NAMCOL Tracer Study of Former Learners: 2005-2010

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CED: Certificate in Education for Development, one of NAMCOL's PPs; **CLGS:** Certificate in Local Government Studies, one of NAMCOL's PPs; **DE:** Distance Education; **DED:** Diploma in Education for Development, one of NAMCOL's PPs; **HE:** Higher Education; **HEI:** Higher Education Institution; **ICDL:** International Computer Driving Licence; **ICT:** information and communications technology; **IGCSE:** International General Certificate of Secondary Education, the predecessor of the NSSCO that was discontinued in 2006; **INSET:** In-Service Education and Training; **IUM:** International University of Management; **JSC:** Junior Secondary Certificate, taken at the end of the junior cycle of secondary education comprising Grades 8 – 10; **MoE:** Ministry of Education; **NAMCOL:** Namibian College of Open Learning; **NEC 2011:** National Education Conference that took place in June/July 2011; **NETS:** Namibia Evangelical Theological Seminary; **NGO:** Non-Governmental Organisation; **NIED:** National Institute for Educational Development, a Directorate in the MoE; **NIMT:** National Institute for Mining Technology; **NSSC:** National Senior Secondary Certificate, taken at the end of the senior cycle of secondary education comprising Grades 11 and 12; **NSSCH:** National Senior Secondary Certificate, Higher level; **NSSCO:** National Senior Secondary Certificate, Ordinary level; **ODL:** Open and Distance Learning; **PoN:** Polytechnic of Namibia; **PP:** NAMCOL's Professional Programmes; **Saide:** South African Institute for Distance Education; **SEP:** NAMCOL's Secondary Education Programme (since 2008, formerly referred to as the Alternative Secondary Education Programme); **SME:** Small and Medium Enterprise; **SMS:** Short Message Service; **TVET:** Technical & Vocational Education and Training; **UNAM:** University of Namibia; **UNISA:** University of South Africa; **VTC:** Vocational Training Centre.

INTRODUCTION

In April 2011, the Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) advertised for expressions of interest to conduct a tracer study of former learners. Following an open tender competition, the South African Institute for Distance Education (Saide) was awarded the contract. Building upon the findings of a similar study in 2007,[1] this project aimed to find out how former learners perceive their experience of studying with NAMCOL. The researchers also sought to determine what has happened to former learners since they left the College, whether they went on to pursue further education and training or sought employment, and how their time with NAMCOL prepared them for these tasks.

Between August and November 2011, a team of researchers from Saide and staff at NAMCOL worked collaboratively to develop research instruments, distribute these, collect data and analyse the results. This report presents an overview of the 2011 NAMCOL Tracer Study.

Background

NAMCOL is a semi-autonomous education institution, established by an act of the Namibian Parliament and funded through the Ministry of Education. In terms of Section 4 of the NAMCOL Act (No. 1 of 1997), the College has a broad mandate to broaden access to education by designing, developing and offering programmes of open learning that address the diverse educational needs and upgrade the level of general education among adults and out-of-school youths. The College became fully operational in April 1998, when it took over responsibility for a number of programmes previously offered by different units within the Ministry.

The College's core activity has traditionally been its Secondary Education Programme (SEP), which enables those who cannot or do not wish to attend a conventional school to study for either the Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC or Grade 10) or the Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate (NSSC or Grade 12). Learners who register for the SEP receive a full set of self-study materials for each subject. In addition, they are provided with a range of academic supports, including face-to-face sessions with

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[1] Alicia Fentiman, Tracer Study of Former NAMCOL Learners, Research Report (Cambridge, UK: International Research Foundation for Open Learning, February 2007). NAMCOL

tutors. Those who opt for the Contact Mode of study receive three to five hours of tuition per week in each subject at one of roughly a hundred tutorial centres located at venues around the country. Those who cannot attend these sessions are registered as Non-Contact Learners and can avail of intensive tuition during workshops scheduled twice per year during school vacations. The curricula for the SEP is exactly the same as followed in conventional schools and the self-study materials provided by NAMCOL conform to the syllabi prescribed by the MoE National Curriculum Panels for each subject. Learners registered with the College sit exactly for the same examinations as their school-based counterparts, which are administered by a unit within the Ministry.

In addition to the SEP, NAMCOL offers a number of post-secondary certificates and diploma programmes in professional disciplines. Since 2008, the College has organised a Pre-Entry to Tertiary Education Programme to assist school-leavers who wish to upgrade their symbols in the NSSC examinations in order to secure a place in a higher education institution. There are also two Computer-Based Learning Centres, located at the NAMCOL campuses in Katutura and Ongwediva, where learners can develop the competencies required for the award of the International Computer Driving Licence. NAMCOL is the largest education institution in Namibia, with over 31,000 learners registered for studies in the 2011 academic year.

Unfortunately, the general public in Namibia have been slow to accept that open and distance learning (ODL) methods can provide education of comparable, or even better, quality than that available in conventional schools or higher education institutions.[2] Some stakeholders have expressed scepticism that NAMCOL's SEP can provide a viable and cost-effective solution to the high rate of failure in the JSC and NSSC examinations. These sceptics express doubts that learners who fail after several years of studying in the formal system can successfully complete their secondary schooling through an ODL institution, such as NAMCOL. Even when the College's learners manage to pass the NSSC examination, there is a widespread belief that they do not fare as well as learners from conventional schools in the competition for places in higher education institutions or for jobs in the formal sector of the economy.

NAMCOL continuously monitors and evaluates its programmes and services in order to introduce improvements that will benefit its learners and other stakeholders. Nevertheless, it was decided to employ independent consultants to gather evidence on the impact of the NAMCOL experience on the lives of former learners over a period of time. Through an impartial report of the findings of this Tracer Study, the College's Management hopes to dispel misconceptions about the SEP, to prove its critics wrong and to restore public confidence in the services it offers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tracer studies have become a widely-used tool for education or other types of institutions to determine the impact of their services on former learners or clients.[3]

The tracer studies encompass a wide range of diverse efforts which can provide intellectual building blocks for newer undertakings, if we can only learn to build on the old while attempting the new. The availability of such studies to the broader field of research and educational evaluation moves forward the potential of knowledge about high quality service.[4]

Tracer studies need to be timed carefully, so as to ensure sufficient time has elapsed to provide useful results, while at the same time still being able to reach the learners:

The important rule might be to ensure that the programme keeps good enough records from the very start so that tracing will be possible as and when it is decided to do so.[5]

Unfortunately, while such studies may prove useful for improving the relevance and quality of the services provided, the information obtained is frequently commercially-sensitive or the studies are so narrowly-focused that it is difficult to generalise from the results. For this reason, the established body of literature on tracer studies is quite limited.

Response rates are often quite low in tracer studies, and so multiple methods are often required to reach as large a sample as possible.

In 2007 Dr Alicia Fentiman, of the International Research Foundation for Open Learning, and Jan Nitschke, NAMCOL's Research and Evaluation Manager, carried out the first tracer study for the College. A total of 478 completed questionnaires were received from former learners, and a sample of 75 of these respondents were interviewed in depth. Some findings of the study include:

•   The most popular subjects of NAMCOL learners in that period were English as a 2nd language, Development Studies, Biology/Life Science, Natural Economy and Mathematics;
•   39% of the sample were enrolled in further education;
•   56% of former learners were employed; and

[2] Mhlanga, Du Vivier, and Mays (2011). *Review of the Roles & Functions of NAMCOL*, pp. 33, 37-38 and 41-56; Mmekoa and Allsop (2005). *Review of the Role and Function of the Namibian College of Open Learning*, pp. 15-16.

[3] Millington, C. (no date). *The Use of Tracer Studies for Enhancing Relevance and Marketability in Online and Distance Education.* http://wikieducator.org/images/e/e1/PID_424.pdf. Accessed January 2012.
[4] Cohen (2004). *Introducing Tracer Studies*. The Hague : Bernard van Leer Foundation. P 15.
[5] *Ibid.*, P 21.

- 39% of the sample reported that NAMCOL made a significant difference in helping them to find employment.

References are made to relevant data from that study in the discussion of the findings from the present research.

At the time this tracer study was taking place, another team of researchers from Saide was conducting a *Review of the Roles and Functions of NAMCOL*, which was a follow-up to a similar study undertaken in 2005.[6] The Roles and Functions study involved broad consultations with stakeholders, using individual interviews, focus group discussions and mini-workshops. Although former NAMCOL learners were not contacted, the data obtained by the Saide team from current learners, their parents, education officials, political office-bearers and other stakeholders provides a useful basis for triangulating the findings of this Tracer Study. Reference is made to relevant findings from the Roles & Functions review when discussing the data obtained in this study.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study, as defined in the terms of reference, were to:

1. Assess the contribution the College has made to its learners in finding employment or gaining entry to tertiary institutions;
2. Determine the success of its (secondary) programmes, as measured by the perceptions of former learners;
3. Establish what challenges NAMCOL faces relating to programme delivery and areas for improvement;
4. Determine the benefits to learners of secondary education at NAMCOL in furthering their career prospects or job opportunities; and
5. Establish the successes or failures of NAMCOL in the fulfilment of its mandate.

METHODOLOGY

Following the development and acceptance of the proposal, an *Inception Report* was prepared and presented to the NAMCOL project team.

A project plan was then developed based on the *Inception Report*.

The project followed several distinct phases:

1. Instrument development and testing;
2. Drafting of newspaper, radio and television advertisements;
3. Data Collection, using three different methods:

a) Method 1: Former NAMCOL learners were given the option of completing paper questionnaires and submitting these at NAMCOL tutorial centres.
b) Method 2: Alternatively, past learners could log onto the Survey Monkey website and fill in an online version of the questionnaire.
c) Method 3: A sample of non-respondents was randomly selected and these former learners were telephoned by research assistants to obtain answers to the questionnaire. The same questionnaire as for Methods 1 and 2 was used.

4. Data was analysed, and a report was drafted. The draft report was presented to the NAMCOL project team for comment, and subsequently finalised.

Developing the data collection instrument

Using the terms of reference, and information from key documents, an draft instrument for collecting the required information was developed.

A Saide consultant then visited the NAMCOL team and conducted a series of discussions to determine the objectives of the instrument, and the key issues to be included.

The instrument was then updated and piloted, subjected to further review by NAMCOL and then finalised.

Two versions were created – a hard-copy version to be completed in paper form (developed in Word) and a version to be completed online (developed on the Survey Monkey platform).

Population of former Grade 12 learners, 2005 - 2010

The population for this study was defined as all learners who were enrolled with NAMCOL for Grade 12 subjects from 2005 to 2010.[7]

A data file of learners who registered for Grade 12 studies with NAMCOL between 2007 and 2010 was provided to Saide.

The breakdown of the population included in the sampling frame is provided in Table 1.[8] Table 1 contains unique learners – i.e. learners who may have enrolled for multiple years, and they have been placed in the latest year of registration to date.

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[6] Mhlanga, Du Vivier & Mays (2011). *Review of the Roles & Functions of NAMCOL*, pp. 33, 37-38 and 41-56; Mmekoa & Allsop (2005). *Review of the Role and Function of the Namibian College of Open Learning*, pp. 15-16.

[7] In the advertisements, the basis for selection was learners from 2005 to 2010, so this included learners who had enrolled for Grade 12 subjects prior to 2005 but who completed their studies with NAMCOL's SEP between 2005-2010, or anyone who had first enrolled between 2005-2010 but had yet to finish their studies at senior secondary level

[8] NAMCOL only provided data for learners from the period 2007-2010.

Table 1. Population of learners enrolled for Grade 12 subjects, 2007-2010.

Year	Central	NE	Northern	Southern	N/A	Total
2007	1,620	1,706	5,788	4,421	63	13,598
2008	1,630	1,595	5,856	5,063	56	14,200
2009	1,737	1,676	6,194	5,931	53	15,591
2010	2,226	1,897	7,013	7,124	55	18,315
Total	7,213	6,874	24,852	22,539	227	61,705

However, the data was provided to Saide in regions, so there may be cases where learners enrolled in more than one region, but the data set has not taken this into account.

The researchers aimed to contact as many former learners as possible, and so multiple methods of data collection were used (described below). Whilst a request for an ideal representative sample was made by NAMCOL, the intention was to obtain a large enough sample in order for results to be valid and reliable. For this reason all means available within the budget were utilised, targeting the population as a whole (so that it would be as representative as possible) rather than a sample. The overall validity and reliability of the total number of learners who responded to the questionnaire is discussed in the *Results and Findings* section of this report.

Methods 1 and 2 data collection

In Methods 1 and 2, the aim was to obtain completed questionnaires from as many former learners as possible. As a result, three means of reaching the learners were utilised:

1. Advertisements were placed in three national newspapers along with a copy of the questionnaire on 18 and 19 August 2011. A second advertisement was published in the same newspapers on 15 September 2011 extending the deadline.
2. Advertisements were also broadcast by eight radio stations from 14 to 16 September 2011 in all languages;
3. Television inserts were prepared and broadcast by the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation from 08 to 13 June 2011.

To facilitate responses from former NAMCOL learners who had access to an Internet-linked computer, these advertisements included a link to the online version of the questionnaire.

Former Grade 12 learners who had studied with the College between 2005 and 2010 were invited to submit questionnaires by delivering them to NAMCOL tutorial or regional centres, or to complete the online questionnaire using the Survey Monkey website.

In order to encourage former learners to take part in the survey, inducements were offered. The names of all eligible respondents were entered into a draw for one of five prizes, each valued at N$ 1,000.

Originally, a period of three weeks was provided for learners to complete the questionnaires, but this was extended by two weeks because of delays in placing the newspaper, radio and television advertisements.

Method 3 data collection

Identifying information provided by respondents who had already submitted either hard copy or online questionnaires was combined in a data file. This was subsequently cross-tabulated with the electronic data file provided by NAMCOL to create a list of non-respondents, which was used as the sampling frame for the second phase of data collection.

Initially a random sample of former learners was selected from this database, for the purpose of telephone calls. However, many of the numbers provided by former learners at the time of enrolment were no longer operational or it proved impossible to reach them, so additional samples were selected and telephone numbers for these former learners were provided to the research assistants responsible for the interviews. On average, each of two research assistants was able to conduct ten to twelve interviews per day, over a period of two weeks.

Every effort was made to reach as many former learners as possible, but many cellphone numbers were no longer valid and/or former learners were not reachable. This is an indication of the need to maintain an alumni database with regular communications and follow up surveys. A continuous process of gathering feedback from learners would also allow a comparative cohort analysis and the easier identification of trends over time. Relatively few of the former learners who were contacted said that they did not have time or refused to take part in a telephone interview.

Data capture and analysis

An MS Access database was prepared and the data from the hard copy questionnaires was captured in digital form. Data from the telephone calls was also captured in the MS Access database.

The data submitted online was downloaded from the Survey Monkey website and combined with the information from the MS Access database. The resulting data file was converted for use with the SPSS™ data analysis package.

Before analysing the data, it was cleaned and repaired. Questionnaires from respondents who did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the study were eliminated, while duplicate entries were deleted (see section under findings for more detail).

Limitations

The following are the limitations to the study and influence the extent to which the findings can be generalised and validated:

1. It was initially envisioned that the NAMCOL former learners would submit the hard copy questionnaires in a sealed box. However, NAMCOL decided to use its network of tutorial centres as collection points. Because NAMCOL makes use of roughly one hundred venues as tutorial centres, it proved impossible to procure and distribute the collection boxes in the time available. As a result, the integrity of the data collection process could not be fully independently verified

2. For Phase 2, an initial random sample of 720 former learners was selected, on the assumption that about half of the telephone numbers would no longer be operational. However, the estimated percentage of respondents who could not be contacted was too low, and additional samples had to be selected in order to achieve the target number of responses.

3. Although questionnaires were returned from all of Namibia's political regions, a disproportionate number of responses came from the Khomas Region, followed by the Oshana Region. This represents a slight bias in the data and must be taken into consideration when interpreting the results.

4. Even though the same questions were used with all respondents, three different data collection methodologies were employed for this survey, and this may have influenced the types of former learners who responded. For example, it is likely that those who logged on to complete the online questionnaire live in urban or peri-urban areas, where it is easier to access an Internet-linked computer. Although the demographic characteristics of these different groups of respondents are sufficiently similar to enable the results to be presented in a combined form, differences in the responses for the three groups are highlighted where these are significant. The results for each data collection methodology – labelled Method 1 (paper questionnaire), Method 2 (online questionnaire) and Method 3 (telephone interview) – are reported separately in *Appendix B*.

5. There may be potential limitations to studies where inducements, such as spot prizes, are offered to respondents to complete questionnaires. Respondents may provide answers that they believe are more favourable to the survey sponsor, or offer of an inducement may disproportionately attract a particular type of respondent.[9] This limitation is offset against the advantage of increasing response rate.

Structure of report

The findings of the study are presented in the following sub-sections:

1. Demographic information on survey respondents,
2. What former learners did during their time with NAMCOL,
3. What former learners did following their time at NAMCOL,
4. Perceptions of former learners of the services provided by NAMCOL.

Although the methods of data collection differed, and may have influenced the type of former learners who submitted questionnaires, the demographic data on the total group of respondents are sufficiently similar to justify presenting the results in a combined manner. Additionally, the same questionnaire was used in all methods of data collection. Differences between the three groups of respondents - labelled Method 1, Method 2, and Method 3, are highlighted where these are significant.

An appendix, presenting the results from the different methods for all questions, is also included in this report.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

For the three methods of data collection, the following numbers of valid responses were collected:

Method 1: Paper   330 responses
Method 2: Online   207 responses
Method 3: Telephone 238 responses

The total number of valid responses was 775

A population of 10,000 or greater, a sample/return rate of 119 for continuous data and 370 for categorical data is adequate to achieve an alpha value of 0.05.[10]
As the number of valid responses was more than twice the minimum return rate for a sample survey of a

[9] Offering inducements may also contribute to lower response rates. See Sax, Linda J.; Gilmartin, Shannon K.; and Bryant, Alyssa N. (August 2003). Assessing response rates and nonresponse bias in web and paper surveys. *Research in Higher Education*, 44 (4), p. 417.
[10] Bartlett, Kotrlik & Higgins (2001), 'Organizational Research: Determining Appropriate Sample Size in Survey Research'. *Information Technology, Learning, and Performance Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Spring 2001, p. 48.

population of this size, this suggests that the findings are reasonably generalizable.

Demographic data

The following provides a breakdown of demographic details for the former learners who responded to the survey, including gender, age and region where they studied with NAMCOL, as well as where they live now.

Gender

Of the total number of former learners who participated in the study, 67% were females and 33% were males. This matches the total population statistics, where 66% are female and 34% are male.

The results are similar for the different methods:

Method 1, Paper: 70% of respondents were female and 30% male
Method 2, Online: 59% of respondents were female and 41% male.
Method 3, Telephone: 69% of respondents were female and 31% male

Age

The ages of respondents ranged from 17 to 56 years (Table 2).

Region where the learners studied

The regions where former learners had registered with NAMCOL are presented in Table 3.

Although questionnaires from all regions were obtained, a large proportion of former learners came from the Khomas region, followed by the Oshana region. The advertisements were sent to all regions, and the phone calls were conducted proportionately to enrolment figures.

The spread across the regions is therefore consistent with enrolment figures, as Khomas and Oshana typically account for the largest numbers of NAMCOL learners.

Region where the learners live now

Data on the regions where learners live now are presented in Table 4.

As seen in the section above, the demographic details of for former learners obtained through the three different methods of data collection are sufficiently similar to justify the presentation of the data in a combined manner. However, differences between the data from the difference methods will be highlighted.

What did you do at NAMCOL and why?

In this section of the questionnaire, learners were asked why they enrolled at NAMCOL and what they did during their time with the College.

JSC (Grade 10) studies

Although the focus was on former Grade 12 learners, respondents were asked to indicate whether they had studied any Grade 10 subjects at NAMCOL. Only 10% of the total respondents indicated that they had, with the number of subjects ranging from one to nine.

Slightly more respondents who submitted hard copies of the questionnaire (13.9%) had studied at JSC level with NAMCOL compared to those who filled in the online version (9.7%) and those who were interviewed by telephone (7.1%).

NSSCO (Grade 12) studies

Learners were asked to indicate the year they started to study Grade 12 subjects at NAMCOL and the year they completed these subjects.

The instructions that accompanied all versions of the questionnaire specified that anyone who had registered for Grade 12 studies between 2005 and 2010 was eligible. As a result, learners who started earlier than that (but who completed their Grade 12 studies between 2005 and 2010) and those who are still studying with NAMCOL (but who started between 2005 and 2010) also submitted questionnaires. In addition, a relatively small number of learners who studied with the College outside those dates handed in completed survey instruments. The latter were identified and eliminated, as they did not meet the criteria for inclusion.

Grade 12: Year started (from the total respondents who answered this question, n = 712)

Figure 1 shows a relatively representative group across the years, with a spread over the period 2005 to 2010. This is difficult to compare to the dataset provided by NAMCOL as the dataset provided covered the period 2007-2010 and did not include the years 2005 and 2006.

Results collected using different methods are similar.

Grade 12: Year completed (from the total respondents who answered this question, n = 680)

Learners were requested to indicate the year they

Table 2. Age breakdown per method.

Age category	1. Paper	2. Online	3. Telephone	Total group
Under 20 yrs	9.9%	7.2%	4.3%	7.5%
21 to 25 yrs	42.6%	46.9%	44.2%	44.2%
26 to 30yrs	22.8%	20.8%	24.7%	22.8%
31 to 40 yrs	20.7%	22.2%	24.2%	22.2%
Over 41 yrs	4.0%	2.9%	2.6%	3.3%
Mean	26.91	27.01	27.34	27.07
S.D.	6.49	5.92	5.54	6.05

Table 1. Region where learners studied per method.

Region	1. Paper	2. Online	3. Telephone	Total group
Caprivi	1.8%	5.8%	0.0%	2.3%
Erongo	4.9%	9.2%	5.0%	6.1%
Hardap	0.3%	2.4%	1.3%	1.2%
Karas	0.9%	4.8%	6.3%	3.6%
Kavango	7.1%	3.4%	0.0%	3.9%
Khomas	42.6%	42.5%	41.6%	42.3%
Kunene	3.7%	1.0%	1.7%	2.3%
Ohangwena	4.9%	2.4%	2.9%	3.6%
Omaheke	4.3%	1.4%	0.4%	2.3%
Omusati	6.1%	2.9%	6.3%	5.3%
Oshana	12.9%	18.4%	23.1%	17.5%
Oshikoto	4.3%	3.4%	6.7%	4.8%
Otjozondjupa	6.1%	2.4%	4.6%	4.7%

Table 2. Region where learners live per method.

Region	1. Paper	2. Online	3. Telephone	Total group
Caprivi	1.9%	2.9%	0.4%	1.7%
Erongo	6.0%	11.1%	8.4%	8.1%
Hardap	0.3%	2.4%	0.8%	1.0%
Karas	0.9%	2.4%	5.0%	2.6%
Kavango	6.0%	2.4%	1.3%	3.5%
Khomas	55.2%	50.2%	43.7%	50.3%
Kunene	3.8%	1.9%	2.5%	2.9%
Ohangwena	1.6%	2.9%	3.8%	2.6%
Omaheke	3.5%	1.4%	0.8%	2.1%
Omusati	4.1%	1.9%	4.6%	3.7%
Oshana	6.9%	13.5%	19.7%	12.7%
Oshikoto	3.2%	2.4%	3.4%	3.0%
Otjozondjupa	6.6%	4.3%	5.5%	5.6%

completed their studies (Figure 2).

Some of the respondents only expected to complete their NSSC studies at the end of the 2011 academic year. These have been left in the data set, as they only represent a small percentage, and some of the questions focused on challenges and perceptions which would be relevant to this sub-group of learners.

Whilst the results for Method 1 and Method 2 are similar, results for Method 3 are more evenly spread between 2007 and 2010 (Appendix, Table 18).

