



Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority

ETDP SETA Rapid Evaluation on Completion and Drop out Rates (2020-2025)

REPORT

AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

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Disclaimer

Please note that this report is based on the review and findings of the data collected by the S24 Evaluation team on behalf of **the ETDP SETA**. However, the views, claims and conclusions made in the report are those of the evaluators and are not binding in any way or form on **the ETDP SETA** and its partners and/or stakeholders.

Acronyms

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
AET	Adult Education and Training
ANA	Annual National Assessments
APP	Annual Performance Plan
APPETD	Association of Private Providers of Education, Training & Development
ATR	Annual Training Report
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CET	Continuing Education and Training
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
ETD	Education, Training and Development
ETDP	Education, Training & Development Practices
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance
FET	Further Education and Training
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
ISPFTED	Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa
MTSF	Medium-Term Strategic Framework
NAISA	National Alliance of Independent Schools Association
NATED	National Technical Education
NC	National Certificate (Vocational)
NDP	National Development Plan
NEET	Not in Employment, Education and Training
NLPE	Non-Levy Paying Enterprises
NLRD	National Learner Record Database
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

NPDE	National Professional Diploma in Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSA	National Skills Authority
NSDS III	the Third National Skills Development Strategy
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SDA	Skills Development Act
SDFs	Skills Development Facilitators
SDL	Skills Development Levy
SDLA	Skills Development Levies Act No.9 of 1990
SETA	Sector Education Training Authority
SSP	Sector Skills Plan
TVET	Technical, Vocational Education and Training
UoTs	Universities of Technology
WBL	Work Integrated Learning
WPE	Workplace Experience
WP-PSET	White Paper for Post School Education and Training
WSP	Workplace Skills Plan
WSPRs	Work Skills Plans and Reports

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1. Introduction

This Report provides the analysis of fieldwork data (quantitative and qualitative) as it pertains to the Rapid Evaluation Study: Completion and Dropout Rates (“Evaluation” or “Study”). The objective of this Report is to draw out findings from the data as a precursor to the final consolidated report to follow.

1.1 Overview of ETDP SETA

The Education Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA) is a public entity established in terms of Section 9(1) of the Skills Development Act, No. 97 of 1998 to advance skills levels in accordance with the National Skills Development Strategy III. The Mandate of the ETDP SETA is to promote and facilitate the development and improvement of the skills profile of the sector’s workforce in order to benefit employers, workers and employees in the ETD sector.

1.2 Purpose of the Rapid Appraisal

As per the TOR, the task entails conducting a rapid evaluation study to assess the completion and dropout rates of learners enrolled in various skills development interventions, including internships, learnerships, Work Integrated Learning (WIL), and bursaries, between 2020 and 2024/25. These interventions are critical in addressing the skills gaps and unemployment challenges within South Africa’s education, training, and development sector. The evaluation is not limited to tracking enrolments but also aims to understand the underlying factors affecting learner retention and completion rates.

The evaluation adopts a comprehensive approach that not only analyses completion and dropout rates but also investigates the factors contributing to these outcomes. This included engaging key stakeholders—learners, programme managers, and employers—to obtain both qualitative and quantitative insights. A mixed-methods approach has been utilised,

incorporating desktop reviews, interviews, and surveys to provide a thorough evaluation of the interventions and the learner experience.

The evaluation aligns with the broader objectives of the ETDP SETA's Annual Performance Plan (APP) and the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP), which emphasise the importance of skills development in driving economic growth and promoting social equity.

The study therefore addresses the following objective: to gather data to help determine priorities, identify emerging problems and trends and to enable decision making to either support project adjustments or support full-scale evaluation.

1.3 Learning Interventions being Evaluated

The following interventions are included within this Rapid Appraisal:

- Bursaries
- Learnerships
- Internships
- Work Integrated Learning (“WIL”) for TVET College Students
- WIL for HEI Students

1.4 Report Structure

The table below provides a description of each section in this Report.

Section Number & Name	High-Level Description
1. Introduction	Provides an introduction to the Project and explains the purpose of this Report
2. Description of the Interventions	Provides a high level description of the interventions, namely; bursaries, learnerships, internships, and work integrated learning for universities and TVETs.
3. Evaluation Purpose and Methodology	Contextualises the evaluation and describes the tools and processes used

Section Number & Name	High-Level Description
4. Research Participant Profile	Describes the participants who took part in surveys and interviews.
5. Findings of the Study	Core component of the Report, exploring reasons for dropouts and completions
6. Other considerations	Further considerations to consider in the implementation of programmes
7. Conclusion and Recommendations	Provides observations and recommendations based on the data analysed

2. Description of the Interventions

This section provides an introduction and description of each of the interventions included in this Rapid Appraisal, namely:

2.1 Bursaries

Bursaries are one of two key options used by the SETA to finance tertiary studies. The aim of the ETDP SETA bursary programme is to give opportunities for workers and the unemployed in the ETD sector in entering and gaining qualifications in scarce and critical skills (intermediate and high level) identified through the Sector Skills Plan. The Bursary Programme is meant;

- To stop the shortage of qualified and skilled people in the workforce by creating opportunities for workers and unemployed people to further their studies;
- To shrink skills gaps — especially when it comes to the scarce and critical skills identified in the ETD sector;
- To give unemployed learners opportunities that will show that they are capable of being employed;
- To help with the problem of youth unemployment by giving them bursaries for their degrees, diplomas or certificates in the sector;

- To make a contribution to fast service delivery in South Africa by training qualified specialists which results in highly productive and skilled youth in the ETD sector;
- To improve access to jobs for different groups like women and the disabled;
- To contribute to the life-long learning of people;
- To educate students about jobs and career opportunities in the ETD sector.

The targeted beneficiaries for the ETDP SETA bursary programme include:

- Unemployed South Africans from previously disadvantaged backgrounds who want to specialise in the ETD sector — especially in critical skills.
- Employed South Africans from previously disadvantaged backgrounds who want to specialise in an ETD field of study that features in the ETDP SETA SSP because there is a shortage in that field.
- Through financing bursaries, the SETA disburses funds as mandated by the Skills Development Act (SDA) and assists students to access higher education and technical vocational training.

2.2 Learnerships

A learnership is a learning programme that leads to the award of an NQF qualification. It has a strong emphasis on workplace experience which is considered very valuable by employers. All learnerships have the following features:

- A formal contract between the employer, the learner and the training provider;
- Assessment (testing) by an accredited skills development provider; and
- The learning programme includes supervised, structured, experiential learning (real-life learning) in the workplace.
- Learnerships combine both knowledge and work experience components of learning. This is the most time- and cost-effective way to empower learners with the relevant skills which lead to better employment opportunities.

Learnerships are ideal for learners who cannot afford full-time study because they need to make money to survive, and those who cannot afford to be on learning programmes that are not

directly (or practically) related to their field of work and better career opportunities in that field. In future, all learnerships will be based on Occupational Qualifications which means they will be more closely linked to jobs in the labour market — and better employment opportunities.

2.3 Internships

An internship is a practical programme to assist with the continuous development of people for future appointment in the labour market. It is directed at young people who are completing their studies or who have completed their studies and are unemployed (ETDP-SETA, 2017). Internships are an important way of giving graduates an opportunity to apply what they have learnt to a real-life environment. This kind of “*applied competence*” or “*occupational competence*” (ability to work) is what is very valuable to employers. To help learners get internship opportunities, the ETDP SETA has an internship programme targeting unemployed graduates. The internship provides learners with the opportunity to practice the work skills that they have studied and will practice in the future.

The ETDP SETA programme is directed at young people who have completed their studies, preferably in an area of scarce and critical skills, and are unemployed. A designated mentor usually supports the intern in the programme. Interns sometimes have to do practical work assignments to get a better understanding of the workplace, its values and work ethic, and the opportunities it offers.

The targeted groups for the ETDP SETA Internship Programme include:

- Unemployed South African graduates from higher education institutions who have completed their degrees or diplomas in ETD related fields and within the scarce and critical skills identified in the ETD sector;
- Unemployed graduates who have not been ex-posed to work experience related to the scarce and critical skills identified in the ETD sector; and
- Unemployed matriculants who want to be ex-posed to the world of work in various fields in the ETD sector. The SETA would assist these matriculants if they wish to study further within the ETD sector.

An internship is also beneficial for an employer as they are granted the opportunity to become familiar with the intern and to establish whether the intern is employable in the business - thus increasing the chances of that learner getting a permanent job.

2.4 Work Integrated Learning: Universities and TVETs

ETDP SETA's workplace experience programmes help learners in scarce and critical skills programmes to get work experience. The programme assists learners in finding employment or prepares them to become self-employed. The intervention provides work experience grants; allowing learners to gain work experience in the ETD sector workplaces. The programme compliments the requirement of many tertiary institutions (TVET Colleges and universities or universities of technology) which have workplace experience built into their programmes — and is often a requirement in order for a student to complete their field of study.

The target groups for the ETDP SETA Workplace Experience Programme include:

- Students in TVET Colleges, universities or universities of technology who need to attend their compulsory workplace experience in order to qualify in their chosen field;
- Students pursuing ETD specialist qualifications which have been identified as scarce and critical; and
- Marginalised groups such as women, youth and the disabled.

3. Theory of Change

Explicit theories of change have been developed by ETDP SETA for each of its learning interventions. Whilst it is not the focus of this Rapid Appraisal to provide an in-depth review of these theories of change, the below provides observations relating to said theories of change, all of which share similar strengths and weaknesses. It should be noted that overall, our impressions of these theories of change are positive, and the weaknesses are noted with the intention of strengthening a good starting point.

The theories of change (TOCs) serve as a conceptual roadmap for understanding how inputs and activities in learning interventions, such as bursaries, learnerships, internships, and work-integrated learning (WIL), lead to improved learner outcomes and broader systemic impacts. It outlines the logical links between programme elements and desired changes in the education and training landscape. Persistent unemployment, poor school-to-work transitions, and systemic barriers in post-school education necessitate targeted interventions. Many learners face financial and institutional obstacles that prevent access to education and employment pathways aligned with national and sectoral development goals.

3.1 Intervention Strategy and Inputs

Interventions are based on:

- Financial assistance (e.g., bursaries)
- Structured experiential learning (e.g., WIL, internships)
- Accredited skills development (e.g., learnerships)

Inputs include funding, partnerships with training providers and employers, policy alignment, administrative infrastructure, and monitoring systems.

3.2 Activities and Outputs

Activities span:

- Learner recruitment and selection
- Educational and workplace placements
- Learner support and mentoring
- Engagement with employers and institutions
- Outputs include increased participation, completion rates, workplace readiness, and exposure to real-world environments.

3.4 Outcomes and Impacts

- Short to medium-term outcomes include:
- Improved learner capabilities and qualifications
- Enhanced employability
- Strengthened employer-education links
- Long-term impacts include:
- Increased employment rates and workforce retention
- Economic transformation through skills development
- A more inclusive and equitable education and labour market

3.5 Assumptions and Preconditions

The ToCs rely on several key assumptions:

- Financial and experiential support lead to better completion and employment outcomes
- Employers are willing and able to host learners
- Institutions deliver quality learning aligned to workplace needs
- Adequate support systems are in place for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds
-

3.6 Strengths of the Theory of Change

The following strengths have been identified.

3.6.1 Clarity of Purpose and Direction

The ToC provides a structured and visualized logic model that clarifies how each intervention contributes to desired outcomes, helping stakeholders understand their roles and expectations.

3.6.2 Alignment with National Priorities

It aligns with the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP), the National Development Plan (NDP), and broader PSET strategies by focusing on employability, access, and transformation.

3.6.3 Foundation for Monitoring and Evaluation

The ToC supports the development of relevant indicators for outputs, outcomes, and impacts, making it a valuable tool for tracking progress and learning.

