NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Department of Human Capital

GRADUATE TALENT DEVELOPMENT POLICY.

Developing **Talent.** Building **Capability.** Shaping Our **Future.**



MENTORSHIP
Guiding growth through experience.

LEARNING
Continuous learning for continuous improvement.

PRACTICAL EXPOSURE
Applying knowledge to real-world challenges.

OPPORTUNITIES
Expanding potential through meaningful opportunities.

OUR COMMITMENT

ATTRACT
Attract high-potential graduate trainees and staff.

DEVELOP
Invest in learning and professional development.

EMPOWER
Empower individuals to reach their full potential.

ENGAGE
Foster engagement and a culture of collaboration.

GROW
Build future leaders who drive the University forward.

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR: HUMAN CAPITAL AND STUDENT SERVICES

GRADUATE TALENT DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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	Constitution	
	Higher Education Act, 2003 (Act No. 26 of 2003)	*NUST Recruitment and Selection Policy*
	NUST Act, 2015 (Act No. 7 of 2015)	*NUST Performance Management Policy*
	NQA Act, 1996 (Act No. 29 of 1996)	*NUST Talent and Succession Planning Policy*
	National WIL Policy, 2025	*NUST Intellectual Property Policy*
	ILO Standards on Decent Employment	*NUST Delegation of Authority Framework*

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AUTHENTICATION

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University Seal:



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Abbreviation	Meaning
DVC	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
GTDP	Graduate Talent Development Programme
GT (Admin)	Graduate Trainee – Administrative Stream
GT (Academic)	Graduate Trainee – Academic Stream
HC	Human Capital Department
HoD	Head of Department
GTDP Committee	Graduate Trainee Development Programme Committee
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
NQA	Namibia Qualifications Authority
NQF	Namibian National Qualifications Framework
ODL	Organisational Development and Learning
PDP	Personal Development Plan
SDF	Staff Development Fellow
TA&R	Talent Acquisition and Remuneration
VC	Vice-Chancellor

Acronym	Meaning
EXCO	Executive Committee of NUST
NUST	Namibia University of Science and Technology

DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Act	The Namibia University of Science and Technology Act (Act No. 7 of 2015).
Budget Availability	Official written confirmation by the Office of the Bursar and the Human Capital Department that sufficient financial resources exist to support all planned appointments, stipends, tuition rebates and associated costs.
Conflict of Interest	A situation in which a person's private interests, personal relationships or prior commitments could improperly influence, or reasonably be perceived to influence, the discharge of that person's duties in relation to the GTDP, including but not limited to recruitment, selection, assessment and supervision. A conflict of interest may be actual, where the private interest directly influences official actions; potential, where circumstances could give rise to a future conflict; or perceived, where a reasonable person could conclude that the individual's private interests may improperly influence their judgment, regardless of whether such influence exists.
Graduate Trainee (Administrative Stream)	A Namibian graduate appointed under the GTDP to a fixed, non-renewable 12-month structured developmental placement within NUST's administrative and operational departments.
Graduate Trainee (Academic Stream) / Staff Development Fellow (SDF)	A Namibian postgraduate student appointed under the GTDP to pursue a Master's (three years) or Doctoral qualification (five years) whilst contributing to teaching, research and academic support at NUST, subject to a Workback Agreement.
Graduate Talent Development Programme (GTDP)	NUST's overarching institutional framework comprises the Administrative Stream Graduate Trainee Programme and the Academic Stream Graduate Trainee Programme (Staff Development Fellowship), designed to develop a pipeline of high-potential talent for future institutional roles.
Host Department / Host Unit	An academic School or administrative Department at NUST responsible for supervising, mentoring and monitoring a Graduate Trainee or SDF.
GTDP Committee	The Graduate Trainee Development Programmes Committee: a formally constituted governance body responsible for overseeing the recruitment, selection and governance of all Internships, Graduate Trainees and Staff Development Fellows.

