.

It is very important that the SRC represents the whole student body. The SRC is the voice of the students and the link between students and college staff. The FET College Act of 2006 states that the establishment of the SRC must be determined by the council after consultation with the students of the college, subject to policy determined by the members of the Executive Council.

GETTING STARTED

STEP 1: Planning for successful leadership development for the Student Representative Council

The first step is to ensure that all the requirements are in place and are part of the college's system. Each college has to be very clear about the structure of the SRC, what the expectations of the SRC are and what it has to do. It is important to understand why the college needs an SRC. This has to be explained to the whole college community. The following step is to decide who may be elected to the SRC. Some important aspects to take into consideration are:; an enrolled student at college; leadership qualities; attitude; regular class attendance; academic requirements; adhering to college code of conduct; and participation in college activities.

Another important aspect to consider is the term of the SRC. Important issues to consider are when the election will take place and when the new SRC will take up its duties. It is also important to think about stipends for SRC members. The following questions need to be answered. Do they receive a stipend or not? If so, how much and when? Do all the members receive the same amount? Do they have to achieve certain goals before they receive a stipend? Must they submit a report before they receive a stipend?

The SRC is the link between the college and the students. It will refer students' requests to the college/campus management. There has to be a procedure for handling requests.

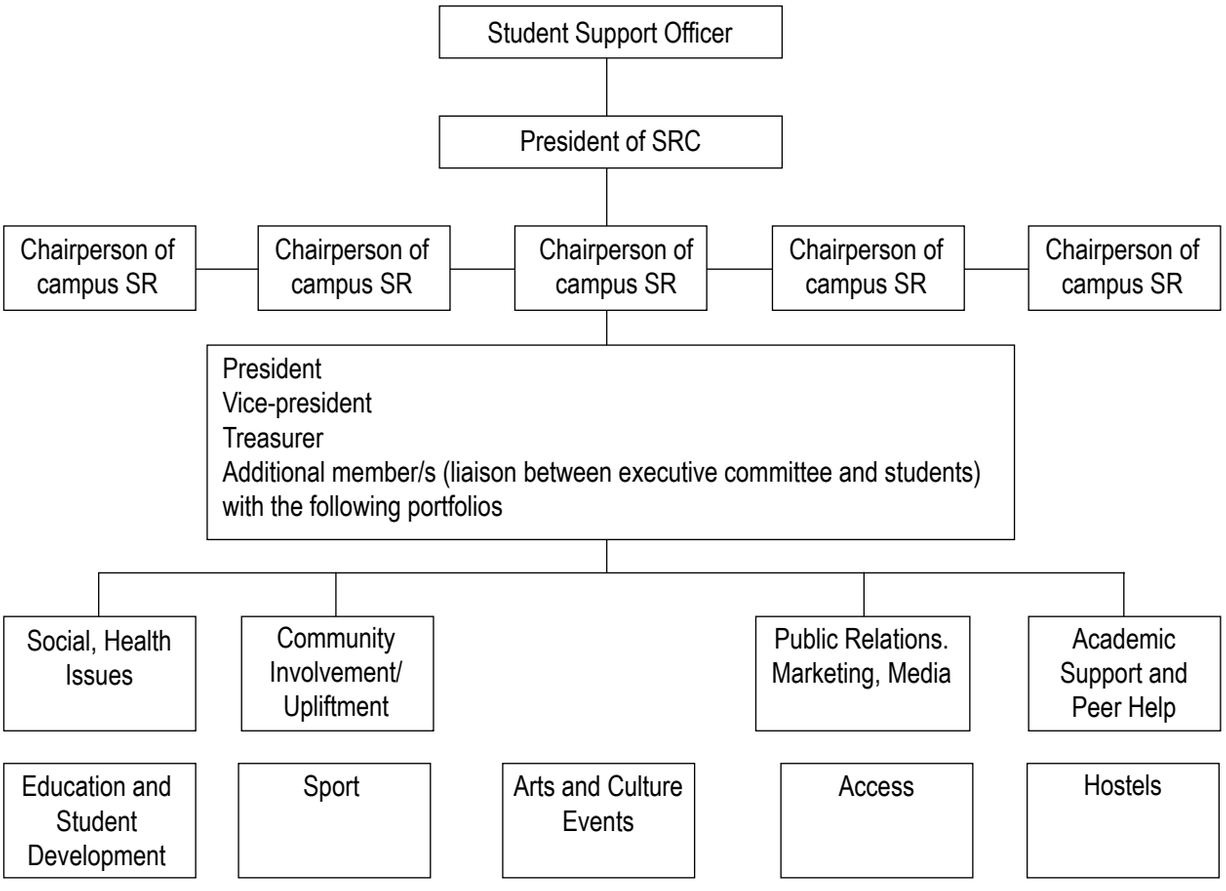
Now read the summary of what has been discussed and then go on to the next step.

STEP 1: Planning for successful leadership development for the SRC
• There is an SRC in place with clear roles and responsibilities. • The whole college community understands why an SRC is needed, who may be elected and the term of office. • There is a policy on stipends for SRC members. • There is a procedure for handling students' requests.

Step 2: Organogram, portfolio and responsibilities

It is suggested that each campus has an SRC with the following portfolios: chairperson, vice-chairperson, treasurer, secretary, additional member/s (liaison between Executive Committee and students) with certain portfolios. All the chairpersons from the various campuses form the Executive Committee of the college SRC. A president of the SRC will be elected from the Executive Committee. The president of the SRC will represent the SRC in the college management. Each college decides how many students will be on the SRC. The number of students per campus will determine the number of representatives on the SRC.

An **example** of the organogram :



SRC members will be given responsibilities that enhance student life on campuses. This means that the SRC members will be empowered to invest in people and communities. The SRC members are collectively and individually responsible for the proper implementation of the constitution of the SRC. For this purpose the SRC must distribute its duties and responsibilities among its members.

It is important that each portfolio has a clear job description. The aim of the portfolio is described and activities expected from the member are stipulated. The chairperson, vice-chairperson, treasurer and secretary also have job descriptions.

Now read the summary of what has been discussed and then go on to the next step.

STEP 2: Organogram, portfolios and responsibilities
• Each SRC member has a portfolio for which they are responsible with a clear job description. • Each SRC member knows what their responsibilities are and that they need to invest in people. • There is an implementation plan for the tasks and responsibilities of the SRC. • Duties are distributed among all members.

Step 3: The election of the SRC

It is best to select an Election Committee to manage the election process. This committee will ensure that the election process is free and fair. The following can be part of this committee: the campus head; a lecturer; the chairperson of the outgoing SRC; and a student not on the SRC.

It is important that the election process is fair and transparent. All students enrolled in the college may vote and everybody must know and understand the election process.

Equality is important. All students that comply with the criteria must have an equal chance to be elected to the SRC. No discrimination on grounds of race, gender, disability, course taken, religion, sexual orientation or anything else is permitted.

Voting is confidential and anonymous. Each student may complete a ballot paper only once. Staff members may not vote.

All students are informed well in advance of the election of the SRC.

It is suggested that the college sets aside an election month which does not vary from year to year. New members should have an opportunity to work with the current SRC for a period of time. It also needs time to plan for the year ahead. At the start of the academic year it needs to be operational so that it can assume its duties and play a role during registration and orientation.

Each college decides on its own election process.

The following aspects are important during the election process:
• The election committee oversees the election process. • Nominations are done timeously and all students are informed. • Nominees are announced at least a week before the election. • Photos and declarations of intent are posted on notice boards. • Ballot papers and ballot boxes are organised well in advance. • Lecturers may be asked to help supervise the voting stations and counting of the ballots. • The election committee counts the votes. • The SRC is announced by the college CEO as soon as possible after counting of the votes. • Results are put up on notice boards. • Management and lecturers are informed about the results. • An appeals procedure is in place. • The election committee handles all appeals.

Now read the summary of what has been discussed and then go on to the next step.

STEP 3: The election of the SRC
• An election committee handles the election process according to a fixed procedure. • Notice of the election is given well in advance. • The election process is fair and transparent. • Equality is strongly built into the process. • The ? process is confidential and anonymous.

Step 4: Inauguration and code of conduct of the SRC

The newly elected SRC is inaugurated as soon as possible after the election. The inauguration takes place after the executive committee has been elected. It is best for the inauguration to be a formal function. Being on the SRC is a serious matter and the message has to be clear to everybody that this is an official college position. The presence of the college CEO and all campus heads will make the function more official. The previous SRC hands its leadership over to the newly elected SRC. The newly elected SRC has to subscribe to the values of the college.

Before the newly elected SRC can start with its duties, it has to sign a code of conduct. The code of conduct is an official college document and is treated as such. The signed code of conduct for all students is kept in the student's file.

In case of misconduct by the student, an official disciplinary hearing follows. Keeping to the code of conduct is of the utmost importance and students have to understand the seriousness of the positions they hold. Forsaking duties will also result in disciplinary action. There has to be a procedure that will be followed when an SRC member does not fulfil the duties expected of them.

Now read the summary of what has been discussed and then go on to the next step.

Step 4: Inauguration and code of conduct of the SRC
• A formal inauguration function takes place soon after the election of the SRC. • The newly elected SRC members sign a code of conduct. • All newly elected SRC members receive training and attend workshops.

Step 5: Training and development of the SRC

The newly elected SRC receives training. It is also provided with capacity building and support. Its members have to be trained in leadership and organising skills. It is important that all SRC members attend all training sessions. Workshops are presented throughout the year to ensure that SRC members are equipped for their roles.

Suggestions for training	
Procedures to conduct a meeting	Writing of a business plan
Management skills	The college management and organogram
Planning skills	Teamwork
Formulating skills	Presentation skills
Conflict management	Co-operation skills
Leadership skills	Mentoring skills
Listening skills	Motivational skills
HIV/Aids	

Step 6: Meetings and equipment

The first meeting of the SRC needs to take place directly after the announcement of the SRC. At this meeting the Executive Committee is selected.

The SRC has regular meetings with the SSO. Proper meeting procedures are followed which include an agenda and minutes. Finances are a fixed item on the agenda. Feedback is given by all portfolios on projects and activities on which they are working.

It is very important for the SRC to have an office with sufficient office equipment where it can meet and work. Office equipment it will need:

- Desk, chairs, cabinets etc
- Computer and printer
- Telephone
- Stationery

The Executive Committee will meet once a month to give direction to the SRC and to give feedback to college management.

All activities planned must be submitted to the SSO with a budget. The SSO will present this activity plan and budget to the management team for approval and feedback.

Now read the summary of what has been discussed.

Step 6: Planning for successful meetings and equipment
• An executive committee is elected at the first meeting and meets on a monthly basis. • Proper meeting procedures are followed. • The SRC has an office with sufficient equipment. • Planned activities are submitted with a budget.

Before you leave this topic you have a chance to measure to what extent current practice in your college or campus reflects the best practices put forward in this topic. This will provide you with a basis for future planning.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The first task in this section is an audit of current leadership development for the Student Representative Council practices in your college or campus. If you are a student support services specialist you can think generally about the teaching practices on the campus or campuses where you offer services.