3.6.4 Stakeholder Engagement

The participatory process of constructing the ToC has encouraged collaboration between SETA staff, institutions, and employers, fostering shared ownership and understanding.

3.7 Weaknesses and Limitations of the Theory of Change

The following weaknesses and areas for improvement have been identified.

3.7.1 Lack of Explicit Assumptions

Many ToCs fail to make explicit the underlying assumptions (e.g., employer demand, institutional capacity), limiting the ability to test or validate causal links.

3.7.2 Incomplete Articulation of External Risks

External factors such as macroeconomic conditions, industry shifts, or institutional instability are often insufficiently addressed, despite their significant impact on outcomes.

3.7.3 Data and Measurement Challenges

Some outcomes (like employability or long-term impact on career mobility) are difficult to measure consistently across different interventions and time frames, affecting the robustness of evaluation.

3.7.4 Insufficient Attention to Learner Diversity

The ToC may treat learners as a homogeneous group, overlooking how socio-economic status, gender, geographic location, and disability status influence learner experience and success.

3.7.5 Implementation Gaps

There is often a disconnect between the ToC model and actual implementation on the ground—especially where capacity, funding, or institutional coordination is weak. This may dilute intended results.

4. Evaluation Purpose and Methodology

This section establishes the context in which this evaluation is conducted, states the approach taken and indicates the key evaluation questions to be answered.

4.1 Context of evaluation

The ETDP SETA, like many other SETAs, is facing a challenge low completion rates for its learning interventions. This Evaluation seeks to determine the reasons for the high dropout rates in order to define mitigating actions going forward.

4.2 Evaluation approach

A mixed-methods methodology was undertaken for this evaluation, which included document review, surveys and interviews. The Evaluation was conducted within the lens of the underpinning logic behind the different interventions. As such, we consider design aspects of the interventions as well as external factors that may be impacting the throughput rates.

The following components are considered:

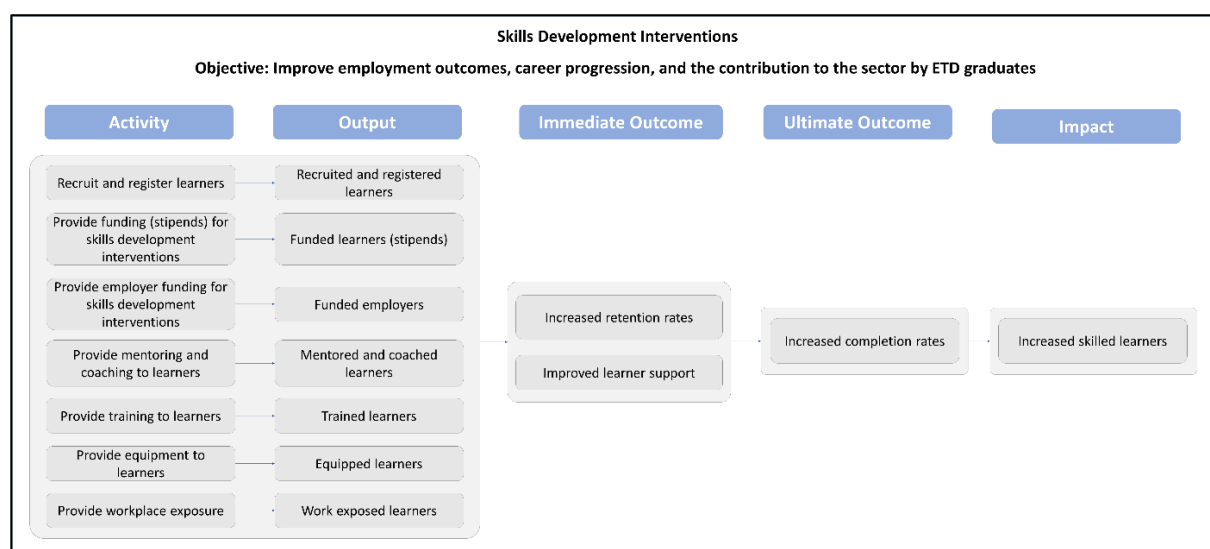
- Theory of Change for each intervention
- Implementation approach, as informed by ETDP SETA documents and interviews with Provincial Managers
- Reasons for completion and dropouts, as informed by stakeholder consultations and assessment of previous studies
- Consideration of the ETDP SETAs tracking and tracing mechanisms for beneficiaries and learners

4.3 Theoretical Framework

This Study was conducted through the lens of a Results Chain theoretical framework. The Results Chain depicts the conceptual “how and why” a desired change is expected to occur in a particular context. It provides a logical and structured pathway from activities to short-term outputs, outcomes, and impacts. By mapping out the causal linkages between various elements of a program or intervention, the Results Chain clarifies the underlying assumptions, contextual factors, and conditions necessary for success.

A simple Results Chain was mapped for this Study, as the Study’s purpose was to focus on completion and dropout rates, the defined Results Chain focussed on factors that may impact this. The diagram conceptually depicts this Results Chain.

Figure 1: Results Chain



At its core, a Results Chain answers the question: “What needs to happen, and in what sequence, for this initiative to achieve its intended outcomes?”

Data that was collected for this Study was interpreted using both descriptive analysis and qualitative coding techniques.

4.4 Evaluation questions

The following questions were considered during the course of this Study.

Table 1: Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Question	Summary Answer			
The rate of completions and reasons.	#	Intervention Type	Completion Rate	Dropout Rate
	1	Bursaries	20%	80%
The rate of dropouts and reasons.	2	Internships	48%	52%
	3	Learnerships	Enrolments only tracked in 2023/24	
	4	WIL: TVETs	71%	29%
	5	WIL: Universities	93%	7%
What projects can be replicated or scaled up in the future and why?	There is opportunity to scale the Bursaries intervention and possibly improve completions. This could be done by contracting with the student for the full length of their degree. Incentives can be provided to the student for staying the SETA for the duration, such as top-up amounts for good academic performance, or a requirement to repay the bursary if they choose to receive a different bursary in the next year.			

4.5 Terminology

The terms used that are most fundamental to the understanding of this Rapid Assessment are listed below:

Termination: refers to when a learner does not complete an intervention due to poor performance or not meeting the specific requirements of the intervention.

- Drop-out: refers to when a learner elects to drop out of an ETDP SETA funded intervention. Could relate to when a learner, for example, elects to take up a different bursary with a different organisation.

- **Completion:** when a learner completes all the requirements of an ETDP SETA funded intervention. In the case of a bursary, it is when the learner completes their degree.
- **Institutional Support:** refers to support and structure provided by either the employer organisation or the TVET or university and is distinct from coaching or mentoring.
- **Funding Delay:** in the case of work integrated learning, learnerships and internships, this refers to a delay in payment of stipends.

4.6 Fieldwork Findings

This section provides an overview of the fieldwork conducted for the Evaluation. Field research, as part of the Evaluation, included distributing electronic surveys and conducting interviews.

4.6.1 Research Participants

The table below summarises the consultations conducted as part of the Evaluation.

Table 2: Fieldwork Conducted

Stakeholder Type	Programme	Number of Responses
Beneficiaries	Bursaries	308
	Learnerships	50
	Internships	337
	WIL: TVET	132
	WIL: Universities	32
ETDP SETA Staff	Provincial Managers	3
TOTAL		862

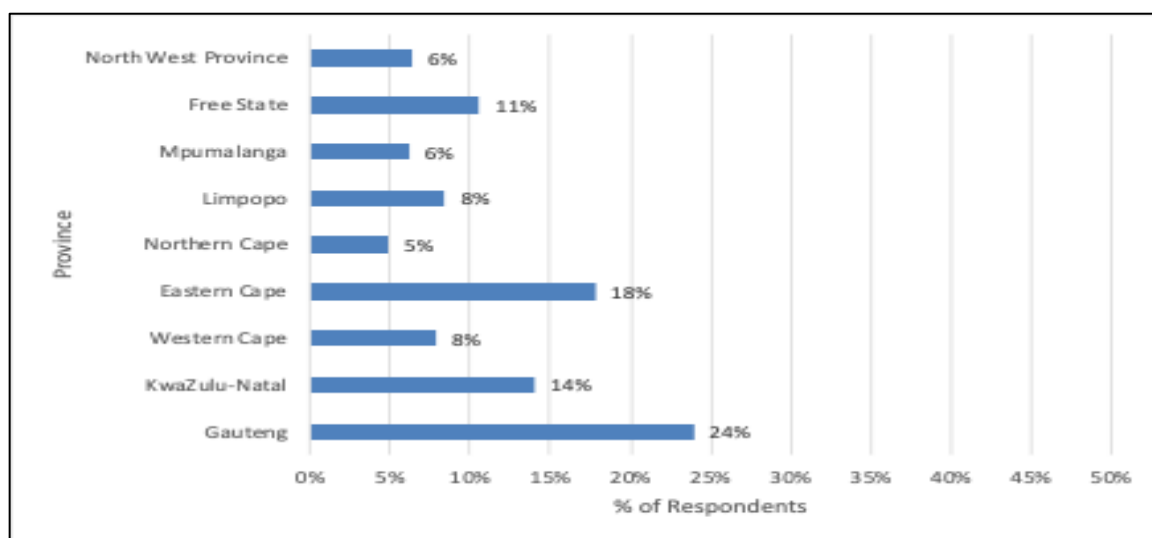
The sections that follow provide a more comprehensive view of the fieldwork that was conducted for this evaluation.

Survey links were distributed to the entire database of relevant beneficiaries for whom email addresses were provided.

4.6.2 Geographic Location

The figure below depicts the provincial distribution of the beneficiaries who completed the surveys.

Figure 2: Geographical Location



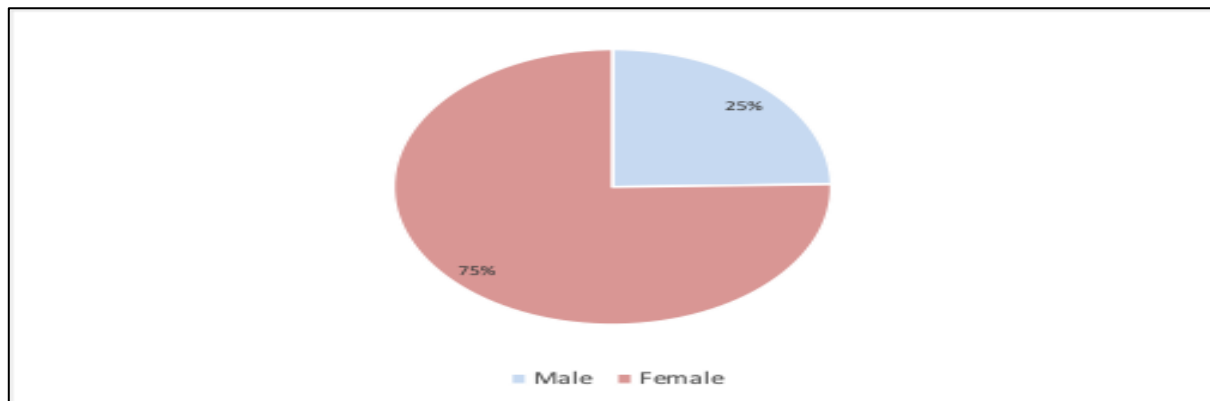
Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

The figure above illustrates the distribution of beneficiaries of the interventions across the different provinces in South Africa.

4.6.3 Gender

The figure below presents an overview of the survey respondents by gender.

