

WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY



# EMPLOYABILITY ASSESSMENT REPORT - FINAL 2025

26 MARCH 2025



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**This report was produced by Institutional Research and Planning under  
the Directorate of Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation.**

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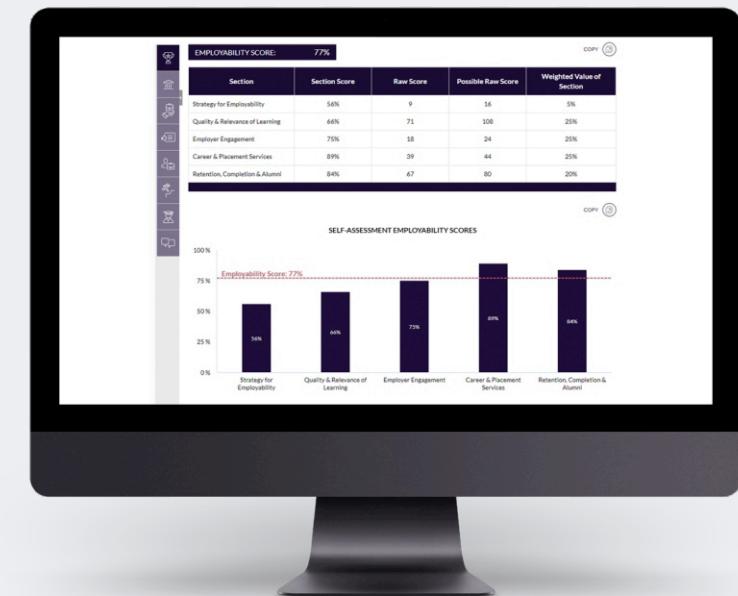
# Introduction

This guide explains the process and methodology behind Vitae's 360° Assessment. The assessment helps higher education institutions understand how well they're preparing graduates for the job market. This guide includes a description of the quantitative and qualitative research components, 10 steps to ensure a successful engagement, and what to expect post-assessment.

## About Vitae's 360° Assessment

The 360° Assessment uses a mixed-method approach that includes a self-assessment, stakeholder surveys, focus groups, and interviews. The objective is to help higher education institutions deliver best-in-class employability support to their students, by providing a comprehensive appraisal of the institution's employability policies, practices and outcomes, and sharing the resulting insights and recommendations with the institution. The entire process takes approximately 10 weeks.

The 360° Assessment questionnaire examines institutional processes, performance, and outcomes through five dimensions covering 70 questions.



## The Vitae App

For the convenience of clients, Vitae offers a one-stop shop web application for self-assessment and data gathering for student and alumni surveys.

# Assessment Process

The components of the 360° Assessment culminate in an Employability Diagnostic Report:

## Quantitative

The quantitative components of the assessment are offered via the Vitae App and include the following:

### An institutional self-assessment questionnaire\* with:

- An examination of the processes and factors within the institution that support employability outcomes
- A measurement of institutional metrics such as retention, graduation, and placement rates

\*The self-assessment can be completed over several sittings as information will be sourced from a variety of units.

### Student and alumni surveys with:

- A survey of final-year students (targeting 100% of the cohort)
- A survey of recent alumni up to three years post-completion (targeting 100% of the cohort)

## Qualitative

The qualitative data gathering takes place once the self-assessment and survey data have been submitted and preliminary data review has taken place. The qualitative process includes:

### One-hour interviews with:

- Deans of faculties participating in assessment
- Faculty and/or administrative staff responsible for alumni office, career services, industry engagement, work-integrated learning, etc.
- Three to five employers selected by the institution

### Focus group discussions with:

- Final-year students and/or student leadership, with six to ten participants
- Recent alumni (up to three years post-completion) with six to ten participants



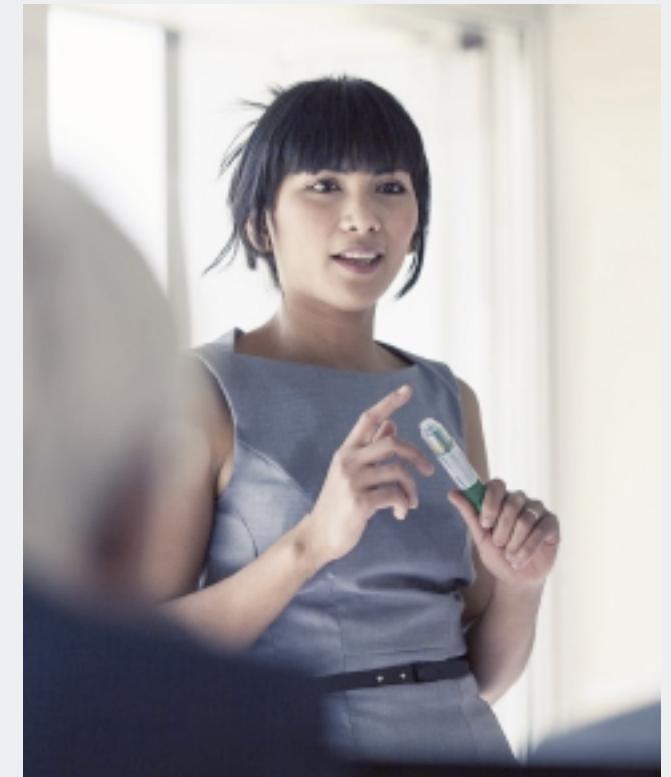
# Role of the Institution

Due to the comprehensive nature of the assessment, it's recommended that the overall authority and responsibility for driving the process be vested in a senior institutional leader or the senior management team.

Data assembly and completion should be assigned to an "Operational Lead" who typically works in a cross-functional unit such as the Office of the President or Office of Institutional Research. Information for completing the assessment will come from across functions and units. The Operational Lead should have access to institutional databases as well as staff and faculty with information on curriculum development, data on admissions, retention, and matriculation, who are knowledgeable about various campus services. The Operational Lead should have an adequate level of technical/ computer expertise and sufficient time to devote to the project. Operational Lead responsibilities can be split among two to three staff when relevant.

## The institution is expected to:

- Select a campus and/or faculties for assessment. The Vitae team can provide advice on considerations for selection.
- Identify senior member(s) of the management team to sponsor the project, help build buy-in of faculty and staff, participate in the assessment debrief, and receive the employability report. Senior staff member(s') time commitment: 3 days over 10 weeks.
- Assign an Operational Lead for the project. The Operational Lead will gather information to complete the online self-assessment, launch the stakeholder surveys, and support logistics for interviews. The Operational Lead must have access to information held by various departments, as the information required will be distributed across units. Operational staff member time commitment: 10-15 days over 10 weeks.
- Complete the 70-question self-assessment for the institution/campus selected (1-2 weeks, led by the Operational Lead). The questionnaire is completed online.
- Distribute IFC's student and alumni questionnaires to students and alumni. Surveys are online completion/mobile accessible.
- Arrange staff and faculty participation in interviews of 1 hour each. A total of approximately 10 interviews will be held. Participants include management, academic deans, career services, alumni office, heads of entrepreneurship, student services, etc.
- Identify 3-5 employers, 6-10 students, and 6-10 alumni for 1-hour interviews and focus groups. Arrange participation at these sessions.



# 10 Steps for a Successful Assessment

## Step 1

Kick-off meeting with institution's leadership team to clarify objectives and scope, review the process and key milestones, and agree on timelines and logistical arrangements. Introduction of the Vitae assessment team and the institution's Operational Lead for the project.

## Step 4

The Vitae team emails links for the student and alumni surveys, with proposed email content to the Operational Lead. The Operational Lead sends an email with a survey link to students and an email with a survey link to alumni. The Operational Lead must have access to the email addresses of students and alumni for this step. (If the institution does not have alumni, only student surveys are distributed.)

## Step 7

The Vitae team conducts a "site visit," virtually or on campus, consisting of 10-15 interviews with institution leadership, staff, faculty, employers, students, and alumni over several days. The Operational Lead provides logistical support to these interviews.

## Step 2

The Vitae team emails the Operational Lead access to the Vitae App for the 360° Assessment, along with instructions. The Operational Lead creates a password to access the app, which will be used for the self-assessment as well as student and alumni surveys.

## Step 5

Surveys are open for three weeks and responses are collated on the Vitae App. Reminders can be sent during this period and incentives can be provided by the institution to increase response rates.

## Step 8

The Vitae team conducts a debrief for the institution's leadership team to review the assessment process, highlight initial findings, scoring, and discuss areas for recommendations.

## Step 10

The Vitae team holds a follow-up meeting with the institution's leadership team at 12 months post-assessment to discuss the implementation progress.

## Step 3

The Operational Lead completes the self-assessment questionnaire through the Vitae App. This will require collection of data from multiple units within the institution over a period of one to two weeks. The Vitae team is available to provide technical assistance.

## Step 6

The Operational Lead liaises with institution management to identify faculty, administrative staff, career services/alumni office staff, student leadership, students, alumni, and employers to participate in in-depth interviews and focus groups conducted by the Vitae team. The Vitae team provides a sample list of participants as well as questions in advance, to help prepare interviews.

## Step 9

Institution leadership receives the Employability Assessment Report with a complete set of findings and recommendations. The Vitae team presents the key findings and recommendations to institution leadership. The debrief includes discussion of next steps and implementation priorities, areas of specific concern or reflection.

# Required Data and Information

The following is a sample of information that will be required during the assessment process:

## 1. Institutional structure and operating process related to employability

- ▶ Career support and guidance services, internships, and work-integrated learning
- ▶ Mechanisms of employer and industry engagement
- ▶ Information on curriculum and program design and planning processes
- ▶ Governance process and KPIs

## 2. Annual operating budget

## 3. Average annual tuition/registration fee

## 4. Number of courses offered

- ▶ Accreditations
- ▶ Lab, workshop, etc. requirements
- ▶ Online courses

## 5. Number of students enrolled *(per faculty, disaggregated by gender)*

- ▶ Total full-time by year of enrollment
- ▶ Total part-time by year of enrollment

## 6. Number of teaching faculty *(per faculty, disaggregated by gender)*

- ▶ Total full-time
- ▶ Total part-time
- ▶ Highest degree/credentials

## 7. Number of administrative staff *(disaggregated by gender)*

- ▶ Total full-time
- ▶ Total part-time

## 8. Retention, graduation, and placement rates *(per faculty, disaggregated by gender)*

- ▶ Retention (first to second year and first to second semester)
- ▶ Completion on time
- ▶ Employment status

## 9. Internship-related information, numbers, and process

## 10. Alumni-related information, numbers, placement results, and engagement mechanisms

# Post-Assessment

## Advisory Services

The Employability Diagnostic Report includes bespoke recommendations for the institution. Upon request, the Vitae team can provide advisory services to develop an implementation road map and to provide training on how to implement changes. Advisory services are delivered in partnership with practitioners and specialists in the areas of recommendations.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

IFC will contact the institution within 12 months of post-assessment regarding the status of recommendations and progress achieved, as well as any additional requirements the institution may have. This typically consists of a one-hour interview with senior leadership.



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# WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY

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## EMPLOYABILITY ASSESSMENT REPORT - FINAL

26 March 2025

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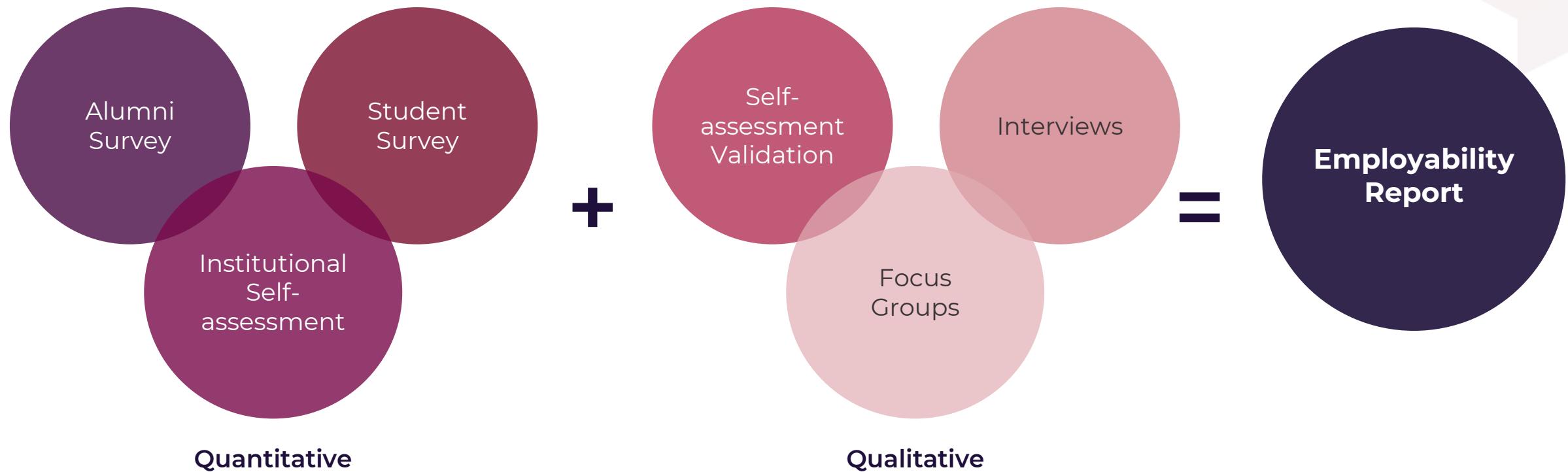


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# 01. METHODOLOGY

# Methodology - *Vitae 360° Assessment Process*

Snapshot view



# Methodology – Key inputs to this report



## KEY INPUTS



### Institutional self-assessment: 26 questions

- Five dimensions of employability



### Vitae Student and Alumni Surveys\*

- 581 Student Survey Respondents
- 840 Alumni Survey Respondents

General:

- Target population: all final year students and graduates from 2020-2023 from undergraduate degree and diploma programmes



### Self-assessment Validation

- Focus groups with WSU units
- Focus groups with students and alumni
- Interviews with employers
- Review of supporting information



### Literature Review

- Institutional profiles
- World Bank and ILO data South Africa
- National statistics and data South Africa

# Methodology - Assessed Dimensions of Employability

## Relevance of Learning



What processes and systems are in place to support leadership and teaching staff in aligning curriculum with labor market needs?

## Strategy & Employment Outcomes



Does the institution's vision and mission reflect a commitment to student employability? How are employability outcomes measured?

## Employer Engagement



What employment focused activities exist to ensure job readiness and to foster employer relationships outside the classroom?

## Career Services



What types of services and guidance are available to students and how are these activities resourced and organized?

## Alumni Engagement



How does the institution engage its alumni to support employability of current students?

# Methodology - Vitae Employability Benchmarking Scoring System



0	1	2	3	4
<b>Non-Existent</b> <1.0  There is no evidence of the foundations of good practices to support student employability outcomes.	<b>Nascent</b> 1.0-1.9  There is limited or weak evidence of the foundations of good practices to support student employability outcomes.	<b>Emerging</b> 2.0-2.9  There is some evidence of the foundations of good practices to support student employability outcomes.	<b>Advanced</b> 3.0-3.5  There is a mix of data driven and anecdotal evidence of good practices to support high student employability outcomes.	<b>Best in Class</b> >3.5  There is clear and data driven evidence of good practices to support high student employability outcomes.