TASK1: AUDIT

Look at the elements listed in the first column of the profile and then circle the number between 1 and 6 that best describes your college's current practice. **A rating of 1 or 2 is LOW** **A rating of 3 or 4 is AVERAGE** **A rating of 5 or 6 is HIGH**						
Planning for successful leadership development for the Student Representative Council						
1. There is a clear **structure** for the SRC as well as clear expectations.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. The whole college community **understands why an SRC is needed**, who may be elected and its term.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. There is a **policy on stipends** for SRC members.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. There is a **procedure for handling students' requests**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Organogram, portfolios and responsibilities						
5. Each SRC member has a **portfolio** for which they are responsible with a clear job description.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Each SRC member **knows what their responsibilities are** and that they need to invest in people.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. There is an **implementation plan** for the SRC's tasks and responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Duties are **distributed** among all members.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
The election of the SRC						
9. An **election committee** handles the election process according to a fixed procedure.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. The election process is **fair and transparent**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. **Equality** is strongly built into the process.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. The process is **confidential and anonymous**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. **Notice** of the election is given well in advance.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						

Inauguration and code of conduct of the SRC						
14. A formal **inauguration function** takes place soon after the election of the SRC.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. There is a **code of conduct** to be signed by the newly elected SRC members.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. There is a **disciplinary procedure for misconduct** by an SRC member.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. There is a **disciplinary procedure for the forsaking of duties** by an SRC member.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Training and development of the SRC						
18. All **newly elected SRC members receive training**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. **Workshops** are held throughout the year to develop the SRC.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Meetings and equipment						
20. Regular **meetings** with proper meeting procedures are held.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. The SRC has an **office** with sufficient equipment.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. The Executive Committee **meets monthly**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						

TASK 2: FINAL SCORE

Write the sub-total for each step in the space provided below and add up the total.

Step 1: Planning for successful leadership development for the SRC	
Step 2: Organogram, portfolios and responsibilities	
Step 3: The election of the SRC	
Step 4: Inauguration and code of conduct of the SRC	
Step 5: Training and development of the SRC	
Step 6: Meetings and equipment	
TOTAL:	

Place your total in the appropriate block below.

Overall rating for academic support in the classroom

LOW	AVERAGE	HIGH
22 - 44	45 - 88	89 - 132

Lowest possible score: 22 *Highest possible score: 132*

TASK 3: PLANNING

The final task requires you to think about how current practice can be improved or deepened as a whole-institution response. Look at your ratings carefully and select three priority needs. The next step is to work out how to address these needs. Money, people and resources may not be readily available so you need to do some strategic thinking:

- Who needs to be involved in deciding how to address the identified needs and how will you get buy-in?
- Is there a committee or forum at campus, college or provincial level to which a proposal or motivation can be submitted so that the matter can be discussed more widely?
- What can realistically be done in the short-, medium- and long-term?

Write down the answers to some of these questions in the space below and then think of ways in which the matter can be taken forward. Planning for leadership development for students starts here.

TOPIC 11

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

In this topic we look at student development. The aim is to help each college and campus to ensure that student development is of a high and consistent standard. We discuss two stages of practice which we have called:

- Getting started
- Doing more

The following steps are important aspects of effective student support.

Step 1: Planning for student development
Step 2: Sport
Step 3: Cultural activities
Step 4: Recreation and social activities

In the final section there is an opportunity to complete an audit of current practice at your college or campus. This will help to identify areas in which practice can be improved or deepened and to plan for this.

Why is student development important?

Sport and recreation are essential in promoting healthy lifestyle habits among students. It also creates a feeling of belonging, which students need. Participation in sport and recreational activities, such as cultural and social activities, make students feel part of the campus community and may lead to academic success. It also offers an opportunity for students to make friends and to socialise. Sport and recreation is an integral part of student life. Other than providing an opportunity for students to develop more holistically, sport and social activities are also seen as ways to bring unity and pride to the college. Irrespective of the availability of resources, students have to be encouraged to participate in sport and recreational activities. It is a function of the SRC to assist the SSO with the management of sport and recreation.

GETTING STARTED

STEP 1: Planning for student development

The first step is to ensure that all the requirements are in place and part of the college system. What would this look like?

Each college has to understand why sport and recreation is necessary and what resources are available at each campus. This has to be explained to the whole college community.

Some important questions to answer are:
• Will sports only be played on a social basis? • Will students get the opportunity to participate against: each other at campus level? other colleges? • What is needed to offer students the opportunity to participate in any sporting or recreational activities?

The answers to these questions will give an indication of the budget that will be allocated to sport and recreation.

Procedures for arranging and participating have to be finalised so that students know precisely how participation in sport and recreational activities works at the college. Opportunities need to be created for differently abled students to participate in sporting events.

Now read the summary of what has been discussed and then go on to the next step.

STEP 1: Planning for successful student development
• The whole college community understands why student development is needed. • There is a budget allocated to student development. • There are procedures in place which encourage student development. • As far as is possible students with disabilities are included in sport

Step 2: Sport

Sport and recreation activities should not interfere with the official academic timetable and academic achievement. Striking a balance between sport and academic work is a challenge. A Sport Committee consisting of SRC member/s and class representatives is responsible for organising all sports events.

Students who are fit and healthy have more energy and are better achievers. Colleges have to be creative and innovative in providing sport opportunities for their students. It is not necessary to focus solely on main, organised sports. Ask students to make suggestions as to what sports can be played at the college. It is advised that sport be organised and played at campus level and that an annual sports day be held, where campuses can participate as a college.

If there are no sports facilities, partnerships can be formed with organisations in the vicinity of the campus to make use of their sporting facilities. Schools or the local authority or municipality may have sport facilities. When partnerships are formed, it is very important that that they are well managed by the sport committee and that effort is put into maintaining good relationships.

If this is not possible, the Sport Committee can investigate different sport opportunities other than normal sport. Traditional sport activities are becoming increasingly popular. To play traditional games and sports also increases cultural awareness. Very often these activities and sports do not need big grounds or lots of equipment. This committee will then develop these activities into campus sports. No formal practising or coaching is necessary. The sports are only played on a social basis. It is important to market sport and encourage participation of both male and female students. The Sport Committee needs some office space where meetings can be held and planning and organising can be done.

Students can get injured while participating in sport. If there is no first-aid station at the campus to attend to these injuries, there has to be at least a well-equipped first-aid kit and a staff member with level 1 in first aid.

Coaching takes place to some extent by willing staff. Participation is non-competitive and only between campuses, with a fun sports day once a year.

Possible activities to consider are:

TEAM SPORTS		INDIVIDUAL SPORTS		TRADITIONAL SPORTS
Soccer	Netball	Tennis	Chess	Darts
Rugby	Cricket	Table tennis	Weightlifting	Jukskei
Volleyball	Softball	Swimming		Egg-and spoon races
Basketball	Badminton	Fun runs		Sack races
				Traditional games and sport

Now read the summary of what has been discussed and then go on to the next step.

STEP 2: Sport
• There is a balance between sport and academic work.
• Creative and innovative ideas are generated, with sport opportunities other than normal sports.
• Partnerships are formed with organisations.
• Sport facilities as well as a first-aid kit are available.

Step 3: Cultural activities

Participation in cultural activities helps the person to develop and to grow. Opportunities for participation in cultural activities are important as they make a **contribution to the cultural heritage** of South Africa. The SSO and the SRC member with the Arts and Culture portfolio select a committee to work with them to manage, organise and promote all relevant events.

Competitions between campuses/colleges can be held. Students who excel in these activities should get recognition.

Some cultural activities to consider	
Choirs	Debating
Public speaking	Dancing
Plays	Women's day
Youth day	Curious culture day
Religious activities	

Now read the summary of what has been discussed and then go on to the next step.

Step 3: Cultural activities
• There are opportunities for students to participate in competitions or events. • Students who excel are recognised. • There are community outreach programmes.

Step 4: Recreation and social activities

Recreational activities and facilities (recreational rooms, tuck shop, bookshops, student centres, cafeteria) supply the needs of students and are available to all students. There can also be a place where magazines and newspapers are available.

Students can organise inter-campus soccer matches and also celebrate days like Valentine's Day by having a Valentine's Day Ball. Forming a debate club is not only entertaining for students but will also improve their general knowledge.

Social activities bind students together and make them feel part of the college community. The SSO and the SRC member with the Arts and Culture portfolio together with a selected committee manage, organise and promote all relevant events. A procedure manual or file where everything concerning the event is kept, simplifies the arrangements. After the event a review of positive and negative points is done. In this way the next event will be easier to plan and can be improved.

Now read the summary of what has been discussed.

Step 4: Recreation and social activities
• Recreation and social activities fulfil the needs of students. • Inter-campus soccer matches or Valentine's Day Ball. • Debate teams. • A procedural manual or file is kept of all functions organised at the college. • Every function is reviewed afterwards.

We have now discussed four steps that student support staff can take to provide effective student development. In the next section you can read about a few more things that can be done.

DOING MORE

If a college has its own sports facilities it is possible to organise more formal sport and cultural events. If there are funds available, a sport or cultural manager and organiser (as part of the management team) can be appointed.

If teams want to participate more competitively, well- organised sport or cultural teams can work towards taking part in competitions and tournaments at all possible levels.

Now read the summary.

Student development: Doing more
• The college has its own sport facilities and participates in formal sporting events. • Sport or cultural teams have coaches and captains.

Before you leave this topic you now have a chance to measure to what extent current practice in your college, campus or classroom reflects the best practices put forward in this topic. This will provide you with a basis for future planning.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The first task in this section is an audit of current student development practices in your college or campus. If you are a student support services specialist you can think generally about the practices on the campus or campuses where you offer services.

TASK1: AUDIT

Look at the elements listed in the first column of the profile and then circle the number between 1 and 6 that best describes your college's current practice. **A rating of 1 or 2 is LOW** **A rating of 3 or 4 is AVERAGE** **A rating of 5 or 6 is HIGH**						
Planning for student development						
1. The **whole college community understands** why student development is needed.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. There is a **budget** allocated to student development.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. There are **procedures** in place which encourage student development.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Sport						
4. There is a **balance** between sport and academic work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. **Creative and innovative ideas are generated**, with sport opportunities other than normal sports.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. An **annual sports day** is held.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. **Partnerships** with organisations are formed.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. There is **office space** available as well as a first-aid kit.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						

Cultural activities						
9. There are opportunities for students to participate in **competitions**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Excelling students get recognition.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. There are **community outreach programmes**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Recreation and social activities						
12. Valentine's Day Ball is organised by students.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. There are inter-campus debate teams and soccer matches at the college.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. A **procedure manual** or file is kept of all functions organised at the college.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. Every function is **reviewed** afterwards.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Doing more						
16. The college has its **own sport facilities**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Students have the opportunity to participate in **formal sport or cultural events**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Sport teams have **coaches and captains**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						

TASK 2: FINAL SCORE

Write the sub-total for each step in the space provided below and add up the total.

Step 1: Planning for student development	
Step 2: Sport	
Step 3: Cultural activities	
Step 4: Recreation and social activities	
Doing more	
TOTAL:	

Now place your total in the appropriate block below.

Overall rating for academic support in the classroom

LOW	AVERAGE	HIGH
18 – 36	37 - 72	73 - 108

Lowest possible score: 18 *Highest possible score: 108*

TASK 3: PLANNING

The final task requires you to think about how current practice can be improved or deepened as a whole-institution response. Look at your ratings carefully and select three priority needs. The next step is to work out how to address these needs. Money, people and resources may not be readily available so you need to do some strategic thinking:

- Who needs to be involved in deciding how to address the identified needs and how will you get buy-in?
- Is there a committee or forum at campus, college or provincial level to which a proposal or motivation can be submitted so that the matter can be discussed more widely?
- What can realistically be done in the short-, medium- and long-term?

Write down the answers to some of these questions in the space below and then think of ways in which the matter can be taken forward. Planning for effective student development starts here.

TOPIC 12

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

In this topic we look at parental involvement. The aim is to help each college and campus to ensure that parental involvement is of a high and consistent standard. We discuss two stages of practice which we have called:

- Getting started
- Doing more

The following steps are important aspects of effective parental involvement.

Step 1: Involvement in the entry and orientation process

Step 2: Involvement in the academic process

Step 3: Involvement in college activities

Step 4: Keeping informed

Parent refers to any person taking the role and responsibility of a parent. It can be a family member or other caregiver.

