



## We need more PhDs

PhD students should be encouraged and incentivised to complete their doctorates.

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<https://upjournals.co.za/index.php/LIS/article/view/3710>

In the national development plan for 2030, there is a target to produce more than one hundred doctorates per million people in South Africa every single year. This target is currently a mirage, as the current figures are below

international standards. This situation is emphasised by a joke trending at universities that says: “A PhD takes four years to complete, but the first five years are the hardest.” Many students who enrol for a PhD never complete it.

Two professors in the Department of Information Science at UNISA have examined the throughput rates of information science doctoral students at South African universities between 2005 and 2015.

“There are several contributing factors to the low number of graduating PhD students, ranging from capacity by academics, to race and nationality of supervisors versus students,” says Professor Mpho Ngoepe. “This is exacerbated by employers in South Africa who do not value a PhD qualification. For example, as long as you have a national diploma or degree, you can rise to the level of director-general or CEO of a company in South Africa.”

The South African government, as the biggest employer, should recognise higher qualifications and so encourage PhD enrolments, and the private sector should follow suit. This would usher South Africa into the research economy.

“Failure to transform the situation will lead to more woes, such as those experienced with regard to the #FeesMustFall student movement. The funding model for postgraduate students should also be revised to invest more in local students.”



*PhD students should be encouraged to graduate.*



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