## Methodology – *Peers and principles applied*



### Peers Selected

1 x Local private institution considered a direct competitor in the market

2 x Local public institution considered direct competitors in the market

1 x Top performer private institution in Africa

### Principles applied:

- Scores per dimension were benchmarked against the average of peers as described
- Scores per dimension were benchmarked against the global average, across the IFC database
- Only key indicators are presented per dimension, as relevant to this report
- Each indicator has an assigned weighting which affects overall scores, as well as scores per dimension

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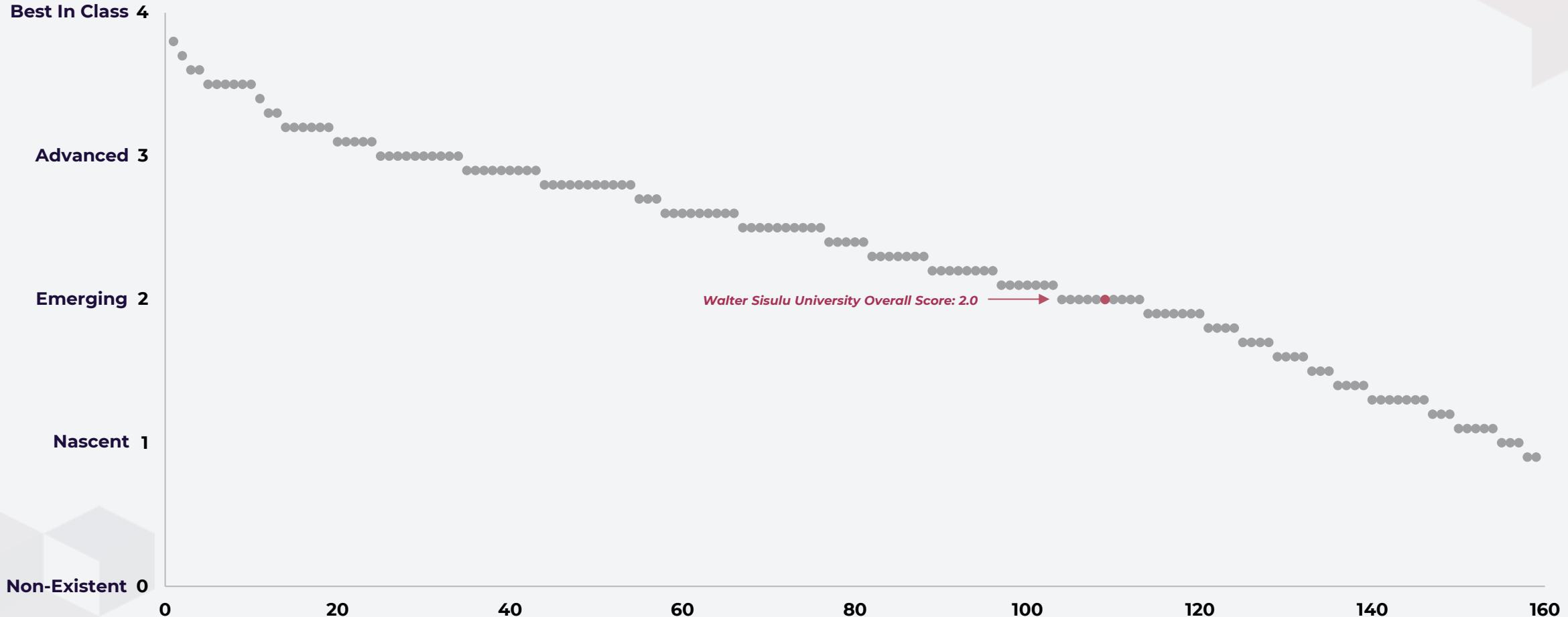
## 02. ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

# Assessment Results and Benchmarking

Walter Sisulu University has emerging employability practices. There is evidence of new initiatives in many areas that support employability, and the institution is poised to further expand and enhance these in its vision of future-fit graduates.



**WSU has “Emerging” Employability practices based on the Employability Benchmarking Scale**

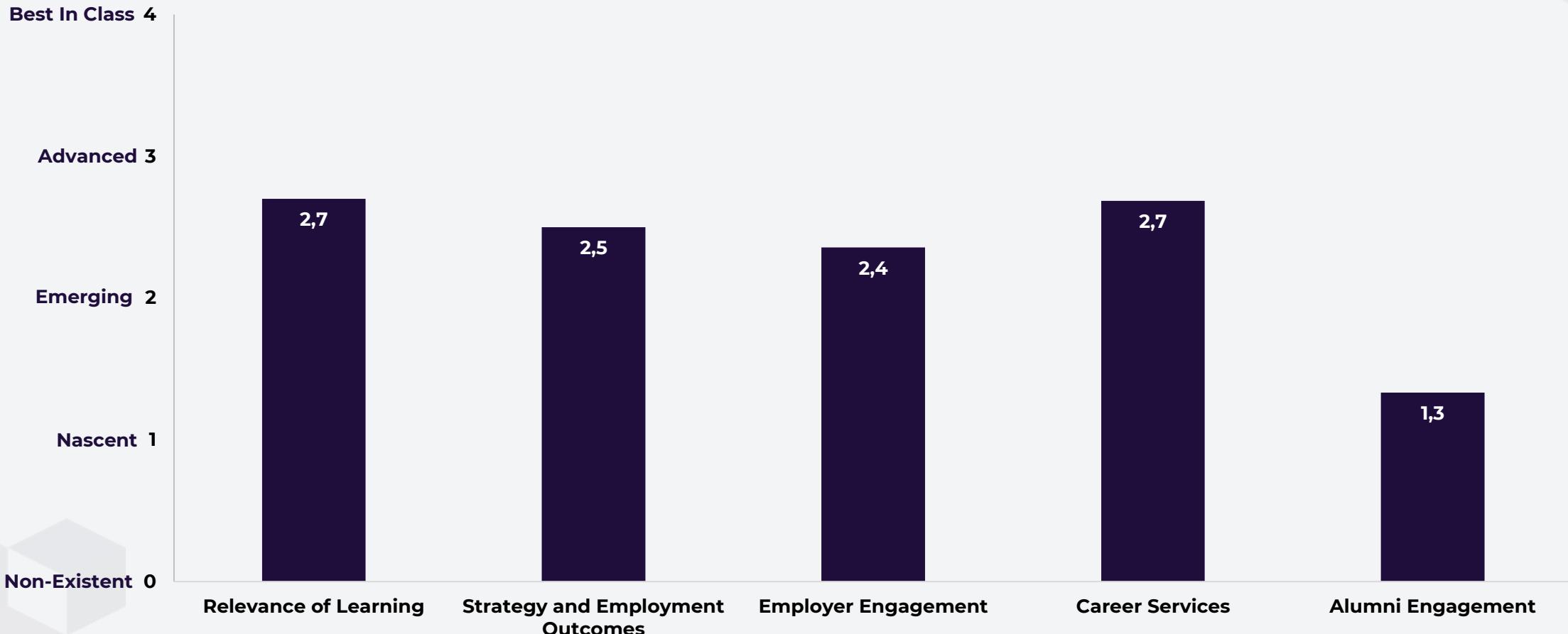


# Assessment Results

The results per dimension provides a deeper level of insight regarding current practices. Alumni engagement reflects as an untapped source to leverage in enhancing other practices



**Walter Sisulu University produced results ranging between emerging and advanced across four of the five dimensions**



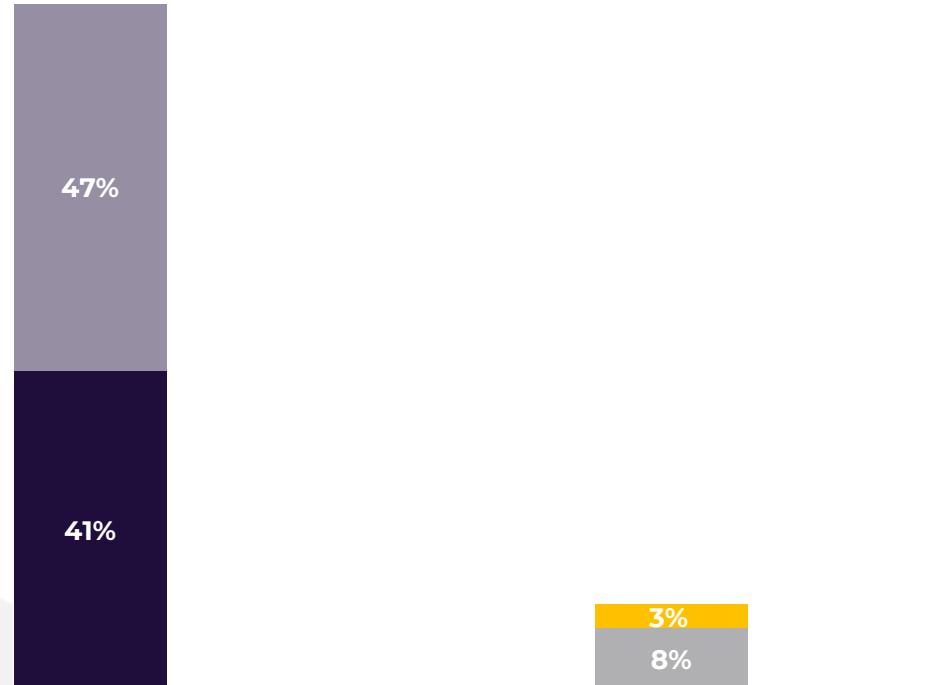
# Assessment Results – Overall Satisfaction

Overall, students and graduates report to be satisfied and would recommend the institution to others



**More than 80% of students would recommend the institution to others**

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree



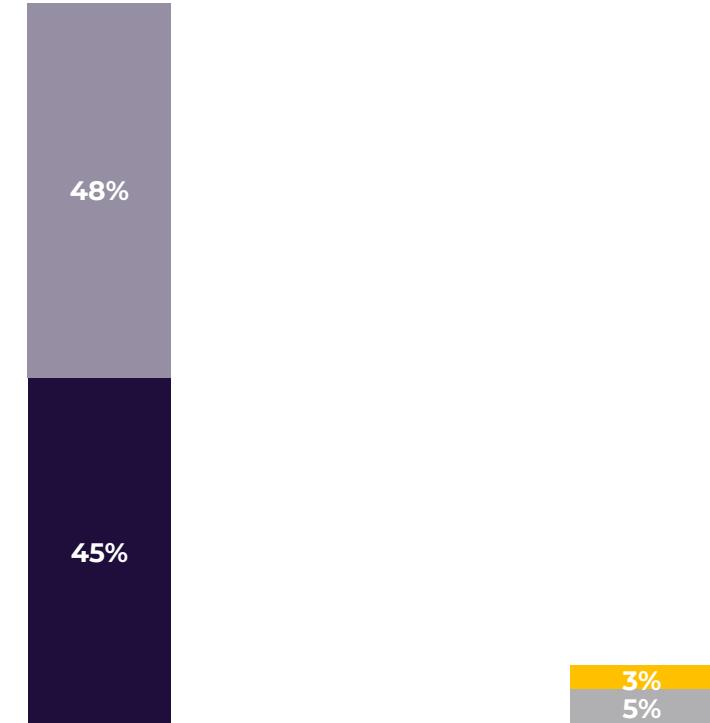
**Strongly Agree/Agree**

**Strongly Disagree/Disagree**

Q. Would you recommend this institution to others? (Student Survey November 2024) n=581

**More than 90% of graduates would recommend the institution to others**

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree



**Strongly Agree/Agree**

**Strongly Disagree/Disagree**

Q. Would you recommend this institution to others? (Alumni Survey November 2024) n=839

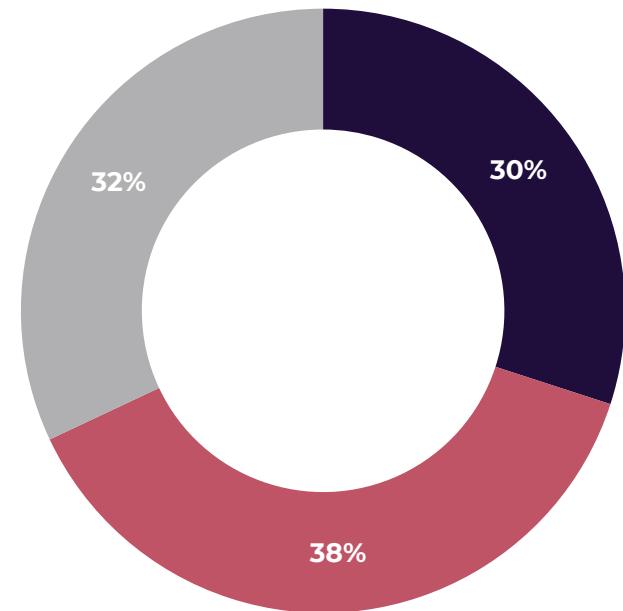
# Assessment Results – Overall Satisfaction

Both students and graduates report that their expectations have been exceeded, but less than a third of graduates believe the benefits they received outweighed the cost



**Only 30% of graduates believe that the benefits received from attending the institution outweigh the financial costs**

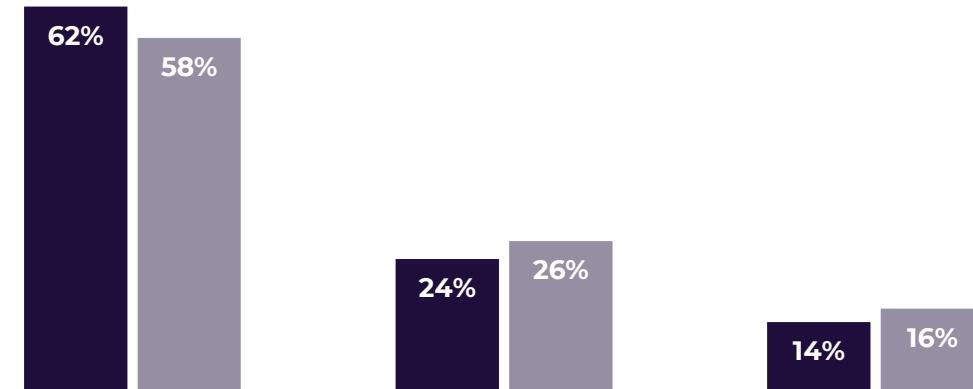
■ Yes ■ No ■ I don't know



Q. Did the benefits you received from attending the institution outweigh the financial costs to you and your family? (Alumni Survey November 2024) n=836

**A larger proportion of students and graduates reported that their experience at the institution exceeded their expectations**

■ Students ■ Graduates



Q. How does your overall experience at this institution match your expectations prior to enrollment? (Student Survey November 2024) n=579 & (Alumni Survey November 2024) n=834

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## 03. ASSESSMENT RESULTS BY DIMENSION

# Results by Dimension – *Strategy and Employment Outcomes*

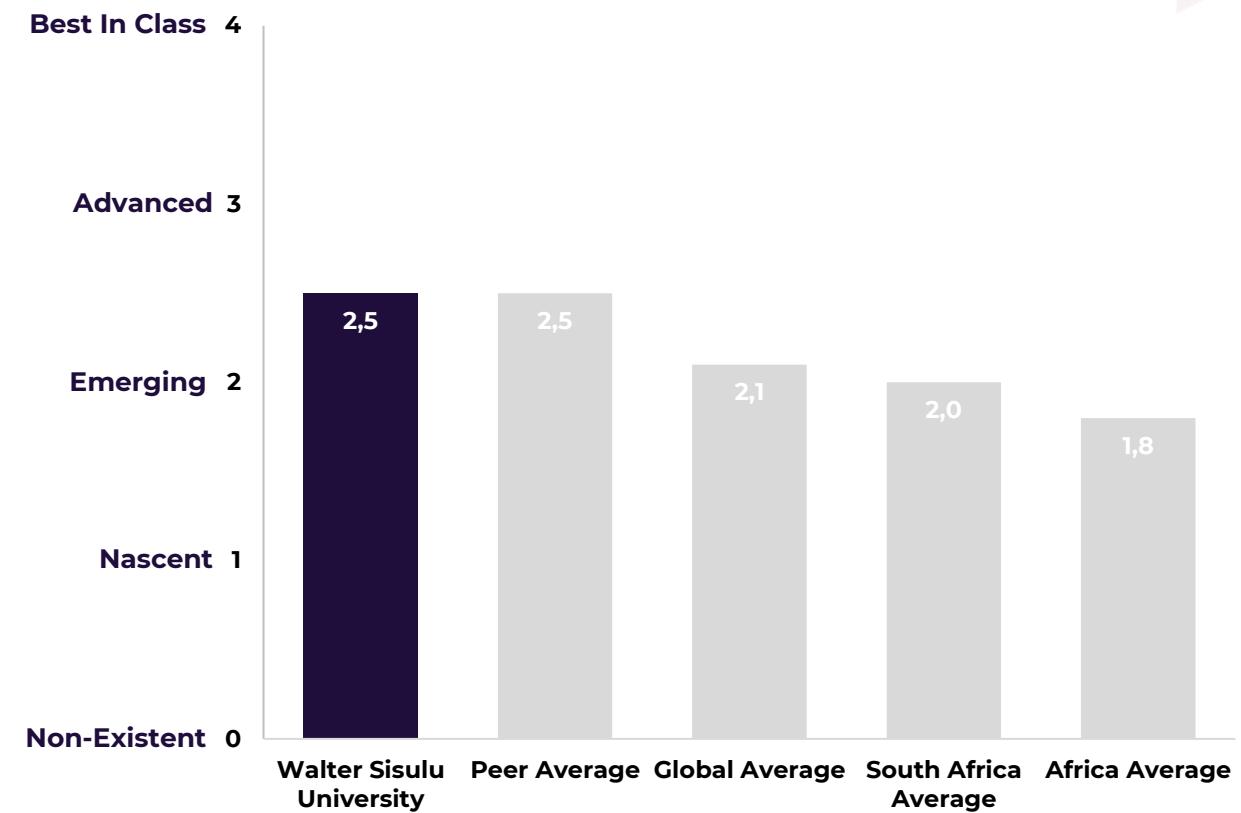
Walter Sisulu outperforms the peer and global averages. Aligning with global trends can elevate performance from emerging to advanced.