Figure 3: Gender



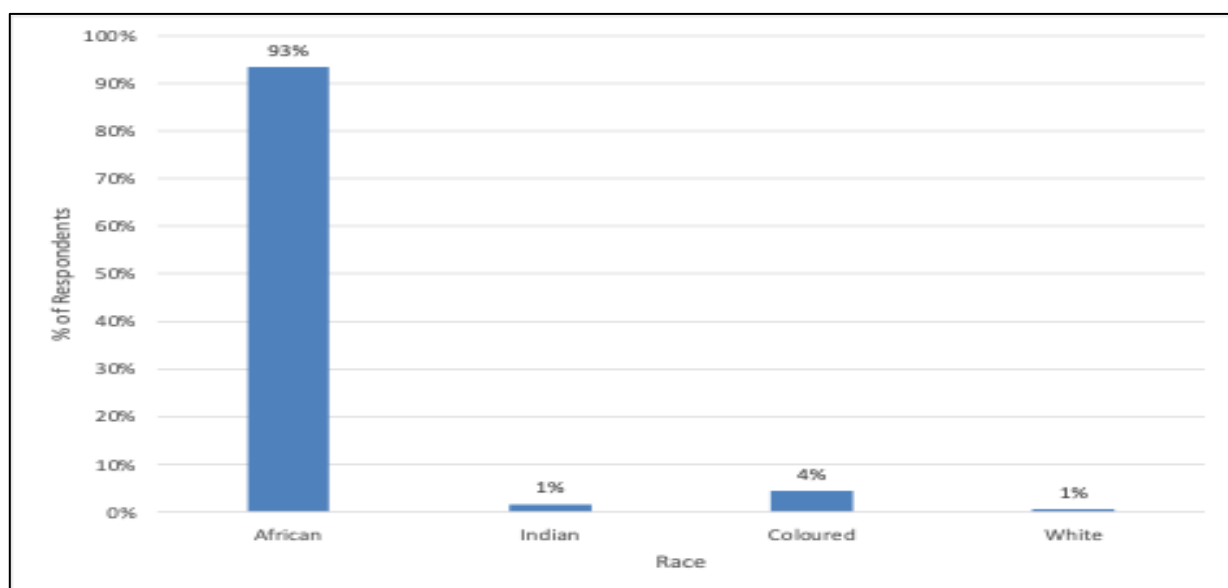
Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

The figure above indicates that the majority of the beneficiaries who completed the survey were female participants.

4.6.4 Race

The figure below provides a breakdown of the survey respondents by race.

Figure 4: Race



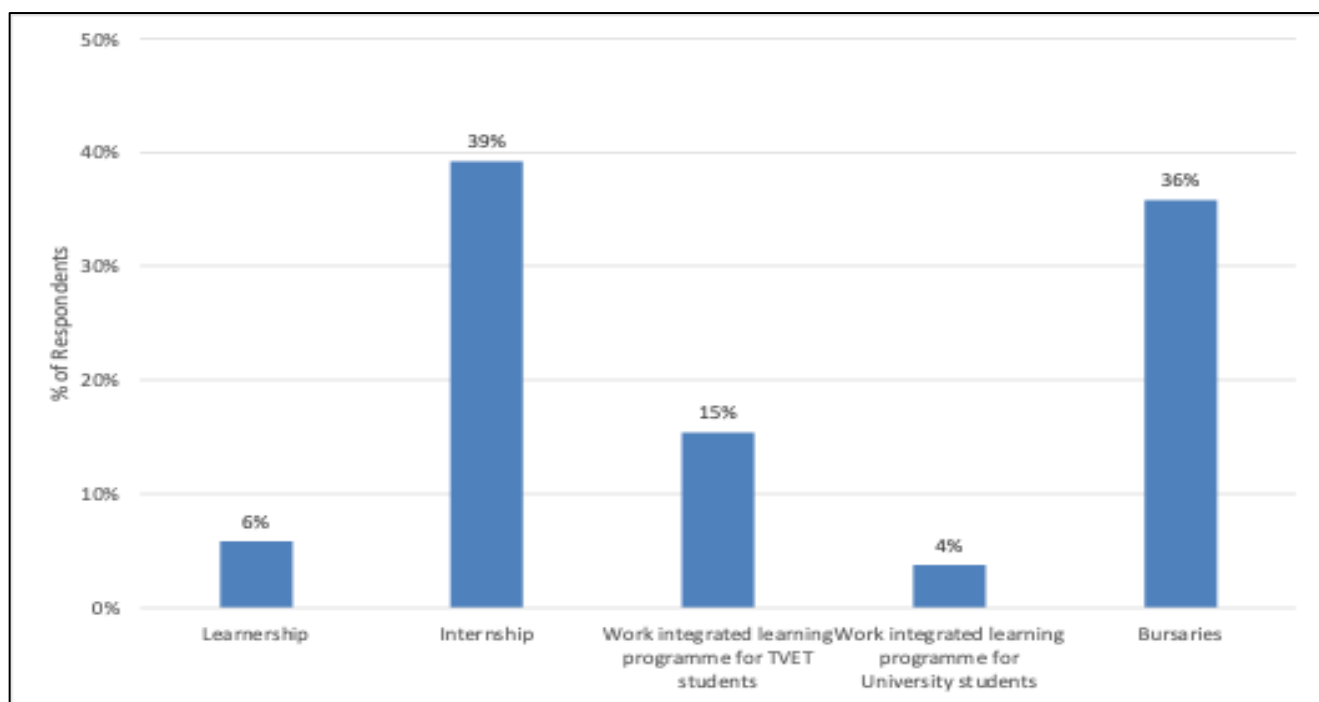
Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

The figure above illustrates that the majority of beneficiaries who completed the surveys are Black.

4.6.5 Type of Intervention Enrolled In

The figure below provides a breakdown of the survey respondents by race.

Figure 5: Type of Programme



Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

4.7 Findings of the Study: Rate of Completions and Drop-Outs, and

4.7.1 Reasons

This section examines the rate of completions and explores possible reasons. Performance reports are used to calculate extent of completions/ dropouts, fieldwork data with existing literature is used to comment on possible reasons.

4.7.2 Extent of Completions and Dropouts

The following provides an indication of the completion levels of each type of ETDP SETA intervention.

Table 3: Completion Rates by Intervention

#	Intervention Type	Completion Rate	Dropout Rate
1	Bursaries	20%	80%
2	Internships	48%	52%
3	Learnerships	Enrolments only tracked in 2023/24	
4	WIL: TVETs	71%	29%
5	WIL: Universities	93%	7%

The above are averages calculated for the period 2020/21 to 2023/24. Bursaries has the lowest completion rate, followed by Internships. WIL TVETs is relatively sound, whilst we note the WIL Universities is based on a limited dataset due to this not being tracked at an APP level on an ongoing basis.

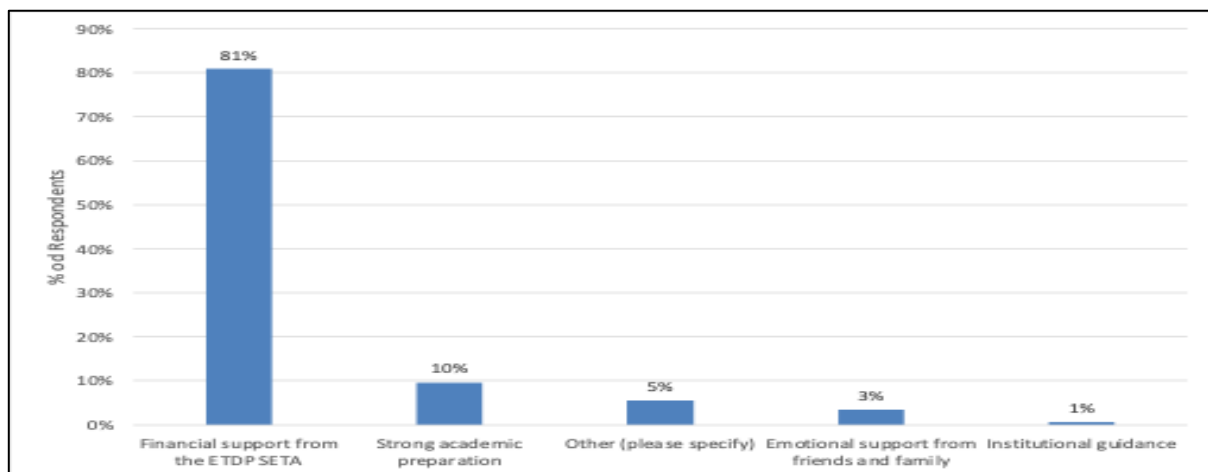
The following explores possible reasons underpinning these completion and dropout rates.

4.7.2.1 Bursaries

South Africa as a whole has a relatively low completion rate as it pertains to university education. Estimates put completion rates within 3 years for a 3 year degree at 22% (Daily Maverick, 2022), with first year dropouts at 60% (Business Tech, 2024). Whilst ETDP SETAs completion rate is therefore in line with national statistics, it is important to identify the causes behind this to improve this position. At the outset, we recognise the ETDP SETA is in the difficult position of having to “compete” with other bursary providers, like other SETAs and NSFAS. This appears to be a major driver behind these high dropout rates. It should therefore be recognised that some learners being recorded as “dropped out” may in fact be going to complete their degrees. For students whose bursaries were terminated, or who dropped out of their studies,

the following provides an indication as to why. The graph below provides the main reasons why bursary recipients completed their degrees.

Figure 6: Reasons for Completion: Bursaries

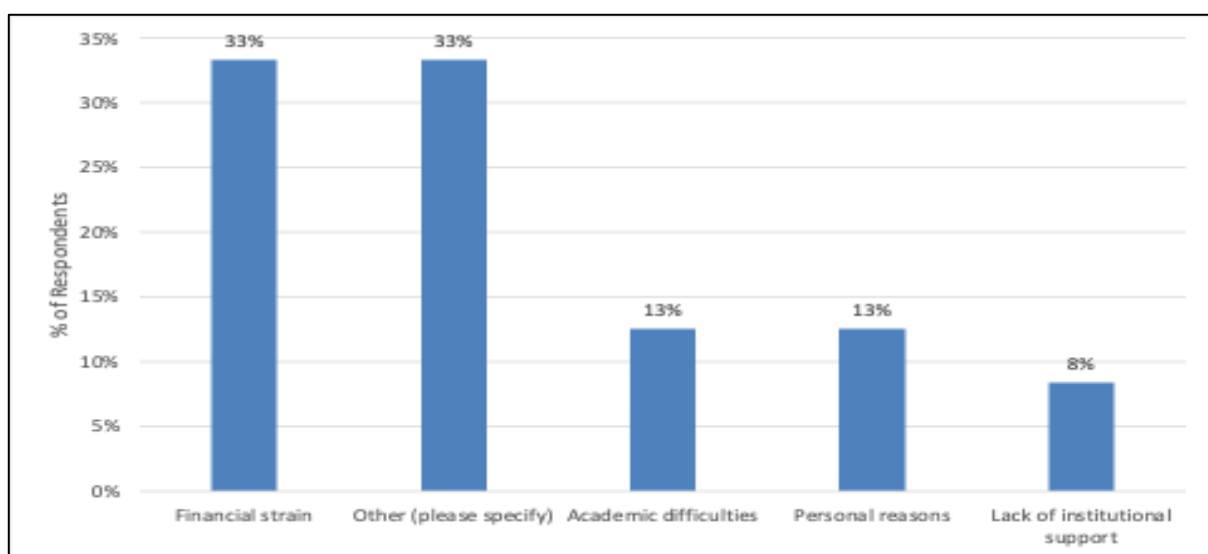


Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

Financial support is by far the biggest reason for completions, followed by strong academic preparation.

The graph below provides the main reasons why bursary recipients dropped out of their studies.

