

GREATNESS WITHOUT **BOUNDARIES**

INTEGRATED
ANNUAL REPORT
2023

● Video

In this [video](#) we tell the story of the NWU's never-ending journey to unlimited greatness, and how the university empowers others to carve out their own paths to greatness.

● Front page image

The image on the front page – the night sky in all its magnificence – symbolises our theme, **Greatness without boundaries**.

For us, the expanding Universe symbolises greatness that knows no boundaries; greatness that overcomes obstacles and finds new and exciting pathways.

Just as our known Universe has no edge or border, our pursuit of greatness has no limit. It is an ongoing journey with milestones along the path but no final terminal to indicate that we have arrived.

This greatness is meant for the NWU as a university, and for every person connected to this institution. As fellow travellers, we exchange knowledge and skills, we inspire each other and – joining hands – we seek to go where no one has gone before.

Together we explore new frontiers, always curious to see beyond the visible, to unveil the mysteries of our times. The small steps we take in doing this ultimately add up to solutions and answers that could benefit humankind.

As a knowledge-seeking institution striving for greatness, we invite you, our stakeholders, along on this endless adventure.

Join us to learn more about our quest to unlock infinite greatness for ourselves and for our stakeholders.

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● This is a more concise version of the integrated annual report which the NWU Council approved on 13 June 2024 and was submitted to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

The full report is available on the NWU website. We welcome feedback on our reporting approach – please send your comments or suggestions to our registrar, Prof [Marlene Verhoef](#).

Throughout this concise version of the report, you will find links to related information. Some of this information is in other sections in this report and some is hosted on the NWU website or posted elsewhere on the internet. Certain links will also take you to the relevant information included in the full integrated report that was submitted to the DHET. Look out for these bold, turquoise links: [link](#).

The NWU is a place where everyone should feel at home. The languages used have a lot to do with that sense of belonging.

In line with our functional multilingual language policy, you will be able to click on “language choice buttons” that will enable you to read certain sections or topics in this integrated report in Setswana, Sesotho or Afrikaans.

Language buttons



About this report



Unleash your greatness

When thinking about the nature of greatness, astronomy and particle physics come to mind.

In astronomy, greatness is measured in light years, the speed of light or the cosmic cycles of birth and death of stars. In particle physics, on the other hand, the greatness constituting life can be found in infinitely small phenomena, such as leptones and quarks, the latter being the building blocks of protons and neutrons.

The range of greatness at the NWU is just as infinite, permeating space and time.

In our work environments it ranges from colleagues implementing our ethic of care by supporting each other and our students, to making an impactful, global difference by implementing our expertise to solve problems experienced by people all over the world.

Traversing time, our striving towards **greatness without boundaries** spans our past and our future – it is both part of the NWU's DNA and heritage, and a proud legacy we want to leave for future generations.

As a result, **Greatness without boundaries** became the theme interlacing all our activities in 2023 and, by extension, the story we tell in this integrated report.

Our first intention with our story is to show you how we as a university offer people numerous opportunities to guide and empower them on their own journeys towards greatness. Our second aim is to invite you, our readers, to witness how we create value for ourselves and our stakeholders while continuing to pursue ever-expanding greatness.

We aim to show you how we mobilised and affected our resources, skills and relationships, known as our "capitals", for the greater good.

There are six capitals: intellectual, human, social and relationship, manufactured, natural and financial.

Although we strive to always increase value for the university and our stakeholders, we realise that changing circumstances in our internal and external environment may hamper our efforts to accomplish this.

We apply and use our capitals while executing our strategy through our daily activities.

This means that our capitals can also undergo either a net decrease, or no net change. In such cases, value is eroded or preserved.

We include these instances – where value is maintained or even eroded – in our integrated report, as we aim to tell our story in a balanced and transparent way.

Our story is for you

The **Greatness without boundaries** story in this report is intended for you, our stakeholders.

Our stakeholders are those individuals or groups whom we affect through our activities and services, and whose actions can also affect our ability to successfully implement our strategy and achieve our goals.

This integrated report refers mainly to our primary stakeholders. They are our students, alumni, Council, staff, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), our peers, our collaboration partners and our business communities (as future employers of our students), as well as our communities in surrounding areas.

However, we believe that our story will also be of value to the other **stakeholders** with whom we engage.

How we tell our story

At the beginning of our story, we give an overview of the NWU and explain how we interacted with our operating environment.

You will find a graphic image of our **business model**, followed by the **risks and opportunities** that affect us, and how we are dealing with these. The section on **our strategy** aims to inform you about where we want to go to and how we intend to get there, while the section on **how we performed against our capitals** describes what we did to achieve our strategic objectives.

How to navigate our story

We use different icons to show the connections between the various sections in our integrated report and enhance your journey of discovery.

[BACKGROUND >](#)[BUSINESS MODEL >](#)[VC REPORT >](#)[STAKEHOLDERS >](#)[TRANSFORMATION >](#)[RISKS >](#)[STRATEGY >](#)[PERFORMANCE >](#)[GOVERNANCE >](#)[INCENTIVISING >](#)[FUTURE OUTLOOK/ANNEXURES](#)

Our capitals



Intellectual

These include our processes, procedures, policies, strategies and knowledge-based intangibles emanating from our teaching and learning and research and innovation activities.



Human

Staff and students (internal stakeholders).



Social and relationship

Relationships with external stakeholders.



Manufacturing

Tangible infrastructure and assets.



Natural

Environmental/natural resources.



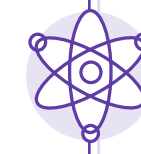
Financial

Funds that we obtain and spend according to budget.

Our strategic goals



Goal 1: Promote excellent learning and teaching and reposition the NWU to attain the size and shape required by the market direction decisions.



Goal 2: Strengthen research and innovation with a strategic focus on impactful globalisation.



Goal 3: Integrate and align community engagement with teaching-learning and research to develop a culture of active citizenship.



Goal 4: Develop a clearly differentiated student value proposition with a focus on creating an inclusive environment aimed at developing students holistically through structured and unstructured co-curricular programmes which are relevant, desirable and meet students' needs.



Goal 5: Attract, develop and retain excellent staff and create an equitable staff profile.

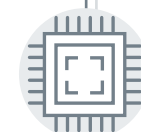


Goal 6: Develop and implement a digital business strategy to create a competitive advantage for the university and ultimately unlock alternative revenue streams.

Our enablers



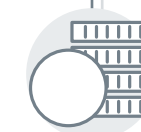
Enabler 1: Govern, lead and manage in an agile, collaborative and integrated way towards an optimally digitised university environment.



Enabler 2: Establish a holistic and integrated university technology platform to provide a solid foundation for a digital future.



Enabler 3: Cultivate and deliver stakeholder-focused platforms to create and grow intentional experiences and brand equity.



Enabler 4: Ensure financial sustainability and optimal performance with due consideration of macro-economic conditions and a drive towards digital transformation.

Materiality of the report content

The University Management Committee (UMC) members, together with their directors, provide the content that appears in the integrated report, while taking into account the principle of materiality.

As set out in the International Integrated Reporting Council's (IIRC) Integrated Reporting Framework, material matters are those issues that substantively affect our university's ability to create value for itself and its stakeholders.

Our integrated reporting task team also contributes towards identifying matters with the biggest impact on our ability to create value. This team is led by the NWU's registrar and includes the deputy vice-chancellor for planning and the chief strategy officer in the office of the vice-chancellor.

Reporting frameworks and documents guiding us

Our integrated reporting is guided by the principles and requirements of the Integrated Reporting Framework, King IV and the DHET's reporting regulations.

We also consider documents such as the NWU's *Annual Performance Plan (APP) that puts the strategic plan into action, and the institution's **risk register. Both these documents are compiled with various role players across the university providing input.

In addition, materiality was informed by the matters our stakeholders raise during their interaction with the university. These are described in the section on how we engage with our stakeholders, in the table under the subheading: Issues raised.

* The goals, enablers and strategic assumptions, as included in the APP, resulted from the process the University Management Committee members used to identify material matters to include when developing or revising the APP.

** Our key risks and opportunities are the result of an institution-wide risk analysis process.

Reporting period and scope, and suite of reports

Our integrated report reflects the performance of the NWU across our three campuses for the period 1 January to 31 December 2023.

Information about our performance is both financial and non-financial. This includes facts about our non-financial performance, risks and opportunities and the internal and external factors that substantially influence our business. Where material, we discuss the real and potential impact of these matters on our ability to create value.



Reporting cycle

Annually in December



Contact point for questions

marlene.verhoef@nwu.ac.za



Suite of reports

Our integrated report is the primary vehicle for reporting to our stakeholders. It is supplemented by the following:

- annual financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2023, which can be found on the NWU website [here](#); and
- documents for various stakeholders, which can be accessed on our website [here](#).



Our reporting framework

This integrated report has been prepared in accordance with the IIRC's International Integrated Reporting Framework and the DHET's Regulations for Annual Reporting by Higher Education Institutions (published in June 2014 and incorporating principles from the King IV Report).

How we ensure the integrity of the report

Various measures are in place to ensure the integrity of both our financial and non-financial information reported in the Integrated Annual Report.

These measures include a combination of monitoring and oversight by our management and governance structures, as well as the use of internal audit and external assurance providers.

- We obtain reliable student and staff data from our Institutional Planning and Strategic Intelligence Department, which is also responsible for submitting NWU data to the Higher Education Information Management System (HEMIS) for approval.
- Internal assurance providers give us assurance about the effectiveness of the internal controls at the NWU. Their input is incorporated into our report.
- The summarised, audited consolidated financial statements in our report are extracted from the audited consolidated financial statements, prepared in accordance with the IFRS and independently audited by our external auditors, Nexia SAB&T.
- Our auditors independently audited the information in [our performance assessment report](#).
- The financial statements, including the auditors' report, are in [annexure 6](#).
- More information about combined assurance can be found in the [risk section](#) of this report.
- To further ensure the accuracy of our content, we submit our integrated report to various NWU structures for their consideration and approval. These structures include the University Management Committee, the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee (among other Council committees), and finally the NWU Council

Council approval

Upon advice from its Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee, Council believes that the integrated report addresses all material matters and offers a balanced view of the NWU's strategy and the organisation's ability to create value.

The NWU Council confirms that it has:

- reviewed the contents of the report and applied its collective mind to the preparation and presentation of this document,
- appropriately considered the accuracy and completeness of the material matters, as well as the reliability of the information presented in the report, and
- sufficiently considered and materially presented these matters in accordance with the Integrated Reporting Framework of the IIRC.

The NWU Council approved the 2023 Integrated Annual Report on 13 June 2024.



MR BERT SORGDRAGER
CHAIRPERSON OF COUNCIL



MR THABO MOKGATLHA
CHAIRPERSON OF THE AUDIT,
RISK AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

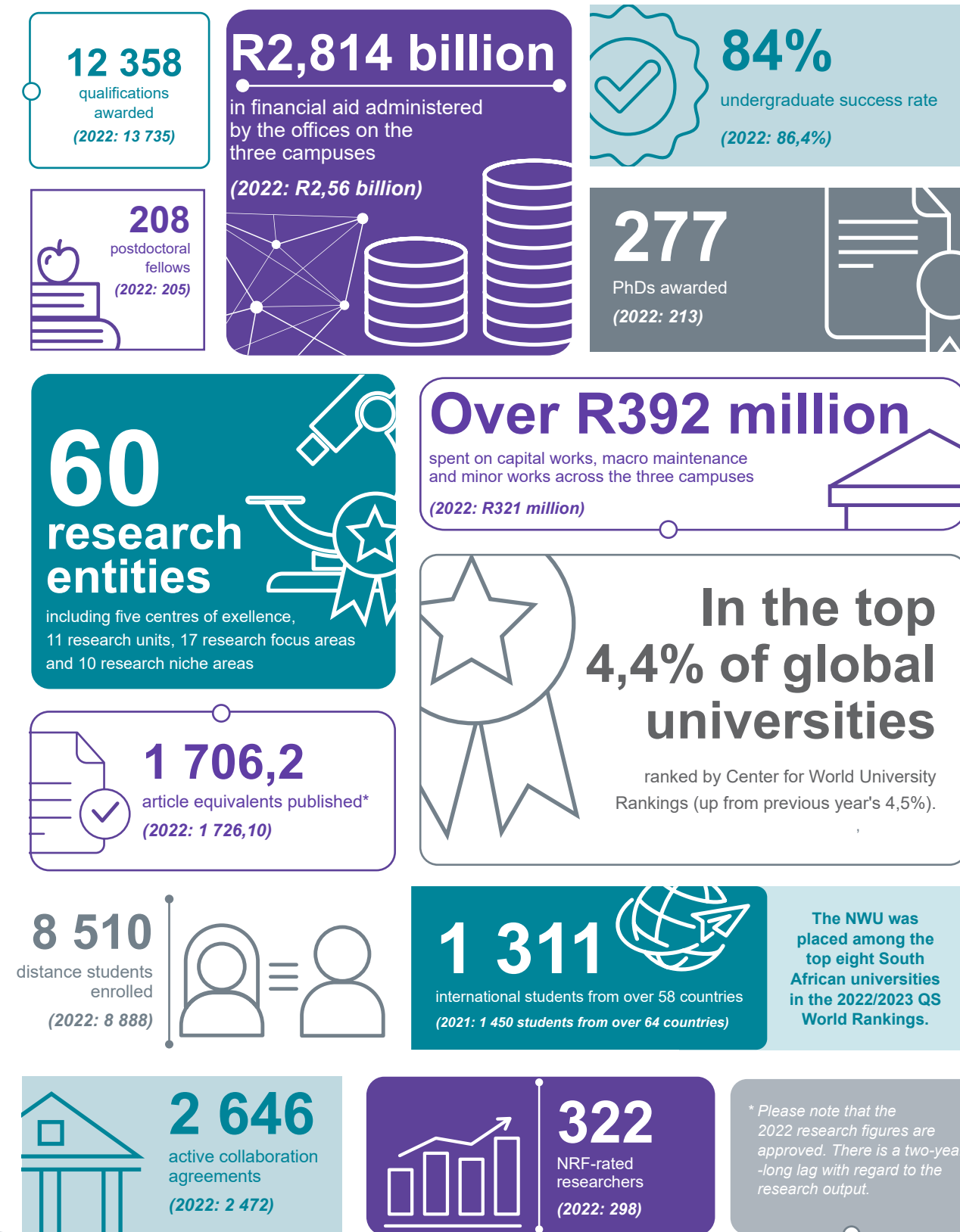


THISisUS

These students at the Great Hall on the Mahikeng Campus are part of the 12 358 NWU students who graduated at the end of 2023.

Overview of the NWU - performance highlights

In 2023 we continued to create value for the NWU and for our stakeholders. The following achievements – and in many instances also improvements – are noteworthy:



Who we are

The North-West University is one of the 26 public higher education institutions in South Africa. We have three campuses: two in the North West province and another in Gauteng.

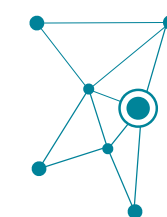
We have a single set of policies, systems and standards, and are driven by a set of constitutionally based values, a core value being ethics in all our endeavours.

We wish to foster engaged and caring staff and students, ensuring a suitable environment in which to reach our purpose and realise our dream.



Our vision

To discover new frontiers and opportunities that benefit society, advancing our relevance and impact.



Our mission

To benefit society through the provision of knowledge, excelling in innovative teaching, cutting-edge research and focused engagement with the community.

What we do

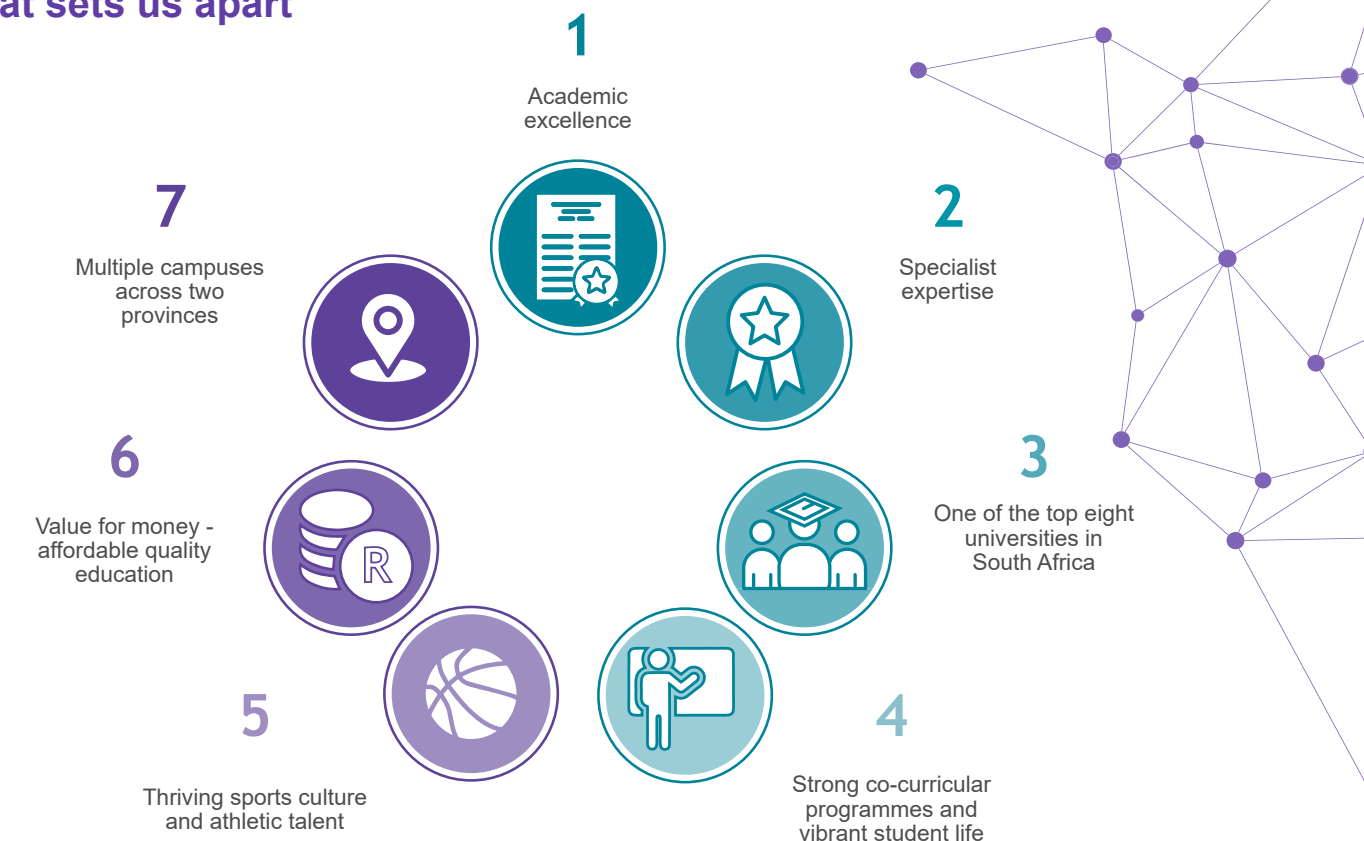
Our core business is teaching-learning and research, with community engagement and innovation intertwined in these activities.

Ultimately, our core business is about creating value in the form of outputs and outcomes, while pursuing an ethic of care.

Where we operate

We operate in South Africa but collaborate extensively with institutions and people all over the world. In 2023, the NWU had approximately 2 646 (2022: 2 473) active collaboration agreements.

What sets us apart



Our external environment

In our external environment, various factors affect our capitals and our ability to create value for ourselves and our stakeholders. While we cannot control these factors, we can respond in a way that optimises our ability to create value.

Material external factors that impacted us in 2023 included ongoing societal transformation, academic staff shortages, instability in the higher education, the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) and funding issues, among other things.

Responding to a transforming society

The NWU is a microcosm of our country, bringing together people from diverse socio-economic, cultural, religious, racial and other backgrounds. Accordingly, we have set a student transformation agenda that places students at the heart of everything we do and is driven by a large-scale strategic change programme operating across the NWU.

This programme is intended to equip students to overcome obstacles and find new and exciting pathways to greatness. It is holistic, focusing on student access and success; reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities; multilingualism and development of African languages; transformation in the student governance environment; gender rights, and identity and sexual orientation awareness and activism; among others.

Strategic matter affected:
development of a clearly differentiated student value proposition (goal no 4)

Capitals affected:
human, social and relationship, financial

Effect on value creation
It is inevitable that instances of inequality and inequity from the external environment would spill over into the university. Our approach is to recognise these early, address them proactively and manage them effectively. This is key as our student value proposition centres on inclusivity and belonging.

Our strategic response
We seek to build social capital, awareness and partnership within the student community. This entails proactively identifying and implementing support initiatives and programmes contributing towards enabling access and success.

Effecting social change is a collective responsibility. Where possible, we integrate interventions and platforms facilitating social change into existing curricular and co-curricular programmes, and embed collective responsibility into university functions, structures and policy.

In maintaining a relevant and valuable student experience, we acknowledge the importance of purpose-driven engagement and effective multifaceted communication channels.

Instability in the higher education sector

Events and developments in the higher education sector influence the way our students receive and respond to university programmes and messages. Scepticism and resistance may come about if students do not understand how the higher education sphere functions, or if sectoral bodies do not perform as they should. Proactive and meaningful responses and interventions to sectoral developments help to safeguard business continuity and manage risk.

Strategic matter affected:
development of a clearly differentiated student value proposition (goal no 4)

Capitals affected:
human, social and relationship, financial

Effect on value creation
Resistance to university responses and offerings could delay and frustrate the development and implementation of sustainable solutions that advance the business of the university.

Our strategic response
We have an inclusive communication and consultation strategy that involves staff, students and community stakeholders, enhancing their understanding of the university's functions, roles and responsibilities, and strengthening our value proposition.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)

Marking an important shift from the 4IR, the Fifth Industrial Revolution (5IR) combines the digital, biological and physical domains, integrating human thinking with artificial intelligence (AI) to drive innovations.

Universities are essential in cultivating individuals who have the skills to efficiently leverage technological advancements for sustainable growth. Our role is to provide tailored learning experiences, access through digital channels and integrated multidisciplinary studies compatible with 5IR.

It is imperative for the NWU to attract and develop scarce ICT innovation skills.

Strategic matter affected:
all goals and enablers

Capitals affected:
all capitals

Effect on value creation
Operational efficiency is significantly boosted by 5IR technologies, leading to cost savings and improved campus experiences. Expanding digital and online learning platforms increases educational access, particularly for remote or financially constrained students, promoting social equity and inclusion.

Our strategic response
Cybersecurity and data analytics are top priorities. In safeguarding our intellectual and infrastructure assets, we are focusing on our Data and Analytics Strategy and Operating Model (DASOM).

IT also plays a crucial role in driving the NWU's digital transformation initiatives for academic excellence. Our Learning Management System, eFundi, has experienced significant growth, with daily logins increasing from 4 100 in 2016 to 52 000 in 2023.

Also in 2023, we began preparing to replace the Student Information System and conducted vulnerability assessments for the Quali Financial System. We also updated the Human Resources and Payroll Systems and introduced a Digital Workplace environment, encouraging collaboration.

We continue to manage the rising costs of cloud storage by engaging strategically with vendors, practising financial prudence and ensuring dependable cloud storage solutions.



THISisUS We have several libraries on our campuses. Here, students sit in front of the Ferdinand Postma library on the Potchefstroom Campus.

Fee-free higher education affects financing model

The way we administer financial aid has changed significantly since government announced fee-free higher education through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) for households whose income is below R350 000 a year.

Where there were 4 837 approved NSFAS students in 2015, we had 27 693 NSFAS students in 2023.

Late NSFAS payments were problematic, prompting the NWU to advance allowances totalling R295 million to affected students so they could continue with the academic year. However, NSFAS has made an upfront payment of only R184 million to facilitate the advance payments.

Delays in approving NSFAS applications and appeals caused significant complications for teaching and learning during the first semester in 2023. There were more delays in the second half of the year when NSFAS appointed service providers to disburse student allowances.

➤ **Strategic matter affected:**
teaching and learning (goal no 1), financial sustainability (enabler 4)

➤ **Capitals affected:**
financial, human, intellectual

➤ Effect on value creation

The fee-free model has led to changes in our enrolment patterns. It has become more complex to manage enrolment targets and to administer registrations.

However, the greatest risk to value creation is still the potential unsustainability of the NSFAS model and the proposed Fee Regulation Model. Both could have a substantial financial impact on the NWU and our students.

➤ Our strategic response

We established an internal working group to manage the impact and minimise disruptions caused by possible late approvals in 2023.

A special orientation opportunity was arranged for all late-arriving first-year students, and potential NSFAS students could register provisionally and participate online.

We also improved our administrative processes and kept staff and students informed of financial aid developments.

Fee regulation by the DHET

The Fee Regulation Framework that the DHET is formulating has the potential to significantly influence the financing model of the NWU.

A tuition-fee increase of 5,1% was implemented, which was below the CPI of 6,9% of 2022 and 6,0 of 2023.

➤ **Strategic matter affected:**
financial sustainability (enabler no 4)

➤ **Capitals affected:**
financial, intellectual, human

➤ Effect on value creation

If the permitted fee increases do not reflect our cost structure and internal inflation rate, our financial stability could be at risk. This may ultimately affect the quality of the services we provide.

➤ Our strategic response

We have a multifaceted strategy to address the complexities of maintaining financial stability and service quality. While participating in the consultations on the proposed Fee Regulation Framework, we are diversifying our income streams, doing fund-raising, extending our continuing education offering, managing our budget process and improving operating cost efficiency.

State funding

From 2022 to 2023, the Rand value of the block grant allocated to the NWU decreased in real terms by 0,7% and the value of the earmarked grants allocated to universities by 53,4%.

With no increase in the block grant, lower-than-required fee increases and the anticipated growth in funded units, the funding available to universities will not fully cover higher education inflation. This negatively impacts our ability to attract and retain excellent staff.

➤ Effect on value creation

State funding contributes to short and medium-term financial stability. If funding shortfalls continue, however, we would be forced to implement budget cuts and would not be able to fund all operational and strategic activities.

Uncertainties over the sustainability of state funding hamper our ability to create value for our staff.

➤ **Strategic matter affected:**
teaching and learning (goal no 1), research and innovation (goal 2), student value proposition (goal 4), staff profile (goal no 5), financial sustainability (enabler 4)

➤ **Capitals affected:**
human, financial, intellectual

➤ Our strategic response

We are practising financial prudence by prioritising wisely when allocating the funds available, reviewing current activities and investing in opportunities to improve cost effectiveness, build reserves and manage costs.

In the longer term, we aim to become less dependent on state funding by diversifying income generation.

External research funding declines

Research funding and support have dwindled amid budget cuts in government and industry. The same has happened with pre-commercialisation, and seed and venture capital funding for innovative and new technology development.

Thus, research and postgraduate funding continues to decline and the implementation of the new National Research Foundation (NRF) funding instrument has meant that fewer students are being funded, even though the amount per student has increased.

➤ Effect on value creation

Diminishing external research funding may adversely affect our research productivity and the standing of the university in national and international rankings.

➤ Our strategic response

We used our limited resources to alleviate the impact of external funding cuts. We awarded R1 499 455 in mobility grants to our researchers and provided R716 815 for research mentorship. We also contributed R626 664 to the salary component of the research chairs.

➤ **Strategic matter affected:**
research and innovation (goal no 2)

➤ **Capitals affected:**
financial, intellectual, human, social and relationship



● **THISisUS**

Students leave the library on the Vanderbijlpark Campus. Library facilities include the Library and Information Service's open access repository for research material, known as Boloka.

Demand for intellectual property (IP) reduced

The reduction in demand for IP was less pronounced in 2023 than in previous years. However, the reduction in early-stage, seed and venture capital funding remained a problem.

➤ **Strategic matter affected:**
research and innovation (goal no 2)

➤ **Capitals affected:**
financial, intellectual, human, social and relationship

➤ Effect on value creation

The low uptake of our IP and technologies could result in lost income and reduced licensing and spin-off activities.

➤ Our strategic response

We strive to back up our inventions with trialled and tested prototypes, enhancing the successful licensing of patents. As prototype development and demonstration is expensive, we were innovative in seeking out research funding.

We continued improving the way we market NWU IP, technologies and innovative research with the aim of attracting funding, collaborators, commercialisation partners and licensees.

(For more information, see the section of how we create value **through innovation and technology**.)

National call for curriculum change and transformation

Curriculum change through decolonisation and transformation is crucial in South African higher education. The NWU is systematically conducting curriculum transformation and renewal, in line with the objectives of Goal 1 of our Annual Performance Plan.

➤ **Strategic matter affected:**
teaching and learning (goal no 1)

➤ **Capitals affected:**
intellectual, human, social and relationship, manufactured, financial

➤ Effect on value creation

If we fail to decolonise the curriculum, we would not retain our intellectual credibility or be able to equip our graduates to address the contextualised challenges of 21st century society.

➤ Our strategic response

During 2023, the NWU pursued the following strategies:

- providing work-integrated learning (WIL) and service learning (SL) opportunities that foster an ethic of care and social responsibility in our students;
- involving students in a range of individual and collaborative learning and assessment activities;
- continuing to install technology in classrooms to establish a HyfFex learning environment; and
- hosting awareness weeks on race, gender and language.

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Disruptions in the provision of basic services

Loadshedding and municipalities shutting down water supplies at critical times pose severe risks for the university, which must ensure a reliable supply of emergency power and clean water to the campuses.

➤ **Strategic matter affected:**
all goals and enablers

➤ **Capitals affected:**
intellectual, human, social and relationship, manufactured, natural and financial capital

➤ Effect on value creation

Running the emergency power-generating plants on our campuses during load-shedding periods places a financial burden on an already constrained utilities budget (and financial capital).

As our central emergency power-generating plants cannot meet the total demand during normal business hours, we focus on supplying power for our core business activities.

