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GCRO DATA BRIEF
NO.10

QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY V (2017/18)

THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF STUDENTS IN GAUTENG

JULY 2020

Authors:
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THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF STUDENTS IN GAUTENG



PHOTOGRAPH BY **ADETAYO ADEPOJU ON UNSPLASH**

PREFACE

The Quality of Life (QoL) survey, conducted every two years, has become the flagship project of the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO). The QoL survey is designed to provide a regular understanding of the quality of life, socio-economic circumstances, satisfaction with service delivery, psycho-social attitudes, values and other characteristics of residents in Gauteng. It serves as a tracking and diagnostic tool, affording a rich information resource for those people in policy-making, business, civil society and the public wanting to see where progress is being made, and where concerns remain.

The QoL is a household-based survey with randomly selected adults (18+ years of age) as respondents. The GCRO has conducted five QoL surveys and there has been substantial growth in the number of respondents since the first survey:

- QoL I (2009) with 5 836 respondents in Gauteng and a total of 6 636 across the wider Gauteng City-Region (GCR)
- QoL II (2011) with 16 729 respondents in Gauteng
- QoL III (2013/14) with 27 490 respondents in Gauteng
- QoL IV (2015/16) with 30 002 respondents in Gauteng
- QoL V (2017/18) with 24 889 respondents in Gauteng

Each QoL sample is designed to be representative of the Gauteng population and each municipality within the province. The data is weighted on the basis of population gender and race distributions provided by Statistics South Africa. The large sample size enables the GCRO to analyse, map and model the data through a range of innovative methods with a high degree of confidence and precision.

The QoL sample is also designed to include respondents from every ward in Gauteng. The survey therefore provides critical, local-level data for analysis and assessment to guide targeted government interventions.

This data brief adds to the collection of GCRO data briefs providing valuable insights from various QoL surveys over the years. As such, it explores patterns, trends and dynamics in a range of focus areas, such as social cohesion, crime, health, quality of life, the economy, poverty and inequality, and governance. Drawing primarily from QoL V (2017/18) data, this analysis is also supplemented with data from previous surveys. Additional information on the QoL survey can be found on the GCRO website: **www.gcro.ac.za**

* Due to the rounding of individual values, figure labels may not add up to 100%.



PHOTOGRAPH BY **SINCERELY MEDIA ON UNSPLASH**

HEADLINE FINDINGS

- In the Quality of Life (QoL) V (2017/18) survey, respondents from all population groups were represented in the student sample. However, a higher percentage of all Indian/Asian respondents (17%) and white respondents (13%) were registered as students compared to the proportion of all African respondents (10%) and coloured respondents (11%). The differences were larger among younger respondents from each population group.
- However, racialised socio-economic inequality is evident in the fact that the average monthly household income of African students was around R11 755 while the average monthly household income of white students was around R38 541.
- Similarly, a lower percentage of African students reported having access to assets which are likely to assist learning (like a laptop or internet at home) when compared to the access of coloured, Indian/Asian or white students. But African and white students had higher levels of access to these assets than African and white non-students.
- The majority of all students in the sample would have qualified for National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) funding (69%) based on their household income. A further 26% of students were considered part of the 'missing middle', and only about 5% of students could be categorised as upper class.

> *Racialised socio-economic inequality is evident in students' average monthly income*

- There were important lifestyle and class differences between full time and part time students. On average, students had a higher socio-economic status than non-students, but part time students had a higher socio-economic status than full time students.
- The mean age of full time and part time students was 24 and 31 years, respectively. Further, part time students were more likely to be household heads, while in the households of full time students it was more likely for the mother or father of the student to be the head of the household.
- On average, students were 6% more likely to be satisfied with a range of services, facilities and spheres of government than non-students, but higher satisfaction with services did not translate into higher satisfaction with spheres of government.
- Although the differences remain relatively small, students were more likely to respond positively on various measures of physical well-being (like general health status) and mental well-being (like having emotional support) than non-students.
- Despite a significant degree of racial inequality in the student sample (in terms of income and access to assets), students score higher on the overall quality of life index than non-students.
- While respondents born in Gauteng were the most likely to be students (12%), migrants from other provinces were nearly as likely to be students (11%). By contrast, only 6% of respondents who had migrated from another country were students.
- Across QoL surveys, students predominantly made use of taxis (44% on average) or private motorised transport (31% on average) for their trips to the places where they study.
- A slightly smaller percentage of students (7%) participated in protest action compared to non-student respondents (9%).

> *On average, students had a higher socio-economic status than non-students, but part time students had a higher socio-economic status than full time students*



PHOTOGRAPH BY **IAM SE7EN ON UNSPLASH**

1

INTRODUCTION

Educational attainment is critically important to ensuring social mobility and reducing inequality in our society (Statistics South Africa, 2019); it also contributes significantly to the regional economy in numerous ways. For example, according to the Gauteng City Region Observatory (GCRO) Quality of Life (QoL) V (2017/18) survey, about 84% of respondents in households with monthly incomes of more than R51 200 had a tertiary education qualification. This increased from about 68% in the QoL III (2013/14) survey.

This trend not only points to an increase in per capita expenditure but also puts respondents with tertiary education qualifications far ahead of the majority of Gauteng residents without similar qualifications. However, managing access to tertiary education to achieve equity and economic growth is no easy task. The cost of tertiary education means that gaining access to university remains challenging, as expressed during the Fees Must Fall protest action at universities across South Africa in 2015 and 2016. Dropout rates are high and there is an urgent need to diversify post-schooling learning opportunities outside of traditional universities. Personal factors – such as assets, transport and personal headspace – also influence the success of students. However, because of the unequal distribution of assets in society, these factors also pose a challenge to ensuring equitable access to tertiary education for all population groups. All of these dynamics add to the importance of exploring the data in this data brief.

Drawing mainly on findings from the QoL V (2017/18) survey, this data brief provides a snapshot of the student population of Gauteng and presents an overview of their social status. In selected instances, the data brief also draws from previous GCRO QoL surveys, specifically QoL III (2013/14) and QoL IV (2015/16), for supplementary or comparative insights. This data allows us to explore relative privilege and disadvantage within, and between, student and non-student populations in Gauteng. In addition to this general aim, this data brief also sheds light on the following questions:

1. The student protests of recent years expressed frustration at the academy for sustaining many barriers to completion, particularly economic ones. What are the economic realities of students compared to non-students, and what are the biggest economic challenges that students face?
2. How does the quality of life of full time students compare to part time students?
3. Are there significant changes, in terms of living conditions, quality of life, social circumstances or opinions, among the student population over time?

> *The cost of tertiary education means that gaining access to university remains challenging*

PHOTOGRAPH BY **ANDRE HUNTER ON UNSPLASH**





PHOTOGRAPH BY **SAM BALYE ON UNSPLASH**

2

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

In the QoL V (2017/18) survey, respondents were specifically asked if they were registered at a tertiary learning institution, including being a part time student or doing distance learning. In previous QoL surveys, when this was not specifically asked, a respondent was identified as a student if, according to various other responses, they were not looking for work because they were a full time pupil or student; or the purpose of their most frequent trip was to go to a place where they study; and their highest qualification was matric or more.

In the QoL V (2017/18) survey, a total of 2 711 respondents indicated that they were registered at a tertiary learning institution – 11% of the total survey sample. Of the registered students, 45% were full time students and 55% were part time students. There were 1 342 and 1 493 students identified in the QoL III (2013/14) and QoL IV (2015/16) surveys, respectively. In QoL III and IV, this amounted to about 5% of the total survey sample. The lower overall proportion of students in the QoL III and QoL IV surveys is due to the method for identifying students rather than to differences in tertiary education enrolment in Gauteng.

The student body in the QoL V survey was racially representative of all respondents in the survey and correlated well with the overall composition of the Gauteng population (Table 1). The proportion of African respondents in the student sample was slightly lower than the proportion of African respondents in the non-student sample; but, given the size of the African population, this small difference is considered significant. The proportions of Indian/Asian and white respondents in the student sample was slightly higher than the proportions in the non-student sample.

However, within population groups, there were larger proportions of some population groups (compared to the population group total) who had access to tertiary education. This provides evidence of one particular axis of inequality. In QoL V (2017/18), of all the African respondents, 10% indicated they were registered students, compared to 11% of coloureds, 17% of Indians/Asians and 13% of whites. Based on previously published QoL IV (2015/16) data, these differences were more pronounced among younger respondents from each population group (Götz, 2016).

Table 1: The demographic profile of students by population group

GCRO

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18)

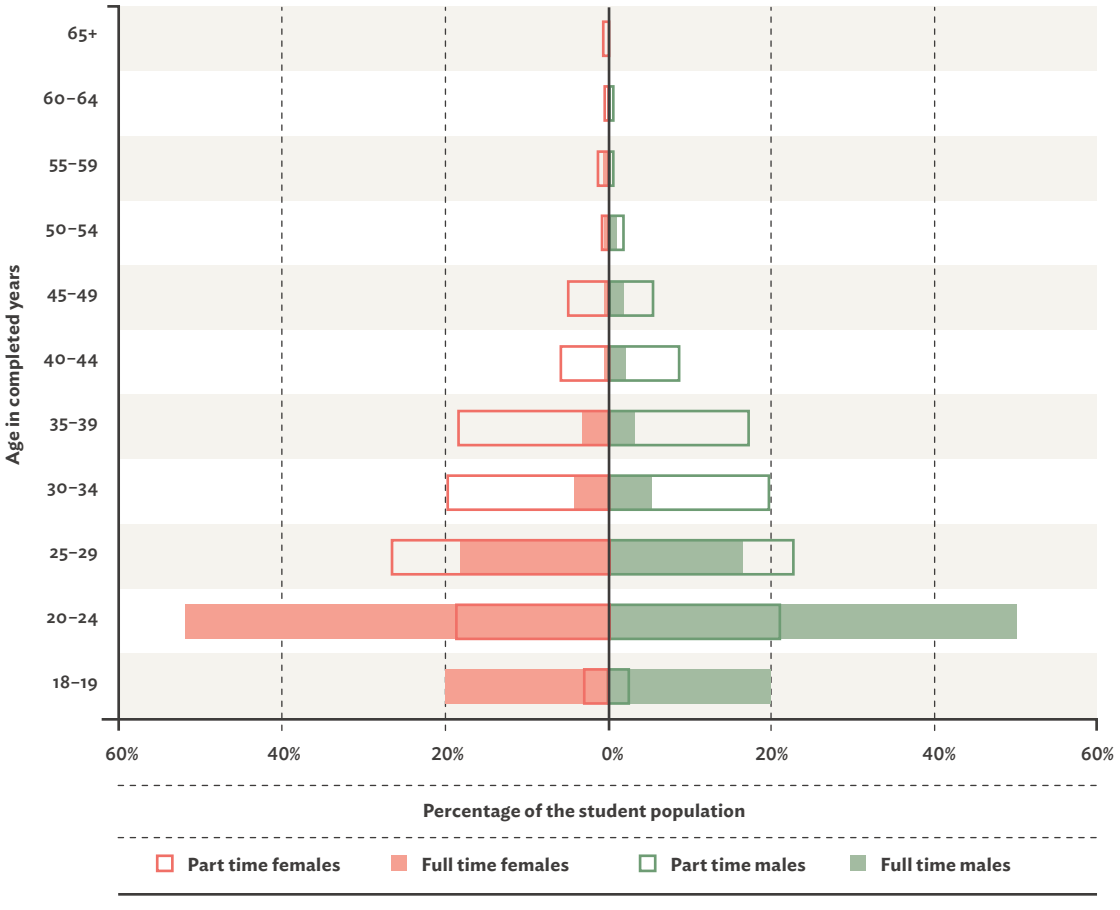
	Population group					
	African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Other	Total
Non-students	17 540	739	548	3 196	156	22 179
	79%	3%	2%	14%	1%	100%
Students	2 035	91	110	457	19	2 712
	75%	3%	4%	17%	1%	100%
Total	19 575	830	658	3 653	175	24 891
	79%	3%	3%	15%	1%	100%

About two-thirds (66%) of all students in the QoL V survey were aged between 18 and 29 (as one would expect of a population that finishes secondary school at the age of 18 years). The proportions of male and female students were relatively equal in most age groups (Figure 1). However, significant age differences were evident between full time and part time students. About 88% of full time students were aged between 18 and 29 years, compared to 47% of part time students. Part time students were almost evenly distributed in the age brackets from 25 years to 39 years (Figure 1). The mean age of full time students and part time students was 24 and 31 years, respectively. Notwithstanding these differences in the age structure of the student sample, the analysis in this data brief does not focus on the age categories 'typically' associated with students; rather, it considers students of all ages. Where a distinction is made between full time and part time students, it is important to recognise that part time students were more likely to be older and, as demonstrated later in the data brief, were of a different social class.

