# NELSON MANDELA

Developing a holistic student access and success model at Nelson Mandela University: Reflections on the 1<sup>st</sup> Year

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#### Changes to the Admissions Process

- Applicant Score (AS) uses subject %, excluding Life Orientation, to calculate a global score – reflecting school performance and giving direct access
- Different AS for applicants with Mathematics and Maths Literacy
- 25<sup>th</sup> percentile used to set the AS per qualification
- Quintiles looked at the performance of students from different quintiles new process was not to disadvantage learners from Q1-3 schools
- An additional 7 points were added to Q1-3 learners' scores who had 50% or more for Life Orientation



#### Value of the AS model

- Criteria are based on research of successful tested students
- Better alignment with other universities
- Better alignment with CAS
- Potential to facilitate and speed up the internal admissions processes
- Simple and quick to calculate
- Easy for an applicant to see what they qualify for and assists in making appropriate study choices to achieve their ultimate career goals
- Able to make developmental recommendations for all accepted applicants, where appropriate
  - not just the tested applicants



#### UG Acceptance: Firm Offers



#### Challenge of turning acceptances into Registrations

- Late matric results
- Multiple applications
- Not accepted for 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> programme choice
- NMU often not the 1<sup>st</sup> choice
- NSFAS
- Accommodation
- No all-inclusive admissions package (accommodation, funding, etc)



# Success Rate: 2016 - 2020



## 2020 Intake: Flags for Support

- Admissions Requirements:
  - Applicant Score (AS): +15 points
  - Mathematics / Technical Mathematics / Mathematical Literacy: + 5 points
  - Other NSC subject requirement(s) (e.g. English Home or 1<sup>st</sup> Additional / Life Science / Physical Sciences): + 5 points
- Quintile 1- 3 Learners
- NC(V)4 Learners
- Age: <18 or ≥23

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#### Sample (n = 1099)

- 2020 Intake, 1st-time entering, undergraduate students
- One faculty, minimum 120 credit-load per year qualifications
- Degree, diploma & higher certificate with Maths/Maths Literacy or Maths only admissions requirement
- Degree [Maths/Maths Lit] (n=77), Degree [Maths] (n=203), Diploma [Maths/Maths Lit] (n=592),
  & Higher Certificate [M/ML] (n=227)
- NSC Maths (n = 691), Maths Literacy (n=403), Maths & Maths Literacy (n=2), Technical Maths (n=3)
- Accedenic performation
  1<sup>st-year</sup> Credits passed Mean, % passing ≥80 credits, changesing ≥
  100 credits

# Flags (n = 1099)



#### Number of Flags x Credits Passed



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	Credits Passed			
Age	Mean	≥80	≥100	
<18	94.09	76%	59%	
18-22	95.06	75%	61%	
≥23	83.15	55%	45%	

	Credits Passed			
Quintile	<i>Mean</i> ≥80 ≥100			
Q1-3	88.61	69%	52%	
Q4-5	100.71	81%	69%	



		Credits Passed			
		Mean	≥80	≥100	
Applicant Score [M/TM] +15	fla g	93.96	73%	61%	
	no	101.08	81%	69%	
Applicant Score [ML] +	fla g	85.83	67%	48%	
15	no	87.32	67%	50%	

		Credits Passed		
		Mean	≥80	≥100
Mathematics	flag	99.05	79%	66%
+5	no	98.78	79%	68%
Maths Literacy +	flag	87.76	67%	48%
5	no	86.18	67%	50%

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#### Mathematics vs Maths Literacy vs Technical Maths

		Credits Passed		
	n	Mean	≥80	≥100
Mathematics	682	98.86	78%	67%
Maths Literacy	395	86.60	67%	49%
Maths & ML	2	118.00	100%	100%
Technical Maths	3	70.00	67%	33%



#### Qualification x Flag x Flag x Credits Passed

Degree [M/ML]	Credits Passed Mean		
Mothe	83.82	Q1-3	64.00
Maths		Q4-5	109.79
Maths Lit	77.94	Q1-3	65.10
		Q4-5	90.00