The availability of electricity and water from municipal connections may be further exacerbated in future, negatively impacting our activities.

➤ Our strategic response

In the last months of 2023, we began installing large solar plants on our campuses. This will continue in 2024.

We are preparing to install water reservoirs on all campuses.

Water treatment plants are also being installed on the campuses, and we are investigating treatment plants for sewerage.

A growing need for sustainable, impactful community engagement and knowledge exchange

We acknowledge our responsibility to use campus-generated knowledge for community benefit and, in turn, to welcome the contribution community support makes in shaping us into a diverse, innovative institution. Embracing knowledge exchange, we engage with communities to learn and share.

➤ **Strategic matter affected:**
Integrate and align community engagement with teaching-learning and research to develop a culture of active citizenship. (Goal 3)

➤ **Capitals affected:**
intellectual, human, social and relationship, financial

➤ Effect on value creation

Through sustainable, impactful community engagement, we can address community needs, facilitate student placements for WIL and service-learning, and foster ongoing, sustainable development in communities.

➤ Our strategic response

We build partnerships and formalise and record our agreements on community engagement.

Our interfaces with communities are via service learning, the science shop, engaged research and innovation and engagement platforms. In 2023, three inception meetings were held to consult with 72 local stakeholders per NWU campus.

Some informal relationships are invaluable for addressing community needs and facilitating student WIL and service learning placements.

We monitor, evaluate and report on our community activities, which are incorporated into the Community Engagement (CE) database.

More detailed information about how factors in our external environment affect our ability to create value and how we respond to them, is available [here](#).

Academic staff shortages

The shortage of academic staff in South Africa has become even more constrained, especially staff from designated groups at senior levels and in the scarce and critical skills areas.

➤ **Strategic matter affected:**
teaching and learning (goal no 1), research and innovation (goal no 2) and community engagement (goal no 3)

➤ **Capitals affected:**
intellectual, human, social and relationship, financial

➤ **Effect on value creation**
By recruiting and retaining high-calibre academic staff with the required demographic diversity, skills and experience, we are able to maintain our reputation for excellent teaching and learning, innovative research and community engagement with impact.

Conversely, our reputation may suffer and our capacity to implement functional multilingualism be constrained if we are unable to attract such staff in sufficient numbers.

At the same time, we have to optimise employment costs, especially as subsidy income is decreasing and student fees are capped.

➤ **Our strategic response**
We are addressing the risks associated with recruiting and retaining skills and talent through initiatives such as coaching for senior managers, the Leadership Academy for Academics and succession planning.

Our talent management strategy provides incentives and professional development pathways for sought-after staff, along with fast-tracking opportunities.

Overall, we continued to focus on offering fair, market-related pay and conducive working conditions in 2023.


Greatness without boundaries

➤ **Ensuring our staff's good health and well-being**

One way of retaining staff members is to show them the NWU cares about their wellness.

This was the purpose of three roadshows that People and Culture brought to the NWU's campuses in September and October 2023.

Besides sharing information on wellness and employment-related matters such as annual leave, the events offered staff access to a range of health-screening services.



The amphitheatre on the Potchefstroom Campus was a hive of activity during the People and Culture roadshow.

NWU

Business Model

● In this section, you can read how we use and transform our capitals to create value for ourselves and our stakeholders through the input, activities, outputs and outcomes in our value chain – all regulated by the NWU Senate.

The functions of the NWU Senate are related to our core academic business, which in turn comprises important aspects of our value chain. That is why we present the Senate report in the format of our business model diagram, followed by a discussion of our value chain.

(Click [here](#) to learn more about the composition of Senate.)

Input

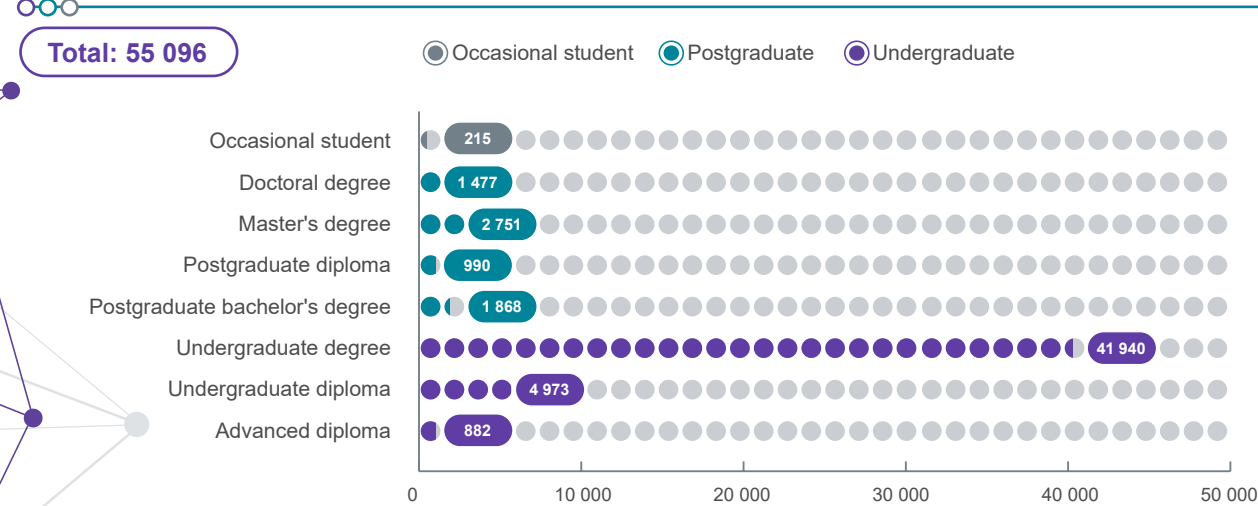
834

Schools reached by our student recruiters through direct marketing campaigns and activities (social and relationship capital)

13 138

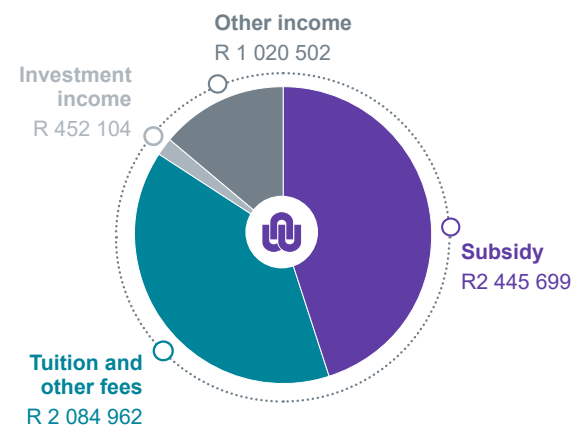
First-time entering undergraduate students (human capital)

Total number of enrolments per qualification type (human capital)

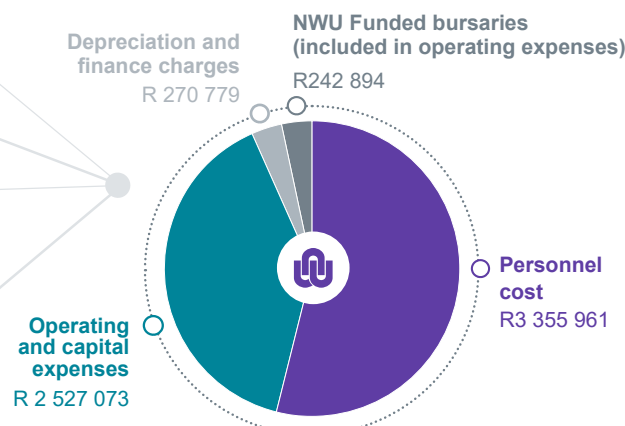


Budget (financial capital)

INCOME (R'000)



EXPENSES (R'000)



R392 million

Spent on capital works, macro maintenance and minor works across the university (manufactured capital)



23% Increase in total assets

476 599

square metres

The total usable floor area of the NWU (manufactured capital)



57% Expertise: permanent academic staff members with PhDs (intellectual capital)

1 110 hectares

The total area occupied by the university's campuses (natural capital)

Academic and support staff (human capital)

Personnel category	Permanent	Temporary	2022	2023
Crafts/trades	✓	✓	25	23
Executive/administration/management professional	✓	✓	91	91
Instructional/research professional	✓	✓	1 678	1 692
Non-professional administration	✓	✓	1 358	1 352
Service	✓	✓	297	295
Specialised/support professional	✓	✓	525	532
Technical	✓	✓	254	251
Grand total			10 762	11 523

Activities

Presenting 974 academic programmes

(intellectual capital)

Student support activities:

academic support, health care, and cultural and sport activities (intellectual and human capital)

Staff development activities

(intellectual and human capital)

Research and innovation activities

(social and relationship capital)

Community engagement activities

(social and relationship capital)

Activities generating third-stream income

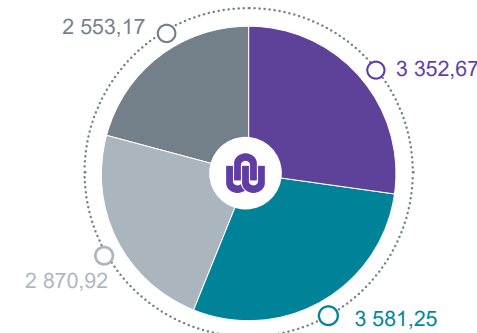
(financial capital)

Activities strengthening our financial capital

	(R'000)
Income from contracts	181
Sales of goods and services and other income	321
Residences and related income	492
Private gifts and grants	34
Investment income	692
Consolidated income from subsidiaries	13
Total	1 733 million

Output

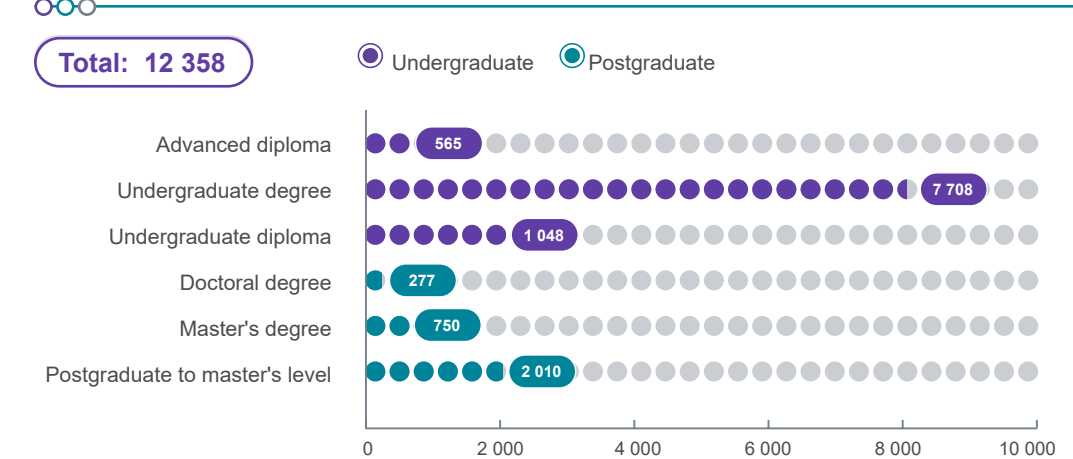
2023 Graduates: educational subject matter distribution (human capital)



Total: 12 358,01

- Business and management
- Education
- All other humanities and social sciences
- Science, engineering and technology

Total number of graduates per qualification type (human capital)



Research output 2022 (intellectual capital)

Journal articles	1 342,10
Conference proceedings	91,5
Books and chapters	272,6
Total article equivalents published	1 706,2
Master's degrees conferred	695
Research master's	519,076
Research master's weighted	519,076
Doctoral degrees conferred	213
Doctoral degrees weighted	639
Total weighted research output	2 864,276
Postdoctoral fellows	205
Publication units per permanent academic staff member	1,02

* Please note that there is a two-year lag with regard to the approval of research output by the Department of Higher Education.

62,86%

Number of graduates who completed their studies in minimum time

R249 million

The university, from its own resources, contributed R249 million or 8,85% of the total funds allocated for financial aid.

R46,8 million (19%)

of the funds allocated to financial aid used to award students for academic performances

96,7%

Success rate of the NWU merit bursary holders

Collaboration

(Social and relationship capital)

We had 2 646 active agreements and memoranda of understanding

Financial sustainability

(financial capital)

R1 062,5 million

Total surplus (excluding other comprehensive income of R59,6 million) for 2023, as reflected in the consolidated statement of comprehensive income

Outcome

Our continued climb in global rankings has taken us to the top 4,4% of global universities. This is according to the 2023 edition of the Global 2000 list of rankings published by the Center for World University Rankings (CWUR). It is an improvement from being in the top 4,5% for 2022/2023 and in the top 4,7% in the 2021/2022 edition of the rankings.

The **external environment** sets the context in which we use our business model to create value.

NWU value chain



In 2023, our value-creation story was about empowering our stakeholders and taking them along on a challenging but exciting journey to find **greatness without boundaries**.

Along the way, we went through the four stages of our business model and value chain: our input, activities, output and outcomes.

At each stage, we accessed, used and transformed our capitals. For instance, as part of our input, we used our sources of income (financial capital), skilled staff (human capital), buildings and equipment (manufactured capital) and academic programmes (intellectual capital) to create value for our students (human capital).

Our students are our fellow travellers on the quest to **unlock infinite greatness** for ourselves and for our stakeholders. By making them an integral part of our value chain, we assist our students to become critical thinkers and change makers (our output) who eventually enter the labour market and society as value creators themselves (our outcome).

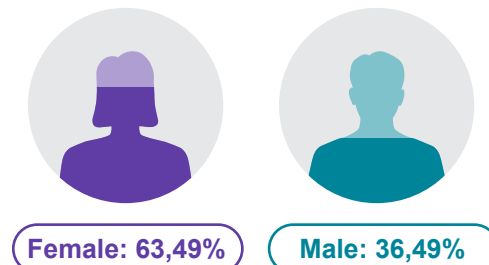
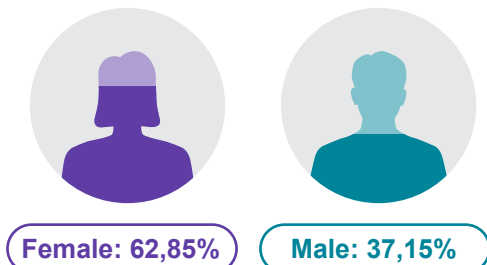
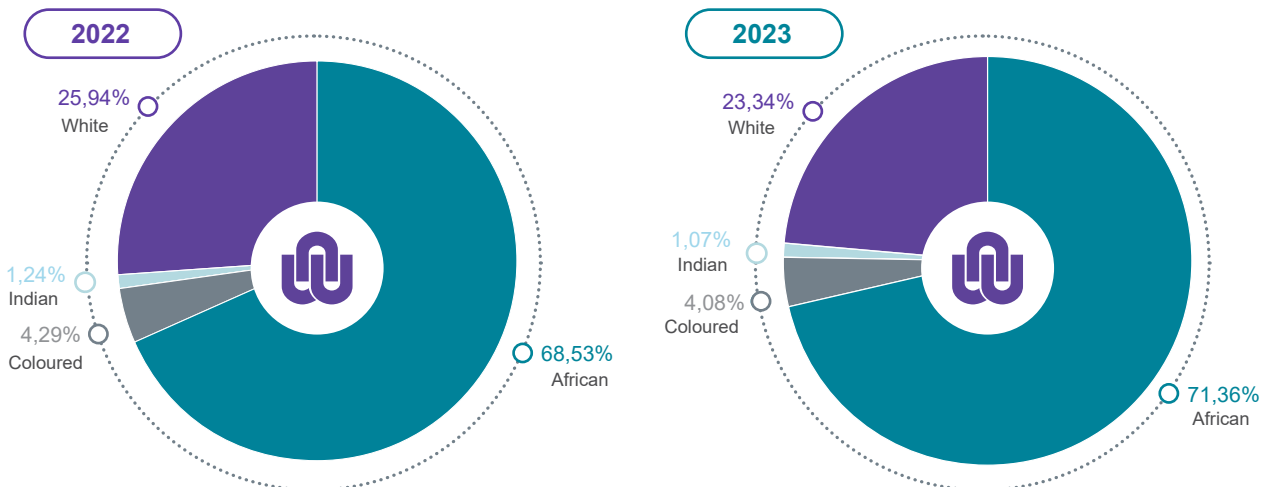
Other stakeholders also benefit from our pursuit of **greatness**. Through community engagement and research, we touch lives, find solutions to real-life problems and change the world for the better.

In the following discussion of our value chain, you will see how we employ our various capitals as inputs and, through our activities, convert them to outputs and outcomes.

Input: Invest in people's potential greatness

Our students

Our students are an invaluable input into our value chain. The pie charts below reflect the composition and size of the student body in 2023 as compared to 2022:



Investing in our students

Following an intensive student recruitment programme, we received more than 181 000 applications, with 43 000 applicants having a 30+ admission points score (APS).

The NWU's financial aid offices administered R2,814 billion in financial aid in 2023. Government funding accounted for 80% of this and the NWU contributed R250 million (9%). The remaining 11% was from other external sources.

Our students receive ongoing and focused academic and non-academic support, equipping them for success.

For more information about our academic support activities for students, turn to the section **Increase student access and success**.

Our staff

A significant input into our value chain is our staff complement.

The following table reflects how our number of permanent academic staff compares with those of other South African higher education institutions (Please note that this is based on 2022 audited HEMIS data):

Institution	Total
University of KwaZulu-Natal	1 176
University of Cape Town	1 192
University of Witwatersrand	1 211
University of Pretoria	1 269
University of Stellenbosch	1 295
University of Johannesburg	1 328
North-West University	1 678
University of South Africa	1 823

Investing in our staff

In 2023, we had 4 236 permanent staff members, comprising 1 692 academics and 2 544 support employees.

Across the year, we invested in the skills, wellbeing and career progression of our people.

As the 4IR and 5IR are reshaping the workplace, many staff development interventions focused on building digital competencies for the NWU's Digital Transformation Strategy.

Through the annual academic promotions process, 161 academic promotions were approved, 46 more than in 2022. Black academic staff accounted for 40% of these promotions, up from only 33,7% in 2021.

Across academic levels, black females have experienced the lowest rate of promotions over the past four years, and we are intensifying our efforts to build a pipeline for these promotions.

Committed to an ethic of care in all we do, the NWU continued to prioritise a nurturing and supportive working environment. We initiated an integrated health and wellness reporting strategy that entails combined reporting by the NWU Wellness service providers, Employee Wellness, group life insurance and medical aids. This is an effective way to analyse trends for decision making and the design of targeted interventions.

Greatness without boundaries

We want women to thrive as leaders

Women leaders are shaping the landscape of higher education worldwide. The NWU, which is part of this trend, launched its first Women in Leadership programme in 2023.

The goal is to identify and nurture women with high potential, ensuring a steady supply of qualified candidates for leadership positions. The programme also aims to close the gender gap in the talent pool and facilitate long-term succession planning.



Members of the audience listen as one of the speakers urges them to equip themselves with knowledge, take ownership of their careers and become the visionaries who will drive change.

Funding as input

Research funding

Research funding of around R103 million was received in 2023 from the National Research Foundation (NRF) and the South African Medical Research Council. The table below shows the number and value of external grants awarded to the NWU in 2022 and 2023.

Grant programme	2022 Number of awards	2022 Total amount	2023 Number of awards	2023 Total amount
SAMRC funding	6	3 021 613	26	2 082 501
Thuthuka	24	2 687 136	22	1 916 295
Other grant-holder awards	186	34 225 887	222	38 962 439
Grant-holder linked bursaries	21	2 348 333	16	2 620 000
Block grants	2	360 000	0	0
Freestanding bursaries	351	49 270 027	343	53 714 262
Freestanding postdoctoral bursaries	12	2 950 000	12	2 896 250
Freestanding postdoctoral funding	12	590 000	12	674 998
SKA student bursaries	1	144 700	2	365 354
SKA student equipment	0	0	0	0
SKA student travel grants	0	0	0	0
Total	615	110 497 696	655	103 232 099

In a significant funding change, the grant-holder linked bursaries and block-grant bursaries are being phased out. Students will only receive freestanding bursaries in future.

Funding for technology transfer and innovation

Only three innovation projects were supported in 2023, one pre-seed project and two Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) Seed Fund projects.

More information about our efforts to increase research funding can be found under **Six goals to realise our strategy**.

International funding

The NWU received R38,9 million in international funding in 2023, a substantial improvement on previous years. The table below shows the international funding each faculty received.

International funding for research	2021 Actual as confirmed by faculties (R)	2022 Actual as confirmed by faculties (R)	2023 Actual as confirmed by faculties (R)
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences	1 334 758	703 261	0
Faculty of Education	290 082	0	434 228
Faculty of Humanities	3 657 783	3 418 090	3 490 006
Faculty of Engineering	360 170	2 220 050	0
Faculty of Health Sciences	13 343 911	10 798 764	21 674 775
Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences	12 623 339	9 985 580	12 844 763
Total	28 808 147	23 707 655	38 893 772

Activities: Guide people to unlock their own unlimited greatness

Teaching-learning activities

Our new Teaching-Learning (TL) Model takes the HyFlex concept to an institution-wide level, with the student as the focal point. The introduction of NWU Student, the new student information system, is part of this.

Block teaching, where students have the opportunity to focus on group projects, was successfully used in the faculties of Economic and Management Sciences, Engineering and Health Sciences.

We are continuing with academic programme alignment.

For more information, refer to the section on **how we performed against our strategy** and **increased our intellectual capital**.

Greater student access and success

In August 2023, we started a systematic process to translate information from FYN (the First-Year Experience site on eFundi) into Setswana and Afrikaans, aiming to enhance inclusivity for all students. A total of 10 070 first-year students collectively paid 83 406 voluntary visits to FYN.

We continued supporting students through peer mentoring, reading development, supplemental instruction and the First Year Navigator tool.

Promoting continuing education

The fully automated short course administration system was launched in April 2023, giving participants a single secure portal to manage their process from application to certification. This includes online payments and integrated external credit providers that reduce the risk of the NWU incurring bad debt. It also allows more participants access to short courses with flexible payment options.

Focusing on academic and professional development

In 2023, we presented the Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) Programme to targeted academics and professional staff, with a particular emphasis on black African South Africans and female staff.

In addition, 1 865 academics from all eight faculties and professional staff participated in webinars, workshops and online training.

Fifteen female academics participated in Women in Leadership courses.

Research activities

Most research at the university was conducted through our 60 research entities, which include eight Research Chairs, eight hosted research entities, and five Centres of Excellence, among others.

In 2023, 10 research entities were successfully evaluated externally, and two evaluations were postponed for 2024.

The current NWU research landscape is shown in the following figure:



Output: Deliver great critical thinkers with vision and foresight

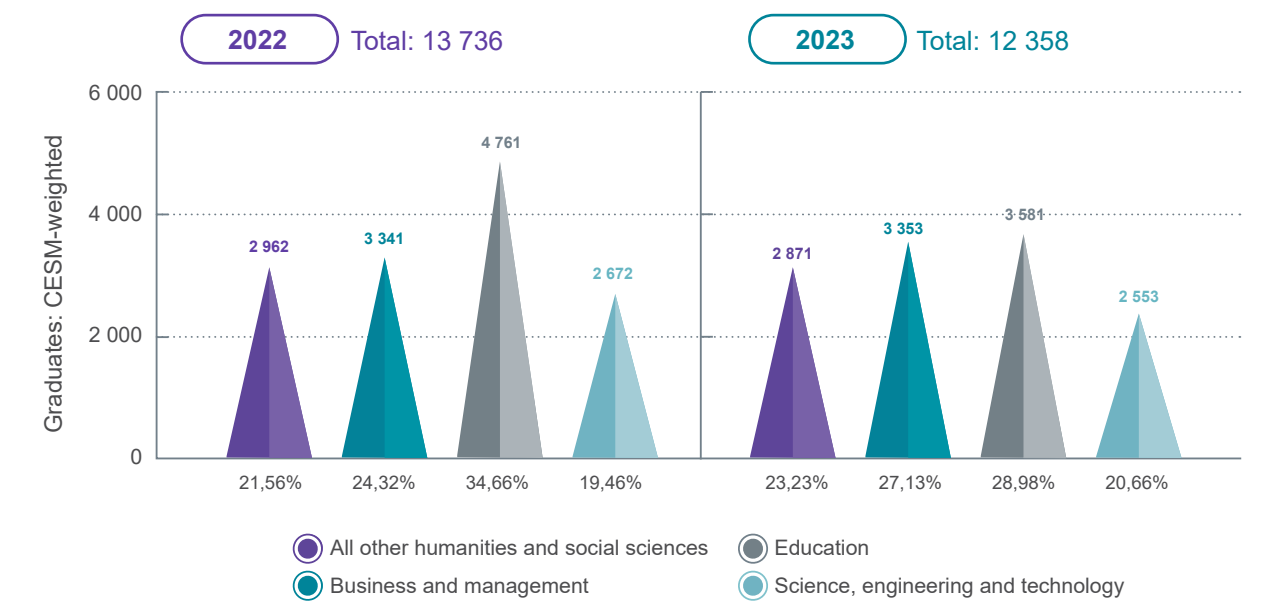
Teaching-learning output

Among first-time entrants, the dropout rate for contact degrees decreased from 10% in 2022 to 9% in 2023 and remains low in comparison to sector norms.

However, fewer students than in 2022 completed their degrees in the minimum time.

There was a slight improvement in the ratio of students to academic staff, with one academic staff member available for every 28,59 full-time equivalent students.

The following graph shows the number of graduates per field of study for 2022 and 2023:



The following table shows how our graduate numbers compare with those of other South African higher education institutions (based on 2022 audited HEMIS data):

Institution	Total
North-West University	13 735
Tshwane University of Technology	15 271
University of Johannesburg	12 128
University of Pretoria	13 553
University of South Africa	54 273

Teaching Excellence Awards

There was a significant increase in the number of academics participating in the Teaching Awards process.

In all, 161 participants from all three campuses participated. The Faculty Teaching Awards had the highest participation, with 114 candidates.

The inaugural Team-Teaching Award received excellent submissions, indicating its success as a new category.



This year's recipients of the University Teaching Excellence Award (UTEA) were Prof Mignon van Vreden (top) of the Faculty of Humanities and Dr Viné Petzer from the Faculty of Education.

Research output

The quality and quantity of research at the NWU continue to improve, as shown in the following table:

	2020	2021	2022
Journal articles	1 264,32	1 366,3	1 342,10
Conference proceedings	38,84	66,9	91,5
Books and chapters	233,43	222,90	272,6
Total article equivalents published	1 536,59	1 656,1	1706,2
Master's degrees conferred	722	698	695
Research master's	521,605	509,962	519,076
Research master's weighted	521,605	509,962	519,076
Doctoral degrees conferred	251	264	213
Doctoral degrees weighted	753	792	639
Total weighted research output	2 811,1914	2 958,062	2 864,276
Postdoctoral fellows	215	212	205
Publication units per permanent academic staff member	0,93	0,99	1,02

* Please note that there is a two-year lag with regard to the research output.

NWU Research and Innovation Excellence Awards

At the annual NWU Excellence Awards in November 2023, awards were presented in various categories, including the Vice-Chancellor's Award, and awards for the most productive senior and emerging researchers, creative outputs and top inventors.



Prof Ruan Kruger from the Faculty of Health Sciences was named the Most Productive Senior Researcher.

Outcomes: Enrich society through our pursuit of infinite greatness

The first links in our value chain are our inputs and activities, as discussed in previous sections of this report. The next stage of the value chain consists of our outcomes, which are intended to create longer-term value.

This future focus means that sustainability is an integral element of our outcomes. After we have taken care of immediate and medium-term needs, there must be sufficient capitals left to use for future value creation.

Financial stability is a good example of an outcome that supports our sustainability. When the NWU is financially stable, we are able to generate other outcomes, such as delivering skilled graduates to enhance the knowledge economy of the country.

Our research output is also an outcome. It strengthens our reputation (another outcome) so that we can attract high quality scientists, further building our human capital and ensuring our future sustainability. In addition, the third leg of our core business, namely community engagement, creates outcomes by empowering people to improve their lives in a sustainable way.



PROF BISMARK TYOBeka
CHAIRPERSON OF SENATE

Our vice-chancellor’s review

Introduction: Looking at 2023

In our strive towards **greatness**, the NWU started exploring possibilities **beyond its traditional boundaries**. It was now time to review the strategic plan (2015-2025) that had been propelling our efforts up to now.

Council approved the new strategy – Taking the NWU Forward 2024 and beyond – in September 2023.

Developing the strategy was an iterative process involving extensive stakeholder engagements, ensuring we all move in the same direction in 2024 and beyond.

We conducted an external situation analysis to refine our understanding of the higher education structure and its competitive dynamics.

Equipped with a broad overview of social and demographic trends, future expectations of technological advancement and economic and environmental factors, as well as political developments, we were ready to move ahead in implementing the NWU strategy, and budgeting accordingly.

Our managerial and administrative activities

Next, we started the conversation about how “structure follows strategy”.

Tomorrow's workforce will need a broad set of skills, and this is what informs our approach to research and innovation, teaching and learning, and community engagement. Our managerial and administrative arrangements are geared at sustaining and supporting this core structure, the heart of which is the success of the academic programme.

After implementing phase one of the staff optimisation project early in 2023, we began implementing phase two.

We streamlined various processes and identified opportunities to improve our efficiencies, allowing us to allocate resources more effectively.

Implementing the Vice-Chancellor’s Special Dispensation Award was a milestone for staff optimisation as the award aims to contribute to realising our dream of an environment conducive to job satisfaction and enhanced overall morale.

We are now busy optimising administrative positions, which includes evaluating the position of longstanding vacancies. In 2024, the NWU will implement the third phase of staff optimisation.

Adequacy of staffing levels, particularly in critical areas

The staff optimisation project will ensure we have the best possible staffing levels and mechanisms to increase productivity. The rationale is to have optimal staffing levels with enhanced remuneration and benefits.