WSU tracks graduate outcomes at exit level, and reports results disaggregated by a variety of factors. Collecting one of three capstone employability indicators, still places WSU above their peers and the global emerging market average.

Articulating employability goals in institutional strategy, and setting formal employability KPIs, with consistent tracking of graduate outcomes at multiple intervals is reflective of global best practice. However, this is not effectively institutionalized within WSU's strategy and there is limited evidence that the data collected is leveraged to provide insights beyond general employment outcomes, to include valuable information regarding program relevance, additional market opportunities, operational efficiencies and gaps.

**Walter Sisulu ranks slightly higher than its peers and higher than the national, regional and global average in the Strategy and Employment Outcomes dimension**



*The chart above shows the overall dimension score*

# Results by Dimension – *Strategy and Employment Outcomes*

WSU incorporates employability as part of its strategic vision, but these are not articulated through formal goals and KPI's formally tracked at regular and multiple intervals.



Indicator	WSU	Peer 1 Public University (South Africa)	Peer 2 Public University (South Africa)	Peer 3 Top Performer Private University (Region Africa)	Peer 4 Private Institution (South Africa)
A formal strategy focused on employability articulating student employability goals and established KPIs	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Monitoring employment outcomes of graduates by program at multiple intervals post-graduation	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
More than 60% of students have full time employment within one year of graduation	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Graduate employment rates are above the national average	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Collect employment outcome and wage outcome results by gender, and disaggregate results for analysis	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓

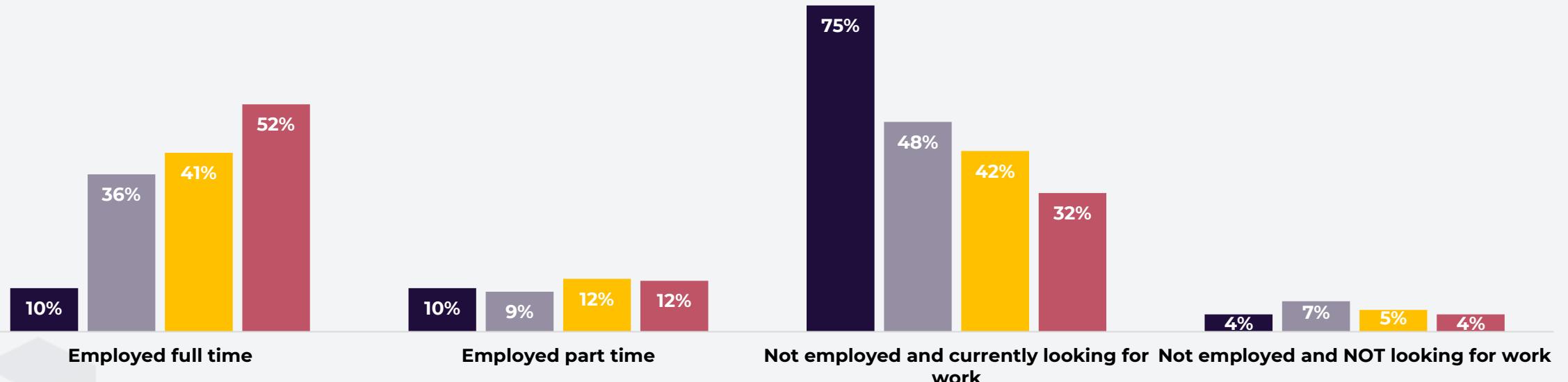
# Results by Dimension – *Strategy and Employment Outcomes*

Employment outcomes from the WSU alumni survey are below par when compared to local, regional, and global averages



**Walter Sisulu's share of graduates that are not employed and currently looking for work is higher than the regional, national and global average**

■ Walter Sisulu University ■ South Africa Average ■ Africa Average ■ Global Average



Q. What is your employment status? (Alumni Survey November 2024) n=837

The Global Average consists of 66 institutions and 17,735 responses from our global database

The Africa Average consists of 34 institutions and 6,854 responses from our global database

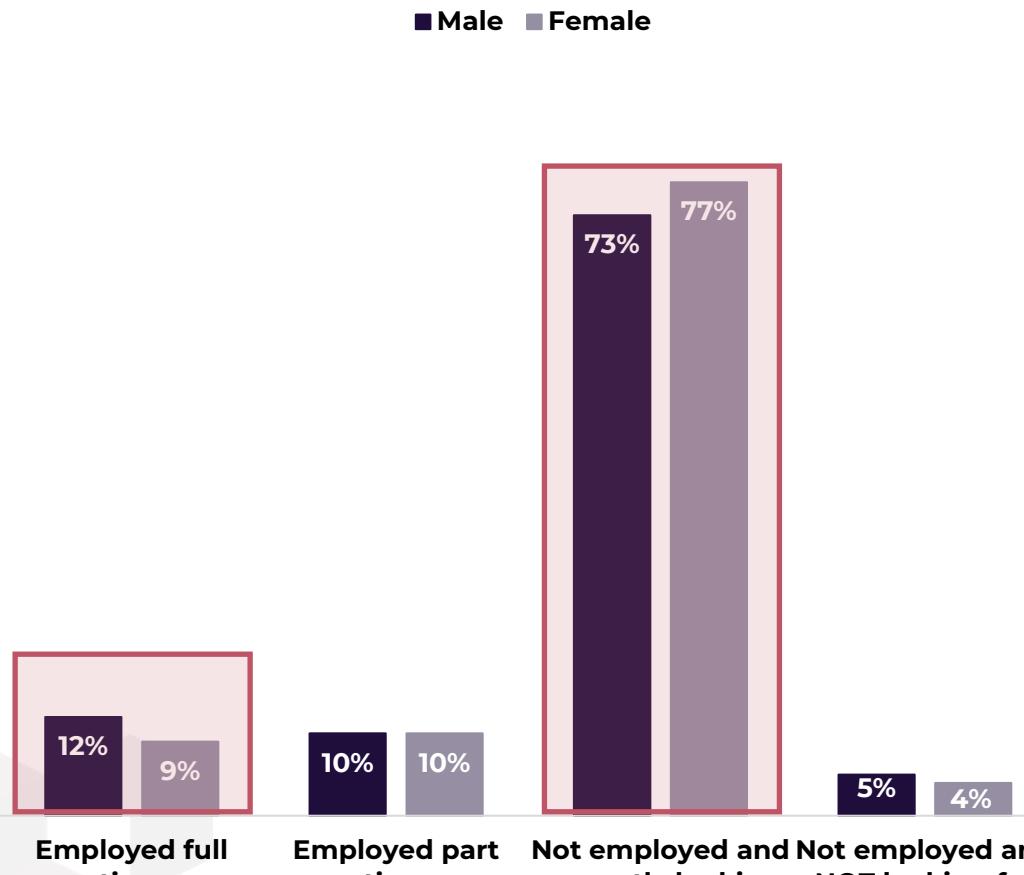
The South Africa Average consists of 9 institutions and 3,610 responses from our global database

# Results by Dimension – *Strategy and Employment Outcomes*

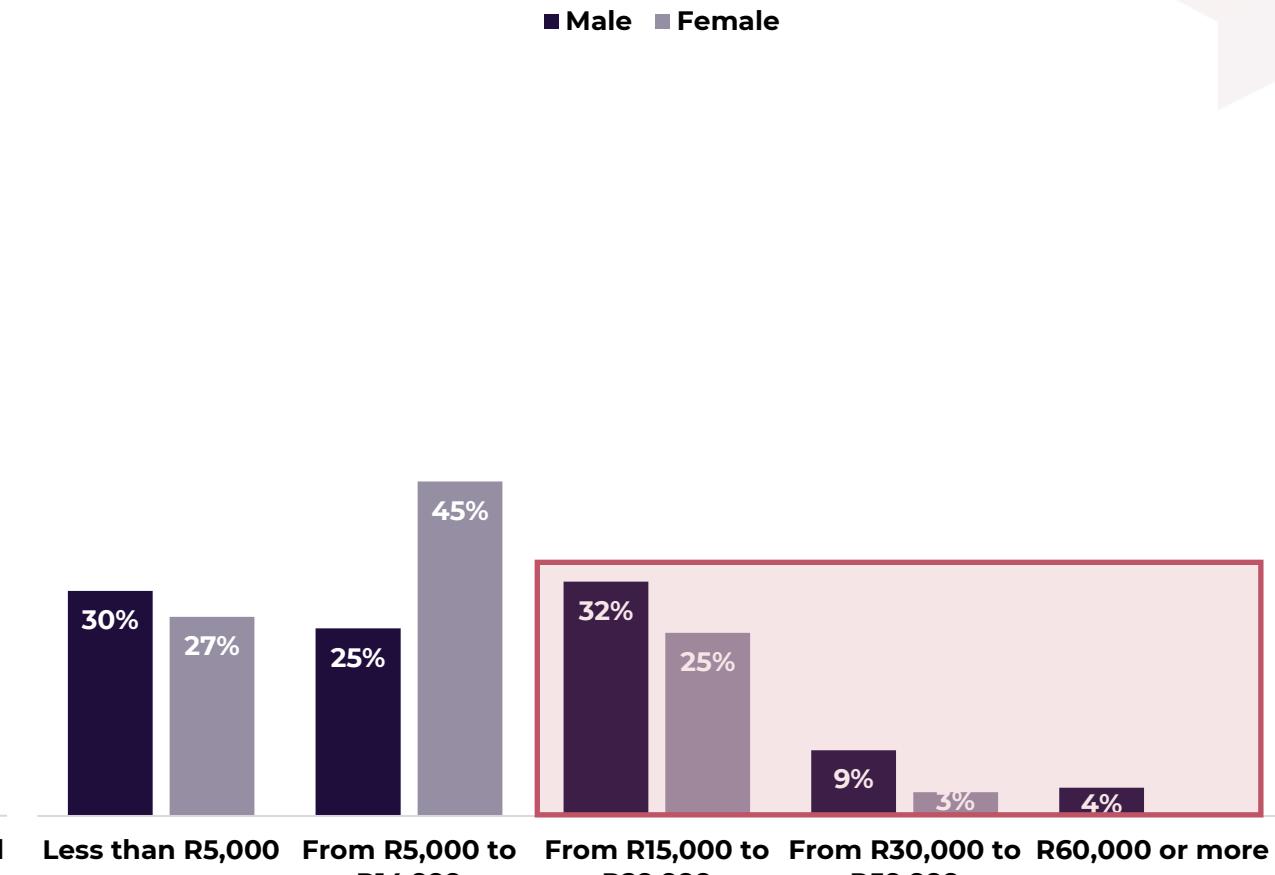
There are opportunities for WSU to utilize employment outcome data to support decision-making. As an example, reflecting on the graduate survey results, the institution could consider specific initiatives to address disparities in employment outcomes by gender



**Male graduates have slightly better employment outcomes than female graduates**



**Male graduates tend to get paid relatively higher than female graduates**



Q. What is your employment status? (Alumni Survey November 2024) n=837

Q. What is your current gross monthly salary range? (Alumni Survey November 2024) n=172

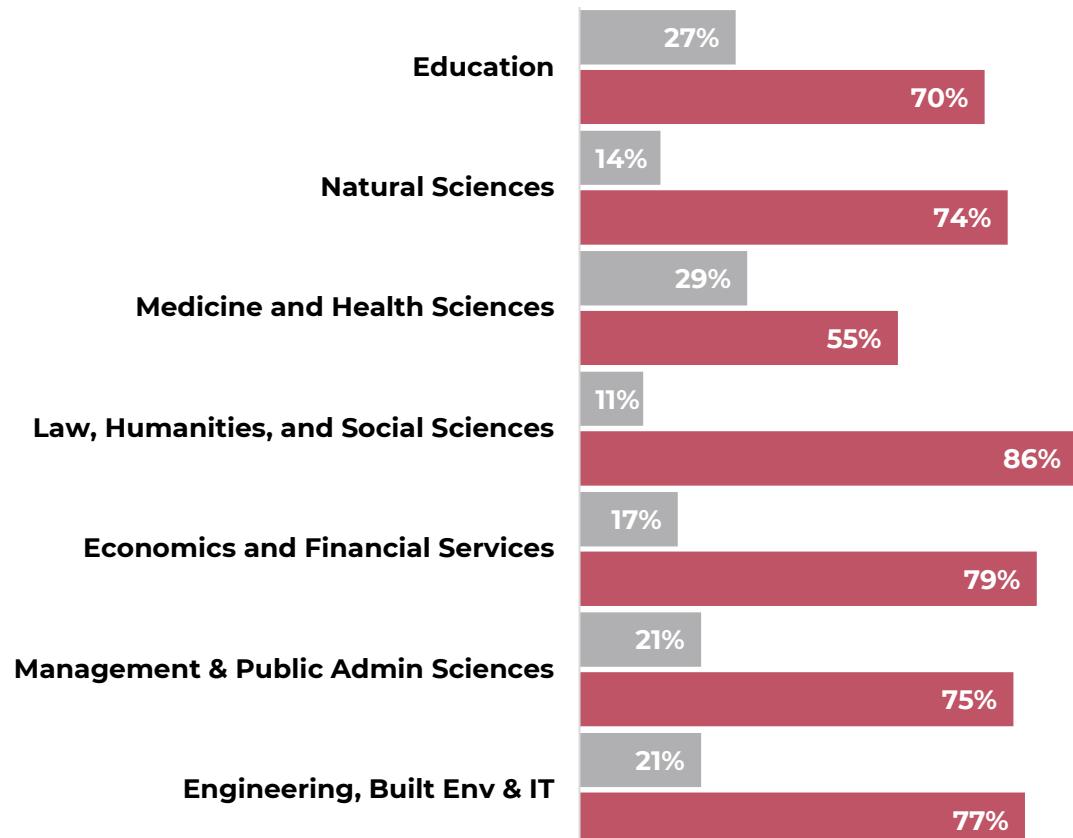
# Results by Dimension – *Strategy and Employment Outcomes*

