

# **Post Graduate studies and academic research**

**By**

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# Post graduate Research in South Africa

- Based on the NDP data on quality of university education is disturbing.
- South African Universities are mid-level performers in terms of knowledge production.
- There is low participation, high attrition rates and insufficient capacity to produce the required levels of skills.
- Characterized by historical inequalities and distortions.

# Post graduate Research cont...

- Universities are under considerable strain.
- Enrolments have double in the past 22 years yet funding has not kept up.
- As a result there is slow growth in the number of university lecturers, inadequate student accommodation, creaking infrastructure and equipment shortages.
- There is serious leadership and governance challenges particularly those universities under administration.

# The role of Universities

- Education
- Research
- Store of knowledge and capabilities
- Innovation
- Reputation and international networks - they are citadels of ability and excellence
- Economic and social mission

# Necessary ?

- Universities are central elements in any national innovation system
- Ensures highest standards of performance across a broad range of disciplines
- Provide the highest calibre of people, ideas and information
- Provide opportunities for achieving greatness

# Why promote Post Graduate Research?

- Global relevancy
- Detached engagement - universities look to the future, the big picture and the universal
- Radical conservatism - go beyond the present and the superficial
- Benefits to students
- University education seeks to create people with the ability to work well in the jobs they take up after graduation
- Benefits to communities

# Why academic research

- New comers might view academia as difficult.
- It becomes easy with overtime by learning the language and basic customs
- When academics are not teaching they are often working on academic papers/ research
- The studies help advance knowledge in a particular field.
- Academic studies are a result of many years research.
- i.e. analysis of large sets of data or experiments.

# Why academic research cont...

- Academic studies contribute incremental knowledge on a particular question
- i.e. is money in politics a cause of corruption?
- Scholars do not provide a simple yes or no to the question.
- They further probe as to why and how and what etc.
- The evidence has to be proven to come up with a precise answer.
- i.e. develop a hypothesis, test it and ensure the that it can be repeated....



# Types of academic work

- Book reviews
- Journal articles
- Books
- Conference papers
- Research
- Project proposals
- Reports

# Academic writing process

- Development of new ideas
- Information gathering
- Shaping of information
- Drafts
- Revisions/rewriting

# Increasing knowledge and demand for synthesis

- Working in teams
- More interaction between researchers and users
- Transdisciplinary/interdisciplinary
- Creation of networks and diversity
- Connectivity- drawing knowledge from different sources
- Broad based quality control- peer review and judgment of users.

# What are the key drivers?

- Changing global environment (including economic and socio-political aspects)
- Internationalization
- Cost of higher education
- Quality of education
- Information explosion
- Building research capacity not an option
- Innovation and sharing best practices
- Transformation, equity and access

# Higher education enrolments trends in Africa

- Demand for higher education is increasing (student – staff ratio is increasing)
- Levels of higher education provision is among the lowest in the world
- i.e. SADC region is projected to achieve a 16.3% higher education enrolment rate by 2050 compared to the current global gross tertiary enrolment rate of 30%.
- Increased demand has not met with increased funding.
- Challenges specifically in the Science and Technology disciplines.

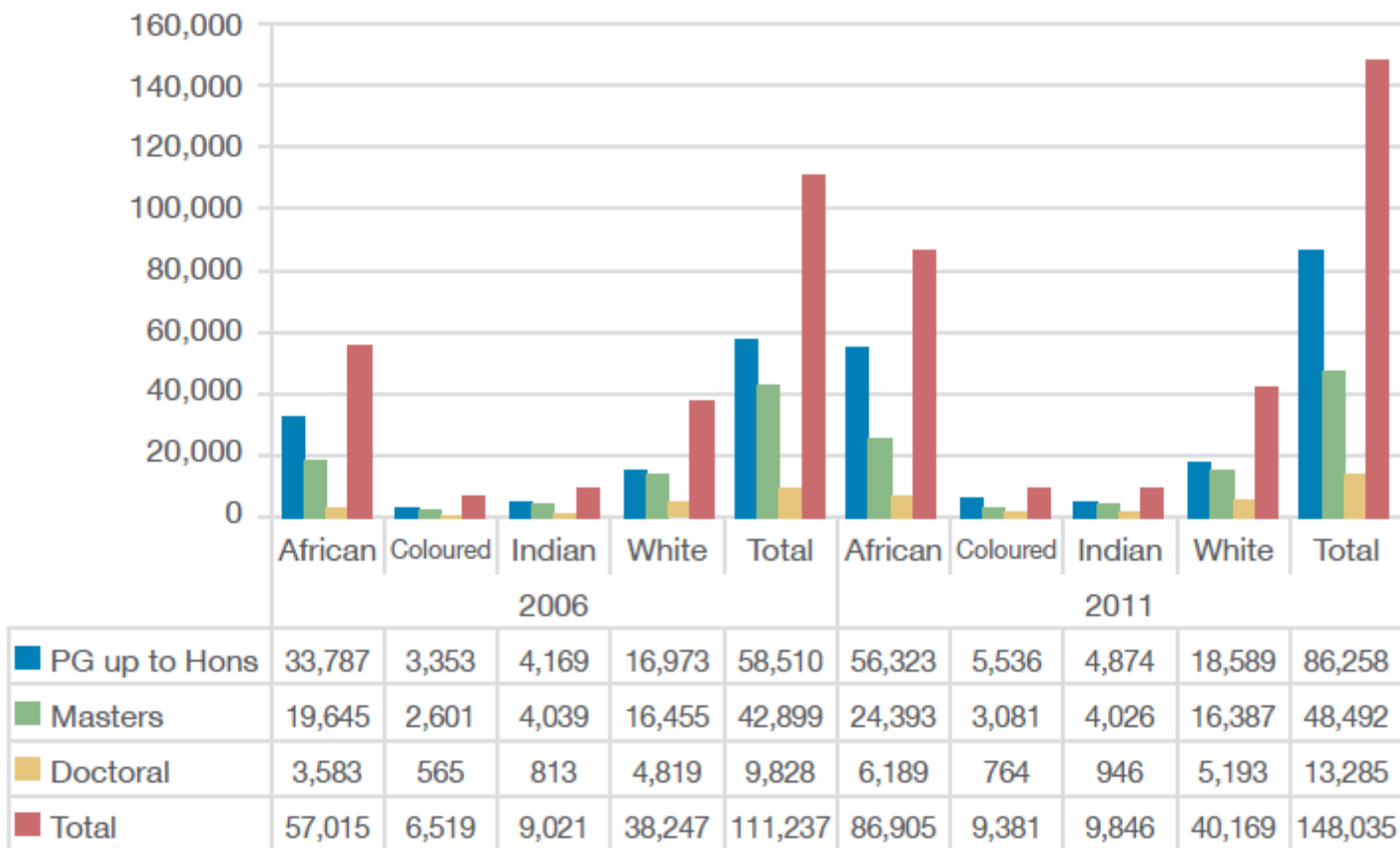
# Higher education enrolments cont...

- Brain drain- challenge to develop and retain academic staff
- Unqualified staff (completing PG studies themselves)
- Low throughputs and high dropout
- Poor infrastructure and ICT
- Increased focus on increasing investment on post graduate education and throughput.
- There are concerns on “massification”
- Increased mobility of staff and students
- Strengthening regional and institutional cooperation and collaboration