Personal Development Plan (PDP)	A structured academic and professional development document required of all SDFs, setting out postgraduate milestones, academic duties, research output targets, support requirements and timelines.
Priority Placement Area	A Department or Unit identified by the GTDP Committee as strategically requiring talent capacity support and therefore approved to host a Graduate Trainee or SDF during a placement cycle.
Stipend	A fixed monthly allowance is paid to Graduate Trainees and SDFs in recognition of their contribution. The stipend does not constitute a salary, and the appointment does not create a permanent employment relationship.

Term	Definition
Termination	The formal, lawful discontinuation of a participant's involvement in the programme, due to unsatisfactory performance, misconduct, breach of contract or failure to meet programme requirements.
Workback Agreement	A binding contractual obligation requiring that, upon successful completion of the funded qualification, an SDF is absorbed into the NUST establishment in an appropriate capacity and serves NUST for a workback period equivalent to the number of years spent on the programme. Failure to fulfil this obligation may trigger repayment of all financial support received, at market-related interest rates.
Work Plan	A structured 12-month developmental document agreed between a GT (Admin) and the Host Department, setting out learning objectives, rotational placements, KPIs, review dates and expected outcomes.

1. PREAMBLE

NUST recognises that sustainable institutional excellence depends on its ability to attract outstanding talent from the broader labour market while deliberately developing and retaining talent within its own graduate community. Graduate talent development is therefore an important component of the University's human capital strategy and long-term institutional sustainability. The Graduate Talent Development Policy establishes a principled, structured and legally sound framework for the identification, development, support and retention of high-potential graduates in accordance with NUST's strategic priorities, human capital requirements and organisational values. The Policy provides for two distinct but complementary development streams, namely the Graduate Trainee Administrative Stream and the Staff Development Academic Stream**,** also known as the Staff Development Fellowship**,** through which NUST develops graduate talent in response to identified institutional and future workforce needs.

The Graduate Talent Development Programme (GTDP) reflects NUST's commitment to national human capital development, institutional transformation and the establishment of a sustainable pipeline of qualified and values-aligned professionals for academic and administrative roles. It responds to Namibia's ongoing challenges related to graduate unemployment, shortages of suitably qualified academic staff in specialized disciplines, and the need to prepare the next generation of institutional professionals and leaders. The GTDP is anchored in the NUST Integrated Strategic Business Plan (ISBP) 2026–2030**,** particularly the Human Capital strategic objective of improving Human Capital Capacity and Retention, the five ISBP Human Capital focus areas, and the Staffing and Human Resource Development Plan in ISBP Annexure C. It operationalises the ISBP's commitment to strengthening academic capacity through postgraduate development pipelines, including the Graduate Trainee Academic Programme (GTAP) and Staff Development Fellowship (SDF) programmes, as well as succession planning, leadership development and NUST's strategic ambition to position the University as an employer of choice.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to establish a **p**rincipled, equitable, transparent and legally sound framework for the implementation and administration of NUST's Graduate Talent Development Programme (GTDP), through which high-potential Namibian graduates are attracted, developed and retained in structured developmental pathways aligned with the University's strategic workforce and human capital requirements. The Policy seeks to build a sustainable pipeline of suitably qualified professionals and academics for future roles within NUST, including by supporting talented postgraduate students who demonstrate potential and commitment to academic careers.

The Policy further seeks to ensure consistent, transparent and merit-based recruitment and selection processes across all GTDP streams, while protecting Graduate Trainees from exploitation through clearly defined roles, responsibilities, boundaries and obligations. It promotes ethical conduct, institutional integrity, accountability and the prevention of corruption, nepotism and favouritism in all aspects of GTDP administration, and ensures that participants' personal information is processed lawfully, securely and responsibly in accordance with applicable data protection requirements.