In the final section there is an opportunity to complete an audit of current practice at your college or campus, or in your classroom. This will help to identify areas in which practice can be improved or deepened and to plan for this.

Why is parental involvement important?

The aim of parental involvement is to help the student to achieve academic success. Parents are in a partnership with the college to ensure academic success. It is important that parents participate and that the college and parents work as partners towards the academic success of the student. Parental support is often a key factor in maintaining a student's motivation and achievement.

It should be one of the core values of the college to invest in people and specifically parents. Parent involvement is more than paying the bills or signing papers. Parents are part of the college community and they should be involved in such a way that they indeed do become part of this community.

Every staff member is responsible for parental involvement. Get to know the parents (at least their faces) and always be friendly when meeting them. Always treat parents with respect. The interaction with the college should always be a positive experience for the parent.

Invite parents to look at presentations of assignments or when students have completed a project.

To make it possible for parents to stay involved and informed, the college can find ways to help with transportation for them to attend meetings and events at the college.

It is vital that all parents stay involved while their child/ren who is/are students at the college. Different types of families are represented in the college. These might be:

- Complete families (mother, father, children)
- Extended families
- Combined families – stepmother/father, stepbrothers/sisters
- Single-parent families
- Grandparent families
- Child-headed families

GETTING STARTED

STEP 1: Involvement in the entry and orientation process

The first step is to ensure that all the requirements are in place and part of the college system. What would this look like?

Parent involvement in enrolment
• A least one parent accompanies the student when they enrol at the college. • The selection and placement process is discussed with the parent and student. • The results of the placement tests or assessments are discussed with the parent as well as the reasons for placing the student in a particular programme. • Parents sign the enrolment/registration documents. • A parent information booklet is handed to the parents to read at home. • Parents should also be oriented about college life and what is expected of them.

Information booklet or pamphlet

An information booklet or pamphlet is given to the parent as a reference when they return home.

Information booklet / pamphlet
• A welcoming note to the parents as part of the college community • Contact details of the college, address, telephone and fax numbers, and email address • The value and advantages of parental involvement for the parents as well as the community • Vision, mission and values of the college • Courses offered at the college (this is not a prospectus, only the different courses are included, not subjects) • Services available to the students, including student support services. All pre-entry support, on-course support and exit support services as well as bursaries and financial and related issues are included • Introduction of staff members. Photos of staff and contact details (even if only an email address) are included • Rules of the college • Code of conduct to be signed by the student

Parent meetings

Early meetings with parents serve to prevent or reduce attendance problems, the number of dropouts and discipline problems. The first parent meeting is held during or shortly after orientation. At this meeting parents receive important information about the college.

First parent meeting
• Vision and mission of the college • Expectations of students – class attendance, assessment, assignments, pass rate, work experiences, appropriate behaviour, participation in college activities, code of conduct and disciplinary process • Expectations of parents – support for the student, interest in the student's life at college and involvement as part of the college community • Services rendered by the college • Recreation, sport and cultural activities, and facilities • How the college communicates with parents

Now read the summary of what has been discussed and then go on to the next step.

STEP 1: Planning for parent involvement in the entry and orientation process
• At least one parent accompanies the student during the enrolment process • The parent/s receives an information booklet or pamphlet • The first parent meeting is held during or shortly after orientation

STEP 2: Involvement in the academic process

Reporting on academic progress

All parents have the right to know how their children are progressing in college. The report is a vital link in the lecturer's relationship with students and parents.

A report should be passed on to parents at least twice a year. In this way the college can fulfil its responsibilities to tell the parents about their children's performance. It gives the college an opportunity to obtain parents' help in educating their child and to explain its programme to the parents and to solicit their understanding and assistance.

WHAT IS IN THE REPORT?
• The student's progress in each subject according to potential. • The student's attendance rate. • The student's potential and developing talents or interests. • Specific difficulties the student may have. • Areas in which the student has done well. • The student's behaviour. • The student's relationship with lecturers and other students. • Support the parent can give the student and the lecturers.

Supplementary reports can be sent to parents after workplace experience. In this short report feedback can be given about the student's progress, conduct and behaviour at the place of work.

An important supplementary report which can be used on a regular basis is a report to inform parents (or guardians) about absenteeism or lack of class attendance by their children.

Parents can be involved in the following ways:
• If a trend of absenteeism is picked up (a week of non-attendance or Fridays and Mondays), the lecturers may report this to the SSO who may then call in the relevant student and ask for an explanation in order to determine the root cause. • If the trend continues or the student stays away more often, parents may be contacted. • A meeting between the parents, their child, SSO and one of the senior lecturers may be arranged.

Other reports can be also be given. These can be in the form of a note to parents, a warning slip, a checklist, a feedback session or a letter of commendation. These reports can be sent if the student did exceptionally well in an assignment or test, if the student was elected to a leadership position like the SRC, a mentor, a peer counsellor or any other position. If there is concern about the student's progress or class attendance, parents are also notified.

Parent meetings

It is necessary to arrange meetings with parents close to the middle of the year (June). During this meeting feedback is given on the academic progress of the students in general. Any problems experienced by the lecturers regarding behaviour and class attendance are discussed. Parents are encouraged to support the students and to stay involved.

Now read the summary of what has been discussed and then go on to the next step.

STEP 2: Planning for parent involvement in the academic process
• A report card is sent to parents to report on academic progress and behaviour twice a year • Supplementary reports are sent after workplace experience and other reports are sent as needed. • A parent meeting is held in middle of the year to report on academic progress and general behaviour of students.

STEP 3: Involvement in college activities

For parents to become part of the college community, they should become involved in activities at the college. On sport days it is important for parents to watch their children play sport and to encourage them even if it is just for fun.

Parents can help with the arrangements and preparations for cultural events. It involves them in college life and builds a college community of parents. The parents need to attend these activities to see whether their child/ren participate or do a presentation.

On open days parents who have children at the college can welcome visitors, help prepare and serve beverages to the visitors and talk to them about their experiences of the college.

There are some students who do not have parents, especially child-headed households. Parents can become involved in caring for needy students by being surrogate parents to them. They can congratulate them on their birthdays and show interest in their academic progress by attending parent–lecturer conferences and meetings concerning the student.

Prize-giving or end-of-the-year function

Parents are invited to the end-of-the-year or prize-giving function.

The end-of-year function
Programme: • Year report • Future plans for the college • Presentations to achieving students • Exhibition of work and assignments done by students • Thanking parents for their support in assisting students towards academic success.

Parent-lecturer communication

Parent-lecturer communication helps to develop processes and vehicles for parents to become involved in an organised manner. Informed parents help to support the college while their children are enrolled there.

Now read the summary of what has been discussed and then go on to the next step.

STEP3: Planning for parent involvement in college activities
• Parents are involved in college activities such as sport days, cultural activities, open days and caring for needy students. • Parents are invited to the prize-giving or end-of--year function.

STEP 4: Keeping parents informed

Communicating with parents

Effective communication is one of the cornerstones of parent involvement. To involve parents in college activities and let them feel part of the college community, it is important for them to be informed and to be able to voice their views. A communication system works both ways. The college informs the parent of what is going on at the college and the parent informs the college about anything concerning their child of which the college should be aware.

Parents are educated regarding the expectations of the college and their role as parents of a college student. Make sure communication is clear and simple and aimed at the target group (literacy level and language of parent). Informal contact and communication is just as vital as formal ways of communication. Always treat what parents tell you as confidential. Never repeat anything without prior consent of the parent. Encourage students to share college news with their parents.

Communication from the college is mostly to give information and need not be long messages.

Ways to communicate	Advantage	Disadvantage
SMS: Short reminders or sudden changes of plans are communicated	Most parents have cellphones and can operate them.	Cannot be used when there is no signal.

Telephonic contact	Immediate contact with or response from parent.	Costly and time consuming.
Email	Very reliable because the college communicates directly with the parent.	Not all parents have email facilities.
Letters	Can be used when parents have no email facilities.	Postage fees are quite expensive and it takes time. Letters can be sent with the student, but they are not always reliable in handing the letters to parents.
Messages sent with students	Helpful when no other means of communication is available.	This is not reliable, because students forget to deliver the message or forget what the message was.
Communication book/envelope: a book or envelope can be used to paste or write important messages in. Parents must sign when the message was received.	This can work well in areas where parents have no email or SMS.	It takes time to educate the student and parent about this system. Students often forget to give the envelope to their parents.

Now read the summary of what has been discussed.

Step 4: Keeping parents informed
• There is a two-way communication system at the college • There is a workable method in which the college communicates with the parents to keep them informed

We have now discussed four steps that student support officers and lecturers can take to provide effective parental involvement. In the next section you can read about a few more things that can be done.

DOING MORE

Detailed feedback to parents

Parent-lecturer feedback sessions are an effective method of reporting student progress to parents. The session gives the parent an opportunity to ask questions and to make suggestions. It also gives the lecturer an opportunity to seek other information about the student and to suggest ways in which the parent can help the student to perform to potential**.** All the lecturers lecturing the student sit with the parent and give feedback on the student's progress.

One parent-lecturer feedback session can be conducted per year preferably after the issuing of the first academic report; 15 to 20 minutes is sufficient for such a session.

There should be some follow-up after every feedback session even if only by sending a message to thank parents who attended the session.

Questionnaires and surveys

Questionnaires are valuable to evaluate parent satisfaction with the college. This is done when the strategic plan of the college is reviewed.

Surveys can be completed once a year by parents to determine their overall level of satisfaction with what the college offers (education, training, workplace-based experience, availability of resources, additional services). These surveys can then be analysed to indicate trends where services or resources are lacking or to influence marketing strategies (include questions in the survey such as popular newspapers parents read or radio stations listened to in order to find out which media are the most relevant for further information about the college).

The aim of a questionnaire or survey is to find out what parents expect from the college. It also reveals information on the background, educational level, language and other information about the parent body needed by the college. The questionnaire should be anonymous so that parents can be honest when answering the questions.

Now read the summary.

Parental involvement: Doing more
Parent-lecturer feedback sessions
• One parent – lecturer feedback session is held during the year
Questionnaires and surveys
• Anonymous questionnaires or surveys to test parent satisfaction, to find out what parents expect from the college and to gain information about parents are done regularly

Before you leave this topic you have a chance to measure to what extent current practice in your college, campus or classroom reflects the best practices put forward in this topic. This will provide you with a basis for future planning.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The first task in this section is an audit of current academic support practices in classrooms in your college or campus. If you are a student support services specialist you can think generally about the practices on the campus or campuses where you offer services.

TASK 1: AUDIT

Look at the elements listed in the first column of the profile and then circle the number between 1 and 6 that best describes your college's current practice. **A rating of 1 or 2 is LOW** **A rating of 3 or 4 is AVERAGE** **A rating of 5 or 6 is HIGH**						
Involvement in the entry and orientation process						
1. At least **one parent** accompanies the student at registration.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. The parents receive an **information booklet**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. The **first parent meeting** is held shortly after orientation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Involvement in the academic process						
4. A **report card** is sent to parents to report on academic progress and behaviour	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. **Supplementary reports** are sent after workplace experience	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. **Other reports** are sent as the need arises	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. A **parent meeting is held in middle of the year** to report on academic progress and general behaviour of students	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Involvement in college activities						
8. Parents are **involved in college activities** such as sport days, cultural activities, open days and caring for needy students	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Parents are invited to the **prize-giving** or end-of- year function	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Keeping informed						
10. There is a **two-way communication** system at the college	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. There is **a workable manner** in which the college communicates with the parents to keep them informed	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Doing more						
12. One **parent-lecturer feedback session** is held during the year	1	2	3	4	5	6

13. **Anonymous questionnaires or surveys** to test parent satisfaction, to find out what parents expect from the college and to gain information about parents are done regularly.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						

TASK 2: FINAL SCORE

Now write the sub-total for each step in the space provided below and add up the total.