NSSCO/IGCSE (Grade 12) subjects

Learners were requested to indicate the subjects that they enrolled for at NAMCOL. Because respondents
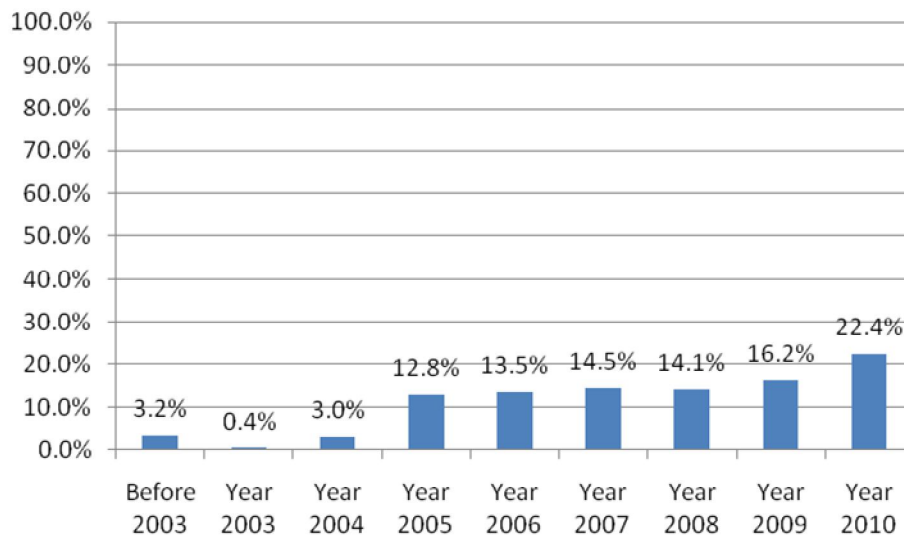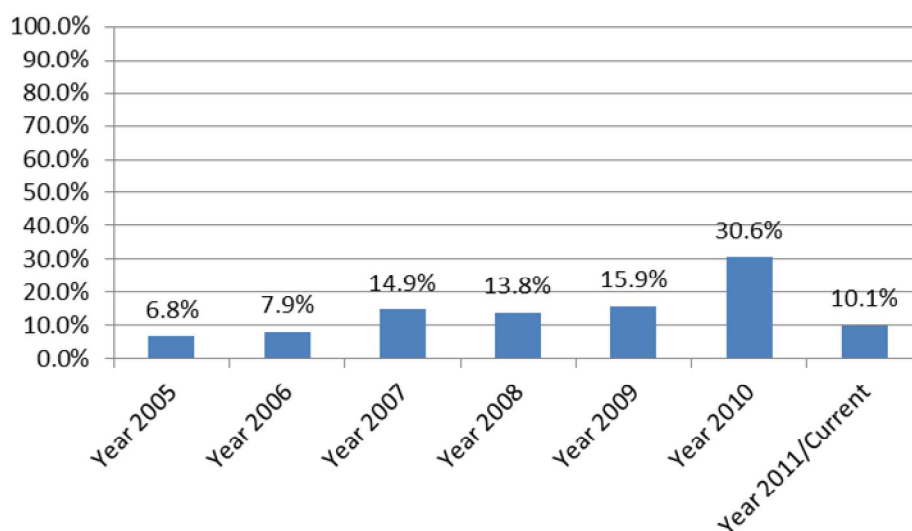
Figure 1. Grade 12 year started.

Figure 2. Grade 12 year completed.

could record as many subjects as they wished, the percentages presented in Table 5 do not add up to 100%.

The results show that the highest percentage of learners enrolled for English Second Language (61.8%), followed by Development Studies (38.3%), Biology (30.6%), Mathematics (22.5%) and Physical Science (18.6%).

These results make sense given that English is a required subject and learners cannot receive the full NSSCO award without passing English. It is also a compulsory requirement for all HE courses.

The most popular courses are those that would be directly relevant for learners wishing to pursue further studies in the areas of maths and science.

Only 10.2% of respondents had studied a Namibian home or first language with NAMCOL. This suggests that the reason for enrolment may be related to a desire for employment and higher education rather than academic pursuits. In addition, learners in conventional schools tend to perform well in the examinations for their home languages. As a result, fewer of them are likely to enrol with NAMCOL in order to re-sit the examination in the hope of improving their marks.

Further comparison to the actual number of subject enrolments from the database is not possible, given the narrative organisation of the dataset provided, where calculations of total subject enrolments from the database were not possible.

Some differences between the three methods of data collection are noted:

Table 3. NSSCO/IGCSE (Grade 12) subjects taken by respondents.

Subject(s) studied at NAMCOL	Yes
Accounting	8.5%
Afrikaans first language	0.5%
Afrikaans second language	1.9%
Agriculture	12.8%
Biology	30.6%
Business Studies	15.2%
Development studies	38.3%
Economics	8.9%
English second language	61.8%
Geography	13.2%
History	7.7%
Mathematics	22.5%
Oshikwanyama first language	2.6%
Oshindonga first language	4.3%
Otjiherero first language	2.7%
Physical Science	18.6%
Rukwangali first language	0.4%
Rumanyo first language	0.0%
Silozi first language	0.0%
Thimbukushu first language	0.1%

- Fewer learners who completed the form online (Method 2) had studied Agriculture – 5.8% and Biology – 23.2%. As these were former learners who had access to computers and internet, this result shows that the subject choices of those who answered the online questionnaire may have been slightly different.

These results indicate former learners who completed the questionnaire online have a greater interest in maths and science than in agriculture and biology.

Symbols – English Second Language

In the Namibian formal education system, relatively few learners are allowed to repeat Grade 12 if they perform badly or fail the terminal examination in one or more subjects. As a result, many learners from conventional schools register with NAMCOL in order to re-sit the NSSCO examinations in the hope of upgrading their symbols. For this reason, it important for the College to know what proportion of these re-sit candidates are being assisted to achieve their goal.

Respondents were also asked if they had taken the same subject at Grade 12 level in a conventional school and what symbol they had obtained in the NSSCO examination before enrolling with NAMCOL. This enabled the researchers to compare the performance of learners in the re-sit examination after studying with the College (normally for one year) with their performance at the end of the two-year cycle in a senior secondary school. Because relatively small numbers of respondents answered this question, the analysis was limited to the subject with the highest number of entries – NSSCO English Second Language (Figure 3).

It is noted from the figure that a greater percentage of learners repeating English L2 at NAMCOL obtained a Grade D or above than they had previously. The observed improvement in symbols might be attributed to greater maturity on the part of learners, the benefits of repeating and revising key concepts and skills, improved motivation, or to the quality and nature of the teaching offered at NAMCOL. Although it is not possible to state a definitive reason, we can observe that, without the opportunity afforded by NAMCOL these learners would not have upgraded their symbols since they could not have gone back into the formal system to repeat.

Mode:

Learners were asked to indicate what mode they had enrolled for. Just over half (57.6%) had enrolled for Contact studies, and 42.4% had enrolled for Non-Contact studies.

There were differences in the responses received for the three methods of data collection (Table 6).

The distribution for the total population of learners is not known, so it is not possible to determine which sub-group of respondents is most representative of former NSSC learners. .

Reasons for enrolling with NAMCOL:

Learners were asked to indicate the reasons that they had enrolled for studies with NAMCOL, and the instructions indicated that respondents could select all that apply. The results are presented in Figure 4.

Almost four out of every five respondents (79.5%) indicated that they had enrolled for Grade 12 studies with NAMCOL in order to upgrade their symbols, and this corresponds closely with data for 2007. Some needed an IGCSE/NSSCO certificate to qualify for entrance to higher education (47.7%) or to get a job (23.3%). A considerable number of respondents (20.2%) indicated that they wanted to change their careers and so needed to obtain additional qualifications.
Differences between the three methods of data collection are noted:

- More respondents who completed the paper questionnaires (Method 1) decided to study with NAMCOL in order to gain entrance to higher education (57.9%); and
- Fewer learners who completed the online questionnaire (Method 2) needed a certificate to get a job (9.2%).

Learners who Obtained Symbols in NSSCO English L2 Examination, after studying at:
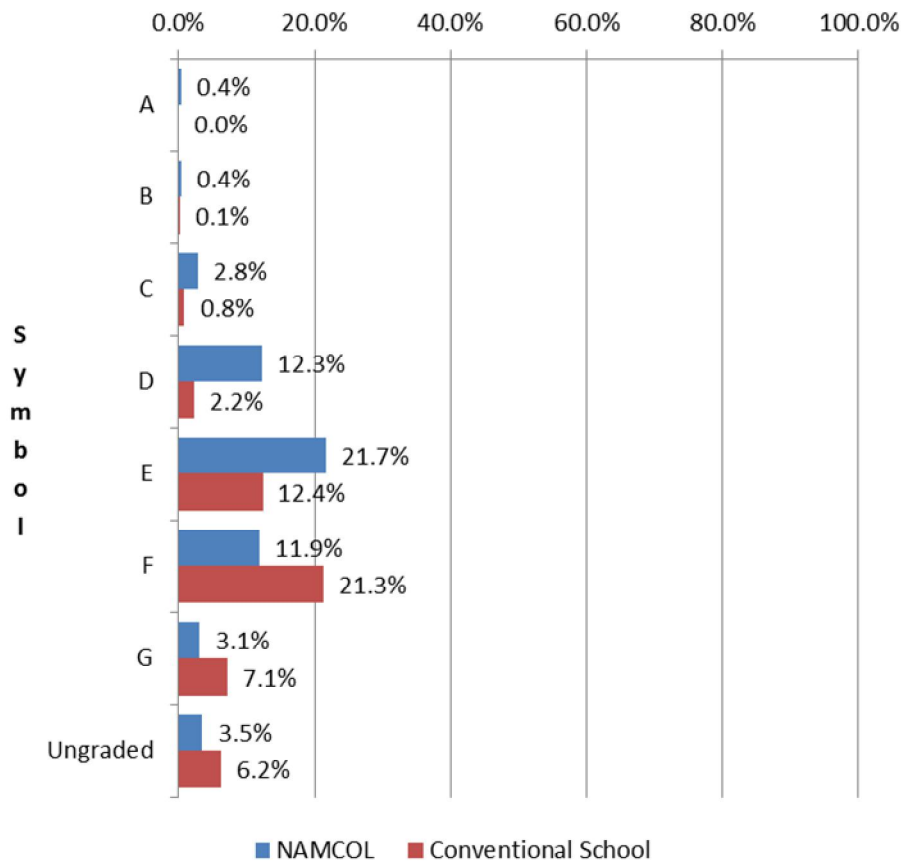

Figure 3. Number of learners obtaining symbols in NSSCO English L2 examination.

Table 4. Mode of study.

Mode	1. Paper	2. Online	3. Telephone	Total
Contact	69.5%	53.1%	45.1%	57.6%
Non-contact	30.5%	46.9%	54.9%	42.5%

What did you do after leaving NAMCOL?

Learners were asked what they did after leaving NAMCOL. Two main areas were covered – higher education and employment.

Higher education

Learners were asked if they had applied to study with a higher education or training institution. A total of 510 (65.8% of the 775 total) of respondents applied to one or more HEIs and 370 (47.7%) were accepted. This compares well to the 47.7% who stated that they had enrolled at NAMCOL in order to improve their symbols to gain entrance to higher education.

Respondents were also asked to indicate which higher education or training institution they had applied to. Some of the key institutions in Namibia were offered as possible responses, including: the University of Namibia (UNAM), the Polytechnic of Namibia (PoN), the International University of Management (IUM), the Teacher Training Colleges, Vocational Training Centres (VTC) or the National Institute for Mining Technology (NIMT). Results are presented in Table 7. Because former learners could apply to more than one HEI, the columns do not add up to 100%.

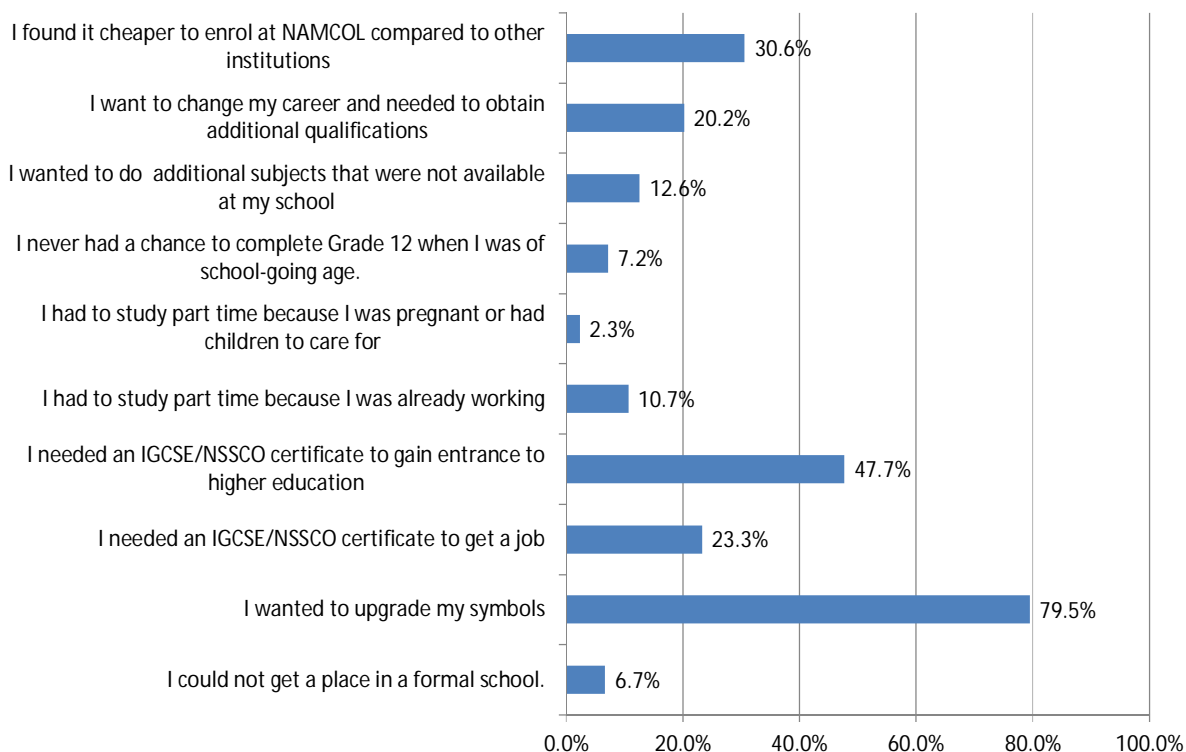Just over one out of every five respondents had applied

Figure 4. Reasons for enrolling with NAMCOL.

Table 7. Application and acceptance at Higher Education Institutes.

Institution	Did you apply?	Were you accepted?	What percentage was accepted?
UNAM	157 learners	85 learners	54.1%
Polytechnic	170 learners	97 learners	57.1%
IUM	66 learners	53 learners	80.3%
Teacher Training College	62 learners	23 learners	37.1%
VTC/NIMT	111 learners	43 learners	38.7%

to study at UNAM or the Polytechnic of Namibia, and more than half of these applicants were admitted to these institutions. Fewer former learners made applications for further studies elsewhere, while the acceptance rates for the other institutions listed ranged from 80.3 to 38.7% (Figure 5).

There were differences between the responses obtained through the three methods of data collection. Among those who submitted online questionnaires, a higher number of learners were accepted by UNAM and the Polytechnic of Namibia as compared to the other methods of data collection. For a more detailed analysis of the differences between the methods, please refer to Table 23 in *Appendix B*.

This questionnaire item allowed respondents to write in the name of another institution, and over forty other education and training providers were listed. For more detail, please refer to the appendix.

Highest qualification to date:

Learners were requested to indicate the highest qualification they had received to date, and the results are presented in Figure 6 (Percentages have been calculated out of 655 respondents who answered this question).

Just over eleven out of every twenty respondents (55.4%) indicated their highest qualification was a NSSCO award. A further four out of twenty (20.5%) said that they hold a post-secondary certificate, while three in twenty (15.9%) had obtained a diploma. Relatively few (3.7%) of those who responded to this question indicated that they had received a bachelor's degree, but this may simply be a reflection of the fact that 70% of all respondents had obtained their NSSC since 2008 and would, thus, not have had sufficient time to complete degree-level studies.
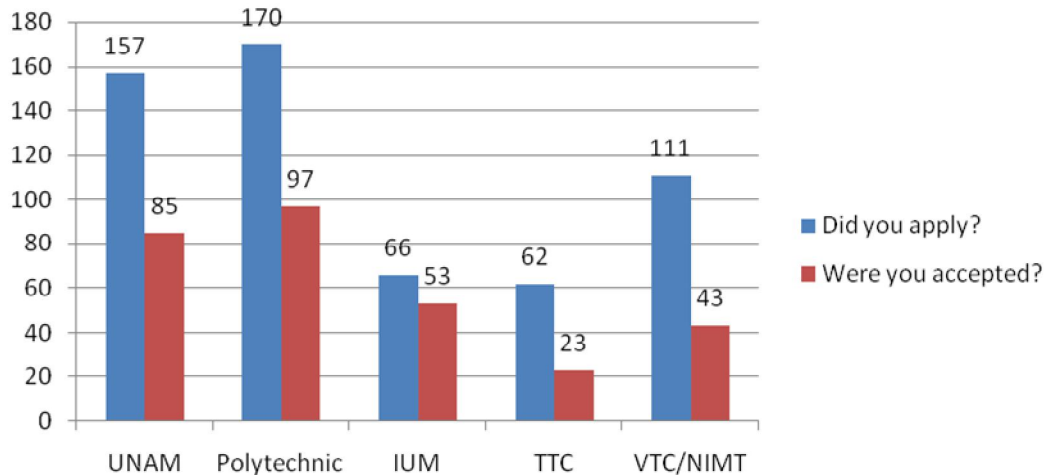
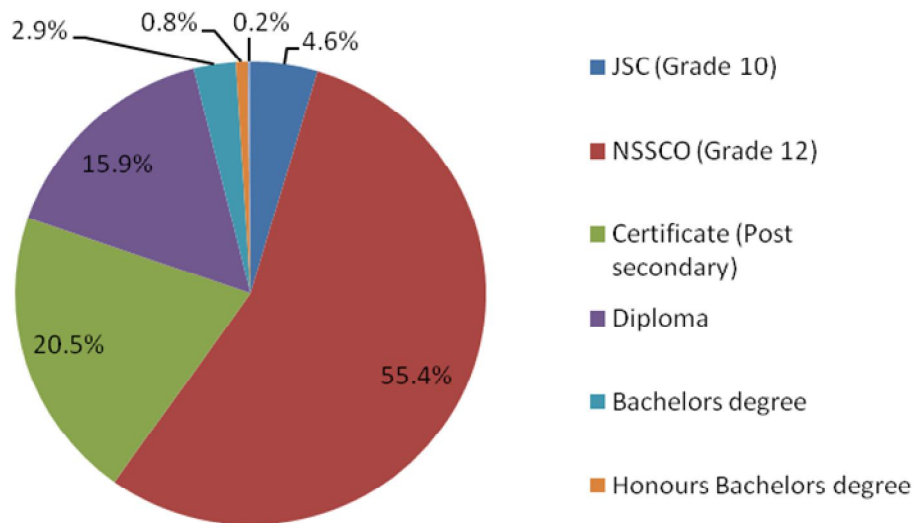**Figure 5.** Application and acceptance at Higher Education Institutes.

Figure 6. Highest qualification to date.

Overall, approximately 40% of learners managed to obtain further qualifications after leaving NAMCOL, which is an encouraging finding.

The fact that so many NAMCOL graduates proceed to some form of education or training at post-secondary or higher education level supports the recommendation in the *Roles and Functions* report cited earlier that NAMCOL should consider further diversifying its Programmes and Qualifications Mix. One possibility might be a foundation programme that would allow a greater proportion of learners to access diploma and degree level studies. Learners who have enjoyed success at NAMCOL may be more inclined to continue with their studies at the same institution, rather than with another one, if a suitable variety of options were made available.

At the same time, those former learners who did not proceed to further studies represent an as yet untapped market, which a robust alumnus division might be able to draw back to NAMCOL if it had a range of options to offer as indicated previously.

Field of study:

Where respondents indicated that they had undergone further studies at a higher education institution, they were asked to indicate their field of study (Percentages out of total who went to HEIs, $n = 370$) (Figure 7).

There is an even spread across the fields of study, with the highest number entering for business studies (17.8% of those accepted), while only a very small number (1.0%) had opted to study law.

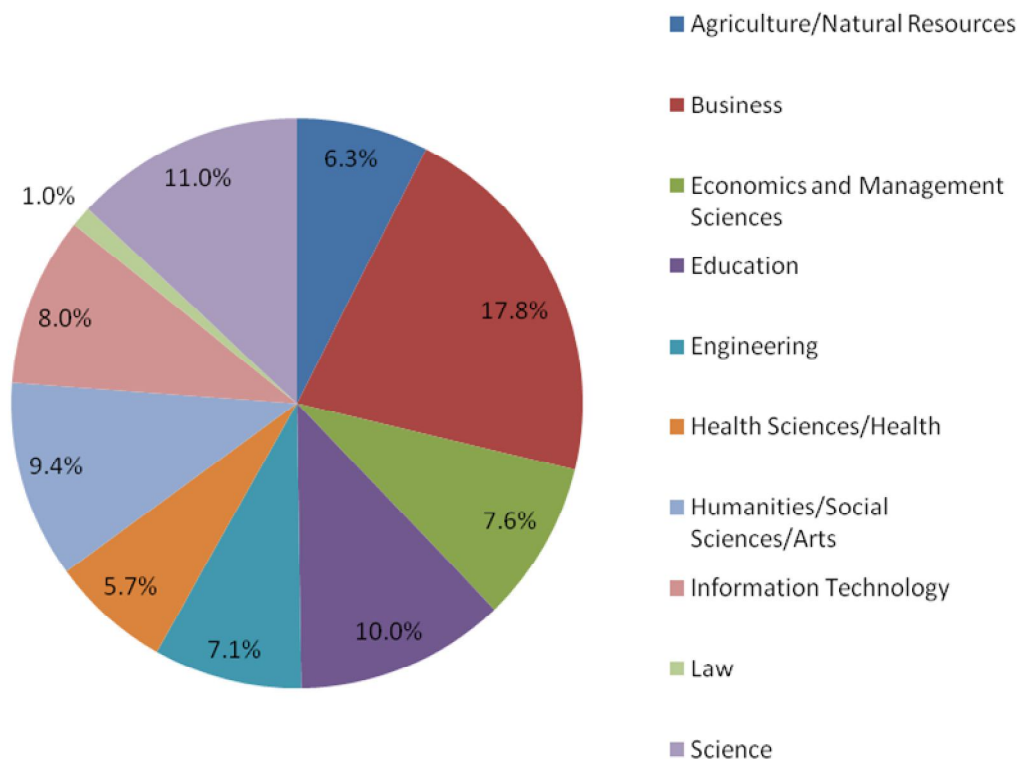This is consistent with enrolment at some other

Figure 7. Field of study after leaving NAMCOL.

institutions, such as UNISA, where the College of Economic and Management Science is currently the largest growth area.

Additionally, for former learners who struggled with maths and science, choices may be more limited; normally, academic disciplines such as Education, Arts and Business Studies do not have high entry requirements for maths and science subjects. Another possible explanation of the popularity of business-related disciplines is that these are seen as the most marketable qualifications in the labour market.

Recommendations:

- This points to the importance of the tracer study, as identifying top interest areas which could lead to the development of new programmes, such as bridging courses to aid successful entry into specific post-schooling career and study streams.
- It also seems important for student performance to be tracked so that at-risk learners can be pro-actively supported and possibly advised on alternative subject choices.
- An alumni association might also be created to capture and maintain data and as a sounding board for possible future programme offerings.
- NAMCOL could also consider extending its services to offer career and study guidance.

There are few differences between the three methods data collection.

Employment

Employment rate among former learners:

Of the 775 learners who completed the questionnaire, 40.3% were currently employed, while 2.3% indicated that they are not currently looking for a job away from their home or farm, and a further 34.4% are still looking. The remaining 23.0% are, presumably, still engaged in full-time studies, either with NAMCOL or at another education or training institution.

Employment status:

Differences between the three methods of data collection are presented in Table 8.

Higher numbers of learners who were telephoned (50.8%) were employed, as compared to the other methods of data collection.

Without comparative data for the traditional school system it is not possible to say whether studying through NAMCOL provided a greater or lesser chance of employment. However, it is clear that for jobs where a school-level qualification is a minimum requirement,

Table 8. Emploment status.

Question	1. Paper	2. Online	3. Telephone
Are you currently employed?	33.0%	39.6%	50.8%
Full time employed?	22.4%	35.7%	46.6%
Part time employed?	-	-	-
Self-employed	3.9%	3.4%	2.5%

successful NAMCOL learners will have been afforded an opportunity they would otherwise not have had.

Sector where employed:

The sectors that learners were employed in ranged from government to non-profit organisations to private companies, to community based organisation to volunteer work. Percentages are represented out of the total 312 respondents who indicated they were employed.

Out of the 312 learners who reported they are currently employed, 44.9% were employed by government ministries or agencies and 41.7% were employed in private companies (Figure 8).

Few differences were noted in the responses obtained with various methods of data collection.

It would be interesting to track the distribution of responses to this question over time in order to uncover possible trends in the market for post-schooling programmes and qualifications related to, for example, public and business administration.

How long did it take you to find a job after finishing your NAMCOL qualification?

It is important to note that 17.3% of learners were already employed while studying at NAMCOL: they were thus afforded an opportunity to work and learn at the same time which would not have been possible in the formal school system.

Figure 9 shows that 34.4% of the total group of respondents had not yet found employment and were still looking for a job.

Fewer former learners who submitted online questionnaires (Method 1) or took part in the telephone interviews (Method 3) were still looking for a job than those who completed paper questionnaires. This seems reasonable given that unemployed may not have the same level of access to the Internet or cellular telephones. It might also indicate the value placed in the workplace on employees equipped with basic ICT knowledge and skills in addition to school qualifications. This is an issue that might usefully be canvassed with typical NAMCOL graduate employers.
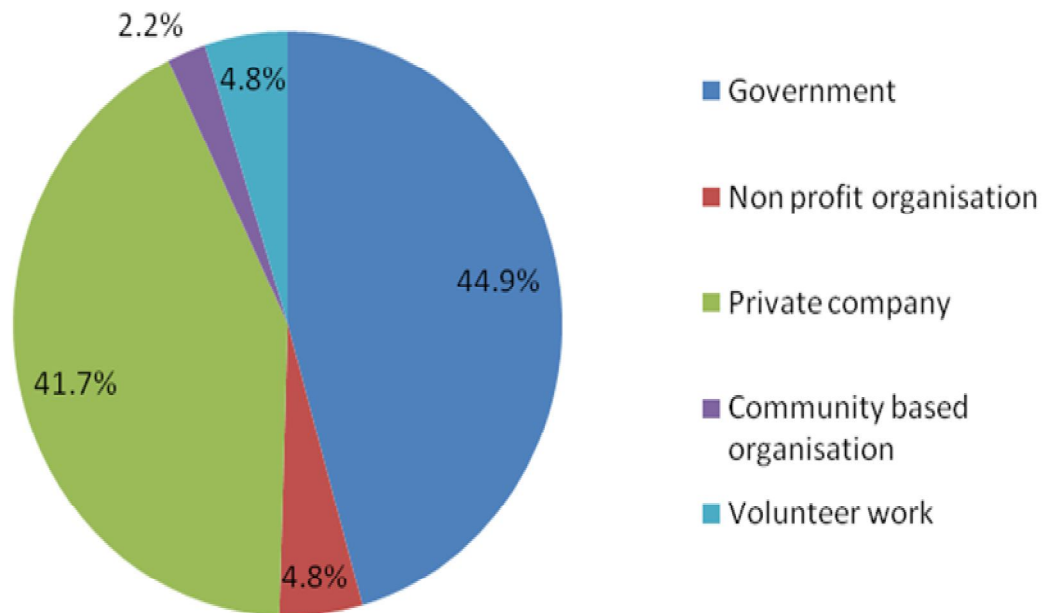

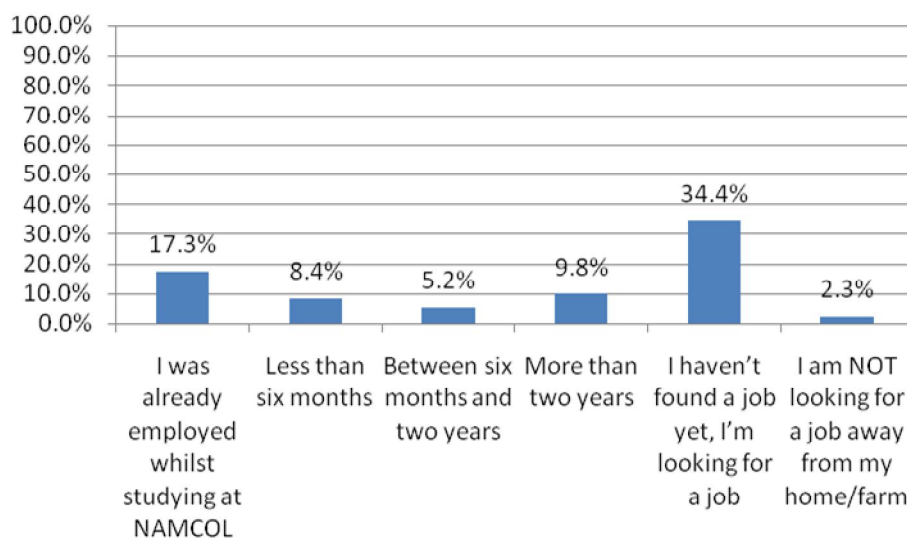**Figure 8.** Employed respondents by sector.

Figure 9. Finding a job after NAMCOL.

What was your experience of NAMCOL and how could it have been better?

In the last section of the questionnaire, learners were asked to comment on their experience of studying with NAMCOL and how it could have been better.

What were the challenging aspects of your studying with NAMCOL?

As shown in Table 9, the aspects that learners found most challenging were motivating themselves to study (46.3%) and the timing of the classes (44.0%).
Respondents were given the option of writing down other challenges in addition to those listed above. Other responses provided by learners for this question included:

- Teachers absent without informing learners
- I was stressed and pregnant, learners were laughing at me every day
- Lack of finance to study efficiently
- Tutors are not coming on time
- I was busy looking for a job
- Increase the duration of the lessons
- Lack of communication between learners and teachers

A substantial and growing literature on the factors affecting student persistence, retention and throughput in distance learning exists, although mainly at the higher education level.[11] These studies suggest that while distance learners are more likely than conventional learners to drop out or terminate their studies early, the reasons are varied and no single intervention is likely to succeed for all learners. Often interventions to support some learners in one way may have unintended consequences for others as is well illustrated by the two main difficulties identified by NAMCOL learners above. A natural reaction to hearing that learners have self-motivation problems would be to offer them additional contact sessions to help them develop their self-motivation and persistence strategies in the face of learning challenges. However, the second highest number of comments indicates that the timing of classes is often problematic and militates against more regular attendance.

This suggests the need for a robust system for tracking student engagement and performance and proactive identification of learners at-risk (for example, when a learner does not submit or fails an assignment). Creative

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[11] Kamau, J. W. (2009). Factors that affect progress and retention of distance learners enrolled on the Diploma in primary education (DPE) programme in Botswana. Paper presented at Nadeosa conference 2009.

Simpson, O. (2003). Student retention in online, open and distance learning. London: Kogan Page.

Simpson, O. (2004). The impact of retention of interventions to support distance education learners. Open Learning: The Journal of Open and Distance Learning 19(1):79-95.

Simpson, O. (2006). Predicting student success in open and distance learning. Open Learning: The Journal of Open and Distance Learning 21(2):125-138.

Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: a theoretical synthesis of recent research. *Review of Educational Research* 45:89-125.

Tinto, V. (1988). Stages of departure: Reflections on the longitudinal character of student leaving. The *Journal of Higher Education* 59(4): 438-455.

Tinto, V. (2002). Establishing conditions for student success. Presented at the 11th Annual Conference of the European Access Network, Monash University, Prato, Italy, 20 June.

Tinto, V. (2006). Research and practice of student retention: What next? *Journal of College Student Retention* 8(1):1-19.

Woodley, A. (2004). Conceptualizing student dropout in part-time distance education: pathologizing the normal? *Open Learning, 19(1), February 2004*. 48-63.

Table 9. Challenging aspects of studying at NAMCOL.

I found it hard to motivate myself to study	46.3%
The classes at the NAMCOL centre were too late in the evening, and I was worried about getting home safely	44.0%
Not enough information was given to learners.	42.7%
The distance I had to travel to the nearest NAMCOL centre was too far	39.8%
I did not receive information on time	32.8%
I found the language in the study materials too difficult to understand.	27.6%
Studying with NAMCOL cost too much.	25.2%
The class schedule at the NAMCOL centre conflicted with my working hours or duties at home	20.4%

Table 10. Improving NAMCOL services.

More qualified/skilled tutors/teachers	58.3%
More face-to-face sessions with tutors/teachers	51.0%
Full-time centres , so that classes can be held in the morning as well	46.4%
Additional learning resources (such as computers)	45.5%
Simpler language in study guides/textbooks and assignments	29.5%
Reduce the fees for studying with NAMCOL	27.0%
Introduce technical and vocational courses	25.8%
Schedule more classes during the week	24.3%
Expand the number of higher education courses/programmes that NAMCOL offers at certificate, diploma and degree level	22.8%
NAMCOL should offer subjects at NSSCO higher level	20.5%
Enhance supervision and monitoring of teaching/tutoring	17.9%
Introduce e-learning options	17.4%
Introduce sports and other extra-curricular activities	17.2%
Provide a wider range of courses at all NAMCOL centres	16.6%
Improve on the turn-around time of assignments	11.2%
Open a centre closer to where I live	11.0%
Training on social skills, such as the 'My Future is My Choice' programme	9.7%
Smaller class sizes so that I can get individual attention from the tutor/teacher	8.4%

ways need to be devised for mediating that support which does not rely on physical contact. For example, the College's bulk SMS facility could be used to remind learners of assignment deadlines. If access to the Internet and other technologies is improved, another option would be to make greater use of individualised tele- or virtual-tutoring, threaded e-mails and online discussion to support SEP learners.

How could NAMCOL services/programmes be improved?

Former learners were also asked to make suggestions for improving the Secondary Education Programme, and their answers are summarised in Table 10.

Former learners are looking for more qualified and skilled tutors (58.3%), more face-to-face sessions (51.0%), full-time centres (46.4%), and additional resources such as computers (29.5%).

If NAMCOL were to implement the top four suggestions

for improving the SEP, the Programme would be turned into something closely resembling a well-resourced secondary school. This may simply be a reflection of the difficulty learners and other stakeholders have in imagining alternatives to the conventional classroom. However, requests for additional face-to-face sessions and full-time centres are common among distance education learners, and may be pleas for improved support. Thus, the responses in the table above may flag the need for more robust and integrated support systems, though learner preferences must be balanced against issues such as flexibility and sustainability.

An understanding of the three presences, as summarised by Mhlanga[12], provides a context in which to understand these findings, and a framework for addressing the need for improved support. These three presences are:

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[12] Mhlanga, E. (2009). Enriching online learning experience: the three 'presences'. Saide.

Teacher presence:

The role of the teacher in a learning process is to influence the content, direction and form of thought of learners. This is what online support should strive to achieve; to provide the right scaffolding that enables learners to extend their knowledge and to try something they would otherwise not manage on their own.

