

ADDENDUM 2

Feedback on research for ASASWEI on lecturer / student ratio's and admission requirements of Social work departments in South Africa

ASASWEI commissioned a task team consisting of Dr Roelf Reyneke, Prof Hanna Nel and Mr John Rautenbach to determine lecturer/student ratio's and admission requirements of Universities. A questionnaire was developed and sent to all the HOD of the 17 different departments of Social work at South African universities. This research had to be completed within two weeks. Because of the limited time available, it is recognised that further research might be needed in order to refine some elements of this project.

Prof Mike Weyers and associates from North West University: Potchefstroom campus developed a formula that uses full-time equivalent (FTE) students and FTE lecturer ratio's, international standards, and current South African standards as a basis for determining the number of FET lecturers required for the current number of students at the different departments.

The following is a summarised report on the most important results from the survey. Included are the results of the questionnaires that were received back from the different departments. E-mails and telephone calls were made to the outstanding departments. At the time of writing this report only 13 of the 17 departments gave feedback.

2. Current registered undergraduate students

Table 1 indicates that the current registered undergraduate students at the participating universities vary from 3780 (Unisa) to 141 (North West: Potchefstroom). The participants were asked if they feel that they could cope with the current number of students that they do have. Only one, Pretoria, said that they could manage, but only just. The rest felt that they cannot cope effectively with their current number of students.

University	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
North West: Potch	58	32	28	23	141
Western Cape	81	66	48	56	251
Huguenote	49	27	94	76	246
Stellenbosch	58	64	29	29	180
Pretoria	205 ¹	180	41	28	454
Unisa	2200	850	532	198	3780
KwaZulu-Natal	125	177	63	56	421
Nelson Mandela	67	48	26	18	159
Free State	70	44	67	49	230
Venda	160	167	120	109	556
Wits	35	39	28	33	135
Johannesburg	380	94	90	40	604
Fort Hare	256	344	217	145	952

Table 1: Current registered undergraduate students

3. Current registered post graduate students

Table 2 shows the current registered post graduate students. The University of Pretoria has the most students with 169 and the University of Venda has no post graduate students. The average number of post graduate students is 44.4 students. Only North West University: Potchefstroom campus is currently training honours students in Social work.

University	Honn	M - course	M - dissert.	PhD	Total
North West: Potch	8	30	24	23	85
Western Cape	0	17	7	2	26
Huguenote	0	4	13	4	21
Stellenbosch	0	4	26	8	38
Pretoria	0	141	5	23	169
Unisa	0	18	15	13	46
KwaZulu-Natal	0	19	7	2	28
Nelson Mandela	0	10	1	4	15
Free State	0	6	1	9	16
Venda	0	0	0	0	0
Wits	0	21	3	4	28
Johannesburg	0	8	0	0	8
Fort Hare	10	12	10	1	33

¹ First year is an open course

Table 2: Current registered post graduate students

4. Current staff of the departments

The current staff of the departments is indicated in table 3. It shows that excluding Unisa (110) the number of staff varies from 6 to 26 members. When looking at the residential universities it is evident that the department with the most students (Fort Hare) has only 12 staff members to do the training. The students that they use help with administrative tasks.

University	Full time	Part time	Admin	Stud ass	Total
North West: Potch	9	1	1	0	11
Western Cape	7	1	3	0	11
Hugenote	9	3	1	0	13
Stellenbosch	5	8	1	4	18
Pretoria	12	6	2	1	21
Unisa	11	3	4	92	110
KwaZulu-Natal	12	6	2	6	26
Nelson Mandela	4	2	0	1	7
Free State	8	1	1	2	12
Venda	5	1	0	0	6
Wits	7	0	1	0	8
Johannesburg	7	4	2	3	16
Fort Hare	10	2	2	4	18

Table 3: Current staff of Departments

5. Capacity of departments

According to the feedback received, the maximum number of students that could be delivered each year is 885 students. It also shows that placements available for final year students play a role in the number of students that could be managed each year (cf. table 4).

University	Max undergraduates per year	Placements for students
North West: Potch	45	45
Western Cape	60	30
Hugenote	50	9*
Stellenbosch	50	As needed
Pretoria	50	14*
Unisa	180	152
KwaZulu-Natal	100	100
Nelson Mandela	35	35

Free State	55	50
Venda	100	109
Wits	40	40
Johannesburg	80	80
Fort Hare	160	As needed
Total	885	

Table 4: Maximum number of student per year

* These departments only indicated the number of sites that they use and not the individual available placements

In order to determine the student – lecturer ratio's, Weyers² recommends five points of departure.