Figure 1: Student population pyramid

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18)

GCRO



About 49% of full time students were female (a similar proportion as female non-students), and about 53% of part time students were female. Although the difference was small, a slightly greater percentage of QoL V (2017/18) students overall were female (Table 2). African students were equally divided between males and females; but for coloured, Indian and, particularly, white population groups, female students outnumbered their male counterparts in tertiary education.

Table 2: The demographic profile of students by gender and population group

GCRO

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18)

	Population group					
	African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Other	Total
Male students	50%	45%	48%	44%	63%	49%
Female students	50%	55%	52%	56%	37%	51%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

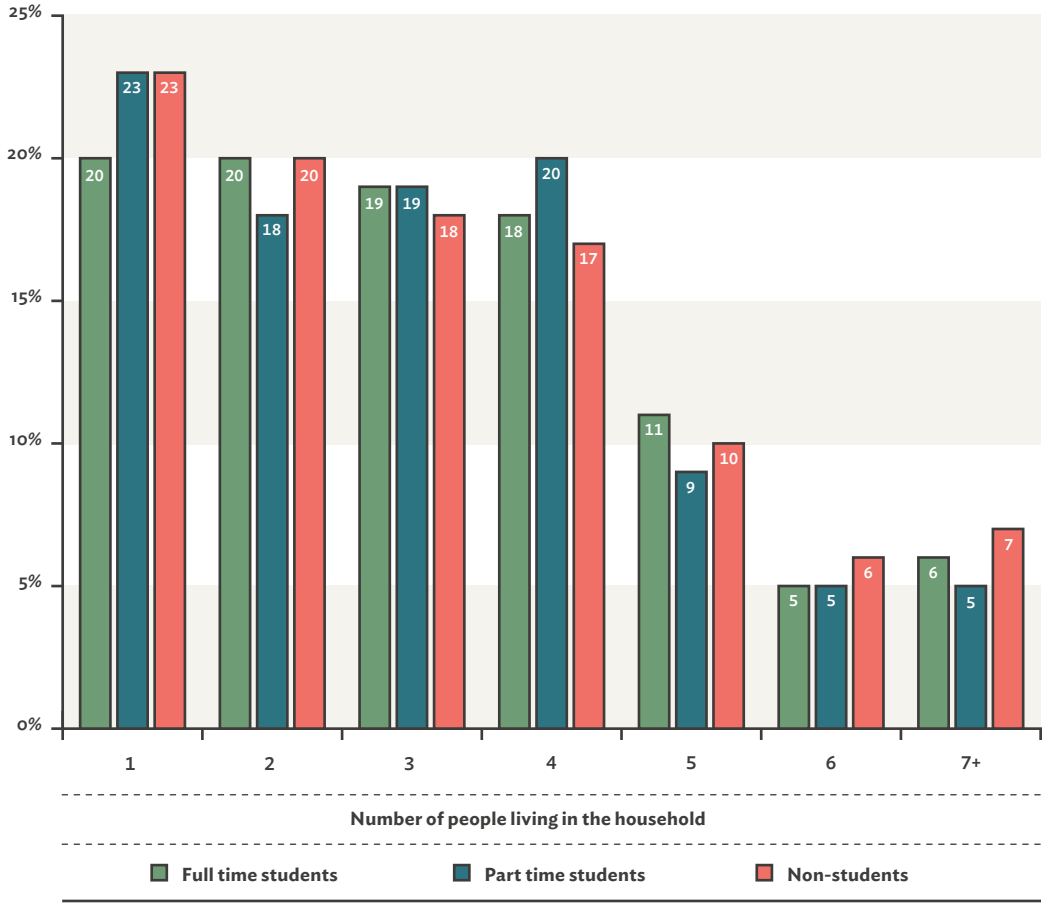
Although the difference was small, a slightly greater percentage of QoL V students overall were female

Next, the household size and household headship of student households are explored (Figures 2 and 3). About two-thirds (67%) of students reported that they live in households that have between two and five members in the household. Compared to the rest of respondents in the QoL V (2017/18) survey, full time students were slightly less likely to head up their own household than part time students and non-students, but full time and part time students were slightly more likely to be part of households with three or four members than non-students. Although it is not definitive, this does suggest, on average, that full time students have more household members with whom to share their household responsibilities than part time students and non-students.

Figure 2: Students' household size compared to the household size of non-students

GCRO

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18)

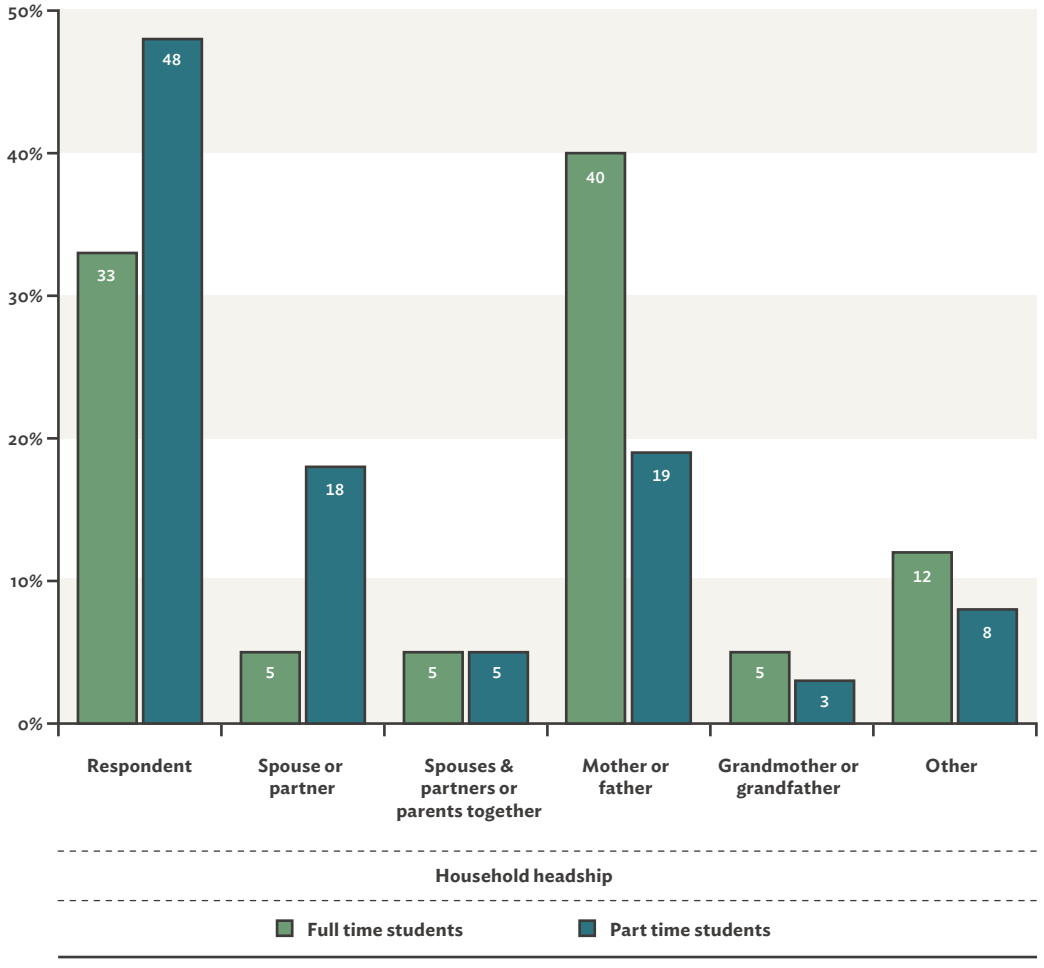


Looking more closely at who the household head is in households with students, some 41% of all students indicated that they were the head of their household, and a further 28% of all students indicated that the head of the household was either their mother or father. African students were the most likely to be the head of their household (42%), compared to coloured and Indian/Asian students (39%) and white students (34%).

Part time students were much more likely to be the head of their household while full time students were the most likely to have their mother or father as the head of the household (Figure 3). This is likely influenced by the age structures of the part time and full time student samples.

Figure 3: Students' role as head of the household

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18)

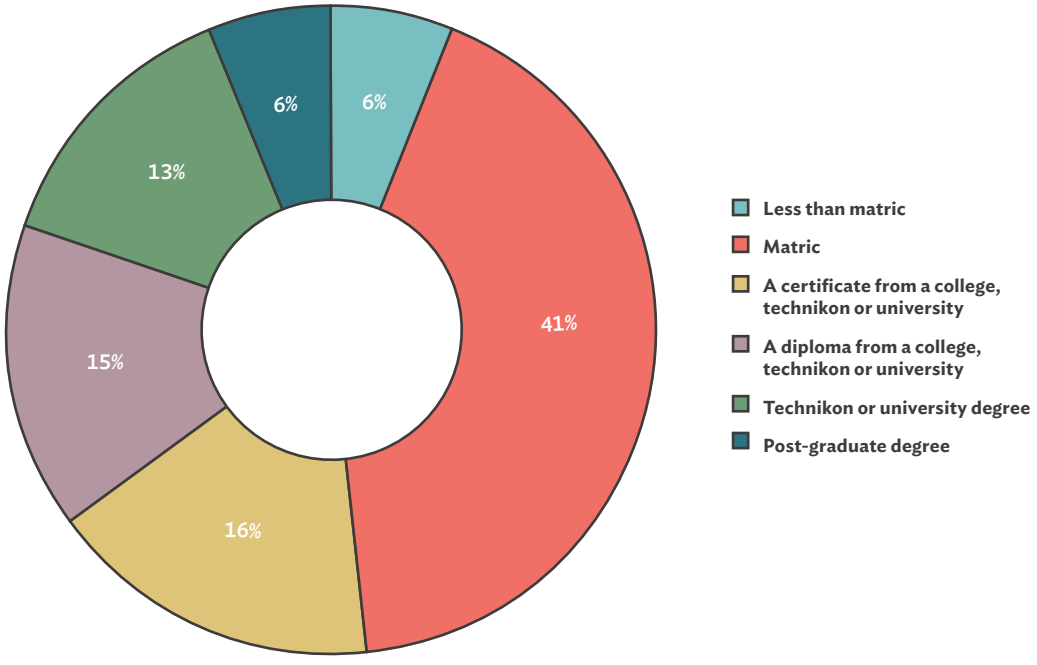


The largest proportion of the QoL V (2017/18) student sample (47%) was in the process of completing their first tertiary education qualification after leaving school – having only completed matric or less before (Figure 4). Some registered students already had a certificate (16%) or diploma (15%) from a college, technikon or university. It is assumed that respondents who are registered as students, but whose highest education qualification is a technikon degree, university degree or post-graduate degree have decided to study beyond their previous tertiary education degree(s). Among other reasons, this might be to pursue careers in academia or to add qualifications to their resume and improve their value in the labour market. About 19% of the QoL V (2017/18) student sample have already completed at least one degree and were registered for additional tertiary education qualifications. Of these students, 80% were part time students, 59% were African, 4% were coloured, 8% were Indian/Asian, 28% were white, 53% were male students and about 15% were from households with a monthly income of more than R51 200.