Step 1: Involvement in the entry and orientation process	
Step 2: Involvement in the academic process	
Step 3: Involvement in college activities	
Step 4: Keeping informed	
Doing more	
TOTAL:	

Place your total in the appropriate block below.

Overall rating for academic support in the classroom

LOW	AVERAGE	HIGH
14 - 28	29 - 56	57 - 84

Lowest possible score: 14 *Highest possible score: 84*

TASK 3: PLANNING

The final task requires you to think about how current practice can be improved or deepened as a whole-institution response. Look at your ratings carefully and select three priority needs. The next step is to work out how to address these needs. Money, people and resources may not be readily available so you need to do some strategic thinking:

- Who needs to be involved in deciding how to address the identified needs and how will you get buy-in?
- Is there a committee or forum at campus, college or provincial level to which a proposal or motivation can be submitted so that the matter can be discussed more widely?
- What can realistically be done in the short-, medium- and long-term?

Write down the answers to some of these questions in the space below and then think of ways in which the matter can be taken forward. Planning for effective parental involvement starts here.

SECTION 4

EXIT SUPPORT

Topic 13: Preparing students for work or further study

Topic 14: Job placement

Topic 15: Graduate tracking

TOPIC 13

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR WORK OR FURTHER STUDY

In this topic we look at preparing and supporting students to enter formal employment, self-employment or further study. The aim is to help each college and campus to understand what is involved in these areas of exit-level support and to ensure that support provided is of an optimum standard. We discuss two stages of practice which we have called:

- Getting started
- Doing more

The following steps are important aspects of preparing and supporting students to enter formal employment, self-employment or further study.

Step 1: Preparing and supporting students to achieve success in finding, keeping and developing in a job

Step 2: Preparing and supporting students for self-employment

Step 3: Preparing and supporting students who want to study further

In the final section there is an opportunity to complete an audit of current practice at your college or campus. This will help to identify areas in which practice can be improved or deepened and to plan for this.

Why is exit support important?

Students who are nearing the end of their learning and development at the college need to bridge the gap between the college and the world of work or the world of further study. Whatever option they choose at exit level the majority of students will need support to enable them to deal with the challenges and realities associated with the different options and to ensure that their choices are realistic and in line with their occupational interests, ability and personal qualities. This will go a long way to ensuring the sustainability of chosen career paths.

To respond successfully to the different types of exit-level needs of students holds very particular implications for the nature and range of support measures and services that a college needs to provide. Let us look at what needs to be in place as a starting point and then consider what more could be done to improve the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of established practices.

GETTING STARTED

STEP 1: Preparing and supporting students to achieve success in finding, keeping and developing in a job

Before we look at measures for addressing students' job search needs, we need to reflect on the distinction between preparation for *employability* and preparation for *employment. Employability* is increasingly being used in relation to current labour market conditions where labour supply often outstrips demand. Research shows a direct link between

employability and four core areas of ability or competence. These are:

1. **Foundational competence**
    - Ability to speak English and other regional languages
    - Ability to work with written text in English (reading and writing)
    - Ability to work with numbers and figures
2. **Social competence**
    - Ability to get on with others and work in a team
    - Ability to help clients in a knowledgeable and courteous manner
3. **Technological competence**
    - Computer skills acquired with regard to various applications, for example, MS Word, Excel, email and research on the Internet
    - Ability to use basic workplace technology (phone, fax, photocopier, workplace tools and equipment)
4. **Technical and problem-solving competence**
    - Ability to think independently and use own initiative to solve problems
    - Understanding of a technical area and ability to talk about the way things work
    - Practical expertise in a technical area

Employers emphasise the need for competence *and* confidence in these four areas if new employees are to be successful in the workplace. They also point out that, in the past, college graduates often struggled with verbal and written communication in English, as well as with social relations, when first entering the workplace. With the introduction of the NC(V) programmes this is changing as the above competencies are addressed directly and purposefully by the topics covered in the curriculum, the way learning takes place and because students are staying in the system longer.

Work-readiness preparation and support of students that ensure successful job seeking occur in two ways: through formal, subject-based learning in the classroom (life orientation) and by means of tailored support services provided to students before they leave the college.

Classroom-based support in co-operation with academic staff

The NC(V) Level 2 life orientation syllabus addresses the following aspects:

- *Career planning*, which builds on the outcomes of pre-entry level career guidance and counselling
- *Job search skills,* by way of identifying sources of job opportunities and how to formally *respond* to these. This includes finding job advertisements in the classified sections of newspapers and on Internet sites, developing a curriculum vitae (CV) and writing a letter of application
- *Job interview skills*
- *Conduct in the workplace* which focuses on aspects such as organisational culture and values, and how one is expected to conduct oneself in a work environment
- *Labour legislation* and related legal aspects which govern the workplace environment

The syllabi for Levels 3 and 4 life orientation do not directly address these aspects and some of them are only revisited just before students leave the college. However, at some colleges it has become established practice in life orientation

teaching to ask students to review their career plans at the beginning of each new academic year. Such ongoing career planning is facilitated to see to what extent students have, in the meantime, been thinking about their future and if, as a result, their interests have deepened or changed.

At this point the following question may well have come to mind: Given that many of the above aspects are curriculum driven and therefore happen in the classroom, what part do student support services personnel play in all of this?

Significant scope exists for student support personnel to work closely with their academic counterparts and this is strongly encouraged. A common practice at some colleges is for student support personnel to present practical workshops in respect of some of the above topics or aspects. A measure like this brings classroom learning to life because of this person's 'guest lecturer' status. Apart from grabbing students' attention, this measure also stimulates students' interest in a particular topic because of a sense of reality that is brought into the classroom. For example, a student support staff member who is responsible for work placement of graduates can inform students 'first hand' what particular employers need or expect from new employees. Based on such information students may need to review their career expectations and plans. The choice of topics for such practical workshops depends on the areas of expertise and experience among student support service personnel.

Involvement on the part of student support personnel is aimed at complementing or supplementing classroom teaching and learning. For this to be successful, the following activities have to occur:

- Student support personnel have to familiarise themselves with the life orientation curriculum so as to know exactly what exit-support topics are covered and when particular topics of interest to them will be presented.
- There needs to be liaison with life orientation lecturers to promote the idea of cooperation.
- If agreement on such cooperation is reached, then the exact nature of involvement by student support personnel needs to be clarified, for example, focusing on practical workshops to supplement and enliven classroom teaching.
- Planning and preparing in advance for such agreed-on contributions.
- Annual assessment of effectiveness of contributions, followed by the implementation of remedial action, as required.

Let us now turn to work-readiness preparation and support provided at exit level – in contrast to the above on-course support interventions.

Direct engagement with students

For the most part support is provided in response to requests from individual students. Students often ask for assistance with the following: wanting more information about job requirements, preparing or updating of their CVs, writing letters of application and preparing for the job interview. Student support personnel normally respond to such requests by means of one-on-one (exit) interviews. Apart from addressing needs for information and other requests for assistance, these interviews also serve another critical purpose: ensuring that students apply for 'realistic' jobs which are in line with their interests, ability and personal characteristics.

Assistance with job interview preparation can take various forms. It builds on students' formal exposure (in their first year of life orientation) to interview techniques or skills as part of work-readiness training. The focus is on developing

confidence in students through practical advice and coaching. Practical advice includes tips on what kinds of questions to expect and how to present oneself. So it is very much a case of developing 'confidence through preparedness'. Coaching by means of role play provides another effective technique for developing interview preparedness. In this case, student support personnel can involve lecturers and heads of departments to participate as 'external' interviewers or interview panels to bring a sense of reality into the preparations.

But where do students get up-to-date information about job opportunities or available jobs for which they may want to apply? The job search skills they learnt as part of on-course work preparation in life orientation should enable them to identify job offers of interest on their own initiative, by looking at job advertisements in newspapers or advertisements posted on the Internet. But access to these sources is not always available to students as colleges are at different levels of infrastructure and resource development; contributions from the student support office are critical in this regard. This brings us to the college's *job placement* service. This service has two components:

- Provision of information on available job opportunities, for example, on college or campus notice boards to which students can respond
- Responding directly to employer requests for suitable candidates for particular positions (vacancies).

Note: The development and implementation of a job placement service will be the focus of Topic 14.

The above aspects have been drawn together in the summary below.

Step 1: Preparing and supporting students to obtain formal employment

Classroom-based support

- Students are formally exposed to work-readiness preparation as part of NC(V) level 2 life orientation. Aspects covered include career planning, job search skills, development of CVs and letters of application, conduct in the workplace, and workplace legal aspects.
- Student support service staff complement classroom teaching and learning through presenting particular topics or facilitating practical workshops on particular topics – if the required expertise and experience is available.
- Student support personnel familiarise themselves with the syllabus and buy-in is secured from life orientation lecturers. This is followed by clarification of roles and planning and preparation for each academic year.

Direct engagement with exit-level students

- One-on-one exit interviews are conducted with students as per individual request for information or assistance, for example, preparing a CV, coaching for job interviews and ensuring that job applications are realistic
- A job placement service is provided: either providing information to students about job advertisements and opportunities or directly recommending students to employers according to employer requests and job requirements

We now consider those students who are interested in starting their own business or enterprise when they complete their studies at the college: students who want to be self-employed.

Step 2: Preparing and supporting students for self-employment

A lack of entrepreneurs is one of the reasons for South Africa's economy not having grown as hoped for in the years following our first democratic elections. Research tells us that the ratio of entrepreneurs to workers in South Africa is approximately 1 to 52, while the ratio in most developed countries is approximately 1 to 10. It has also been found that young South Africans believe significantly less in themselves as business starters compared to other developing countries such as Argentina, India, Brazil and Mexico.

But research also tells us that a high percentage of high school students and FET college students indicate that they are interested in starting their own business, which raises the question: Why is it that such high interest and ideals are not translated into practice?

Before we investigate measures and practices for preparing and supporting exit-level students who choose the self-employment career path or route into the world of work, let us briefly consider what is involved in entrepreneurship education.

The key principle or element underlying entrepreneurship, first and foremost, is the raising of students' awareness about self-employment as a career option and, by implication, creating and nurturing such interest. This, of course, holds critical implications for lecturers to obtain entrepreneurial skills.

Most entrepreneurship education programmes focus on two components, namely:

1. The *entrepreneur as a person*, which emphasises:
    - Entrepreneurial qualities, for example, achievement motivation, creativity, decision-making, initiative, innovation and risk taking
    - Entrepreneurial skills, for example, strategy formulation, leadership, planning, time management, financial concepts, and communication and negotiation skills
    - Self-knowledge
2. The *entrepreneurial process*, which covers:
    - Economic education, for example, unemployment, economic growth, tax, personal financial management, productivity and industry knowledge
    - Business idea, for example, searching for an idea, creativity and innovation
    - Compiling a business plan
    - Starting a business

Current views on entrepreneurship education and training strongly emphasise the need for education and training institutions to appreciate the difference between entrepreneurial skills development and (traditional) business skills teaching. In comparison with traditional business education, which focuses on aspects like management/leadership, business plans, financial skills, marketing skills and operational skills, entrepreneurship education and training addresses critical additional topics such as creativity, innovation, identifying opportunities and risk taking. As a result, a warning is sounded that the distinction between the two should always be kept in mind – entrepreneurship should be offered as a programme in its own right, and not as a component of or add-on to traditional business education programmes.

A final point: while entrepreneurship education obviously increases the chances of students becoming successful small business owners and developers, it cannot fully prepare them because what makes entrepreneurship development work out successfully, overall, goes far beyond education and training. This involves:

- Contributions from the broader economic community, for example, businesses and organisations that provide support in areas of training and development, mentoring, role models, financial support, infrastructure and after-care support.
- Support from non-government organisations (NGOs) that specialise in entrepreneurship education and training at school or college level. These NGOs usually use training material developed by and for the South African business environment.
- Networking and collaborating among all stakeholders and participants in the system of educational service delivery.
- Broader networking and collaboration among provincial departments of education, tertiary institutions, private groups, financial institutions and successful entrepreneurs to give guidance, expertise and support.