1.2 Background

NUST's strategic growth aspirations require a robust pipeline of skilled administrative professionals and qualified academic staff. Recruitment in specialised academic disciplines, particularly in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, has been a persistent challenge across Namibian higher education institutions. The Graduate Talent Development Policy responds to this challenge with a proactive, structured and deliberate talent development strategy.

The Administrative Stream of the GTDP provides recent graduates with 12 months of structured, cross-functional institutional exposure, helping them develop skills and professional maturity that benefit both the individual and the University. The Academic Stream, the Staff Development Fellowship, creates a formal mechanism for identifying promising postgraduate students and supporting them through funded doctoral and master's studies, in exchange for academic service and a workback commitment.

This Policy consolidates and formalises NUST's historical graduate development practices into a single, coherent institutional framework, aligned with best practice at leading research-intensive universities.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are to:

1.3.1 Establish a principled, equitable, transparent and legally sound framework for the implementation and administration of the Graduate Talent Development Programme (GTDP) at NUST.

1.3.2 Attract and develop high-potential Namibian graduates through structured developmental pathways aligned with NUST's strategic workforce needs, while building a sustainable talent pipeline for future professional and academic roles.

1.3.3 Strengthen NUST's academic capacity by identifying and supporting talented postgraduate

students committed to academic careers through appropriate development and study opportunities.

1.3.4 Ensure transparent, consistent and merit-based recruitment and selection processes across all GTDP streams, while protecting Graduate Trainees from exploitation through clearly defined roles, responsibilities, boundaries and obligations.

1.3.5 Promote ethical conduct, institutional integrity and accountability in the administration of the GTDP, including the prevention of corruption, nepotism and favouritism.

1.3.6 Ensure the lawful, secure and responsible processing and protection of participants' personal information in accordance with applicable data protection requirements.

2. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This Policy applies to:

2.1. All Namibian graduates eligible for and appointed to the Graduate Trainee, Administrative Stream.

2.2. All Namibian postgraduate students eligible for and appointed to the Graduate Trainee, Academic Stream (Staff Development Fellowship).

2.3. All academic Schools, Faculties and administrative Departments at NUST that host Graduate Trainees or SDFs.

2.4. The Human Capital Department in its administrative, HR, monitoring and development facilitation role.

2.5. The GTDP Committee in its governance and oversight role.

2.6. The Office of the Bursar in its budgetary and financial management role.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

NUST recognises the Graduate Talent Development Programme (GTDP) as a strategic human capital and talent development initiative designed to attract, develop and retain high-potential Namibian graduates and strengthen the University's pipeline of qualified professionals and academics. The Programme shall be implemented in alignment with NUST's strategic priorities, human capital requirements and institutional values, and shall contribute to the development of participants while strengthening institutional capacity. Successful participants may, subject to applicable University policies, approved staffing requirements, merit-based processes and budgetary availability, be considered for talent pools, succession planning, leadership development or future employment opportunities; participation in the GTDP shall not, however, create an expectation of permanent

employment.

Through the GTDP, NUST is committed to providing structured, quality-assured and meaningful developmental placements for Graduate Trainees and Staff Development Fellows (SDFs); ensuring that appointments are fixed-term and developmental in nature and are not used to replace permanent employees or fill substantive posts; and ensuring equitable, transparent and non-discriminatory recruitment and selection. The University shall provide Graduate Trainees with structured Work Plans and SDFs with Personal Development Plans, supported by appropriate supervision, mentoring and developmental opportunities, and shall make appointments only where confirmed budgetary provision exists. NUST shall further uphold ethical conduct, institutional integrity, research integrity, academic ethics, accountability and sound governance, including appropriate safeguards against corruption, nepotism, favouritism, conflicts of interest and exploitative practices throughout the administration and implementation of the GTDP.

4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This Policy shall be implemented in compliance with all applicable national legislation, regulations and standards, including but not limited to:

4.1.1. Labour Act, 2007 (Act No. 11 of 2007): Governs all conditions of employment, including fixed-term contracts, and the rights of persons in workplace-based development programmes.

