

Orientation Session

DSI-HSRC Internship Programme

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Making sure it's possible



science & innovation

Department:
Science and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





DSI-HSRC INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

Background and Policy Context

- South Africa amongst its many challenges, is the high unemployment rate especially among the youth of ages 15 to 34 years. Current rate is estimated to be at 53.65% according to the latest figures released by Stats SA (Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Q2: 2021).
- This is exacerbated by lack of skills and formal work experience among most graduates. Higher Education Institutions do not appear to prepare students adequately for the world of work and employers tend to be reluctant to take recently qualified graduates who do not possess the requisite skills for the world of work.
- The National Development (NDP) 2030, which is the bedrock of socio-economic development in the country, has recognised youth unemployment as prohibitive to economic development and elimination of poverty and inequality in the country, and stated that:

Background and Policy Context

- ❑ SA displays low growth coupled with large numbers of work seekers who cannot enter labour markets due to poor skills profile;
- ❑ In moving towards decent employment for all, the short-term priority must be to raise employment and encourage the entry of young people into the labour market;
- ❑ By 2030 the economy should be close to full employment and equip people with skills they need.
- The 2019 White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation identifies youth unemployment as a concern as it has increased since 1994 from 30% to over 40% in 2020, leaving many young people on the margins of society.

Background and Policy Context

- In response to this government has introduced over the years a number of initiatives, e.g.
 - ❑ In 2002 the Cabinet, approved the Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategy for the Public Service, which included an **Internship Framework**
 - ❑ The Youth Accord of 2013 signed at NEDLAC, which led to the establishment of the **National Youth Service Programme (SAASTA)**
 - ❑ In March 2018 the President launched the **Youth Employment Service**, incentivizing industry to create internship opportunities for the youth
 - ❑ Recently, the President launched the **Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI)** job initiative to undo largely the bulging unemployment exacerbated by COVID-19 pandemic.

DSI-HSRC Internship Programme

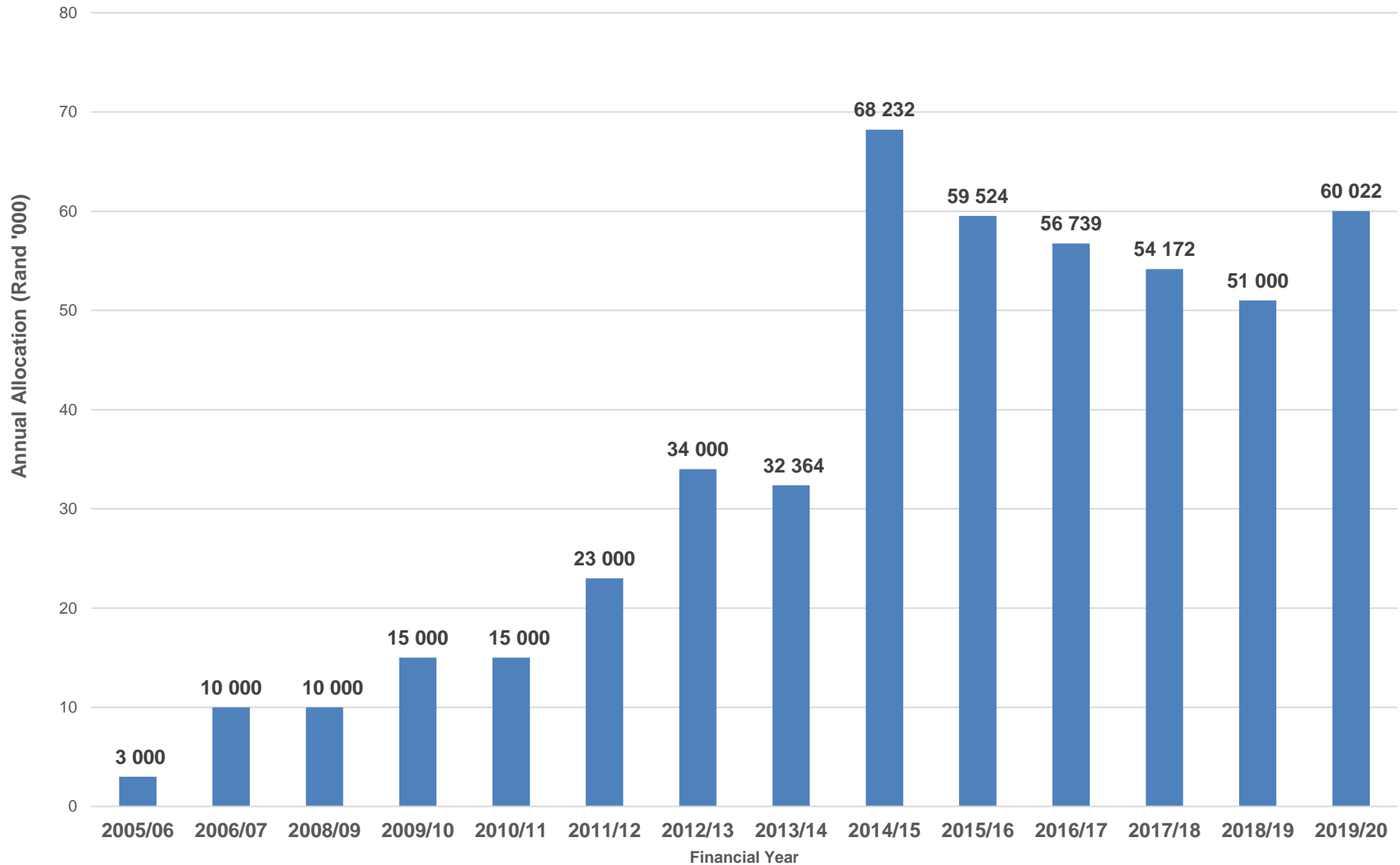
- In 2005, the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI), formerly known as the Department of Science and Technology (DST), established the DSI-NRF Internship Programme as a response to this challenge of unemployment and lack of skills.
- In 2007, the full management and administration of the Programme was migrated to the National Research Foundation (NRF), following a contractual agreement between the two organisations. In 2021, the management and administration of the programme was migrated to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC).
- The Programme targets unemployed graduates in Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) disciplines, as well as those in Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) disciplines.
- Graduates are placed at various research performing and supporting institutions for training under experienced mentors throughout the country. Recently, the Public Service Internship Framework has extended the period of internships in the Public Service to 24 months.

