



Higher Education

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ABSTRACT: Statistical information on the output of universities and technikons is set out before the description of extensive policy development in higher education since 1995. These developments are assessed against a changing pattern of Senior Certificate passes and enrolments. The production of teachers is given special consideration, as are private higher education institutions and the higher education programmes of technical colleges. Complex conditions, including conflicting pressures on the higher education system, mean that policy implementation will stretch over a number of years.

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1 Introduction

The Higher Education Act (101 of 1997) defines higher education as consisting of all learning programmes leading to qualifications higher than Grade 12 or its equivalent in terms of the National Qualifications Framework. Grade 12 is the highest grade in which education is provided by a school. The Senior Certificate (taken at the end of Grade 12) is assigned to level four on the National Qualifications Framework. Levels five to eight on the NQF are defined as higher education.

Higher education may be offered by:

- Universities
- Technikons
- Teacher training colleges
- Technical colleges (Further education and higher education programmes are offered simultaneously within technical colleges)
- Private higher education institutions

The evolution of policy on higher education exhibits a number of features identified by analysts of public choice. A brief outline of the public choice theoretical framework is contained in Section 2. Section 3 deals with the statistical record from universities and technikons. Section 4 sets out the recent development of higher education policy, starting with the report of the National Commission on Higher Education in 1996. Section 5 deals with the production of teachers in teacher training colleges, universities and technikons. Section 6 deals with higher education programmes in technical colleges. Private higher education is discussed in Section 7 and Section 8 concludes the analysis.

2 Aspects of public choice relevant to higher education

Economic analysis has identified conditions for markets to yield efficient outcomes. When some of these conditions are absent, markets may produce

inefficient outcomes or fail altogether. Under some circumstances, state action may be able to eliminate, or at least reduce, market failure.

The theory of public choice complements market analysis by analysing the conditions under which states can be expected to make economically efficient choices. Of course, states may have objectives other than efficiency. The most commonly analysed other goal is that of equity; if equity is pursued as well as efficiency the equity-efficiency trade-off (a curve defining the maximum efficiency at every point of a measure of equity) has to be considered and a point on it chosen.

Even when equity is taken into account, the efficiency attained might be less than maximum possible. Under such circumstances, there is a degree of state failure. There are three sources of state failure which are particularly relevant to higher education:

- Poorly defined trade-offs between multiple goals. Ambiguity about strengths of purposes and even about purposes themselves is characteristic of political decision making. This means that the utility function is poorly-defined, in contrast with the assumption of well-defined utility functions in standard market analysis
- The ability of relatively small, well-organised groups to impose their will on a public programme, even when it conflicts with desires of a much larger but poorly organised group of intended beneficiaries. This problem arises in an acute form in education: the interests of pupils (the beneficiaries) does not necessarily coincide with those of teachers (the providers). The recent American literature on school reform stresses the necessity for an appropriate set of incentives for teachers.
- Regulatory capture, which refers to a situation where a group of producers whose regulation by the state is in the public interest manage to capture the regulatory agency. Sometimes this is implicitly sanctioned by the concept of ‘co-operative governance’.

By far the best organised producer groups in higher education are the South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association and the Committee of Technikon Principals. This both reflects and perpetuates the situation in which universities and technikons are the best resourced parts of the higher education system and receive the greatest policy attention. By contrast, the production of teachers through teacher training colleges, universities and

technikons is less well understood and planned for. Policy on higher education in technical colleges is even less well developed. Power relations also explain the current status of private higher education.

3 Universities and technikons: the statistical record

3.1 Universities

Table 1 sets out enrolments at universities and qualifications granted by them between 1987 and 1998. Total enrolments at universities rose from 250 243 in 1987 to 378 433 in 1995, the average annual growth rate between those years being 5.3%. By 1998, however, enrolments had dropped to 343 609. Part of the reason was a drop in first time enrolments after 1995 as the number of Senior Certificates with endorsement dropped from 1994. First time enrolments as a proportion of Senior Certificates with endorsement passes in the previous year fluctuated (within quite wide margins) around 78% between 1987 and 1998

An eye must also be kept on the balancing item in the stock-flow panel in Table 1. This item is made up of three components:

- Drop outs, plus
- Transfers out of universities into other higher education institutions, less
- Transfers in to universities out of other higher education institutions.

