



TRACK AND TRACE STUDY REPORT

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Acronyms

DHET	The Department of Higher Education and Training
FASSET	Finance and Accounting Services Sector Authority
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act
ROI	Return on Investment
SETA	Sector Education and Training authority
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
TTS	Track and Trace Study
WBE	Work-based experiential (learning)

Glossary of terms

Beneficiary	A person who was funded by FASSET and was part of the WBE learning program
Desktop analysis	A method that explores data from existing documents and previous research
Large enterprise	Employ 251 or more employees with a turnover of more than R85 million
Medium enterprise	Employ 51 to 250 employees with a turnover of less than or equal to R85 million
Micro Enterprise	Employ less than 10 employees with a turnover over of less than or equal to R7,5 million
Sample size	The predetermined total number of participants was drawn from the population size to conduct the survey questionnaire.
Small Enterprise	Employ 11 to 50 employees with a turnover over of less than or equal to R35 million
Target group	The group of individuals that the intervention intends to conduct research in and draw conclusions from
Training provider	An accredited training organisation in partnership with FASSET to provide sector-related training

N.B: The classification of enterprises is based on the Revised Schedule 1 of the National Definition of Small Enterprise in South Africa dated 15th March 2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The executive summary details the findings of the current Track and Tracer Study (TTS) conducted with the FASSET bursary beneficiaries from 2018 to 2021.

Total sample

The target group for this study is bursary scheme beneficiaries who benefitted from this funding initiative by FASSET during the 2018/19 to 2020/21 financial years.

The table below provides a breakdown of the numbers initially received from FASSET:

Year	Number of bursary scheme beneficiaries
2018/2019	1 044
2019/2020	1 373
2020/2021	1 085
Total	3 502

The sample size was reduced by 1 025 when FASSET advised that Academic Support, Learnership and NSFAS beneficiaries should be excluded from the list.

Beneficiary category	Number of learners
Academic support beneficiaries	724
Learnership beneficiaries	299
Bursary beneficiaries funded by NSFAS	2
Total	1 025

It is important to note that although the exclusion of the categories above results in a total of 2 477, that this reflects the number of qualifications and not beneficiaries. An analysis of the numbers revealed that the actual number of beneficiaries for the programme is 2 041.

Approach and Methodology

The following processes were followed in the completion of the TTS:

- Questionnaire design
- The selection of a sample size
- Desktop analysis
- Conduct the Track and Tracer study
- Data collection and analysis

Response rate:

Questionnaires were distributed to **1 155** beneficiaries: The overall response rate was **38%** (441 responses). The table below details the number of responses per funding year.

Year	Number of responses by year
2018-2019	174
2019-2020	101
2019-2020.2	115
2020 -2021	51
Total	441

Limitations

The following limitations were encountered in the process of conducting the TTS:

- FASSET did not have contact details of all beneficiaries. These were sourced from institutions through which they were funded and social media platforms, e.g. LinkedIn.
- Some institutions were reluctant to share beneficiaries' details because of POPIA.
- A few of the institutions opted to introduce the study to beneficiaries.
- Some beneficiaries communicated that they are not willing to participate in the study
- It was also noted that some institutions who were reluctant or unwilling to assist as they were of the view that FASSET should have all the details which are submitted to FASSET annually. Others were unhappy with the manner in which FASSET responds to their concerns, most of which were not related to the TTS.

A summary of findings

- **86%** of the beneficiaries have completed their studies, **11%** are still studying and **3%** have dropped out
- Reasons provided for the **3%** drop-out rate are varied. They include lack of funding and difficulty of study programme
- **56%** of the beneficiaries indicated that they are employed and **1%** are self-employed. **21%** are unemployed, **16%** are studying further and **6%** did not disclose their employment status
- The majority of the respondents are employed in Large Enterprises (**74%**), **14%** in Medium Enterprises and **12%** are employed in Small Enterprises. None are employed in the Micro Enterprises
- **69%** of the beneficiaries are employed within the Finance and Accounting industry with the majority employed in Gauteng (**54%**), followed by Western Cape, (**23%**), Eastern Cape (**7%**) and KZN (**6%**)
- **40%** of the respondents earn less than R10 000 per month, **38%** earn between R15 000 and R20 000, **16%** earn between R25 000 and R30 000 and **6%** earn a monthly salary of R35 000 and above
- **93%** of the respondents replied that they received the necessary support from FASSET

Recommendations

- **Record Management:** There is a need to improve the process of capturing and keeping record of beneficiaries' details. Through this study, the importance of record keeping and its relevance in the efficient completion of similar studies in future has been highlighted.
- **Stakeholder Engagement and Management:**
 - Improve on the engagement and resolution of issues raised by bursary scheme stakeholders. It is recommended that FASSET provides regular progress updates on issues raised by stakeholders.
 - Facilitate that stakeholders are aware that their obligation includes the support of initiatives by FASSET and that these may include responding to requests by FASSET or its appointed service providers.
- **Academic support for bursary scheme beneficiaries:** Although the majority of the respondents have stated that they received the necessary support from FASSET, feedback from interactions with some of the Institutions and interviews with beneficiaries have revealed that there is a need for improvement in this area. A few of the beneficiaries have recommended that beneficiaries should be assigned mentors.
- **Improved awareness of FASSET and its funding programmes:** FASSET to facilitate that more potential beneficiaries are aware of FASSET first and the funding programmes available.