Classroom-based support in co-operation with academic staff

As in the case of preparation and support for formal employment, students are formally exposed to preparation for self-employment through classroom-based teaching – in this case, entrepreneurship as a subject in the NC(V) Level 2 management programme. Students are introduced to aspects common to all ventures, for example, financial planning, marketing, staffing, technical expertise, material purchasing and environmental impact assessment – in relation to products or services. The following topics are covered:

- 'The Entrepreneur', which addresses aspects such as: technical; business and managerial requirements and the associated characteristics required of a successful entrepreneur; the business environment; the need, importance and merits of entrepreneurship as well as the advantages of becoming an entrepreneur; developing an entrepreneurial profile, which includes aspects like creditworthiness and entrepreneurial skills and abilities; and identifying entrepreneurial opportunities
- 'Customer Relations and Marketing', which covers aspects such as: identifying potential clients for a new venture; surveying opinions on the need for the products or service of such a venture; suitable ways to promote the products or services of a new venture; ways to ensure customer satisfaction; and basic principles of negotiation to secure new business
- 'Basic Finances', which covers aspects like terminology associated with the finances of a new venture; processes and principles for the pricing of a product or service; financial management; recordkeeping; and stock control
- 'Managing Time and Work Processes'
- 'A Business Plan', which covers aspects like the purpose and different components of a business plan.

Scope for student support services personnel to engage with their academic colleagues takes on the same intent and purpose as discussed earlier in respect of workplace or job-readiness training. That is, to bring the world of work to classroom teaching. In this case, the focus is on entrepreneurial skills development both as a means of 'motivational information' and for students to 'reality-test' their evolving career plans. While student support services personnel may not be in a position to actually conduct practical workshops they may well be in a position to play a facilitating role. For example, representatives of entrepreneurial development organisations or successful entrepreneurs can be invited to take part in classroom activities. On the other hand, student support personnel can facilitate students going

into the entrepreneurial world with career-planning projects as part of life orientation. Such initiatives could occur as joint ventures between life orientation lecturers, student support staff as well as personnel from the Linkages and Partnerships Unit (if such a unit exists).

Support through direct engagement with students

Office-driven or initiated student support measures and practices essentially involve responding to requests from exit-level students for individualised assistance with specific practical aspects, such as enterprise establishment or entrepreneurial activity. The most commonly sought after support is for assistance with business plan development. Support provision will depend on available expertise either at the student support office or elsewhere at the campus/ college. Should such support not be available, opportunities for further entrepreneurial skills development and/or support with particular aspects will have to be identified and accessed outside the college. This can take the form of placing students in programmes offered by companies that are aimed at small business development. Alternatively, cooperative relationships or partnerships need to be purposefully developed and sustained with individuals and organisations either in the community, regionally, provincially or nationally.

The hosting of a 'market day' is a popular activity or practice adopted by numerous colleges. This serves as an incentive to students to apply and integrate the relevant theoretical aspects in respect of successfully creating entrepreneurial projects. Support is provided on request.

Finally, institutional support for practical or simulated learning and experience plays a critical role in preparing students for the realities in which newly established entrepreneurs will find themselves. These aspects were covered in Topic 8.

Look at the following summary.

Step 2: Preparing and supporting students for self-employment
Student support personnel participation involves the following: • Becoming familiar with the general principles underpinning entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education as well as with the nature and content of entrepreneurship education offered at the college –to better understand the needs of students at exit level. • Supporting classroom-based preparation of students for self-employment by either presenting certain aspects (expertise permitting) on a guest lecturer basis or facilitating outside expertise on a guest-lecturer basis. • Responding to requests for information or assistance from exit-level students – either directly or through sourcing the required expertise from elsewhere (inside or outside the college). • Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships and partnerships with entrepreneurship development individuals, organisations and government departments.

Step 3: Preparing and supporting students who want to study further

In the past limited student demand was expressed for information, guidance and support regarding further study or training.

What are the information and support needs of students wanting to study further?

For the most part students who want to study further have the same information needs as when they first approached the college. They need to choose programmes and courses and find out what the entrance requirements and financial costs are. They also need to find out whether financial aid is available, what documents are required to register and whether they can be credited for courses or modules completed at the college through a recognition of prior learning (RPL) process.

Students who want to study further need access to comprehensive, up-to-date information. Colleges can assist by developing their own databases of areas of post-FET or tertiary study. They can also facilitate access to such information through, for example, Internet searches and liaison with student affairs departments of the relevant institutions. Those who want to enrol for apprenticeships or learnerships as routes to becoming an artisan need access to information available on the website of the Department of Labour and the links provided to the various sector education and training authorities (SETAs).

SETAs can also be approached directly for their latest brochures. Further processes towards enrolment in these types of learning programmes is the responsibility of programme managers or of the linkages and partnerships unit (LPU), should the college have one.

To summarise:

Step 3: Preparing and supporting students to study further
• Relevant and up-to-date information is available or can be obtained to address students' information needs about options for further study. • Such information may have to be mediated through guidance and counselling services. • Student support personnel may on occasion have to liaise directly with student affairs personnel at higher or further education institutions or providers of DoL-linked programmes.

DOING MORE

There is scope and opportunity for student support personnel to build on and deepen exit-support services. This can happen either as an extension of classroom or subject-based preparation and support or as initiatives aimed at particular needs of exit-level students.

Let us take curricula vitae (CV) development to which students are exposed for the first time as part of the life orientation course in their first year. As a means of preventing a 'generic' outcome, where all students' CVs look exactly the same, the student support officer responsible for the work placement of students at one college initiated a process aimed at getting students to 'personalise' or 'individualise' their CVs. Students are given different formats from which to choose and encouraged to 'beef-up' their CVs by incorporating more detail, for example, to say 'what they learnt' at each level of their programme and 'what they can do'.

As a result of these interventions, CV development has become established as a proactive and continuous process. Up-to-date electronic copies of *all* students' CVs are kept at the student support office and filed by course, to allow

for prompt matching to employer requests for suitable candidates. This practice contrasts sharply with the practice previously in place in terms of which student CVs initially developed during life orientation Level 2 studies were only updated at exit level when applying for a job.

The nature and scope for innovative support practices obviously depends on available human and physical resources and expertise levels of staff.

To summarise:

Exit support: 'Doing more'
• Pro-active practices or measures are introduced as extensions of subject/classroom-based practical activities. • Dedicated support structures, services and staff have been put in place to address particular areas of exit support to students, for example, a job placement office and officer(s).

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The first task in this section is an audit of current college or campus practices for preparing and supporting students to successfully find work in both formal employment and self-employment contexts and/or to pursue further studies.

TASK1: College/campus self-audit

Look at the elements listed in the first column of the profile and then circle the number between 1 and 6 that best describes your college's current practice in respect of this area of support. **A rating of 1 or 2 is LOW** **A rating of 3 or 4 is AVERAGE** **A rating of 5 or 6 is HIGH**						
Preparing and supporting students to obtain formal employment						
1. A **policy, strategy and operational plan** are in place for governing exit-level career guidance and counselling.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Student support service personnel **supplement classroom teaching** and learning through presenting particular topics or facilitating practical workshops.	1	2	3	4	5	7
3. Student support personnel **familiarise themselves with the syllabus** and buy-in is secured from life-orientation lecturers.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. **Exit interviews** are conducted with individual students to ensure they apply for realistic jobs.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. **Practical assistance** is provided in respect of aspects like CV development, interview readiness preparation and information on job requirements.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. A **job placement service** is provided.	1	2	3	4	5	6

7. Mechanisms are in place for **regularly reviewing** the effectiveness and impact of exit support measures and services in this area.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Preparing and supporting students for self-employment (entrepreneurship)						
8. Student support personnel **understand the general principles of entrepreneurship** and entrepreneurship education.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Student support personnel **support subject-based preparation of students** for self-employment.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Student support personnel successfully **respond to requests** from individual students for information or practical assistance.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. **Networks** with entrepreneurship development individuals, organisations and government departments are in place and are sustained.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Mechanisms are in place for **regularly reviewing** of the effectiveness and impact of support provision in this area.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Preparing and supporting students for further study						
13. Students receive relevant, up-to-date and easily accessible **information on further study opportunities** or options when requested.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Students receive **guidance and practical assistance** with regard to further study options or particular aspects thereof when requested.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. Mechanisms are in place for **regularly reviewing** of the effectiveness and impact of support provision in this area.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Doing more						
16 Practices or measures are introduced as **extensions of subject/classroom – based practical activities**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Dedicated **support structures, services and staff** have been put in place to address particular areas of exit support.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						

TASK 2: FINAL SCORE

Write the sub-total for each step in the space provided below and add up the total.

Step 1: Preparing and supporting students for formal employment	
Step 2: Preparing and supporting students for self-employment	
Step 3: Preparing and supporting students for further study	
Doing more	
TOTAL:	

Place your total in the appropriate block below.

Overall rating for exit support:

LOW	AVERAGE	HIGH
17-34	35-68	69-102

Lowest possible score: 17 *Highest possible score: 102*

TASK 3: PLANNING

The final task requires you to think about how current practice can be improved or deepened as a whole-institution response. Look at your ratings carefully and select three priority needs. The next step is to work out how to address these needs. Money, people and resources may not be readily available so you need to do some strategic thinking:

- Who needs to be involved in deciding how to address the identified needs and how will you get buy-in?
- Is there a committee or forum at campus, college or provincial level to which a proposal or motivation can be submitted so that the matter can be discussed more widely?
- What can realistically be done in the short-, medium- and long-term?

Write down the answers to some of these questions in the space below and then think of ways in which the matter can be taken forward. Planning for preparing students for work or further study starts here.

TOPIC 14

JOB PLACEMENT

The aim of this topic is to help each college and campus to understand what is involved in putting in place an effective or optimum job placement service. We discuss two stages of practice which we have called:

- Getting started
- Doing more

The following steps are important aspects of effective job placement:

Step 1: Establishing placement as a service

Step 2: System development

Step 3: Placement of students

In the final section there is an opportunity to complete an audit of current practice at your college or campus. This will help to identify areas in which practice can be improved or deepened and to plan for this.

Note: The terms 'job placement' and 'exit work placement' are both used to refer to support provided to graduates to find employment. We will use the former in this discussion.

Why is job placement important?

Students face many obstacles when entering the job market. In some fields supply outstrips demand, which has the effect of graduates ending up in jobs in fields they did not train for. In other cases, graduates lack the minimum of three to four years of work experience in their field of study, which is often a requirement for jobs advertised. Without support from their colleges, students generally struggle to break into the job market and frequently end up in employment that is unrelated to their training.

Colleges can provide support through a job placement service, which focuses on one or more of the following key deliverables:

- Providing up-to-date information about employment opportunities on campus notice boards or in the resource centre.
- Linking students directly with employers who contact the college for prospective employees in a particular field. This is a re-active approach.
- Actively promoting or marketing students and college programmes among prospective employers. This is a pro-active approach.

Very few colleges have a dedicated placement service in place. For the most part, current college placement practices involve informal processes. The most common one of these is when lecturers informally link students to employment opportunities which may arise when employers call the college or through advertisements for jobs or learnerships. Alternatively, lecturers may draw on the personal relationships they have developed with various employers. But this arrangement can become problematic for a college. There are two main reasons: (a) when lecturers leave the college their relationships leave with them, and (b) the benefits of such informal placement are limited to students that are directly connected to certain lecturers.