The balancing item rose substantially in 1995 and again in 1996. This could have been caused by an increase in the drop out rate or a decline in net transfers into universities.

The proportion of African enrolments rose from 25.7% in 1987 to 52.9% in 1997, dropping back slightly to 51.7% in 1998. The proportion of post-graduate enrolments of total enrolments fluctuated around a mean of 18.4% between 1987 and 1998, moving marginally higher between 1993 and 1998.

First general bachelor's degrees awarded rose from 13 887 in 1987 to 24 760 in 1996, dropping back to 23 115 in 1998. First professional bachelor's degrees awarded rose from 6 913 in 1987 to 10 919 in 1996, dropping back to 10 217 in 1998. The sum of first general bachelor's degrees and first

professional degrees represents the number of new graduates each year. In 1996, the number of new graduates was 35 679 and in 1998 it was 33 332.

At the postgraduate level, postgraduate Bachelor's degrees awarded rose from 2 156 in 1987 to 4 414 in 1995, falling sharply to 2 791 in 1998. Honours degrees awarded rose from 4 983 in 1987 to 7 775 in 1996, falling back to 7 421 in 1998. Master's degrees awarded rose from 2 547 in 1996 to 4 081 in 1998. Doctorates awarded rose from 536 in 1987 to 737 in 1994, falling back to 696 in 1998.

Qualifications awarded therefore show a steady expansion along with enrolments until 1995 and, like enrolments, drop off somewhat after that date. One may construct graduation rates as a measure of productive efficiency by weighting qualifications by the minimum number of years taken to achieve them and dividing them by a moving average of enrolments over the qualification cycle. By so doing, one excludes repeat enrolments and enrolments of non-qualifiers from the numerator. Headcount enrolments are not the ideal denominator; full-time equivalent enrolments would be better. So the graduation rates are biased downwards; nonetheless, they suffice for year-to-year comparisons.

The graduation rate panel suggests fairly stable efficiency. There are no detectable trends in undergraduate, honours, master's or doctoral graduation rates. The efficiency of postgraduate certificate and diplomas may have declined a little since the late 1980s and of postgraduate bachelor's in 1997 and 1998.

3.2 Technikons

Table 2 sets out enrolments at technikons and qualifications granted by them between 1987 and 1998. Enrolments rose from 56 446 in 1987 to 199 149 in 1996, representing an average annual growth rate of 15.0%. By 1998, enrolments had dropped slightly to 194 865. Part of the reason was a drop in first time enrolments after 1996. First time enrolments as a proportion of Senior Certificates passed without endorsement in the previous year fluctuated in quite a wide band around 28%. As with universities, the balancing item in the stock-flow panel rose in 1995 and again in 1996 and 1997.

The structure of qualifications became more elaborate in technikons in 1995. Up to 1994, technikon enrolments had been divided into:

Pre-diplomate

National Certificate
 National Higher Certificate
 National three year diplomas
 National four year diplomas
 Post-diplomate
 Diploma
 National Higher Diploma
 National Diploma in Technology
 Laureatus

From 1995, the technikons have added undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications

Undergraduate

Bachelor of Technology

Postgraduate

Master of Technology

Doctor of Technology

The proportion of African enrolments rose from 11.3% in 1987 to 66.4% in 1998. The proportion of postdiplomate, undergraduate and graduate students fluctuated around 7.2%. Even in 1998, over 90% of all registrations were at the pre-diplomate level.

The number of certificates and higher certificates awarded has been relatively small and has shown a tendency to decline from 1987 to 1998. By contrast, the number of three and four year diplomas awarded rose from 5 368 in 1987 to 16 741 in 1997, dropping back slightly to 16 072 in 1998.

The number of postdiplomate diplomas awarded has declined since 1987 to a mere 19 in 1997 and 23 in 1998, compared with 732 in 1987. The number of National Higher Diplomas rose from 1 220 in 1987 to 3 103 in 1994 but fell to 751 in 1998. The number of National Diplomas in Technology dropped from 123 in 1987 to 17 in 1998. Only a handful of Laureatuses (17) were awarded between 1987 and 1998. Post-diplomates are generally in decline and are being replaced by B Tech, M Tech and D Tech enrolments and

qualifications. The number of B Techs awarded rose from 455 in 1995 to 2 992 in 1998. The number of M Techs rose from 53 to 90 over the same period. 13 D Techs were awarded between 1996 and 1998.