1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The objective of this report is to outline findings of the Track and Trace Study (TTS) conducted with the FASSET bursary scheme beneficiaries who were funded during 2018 -2021.

Over the years, there has been a renewed interest in keeping track of beneficiaries amongst Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) as well as the Department of Education and Training (DHET). This interest was created by the SETAs' need for feedback on the progress and destination of funded beneficiaries. SETAs anticipate that this feedback will assist them in the establishment and measurement of the Returns on Investment (ROI).

This interest is shared by the Finance and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority (FASSET) and thus the request to have a Track and Trace study on the impact of the Bursary scheme which is funded through the Discretionary Grant budget conducted. Through the TTS, FASSET seeks not only to keep track of the destination of the bursary scheme beneficiaries, but to also determine the value-add that the bursary scheme has and continues to make among its beneficiaries.

Keeping track of the beneficiaries is an important endeavour for FASSET as this will assist the organisation in ensuring that the processes followed in the awarding of bursaries and the support given to beneficiaries has the intended impact and does assist in the establishment of their careers and successful journey towards gainful employment or self-employment.

In addition, FASSET intends to use lessons learnt from this study for business improvement opportunities as it grows and adapts to the needs of clients and stakeholders. The study can also assist with insights required for the development of an academic support intervention for beneficiaries. This will be designed to ensure that beneficiaries get the necessary support to successfully complete their studies.

The objectives of the current TTS study can be summarised as follows:

- To gather data about the effectiveness, impact and destination of the bursary scheme supported by FASSET for the period since the inception of this program. The impact could be direct or indirect as well as intended or unintended.
- To understand the wider effects of the bursary intervention, i.e. social, economic and technical on individual beneficiaries
- To generate evidence of key achievements and challenges to inform the decision making process for senior management and accounting authority on program delivery mechanisms and how these can be improved in the future to ensure sustainability, and
- To determine the nature of employment of bursary beneficiaries

2. FASSET BURSARY SCHEME PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

FASSET has partnered with public higher education institutions, i.e. Universities, Universities of Technology and TVET Colleges registered with DHET as well as professional bodies to ensure that learners receive full bursaries so as to obtain formal qualifications which will ultimately enhance their chances of securing learnership programs, internships or full time employment in the broader economy including the Finance and Accounting sector.

3. SCOPE FOR THE CURRENT TRACK AND TRACE STUDY

3.1 Inclusions in the current study

The current TTS includes bursary scheme beneficiaries over the four (4) year period since its inception, i.e.2018-2021. These beneficiaries were funded through the various institutions spread across the country, they include:

- Universities
- Universities of Technology (UoT)
- Professional Bodies

3.2 Exclusions from the current study

The initial number of beneficiaries who were included in the study was **3 502**. This number was reduced to **2 477** after FASSET communicated that the following categories are to be excluded.

Table 1: Categories excluded from the current study

Beneficiary category	Number of learners
Academic support beneficiaries	724
Learnership beneficiaries	299
Bursary beneficiaries funded by NSFAS	2
Total	1 025

The table provides the sample size after the exclusions were taken into consideration.

Table: 2: Number of qualifications

Year	Beneficiaries	Exclusions	Final number of beneficiaries
2018/2019	1 044	299 (Learnership beneficiaries)	745
2019/2020	1 373	2 (NSFAS funded beneficiaries)	1 371
2020/2021	1 085	724 (Academic support beneficiaries)	361
Totals	3 502	1 025	2 477

Through further analysis of the numbers, it was determined that the actual number of beneficiaries is **2 041** and that **2 477** reflects the total number of qualifications attained.

In addition to the above exclusions, it is beneficial to note that there are beneficiaries whose contact details could not be sourced and therefore their responses could not be included in the report. A total of **833** beneficiaries who were funded through 4 institutions, as outlined in **Table 3** below could not be traced. Their contact details were not provided by FASSET and could not be sourced from the institutions they were funded through

As a result of the challenges in sourcing contact details, questionnaires were distributed to only **1 155 (56%)** of the **2 041** beneficiaries who form part of the study. Insights included in the report are based on the responses by 441 (**22 %**) of the 2 041 beneficiaries.

Table 3: Beneficiaries whose details could not be sourced

Institution /Entity	Number of beneficiaries	Details sourced	Details not sourced
SAICA	380	78	302
University of the Western Cape	458	112	346
Careerwise	158	126	32
University of Johannesburg	217	64	153
Total	1 213	380	833

Additionally, the University of Free State (UFS) had recently conducted a TTS at the time the study commenced. The UFS TTS included FASSET bursary beneficiaries. Although the initial discussions were that UFS beneficiaries will not be included in this study so as to avoid “research fatigue” and that UFS will share the outcomes of their study instead, it was subsequently determined that the scope of the two studies were not aligned.

It was therefore decided that UFS beneficiaries should be included in the current study. Findings of the TTS conducted by the UFS were considered in the consolidation and presentation of this report.

4. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

This section looks at the approach and methodology followed in conducting the Track and Trace study.

- Questionnaire design
- The selection of a sample size
- Desktop analysis
- Completion of the TTS
- Data collection and analysis

An online questionnaire which was finalised based on the terms of reference and inputs from the FASSET Research Unit was utilised.

4.1 Target Group

The target group for this study is bursary scheme beneficiaries who benefitted from this funding initiative by FASSET during the 2018/19 - 2021/22 financial years.

4.2 Sample Size

The sample size distribution tracks **2 041** beneficiaries.

4.3 Desktop Analysis

A desktop analysis was aimed at gaining insight and understanding:

- on issues affecting the FASSET Bursary scheme.
- of the size and shape, locality and progress status of the beneficiaries.

Bursary scheme and other relevant reports and documents were reviewed.

A database of bursary beneficiaries was obtained from FASSET. The database did not contain beneficiaries' contact details but provided a list of institutions they were funded through.

4.4 Research questions

The research questions are based on the destination of beneficiaries which typically measures the following;

- (un)employment status
- household earnings
- economic output
- value added
- further studying

Figure 1: Research questions

<p>What is the population distribution of bursary beneficiaries per the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ geographical locality○ gender, and○ age	<p>What is the completion/progress status?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ what was the duration of the academic program?○ did the beneficiaries complete the program?	<p>If discontinued, what are the reasons for discontinuation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ academic exclusion○ ill-health○ death○ other (specify)
<p>If completed, what are the destinations of students who completed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ are they employed?○ are they not working?○ are they studying further?	<p>If employed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ are they employed by a company or self employed?○ where are they employed/ self-employed (name of the company/ organisation)?○ economic sector of the organisation○ what is their occupation?○ has there been a change in jobs since completing the learning program?○ after the program has there been a difference in rank/post level?○ are they in full time , part time, temporarily or contract employment ?○ what are their wages?○ what benefits and allowances are they receiving?○ do they own any cars or houses?○ are they looking after parents or siblings?	<p>If not in employment, why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Are they studying full time?○ Are they looking for employment○ Are they ill?○ Are they deceased?

4.5 Data Collection Methods

Both the quantitative and qualitative methods of research were utilised in the completion of the Track and Trace study. An online questionnaire was distributed to beneficiaries. Follow-up telephonic interviews were also conducted with a sample of the beneficiaries.

Insights from both the quantitative and qualitative research are included in this report.

5. RESPONSE RATE

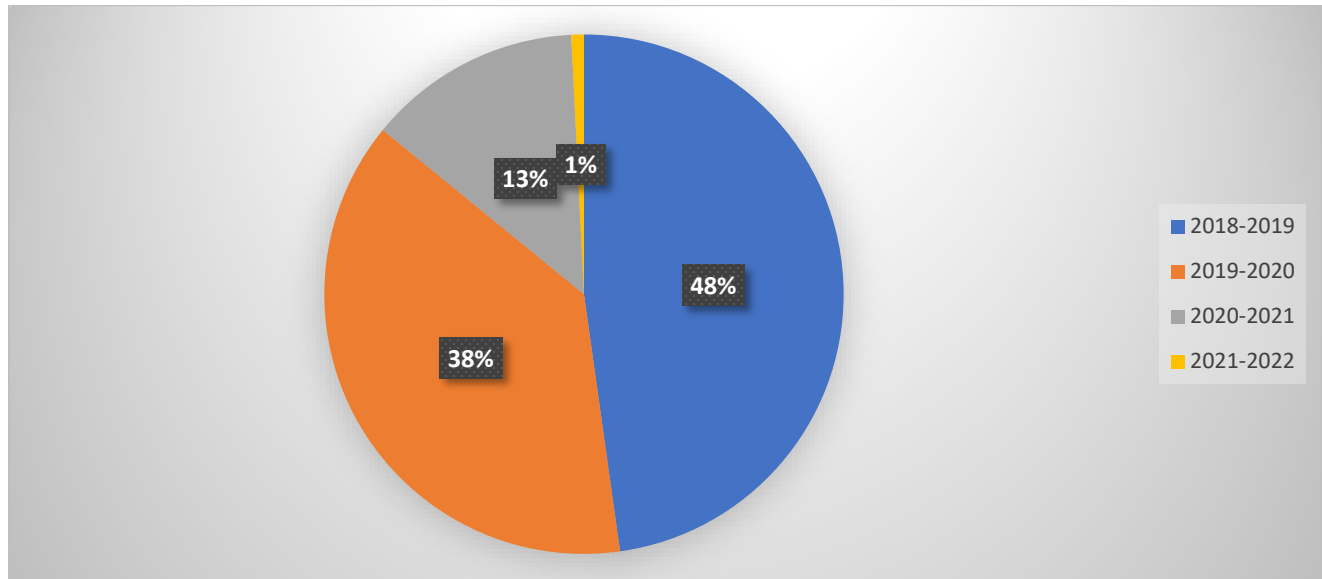
Questionnaires were distributed to 1 155 (56%) of the 2 041 beneficiaries, and 441(38%) of the 1 155 beneficiaries responded.

Table 4: Response rate

Response Rate: 38%	Number of Beneficiaries	2 041
	Number of Qualifications	2 477
	Distributed Questionnaires	1 155
	Number of Responses	441
	Outstanding Responses	714

Figure 2 below provides a breakdown of the responses per funding year. The majority of the responses received are from beneficiaries who were funded during the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 with the lowest number of responses coming from the 2021/2022 group

Figure 2: Distributions of respondents by programme year



6. LIMITATIONS

The following limitations were encountered in the process of conducting the TTS:

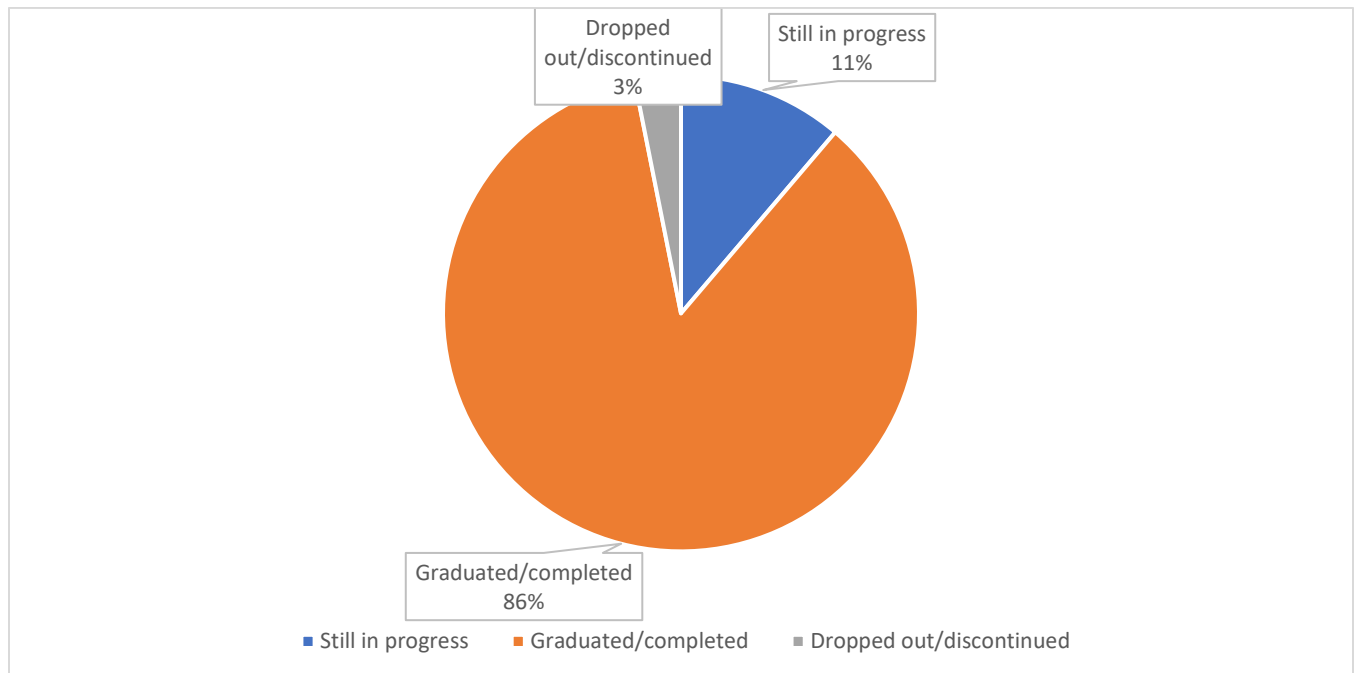
- FASSET did not have contact details of all beneficiaries. These were sourced from institutions through which they were funded and social media platforms, e.g. LinkedIn.
- Some institutions were reluctant to share beneficiaries' details because of POPIA
- A few of the institutions opted to introduce the study to beneficiaries.
- Some beneficiaries communicated that they are not willing to participate in the study
- It was also noted that some institutions who were reluctant or unwilling to assist as they were of the view that FASSET should have all the details which are submitted to FASSET annually. Others were unhappy with the manner in which FASSET responds to their concerns, most of which were not related to the TTS.

7. FINDINGS

7.1 Status of the programme

- The majority of the respondents (i.e. **86%**) have graduated whilst **11%** stated that they are still studying.
- **3%** have dropped-out of their studies. Reasons for dropping out of the studies included lack of funding and changing chosen study programme because of its difficulty

Figure 3: Status of the programme



7.2 Employment status and location

- The majority of the respondents are employed (**56%**), whilst **21%** are unemployed and few are self-employed (**1%**).
- **16%** of the respondents are still studying, i.e. under graduate and post graduate studies, whilst **6%** of the respondents did not disclose their employment status.
- The majority of the respondents work in Gauteng (**54%**), followed by the Western Cape (**23%**), Eastern Cape (**7%**) and KZN (**6%**).
- The remaining are employed in the Free State (**3%**), Limpopo and Mpumalanga at **2%** each as well as the North West and Northern Cape provinces both at **1%**
- Figures 4 and 5 below provide a diagrammatical view of employment status and employment by province:

Figure 4: Employment Status

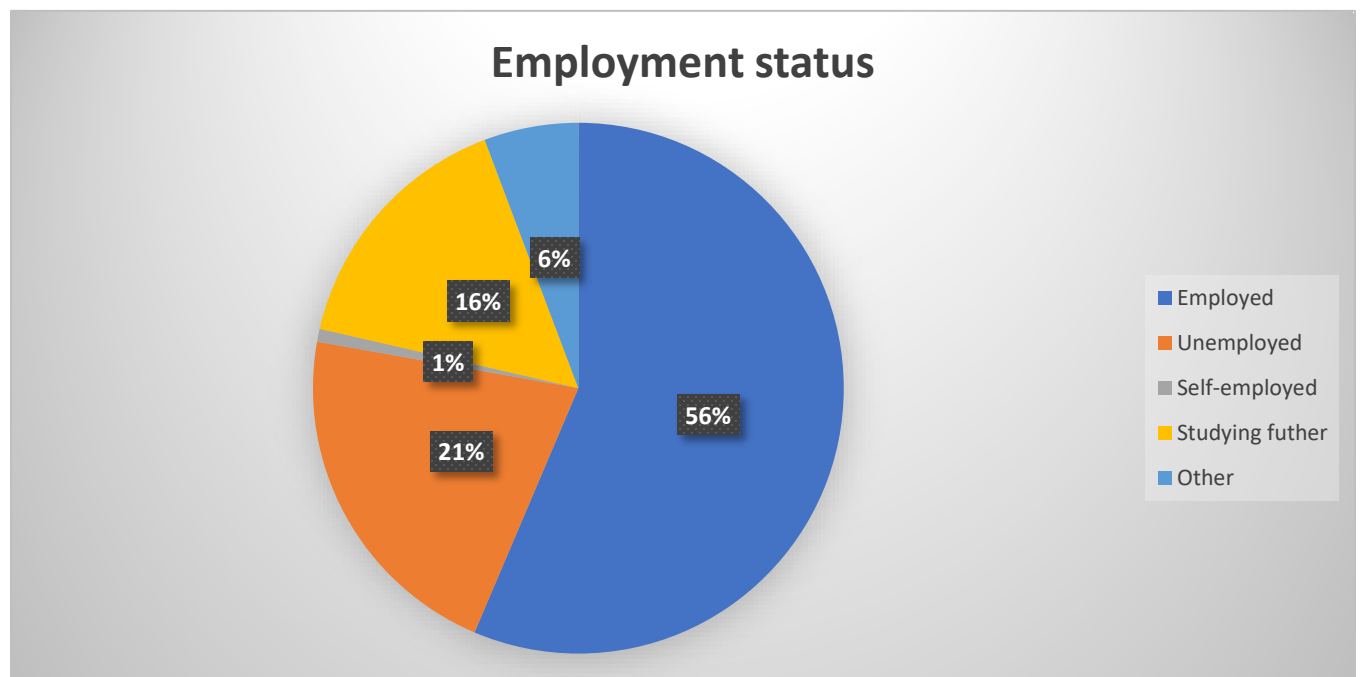
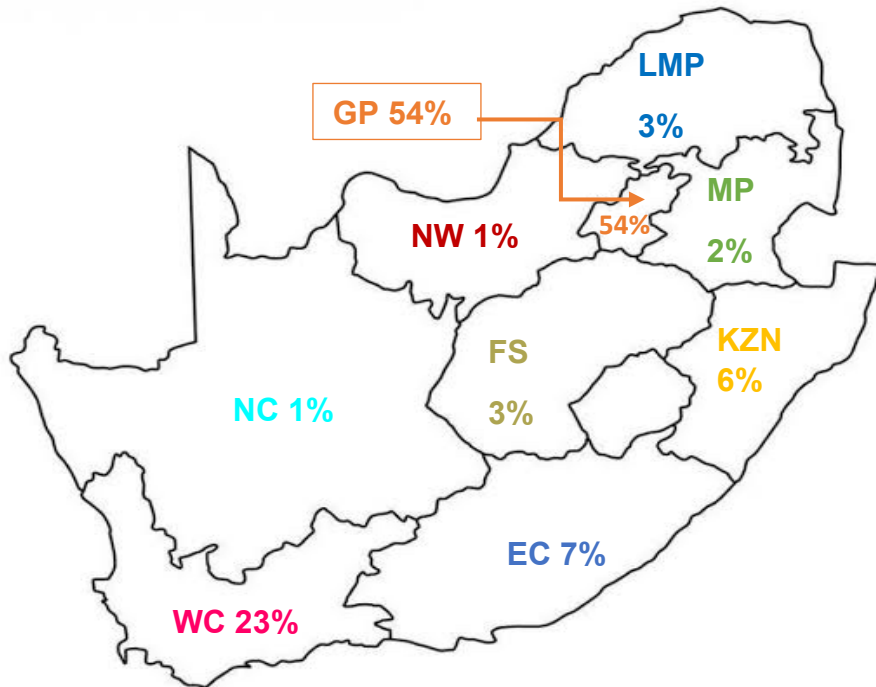


