



**Nelson Mandela
Metropolitan
University**

for tomorrow

Roadmap to Success

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**Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
NMMU**

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What is 'Roadmap to Success'?

Roadmap to Success is a proactive NMMU initiative, which provides students with opportunities for their holistic development. Students are introduced to the concept of *Roadmap* at each Faculty Welcoming Ceremony, which forms part of the Orientation Programme, for first years. At this juncture students are presented with a strategy to enable them to develop themselves intentionally in some areas beyond the classroom.

The process consists of the following steps:

1. An intake interview is conducted by a Student Counsellor at Student Counselling.
2. The Learning Enhancement Checklist (LEC) and or the Wellness Questionnaire for Higher Education (WQHE) are administered – these needs assessment / developmental tools have been developed by Student Counselling.
3. Through co-involvement of the Student Counsellor and student, the appropriate intervention strategies are mapped.
4. Attendance of *Keys to Success* workshops form an integral part of the intervention strategies.
5. Ongoing monitoring of the student's progress is conducted by both Student Counsellor and student.
6. Evidence of learning for portfolio development and future employability, is strongly encouraged.

Background

Concerns over student retention rates in higher education (HE) continue to dominate institutional, national and international HE debates. Orientation programmes are vital institutional strategies that underpin retention initiatives - the most important strategic goal of an orientation programme is that it promotes retention and throughput rates. (Mullendore & Banahan, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991) show evidence that positively links extended first year orientation programmes with first year persistence and ultimately with degree completion. The NMMU envisions *Roadmap* as an extended orientation programme available to the entire student population. *Roadmap* is envisioned as both a remedial and developmental tool.

The NMMU attracts a diverse student population, comprising mainly students from disadvantaged backgrounds, whose needs necessitate pedagogical interventions from university support programmes.

The *Roadmap to Success* initiative aligns itself with the NMMU vision of the transformation and development of its communities by offering interventions, which provide support for all students.

Assessment / Evaluation

Aim:

A process evaluation study was utilized.

Assessment tools:

The two primary tools used as the assessment component of Roadmap include the LEC and WQHE. As a retention tool, the LEC process has been extended to include the development of an electronic database as a tracking mechanism. The LEC database archives demographic, process and outcome data. This mechanism was designed to generate institutional needs assessment data and group profiles so as to inform future intervention strategies.

Methodology:

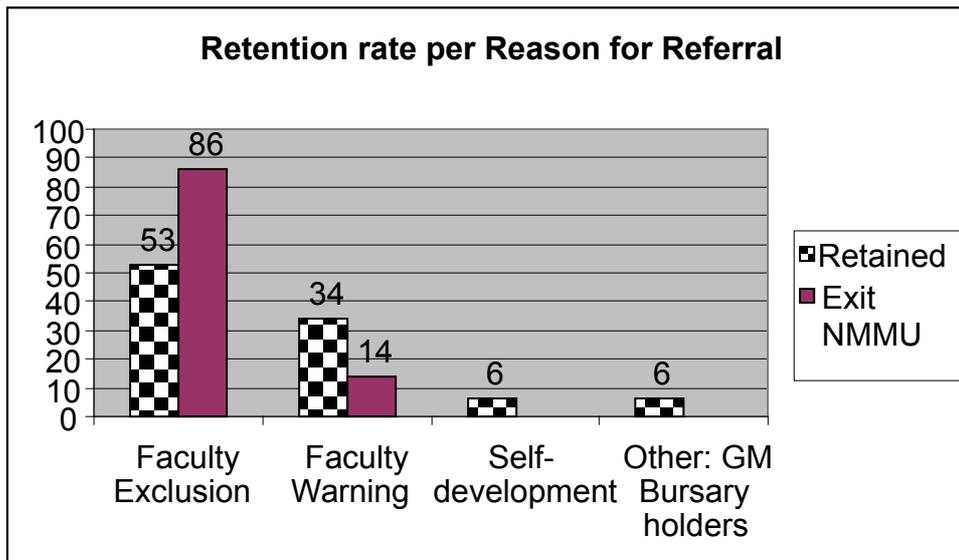
A quantitative exploratory-descriptive research design was employed and convenience sampling was used.

Sample description:

A diverse sample of NMMU students reflected the participant demographic, N=99. The participants comprised 75% from the Faculty of Engineering, the Built Environment and Information Technology, 12% in Health Science and smaller numbers in the other faculties: 6% in Business and Economic Sciences, 4% in Arts, 2% in Law.

The data reveals that a large proportion of participants are in their undergraduate study of which 44% of participants are in their first year of study, 37% of participants are in their second year of study. This result is important as it indicates that participants have been early identified as at risk of failing and in turn have been referred to Student Counselling.

As previously indicated *Roadmap* can also be used to inform the self-development process. This process is of particular focus to student counselling as participants are encouraged to be responsible for their own development. The co-involvement of participants in their own development is imperative. As a result of the assessment process student counsellors are able to ascertain the reasons for referral of participants to student counselling. At this stage according to the participants assessed 12% have utilised roadmap for their own self-development. The results at this stage indicate that *Roadmap* has been primarily used as a remedial tool and a small percentage of students have used it as developmental tool. That is, 46% of those who were assessed did so because they were excluded from their respective faculty, based on poor academic performance and were referred to Student Counselling. 28% were given a written warning by their respective faculty to improve their academic performance, within a specified time, or be excluded, based on poor academic performance.



The above graph indicates that a large proportion of participants who were referred to Student Counselling benefited from *Roadmap* in that it enabled their retention at NMMU.

Conclusions:

The findings support the use of *Roadmap* as a retention tool. That is, only a small percentage (4%) of participants exited the NMMU following the faculty exclusion. A large percentage (44%) essentially remained in their respective study course, while 7% changed their respective course but remained in their original faculty. A very small percentage (1%) registered in a new faculty. In total, 52% of participants, remained at NMMU to pursue further studying.

As highlighted previously the primary reason for referral of participants to Student Counselling was for remedial assistance as these participants were excluded on the basis of poor academic performance. *Roadmap* has supported the co-involvement of Student Counsellor and participant in mapping out a strategy for intentional development. The result of which, reveals that a large percentage of participants have benefited from this intentional intervention have remained in their courses and are also continuing with the interventions suggested as well as with on-going monitoring. Thus it can be concluded that *Roadmap* has positively assisted with retention of students who were referred from faculties to Student Counselling to assist with the retention of students. Another integral component of *Roadmap* is the Keys to Success workshops, the assessment of which is attested to in the Keys to Success poster presentation.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Student Counselling develop an electronic database for the WQHE. At present a small percentage of students have used *Roadmap* as a developmental tool and therefore it is recommended that it be actively promoted to all students.

References:

Mullendore, R. H., & Banahan, L. A. (2005). Designing orientation programs as found in *Challenging and supporting the first-year student* by Upcraft, M. L., Gardner, J. N., and Barefoot, B. O. National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Student in Transition (2005). Retrieved October 21, 2005 from <http://www.sc.edu/fye/research/surveyfinding/surveys/survey03.html>.

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (1991). *How college affects students: Findings and insights from twenty years of research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