4.1.2. Higher Education Act, 2003 (Act No. 26 of 2003): Governs higher education governance and the obligations of institutions to develop qualified academic staff.

4.1.3. Namibia University of Science and Technology Act, 2015 (Act No. 7 of 2015): The enabling statute of NUST.

4.1.4. Namibia Qualifications Authority Act, 1996 (Act No. 29 of 1996): Governs qualifications standards and programme accreditation requirements relevant to SDF postgraduate studies.

4.1.5. National WIL Policy, 2025: Whilst the GTDP extends beyond WIL, the principles of the National WIL Policy, 2025, particularly those relating to structured learning, quality assurance, equity and non-exploitation, inform this Policy.

4.1.6. ILO Standards on Decent Employment: Inform the minimum standards of treatment, protection and development opportunities to be afforded to all programme participants.

5. PRINCIPLES GUIDING PRACTICES AT NUST

The GTDP shall be underpinned by the following principles:

1.1 Talent Pipeline, Succession and Institutional Alignment: The GTDP shall form part of NUST's integrated Talent and Succession Planning Framework and shall develop a sustainable pipeline of professionals and academics aligned with the University's strategic workforce and institutional needs.

1.2 Merit, Excellence, Equity and Transformation: Recruitment and selection shall be based on academic achievement, potential, merit and alignment with NUST's needs, while actively promoting equity, inclusion and the identification and development of talent from historically underrepresented groups in support of the University's transformation agenda. The highest standards of selection integrity shall be maintained.

1.3 Structured Development and Mutual Obligation: All participants shall receive purposeful, supervised and documented development activities aligned with institutional requirements and individual career goals. NUST shall provide quality development opportunities, while participants shall fulfil their performance, development and programme obligations, including applicable workback commitments for SDFs.

1.4 Non-Exploitation, Ethical Conduct and Academic Integrity: Graduate Trainees and SDFs shall not replace permanent employees, fill substantive posts or perform duties outside their approved Work Plans or PDPs. SDFs shall conduct their research and academic activities in accordance with NUST's research ethics, intellectual property and academic integrity requirements.

1.5 Financial Stewardship, Transparency and Accountability: GTDP appointments shall be made only where confirmed budgetary provision exists. All programme processes and decisions shall be transparent, documented, auditable and consistently applied, with responsible governance structures held accountable for compliance.

1.6 Monitoring, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement: The GTDP shall be regularly monitored and evaluated, with reliable programme data and evidence used to assess participant outcomes, institutional value and compliance, and to inform continuous improvement of the Programme.

6. POLICY CONTEXT

The Graduate Talent Development Programme (GTDP) is a strategic human capital initiative through which NUST addresses its workforce planning, talent development, and succession planning requirements. As a research-intensive, applied technology university, NUST's

institutional sustainability and effectiveness depend on a strong pipeline of qualified academic and professional staff. The GTDP therefore supports the University's strategic priorities while contributing to Namibia's broader human capital development and the development of a knowledge-based economy, consistent with national development priorities, including Vision 2030, NDP6 and the Harambee Prosperity Plan II.

The GTDP comprises two complementary development streams. The Administrative Stream provides high-potential recent graduates with structured, supervised and cross-functional institutional exposure to develop the operational, analytical, professional and leadership competencies required for future professional roles. The Academic Stream, through the Staff Development Fellowship (SDF), identifies promising postgraduate graduates and supports their master's or doctoral development, where applicable, in exchange for academic service and agreed workback commitments, thereby strengthening NUST's internal pipeline of qualified academics and future academic leaders. Successful participants may be considered for future employment, talent pools, succession planning or leadership development opportunities, subject to merit-based recruitment processes, organisational requirements, approved workforce plans and budgetary availability; participation in the GTDP does not constitute or guarantee permanent employment.