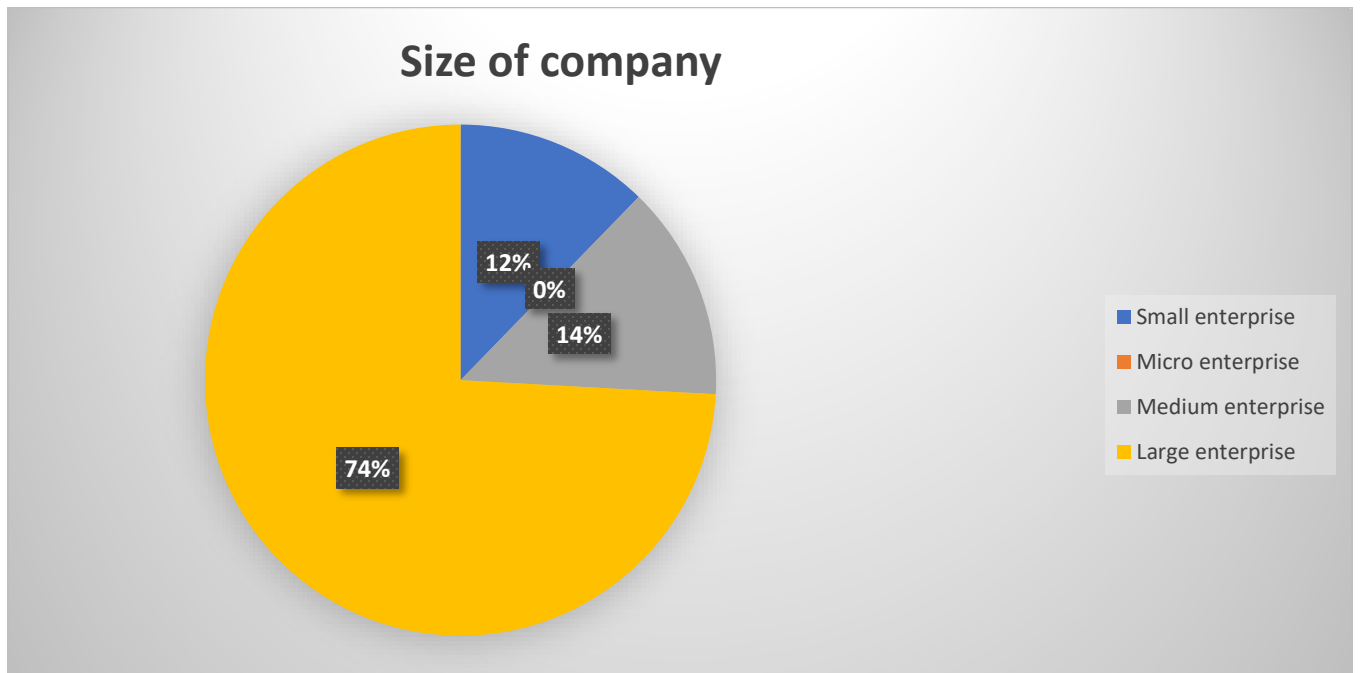
Figure 5: Employment by Province



7.3 Size of company

- The majority of the respondents are employed in Large Enterprises (**74%**), **14%** in Medium Enterprises and **12%** are employed in Small Enterprises.
- None of the respondents are employed by a Micro Enterprise.
- The figure below provides a graphic outline of the employment based on the size of the company

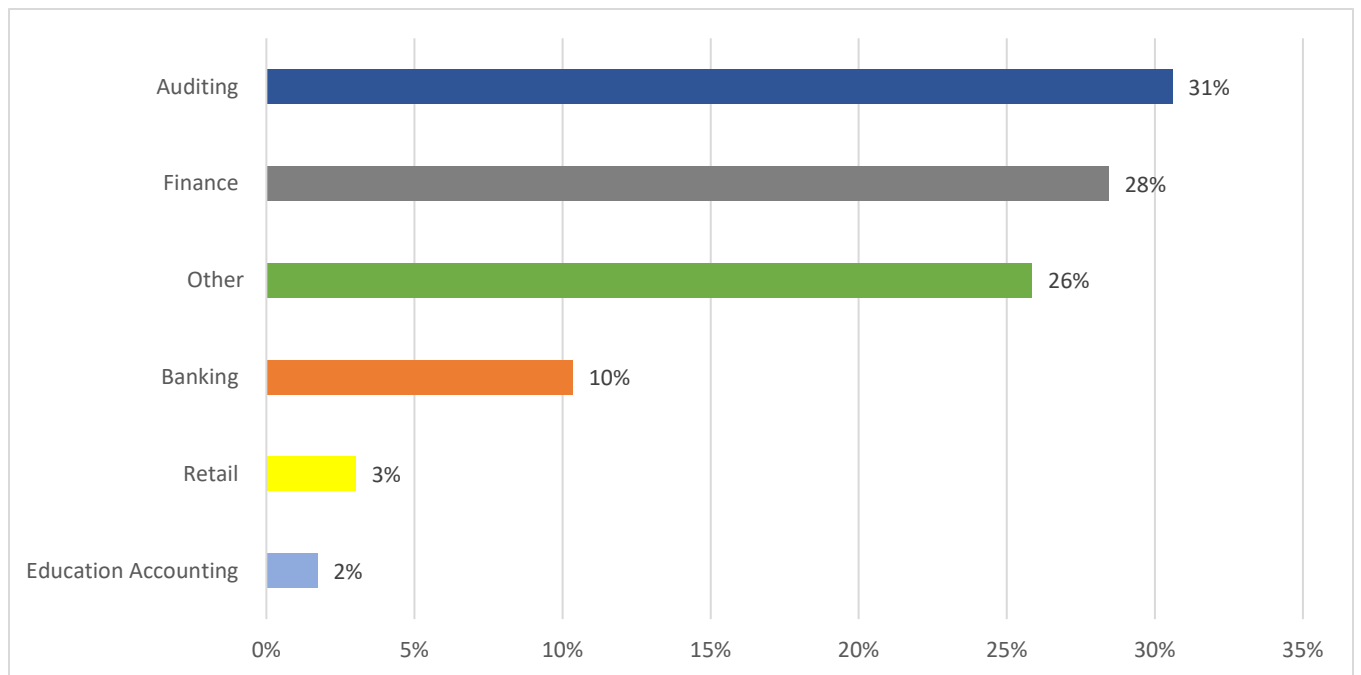
Figure 6: Size of the company



7.4 Employment by Economic Sector

- The study has revealed that most of the respondents are employed within the Finance and Accounting industry.
- **69%** of the respondents are in the Finance, Auditing and Banking Industry with **5%** split between the Retail and the Accounting Education industries.
- **26%** of the respondents are employed in other industries outside of the Finance and Accounting industry.
- **Figure 7** below provides details of the employment by economic sector