Figure 4: Highest education qualifications of students

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18)

GCRO



In terms of the migration status of registered students in Gauteng, 61% were born in Gauteng, 35% migrated into Gauteng from another province and 4% migrated to Gauteng from another country. This compared to 56% of non-students who were born in Gauteng, 35% of non-students who migrated from another province and 9% of non-students who migrated from another country. The other side of the picture is that about 11% of respondents who migrated from another province were registered students, compared to only 6% of respondents who migrated from another country, and to 12% of respondents who were born in Gauteng.

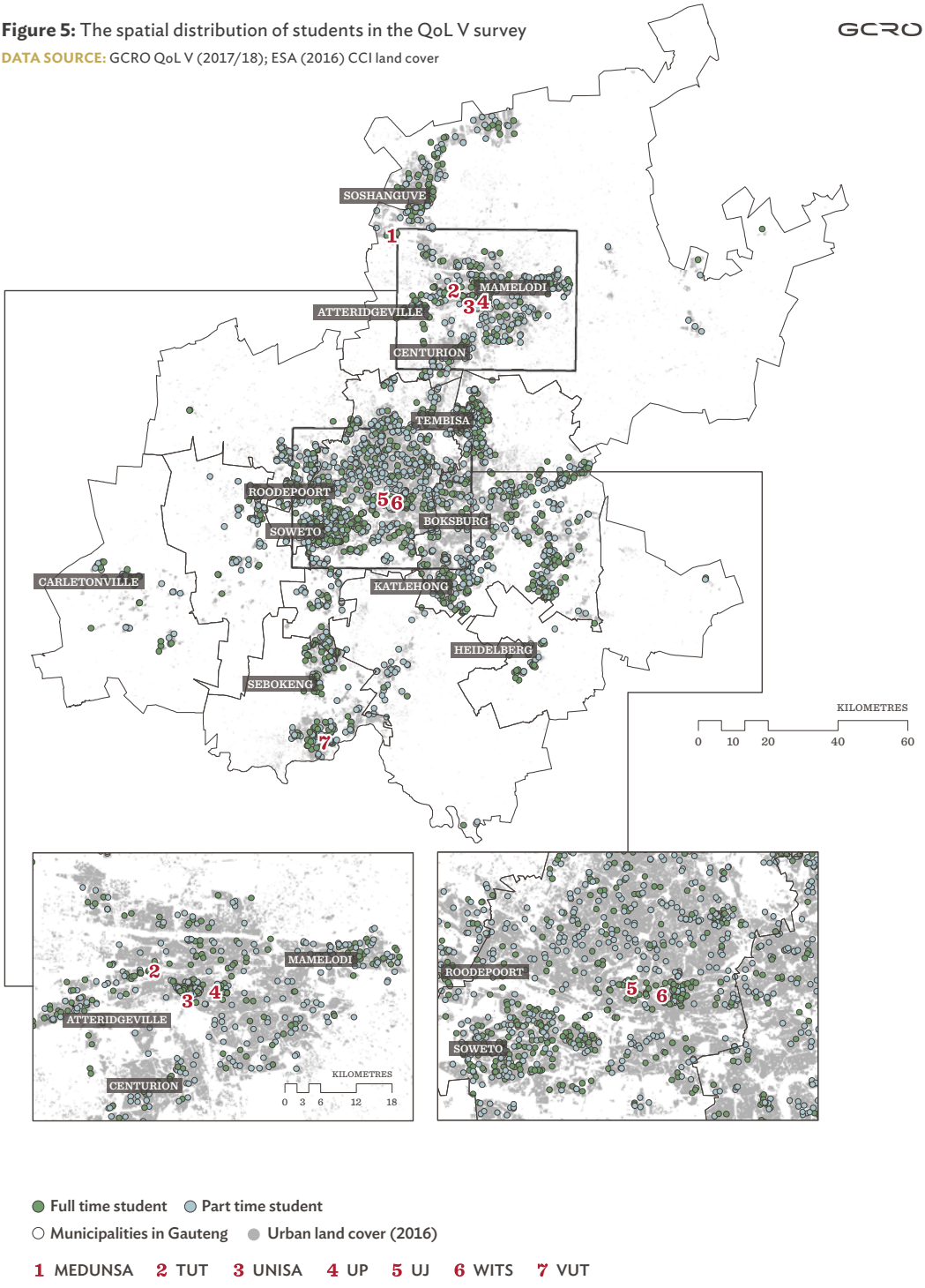
Student respondents were located throughout the province and distributed in a pattern that follows the Gauteng urban footprint and average population density (Figure 5). Many students live in developed urban centres and close to some of the premier learning centres in the province,[1] but students were also concentrated in township areas such as Attridgeville, Mamelodi, Tembisa and Soweto. Part time students were dispersed among suburbs and townships surrounding major nodes in Gauteng while full time students cluster around the main campuses of universities, especially around the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). When looking at the distribution of students around specific universities, there are important contextual factors to note. The relatively dense distribution of students near UJ and Wits is partly attributed to the availability of student accommodation in these areas. The distribution of students around the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), University of South Africa (UNISA) and University of Pretoria (UP) seems sparse. However, given that this representation of the students respondents is unweighted, this sparse distribution is in part attributed to the lower sampling density in the City of Tshwane compared to the sampling density in the City of Johannesburg and in the City of Ekurhuleni. The distribution of students around MEDUNSA is also sparse and is influenced by the urban form of the area, which has much lower residential densities than the rest of the City of Tshwane. Nonetheless, students in Gauteng get to their learning institutions in various ways (see section 5).

1 The universities mapped here include the main campuses of comprehensive, traditional or technological universities within Gauteng. Specifically, Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (MEDUNSA), Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), University of Johannesburg (UJ), University of Pretoria (UP), University of South Africa (UNISA), University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and Vaal University of Technology (VUT). Although they are not mapped here, we recognise that there are a variety of other tertiary education institution located across Gauteng (see **https://www.colleges.co.za/list-of-colleges-in-south-africa/gauteng/**).

Figure 5: The spatial distribution of students in the QoL V survey

GCRO

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18); ESA (2016) CCI land cover





PHOTOGRAPH BY **ELIOTT REYNA ON UNSPLASH**

3

LIVING CONDITIONS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

In this section, we analyse the living conditions and socio-economic status of students and compare students to the rest of the QoL V (2017/18) sample. This analysis identifies various dimensions of inequality within the student sample as well as between students and non-students.

LIVING CONDITIONS

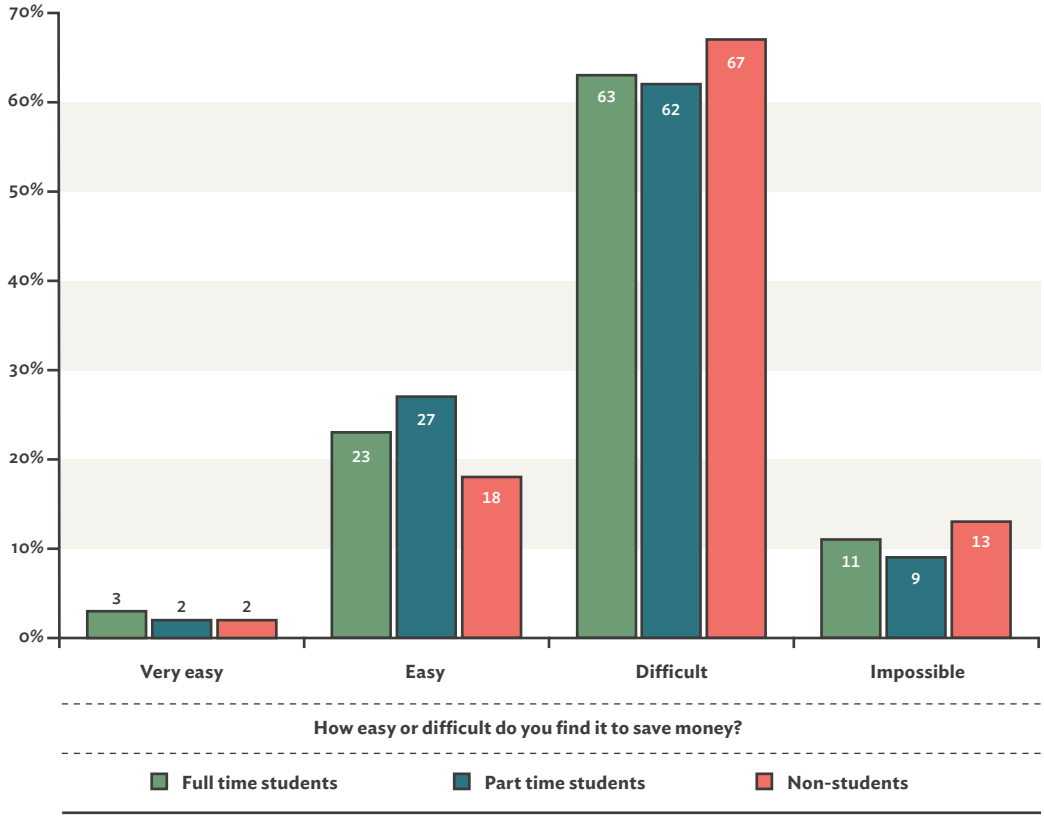
About 91% of students reported that they lived in formal housing; of these, 55% said they lived in a house on a separate stand while only 16% said that they lived in apartments/flats. About 7% of students lived in informal dwellings, compared to 16% of non-students. These figures suggest that, at least in comparison to the general population, students were likely to have better living conditions. Furthermore, the households in which students lived were generally better serviced, as is to be expected from the formal housing sector.

- 95% of students said that they live in households that have piped water inside their dwelling or yard, compared to 91% of non-students.
- 95% of students indicated that their water is always or usually clean, compared to 93% of non-students.
- 96% of students said that they live in households which use electricity for lighting, compared to 91% of non-students.
- 91% of students said that they live in households that have access to a flush toilet that is also fully waterborne, compared to 82% of non-students.
- 87% of students said that they live in households that have their refuse removed from their home at least once a week, compared to 82% of non-students.

Living conditions were further affected by employment, debt, students' ability to save money and access to the benefits of medical insurance. Part time students have a clear advantage in terms of their income sources, as 50% indicated that they did paid work in the week before the QoL interview, compared to 37% of non-students and 12% of full time students. About 45% of part time students acknowledged that they had debt, compared to 35% of non-students and 23% of full time students. About 34% of part time students with debt missed a debt repayment in the three months before the interview, compared to 45% of non-students and 42% of full time students. Most students (and more so non-students) found it difficult to save money (Figure 6) but part time students were slightly more likely than full time students to indicate that it was easy to save money. In addition to this, about 57% of full time and 43% of part time students did not have medical insurance. Students were proportionally less likely to be without medical insurance when compared to the 70% of non-student respondents who did not have medical insurance.

Figure 6: The perceptions of students and non-students on saving money

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18)



INCOME INEQUALITY

While the financial position of student households has important implications for their tertiary education funding opportunities and needs, it also highlights various dimensions of inequality within the student population and society. The income inequality analysis in the following two sections takes into account the complexities of collecting household income data, especially among students. First, about 35% of all QoL V (2017/18) respondents did not provide their monthly household income and this increased to 38% of students, so our analysis is only based on those who provided a response. The implication is that the sample sizes of coloured and Indian/Asian students who reported their household income were too small to use for reporting. Second, household income data obtained from individuals in the household could be inaccurate or, in the case of students, might not reflect the same household income from which their tertiary education is paid.

The data that QoL provided showed that income inequality was especially evident between African and white students, but also between students and non-students in each population group (Table 3). The average household income of white students was three times higher than the average household income of African students. White students were also much more likely (12%) to be from households with monthly incomes higher than R51 200 than African students (3%). Albeit very low, the average household income of African students was almost twice as much as that of African non-students.

