

2024



STUDENTS'
CHOICE
AWARDS

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EMPLOYMENT CHOICES

OF

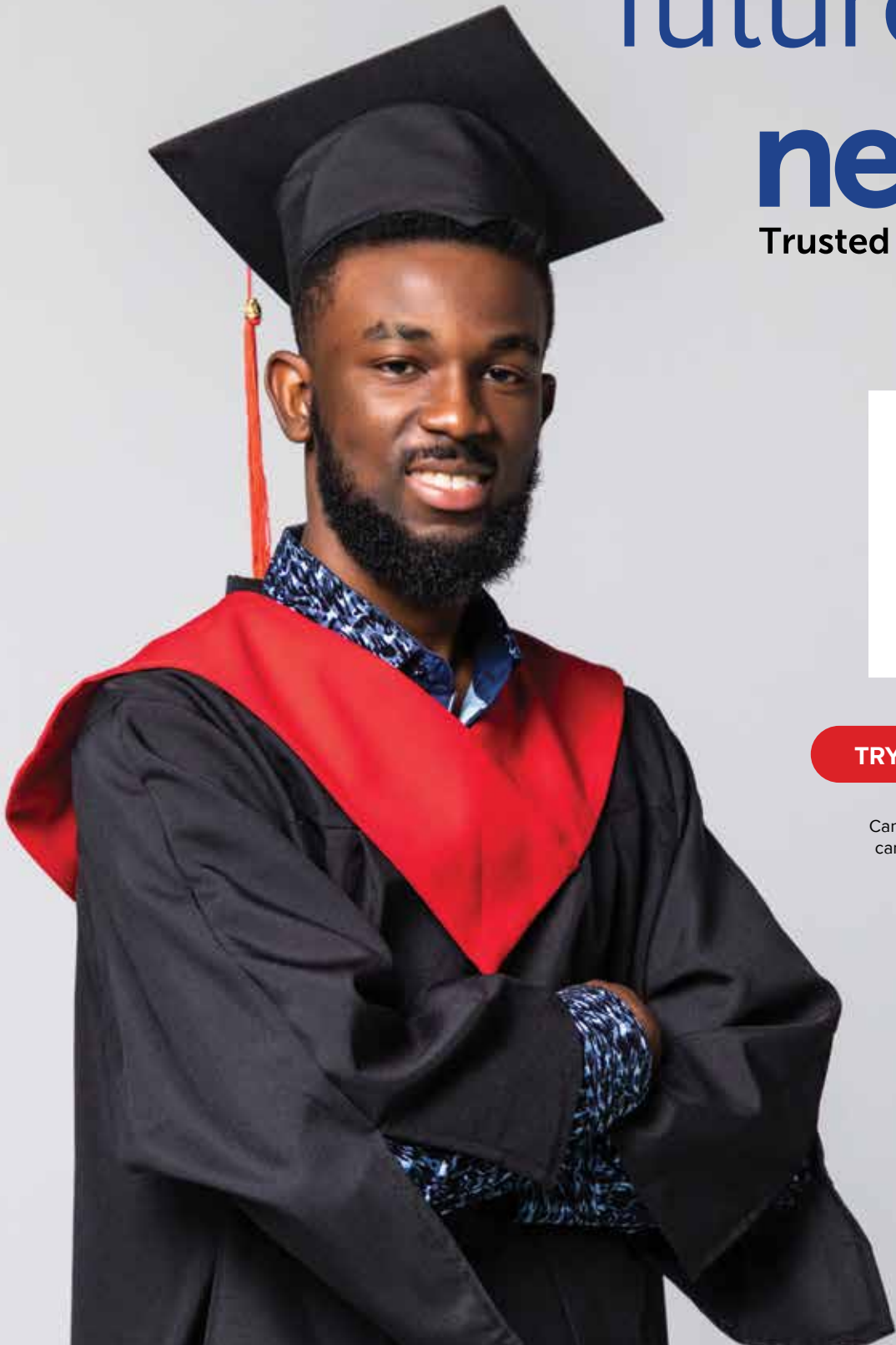
TERTIARY-LEVEL

STUDENTS

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A SURVEY TO DETERMINE THE VIEW OF TERTIARY-LEVEL STUDENTS FROM SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTIONS ON THEIR EMPLOYMENT CHOICES.

INTRODUCTION

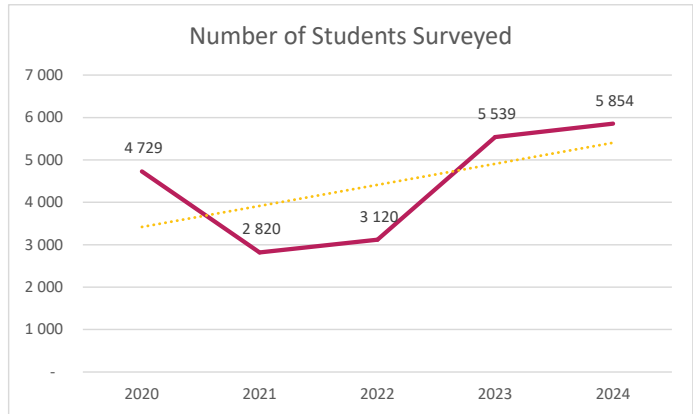
Now in its fifth year, this survey aims to better understand how students perceive potential employment environments. In addition to providing employers with insight into how students think and see themselves, the survey also highlights the kinds of cultures students believe will be a good fit when looking for companies to approach for employment.

