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| MEMORANDUM FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE |

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 2532**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 30/10/2020**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 42 OF 2020**

**Mr S L Ngcobo (IFP) to ask the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology:**

(1) What total number of graduates have been retained by their respective host institutions since the National Research Fund internship programme of the Department of Science and Innovation commenced;

(2) whether he has the statistical data on the number of graduates who have been able to find employment once the internship ended; if not, what is the position in this regard, if so, what is the data of (a) how long it took for graduates to gain employment and (b) the terms of their (i) permanent and/or (ii) contract employment;

(3) whether there are any obligations placed on the host institutions and mentors to facilitate formal skills training during the programme to enhance the chances of the graduates to gain employment once their internship is completed; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;

(4) with the 2020-21 cohort of graduates, what support mechanisms are in place to ensure that students obtain their qualifications within the two-year period? **NW3202E**

**REPLY:**

1. Interns that participated in the Programme have been absorbed for employment by various sectors, as depicted in Figure 1 below. Data on the retention of interns for employment by their respective hosts has not been collected. The Department has commissioned an impact study that will provide more information on the retention of interns by their hosts and their career progression. The study will be completed in March 2022.

Figure 1: Sectors employing Interns on completion of the internship

1. Two months after the end of each internship, high-level data on the employment is collected, through exit surveys. Table 1 below provides statistics on interns’ employment and further studies. According to the annual exit surveys, of the 5 505 interns enrolled in the Programme since inception more than 2 100 were employed (a) The number reported is a cumulative number of interns employed while in the Programme and two months after exiting, as per annual exit survey’s findings. It should be noted that this number may have changed significantly with interns who exited the programme more than two years ago (b) Longer-term tracking of interns is currently not in place, and the impact study that has been commissioned is expected to gather data on the nature of their first employment after the internship.

 Table 1: Interns’ status at the end of each internship

| **Internship Year** | **No. Placed** | **Employed** | **Further Study** | **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2005/06 | 49 | 38 | 4 | 42 |
| 2006/07 | 169 | 135 | 21 | 156 |
| 2008/09 | 92 | 46 | 34 | 80 |
| 2009/10 | 160 | 70 | 34 | 104 |
| 2010/11 | 280 | 124 | 54 | 178 |
| 2011/12 | 276 | 96 | 83 | 179 |
| 2012/13 | 517 | 220 | 149 | 369 |
| 2013/14 | 568 | 232 | 128 | 360 |
| 2014/15 | 710 | 249 | 246 | 495 |
| 2015/16 | 728 | 253 | 260 | 513 |
| 2016/17 | 733 | 284 | 277 | 561 |
| 2017/18 | 622 | 172 | 308 | 480 |
| \*2018/19 | 601 | 200 | 146 | 346 |
| **Total** | 5505 | 2119 | 1744 | 3863 |

1. As part of the intern performance management, mentors are expected to develop a detailed work plan for their respective interns for the internship period. This includes an agreement between the mentor and the mentee to identify training needs and courses for the intern to enhance their skills and competencies such as basic project management, report writing and *Curriculum Vitae* drafting. Training undertaken is reported on in the intern quarterly reports.
2. Interns are encouraged to enrol for postgraduate studies whilst participating in the Programme. It is required that mentors support interns on their further study activities so as to ensure that interns obtain the qualifications. The Programme makes provisions for interns to take study leaves when preparing for examinations and undertaking research activities. Progress on studies is also reported as part of the intern quarterly reports.