1. That the whole workload of lecturers should be taken into account
2. That a formula should be developed that differentiates between the different levels (from undergraduate to postgraduate)
3. That $\pm 60\%$ of the credits of a BSW programme should, according to the SACSSP, consist of so-called "social work" modules
4. That the percentage 'contribution' of social work to the BSW programme increases from 1st to the 4th year with the 4th year being 100% social work
5. That both South African and international standards in higher education should be taken into account in determining student-lecturer ratios.

Some South African, African and international standards in social work and equivalent training

A quick web survey produced the following indicators of the ratio's of full-time equivalent (FTE) students and FTE lecturers:

- ◆ Pupil-Teacher ratio in RSA schools: 30/40: 1
- ◆ Student-lecturer ratio's in RSA's FET colleges: varies from 13:1 to 38: 1
- ◆ Student-lecturer ratio's in RSA's hotel schools/colleges: varies from 8:1 (final year) to 20:1 (1st year)
- ◆ Student-lecturer ratio's in one of the RSA university's school of music: 5.5:1
- ◆ Overall student-lecturer ratio's in one of Australia's schools of social work: 11:1
- ◆ Student-lecturer ratio's in a Canadian school of social work: 20:1
- ◆ Student-lecturer ratio's in a Malawian school of social work: 25:1
- ◆ Student-lecturer ratio's in a Malaysian school of social work: 23:1
- ◆ Student-lecturer ratio's in Tanzania higher education: 22:1
- ◆ International standard for higher education (generalist undergraduate training): 20:1
- ◆ Student-lecturer ratio's for (full-time) MSW studies at a USA school for social work: 6:1

² Prof M Weyers and associates from the North West University: Potchefstroom campus

- ◆ (No indicators could be found for PhD/DSW or research masters students)

Recommended formula:

Formula’s assumptions (note: this is only a recommended starting point for further refinement):

1. That South African social work training is unique inasmuch as that it constitutes professional undergraduate training (and its accompanying high staff-input ratio) that makes it imperative that the ratio’s should not exceed the international tertiary education standard of 20:1
2. That an escalating “weighting” formula to accommodate escalating practical training should be incorporated from the 2nd year onwards and that at least the final year should be approximately in line with Australia’s overall average (i.e. 11:1)
3. That the percentage ‘inputs’ of social work staff to the BSW programme per year would, on average, be: 1st year = 42%; 2nd year = 45%; 3rd year = 55%; 4th year = 100%
4. That international standards for post-graduate training should apply to South African MSW & PhD/DSW training
5. That the input requirements for coursework and dissertation MSW’s are the same (they carry the same amount of credits)
6. That a PhD/DSW is approximately twice as much work for the study supervisor as a MSW

Formula:

[Note: The following formula represents the ideal ratio and benchmark that South African social work training should strive to achieve within the next 10 to 15 years. The powers that be (e.g. SACSSP, individual universities, ASASWEI) could decide which targets to set for specific dates (e.g. ‘that all training institutions should meet at least 75% of the ideal/targeted ratios by 2015’)

LEVEL/YEAR	FTE1 STUDENT- FTE LECTURER RATIO	CALCULATIONS
1ST year	48:1	$100 \div 422 \times 203 = 48$
2nd year	42:1	$100 \div 45 \times 20 = 45$ (plus 5% weight4)
3rd year	30:1	$100 \div 55 \times 20 = 36$ (plus 15% weight)
4th year	12:1	$100 \div 100 \times 20 = 20$ (plus 40% weight)

Honours BA (Social Work) (part time)	20:1	$100 \div 100 \times 20 = 20$
Masters (Course work)	6:1	
Masters (Dissertation)	6:1	
PhD.	3:1	

1. Note: calculations only apply to full-time (residential type) undergraduate and full-time postgraduate students. The ratio for part-time students should be \pm twice the proposed numbers.
2. Average social work contribution to programme
3. Internationally excepted ratio for general tertiary training
4. Added weight for practical training

Using this formula the FTE's for the different departments was calculated. Table 5 indicates that when using this formula all the departments will need more staff to train their students effectively and to maintain high educational standards. From the feedback received, many respondents indicated that the students that they deal with need additional help as the current educational system, personal problems of students and trauma experienced by many students leads to more supervision and individual attention. It is suggested that additional weight could probably be added to the used formula to counter this.

University	FTE formula	Full time & part time lecturers
North West: Potch	12.6	10
Western Cape	13.9	8
Hugenote	15.9	12
Stellenbosch	10.5	13
Pretoria	27.7	18
Unisa ³	59.1	14
KwaZulu-Natal	18.3	18
Nelson Mandela	6.9	6
Free State	12.2	8
Venda	24.8	6
Wits	9	8
Johannesburg	19.1	11
Fort Hare	40.4	12

Table 5: Comparison between FTE lecturers required and the available staff

³ See note 1 of the formula

6. The division of academic work in departments

University staff have to teach, do research, community service, administration etc. Time for teaching varies from 30% (KwaZulu-Natal) to 70% (Hugenote collage) – see table 6. Most academics will agree that although this is what is expected from them, they do more teaching and less research. This leads to them not being promoted, with personal financial implications. Although not being researched, it seems from personal experience that more and more academics are leaving because of better opportunities elsewhere. This will be even more detrimental to the training of future social workers.