The report considers the following employment insights from students:

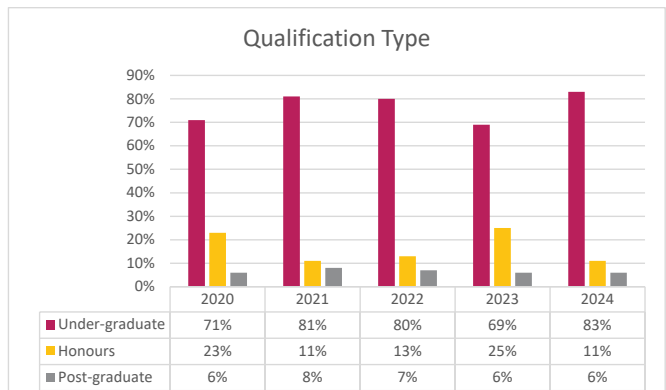
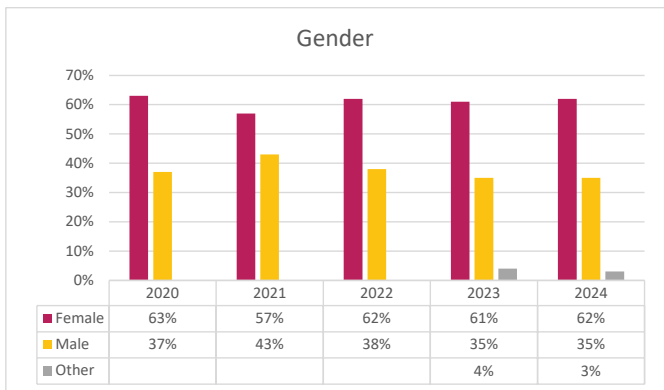
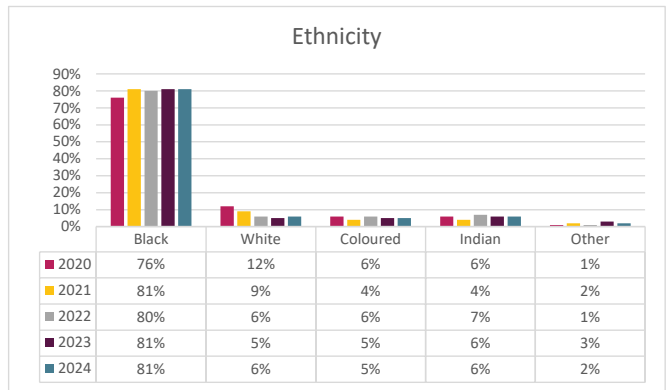
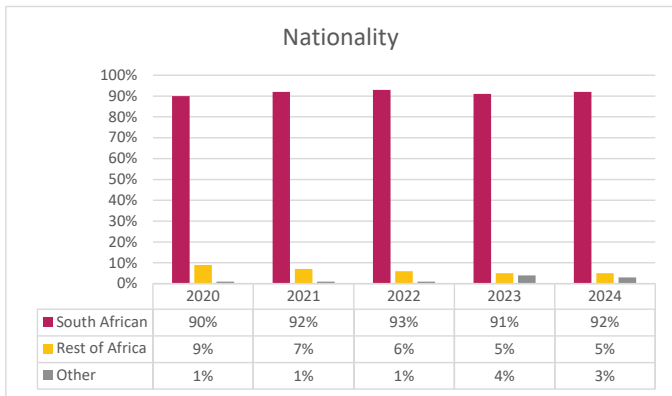
- Preferred office culture
- Likelihood of transferring out of South Africa
- The importance of travel
- Most-valued employee benefits
- Preferred industry to work in
- Salary expectations
- Level of comfort working outside core background
- Top preferred employers

STUDENT SAMPLE

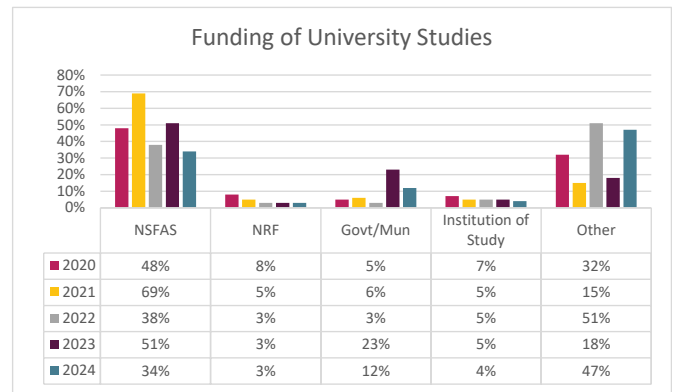
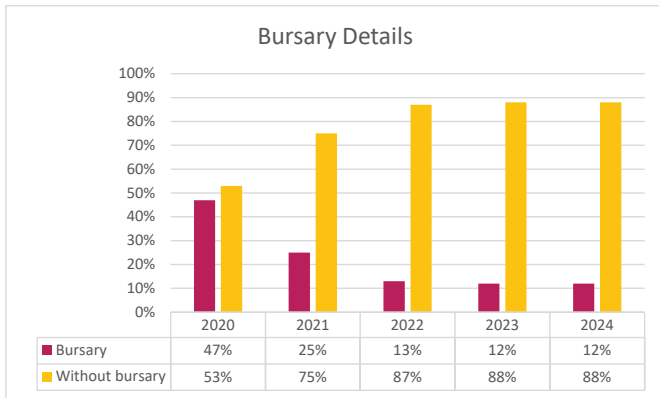
A web-based survey was used, which was completed by students upon registration for entry to the Gautrain GradStar Awards 2024. The survey took place between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024.