Technikons appear to have become less efficient at producing first certificates and diplomas in 1987. Part of the reason may be rapid growth in enrolments in Technikon South Africa (the distance technikon) in which efficiency is very low. Efficiency in the B Tech programme appears high, though there are only a couple of observations to go on. Postgraduate diploma and National Higher Diploma efficiency appear to have dropped off since 1994. Apart from 1995, M Tech efficiency is low, in line with the finding for universities.

4 Government policy on higher education

Government policy on higher education, as in many other spheres, has gone through several stages. An ambitious initial statement of goals has been modified by:

- Interaction with interest groups, notably SAUVCA and CTP
- Limited state capacity. As recommended in the report of the National Commission on Higher Education, a small higher education branch (headed by a Deputy Director General) has been established within the Department of Education.
- the actual evolution of circumstances which were not foreseen fully at the time of initial goal specification. It appears that, since 1996, enrolment in universities and technikons has contracted rather than expanded.

Accordingly, the emphases in actually existing higher education policy since 1996 have been considerable

4.1 The National Commission on Higher Education

The government constituted the National Commission on Higher Education in 1995 and received its report in August 1996. The NCHE report's main concerns were:

- Inequitable distribution of access and opportunity for students and staff along axes of race, gender, class and geographic location
- Mismatch between the output of higher education and the needs of the economy, both by discipline and by the lack of orientation towards life long learning.
- Lack of accountability and regulation with low levels of efficiency and unresponsiveness and insufficient quality control
- Imperfections in the democratic, representative and participatory aspects of governance.

The report proposed:

- Provision for expanded access over the next decade
- A single co-ordinated system of higher education, including regional agreements, mergers and a national higher education admissions service
- The formation of a Higher Education Council
- A unified and coherent qualifications framework within the National Qualifications Framework, providing a fuller spectrum of higher educational opportunities and facilitating flexible entry and exit
- An expanded role for distance education, organised in a single distance education institution
- A rolling three year national higher education plan and three year institutional plans, as expressions of co-operative governance
- A revised higher education funding system, containing formula and earmarked elements, and including funding for academic development (extended curriculum) programmes
- Identification of key areas of capacity development

4.2 The 1997 White Paper on Higher Education

Receipt by the Ministry of Education of the NCHE report was followed by publication of a Green Paper, a draft White Paper and a White Paper. The White Paper accepted many of the NCHE proposals, including:

- A programme-based higher education system which is planned, governed and funded as a single, coherent national system
- Focus on equity of access and equity of outcomes
- Maintenance of the distinction between universities, technikons and colleges, but an easing of the boundaries between them. Regional collaboration between these three institutional types is to be encouraged. Special arrangements were announced for colleges in the White Paper. Although they all fall under the Ministry of Education, they will in the interim continue to be administered, controlled and funded by the departments within whose jurisdiction they fell at the time of the White Paper. Colleges of education and technical colleges, in particular, will continue to be administered by provincial departments.
- The development of a national research plan
- The formulation of a national higher education language policy framework
- A national higher education information and admissions service
- The creation of a Council for Higher Education to provide independent, strategic advice to the Minister of Education and to manage quality assurance and quality promotion in higher education
- Incorporation of higher education qualifications within the NQF
- A single distance education institution
- A system consisting of three year rolling plans at the national and institutional level
- A new, goal-directed funding system

The White Paper essentially parked the colleges problem. It authorised the creation of the Council for Higher Education. Institutions were required to start producing rolling three year plans, two rounds of which have been discussed with the Ministry. The first version of the National Plan was published in February 2001. Work has been done on the creation of the new funding system and a discussion document was circulated for comment in March 2001.

4.3 The Council for Higher Education

The CHE was formed in May 1998. Fifteen voting members were appointed, five of which held appointments in universities or technikons. It established a task team in 1998 to consider the size and shape of the higher education system. It presented a memorandum to the Minister of Education in December 1999, as a result of which the Minister asked for a set of concrete proposals by June 2000. In April 2000, a discussion document was circulated by the task team; on the basis of comments received and studies commissioned, the task team presented its report in July 2000.

The report contained two important components. The first was the recommendation that institutions be divided into three categories: bedrock, selective research and comprehensive research.

- Bedrock institutions would focus on undergraduate programmes, limited postgraduate programmes up to the taught master's level and research into curriculum, learning and teaching
- Selective research institutions would focus on undergraduate programmes, extensive taught and research programmes up to the master's level, selective postgraduate taught and research programmes up to the doctoral level and select areas of research
- Comprehensive research institutions would focus on undergraduate programmes, comprehensive postgraduate taught and research programmes up to the doctoral level and extensive research capabilities across a broad range of areas.

In addition, the higher education system would contain an institution dedicated to distance education and private higher education institutions.

The purpose of the proposed differentiation and diversity was to ensure a range of institutions, institutional programmes and capabilities appropriate to national need. Differentiation would have to go hand in hand with articulation between institutions to ensure student and staff mobility.

The second key component of the report was recommendations for reconfiguring the institutional landscape of higher education. This was prompted by three deficiencies of the present system:

- Lack of human and financial resources to sustain the present system, especially in some parts of it
- New patterns of student enrolments putting some institutions at risk
- Some institutions not meeting even the bedrock specifications

The task team did not believe that institutions acting individually would reach the desired new configuration and therefore called for specific Ministerial action to achieve reconfiguration within the context of the national plan for higher education. It set out a number of concrete suggestions for possible combinations and restructurings.

4.4 The National Plan

The National Plan for Higher Education was published in February 2001. It defined sixteen desired outcomes for higher education:

1. A target of a 20% participation rate in public higher education within ten to fifteen years (the participation rate is the number of students divided by the size of the 20-24 age group). This target is described as relatively modest, given that the existing participation rate is about 15%.
2. Improved graduation rates relative to the number of students enrolled. The targets can be seen in Table 1.
Achievement of these goals over the 1998-2000 period would have implied an annual increase of 40 000 graduates.
3. A broadened social base of students, including workers, mature students (especially women) and the disabled.

4. Increased recruitment of students from the Southern African Development Community. These students are to be treated as South African students for subsidy purposes from 2002.
5. A shift in the balance of enrolments between the humanities, business and commerce, and science, engineering and technology students from the current ratio of 49%: 26%: 25% to 40%: 30%: 30% within five to ten years.
6. Enhanced cognitive skills of graduates. To achieve this the three year undergraduate degree may need to be replaced with a four year degree in the long term.
7. Increased race and gender equity in student access and success rates.
8. Improved staff equity
9. Diversity through mission and programme differentiation. In formulating this goal, the Ministry agreed with the CHE report that a differentiated and diverse higher education system was desirable. However, it disagreed with the CHE's proposal that this should be achieved through structural differentiation based on a distinction between teaching and research institution. It regarded such an approach as too rigid. On the other hand, the Ministry does not favour an open-ended institutional framework or mission drift towards the values, priorities and practices of the major research universities.
10. Regulation of distance education, primarily to ensure quality and the sustainability of the dedicated distance education institution
11. Establishment of a single dedicated distance institution
12. Regulation of private higher education
13. Concentration of research at sites where there is demonstrable research capacity or potential and output-based funding of research
14. Increased postgraduate enrolments and output at the Master's and doctoral level
15. Programme and infrastructural collaboration between institutions

16. Mergers and new institutional and organisational forms. A National Working Group has been established to investigate and advise the Minister on the appropriate institutional structures on a regional basis to meet regional and national needs for higher education, including mergers and other forms of combination.

4.5 Funding

In March 2001, the Ministry of Education released a Discussion Document outlining a new framework for the funding of public higher framework. The existing funding system dates from the early 1980s. It contained formula-funded and earmarked components. The formula was built up from a number of expenditure programmes: teaching, research, administration, student services and the like, for which empirically based coefficients were applied to a number of cost factors. These cost factors were recalculated from year to year and rose, reflecting inflation in the various cost drivers of higher education. The overall philosophy of the formula was that the government was funder of last resort for the expenditures in the formula: institutions were expected to cover a certain percentage of expenditures from fees and the remainder would be covered by government subsidies. Shortly after the formula was introduced, it was found that government was not in a position to fund it fully. A vector of a-factors (the proportion of the formula funding entitlement actually paid to institutions) was introduced. By the late 1990s, the a-factors had fallen to an average of about 0.65. The existing funding system essentially followed students, adjusting the real subsidy per student downwards when the real increase in state funds did not match the growth in student enrolments.

The Discussion Document proposed a new system, to be divided into block grant and earmarked funding. Block grant funding would differ from the old formula funding in the following ways:

- It would be based on approved full-time equivalent (FTE) students agreed on institutional plans, themselves checked for congruence with the national education plan. Block grant funding would not simply follow the student.
- There would continue to be an institutional set-up subsidy. This is based on a fixed cost and constant marginal cost model of economies of scale.

- Teaching input subsidies would be based on four funding groups, clustering educational subject matter categories of similar costs. This replaces the human science/natural science distinction introduced during the life of the existing subsidy system. As in the old system, subsidies would also depend on the level of study: undergraduate, Honours, Master's, doctorate. Unlike the old system, approved foundation/academic development programmes would be funded.
- Unlike the existing subsidy which rewards the achievement of degree credits (effective subsidy students were calculated as half of the FTEs enrolled and half of the FTEs obtaining degree credits), the block grant would reward the achievement of whole qualifications.
- Block grant funds for research would not be based on an assumed portion of staff time spent on research as in the existing subsidy, but on research outputs in the form of publications, the research components of Master's degrees and doctorates. (The National Plan referred to the need to update current policies and procedures to measure research outputs.)

Earmarked funds, on the other hand, will be used for:

- The National Student Financial Aid Scheme. Started by the Independent Development Trust in 1991 with new advances of R 25 million, NSFAS advanced R 600 million in loans to students in 2001, R 160 million being financed from return flows
- Institutional development and redress. Funding through this channel will include financing for institutional mergers and arrangements.
- Interest and redemption on approved loans
- Approved capital projects
- Projects designed to increase research capacity
- Other development projects identified in the National Higher Education Plan.

In the 2000/01 financial year, earmarked funds accounted for 12% of higher education spending by government. The Ministry will attempt to hold the proportion at roughly this level over the next few financial years.

4.6 Assessment of policy development

Policy development for universities and technikons takes place against a changing backdrop of enrolment patterns. These are:

- Declining Senior Certificate passes between 1994, when 287 343 candidates passed, and 1999, when 249 831 passed. There was a considerable improvement in 2000, when 283 294 passed. In part, the developments during the 1990s reflect the demographic transition. South African fertility has fallen markedly since the 1970s and this is now showing up in a close to static number of school enrolments. But the developments also indicate that the school system is struggling to get Senior Certificate candidates to the level required for a pass. Of the passing candidates, 30.8% passed at the endorsement level in 1994, compared with 25.5% in 1999 and 24.2% in 2000. This means that the universities have been most affected by developments since 1994.
- Changing racial composition of student enrolments. The National Plan notes that African student enrolments in universities and technikons rose by 80% between 1993 and 1999 and that in 1999, African students constituted 59% of enrolments in these institutions. Equally dramatic is the shift in African enrolments away from historically black institutions: 49% of them were enrolled in HBUs in 1993, compared with 23% in 1999. Between 1993 and 1999, there was a decrease of 7 000 African students in the historically black universities, an increase of 66 000 in historically white universities (56 000 in historically Afrikaans medium universities), an increase of 22 000 in historically black technikons, an increase of 49 000 in historically white technikons and an increase of 22 000 in UNISA and Technikon SA. The shift away from historically black universities have left some of these institutions with small enrolments and hence small claims on government subsidies.
- A lag between the changing composition of students and the composition of academic staff in many institutions. To a considerable degree this is inevitable: changing composition among first time students is soon reflected in the changes in composition of enrolments as a whole, the average length of study being but a few years. Changing composition of new staff members takes a much longer time to change the composition of all staff members; a staff appointment may lead to a

career of thirty years or more. Moreover, the National Plan notes that low numbers of black and women postgraduate students, inadequate levels of financial support for postgraduate students and uncompetitive salaries in higher education all make it difficult to change the staff profile in higher education. Under these circumstances, the National Plan encourages institutions to recruit academic staff from the rest of Africa.

Three policy issues have particular salience at present:

- Restructuring the institutional landscape. Here the strength of producer interests and the limited capacity for regulation together mean that progress has been very limited. The rationales for mergers or new institutional forms include creating higher education capacity in provinces which have no universities or technikons (Mpumalanga, Northern Cape), overcoming racial fragmentation of the higher education system, achieving economies of scale or scope, responding to low levels of enrolments in some institutions, rationalising and strengthening administration and strengthening the national system of higher education against foreign competition. The National Plan signals government's intention to take a more active role and the appointment of the National Working Group is a step in this process.
- Elaborating the ladder of qualifications. While the ladder should stretch from the most elementary higher education qualifications to the most advanced, the most urgent need is for elaboration at the bottom end. A large proportion of entrants into higher education arrive with not much more than a bare Senior Certificate pass and such students are at risk of falling at the first fence when attempting a first diploma or degree. A great deal of unglamorous work is required to improve throughput at this level. It should also be noted that the National Qualifications Framework is struggling with its task and that the relation of the higher education system with it has been contested from the outset.
- Improving research output. The National Plan also indicates grounds for concern about research output from higher education. It identifies a drop of about 10% in published output between 1997 and 1999. Between 1995 and 1999, the proportion of enrolments which were at the Master's and doctoral level rose from 5.0 to 5.7 per cent. The increase

was in the universities; there was a marginal decline in the universities. If there is a shift towards shorter average periods of service in order to achieve equity goals, this may have adverse effects on research output; it takes time to build up research productivity.

5 The production of teachers

5.1 Teacher training colleges

The most recent detailed compilation of teacher training college statistics is for 1998. In that year, there were 81 teacher training colleges, 20 of which were in the Eastern Cape, 18 in KwaZulu-Natal and 10 each in Gauteng and Northern Province. Most colleges had links to university and some had links to more than one. Links to technikons were much less numerous. 46 780 students were registered on a full-time basis and 39 205 on a part-time or distance basis, distributed across programmes as shown in Table 2.

Part-time and distance enrolments are more heavily weighted towards junior and senior primary programmes and much less heavily weighted towards secondary programmes than full-time enrolments.

Of the 85 985 learners, 62 079 (72.2%) were female. There is no reliable breakdown by population group because a major distance learning institution does not keep statistics by population group. However, of the learners to whom a population group could be ascribed, 89.9% were African.

15 324 learners at the primary level (25.6% of the total) and 4 476 learners at the secondary level (22.6% of the total) were taking mathematics. The corresponding numbers for science were 9 627 (16.1% of the total) and 4 118 (21.1% of the total).

There were 20 578 graduates in 1997 and 20 474 in 1998, distributed over the various qualifications as shown in Table 3.

5.2 The role of universities and technikons

Universities have traditionally been a second major source of teacher education and training. In 1997, 55 147 students were enrolled in the field of education. Technikon enrolments in education are much smaller: 648 in 1997. Of the 82 841 degrees, diplomas and certificates awarded in universities in 1997, 16 110 were in education. One has to go back further in time for statistics breaking these qualifications down: in 1993, 4 382 degrees were awarded

in education, 10.1% of the total. Of the 10 681 diplomas and certificates awarded in universities in 1993, 8 233 (77.1%) were awarded in education.

6 Technical colleges and higher education

General information on technical colleges appears in the study on vocational education and training. Here attention will be focussed on N4 to N6 programmes in technical colleges; these are regarded as higher education.

Within the higher education band, the pattern of FTE enrolments and throughput rates in 1998 shown below in Table 4

Technical colleges had a 64.8% pass rate and a 59.2% throughput rate in 1998. There is very much less engineering at the higher education level than at the FET level and very much more business studies at the higher education level than at the FET level.