Another way of getting into the job market is when students are employed by the employers who hosted them for on-course work placement and were suitably impressed with these students' performance. This practice highlights two important factors that influence employers when they consider applicants from a college. The first is that employers evaluate the college in terms of its success rate in getting students to complete their programmes and to graduate successfully. Secondly, they also refer to previous experiences they may have had with the college in relation to work placement and the performance of past students who are already in their employ.

At a few colleges job placement has formally been established as part of student support services. The main approach refers students who match the requirements of employers who call the college. To facilitate the referral process, student support officers usually keep records on graduates and copies of their CVs. The reality is that student support officers are under tremendous pressure to provide a broad range of services. Fitting job placement, which is a time-consuming process, into an already full programme of activities can be difficult. The ideal would be for a college to establish a placement office.

GETTING STARTED

STEP 1: Establishing job placement as a service

To start with, your college needs to agree that a job placement service and support system will be introduced and to plan it. When planning a placement service a college needs to consider what this will entail. For example:

- Will the college try to place every graduate in a job?
  OR
- Will the college be less ambitious and only focus on building a placement service which responds to employer requests for qualified students?

Whatever approach your college adopts, its placement service needs to be properly planned, designed and resourced if it is to be effective. Keeping in mind that job placement is a time-consuming process, it is important that the college carefully thinks about what it can manage. If a college starts with a job placement programme that is too ambitious it could place too much of a burden on student support and academic staff and the initiative may not succeed.

A placement policy needs to be developed to support and formalise the placement service being established. Policy issues include the following:

- The rationale for job placement
- Which staff members should be involved and their roles and responsibilities
- The relationship between on-course and exit work (job) placement
- What support will be provided to students to prepare them for the process of securing work
- The approach to be adopted in working with the employers with whom students are placed, including recruiting employers and managing placement partnerships with them
- What exit placement data needs to be collected and reported on
- Timetabling to accommodate time spent on job placement.

A plan for implementing the job placement service needs to be developed annually. This should outline what needs to be done, by whom, by when and the resources that will be needed. Student support officers will use this plan to carry

out and report on placement activities. Given that job placement will form only one of the many responsibilities of a student support officer, the amount of time available for this will be fairly limited. As a result it may not be possible for them to manage a proactive job placement programme that requires them to actively seek placements for students. A start-up level placement service should at least consist of an effective referral system which involves linking the college's best students (those with good marks, good attendance and good attitude) to employers who contact the college looking for potential employees.

To be able to manage the placement function student support officers will need to structure dedicated time into their working week. A few hours could, for instance, be blocked off three times a week, or perhaps one morning and one afternoon per week. The amount of time allocated to placement will depend on the kind of placement service to be implemented. For instance, if the programme includes reactive and proactive placement of students, student support officers may need to dedicate chunks of time to placement activities at points in the year when students exit from a programme. For the NC(V) this will be at the end of the year or maybe early in the new year after students' results have been released. Depending on the range of programmes offered there could be other points in the year when programmes are completed.

Strong employer relationships and partnerships form the core of a successful exit and on-course placement service. Employer placement relationships and partnerships thus need to be developed. As highlighted earlier, the college's relationships with different employers are often built on the informal personal relationships that academic staff members have developed. Building these relationships and new ones into college-level placement partnerships is an important task of staff involved in job and on-course work experience placement.

Finally, your college needs to evaluate its placement service annually and use the findings to improve its service and to develop its plan for the following year.

The summary draws together the aspects discussed above:

Step 1: Establishing a job placement service
The college has agreed to establish a job placement service. • The goals for the job placement service have been developed and a plan is developed annually to meet these. • The college provides the physical and financial resources needed to implement its job placement plan (for instance, office space, computers and telephones). • The college develops a graduate job placement (and tracking) policy. • The job placement service is located in the student support office. • Job placement (and tracking) is carried out as one of the responsibilities of campus-based student support officers or by a placement and tracking officer. • The college develops job placement relationships with employers from different industries. • The college evaluates its placement service annually and the findings inform the placement plan developed for the following year.

With all the preparations for setting up or establishing a job placement system in place – aspects such as getting

agreement on and buy-in to the need for a job placement system, policy development, staffing, role definition – our focus now shifts to the system and tools your college will need to develop to support its job placement service.

What will this look like?

STEP 2: System development

To implement an effective job placement service your college needs to develop various tools, processes and procedures – that is, a system. A job placement system will support the collection and management of the information and ultimately drive the service provided. A well-developed and managed placement database lies at the heart of an effective placement system. The placement database needs to:

- Provide student and employer information (names and contact information)
- Provide each student's academic results, their overall attendance record, career goals and the lecturers who taught them
- Enable the college to track each student's progress toward and beyond securing a job
- Ideally, allow the matching of potential candidates with employer requests. Such requests must therefore be captured, including the knowledge, skills and personality attributes required for the job.

Various standardised tools and templates can also be developed to support the job placement service, for example:

- A student registration for job placement support form (completed by each student applying to be part of the job placement programme. This form ensures that the same information can be captured on each student)
- A student work placement support agreement form. This form is completed by a student when accepted into the placement programme and indicates their agreement with the terms
- A job requirement form, which is used to clarify and record an employer's job requirements
- A confirmation of job placement form, which is completed by students when they have secured jobs
- An employer profile form, used to capture information on employers. This ensures that the same information is captured on each employer.

When putting in place a formal job placement system and related processes it is important to keep in mind that it may not involve starting from scratch because the basics of a closely related system may already be in place. For example, an on-course work placement database may have already been developed for one or more programmes as discussed in Topic 8. It is possible that a single database can be developed to manage both exit and on-course placement and that the same relationships or partnerships with employers can be drawn on in both areas. Overlap also occurs between job placement and tracking (the focus of Topic 15). The streamlining of these two functions would therefore be necessary to ensure effective and efficient operations.

Summary:

Step 2: System Development
• A database supporting job placement is established. • Forms and templates are developed that support effective job placement operations and management.

Let us now turn to the actual placement of students and how the system handles this process.

STEP 3: Placement of students

Students have to be informed about the existence of the placement service for them to use it. This usually happens as part of on-course career guidance and counselling as described in Topic 13. To be considered for work placement students have to submit their CVs to the student support office. Students apply for work placement by completing a 'registration for work placement' form.

EXAMPLE/SPECIMEN

REGISTRATION FOR JOB PLACEMENT SUPPORT

Please fill in the following and return to the college:

1. Name and surname: _____
2. Programme _____
3. Campus: _____
4. When do you exit the college? _____
5. Home address: _____

   _____
6. Contact number/s: _____

I, _____wish to register for work-placement support.

signed: _____ dated:_____

While every student should have the right to apply for work placement, they will need to qualify for this. Criteria used in this regard usually include the following:

- Adequate academic performance (that is, having passed the relevant subjects)
- Evidence of good attitude (for example, regular class attendance)
- A reasonable recommendation from a lecturer.

The above provides another reason why close working relationships with academic staff members need to be in place: they form an important source of information about the performance and attitude of different students and how suitable each would be for potential positions. But care must be taken not to overburden academic staff in relation to the exit work placement function.

When referring students to employers who contact the college the placement process to follow is:

- The student support officer asks the employer about the requirements of the job and then provides them with the CVs of the best or most appropriately qualified students
- The employer contacts students they are interested in directly to make arrangements to interview them or the college assists to set up the interviews
- Students notify the college if they secure employment by completing a 'confirmation of job placement' form.

To ensure the success of the placement process, the student support officer needs to contact students who were referred to employers and find out how they performed in the job interview. Both successful and unsuccessful students have to be encouraged to reflect on their performance in the job search process and what could be done better. Unsuccessful students need to think about why they might have failed to secure the position for which they applied and consider what they need to do to succeed. The college must now react to such feedback and decide what additional assistance it can provide to these students.

A job placement tracking form can be used to track the progress towards securing a job.

EXAMPLE/SPECIMEN

STUDENT JOB PLACEMENT TRACKING FORM PER PROGRAMME													
NAME OF PROGRAMME:													
Name of student _____	Category	Qualification	Internal interview	CV updated	Personal form	Correct as at	Contact details _____	Referrals/applications	Interviewed	Rejected	Temp position	Permanent	Company placed

Placement activities and results also need to be reported on. A 'placement report template', like the one below, can be developed to facilitate reporting. Placement reports need to be presented to college management and academic departments with a view to improving programme delivery and student support services.

EXAMPLE/SPECIMEN

JOB PLACEMENT REPORT
Name of programme: _____ <u>Placement</u> Number of students placed and where <u>Analysis</u> Trends with regard to placement: Do students get employment in some industries more than others? What helps and hinders job placement?

Summary:

Step 3: Placing students in jobs
• Students are fully informed about the rules and procedures governing the job placement service. • Students apply and register for placement. • Students are successfully matched with employer and job requirements. • Student support officers stay in contact with students referred to employers to get feedback about their success or not and the reasons for such outcomes. • Job placement reports are prepared on placement results.

DOING MORE

At this level of development the college's job placement service or programme has become both reactive and proactive. As such, it responds both to employer requests for college graduates and actively seeks placements for them. Further development of your college's job placement service toward more advanced practice involves building on what has been put in place as minimum or start-up practice.

Extension of the placement process

The placement (and tracking) function is now extended beyond the placing of graduates in employment by introducing follow-up activities. This could involve:

- Contacting students after they have been in employment for three months to enquire about their work experience and the extent to which their training has been relevant to the work they are doing.
- Contacting employers after three months to establish their satisfaction with the graduate(s) and their view of the extent to which the college has adequately prepared them for the job for which they have been hired.

Feedback received from graduates and their employers needs to be captured in the database and included in the placement reports.

Structural and systemic development

Further development of start-up practice focuses on the following outcomes:

- Formalising of placement through an approved placement policy
- Developing additional forms and templates required to support extended placement and tracking services, for example, 'tracking student work placement progress form' and an 'employer evaluation of college graduates form'
- The placement database becoming Web-based to increase its capacity for data management and to make it more accessible to college users
- Establishing a centralised job placement (and tracking) office – staffed by one or more dedicated placement officers who implement and manage the job placement service. *(Please see Appendix 1 at the end of this topic for an example of a job description for a placement officer)*
- Including placement in the college's quality-management system.

Partnership development

To ensure that the placement relationships and partnerships developed with employers grow to full potential and are mutually beneficial, it is essential that each of these be properly coordinated and managed. A centralised partnerships unit or desk can help a college to keep an overview of all its relationships and partnerships with regard to the purpose and status of each as well as the contact people involved from both the college and partner's side. It can also provide management support. If there is no partnerships unit in the college, strong collaboration will be needed between the student support or placement officers and academic departments to effectively develop and coordinate placement relationships and partnerships. At this level of development, relationships and partnerships should display the following features:

- Employer relationships are managed through letters or memoranda of understanding
- Relationships and partnerships are actively kept alive
- A primary college contact person is identified for taking responsibility for each employer relationship or partnership, for example, the linkages manager, the placement officer and /or an academic staff member
- College staff members who are involved in on-course work placement and job placement keep each other informed about developments regarding employer relationships or partnerships
- Relationships and partnerships are also established with organisations that facilitate entrepreneurship development

Working toward optimum practice

Optimum practice in this area would be for the college to have a centralised placement and tracking unit that forms part of its student support office. **It is also worthwhile remembering that the best employment opportunity a college gives its students is to have an established reputation as an institution that provides high-quality learning and achieves high levels of success.**

Summary:

Job placement service: Doing more
The job placement service is both reactive and pro-active. • The job placement service is located in a centralised placement (and graduate tracking) unit within the student support office • Job placement (and tracking) activities are carried out by one or more dedicated placement (and tracking) officers. • The job placement database is centralised, up-to date and Web-based. It is organised by programme and is accessible to all academic staff. • Placement officers collaborate with academic staff to ensure that the placement service operates effectively. • The college actively maintains and develops new placement relationships and partnerships with employers in each industry in which programmes are provided. • Job placement is part of the college's quality-management system.