Figure 7: Reasons for Dropouts: Bursaries



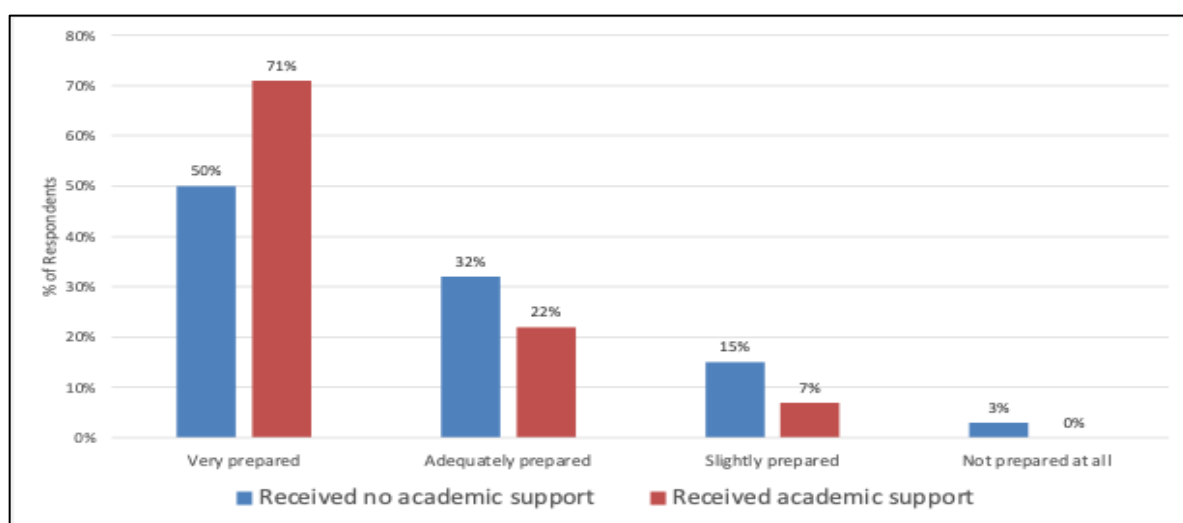
Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

Financial strain is the biggest reason for drop-outs. For “other” most respondents indicated that they had failed a few modules as the reason.

- **Academic Support and Preparedness for Work: Bursaries**

The graph below compares the work preparedness of bursary recipients who received academic support against those who did not.

Figure 8: Academic Support & Work Preparedness



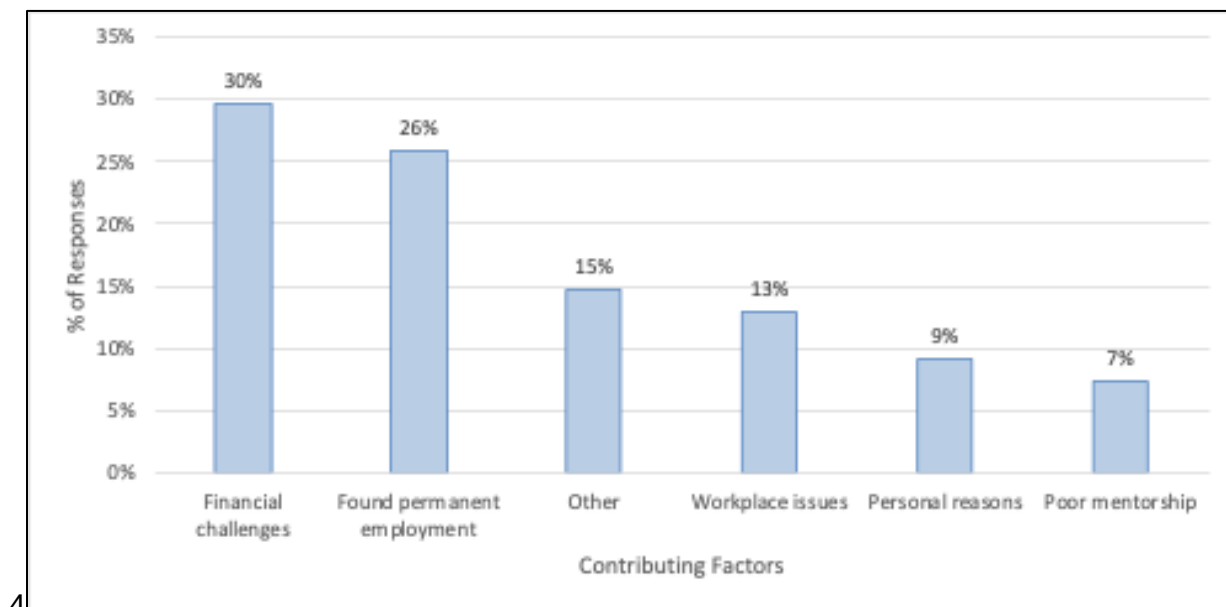
Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

It does appear from the above that students who receive academic support generally feel more prepared for the professional working world.

4.7.2.2 Internships

Internships are, at their core, designed to assist unemployed learners gain practical world experience in order to find permanent employment. It has also been noted that internships offer the beneficiary a stipend, as opposed to a competitive salary. Within this context, we recognise that the two main reasons for dropouts from internships are financial challenges and the beneficiary finding permanent employment. This is illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 9: Reasons for Dropouts: Internships



Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

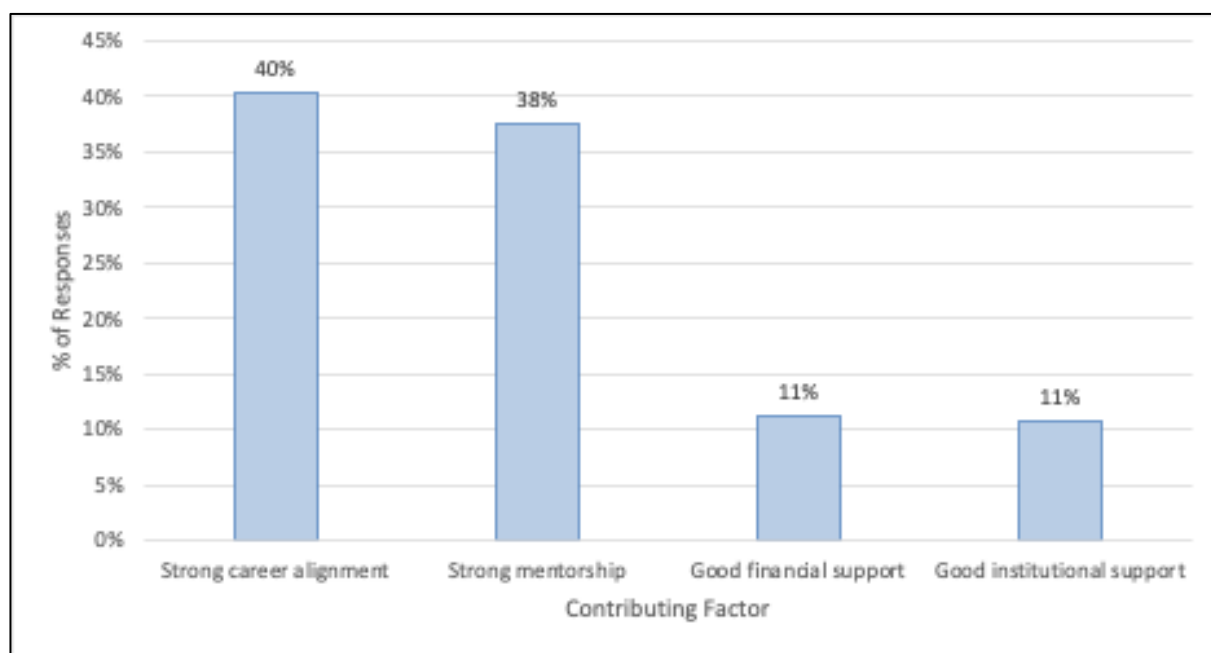
In the main, the reason given under “other” included an offer for a different internship that offered a better stipend, which could be linked to financial challenges.

Related to this, 16% of beneficiaries indicated that they had to work “a second job” to cover living expenses whilst on the internship.

Regarding the dropouts due to finding permanent employment, at an ideological level, this is not necessarily a negative indication of the internship intervention and can perhaps be viewed as a positive sign. At an operational level, this would create issues for ETDP SETA when it comes to reporting performance.

The below figure indicates the contributing factors that beneficiaries indicated assisted them in completing the internship.

Figure 10: Reasons for Completion: Internships



Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

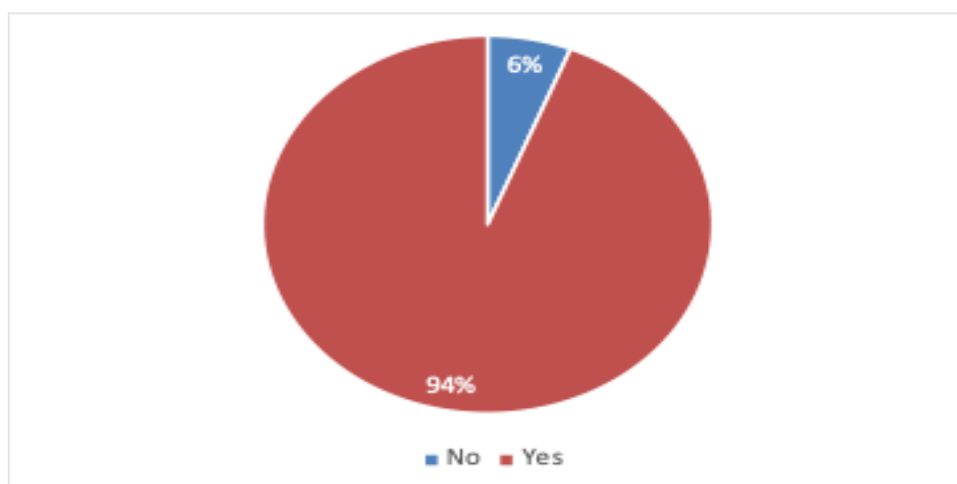
Strong career alignment and strong mentorship are the two most dominant reasons. This is supported by existing evidence in the literature.

The lower rating for financial support supports the notion that internships are designed to gain experience and not to financially enrich beneficiaries *per se*.

- Access to Mentorship

Respondents in the study were asked whether they had access to a mentor, as seen in the figure below, the overwhelming majority indicated yes.

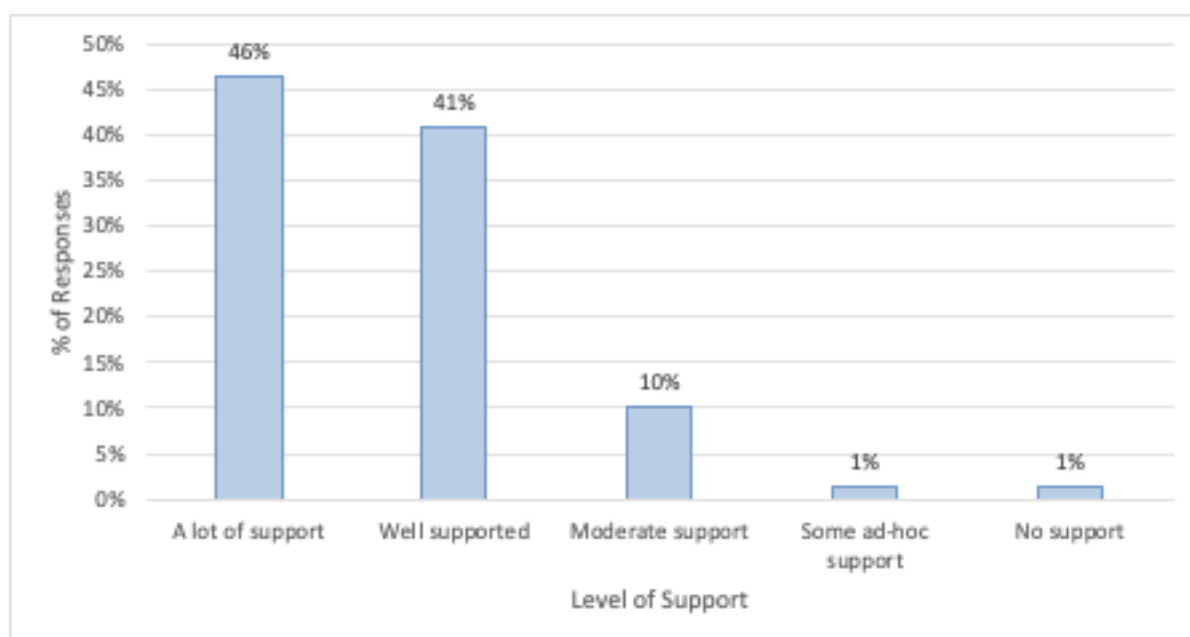
Figure 11: Access to Mentor: Internships



Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

Respondents were also asked the level of support they received from their mentor, with the majority indicating satisfaction with the level of support, as seen in the figure below.