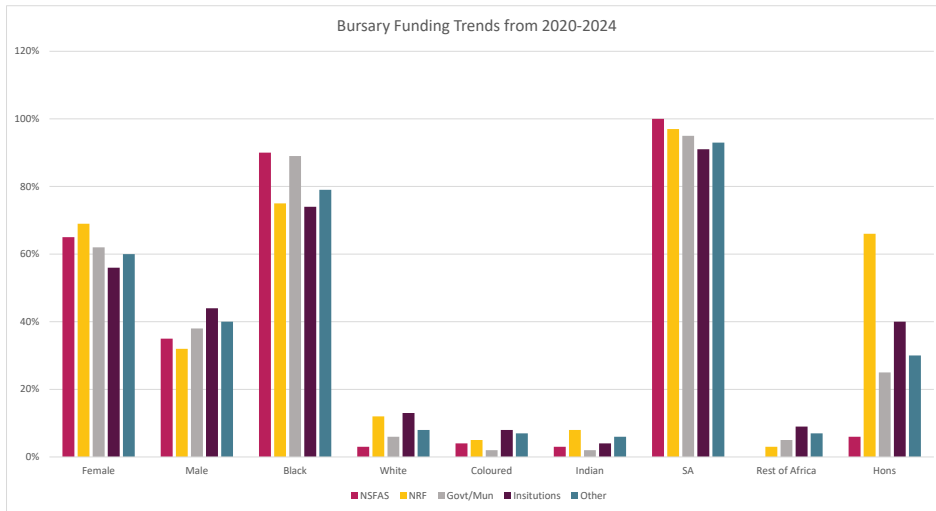
DEMOGRAPHICS



BURSARY FUNDING



Data from the past five years shows that allocations from funding sources to the students surveyed has been relatively stable across demographics:

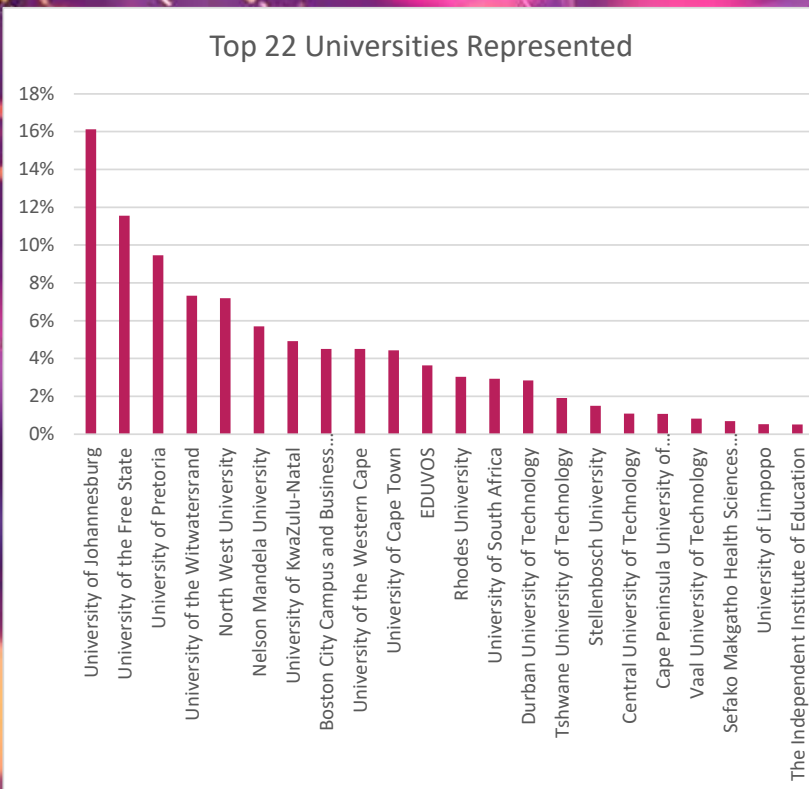


48% NSFAS has funded 48% of bursaries over the 5-year period.

10% Government averages 10% of bursary funding.

57% Black females have received 57% of all bursaries awarded from 2020 to 2024.

There were 63 universities represented in the 2024 survey.