Before you leave this topic you have a chance to measure to what extent current practice in your college or campus reflects the best practices put forward in this topic. This will provide you with a basis for future planning.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The first task in this section is an audit of current job placement practice in your college or campus. If you are a lecturer you must think about how the job placement service could help you to improve your teaching and the quality of the programmes delivered by your college. If you are a campus manager or academic manager you need to think about how to use feedback generated by the job placement service to improve programme delivery and student support. If you are a student support services specialist you need to think about how to incorporate job placement activities and findings to enhance the work of the student support department.

TASK1: AUDIT

Look at the elements listed in the first column of the profile and then circle the number between 1 and 6 that best describes your college's current practice in respect of this area of support. **A rating of 1 or 2 is LOW** **A rating of 3 or 4 is AVERAGE** **A rating of 5 or 6 is HIGH**						
Establishing (introducing) a job placement system						
1. The college has **agreed** to establish a job placement service.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. The **goals** for the job placement service have been formulated and an action plan is developed annually.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Physical and financial **resources** are provided to implement the placement action plan.	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. The college has developed a **policy** for job placement.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. The job placement service is **located in the student support office**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Job placement (and tracking) is carried out as **one of the responsibilities of campus-based student support officers** or by a placement and tracking officer.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. The college develops job/work placement **relationships with employers** from different industries on a continuous basis.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. The college evaluates its tracking function annually and the findings inform the tracking plan developed for the following year.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
System development						
9. A **database** supporting job placement has been established.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. **Forms and templates** have been developed to manage and report on job placement.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Placement of students						
11. Students are **fully informed** about the rules and procedures that govern job placement.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Students **apply and register** for placement.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Students are successfully **matched** with employer and job requirements.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Student support officers get **feedback** from students referred on their success or not in securing employment and the reasons for such outcomes.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. **Placement reports** are prepared on placement results.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Doing more						
16. The job placement service is **both reactive and pro-active**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. The job placement service is located in the student support office.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Job placement (and tracking) activities are carried out by one or more **dedicated placement (and tracking) officers**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. The college has a **centralised up-to date Web-based student work placement database** which is organised by programme and is accessible to all academic staff.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Placement officers **collaborate** with academic staff to ensure that the placement service operates effectively.	1	2	3	4	5	6

21. The college actively maintains and develops **new placement relationships** and partnerships with employers in each industry in which programmes are provided.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. Job placement is part of the college's **quality-management system**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						

TASK 2: FINAL SCORE

Write the sub-total for each step in the space provided below and add up the total.

Step 1: Establishing (introducing) a job placement service	
Step 2: System development	
Step 3: Placement of students	
Doing more	
TOTAL:	

Place your total in the appropriate block below.

Overall rating for job placement support

LOW	AVERAGE	HIGH
22-44	45-88	89-132

Lowest possible score: 22 *Highest possible score: 102*

TASK 3: PLANNING

The final task requires you to think about how current practice can be improved or deepened as a whole-institution response. Look at your ratings carefully and select three priority needs. The next step is to work out how to address these needs. Money, people and resources may not be readily available so you need to do some strategic thinking:

- Who needs to be involved in deciding how to address the identified needs and how will you get buy-in?
- Is there a committee or forum at campus, college or provincial level to which a proposal or motivation can be submitted so that the matter can be discussed more widely?
- What can realistically be done in the short-, medium- and long-term?

Write down the answers to some of these questions in the space below and then think of ways in which the matter can be taken forward. Planning for effective job placement starts here.

APPENDIX 1

EXAMPLE/SPECIMEN: Job Description for a Placement Officer.

Placement Officer Job Description

Role and Responsibilities

- Pre-screening candidates, reviewing CVs and assisting with interview readiness
- Meeting with clients to discuss the details of the vacancy and what sort of person they are looking for. You would then match suitable candidates in the database
- Matching suitable candidates and setting up interviews for candidates with potential employer
- Providing support to both parties on salary and contract negotiations as needed
- Developing business with new companies and maintaining relationships with existing clients

Job Requirements and Skills

- Be confident, organised and good at communicating
- Possess excellent writing and telephone manner to communicate effectively with clients as well as candidates
- Have an interest in sales and negotiating
- Have knowledge and experience of the sector
- Must be fully computer literate
- Have an ability to work independently as well as in a team, show initiative and meet deadlines

TOPIC 15

GRADUATE TRACKING

In this topic we look at graduate tracking. The aim is to help each college and campus to ensure that graduate tracking functions at an optimum standard. We discuss two stages of practice which we have called:

- Getting started
- Doing more

The following steps are important aspects of effective graduate tracking:

Step 1: Establishing a graduate tracking function

Step 2: Developing systems and tools for tracking graduates

Step 3: Tracking graduates and using tracking information to improve college functioning

In the final section there is an opportunity to complete an audit of current practice at your college or campus, or in your classroom. This will help to identify areas in which practice can be improved or deepened and to plan for this.

Why is graduate tracking important?

FET Colleges are expected to provide students with training and support that will lead to formal or self-employment. This is one of the most important indicators of a college's success. If graduates find work in their field of study, this shows that there is a good match between the training and support provided by a college and the needs of its local and regional economy. Tracking, which involves following up students who have graduated, is one of the main ways colleges can find out what happens to their students after they graduate and how they are performing in the job market.

Through tracking, colleges collect information on issues like: whether or not graduates are employed; unemployed or studying; if they are working; what job they are doing and whether this is in their field of study; what they are earning; their level of satisfaction with their current situation; the extent to which they believe the college prepared them for the world of work; and their future goals. Tracking is also used to obtain feedback from employers about the performance of the graduates they have employed.

Tracking can help colleges to:

- Better understand job market and employer needs
- Improve the match between the programmes they provide and job market and employers' needs
- Provide students with information and support that will enable them to make more informed career choices when they enrol at a college, and to match their job and career development expectations with job market reality
- Improve their job preparation and placement services

GETTING STARTED

STEP 1: Establishing a graduate tracking function

The first step is concerned with planning a graduate tracking function. What would this look like?

The starting point is for your college to agree to establish a tracking function and to clarify what this will entail. A tracking plan then needs to be developed. Some of the issues that your college needs to consider when planning its tracking function include:

- What does your college hope to achieve by tracking its graduates?
- Which graduates will be tracked, how often, over what period of time and what information will be collected from them?
- Will feedback from employers also be obtained and, if so, what information?
- What tracking activities will be included and what systems and tools will be needed to support the tracking activities planned?
- How much time will be needed for tracking and who will carry out tracking responsibilities?

It is important that your college is clear about its tracking purpose and what it will do with the information it collects. If your college does not make use of the tracking information it collects and addresses the problems identified, there is little point in tracking graduates. While the purpose of tracking should ultimately be to improve the programmes and services provided by your college, your college's aims could be more modest than this at the start.

For instance, your college could initially aim to update the contact information it has on its students at the point of graduation and find out from them what they will be doing or are planning to do after they graduate. This sort of information is relatively easy to collect as it can be obtained from graduates before they leave the college. The college could at a later stage expand the scope to include tracking its graduates after a certain period of time, like a year, to find out how many are working, studying or unemployed, why they are in the position they are in, and if those who are employed are working in jobs that are related to their field of study.

Once your college is clear about its purpose for tracking it needs to consider how it will achieve this. Tracking can be an extremely time consuming and administratively heavy process and the plan your college develops needs to be based on how much staff time can be allocated. Until your college is able to appoint one or more dedicated placement and tracking officers, tracking is likely to be a responsibility that will fall to student support officers, who may not be able to devote a great deal of time to this activity. However, a small-scale tracking programme, if it is well planned, can produce extremely valuable information.

Depending on the time available, a start-up tracking programme could include one or all three of the following components: a graduate tracking form, an alumni structure and short-term telephonic tracking of graduates. These are discussed below.

- *A graduate tracking form*. Each college graduate completes a graduate tracking form at graduation. This would provide up-to-date contact information on each student at the point of graduation as well as information on their

work or study plans. If graduates are tracked at a later stage, your college will be able to compare what they planned to do at graduation with what they have actually done, and if this is different, find out why. The following information could be collected through a graduate tracking form.

EXAMPLE/SPECIMEN

Graduate Tracking Form (completed at graduation)

Contact details
- Current address and contact details
- Current address and contact details of parents and one sibling

Programme completed at college
- Name of programme or course completed at the college
- Marks obtained in final exams

Current employment situation (if applicable)
- Employment status (job secured or promised)
- Name and contact details of employer
- Position held or promised
- Is the work in the graduate's field of training
- Nature of employment (permanent, temporary, full-time, part-time, piecemeal)
- Earnings

- *An alumni structure*. The college establishes an alumni structure for college graduates as a way to keep track of them. An Alumni Committee, which is elected annually, plans a programme of activities and events for college alumni. The college then uses the alumni events to keep in contact with its graduates, find out what they are doing and update their contact details. The alumni structure is introduced to graduates during their graduation ceremony and they are encouraged to join and participate in the activities it arranges.

Case study: A college that uses alumni functions as a way to keep track of its graduates

Every year the college hosts one alumni function at each of its campuses. All campus graduates are invited to attend. The main purpose of these functions is for the college to find out what its graduates are doing. They are also used to inform graduates about work and training opportunities, and to motivate them to succeed in their work or job searching. Alumni functions are marketed to graduates as social events and as a way for them to find out about employment and further training opportunities. The functions usually include an exhibition, a motivational speaker, videos, music and refreshments. Each student also completes a tracking questionnaire at the function. Alumni functions are advertised in newspapers and each graduate is also sent an invitation by mail or email. Even though alumni functions do not attract large numbers, the college feels that they are still a good way to keep up with its graduates. In addition, graduates dress up for and enjoy the function and it makes them feel that they are still part of the college.

- *Short-term telephonic tracking of graduates.* One year after graduation the college attempts to track all or a specified percentage of graduates from each programme telephonically. This gives the college an indication of

how many of its graduates are employed, unemployed or studying further a year after graduation. The college is also able to find out what sort of work or study its graduates are doing and whether this is in their field of training. If the college compares the information collected through telephonic tracking with the information provided on the graduate tracking form it is able to see how many graduates are doing what they had planned to do. Below is an example of the useful information that can be collected during telephonic tracking.

EXAMPLE/SPECIMEN

Telephonic Graduate Tracking Form

Employment situation

- Employment status (employed, self-employed, unemployed or studying further)
- Name and contact details of employer
- How employment was secured and what assistance the college provided in this regard
- Nature of employment (permanent, temporary, full-time, part-time, piecemeal)
- Employment position or grade
- Is employment in the field in which they trained? If not, why not?
- Earnings
- Satisfaction with current situation
- Future employment prospects with current employer

Study situation

- If studying, what graduate is studying and where

Plans

- Is the graduate doing what they planned to do at graduation and if not, why not?
- What are the graduate's future goals?
- How are they going to achieve these goals?

Confirm contact details

- Check address and contact details of graduate and other contacts like parents and siblings

Whatever tracking programme your college introduces, it requires a budget and resources, such as computers and telephones, to support it. The college should also evaluate its tracking function annually and use the findings to improve and plan for the following year.

Now read the summary of what has been discussed and then go on to the next step.

Step 1: Establishing a graduate tracking function

- The college has agreed to establish a tracking function.
- The college develops an annual tracking plan that lists its objectives and outlines how these will be achieved.
- The tracking function is located in the student support department.
- Tracking responsibilities are carried out by campus-based student support officers.
- The college provides the physical resources and budget it needs to implement its tracking plan.
- The college is developing a tracking (and job placement) policy.
- The college evaluates its tracking function annually and the findings inform the tracking plan developed for the following year.