Figure 12: Level of Support from Mentor: Internships



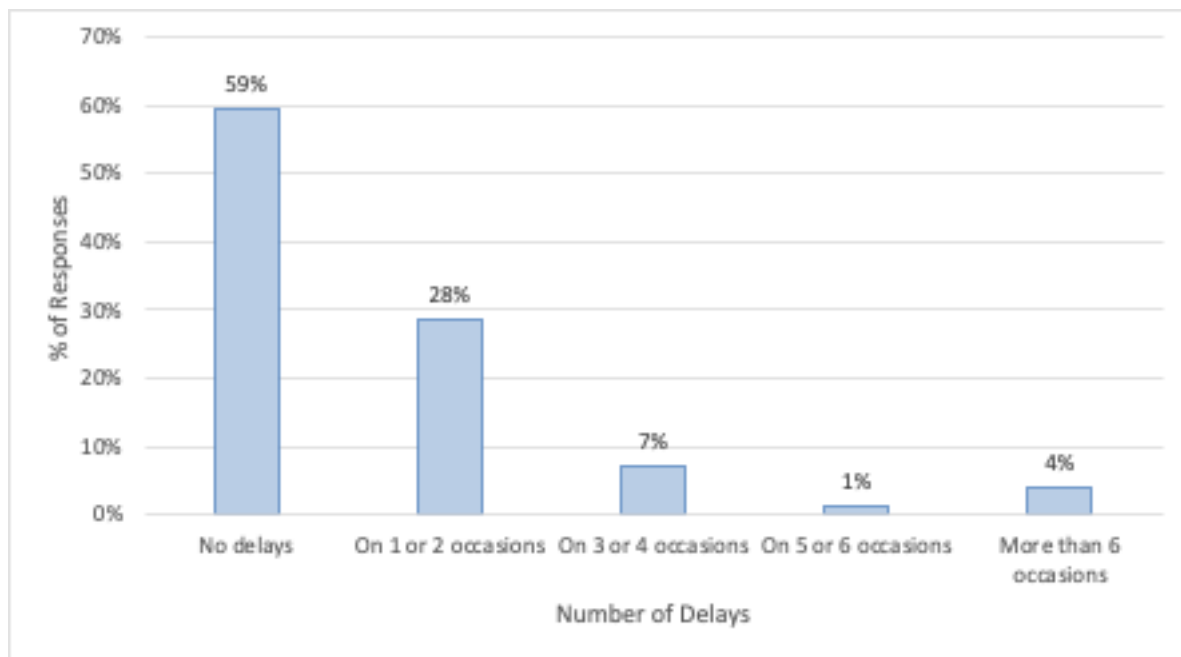
Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

Mentorship appears to be working well within internships.

- **Funding Delays**

Respondents were asked if, and how often they experienced funding delays.

Figure 13: Funding Delays: Internships



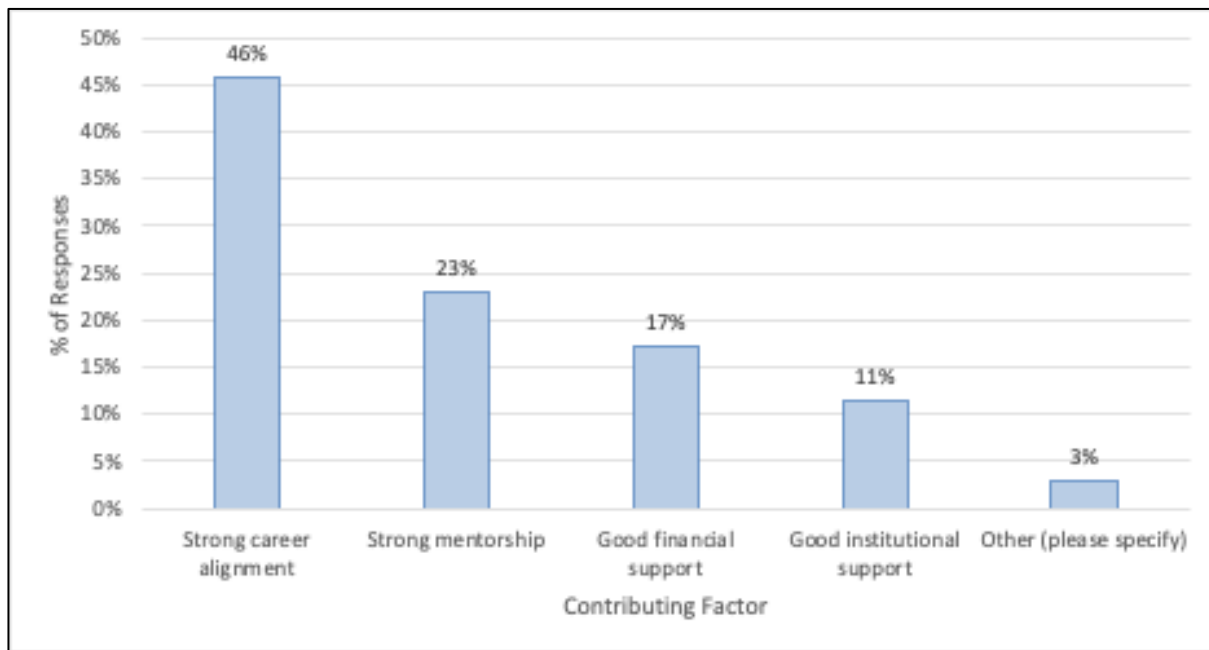
Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

The majority experienced no funding delays, with over a quarter of respondents indicating delays funding of twice or less.

4.7.2.3 Learnerships

Factors contributing to learnerships completion follow a similar trend to internships, as illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 14: Reasons for Completion: Learnerships



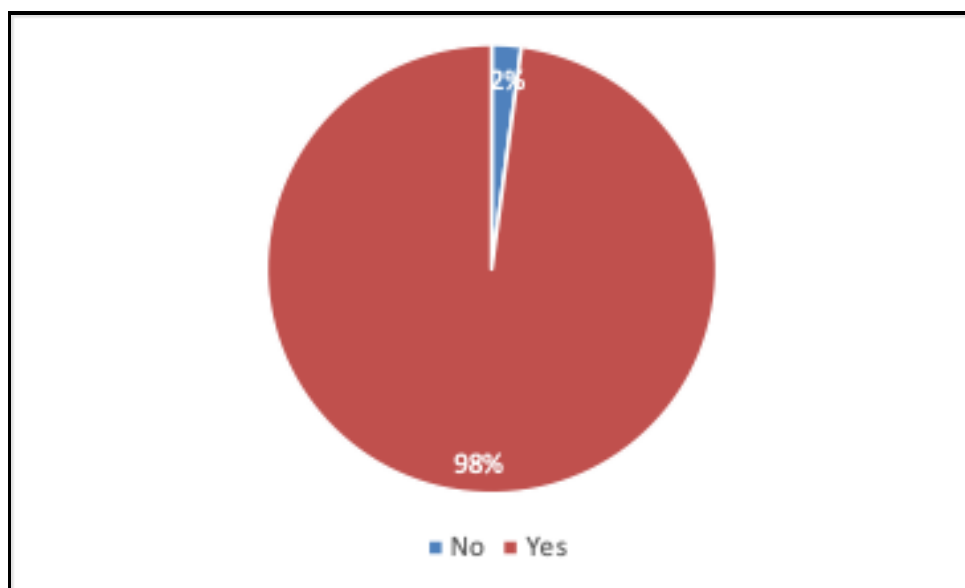
Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

Strong career alignment and strong mentorship are the dominant factors contributing to completions, followed by good financial support.

- Access to Mentorship

Respondents in the study were asked whether they had access to a mentor, as seen in the figure below, the overwhelming majority indicated yes.

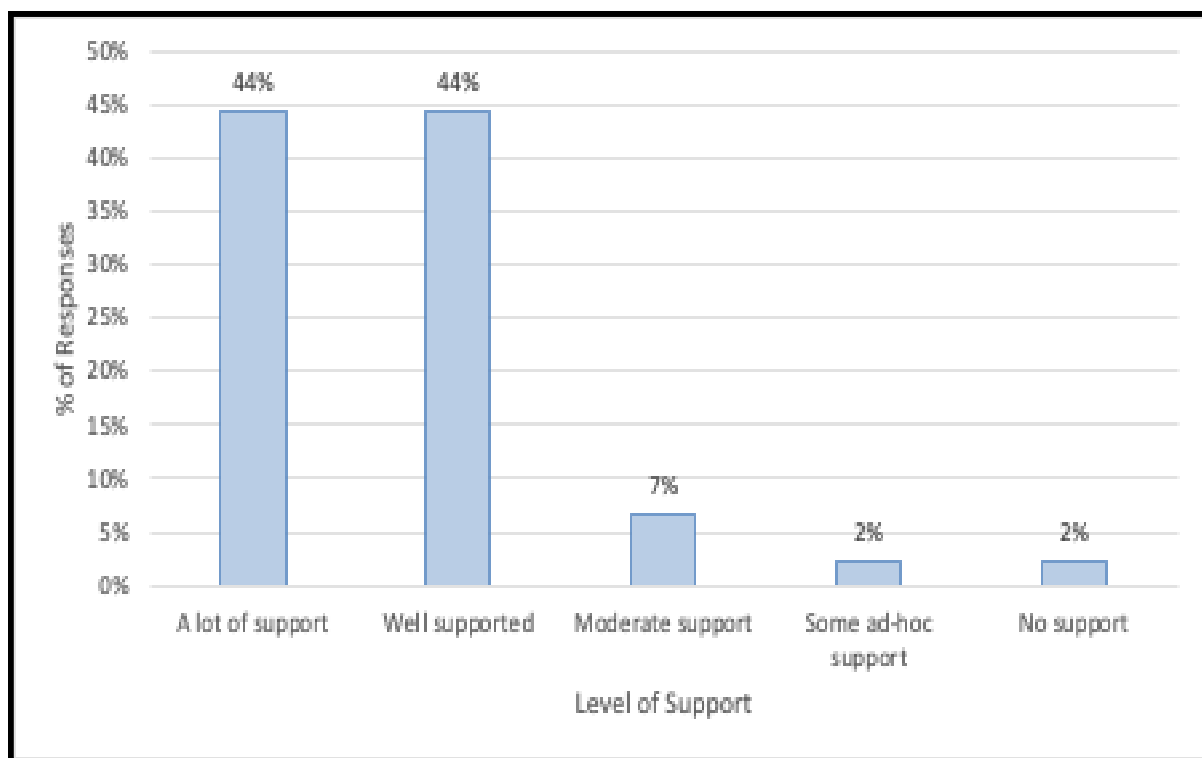
Figure 15: Access to Mentor: Learnerships



Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

Respondents were also asked the level of support they received from their mentor, with the majority indicating satisfaction with the level of support, as seen in the figure below.