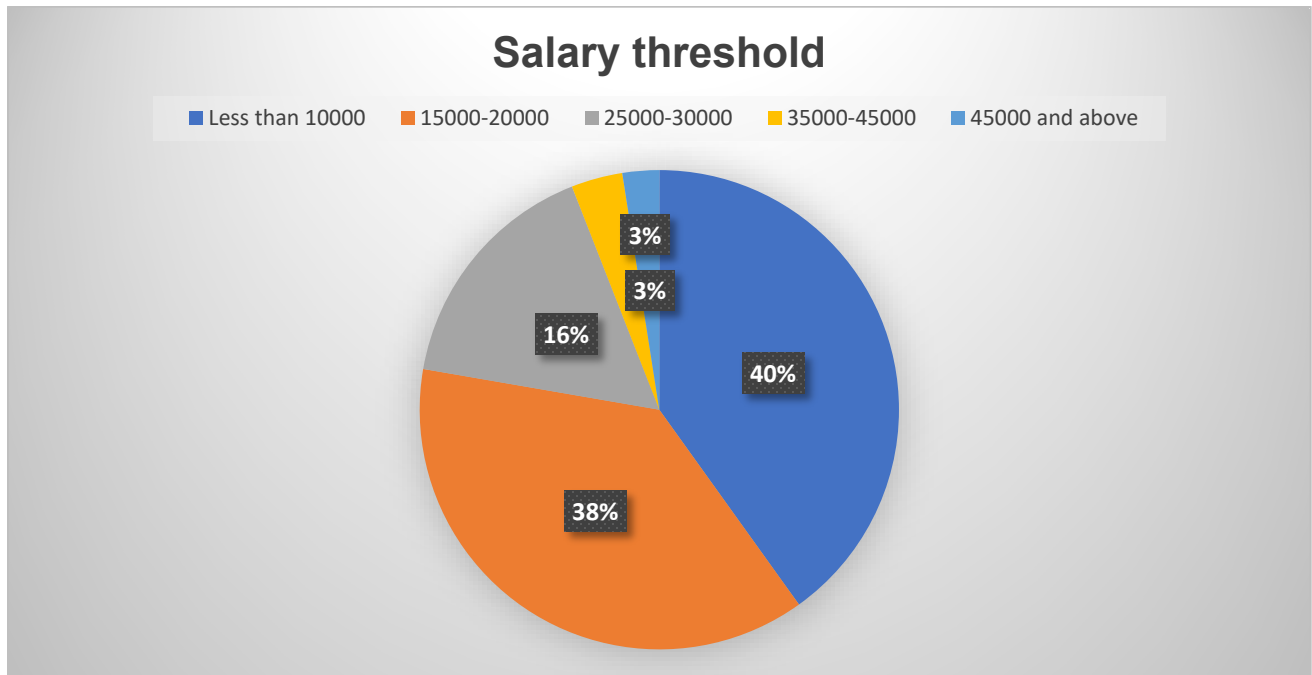
Figure 7: Employment by Economic Sector



7.5 Salary threshold

- **40%** of the respondents earn less than R10 000 per month
- **38%** earn between R15 000 and R20 000,
- **16%** earn between R25 000 and R30 000, and
- **6%** earn a monthly salary of R35 000 and above.

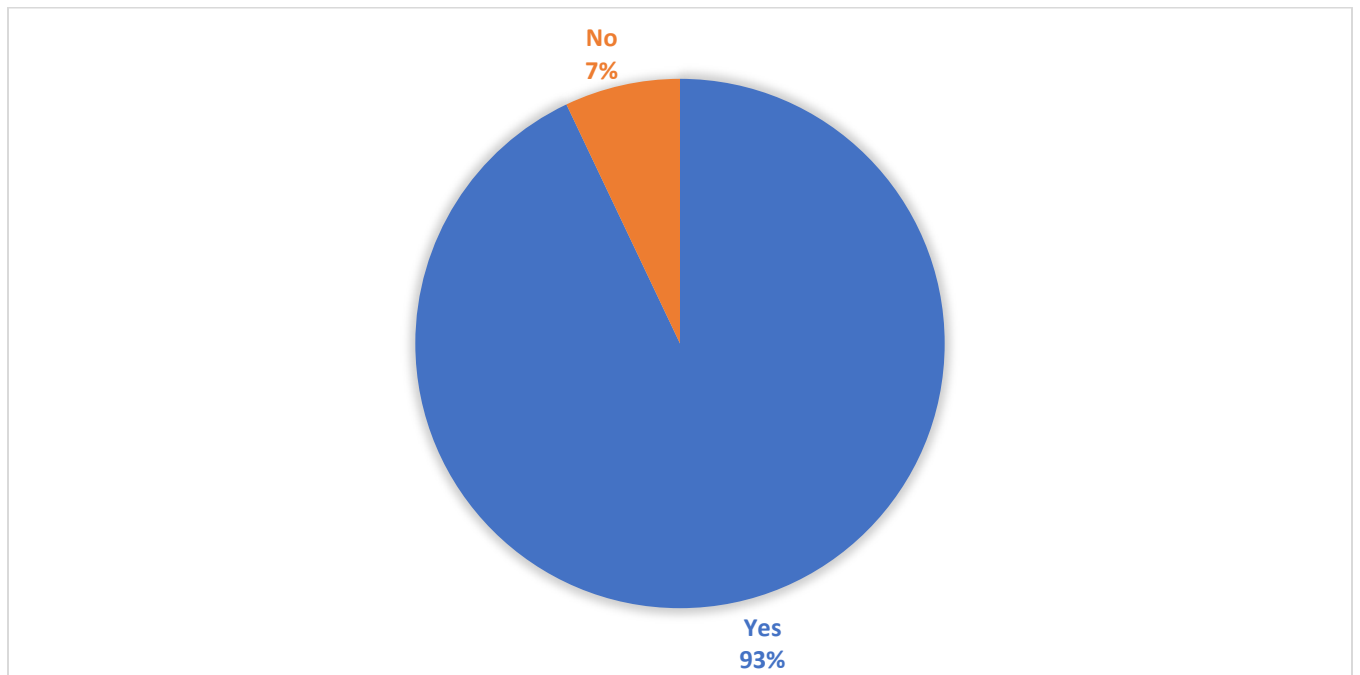
Figure 8: Salary threshold



7.6 Support from FASSET

- **93%** of the respondents stated that they did receive the necessary support from FASSET whilst **7%** said they received no support.
- Some of the reasons provided by a sample of the 7% who stated that they did not receive support from FASSET include
 - Mentors should be appointed for bursary beneficiaries
 - Stipends to be paid timeously. One beneficiary mentioned that their stipends were paid a year after they were funded. A timeous payment of stipends would have afforded them a better focus on their studies.
 - Issues raised by students must be resolved speedily

Figure 9: Support from FASSET



7.7 Beneficiaries who were funded more than once

- It was determined that although the current study involves 2 041 beneficiaries, these 2 041 beneficiaries completed 2 477 qualifications.
- There are beneficiaries who were funded up to three (3) times by FASSET, below is a breakdown:

Table 5: A breakdown of beneficiaries who were funded more than once

Beneficiaries funded once	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 1 614 beneficiaries were funded once and attained 1 614 qualifications
Beneficiaries who were funded twice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 416 beneficiaries were funded twice. They attained 832 qualifications○ Of the 416 beneficiaries, 314 were funded from the same university whilst 102 of them were funded through different universities over different years
Beneficiaries who were funded three times	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 11 beneficiaries were funded three times and attained a total of 33 qualifications

- Beneficiaries who were funded multiple times are spread across the various institutions but most have received funding between Thuthuka and SAICA, (refer to **Table 5** below).
- In addition, we have established that beneficiaries who were awarded multiple bursaries did complete each of the studies they received funding for.

Table 6: Beneficiaries funded twice from different institutions.

Institution/Entity	2018-2019	2019-2020.1	2019-2020.2	2020-2021	Totals
Thuthuka				10	10
Thuthuka (SAICA)	83				83
SAICA		85	1		86
Wits University		1		1	2
University of the Western Cape		1	7		8
Careerwise	3		1		4
Rhodes	1	1			2
University of Limpopo	1				1
University of South Africa				5	5
University of Johannesburg	2				2
Nelson Mandela University		1			1
Totals	90	89	9	16	204

Table 7: Beneficiaries funded 3 times from different entities.

University/Year	2018-19	2019-20.1	2019-20.2	2020-21	TOTAL
Thuthuka				3	3
Thuthuka (SAICA)	2				2
SAICA		2			2
University of the Western Cape	1		1		2
TOTAL	3	2	1	3	9

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, it is recommended that FASSET give attention to the following:

- **Record Management:** There is a need to improve the process of capturing and keeping record of beneficiaries' details. Through this study, the importance of record keeping and its relevance in the efficient completion of similar studies in future has been highlighted.
- **Stakeholder Engagement and Management:**
 - Improve on the engagement and resolution of issues raised by bursary scheme stakeholders. It is recommended that FASSET provides regular progress updates on issues raised by stakeholders.
 - Facilitate that stakeholders are aware that their obligation includes the support of initiatives by FASSET and that these may include responding to requests by FASSET or its appointed service providers.
- **Academic support for bursary scheme beneficiaries:** Although the majority of the respondents have stated that they received the necessary support from FASSET, feedback from interactions with some of the Institutions and interviews with beneficiaries have revealed that there is a need for improvement in this area. A few of the beneficiaries have recommended that beneficiaries are assigned mentors.
- **Improved awareness of FASSET and its funding programmes:** FASSET to facilitate that more potential beneficiaries are aware of FASSET first and the funding programmes available.

9. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study indicate that the scheme is meeting its intended purpose of ensuring that beneficiaries obtain full bursaries to attain formal qualifications which will ultimately enhance their chances of securing leadership, internships, or full-time employment in the broader economy, including in the FASSET sector.

The findings also point out to the fact that there are specific areas of improvement within FASSET's processes.