As another example, the institution could consider specific initiatives to address disparities in employment outcomes by faculty or program



## Employment outcomes by faculty highlight the need for further research to inform employability initiatives

■ Employed (Full or Part time) ■ Not Employed and looking for work



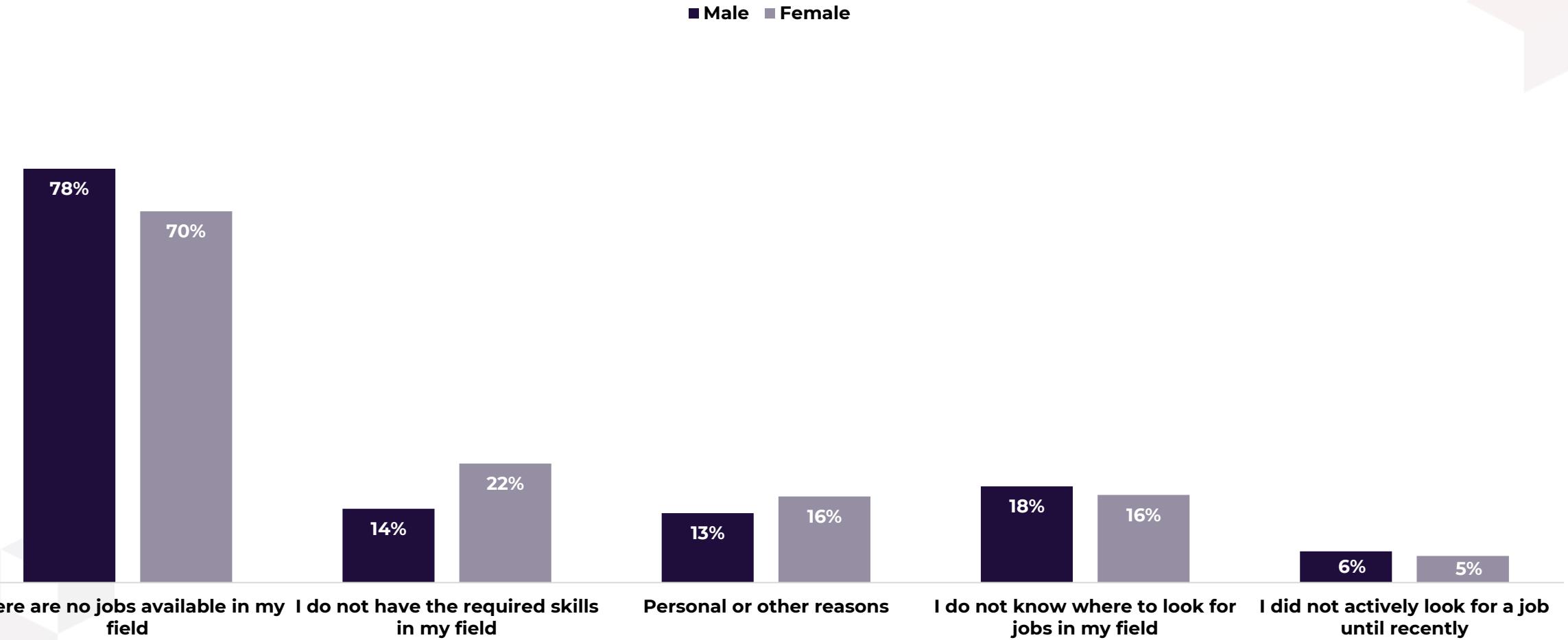
Q. What is your employment status? (Alumni Survey November 2024) n=821

# Results by Dimension – *Strategy and Employment Outcomes*

Results from the alumni survey further suggest that there may be scope for enhancement of services to both students and unemployed alumni



**The main reason why graduates are not employed is the lack of available jobs in their field**



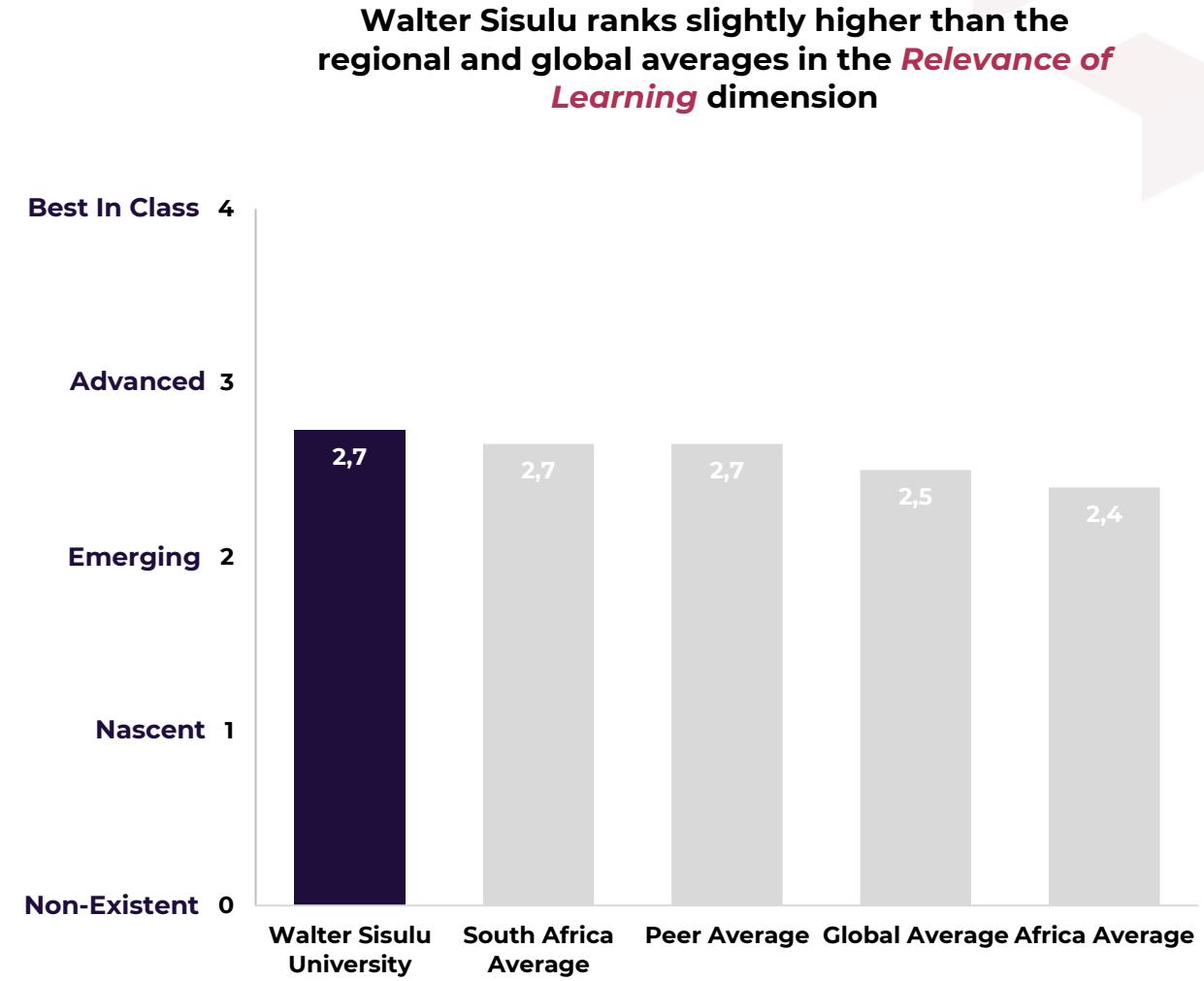
Q. What is the main reason you are not employed? [select all that apply] (Alumni Survey November 2024) n=578

## Results by Dimension – *Relevance of Learning*

Walter Sisulu University is on par with local and peer averages, and above the global and regional averages

Walter Sisulu University's score is testament to the general good practices in South Africa as aligned with regulatory requirements.

The score is reflective of majority of WSU faculty maintaining professional relevance which can be translated into the classroom. However, there is still scope to strengthen formal mechanisms to engage industry in curriculum review and integrate digital literacy and durable (soft) skills in all programs, which can be further enhanced through associated faculty professional development initiatives.



*The chart above shows the overall dimension score*



## Results by Dimension – *Relevance of Learning*

There are opportunities for Walter Sisulu University to outperform peers by continuing to expand on existing good practices to support relevance of learning



Indicator	WSU	Peer 1 Public University (South Africa)	Peer 2 Public University (South Africa)	Peer 3 Top Performer Private University (Region Africa)	Peer 4 Private Institution (South Africa)
Institution reviews <u>all</u> course contents/courses to ensure relevance at least once a year	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
External industry involvement in the curriculum review process on annual basis	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
More than 40% teaching staff with industry or work experience professional field	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
Digital Literacy training provided to all students	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Durable skills (soft skills) are embedded in all discipline-based and common/core courses	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓

# Results by Dimension – *Relevance of Learning*

The alignment between employment and field of study produced varying results across faculties. Although this is expected, some areas require further investigation

Employed graduates from Walter Sisulu University reported varying results in connecting their employment to their field of study, which is not surprising in the context of global skills shortages in the fields of health, natural sciences, and education. There may be benefit in further exploring results as an institutional research question, especially in the faculties of Economics and Financial Services, and Engineering, Built Environment and IT. Regardless, it does highlight an opportunity to reflect on employability at faculty level.



## Relevance of employment to field of study by faculty\*



### Economics and Financial Services



### Management & Public Admin Sciences



### Engineering, Built Env & IT



\*It must be noted that due to the low response rate, the results for Natural Sciences, Medicine & Health Sciences, and Law, Humanities & Social Sciences were omitted.

# Results by Dimension – *Relevance of Learning*

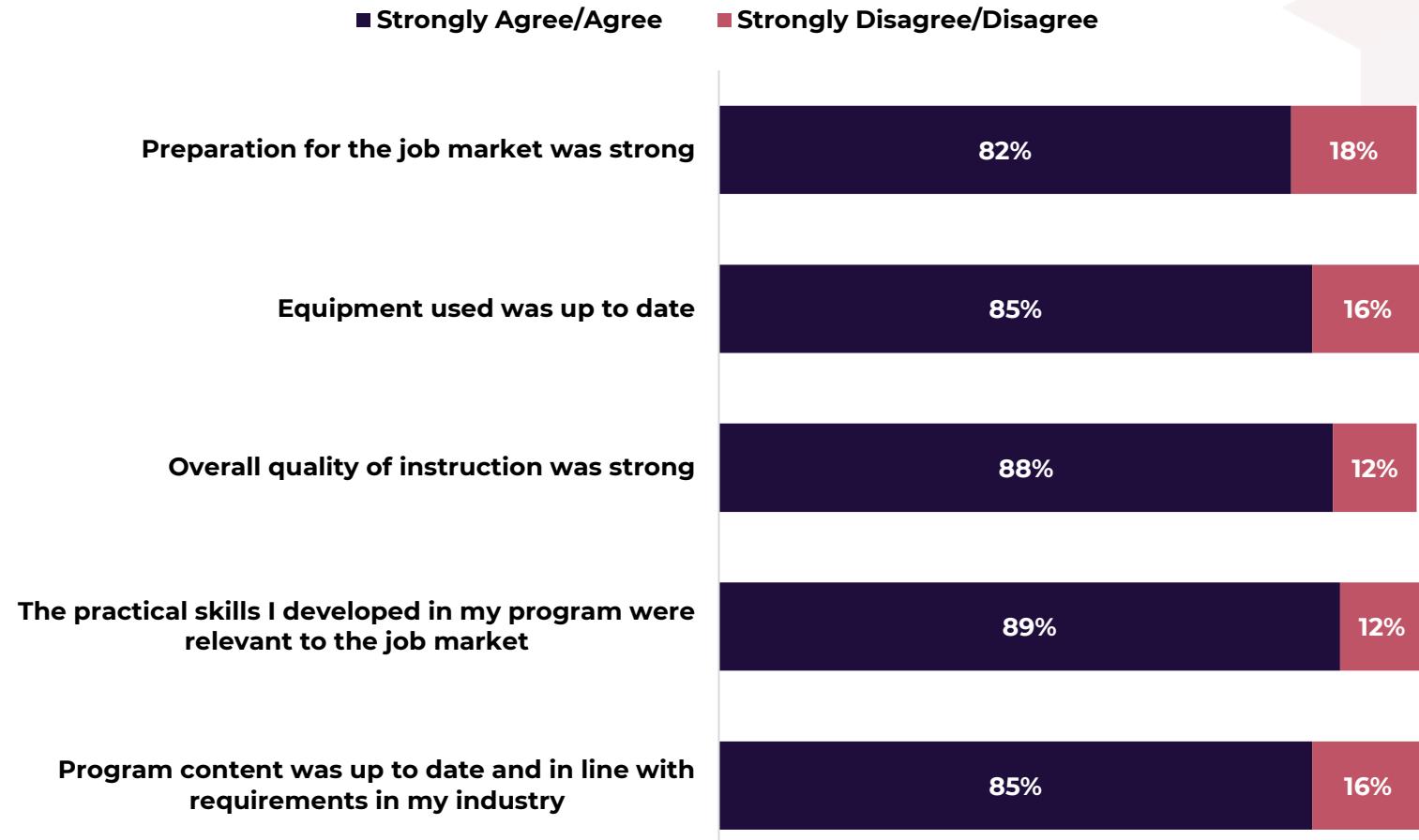
The majority of employed graduates are satisfied with the content of their programs

Walter Sisulu University's results in the dimension of relevance of learning is further supported in the satisfaction with program content expressed by employed graduates. This particularly applies to technical content and exposure.

The results present an opportunity for further research to be conducted at faculty level, especially since certain faculties produce far better employment outcomes than others.