Table 3: Comparative income differences

GCRO

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18)

	African students	African non-students	White students	White non-students
Average monthly household income	R11 755	R6 086	R38 541	R26 102
From households earning more than R51 200 a month	3%	1%	12%	9%

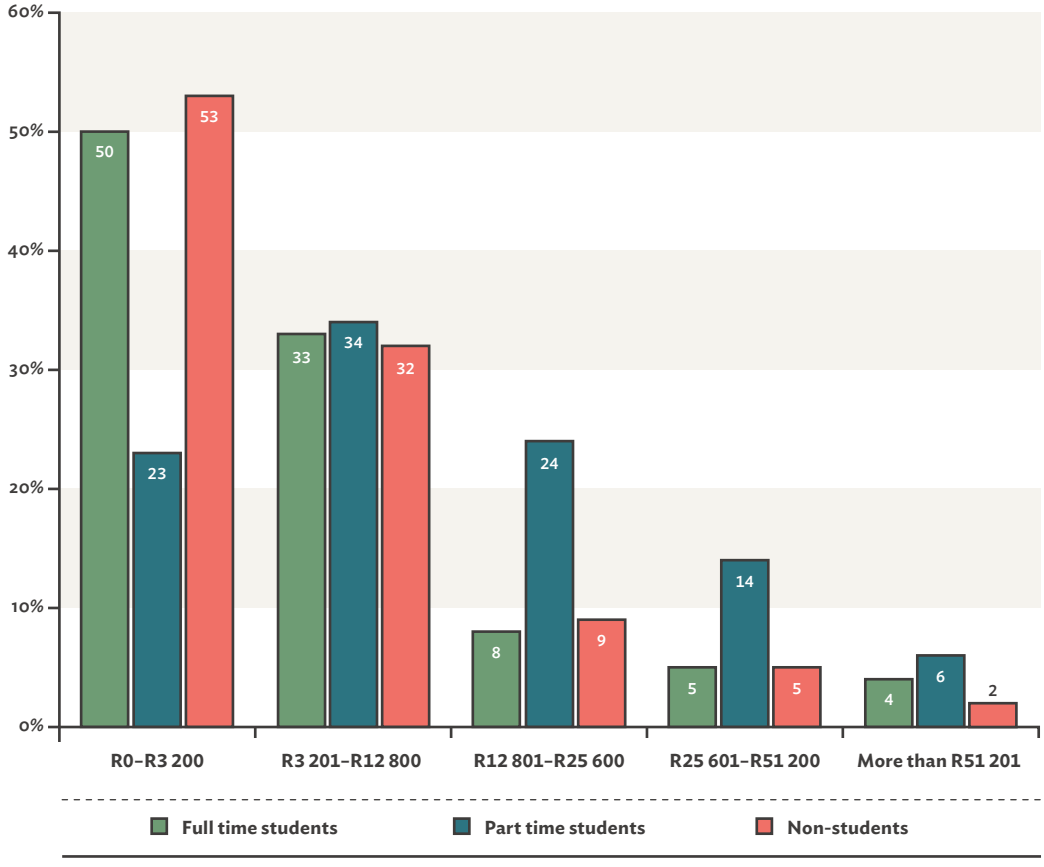
The average household income of African students was almost twice as much as that of African non-students

Although not all student respondents reported the amount of income that came into their households, it was evident that, of students who disclosed their household income, 35% were from households that earned less than R3 200 a month. About 60% of students were from households with monthly incomes between R3 201 and R51 200, and only 5% of students were from households with monthly incomes of more than R51 200. About 50% of full time students were from households with monthly incomes of less than R3 200, compared to 53% of non-students and only 23% of part time students (Figure 7). The majority of full time students and non-students were from households with monthly incomes below R12 800, while part time students were more evenly distributed in higher income brackets and typically have a much higher socio-economic status than full time students and non-students.

Figure 7: The distribution of full time students, part time students and non-students across income brackets

GCRO

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18)



FUNDING NEEDS

The income distribution of students provides a strong indication of the amount of financial aid that students (and their households) require in order to complete their studies and still ensure some social mobility and financial security after completing a tertiary education degree. For the purpose of this data brief, we distinguish between three categories of funding needs that are relevant to the current tertiary education context: students eligible for National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) funding, 'missing middle' students and upper-class students. By definition, NSFAS students live in households with an income of less than R122 000 per year (or less than R10 000 a month), while 'missing middle' students live in households with an annual income of between R122 000–R600 000, 'but do not qualify for commercial bank student loans/finance' (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2016, p. 7). The national government, however, has suggested there will be some financial relief for these households in the form of a moratorium on fee increases. Upper-class students are those students who live in households with an annual income of more than R600 000 (or R50 000 per month) and to whom fee increases will apply (DHET, 2016). In order to draw similar economic stratifications from our QoL V student sample, we categorised students from households that brought in less than R12 800 per month as NSFAS qualifying students, students from households with monthly incomes between R12 800 and R51 200 as 'missing middle' students, and students from households reporting monthly incomes of more than R51 201 as upper-class students. In this data brief, these categories refer to the type of funding that a student may qualify for regardless of whether that student in fact applied for or received financial support. Of the registered students who reported their monthly household income, 69% would be eligible for NSFAS funding, 26% were considered part of the 'missing middle' and only 5% were upper-class students. It is typical for wealth to be concentrated in a very small percentage of the population; however, this figure reveals that the financial provisions suggested by government are directed at 95% of the QoL V (2017/18) student sample.

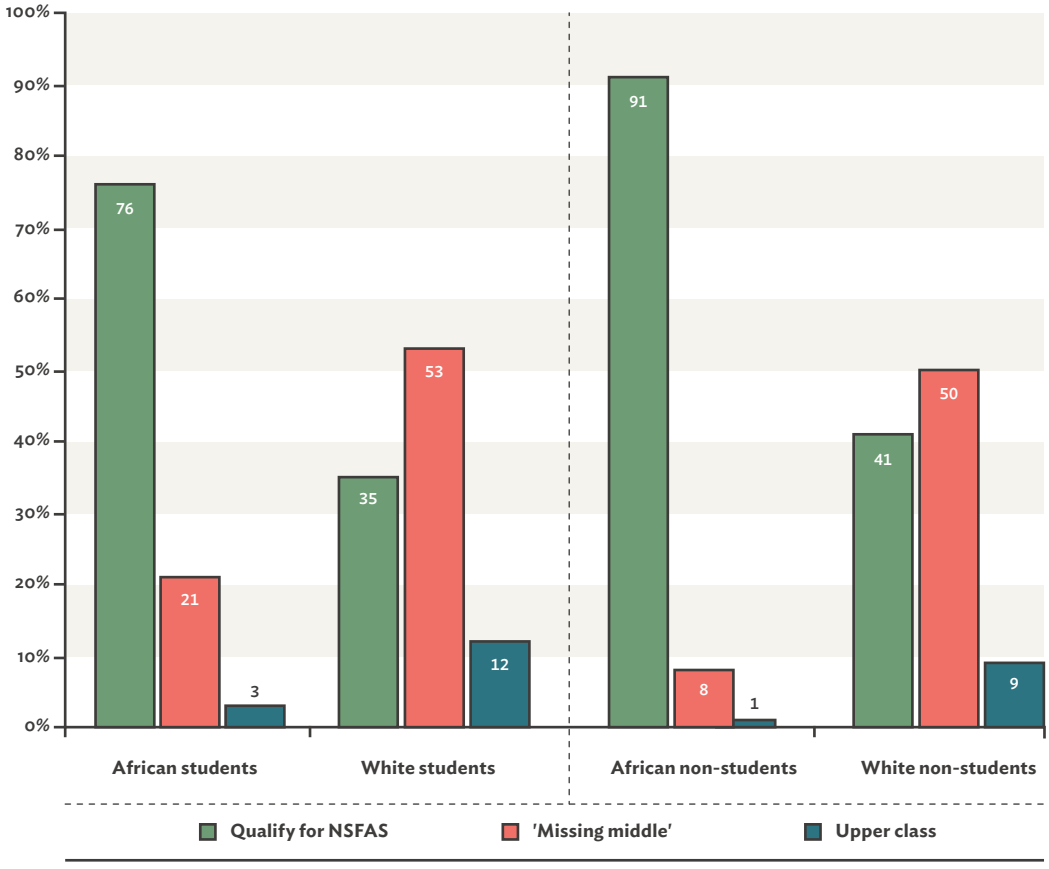
PHOTOGRAPH BY **BANTER SNAPS ON UNSPLASH**



If we disaggregate the student body according to population demographics and then funding needs (Figure 8), it is noteworthy that about 35% of white student respondents who indicated their household income would be eligible for NSFAS funding based on their household income. However, by comparison, 76% of African students would be eligible for NSFAS funding based on their household income. White students (53%) were the most likely to be from households that were considered part of the 'missing middle'. Compared to African students, white students were about four times more likely to be from households that were considered upper class. African students were prominent in the 'missing middle' class bracket, but it is clear that a greater proportion of African students fell in the NSFAS funding bracket. Comparing students to non-students, it is evident that high proportions of non-students (higher than student proportions) would qualify for tertiary education funding if they were registered as students – both African and white non-students. This highlights how important support measures for accessing tertiary education are to respondents from poorer households.

Figure 8: The distribution of funding needs among students and non-students, by population group GCRO

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18)





PHOTOGRAPH BY **NESA BY MAKERS ON UNSPLASH**

4

ACCESS TO SELECTED RESOURCES AND ASSETS

Of the students in Gauteng in QoL V (2017/18), 79% accessed the internet nearly every day while 15% accessed the internet less frequently and 6% did not access the internet at all. The proportion of students who do not access the internet declined from 19% in QoL III (2013/14) to 11% in QoL IV (2015/16) and further to 6% in QoL V. From the QoL V survey, about 7% of African students did not access the internet at all and were therefore the most deprived of internet access. This compared to 2% of coloured, 6% of Indian/Asian and 1% of white students who did not access the internet at all.

> *White students were much more likely to access the internet through home networks or through mobile data on their laptops than other population groups*

Student respondents in the QoL V survey accessed the internet on a variety of platforms and facilities, mostly on their cell phones or tablets (94%), their laptops (55%), at university (49%), a Wi-Fi hotspot or free public Wi-Fi (43%), at an internet café (41%) or at home (39%). Although accessing internet was spread over various platforms, disparities were evident between population groups (Figure 9). White students were much more likely to access the internet through home networks or through mobile data on their laptops than other population groups. African and coloured students were the most likely to access the internet through internet cafés or Wi-Fi hotspots and free public Wi-Fi. All students have similar, and high, access to the internet via mobile data on their cell phones or tablets and through their learning institutions.

Figure 9: Students' internet access by population group

GCRO

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18)

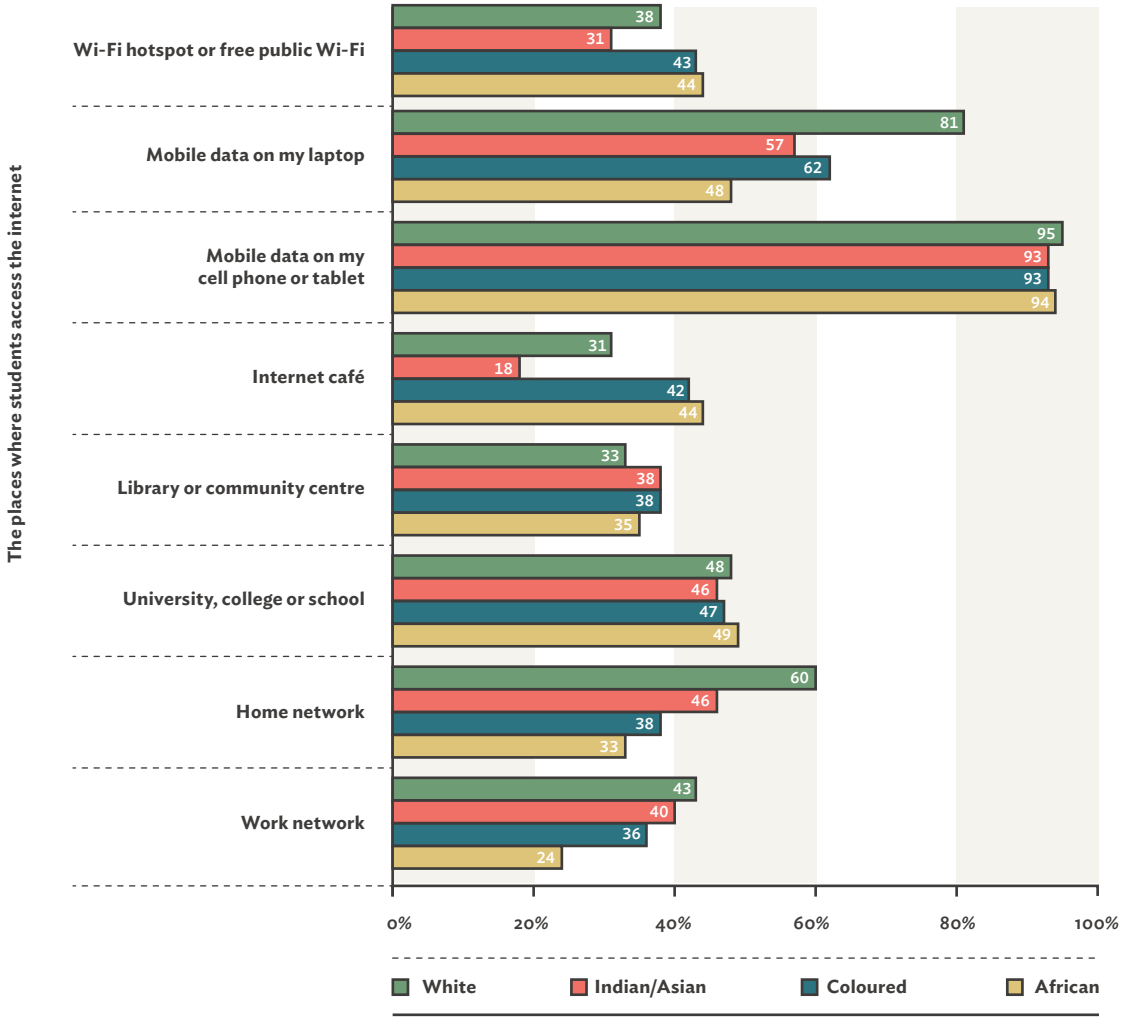
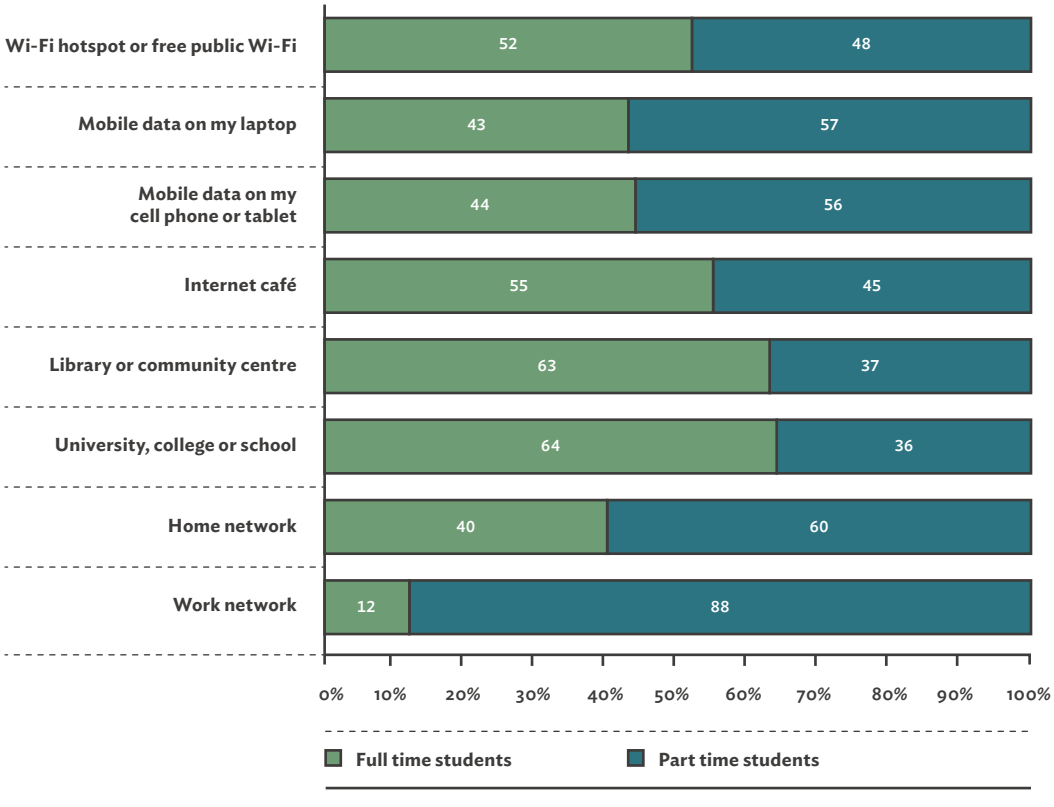


Figure 10 shows interesting, and somewhat expected, variations in the ways that the internet is accessed by full time and part time students. Full time students were the dominant group to access the internet through university, college or school or a library or community centre because full time tertiary education institutions provide easy access to these facilities. Part time students were much more likely to access the internet through their work or home networks – where they likely spend most of their day or their time studying. These figures point to ways in which access to the internet for different student groups can be supported or tailored to suit different study times and objectives.

The use of and access to the internet was inevitably related to the assets owned by a student and their household. Here we consider access to a cell phone, a computer or laptop (all in good working order) and a car by population group and compare it to non-students (Figure 11). All students had similar access to cell phones, at least in their household. Access to a personal computer, laptop or tablet and access to the internet at home varied significantly between population groups. African students were the least likely to have access to a personal computer, laptop or tablet in their household (68%) while white students were the most likely to have such access (94%). Students had better access to these assets than non-students, but a much higher proportion of African and coloured students had access to a personal computer, laptop or tablet compared to African and coloured non-students.

Figure 10: Differences in accessing the internet by full time and part time students

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18)

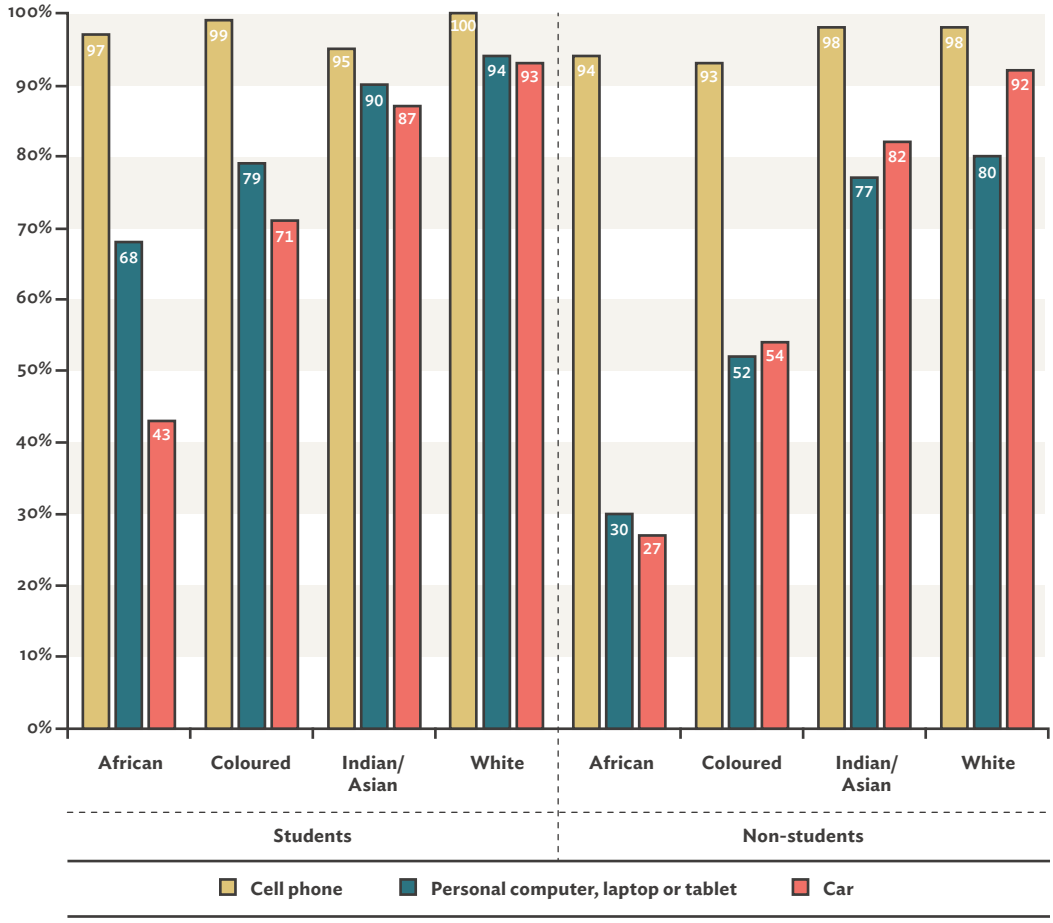


About 55% of students were from households with access to a car that was in good working order (compared to 39% of non-students), but access to a car in the household was not equal across population groups (Figure 11). About 93% of white students had access to a car in their household, compared to only 43% of African students. On all measures, students remained more likely to have had access to a car in their households than non-students, but this does not mean that students were able to (or chose to) use the car(s) that were available to their household to travel to their learning institution. The mobility of students is considered in more detail in section 5.

Figure 11: Students' access to assets by population group

GCRO

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18)





PHOTOGRAPH BY **BRUCHIN NOEKA ON UNSPLASH**

5

TRANSPORT CHOICES

The transport options available to students and the transport choices students make are very important because they hold financial implications as well as implications for academic performance caused by their mode of transport's poor reliability and long, exhausting journeys. Here, we analyse only the responses from students (full time and part time) who indicated that the purpose of their most frequent trip was to go to the place where they study (n = 1050). This ensures that any transport-related information extracted from our QoL V student sample was directly related to how students got to and from their learning institutions and in turn allows us to begin to understand the mobility of students in Gauteng. The sub-selection of respondents meant that the samples for coloured and Indian/Asian students were too small to use for reliable results and were excluded when we disaggregate between population groups. When comparing these results to non-students, we only consider those non-students whose most frequent trip was to go to work.