Objectives of the Programme

The objectives are to:

- ☐ establish and increase the pool of human resources for the public sector, science councils, national research institutions, and industry;
- ☐ provide graduates with work experience in their field so as to increase their chances of employment;
- ☐ expose interns to research, development and innovation (RDI) projects that are critical to the National System of Innovation (NSI), thus contributing to South Africa's competitiveness and economic growth;
- ☐ build capacity in research management at higher education and research institutions throughout the country;
- ☐ improve equitable access to marginalized groups such as women and disabled persons; and
- ☐ contribute to life-long learning.

Investment in the Programme



Progress and Achievements

- Since inception, the programme has been successful in increasing the number of:
 - ✓ interns supported thus far, exceed 6000,
 - ✓ host institutions participating in the Programme estimated to be over 110,
 - ✓ interns who got permanent employment from host institutions during and after their internship programme, and
 - ✓ interns who, through the exposure to the research environment, were motivated to further their studies.
- Over the years the programme has exceeded redress and equity targets, with female interns at an average of 60%, and blacks above 90%.
- The Programme was recognized during the National Skills Authority (NSA) conference held in March 2017. The Department was presented a Silver Award for implementing the best public sector programme.

Challenges and interventions

Challenges

- The decline of investment from government due to slow economic growth in the country;
- Lack of a formal commitment for hosts to employ interns on exit;
- The 27% of interns who remain unemployed on exit;
- Disability target consistently not met.

Some interventions:

- Implementation and Impact study that is being undertaken;
- The Programme to explore joint funding with hosts and/or industry in to expand its footprint and impact.


In Conclusion

The DSI would like to acknowledge the following:

- ❖ The NRF for successful implementation of the Programme over the years
- ❖ HSRC for taking over the management and administration of the Programme
- ❖ Host institutions for availing office space and necessary equipment for interns, others have also gone to absorb their interns
- ❖ Mentors for making a contribution to skills development in the country.

To interns, the DSI would like to say grab the opportunity and learn as much as you can over the two year period, while also keeping an eye on available opportunities, build networks and doing your work with all diligence.

The Programme is also under review to obtain information on its impact and this will be shared with the public on completion.



Dankie
Enkosi
Ha khensa
Re a leboga
Ro livhuwa
Siyabonga
Siyathokoza
Thank you