## Graduates' satisfaction with the content of their programs



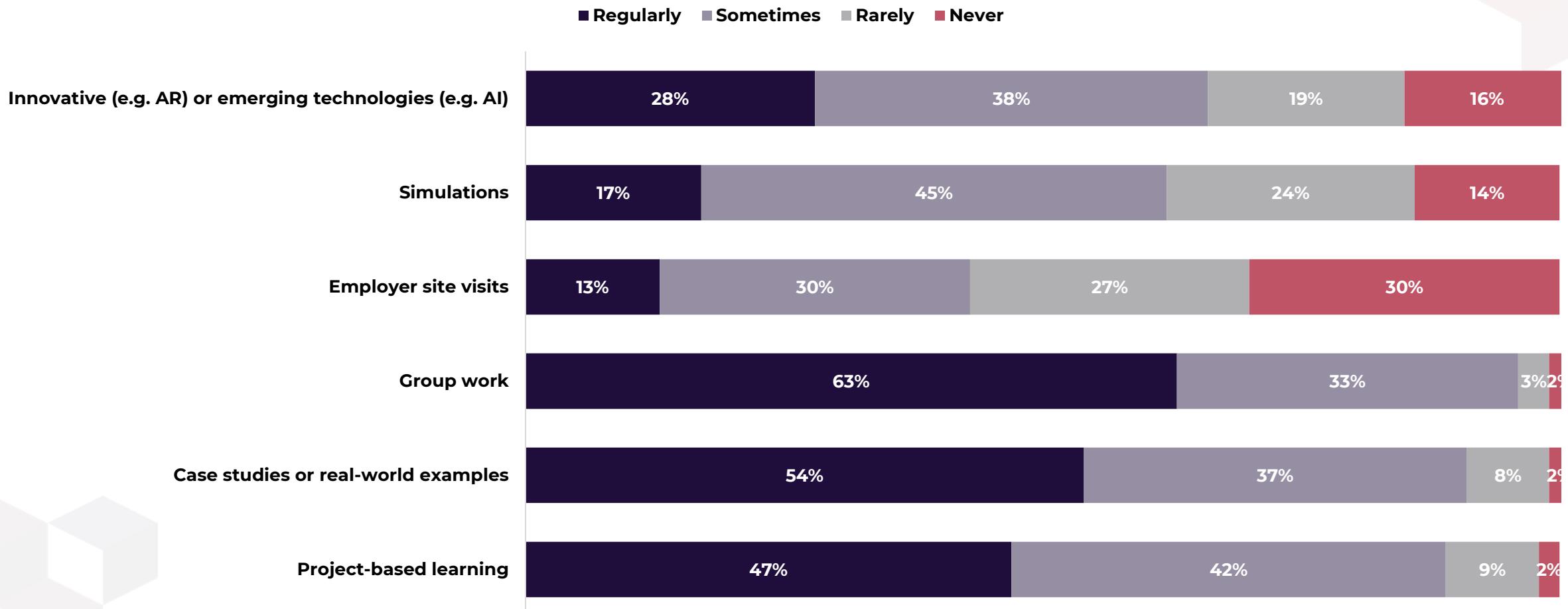
Q. Thinking about the demands of your job, how satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your program: (Alumni Survey November 2024) n=169

# Results by Dimension – *Relevance of Learning*

The institution could consider enhancing programs by fostering closer relationships with industry and leveraging technology



**A large share of students reported never or rarely being part of Employer Site Visits, Simulations and Innovative Technologies**



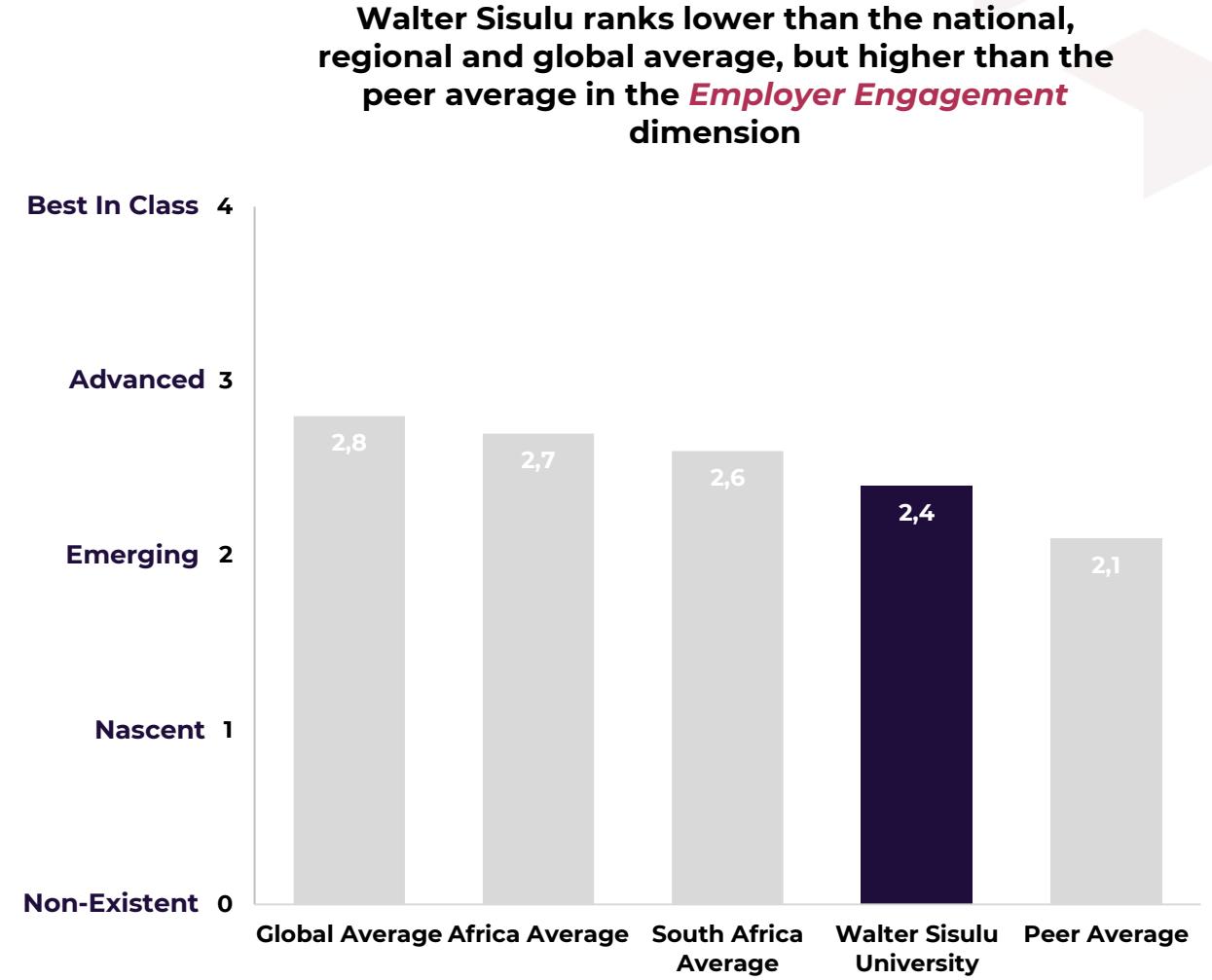
Q. Which of the following approaches have been part of your classroom experience: (Student Survey November 2024) n=576

## Results by Dimension – *Employer Engagement*

Walter Sisulu University performs below all averages, except its peers, reflecting the need to adopt a wider employer engagement strategy beyond existing initiatives

Employer engagement extends beyond input from industry to support relevance of learning. There is also ample opportunity to establish and adopt a broader employer engagement strategy to support entrepreneurship initiatives and work-integrated learning activities beyond existing offerings.

Furthermore, there is an opportunity to expand the corporate education unit as an additional stream of revenue by offering customized programs.



*The chart above shows the overall dimension score*



# Results by Dimension – *Employer Engagement*

The results from this dimension highlights the need for a wider employer engagement strategy with initiatives focused on entrepreneurship, WIL, and corporate education, specifically



Indicator	WSU	Peer 1 Public University (South Africa)	Peer 2 Public University (South Africa)	Peer 3 Top Performer Private University (Region Africa)	Peer 4 Private Institution (South Africa)
Resources and/or activities related to entrepreneurship and self-employment	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Support all students to secure WIL placements in addition to mandatory WIL requirements	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
Most WIL placements are paid	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
More than 50% of students participate in at least one WIL experience during their undergraduate studies	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
We have formal agreements with companies that host our students for WIL on a regular basis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
The institution has a dedicated corporate training unit that designs custom programs for companies, industries, and/or organizations	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗

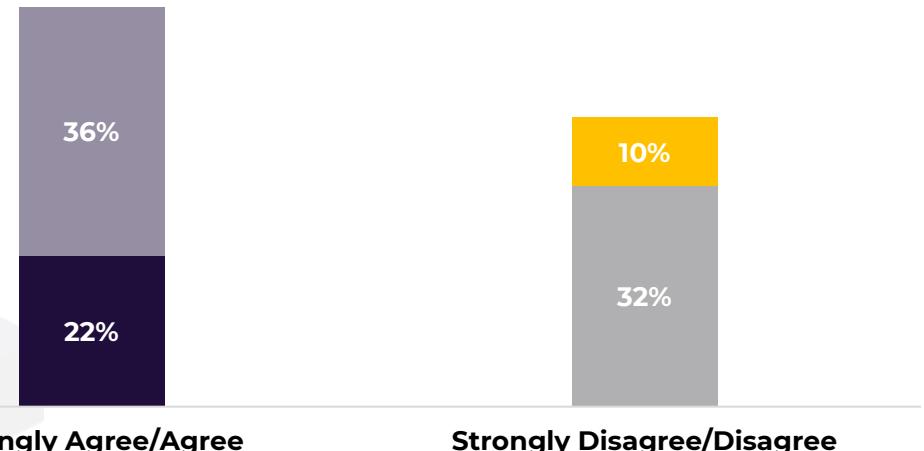
# Results by Dimension - *Employer Engagement*

Although a slight majority of graduates feel that they had opportunity to interact with industry, most graduates reported not having had a workplace-based learning experience.



**A larger proportion of graduates reported that the institution provides students with sufficient opportunity to interact with hiring companies and potential employers**

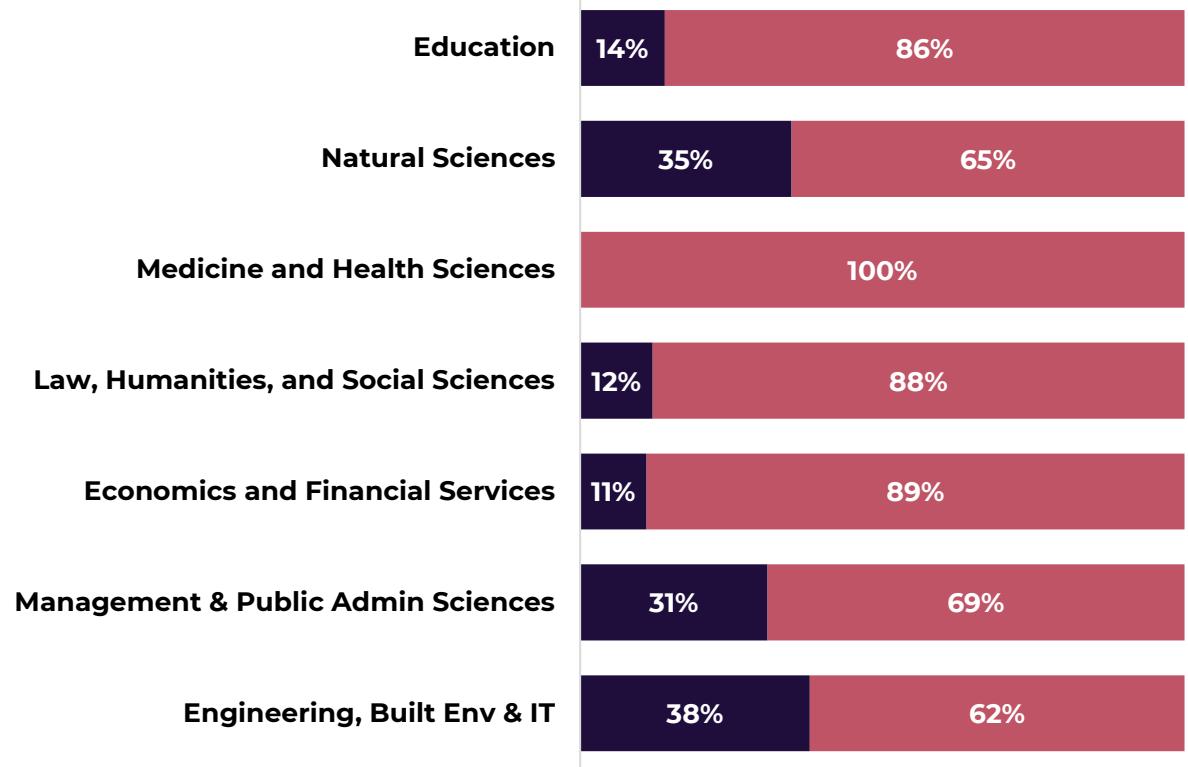
■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree



Q. This institution provides students with sufficient opportunities to interact with hiring companies and potential employers: (Alumni Survey November 2024) n=829

**The majority of graduates across all faculties reported that they had not had an internship / apprenticeship / traineeship as a student**

■ Yes ■ No



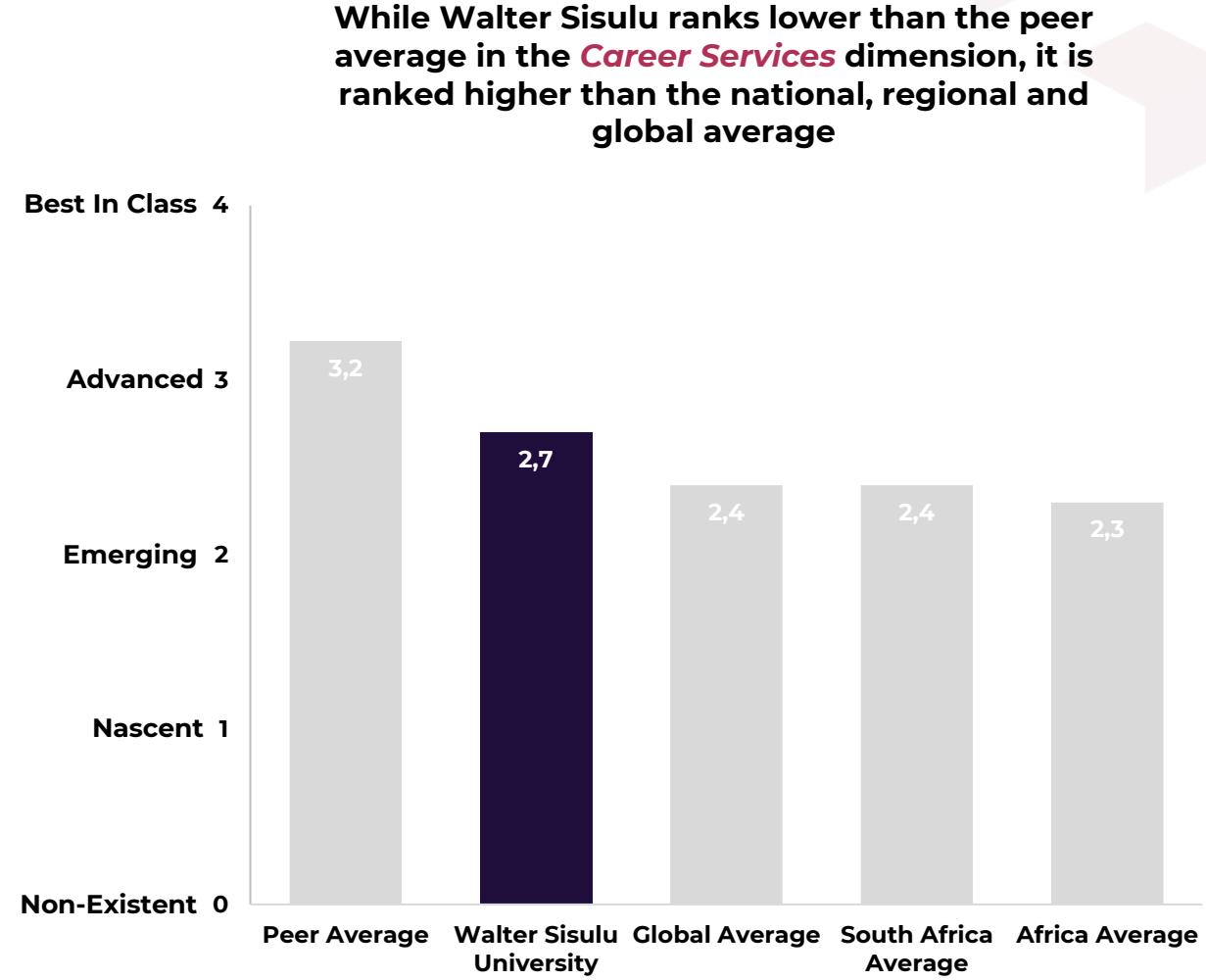
Q. While you were a student did you have an internship/apprenticeship/traineeship? (Alumni Survey November 2024) n=834

# Results by Dimension – *Career Services*

Walter Sisulu University outperforms global, regional, and local averages. Adopting practices implemented by the selected peers could shift delivery from emerging to advanced



Walter Sisulu University outperforms the global and regional averages, but not the peer average. Although certain services are available, it appears from the student survey that access, and utilization is low. The institution could consider expanding its offering in line with peers, by aligning career development with the full student lifecycle, and increasing the range of services on offer. WSU could also further benefit from utilizing technology to enhance the offering of asynchronous and customized services to students and graduates who require additional support.



*The chart above shows the overall dimension score*

# Results by Dimension – Career Services

Although Walter Sisulu University outperforms averages, there are opportunities to adopt good practices, processes and platforms utilized by peers.



Indicator	WSU	Peer 1 Public University (South Africa)	Peer 2 Public University (South Africa)	Peer 3 Top Performer Private University (Region Africa)	Peer 4 Private Institution (South Africa)
Dedicated team for providing career services/career coaching to students	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Career development embedded into curriculum	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
Ratio of career counseling, or services staff to students is 1 staff to <2,500 students	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Online, asynchronous career resources for students	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓

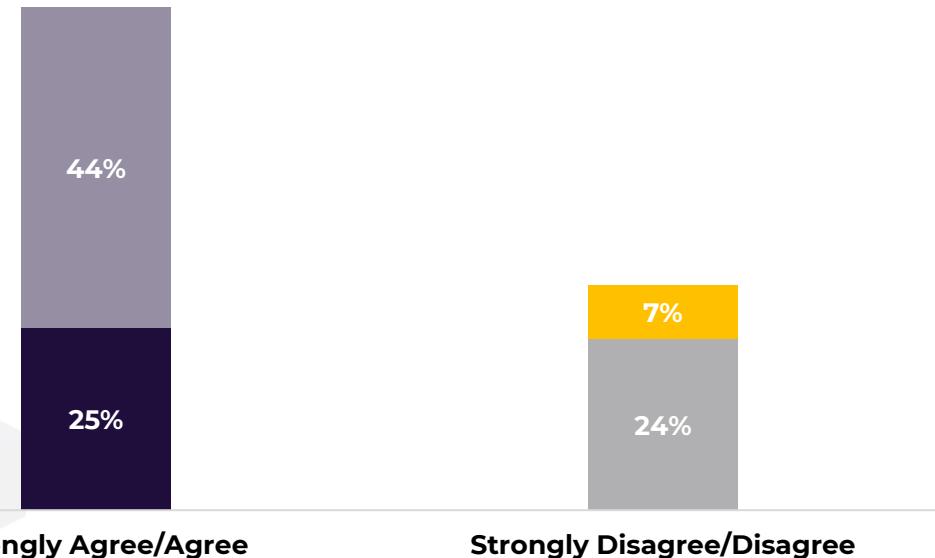
# Results by Dimension – Career Services

Overall, the results from the surveys reflect a high level of satisfaction with career services in general, from both students and graduates.



**A large proportion of students believe that the institution provides them with helpful career services and resources for their job search**

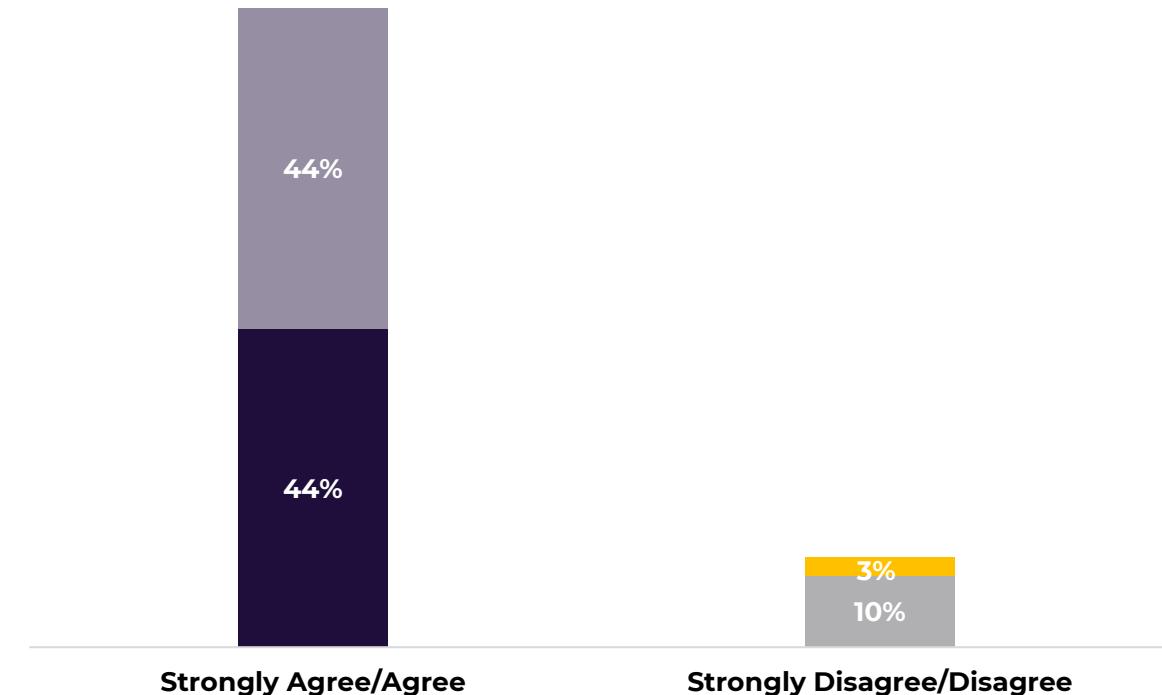
■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree



Q. This institution provides students with helpful career services and resources for their job search. (Student Survey November 2024) n=579

**The majority of graduates reported that they are satisfied with the quality of career guidance provided by the institution**

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree



Q. I am satisfied with the quality of career guidance provided by this institution. (Alumni Survey November 2024) n=839

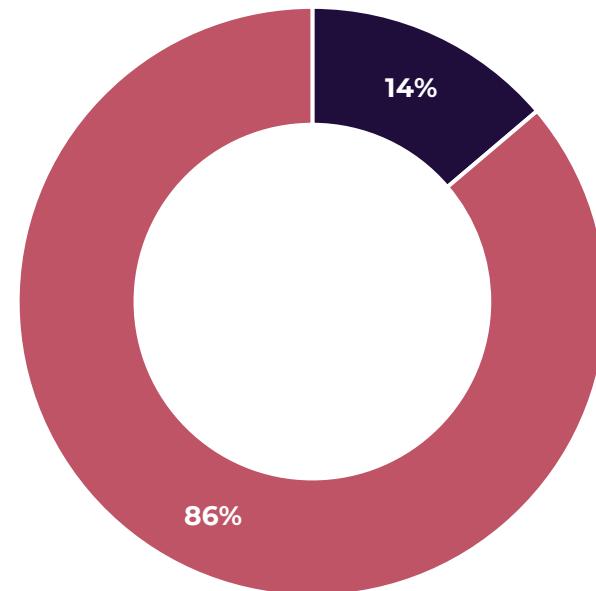
# Results by Dimension – Career Services

Deeper reflection on the graduate survey results indicate that there is opportunity to expand services offered to students and graduates.



**The majority of graduates were not assisted by career services to find a job**

■ Yes ■ No



Q. Did the career services at your institution assist you to find a job?  
(Alumni Survey November 2024) n=838

**The majority of employed graduates did not find their job through the institution**

Job postings not linked to my institution

38%

Personal connections/networking

22%

Career services at my institution

5%

Job fairs held at my institution

1%

University or institution job board

1%

Other

33%

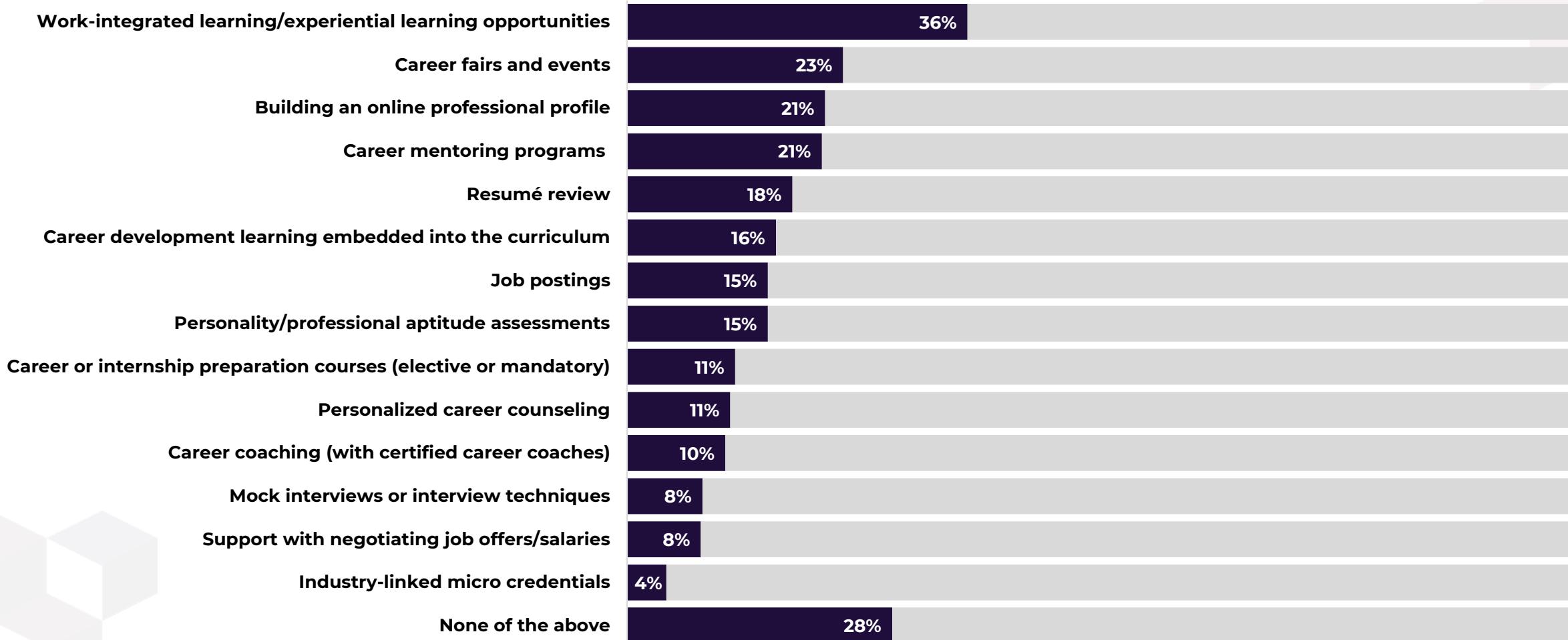
Q. How did you find your current job? Mark the best answer. (Alumni Survey November 2024) n=171

# Results by Dimension – Career Services

Although both graduates and students report WSU provides helpful career resources, the access to career services/resources seems limited and this impacts employment outcomes



**The majority of students did not access any of the listed services**



Q. Which of the following services have you accessed at this institution in the last 12 months (please select all that apply)? (Student Survey November 2024) n=575

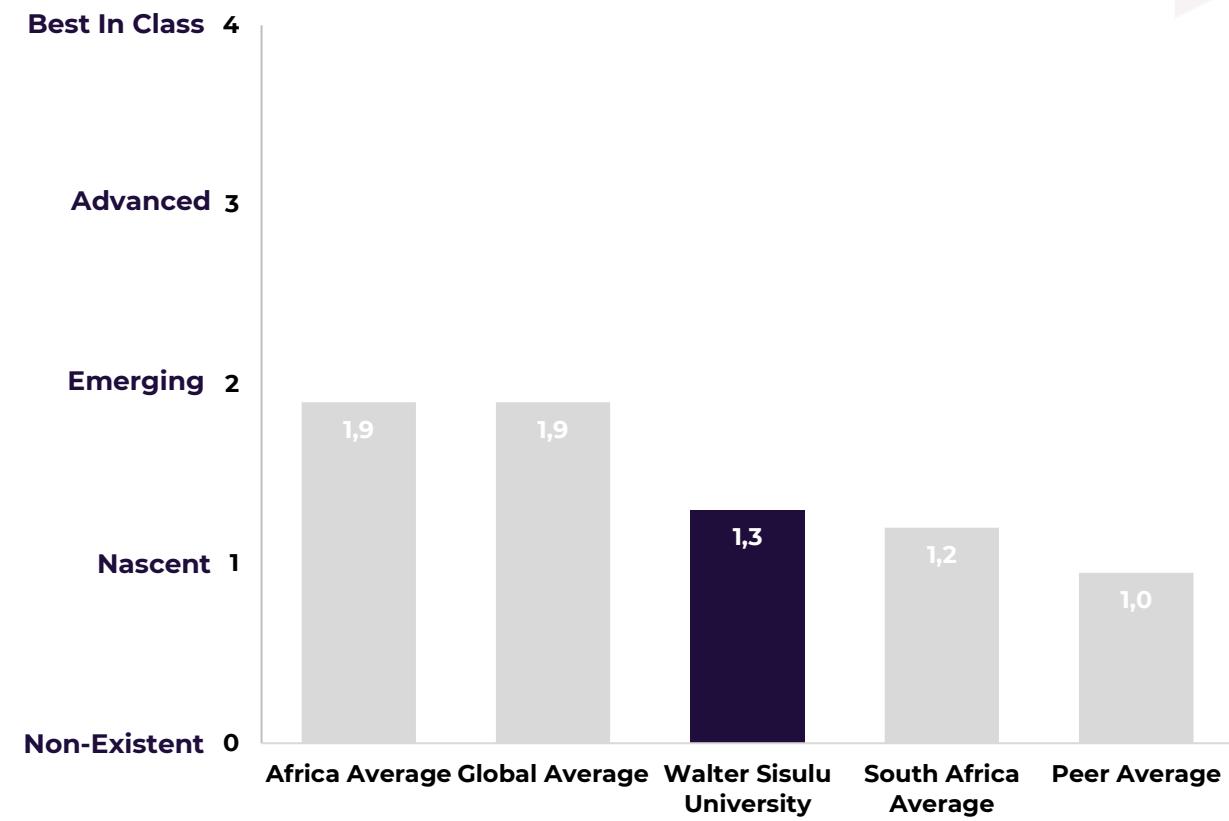
## Results by dimension – *Alumni Engagement*

Walter Sisulu University outperforms the local and peer average in alumni engagement but still has scope to establish stronger foundational processes in this area

Walter Sisulu University has existing relationships with alumni which can be expanded upon to enhance other employability practices. Examples of these could include WIL initiatives, support for entrepreneurship development, and career services.

There is also opportunity for Walter Sisulu to adopt technology to increase alumni engagement and secure opportunities for enhanced employability outcomes for students and unemployed graduates.