Universities with less than 1% representation:

AAA School of Advertising, AFDA, Belgium Campus, Berea College of Technology, Boston Media House, Centurion Akademie, CTI Education Group, CTU Training Solutions, Da Vinci Institute for Technology Management, Damelin, IMM Graduate School of Marketing, Institute of Accounting Science, Intec College, MANCOSA, Mangosuthu University of Technology, Milpark Education, Monash South Africa, Open Learning Group, PM Academy, Prestige Academy, Regenesys, Regent Business School, Richfield Graduate Institute of Technology, Rosebank Business College, SANTS, SGB, Sol Plaatje University, Stadio, The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers, The South African College of Applied Psychology, University of Durban Westville, University of Fort Hare, University of Mpumalanga, University of Port Elizabeth, University of Potchefstroom, University of the North, University of Venda, University of Zululand, Varsity College, Vega School of Brand Communications, Walter Sisulu University.



has a **recipe.**

Momentum Group again certified as Top Employer, showing consistency of excellence in people management practices.

Global recognition as SA insurer earns 4th consecutive certification from International Top Employer Institute.

Integrated financial services company Momentum Group has again secured Top Employer certification from the internationally recognised Top Employer Institute. The certification is only awarded to companies whose HR and human management practices reach a comparable level of excellence set against accepted global best-practice standards.



Lettie-Basani Phume
Momentum Group Human Capital Executive

Lettie-Basani Phume, Momentum Group Human Capital Executive said,

“We are again incredibly proud to have secured our Top Employer Certification for 2024. Our people management practices and the way we look after all of our 16 442 employees have again been checked and benchmarked against some of South Africa’s and the world’s most respected and successful companies. We have taken note of where we can improve and have worked hard to up our game.

We want a workforce that is engaged and empowered to bring their best selves to work. We want our people to feel respected and protected in a work environment that is not only conducive to productivity but also provides a pleasant and inspiring space.”

The Top Employers Institute certification programme is a rigorous process that involves an extensive, independently audited, and fact-based HR Best Practices Survey and validation to ensure answers are truthful.

In 2024 the Institute certified 2 303 organisations in 121 countries on five continents. 138 South African companies have been certified.

One of the primary points of the certification is for companies to continually assess and improve their human management policies to improve welfare and morale of employees. Companies compete against their previous results as well as being benchmarked and assessed against companies around the world.

This year for Momentum Group, 65% of topics scored above the SA benchmark, against all the other South African companies assessed and certified.

Every year since 2021 Momentum Group has improved its overall average rating, meaning that employees reap the benefits of the company continually evolving and improving. The company is keeping pace with international best-practice standards and continually innovating as part of the global Top Employer community.

Stand-out scores were identified in four key areas:

1. Leadership
2. Reward and Recognition
3. Digital HR
4. Employee Wellbeing Initiatives

Phume concluded on a high note,

“Our commitment to excellent people management practices is stronger than ever before. It is not just about our scores; it is about thoughtfully crafting a recipe for impactful success, that we refine on a continual basis.”



Scan here for the announcement

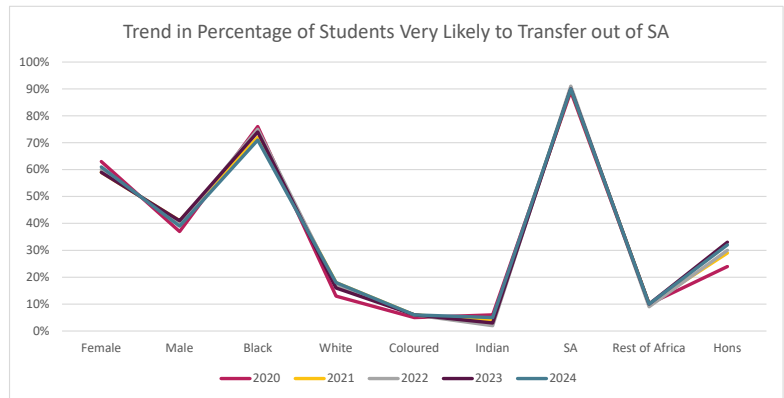
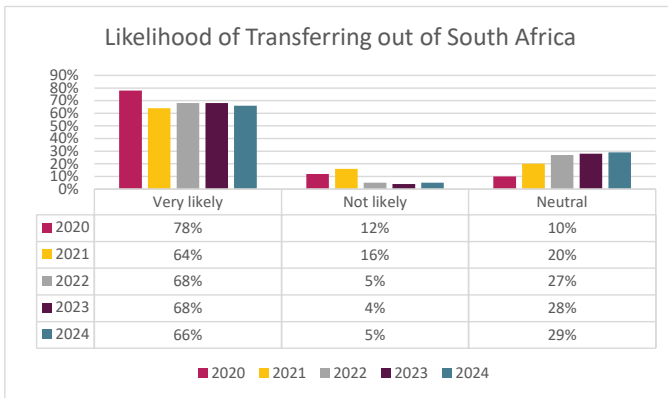
QUESTION 1: WHAT SORT OF OFFICE CULTURE APPEALS TO YOU?