Social presence:

Learning is a social activity that involves collaborative construction of knowledge. The greatest danger in distance education is for learners to be isolated and endure the burden of learning in very prohibitive 'learning spaces'[13].

Cognitive presence:

Cognitive presence is an act of the mind; it is about mental processing of information perceived/gained through experience and reflecting upon that information in order to construct new knowledge.

It is important to note that there are some contradictions in the data on this issue. In the previous question, a significant number of former learners commented on the difficulty of traveling to a physical centre to study or about the inconvenient timing of contact sessions. Yet, in response to this question, a majority suggested additional tutorials and permanent centres. It is clear, therefore, that a one-size-fits-all approach to learner support will not meet the needs of all SEP learners.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This Tracer Study set out to answer a number of key questions with respect to NAMCOL's Secondary Education Programme. This section summarises the lessons learnt from this study about the following concerns:

What contribution has NAMCOL made to the lives of its learners, in terms of gaining entry to further education and training, or in terms of seeking employment?

There are three main reasons for learners to enrol with NAMCOL – upgrading symbols (80%), gaining entrance to higher education (47.7%) and obtaining the entry qualification for a job (23.3%).

An analysis of the statistics for NAMCOL's NSSC courses in 2007 indicated that four out of every five subject enrolments were by learners who were attempting the examination for a second time.[14] These statistics were corroborated by the results of the Tracer study, where almost 80% of respondents indicated that they had enrolled with the College to upgrade their symbols. In this regard, the former learners surveyed reported an overall improvement of their results in the NSSCO English Second Language examination compared to the symbols they had previously obtained after studying in a conventional school. Although a more detailed statistical analysis is needed to confirm the percentage who managed to improve their symbols and by how much, the summary results are encouraging. It appears as if studying with NAMCOL has enabled the majority to achieve their stated goal of improving their symbols.

Almost half (47.7%) of respondents said that they needed an IGCSE/NSSCO certificate to gain entrance to a higher education institution. Again, results of the Tracer Study indicate that a significant number of former learners have achieved this goal after completing their studies with NAMCOL. Sixty-five percent of respondents said that they had applied for further studies at a higher education or TVET institution, and just under half of them were accepted. Although comparable statistics for Grade 12 completers from conventional schools are not available, the NAMCOL results are impressive.

A third major reason for studying with NAMCOL was that respondents wanted an IGCSE/NSSCO certificate in order to get a job (23.3%), and again it appears as if many have achieved this goal after leaving the College. Over four out of every ten (40.3%) former learners surveyed for the Tracer study said they were currently employed, while a further 2.3% indicated that they are not looking for a job away from their home or farm. Nevertheless, just over one in three (34.4%) former NAMCOL learners indicated that they are still looking for a job, which is considerably lower than the national unemployment rate of 51%.[15] Again, it is difficult to evaluate the College's performance in assisting learners to secure employment in the formal sector of the economy as no comparable statistics are available for former learners from conventional schools.

Over three out of every ten (30.6%) former learners surveyed for this Tracer Study said they registered to study with NAMCOL because they found it cheaper than enrolling with other institutions. Nevertheless, one out of every four (25.2%) respondents in the tracer study

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[13] This means that there needs to be mechanisms in place such as online tutorials and support to assist learners.

[14] Mhlanga, Du Vivier, and Mays, *Review of the Roles and Functions of NAMCOL*, Table 4.1, p. 46.

[15] National Planning Commission, *Targeted Intervention Program for Employment and Economic Growth (TIPEEG)* (Windhoek: National Planning Commission, 2011), 4.

complained that studying with NAMCOL costs too much. It is also interesting to note that, during the consultations conducted for the *Review of NAMCOL's Roles and Functions*, a number of stakeholders expressed concern about the high cost of studying with the College.[16] These responses indicate the diversity of views in the ongoing debate about the affordability of the College's SEP and reveal consumer perceptions about the relative value for money that NAMCOL provides.

A distinction probably needs to be made between direct costs (in the form of fees), indirect costs (in the form of time and transport to attend contact sessions) and possibly ancillary costs (such as additional books and stationery and/or telephone calls). In future student satisfaction surveys, the issue of costs could be explored further.

How do former learners perceive their experience of studying with NAMCOL?

Respondents in this Tracer Study reported several challenging aspects of their studies with the College, and the most commonly-cited challenge was motivating themselves to study. The *Review of NAMCOL's Roles and Functions* found a widespread belief among stakeholders in Namibia that young people lack the motivation and self-discipline needed to make a success of studies offered through open and distance learning methods.[17] In light of this, it was not surprising to see former learners surveyed for the Tracer Study echoing this point of view.

Another major challenge related to the timing of classes, which many (44.0%) former learners felt were scheduled too late in the evenings. As a majority of NAMCOL's NSSC learners are girls, it is not surprising that they worry about whether they will get home safely if they have to travel after dark. Coupled with this were the complaints about the distance that learners must travel to their nearest tutorial centre, which were voiced by almost four out of every ten (39.8%) respondents.

Lack of information also proved to be a challenge for many former learners, with over four out of every ten (42.7%) respondents selecting the option "Not enough information was given to learners". In addition, three out of every ten (32.8%) former learners complained that they did not receive information on time, while others wrote in comments such as "Teachers absent without informing learners" and "Lack of communication between learners and teachers". A concerted effort needs to be made by NAMCOL Regional Offices to address these problems at tutorial centres.

How can the Secondary Education Programme be improved?

Those surveyed for the Tracer Study were offered a range of suggested responses when asked how NAMCOL could improve the services and programmes it offers. Not surprisingly, the most frequently-selected responses were "More qualified/skilled tutors", "More face-to-face sessions with tutors" and "Full-time centres, so that classes can be held in the morning as well". All of these points were raised by stakeholders during the consultations for the *Review of NAMCOL's Roles and Functions*.[18] Such comments reflect the continuing prominence given to contact-based forms of education provision.

Nevertheless, a significant proportion (45.5%) of former learners surveyed for the Tracer Study also felt that technology, in the form of additional learning resources and computers, could contribute to improving the SEP and other NAMCOL programmes. This suggests an openness to new ways of teaching and learning that the College might wish to exploit through pilot projects to make greater use of ICTs and e-learning materials.

In a paper in press, Mays[19] notes that one common mistake in the design stage of programme development is to give attention to material development at the expense of well-thought-through strategies for support, assessment, and quality assurance. Recently, within Unisa, there has been recognition of the need to think and plan more holistically in terms of the student's progress or walk through the institution (Louw, 2007). Consideration needs to be given to the fit (or lack thereof) between the student and the institution in terms of expectations, preparedness and responsiveness at each key step of the walk (Prinsloo, 2009). Creative ways of doing this need to be found for increasingly large numbers of learners who do not require direct face-to-face interaction. Table 11 illustrates how information and communication technologies can be harnessed appropriately in each step of the student walk at UNISA; these might be considered, then adopted or augmented at NAMCOL in future planning:

RECOMMENDATIONS

The process of designing and conducting this Tracer Study highlighted two main areas where NAMCOL's operations might be strengthened:

Student feedback data management

Three key recommendations are made here:

[16] Mhlanga, Du Vivier, and Mays, *Review of the Roles and Functions of NAMCOL*, pp. 39–40.
[17] Ibid., p. 38.

[18] Ibid., pp. 38–40, 49–52.
[19] Mays, T. J. (2011). Developing practice: teaching teachers today for tomorrow. *US-China Education Review, December 2011*. In press. Citing Moon,[initials]; Leach, [initials]; & Stevens, [initials]. 2007.

Table 11. Technology and the student walk.

Step in the student walk	Appropriate technology for purpose and audience
1. Marketing and orientation	Provision of information in user-friendly styles and multiple modes (e.g. online, mobile– Compact Disc Recordable/Read Only (CDR), Digital Video Disc (DVD), podcast, audio/video and print) and access to OER examples of learning resources enables potential learners to make more informed choices. Supported by online advisors, call centre, or staff at decentralised regional centres.
2. Application: Responsible Open Access Programme	Provision of diagnostic self-test quizzes available on-line, DVD, flash drives or in-person at regional centres can help potential learners to make appropriate choices about what, how much and in what mode to study. The emphasis should be on the most appropriate route to access learning rather than on testing for exclusion. Supported by online advisors, call centre, or staff at decentralized regional centres.
3. Registration	Learners can register online remotely, at a self-service terminal at a regional centre, or seek personal assistance at a regional centre. Currently, about 70% of UNISA learners register on-line. A technology-enhanced registration process allows for automatic pop-up alerts regarding pre-and co-requisites, possible exam clashes, workload challenges and work-integrated learning (WIL) components, such as teaching practice. It also allows for the possibility of immediate access to digital versions of resources immediately on successful registration through the use of a toaster.
4. Teaching Orientation	Traditionally, UNISA has relied on printed tutorial letters at programme (300 series) and module (100 series) levels for orientation purposes and these are also available in Portable document Format (PDF) online and so can be downloaded should learners lose their copy. Other orientation possibilities include YouTube, video-conferencing, satellite TV or radio broadcast, video on DVD or podcast, an e-tutor led small group online or tele-conference, and where the need exists and numbers justify it, even a face-to-face contact session in a regional centre, other institution, school, church hall, teacher centre, etc., All contact with student-teachers should consciously model appropriate teacher-student behaviours.
Maintenance/Formative assessment	In many institutions, formative assessment in the form of assignments is a pre-requisite for entry to summative assessment (most often in the form of a formal examination). Ten percent of learners either do not complete or do not pass their formative assessment. So: Provide Short Message Service (SMS) and email reminders of deadlines Set up online discussion fora related to assignment preparation. Provide for an e-tutor or student led (peer collaborative learning - PCL) small group online or tele-conference, and where the need exists and numbers justify it, even a face-to-face contact session. Provide for online, postal and in-person submissions. Provide for online marking and marks submission. Automate routing of non-submissions or weak submissions for pro-active follow-up by an e-tutor—by phone, email or Skype. Provide feedback on problem areas in a tutorial letter, email, SMS, in the online forum, via e-tutor or face-to-face tutor. For the joint exploration of practice consider having learners engage with digital copies of lesson planning documents and videos of classroom practice and encourage critical engagement online, by mobile, in an etutorial or in a face-to-face tutorial; maintain a programme and teaching practice website throughout the programme including updates on policy, news articles, and research publications etc. as well as informal chat room facilities.

Table 11. Continues.

Consolidation/summative assessment registration	Ten per cent of learners successfully complete the formative assessment but although registered to attempt summative assessment do not present themselves. So: Provide SMS and email reminders of timetables. Provide SMS or online booking of exam candidacy and automated reminders for deferrals. Automate routing of non-registrations for pro-active follow-up by an etutor–by phone, email or Skype. Provide feedback on key areas/assessment foci in a TL email, sms, in the online forum, via e-tutor or face-to-face tutor, or use YouTube, video-conferencing, satellite TV or radio broadcast, video on DVD or podcast.
Summative assessment	Of the 80% of learners who present themselves, 70% of Humanities learners pass first time (pass rates tend to be lower in other fields), yielding an initial cohort throughput of 80% × 70% = 56%. Track trends automatically to prioritize interventions. Where possible provide both online and more traditional opportunities to complete summative assessment Automate routing of no-shows or poor performance for pro-active follow-up by an e-tutor–by phone, email or Skype
2nd examination opportunity	At UNISA, learners who fail a module with a stipulated subminimum can register for a second examination opportunity in the following semester. Provide SMS and email reminders of timetables. Provide SMS or online booking of exam candidacy and automated reminders for deferrals. Automate routing of non-registrations for pro-active follow-up by an e-tutor—by phone, email or Skype. Provide feedback on key areas/assessment foci in a TL email, SMS, in the online forum, via e-tutor or face-to-face tutor, or use YouTube, video-conferencing, satellite TV or radio broadcast, video on DVD or podcast.
5. Graduation and alumni	Build and maintain a database of graduates; keep regular contact with alumni through a quarterly e-newsletter; conduct e-impact studies; recruit graduates as e-tutors ...