> *The use of taxis or private motorised transport dominated across the surveys ... using trains and buses for the longest part of trips was not a common choice*

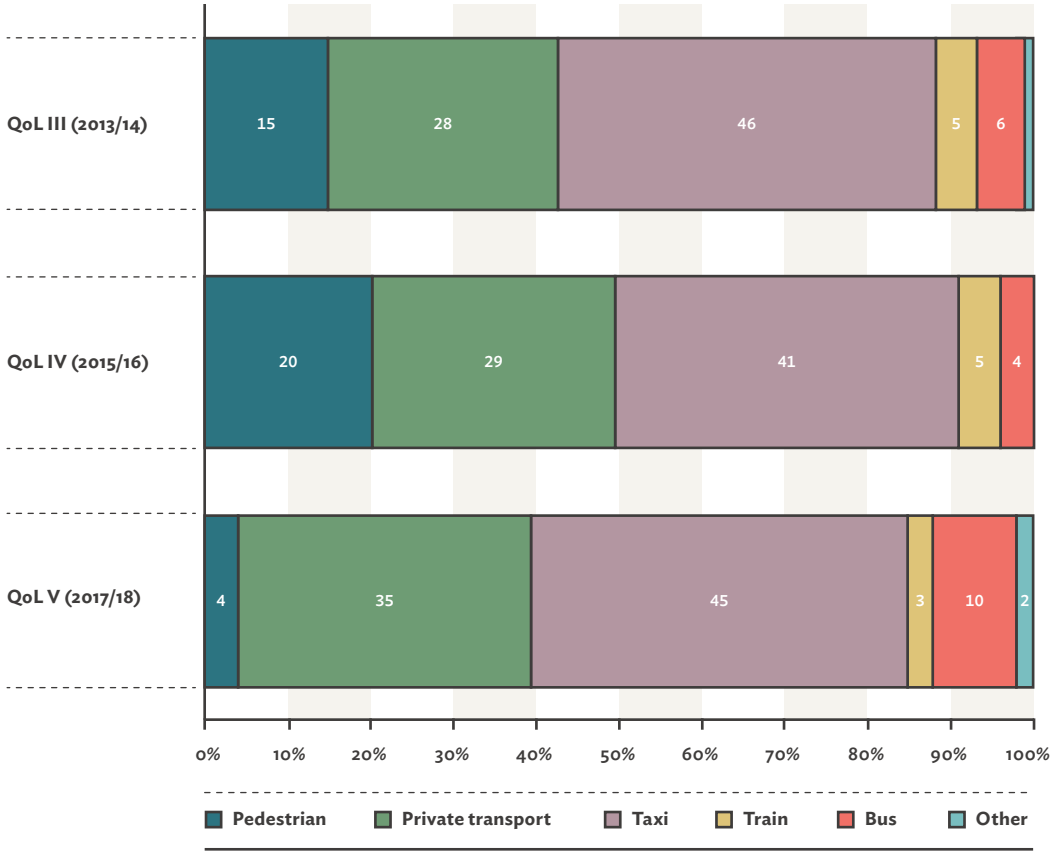
The modes of transport that students used for the longest part of their trip to the place where they study can also be compared between QoL surveys (Figure 12). The use of taxis (44% on average) or private motorised transport[2] (31% on average) dominated across the surveys. Using trains (5% on average) and buses (7% on average) for the longest part of trips was not a common choice for students in Gauteng.

In the QoL V (2017/18) survey, there was a significant reduction in the proportion of students who walked the longest part of their trip to the place where they study, from 15% in QoL III and 20% in QoL IV to only 4% in QoL V. Further investigation is required to understand the changes in the proportion of pedestrians.

Figure 12: Modes of transport for the longest part of students' trips to the place where they study in Gauteng

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DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL III (2013/14), QoL IV (2015/16) and QoL V (2017/18)



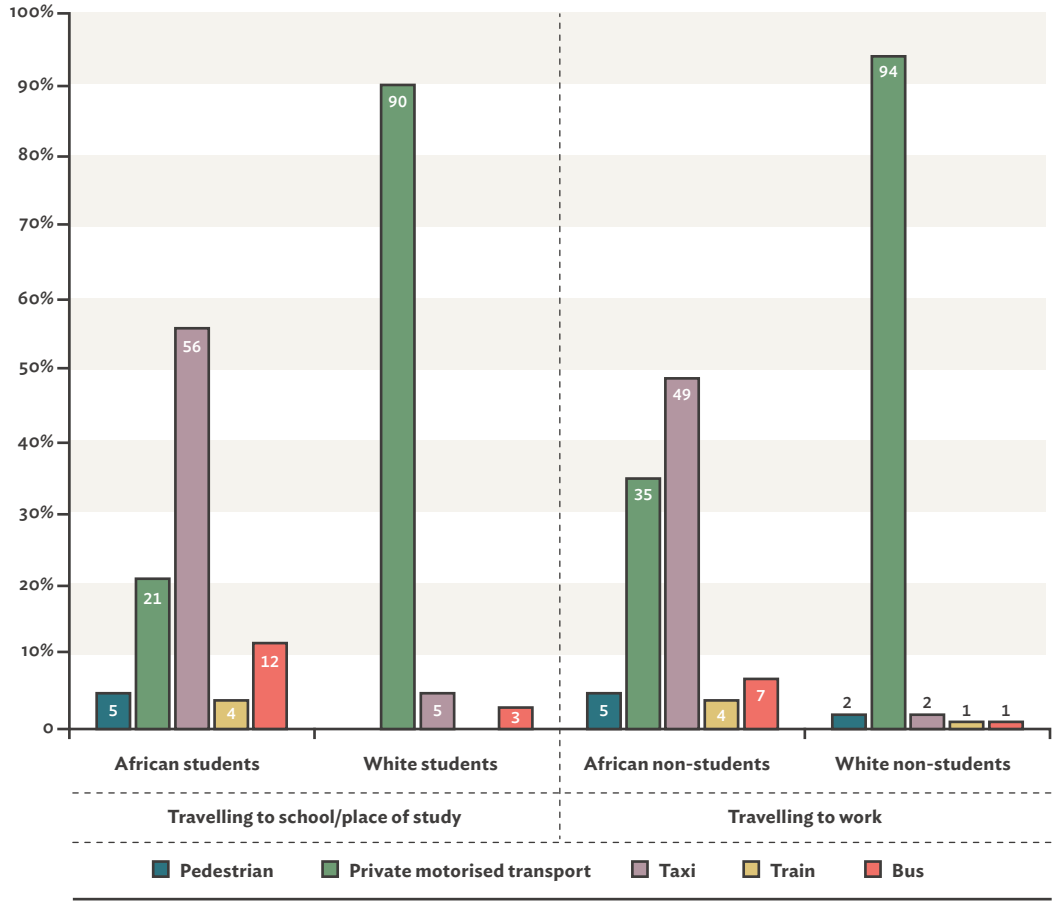
2 The private motorised transport category includes those students who indicated that the mode of transport for the longest part of their trip is a motorbike, a car as driver, a car as passenger, or as a passenger in a lift club.

Figure 13 shows significant variations between African and white students in terms of the modes of transport that they used for the longest part of their trips to the places where they study. For example, private motorised transport for the longest part of their trips was much more prevalent among white (90%) compared to African (21%) students. African students were more likely to walk, cycle or use a taxi than white students. Similarly, white non-students travelling to work were the most likely to use private motorised transport (94%) and relied very little on other modes of transport. African non-students were the most likely to use a taxi to get to work (49%), but also relied on a variety of other transport modes, especially private motorised transport (35%). With respect to all transport modes, private motorised transport and taxis were the dominant transport modes among African and white students. Students were the least likely to use trains or buses for the longest part of their trips to the places where they study. This indicates the importance of road infrastructure to facilitate mobility among students in similar ways to non-students.

GCRO

Figure 13: Transport modes used by students for the longest part of their trips to the places where they study, compared to transport modes used by non-students for the longest part of their trips to work

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18)

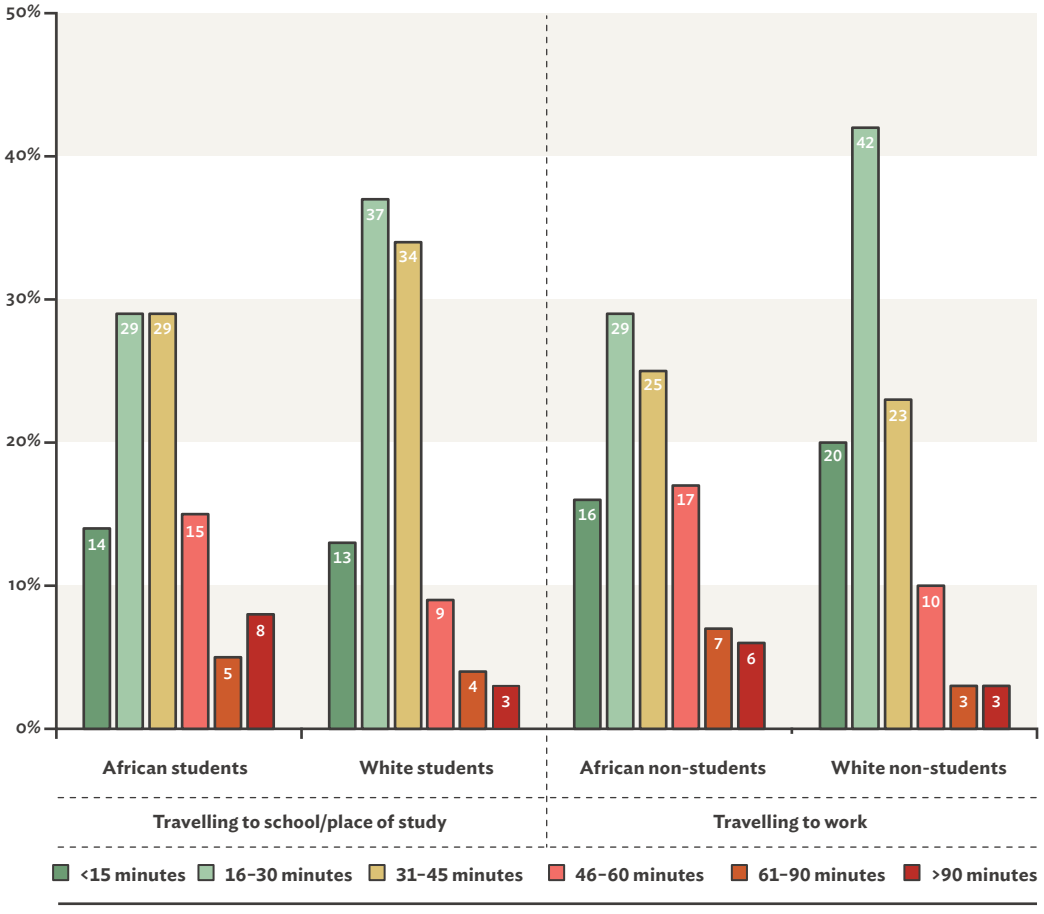


Travel times for students are also important to consider. In the QoL V (2017/18) survey, only 14% of students travelled less than 15 minutes, 30% of students travelled between 16 and 30 minutes, and 30% of students travelled between 31 and 45 minutes during their most frequent trip. This means that about 26% of students travelled longer than 45 minutes to their place of study. Travel times varied slightly between students and non-students (Figure 14). Only 29% of African students travelled between 16 and 30 minutes during their most frequent trip, compared to 37% of white students. African students (14%) were slightly more likely to travel less than 15 minutes to their place of study than white students (13%).

Figure 14: Travel times for students by population group

GCRO

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18)



The travel times do not provide evidence of significant advantage or disadvantage, but might rather be an expression of choice than the result of circumstances. For example, white students were more likely to travel between 31 and 45 minutes than African students, but that is probably due to their ability and choice to live in decentralised areas and make use of private transport. Travel times for students travelling to their place of study, as compared to non-students travelling to work, are most likely a function of the different distributions (in terms of number and density) of tertiary education facilities compared to job opportunities. This does suggest that students could face unique difficulties in getting to and from the places where they study, especially when also considering the irregular times of classes, exams and study time (sometimes late into the evening or on weekends).