STEP 2: Developing systems and tools for tracking graduates

This step is concerned with the systems and tools your college will need to develop to support its tracking function. What will this look like?

Tracking is a process of collecting, capturing, analysing and reporting information. The process of graduate tracking can be simplified and standardised by the development of forms and templates that can be used by those carrying out and reporting on tracking activities. The following kinds of forms and templates can be developed:

- A tracking form completed by graduates at graduation
- A graduate tracking form completed during telephonic tracking or at an alumni event
- An employer satisfaction survey form
- A tracking report template

A college's tracking purpose provides direction on what information it will collect. When it is clear about its tracking purpose, the college needs to look at what questions to ask to get the information it needs to fulfil this purpose. The data collection forms, which will be used to support the process of collecting information from graduates, and the tracking database, which will be used to store the information collected, should be based on the questions developed.

To start with, your college needs contact information for each student. This should include a cellphone number, a postal or street address and, if possible, a landline number and email address. Similar contact information should also be obtained from at least one parent and a sibling as this information could be used to locate a student who has graduated and has changed contact details. It is also helpful to have some information on students and their expectations at graduation. As noted above, this information can serve as a useful point of comparison when future information is collected. The tracking forms included above give an idea of the kind of information that your college might want to collect.

Your college will need to establish some form of database to keep its tracking data. The database must be able to contain all the information collected during tracking and must assist your college to analyse this information. The database should also preferably be expandable so that new categories of data can be included if your college chooses to collect additional information at a later stage. In an ideal situation, the student information contained your college's management information system (MIS) must be able to provide the basics of a graduate tracking database. In this case, the MIS either includes or allows for the inclusion of a graduate tracking module that is created from data uploaded from other student records in the MIS. Unfortunately, even if your college's MIS has such a facility, your MIS service provider is likely to charge extra for this.

On the basis of its tracking purpose, practicalities and cost, each college will need to decide whether or not to purchase the right to use the tracking module that goes with its MIS or to establish a separate tracking database. As noted already, it is important that a college's tracking database allows it to capture data that matches its purpose for tracking students. If the tracking module that can be bought to supplement the college's current MIS does not allow this, your college may need to develop its own tracking database.

During the start-up phase a basic database or spreadsheet is developed to manage tracking data. The headings and

sub-headings included are a reflection of the information your college intends to collect on its graduates at the point of graduation and through future tracking activities. A data profile is then developed for each graduate that is tracked. The profile is initially created from your college's MIS student history files (if the information is up to date) or from the graduate tracking forms completed at graduation. The profile developed for each graduate should include all the information on the tracking form. As graduates are tracked over time, their profiles are updated and added to as new information is obtained.

Now read the summary of what has been discussed and then continue to the next step.

Step 2: Developing systems and tools for tracking graduates
• A tracking database is developed to manage the tracking information collected on graduates. • Tracking forms and templates are developed to manage and report on tracking.

STEP 3: Tracking graduates and using tracking information to improve college efficiency

This step is concerned with the process of tracking graduates, analysing information collected, reporting on it and using it to improve college functioning. What does this look like?

Tracking graduates

Tracking activities are carried out according to a college's tracking plan. Depending on the tracking plan developed, student support officers implement tracking activities continuously or periodically. In a continuous tracking programme, tracking forms part of a college's day-to-day work. In a periodic tracking programme, tracking activities are scheduled to take place at certain times in the college year, for instance, at three monthly, six monthly or annual intervals. As tracking information is collected student support officers capture and update the records kept on each graduate. The student support department considers how best to build tracking activities into the weekly and monthly schedules of student officers. Dedicated time is set aside to ensure that student support officers have time to fulfil their tracking responsibilities.

Analysing and reporting on graduate tracking

Tracking information collected on graduates is translated into a form that the college is able to use. Reports on tracking statistics are prepared.

EXAMPLE/SPECIMEN

TRACKING REPORT
Name of programme: _____ • Number of students tracked • How many are employed, unemployed or studying further • Number in permanent, temporary or training (apprenticeship or learnership) positions • How many are in positions related to their field of study

The college then examines the findings and draws out the implications of these for programme delivery, student support and recruitment. Your college ultimately needs to use the tracking information it collects to fulfil whatever purpose it has.

Using tracking information

A college can use tracking information to guide its other labour market research activities and to inform its decisions about which programmes it offers and how these can be improved. Tracking information can also be used by a college to improve its student support services, including career guidance, on course academic support, job preparation and placement. If tracking information indicates, for instance, that most of the graduates from a particular programme are not managing to obtain or create work in their area of training this can mean a number of things: (i) there is no labour market demand for the skills they have; (ii) their level of expertise and experience does not meet industry standards; or (iii) while there are jobs available at their skills and experience level, students have been unable to secure these due to poor job finding skills or an inability to sell themselves to prospective employers.

These are problems that a college should be able to address. If tracking feedback suggests that there is no demand for the skills being developed by a particular programme, the college should seriously consider dropping this programme. Before dropping a programme, however, the college needs to do additional research to make sure that this is the right decision. It might be that with some adaptation the programme could be made more relevant. To address the second problem the college needs to improve the match between employer expectations and the training it is providing. It might be that employers do not understand college programmes and have unrealistic expectations. In this case, the college needs to ensure that employers are better informed about the programmes it is providing and the kind of employees these will produce. It is also possible that the training provided could be improved so that it better matches employer needs. Student expertise and work experience could, for instance, be improved by expanding the programme to include work experience through placements in actual workplaces. To solve the third problem the college needs to provide greater job preparation and placement assistance to students.

Tracking information can also be used to assist students to make the right career choices when they enrol at a college. Their choice of study should be based on more than interest and aptitude. It also needs to be informed by real career opportunities in the labour market. Armed with information collected through graduate tracking, colleges will be able to provide pointers as to which fields are leading to work, what kinds of work, and what the earning and future prospects in the field are.

Now read the summary.

Step 3: Tracking graduates and using tracking information to improve college functioning
• Tracking activities are carried out according to an annual tracking plan. • Information is kept on each graduate tracked and updated as soon as new information is collected. • Findings are presented in tracking reports. • Findings are considered by relevant college managers, academic staff and the college council. • The college is starting to use tracking information to improve programme delivery and student support.

We have now discussed three steps that colleges can take to establish and implement graduate tracking. In the next section you can read about a few more things that can be done.

DOING MORE

'Getting started' focuses on establishing and implementing a basic tracking function. 'Doing more' is concerned with extending the college's tracking function. What does this look like?

The college increases its capacity to place and track graduates through establishing a centralised placement and tracking unit in its student support office which now takes responsibility for placement and tracking activities. The unit is initially staffed by one full-time placement and tracking officer.

The tracking programme is extended and, in addition to the activities outlined in the 'getting started' phase, includes employer satisfaction surveys and longer-term tracking of each cohort of graduates.

- *Employer satisfaction surveys.* An annual employer satisfaction survey is carried out with employers who have hired college graduates. Two methods are used simultaneously to collect information: email and phone. An email questionnaire that is quick and easy to complete is sent out first. Employers who do not respond to the email survey are then phoned to obtain information.

- *Longer-term graduate tracking.* While short-term tracking provides information about the experience of graduates when they first enter the labour market, long-term tracking helps a college to build an understanding of how its graduates are progressing in the labour market over time. In the 'doing more' phase the college extends the period of time that it tracks each cohort of graduates from one to three years, with graduates being contacted once a year in the second and third year. If the college does not have the capacity to telephonically contact each cohort of students for three years, a mail and Web based tracking approach is used for years two and three. This approach makes use of three contact strategies simultaneously: a prepaid postcard which students are asked to complete and return to the college, an email addressed to students who have email addresses which must be completed and returned, and an SMS directing students to a Web-based form on the college's website that they should complete. The postcard, email and Web-based form all require identical information and students are asked to complete and return only one of these.

  To encourage graduates to reply and thereby minimise the number of non-returns, attractive prizes may be offered. For instance, the names of students who reply are put into a draw and the first name drawn wins R1 000, the second R500 and the third R250.

Now read the summary.

Graduate tracking: Doing more
• The tracking function is located in a centralised placement and tracking unit in the student support department and tracking activities are carried out by a dedicated placement and tracking officer. • Each cohort of graduates is tracked for at least two years. • Employer satisfaction surveys are carried out as part of the tracking function.

Before you leave this topic you have a chance to measure to what extent current practice in your college or campus reflects the best practices put forward in this topic. This will provide you with a basis for future planning.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The first task in this section is an audit of current graduate tracking practice in your college or campus. If you are a lecturer you must think about how graduate tracking could help you to improve your teaching and the quality of the programmes delivered by your college. If you are a campus manager or academic manager you need to think about how to use graduate tracking findings to improve programme delivery and student support. If you are a student support services specialist you need to think about how to incorporate graduate tracking activities and findings into the work of the student support department.

TASK1: AUDIT

Look at the elements listed in the first column of the profile and then circle the number between 1 and 6 that best describes your college's current practice. **A rating of 1 or 2 is LOW** **A rating of 3 or 4 is AVERAGE** **A rating of 5 or 6 is HIGH**						
Establishing a graduate tracking function						
1. The college has agreed to establish a **tracking function.**	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. The college develops an **annual tracking plan** that lists its tracking objectives and outlines how these will be achieved.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. The tracking function is **located** in the student support department.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. **Tracking responsibilities** are carried out by a campus-based student support officer.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. The college provides the **physical resources and budget** it needs to implement its tracking plan.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. The college is developing a **tracking** (and job placement) **policy**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. The college **evaluates** its tracking function annually and the findings inform the tracking plan developed for the following year.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Developing systems and tools for tracking graduates						
8. A **tracking database** has been developed to manage the information collected on graduates	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. **Tracking forms and templates** have been developed to manage and report on tracking.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						

Tracking graduates and using tracking information to improve college functioning						
10. **Tracking activities** are carried out according to the annual tracking plan.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. **Information** is kept on each graduate tracked and updated as soon as new information is collected.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. **Findings** are presented in tracking reports.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. **Findings are considered** by relevant college managers, academic staff and the college council.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. The college is starting to use tracking information to **improve programme delivery** and student support.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						
Doing more						
15. The tracking function is located in a **centralised placement and tracking unit** in the student support department and tracking activities are carried out by a dedicated student support officer.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Each cohort of graduates is **tracked for at least two years**.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. **Employer satisfaction surveys** are carried out as part of the tracking function.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-total (add up your score and write it down in the open block)						

TASK 2: FINAL SCORE

Write the sub-total for each step in the space provided below and add up the total.

Step 1: Planning a graduate tracking function	
Step 2: Developing systems and tools for tracking graduates	
Step 3: Tracking graduates and using tracking information to improve college functioning	
Doing more	
TOTAL:	

Place your total in the appropriate block below.

Overall rating for graduate tracking

LOW	AVERAGE	HIGH
17-34	35-68	69-102

Lowest possible score: 17 *Highest possible score: 102*

TASK 3: PLANNING

The final task requires you to think about how current practice can be improved or deepened as a whole-institution response. Look at your ratings carefully and select three priority needs. The next step is to work out how to address these needs. Money, people and resources may not be readily available so you need to do some strategic thinking:

- Who needs to be involved in deciding how to address the identified needs and how will you get buy-in?
- Is there a committee or forum at campus, college or provincial level to which a proposal or motivation can be submitted so that the matter can be discussed more widely?
- What can realistically be done in the short-, medium- and long-term?

Write down the answers to some of these questions in the space below and then think of ways in which the matter can be taken forward. Planning for effective graduate tracking starts here.

(Footnotes)

1 The FET College Project was initiated by and is being funded by the Swiss-South African Co-operation Initiative (SSACI). It is being implemented by SSACI in partnership with the National Department of Education.

Notes:

Notes:

Notes: