



national film and video foundation
— SOUTH AFRICA —

GRADUATE ABSORPTION

STUDY 2008

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1. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
DUT	Durban University of Technology
EC	Eastern Cape
FS	Free State
GP	Gauteng Province
KZN	Kwa-Zulu Natal
LIM	Limpopo
MP	Mpumalanga Province
NFVF	National Film and Video Foundation
NW	North West
TUT	Tshwane University of Technology
UCT	University of Cape Town
UJ	University of Johannesburg
WC	Western Cape
WITS	University of Witwatersrand

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4. INTRODUCTION

Section 4 (1)(a) and Section 3 (e) of the NFVF Act No. 73 of 1997 stipulates that the NFVF must make bursaries and loans available for local and overseas studies and address historical imbalances in the distribution of skills. The NFVF has so far awarded bursaries to 230 students since 2001 to study in local and international institutions.

The NFVF believes that effective skills development and nurturing prospects for people from disadvantaged communities are fundamental to the development of the film industry in South Africa and thus invests millions of Rands each year funding deserving students who have a passion for the industry and want to pursue a career in the industry.

5. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The study aims to find out the employment status of NFVF funded graduates and the industries they are employed in; reasons for unemployment, relevancy of courses studied in their career, challenges faced during studies, current position, first position after graduation, duration of employment and remuneration.

By regularly surveying graduates, a picture can be built up of their entry into and progression through the labour market. A regular graduate tracking system can potentially provide the NFVF, current and prospective students, as well as employers, with in-depth information on the way in which the graduates in the film and television industry progress, thus assisting them to make realistic career plans.

The study can further serve as barometer to measure the educational outputs and the type of employment opportunities available.

6. METHODOLOGY, CHALLENGES AND RESPONSE

Data for this study was compiled from the NFVF bursary database and a questionnaire that was sent out by e-mail to NFVF bursary holding graduates. Data from questionnaires was captured and then analysed.

Out of the 143 graduates as sourced from NFVF bursary database, 77(54%) had valid contact details. The remaining 66(46%) graduates did not have any contact details, or had changed their contact details and some had wrong contact details. For these reasons, it was impossible to trace them.

Out of 77 questionnaires that were sent out, 66 (86%) responses were received. 59 responses were valid, 6 responses were not valid because even though respondents had graduated, they were still furthering their studies and had never worked. 12 graduates promised to send a completed questionnaire but did not do so even after they were reminded twice.

7. BACKGROUND

From 2001, the NFVF has funded 230 individual students to the total amount of R10, 230,794 as illustrated in Table 1 below. Of the 230 students funded, 125 (54%) were funded for more than one year of study. The highest number of students funded since 2001 was in 2005 when 81 students received bursaries and the least was in 2001 with 10 students receiving bursaries. The reason for the least number of bursaries can be attributed to the commencement of bursary grants to students by the NFVF in that year.

Table 1: Funded students per year and amount

Year of Funding	Amount Granted	Number Of Students
2001	R 250,260	10
2002	R 499,370	21
2003	R 753,000	35
2004	R 1,565,064	76
2005	R 2,088,170	81
2006	R 1,426,850	49
2007	R 1,579,932	55
2008	R 2,068,148	74
Grand Total	R 10,230,794	341

Source: NFVF database

143 students (62%) that received NFVF bursaries since 2001 have graduated. 74 (32%) are still studying while only 5(2%) of the students failed. Table 2 below shows the status of NFVF funded students. 9% of funded students have studied and obtained post graduate qualifications (Honours, Masters, and PhD).

Table 2: Status of funded students

Status	Number of students	Percentage (%)
Dropped Out	8	3%
Failed	5	2%
Graduated	143	62%
Still studying	74	32%
Grand Total	230	100%

Source: NFVF database

Of the NFVF funded students, 171 (74%) were black and 59 (26%) were white. 141 (61%) of the funded students were females and 89 (39%) were males.