Degree [Maths]	Credits Passed Mean		
Motho	04.25	Q1-3	77.60
Matris	94.35	Q4-5	108.74

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Diploma [M/ML]	Credits Passed Mean		
Mothe	98.24	Q1-3	95.45
wattis		Q4-5	102.25
Maths	85 70	Q1-3	80.98
Lit	00.79	Q4-5	90.67

HCert [M/ML]	Credits Passed Mean		
Matha	109.26	Q1-3	108.04
Maths	100.30	Q4-5	108.84
Maths Lit	92.81	Q1-3	91.40
		Q4-5	94.63

## LTCOLLAB LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

#### DIRECTOR: LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

#### **STUDENT SUCCESS** LEARNING ACADEMIC **RESEARCH:** DEVELOPMENT LITERACIES COACHING (SSC) **STUDENT SUCCESS** One Student Success Coach Conduct research on Supplemental Instruction (SI) First Year Success (FYS) Learning Development in each Faculty plus on the student success initiatives Academic Lifeskills **George Campus** Management (ALM) Academic Literacies Writing

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To contact your Student Success Coach, email: LearningDevCoaching@mandela.ac.za

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#### 2020 Academic Year

• Researchers collated all the first year information and identified the flags

• SSC contacted programme leaders and forwarded the names of students with flags for monitoring

- Students with 3 of more flags were contacted individually by the SSC's and requested to make appointments to discuss the development of an academic success plan (Feb to March) 2020
- Late March COVID mushroomed and lockdown started

SSC programme not yet embedded in the university structure

![](_page_18_Picture_6.jpeg)

#### 2020 Academic Year

- Focus changed to moving support online using TEAMS; Zoom; WhatsApp; Voice calls; etc
- Challenges were the same as those faced by the move to online learning and number of interactions fell away
- LD staff involved in the preparation of online preparatory materials
- Nature of the adaptations made meant many of the planned interventions did not occur
- Senior students were more likely to take up the SSC opportunities
- Despite 2021 challenges the new year is giving us the opportunity to pick up where we left off and to consolidate and expand the programme

![](_page_19_Picture_7.jpeg)

#### Coaching Summary: 2020

• A total of 465 Students were seen in 874 sessions from January – December

 50% of students had their first session in the first quarter (Jan – March 2020) as face to face and 50% were online sessions from April-December 2020

55% were seen for one session, 25% were seen for 2 sessions, 9% were seen for 3 sessions, 5% were seen for four sessions. Highest number of sessions was 16 at <1%</li>

![](_page_20_Picture_4.jpeg)

 Main reasons for sessions with the coaches were: Time Management (n=273), Study Skills (n=210), Goal Settir (n=169), Motivation (n=152) and Exam Prep (n=93). Other reasons included Academic Warning Letters, Academ Exclusion, Financial Challenges, Emotional Intelligence and Note Taking

 Majority of students were referred to coaches by Faculty Administration, the HoD or Lecturer and third highest w self-referral

Coaches referred students to Faculty Admin, Emthonjeni (Student Counselling) and the HoD or Lecturer

![](_page_21_Picture_4.jpeg)

#### Reflections

- The AS process has not impeded access
- Success rates (FTEN 83%) and retention rates (FTEN 91%) indicate that admissions criteria may be set at the appropriate level
- Some of the flags (quintile, age and Maths Literacy) suggest that students with these flags may need an earlier intervention and therefore it may be necessary to prioritise meeting with these students
- It may be necessary to focus on students with specific flags rather than on the number of flags a student has Q1 to 3 or Maths Lit students
- Maths Literacy may need to be added to the list of flags, together with identified "high risk" qualifications
- Further follow up work is required on the flags and on the tracking of students admitted via the new model
- Look at ways of automating the generation of flags as students register
- The SSC to develop strategies to reach students with high risk flags and to increase the number of follow up coaching sessions with these students
- COVID has highlighted both the possibilities and limitations of using online platforms for students support. As we settle into a more mixed mode effective combinations of face-face and online interactions need to be investigated
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