As in previous years, students place high value on open and free communication between employers and employees as the most important part of office culture. Teamwork, respect, a growth mindset and opportunities for further study complete the top five office culture attributes desired by students entering the workplace.

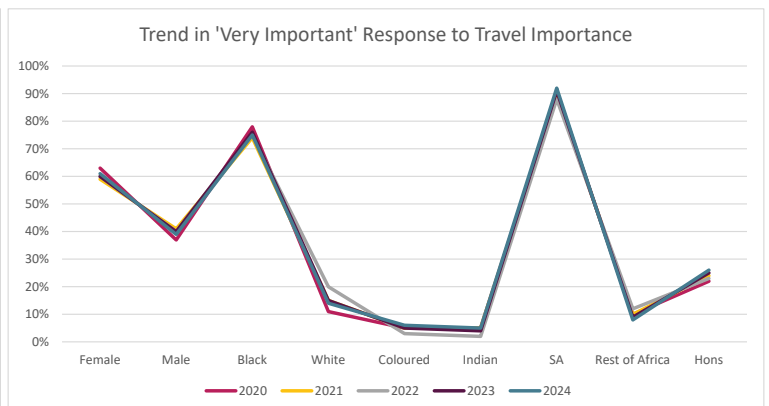
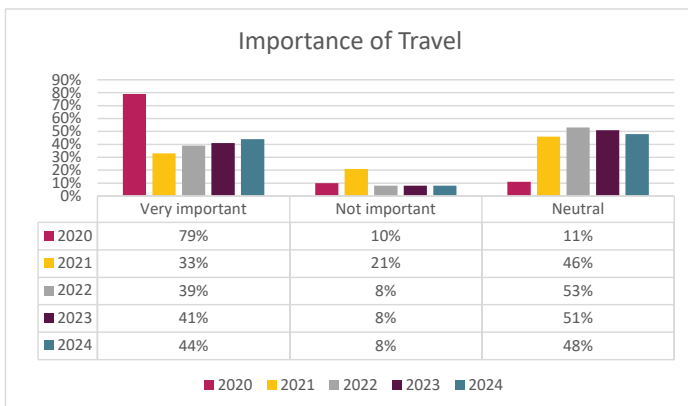
Ranked in order of preference by students:

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Open and free communication between employers and employees | 6. Integrity | 14. Positive empowerment rating |
| 2. Teamwork is promoted | 7. Innovative | 15. Fun |
| 3. Respectful | 8. Non-discriminatory | 16. Working hard |
| 4. Growth mindset | 9. Mentoring | 17. Entrepreneurial |
| 5. Study leave and opportunities for further study | 10. Professional | 18. Casual and relaxed |
| | 11. Transparent | 19. Formal |
| | 12. Friendly | 20. Clan office culture |
| | 13. Positive | |

QUESTION 2: IF YOU ARE EMPLOYED BY A GLOBAL FIRM, WHAT IS THE LIKELIHOOD THAT YOU WOULD LOOK TO TRANSFER OUT OF SOUTH AFRICA?



QUESTION 3: HOW IMPORTANT IS TRAVEL TO YOU?



Your Story, Our Journey: Growing and Belonging Together at Absa



At Absa, your story is integral to our shared adventure, defining who we are and guiding our collective future. We embrace you for who you are and support you as you grow into your full potential. Each individual's unique contribution helps shape our identity. Together, we cultivate a workplace where you feel valued, nurtured, and respected—a place where your story is celebrated, encouraging true belonging and inclusion.

As Africa's leading digitally-driven bank, we're committed to success. Our achievements are driven by empowering each team member to learn, grow, and innovate, contributing to our collective narrative of excellence—an excellence built on the diverse stories of our colleagues.

Stories hold immense power. They foster understanding, inspire, motivate, bridge gaps, and transcend barriers, deepening our connections and sense of belonging. Through stories, we have the power to shape our future together.

@Absa your story Matters






Your story matters



QUESTION 4: WHAT BENEFITS DO YOU MOST VALUE IN AN EMPLOYER?

Students value training and learning opportunities the most in an employer. In 2024, making a difference in the community ranked higher than previous years.

All benefits ranked in order of importance to the students:

- | | |
|---|---|
|  <p>1 Training and learning opportunities</p> | |
|  <p>2 Financial Insurance – pension, medical, disability insurance, maternity pay etc.</p> | |
|  <p>3 Personal growth and development</p> | |
|  <p>4 Opportunity for promotion</p> | |
|  <p>5 Community engagement and making a difference</p> | |
| | <hr/> <p>6. Conducive work environment</p> <p>7. Competitive salary</p> <p>8. Exposure to other positions</p> <p>9. Flexible working hours</p> <p>10. Mentorship</p> <p>11. Job Security</p> <p>12. Safe and secure environment</p> <p>13. Travelling</p> <p>14. Performance bonuses</p> <p>15. Recognition programmes</p> <p>16. Wellness programmes</p> <p>17. Work from home</p> <p>18. 13th cheque</p> <p>19. Additional paid leave</p> <p>20. Car and travelling allowance</p> <hr/> |

QUESTION 5: WHAT WILL MAKE OR BREAK YOUR CHOICE IN AN EMPLOYER?