Figure 16: Level of Support from Mentor: Learnerships

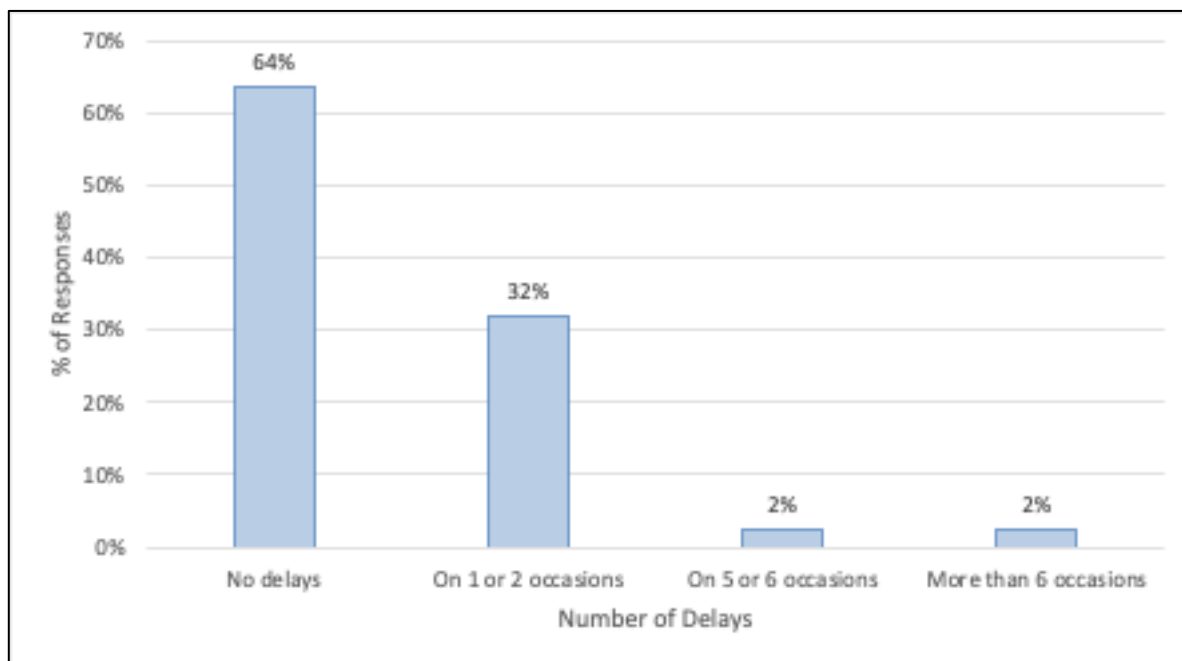


Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

Funding Delays

Respondents were asked if, and how often they experienced funding delays.

Figure 17: Funding Delays: Learnerships



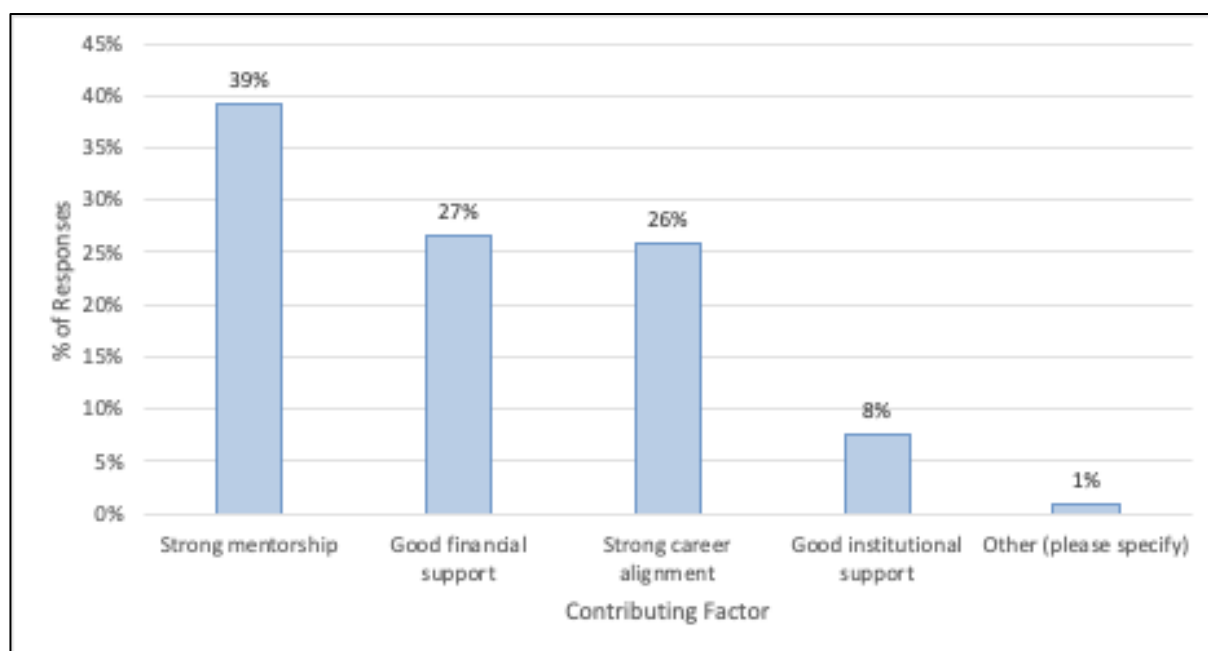
Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

Only 4% of respondents experienced funding delays more than twice.

4.7.2.4 WIL: TVETs

Factors contributing to the completion of WIL: TVETs are indicated in the figure below.

Figure 18: Reasons for Completion: WIL – TVETs



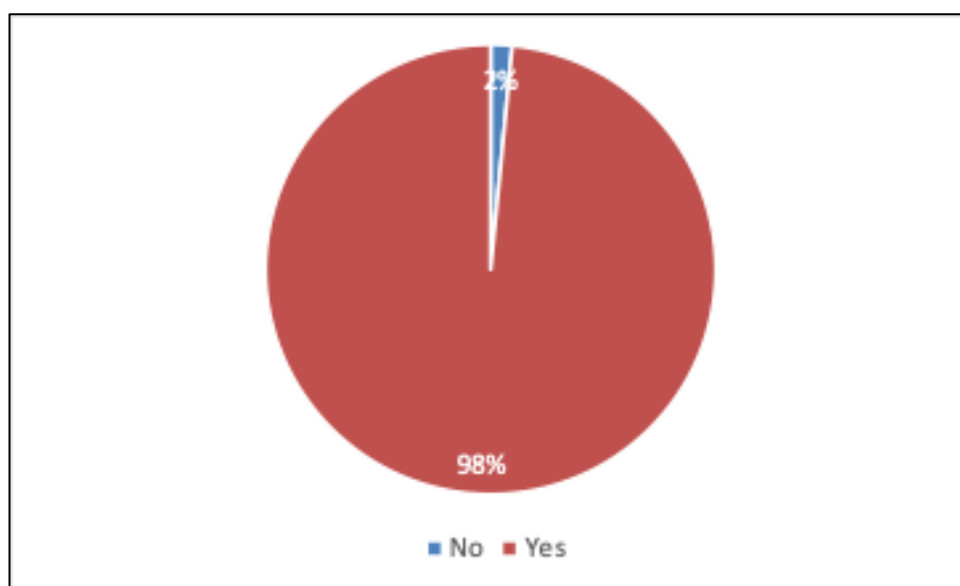
Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

Strong mentorship, good financial support and strong career alignment on the dominant reasons cited for completion.

- **Access to Mentorship**

Respondents in the study were asked whether they had access to a mentor, as seen in the figure below, the overwhelming majority indicated yes.

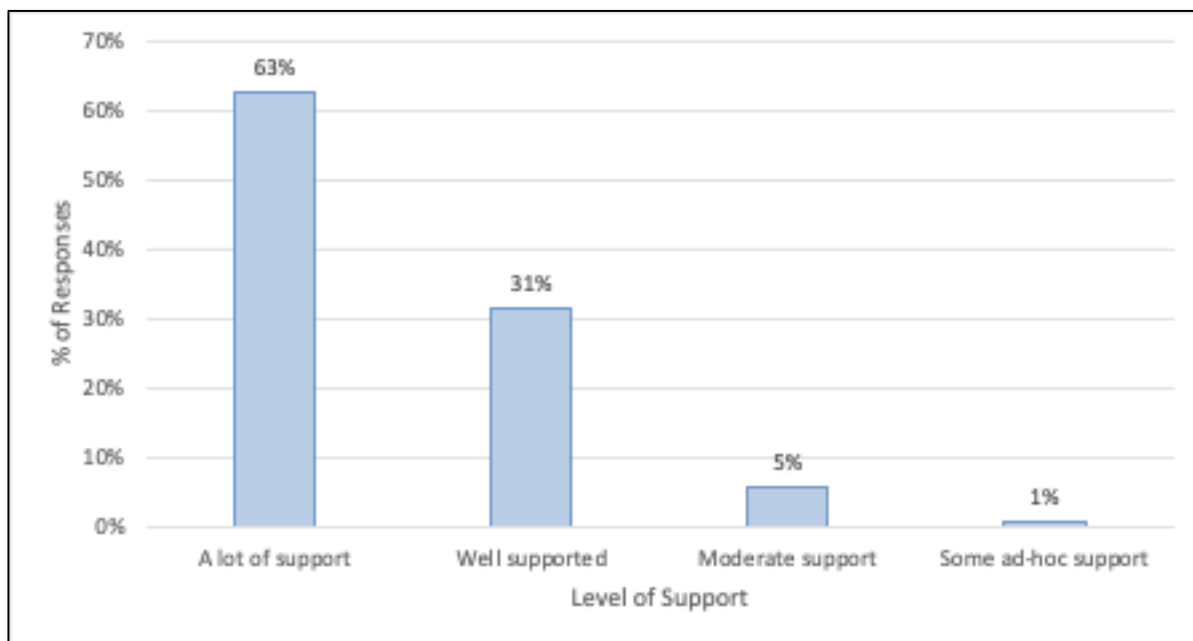
Figure 19: Access to Mentor: WIL – TVETs



Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

Respondents were also asked the level of support they received from their mentor, with the majority indicating satisfaction with the level of support, as seen in the figure below.

Figure 20: Level of Support from Mentor: WIL – TVETs

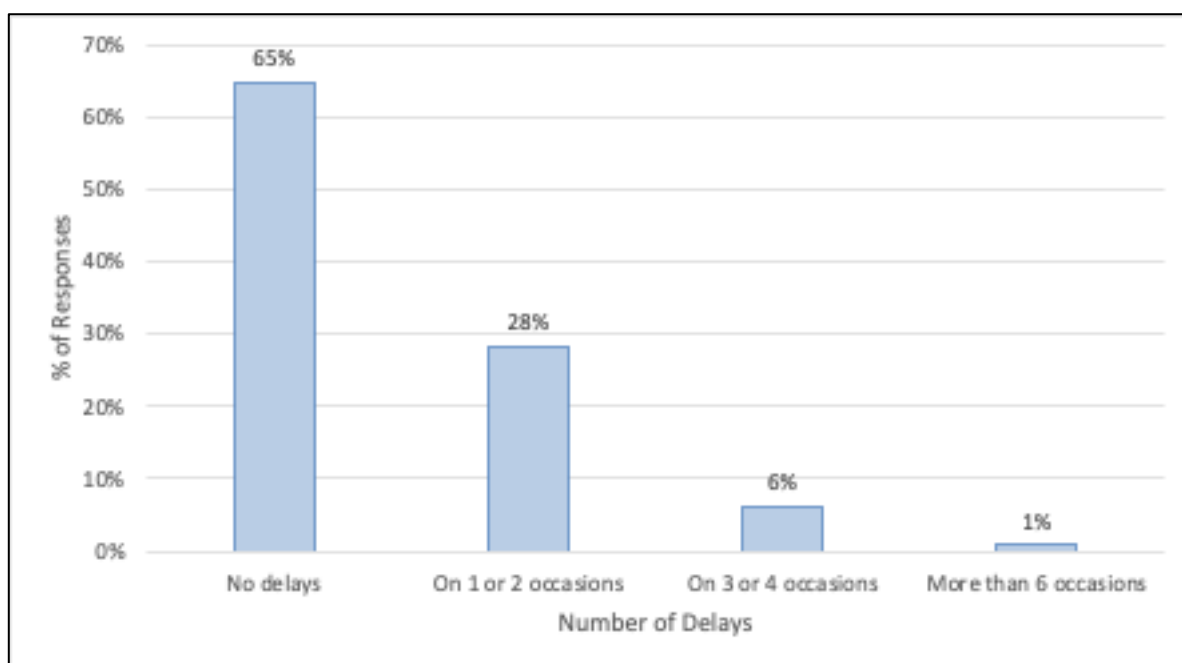


Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

- Funding Delays

Respondents were asked if, and how often they experienced funding delays.

