UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

STUDENT SUCCESS RATES TEMPLATE

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STUDENT SUCCESS RATES ANALYSIS

1. Introduction

The sustainability of higher education institutions is affected by various things including particularly student satisfaction, student success rate and the financial stability of the institution. An analysis of student attrition and retention plays a vital role in assessing the sustainability of a higher education institution. Using suitable analysis techniques to do success profiling of prospective and current students is crucial for students and institutions alike.

Success/risk estimation is essential for any higher education institution (HEI) because determining such factors can assist higher education institutions in fulfilling their obligation to provide support, guidance and interventions for their prospective and existing students.

One way of assessing student progress is to calculate success rates. These rates take into account full-time equivalent student enrolments and headcount enrolments. The number of students who have successfully passed exams is an important element in monitoring student success rate. Student success rates can be measured in several waysincluding the following two most familiar ones:

- **Degree credit success rate**: This measures the ratio between student modules/courses passed and students enrolled for any particular year. It looks at module/course pass rates using the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS).

- **Graduation rate**: This is the number of students who graduated at the end of a degree programme. South Africa's graduation rate of 15% is one of the lowest in the world, according to the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) compiled by the Department of Education in 2001.

Notwithstanding the lower target graduation rates, improving throughput remains a priority, to the extent that the new funding framework links funding to the number of graduates an institution produces.

It is very important that Schools report on the success rate of their offerings as this has an impact in the way UNIVEN is funded by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DoHET). The University ise funded by both the teaching inputs (students enrolled) and teaching outputs (students graduating) as outlined in the national funding framework (NFF).

2. Definitions of Terms

2.1 Drop out in Good Academic Standing: A student who leaves the university without completing his/her qualification, and who has not been excluded from the institution on academic grounds, is considered to have dropped out in good academic standing.

2.2 Full-Time Equivalent Enrolments (FTE): An FTE student enrolment takes as a unit a student who is following a standard full-time curriculum. A part-time student who is taking (say) one third of a standard curriculum is counted as 0.33 of an FTE enrolment. FTE enrolments per department and per Faculty are built up from the course level, summing the un-weighted credit values per course.

2.3 Graduation rate: This is a percentage computed from a simple fraction where the numerator is the graduate total and the denominator is all enrolled students in the programme, qualification, qualification type etc. The Department of Higher Education and Training makes use of the following benchmark graduation rates by qualification type in arriving at planned FTE enrolments per institution:

- General academic (3-year) Bachelors degrees: 25% (22,5%)
- Professional first Bachelors degrees: 20% (18%)
- Postgraduate diplomas: 60% (54%)
- Honours degrees: 60% (54%)
- Masters degrees: 33% (30%)
- Doctoral degrees: 20%

2.4 Head Count: A head count enrolment total is literally a counting of heads, which implies that full-time as well as part-time students are taken as units. Unduplicated head count enrolments are used where required in National Funding Formula calculations:

- Where a student is concurrently registered for two programmes, only the more senior programme, or the first alphabetically, where both programmes are at the same level, is included.

2.5 Retention Rate: The retention rate for a particular programme (or group of students registered for a programme) most usefully examines the average proportion of students registered in year n (by entrance category and academic year of study) who re-register in year n+1.

2.6 Success Rate: This term is most often used in the context of course rather than programme performance, and refers to the percentage of passes in relation to the total course registration. In some cases, FTE rather than head count success rates are used. The DoHET, for example, commonly reviews the overall undergraduate course FTE success rates, by population group, for each institution.

2.7 Throughput Rate: This term is variously used to refer to both the graduation rate and the retention rate, amongst others. It is more useful therefore to refer to either the graduation rate or the retention rate very clearly.

3. Data Definitions

3.1 Pass Rate

1. $\frac{\text{Exam passed}}{\text{Enrolled}} \times 100 =$ Success rate.

2. $\frac{\text{Exam passed}}{\text{Exam Admission}} \times 100 =$ Module pass rate.

3. $\frac{\text{Total FTE credit}}{\text{Total FTE enrolled}} \times 100 =$ Pass Rate.

4. $\frac{\text{Exam admission}}{\text{Enrolled}} \times 100 =$ Exam Admission Rate

3.2 Dropout Rate

1. Enrolled - Exam admission = Drop out.

2. $\frac{\text{Enrolment - Exam admission}}{\text{Enrolled}} \times 100 =$ Drop out Rate.

3. $\frac{\text{Exam admission - Ex. Passed}}{\text{Exam admission}} \times 100 =$ Failure Rate.

3.3 Graduation Rate

1. $\frac{\text{Graduated (Year)}}{\text{Enrolled (year)}} =$ Graduation Rate.

2. $\frac{\text{Enrolled (n) (year +1)}}{\text{Enrolled (n) (year)}} \times 100 =$ Retention Rate (Level 1, **R1**).

3. $\frac{\text{Enrolled (n) (year + 2)}}{\text{Enrolled (n) (year + 1)}} \times 100 =$ Retention rate (Level 2, **R2**).

4. $\frac{R\,1 + R\,2}{2} =$ Throughput rate.

The School/Department should be able to work out the throughput rate of the entire programme/qualification once the pass rate and the dropout rate has been calculated.

Table 1: Student Success Rate Analysis Template

Course/Module	Academic staff	No. of students enrolled	No. of students drop out	Exam admission	No. of student pass exam	Success Rate	Subject pass rate	Pass rate	Exam Admission Rate	Dropout Rate	Failure Rate