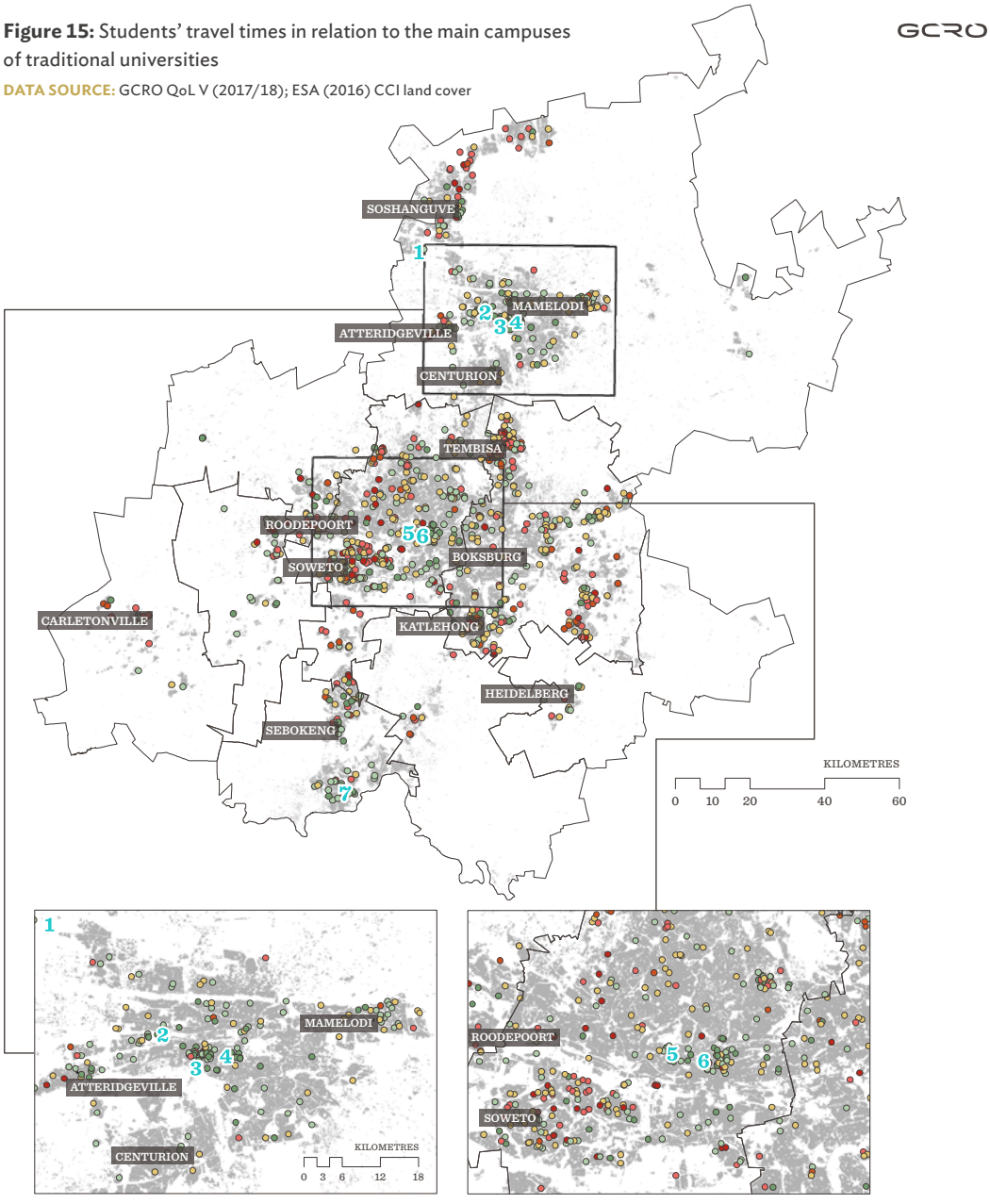
Our spatial perspective of travel times for students (Figure 15) indicates that travel times vary irrespective of the relative distance to the main campuses of traditional universities in Gauteng. For example, some students who were in relatively isolated locations (such as Carletonville, Sebokeng and Soshanguve) had shorter travel times than those students in more central locations. This suggests that these students made use of a variety of tertiary learning facilities (like branches of main campuses) or tertiary learning options (like distance learning) that were closer to their homes and still suited their needs. The map also suggests that students who travelled more than 30 minutes during their most frequent trip include students who lived in decentralised, low-density residential areas around the province which were not always very far away from the main campuses of traditional universities in the province, like Roodepoort and other northern suburbs of Johannesburg. These students might access tertiary education further away from their homes (like students travelling from Johannesburg to Pretoria) or the map indicates that trips through suburbs to the central locations of main campuses are relatively short but take a long time.

> ***Some students who were in relatively isolated locations had shorter travel times than those students in more central locations***

Figure 15: Students' travel times in relation to the main campuses of traditional universities

GCRO

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18); ESA (2016) CCI land cover





PHOTOGRAPH BY **MUHAMMAD RIZWAN ON UNSPLASH**

6

SATISFACTION, SENSE OF WELL-BEING AND QUALITY OF LIFE

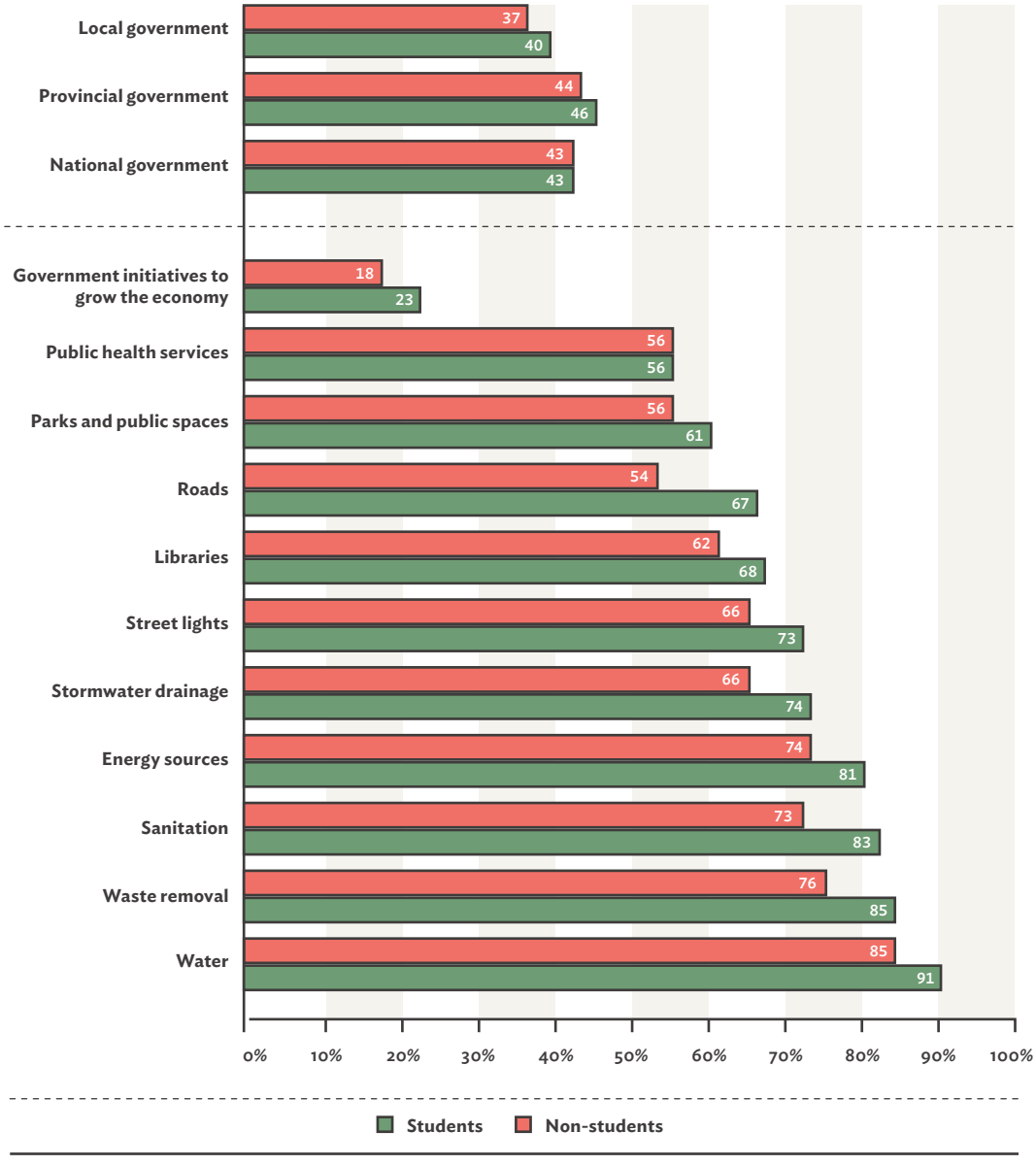
Satisfaction, sense of well-being and quality of life are useful overall indicators of the objective and subjective conditions in students' lives and how students compare with non-students. Compared to the rest of the QoL V (2017/18) sample, students were on average 6 percentage points more satisfied with a range of services, facilities and spheres of government (Figure 16). On some measures, there were negligible differences between students and non-students, such as satisfaction with public health facilities and satisfaction with national government. Satisfaction with services provides an indication of the relatively privileged spaces that students inhabit (areas where roads and services are functioning well), but it is interesting to note that this does not translate into similarly high levels of satisfaction with different spheres of government. For students and non-students, satisfaction with government remains lower than satisfaction with various services and facilities.

> *For students and non-students, satisfaction with government remains lower than satisfaction with various services and facilities*

Figure 16: Comparing satisfaction with various services, facilities and spheres of government between students and non-students

GCRO

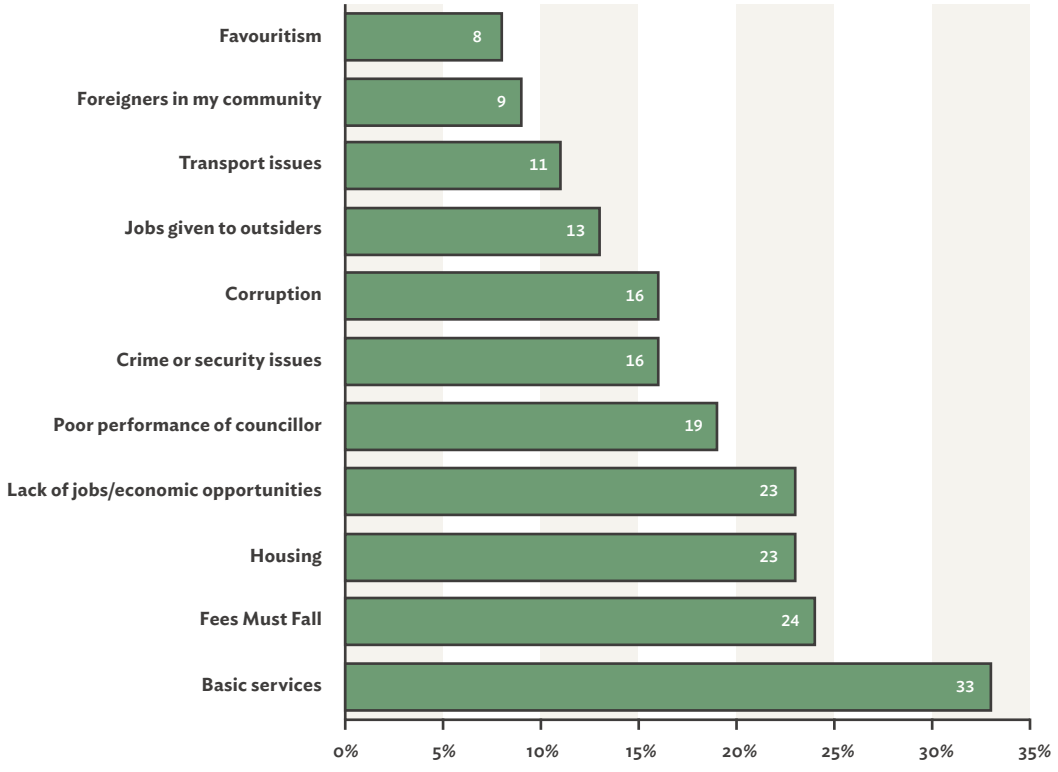
DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18)



Only about 7% of all students in the QoL V (2017/18) survey participated in a protest in the year preceding the interview,[3] compared to 9% of non-students. Full time students (8%) were slightly more likely than part time students (6%) to participate in a protest. About 6% of students identified in the QoL IV (2015/16) survey participated in a protest, compared to only 3% in the QoL III (2013/14) survey. Interviews for the QoL IV survey took place between July 2015 and May 2016, which is also the year coinciding with major mass protest action associated with the student Fees Must Fall campaign, and therefore we draw on QoL IV for the insights in Figure 17. The most frequently cited reason given by students for participating in a protest was 'basic services' (33%). This was followed by 'Fees Must Fall' (24%), housing (23%) and lack of jobs/economic opportunities (23%).[4] This shows that even though Fees Must Fall protests were significant during this time, students also participated in protest action because of a variety of other concerns in their lives. It should also be noted that only an estimated 1.5% of the entire student sample participated in Fees Must Fall protests.