Figure 21: Funding Delays: WIL – TVETs



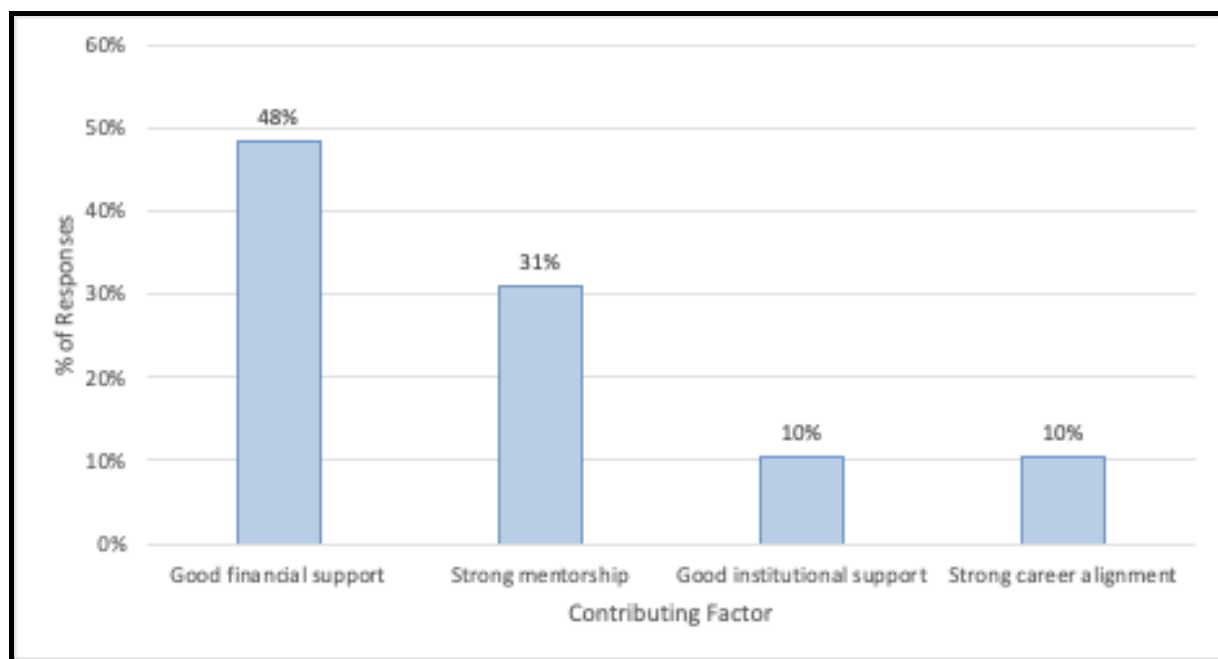
Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

Only 7% of respondents experienced funding delays more than twice.

4.7.2.4 WIL: Universities

Factors contributing to WIL: Universities completion follow a similar trend to TVETs, as illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 22: Reasons for Completion: WIL – Universities



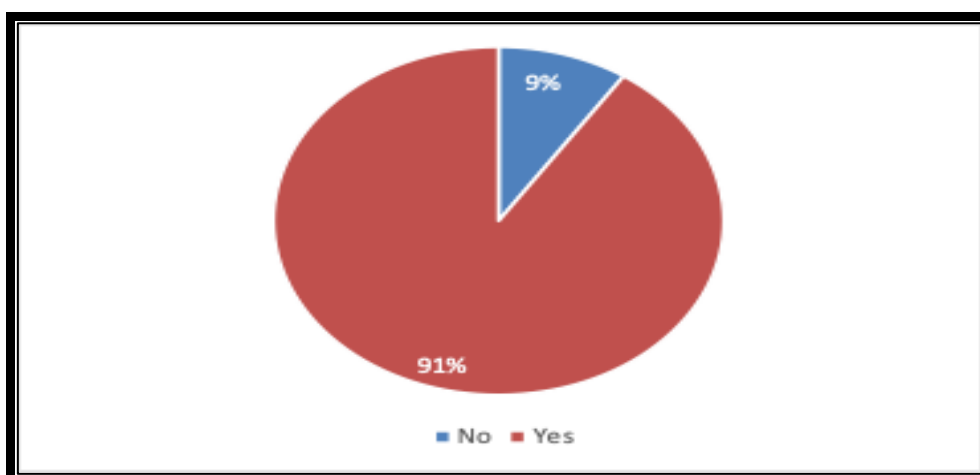
Source: *ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025*

Financial support is cited more often than is the case of TVETs. This may be due to the added financial strain that a university often places, more so than that of a TVET. Strong mentorship plays a prominent role once again.

Access to Mentorship

Respondents in the study were asked whether they had access to a mentor, as seen in the figure below, the overwhelming majority indicated yes.

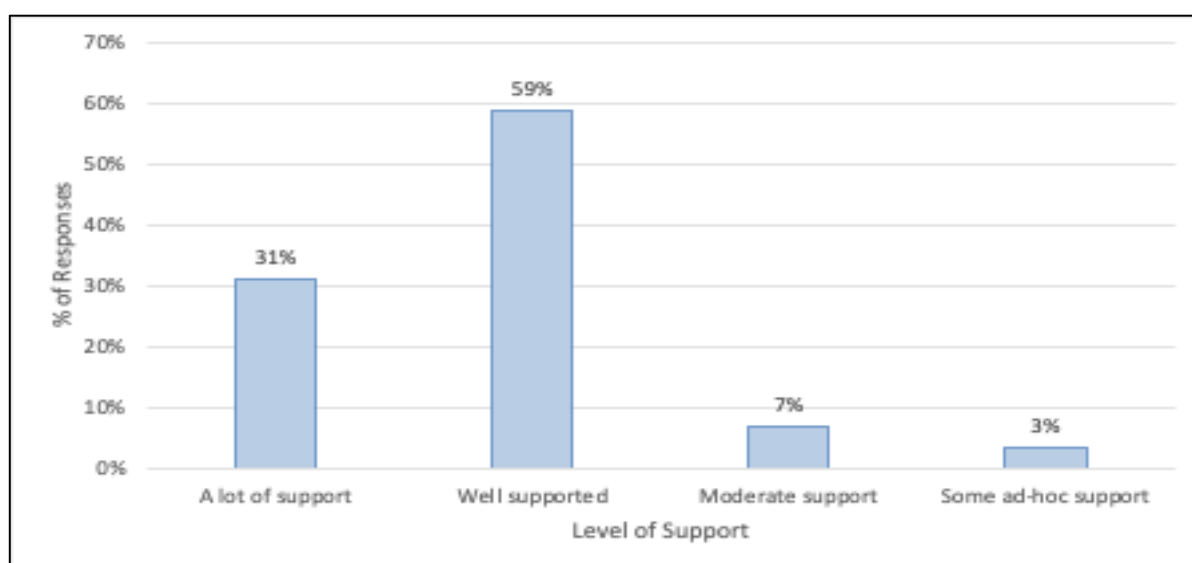
Figure 23: Access to Mentor: WIL – Universities



Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

Respondents were also asked the level of support they received from their mentor, with the majority indicating satisfaction with the level of support, as seen in the figure below.

Figure 24: Level of Support from Mentor: WIL – Universities

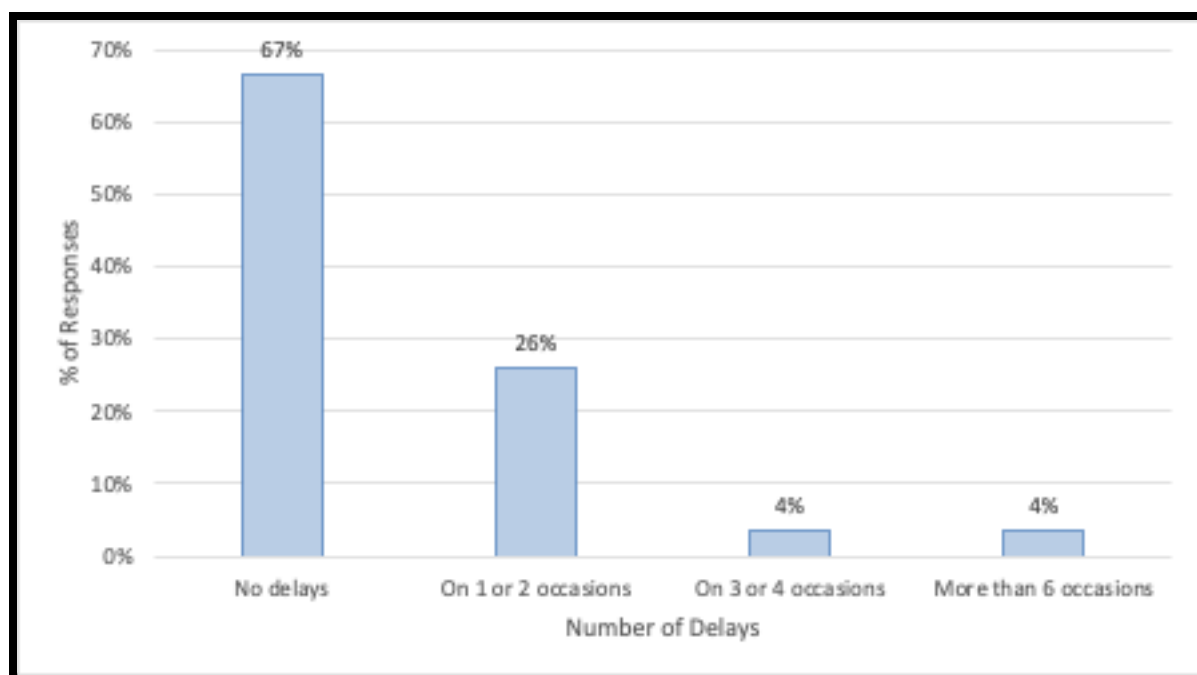


Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

- Funding Delays

Respondents were asked if, and how often they experienced funding delays.

Figure 25: Funding Delays: WIL – Universities



Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

Only 8% of respondents experienced funding delays more than twice, with two thirds experiencing no delays.

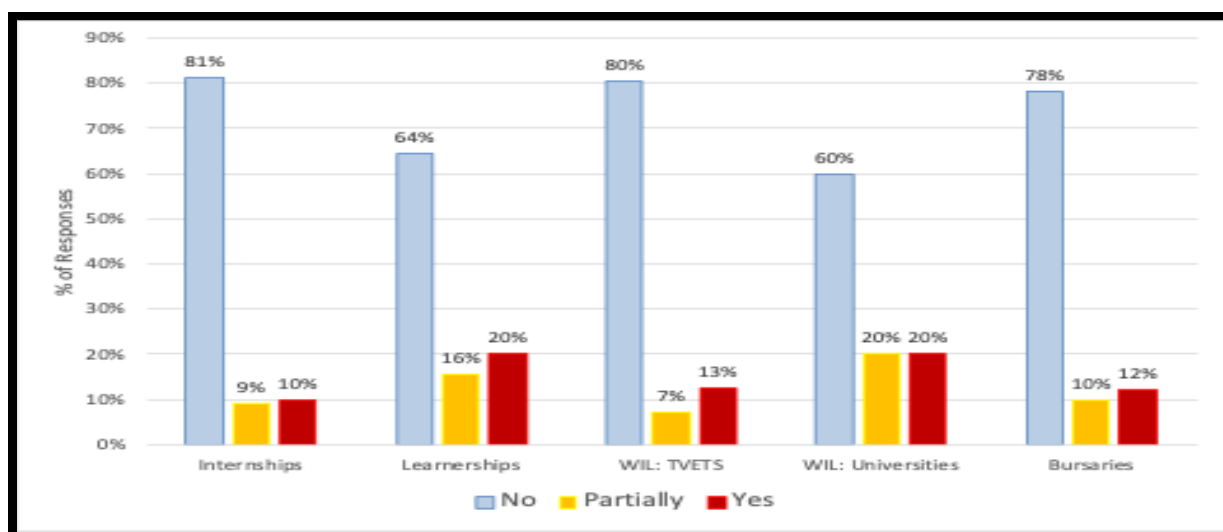
- Other Considerations

Further considerations, discussed here, include whether mental health had an impact on learners. Overall satisfaction with the interventions, and areas for improvement are also considered here.