Build internal capacity to conduct learner satisfaction surveys

In most education and training institutions, regular surveys of learner satisfaction are a key mechanism for assuring the quality of programmes. In some HEIs, learners are asked to assess the organisational abilities, subject knowledge and teaching skills of their lecturers, as well as rating the lesson plans and learning resources they provide. Evidence from these assessments is used when members of academic staff undergo performance reviews, are considered for tenure or apply for promotion.

The most efficient way of conducting such learner satisfaction surveys is to use online questionnaires, which learners can fill in anonymously and which allow supervisors/managers to have immediate access to results. While such a system may not be feasible for most NAMCOL learners at present, it is likely that the infrastructure will be available within the next five to ten years. NAMCOL's Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Assurance unit will need to lay the groundwork for such a system by acquiring the licence for online survey software and by training staff at the College's Head Office, Regional Offices and tutorial centres.

Set up a long-term longitudinal study to trace the impact on former learners

One of the greatest drawbacks of the current study lay with the limitations of the sampling methods. Because it proved impossible to make contact with so many former NAMCOL learners, non-probability sampling methods had to be adopted. As a result, it is impossible to know whether those who submitted questionnaires (either in hard copy or online) and those who were interviewed by

telephone are truly representative of the population of former learners.

A much better way of going about such research is to select a random sample of those who are currently studying with the College and then trace their progress over a period of time. Such cohort studies require contact with those in the sample group at regular intervals, to ensure that telephone numbers and addresses are up to date and to record any changes in the status of variables under consideration. For this reason, longitudinal studies demand a considerable commitment in terms of staff time and research resources over a period of many years. Nevertheless, a well-designed and conscientiously-conducted longitudinal research project is likely to produce the most comprehensive and reliable data of the impact of studying with NAMCOL. Longitudinal cohort analyses also allow for easier tracking of comparative trends over time.

Make contact with employers to obtain their perceptions of NAMCOL 'graduates'

Anecdotal evidence suggests that some former learners encountered discrimination when seeking employment because qualifications obtained after studying with NAMCOL are seen by employers as inferior to the same certificates awarded to those who studied in conventional schools. Although a suggestion was made to include some items in the questionnaire to determine how widespread this phenomenon might be, these were later removed because the survey instrument contained too many items. Approaching employers to assess their views was outside the scope of this particular research, though a recent tracer study of UNAM graduates did include interviewing HR Managers in major companies about their performance. Consideration should be given to a similar exercise in future tracer studies of former NAMCOL learners.

Designing interventions to support learning throughout the student experience from pre-registration to post-graduation

Four key recommendations are made here:

Adapting current marketing strategy for applicants

In order for learners to gain a better understanding of NAMCOL and how it works before registering, it may be useful for a selection of NAMCOL materials to be made available as open educational resources (OERs), where learners can get a sense of what they will be studying, the time it will take, etc. A self-diagnosis questionnaire for readiness to study through part-time or open and

distance learning methods could also be included to enable prospective learners to make informed decisions. This will help to address issues such as drop outs.

Improving throughput rates

Another means of increasing visibility and impact is to improve retention and throughput rates so that these are demonstrably much better than those in the traditional system. This would imply the need to track engagement and performance and provide individualised pro-active/pre-emptive support to learners across the entire learning journey - from marketing, to application, to registering, to the learning itself, to assignment submission and return, to exam preparation, to support for the transition to employment or further education and training.

Expanding the PQM of the institution

As time progresses, the memory and direct impact of school-level studies fades and work- and life-place experience takes precedence. If NAMCOL were able to expand its programme and qualifications mix (PQM) in targeted areas it might be able to change its profile from that of an adjunct to the traditional school system to that of a lifelong learning partner. It is suggested that learners who enjoyed success with NAMCOL after exiting unsuccessfully from the traditional school system might well be favourably disposed to further study with the institution. A possible area to explore in this regard is bridging or foundation programmes providing credit-bearing access into qualifications offered at other institutions such as UNAM and the Polytechnic.

Building a robust alumni association

Over the years NAMCOL has built an extensive group of alumni, which represents a potential asset in terms of future growth and informal marketing. In addition, former learners who go on to further study represent a potential pool of future full-time staff, part-time tutors, evaluators, course writers etc. Networks or alumni associations could be established.

There is potential for a meaningful iteration between this recommendation and those in part 1 above.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

This questionnaire is for former learners of NAMCOL who were enrolled for IGCSE/NSSCO (Grade 12) level studies with the College from 2005 to 2010. Please complete all sections and submit at a NAMCOL regional or sub-regional office.

Section A: Biographical Details

1. First Name_____
2. Family Name/Surname: _____
3. Date of birth (dd – mm - yyyy) _____
4. Gender: TICK CORRECT ANSWER: Male _____ Female _____
5. NAMCOL Student Number_____
6. Contact Telephone or Cellphone Number (for draw)_____
7. Email address(for follow up)_____
8. Name of NAMCOL Region where you studied: TICK THE CORRESPONDING BOX

8.1	Caprivi	
8.2	Erongo	
8.3	Hardap	
8.4	Karas	
8.5	Kavango	
8.6	Khomas	
8.7	Kunene	
8.8	Ohangwena	
8.9	Omaheke	
8.10	Omusati	
8.11	Otjozondjupa	
8.12	Oshana	
8.13	Oshikoto	

9. Region (where you live now): TICK THE CORRESPONDING BOX

9.1	Caprivi	
9.2	Erongo	
9.3	Hardap	
9.4	Karas	
9.5	Kavango	
9.6	Khomas	
9.7	Kunene	
9.8	Ohangwena	
9.9	Omaheke	
9.10	Omusati	
9.11	Otjozondjupa	
9.12	Oshana	
9.13	Oshikoto	

Section B: What did you do at NAMCOL and why

10. Did you attend NAMCOL for JSC (Grade 10) level (TICK CORRECT ANSWER) Yes:_____ No:____
a. Number of subjects at Grade 10:_____
11. Complete the following relating to attending NAMCOL for IGCSE/NSSCO (Grade 12) level:
a. Year Started:_____
b. Year completed:_____
c. Subjects taken and highest symbol obtained

No.	Subject	Subject(s) you studied at NAMCOL (Indicate by ticking the appropriate box)	Symbol obtained after finishing with NAMCOL (Write symbol in appropriate box)	If you took this subject previously at Grade 12 level in a formal school, what symbol did you get in the exam
11c.1.	Accounting			
11c.2	Afrikaans first language			
11c.3	Afrikaans second language			
11c.4	Agriculture			
11c.5	Biology			
11c.6	Business Studies			
11c.7	Development studies			
11c.8	Economics			
11c.9	English second language			
11c.10	Geography			
11c.11	History			
11c.12	Mathematics			
11c.13	Oshikwanyama first language			
11c.14	Oshindonga first language			
11c.15	Otjiherero first language			
11c.16	Physical Science			
11c.17	Rukwangali first language			
11c.18	Rumanyo first language			
11c.19	Silozi first language			
11c.20	Thimbukushu first language			

12. Which mode did you enrol for with NAMCOL for IGCSE/NSSCO (Grade 12) for most of your subjects?
Contact (face to face): _____ Non-Contact (distance):_____
13. Why did you enrol with NAMCOL for IGCSE/NSSCO (Grade 12): TICK ALL THAT APPLY

13.1	I could not get a place in a formal school.	
13.2	I wanted to upgrade my symbols	
13.3	I needed an IGCSE/NSSCO certificate to get a job	
13.4	I needed an IGCSE/NSSCO certificate to gain entrance to higher education	
13.5	I had to study part time because I was already working	
13.6	I had to study part time because I was pregnant or had children to care for	
13.7	I never had a chance to complete Grade 12 when I was of school-going age.	
13.8	I wanted to do additional subjects that were not available at my school	
13.9	I want to change my career and needed to obtain additional qualifications	
13.10	I found it cheaper to enrol at NAMCOL compared to other institutions	
13.11	Other:_____	

Section C: What did you do after leaving NAMCOL

14. Did you apply for further studies at any higher education institution or training centre? TICK IF THE ANSWER IS YES

No	Institution	Did you apply	Were you accepted?
14.1	UNAM		
14.2	Polytechnic of Namibia		
14.3	IUM		
14.4	Teacher Training College		
14.5	VTC/NIMT		
14.6	Other:_____		

a. Highest qualification achieved to date: TICK CORRESPONDING ANSWER

14a.1	JSC (Grade 10)	
14a.2	NSSCO (Grade 12)	
14a.3	Certificate (Post-secondary)	
14a.4	Diploma	
14a.5	Bachelor's degree	
14a.6	Honours Bachelor's degree	
14a.7	Postgraduate diploma or Master's degree	
14a.8	Doctoral degree	

b. What field of study? TICK CORRESPONDING ANSWER

14b.1	Agriculture/Natural Resources	
14b.2	Business	
14b.3	Economics and Management Sciences	
14b.4	Education	
14b.5	Engineering	
14b.6	Health Sciences/Health	
14b.7	Humanities/Social Sciences/Arts	
14b.8	Information Technology	
14b.9	Law	
14b.10	Science	
14b.11	Other: _____	

15. Are you currently employed? Yes:_____   No:_____
a. Full time or Part time?_____
b. Self-employed?_____
c. Which sector?_____

15.1	Government	
15.2	Non-profit organisation	
15.3	Private company	
15.4	Community based organisation	
15.5	Volunteer work	
15.6	Other: _____	

16. How long did it take you to find a job after finishing your NAMCOL qualification? TICK CORRECT ANSWER

16.1	I was already employed whilst studying at NAMCOL	
16.2	Less than six months	
16.3	Between six months and two years	
16.4	More than two years	
16.5	I haven't found a job yet, I'm looking for a job	
16.6	I am NOT looking for a job away from my home/farm	

Section D: What was your experience with NAMCOL and how could it have been better?

17. What were the challenging aspects of your studying with NAMCOL: TICK FIVE THAT MOST APPLY

17.1	Studying with NAMCOL cost too much.	
17.2	I found the language in the study materials too difficult to understand.	
17.3	I found it hard to motivate myself to study	
17.4	The distance I had to travel to the nearest NAMCOL centre was too far	
17.5	The classes at the NAMCOL centre were too late in the evening, and I was worried about getting home safely	
17.6	The class schedule at the NAMCOL centre conflicted with my working hours or duties at home	
17.7	I did not receive information on time	
17.8	Not enough information was given to learners.	
17.9	Other:_____	

18. How could NAMCOL services/programmes be improved? TICK FIVE THAT MOST APPLY

18.1	Simpler language in study guides/textbooks and assignments	
18.2	More qualified/skilled tutors/teachers	
18.3	More face-to-face sessions with tutors/teachers	
18.4	Full-time centres, so that classes can be held in the morning as well	
18.5	Additional learning resources (such as computers)	
18.6	Reduce the fees for studying with NAMCOL	
18.7	Introduce sports and other extra-curricular activities	
18.8	Introduce e-learning options	
18.9	Introduce technical and vocational courses	
18.10	Provide a wider range of courses at all NAMCOL centres	
18.11	Expand the number of higher education courses/programmes that NAMCOL offers at certificate, diploma and degree level	
18.12	Open a centre closer to where I live	
18.13	Improve on the turn-around time of assignments	
18.14	Smaller class sizes so that I can get individual attention from the tutor/teacher	
18.15	Training on social skills, such as the 'My Future is My Choice' programme	
18.16	NAMCOL should offer subjects at NSSCO higher level	
18.17	Enhance supervision and monitoring of teaching/tutoring	
18.18	Schedule more classes during the week	

APPENDIX B: DETAILED ANALYSIS

Demographics

Table 12. Gender breakdown, by method.

Gender	1. Paper	2. Online	3. Telephone
Female	70%	59%	69%
Male	30%	41%	31%

Table 5. Age breakdown, by method.

Age	1.Paper	2.Online	3. Telephone
Under 20 yrs	9.9%	7.2%	4.3%
21 to 25 yrs	42.6%	46.9%	44.2%
26 to 30yrs	22.8%	20.8%	24.7%
31 to 40 yrs	20.7%	22.2%	24.2%
Over 40 yrs	4.0%	2.9%	2.6%
Mean	26.91	27.01	27.34
S.D.	6.49	5.92	5.54

Table 14. Region where studied, by method.