Figure 17: Reasons why students participated in protests during the year preceding the interview

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL IV (2015/16)



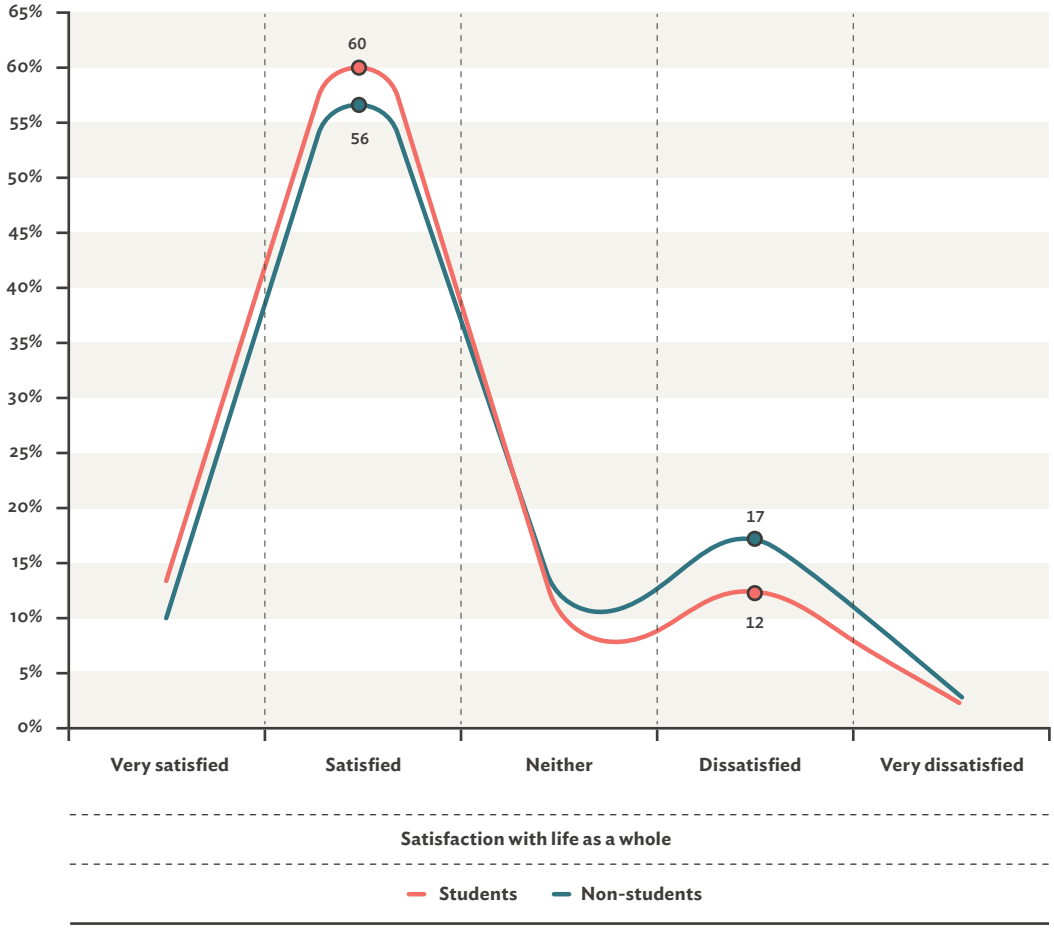
3 Interviews for the QoL V survey took place between November 2017 and September 2018.

4 The reason for protesting was asked for all protests that the respondent participated in, so multiple mentions per respondent were possible. Given the small sample of responses, these findings are only suggestive of students' protest action.

The Quality of Life surveys also inquired about respondents' headspace in terms of their satisfaction with their life as a whole, as well as their mental well-being (interpreted through feelings of happiness and depression). The response patterns for 'satisfaction with life as a whole' were very similar for students and non-students (Figure 18). However, a higher proportion of students were satisfied with their lives as a whole and a lower proportion of students were dissatisfied with their lives as a whole, compared to the non-student respondents.

Figure 18: Comparing satisfaction with life as a whole, between students and non-students

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18)



Furthermore, although the differences remain relatively small, students were more likely to respond positively on various other measures of physical and mental well-being (Table 4). Students were especially more likely to indicate that their health status hardly ever or never prevents them from doing daily work or from taking part in social activities. On measures of mental well-being, the differences between students and non-students were much smaller. On average, students experienced feelings of depression and hopelessness less often than non-students, and students were more likely to have emotional support than non-students.

This data demonstrates that in addition to material comforts – as seen by the fact that more than 90% of students lived in formal housing with adequate services – students' physical health and mental outlook echoed this experience. In other words, students were typically relatively well off and experienced a relative level of comfort in their lives greater than that of non-students.

Table 4: Comparing measures of physical and mental well-being between students and non-students GCRO

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18)

Measure of physical or mental well-being	Full time students	Part time students	Non-students
My health status lately has been *excellent or good*	97%	98%	92%
My health status *hardly ever or never* prevents me from doing daily work	84%	83%	74%
My health status *hardly ever or never* prevents me from taking part in social activities	83%	83%	75%
On *a few days or not at all,* I have little interest or pleasure in doing things	91%	90%	91%
On *a few days or not at all,* I feel depressed or hopeless	92%	90%	89%
I *have someone* to talk to when I need emotional support	85%	87%	82%

Students reported higher levels of general satisfaction than non-students. A useful way to reiterate this point is through the quality of life index. The index comprises a range of objective and subjective questions (58 in total) from the QoL survey and provides an opportunity to compare the overall quality of life of students with that of non-students. The maximum achievable score is 10 and a higher score indicates a better overall quality of life.
The quality of life index scores for all students saw a similar increase between QoL III and QoL V as the quality of life index scores for all non-students (Table 5), but the quality of life of all students remains much higher than that of non-students. Importantly, the high quality of life index scores do not negate the challenges to completing tertiary education that students face, but rather signifies that registered students come from much better living circumstances that non-students which ultimately set them up for success, and it signifies the added value of tertiary education on living conditions if some of these students already have qualifications.

GCRO

Table 5: Quality of life index scores for students and non-students

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL III (2013/14) and QoL V (2017/18)

Quality of life index	Students	Non-students
QoL III (2013/14)	6.49	6.08
QoL V (2017/18)	6.65	6.25

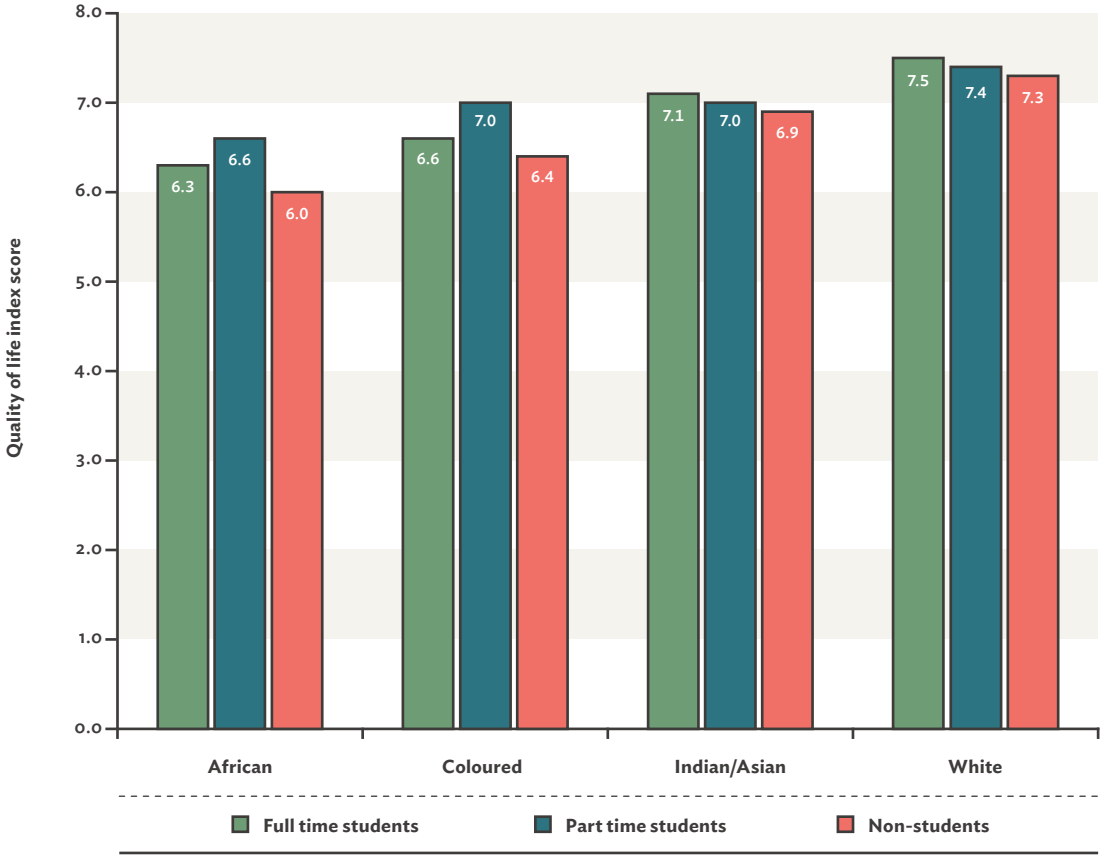
> *The quality of life index scores for all students saw a similar increase between QoL III and QoL V as the index scores for all non-students*

The differences in quality of life between population groups and student types (Figure 19) are all significant and meaningful even though some differences seem very small. For African and coloured respondents, the difference in quality of life between students and non-students was more pronounced than for Indian/Asian and white respondents. Part time African and coloured students had particularly higher quality of life scores than full time students and non-students of the same population group. There was very little difference between the quality of life scores for Indian/Asian students and non-students.

White full time students had the highest quality of life scores of all respondents, higher than both white part time students and white non-students. These scores on the quality of life index indicate two important things. First, students were generally in privileged positions compared to non-students as they scored higher on the quality of life index. Second, despite a significant degree of racial inequality (emphasised in sections 3 and 4) that exists within the student sample, the gaps between population groups on this measure were smaller among students than non-students.

Figure 19: Quality of life index for students and non-students by population group

DATA SOURCE: GCRO QoL V (2017/18)





PHOTOGRAPH BY **KATE KALVACH ON UNSPLASH**

7

CONCLUSION

Students, as demonstrated through the QoL survey data, are a diverse group of people from all walks of life. This data brief used various lenses to understand the demographic profile, living conditions, socio-economic status, access to assets, transport choices, and satisfaction, sense of well-being and quality of life of students. The data brief also compared full time and part time students, African and white students on some measures, as well as students to non-students. The key findings that are highlighted in this data brief include:

- Racial inequality exists among students (in terms of household income and access to assets), but, on average, students have a higher socio-economic status compared to non-students.
- The need for financial support for tertiary education remains significant among the current student sample, but more so for respondents from poorer households who are not students but might want to pursue tertiary education.
- There were substantial social class differences between part time and full time students. Part time students were older and from households with higher monthly household incomes.
- On various measures, including the quality of life index, students were better off than non-students.

Higher education has the potential to help reduce inequality and improve social mobility in the Gauteng City-Region, but significant challenges remain with regards to completing tertiary education qualifications and these constraints should be recognised and addressed. It is especially important to provide disadvantaged youth access to tertiary education.

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