7 Private higher education institutions

There are no statistics available on enrolments in, or graduates from, private higher education institutions. The Ministry believes that:

- Some students thought of as private higher education students are also enrolled with public institutions as part of public-private agreements.
- Many private providers of what purport to be higher education programmes are in fact offering further education or a mix of further and higher education
- The private higher education sector consists mainly of small single-purpose providers specialising in programmes with high economic returns
- There is no tradition of not-for-profit higher education in South Africa, except for some institutions linked to religious denominations.

The Higher Education Act allows for registration of private higher education institutions. Three criteria are used in deciding on registrations:

- The financial viability of institutions (to protect students against fly-by-night operations)

- The quality of programme offerings
- Whether the provision is in the national interest. This criterion is interpreted in terms of possible adverse effects on the public higher education system, especially at a time when the public system is undergoing restructuring.

As at 31 July 2001, the registration status of private higher education institutions was as shown in Table 5 below.

8 Conclusion

Despite the aspiration to develop a coherent higher education system consisting of universities, technikons and colleges offering a variety of articulated programmes to meet different needs and to permit the higher education participation rate (enrolments divided by the population between 20 and 24) to rise, progress has been slow. The main reasons for this are as follows:

- Universities and, to a lesser extent, technikons are well-organised to defend their particular interests. They often have little capacity or interest in wider higher education system development
- By contrast, the college sector is relatively poorly organised. Thinking about the volume of teacher training seems to have got caught up in the temporary and abnormal excess teacher supply situation of the mid and late 1990s. As this situation unwinds, there needs to be a re-orientation. Furthermore, rising AIDS mortality among teachers is a challenge yet to be faced. A vision for technical colleges has yet to be articulated.
- The number of people arriving at the gate of higher education by passing the Senior Certificate examination has been considerably lower in the late 1990s than was anticipated at the time of the NCHE report. Some universities have been hit by sharp declines in enrolment.
- Achieving a variety of articulated programmes across different institutional types is by no means easy. The National Qualifications Framework is designed for this purpose, but there has been controversy about how the higher education sector relates to the NQF. Maintaining and

developing the NQF requires considerable high-level manpower, which is not easy to assemble and harness.

- Policy development by consultation with all the stakeholders in higher education tends to produce goal overload.

Policy implementation will continue to struggle with all these factors for a considerable time to come.

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Table 1: Graduation Rates

Qualification type	Graduation rate	
	Contact	Distance
Undergraduate (up to 3 years)	25%	15%
Undergraduate (4 years or more)	20%	10%
Postgraduate: up to Honours	60%	30%
Master's	33%	25%
Doctorate	20%	20%

Table 2: Teacher Training Colleges

	Full-time	Part-time/distance
Adult basic education & training	410	493
Preprimary/early childhood development	962	1968
Junior and senior primary	29629	30133
Secondary	15277	2922
Special education	45	1268
Further diploma in education	457	2421
TOTAL	46780	39205

Table 3: Teacher training colleges graduates

	1997	1998
ABET diploma	226	20
Bachelor of Primary Education	30	30
Certificate in education-preprimary	128	129
Certificate in education-junior/senior primary	875	1188
Diploma in education – pre/junior primary	976	2134
Diploma in education – junior/senior primary	8975	8568
Diploma in education – secondary	2893	2367
Further diploma in education – secondary	1357	1331
Further diploma in education – special secondary	292	292
Higher diploma in education-pre/junior primary	173	227
Higher diploma in education-jun/sen primary	3407	3744
Higher diploma in education – secondary	1246	444
TOTAL	20578	20474

Table 4: FTE Enrolments

	FTE Enrolments	Throughput rates
Art and Music	397	81.6%
Business Studies	40735	61.0%
Educare/social services	2604	83.5%
Engineering studies	9348	50.0%
Utility studies	3556	60.4%
TOTAL	56640	59.2%

Table 5: Registration status of Higher Education Institutions

Conditionally registered (have fulfilled requirements)	90
Conditionally registered (have yet to confirm their commitment to fulfil requirements)	2
Qualified conditional registration (might be able to fulfil requirements and have six months, renewable once, to do so)	10
Temporary permission to operate (while the Ministry is finalising their registration status)	8
TOTAL with permission to operte	1100
Withdrawal of registration	1
Withdrawal of application of registration:	
Local	6
Foreign	15