Region	1. Paper	2. Online	3. Telephone
Caprivi	1.8%	5.8%	0.0%
Erongo	4.9%	9.2%	5.0%
Hardap	0.3%	2.4%	1.3%
Karas	0.9%	4.8%	6.3%
Kavango	7.1%	3.4%	0.0%
Khomas	42.6%	42.5%	41.6%
Kunene	3.7%	1.0%	1.7%
Ohangwena	4.9%	2.4%	2.9%
Omaheke	4.3%	1.4%	0.4%
Omusati	6.1%	2.9%	6.3%
Oshana	12.9%	18.4%	23.1%
Oshikoto	4.3%	3.4%	6.7%
Otjozondjupa	6.1%	2.4%	4.6%

Table 15. Region where live, by method.

Region	1. Paper	2. Online	3. Telephone
Caprivi	1.9%	2.9%	0.4%
Erongo	6.0%	11.1%	8.4%
Hardap	0.3%	2.4%	0.8%
Karas	0.9%	2.4%	5.0%
Kavango	6.0%	2.4%	1.3%
Khomas	55.2%	50.2%	43.7%
Kunene	3.8%	1.9%	2.5%
Ohangwena	1.6%	2.9%	3.8%
Omaheke	3.5%	1.4%	0.8%
Omusati	4.1%	1.9%	4.6%
Oshana	6.9%	13.5%	19.7%
Oshikoto	3.2%	2.4%	3.4%
Otjozondjupa	6.6%	4.3%	5.5%

What did you do at NAMCOL and why

Table 16. Attended Grade 10, by method.

Answer	1. Paper	2. Online	3. Telephone
Yes	13.9%	9.7%	7.1%

Table 17. Grade 12 year started, by method.

Year	1. Paper	2. Online	3. Telephone
Before 2003	1.9%	6.3%	3.0%
2003	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%
2004	2.5%	5.0%	2.1%
2005	10.7%	18.2%	11.9%
2006	11.0%	19.5%	12.8%
2007	7.6%	7.5%	28.5%
2008	14.8%	14.5%	12.8%
2009	21.8%	10.1%	12.8%
2010	28.7%	18.9%	16.2%

Table 18. Grade 12 year completed, by method.

Year	1. Paper	2. Online	3. Telephone
2005	3.6%	11.1%	4.6%
2006	6.7%	10.1%	4.6%
2007	7.0%	9.7%	24.4%
2008	11.5%	6.2%	14.7%
2009	13.3%	12.1%	16.4%
2010	38.5%	16.9%	18.9%
2011/current	11.5%	5.3%	7.6%

Table 19. Grade 12 subjects, by method.

	1. Paper	2. Online	3. Telephone
Accounting	7.9%	9.7%	8.4%
Afrikaans first language	0.3%	11.1%	0.4%
Afrikaans second language	1.5%	2.9%	1.7%
Agriculture	18.8%	5.8%	10.5%
Biology	35.2%	23.2%	30.7%
Business Studies	15.2%	15.5%	15.1%
Development studies	35.5%	32.9%	47.1%
Economics	9.1%	11.1%	6.7%
English second language	68.5%	47.3%	65.1%
Geography	15.5%	11.1%	11.8%
History	8.8%	6.8%	7.1%
Mathematics	23.0%	19.8%	23.9%
Oshikwanyama first language	3.3%	1.4%	2.5%
Oshindonga first language	3.9%	4.8%	4.2%
Otjiherero first language	4.2%	1.9%	1.3%
Physical Science	20.6%	17.4%	16.8%
Rukwangali first language	0.6%	0.5%	0%
Rumanyo first language	0%	0%	0%
Silozi first language	0%	0%	0%
Thimbukushu first language	0.3%	0%	0%

Table 20. Symbols - English Second Language.

Symbol	Symbol obtained after finishing with NAMCOL)	If you took this subject previously at Grade 12 level in a formal school, what symbol did you get in the exam
A	3	
B	3	1
C	22	6
D	95	17
E	168	96
F	92	165
G	24	55
Ungraded	27	48

Table 21. Mode enrolled, by method.

	1. Paper	2. Online	3. Telephone
Contact	69.5%	53.1%	45.1%
Non-contact	30.5%	46.9%	54.9%

Table 22. Reasons for enrolling at NAMCOL, by method.

	1. Paper	2. Online	3. Telephone
I could not get a place in a formal school.	9.1%	3.4%	6.3%
I wanted to upgrade my symbols	83.9%	65.2%	85.7%
I needed an IGCSE/NSSCO certificate to get a job	20.6%	9.2%	39.1%
I needed an IGCSE/NSSCO certificate to gain entrance to higher education	57.9%	35.7%	44.1%
I had to study part time because I was already working	9.1%	11.6%	12.2%
I had to study part time because I was pregnant or had children to care for	1.5%	1.9%	3.8%
I never had a chance to complete Grade 12 when I was of school-going age.	8.5%	7.2%	5.5%
I wanted to do additional subjects that were not available at my school	16.1%	9.2%	10.5%
I want to change my career and needed to obtain additional qualifications	26.1%	12.1%	19.3%
I found it cheaper to enrol at NAMCOL compared to other institutions	34.8%	23.7%	48.3%

What did you do after leaving NAMCOL

Table 23. Application and acceptance to higher education, by method (number of learners).

	1. Paper	2. Online	3. Telephone
Did you apply to any institution?	226	113	171
Were you accepted at any institution	155	87	128
UNAM: did you apply	71	37	49
UNAM: were you accepted	30	27	28
Polytech: did you apply?	62	64	44
Polytech: were you accepted?	27	45	25
IUM: did you apply	33	14	19
IUM: were you accepted?	24	12	17
Teacher Training College: Did you apply?	31	16	15
Teacher Training College: Were you accepted?	10	7	6
VTC/NIMT: did you apply?	68	23	20
VTC/NIMT: were you accepted?	23	8	12

Table 24. Other educational institutions learners applied to.

HEI/Institution
Academy College, Upington
Adult Education Literacy4
Arts Centre Katutura
Brilliant Training College
Catholic Aids Action
CED
CLGS (Certificate in Local Gov't Studies, a NAMCOL Professional Programme)
College of Arts
College of Cape Town
Cosdec (Community Skills Development Centres)
Farisan Oriental College
Heritage School
HR Development Centre
ICDL (International Computer Driver's Licence, offered by NAMCOL)
Identity Business Solution
Institute of Bankers in Namibia (IOB)
Institute of Management Science
Intec College
International training college of lingua
IOL (Institute of Open Learning)
ITCL
Katutura Community College
Kayec Trust
Keetmanshoop Health Centre
Lingua International Training College
Marco- Mpollo VTC
Mechanical Training Institute
Monitronic College
NATH (Namibia Academy for Tourism and Hospitality
National Academic College
NETS (Namibia Evangelical Theological Seminary)
North West University of SA
Nurse Training Centre
Okahao youth centre
Oshakati Northern Campus
Oshigambo S. Training
Regional Health Centre
SCHCMC
Shadonai College of Beauty
Social Marketing Association
Triumphant College
Tuwilika Training Institution
UNISA

Table 25. Highest qualification to date, by method.

	1. Paper	**2. Online**	**3. Telephone**
JSC (Grade 10)	4.7%	4.2%	5.1%
NSSCO (Grade 12)	64.7%	32.8%	54.2%
Certificate (Post-secondary)	15.0%	27.7%	23.7%
Diploma	12.7%	24.4%	15.7%
Bachelor's degree	2.3%	7.6%	1.3%
Honours Bachelor's degree	0.3%	3.4%	0.0%
Postgraduate diploma or Master's degree	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 26. Field of study, by method.

	1. Paper (n = 226)	**2. Online (n = 113)**	**3. Telephone (n = 171)**
Agriculture/Natural Resources	11.5%	3.5%	18.2%
Business	9.3%	20.4%	427.3%
Economics and Management Sciences	8.8%	9.7%	72.7%
Education	11.1%	6.2%	172.7%
Engineering	7.1%	3.5%	145.5%
Health Sciences/Health	6.2%	4.4%	90.9%
Humanities/Social Sciences/Arts	9.3%	8.8%	154.5%
Information Technology	4.4%	12.4%	154.5%
Law	0.9%	0.9%	18.2%
Science	14.2%	0.9%	200.0%

Employment

Table 27. Employment, by method.

	1. Paper	**2. Online**	**3. Telephone**
Are you currently employed?	33.0%	39.6%	50.8%
Full time?	22.4%	35.7%	46.6%
Are you self-employed?	3.9%	3.4%	2.5%

Table 28. Sector working in, by method.

	1. Paper (n = 109)	**2. Online (n = 82)**	**3. Telephone (n =121)**
Government	37.6%	64.6%	38.0%
Non-profit organisation	5.5%	7.3%	2.5%
Private company	38.5%	36.6%	47.9%
Community based organisation	2.8%	4.9%	0.0%
Volunteer work	8.3%	6.1%	0.8%

Table 29. Finding a job, by method.

	1. Paper	**2. Online**	**3. Telephone**
I was already employed whilst studying at NAMCOL	15.2%	18.8%	18.9%
Less than six months	6.7%	8.2%	10.9%
Between six months and two years	4.5%	6.3%	5.0%
More than two years	5.8%	9.7%	15.5%
I haven't found a job yet, I'm looking for a job	44.2%	28.5%	26.1%
I am NOT looking for a job away from my home/farm	1.2%	5.3%	1.3%

What was your experience of NAMCOL and how could it have been better?

Table 30. Challenging aspects of studying at NAMCOL, by method.

	1.Paper	2.Online	3. Telephone
Studying with NAMCOL cost too much.	38.2%	21.3%	18.9%
I found the language in the study materials too difficult to understand.	31.5%	17.4%	10.9%
I found it hard to motivate myself to study	54.8%	45.4%	5.0%
The distance I had to travel to the nearest NAMCOL centre was too far	55.8 %	42.5 %	15.1%
The classes at the NAMCOL centre were too late in the evening, and I was worried about getting home safely	64.2%	41.1%	18.5%
The class schedule at the NAMCOL centre conflicted with my working hours or duties at home	21.8%	30.9%	9.2%
I did not receive information on time	30.6%	28.0%	39.9%
Not enough information was given to learners.	47.6%	40.6%	37.8%

Table 31. Improving NAMCOL programmes/services, by method.

	1. Paper	2. Online	3. Telephone
Simpler language in study guides/textbooks and assignments	23.9%	20.8%	45.0%
More qualified/skilled tutors/teachers	66.1%	43.5%	60.5%
More face-to-face sessions with tutors/teachers	60.3%	42.5%	45.4%
Full-time centres, so that classes can be held in the morning as well	61.5%	44.4%	26.9%
Additional learning resources (such as computers)	57.6%	42.0%	31.9%
Reduce the fees for studying with NAMCOL	36.1%	26.1%	15.1%
Introduce sports and other extra-curricular activities	17.9%	11.6%	21.0%
Introduce e-learning options	13.9%	25.6%	15.1%
Introduce technical and vocational courses	34.8%	20.3%	18.1%
Provide a wider range of courses at all NAMCOL centres	16.7%	18.8%	14.7%
Expand the number of higher education courses/programmes that NAMCOL offers at certificate, diploma and degree level	31.8%	20.8%	12.2%
Open a centre closer to where I live	10.6%	4.3%	17.2%
Improve .on the turn-around time of assignments	13.3%	8.7%	10.5%
Smaller class sizes so that I can get individual attention from the tutor/teacher	8.8%	6.3%	9.7%
Training on social skills, such as the 'My Future is My Choice' programme	8.8%	6.3%	11.3%
NAMCOL should offer subjects at NSSCO higher level	28.5%	18.4%	11.3%
Enhance supervision and monitoring of teaching/tutoring	24.2%	16.4%	10.5%
Schedule more classes during the week	35.5%	14.4%	17.2%