

Gaps Associated with the Timing of Students' Orientation Programs in Two Institutions of Higher Learning in South Africa

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ABSTRACT Indubitably, efficient timing of the students' orientation programs could be a panacea to the current challenges of student adjustment and retention. This paper investigated gaps associated in timing of students' orientation programs in two South African universities. The study adopted a mixed method approach. Qualitative data was sought from in-depth interviews of four purposively selected staff and quantitative data was gathered from semi-structured questionnaires administered to three hundred and fifty randomly selected first-year students. Findings indicate poor participation in the orientation program owing to admission delays. Furthermore, short duration of orientation led to low comprehension due to information overload. These findings imply that poor scheduling of orientation is not meeting the students' individual needs. The study recommends that the staff handling orientation consider alternative strategies such as extended orientation to allow time to accomplish orientation objectives, and use of visual online activities to augment time for face-to-face orientation.