In 2023, the total staff headcount stood at 11 523, up from 10 762 in 2022.

Staff numbers increased in the academic environment (see the staff headcount table). Our support cohort decreased with 285 employees – from 8 301 in 2022, to 8 016 in 2023.

There was an increase of 1 046 in our academic staff, which grew from 2 461 in 2022, to 3 507 in 2023. We are aware that budget cuts are on the horizon for the sector, which is sure to affect future staffing levels.

Our cost-mitigation plan seeks to mitigate the impact of the sectoral budget cuts, protecting our core business and ensuring the university remains academically and financially viable.

Since we had to reprioritise our budget and optimise our staff-cost budget, only mission-critical positions were filled in 2023.

Realising equity targets in the workplace

Employment equity targets are closely monitored. The Council committees responsible for this are the People and Culture and Employment Equity Committee and the Transformation Oversight Committee.

Our current employment equity plan runs from January 2021 to December 2023. The targets and outcomes for 2023 are shown in the following table.

Race	2023 Target		% Total	31 December 2023 Actuals		31 December 2023 % Total	Difference	Target Achieved Y/N
	Male	Female		Male	Female			
African	21,41%	20,15%	41,56%	21,34%	21,76%	43,10%	-1,54%	Y
Coloured	3,27%	4,10%	7,37%	3,08%	4,13%	7,21%	0,16%	N
Indian	0,85%	1,10%	1,95%	0,78%	0,88%	1,65%,	0,29%	N
White	18,04%	29,97%	48,02%	17,41%	28,32%	45,73%	2,29%	Y
Foreign nationals	0,89%	0,21%	1,10%	1,83%	0,48%	2,30%	-1,20%	N
	44,56%	55,44%	100,00%	44,1%	55,9%	100,00%	0,00%	

When filling vacancies, we focus on achieving representivity. However, cost containment means we have had fewer vacancies to fill, negatively affecting our ability to reach the employment equity targets.

Even so, we achieved the 2023 employment equity targets for Africans, mainly because any appointments from non-designated groups were limited to cases approved by the vice-chancellor.

Other strategies to improve representation were:

- removing barriers in attracting people from the designated groups and people living with disabilities
- succession planning for key positions
- retention strategies
- establishing an enabling organisational culture

As 2023 was the last year of the current employment equity plan, we developed the Successive Employment Equity Plan for 2024-2026. Council approved this in November 2023.

The quality of information available to management

The Strategic Intelligence department at the NWU has consciously shifted from generating static data reports to creating dynamic information tools.

This strategic move is designed to empower stakeholders with interactive data experiences, enabling them to delve into the nuances of the data and extract the insights most relevant to their needs.

Our short-term goal is to design and execute a revamped data warehouse architecture that provides the flexibility needed to incorporate varying business rules arising from new enterprise resource planning systems. These include the updated Student Information System and the upcoming Learner Management System.

Our longer-term goal is to expand our data architecture to include additional data sources, such as the new Student Information System and to investigate the possibility of including an external data source such as LinkedIn.

Student services and co-curricular activities

The co-curricular programme continues to grow on the three campuses of the university, with an increased uptake in demand for participation in arts and culture, sports, community engagement and student leadership initiatives.

Post-pandemic, technology has remained an integral part of our co-curricular programme and services rendered to students. However, the preference to engage and interact in-person remains the primary choice, augmented by technology.

Campus Health Care Centres (CHCCs) continued to render primary healthcare services to students.

Social welfare programmes such as the Meal-a-Day programme remained under pressure amid constrained socio-economic circumstances. While smaller initiatives have emerged at campus level to assist pockets of students within specific environments, there is a pressing need for a longer-term, sustainable social welfare programme.

In supporting pregnant students to successfully complete their academic programmes, we ensure a student-centric approach by adopting the Rules and Guidelines on the Support and Accommodation of Pregnant Students.

Total staff headcount – 2021 vs 2022						
Classification	Permanent		Temporary		Total	
	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023
Academic	1 678	1 692	783	1815	2 461	3 507
Support	2 550	2544	5 751	5472	8 301	8 016
Grand total	4 228	4 236	6 534	7 287	10 762	11 523

The overall attrition rate is 7,96%, well within our target of keeping attrition below 10%.

The reach of psycho-social services within the student community was expanded to include 250 peer helpers in university residences, faculties and the general student community. This network of peer helpers is a core driver of psycho-social referrals to professional counselling.

On 13 November 2023, the NWU hosted the Higher Health Gender-based Violence and Femicide Assembly.

Co-curricular arts, sports and social engagement programmes were active at campus level throughout 2023.

The Potchefstroom Campus choir completed their “This is Why We Sing” tour in Europe, and the NWU Eagles (our senior rugby team) and the NWU Young Guns (our junior team) were crowned Varsity Cup champions for 2023.

Our bodybuilding team won the University Sport South Africa (USSA) championship, and both our NWU Eagles teams won their tennis divisions at the 2023 USSA Tournament.

Approximately 1 100 student leaders were active within the university’s various student leadership structures, including the Student Representative Council, Student Campus Councils, residence house committees, day house committees and academic chapters.

Student leaders also participated in Council, Senate, Faculty and support services committees and forums.

The Student Leadership Academy was officially launched during the inaugural annual NWU Student Leadership Summit on 6 October 2023.

Post-pandemic, the 2023 orientation programme for registered first-year students was again presented in a face-to-face format. Through this programme, students were introduced to university life.

To [read more](#) about our academic support activities for students, turn to the section on how we create value through our performance.

Changing patterns in the provision of academic courses

Our strategy is to enrol more students in the fields of science, engineering, technology and commerce, and we are making steady progress in delivering on this.

In total, 55 486 students were enrolled at our three campuses in 2023. Female enrolments increased from 34 051 to 35 033, while male enrolments, at 20 153, showed a slight increase from 20 124 in 2022.

The number of students enrolled in the distance programmes stabilised (8 888 in 2022 and 8 900 in 2023).

We formed a task team in 2023 to investigate various options for distance education offerings. The task team’s plan will be submitted to university management structures in 2024.

New programmes rolled out in 2024

Twelve new qualifications/programmes that did not require external approval were prepared for inclusion in the 2024 yearbooks.

No fewer than four of these were MSc degrees in nutrition, while three were MSc qualifications in different aspects of agriculture. There were also two new postgraduate diplomas in industrial engineering with sustainability, and two education qualifications (an MEd and a PhD) with language education. Full details of all these programmes can be viewed [here](#).

The Council for Higher Education (CHE) and/or South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) accredited or registered four new qualifications and programmes in 2023. Two of these concern early childhood care and education (a BEd and a diploma), while the other two, both postgraduate diplomas, focus on health services management and nursing education.

Eight new qualifications and programmes were developed and internally approved in 2023 and are still being externally approved. The full list can be viewed [here](#).

Programme and Qualifications (PQM) Review Project

We also continued with the PQM Review Project to critically re-examine the NWU’s programme offering and ensure it remains relevant, viable and meets the demands of the 21st century world of work.

Data analysis was conducted to determine where credit overloads and programme overlaps required urgent attention. A decision was taken at the end of 2023 to recalibrate the goals and outcomes in the for the short, medium and long term. The NWU applied for University Capacity Development Grant funding to complete the project.

Self-assessment of our achievements

Our intention to work through partnerships was realised in 2023, when we had close collaborations with partners in local and provincial government.

These collaborations included the 100 graduates programme with the North West Provincial Government, where 100 of the NWU unemployed graduates were posted to various municipalities.

Another notable partnership with provincial government stakeholders was the NWU’s inaugural Vice-Chancellor’s Science Day on 31 July, which 2 000 learners attended.

Other notable achievements:

- The School of Accounting Sciences at the NWU received accreditation from the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) for two of its accounting programmes: the BCom in financial accountancy and the extended BCom in financial accountancy. The NWU was one of only two universities in South Africa to have achieved this.
- In the 2023 rankings of the ShanghaiRanking Consultancy, the NWU was ranked in the category for the top five to seven South African universities.

For the past four years, the NWU has been positioning itself as “pioneers and innovators in the area of enabling technologies”. Our Digital Business Strategy (DBS) gained strong momentum, as exemplified by the following initiatives:

- The Student Information System (SIS), which will see full implementation in February 2024, strategically using 4IR technologies to transform the NWU institutional culture towards a future-fit organisation.
- The revamping of the Learning Management System to provide students with a more responsive, accessible and supportive learning experience.

In 2023, we had to deal with challenges in government funding, particularly the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). We experienced a 5,3% decline in the NSFAS budget allocation for 2024 and a 0,9% reduction in the subsidy block grant budget allocation. In response, we are strengthening our third and fifth stream income.

Lastly, the 2023 graduation season saw 12 358 students graduating. Among these are 9 321 undergraduates, 750 master’s graduates, 277 PhDs and 2 183 distance learning graduates.

Looking to the future

Key strategic projects were initiated in 2023, some of which will impact on managerial and administrative activities of the university. The projects are in progress and expected to gain momentum in 2024 and will be fully reported on in due course.

Important milestones reached regarding these initiatives in 2023 were:

- the commencement of benchmarking and stakeholder engagement to ascertain the viability of the NWU becoming a future hub for short learning programmes in small-scale and artisanal mining, as well as sustainable mining solutions;
- the creation of NWU Enterprises as a wholly owned subsidiary with the capacity to deliver a substantial, growing portfolio of directed research, consultancy and derivative commercial activity; and
- the NWU receiving government approval to proceed with our plans to establish the NWU Medical School. Together with the Provincial Government, the Faculty of Health Sciences and relevant stakeholders are working in earnest to make the NWU Medical School a reality, ready to open our doors to the first intake of students in the foreseeable future.



PROF BISMARK TYOBEKA
CHAIRPERSON OF SENATE

Greatness without boundaries

NWU Medical School: full steam ahead

In late December 2023, the NWU received the official support of the then Minister of Health, Dr Joe Phaahla, to establish the NWU Medical School.

For the country and the medical training landscape, this will bring more skills and a more diverse workforce into the healthcare system.

The university is confident that all processes will go according to plan and that the NWU Medical School will have its first intake of students in 2028. [\(Read more\)](#)



The NWU plans to offer a six-year programme, followed by internship and community service. The initial enrolment will be set at 50 students.

Meet our 2023 University Management Committee members



Prof Bismark Tyobeka
Principal and Vice-Chancellor



Prof Daryl Balia
Deputy Vice-Chancellor:
Information Technology and
Potchefstroom Campus
Operations



Prof Marlene Verhoef
Registrar



Ms Elmarie de Beer
Executive Director:
Finance and Facilities



Prof Linda du Plessis
Deputy Vice-Chancellor:
Planning and Vanderbijlpark
Campus Operations



Prof Mala Singh
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Mahikeng Campus Operations

How we engage with our stakeholders

Creating value for ourselves and our stakeholders

This university vigorously promotes diversity, inclusiveness and an ethic of care.

In our quest for **greatness without boundaries**, we strive for continuous improvement, informed by our stakeholders' perspectives of the programmes and services we introduce and implement.

By listening to our stakeholders, we discover new ways to apply knowledge to benefit society, excel in innovative teaching, conduct cutting-edge research and engage with communities.

The North West Provincial Government was a key stakeholder of the university in 2023 and, on municipal level, we rolled out a project to place interns and unemployed graduates to assist with local service delivery challenges.

In 2023 we strengthened our connections with the departments of Arts, Culture and Recreation, Statistics, Health, Economic Development, Education and Conservation and Tourism, as well as the Film and Production Board and the Independent Electoral Commission.

How we react to our stakeholders' interest and expectations

As a public higher education institution, we are responsible and accountable for engaging and responding to stakeholders and the public about how and why we implement our programmes.

Stakeholder group	Prospective students
<p>How we engage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visits to schools Career fairs and career guidance sessions Marketing (direct and indirect) Open days Sport and arts events and sponsorships 	<p>Issues raised (material matters)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career and subject choices Equity of student experience Health and safety Applications for admission Economic circumstances Programmes and qualifications

Our response

Using in-person and virtual communication channels, we reach diverse target audiences in inclusive and interactive ways that are convenient and meaningful for them.

These are some of the responses received from our prospective students/their parents/schools during our engagements with these stakeholders:

- “I just wanted to say thank you so much for everything you did for me and my child; I was panicking and didn't even know what to do. I approached you and you responded with so much respect and you were so patient with us.”
- “Today my daughter is at school, and you took time in every step when we were confused. I will call and you will pick up your phone and email where there was a need to. She is the first one to go to varsity and we did not know anything, but here we are at peace.” (Gauteng Top Performer Bursary Function Student)
- “I just want to thank you for all your help with Marli and Dian's big move to Potchefstroom. Thank you very much for being willing to go out of your way to make them feel at home with you and for being there yourself to receive them upon arrival in Potchefstroom. Paarl is not close and as parents we leave our children in NWU's hands with peace of mind.” (Paarl Gimnasium, parents of prospective students)
- “I am an NWU student and proud Laureus resident. I just want to say thank you very much ... I would not be here without your help. I appreciate it very much.” (Walvis Bay, international prospective student)
- “Lebo let me know that she had been awarded funds for her PhD. And just in case you don't hear it often enough, this literally changes a whole family's life. She will be the first person in her family ever to pursue a PhD. Thanks again!” (NWU Vanderbijlpark, lecturer)
- “Wow! Thank you so much for your visit today. Your presentation was exciting and gained a lot of attention from my students. I hope we can maintain and grow this relationship.” (Livingstone Kolobeng College, teacher)

Stakeholder group

Industry and business community

How we engage

- Integrated report
- Webinars
- Publications and videos
- One-on-one and group engagements

Issues raised (material matters)

- Assurance on stability and sustainability
- Partnerships and collaboration
- Graduate attributes
- Research

Our response

We had ongoing engagement with industry partners, especially enterprises that employ our graduates. The aim was to understand their skills needs and obtain feedback on how our graduates are performing in the market. Our faculties use this feedback to update their academic programmes.

Other engagements were held with the business community close to our campuses to inform them about NWU procurement processes and how they can respond to calls for tenders and access business opportunities.

Stakeholder group

Employees

How we engage

- Intranet
- Email
- Website
- Webinars
- Publications and newsletters
- SMS

Issues raised (material matters)

- Conducive work environment
- Employee equity
- Remuneration and compensation
- Skills development and empowerment
- Ethics and transparency
- Personal wellbeing
- Strategic issues, including the new NWU Strategy: Taking the NWU forward – 2024 and beyond

Our response

The vice-chancellor interacted with staff, noting their concerns about remuneration, empowerment and the working environment, and informing them that measures would be put in place to address their concerns.

Corporate Communication sent out more than 1 000 messages about important matters impacting staff members in 2023.

We shared information about the 2023 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), a once-off salary enhancement payment, training opportunities and webinars on mental health and well-being.

Information was also shared on the NWU values and the development of the NWU new strategy.

In consulting staff about the new strategy, we conducted a survey, held individual and group interviews and presented information sessions and walkabouts on the campuses.

Here is one of the responses we received from employees regarding a message on the preliminary CHE Institutional Review Report:

“Thank you for this positive update. We are ready to continue participating in our improvement plan.” (staff member, Library Information Services)

We also received suggestions from staff members about the NWU’s reduce-the-use campaign. Here are two of them:

“Sensors in bathroom showers would be a great idea.”

“I would suggest that all lighting in university buildings be motion sensed.”

“...our sincere gratitude to the North-West University for its unwavering support and valuable contributions ... in enabling Athletics South Africa to bring the love and passion for sports to numerous schools, learners and aspiring sport stars.” (Athletics SA, Acting CEO)

“Once again, we express our gratitude for your support and willingness to accommodate Prestige Secondary School at the Open Day. We eagerly look forward to this valuable opportunity for our learners to engage with the university's offerings and explore the possibilities it holds for their future education.” (Prestige School, teacher)

Stakeholder group

Current students

How we engage

- eFundi learning management system
- Webinars
- NWU website
- Social media
- Meetings
- Communiques
- SMS

Issues raised (material matters)

- Financial assistance/NSFAS
- Equity of experience

Our response

During 2023, we communicated regularly with students about financial assistance, NSFAS payments and bursaries. We also kept our students informed about psycho-social and well-being services and shared information about student elections, load-shedding, assessment periods, and more.

Our students made good use of eFundi for teaching-learning purposes and to access general information on NWU-related issues.

“I cannot thank you enough for the advice you gave us from day one for our daughter who is attending the Vanderbijlpark Campus. Every time I phoned for assistance you were always eager to help. My daughter cannot stop talking about NWU; she is really eager to learn and make her dreams come true. Thank you.” (Gauteng parent)

Career Centre – Improving graduate employability

The Career Centre's work readiness services are intended to produce well-rounded, resourceful and work-ready graduates.

In 2023, the Career Centre hosted three face-to-face career fairs on each campus, and one virtual career fair. Some 6 406 students attended these fairs and 130 companies participated.

Our entrepreneurship and work-readiness training sessions reached 12 576 students. The services included CV and interview training, group training and work-readiness webinars.

Career-related support for our students

The Career Centre accelerated the drive to automate career services, facilitate interaction between employers and students and use online platforms to host virtual career fairs and conduct entrepreneurship and work-readiness training.

In 2023, there was a 48% increase in the number of students attending the entrepreneurship and work-readiness training sessions.

The Career Zone platform recorded 19 452 logins. Its Facebook pages had 20 791 followers and received 19 220 likes.

The work-readiness short learning programme was launched in June 2023, with a student uptake of 485, against a target of 200.

The 2023 Universum survey, which assists companies to attract and retain graduate and professional talent, had 10 209 student respondents, as well as 3 472 graduate respondents from the NWU.

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Stakeholder group Alumni

How we engage

- Webinars
- SMS
- Emails
- Events
- Newsletters and alumni magazine
- One-on-one and group engagements
- Website
- Social media

Issues raised (material matters)

- Stability
- Sustainability
- Partnerships
- Reputation

Our response

A total of 364 alumni signed up to become members of the NWU Convocation and 80 alumni volunteered their time and expertise in 2023.

The eighth Alumni Excellence Awards took place.

Three campus committees were established, operating in collaboration with the NWU Alumni Association.

An overall 80% satisfaction feedback rate from alumni was received after all events in 2023.

The Alumni Relations Office conducted mentorship programmes for students and young alumni and hosted workshops on job-seeking skills for unemployed graduates and postgraduate students.

Five editions of the alumni magazine, *NWU&U*, were distributed online to alumni. Communication to alumni is regulated to avoid over-communication and ensure compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA).

Keeping in touch with alumni all over the world, we engaged in various events in Botswana, Germany, Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands. One roadshow was held in the Free State and various regional events in Gauteng.

Here are some of the responses we received from alumni:



"Thank you once more for having us. It was really great to be recognised, and we appreciate the hospitality we enjoyed. We travelled safely back to our mother city... I hope you had time to rest after such a great work you have done. Well done!" (Dr Dumisane Jantjies)

"I graduated with my BSc in nutrition and physiology at the NWU's Potchefstroom Campus in 2015, cum laude. I was then accepted into the MBBCh programme at Wits University – fulfilling my dream to be a doctor. I am very proud of the North-West University as it gave me my wings. I always vowed that if the NWU starts a Medical School I want to be a part of it to make it the best – because I truly believe it can be. So, I would like to become a part of what you are doing. It would be an honour and privilege for me." (Dr SC Fourie-Nel)



"Dear alumni team. Once again, a massive thank you to you and everyone who was involved in making all the arrangements. I've never been one for reunions, but I just knew I WANT to attend this one! Thank you very much for the reminder of the Convocation membership; I quickly filled in the form and made the payment. I am very much looking forward to being part of the NWU Alumni family in Europe. Greetings from the Netherlands" (Benize Bester)

Stakeholder group Donors

How we engage

- Integrated report
- One-on-one and group interactions
- Newsletters and digital communication
- Website
- Meetings
- Campus visits and tours

Issues raised (material matters)

- Stability and performance of the higher education sector in general and the NWU in particular
- Long-term sustainability of the government's funding model
- Diversity of third-stream income sources
- Students' access and success

Our response

Donors play an important role in enabling the NWU to implement its core mandate.

The Development and Fundraising office raised R48 116 384 in 2023, which represented growth of 12,6% from 2022.

The vice-chancellor hosted a donors' luncheon to thank donors for their support.

Here is one of the responses we have received from members of the donor community:



"When you donate to the NWU, you pave the way to a brighter future for many students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. You can rest assured that the Board of Donors is fulfilling its oversight role by ensuring that your investments will yield the intended results." (Ms Percy Moleke, chairperson of the NWU's Board of Donors)

Stakeholder group Government and regulatory bodies

How we engage

- Publications
- One-on-one and group engagements
- Conferences
- Workshops

Issues raised (material matters)

- Compliance with legislation
- Financial accountability and reporting
- Quality and standards

Our response

We shared our performance information through prescribed progress reports to the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and sectoral regulatory bodies.

Complying with legislation such as the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Higher Education Act will always be a priority.



Prof Bismark Tyobeka, NWU principal and vice-chancellor, speaks at a donors' luncheon on 5 October 2023. Click on the image above to watch a short video about the event.

Greatness beyond boundaries in the transformation sphere



The student community and social landscape are changing rapidly. In keeping abreast, we have explored new ways to support student diversity and transformation.

Monitoring transformation

As we open up new frontiers in our transformation journey, we have become better and better at reporting on transformation. Using tools such as the transformation dashboard, we monitor transformation initiatives and milestones across the university, comprehensively and coherently.

Overseeing transformation

Several transformation oversight structures work together to ensure the university stays on track with its transformation targets and goals. These are the Transformation Oversight Committee, the People and Culture and Employment Equity Committee and the Student Life Oversight Committee.

Then there are two transformation advisory bodies. The Institutional Forum is a statutory committee that advises Council on transformation matters, while the Student Diversity and Transformation Committee (SDTC) focuses on transformation in the student environment.

Besides these formal governance structures, we encourage staff and students to seek innovative and practical ways to promote a diverse student population and student leadership cohort. This has included running programmes on multilingualism, gender, sexuality, cultural intelligence and disability.

Adding value

Many students are comfortable in the digital domain, and innovations such as the NWU Language Portrait App has become a valuable tool to enhance the overall student experience. The app encourages engagement on language diversity and capacity within the student community and is a critical enabler of multilingualism. The app is relevant in both the academic and co-curricular environment.

Student Life and People and Culture collaborated on joint campaigns and programmes to implement the NWU values. An example was the NWU **Media and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour Recognition Awards**, launched in 2023 to acknowledge the contributions of employees and students in embodying the NWU values and acting as change agents. You can read more about these awards in the [section on our value chain](#).

We are proud of the role senior management members have played in various sectoral transformation initiatives. Our executive director for student life and assigned function: transformation, Prof Sibusiso Chalufu, was an active member of the Universities South Africa (USAf) Transformation Strategy Group and the Transformation Managers' Forum.

Pursuing and enabling equity

In 2023, we concluded the Employment Equity Plan (EEP) for 2021 to 2023 and completed the development and approval of the new three-year plan for 2024-2026.

According to the targets set in the current EEP, black people must account for at least 70% of appointees and people living with disabilities for 2% of the workforce.

The targets were incorporated into the university's Annual Performance Plan for 2023 and cascaded to individual performance agreements of line managers. Key people management performance areas included managing employment equity and diversity and promoting the preferred NWU culture. A KPA for ethics was also added to the performance agreements of senior managers.

A six-year view of employment equity at the NWU shows that the representativeness of the workforce profile of the NWU has been on an upward path since 2017. The table below shows the progress we have made towards achieving fair representation of people in the designated groups.

Race	2017	2023	Progress	
African	32,50%	43,10%	10,60%	Increase
Coloured	5,62%	7,21%	1,59%	Increase
Foreign national	1,90%	2,30%	0,40%	Increase
Indian	1,10%	1,65%	0,55%	Increase
White	58,80%	45,73%	-13,07%	Decrease
	100%	100%	0,00%	

In 2023, we developed a comprehensive Transformation Journey Report, which culminated in two workshops facilitated by Professor Crain Soudien, the former deputy vice-chancellor of the University of Cape Town and chair of the Ministerial Oversight Committee on Transformation.

One of the key suggestions arising from the second workshop was to compile a publication on the transformational journey of the NWU. This publication would be released as part of the NWU's 20th-anniversary celebrations.

Academic transformation

Our curriculum transformation strategies include giving students an in-depth orientation to their fields of study and associated methodologies, as well as a broader understanding of contemporary societal challenges. Work-integrated learning (WIL) and service learning (SL) opportunities foster an ethic of care and social responsibility.

All NWU curricula provide an orientation to various paradigms of thought and explanatory systems, including, where appropriate, indigenous knowledge systems.

During 2023, all faculties revised their language plans to align with the revised NWU Language Policy.

Two major improvements were made across all language plans. First, we included attendance of short learning programmes to promote multilingualism and translanguaging in the performance agreements of staff. Second, we recognised that priority needs to be given to increased resource provision, especially in the African languages.

In 2023, the Language Directorate worked with the Centre for Teaching and Learning to train 372 academic advisors, supplemental instructors and tutors on multilingual approaches to teaching and learning.

The New Century Curriculum project was initiated in 2023 to address rearticulation through a renewed focus on the first and final year of undergraduate studies. The project aims to investigate how initial curricular choices and teaching methods in the first year equip students with essential skills and knowledge for success throughout their undergraduate studies. More details of this project can be found [here](#).

Three awareness weeks were held to support the transformation of the NWU, receiving enthusiastic support.

Gender Awareness Week had the theme "Gender Galaxy" to promote awareness and understanding of gender diversity through online discussions, movie screenings, presentations and a colour run, supported by the vice-chancellor, who completed the run with colleagues and students.



For Facing Race Week, the theme for 2023 was "Expand your vision, appreciate diversity/race in South Africa through different eyes". Speakers from the University of Venda, the South African Human Rights Commission and the Cultural, Religious and Language Rights Commission shared their insights and stimulated debates.



Language Awareness Week celebrated the linguistic diversity of the NWU. Activities included a 60 Seconds Language Challenge, a Literary Day at Vanderbijlpark Campus and the launch of a language booklet called Mpuiseng (“make me talk” in English).

A colloquium “Decolonising multilingual resources in higher learning institutions” was well-attended by NWU staff and members of the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB).



Transformation of the procurement space

We continued to transform the procurement space by involving local small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) in the procurement of the NWU:

- Preferential procurement is high on the agenda of the relevant sections, based on the amended Preferential Procurement Strategy that Council approved in late 2022.
- On large construction projects, contractors may appoint community liaison officers (CLOs) to liaise with communities about appointing local SMMEs as subcontractors and using local labour on construction projects.
- Tender requirements for local SMME participation are a standard inclusion in all tenders where such participation is possible, especially construction tenders and service contracts.
- We have implemented tender requirements for the subcontracting of a portion of construction projects/ service contracts to local contractors.
- A database for SMME registration is up and running. Workshops will be conducted to educate SMMEs and local suppliers on how to register their businesses.
- CLOs have been appointed on each campus to assist with the implementation of the Preferential Procurement Strategy.
- Two companies have been awarded a one-year contract each to carry out the responsibilities of social facilitators.
- A programme that supports SMMEs and local suppliers has been developed, consisting of formal supplier development programmes and workshops.
- A supplier development specialist and an administrator have been appointed.
- We have formed a task team with representatives from Facilities, Finance, Community Engagement, Stakeholder Relations and the Vice-Chancellor's Office to implement the framework for local participation and community engagement.

Looking ahead

The NWU is firmly committed to establishing a unitary institutional culture and a unique NWU way of life that supports our strategy and speaks of care, equality and fairness for all. Transformation will be high on our agenda for many years to come.

Transformation is being driven from the top, with members of Council and Senior Management visibly throwing their weight behind our transformation strategies, policies and initiatives.



COUNCIL STATEMENT ON TRANSFORMATION

The NWU believes that value-adding transformation should be deeply embedded in all our activities, from the transformation of the curriculum to transformation of the institutional culture. All our members are required to further the transformation objectives of the university and to be change champions of transformation initiatives. We are committed to making meaningful changes that will impact positively on the lives of our staff and students.

Statement approval obtained from the NWU Council on 13 June 2024.

MR BERT SORGDRAGER
CHAIRPERSON OF COUNCIL

Material risks and opportunities impacting value

Language buttons



Overview: Our risk governance and management processes

In striving for **greatness without boundaries**, it is vital for us as a university to practise the most stringent discipline in how we manage our risks and governance processes.

The university's ability to achieve greater heights for itself and its stakeholders depends to a large extent on how well governed and sustainable it is, which is in turn influenced by the depth and quality of risk management.

Our approach to risk and opportunity management is strategic. We identify and prioritise risks and opportunities that could influence our ability to implement the university's strategy, and then adopt appropriate risk mitigation strategies and initiatives.

We consider the various dynamics in the **external environment** and align our risk management processes with the King IV Report on Corporate Governance for South Africa.

Our top risk management priorities for 2023 were risk assurance, risk tolerance and risk management.

Click [here](#) to read more about risk tolerance and risk management.

During 2023, adding to the work already done on first and second-level assurance, we initiated a third-level assurance process, aimed at determining the top 10 risks on the NWU Strategic Risk Register.

Click [here](#) to read more about risk assurance.

Having introduced third-level assurance, we tested its resilience through risk audits outsourced to external audit firms. Although the outcome of the audits did not produce the assurance we had envisaged, they did provide valuable lessons for third-level assurance in 2024.

All these processes resulted in an updated top 10 risk list for the university.

Also in 2023, we expanded our risk-tolerance and risk-appetite reporting. This went beyond setting risk tolerance levels for the six NWU goals in the 2022 Annual Performance Plan (APP) and included the four enablers in the 2023 APP.

We plan to strengthen the integration of risk tolerance and risk appetite into the APP goals and enablers during 2024.

More information about how we integrate risk management and risk tolerance into the APP is available [here](#).

Meanwhile, we ensured that risk management remains an integral part of the strategy development and documentation process.

