

Doctoral Supervision in Context: Perspectives from Africa, 2024

Project management as an enabler of doctoral completion

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Abstract

South Africa has a population of 62 million. The country has 26 public universities with a total enrolment of 1.1 million students. Doctoral enrolments in South Africa have increased from 9 994 in 2008 to 23 588 in 2020 (CHE, Vitalstats). During the period 2000-2018, a total of 32 025 doctoral students graduated at South African universities. Annual doctoral graduates increased from 972 in 2000 to 3 339 in 2019 (SciSTIP, Tracer Study). Stellenbosch University became an independent university in 1918, tracing its origins to the Theological Seminary of the Dutch Reformed Church (est. 1859) and Stellenbosch College (est. 1880). The university has ten faculties located on four campuses (in Stellenbosch, Bellville, Cape Town and Saldanha). In 2021 it had 1 400 academic staff members and 32 471 students, including 1 611 doctoral candidates, and 310 doctoral degrees were awarded. The first doctoral degree was awarded by Stellenbosch University in 1923, in physics. The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) is a national research and development organisation in South Africa, established in 1945. The CSIR undertakes directed, multidisciplinary research and technological innovation that contributes to the improved quality of life of South Africans. The CSIR's shareholder is the South African Parliament, held in proxy by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation.