

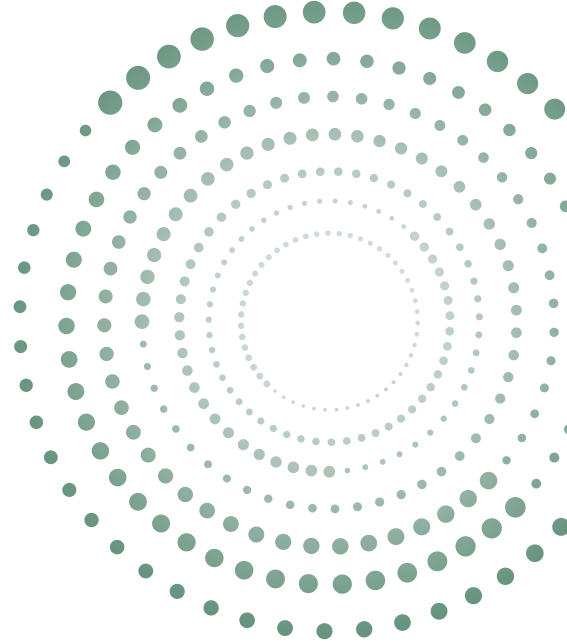
FACT SHEET ON GENDER FOR STUDENTS IN PSET INSTITUTIONS: 2023



higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





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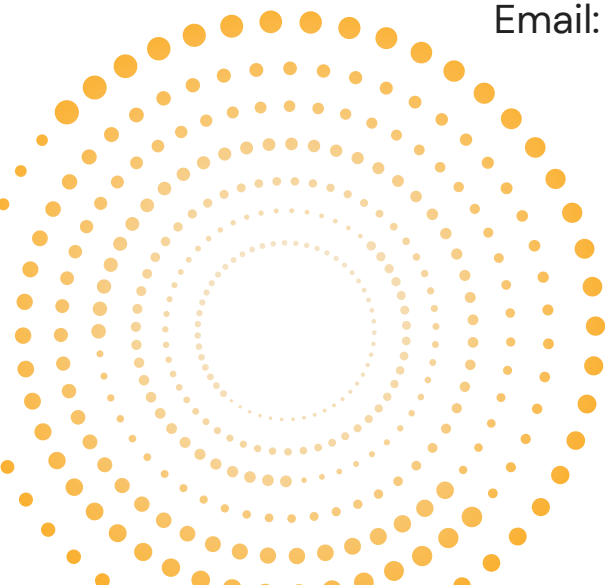


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1. BACKGROUND

The Department of Higher Education and Training (the Department) publishes annual statistics on Post-School Education and Training (PSET) institutions, including enrolment and graduate data disaggregated by gender. These statistics support the Department in monitoring progress toward improved access to education. However, in-depth analysis of gender-specific trends remains limited. Gender-based analysis of access to PSET institutions is an important indicator, as it reflects both the extent of educational provision and the level of gender equality in access to the PSET system.

According to Statistics South Africa's *Quarterly Labour Force Survey* (Q4:2023), the national unemployment rate was 32.1%, with women experiencing a higher rate (34.0%) as compared to males (30.1%). The unemployment rate for women has been consistently higher than that of males, and persistent gender gap highlights the challenges women face in the labour market. The survey also revealed that 3.3 million youth aged 15-24 years were not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) during the same period, and this translated to a NEET rate of 33.0%. Female youth were more affected, with a NEET rate of 33.8% compared to 32.1% for their male counterparts.

In light of these statistics, this factsheet will explore the patterns of enrolment by gender across various PSET programmes. The factsheet will be produced annually, subject to the availability of credible enrolment and graduate/completion data from PSET institutions.

2. PURPOSE OF THE FACT SHEET

This Fact Sheet provides an analysis of the gender of students in PSET institutions, in particular the type of programmes/qualifications they enrol and complete/graduate in. The analysis of participation in education by gender is crucial in monitoring progress towards attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) goals, particularly SDG 4 which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. The information contained in this factsheet will also serve as a monitoring tool to track the provision of PSET opportunities for this group of individuals.

3. METHODOLOGY

The 2023 data from 26 public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), 138 private HEIs, 50 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, 9 Community Education and Training (CET) colleges and 161 registered private colleges was used for this Fact Sheet and sourced from the following:

- a) The Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS), which contains data provided to the Department by public HEIs;
- b) Annual reports submitted by registered private HEIs;
- c) Unit level record data submitted by the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges;
- d) The Community Education and Training Management Information System (CETMIS), which contains enrolment data for CET colleges;
- e) Annual Survey data submitted to the Department which contains data for registered private colleges; and
- f) The National Examinations Database, which contains administrative data about student examinations and certification for the General Education and Training Certificate-Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC-ABET), the National Certificate (Vocational) [NC(V)] and the N part-qualifications.

4. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Total enrolment across public and private Post-School Education and Training (PSET) institutions reached 2.1 million, with females representing the majority at 62.6% (1.3 million), and males at 37.3% (792.8 thousand). Female enrolment exceeded 62% in almost all sub-sectors, except private colleges, where male enrolment was higher (58.3%).

When it comes to graduates/completions, a total of 354 707¹ completed their qualification or part-qualification in public and private HEIs, TVET, CET and private colleges. Females accounted for two thirds of all completions (66.0% or 234 106) compared to 34.0% (120 499) males. Across all PSET sub-sectors, the proportion of female graduates was higher, with the highest shares observed in CET colleges (77.6%) and TVET colleges (72.4%).

¹ Completions for TVET and private colleges refer to N3, N6, and NC(V) Level 4 qualifications, whereas for CET colleges, completions are limited to the GETC: ABET Level 4 qualification.

In public HEIs, higher female participation was observed in all fields of study, and the most noticeable difference was in the Education field of study, where 74.0% were females as opposed to 26.0% of males in the same field. The proportion of enrolment in the SET field of study was similar for females and males (51.7% and 48.3% respectively). Females' enrolment was higher than that of males in almost all qualification categories (except Doctoral degrees), where males' enrolment was slightly higher.

Almost two-thirds of graduates in public HEIs were females (65.4%) compared to 34.6% males. A higher proportion of graduates across all fields of study were females. The most significant gender gaps were in the Other Humanities and Education fields, with 23 790 and 22 065 more female graduates than males. Doctoral degrees were the only qualification category where male graduates (51.8%) slightly outnumbered females (48.1%).

In private HEIs, female enrolment was higher (62.1%), compared to 37.6% for males. Similar trends were observed among graduates, with females comprising 62.5% and males 37.4%. The majority of both male and female students enrolled and graduated in the field of Business, Commerce, and Management Studies. Females showed a strong preference for certain fields of study compared to males. For instance, enrolment in Education, Training, and Development was dominated by females (88.4%).

Similarly, females made up 87.2% of enrolments in Health Sciences and Social Services, with similar proportions observed in graduates' data. In contrast, fields such as Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology; Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences; Physical Planning and Construction; and Agriculture and Nature Conservation were male-dominated in both enrolments and graduates.

In TVET colleges, females accounted for 63.9% of total enrolments, while males made up 36.1%. Female enrolment was higher in almost all programmes, except for skills programmes, where males proportion was higher (62.6%) compared to 37.4% for females. The majority of female students enrolled in and completed the Report 191 N6 Management Assistant programme, while the majority of male students completed the N6 Public Management programme. At the NC(V) Level 4, most female students enrolled in and completed Office Administration, whereas most males enrolled in Electrical Infrastructure and Construction but completions were higher in Office Administration.

In private colleges, a slightly higher proportion of males (58.3%) enrolled compared to 41.7% of females. However, with the completions, females were in the majority (58.2%) compared to 41.8% males. The majority of male students enrolled in NC(V), Report 191 and skills programmes, while female students had a higher proportion in occupational qualifications and Report 550/NSC.

In CET colleges, females comprised 70.9% of total enrolments, while males accounted for 29.1%. Notable gender differences were observed in enrolments for GETC: ABET Level 4 and Grade 12, with 24 698 and 20 529 more females enrolled than males. When it comes to completions, 77.6% females completed GETC: ABET Level 4 while males made up 22.4% of total completions.

5. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIs)

5.1 Enrolment in public HEIs

Table 1: Number of students enrolled in public HEIs by major field of study and gender, 2022 and 2023

Major field of study	2022			2023		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Science, Engineering and Technology	161 310	157 656	318 966	164 867	154 255	319 122
Business and Management	162 404	103 217	265 621	168 653	102 261	270 914
Education	143 122	49 687	192 809	137 132	48 160	185 292
Other Humanities	202 613	97 452	300 065	201 335	94 583	295 918
Total	669 448	408 012	1 077 768*	671 988	399 258	1 071 715*

Source: HEMIS database 2022 and 2023. Data for 2023 was extracted in November 2024.

Note 1: *Total enrolment for 2022 and 2023 includes students with unspecified gender (308 and 469 respectively).

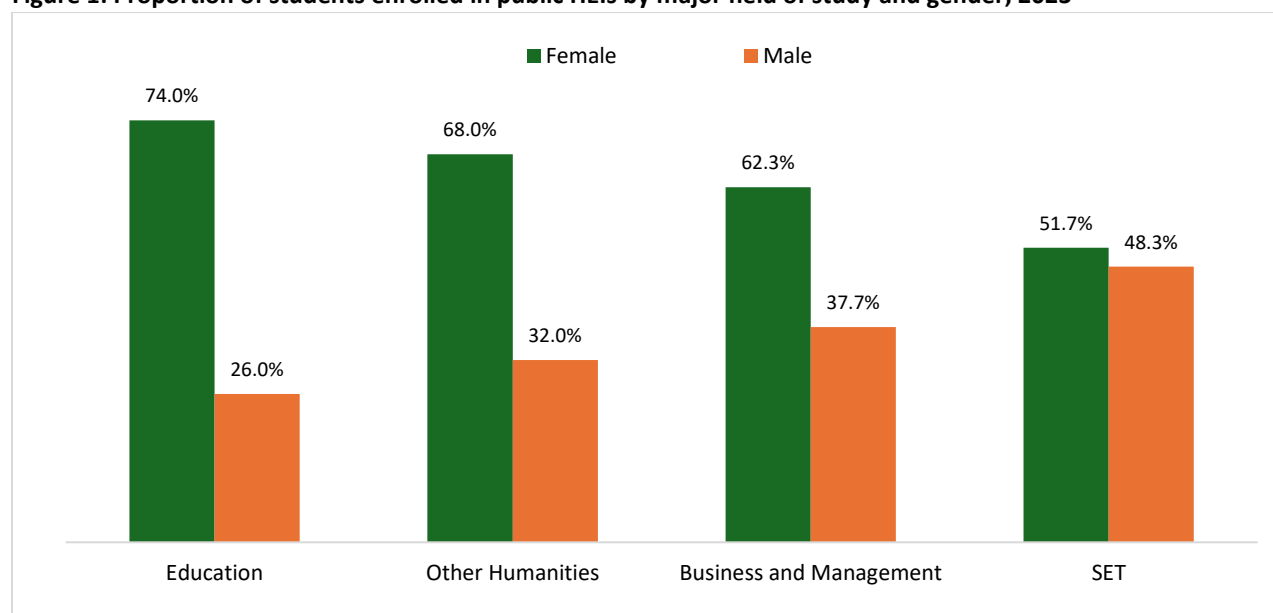
Note 2: As a result of rounding off, numbers may not necessarily add up to totals.

In 2023, a total of 1 071 715 students were enrolled in public Higher Education Institutions, representing a 0.6% decline (6 053 students) compared to 2022 (1 077 768). This decrease was primarily driven by a reduction in male enrolment, which declined by 8 784 students, and declines were recorded across all fields of study. In contrast, female enrolment increased by 2 540 during the same period, although declines were observed in the fields of Education and Other Humanities see Table 1.

In 2023, female enrolment exceeded that of males by 272 730 students. Females outnumbered males across all fields of study, with enrolment for females constituting 62.7% (671 988) of total enrolments, while males accounted for 37.3% (399 258). The most significant gender gap was observed in the fields of Other Humanities and Education, where female enrolment surpassed that of males by 106 752 and 88 972 students respectively. The smallest gender difference was recorded in the Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) field, with 10 612 more females than males enrolled.

Figure 1 further highlights the concentration of female students in specific fields of study. Notably, more than 70% of students enrolled in Education field of study were females. Similarly, higher female representation was observed in the Other Humanities and Business and Management fields of study.

Figure 1: Proportion of students enrolled in public HEIs by major field of study and gender, 2023



Source: 2023 HEMIS database, data extracted in November 2024.

Note: The proportions might not add up to 100% due to unspecified gender.

Table 2: Number of students enrolled in public HEIs by qualification category and gender, 2023

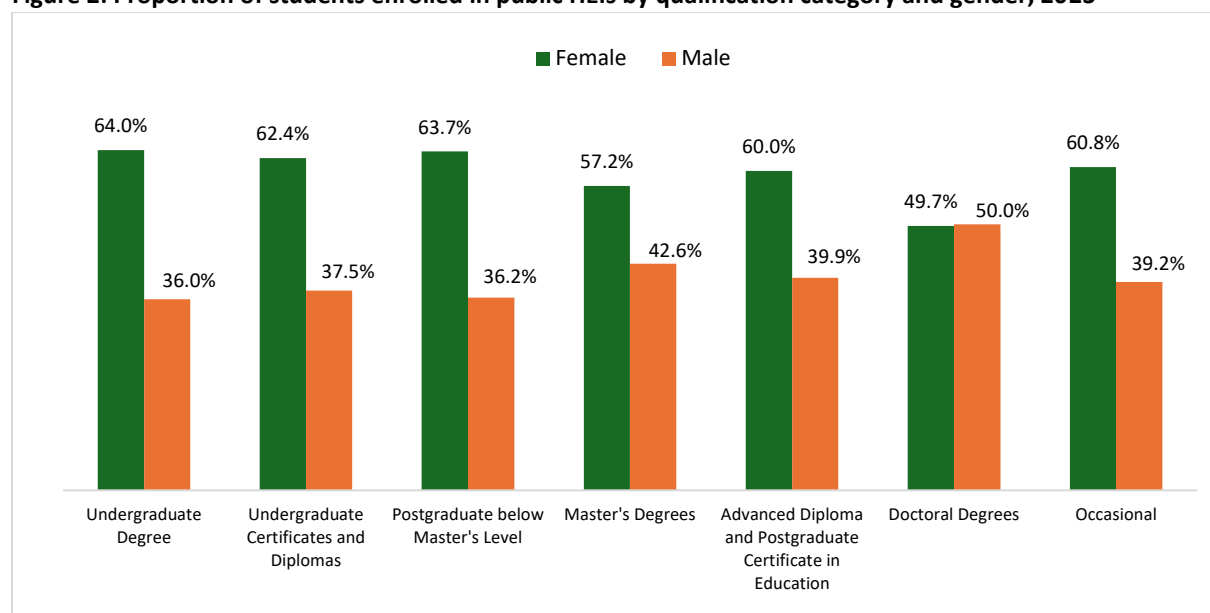
Qualification category	Female	Male	Unspecified	Total
Undergraduate Degree	378 722	212 809	239	591 531
Undergraduate Certificates and Diplomas	172 458	103 698	7	276 156
Postgraduate below Master's Level	47 671	27 096	36	74 767
Master's Degrees	34 494	25 698	103	60 192
Advanced Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate in Education	22 666	15 081	4	37 747
Doctoral Degrees	12 660	12 739	76	25 399
Occasional	3 317	2 137	4	5 454
Total	671 988	399 258	469	1 071 715

Source: HEMIS database 2021 and 2022. Data for 2022 was extracted in November 2023.

Note: As a result of rounding off, numbers may not necessarily add up to totals.

The majority of male and female students enrolled in undergraduate degrees, followed by undergraduate certificates and diplomas. The largest gender disparity was seen in undergraduate degrees, with 165 913 more female students enrolled than males. Doctoral degrees were the only qualification type where male enrolment slightly exceeded that of females (50.0% for males and 49.7% for females) (see Table 2 and Figure 2).

Figure 2: Proportion of students enrolled in public HEIs by qualification category and gender, 2023



Source: 2023 HEMIS database, data extracted in November 2024.

Note: The proportions might not add up to 100% due to unspecified gender.

5.2 Graduates from public HEIs

Table 3: Number of graduates in public HEIs by major field of study and gender, 2022 and 2023

Major field of study	2022				2023			
	Female	Male	Unspecified	Total	Female	Male	Unspecified	Total
SET	36 001	29 976	23	66 000	36 213	29 436	31	65 680
Business and Management	37 761	22 399	6	60 166	36 503	21 238	5	57 745
Education	31 385	10 139	5	41 530	31 312	9 247	3	40 562
Other Humanities	40 670	17 295	42	58 006	40 259	16 469	43	56 771
Total	145 816	79 811	75	225 702*	144 287	76 389	82	220 758**

Source: 2023 HEMIS database, data extracted in November 2024.

Note 1: As a result of rounding off, numbers may not necessarily add up to totals.

Note 2: *The total number of graduates for 2022 includes 75 students with unspecified gender.

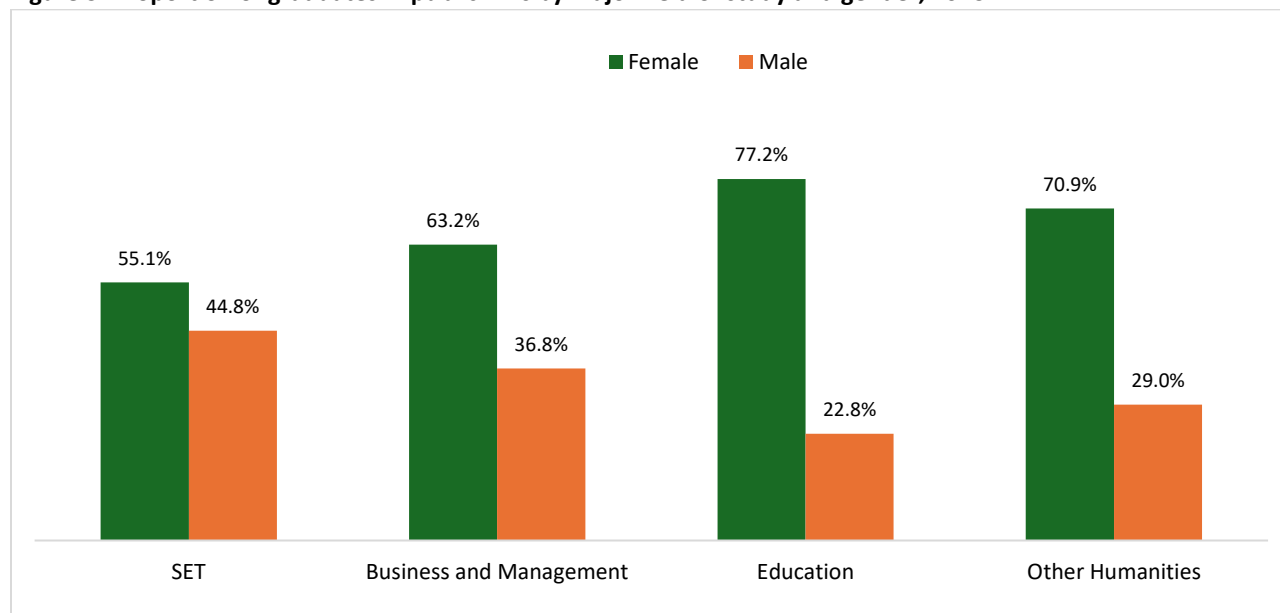
Note 3: ** The total number of graduates for 2023 includes 82 students with unspecified gender.

In 2023, a total of 220 758 students graduated from public HEIs, representing a 2.2% decrease (4 944 fewer graduates) compared to 2022 (225 702). Graduate numbers declined for both genders across nearly all fields, with the largest drop observed among males (reduction of 3 422 graduates between 2022 and 2023). Despite the overall decline, the number of female graduates in the Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) field saw a slight increase of 212 between 2022 and 2023.

In 2023, the number of female graduates exceeded that of males by 67 898. The majority of female graduates completed their qualifications in the Other Humanities (40 259 or 27.9%) and Business and Management (36 503 or 25.3%) fields of study. Among male graduates, over one-third completed qualifications in the Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) (29 436 or 38.5%), followed by Business and Management (21 238 or 27.8%) fields of study. Although the majority of males completed their qualifications in the SET field of study, the actual figures show that 6 777 more females graduated in this field than males.

Figure 3 shows that females had a higher proportion of graduates across all fields of study compared to males. The most significant gender gaps were in the Other Humanities and Education fields, with 23 790 and 22 065 more female graduates than males (see Table 3). Additionally, over three-quarters of Education graduates were female (77.2%), compared to 22.8% males. This pattern is similar to what was observed in enrolment data (see Figure 1).

Figure 3: Proportion of graduates in public HEIs by major field of study and gender, 2023



Source: 2023 HEMIS database, data extracted in November 2024.

Note: The proportions might not add up to 100% due to unspecified gender.

Table 4: Number of graduates in public HEIs by qualification category and gender, 2023

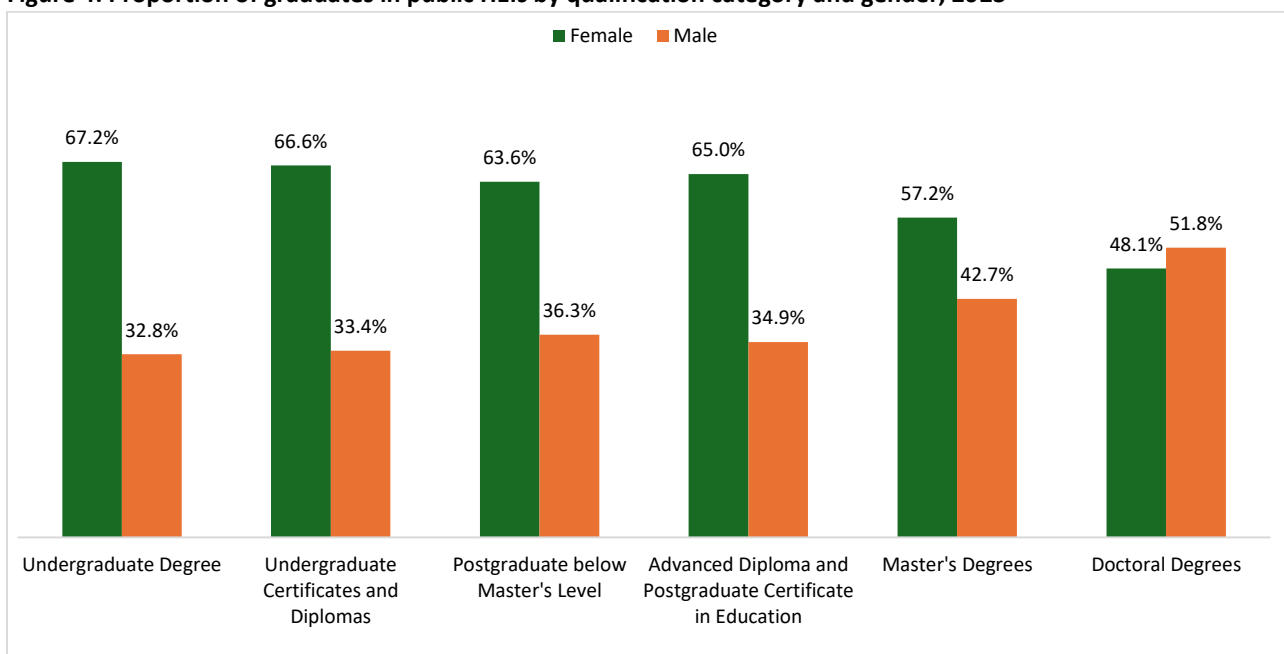
Qualification category	Female	Male	Unspecified	Total
Undergraduate Degree	65 789	32 097	41	97 927
Undergraduate Certificates and Diplomas	34 302	17 216	1	51 519
Postgraduate below Master's Level	22 408	12 779	24	35 211
Advanced Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate in Education	12 139	6 521	2	18 662
Master's Degrees	7 907	5 900	12	13 819
Doctoral Degrees	1 742	1 876	2	3 620
Total	144 287	76 389	82	220 758

Source: 2023 HEMIS database, data extracted in November 2024.

Note: As a result of rounding off, numbers may not necessarily add up to totals.

A large number of graduates obtained undergraduate degrees (97 927 or 44.4%), followed by undergraduate certificates and diplomas (51 519 or 23.3%). Large gender disparities were recorded in these qualification categories, with 33 692 and 17 086 more females than males. The smallest proportion of students obtained Doctoral degrees (3 620 or 1.6%), and this was the only qualification category where male graduates slightly outnumbered females – see Table 4 and Figure 4.

Figure 4: Proportion of graduates in public HEIs by qualification category and gender, 2023



Source: 2023 HEMIS database, data extracted in November 2024.

Note: The proportions might not add up to 100% due to unspecified gender.

5.3 Enrolment in private HEIs

Table 5: Number of students enrolled in private HEIs by NQF field and gender, 2023

NQF Field	Female	Male	Unspecified	Total
1. Agriculture and Nature Conservation	156	175	1	332
2. Culture and Arts	6 578	6 178	37	12 793
3. Business, Commerce and Management Studies	79 715	54 364	260	134 339
4. Communication Studies and Language	13 298	5 586	51	18 935
5. Education, Training and Development	40 987	5 294	102	46 383
6. Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology	1923	3928	0	5851
7. Human and Social Studies	7 465	5 297	71	12 833
8. Law, Military Science and Security	10 264	7 199	30	17 493
9. Health Sciences and Social Services	4 109	601	1	4 711
10. Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences	6 418	13 090	110	19 618
11. Services	6 601	5 464	102	12 167
12. Physical Planning and Construction	385	597	17	999
Total	177 899	107 773	782	286 454

Source: Annual reports submitted by PHEIs to DHET for the 2023 reporting year.

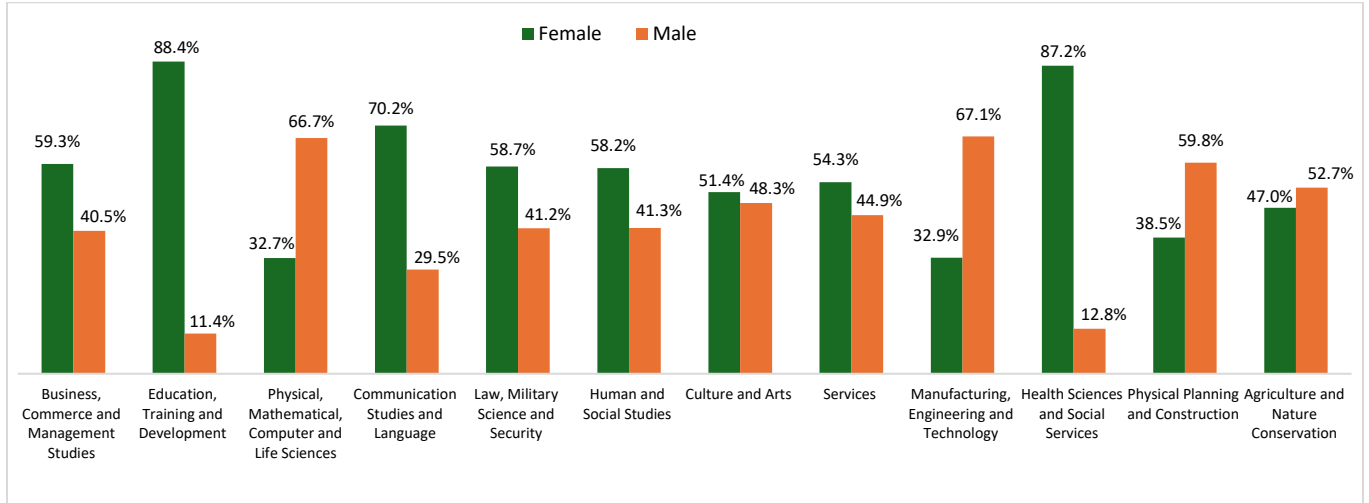
In 2023, the total number of students enrolled in private HEIs was 286 454, and female enrolment exceeded male enrolment by 70 126 students. A large proportion of students were females (62.1% or 177 899), compared to 37.6% (107 773) males.

More than two-thirds of female students were enrolled in Business, Commerce and Management Studies (79 715 or 44.8%) and Education, Training and Development (40 987 or 23.0%). On the other hand, more than half of male students enrolled in the Business, Commerce and Management Studies (54 364 or 50.4%) followed by Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences (13 090 or 12.1%) fields.

Although female enrolment was generally higher than male enrolment, the proportion of males was higher in fields such as Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology, Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences, Physical Planning and Construction, and Agriculture and Nature Conservation, as shown in Figure 5. Females on the other hand dominated the Education, Training and Development, Health Sciences and Social Services and Communication Studies and Language, where their proportions exceeded 70% - see Figure 5.

Large gender differences were observed in the Education, Training and Development and the Business, Commerce and Management Studies fields, where 35 693 and 25 351 more females were enrolled as compared to males (see Table 5 and Figure 5).

Figure 5: Proportion of students enrolled in private HEIs by NQF field and gender, 2023



Source: Annual reports submitted by PHEIs to DHET for the 2023 reporting year.

Note: The proportions might not add up to 100% due to unspecified gender.

5.4 Graduates from private HEIs

Table 6: Number of graduates from private HEIs by NQF field and gender, 2023

NQF Field	Female	Male	Unspecified	Total
1. Agriculture and Nature Conservation	50	71	0	121
2. Culture and Arts	1 968	1 592	4	3 564
3. Business, Commerce and Management Studies	16 591	11 559	4	28 154
4. Communication Studies and Language	4 531	1 699	8	6 238
5. Education, Training and Development	7 118	1 068	0	8 186
6. Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology	613	1 105	0	1 718
7. Human and Social Studies	1 280	927	2	2 209
8. Law, Military Science and Security	1 369	1 165	0	2 534
9. Health Sciences and Social Services	1 376	158	0	1 534
10. Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences	978	1 861	0	2 839
11. Services	1 355	859	2	2 216
12. Physical Planning and Construction	96	116	0	212
13. Unspecified	779	623	0	1 402
Total	38 104	22 803	20	60 927

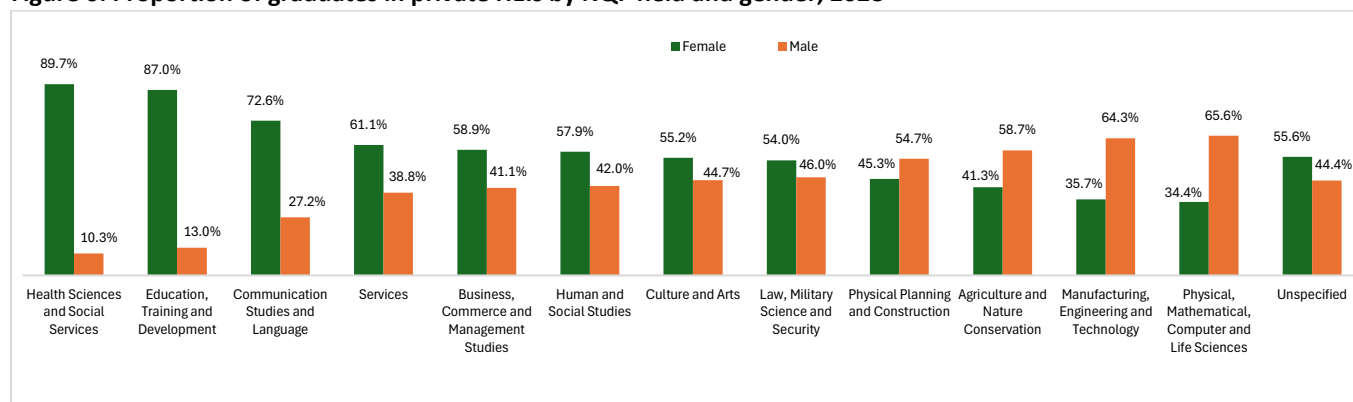
Source: Annual reports submitted by PHEIs to DHET for the 2023 reporting year.

A total of 60 927 students graduated from private HEIs in 2023, and a large proportion of them were females (38 104 or 62.5%) while males accounted for 37.4% (22 803). Almost half of the students graduated in Business, Commerce and Management Studies (28 154 or 46.2%), followed by Education, Training and Development (8 186 or 13.4%) and Communication Studies and Language (6 238 or 10.2%).

Almost three quarters (74.1%) of female students completed their qualifications in the following fields: Business, Commerce and Management Studies (16 591 or 43.5%), Education, Training and Development (7 118 or 18.7%) and Communication Studies and Language (4 531 or 11.9%). The majority of males on the other completed in the following fields: Business, Commerce and Management Studies (11 559 or 50.7%), Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences (1 861 or 8.2%) and Communication Studies and Language (1 699 or 7.5%).

The largest gender disparities were observed in the Education, Training and Development and Business, Commerce and Management Studies and the fields, where 6 050 and 5 032 more females completed as compared to males. It is also noteworthy that the number of female graduates in the Health Sciences and Social Services field was nine times higher than that of their male counterparts.

Figure 6: Proportion of graduates in private HEIs by NQF field and gender, 2023



Source: Annual reports submitted by PHEIs to DHET for the 2023 reporting year.

Almost two thirds of the graduates in the Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences (65.6%) and Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology (64.3%) were males. Other fields with a higher proportion of male graduates included Agriculture and Nature Conservation, as well as Physical Planning and Construction (See Figure 6). An overwhelming majority (over 72%) of graduates in the Health Sciences and Social services, Education, Training and Development and Communication Studies and Language were females (see Table 6 and Figure 6).

6. TVET COLLEGES

6.1 Enrolment in TVET colleges

Table 7: Enrolment cycle count of students in TVET colleges by qualification type and gender, 2022 and 2023

Qualification Category	2022			2023		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
NC(V) Levels 2-4	95 808	39 919	135 727	93 990	40 015	134 005
Report 191 (N1-N6)	227 536	129 039	356 575	251 442	151 211	402 653
Occupational Qualifications	9 035	6 802	15 837	9 523	5 951	15 474
Skills programmes	1 922	2 583	4 505	2 619	4 378	6 997
PLP	2 533	1 887	4 420	2 301	2 022	4 323
Level 5 & Level 6 Qualifications	1 339	181	1 520	503	134	637
Total	338 173	180 411	518 584	360 378	203 711	564 089

Sources: *2022 Student headcount listing with verification checks 20240420Final.*
2023 TVET College Enrolment_Final_02 April 2025.

Note 1: Report 191 refers to the NATED programmes, N1 to N6, Non-National Certificate and N Diploma. It is a part-qualification.

Note 2: NC(V) refers to the National Certificate (Vocational) Levels 2-4.

Note 3: "Occupational Qualifications" are those qualifications associated with a trade, occupation or profession, resulting from work-based learning and consisting of knowledge, practical and work experience components. Accreditation by a SETA (and QCTO) is linked to these qualifications.

Note 3: PLP refers to a Pre-Vocational Learning Programme which is a foundational learning programme and not registered on the NQF.

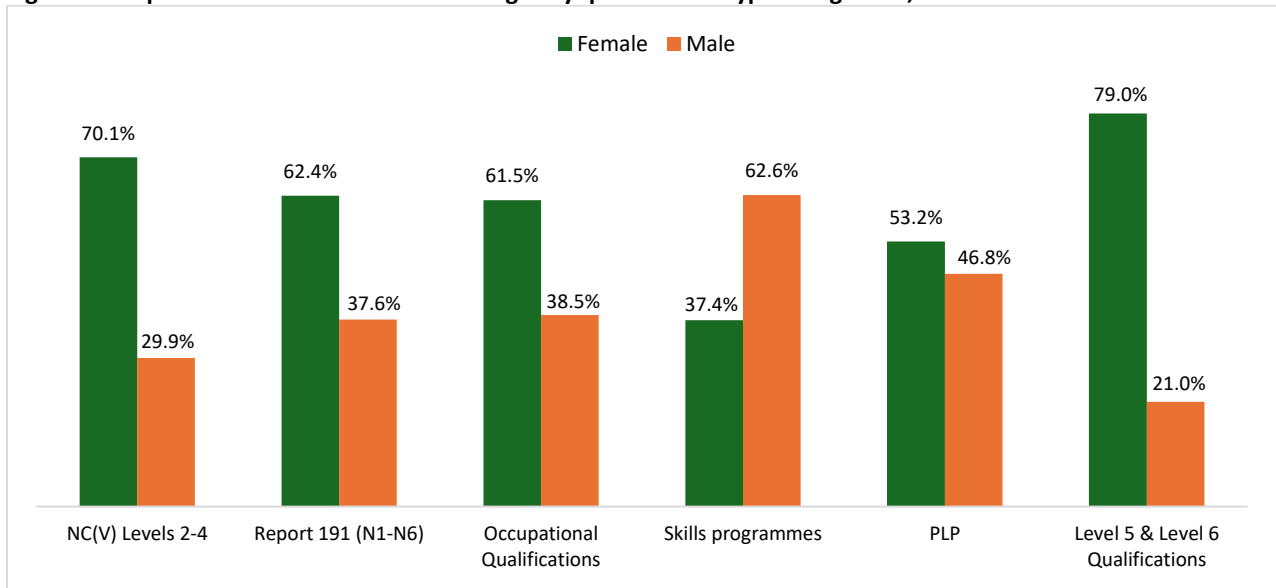
Note 4: The following colleges did not report any enrolment in Occupational Qualifications in 2023, namely, Nkangala, Sedibeng, Taletso and Western TVET Colleges.

Note 5: Qualifications on NQF Level 5 and 6 include higher certificate qualifications.

Total enrolment in TVET colleges reached 564 089 in 2023, reflecting an 8.8% (45 505) increase when compared to 2022 (518 584). Increases were observed across both genders, with male enrolment increasing by 23 300 and female enrolment by 22 205. The most notable increases were recorded in Report 191 programmes. In 2023, female enrolment was 360 378 (63.9%), while males represented 36.1% (203 711) of total enrolment. The largest gender difference was observed for Report 191, where 100 231 females enrolled compared to males (see Table 7). Furthermore, female enrolment in NC(V) was 53 975 higher than that of males.

Female representation was higher across nearly all qualification types, with the exception of skills programmes, where male enrolment exceeded that of females by 1 759. Female students accounted for almost 80% of enrolment in Level 5 and Level 6 qualifications. Enrolment in NC(V) programmes was also dominated by females (70.1%) as compared to 29.9% for males – see Figure 7.

Figure 7: Proportion of students in TVET colleges by qualification type and gender, 2023



Source: 2023 TVET College Enrolment_Final_02 April 2025.

Note 1: Report 191 refers to the NATED programmes, N1 to N6, Non-National Certificate and N Diploma. It is a part-qualification.

Note 2: NC(V) refers to the National Certificate (Vocational) Levels 2-4.

Note 3: "Occupational Qualifications" are those qualifications associated with a trade, occupation or profession, resulting from work-based learning and consisting of knowledge, practical and work experience components. Accreditation by a SETA (and QCTO) is linked to these qualifications.

Note 4: Skills Programme refers to all other programmes offered in TVET colleges, for example skills and short courses (accredited or not).

Note 5: PLP refers to a Pre-Vocational Learning Programme which is a foundational learning programme and not registered on the NQF.

Note 6: The following colleges did not report any enrolment in Occupational Qualifications in 2023, namely, Nkangala, Sedibeng, Taletso and Western TVET Colleges.

Note 7: Qualifications on NQF Level 5 and 6 include higher certificate qualifications.

Table 8: Enrolment cycle count of students in TVET colleges for Report 191 N6 programmes by gender, 2023

Report 191 N6 Programme	Female	Male	Total
1. Art and Design	119	104	223
2. Business Management	5 382	2 085	7 467
3. Clothing Production	346	110	456
4. Educare	3 619	174	3 793
5. Engineering Studies	7 566	7 203	14 769
6. Farming Management	979	514	1 493
7. Financial Management	4 934	1 872	6 806
8. Hospitality and Catering Services	2 058	555	2 613
9. Human Resource Management	5 840	1 821	7 661
10. Legal Secretary	659	158	817
11. Management Assistant	11 548	2 415	13 963
12. Marketing Management	2 467	1 072	3 539
13. Medical Secretary	285	24	309
14. Popular Music: Composition	0	6	6
15. Popular Music: Performance	47	44	91
16. Popular Music: Studio Work	14	81	95
17. Public Management	7 065	2 504	9 569
18. Public Relations	414	102	516
19. Tourism	2 164	850	3 014
Total	55 506	21 694	77 200

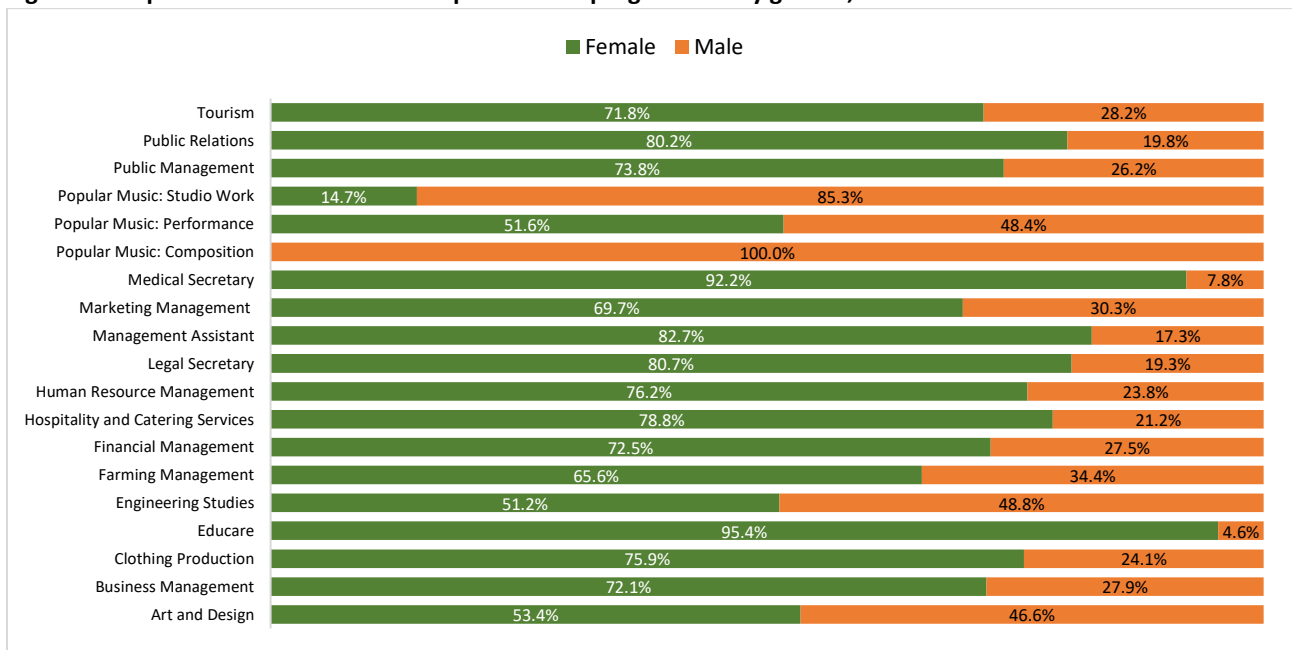
Source: 2023 TVET College Enrolment_Final_02 April 2025.

The table above indicates that females comprised 71.9% (55 506) of total enrolments in Report 191 N6 programmes, while males accounted for 28.1% (21 694). The most significant gender disparity was observed in the Management Assistant programme, where female enrolment exceeded that of males by 9 133 students.

Among male students enrolled in Report 191 N6 programmes, over one-third (33.2% or 7 203) enrolled in Engineering Studies, followed by Public Management (11.5% or 2 504) and Management Assistant (11.1% or 2 415). In contrast, female students primarily enrolled in Management Assistant (20.8% or 11 548), Engineering Studies (13.6% or 7 566), and Public Management (12.7% or 7 065).

Although overall female enrolment in Engineering Studies was lower when compared to other programmes among females, it is noteworthy that the gender gap within this field was minimal, with 363 more females than males enrolling in this programme. Enrolment in certain programmes such as Educare, Legal Secretary, Public Relations, Medical Secretary, and Management Assistant were dominated by females, with their proportions exceeding 80% - See Figure 8.

Figure 8: Proportion of enrolment for Report 191 N6 programmes by gender, 2023



Source: 2023 TVET College Enrolment_Final_02 April 2025.

Table 9: Enrolment cycle count of students in TVET colleges for NC(V) Level 4 programmes by gender, 2023

NC(V) Level 4 Programme	Female	Male	Total
1. Civil Engineering and Building Construction	1 577	956	2 533
2. Drawing Office Practice	7	8	15
3. Education and Development	951	66	1 017
4. Electrical Infrastructure and Construction	3 959	3 076	7 035
5. Engineering and Related Design	627	512	1 139
6. Finance, Economics and Accounting	1 854	404	2 258
7. Hospitality	2 186	348	2 534
8. Information Technology and Computer Science	1 045	655	1 700
9. Management	1 187	271	1 458
10. Marketing	1 224	358	1 582
11. Mechatronics	121	115	236
12. Office Administration	7 568	1 063	8 631
13. Primary Agriculture	891	359	1 250
14. Primary Health	308	25	333
15. Process Plant Operations	176	38	214
16. Safety in Society	875	326	1 201
17. Tourism	1 862	470	2 332
18. Transport and Logistics	758	266	1 024
Total	27 176	9 316	36 492

Source: 2023 TVET College Enrolment_Final_02 April 2025.

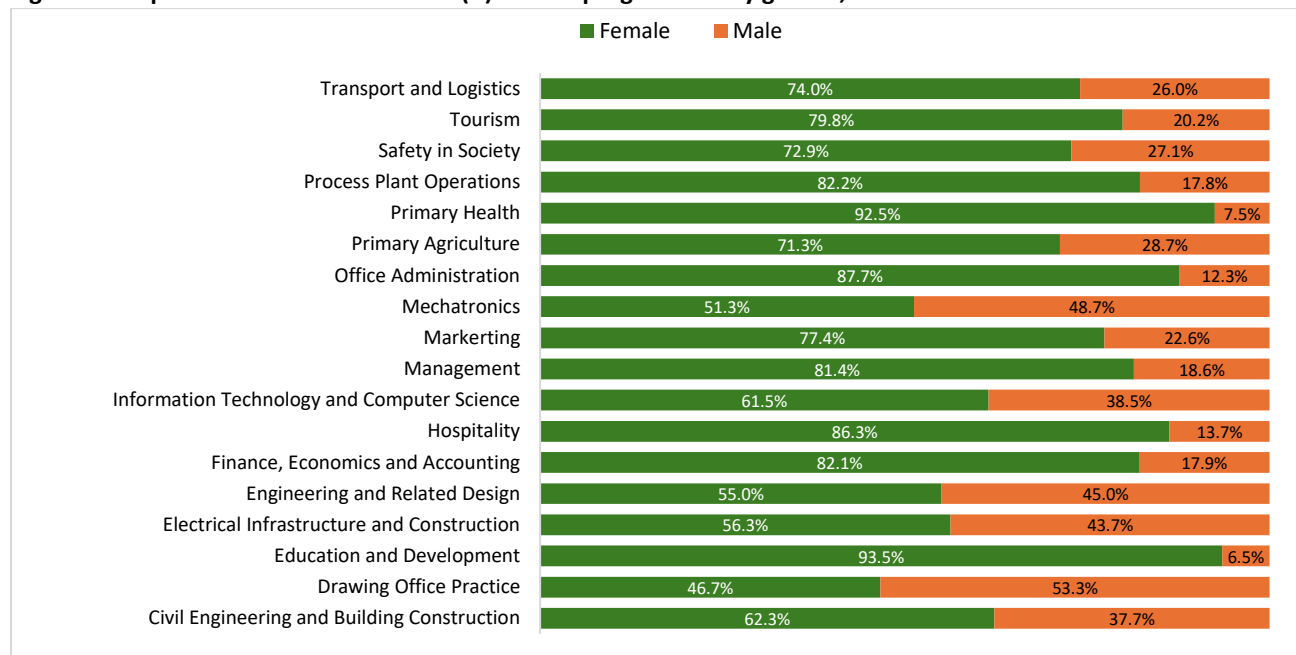
Note : NC(V) refers to the National Certificate (Vocational) Levels 2-4.

Almost three-quarters of NC(V) Level 4 enrolments in 2023 were female (27 176 or 74.5%), while males represented 25.5% (9 316). The most significant gender disparity was observed in the Office Administration programme, where female enrolment exceeded that of males by 6 505 students.

Female enrolment was higher than male enrolment in nearly all NC(V) programmes, with the exception of Drawing Office Practice. Programmes in which female students constituted more than 80% of total enrolments included Process Plant Operations, Primary Health, Office Administration, Management, Hospitality, Finance, Economics and Accounting, and Education and Development (see Figure 9).

Over 40% of female students were enrolled in two main programmes: Office Administration (7 568 or 27.8%) and Electrical Infrastructure and Construction (3 959 or 14.6%). Among male students, the highest enrolments were in Electrical Infrastructure and Construction (3 076 or 33.0%), followed by Office Administration (1 063 or 11.4%)

Figure 9: Proportion of enrolment for NC(V) Level 4 programmes by gender, 2023



Source: 2023 TVET College Enrolment_Final_02 April 2025.

Note: NC(V) refers to the National Certificate (Vocational) Levels 2-4.

6.2 Examination results in TVET colleges

Table 10: Number of students in TVET colleges who registered, wrote examinations and completed Report 191 part-qualifications by gender, 2023

Report 191 Level	Female				Male			
	Number registered	Number wrote	Number completed	Completion rate	Number registered	Number wrote	Number completed	Completion rate
N1	14 791	10 879	6 856	63.0%	15 558	10 686	6 748	63.1%
N2	20 299	13 731	5 016	36.5%	21 347	13 682	5 561	40.6%
N3	10 825	7 574	3 649	48.2%	11 220	7 432	3 976	53.5%
N4	85 842	65 801	42 568	64.7%	40 244	27 581	16 751	60.7%
N5	56 237	48 308	31 285	64.8%	22 706	18 155	11 218	61.8%
N6	46 057	41 136	26 845	65.3%	16 439	13 894	8 490	61.1%
Total	234 051	187 429	116 219	62.0%	127 514	91 430	52 744	57.7%

Source: National Examinations Database, November 2023.

Note 1: The number of students who REGISTERED, WROTE and COMPLETED includes only those who were eligible to complete qualifications (part or full) during the 2023 academic year. This number excludes students who registered, wrote and passed individual subjects, but were not eligible to complete the relevant qualifications in 2023.

Note 2: "Number Registered" refers to the number of students who registered for the relevant examinations in 2023 and were eligible to complete the relevant qualifications during the 2023 academic year. This number excludes students who registered to write individual subjects but were not eligible to complete the relevant qualifications in 2023.

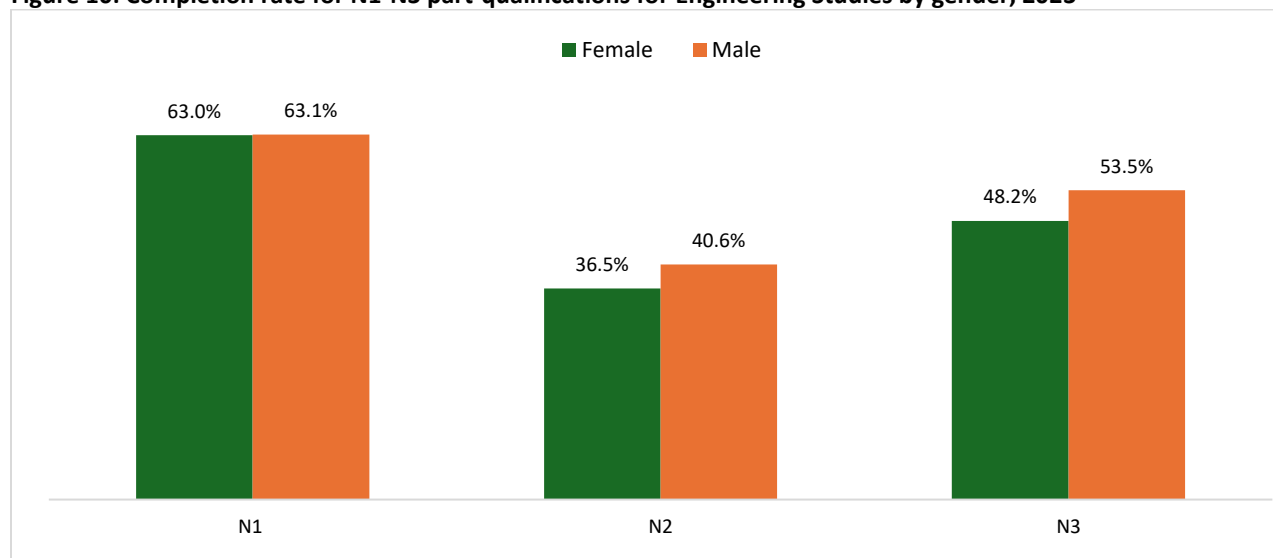
Note 3: "Number Wrote" refers to the number of students who wrote the relevant examinations in 2023 and were eligible to complete the relevant qualifications during the 2023 academic year. This number excludes students who wrote individual subjects but were not eligible to complete the relevant qualifications in 2023.

Note 4: "Number Completed" refers to the number of students who were eligible to complete and successfully completed the relevant qualifications in the 2023 academic year. This number excludes students who may have passed individual subjects but were not eligible to complete the relevant qualifications in 2023.

The overall number of students in TVET colleges who registered, wrote and completed Report 191 examinations in 2023 were females. However, when looking at the different N levels, completion for males was higher in N2 and N3, while females completion surpassed that of males in the other levels (N1 and N4-N6). In terms of completions, 116 219 females completed N1-N6 levels, compared to 52 744 males. The largest gender disparity was in N4, where 25 817 more females than males completed. Furthermore, females' completion for N6 was more than three times higher as compared to males.

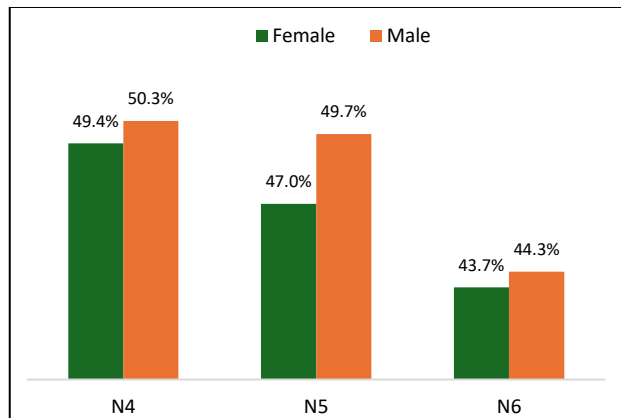
With regard to completion rates, female students recorded the highest rate at N6 level (65.3%), while male students achieved their highest completion rate at N1 level (63.1%). Figures 10 and 11 illustrate that, across all levels of Engineering Studies, male students consistently achieved higher completion rates than their female counterparts. The most notable gender disparity was observed at N3 level, where the male completion rate exceeded that of females by 5.3 percentage points (see Table 10 and Figure 10).

Figure 10: Completion rate for N1-N3 part-qualifications for Engineering Studies by gender, 2023



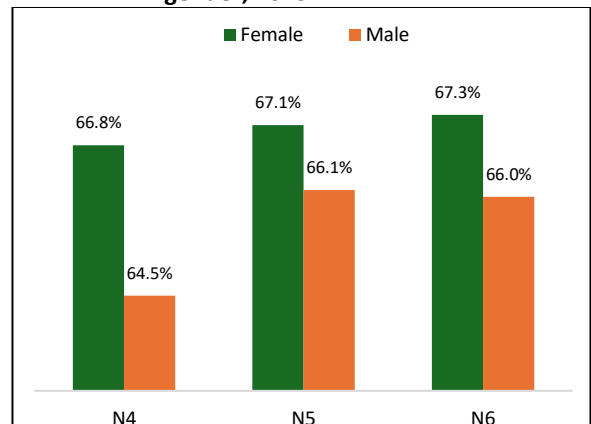
Source: National Examinations Database, November 2023.

Figure 11: Completion rate for N4-N6 part-qualifications for Engineering Studies by gender, 2023



Source: National Examinations Database, November 2023.

Figure 12: Completion rate for N4-N6 part-qualifications for Business Studies by gender, 2023



Source: National Examinations Database, November 2023.

As illustrated in Figures 11 and 12, males had higher completion rates in N4–N6 Engineering Studies, whereas females had higher completion rates than males in N4–N6 Business Studies.

Table 11: Number of students in TVET colleges who completed Report 191 N6 part-qualifications by gender, 2023

Report 191 N6 Programme	Female	Male	Total
1. Art And Design	112	88	200
2. Business Management	2 862	1 075	3 937
3. Clothing Production	245	62	307
4. Educare	3 071	145	3 216
5. Engineering Studies	1 524	1 386	2 910
6. Farming: Management	801	352	1 153
7. Financial Management	2 785	1 058	3 843
8. Hospitality and Catering Services	1 320	323	1 643
9. Human Resource Management	3 113	858	3 971
10. Legal Secretary	195	42	237
11. Management Assistant	4 188	744	4 932
12. Marketing Management	946	367	1 313
13. Medical Secretary	117	8	125
14. Popular Music: Composition	0	4	4
15. Popular Music: Performance	37	37	74
16. Popular Music: Studio Work	7	46	53
17. Public Management	4 185	1 445	5 630
18. Public Relations	93	11	104
19. Tourism	1 244	439	1 683
Total	26 845	8 490	35 335

Source: National Examinations Database, November 2023.

A total of 35 335 students completed N6 at TVET colleges, with females making up the majority (26 845 or 76.0%) and males comprising 8 490 (24.0%). More than half of all completions were in the following four programmes: Public Management (5 630 or 15.9%), Management Assistant (4 932 or 14.0%), Human Resources Management (3 971 or 11.2%), and Business Management (3 937 or 11.1%).

The largest gender gap was in Management Assistant, where 3 444 more females completed than males. Significant gender differences were also seen in Educare and Public Management, where 2 926 and 2 740 more females than males completed. It should also be noted that the proportion of females completing Educare, Medical Secretary, Public Relations, Management Assistant, Hospitality and Catering Services and Legal Secretary within different programmes was more than 80%.

Among female students, the highest number of N6 completions were in Management Assistant (4 188 or 15.6%), followed closely by Public Management (4 185 or 15.6%) and Human Resources Management (3 113 or 11.6%). Male students on the other hand completed in the following programmes: Public Management (1 445 or 17.0%), Engineering Studies (1 386 or 16.3%), and Business Management (1 075 or 12.7%).

Table 12: Number of students in TVET colleges who completed NC(V) Level 4 by gender, 2023

NC(V) Level 4 Programme	Female	Male	Total
1. Civil Engineering and Building Construction	169	120	289
2. Drawing Office Practice	2	0	2
3. Education and Development	364	23	387
4. Electrical Infrastructure Construction	150	103	253
5. Engineering and Related Design	262	239	501
6. Finance, Economics and Accounting	278	50	328
7. Hospitality	512	62	574
8. Information Technology and Computer Science	89	87	176
9. Management	335	79	414
10. Marketing	177	40	217
11. Mechatronics	9	10	19
12. Office Administration	2 321	313	2 634
13. Primary Agriculture	209	83	292
14. Primary Health	126	8	134
15. Process Plant Operations	20	6	26
16. Safety In Society	186	55	241
17. Tourism	647	141	788
18. Transport and Logistics	252	85	337
Total	6 108	1 504	7 612

Source: National Examinations Database, November 2023.

Note: NC(V) Level 4 is a full qualification.

A total of 7 612 students completed NC(V) Level 4, with four in five completers being female (6 108 or 80.2%) while males accounted for 19.8% (1 504). Over one third of completions were in Office Administration (2 634 or 34.6%), and this programme had the largest gender gap, with 2 008 more females completing than males.

The majority of both females and males completed an NC(V) Level 4 in Office Administration (2 321 and 313 respectively). The following programmes had female students accounting for more than 80% of all completions: Drawing Office Practice, Education and Development, Primary Health, Office Administration, Hospitality, Finance, Economics and Accounting, Tourism, Marketing and Management.

7. COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING (CET) COLLEGES

7.1 Enrolment in CET colleges

Table 13: Number of students enrolled in CET colleges by programme and gender, 2023

Programme	Female	Male	Total
AET Level 1	501	524	1 025
AET Level 2	1 191	905	2 096
AET Level 3	1 882	1 798	3 680
GETC: ABET Level 4 (NQF Level 1)	37 897	13 199	51 096
Grade 12 (NQF Level 4)	37 591	17 062	54 653
Non-formal programmes	5 081	1 229	6 310
Occupational Qualifications	948	273	1 221
Total	85 091	34 990	120 081

Source: CETMIS 2023, data extracted in April 2025.

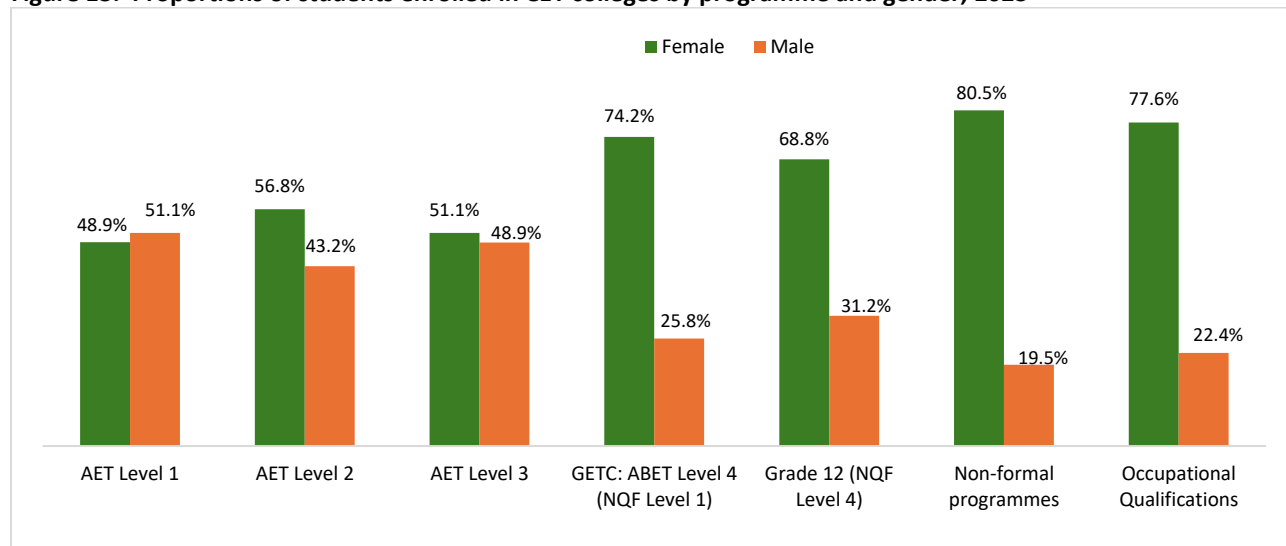
Note 1: Non-formal programmes were previously referred to as other/skills programmes.

Note 2: Grade 12 enrolment figure includes enrolment for National Senior Certificate, Senior Certificate and Amended Senior Certificate.

Note 3: Total enrolment is based on a response rate of 83.5%.

In 2023, Community Education and Training (CET) colleges recorded a total enrolment of 120 081 students. The majority of enrolments were female (85 091 or 70.9%) , while male students comprised 34 990 (29.1%). Female students represented the highest proportion of enrolments across all programme types, with the exception of AET Level 1, as illustrated in Figure 13. The most pronounced gender disparities were observed in GETC: ABET Level 4 and Grade 12 programmes, where female enrolments exceeded those of males by 24 698 and 20 529 respectively – see Table 13.

Figure 13: Proportions of students enrolled in CET colleges by programme and gender, 2023



Source: CETMIS 2023, data extracted in April 2025.

Note 1: Non-formal programmes were previously referred to as other/skills programmes.

Note 2: Grade 12 enrolment figure includes enrolment for National Senior Certificate, Senior Certificate and Amended Senior Certificate.

Note 3: Total enrolment is based on a response rate of 83.5%.

7.2 Examination results in CET colleges

Table 14: Number of students in CET colleges who registered, wrote, and completed the GETC ABET Level 4 qualification, by province and gender, 2023

Province	Female				Male				Total			
	Number registered	Number wrote	Number completed	Completion rate	Number registered	Number wrote	Number completed	Completion rate	Number registered	Number wrote	Number completed	Completion rate
Eastern Cape	5 658	3 151	1 388	44.0%	1 543	832	297	35.7%	7 201	3 983	1 685	42.3%
Free State	1 556	1 090	429	39.4%	884	550	177	32.2%	2 440	1 640	606	37.0%
Gauteng	4 141	2 448	862	35.2%	3 440	1 881	519	27.6%	7 581	4 329	1 381	31.9%
KwaZulu-Natal	8 608	5 689	2 591	45.5%	1 934	1 145	486	42.4%	10 542	6 834	3 077	45.0%
Limpopo	3 449	2 783	1 041	37.4%	758	563	151	26.8%	4 207	3 346	1 192	35.6%
Mpumalanga	3 329	2 214	1 033	46.7%	990	648	225	34.7%	4 319	2 862	1 258	44.0%
North West	2 282	1 643	571	34.8%	1 120	815	237	29.1%	3 402	2 458	808	32.9%
Northern Cape	315	209	59	28.2%	258	167	54	32.3%	573	376	113	30.1%
Western Cape	1 648	562	206	36.7%	1 340	504	209	41.5%	2 988	1 066	415	38.9%
Total	30 986	19 789	8 180	41.3%	12 267	7 105	2 355	33.1%	43 253	26 894	10 535	39.2%

Source: National Examinations Database, November 2023.

Note 1: The number of students who REGISTERED, WROTE and COMPLETED included only those who were eligible to complete a GETC: ABET Level 4 qualification during the 2023 academic years. This number excludes students who registered, wrote and passed individual subjects, but were not eligible to complete the relevant qualifications in 2023.

Note 2: "Number Registered" refers to the number of students who registered for the 2023 GETC: ABET Level 4 examinations and were eligible to complete a GETC: ABET Level qualification during the 2023 academic year. This number excludes students who registered to write individual subjects but were not eligible to complete the GETC: ABET Level 4 qualification in 2023.

Note 3: "Number Wrote" refers to the number of students who wrote the 2023 GETC: ABET Level 4 examinations and were eligible to complete a GETC: ABET Level qualification during the 2023 academic years. This number excludes students who wrote individual subjects but were not eligible to complete the GETC: ABET Level 4 qualification in 2023.

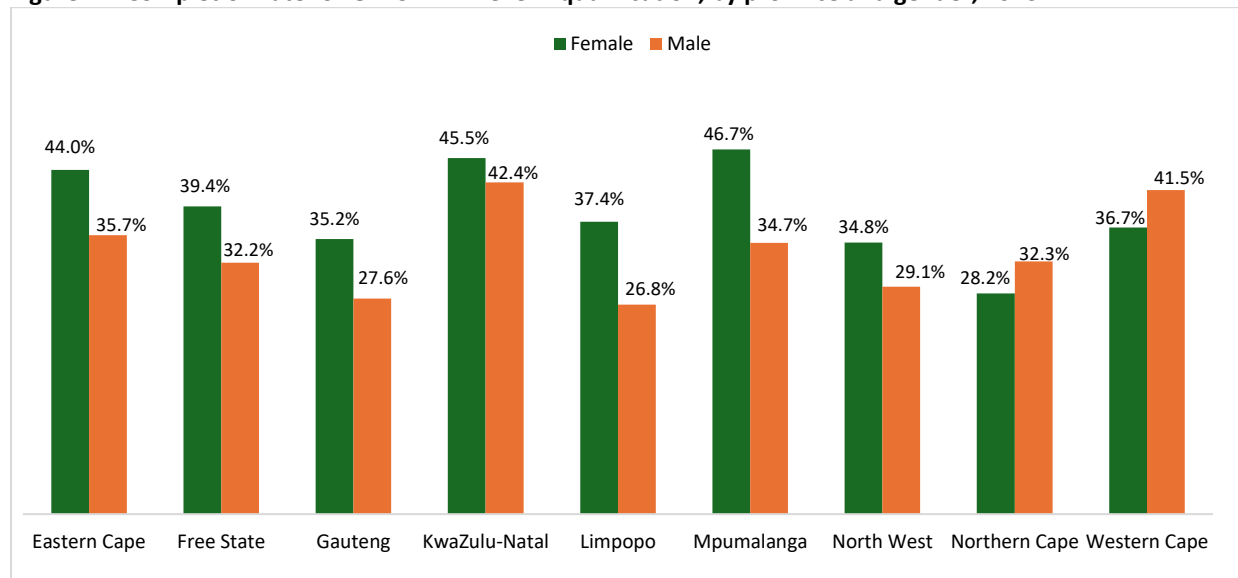
Note 4: "Number Completed" refers to the number of students who were eligible to complete and successfully completed the GETC: ABET Level 4 qualification in the 2023 academic years. This number excludes students who may have passed individual subjects but were not eligible to complete the GETC: ABET Level 4 qualification in 2023.

Note 5: "Completion rate" refers to the number of students who successfully completed a GETC: ABET Level qualification in the 2023 academic years, expressed as a percentage of the number of students who were eligible to complete the GETC: ABET Level 4 qualification and wrote the examinations (the latter is defined above) in 2023.

A total of 10 535 students completed the GETC: ABET Level 4 qualification in 2023. Of these, 8 180 (77.6%) were female and 2 355 (22.4%) were male. Female completers outnumbered males in almost all provinces, with the exception of the Western Cape, where a slightly higher number of males completed the qualification.

KwaZulu-Natal accounted for the highest share of completers, with 3 077 students (29.2%), followed by the Eastern Cape with 1 635 (16.0%) and Gauteng (1 381 or 13.1%). The most significant gender disparities were observed in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, where the number of female completers exceeded that of males by 2 105 and 1 091 respectively. In contrast, the Western Cape and Northern Cape recorded the smallest gender gaps.

Figure 14: Completion rate for GETC ABET Level 4 qualification, by province and gender, 2023



Source: *National Examinations Database, November 2023.*

Note: "Completion rate" refers to the number of students who successfully completed a GETC: ABET Level qualification in the 2023 academic years, expressed as a percentage of the number of students who were eligible to complete the GETC: ABET Level 4 qualification and wrote the examinations (the latter is defined above) in 2023.

In 2023, female students recorded higher completion rates in almost all CET colleges, with the exception of the Western Cape and Northern Cape, where male completion rates exceeded those of females by 4.8 and 4.1 percentage points respectively. The highest completion rate among female students was recorded in Mpumalanga CET College (46.7%), while the highest male completion rate was observed in KwaZulu-Natal CET College (42.4%). The most significant gender gaps were noted in Mpumalanga and Limpopo CET colleges, where female completion rates were 12.0 and 10.6 percentage points higher than those of their male counterparts.

8. PRIVATE COLLEGES

8.1 Enrolment in private colleges

Table 15: Students enrolled in private colleges by qualification type and gender, 2022 and 2023

Qualification Category	2022			2023		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
NC(V) Levels 2-4	388	540	928	205	366	571
Report 191 (N1-N6)	22 767	28 424	51 191	25 490	38 453	63 943
Occupational Qualifications	4 268	2 964	7 232	2 962	2 630	5 592
Report 550/NSC	1 859	1 421	3 280	1 302	866	2 168
Other/skills programmes	3 932	5 293	9 225	3 730	4 781	8 511
Total	33 214	38 642	71 856	33 689	47 096	80 785

Sources: FET_Pvt_Annual_2022_20240124, extracted in January 2024.
2023_Private_Annual_Survey_Integrated_29_January_2025, extracted in January 2025.

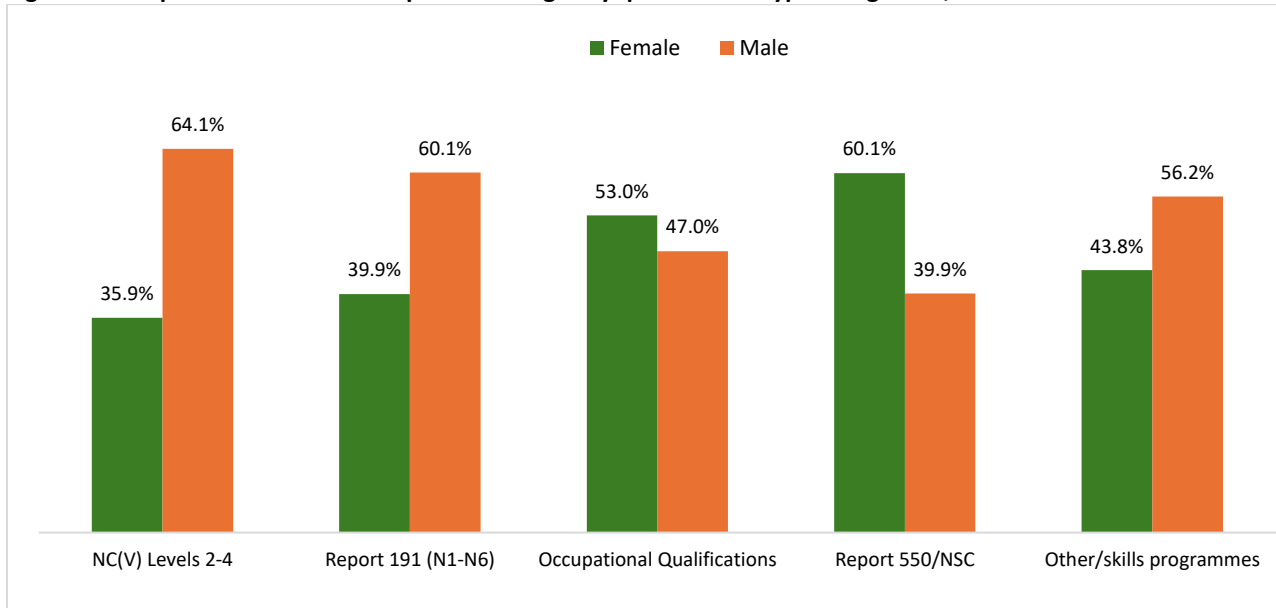
Note 1: The 2022 figures represent enrolment at only 90 of the 161 registered private colleges that responded to the departmental Annual Survey.

Note 2: The 2023 figures represent enrolment at only 90 of the 149 registered private colleges that responded to the departmental Annual Survey.

In 2023, a total of 80 785 students were enrolled in private colleges, reflecting an increase of 8 929 (12.4%) compared to 2022 (71 856). Enrolment increased for both males and females during this period, by 8 454 and 475 students, respectively. The growth in male enrolment was primarily driven by an increase in Report 191 programme enrolments, which increased by 10 029, while enrolments in other qualification types declined. A similar trend was observed among female students, with an increase of 2 723 in Report 191 enrolments, while all other qualifications showed declines.

Unlike other PSET sub-sectors, private colleges recorded a higher proportion of male enrolments in 2023, with males comprising 58.3% (47 096) and females accounting for 41.7% (33 689) of total enrolment. The majority of students from both genders were enrolled in Report 191 (N1–N6) programmes, however, male enrolment in this qualification type exceeded that of females by 12 963. Despite the overall male majority, female students represented a higher proportion of enrolments in occupational qualifications and Report 550/NSC programmes compared to their male counterparts (see Figure 15 and Table 15).

Figure 15: Proportion of students in private colleges by qualification type and gender, 2023



Source: *2023 Private Annual Survey Integrated 29 January 2025, extracted in January 2025.*

Note: The 2023 figures represent enrolment at only 90 of the 149 registered private colleges that responded to the departmental Annual Survey.

8.2 Examination results in private colleges

Table 16: Number of students in private colleges who registered, wrote examinations and completed Report 191 part-qualifications by gender, 2023

Report 191 Level	Female				Male			
	Number registered	Number wrote	Number completed	Completion rate	Number registered	Number wrote	Number completed	Completion rate
N1	2 807	1 950	1 369	70.2%	8 617	5 833	3 784	64.9%
N2	7 421	4 686	1 614	34.4%	18 402	10 317	3 601	34.9%
N3	5 389	3 364	1 621	48.2%	10 458	5 811	2 761	47.5%
N4	22 792	15 236	8 058	52.9%	16 625	9 646	4 247	44.0%
N5	12 514	10 264	5 833	56.8%	8 345	5 926	2 980	50.3%
N6	9 626	8 044	5 256	65.3%	5 693	4 017	2 188	54.5%
Total	60 549	43 544	23 751	54.5%	68 140	41 550	19 561	47.1%

Source: *National Examinations Database, November 2023.*

Note 1: The number of students who REGISTERED, WROTE and COMPLETED includes only those who were eligible to complete qualifications (part or full) during the 2023 academic year. This number excludes students who registered, wrote and passed individual subjects, but were not eligible to complete the relevant qualifications in 2023.

Note 2: "Number Registered" refers to the number of students who registered for the relevant examinations in 2023 and were eligible to complete the relevant qualifications during the 2023 academic year. This number excludes students who registered to write individual subjects but were not eligible to complete the relevant qualifications in 2023.

Note 3: "Number Wrote" refers to the number of students who wrote the relevant examinations in 2023 and were eligible to complete the relevant qualifications during the 2023 academic year. This number excludes students who wrote individual subjects but were not eligible to complete the relevant qualifications in 2023.

Note 4: "Number Completed" refers to the number of students who were eligible to complete and successfully completed the relevant qualifications in the 2023 academic year. This number excludes students who may have passed individual subjects but were not eligible to complete the relevant qualifications in 2023.

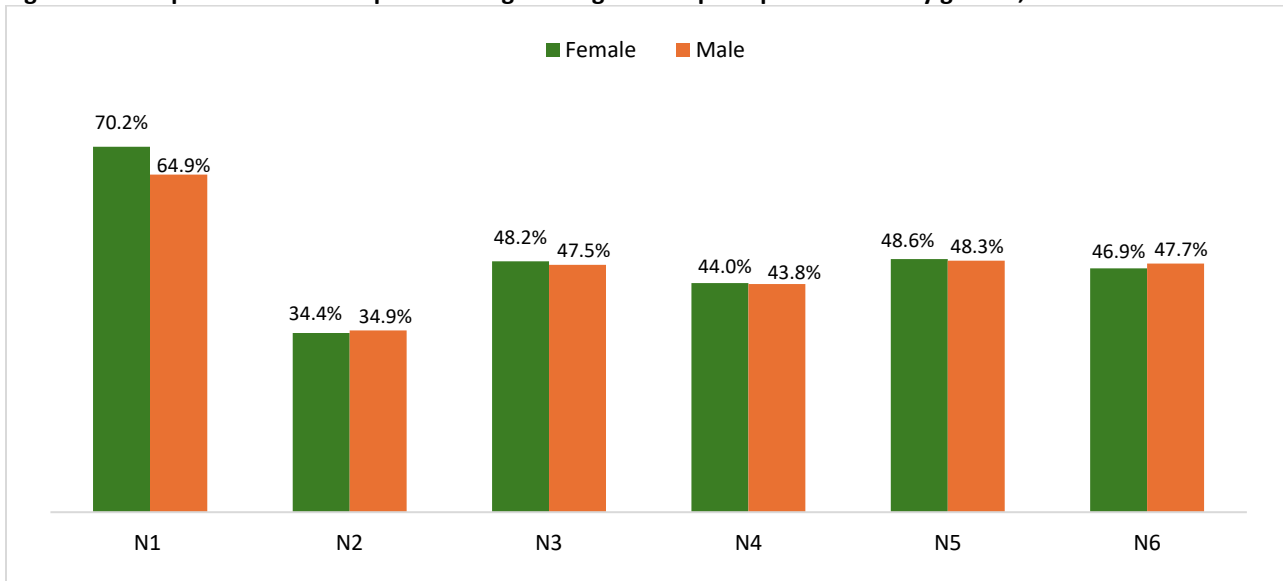
Note 5: "Completion rate" refers to the number of students who successfully completed a Report 190/1 N1-N6 part-qualification in the 2023 academic year, expressed as a percentage of the number of students who were eligible to complete the Report 190/1 N1-N6 part-qualifications and wrote the examinations in 2023.

The number of males who completed N1-N3 was higher as compared to females, while female completion was higher at N4-N6. The largest gender disparity was observed at N4 level, with 3 811 more females completing than males – see Table 16.

Figure 16 shows that completion rates for Engineering Studies were relatively similar between males and females, with only slight differences across levels. Female students had marginally higher completion rates at N1 and N3–N5, while males had slightly higher rates at N2 and N6. The highest completion rates for both genders were recorded at N1 (70.2% for females and 64.9% for males) (see Table 16 and Figure 16).

In terms of Business Studies, Figure 17 reveals that female completion rate was higher than that of males across all levels (N4-N6). Both genders had the highest completion rates at N6 (69.0% and 62.2% respectively).

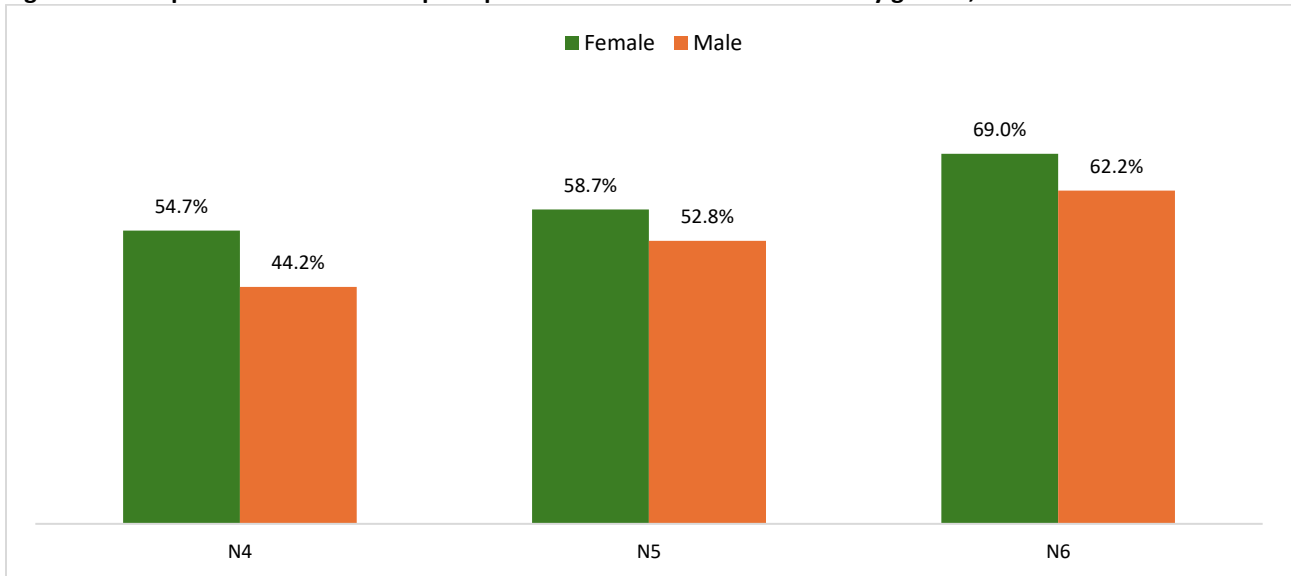
Figure 16: Completion rate for Report 191 Engineering Studies part-qualifications by gender, 2023



Source: *National Examinations Database, November 2023.*

Note: "Completion rate" refers to the number of students who successfully completed a Report 190/1 N1-N6 part-qualification in the 2023 academic year, expressed as a percentage of the number of students who were eligible to complete the Report 190/1 N1-N6 part-qualifications and wrote the examinations in 2023.

Figure 17: Completion rate for N4-N6 part-qualifications for Business Studies by gender, 2023



Source: *National Examinations Database, November 2023.*

Note: "Completion rate" refers to the number of students who successfully completed a Report 190/1 N4-N6 part-qualification in the 2023 academic year, expressed as a percentage of the number of students who were eligible to complete the Report 190/1 N4-N6 part-qualifications and wrote the examinations in 2023.

8.CONCLUSION

This factsheet highlights gender disparities in enrolment and completion patterns across South Africa's Post-School Education and Training (PSET) system. While female participation generally exceeds that of males in most subsectors (except private colleges), females' participation is especially evident in fields such as Education, Health Sciences, and Business Studies, while males continue to dominate in traditionally male-oriented fields like Engineering and Technology. Despite strong female representation in enrolments and graduations, labour market outcomes remain unequal, as seen in the persistent higher unemployment and NEET rates among women.