1. Introduction

The Graduate Exit Survey is an annual survey conducted by the Institutional Research Department at Regent Business School (RBS). The survey provides a detailed account of the demographics, experiences, expectations of the Institution and the respective academic programmes undertaken by the graduates.

In the 2013 RBS graduate exit survey, 110 RBS students graduated. 52 (response rate of 47%) of these students completed the requirements of the survey. The remaining 58 students did not participate in the survey.

It is critical to note that the respondents that graduated in the December graduation were predominately students that were enrolled for their Master of Business Administration Programme. This has resulted in particular bias to the outcomes of the survey. Therefore, it is suggested that for such a bias to be overcome, a longitudinal study should be conducted.

2. Key Outcomes of the Survey

Who is our Postgraduate student? According to the data generated, the demographics of majority of our postgraduate students are Black (74%), females (63%) between the ages of 25-35 (53%).

The 2013 graduates comprised of 74% of students enrolled in the Master of Business Administration Programme (MBA), 23% Bachelor of Commerce (Hons) and 2 % in the Postgraduate Diploma.

The majority (86%) of the participants in the study suggested that they were able to achieve the academic knowledge by undertaking the respective programmes and learn the necessary skills accorded.

The graduates expressed satisfaction with the fairness (65%) of the evaluations conducted by lecturers. However, while students expressed satisfaction with the above, equally the inaccessibility of lecturers to students is alarming as 35% of students chose to remain neutral to a statement pertaining to the accessibility of their lecturers.

It was further interesting to note that students indicated dissatisfaction with the usefulness of contact sessions workshops or attending additional workshops on a weekday. Student’s preferred attending additional weekend classes (60%), suggesting perhaps that the delivery styles and habits of the lecturers, composition of class numbers, and also significantly important to note that
students at RBS are predominantly distance students. However, all of the attributes mentioned, impacts on the experience of the students.

The graduates from the findings suggested that they are highly satisfied with the dissertation/project phase of their qualification, indicating that they are receiving the necessary support from the initial phase of the programme to the completion.

The overall responses pertaining to student support and RBS environment was positive. However, students response to facilities provided by RBS were of concern, as 44% chose to remain neutral to this statement. Thus, indicating that RBS needs to further investigate the matter and the type of facilities that the student requires.

3. Empirical Analysis

The results of the study are presented in graphical format and follow sequentially the layout of the questionnaire administered to graduates.

**Figure 1: Gender of participants**

![Gender](image)

Participants of the study comprised of 63% of female and 37% males. According to the Council of Higher Education: VitalStats: Public Higher Education (2011:8), the headcount of graduates comprised of 31% male and 69% of female at Distance education. Therefore, it can be concluded that the student composition by gender of RBS students does not differ from that of Public Higher Education Distance Providers.

**Figure 2: Race of participants**
Majority of participants were African 74%, 23% Asian, 2% Coloured and no White participants (0%). According to the Council of Higher Education : VitalStats: Public Higher Education (2011:8), the composition of graduates at Public Higher Education Distance mode of delivery are as follows: African 72%, 6% Asian, 4% Coloured and 18% White participants. Therefore, it can be argued that the composition of students at RBS by race is on par with that of other Public Higher Education Distance Providers with the exception of White participants. However, it must be noted that only 47% of graduates participated in this survey.

Figure 3: Qualification of participants

Majority of participants graduated with an MBA qualification (74%), 23% of participants with a BCom (Hons) and 2% with a Postgraduate Diploma. These statistics generated, indicate that there is a higher number of participants in the MBA programme. However, it must be noted that the survey comprised of predominantly students in the MBA programme.
Participants between the age category of 25 to 35 comprised of 53%, while 30% of participants were between the age category of 36 to 45. Only 16% of participants were above 45 years and there were no participants that were below 25.

Participants were asked if they had gained the appropriate knowledge expected at their qualification level. 86% agreed that they had gained the appropriate knowledge and only 5% disagreed. 7% were neutral and 2% of the participants responded that the statement was not applicable. It is imperative that the RBS conduct further discussion with the 14% of respondents that expressed dissatisfaction with this specific statement. The further discussion can assist in the planning and preparation for all stakeholders especially lecturers and learning materials.
81% of participants agreed that they had developed the capacity for independent and critical thinking. Only 2% disagreed, 12% neutral and 5% of the participants the statement was not applicable. Again, it is significant that further discussion is undertaken with the 19% of respondents that responded negatively. The discussion will assist the relevant stakeholders especially during curriculum development.

**Figure 7: The relevancy of modules contributing to participants qualification**

84% of participants agreed that the modules undertaken impacted positively on the chosen qualification. Only 2% disagreed, 9% were neutral and 5% responded to statement as being not applicable. While the findings suggest that the majority of graduates responded positively, however, it is important to understand the reasons attributed to the negative responses generated by this statement. Therefore, for future purposes those participants who respond negatively, should be asked to justify their response.

**Figure 8: Contribution of programme towards logical & orderly thinking skills**
86% of participants agreed that the programme undertaken improved his/her logical and orderly thinking skills. Only 2% disagreed, while 7% were neutral and 5% indicated the statement was not applicable to them.

**Figure 9:** Contribution of programme towards participants analytical skills

74% of participants indicated that the programme had improved their analytical skills. 5% of participants disagreed that programme had a positive impact on their analytical skills, while 19% of participants were neutral and only 2% indicated not applicable. Thus far, graduates have responded positively and while it is expected that they would respond in this manner, there has been a significant number of respondents that have indicated dissatisfaction towards specific aspects of their studies. These aspects include, the quality of learning materials, contact sessions, workshops as well as individual attention.
While 44% of participants responded positively towards receiving adequate individual attention, 42% of participants remained neutral and 12% disagreed. Only 2% of participants responded by indicating not applicable. The responses therefore indicate that all the relevant stakeholders are required to be more responsive to the needs of students. Further, it is critical that this question is simplified to add options, to enable establishing which graduates are not receiving the desired support.

**Figure 11: Learning materials**

While 49% of participants agreed that the learning materials provided were of a high quality, 40% remained neutral. 9% of participants disagreed that the learning materials were of a high quality and 2% indicated not applicable. The results indicate a need to review current learning materials.
Participants (47%) responded in a positive manner to the usefulness of workshops (contact sessions). However, there were 35% of participants that remained neutral, 9% that disagreed and 9% that indicated not applicable. It is alarming that 44% of participants responded negatively, suggesting that contact sessions require improvement. However, what form of improvements are required, whether these are classroom layouts or lecturer presentation, would only become known, if longitudinal studies are conducted and students are asked to explain their negative responses to the statement.

Figure 13: Additional contact classes (weekend)

60% of participants indicated that they would have attended additional contact classes on a Saturday. 16% of participants remained neutral, 12% indicated disagreement and 12% of participants responded that the statement was not applicable to them. The results suggest that consideration should be given to increasing the number of contact session workshops especially
on a Saturday. It is interesting to note that while students responded negatively to the statement pertaining to contact workshops, students would prefer attending additional contact classes on the weekend. It can therefore be concluded that students may feel more relaxed on the weekend as opposed to attending weekday contact sessions, further it may be due to number of student composition and individual attention. These are just some of the reasons that can be associated with the majority of positive student responses.

33% of participants agreed that he or she would attend additional contact classes on weekdays. However, 28% of participants disagreed, while 21% were neutral and 19% indicated that the statement was not applicable to them. The responses to this statement amplifies previous comments pertaining to students preferences to weekend classes as opposed to additional contact classes on a weekday. Further, it can be stated that as a distance education provider, and with majority of RBS students being between the ages of 25-35 and are working class students, further attributing the lack of interest in additional contact classes.
Participants were asked their opinion of the fairness of lecture evaluations on their academic performance. The results generated revealed that 65% of participants agreed that lecturers evaluations on academic performance was fair and only 5% disagreed. However, 21% of participants chose to remain neutral and the remaining 9% indicated not applicable.

The participants were asked about the general accessibility of their lecturers. According to the findings illustrated, 58% of participants agreed that lecturers were generally easily accessible. However, it is of concern that 35% of participants chose to remain neutral. Only 7% of participants disagreed. Lecturer accessibility to student is critical, especially in cases where students may not feel comfortable to ask questions or have some difficulty in understanding. Therefore, it is imperative that the relevant stakeholders need to probe this matter further and perhaps that designated consultations are scheduled and students are aware of these times through notification in the classrooms as well as noticeboards (contact sessions). For students that are
studying through the distance mode of delivery, lecturers and relevant stakeholders at RBS, need to create a structure where students have better access to their lecturers, for example online chat forums.

**Figure 17: Appropriateness of the mode of delivery of the programme**

![Chart showing the appropriateness of the mode of delivery of the programme](image)

The participants were asked about the appropriateness of the mode of delivery of the programme relevant to his/her qualification. The majority (72%) of the participants agreed on the appropriateness of the mode of delivery of the programme. Only 5% had disagreed, 2% selected not applicable. 21% were neutral.

**Figure 18: Guidance provided for topic selection & refinement**

![Chart showing guidance provided for topic selection & refinement](image)

This question was specifically directed to those students who were undertaking postgraduate studies. The majority (63%) of participants agreed that they received good guidance during the process of topic selection and refinement for their dissertation/project. 28% of the participants remained neutral, 2% disagreed and 7% indicated not applicable. The results indicate that students are receiving the necessary guidance to begin their dissertation/project, this form of assistance is vital in the swift completion of their postgraduate programme.
The findings above illustrate participants’ response to the guidance provided by the supervisor with regards to feedback during their postgraduate studies. 60% of the participants suggested that they received helpful feedback from the supervisor, while 7% disagreed. 21% of participants were neutral and 12% indicated that the statement was not applicable to them. The confirmatory responses by the postgraduate students with reference to this statement, and the previous one, is the affirmation that students are receiving the necessary support to successfully complete the final phase of their studies.

**Figure 19: Supervisor feedback**

![Supervisor feedback chart]

The findings depicted above illustrate participants’ response to the impact of the workshops on their project/dissertation. 60% of participants responded positively as they agreed that workshops were helpful throughout the project/dissertation. However, 21% remained neutral, 7% disagreed and 12% indicated not applicable.

**Figure 20: The usefulness of workshops for project/dissertation**

![Workshops were helpful throughout the project/dissertation chart]
Figure 21: Requirements of dissertation/project/examination

The majority (70%) of participants agreed that they understood the requirements of the dissertation/project/examination. Only 5% of participants disagreed. 19% remained neutral and 7% noted as not applicable.

Figure 22: Administrative support by Research Department

The majority of participants (74%) responded positively to the administrative support received by research department, while only 5% were dissatisfied. 12% of participants opted to remain neutral and 9% indicated not applicable.
The participants (72%) agreed that the admission and acceptance process as being fair, while 5% had disagreed. Only 21% remained neutral and 2% chose not applicable.

Figure 24: RBS tuition fees

Participants were asked if they thought that the tuition fees they were paying was value for money. 74% of participants agreed that the tuition fees paid were value for money and only 5% disagreed. 19% selected to remain neutral and 2% not applicable.
Participants were asked if they felt that the registration process conducted was satisfactory. 79% of participants indicated agreement about the satisfactory nature of the registration process, with only 5% showing disagreement and 16% remaining neutral.

The participants were asked if they were taken through an orientation process. 60% of the participants had agreed that he or she had been through an orientation process. Only 9% had disagreed. 26% of participants chose to remain neutral and 5% selected not applicable.
The participants were asked to rate the Institution with particular reference to Regent Business School having a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Majority (77%) of the participants agreed that the Institution offered a friendly and welcoming atmosphere, while 5% disagreed. Only 16% of participants remained neutral and only 2% indicated not applicable.

**Figure 27: RBS environment**

![RBS had a friendly welcoming atmosphere](chart1)

The findings generated above reflect the participants response to the adequacy of facilities provided by the institution. 47% of participants agreed that the facilities provided are adequate, however 44% of participants also chose to remain neutral. This is of concern and indicates that the institution needs to improve the facilities that they are currently providing. 5% of participants had disagreed that the facilities were adequate and a further 5% selected not applicable.

**Figure 28: Facilities provision at RBS**

![Facilities provided were adequate](chart2)
Participants were asked if the library at the institution provided useful resources. 51% of participants agreed that useful resources was provided by the institutions library, however 26% of participants were neutral and 16 % had disagreed. Only 7% chose not applicable.

Figure 30: Feedback from student support

60% of participants reported that student support at the Institution provides feedback timeously and only 9% disagreed.  28% of participants chose to remain neutral and 2% selected not applicable.
The participants were asked to rate the approach of student support staff towards students. 60% of participants agreed that student support staff are always friendly and polite towards them. Only 7% disagreed. 19% of participants were neutral and 2% chose not applicable.

Figure 32: Efficiency of student support

Majority (70%) of participants agreed that student support staff handled their queries efficiently, while only 7% disagreed. 21% of participants were neutral and 2% selected not applicable.

4. Conclusion

The Graduate Exit Survey 2013 was conducted with the purpose of assessing four aspects of RBS service delivery, namely: academic, administration, institutional support/facilities/library and the graduation process. The survey results provided insights into the assessment of these by students. Academically, students were satisfied overall with knowledge and skills acquired, mode of delivery, lecturer quality and assessment as well as supervision. The administration services offered by RBS were also rated with immense satisfaction by the students. The students
further positively rated the services rendered by institutional support, library and the facilities of RBS.

Acknowledgements
The writers place on record their thanks to all students who participated in this exit survey. By the same token the principal author places on record her immense gratitude to the Management of the Regent Business School for permission to conduct the survey and to subsequently publish the findings. Her gratitude is also expressed to Professors D. Soni and A. M. Karodia of the Regent Business School, for their assistance in preparing the manuscript.

BIBLIOGRAPHY
The paper in respect of the exit survey was conducted on the basis of questionnaires handed out to students as respondents to the exit survey conducted by the Regent Business School for 2013. The survey includes respondents from various destinations in respect to where the Regent Business School operates and functions. There is thus no classical bibliography because the exit survey utilized appropriate analytical tools in the construction of its analysis, which were presented within the body of the paper.