**Walter Sisulu ranks lower than the regional and global average in the *Alumni Engagement* dimension but higher than the national and peer average**



*The chart above shows the overall dimension score*

## Results by dimension – *Alumni Engagement*

There are opportunities for Walter Sisulu University to engage and leverage alumni through inclusion in other initiatives which support employability



Indicator	WSU	Peer 1 Public University (South Africa)	Peer 2 Public University (South Africa)	Peer 3 Top Performer Private University (Region Africa)	Peer 4 Private Institution (South Africa)
Industry partners in applied research projects	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Alumni participate in advisory committee or board members	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Engaging alumni as coaches/mentors in institutional incubator/accelerator	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
The institution engages alumni to support employability of students through other initiatives	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
Alumni engaged to support career development for students	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

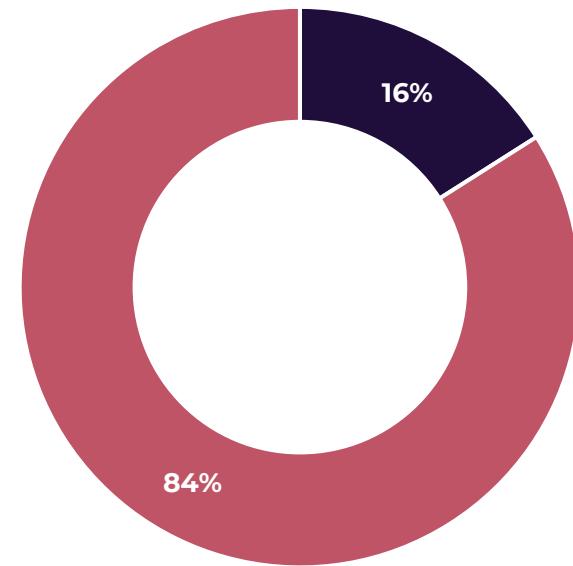
# Results by dimension – *Alumni Engagement*

Results from the graduate survey further illustrates potential opportunities to leverage alumni participation in initiatives



**More than 80% of the graduate respondents did not attend any event organized by the institution since graduation**

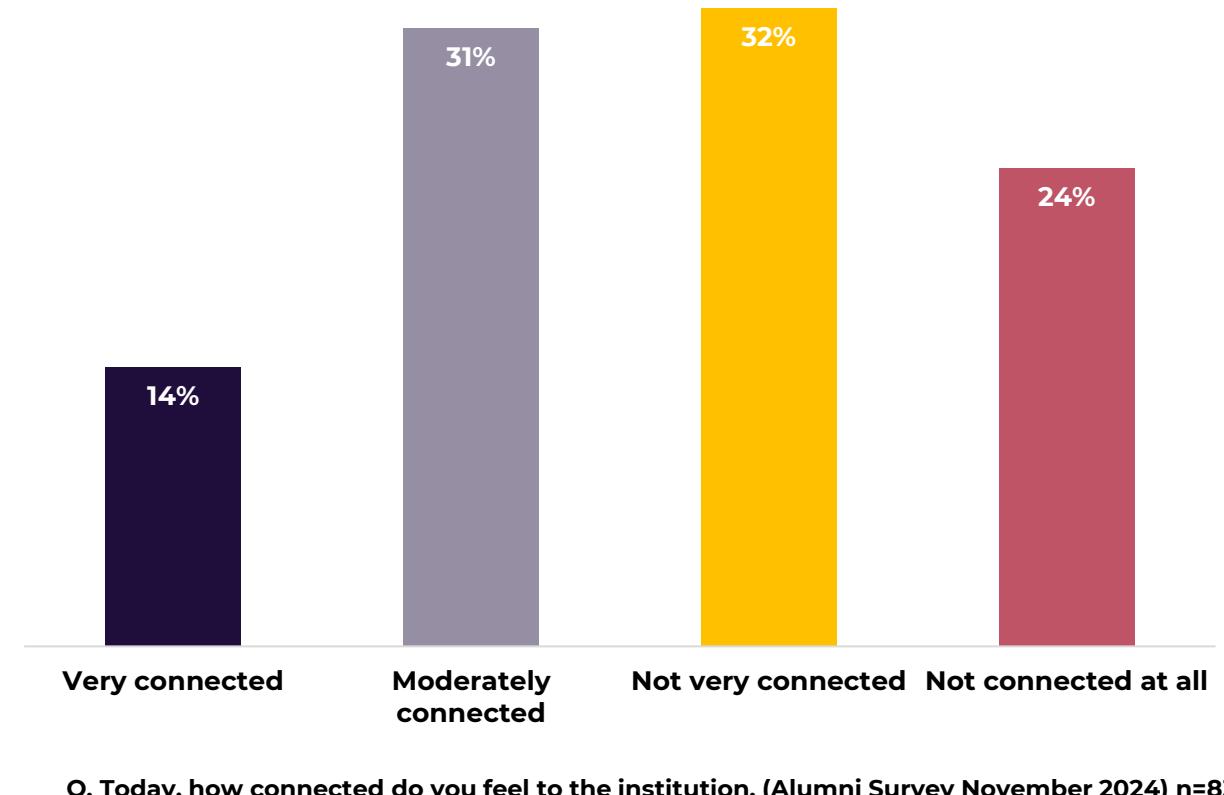
■ Yes ■ No



Q. Have you attended any events organized by the institution since graduation?. (Alumni Survey November 2024) n=838

**A slightly larger proportion of graduates do not feel connected to the institution**

■ Very connected ■ Moderately connected  
■ Not very connected ■ Not connected at all



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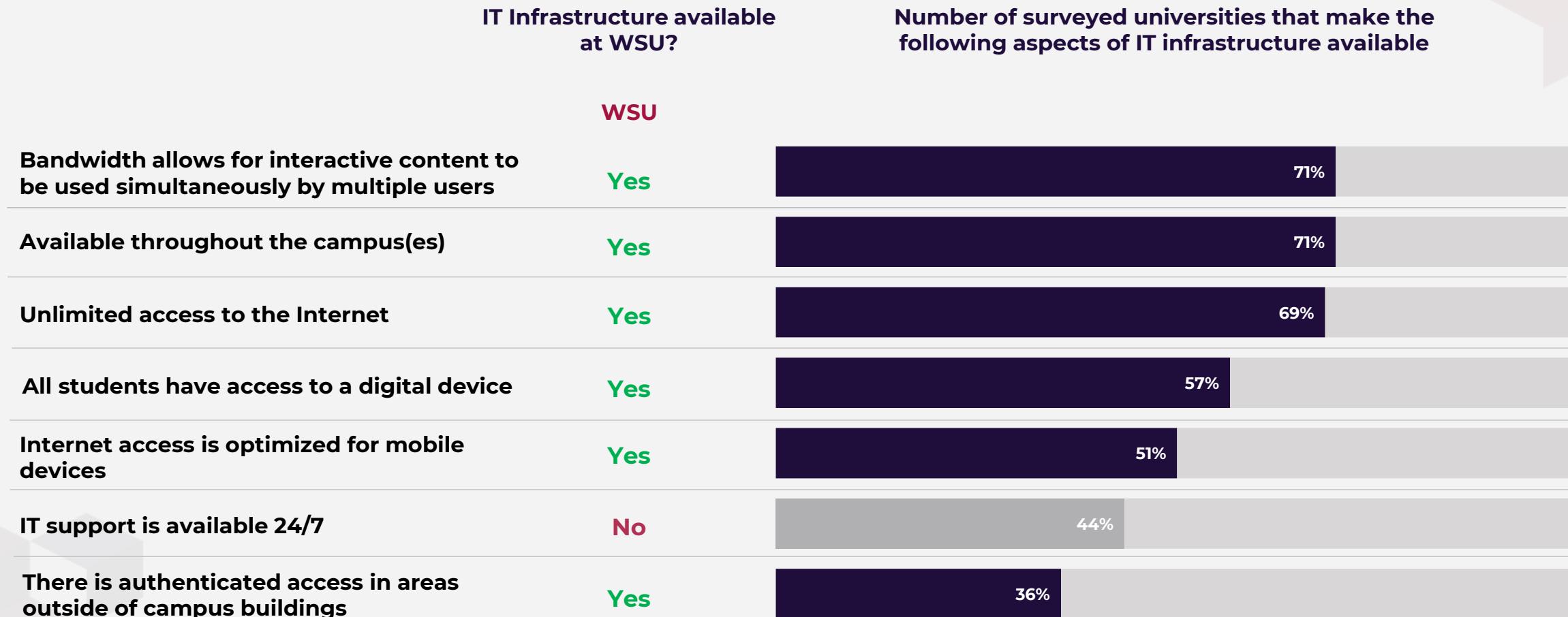
## 04. DIGITAL STRATEGY FINDINGS

# Digital Skills - IT Infrastructure

The IT Infrastructure supports core digital learning activities



## WSU outperforms peers



# Digital Skills - *Digital Library Holdings*

Overall, libraries provide a variety of digital resources



**WSU outperforms peers by providing a variety of digital resources, except for course reserves**

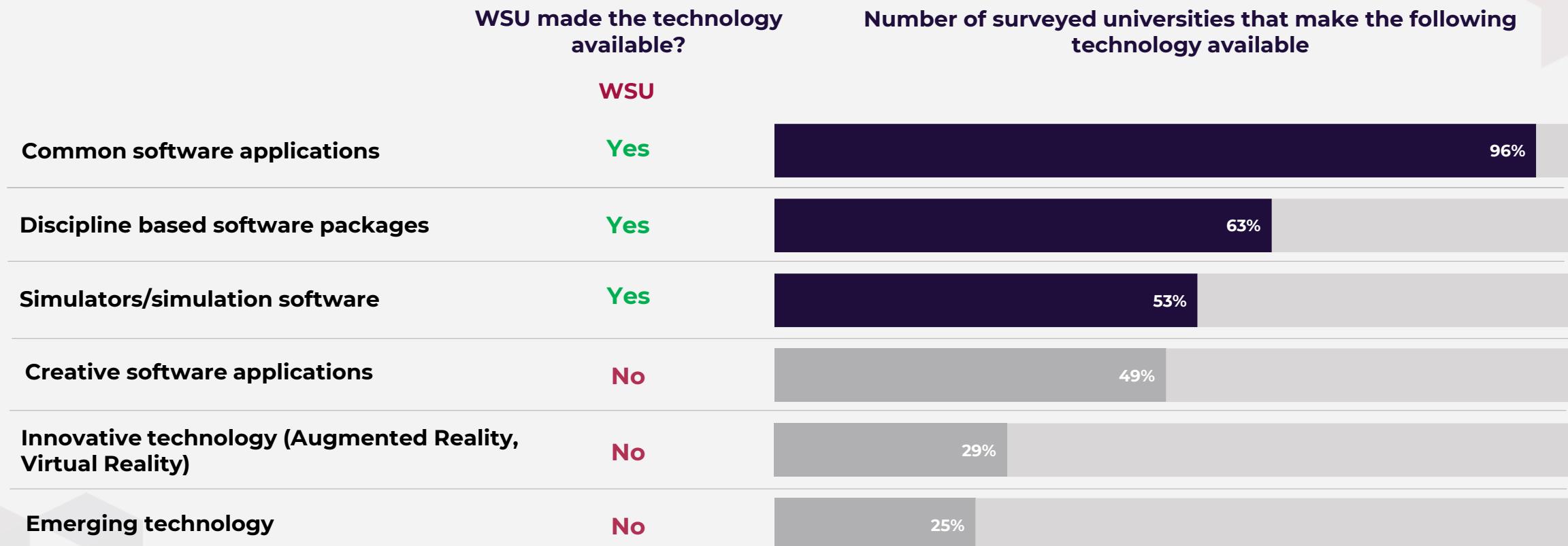


# Digital Skills - Technology Available To Students

Technology made available to all students is limited to common software applications and discipline-based software packages (where relevant)



**WSU provides a limited variety of software applications to students. It might be worthwhile to consider the use of creative, innovative and emerging technology, to strengthen market positioning and value proposition**

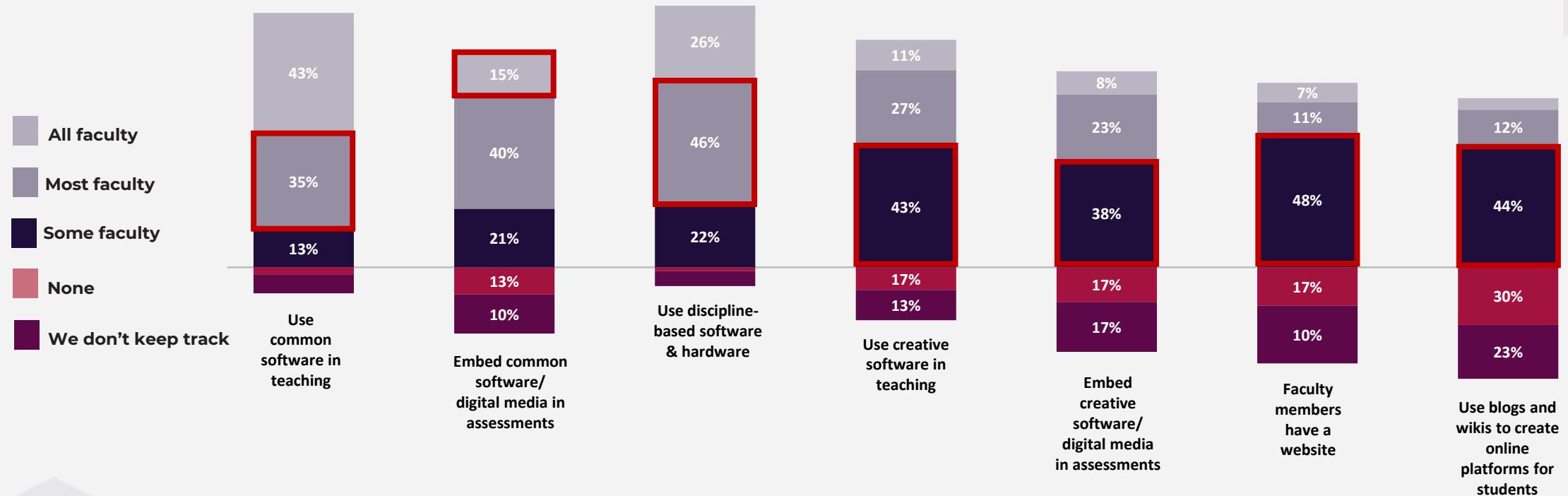


# Digital Skills - Faculty Use Of Technology

Most surveyed institutions lag behind best practices in use of digital learning strategies and level of faculty digital skills. This is particularly evident in the way faculty use creative software applications in teaching and assessments



**Like most surveyed institutions, WSU can further support the use of digital learning strategies in the classroom and faculty's mastery of digital skills (WSU's responses are highlighted in the red boxes).**



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## 05. RECOMMENDATIONS

WSU

# Recommendations Summary - WSU

1

## Data and Strategy - Align data collection and reporting with best practice



### Collect, analyze, and leverage data to support employability

1.a

The WSU graduate survey provides valuable information and insights, but is limited to outcomes at graduation. This practice can be expanded and enhanced in support of the institutions' vision of future-fit graduates. As a first step, the university should:

- Track graduate outcomes at least 12 months post graduation using a new survey complementary to the current graduate survey.
- Develop a standard protocol that includes common definitions and criteria, census week, survey calendars, data privacy and storage policies, and data collection mechanisms.
- Set goals and KPI's for employability.
- Reporting key indicators (such as employment rate, average salaries, satisfaction levels) by program, by campus and by demographic profile with at least 3 years of historical data to identify trends. This will support strategic and operational decision-making regarding program relevance, new offers, and intervention design and impact evaluation.

In addition, WSU may consider:

- Developing an employability dashboard to summarize key indicators tracked by leadership and facilitate data sharing.
- Use predictive and analytical tools to identify students at higher dropout and academic risk to tailor the existing interventions (e.g. Writing Center, Counseling) and offer additional support more efficiently. Given that nearly 90% of WSU students come from quintile 1-3 high schools, this will help use resources more effectively and enhance the current reactive resources that are available to students upon request.