1. Growth potential within the company, including skills development, training and opportunities for promotion
2. Organisational culture and management style where employees are supported and cared for, as opposed to one where employees are exploited and treated unfairly
3. Open communication
4. Competitive remuneration, rewards and recognition structure
5. A conducive working environment
6. Mutual respect
7. Honesty
8. Growth focus
9. A diverse non-discriminative environment
10. Physical work conditions including promotion of health and wellness and working hours
11. Availability of mentorship
12. Employee benefits
13. Job security
14. Flexible working hours and ability to work from home
15. Inclusive and authentic leadership
16. The way the company treats their clients
17. The company values, mission, vision and reputation
18. The company's outlook on innovation and change
19. The company's social and environmental responsibility
20. An employer that encourages creativity

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QUESTION 6: WHAT ARE YOUR PREFERRED INDUSTRIES TO WORK IN?

The top five industries that students prefer to work in, remain finance, public and government, ICT, consulting and education, with the top three making up 80% of student preferences.

1. Finance
2. Public and Government
3. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)
4. Consulting
5. Education
6. Healthcare
7. Energy and Mining
8. Human Resources and Management
9. Manufacturing
10. Logistics and Transport
11. Construction and Engineering
12. Retail
13. Property
14. Automotive, Aviation and Aerodynamic
15. Tourism
16. Corporate Social Investment and Sustainability
17. Agricultural
18. Other



FINANCE



PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENT

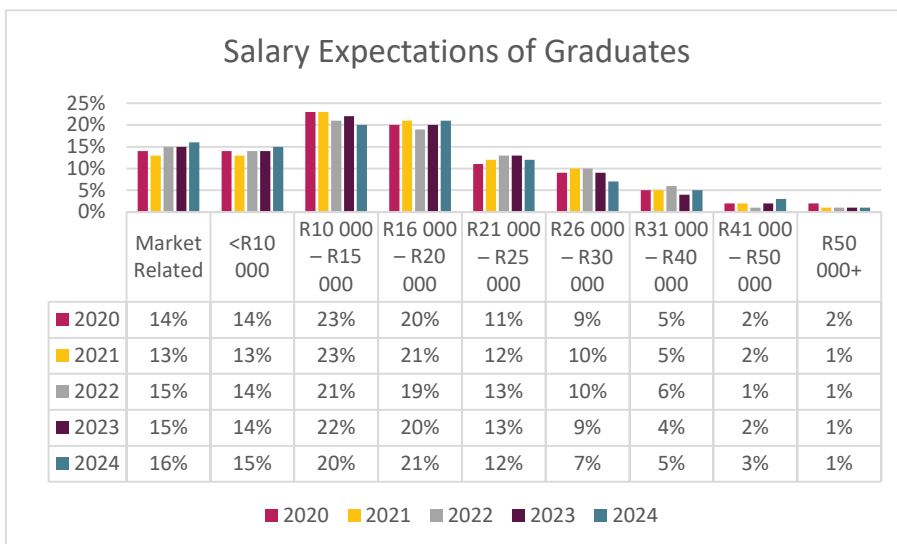


INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)

QUESTION 7: WHAT SALARY EXPECTATIONS DO YOU HAVE AS A GRADUATE?

Over the five-year period that this study was conducted, salary expectations for graduates have remained consistent: Most students expect a monthly salary of between R10 000 and R20 000.

- The salary expectancy of female students remains notably lower than that of male students.
- Students in the rest of Africa expect a higher salary than South African students.
- Honours students expect a salary of between R16 000 and R40 000 per month.



The five-year average of students who expect a salary between R10,000 and R20,000 per month is **22%**.

Only 15% of students surveyed expect a **market-related** salary.



Around **4%** of students surveyed expect a monthly salary of over R30,000 per month.



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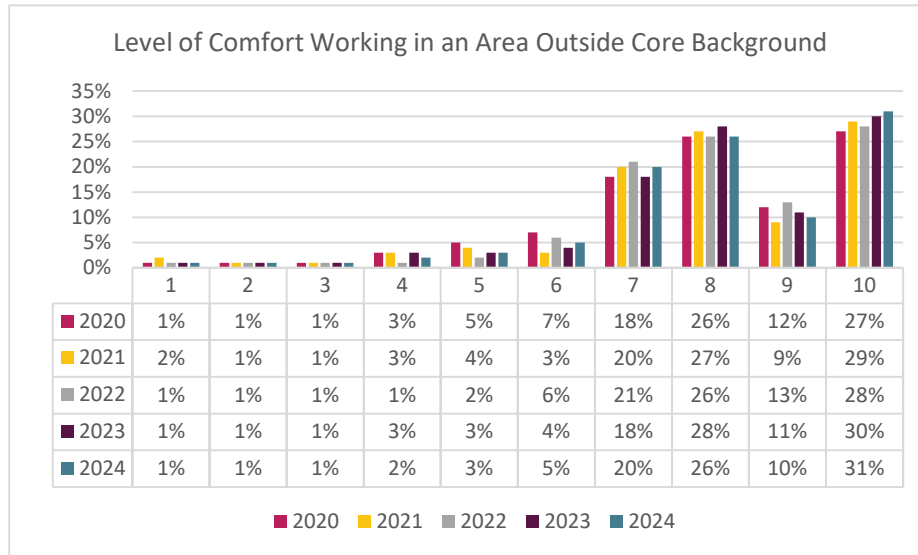


HATCH

**QUESTION 8:
ON A SCALE OF 1 – 10, HOW COMFORTABLE ARE YOU TO WORK IN AN AREA OUTSIDE OF YOUR CORE BACKGROUND?**

Most students are very comfortable to work in an area outside of their core background, with the bulk of students rating their level of comfort as 7 out of 10 and upwards.