For instance, our new NWU Strategy: Taking the NWU forward – 2024 and beyond, explicitly acknowledges that the university subscribes to the COSO 2017 risk management framework.

In addition, we identified the risks and opportunities for the following aspects of the newly approved strategy:

- the NWU's competitive advantage
- strategic projects
- the NWU's goals and enablers (already started in previous years, but to be further refined).

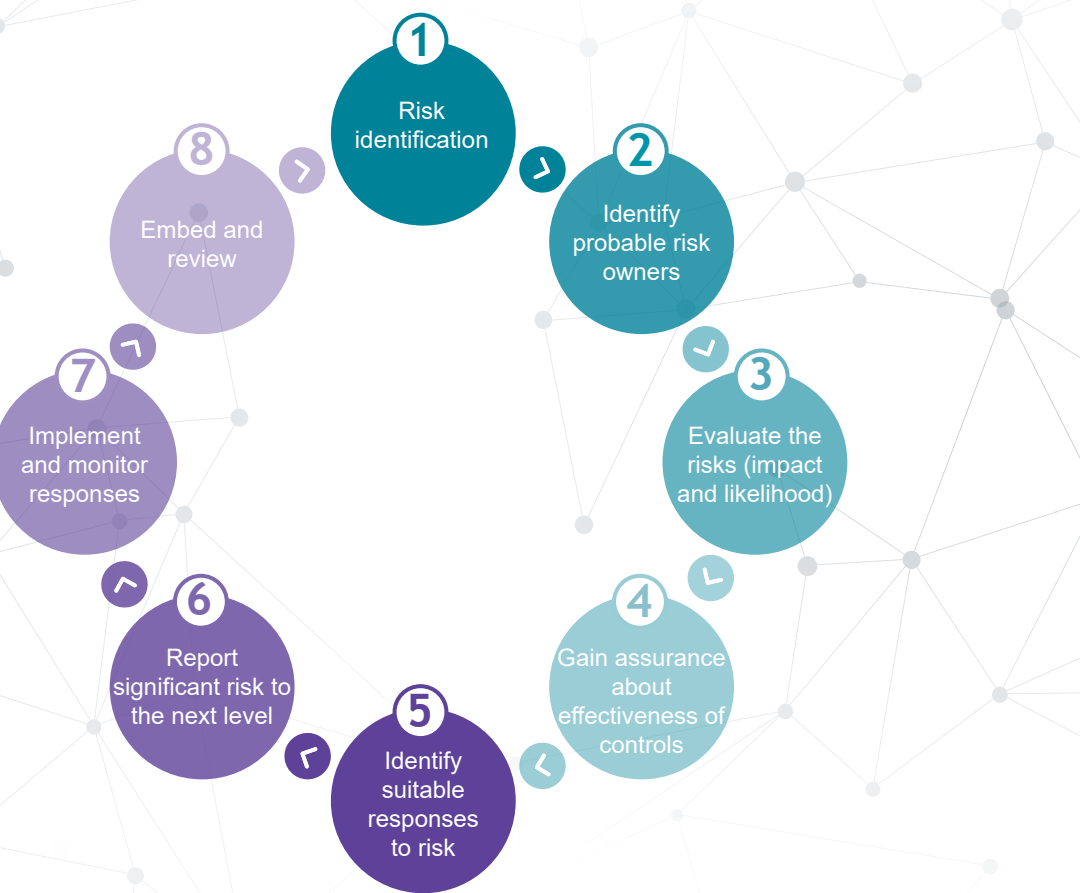
Greatness without boundaries



Cyber security is the number one risk at the NWU. Measures to mitigate this risk include a comprehensive cyber-incident and execution management system, a cyber-security strategy, and a security information and event management plan.



Our risk management methodology includes the following stages:



How we identify our risks

Using a template, we identify, define and manage risks. Complementing this template, we then implement internal controls, set future controls and agree on action plans to manage the risks to an acceptable level.

Any risk above appetite is prioritised for focused management attention and reporting.

The Combined Assurance Forum monitors the risk registers of faculties and support departments, as well as the NWU Strategic Risk Register.

Risk reports are tabled in May and October at all Council committee meetings for governance oversight and to identify possible emerging risks.

Using our opportunities

We continually identify and update our risks and opportunities to adapt to our changing environment.

Although we refine our goals and enablers in our APPs, certain clear themes can be discerned over time. We see these as strategic opportunities that:

- continually safeguard the financial sustainability of the university;
- enable us to implement our strategy, structure and operating model;
- promote excellence in teaching and learning and research and innovation;
- establish a clearly differentiated student-value proposition;
- develop and retain excellent staff and create an equitable staff and student profile;
- enable the deployment of best-in-class IT to support the core business; and
- provide an effective financial model, policies and structure for continuing education offerings and more commercialisation opportunities.

The following tables provide an overview of the top risks that affected our ability to create value, and how we addressed them.

Top 10 residual risks and their influence on value creation

Cyber security

Risk ranking 1

Related material matter providing the opportunity:

Risks and the impact on value creation and capitals

Mitigating actions

Related material matter providing the opportunity:

Develop and implement a digital business strategy to create a competitive advantage for the NWU, ultimately unlocking a revenue stream.
(2023 APP, Goal 6).



Risks and the impact on value creation and capitals

Cyber security is not adequately addressed at the NWU and is the number one IT issue worldwide. An attack on the NWU is likely. Digital transformation will increase the cyber security risk.

Mitigating actions

Ensuring that the NWU is ready for the demands of the 4IR is a strategic priority.
We have implemented a comprehensive cyber-incident and execution management system, developed a cyber-security strategy and deployed a security information and event management plan. A single centralised platform enables abnormalities in our IT environment to be identified and escalated to the cyber-incident response team.

Environmental management

Risk ranking 2

Related material matter providing the opportunity:

Integrate and align community engagement with teaching-learning and research to develop a culture of active citizenship.
(2023 APP, Goal 3)



Risk and the impact on value creation and capitals

The lack of focus and clarity on where environmental management should belong, function and be monitored at the NWU poses a risk to sustainability and compliance.

Mitigating actions

We actively promote environmental sustainability in all our activities. We have done an Environmental Gap Analysis with an action plan to close gaps, appointed an internal and external safety, health and environment (SHE) project team and introduced a SHE system for benchmarking, development and implementation. All faculties and departments are required to manage and monitor their SHE risks/impacts.

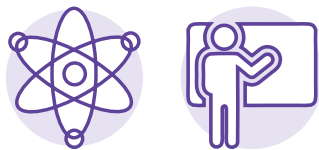
Business model adequacy after Covid-19

Risk ranking 3

Related material matter providing the opportunity:

Promote excellent learning and teaching and reposition the NWU to attain the size and shape required by market direction decisions. Strengthen research and innovation with a strategic focus on impactful globalisation.

(2023 APP, Goal 1 and 2)



Risks and the impact on value creation and capitals

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, universities have had to re-invent their business models to compete effectively and, in some cases, take advantage of unprecedented demand for tertiary study. An inadequately focused approach on managing the post-Covid-19 situation impacts directly on the NWU's governance and management, and could hamper its sustainability in the short, medium and long term.

Mitigating actions

Teaching-learning delivery and support must be conducive to excellence and innovation at all times, including in pandemic conditions. This commitment is embedded in the NWU's purpose statement, brand promise and 2015-2025 Strategy.

In 2023, therefore, we focused on preparing the NWU to embrace the new world of work and study, benefit from the gains of implementing the Digital Business Strategy, and address digital risks.

IT, the Centre for Teaching and Learning and Space Management are facilitating strategic future-fit projects. These include an integrated facilities project, student information system renewal, the work-integrated learning and service learning (WISL) system, e-assessment and proctoring platforms/software, and further development of the NWU learning management system.

The implications and demand for digital transformation on the NWU's business

Risk ranking 4

Related material matter providing the opportunity:

Develop and implement a Digital Business Strategy to create a competitive advantage for the NWU and ultimately unlock alternative revenue streams.

Establish a holistic and integrated university technology platform to provide a solid foundation for a digital future.

(2023 APP, Goal 6, Enabler 2)



Risks and the impact on value creation and capitals

IT provisioning for certain administrative and academic functions is not optimal and IT is short-staffed. Uncertainties over the direction of the Digital Business Strategy lead to delays in new system design and implementation. Digital transformation will also have a major impact on operational models, structures, people, processes and roles.

Mitigating actions

We are strengthening the foundation for the digital future by:

- ensuring stable, scalable, hybrid, manageable and responsive infrastructure;
- using composable infrastructure to make data centre resources as readily available as cloud services;
- establishing a long-term integration platform to ensure business agility through rapid deployment of standardised shared services;
- ensure a secure digital environment and start building the technology ecosystem that integrates students, partners, employees and "things" to deliver an exceptional customer experience; and
- establish a responsive IT operating model, known for agility, competent people, best practices, innovative culture and well-looked-after staff.

Greatness without boundaries

Strategy for digital transformation gets the green light

The NWU Council approved the Digital Business Strategy at its meeting on 22 June 2023.

This strategy ties in with Goal 6 and Enabler 2 in the university's Annual Performance Plan. These are about implementing a business strategy to create a competitive advantage for the NWU, and establishing an integrated technology platform for a digital future.

The Digital Business Strategy will enable us to build a technology ecosystem that integrates students, staff and partners to deliver an exceptional customer experience.



As part of the new Digital Business Strategy, we are preparing for a new student information system to boost operational efficiencies and create a better experience for users.

Information governance

Risk ranking 5

Related material matter providing the opportunity:

Develop and implement a Digital Business Strategy to create a competitive advantage for the university and ultimately unlock alternative revenue streams.

Govern, lead and manage in an agile, collaborative and integrated way towards an optimally digitised university environment.

(2023 APP, Goal 6, Enabler 1)



Risk and the impact on value creation and capitals

An inadequately focused approach to information governance implementation could hamper our operations and expose the NWU to compliance risks.

Mitigating actions

We are focusing on business continuity planning, contingency planning for mission-critical processes and implementing our Digital Business Strategy. We also have a compliance management process, compulsory training for all staff on the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), and are reviewing the Policy on Academic Integrity. An information governance coordinator will be appointed to focus on implementing the Information Governance Framework.

Business continuity plans and disaster recovery plans

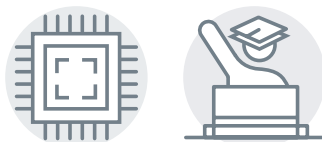
Risk ranking 6

Related material matter providing the opportunity:

Govern, lead and manage in an agile, collaborative and integrated way towards an optimally digitised university environment.

Establish a holistic and integrated university technology platform to provide a solid foundation for a digital future.

(2023 APP, Enabler 1 and 2)



Risk and the impact on value creation and capitals

Inadequacies around disaster recovery and business continuity management could hamper the NWU's operations and lead to compliance risks, financial losses and reputational damage.

Mitigating actions

Business continuity planning and contingency planning should be built into the execution of key processes such as registration. The implementation of the Business Continuity Planning Policy should be approved by Council and business processes should be refined to remove redundancies. The Technology and Information Governance Committee has approved the Cybersecurity Strategy, and targets have been set and achieved for improving the NWU's cybersecurity detection capabilities.

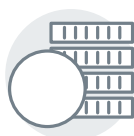
Funding and fee regulation

Risk ranking 7

Related material matter providing the opportunity:

Ensure financial sustainability and optimal performance with due consideration of macro-economic conditions and a drive towards digital transformation.

(2023 APP, Enabler 4)



Risk and the impact on value creation and capitals

The government funding model is not sustainable, and the higher education sector requires more information on this model from the DHET.

The unofficial regulation of fee increases since 2016 adds to the uncertainty and there is a lack of clarity on processes the DHET has already commenced to regulate fees.

Mitigating actions

We have developed an internal financial impact model that we update constantly. It accounts for all variables that might impact on the financial performance of the NWU. We are also focusing on fundraising and endowment initiatives, building available reserves to cover one year of operational expenses, optimising relationships with funders and facilitating start-up capital through the Technology Transfer and Innovation Support Department.

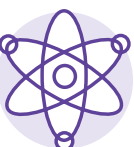
Poor financial support to postgraduate students

Risk ranking 8

Related material matter providing the opportunity:

Strengthen research and innovation with a strategic focus on impactful globalisation.

(2023 APP, Goal 2)



Risk and the impact on value creation and capitals

Poor financial support to postgraduate students results in loss of student income and discontinuity from undergraduate to postgraduate level. Postgraduate numbers are dependent on bursaries.

Mitigating actions

A postgraduate funding model provides merit bursaries to qualifying students who received NSFAS funding during their undergraduate studies. Strategic funds are made available to a limited number of potential candidates. A special fund is being established to provide funding according to the academic rules, linked to a maximum study duration.

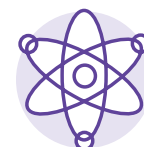
Research quality

Risk ranking 9

Related material matter providing the opportunity:

Strengthen research and innovation with a strategic focus on impactful globalisation.

(2023 APP, Goal 2)



Risk and the impact on value creation and capitals

Poor quality of research products could lead to a decline in or inadequate resources for research and research chairs.

Mitigating actions

The NWU budget focuses on sustaining and enhancing the research function. Control sheets are used to monitor the spending of research funds and processes are in place to detect and manage academic misconduct. Internal Audit executes ongoing compliance audits on the Academic Integrity Policy and webinars on academic integrity are held. The SCIMAGO tool (for assessing scientific domains) is used to independently determine the quality of research products before any research paper is sent to journals.

Diversity

Risk ranking 10

Related material matter providing the opportunity:

Develop a clearly differentiated student value proposition with a focus on creating an inclusive environment aimed at developing students holistically through structured and unstructured co-curricular programmes which are relevant, desirable and meet students' needs.

Attract, develop and retain excellent staff and create an equitable staff profile.

(2023 APP, Goal 4 and 5)



Risk and the impact on value creation and capitals

Insufficient levels of diversity in the staff and student environment could undermine the university strategy.

Mitigating actions

Employment equity targets are built into the performance agreements of Senior Management Committee members. An Employment Equity Policy is in place to ensure that the university creates equal opportunities for all its employees and to remove all barriers. Succession planning has been finalised, starting with the UMC and mission-critical positions. A control mechanism to monitor and approve non-designated appointments has been implemented.

Key to risk indicators:

Name	Value	Description	Colour
Minor	4	A risk event that holds no significant threat to the organisation, employees or other stakeholders.	Green
Low	10	A risk that is unlikely to occur, but if it does occur, can be managed under normal operating conditions.	Yellow
Medium	15	The risk could have a serious impact on operations. It can be managed with some additional resources, budget and maintenance effort.	Orange
High	25	The risk is potentially disastrous and will hinder the achievement of objectives and/or lead to the collapse of business and/or projects.	Red

The top 10 risk movements for 2023 were as follows:

Risk number	Risk name	Initial risk rating	Previous risk rating	Current risk rating
42	Cyber security	16	20	20
40	Environmental management	12	16	16
233	Business model adequacy after Covid-19	16	16	16
234	The implications and demand for digital transformation on the NWU's business	16	16	16
20	Information governance	12	12	12
231	Business Continuity Plan and Disaster Recovery Plan	12	12	12
232	Funding and fee regulation	12	12	12
3	Postgraduate students	7	12	12
9	Research quality	12	12	12
6	Diversity	6	9	9

The risk heat map for the NWU

The number in the top left-hand corner of each block indicates the residual risk rating and the # indicates the number of risks at that rating on the NWU risk register.

Conclusion

Risk management is part of the strategic mindset of the university and we continue to refine our understanding and management of risk.

We are intensifying efforts to integrate risk management into the day-to-day operations of the NWU and ensure that opportunity management remains an inherent part of risk management.

At operational level, the NWU continues to use electronic risk management software that integrates risk management, compliance management and audit matters.

Risk reporting takes place at various levels: at the UMC, the ARCC, Combined Assurance Forum, faculty management committees and at all the Council committee meetings in May and October.

The reports submitted to Council committees in 2023 focused on integrating risk appetite and risk tolerance into the 2023 APP. Reporting also emphasised pertinent aspects of the Strategic Risk Register, particularly where risk is linked to the relevant area of expertise and oversight of a particular committee. Each Council committee is required to identify emerging risks on an ongoing basis.



COUNCIL STATEMENT ON RISK MANAGEMENT

The NWU Council, as the final decision-making body of the university, affirms that it is endowed with the responsibility and accountability for the effectiveness and efficiency of the risk-management process. It is continually apprised of developments by means of management and audit reports on the management and risk coverage processes; and had been provided sufficient assurance over the past year from all relevant assurance providers.

Statement approval obtained from the NWU Council on 13 June 2024.

Our strategy to create value

Introduction

In striving for **greatness beyond boundaries**, we move forward with purpose, creating value for our shareholders as we do so. Our strategy and Annual Performance Plan (APP) keep us orientated and progressing in the right direction.

Our strategy extends over a 10-year period, currently 2015 to 2025, while our APP is for 12 months, in this case 1 January to 31 December 2023.

Explaining our strategy

In September 2023, Council approved **the new NWU Strategy**: Taking the NWU forward – 2024 and beyond, which formed the basis for the 2024 APP.

For the new strategy cycle, the NWU has defined key strategy pillars. These pillars focus both on the university's interests and on stakeholder and community interests.

THE PILLARS SUPPORTING OUR STRATEGY

OUR MISSION

To benefit society through the provision of knowledge, excelling in innovative teaching, cutting-edge research and focused engagement with the community.

OUR VISION

To discover new frontiers and opportunities that benefit society, advancing our relevance and impact.

OUR VALUES

- Caring and inclusive
- Embracing diversity
- Transparency
- Excellence in all our endeavours
- Ethics in all endeavours
- Responsibility and accountability
- Academic freedom and freedom of research

OUR PRIORITIES

- Impact
- Growth
- Diversity
- Partnerships
- Internationalisation
- Operational excellence

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Sustainability
- Transformation
- Digitisation
- Student centricity
- Valuing our people

OUR GOALS

For our goals and enablers, please see page 47.

Six goals to realise our strategy



Our goal

1

We want to promote excellent learning and teaching and reposition the NWU to attain the size and shape required by the market direction decisions.

How we achieve it

Our proven student academic development and support initiatives continue to advance student retention and success.

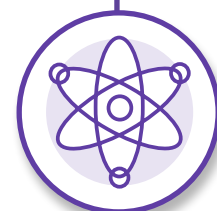
We are systemically transforming and renewing the curriculum to equip graduates for 21st century challenges.

Our Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) uses research results to enhance its support to the faculties.

While providing professional services to the community, we explore opportunities to generate third-stream income through continuing education offerings.

We ensure that the PQM is responsive, viable and relevant.

Work-integrated learning and service learning are well managed and appropriate, enhancing the employability of our graduates.



Our goal

2

It is our goal to strengthen research and innovation with a strategic focus on impactful globalisation.

How we achieve it

We enhance the visibility, impact and footprint of our research by publishing in Scopus/ ISI journals, emphasising research integrity, improving our researchers' NRF ratings and offering joint degrees and co-publishing with researchers from reputable international institutions.

Our 60 research entities include various chairs under the South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI).

We successfully concluded the evaluations for research funding applications to the NRF, SAMRC and other local funders, resulting in a range of grants for research and bursaries. In addition, SAMRC, DTI/THRIP and NWU postdoctoral grants were concluded.

Training sessions on funding and ethics for researchers and students were conducted to advance research excellence and Library and Information Services (LIS) arranged workshops and webinars on open access and research data management.



Our goal

3

Community engagement that deepens relevance, impact, reputation and sustainability to develop a culture of active citizenship.

How we achieve it

Our campus-based community engagement (CE) forums welcomed 72 new partners, which will boost opportunities for student volunteering, work-integrated learning and service learning.

In total of 16 different organisational units registered on 500 community engagement activities in 2023.

Almost 40% of these activities involved Engaged-Teaching and Learning and nearly 44% were reported as outreach or volunteerism.

Engaged research comprised 11,6% of registered activities, and 2,2% were recorded as engaged scholarship.

Ten community engagement champions were recognised in November 2023 when the annual awards ceremony was held.

All three campuses celebrated Arbour Day by planting the tree of the year, the Olive Sagewood, as well as fruit trees.



Our goal

4

Develop a clearly differentiated student value proposition with a focus on creating an inclusive environment aimed at developing students holistically through structured and unstructured co-curricular programmes which are relevant, desirable and meet students' needs.

How we achieve it

We continued to focus strongly on supporting students through psycho-social and primary health care services, financial support, accommodation, academic development and support, and social welfare programmes.

We pay close attention to student information management, in line with applicable legislation.

In 2023, staff and student leaders presented proposals on a standardised Student Life programme. This engagement will continue during 2024. Our student leadership model functions effectively, ensuring transparency, assurance and stability within the student domain.

Student safety was again a top priority in 2023. We further strengthened our partnerships with local municipalities, law enforcement agencies and community members.

Four enablers to help us realise our strategy

Where we want to go	How we achieve it
<p>(our enablers)</p> <p>Govern, lead and manage in an agile, collaborative and integrated way towards an optimally digitised university environment.</p> <div> </div> <p>Establish a holistic and integrated university technology platform to provide a solid foundation for a digital future.</p> <div> </div> <p>Cultivate and deliver stakeholder-focused platforms to create and grow intentional experiences and brand equity.</p> <div> </div> <p>Ensure financial sustainability and optimal performance with due consideration of macro-economic conditions and the drive towards digital transformation.</p> <div> </div>	<p>Effective governance is a competitive advantage for the NWU, which functions as a unitary, integrated, multi-campus university.</p> <p>We make sure that support services across all sites of delivery function in an integrated and mature way and that the support-staff provisioning is optimised.</p> <p>All policies and rules are drafted in accordance with the 2017 NWU Statute.</p> <p>Our integrated risk and compliance management model focuses on business continuity and disaster recovery strategies.</p> <p>We are making the transition to cloud computing and software-as-a-service (SaaS) models, paving the way for greater scalability, flexibility and cost efficiency.</p> <p>However, we understand that it will take time to realise the full potential of these new approaches.</p> <p>Over time, our aim is to leverage digital transformation as a strategic advantage, shifting our focus from basic business operations to a blend of IT and innovation.</p> <p>Additionally, we are working towards a more integrated approach to cybersecurity and transitioning from a fragmented data infrastructure to a unified analytics strategy and methodology.</p> <p>A positive stakeholder experience presents opportunities for beneficial stakeholder engagements, retention and loyalty. Thus, developing and implementing targeted communication platforms/channels was a priority for 2023.</p> <p>The interactions with our stakeholders via appropriate channels that lead to intentional experiences play a key role towards enhancing NWU brand equity.</p> <p>We focused on our mitigation plan to address the financial and economic impact of Covid-19, and on compiling a three-year rolling budget for 2024 to 2026. The aim is to ensure medium and long-term sustainability, with an emphasis on cash-flow management for the shorter term.</p> <p>We continued implementing the infrastructure policy on optimal space management.</p> <p>We implemented projects to measure the impact and efficiency of alternative energy sources.</p> <p>In line with the NWU's Environmental Policy, we developed an Environmental Sustainability Management strategy and guidelines.</p> <p>Several automation projects continued in support of the Digital Business Strategy.</p>

<div> </div> <div> <h3>Our goal</h3> <p>5</p> <p>We want to attract, develop and retain excellent staff and create an equitable staff profile.</p> </div>	<h3>How we achieve it</h3> <p>We made progress towards achieving the targets set in the Employment Equity (EE) Plan for 2021 to 2023. As 2023 was the final year of this plan, a Successive EE plan was drafted, consulted on and approved by Council.</p> <p>The staff cost optimisation project for Phase 1 yielded savings to fund a 1% salary increase across the board.</p> <p>A resourcing plan was developed, and vacancies were maintained at under 10%.</p> <p>Members of the University Management Committee (UMC) and Senior Management Committee (SMC) attended the Emotional Intelligence, Digital Transformation and Managing Remotely programmes.</p> <p>In 2023, we enhanced the People and Culture Digital Transformation Strategy through effective automation and digitisation of the performance management system, digital onboarding, probation management system and hybrid work process.</p>
<div> </div> <div> <h3>Our goal</h3> <p>6</p> <p>It is our goal to develop and implement a digital business strategy to create a competitive advantage for the university and ultimately unlock alternative revenue streams.</p> </div>	<h3>How we achieve it</h3> <p>Council approved the Digital Business Strategy (DBS) in June 2023, reaffirming the NWU's position as a future-ready institution.</p> <p>An Agility Hub has been established to promote innovation and fast-track the adoption of cutting-edge technologies.</p> <p>Strategic initiatives stemming from the DBS are currently under way, including the renewal of the Student Information System and reviewing the People and Culture (HR) and Payroll systems.</p> <p>The NWU has entered into a strategic partnership with local and international vendors to provide capacity and expertise to drive implementation of AI-enabled functionality.</p>

Strategic projects per goal/enabler

The Annual Performance Plan (APP) is an important instrument to realise the NWU strategy and implement strategic projects.

These are projects that impact significantly on the achievement of our goals and the realisation of our strategy, and help determine the university's overall direction. To see how we financed these strategic initiatives, refer to **Our financial capital** in the section on our performance against our strategy.

The following summary outlines the strategic projects we are implementing and how they relate to the APP goals and enablers.

Teaching and learning

Goal 1

Promote excellent learning and teaching and reposition the NWU to attain the size and shape required by the market direction decisions.

- Continuation of the Medical School Project
- Design and development of a digital classroom
- Development of contact-to-online conversion for short learning programmes
- Incentive scheme for intellectual property creators
- Mixed-reality simulation for language and reading teacher education
- Study well project
- Upgrading of MBA facilities



Research and Innovation

Goal 2

Strengthen research and innovation with a strategic focus on impactful globalisation.

- Business School to consult and develop a PhD degree in research for business administration
- Development of humanised mice
- Green ammonia and hydrogen for sustainability of Hydrogen South Africa (HySA)
- Incubation support towards commercialisation



Excellent staff

Goal 5

Attract, develop and retain excellent staff and create an equitable staff profile.

- Cross-campus student seminars
- New People and Culture Human resources payroll system
- Staff costs optimisation

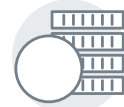


Financial sustainability

Enabler 4

Ensure financial sustainability and optimal performance with due consideration of macro-economic conditions and a drive towards digital transformation.

- NWU safety, health and environmental system



Click [here](#) to read more about risk tolerance and risk management.

How quality enhancement fits in with our strategy

In addition to providing clear directives for managing and embedding quality in the university's core functions, the NWU Strategy: Taking the NWU forward – 2024 and beyond – sets out how we should deal with major quality events such as the institutional audit by the Council on Higher Education (CHE).

The audit cycle is a series of engagements for the institutional audit from inception to completion. The main steps after initiating the audit are to prepare the self-evaluation report, conduct the site visit and compile the final audit report.

This report includes developing and reporting on an improvement plan and submitting a final close-out report to the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) and the NWU Council.

The site visit was conducted from 22 to 26 August 2022, and we received the final audit report on 28 November 2023, confirming that our quality management systems consistently meet or exceed established standards.

We received eight commendations and various recommendations for improvements. No aspect of our operations was reported as being below a given functional level or requiring significant improvement.

The commendations were about our Transformation Charter and Language Policy, community engagement, library facilities, the safeguarding of university information, student discipline, stakeholder involvement in programme development, the assessment review and alumni relations.

Future outlook

Having drafted our new strategy in 2023 and agreed on the way forward for the NWU, we will be entering the strategy implementation phase in 2024.

It will require focus, agility and pragmatism to implement this roadmap in earnest and ensure that our shared vision and mission are realised.

Fortunately, we will have our 2024 APP to guide us to harness our strengths, discover new frontiers and seize all opportunities to position ourselves in an increasingly competitive higher education landscape and – most importantly – benefit society.

Armed with our new strategy and APP, we will continue to strengthen and build the NWU while enhancing the university's impact in our delivery and engagements.

Greatness without boundaries

High-tech online system enhances audiovisual equipment

Faulty audiovisual equipment can derail a lecture and interfere with teaching and learning time. As a solution, the university has taken its audiovisual systems online – a step towards the design and development of the NWU digital classroom, a strategic project.

The technology provides remote assistance in lecture rooms where audiovisual devices are used. It identifies what equipment is installed in each lecture room and whether it is functioning properly.

The online control technology also enables IT to determine which audiovisual devices academics use the most, and to produce real-time asset and status lists, which can assist IT with preventive maintenance in academic spaces.



Our performance against our strategy

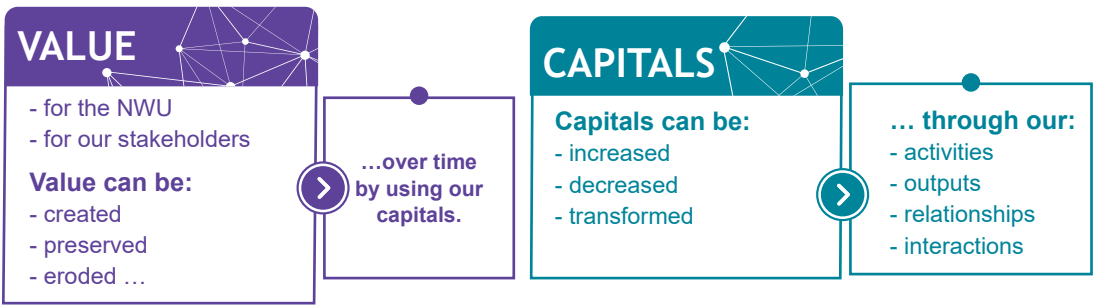
Creating value through the capitals

The value-creation processes at the NWU are the focus of this part of the annual report.

Here we show you how we respond to our stakeholders' needs through our business activities, and how these activities lead to outputs and outcomes, transforming the value of our six capitals.

These capitals represent the value we create for ourselves and our stakeholders. Our performance against these shows how we are faring in achieving our strategic goals.

The image below illustrates the link between our value creation and our capitals.