- Mental Health Impacts

The figure below compares the impact of mental health across interventions. Respondents were asked if mental health or family responsibilities impacted their ability to complete the programme.

Figure 26: Mental Health Impacts



Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

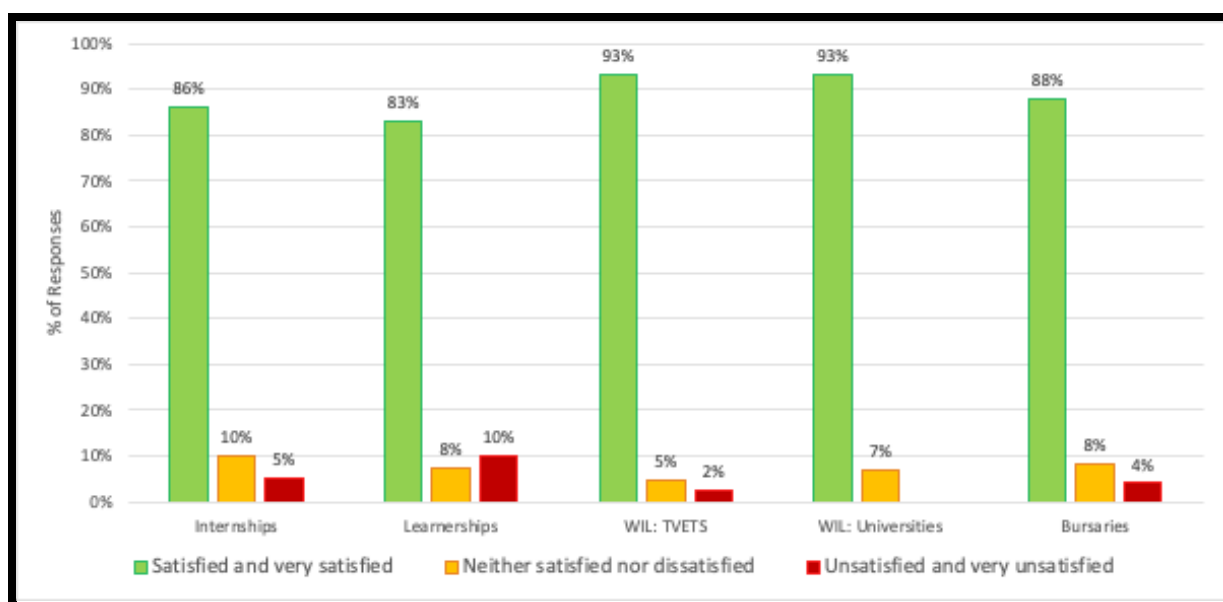
University students would appear to have been the most affected, followed by those enrolled in learnerships.

This may indicate a need for psychosocial programmes in these areas.

- Satisfaction Levels

The figure below compares the satisfaction levels across interventions.

Figure 27: Satisfaction Levels



Source: ETDP Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025

Strong satisfaction levels can be seen across the interventions. Beneficiaries that were not satisfied did mention some areas to improve, including:

- Increase the stipend
 - Pay stipends on time
 - Place learners close to home to reduce travel costs
- Reasons for Payment Delays

Whilst learners are not always sure what causes payment delays, some reasons have been offered:

Delays and inefficiencies surrounding the handling of attendance registers, which are, in some cases, dependencies for stipend payments.

“At that time stipend was coming late, also the signing of registers delayed the payment day. ETDP sets should have a system where their candidate sign rather than papers that need to be sent to the office.”

- Source: ETDP SETA Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025
-

In some cases, there may not be a delay but rather a lack of understanding from the learner’s side as to when payments should be made.

“Clear communication regarding payments schedules and any potential delays.”

- Source: ETDP SETA Rapid Appraisal Beneficiary Survey, 2025
-

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

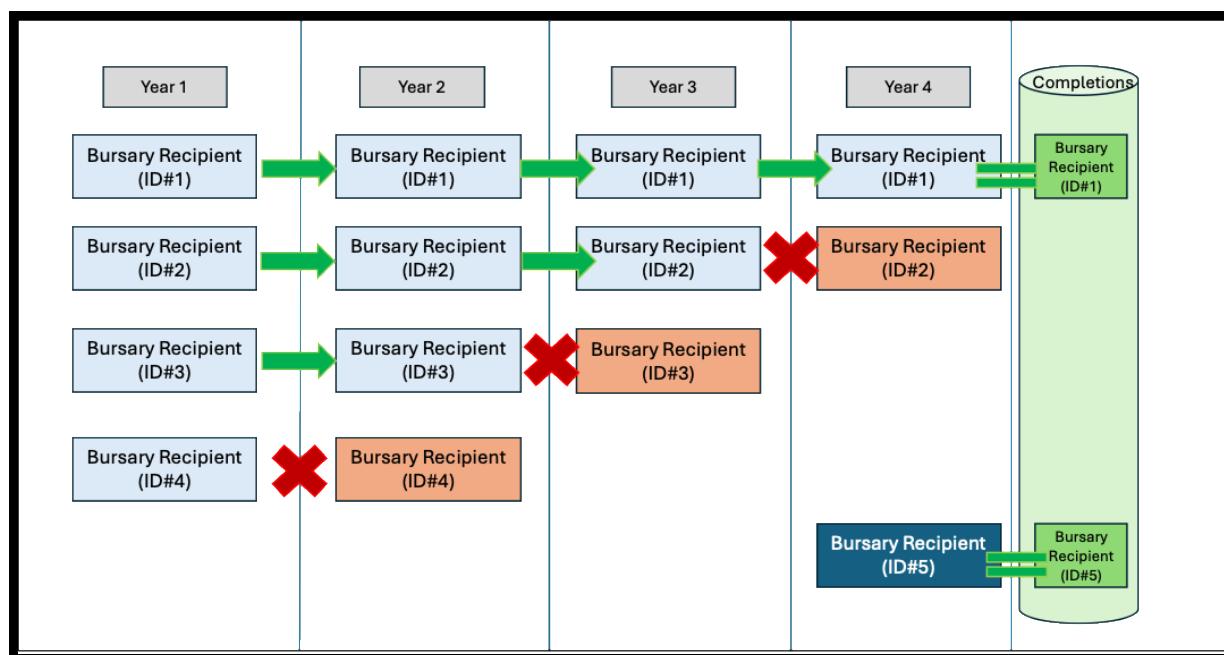
The following conclusions and recommendations are made at this stage:

5.1 Bursaries Completion Design

Currently, the project team understands that a bursary is deemed to be complete should the student pass their final year of study. The ETDP SETA may claim the completion regardless of whether said student was funded for their whole degree by the SETA, or only part of the degree. Similarly, the SETA cannot claim the completion if they funded the student for the first 3 out of 4 years of the student's degree, in the case where the student chooses a bursary from a different organisation in their final year of study.

This model is depicted visually below.

Figure 28: Bursary Completion Model



The visualisation above demonstrates that any learner can dropout from an ETDP SETA funded bursary at any time and can enter at any time to count as a completion.

This also makes it challenging to compare enrolments to completions.

5.2 Data Management

A further challenge in tracking completions, especially in Bursaries context, is the fact that a new line entry is created for the same student for every year of funding (intake and renewal). This point is demonstrated by the small data extract below.

Fullname	Surname	IDNo	Gender	ImplementingProvince	Programme
Zintle Tartia	Mdleteni	0001050528080	Female	Western Cape	20/21 Learning Programmes and Projects
Zintle	Mdleteni	0001050528080	Female	Western Cape	Learning Programmes and Projects

As can be seen, the same student has two separate entries in the database, making it difficult to track that individual's progression through the years.

A further example is provided below.

Fullname	Surname	IDNo	Gender	ImplementingProvince	Programme	Project
Avela	Ngqunguza	0001175610086	Male	Eastern Cape	Learning Programmes and Projects	USAF UNEMPLOYED BURSARY RENEWAL
Avela	Ngqunguza	0001175610086	Male	Eastern Cape	01 April 2020 – 31 March 2021	20/21 (3.12): Number of bursaries awarded to the unemployed (Renewals)
Avela	Ngqunguza	0001175610086	Male	Eastern Cape	20/21 Learning Programmes and Projects	UNEMPLOYED AWARDED BURSARY RENEWAL - EC

In this example the issue is compounded by the different project name/ descriptor given.

5.3 Double Dipping

The issue of “double dipping”, where a student receives more than one bursary from different public organisations (e.g. a SETA and NSFAS) is not new. We emphasise the point that the ETDP SETA will continue to run the risk of funding students who are double dipping until a centralised repository is created where all public entities who provide bursaries can access to determine if they should be funding an individual or not.

6. Other Observations

The following presents other prevalent trends identified:

- Allowing universities to select bursary recipients and then allocate/ disburse the funds to students may well reduce the overhead on the SETA. It is suggested that controls are in place to ensure universities are selecting appropriate students and allocating bursaries accordingly.

- The research team has received a few responses (5 responses) from bursary recipients indicating that they never received any bursary. A list of these students will be provided to the SETA, and it is suggested the SETA determine the status of these.
- An underlying assumption within the Internship Programme (and other learning programmes, albeit to a lesser degree) is that the focus of the Programme is not to financially reward students through the stipend, but rather to give work experience so they can find more financially sustainable employment. However, an implicit assumption within this is that these students have some support structure behind them. This may well not be the case given South Africa's socio-economic challenges, and hence many students will drop-out if they receive an offer for a better bursary, permanent employment or a higher stipend.
- To scale the Bursaries intervention, and possibly improve completions, one may consider contracting with student for their entire degree.

The below table summarises the preceding recommendations within the context of the evaluation questions this Rapid Appraisal sought to answer.

Table 4: Recommendations & Evaluation Questions

#	Evaluation Question	Finding	Recommendation
1	The rate of completions and reasons.	Completion rates for bursaries are particularly and should be prioritised.	This Study suggests that contracting with learners for the full degree duration will encourage them to remain committed to ETDP SETA funding and not seek out other funding in case ETDP SETA funding is not renewed. Therefore, adapting the funding model is suggested. Data management in the bursaries context should be improved. Currently, a learner appears as a new entry for every year their bursary is renewed. This makes
2	The rate of dropouts and reasons.	Many learners do not complete their programmes, with a high rate of dropouts being found across	

#	Evaluation Question	Finding	Recommendation
		learning interventions.	it challenging to track the state of completions and terminations/ dropouts for students. Ideally, the learner should be tracked continuously across their years of study and not be given a new system entry for every year. Placing learners in workplaces close to their homes, thereby decreasing travel costs, may increase completion rates. This strategy would mean taking into account each learner's personal circumstances.
3	What projects can be replicated or scaled up in the future and why?	Allowing universities to select bursary recipients and then allocate/ disburse the funds to students may well reduce the overhead on the SETA. It is suggested that controls are in place to ensure universities are selecting appropriate students and allocating bursaries accordingly. Further work in designing the bursaries programme to be implemented through universities is encouraged, to ensure the necessary controls are identified and put in place.	

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