The figure below, where 1 is least comfortable and 10 is most comfortable, shows that this is the trend over the past five years, varying minimally over time:



87% of students surveyed are comfortable working in an area outside their core background.

**QUESTION 9:
WHERE DO YOU FIND MOST OF YOUR INFORMATION ABOUT GRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES?**

1. LinkedIn
2. University career services, mailing lists, notice boards and lecturers
3. Recruitment websites
4. Employer websites
5. Career fairs
6. Word of mouth/family and friends
7. University websites
8. Facebook
9. Other social media (WhatsApp, Telegram, etc.)
10. Government websites
11. Google notifications
12. Twitter
13. Other (newspapers, professional associations, etc)



LinkedIn remains the primary source of information for students on graduate opportunities, closely followed by university resources.

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QUESTION 10:
LIST THE TOP 5 EMPLOYERS YOU WOULD LIKE TO WORK FOR WHEN YOU GRADUATE.

AUTOMOTIVE



- 2. Mercedes-Benz
- 3. Toyota
- 4. Volkswagen
- 5. Ford

ACCOUNTING & AUDITING



- 2. Deloitte
- 3. KPMG
- 4. Ernst & Young
- 5. BDO

BANKING & INVESTMENT



- 2. Standard Bank
- 3. FNB
- 4. Nedbank
- 5. Allan Gray

BROADCASTING & MEDIA



- 2. Multichoice
- 3. Media24
- 4. Ogilvy
- 5. ENCA

CONSULTING



- 2. Deloitte
- 3. KPMG
- 4. Ernst & Young
- 5. Accenture

CONSULTING ENGINEERING



- 2. Hatch
- 3. Aecom
- 4. Murray & Roberts
- 5. Aurecon

ENERGY, CHEMICALS & HEAVY ENGINEERING



- 2. bpSA
- 3. Sappi
- 4. Total
- 5. Engen

FMCG



- 2. Coca-Cola
- 3. Tiger Brands
- 4. Nestle
- 5. ABInBev

HEALTHCARE



- 2. Mediclinic
- 3. Lancet
- 4. Life Hospitals
- 5. Ampath

HEALTHCARE INSURANCE



- 2. Momentum Group
- 3. Liberty
- 4. PPS
- 5. Hollard

ICT



- 2. Google
- 3. Accenture
- 4. Microsoft
- 5. Apple

INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGIES



- 2. Samsung
- 3. ABB
- 4. Tesla
- 5. Philips

INSURANCE



2. Sanlam
3. Santam
4. Outsurance
5. Clientele

LEGAL



2. Webber Wentzel
3. ENSAfrica
4. Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr (CDH)
5. Werksmans

LEISURE, TRAVEL & HOSPITALITY



2. South African Airways
3. Sun International
4. Marriott
5. FlySafair

MINING & MINERALS



2. Sibanye-Stillwater
3. Exxaro
4. Epiroc
5. Impala Platinum

PHARMACEUTICAL



2. Johnson & Johnson
3. Cipla
4. Pfizer
5. Adcock Ingram

PROPERTY & CONSTRUCTION



2. Concor
3. Raubex
4. Motheo Construction
5. Stefanutti Stocks

RETAIL



2. Woolworths
3. TFG
4. Takealot
5. Massmart

STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISES



2. Eskom
3. SARB
4. SARS
5. CSIR

TELECOMMUNICATIONS



2. MTN
3. Telkom
4. Cell C
5. Rain

TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS



2. Imperial, a DP World Company
3. DSV
4. Barloworld
5. Value Logistics



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TOP EMPLOYERS 2024

It is important to note that the students surveyed nominated the companies on the preceding pages as their preferred employers through an entirely unscripted process. The question was open-ended, and not segmented into industries - nor were the students provided with any examples as prompts. Their choices are based on their knowledge of the employment landscape as a whole, and industry segmentation was applied after the survey was complete.

While the top employer nominated by our students to work for remains the government, it is important to note that this category includes all government departments, hospitals, schools and entities not mentioned separately in the list.

The top 5 private preferred employers for 2023 were Absa in first place, followed by Deloitte, FNB, PwC and Standard Bank.

In 2024, Absa has once again netted the top spot as the top private preferred employer overall. Standard Bank has moved from fifth place in 2023 to second place in 2024, followed by PwC, which moves up a place to third. Deloitte moved to fourth place in 2024 from second place in 2023, and FNB moves to fifth place from third place last year.



Deloitte.