Our intellectual capital

Our intellectual capital refers to the knowledge assets from our core business activities. We use our knowledge resources to create more knowledge, as well as to inform the activities, policies, strategies and procedures needed to support our business operations.

Stakeholders who will benefit from our intellectual capital

When we increase our intellectual capital, the benefit flow through to all stakeholders interested in the knowledge we create through our research or teaching and community engagement.

These stakeholders include our staff, current and prospective students and their parents, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), communities, donors, alumni, employers, business and industry and professional bodies.

Material matters (goals or enablers) involved

Material matters are teaching and learning, research, community development, ability to govern, lead and manage, information and communication technology.



Risks involved

There are risks connected to organisational change and ongoing transformation (such as the decolonising of the curriculum), risks related to academic matters (teaching and learning, research and innovation and academic administration), the risk of non-compliance (such as the standards and regulations of professional bodies), and risks related to IT, university systems and commercialisation of our innovation and research results.

[Read more](#) about the mitigation of these risks.

Material matter: Teaching and learning



An academic literacy test is compulsory for all first-year students. They may then be required to register for specific academic literacy modules in academic writing, reading, computer and information literacy and study skills. These modules incorporate discipline-specific content, integrate contact and multimodal offerings and emphasise self-directed learning.

We are rethinking distance learning as enrolment figures have been declining.

The number of learning support centres is being reduced to 18 for 2024 and the focus will in future be on the postgraduate market and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. Except in STEM fields, no further higher certificates will be developed.

Increase student access and success

In increasing student access and success, we offer extensive, value-adding academic support to students:

- In extended academic programmes, students can complete their studies over a longer period. The overall student success rate of approximately 90%.
- The one-year University Preparatory Programme (UnivPrep) provides access opportunities to prospective students who do not meet the admission requirements for specific formal degrees in the faculties of Humanities, Theology and Economics and Management Sciences. Over 50% of successful UnivPrep participants become eligible to apply for formal studies in these faculties.
- A number of higher certificates also provide access to students who would otherwise not qualify for university studies.
- We offer tutorial support through supplemental instruction (SI) and tutoring.
- In 2023, tutors conducted 1 743 tutorials and reached 8 585 students. Our analysis showed a correlation between tutorial attendance and higher examination and module marks and pass rates.
- For mathematics and statistics support in 2023, we had 40 tutors conducting approximately 1 880 tutorials and individual consultations per semester.

- We increased the number of academic peer mentors from 77 in the first semester of 2023 to 138 in the second semester.
- During 2023, 11 academic advisers conducted 564 advising sessions.

For more information on how we improve student access and success, click [here](#).

HyFlex teaching-learning in 2023

We continued with our hybrid teaching and learning model, HyFlex, offering asynchronous and synchronous online offerings, limited face-to face interaction in small groups and personal consultation with students.

An assessment review indicated that assessment and modes of assessment should receive attention.

The Community of Practice in Academic Integrity, an inter-faculty and inter-departmental forum, has continued its work and a full-time academic integrity officer has been appointed.

Extending the development of our academics, we identified international teaching mobility opportunities for 2023, resulting in ongoing collaborations with institutions such as Inholland University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands, Lincoln University in the United Kingdom, and the University College Leuven Limburg, in Belgium.

Student success rate

In 2023 our contact student success rate was 84,14%, while our distance student success rate was 85,08%. Both figures combine undergraduate and postgraduate students.

How much value we created, compared to previous years:

Academic performance	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Contact student success rate (undergraduate and postgraduate students combined)	85%	85%	90%	87%	84,7%	84,14%
Undergraduate degree graduation duration factor	1,13	1,13	1,2	1,09	1,08	1,11
Graduation rate*	25,1%	23,5%	27%	27%	25,4%	22,43%

* Where the education offering of an institution consists mostly, but not exclusively, of three-year programmes, it is expected that approximately a third of any cohort should graduate.

How much value we created, compared to our targets:

Academic performance	Target	Definition	Actual
Contact student success rate (undergraduate and postgraduate students combined)	87%	Based on HEMIS data. Completed FTEs divided by enrolled FTEs on a module level	84,14%
Undergraduate degree graduation duration factor	1,2	Based on HEMIS data. The time (in years) it takes a student to graduate divided by the minimum time to complete the qualification	1,11

Other teaching and learning activities in 2023

- We focused on ensuring that students across our campuses have access to equivalent resources and benefit from comparable high-quality teaching and learning.
- Quality was a major focus of 2023. Four faculties participated in internal and external reviews, and several professional bodies visited the NWU for accreditation visits.
- We developed a Curriculum Renewal programme to equip graduates to address the challenges of the 21st century. A standardised model for work-integrated learning and service learning is being created, ensuring uniformity across disciplines.
- The Senate approved a framework for developing and recognising micro-credentials. A micro-credential refers to a part of a module that the university recognises as credit bearing,
- The NWU adopted its Policy on Open Education Resources. We also host the UNESCO Research Chair for OER and Multimodal Learning.

Our output: graduates

The number of graduates is lower than planned due to the drop in distance enrolments. The decrease in our distance numbers was due to the Advanced Certificate in education, the NPDE and the BEdHons being phased out faster than anticipated, and the approval of our new distance offering taking longer than expected.

How much value we created, compared to previous years:

Graduates	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Overall	14 961	15 454	14 484	13 735	12 358
Contact	11 191	11 697	11 191	10 323	10 175
Distance	3 770	3 757	3 293	3 412	2 183

How much value we created, compared to our targets:

Output	Target	Definition	Actual
Graduates	13 576	Based on HEMIS data; number of graduates in the reporting year	12 358

Future outlook

In 2024, a draft policy on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) for the NWU is expected and guidelines on the ethical and responsible use of AI in teaching and learning will be published.

The recalibration of the PQM Review Project will indicate what the emphasis and focus should be in 2024 and subsequent years.

Now that all faculties have submitted their integrated teaching plans for 2024-2027, we are looking forward to implementing a teaching and learning model that will allow variations in modalities.

A new learning management system (LMS) service provider will be appointed in 2024. Lecturers will be trained to use the new LMS for first-year modules in 2026 and we expect that all modules will be transferred to the new LMS by the end of 2027.

Challenges in teaching and learning

A major focus was on ensuring that all our offerings were nationally and internationally comparable, appropriately designed and incorporate accessible information and communications technologies (ICTs).

We continued addressing the further decolonisation of the curriculum, the Africanisation of appropriate sections of our offerings, and opportunities to promote multilingualism.

Teamwork in the teaching and learning context will become ever more important as the NWU moves forward with the Digital Business Strategy.

Material matter: Research



Our researchers and inventors increase our intellectual capital by finding affordable and workable solutions to real-life problems. This creates value for ourselves and our stakeholders.

Research output

In recent years, we have steadily increased the number of NRF-rated researchers, rising from 248 in 2019 to 322 in 2023. This is important as NRF ratings are a key indicator of the calibre of a university's researchers.

The following table shows the numbers of researchers in the different rating categories:

NRF	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
A	0	0	1	1	0
B	27	26	32	36	36
C	161	181	188	196	218
P	2	1	1	2	1
Y	58	55	58	63	67
Total	248	263	280	298	322

A – Leading international scholars
B – Internationally recognised researchers
C – Established researchers
P – Young researchers (normally under 35)
Y – Young researchers (40 years or younger)

Publications

How much value we created, compared to previous years:

Research	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Publications per academic staff member	0,94	0,98	0,93	0,99	1,02
Weighted research output	2 708,941	3 058,0223	2 811,1914	2 958,062	2 864,276

* Please note that there is a two-year lag for the research output.

Greatness without boundaries

From ideation to commercialisation – that is impactful research

When a third-year BCom student, Irene Nompini Tsele, conceived her idea for a cosmetics business, little did she know that partnering with the university's Technology Transfer and Innovation Support office would one day make her business flourish.

She is one of many entrepreneurs who have, thanks to the NWU, navigated the business minefields inherent in the journey towards commercial success.

Irene, along with other exhibitors, showcased her products at a multistakeholder event to demonstrate the research capabilities that the NWU leverages to support the commercialisation of innovative products and services. [\(Read more\)](#)



Irene Nompini Tsele (centre), an entrepreneur and final-year NWU student, with Thandi Maretlane and Hannes Malan, both from the NWU's Technology Transfer and Innovation Support office.

Increase our global standing and visibility

Working with our partners internationally, we co-chair collaborative research and innovation programmes and offer collaborative degrees, skills development opportunities and conduct international student recruitment and exchange.

We have partnerships with prestigious institutions such as the Corporación Universidad de la Costa in Colombia, the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom and the University of Hong Kong in Asia, among others.

In addition to bilateral partnerships, the NWU belongs to strategic inter-institutional collaborations such as the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA), which has a memorandum of understanding with the OBREAL Global Observatory. The NWU is also a member of the Southern African-Nordic Centre (SANORD), which advances strategic, multilateral academic collaboration between institutions in the Southern African and Nordic regions.

Furthermore, the NWU belongs to strategic inter-institutional collaborations and is an active partner in research collaborations within the Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS) bloc.

Our visibility has increased as a result of our Open Access Policy that promotes publication in open access journals and on similar platforms. This has also led to more than R21 million savings in article processing charges (APC).

Creating value through innovation and technology

Commercialisation revenues from running royalties, licence fees and once-off or ad hoc transactions reached an impressive R6 million.

The Department of Science and Innovation and the Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA) presented **an award to TTIS** for organisational excellence in innovation management.

The TTIS office continued to facilitate relationships between industry partners, investors, government agencies and other institutions, and also supported the development of innovation management professionals in the Southern African region.

In 2023, we implemented new incentives through the NWU Innovation Fellowship Programme and the Patent Incentive Scheme to encourage early-stage researchers to enhance their innovation skills and commercialise their academic research.

An important launching pad for young innovators is the Leopards Lair® **student entrepreneurship competition**.

In 2023, alternative leather company FLeather, which uses mushroom roots as feedstock, won the Leopards Lair® postgraduate category, as well as the inaugural Bongani Foundation Prize for sustainability.

Zander van der Watt, an engineering student, won the undergraduate category with his Positech Vending Machine, which incorporates cutting-edge technologies to enhance reliability and aesthetics.

Challenges with research output

Funding constraints are affecting the availability of incentives for our most productive researchers. Fortunately, we have sophisticated research infrastructure and good relationships with funders.

We ran a pilot Innovation Fellowship programme in 2023 to encourage early-career researchers and academics to engage in innovation, enhance their innovation skills and business acumen and improve the commercialisation readiness of own inventions.

We also launched a new IP incentive scheme that acknowledges the effort our inventors expend on the patent prosecution process. These contributions often go unrecognised as productive activities, and the incentive scheme goes some way towards changing this thinking.

Future outlook

We look forward to growth in the number of IP disclosures from the humanities and social sciences as this will enlarge our pool of productive researchers and innovators across disciplines.

All academics should view research and innovation as part of their responsibilities, but a number are not yet participating. We have emphasised the participating is in their professional best interests and set research output targets that require them to contribute.

We are considering additional strategies to encourage and guide academics who do not deliver research outputs, and to retain those who are active researchers.

“The university is evolving its approach to innovation. Instead of focusing on intellectual property (IP) curation, we are shifting to the transfer or monetisation of our IP portfolio. This includes trimming the low-value or mature patents and taking more relevant technologies to the marketplace.”



Zander van der Watt and his Positech vending machine won the undergraduate category of the Leopard's Lair competition.

Material matter: Govern, lead and manage

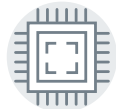


We set out to create optimal value through good governance and management, guided by our governance structures and approach to ethics, as well as our strategy, values, success model and Annual Performance Plan (APP).

These are part of our intellectual capital, along with the systems, processes, procedures and policies that support governance and management.

For more information about how our management activities increase our intellectual capital, refer to the **report of the vice-chancellor** and, for information about governance, read more in the section on **governance supporting and protecting value**.

Material matter: Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

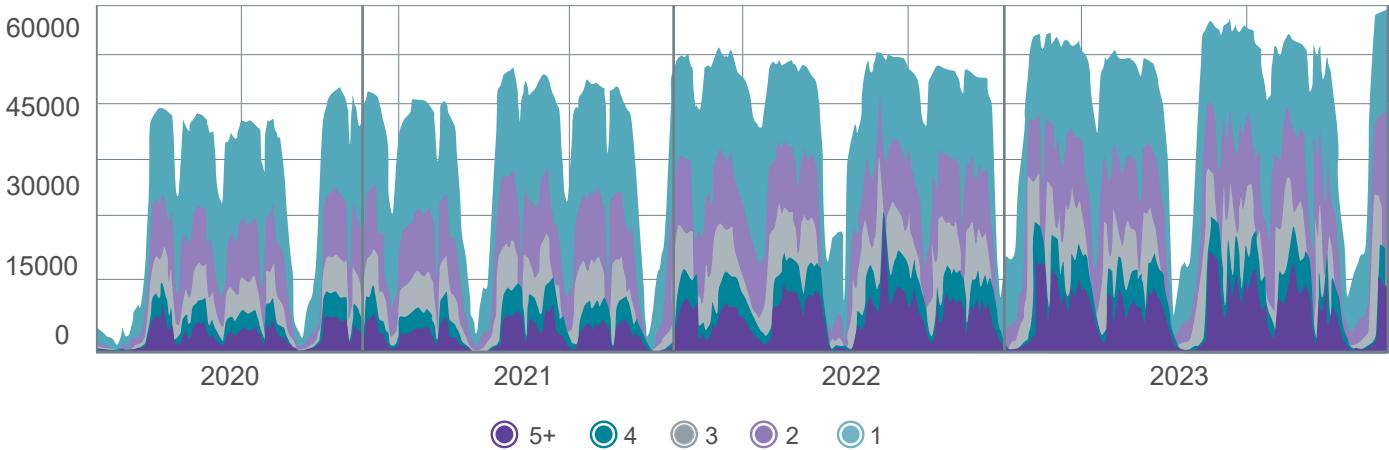


Our intellectual capital includes ICTs and digital resources, which underpin the core operations and support services at the NWU.

Unlike manufactured capital, which refers to our physical ICT infrastructure, ICT-related and digital intellectual capital includes software, IT support services and the e-learning platform eFundi.

The IT department manages a portfolio of technological products, projects and services, which are in high demand. eFundi is one of the most utilised platforms, as illustrated below:

This stacked area chart shows the number of users who logged in regularly in a week. The dark purple is the heavy users who log in more than five times in a week.



eFundi user numbers increased by 11%, in 2023, with 5 000 new users signing on. At peak times, over 18 000 students accessed eFundi simultaneously and there were 15 000 hourly logins.

The platform handles approximately 45 terabytes of traffic monthly, with lecturers uploading around 15 terabytes of content throughout 2023. In 2023, the demand for online meeting platforms such as Microsoft Teams remained substantial, echoing the trends of the previous years.

As the NWU progresses into the digital era, we expect a significant and sustained increase in the utilisation of IT products and services.

COUNCIL STATEMENT ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Council affirms, as the final decision-making body of the university, that it is endowed with the responsibility and accountability for the effectiveness and efficiency of information technology processes, including the IT governance framework, alignment with NWU objectives, significant IT investment, risk management, assets, policies and strategies, and compliance with statutory requirements. Council is continually apprised of developments, by means of management and audit reports to the Technology and Information Governance Committee and received sufficient assurance over the past year from all relevant assurance providers.

Statement approval obtained from the NWU Council on 13 June 2024.

Our human capital

At the NWU, we are proud of individuals who are not only experts in their fields but also creative thinkers and problem solvers. This is the calibre of human capital that can drive productivity, innovation and growth, student engagement and collaboration.

Our human capital includes faculty and staff who teach, do research and provide administrative support, as well as students who engage in learning and research. Together, their contributions lead to increased financial, physical, intellectual and social and relationship capital.

Skilled employees can build and maintain strong relationships with stakeholders, leading to increased trust, collaboration and opportunities for the NWU, while also enhancing our reputation and brand.

Our staff and students play a prominent role in the NWU value chain, as outlined in this table.

Stakeholders who will benefit from human capital activities	Our human capital activities mainly affect our staff and students; their families are also indirectly affected.
Material matters (goals and enables) involved	<div>Almost all material matters affect our staff and students. These matters include teaching and learning, research, community engagement, student value proposition, staff and student profile, ability to govern, lead and manage, information and communication technology, and financial sustainability.</div> <div></div>

Risks involved	Our main risks are uncertainties in the higher education sector, pressure for organisational change and risks related to academic, compliance, student life, IT and operational risks matters. Almost all these risks have a bearing on our staff and students.
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Material matter:

Teaching and learning, research, community engagement

Caring for our students

Graduates entering the labour market require a combination of technical, professional and life skills to adapt to the future world of work and contribute as responsible global citizens.

We promote the holistic and all-round development of our students by offering them opportunities to participate in social, cultural, arts and sport activities.

In addition, student leadership and peer helper programmes help in creating a caring and inclusive environment for a diverse student community.

More information on how we care for our students is available in the [vice-chancellor's report](#).

Academic and career-related support

Faculties assist students to prepare for assessments, while academic peer mentors and supplemental instruction facilitators assist with academic support.

Career and course counselling is available through Student Counselling and Development (SCD), as are psychometric assessments and leadership and personal development.

SCD also continued to provide support services and programmes, including emotional support (therapy or counselling), HIV testing and counselling, and various social support initiatives. Our Disability Rights Unit supported students living with disabilities, for instance with certain concessions and extended writing time during exams.

All students in contact or distance programmes can access these services via the SCD website or the 24/7 psychological crisis line.

Caring for our staff – building staff capacity

In 2023, about 54% of our training spend was used for various in-house training programmes on digital transformation, emotional intelligence, report writing skills, courageous conversations, diversity training and the launch of the Women Leadership programme.

Semi-skilled employees benefited from learnerships on end-user computing.

We hosted 181 interns through the Presidential Stimulus Programme, in partnership with Universities South Africa (USAf).

In 2023, we spent over R29,7 million on study discount benefits, enabling 869 staff and their dependants to study at the NWU and Unisa.

Empowering our researchers

For our researchers at all levels, we run internal capacity-building workshops. As part of the larger research community in South Africa, we leverage external development opportunities on key topics such as research ethics and integrity, article writing, grant writing, postgraduate supervision and preparing for NRF rating applications.

In 2023, the Library Information Services (LIS) offered advanced data and research skills to postgraduate students and researchers at all levels. Topics included understanding open research practices and policies, navigating the publishing landscape, and mastering research data management.

During 2023, training costs were covered through the Informal Research Development project grant, amounting to R1 860 312,80, and the Enhancement of Researcher Profile project grant, totalling R716 815. Both grants were awarded under the Universities Capacity Development Grant (UCDG).

During 2023, 38 staff members received funding of R1 394 659 from our UCDG to complete their master's or doctoral studies, while a UCDG contribution of R2 000 000 to the NWU Staff Discount Scheme was made to support 97 staff members enrolled for their master's or doctoral studies.

Material matter:

Student value proposition

We create an inclusive environment where students can access holistic support, from wellness and skills development to academic support and career advice. .

Specialist units and programmes are on hand to support our students' well-being. They include the campus healthcare centres, campus disability rights units and social welfare projects such as the Meal-a-Day programme for students in need.

The Thuso (Help) Crisis Line is staffed by registered psychologists. Students can choose from face-to-face or online counselling and therapy.

Co-curricular programmes in the arts, sport and student media platforms further strengthen our student value proposition.

Dropout rates

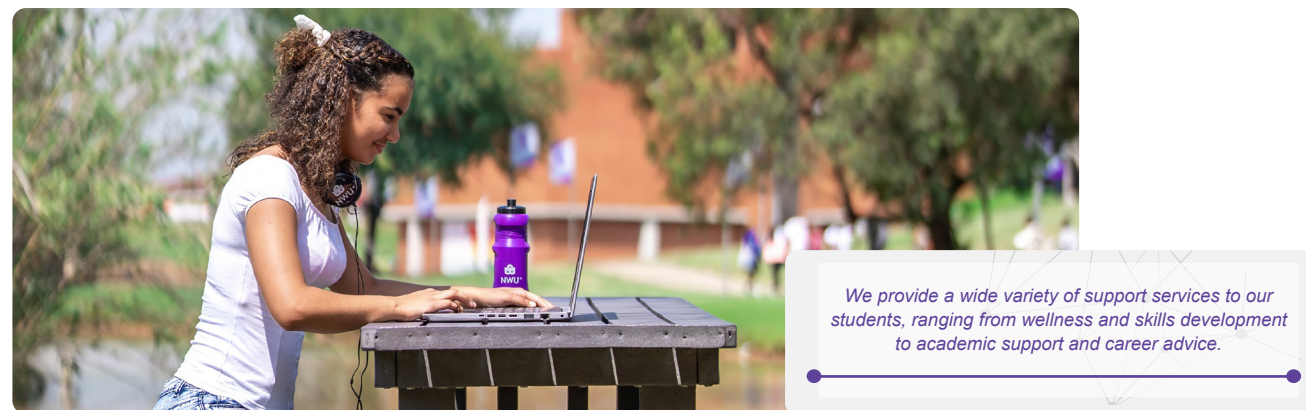
Our student to staff ratio increased from 28,45 to 28,59 in 2023. Our first-time entrant dropout rate dropped from 9,79% in 2022 to 8,86% in 2023.

How much value we created, compared to previous years:

Dropout rate	2020	2021	2022	2023
First-time entrant dropout rate for contact degrees	10,48%	8,96%	9,79%	8,86%

How much value we created, compared to previous years:

	Target	Definition	Actual
Academic staff full-time equivalent ratio: students	27,5	Based on HEMIS data and refers to the enrolled student full-time equivalent divided by the permanent instruction/ research professionals full-time equivalent.	28,59
First-time entrant dropout rate for contact degrees	Below 13%	First-time entering students in contact degree qualifications who register in the reporting year but do not return the next year.	8,86%



Material matter:

Develop and retain excellent staff and create an equitable staff and student profile



Our employees matter

Our wellness offices support the all-round well-being of our staff, from biopsychosocial to spiritual needs.

We use an outsourced service provider, Life Health Solutions, to provide professional counselling services for NWU employees and their dependents, 24 hours a day.

Employee wellness works closely with the Campus Health Care Centres to offer health services to staff, and People and Culture has established a health forum for incapacity guidance and support.

Campus Protection Services and the Occupational Health and Safety Department contribute to a healthy and safe working environment.

Staff profile

Guided by our employment equity plan for 2021 to 2023, we strive to create and maintain an equitable staff profile.

How much value we created, compared to previous years:

	2021	2022	2023
African (%)	39,7%	41,74%	44,66%
Coloured (%)	6,9%	7,39%	7,38%
Indian (%)	1,6%	1,62%	1,77%
White (%)	51,7%	49,25%	46,19%

How much value we created, compared to our equity targets:

	2022 target	Actual
African (%)	41,04%	41,74%
Coloured (%)	7,19%	7,39%
Indian (%)	1,95%	1,62%
White (%)	48,71%	49,25%
Foreign Nationals	1,12%	4,74%

COUNCIL STATEMENT ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

The NWU is committed to the principle of fairness which encompasses both substantive and procedural fairness. We strive for proactive resolution of potential disputes and our approach to discipline is of a progressive nature and not punitive. Our grievance procedure stipulates that grievances should be resolved at the lowest point of origin and as speedily as possible. It is worth mentioning that there were no major disputes between the university and unions organised within the NWU.

As there is currently no union that enjoys recognition, engagements with all the three unions are through the Management-Employee Consultative Forum. The engagement meeting with these unions is arranged separately for each union and relevant information is shared with them.

Statement approval obtained from the NWU Council on 13 June 2024.



NWU Wellness often organises events to raise awareness among staff about the dangers of high blood pressure.

COUNCIL STATEMENT ON WORKER AND STUDENT PARTICIPATION

On worker participation: There is currently still no union with recognition within the NWU, and an interim structure, called the University Consultative Forum, was established to deal with matters that were previously dealt with by the University Bargaining Forum (UBF).

The current situation is that the three unions (NEHAWU, SAPTU and Solidarity), organised within the NWU, enjoy organisational rights. It seems this situation is likely to persist for some time as none of the three unions is close to attaining the mandatory 30% threshold for them to enjoy recognition rights.

On the other hand, the University Management Committee on Cost-of-Living Adjustment (UMC-COLA) was established after the de-recognition of SAPTU, which used to have a Recognition Agreement with the NWU. The Recognition Agreement entitled SAPTU to be part of the University Bargaining Forum on Cost-of-Living Adjustment (UBF-COLA), which was the forum where the annual negotiation on salary increases took place.

The committee comprises University Management Committee members and co-opted members from the People and Culture and Finance portfolios, owing to their relevant expertise.

On student participation: The NWU Statute forms the basis for ensuring student participation in statutory structures, with student representation further guided by the Institutional Rules on Student Governance and the Constitution of the Student Representative Council (SRC).

In accordance with these rules, the SRC President, after consultation with the SRC, designates members of the SRC and SCCs to become, among others, full members of the NWU Council, some subcommittees of Council (such as the Student Housing Committee, the Student Life Oversight Committee and the Human Rights Committee), as well as the Senate, the Institutional Forum and the Committee for Student Support Services.

The NWU enjoys an extensive student leadership and governance model, with approximately 1 100 student leaders elected annually to various student leadership structures that further ensure student participation throughout all levels of the university, including faculties, university residences, sport and art.

Statement approval obtained from the NWU Council on 13 June 2024.

Greatness without boundaries

Developing tomorrow's leaders today

Shaping the leaders of the future, the NWU held its first-ever Student Leadership Summit on 6 October 2023 and launched the Student Leadership Academy.

NWU principal and vice-chancellor Prof Bismark Tyobeka said the university's vision is to have a long-lasting positive impact on society by nurturing future leaders and change-makers.

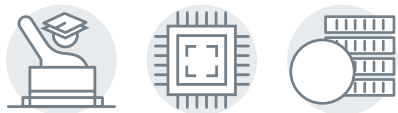
He expressed his excitement about the launch of the Student Leadership Academy. "By launching this leadership programme, we are clearly demonstrating our commitment to nurturing these emerging leaders." [\(Read more\)](#)



More than 150 student leaders, representing various student leadership structures on all three campuses, attended the Student Leadership Summit and the launch of the NWU's Student Leadership Academy.

Material matter:

Govern, lead and manage; information and communication technology; and financial sustainability



An important part of the responsibilities of the Council and Council committees is supporting and protecting our human capital through good governance.

The committees concerned are the Remuneration Committee, People and Culture and Employment Equity Committee and Student Life Oversight Committee.

For the fair and just people management of the university, we have policies on conflict of interest, governance oversight and management control, human rights, remuneration, performance management, staff learning and development, employment equity and disabilities.

The IT Department upholds the broader values of the NWU and demonstrates its commitment to serving the entire community with fairness and precision. Our ICT systems are well maintained across the three campuses and all staff and students have the hardware, software and helpdesk support they need.

Financial sustainability is always a priority for us. Making sure that our university stays financially sustainable is in the interests of our current staff and students, as well as future generations. Read more about how we do this is in the section on [our financial capital](#).

Our social and relationship capital



Advancing societal progress and contributing to sustainable development through active community engagement are central to our standing as a university with a commitment to social justice and an ethic of care.

We align community engagement, or CE, with teaching, learning and research to nurture intentional relationships with local, national and international stakeholders, including community organisations, businesses and governmental bodies.

These relationships are collaborative. We exchange knowledge and resources in ways that are mutually beneficial and ultimately contribute to more sustainable, just and healthy communities.

Stakeholders who will benefit from effective engagement with the NWU

These stakeholders include the parents of current and prospective students, communities around our campuses, donors, alumni, employers, business and industry, professional bodies and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

Material matters (goals or enablers) involved

Our relationships with external stakeholders affect all our university goals. In sharing knowledge to the benefit of society, we use our communication, marketing and stakeholder engagement activities to reach out and engage.



Risks involved

If communities do not see the value of our volunteerism and service contributions, they might withdraw their support for work-integrated learning (WIL), service learning or community-engaged research.

Instability within community settings presents a potential obstacle to placing students and staff in positions to assist with engaged research and student experiential training. The scientific processes and methods we apply may not always resonate among all stakeholders. Unintended consequences may then arise and have to be managed.

[Read more](#) about the mitigation of these risks.