University	Teaching	Research	Com service	Admini-stration	Acad. citizenship
North West: Potch	40	40		20	
Western Cape	60	20	20		
Hugenote	70	20	10		
Stellenbosch	60	25	15		
Pretoria	50	40	10		
Unisa	40	30	20		10
KwaZulu-Natal	30	40	20	10	
Nelson Mandela	50	40	10		
Free State	60	20	15	5	
Venda	65	15	20		
Wits	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Johannesburg	80	15	5		
Fort Hare	60	30	10		

Table 6: Academic work division in departments

7. Access to universities

Universities use different methods of determining access. A case study was given in the questionnaire in order to determine if a particular university will admit a student, who has the minimum requirements for admission into a general degree. Table 7 shows that all the departments that answered the question will allow the student into the program, depending on selection where applicable. It thus seems that the admission requirements of the universities that participated are mostly the same although they use different formulas to determine the admission.

Currently five departments of Social work have selection for students. The selection comprises of the following:

North West University: Potchefstroom campus

A learner should have a full Matriculation exemption certificate and an average pass mark of at least 60% for the matriculation examination;

Prospective learners are subjected to a screening programme composed of the following:

- i) screening discussions by a screening panel with prospective learners

ii) the completion of a psychometric screening test.

Hugenate College

A minimum of 60% and a psychometric assessment is required. Students will also be assessed for a working knowledge of Afrikaans for which an individual interview may be required. The latter can be done telephonically.

Pretoria University

Selection for the BSW programme takes place at the end of the first year of study for entry into level two. The selection criteria are comprised of academic marks (50%), psychometric testing (50%) and a selection interview (50%).

Free State University

The selection criteria are comprised of academic marks, psychometric testing and a selection interview. Applicants need a full Matriculation exemption certificate and an admission point of at least 28 after completion of the matriculation examination.

Venda University

An applicant need matriculation with exemption and has to write selection tests. They also try to assess elementary English language ability through an essay that entering students write as part of the selection test.

Wits University

Due to the extensive number of applicants, they are unable to conduct individual interviews. They therefore ask all applicants to write the social work selection test. This test includes biographical information, challenges experienced during their schooling, how they tried to overcome these challenges, involvement in community service, role models, achievements, reasons for choosing social work as a career, views on current social issues, response to a hypothetical scenario involving a relationship between two people and response to a hypothetical scenario involving a community.

Decisions are made on the basis of three criteria i.e. scores on the PTEEP, matric points, and ratings on the social work selection test.

University	Admit?	Select
	Y/N	Y/N
North West: Potch	y	Y
Western Cape	y	N
Hugenate	y	Y
Stellenbosch		N
Pretoria	y	Y
Unisa	y	N

KwaZulu-Natal	y	N
Nelson Mandela	y	N
Free State	y	Y
Venda	y	Y
Wits	y	Y
Johannesburg	y	N
Fort Hare	y	N

Table 7: Admission and selection

8. Elements that contribute to the selection of students

Physical resources, supervision of students, the availability of field placements and field instructors, staff and the income generated by the department for the University and departmental quotas has the biggest influence on determining how many students could be accommodated by most departments of Social work (cf. Table 8).

	Phys	Superv	Field	Field	Staff	Staff	Capping	Dept	Facult	Dept	Other
	res.		instr.	place		qual		income	quota	quota	
North West: Potch	1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1	1
Western Cape Hugenote								1		1	
Stellenbosch											
Pretoria	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Unisa	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	
KwaZulu-Natal	1	1	1	1	1			1			
Nelson Mandela	1	1	1	1	1	1		1		1	
Free State	1	1	1	1	1			1			
Venda	1	1		1			1		1		1
Wits										1	
Johannesburg											
Fort Hare	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Total	8	8	7	8	7	5	3	7	5	7	2

Table 8: Elements that contribute to admission of students

9. Conclusion

It is concluded that when using the formula described in point 5, the departments of Social work that took part in this study need more staff in order to train effectively. Field placements and field instructors also contribute to the number of students these departments could accommodate. In order to increase the number of Social work students, attention should also be given to the availability of physical resources and staff to supervise students. The income these students provide for the departments are also

important. An increase in the subsidy formula will not only make it possible to employ more lecturers but will improve the general status of social work in higher education.