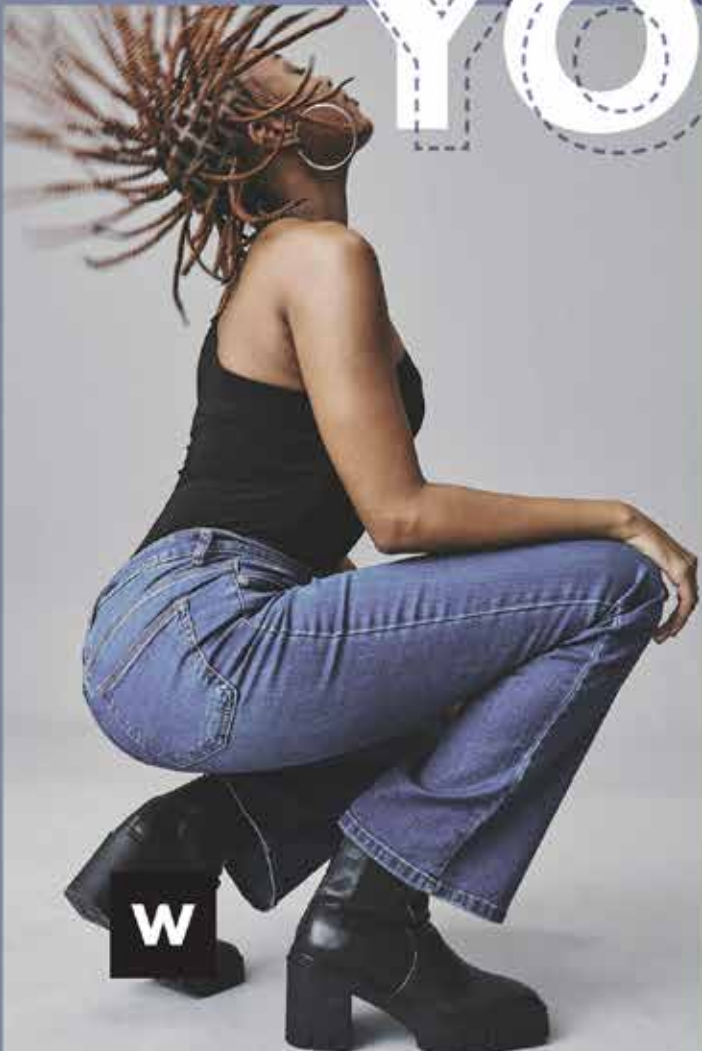
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TOP EMPLOYERS OF 2024!

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DISCUSSION AND KEY FINDINGS

The Students' Choice survey was first commissioned in 2020 as a mechanism to determine the view of tertiary-level students from South African institutions on their employment choices.

Over the past five years, the results of this survey have proved an invaluable resource for employers, helping them understand what students prioritise when searching for employment after graduation, and what they value in a future employer.

In 2020 and 2021, the effects on student mobility were evident in the survey results, but in the three years since, results have normalised and provide a more balanced view, particularly on willingness to travel or relocate for work, and the desire to work in a flexible/hybrid (on-site vs work-from-home) environment.

In 2024, a number of factors still remain an influence on the results of this survey:

- Rising unemployment statistics in South Africa continue to play a role in how students view employment after graduation. This is evidenced by 87% of students being prepared to work in an area outside of their field of study.
- Electricity load-shedding and supply chain disruptions were a factor influencing weak economic growth over the past five years, and although loadshedding has been suspended in South Africa for most of 2024, the effects are still felt as the South African economy lags behind those of many other African countries.
- Students continue to place focus on physical and mental health, prioritising office cultures that support them in this focus.

Open and free communication between employers and employees was ranked the highest in preferred office culture by students surveyed in 2024, and was also top-ranked as "making or breaking" a student's choice in employer. Students continue to show that they

value mutual respect, integrity and honesty in their future employers, and they want to work in a diverse environment where teamwork is promoted.

As in previous years, most students are likely to transfer outside of South Africa if given the opportunity, however, travel remains low in importance. This can be attributed to the post-COVID work environment where multiple opportunities exist to work virtually in almost any country in the world.

Training and learning opportunities are still the most preferred benefit students are looking for from an employer, ahead of benefits such as personal growth and development, and financial insurance including pension fund, medical aid, paid leave, maternity and paternity leave, life/disability insurance, sick leave and UIF. Opportunities for promotion, a conducive work environment and the opportunity to make a difference in communities also ranked highly amongst students surveyed in 2024.

The top preferred industry to work in remains finance, followed by public and government, ICT, consulting, and education.

Year-on-year, salary expectations amongst students have remained constant, with most students expecting a monthly salary of between R10 000 and R20 000. The salary expectancy of female students remains lower than that of male students. Only 15% of students expect a market-related salary, which is likely indicative of a lack of understanding of what such a salary would be in real terms.

LinkedIn is still the most widely used platform for searching for graduate opportunities, followed by university resources. Recruitment and employer websites also rank highly as sources, followed by social media, career fairs and word of mouth. ■



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Tshepo Kgobe, *Gautrain Management Agency CEO*

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