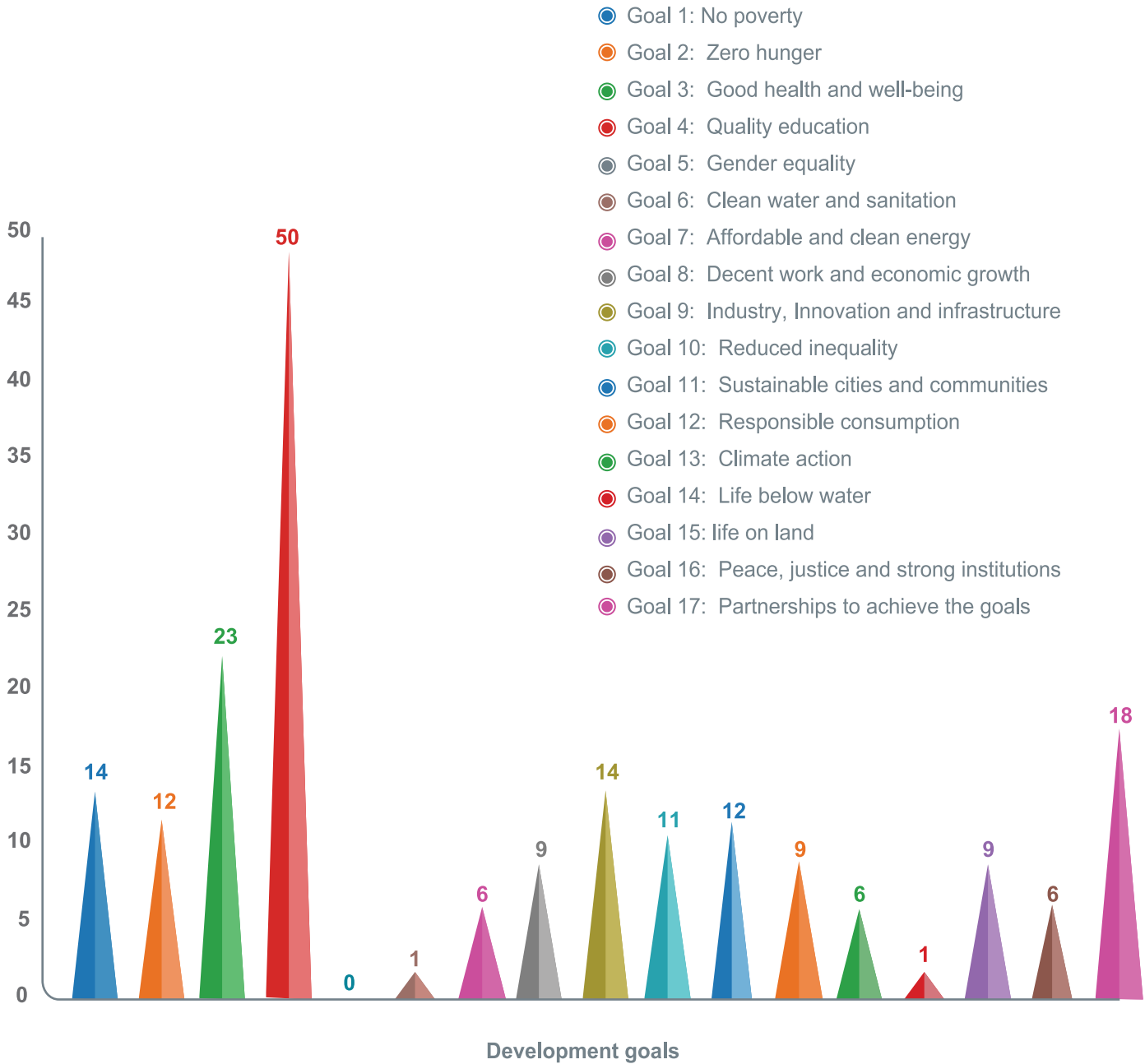
Creating value together

Our students benefited from work-integrated learning and communities from knowledge sharing.

We enhanced the impact of community engagement activities by aligning them with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The figure below shows how our community engagement activities are aligned with the SDGs.

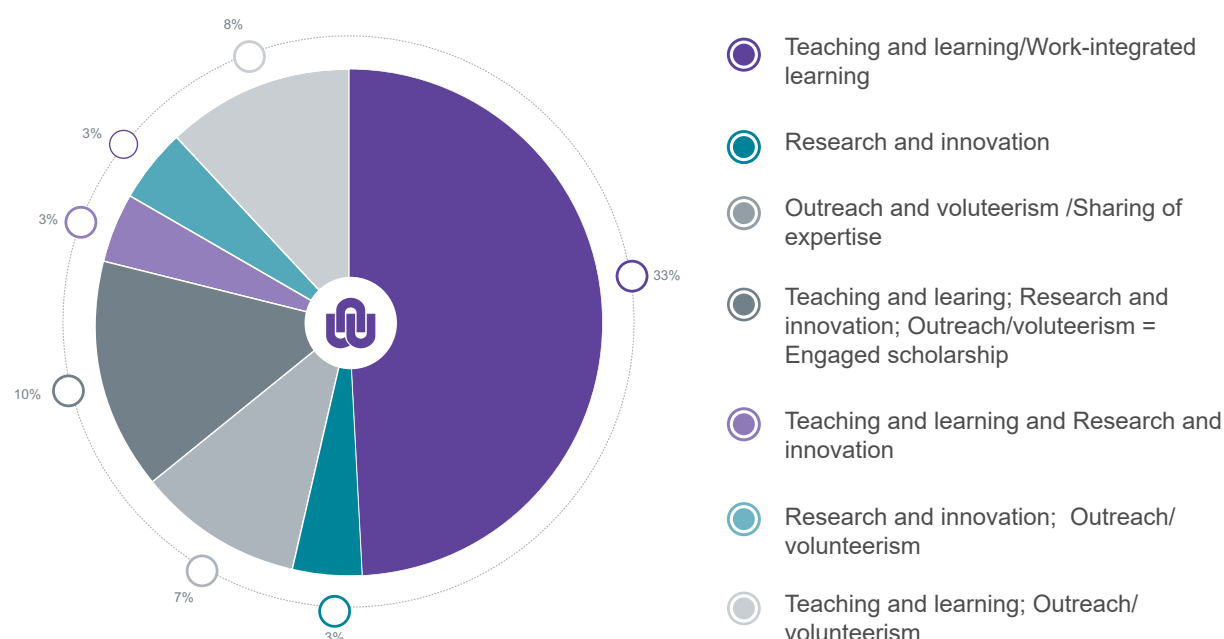
Engagement alignment with Sustainable Development Goals in 2023



SDG 4, Quality Education, was associated with the highest number of community engagement activities. This was followed by SDG 3, Good Health and Well-being, and SDG 17, Partnerships to achieve the goals.

The figure below shows the main categories of community engagement activities in 2023. We have seen good growth in engaged scholarship at the NWU.

Clustering of activity types according to definitions in the Community Engagement Policy



* Please note that the figure excludes the 17 reported activities not categorised into the four CE categories and therefore the percentages given add up to 96,6%.

We kept our database of legitimate, trusted service learning partners up to date for service placements.

We also updated our list of local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), public benefit organisations (PBOs) and religious organisations that could assist with student placements.

Material matter: Teaching and learning; research; community engagement



When students have WIL and SL opportunities, they grow academically and acquire planning, negotiation and collaboration skills.

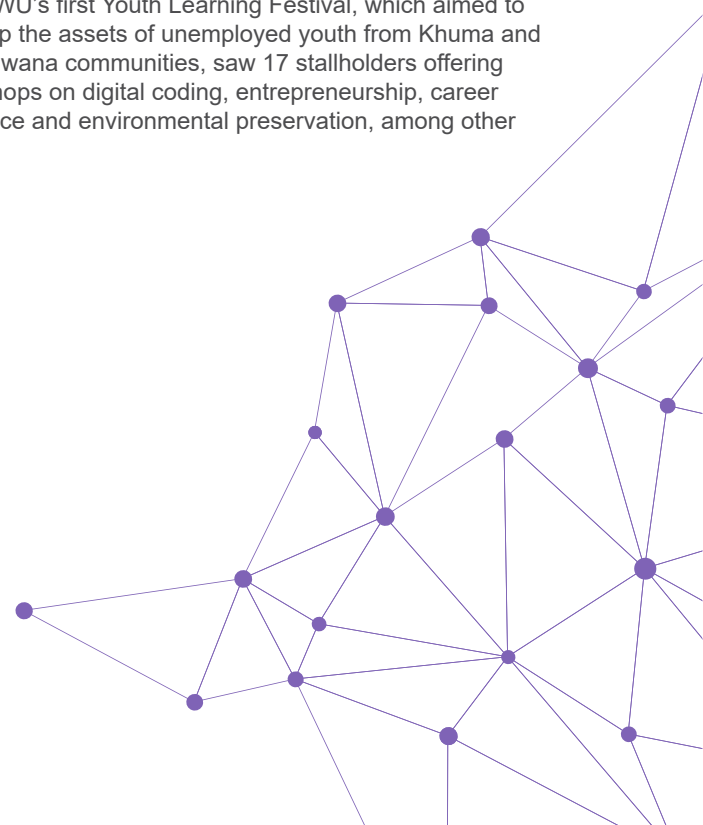
At this stage, SL elements in the curriculum are limited in comparison with WIL, which emphasises learning rather than service to community partners.

That said, many of our faculties are increasing their focus on SL. More information on the projects our faculties undertook, is available [here](#).

In addition, the NWU established a virtual science shop and hosted a Youth Learning Festival.

At the virtual science shop, community members are matched with university units or experts who share their scientific knowledge about issues such as gender-based violence or food security, and help them find solutions.

The NWU's first Youth Learning Festival, which aimed to develop the assets of unemployed youth from Khuma and Mandawana communities, saw 17 stallholders offering workshops on digital coding, entrepreneurship, career guidance and environmental preservation, among other things.



Material matter: Research



In 2023, NWU researchers and inventors conducted engaged research on real-life challenges such as load-shedding, alternative heat sources and water quality management.

Funding for our engagement efforts remains a challenge. With the assistance of the NWU's fundraising team, we could actively pursue avenues such as corporate and government-funded engaged research and targeted stakeholder engagement. This could unlock new funding sources, diversify our portfolio and amplify the impact of our research.

Through a collaboration with Emile Coetzee, an NWU historian in the Faculty of Humanities, South African company Value Apps Pty Ltd developed the Road Trip SA app to help travellers uncover places of interest across southern Africa.

The app has over 3 000 listings, photographs, historical explanations and precise locations for easy navigation. It is an invaluable resource for students studying history, tourism and heritage management, and promotes domestic tourism.

Material matter: Student value proposition; develop and retain excellent staff



Our staff and students contribute to society through volunteering in many different ways, from establishing community gardens and running the meal-a-day programme to address food insecurity to collecting sanitary pads for distribution at schools.

Here are a few examples of the community engagement activities students and support staff undertook in 2023:

> The GoAllOut organisation's student chapter at the NWU launched the Pad the Way project to combat period poverty. So far, it has collected 100 000 sanitary pads for girls at schools in the Mahikeng area.

> At Bert's Bricks Primary School in Potchefstroom, a backyard garden was launched. This was a partnership involving the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), the NWU's Unit for Environmental Sciences and Management, the Social Anthropology subject group, Assupol, Sanlam, the North West Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, and the North West Department of Education.

> The Vanderbijlpark Campus's Student Campus Council (SCC) organised a "Hang a Hug" event where students and staff donated jackets that were hung on trees around the campus for those in need during winter. Over 150 jackets were collected.

> A total of 16 966 kilograms of clothing and shoes were collected for donation to schools, children's homes and non-profit organisations through the annual Barefoot Day event of the SCC at the Potchefstroom Campus.

Challenges and future outlook

Closer working relationships with partners are planned for the coming year. Our aim is to work together to set targeted objectives to address our partners' needs and engage with NWU experts who can assist with challenges identified.

While technology and online education offer avenues for skills development among communities hard hit by poverty, inequality and unemployment, the digital divide impedes progress. We plan to donate 156 redundant computers to deserving community partners.

Entrepreneurship, environmental responsibility and digital literacy are central to our focus on advancing the SDGs and the African Agenda 2063. We are committed to contributing to societal progress through development and sharing expertise.

Our natural capital



Safeguarding natural resources such as water, soil and clean air is key to the sustainable operations of the university and our ability to create value. Such resources are under threat from climate change and pollution, bringing sustainable consumption to the fore in everything we do.

Stakeholders who will benefit from our natural capital

These stakeholders include the parents of current and prospective students, communities around our campuses, donors, alumni, employers, business and industry, professional bodies and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

Material matters (goals or enablers) involved

Without natural resources as inputs, we cannot realise any of our goals or implement our enablers.

The material matter “to promote sustainability” (part of goal three in our APP) is particularly relevant here.



Risks involved

There are various risks, such as those related to academic and operational matters, student life, compliance (for instance with environmental regulations) and IT (infrastructure needs an energy source).

Our policies and strategies to protect our natural resources include the NWU Environmental Sustainability Policy and the Environmental Sustainability Guidelines that were introduced in 2022.

We used these to refine our NWU Environmental Strategy in 2023. Our full environmental and sustainability policy framework can be viewed [here](#).

Our strategy focuses on measuring and reporting our consumption of natural resources, encouraging behaviour change, optimising the efficiency of current installations, adopting resource-saving technologies for new buildings, and using alternative energy sources and waterwise solutions.

The strategy outlines five pillars that support the NWU’s values, as shown in the figure below:

Five pillars of the environmental sustainability strategy



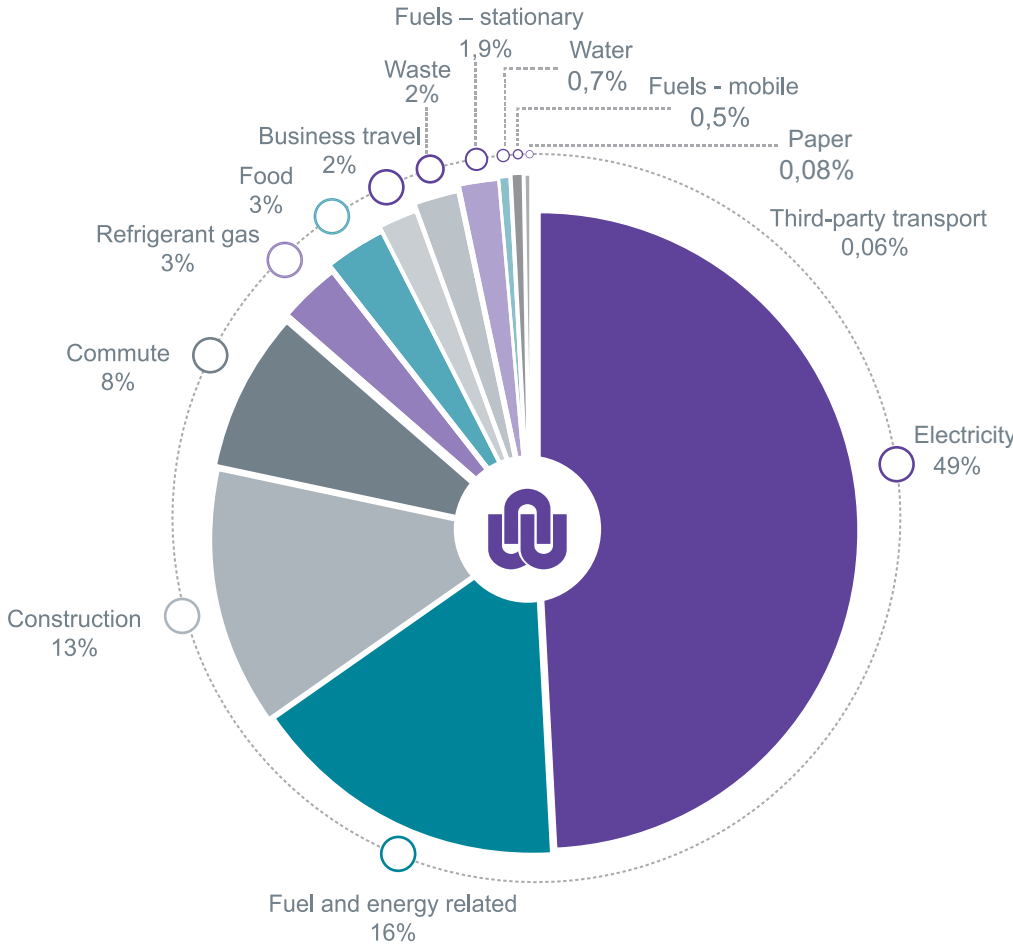
Measure, verify and report	Behavioural change	Optimise current installations	New installations (construction projects)	Alternative energy sources and waterwise solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Actively do energy measuring on a full-time basisVerify utility bills for usage, tariffs and correct chargesEnable internal chargebacks to residences and internal energy suppliesReport on energy consumptionIssue and generate the data required for energy performance certificatesMeasure the NWU carbon footprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Promote energy and water conservationUse technology to promote behavioural changeUse information to promote behavioural changeUse visuals of energy usage to change behaviour and encourage savingsStakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Retrofit what we have with more energy and water-efficient equipmentChange and improve equipment to minimise lossesImprove controlsUse intelligent controls and time-of-use controlsInstall real-time controls to verify the systems and their functionalityEngage actively with municipalities (service providers)Advocate for university exemption from load-shedding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Install energy-efficient products and equipmentUse alternative energy and cooling solutionsDesign buildings that support energy and water efficiencyAdopt all energy savings initiatives as per the SANS10400Design and construct buildings to use natural ventilation to reduce energy consumption of mechanical ventilation systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use green energy sourcesUse grey water and rainwater harvestingInstall water-saving devicesPrepare an emergency water planInstall reservoirs to carry the campuses through short water supply interruptionsRegister boreholes to be used for alternative suppliesUndertake strategic projects to validate reliability of new technologies and secure buy-back periodsProvide our own water treatment plants

Material matter: Teaching and learning; research; community engagement



In 2023, we conducted our first formal carbon footprint calculation, focusing on carbon emissions for 2022. Here is a summary our carbon footprint for 2022.

NWU carbon footprint FY22: 134,751 tCO2e



We implemented a fully automated energy management system in 2023 and did assessments of water quality, water treatment process gaps and water usage.

Large solar plant installations commenced in late 2023 and will continue in 2024. We tested waste-to-landfill reduction options and appointed service providers to do off-campus waste recycling for each campus.

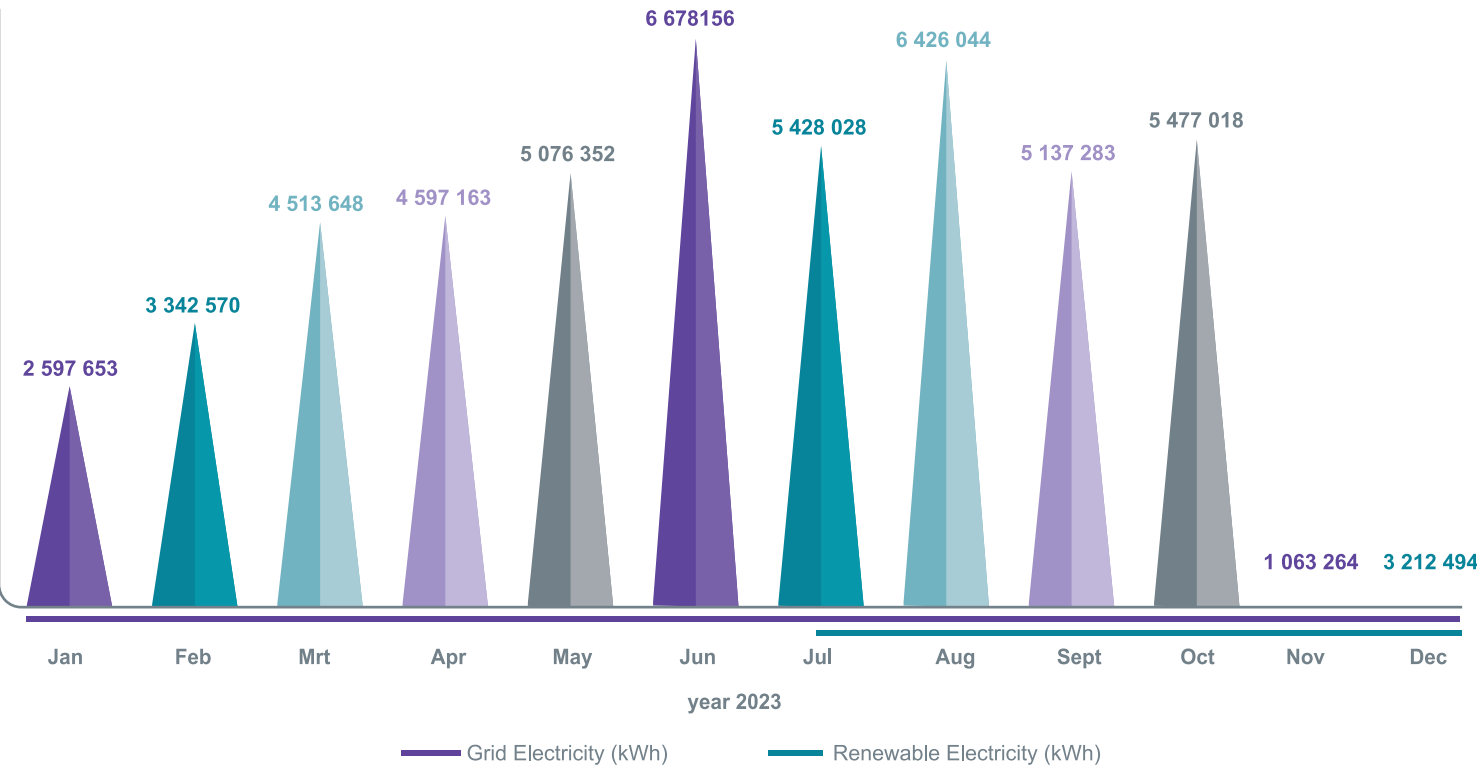
For hazardous waste disposal, we use a thermal desorption process and aim to achieve a zero-to-landfill operation.



The NWU undertook a campaign to encourage staff and students to reduce their electricity usage.

Electricity consumption (kWh) January to December 2023

The graph below shows that renewable energy sources installed in 2023 have started to decrease of the university's dependence on grid electricity.



Future outlook

We will continue our efforts to address environmental sustainability – especially in reducing the NWU's carbon footprint.

A long-term sustainable and renewable energy-generation solution is to install solar photovoltaic electric generation facilities across the NWU. Our goal is to source a minimum of 30% of energy from renewable sources by 2024.

However, energy efficiency is also about people's behaviour. We aim to achieve a 10% behaviour-related reduction in energy use in 2024.

Other energy-saving measures include installing energy-efficient lighting in our buildings, for instance, occupancy and dimmable lights.

The results of water treatment, quality and usage assessments in 2023 highlighted the significant need to address water saving and water quality supplied by local authorities. We aim to install water treatment plants for each campus between 2024 and 2026.

We realise that clean drinking water may become the next big challenge and will continue to focus strongly on water supply, quality and consumption.

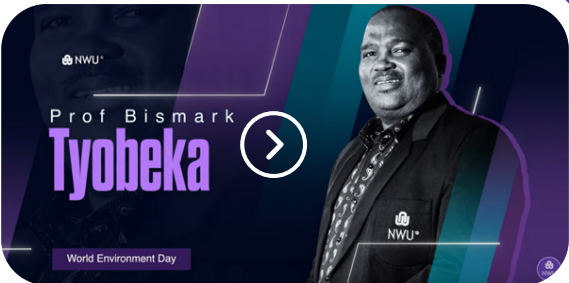
Greatness without boundaries

NWU celebrates World Environmental Day

The theme for World Environment Day on 5 June 2023 focused on solutions to plastic pollution under the campaign #BeatPlasticPollution.

Prof Bismark Tyobeka, principal and vice-chancellor, challenged students and staff to stop using plastic water bottles and bring their refillable water bottles with them to class and work.

"The NWU is committed to environmental sustainability and is on a drive to reduce our carbon footprint," he said.



Click on the image to watch Prof Tyobeka inviting NWU staff and students to become part of the #BeatPlasticPollution campaign.

Our financial capital



Our financial capital comes from state funding, debt and revenue generated through our operations and investments. We use this capital to provide services and maintain and improve our infrastructure to create value for the NWU and our stakeholders.

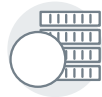
The key to maintaining financial health and stability is to manage our income and spending, as set out in our three-year rolling budget.

Stakeholders who will benefit

All our stakeholders benefit when our financial capital is strong. Financial stability means we can charge reasonable tuition fees, pay our staff fairly and confidently account for our spending to our donors and the DHET.

Material matters (goals or enablers) involved

Enabler 4 (financial stability) is our main focus, but all our goals and other enablers contribute as we need money to achieve and implement them.



Risks involved

There are uncertainties in the higher education sector around fee regulation and the NSFAS funding model, and concerns that free education makes us more dependent on state funding.

The other top risks in our risk register are also implicated, as we need money for all the activities needed to mitigate them.

Material matter: Ensure the financial sustainability of the NWU

We plan well and allocate resources to support our core business strategies. This is crucial for our long-term financial sustainability.

Improvements in how we manage our finances include compiling a detailed three-year rolling budget and strengthening financial risk management. We update the financial risk factors of our Financial Impact Model and mitigation plan whenever new, relevant information becomes available.

Our income predictions are realistic and we budget for affordable expenses, using approved principles.

In calculating the high-level expense budget, we took into account the financial health indicators from the DHET and the NWU's 2023 budgeted cash-flow expense ratios, as follows:

- staff cost as a percentage of income
- operating cost as a percentage of income
- capital cost as a percentage of income

Financing our strategic initiatives

We use our dedicated strategic fund to invest in specific strategic projects, which are carried out over and above the activities and resources in the normal operating budget. The University Management Committee approves the allocation of strategic funds.

Read more about these strategic projects in the section on our strategy.

COUNCIL STATEMENT ON BORROWINGS

The NWU did not enter into any new long-term borrowing agreements in 2023.

Statement approval obtained from the NWU Council on 13 June 2024.

Strategic funds allocated per goal/enabler		
APP link	Rand value of allocation R'000	% of allocation
Goal 1	19 115	32,5%
Goal 2	17 104	29,1%
Goal 5	19 400	33,0%
Enabler 4	3 200	5,4%
Grand total	58 819	100%

Financial overview

This financial overview is a joint report by the chairperson of the Finance Committee of Council and the executive director for finance and facilities.

It presents a summary of our financial results for 2023, provides information about the budgeting and budgetary control processes followed, and gives an overview of financial achievements.

Please click [here](#) for the full financial overview.

Conclusion

During 2023, the NWU again added material value to the economy, and was able to achieve its financial goals.

The NWU provides affordable higher education, resulting in 12 358 students receiving degrees and diplomas during 2023 and ready to become part of the South African work force and knowledge economy.

Our Financial Aid offices administered a total of R2,8 billion in bursary funds during 2023. A part of this was earmarked to support and enhance academic performance, with students receiving bursaries to the amount of R250,1 million from our own funds.

The cash flow investment in property, plant and equipment amounted to R530,9 million (2022: R416,0 million and 2021: R353,4 million) from DHET infrastructure and efficiency funding, as well as funding from own reserves.

Although not all projects have been completed in 2023 and some macro-maintenance being carried forward to 2024, out total assets increased by 10,9% (2022: 12,5% and 2021: 14,9%).

We were able to maintain a sound solvency position and optimal liquidity levels during the 2023 financial year to ensure that the NWU remains a going concern.

Council and management are committed to maintaining this financial health, despite the university's reliance on state subsidies and tuition fee-related income, with the latter income totalling 71,1% of turnover (2022: 76,2% and 2021: 77,1%).

The NWU's financial results from recent years provide a solid foundation for navigating future uncertainties and challenges.

In the near future: opportunities and challenges in executing our strategy

We are vigilant in monitoring developments around the funding of higher education. Internally, we continue to diversify and optimise our income streams, improve operating cost efficiency and effectiveness, optimise the use of infrastructure, and manage our mitigation plan and cash with great care.

It is of the greatest importance that the higher education and NSFAS funding model should support the financial sustainability of universities.

We reiterate our commitment to working with the DHET to ensure a well-functioning and sustainable NWU and, more broadly, the stability and sustainability of the South African higher education sector. The NWU has been participating actively in the modelling of the future funding design and will continue to do so.

Future outlook: how to maintain financial sustainability

Internally, our focus will continue to be on diversifying and optimising our income streams, improving operating cost efficiency and effectiveness, optimising the use of infrastructure, and managing our mitigation plan and cash with great care.

We reiterate our commitment to working with the DHET to ensure a well-functioning and sustainable NWU and, more broadly, the stability and sustainability of the South African higher education sector.

Greatness without boundaries

Investing in our students

The NWU's financial aid offices administered R2,8 billion in financial aid in 2023.

Government funding accounted for 80% of this and the NWU contributed R250 million (9%). The remaining 11% was from other external sources.

A part of the university's contribution was earmarked to support and enhance academic performance, with students receiving bursaries to the amount of R250,1 million from NWU funds.



R46,8 million (19%) of the funds allocated for financial aid was used for student academic merit awards. The success rate of our merit bursary holders was 96,7%.

Greatness without boundaries

Celebrating the 'river of knowledge' – our new Tsebonokeng Hall

Tsebonokeng is an apt name for the new multipurpose hall on the Vanderbijlpark Campus. This Sesotho name means river of knowledge – a description that fits this venue, situated on the banks of the Vaal River, like a glove.

Tsebonokeng Hall, which was officially opened on 29 May 2023, has state-of-the-art architecture and can seat more than 1 700 people.

Using digital technology, the versatile building can be repurposed for a variety of events, ranging from graduation ceremonies and examinations to conferences, workshops, social and indoor sports events and public lectures.

Laser beams simulate the lines of the courts for different sports codes without leaving permanent markings. [\(Read more\)](#)



The new Tsebonokeng Hall proudly takes its place in a long line of infrastructure developments on the Vanderbijlpark Campus.

Our manufactured capital

This capital is the physical infrastructure that supports our core business activities and enables us to provide services to our stakeholders. Manufactured capital consists of buildings and infrastructure, as well as teaching technology, research equipment, IT systems and infrastructure for teaching, research and community engagement.

By putting our facilities and infrastructure to work, we increase our intellectual, human and social and relationship capital and support the execution of our strategy.

Stakeholders who will benefit from our manufactured capital

The main beneficiaries are our staff and students. People and communities outside the direct footprint of the university also benefit when we use our building and maintenance projects to create business and jobs.

Communities around our campuses also benefit from our facilities, such as schools and professional athletes who use our sports facilities. Community members around our Mahikeng Campus use the animal health facilities there. Other stakeholders are donors and the DHET, who fund many of our infrastructure projects.

Material matters (goals or enablers) involved

Our manufactured capital has a bearing on material matters such as teaching and learning, research, community engagement, student value proposition, our ability to govern, lead and manage, information and communication technology, communication, marketing and stakeholder engagement and financial sustainability.



Risks involved

The main risks are uncertainties in the higher education sector (state funding and new ways of working post-Covid-19), demand for organisational change (equity of resources), risks related to academic matters, compliance (such as with building regulations), IT and operational risks.

Safety on and around our campuses

Both the Mahikeng and Vanderbijlpark campuses implemented the “Purple Route” Safety and Security project in 2023 to ensure the safety of students, staff and visitors.

At the Vanderbijlpark Campus, the project commenced on 1 June 2023, covering two routes, each with two security officers.

The Mahikeng Campus opened its “Purple Route” on 16 October 2023, also with two routes and two security officers for each route.

While the Mahikeng and Vanderbijlpark municipalities had committed to supporting the Purple Route projects, there was a lack of follow-through.

Infrastructure development

We spent R393 million for capital works, macro maintenance and minor works across the university in 2023. This funding was from the DHET and our own funds.

The following table provides a spending breakdown:

Infrastructure development	Mahikeng Campus	Potchefstroom Campus	Vanderbijlpark Campus	Projects across campuses	Grand total
DHET student housing 2016/17	R8 891 741				R8 891 741
DHET student housing 2017/18	R2 319 419				R2 319 419
DHET 2018 - 2021		R61 031 535	R44 673 171	R3 970 456	R109 675 161
DHET 2023			R19 995	R2 077 682	R2 097 677
Capital projects (2017-2022)	R29 587 743	R86 205 159	R41 362 669	R35 990 543	R193 146 114
Capital projects (new)	R6 120 603	R3 351 761	R1 922 976		R11 395 340
Capital projects (renewals)	R450 725	R11 853, 70	R147 ,853		R12 451 848
Investigations	R502 272	R103 278	R206 230		R811 781
Minor building works	R1 459 838	R3 246 007	R555 511	R85 700	R5 347 057
Planned maintenance (macro)	R18 463 542	R15 530 607	R232 811	R12 087 831	R46 314 791
Grand total	R67 795 885	R181 321 617	R89 121 216	R54 212 213	R392 450 930

DHET grant funding

The overall expenditure for 2023 on DHET Infrastructure Efficiency Grant (IEG) funding cycles was R122 983 999.

We completed our largest student accommodation project to date in 2023, consisting of six clusters with a total of 1 728 beds on the Mahikeng Campus. Its successful completion demonstrates the university’s goal of providing safe accommodation on and around its campuses.

Accommodation for our students

Student housing on and near the three campuses consisted of 48 university-owned residences and four leased accommodation facilities operated as formal residences. This accommodation had the capacity to accommodate 12 743 students in 2023.

We ensure that residence fees are appropriate and affordable, and that all residences comply with the national policy on minimum norms and standards for public universities in South Africa. These standards deal with physical infrastructure, prescribed equipment per student, residence staffing levels, location, health and safety, governance, professional development of residence staff, policies and procedures and student discipline.

Complying with norms and standards

When the DHET standards for student housing were reviewed, the NWU actively participated in the development of the future standards. These have not yet been published.

In the meantime, we ensure that all new student residences meet the existing minimum norms and standards for student accommodation. Similarly, when residences are upgraded, we make sure that the changes and improvements comply.

We have been making good progress with the accreditation of private student accommodation providers, in line with the DHET’s expectations.

Our accreditation department accredited approximately 24 563 beds at 1 412 facilities in 2023.

Construction and refurbishment

We cleared the pandemic-related backlog of infrastructure projects from 2020/21 and made progress with other projects that had been delayed. Even better progress is expected during 2024.

Large capital projects and macro maintenance projects completed during 2023

On the Mahikeng Campus, the new building for the community law centre was completed, as were the new buildings for the faculty of Humanities, Education and Economic Management Sciences.

On the Potchefstroom Campus, Building C6 was completed, along with phase one of the refurbishment of spaces for the Schools of Biological and Geospatial Sciences. Construction of the solar photovoltaic plant commenced.

At the Vanderbijlpark Campus, the additional lecture spaces were completed, and the old administration building was converted into a multi-purpose hall.

Click [here](#) to read more about our macro maintenance and smaller projects completed during 2022 or carried over to 2023.

COUNCIL STATEMENT ON ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE

All additional investments in infrastructure at the NWU during 2023 were duly authorised.

Statement approval obtained from the NWU Council on 13 June 2024.

Plans for the future

Council approved the NWU’s Spatial Development Framework for future infrastructure planning.

In 2024, we will accelerate the shift to more sustainable power and water resources and further renew the buildings and infrastructure on the three campuses.

The Mahikeng Campus can look forward to an investment of R144 million in infrastructure projects to address compliance risks in teaching-learning spaces and upgrade student life recreation areas.

On the Potchefstroom Campus, residence and property upgrades will focus on addressing compliance risks in teaching-learning spaces.

At the Vanderbijlpark Campus, a high priority is investment in water sustainability infrastructure services.

We plan to continue converting lecture venues into HyFlex learning environments.

IT infrastructure developments

In 2023, we enhanced the NWU’s IT capabilities, which strengthened our intellectual and human capitals.

We implemented "data protection" capabilities and enhanced our toolkit with cutting-edge backup and snapshot technologies for information protection. At the same time, we significantly enhanced our Wi-Fi and campus backbone to ensure our infrastructure can handle current and future requirements.

The integration platform, which facilitates seamless communication between various applications and systems, was bolstered. We set up a robust data architecture and revamped crucial organisational systems.

Security was a top priority. We created a comprehensive NWU enterprise security architecture to tackle vulnerabilities proactively and established a hybrid security team. We contributed to national collaborative initiatives to enhance cybersecurity and support the broader community.

Future outlook

IT will concentrate on improving workforce diversity and service delivery efficiency, strengthening cybersecurity and overseeing strategic projects with a focus on alignment and governance.

We are emphasising innovation through AI strategies and advanced technology integration that bridge the gap between IT and business, enabling improved communication, stakeholder engagement and digital dexterity.

We aim to elevate our e-learning management system, eFundi, and other IT services by leveraging the Digital Business Strategy to foster a more interactive, personalised and efficient learning environment.

Governance: supporting and preserving value



COUNCIL STATEMENT ON COVERNANCE

The NWU is committed to the principles of discipline, transparency, independence, accountability, responsibility, fairness and social responsibility, as advocated in the King IV Report.

Accordingly, Council endorses the Code of Practices and Conduct and the Code of Ethical Behaviour and Practice as set out in King IV, and has applied these in a rigorous way during the period under review. In supporting these codes, Council recognises the need to conduct the business of the NWU with integrity and in accordance with generally accepted good practices.

The monitoring of the NWU's compliance with these codes forms part of the mandate of the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee.

A distinct difference exists in the roles and responsibilities of the chairperson of Council and that of the vice-chancellor.

Statement approval obtained from the NWU Council on 13 June 2024.

The role and function of Council and its committees

In providing a sound foundation for the creation of value, long-term growth and sustainability, the Council sets strategy, ensures proper governance, drives compliance and risk management and monitors the material activities of the university.

As the overall custodian of good corporate governance, the Council takes its oversight and guidance role seriously. We act in strict accordance with the stipulations of the Higher Education Act and the NWU Statute, which was reviewed and published on 24 June 2022.

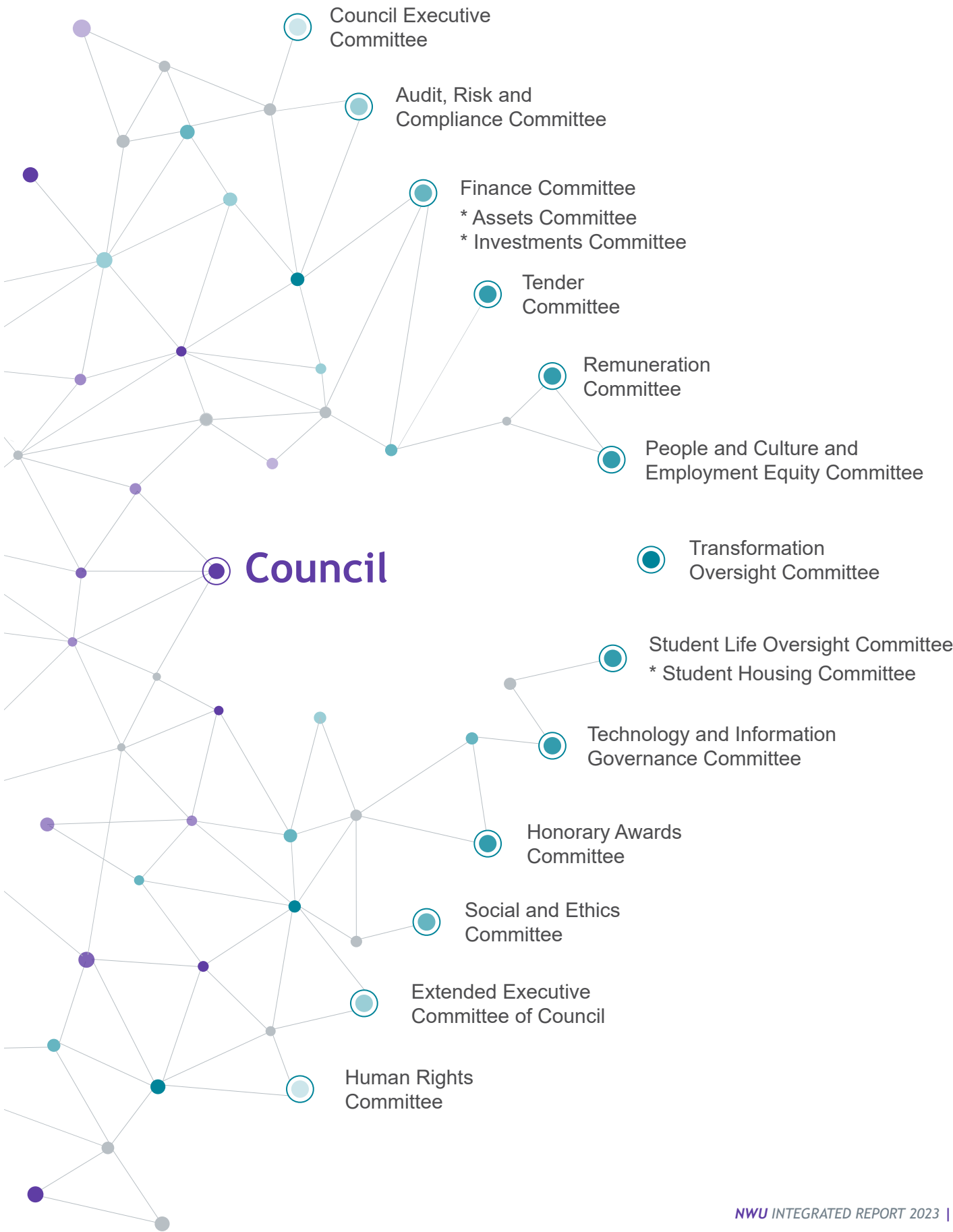
In 2023, under Council's leadership, the NWU continued to adhere to high governance standards while creating a value-driven governance landscape.

The Council is constituted in accordance with the guidelines in the Higher Education Act and the university's Statute.

Of the 30 Council members, 60% are external and 40% internal, ensuring independence in the governance environment.

Council members externally elected or designated		Council members internally elected or designated	
Ministerial appointees	5	Management: vice-chancellor and vice-principal	2
Donors	3	Senate	3
Convocation	4	Academic employees	2
Community leaders	3	Support employees	2
Specific expertise	3	Student Representative Council	3
18		12	

In the interest of proper oversight and accountability, Council has a number of committees to advise it on all the relevant governance matters.



Council training

In 2023, we continued implementing the revised induction programme for newly appointed Council members. Feedback from Council members was that the programme equipped new members to begin contributing quickly and effectively in governance oversight on Council and in Council committees.

Annual Council workshop

All Council members attended a workshop on 15 March 2023, consisting of three plenary sessions. The topics were the NWU Strategy under construction to take the university forward, an introduction to the importance of IT government in higher education institutions and the digital future of universities.

Click [here](#) to read more about the Council workshop.

Changes in Council membership

The only new member to join the Council was:



Ms EP Ramatswana
an external member elected by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (second term)

The following members re-joined the Council for subsequent terms:



Mr A Sorgdrager
elected by the Convocation (third term) (Council chairperson)



Ms S Britz
elected by the community leaders (second term)



Pastor P Tihabanyane
elected by the community leaders (second term)



Mr MSJ Thabethe
external member appointed by the Minister of Education, Science and Innovation (third term)

There were two vacancies on the Council, one for an external member elected by the Board of Donors and an external member appointed by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation.

Code of Conduct and declarations of interest

At the beginning of 2023, the members of Council pledged their commitment to the NWU Council Code of Conduct by taking part in the annual signing process. When new Council members are appointed, they are also required to sign the Code of Conduct.

Annual declarations of directorships and interest by members of Council and Council committees are mandatory. This is of the utmost importance in ensuring integrity in our behaviour at governance level.

The Council Executive Committee (Council Exco) serves as Council’s membership committee. Its role is to receive and discuss the quarterly declaration of interest audit reports for Council and Council committee members.

Sanctions can be imposed on members who do not comply with the legal requirements for declarations of interest. No such sanctions were needed in 2023.

Exco noted and discussed all declarations made by members of the University Management Committee, and referred any enquiries to the vice-chancellor.

Meet our Council members

(Council membership as at 31 December 2023)



1. **PROF MB TYOBEKA (48)**
Vice-Chancellor

Qualifications: BScEd and MSc (applied radiation science and technology) (University of North West), MSc and PhD (nuclear engineering) (Penn State University, USA), MSc (management) (Colorado Technical University, USA)
Membership of Council committees:
 All Council committees (except Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee – not a full member)
Term on Council:
 Appointed for a five-year term from 2022 to 2027. One year, nine months into first term.
Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance:
 61 meetings | 85% attendance
Directorships: USAf



2. **PROF L DU PLESSIS (54)**
Vice-Principal

Qualifications: PhD (education), MSc (computer science), BScHons, BSc (PU for CHE), Certificate for environmental educators (Unisa), Leadership in higher education (Institute for Educational Management, Harvard). Certificate in ICT in education for policy implementers (Wits, Oracle University)
Membership of Council committees:
 Council Exco
Term on Council:
 Appointed in 2020 for three years which was contractually extended to 2027. Three years and four months into second term.
Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance:
 42 meetings | 89% attendance
Directorships: None




3. **PROF DM MODISE (63)**
Elected by Senate

Qualifications: BSc (horticultural science) (University of Bath), MSc (horticulture) (West Virginia University), PhD (plant sciences) (Nottingham University)
Membership of Council committees:
 Student Life Oversight Committee | Honorary Awards Committee
Term on Council:
 Appointed for a three-year term from 2022 to 2025. One year, eight months into first term.
Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance:
 18 meetings | 90% attendance
Directorships: Mylab Pty Ltd.



4. **PROF AF KOTZÉ (55)**
Elected by Senate

Qualifications: BPharm, MSc, PhD (PU for CHE)
Membership of Council committees:
 Student Housing Committee | Honorary Awards Committee | Council representation on the Senate Executive Committee
Term on Council:
 Appointed for a three-year term from 2022 to 2025. One year, eight months into second term.
Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance:
 19 meetings | 95% attendance
Directorships: Innovation Highway Enterprises



5. PROF AH VERHOEF (50)
Elected by Senate


Qualifications: BA (US), BD Theology (US), BAHons Philosophy (US), MTh (US), DTh (US), PhD (Free University Amsterdam)

Membership of Council committees:
People and Culture and Employment Equity Committee | Honorary Awards Committee

Term on Council:
Appointed for a three-year term from 2021 to 2024. Two years, one month into first term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance:
12 meetings | 100% attendance

Directorships: None



6. PROF PA SMIT (62)
Elected by academic staff members

Qualifications: BA, (HED) (postgraduate), BAHons, MA, PhD (labour relations management)

Membership of Council committees:
People and Culture and Employment Equity Committee | Student Life Oversight Committee

Term on Council:
Appointed for a three-year term from 2021 to 2024. Two years, three months into second term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance:
11 meetings | 85% attendance

Directorships: None



7. PROF WJ DU PLESSIS (44)
Elected by academic staff members

Qualifications: BA (international relations), LLB, LLD (University of Stellenbosch)

Membership of Council committees:
Transformation Oversight Committee | Social and Ethics Committee | Human Rights Committee

Term on Council:
Appointed for a three-year term from 2021 to 2024. Two years, nine months into first term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance:
11 meetings | 69% attendance

Directorships: None



8. DR AA LE ROUX (57)
Elected by support staff members


Qualifications: BScHons (biokinetics) (PU for CHE), PhD (relationship marketing)

Membership of Council committees:
Transformation Oversight Committee

Term on Council:
Appointed for a three-year term from 2021 to 2024. Two years, one month into first term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance:
14 meetings | 93% attendance

Directorships: None



9. MS MH LEKALAKALA (46)
Elected by support staff members

Qualifications: BCom (accounting) (University of Limpopo), BComHons (business management) (University of Limpopo)

Membership of Council committees:
Social and Ethics Committee

Term on Council:
Appointed for a three-year term from 2022 to 2025. One year, nine months into first term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance:
10 meetings | 100% attendance

Directorships: None



10. MS KE MOGOSHOA (25)
Student Representative Council


Qualifications: Enrolled for a BSc (agriculture)

Membership of Council committees:
Student Oversight Committee

Term on Council:
One year, three months into term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance:
14 meetings | 78% attendance

Directorships: None



11. MR A YIKUMBA (23)
Student Representative Council


Qualifications: Enrolled for a BCom (economic sciences)

Membership of Council committees:
Student Life Oversight Committee

Term on Council:
One year, three months into term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance:
19 meetings | 90% attendance

Directorships: None



12. MS K MATUME (21)
Student Representative Council

Qualifications: Enrolled for a BCom (law)

Membership of Council committees:
Student Oversight Committee

Term on Council:
Four months into term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance:
Three meetings | 75% attendance

Directorships: None



13. MS EP RAMANTSWANA (48)
Appointed by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation

Qualifications: BCom (University of KwaZulu-Natal), BComHons (business management) (University of KwaZulu-Natal), MBA (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

Membership of Council committees: None.

Term on Council: Appointed for a three-year term from 2023 to 2026. Two months into first term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance: One meeting | 100% attendance

Directorships: None



14. ADV PG SELEKA SC (49)
Appointed by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation

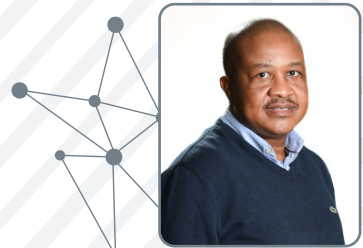
Qualifications: BA Law and LLB (PU for CHE)

Membership of Council committees: Transformation Oversight Committee | Social and Ethics Committee

Term on Council: Appointed for a three-year term from 2021 to 2024. Two years, four months into first term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance: Nine meetings | 56% attendance

Directorships: None



15. MR C MABE (45)
Appointed by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation

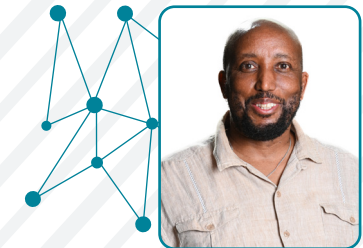
Qualifications: BCom (University of North West), Dip AIBM (finances), diploma in financial management (Business Management Training College of Southern Africa), Certificate in managing the employment process (Unisa), MBA (NWU)

Membership of Council committees: Finance Committee | Remuneration Committee | Extended Exco

Term on Council: Appointed for a three-year term from 2021 to 2024. Two years, three months into second term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance: 27 meetings | 96% attendance

Directorships: K2017228855 (South Africa) | Thapo Vision Group CM2510 (Pty) Ltd | NH2606 (Pty) Ltd | Tapologo HIV and AIDS programme | Jepa 321 (Pty) Ltd



16. MR MSJ THABETHE (49)
Appointed by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation

Qualifications: National diploma (information technology), BTech (information technology) (TWR), MCom (information systems) (University of the Witwatersrand)

Membership of Council committees: Technology and Information Governance Committee | Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee | Social and Ethics Committee | Executive Committee of Council (alternate) | Extended Exco

Term on Council: Appointed for a three-year term from 2023 to 2026. Two months into third term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance: 17 meetings | 94% attendance

Directorships: Sihlasi Technologies CC

17. VACANT
Appointed by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation



18. MR JDS DE BRUYN (72)
Elected by the Board of Donors

Qualifications: BCom (accounting science), Bluris, LLB (PU for CHE)

Membership of Council committees: Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee | Tender Committee | Senate

Term on Council: Appointed for a three-year term from 2021 to 2024. Two years, six months into third term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance: 21 meetings | 95% attendance

Directorships: None



19. MS PS MOLEKE (56)
Elected by the Board of Donors

Qualifications: Honours (economics) (University of the Witwatersrand), master's degree (economics) (Georgia State University), BA (education) (Vista University)

Membership of Council committees: Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee | Finance Committee | Investments Committee

Term on Council: Appointed for a three-year term from 2022 to 2025. One year, two months into first term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance: 17 meetings | 94% attendance

Directorships: None

20. VACANT
Elected by the Board of Donors



21. MR A SORGDRAGER (64)
Elected by the Convocation Chairperson of the Council


Qualifications: Bluris and LLB (PU for CHE), international executive programme (INSEAD Business School)

Membership of Council committees: Executive Committee of Council | Remuneration Committee | Finance Committee | Honorary Awards Committee | Student Life Oversight Committee | Senate | Medical School Task Team | Extended Exco

Term on Council: Appointed for a three-year term from 2023 to 2026. Five months into third term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance: 54 meetings | 96% attendance

Directorships: Vaalrivier Steiltes Aandeleblok | Florida Buitemuurs | Nedbank Zimbabwe



22. PROF TP VENTER (68)
Elected by the Convocation


Qualifications: Master’s degree (political science) (PU for CHE), master’s degree (comparative politics) (State University of New York)

Membership of Council committees:
Technology and information Governance Committee | Medical School Task Team

Term on Council:
Appointed for a three-year term from 2022 to 2025.
One year, eight months into first term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance:
18 meetings | 86% attendance

Directorships: None



23. PROF AL COMBRINK (79)
Elected by the Convocation


Qualifications: BA, BAHons, MA, DLitt (English) (PU for CHE), higher education diploma (Unisa)

Membership of Council committees:
Social and Ethics Committee | Medical School Task Team

Term on Council:
Appointed for a three-year term from 2021 to 2024.
Two years into third term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance:
19 meetings | 90% attendance

Directorships: None



24. ADV M KRUGER (58)
Elected by the Convocation

Qualifications: Bluris, LLB (PU for CHE)

Membership of Council committees:
Student Life Oversight Committee | Technology and Information Governance Committee | Human Rights Committee

Term on Council:
Appointed for a three-year term from 2021 to 2024.
Two years, four months into second term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance:
16 meetings | 94% attendance

Directorships: None



25. PASTOR PM TLHABANYANE (60)
Appointed from the community leaders

Qualifications: Dip PA, BPA, BAHons (theology)

Membership of Council committees:
Executive Committee (alternate member) | Student Life Oversight Committee | Student Housing Committee | Social and Ethics Committee

Term on Council:
Appointed for a three-year term from 2023 to 2026.
Nine months into second term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance:
48 meetings | 77% attendance

Directorships: None



26. MS S BRITZ (62)
Appointed from the community leaders


Qualifications: Matric, NQF5 Real Estate

Membership of Council committees:
Executive Committee (alternate member) | People and Culture and Employment Equity Committee | Assets Committee | Transformation Oversight Committee

Term on Council:
Appointed for a three-year term from 2023 to 2026.
Nine months into second term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance:
21 meetings | 100% attendance

Directorships: iDUC NPC | Tlokwe Crisis Centre



27. MS PP THEBE (36)
Appointed from the community leaders


Qualifications: BCom, PGCE

Membership of Council committees:
Student Life Oversight Committee | Human Rights Committee

Term on Council:
Appointed for a three-year term from 2022 to 2025.
One year, six months into first term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance:
14 meetings | 100% attendance

Directorships: None



28. MR N OMAR (36)
Appointed by Council for specific expertise

Qualifications: CA(SA) (Unisa)

Membership of Council committees:
Investments Committee

Term on Council:
Appointed for a three-year term from 2022 to 2025.
One year, six months into first term.

Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance:
Seven meetings | 70% attendance

Directorships: Snap Consulting



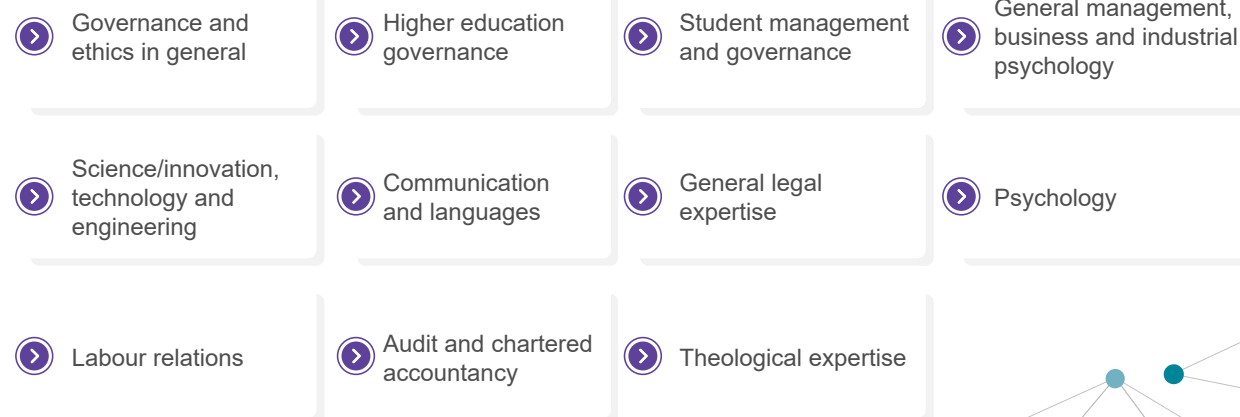
29. MS RA KENOSI (52)
Appointed by Council for
specific expertise
Deputy Chairperson of
Council

Qualifications: BComp Accounting, BComp Accounting (Hons),CA(SA) (Unisa)
Membership of Council committees:
Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee | Executive Committee | People and Culture and Employment Equity Committee | Remuneration Committee | Extended Exco
Term on Council:
Appointed for a three-year term from 2021 to 2024.
Two years and nine months into first term.
Number of committee meetings attended as council member and average attendance:
35 meetings | 85% attendance
Directorships: Fraudsmiths (Pty) Ltd | Bridging Concepts Financial Services (Pty) Ltd | Anova Health Institute NPC

Qualifications: BCom (accounting) (University of North West), HonsBcompt/ Certificate of theory in accounting (CTA) (Unisa)
Membership of Council committees:
Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee | Assets Committee | Remuneration Committee | Extended Exco
Term on Council:
Appointed for a three-year term from 2012 to 2025.
One year, six months into second term.
Number of committee meetings attended as Council member and average attendance:
21 meetings | 95% attendance
Directorships: Yebo Yethu (RF) Limited | Yebo Yethu Investment Company (RF) (Pty) Limited | Baphlane Siyanda Chrome Company | MTBG Investments | South African Blood Services NPC (SANBS) | Stokfella | Philasini | Baphalane Ba Mantserre Investment Holdings | Atomic Trading | Baphalane Property Holdings | His Crown Apostolic Ministries | BBMIH Food | Hyprop Investment Ltd | BBMIH Textile | BBMIH Manufacturing

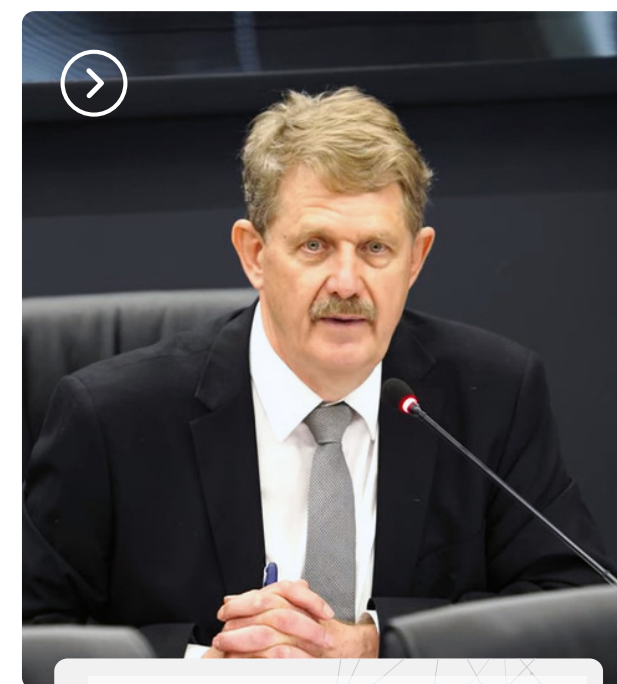
Diversity of skills and experience

Our Council members have a variety of valuable skills and experience in these fields of expertise:



When filling vacancies on the NWU Council, we seek particular skills that match our required skills set. The coloured blocks in the diagram below represent the skills that are emphasised.

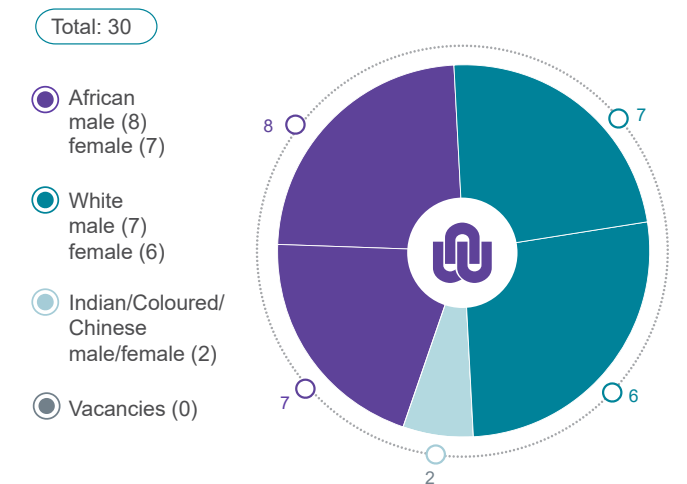
1	General legal expertise
2	Environment, land and indigenous law
3	Global engagement expertise
4	Data analytics expertise
5	Audit and accounting expertise
6	Investment expertise
7	Fundraising expertise
8	Finances and business expertise (medium to macro enterprises)
9	Business administration and/or strategy expertise
10	Governance and ethics expertise
11	Corporate communication expertise
12	Information technology expertise
13	Technology transfer expertise
14	High positive public profile – science
15	High positive public profile – community engagement
16	Arts/people management



Click on the image to watch Mr Bert Sorgdrager, chairperson of Council, sharing the highlights of the last Council meeting for 2023. It took place on 16 November at the Vanderbijlpark Campus.