### Leverage data to identify students at risk and initiate relevant support

1.b

# Recommendations Summary - WSU

2

## Expand Scope of Career Services Provision



### 2.a Integrate Career Development into the Curriculum

Good practice is applying a student-centred approach by integrating career development in the entire student lifecycle at program level. Career development should consist of both synchronous and asynchronous initiatives which align with student career development needs with cognisance of socio-economic context and individual development needs. While WSU 101 is a noteworthy curricular intervention, it focuses primarily on the induction of students as part of the first-year experience and should only be the first touch point of many career development steps a student can be expected to go through.

#### Recommendations:

- Develop asynchronous online content to help students with career development. See IFC's [Career Tips](#) page as an example of a simple boot-strapped platform that can be created for students (currently only available in French). Content can be made available on the WSU website and/or be integrated into an LMS or career services platform to enhance accessibility.
- 'Integrate career development within the entire student lifecycle. Career development should include curricular and co-curricular initiatives, be both institution-led and student-led, and made available synchronously and asynchronously, as relevant. Basic activities should include: orientation to career services for new students, support creating a LinkedIn or professional profile, career advising, discipline specific workshops, support in creating CVs, interview simulations, and a career services library.
- Create career development maps at the program level. (See an example at [Queens University](#)).

# Recommendations Summary - WSU

2

## Expand Scope of Career Services Provision



### 2.b Adopt digital solutions in career services

- WSU should articulate a digital transformation strategy for Career Services given the scale and geographic spread of the student body that the university services (across career software/career platforms, LinkedIn Learn, LinkedIn Insights, AI powered interview software).
- Leveraging technologies can help WSU create a funnel for employability support and scale the services to reach all students virtually and asynchronously: students should be able to first access career education content online (e.g. current job-data, labor market trends, job reports, etc.), then interact with more individualized online resources (resume builders, resume critique, video interviews, career coaching, job boards, career matching, psychometric tests, etc.), before receiving one-on-one counseling and coaching, thus making efficient use of career advisors' time. Third-party platforms often allow for integration with the Student Information Systems, allowing for additional analysis for identifying success and risk factors in students. Examples include: Big Interview, GradLeaders, Simplicity, Vmock, 12Twenty, all provide a variety of career services tools and resources, as well as monitoring mechanisms. See this example at [National University of Singapore VMock Career Platform](#) (note: how-to and description of functionality is available, but access is restricted to students and alumni).
- WSU can also consider engaging alumni in career coaching for current students. When structured with adequate incentives, alumni can play a valuable role in the helping students with mock interviews, resume critique, salary negotiation practice, and mentoring. Technology can also play an active role in facilitating the automated networking between alumni and students. See [UTEL's example](#) in Mexico.

# Recommendations Summary - WSU

3

## Enhance Relevance of Teaching and Learning



### Strengthen resources for faculty development

3.a

While WSU offers support to its faculty on a range of topics, including innovative pedagogies and teaching with technology, there is an opportunity to enhance the in-service support to faculty so that students and future graduates are consistently experiencing the best-in-class teaching and learning. Qualitative feedback indicated that the quality of teaching varied significantly across individual teaching faculty members. WSU is encouraged to review current support for all faculty teaching in the following key areas:

- Fundamentals of Teaching and Learning – focused on course design that embeds innovative assessments aligned with learning outcomes in each course.
- Teaching with technology – the current support for faculty in teaching with technology seems to be limited to the “mechanics” of technology, i.e., how to set it up, integrate with LMS, and use the equipment, rather than the pedagogy of technology - how to use it effectively in teaching and learning, or more current tools (AI, teaching tools such as ExamSoft, Kaltura, etc.).
- Inclusive teaching/Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all students.
- Scholarly practice – This could support the expansion of applied research with private sector partners, for example, by encouraging faculty members to seek partnerships.
- WSU should make aspects of its current faculty development program mandatory (especially for new hires) and consider mandating the post-graduate diploma in teaching (currently under consideration) for progression.
- Additionally, to improve communication with faculty, WSU should create a Teaching and Learning website with multiple resources available to teachers posted on the site. [National University of Singapore](#) and [Columbia University](#) offer good examples of online repositories for teaching and learning.

### Develop online resources for faculty

3.b

# Recommendations Summary - WSU

3

## Enhance Relevance of Teaching and Learning



3.c

### Standardize and expand Industry Advisory Bodies

- WSU faculties have begun forming advisory boards with substantial external representation (e.g. up to 12 members in the Economics and Financial Sciences). It would benefit WSU to standardize these advisory committees across all Faculties and campuses and to expand their mandates. Industry advisory committees do not replace any other academic committees at the program level. They are complementary, provide insight from the labor market, and usually meet twice a year. They are comprised of business leaders and alumni, are external to the institution (no parttime faculty) and voluntary. Typically, these advisory bodies have a minimum 8-12 external members at program/program cluster level.
- With regards their mandate, aside from providing input to the curricular review process, advisory committees should support career services / work-integrated learning provision, the design of applied research projects, access to infrastructure and equipment, and the identification of upskilling-reskilling needs / trends.
- See some examples: [Kumasi Technical University](#); Toronto Metropolitan University [Hospitality and Tourism Management](#); Northeastern University [School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs](#)

3.d

### Integrate digital literacy outcomes in the digital learning strategy

- Develop a common digital literacy strategy. Digital literacy is a core employability skill that ensures students can transfer knowledge easily to new technology. It involves ability to evaluate and create digital content safely and appropriately. Some institutions are spreading typical learning outcomes across the curriculum, while others offer a Digital Literacy or Digital Citizenship common/core courses.

# Recommendations Summary - WSU

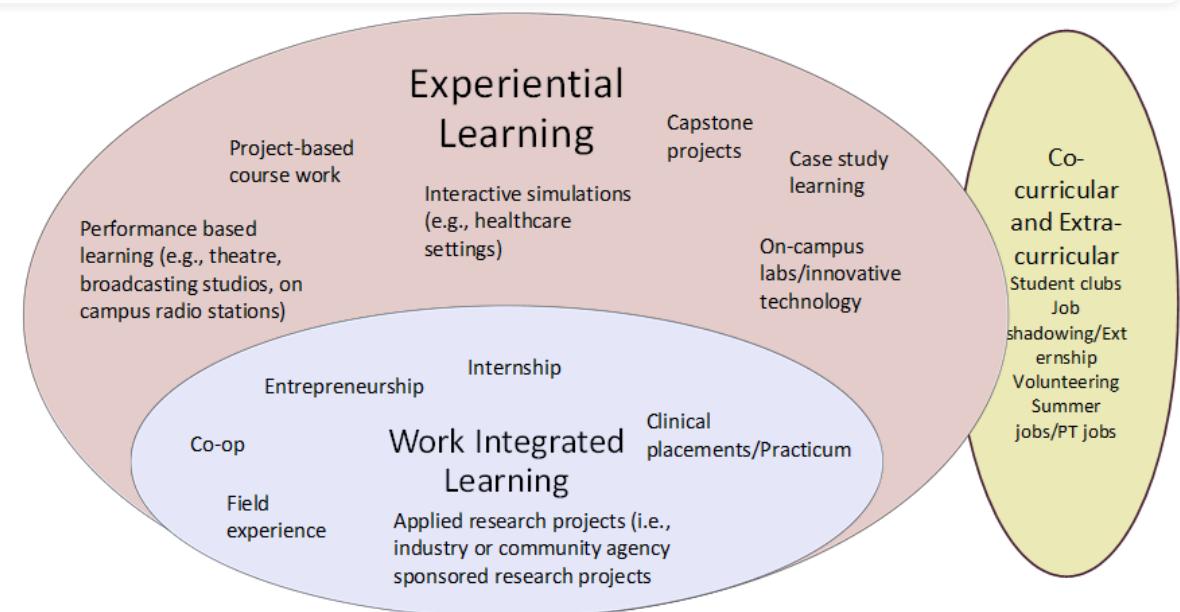
4

## Additional Considerations

### 4.a Adopt broader definition of Work Integrated Learning and mandate WIL where not already required.

- WIL is not currently mandatory in all programs at WSU. WSU should consider including some form of WIL (differentiated from simulated work or experiential learning) in all of its programs. In addition, the university should consider enhancing Work Integrated Learning (WIL) beyond mandatory internships. WIL is an important tool that enhances employability of graduates specifically when related to external, non-simulated experiences. WSU should:
  - Develop WIL framework for early and mid-year students (rather than limit it to final years)
  - Adopt a variety of WIL modalities (field visits, service learning, applied research in collaboration with industry, externships/job shadowing, etc.).
  - Join global communities to engage with peers on WIL.

**Experiential Learning Chart  
(adapted from the [CEWIL](#) and [MAESD](#))**



# Recommendations Summary - WSU

4

## Additional Considerations



### **4.b Adopt AR in partnership with industry as part of the WIL strategy**

- Building on existing experience with applied research, WSU should consider expanding industry partnerships at the program level (leveraging industry advisory bodies) specifically to solve problems in the industry/employment setting or community through faculty-led applied research projects that involve undergraduate students as a strategy. These projects should ideally be interdisciplinary and across qualifications to give students additional exposure.
- Best practices in applied research involve a) mobilizing and incentivizing faculty (contracts, release time, internal grants, support with external grant writing, etc.), b) including applied research in industry partnership models (an add-on to MOUs whenever possible), c) identifying external funding opportunities in the public and private sector, d) advocacy among relevant public and private sector stakeholders, and e) international industry partnerships in AR (common in computer science) etc. The strategy may also include membership in relevant international associations, attendance at conferences and industry events.

### **4.c Expand the Life-Long Learning Strategy**

- Building on the short learning program directorate's experience, expand the Life-Long learning unit/operation to upskill alumni and community at large in the Eastern Cape.
- Consider articulating a strategy on industry partnerships that includes upskilling and reskilling to industry partners (workforce development) in the region and South Africa broadly.

# Recommendations Summary - WSU

4

## Additional Considerations

### Improve access and awareness of the brand proposition through the website

4.d

WSU's website is its primary communication channel for many prospective students and employers. WSU should define clear strategies to demonstrate its value proposition. As a first step, WSU could:

- Remove malware, broken links.
- Leverage student body to improve website functionality while providing students with practical experience.
- Include relevant career and faculty development content for WSU community members.

In addition, WSU should create up-to-date and relevant content for specific audiences (e.g. prospects, current students, parents, faculty members, alumni, employers, etc.). This would support engagement in applied research projects, work integrated learning, entrepreneurship, mentorship, and career services.

# Recommendations Summary - WSU

## Overview for discussion



Data and Strategy	Career Services	Teaching and Learning	Additional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect, analyze, and leverage data to support employability</li> <li>• Leverage data to identify students at risk and initiate relevant support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate Career Development into the Curriculum</li> <li>• Adopt digital solutions in career services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen resources for faculty development</li> <li>• Develop online resources for faculty</li> <li>• Standardize and expand Industry Advisory Bodies</li> <li>• Integrate digital literacy outcomes in the digital learning strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt broader definition of Work Integrated Learning and mandate WIL where not already required.</li> <li>• Adopt applied research in partnership with industry as part of the WIL strategy</li> <li>• Expand the Life-Long Learning Strategy</li> <li>• Improve access and awareness of the brand proposition through the website</li> </ul>

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## 06. STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED

# WSU Internal Stakeholders Interviewed



Date(s)	Name	Title
02 Dec 2024	Prof Manoj Panicker	Executive Dean: Faculty of Economic and Financial Sciences
	Prof Albert Thembinkosi Modi	Executive Dean: Faculty of Natural Sciences
	Prof Bulelwa Nguza-Mduba	Executive Dean: Faculty of Management and Public Administration Sciences
	Prof Wilson Wezile Chitha	Executive Dean: Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences
	Prof Wellington Didibhuku Thwala	Executive Dean: Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology

# WSU Internal Stakeholders Interviewed



Date(s)	Name	Faculty / Department	Name	Faculty / Department
02 Dec 2024	Prof Fortune Ganda	Accounting	Mrs Nolwazi Ndamase	Education
	Prof Olukayode Adeleke	Medicine & Health	Mr Samuel Adjei-Frimpong	Information & Electrical Engineering
	Assoc Prof Augustine Niba	Biological & Environmental Sciences	Mr Kgomoitso David Mosimanyane	Mechanical Engineering
	Dr Stenford Matenda	Marketing, PR & Communications	Prof Ernesto Blanco-Blanco	Medicine & Health
	Dr Zikhona Seleke	Accounting	Mrs Ntombophelo Sithole	Psychology
	Mr Senzo Ndlangamandla	Accounting	Dr Jose Lukose	Business & Applications Development
	Ms Bongiwe Xhoseni	Psychology	Ms Sheila Da Silva	Psychology
	Mr Chrispin Kabuya	Mathematical Sciences & Computing	Mr Zamile Mpeta	Mechanical Engineering

# WSU Internal Stakeholders Interviewed



Date(s)	Name	Unit / Department	Name	Unit / Department
03 Dec 2024	Miss Nombulelo Blaai	Student Development	Mr Zwelijongile Baleni	Academic Staff Development
	Mrs Nontsikelelo Moyikwa	Work-integrated Learning	Ms Nokuzola Dangazele	Faculty: Natural Science
	Mr Sabelo Malindisa	Entrepreneurship	Mr Sindile Mawisa	Quality Assurance
	Ms Dorris Mnengi	Student Support	Mr Mfundu Funani	Faculty: Natural Science
	Mr Mzolisi Payi	Community & International Partnerships	Mr Francis Kwahene	Academic Planning
			Mr Skaplan Skosana	Faculty: Management and Public Admin Science
			Mrs Nomfanelo Mbiza	Teaching & Learning
			Mr Mzwanele Toni	Quality Assurance

# WSU Internal Stakeholders Interviewed



Date(s)	Name	Unit / Department	Name	Unit / Department
04 Dec 2024	Ms Amanda Joe Mr Andreas Mphumzi Dlamini Mr Bizo Bomela Ms Khulukazi Madikizela Ms Okuhle Nkondlwana Mr Lulama Cwala	Continuing Professional Teacher Development Student Counselling Writing Centre Student Affairs Student Counselling Education, Teaching & Learning	Miss Nompumelo Lufuso Mr Nkositethile Sidinile Miss Hezeline Nxenye Mr Prince Dabula Ms Ziyanda Mavumengwana Ms Refiloe Khitsane	Education, Teaching & Learning Student Counselling Education, Teaching & Learning Student Health & Wellness Student Counselling Work-integrated Learning

# WSU Internal Stakeholders Interviewed



Date(s)	Name	Unit / Department	Name
04 Dec 2024	Mr Sive Finini	Operations and ICT	Mr Nkosinathi Zulu
	Dr Samuel Ncoyini	Library & Information Services	Dr Munienge Mbodila
	Mrs Bulelwa Gxwem	Resource Center	Mr Tshepo Rabotapi
	Mr Louis Mapatagane	Institutional Research & Planning	Ms Zikona Macibela
	Mr Lungile Mdanyana	Library & Information Services	Mrs Thandokazi Mfikoyi
	Dr Tiyani Tyson Mabunda	Library & Information Services	Learning and Teaching with Technology
			Learning and Teaching Development
			Learning and Teaching with Technology

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## 07. SPECIAL RECOGNITION: WSU PROJECT TEAM

# WSU Project Team



Special recognition and gratitude to the WSU Core Project Team:

Name	Project Role
Dr Munienge Mbodila	Project Leader
Mr Anele Bangani	Organization
Miss Regomoditswe Mkhabela	Administration and Set-up



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[vitaeready.org](http://vitaeready.org)

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