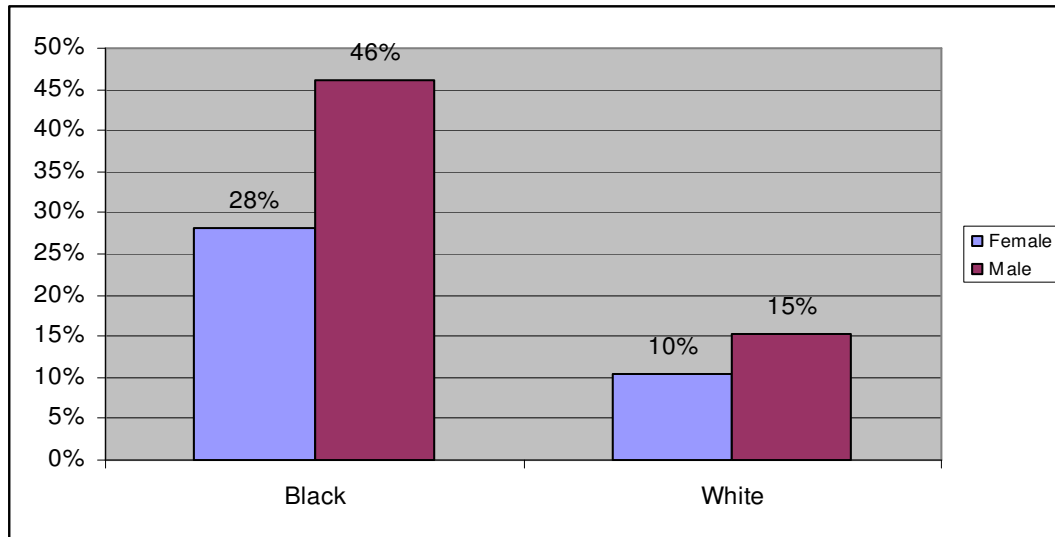
Table 3: Funded students by race and gender

Gender	Black	White	Grand Total
Female	65	24	89
Male	106	35	141
Grand Total	171	59	230

Source: NFVF database

Black males constituted 46% of funded students, black females 28%, white males 15% and white females 10% of funded students. Figure 1 shows the distribution of funded students by race and gender.

Figure 1: Funded students by race and gender



Source: NFVF database

59% of funded students were from Gauteng and 19% were from the Western Cape. Free State and North West province had the least students at 2% each. Northern Cape is the only province that does not have any student funded by the NFVF. Table 4 below shows breakdown of funded students by province.

Table 4: Funded students by province

Province	Number Of Students	Percentage (%)
EC	11	5%
FS	5	2%
GP	136	59%
KZN	13	6%
LIM	10	4%
MP	8	3%
NW	4	2%
WC	43	19%
Grand Total	230	100%

Source: NFVF database

Table 5 below shows the distribution of students by institution. 66% of funded students studied through AFDA, Wits University had the second highest at 7% while 3% of funded students studied at international institutions.

Table 5: Funded students by institution

Institution	Number Of Students	Percentage
AFDA	152	66.10%
Binger Film Institute	3	1.30%
Boston	4	1.70%
City Varsity	15	6.50%
Columbia University	1	0.40%
CPUT	7	3.00%
DUT	5	2.20%
Monash Film and TV Unit	1	0.40%
UJ	5	2.2%
Ryerson University - Canada	1	0.40%
TUT	9	3.90%
UCT	6	2.60%
WITS	16	7.00%
Information unavailable	4	1.70%
Arts Ins. S. California	1	0.40%
Grand Total	230	100.00%

Source: NFVF database

Information about major course(s) for 118 students was not available. Table 6 below shows major course (s) for 112 funded students where information was available.

Table 6: Funded students by major course(s)

Major Course(s)	Number Of Students	Percentage (%)
Animation	6	5%
Cinematography	9	8%
Directing	20	18%
Directing & Editing	1	1%

Directing & Producing	1	1%
Directing & Writing	2	2%
Editing	15	13%
Editing & Directing	1	1%
Fine Arts	1	1%
Producing	32	29%
Production Design	4	4%
Script Writing	3	3%
Sound & Production Design	1	1%
Sound Design	10	9%
Special Effects	1	1%
TV & Media Studies	1	1%
TV Production	2	2%
Video & Journalism	1	1%
Visual Effects	1	1%
Grand Total	112	100%

Source: NFVF database

8. RESPONDENTS DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 7: Distribution of graduates by race and gender

Gender	Black	White	Grand Total
Female	17	7	24
Male	30	5	35
Grand Total	47	12	59

47 (80%) of graduates were black while 12 (20%) were whites. 24 (41%) were females, 35 (59%) males.

Majority of graduates at 83% are between the ages of 21-29 years, 15% are between 30-40 years of age and only 2% of graduates are older than 40 years.

42% of graduates indicated that they graduated in 2005, 25% in 2006, 22% in 2007 and 3% graduated in 2003.

Table 8: Distribution of graduates by Institution

Institution	Respondents	Percentage (%)
AFDA	42	71%
City Varsity	5	8%
DUT	2	3%
TUT	1	2%
WITS	5	8%
Boston	3	5%
Monash	1	2%
Grand Total	59	100%

Table 8 above shows the distribution of graduates by institution. The majority of graduates (71%) studied through AFDA. Monash (now Big Fish School of Digital Filmmaking) and Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) each had 2% of the graduates.

10 respondents did not indicate major course(s) that they studied. Table 9 below shows major course(s) for the remaining 49 students who indicated their major course (s).

Table 9: Respondents by major course(s)

Major Course/s	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Animation	3	6%
Cinematography	3	6%
Directing	2	4%
Directing & Editing	1	2%
Directing & Writing	1	2%
Editing	6	12%
Editing & Directing	1	2%
Feature Film & Motion Picture	2	4%
Film Study	1	2%
Producing	13	27%
Production Design	1	2%
Sound & Production Design	1	2%
Sound Design	3	6%
Television	1	2%
TV & Broadcasting	1	2%
TV & Film Production	1	2%
TV & Media Studies	1	2%

TV & Performance Studies	1	2%
TV Production	1	2%
Video & Journalism	1	2%
Video Technology	2	4%
Visual Effects	1	2%
Directing & Producing	1	2%
Grand Total	49	100%

9. RELEVANCY OF COURSES STUDIED

When asked if they find what they have studied relevant, 53 (90%) of graduates were of the view that what they studied is relevant in their careers and only 6 (10%) of the graduates indicated that what they studied is not relevant in their careers. Of those that were of the view that what they studied is not relevant, 50% indicated that while the theoretical aspect of the training was relevant, adequate exposure into the industry during studies was lacking. Figure 2 below illustrates graduates views.

Figure 2: Views on relevancy of studies

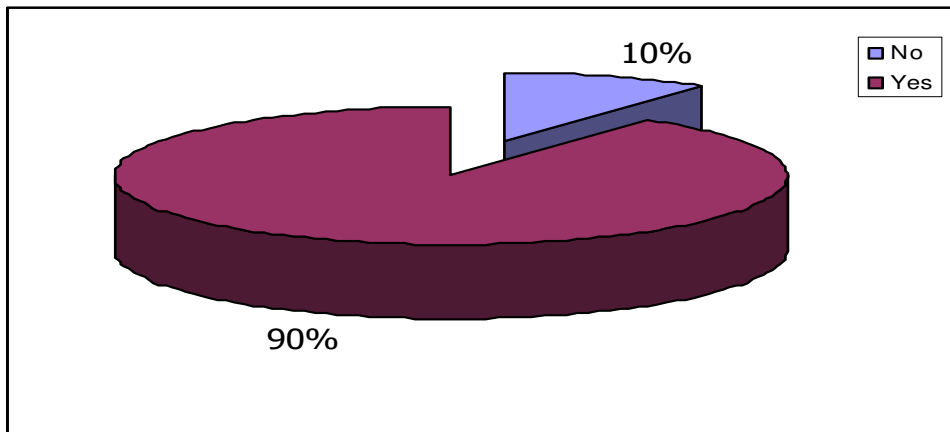


Table 10 below shows different views of graduates that felt that what they studied is not relevant in their career advancement. 3 (50%) out of 6 graduates who felt what they studied is not relevant mentioned that they were not exposed enough into the industry during their studies.

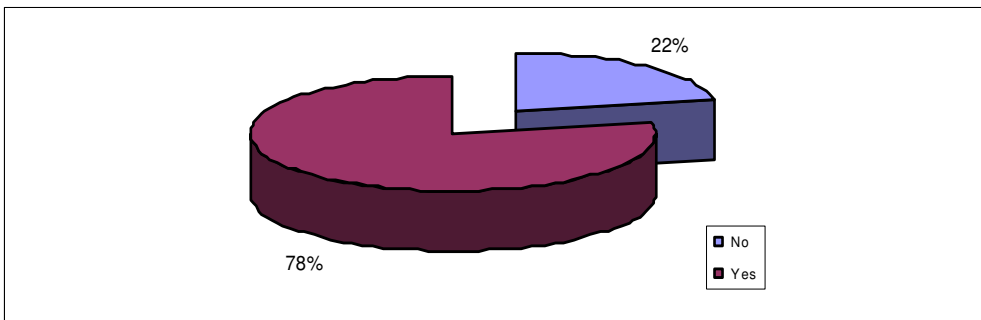
Table 10: Views of graduates that felt what they studied is not relevant.

Find what learned relevant? If not, Reasons	Respondents	% of total respondents
Lack of exposure into the industry	3	50%
Incompetence of some Lecturers	1	17%
Course work relevant but not enough practical work	1	17%
Institution did not have relevant software	1	17%
Lectures not integral part of the industry	1	17%

10. CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED DURING STUDIES

46 (78%) of graduates against 13 (22%) indicated that they had experienced challenges during their studies.

Figure 3: Experienced challenges during studies?



25 (54%) out of 46 graduates mentioned finance as a challenge they experienced during studies, 7 (15%) mentioned racism and favouritism from lecturers, 6 (13%) mentioned lack of exposure into the industry and 5 (11%) mentioned demanding coursework as challenges they experienced during studies.

While 65% of black graduates mentioned finance as the biggest challenge they experienced during studies, only 11% of white graduates mentioned finance as a challenge they experienced while studying.

Despite receiving a bursary, most black students indicated that they came from financial disadvantaged background and found it hard to raise money to pay the remaining portion of fees that was not covered by the bursary. They also indicated that they had to raise money for their projects which compromised the quality of their projects because they had to work with a limited budget. Some students particularly those that were studying far away from home stated that finding money for accommodation was a challenge.

33% of white graduates against 5% of black graduates mentioned demanding nature of course work as a challenge they experienced during studies.

Favouritism and racism were also mentioned by some black graduates as a challenge they experienced. They mentioned that some lecturers gave white students preferential treatment. Some of the students mentioned that it was also hard to find group mates to work with for projects that required group work.

Graduates indicated that since they were responsible to carry shooting equipment to the location shoots for their projects and, not having their own car and a computer was a challenge.

Table 11: Challenges experienced during studies

Challenges experienced during studies	Respondents	% of total respondents
Campus not organized	1	2%
Demanding coursework	5	11%
Incompetent Lecturers	2	4%
Lack of business studies	1	2%
Lack of exposure into the industry	6	13%
Language barrier problems in group projects	1	2%
Not enough practical work	2	4%
Racism & favouritism from Lecturers	7	15%
Not having own computer	3	7%
Finance for study extras	25	54%
Not enough learning resources at school (softwares etc)	3	7%

Not having own car	3	7%
Choice of stream courses disappointing	1	2%
Too many students & not enough support from Lecturers	2	4%
Social and racial problems with fellow students	1	2%

11. CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

8 (14%) of the graduates indicated they were unemployed against 51 (86%) that indicated they were working. Of the 51 graduates that indicated that they are employed, 5 indicated that they have established their own companies.

All white graduates that responded to the questionnaire indicated that they are employed. Of the unemployed graduates, 4 indicated they graduated in 2007, 3 in 2005 and 1 graduated in 2004. When asked for reasons why they were unemployed, 3 graduates indicated they were looking for employment but unable to find any opportunity. 1 graduate indicated he decided to study further and the other 4 graduates did not indicate the reasons for their unemployment. 4 of the unemployed graduates indicated they have never been employed since they graduated and 4 indicated that they had been employed in the industry before.

40 (78%) of employed graduates are employed in the film & TV industry and the rest, 11 (22%) are employed in other industries. Most (78%) of the employed graduates have occupations in the area which they studied as a major course and most of them indicated they were working as freelancers.

Table 12 below shows reasons given for employment in other industries. Freelance and unstable nature of the industry was the most mentioned reason (3 graduates out of 6) for graduates who are employed in other industries.

Table 12: Reasons for employment in other industries

Reasons For Employment In Any Other Industry	Respondents
Believes Producer can fit into any industry	1
Freelance and unstable nature of the industry	3
Transformation. Owned by white employers who tell African stories.	1
Unspecified	7

12. FIRST EMPLOYMENT AFTER GRADUATION

The first occupation after graduation as indicated by graduates ranges from a Runner to a Producer. Table 13 shows different first occupations as indicated by graduates.

Table 13: First employment after graduation

Occupation First Employment	Respondents
3D Animator	1
Actor/Extra	1
Actress	1
Animator	1
Assistant Art Director	1
Assistant Editor	7
Assistant Manager	1
Camera Operator	1
Cameraman	2
Debtors Clerk	1
Edit Logger	1
Editor	1
Events Co-ordinator	1
Fabrication	1
Illustrator/Cartoonist	1
In-Service Training	1
Intern	1
Junior Producer	2
Lecturer	1
Location Sound Mixer	1
Online Editor	1
Personal Assistant	1
Producer	1
Producer/Film Lecturer	1
Production Assistant	4

Production Coordinator	3
Production Design	1
Production Manager	2
Research Writer	1
Researcher, Animator	1
Runner	2
Script Editor, Photographer	1
Sound Recorder	1
Studio Hand	1
Studio Zoo	1
Subtitles	1
Telecine Operator Intern	1
TV Director	1
Video Editor	1
Writer/Director/Producer	1
Grand Total	55

The average duration for first employment ranged from 2 days to 2 years. The mean basic salary in first employment was about R5500 per month.

13. CONCLUSION

While it is clear that the labour market is able to absorb graduates with 51 out of 59 being able to find employment within the industry, it will also be of critical importance for the NFVF to consider conducting a follow up on the challenges as experienced by the graduates.

Most respondents identified insufficient resources as the most common problem experienced during studies. The reason for that can be attributed to that the NFVF pays 75% of tuition fee because of limited budget and does not cover for accommodation, study materials and projects and for that reason students had to source their own funds to cater for expenses not covered the bursary. It is also evident that there is less interaction between students and the industry.

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

The graduate absorption study needs to be carried out regularly so as not to lose track of the NFVF bursary holding students.

The NFVF should try and facilitate an interface session with industry practitioners and final year students so as to familiarize them with industry and also help them build inroads into the labour market.