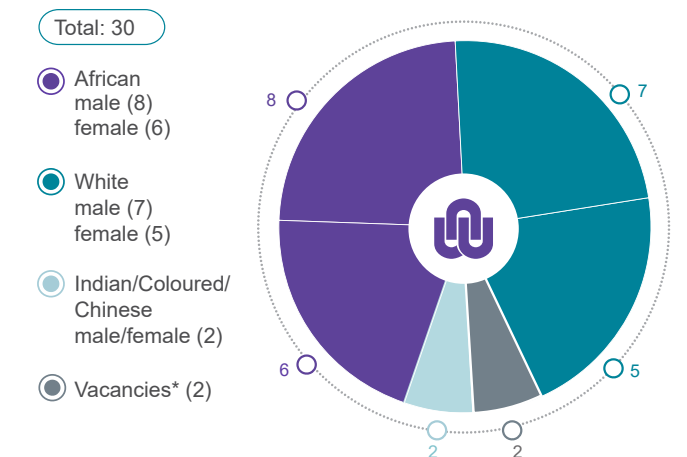
Council transformation

Council has membership transformation targets. Council aims to achieve the following equity targets in its composition by January 2025:

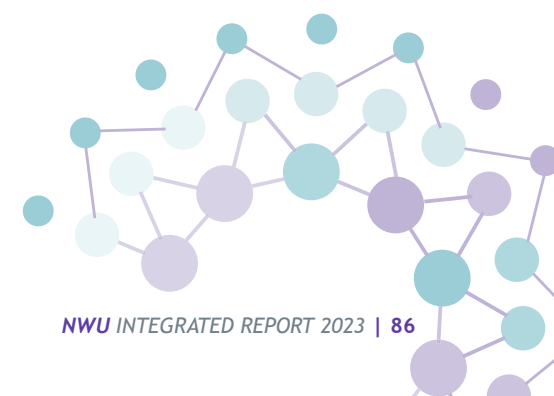


In September 2022, Council resolved that its membership should include two members living with disabilities, but currently there are none.

As of 31 December 2023, the equity profile of Council was as follows:



Members with disabilities: None
* External member appointed by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation
* External member elected by the Board of Donors



Council decisions impacting value creation

The following table gives a summary of Council’s value-creating decisions and how these might affect future value creation.

Strategy and structure	
Council approved the NWU Strategy: Taking the NWU forward – 2024 and beyond.	
We reworded the mission statement as follows: To benefit society through the provision of knowledge, excelling in innovative teaching, cutting-edge research and focused engagement with the community.	
How this governance decision could affect future value creation	<p>As Council we are confident that the ongoing implementation of the strategy, structure and brand is shaping the NWU’s operations and efficiency.</p> <p>We remain confident that the realisation of the strategic agenda of the NWU adds to the improved positioning of the university in the South African higher education landscape.</p>
Policies and rules	
The Policy Refinement Committee continued drafting and reviewing NWU policies. We approved 11 policies and one strategy in 2023, and rescinded six policies.	
Click here for the list of policies concerned.	
How this governance decision could affect future value creation	<p>The ongoing drafting and revision of policies and rules is in line with the prescripts of the Statute and the NWU’s success model. These encourage the adoption of responsible, risk-embracing strategies and transformational practices.</p>
Financial and infrastructure matters	
During 2023, Council approved the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2022.	
In addition, other notable financial approvals were:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purchase of a property as interim accommodation for the vice-chancellor. The position of this property will be revisited in 12 months’ time.• Revised capital programme budget of R148 195 580.• The 2024-2026 budget, subject to the principle that the budget would need to be adjusted when new information is received from the Minister.• The 2024 tuition fee inflation adjustment on all campuses to be linked to the projected CPI for 2024 for contact students and adjustments in the 2024 residence and meal fees. (Click here for more detail)• Increases in the 2024 Postgraduate Diploma fees in the Faculty of Engineering.• Agreement with the DHET and NSFAS that, if necessary, the NWU would advance the cash to pay out allowances to NSFAS students to support the start of the academic year.	
How this governance decision could affect future value creation	<p>We are confident that the right decisions have been taken in the short term to enable the university to realise the goals in the Annual Performance Plan and to continue pursuing its strategic agenda.</p> <p>However, Council is on record as having expressed concerns on the medium and long-term effects of uncertainties around the funding of public higher education.</p>

Tender matters	
Council approved three tenders for proposed construction projects on the Vanderbijlpark Campus, one tender for a solar power project on the Potchefstroom Campus and one tender for mass secure printing services.	
Click here for details of the tender amounts and the successful bidders.	
How this governance decision could affect future value creation	<p>We ensure that the university procures services in a fair, equitable, transparent and cost-effective manner, while also realising transformation objectives.</p> <p>We are confident that the tenders awarded adhered to the principles laid down in relevant legislation.</p>
Appointment of office bearers	
Council oversaw the process of appointing senior office bearers and approved the following:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extending the contract of Prof Linda du Plessis as vice-principal for a second term until 31 August 2027. Until that date, she will also serve her second term as deputy vice-chancellor for assigned functions and Vanderbijlpark Campus operations.• Re-appointing Prof Daryl Balia as deputy vice-chancellor for assigned functions and Potchefstroom Campus operations for a further period of two years, ending 31 December 2025.• Extending the term in office of Dr Mala Singh to 31 December 2024 with the proviso that a successor be appointed in the latter part of the extended period.• Retaining Prof Marlene Verhoef’s term in office as registrar until 31 December 2025, subject to proper succession planning with clear timelines.• Extending by one year, from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025, the term of Prof Sonia Swanepoel as deputy-vice-chancellor for assigned functions and Mahikeng Campus operations.• Extending the term of Prof S Chalufu as executive director for student life by one year, from 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025.	
How these governance decisions could affect future value creation:	<p>We made sure that the appointment of these office bearers was informed by the Statute and relevant rules. The calibre of those who have been appointed was and is key to achieving the NWU’s strategic objectives.</p>
Governance matters	
Council approved revised and new terms of reference for 13 Council committees, including the Council Exco and Remuneration Committee. We also approved the reviewed rules of the Board of Donors and the Institutional Forum.	
In other key governance resolutions, Council elected Ms R Kenosi as deputy chairperson of Council and confirmed the election, re-election or appointment of eight external experts to Council and Council committees.	
Furthermore, Council confirmed the selection panel for the position of executive director for people and culture, approved the 2022 DHET Governance Scorecard and the 2022 Integrated Annual Report, and also gave its stamp of approval to the Successive Employment Equity Plan and revised employment equity goals.	
How these governance decisions could affect future value creation:	<p>Through sound governance principles and practices, we create an ethical environment in which the NWU can realise its strategy.</p>

Remuneration of externally elected Council members

Each year, the university pays an honorarium to external members of Council and of Council committees as a token of appreciation for members' time and effort.

The honorarium fee is paid twice a year, in August and December. It is linked to the NWU's annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) process, which the Remuneration Committee approves.

The following table shows the honoraria paid for each meeting attended:

Position	Honorarium 2022	Honorarium 2023
Council chairperson	R7 310	R7 310
Council-appointed external expert, but not a Council member	R5 483	R5 483
Chairperson of a Council committee that fulfils a statutory role (Reporting Regulations)	R5 483	R5 483
<div><div></div><div>Finance Committee</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Remuneration Committee</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Tender Committee</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Technology and Information Governance Committee</div></div>		
Chairperson of a Council committee	R4 604	R4 604
Deputy chairperson of Council for each Council meeting	R5 483	R5 483
Council chairperson or deputy chairperson as an ordinary member of a structure	R3 658	R3 658
Council member	R3 658	R3 658

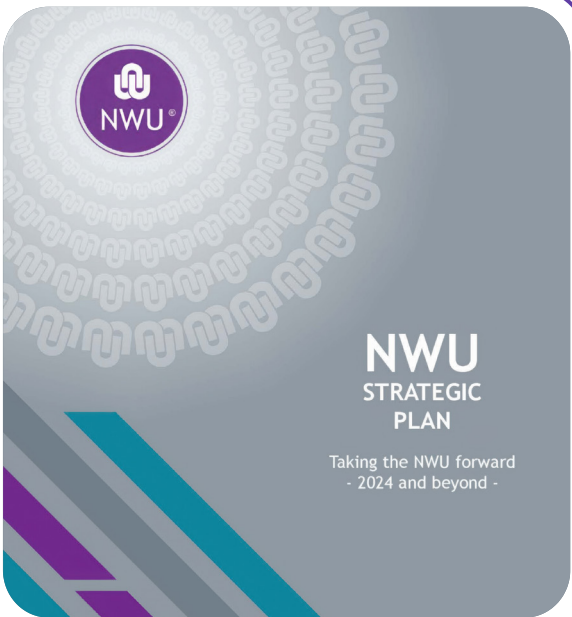
Greatness without boundaries

Our new strategy serves as a road map and a flight plan at the same time

The NWU has a new five-year map to navigate the challenges and seize the opportunities the rapidly evolving world presents.

At their meeting on 14 September 2023, the NWU Council put their stamp of approval on the NWU strategy, titled: Taking the NWU forward – 2024 and beyond.

The new strategy is based on six pillars: our values, goals, priorities, guiding principles, mission and vision. [\(Read more\)](#)



Click on the image to view the new strategy document.

King IV as the guiding framework for value creation through governance

The NWU's governance framework is aligned with the King IV report. The below shows how the various internal structures or responsibilities correspond with King IV:

KING IV requirement	Integrated report content element	Relevant governance structure
Leadership and ethics	Stakeholder engagement and relationships; governance	<div><div></div><div>Council</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Social and Ethics Committee</div></div>
Performance and reporting	Strategy and resource allocation; performance; outlook	<div><div></div><div>Exco</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Finance Committee</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Senate</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Council</div></div>
Governance structure and delegation	Governance and remuneration	<div><div></div><div>Council</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Exco</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Remuneration Committee</div></div>
Risks and opportunities	Stakeholder engagement and relationships; risk and opportunity	<div><div></div><div>Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee (ARCC) (as the primary committee for oversight purposes)</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Other committees of Council (for risks and opportunities relevant in the identified area of oversight)</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Senate</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Council</div></div>
Technology and information	Governance, risk and opportunity; strategy and resource allocation	<div><div></div><div>Technology and Information Governance Committee</div></div> <div><div></div><div>ARCC</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Exco</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Council</div></div>
Compliance	Governance	<div><div></div><div>ARCC</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Other committees of Council (for compliance – matters relevant in the said area of oversight)</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Council</div></div>
Remuneration	Stakeholder engagement and relationships; remuneration	<div><div></div><div>Remuneration Committee</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Council</div></div>
Assurance	Governance; basis of preparation and presentation	<div><div></div><div>ARCC</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Finance Committee</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Senate</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Council</div></div>
Stakeholder relationships	Stakeholder engagement and relationships	<div><div></div><div>Social and Ethics Committee</div></div> <div><div></div><div>People and Culture and Employment Equity Committee</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Transformation Oversight Committee</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Student Life Oversight Committee</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Institutional Forum</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Student Representative Council</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Convocation</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Board of Donors</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Council</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Human Rights Committee</div></div>

Governance structures of the NWU

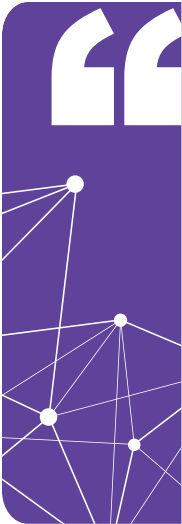


Committees supporting Council

All Council committees are formally constituted, have terms of reference and consist of a majority of Council members who are neither employees nor students of our public higher education institution. The Council and its committees are chaired by external independent members with the necessary expertise and skills.

Quality manual

The Council Quality Manual was revised and approved by the Council on 22 June 2023, and is based on the norms prescribed by the DHET Governance Scorecard. Some of the aspects it covers are monitoring mechanisms to gauge the effectiveness and efficiency of Council activities, identifying risks around the functioning of Council and measuring key areas of Council's operations.

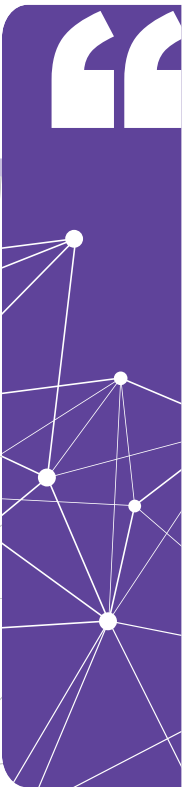


COUNCIL STATEMENT ON SUSTAINABILITY AS VALUE ADD

At the NWU we define sustainability as the ability of the university to create value in the short, medium and long term by promoting stakeholder inclusive approach to developign a strategic response to the risks and opportunities faced, We consider material matters, whether financial or non-financial in nature.

Material matters of a social and environmental nature are as important as financial and economic issues in determining the overall value created by the NWU. The five-year strategic plan and the business plan for implementing the strategy are integral to the value-creation process and to ensuring our sustainability. The six long-term goals and the four enables of the NWU Strategy 2015 to 2025 underpin the commitment of the university in this regard.

Statement approval obtained from the NWU Council on 13 June 2024.



COUNCIL STATEMENT ON ETHICS AND VALUES

The NWU Code of Ethics commits the university to the highest standards of integrity, behaviour and ethics in dealing with all its stakeholders and society at large.

In accordance with our ethics strategy, we aspire to lead in ethical behaviour towards all our stakeholders, while advocating the principles of respect, honesty, transparency and accountability and conducting our business through the use of fair and commercially competitive practices.

The values statement in the NWU Strategy 2015 to 2025 determines that the NWU fosters engaged and caring staff and students and embeds the following foundational values that are based on the constitutional values of human dignity, equality and freedom in our practices:

- Ethics in all endeavours
- Academic integrity
- Academic freedom and freedom of scientific research
- Responsibility, accountability, fairness and transparency
- Embracing diversity.

Statement approval obtained from the NWU Council on 13 June 2024.

Ethical leadership and corporate citizenship

Ongoing oversight creates an environment conducive to detecting and countering possible unethical or irregular practices. In 2023, the Social and Ethics Committee and the ARCC fulfilled this ongoing oversight role.

At policy level, a number of Council-approved policies instil an ethical leadership culture and strengthen the NWU’s position as a corporate citizen. Click [here](#) for a list of these policies.

The revised NWU Code of Ethics, which Council approved in the previous year, sets out the ethical behaviour expected of our Council members against the background the university’s values statement. We also have an ethics management plan, summarised as follows:

Strategic focal area 1:
Governance and management commitment to ethics

At both management and governance levels, ethics risks and reporting are regularly discussed.

Strategic focal area 2:
Ethics accountability

Policies are clear and enforceable, and the right structures and reporting processes are in place to facilitate the governance and management of ethics.

Employees and students are protected from victimisation when reporting on ethics matters.

Strategic focal area 3:
Ethics talk and awareness

The degree to which employees are familiar with ethics and ethical conduct, know what is expected of them regarding ethical behaviour and feel comfortable to address ethical concerns with peers and leadership.

Behavioural manual for staff

The NWU Behavioural Manual is used to regulate employee conduct and was updated in 2023. It has been approved by Council and becomes effective on 1 January 2024.

Matters dealt with in 2023

Disciplinary action was taken against 44 NWU employees who were charged with misconduct.

Seven employees were summarily dismissed after undergoing disciplinary action. One employee went on early retirement and six others resigned with immediate effect before disciplinary action had been finalised. One employee was found not guilty and written warnings were imposed in the remainder of the cases.

A total of 18 matters were referred to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA). Of these, 12 matters were finalised, one matter was withdrawn by the applicant and the remainder are still ongoing.

Ombud office for language

The Language Directorate attempts to resolve language matters as early on as possible so that these do not escalate.

Complaints can be reported to the Ombudsperson in the Language Directorate for investigation.

Matters dealt with in 2023

There was a noticeable increase in language-related inquiries and complaints in 2023. All of these were investigated and effectively resolved. Clear guidance was given, with a focus on inclusivity, diversity and a commitment to ethical principles.

Dealing with sexual harassment

Six sexual harassment cases were reported in 2023.

Matters dealt with in 2023

In two of these cases, the perpetrators resigned, while in another, the perpetrator went on early retirement before the case was finalised. In the fourth case, the complainant withdrew the matter and in a fifth, the parties agreed that there had been a misunderstanding between them. In the final case, the employee was dismissed from the employment of the NWU.

Matters reported by employees or the public

Reports on maladministration and irregularities are received via reporting boxes placed on all three campuses, or via the email address REPORT-FRAUD@nwu.ac.za.

Matters dealt with in 2023

Seven reports were placed in the reporting boxes 2023, compared to three in 2022.

In November 2023, we launched a fraud website with an electronic reporting form.

Ongoing investigations

Internal Audit plays an important role in the ongoing investigation of suspected irregularities. Of the investigations reported in 2023, seven were received via the reporting boxes on the different campuses, and the rest were referred by internal members/employees.

Matters dealt with in 2023

Internal Audit investigated 53 reported cases in 2023, of which 23 were completed. A total of 27 investigations were still underway at the end of the year, including one reported in 2022.

The nature of the allegations investigated ranged from fraudulent amendments on invoices to possible conflict of interests, tender irregularities, admission irregularities and general misuse of NWU resources.

Fighting fraud

The NWU’s Anti-Fraud Strategy calls for a specific focus on Internal Audit’s proactive and continuous audit monitoring of procurement and payroll transactions. Various tests are continually run and reported to operational managers to follow up and identify the need for further investigation.

Matters dealt with in 2023

We have handed eight cases of forgery and uttering and misappropriation of resources over to the South African Police Services (SAPS). Two of these cases has been closed.

According to preliminary calculations, the amounts involved are over R1,7 million, of which approximately R530 000 has been recovered from two employees.

Compliance with laws, codes and standards

The NWU's regulatory universe currently consists of 137 pieces of legislation. Compliance self-assessments and monitoring are scheduled according to a three-year rolling plan.

Regular compliance reporting to Council committees takes place in May and October during each year of the three-year compliance plan.

Council receives quarterly reports on changes to legislation relevant to the higher education environment.

Matters dealt with in 2023

In 2023, compliance with 25 pieces of legislation was self-assessed. Click [here](#) for a full list of this legislation.

The Compliance Department concluded the work from the first three-year rolling plan (2021-2023) and a new three-year rolling plan for 2024-2026 was approved.

The new plan will include all low-risk legislation that was not self-assessed previously, as well as a follow-up and re-evaluation plan for all previously assessed high-risk legislation.

Compliance with the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) and Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA)

To ensure compliance with the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) and the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), the information governance coordinator reports regularly to the Information Management Committee and in turn to the University Management Committee and the Technology and Information Governance Committee of Council.

Matters dealt with in 2023

In 2022/23, the NWU received 31 PAIA requests. Of these, 22 were granted in full, seven were refused in full and two were partially refused.

POPIA training has been developed and implemented online, and an attendance monitoring system is in place.

Providing integrated assurance

The purpose of the Combined Assurance Forum (CAF) is to manage and limit the risk exposure of the university and to provide assurance.

Matters dealt with in 2023

The CAF undertook risk assurance mapping and second-level risk assurance on all risks on the Strategic Risk Register with a risk rating of 8 and above. Further, a third-level risk assurance audit was undertaken on the top 10 strategic risks.

In addition, the forum assisted the ARCC to fulfil its responsibility in giving assurance to Council.

More information on risk management can be found in the section on **material risks and opportunities impacting value**.

Human rights matters

The constituting meeting of the Human Rights Committee (HRC) took place on 1 June 2023. Council approved the reviewed terms of reference of the HRC on 22 June 2023. The revised Human Rights Policy was approved by the Council on 16 November 2023.

Matters dealt with in 2023

The HRC confirmed that all reports of alleged human rights violations were presented to the committee without any filtering. The committee established an email address for reporting infringements, monitored by People and Culture staff, with all reports documented for trend analysis. Awareness campaigns and training were conducted to sensitise staff and students.

Council statements

The following Council statements can be found [here](#):

- Council statement on going concern
- Council statement of financial controls outside financial statements
- Council statement on financial health and viability
- Council statement on tenders
- Council statement on contract management, SLAs and monitoring of suppliers' performance
- Statement on penalties, sanctions and fines

MR BERT SORGDRAGER
CHAIRPERSON OF COUNCIL

The Institutional Forum's full report is available [here](#).

Greatness without boundaries

We applaud our trailblazing alumni

There is no doubt about it: the NWU's top alumni have mastered the art of excellence.

We recognised 10 of our outstanding alumni during a prestigious Alumni Awards of Excellence event at the Capital Hotel Menlyn in Pretoria on 9 November 2023. ([Read more](#))



The recipients of the NWU's 2023 Alumni Awards of Excellence are Prof Kobus Eloff, Dr Dumisani Jantjies, Chris Nell (on behalf of Louis-Gillis Janse van Rensburg), Dr Monicca Bhuda, Susan Cilliers, Prof Musawenkosi Donia Saurombe, Amé Bell, Ofentse Kgwadi (on behalf of Prof Ntate Dan Kgwadi) and Dr Alistair Mokoena. At the back are Prof Pieter Kruger and Phenyio Kgwadi (on behalf of Prof Ntate Dan Kgwadi).

Incentivising for achievement



We have a strategy to encourage high performance and productivity. It includes offering attractive and sustainable performance incentives that are applied fairly and consistently.

We use integrated performance management to recognise superior organisational, team and individual performance.

Remuneration mix aligned to strategy

Market-related remuneration is essential for recruiting and retaining the best staff. Our remuneration mix has variable and fixed elements and includes monetary and non-monetary rewards. Variable pay consists of performance bonuses and various value-adding allowances, and is paid according to the results of individual remuneration reviews.

We do annual benchmarking to ensure the continued competitiveness of guaranteed pay.

Employees contribute 7,5% to the pension fund and can choose an employer contribution of 12%, 15%, 17,5% or 20%.

Employees also belong to the group life scheme where they may choose to “flex” their benefits between one and five times their pensionable earnings (over and above the pension benefit).

Name	Basic salary	Employee benefits	Other allowance payments	Total cost to NWU 2022
Prof MB Tyobeka**	3 281 727	389 928	366 924	4 038 579
Prof LA du Plessis	2 559 082	35 014	731 407	3 325 503
Prof DM Balia	2 373 711	173 436	269 485	2 816 632
Prof S Swanepoel	2 280 736	35 014	257 473	2 573 223
Prof MM Verhoef	2 663 042		343 889	3 006 931
Prof RJ Balfour	2 564 648		319 820	2 884 468
Prof MJ Mphahlele	2 560 246		266 496	2 826 742
Ms E de Beer	2 780 664	48 634	243 060	3 072 359
Dr M Singh	2 352 598	36 206	269 887	2 658 690
Mr NC Manoko	2 095 848	145 944	287 733	2 529 525
Prof JS Chalufu	1 936 854	137 735	167 771	2 242 359
Total	27 449 156	1 001 910	3 523 944	31 975 010

**** This management member has not been in service for a full year – 2022. Remuneration was annualised. These include annual remuneration, levies, bonuses and in the case of the vice-chancellor, housing benefits (refer to note 32 in the annual financial statements – relate-party transactions).**

- *Dr M Singh will retire on 31 December 2024.*
- *All members of management were in service for the full year – 2023. No annualising of remuneration.*

Remuneration governance and management

Council’s Remuneration Committee has been paying close attention to the income differentials between the higher and lower salary bands. This includes establishing how these differentials affect fair and responsible remuneration and the perceptions of employees and other stakeholders of the NWU as a value-adding institution.

It is a priority to close the income differentials and address the enhancement of salaries of academic staff.

In 2023, through the salary increases agreed on in the collective bargaining process, we built on the differentiated increases that were introduced in 2019 to cater for academic staff and staff on the lower income bands.

Executive contracts

Council oversees and approves the appointment of the vice-chancellor, deputy vice-chancellors, the registrar, executive directors and deputy vice-chancellors for assignable functions and campus operations. These appointments are made in line with the NWU Statute and the Council’s Rules.

BACKGROUND >	BUSINESS MODEL >	VC REPORT >	STAKEHOLDERS >	TRANSFORMATION >	RISKS >
	STRATEGY >	PERFORMANCE >	GOVERNANCE >	INCENTIVISING >	

External members’ fees

The remuneration of members of Council and Council committees comprises an honorarium paid as a token of our gratitude for their time and effort. The honorarium, paid in August and December, is linked to our annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) process and approved by Council’s Exco.

More information about the honoraria that members received for each meeting attended is available under the heading Remuneration of externally elected Council members in the Governance section of this report.

Honoraria payments (gross remuneration to Council members) in 2023:

Name	R value
Mrs UAD Baravalle	87 792
Mrs S Britz	62 186
Prof AL Combrink	25 606
Mr JDS de Bruyn	95 092
Rev PD Dinkebogile	41 184
Mr XV Hadebe	32 326
Mrs RA Kenosi	165 556
Mr TC Kgomo	84 252
Adv M Kruger	60 132
Mr CS Mabe	80 452
Ms S Mlambo	18 290
Mr SM Mohapi	43 864
Mr TV Mokgatlha	80 519
Mr LE Seilane	21 932
Mr AM Sorgdrager	361 953
Ms E Stander	37 809
MR MSJ Thabethe	86 077
Mrs PP Thebe	10 974
Mr PM Tlhabanyane	70 448
Prof MB Tyobeka*	62 361
Mrs M van Zyl	43 292
Mr TP Venter	21 948
Ms PS Moleke	3 658
Mr OE Mongale	117 040
Mrs MJ Mwase	27 415
Adv PG Seleka	43 896
Grand total	1 786 054

Organisational culture

For the past three years, the NWU has been focusing on building an inclusive, enabling and welcoming environment and organisational culture.

We do this by celebrating the NWU values, conducting culture-based activities and promoting a transparent and values-driven leadership culture.

In 2023, we held team-building sessions and through the Leadership Academy, did training on engagement and leading through inclusivity.

We also identified values champions who and launched the NWU Media and Organisational Citizenship Recognition Awards to celebrate, recognise and award staff and students who live and demonstrate the NWU values.

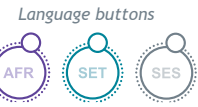
In August, Women’s Month, we launched the Organisational Citizenship Behaviours Women’s Month Award and presented the inaugural Women in Leadership Programme.

In distinguishing the NWU from other institutions competing for talent, our comprehensive talent management strategy is critical. Components of this strategy are an employee value proposition that increases engagement and belonging, competitive compensation and a programme for the recruitment and retention of scarce and critical skills.



During a prestigious event on 25 May, the NWU recognised dedicated staff and students for promoting and enhancing its culture and strategy. Michelle Bownes and Mario Chauque shared the Social Responsibility and Awareness Advocate Award. Michelle is a senior specialist for employee relations, and Mario Chauque is the HIV coordinator on the Potchefstroom Campus. [\(Read more\)](#)

Future outlook for the NWU



In setting out to navigate the challenges that lie ahead for the higher education sector generally and the NWU in particular, it will be critical for us to focus unrelentingly on clearly defined priorities and to use our resources wisely to realise these.

Our priorities are:

Impact – Realising academic and social impact through innovative and forward-looking approaches and programmes.

Growth – Growing the scope, quality, reach and relevance of our products and offerings, and increasing the number of postgraduate students.

Diversity – Embracing the diversity of NWU stakeholders through inclusive practices.

Partnerships – Delivery through value-adding partnerships.

Internationalisation – Growing the NWU's international profile through collaborations with international counterparts at various levels.

Operational excellence – Continuously enabling strategy execution through excellent operations.

Excellent, student-centric learning and teaching that is relevant to our market and knowledge generation is central to our core business. We intend to increase international engagement on open, distance, online and flexible learning, support the digital transformation of teaching and learning and strengthen multilingualism.

Our research and innovation will focus strategically on global impact, nurturing the next generation of researchers and improving our international stature and the visibility of scholars and research outputs.

We will continue to integrate and align community engagement with teaching-learning and research.

In the medium term, we will proceed with the establishment of a medical school and further explore the growth of sustainable mining.

In summary

In 2023, a year of reaching for greatness beyond boundaries, we continued positioning the NWU as an institution of superior academic excellence with a commitment to social justice. This, along with an increased focus on impact and relevance, will remain our anchor as we implement the new strategy, Taking the NWU forward – 2024 and beyond.

We harnessed new technologies to improve our processes and value proposition and look forward to implementing the Student Information System in the coming year.

Conducting novel research and sharing knowledge to benefit society has enabled us to continue attracting high-quality researchers and postgraduate students, while offering even greater value to the communities we serve.

During 2023, we strengthened our intellectual and collaborative networks, nationally and internationally, and sent a new generation of NWU graduates out into the world to make a difference.

We are optimistic about the future, while acknowledging that higher education funding and water, energy and waste management are critical areas of concern.

Click on the links below to access several annexures to this report.

Annexure 1:

2023 Performance Assessment Report

Annexure 4:

NWU Risk Register

Annexure 2:

List of committee meetings

Annexure 5:

Financial Overview

Annexure 3:

Composition of committees

Annexure 6:

Consolidated Financial Statements as at 31 December 2023



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The 2023 integrated report was compiled by
Corporate and Information Governance Services
and
produced by Corporate Relations and Marketing.

This report is also available in a web-based version.
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Setswana, Sesotho and Afrikaans.

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