# South Africa as an illustrative example

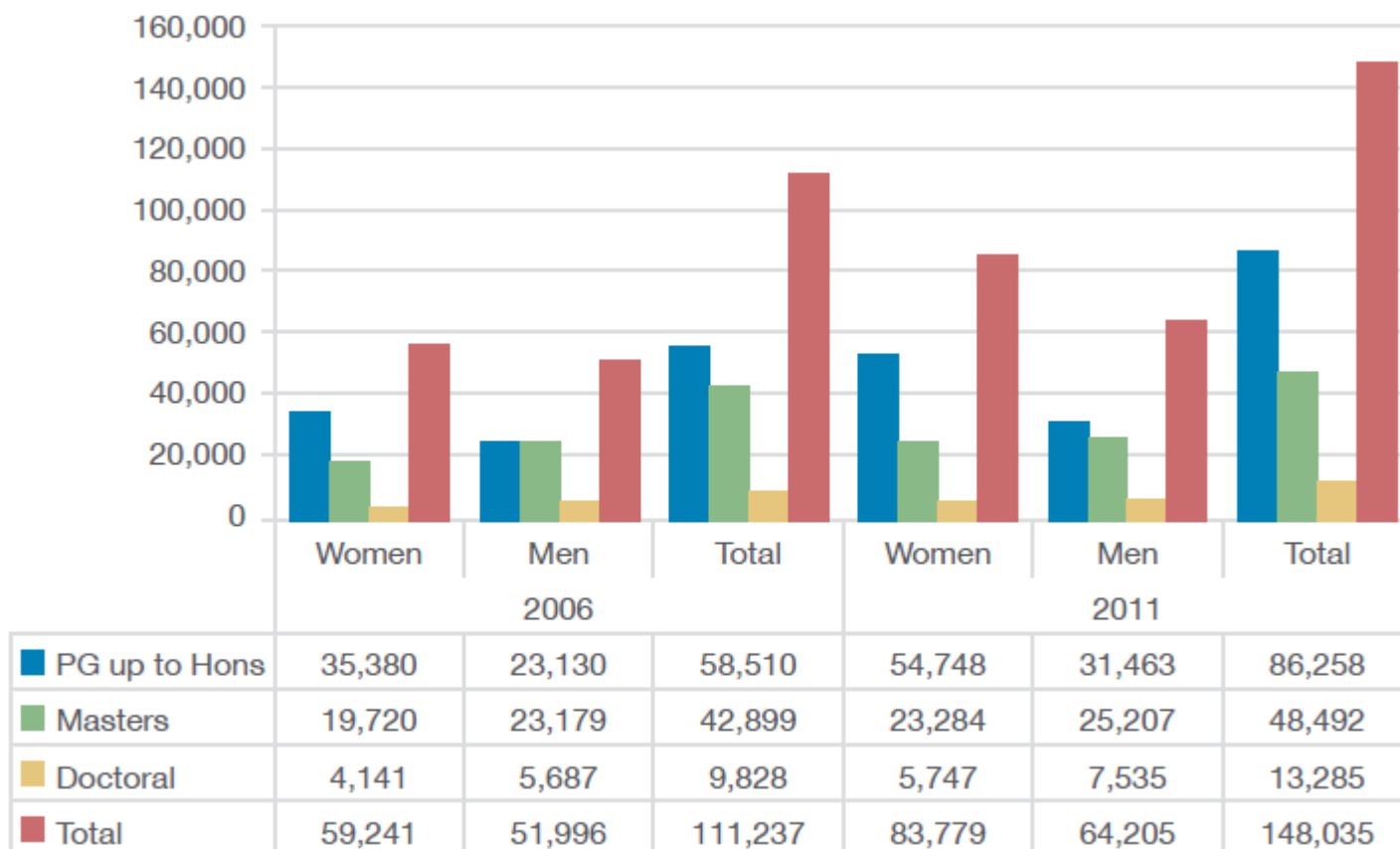
- National development plan target:
- 100 000 PhDs by 2030
- Current rate: 1 800 PhD in 2013
- Need to train 6 000 PhDs per year to meet target.
- Need an additional R5.8 billion a year to meet target.

# Headcount of postgraduate enrolments by race for 2006-2011 (Council for Higher Education, 2013)





# Headcount of postgraduate enrolments by gender for 2006-2011 (Council for Higher Education, 2013)



Thank you!