7. STRUCTURES GOVERNING THE POLICY

The following structures shall be responsible for the governance of this policy:

7.1 Vice-Chancellor

7.2 Human Capital Department

7.3 GTDP Committee

7.4 Host Departments / Academic Schools

7.5 Office of the Bursar

7.6 DVCs, Deans, Associate Deans, Directors and HoDs

7.7 Programme Participants

8. IMPLEMENTATION

8.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The specific roles and responsibilities of each governance structure are as set out below:

8.1.1 Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor shall:

8.1.1.1 Provide strategic leadership for the GTDA and appoint the GTDP Committee every five years.

8.1.1.2 Approve all Graduate Trainee and SDF appointments recommended by the GTDP Committee.

8.1.1.3 Ensure programme alignment with NUST's Strategic Plan.

8.1.2 Human Capital Department

The Human Capital Department shall:

8.1.2.1 Administer and coordinate the GTDP, including annual budgeting, recruitment facilitation, appointments, stipend and tuition rebate processing in collaboration with the Bursar, and the maintenance and secure management of participant records, contracts, Work Plans and Personal Development Plans (PDPs), with appropriate access controls and data security measures.

8.1.2.2 Coordinate and monitor participant development, including the design, facilitation and monitoring of structured development activities, training modules and leadership development initiatives for the Administrative Stream, monitoring PDP progress in the Academic Stream, advising the GTDPC on compliance with applicable employment legislation and institutional policies, and providing quarterly programme status and outcome reports to EXCO.

8.1.2.3 Evaluate and continuously improve the GTDP, including conducting the annual monitoring and evaluation of both programme streams, preparing consolidated progress and evaluation reports, and making recommendations to the GTDPC on programme quality, effectiveness and improvement.

8.1.3 GTDPC

The GTDPC shall:

8.1.3.1 Provide strategic governance and oversight of the GTDP, including recruitment, selection, placement and quality assurance, and identify the Priority Placement Areas for both programme streams on an annual basis.

8.1.3.2 Oversee programme implementation and performance, including reviewing and recommending candidate appointments to the Vice-Chancellor, monitoring programme

performance on a quarterly basis, submitting reports to EXCO, and meeting at least four times annually, with a quorum of 50% plus one, including the Chairperson.

8.1.3.3 Safeguard the integrity and accountability of the GTDP, ensuring that recruitment, selection and appointment decisions are free from conflicts of interest. Members with a conflict of interest shall recuse themselves from all related deliberations and decisions, and any suspected irregularities, conflicts of interest or breaches of this Policy shall be reported to the Vice-Chancellor and, where appropriate, the Division of Internal Audit and Risk Management.

8.1.4 Host Departments / Academic Schools

Host Departments / Academic Schools shall:

8.1.4.1 Provide a structured, supportive and intellectually stimulating placement environment, designate an appropriately qualified supervisor and, for Staff Development Fellows (SDFs), an Academic Supervisor, and ensure that participants are not used as substitutes for permanent staff.

8.1.4.2 Support participants' professional and academic development by assigning appropriately qualified mentors to provide career guidance and developmental coaching, and by co-developing and approving participants' Work Plans and Personal Development Plans (PDPs).

8.1.4.3 Monitor and assess participant performance and progress through quarterly assessments for the Administrative Stream and semester assessments for the Academic Stream, and provide appropriate feedback and developmental support.

8.1.5 Office of the Bursar

The Office of the Bursar shall:

8.1.5.1 Confirm and communicate the availability of approved budgetary provision for the GTDP prior to each recruitment cycle and advise the Human Capital Department on the financial implications of proposed appointments and programme commitments.

8.1.5.2 Administer and process approved financial obligations under the GTDP, including monthly stipends and tuition rebates, accurately and timeously, in accordance with approved budgets, applicable financial policies and procedures, and supporting documentation.

8.1.5.3 Maintain appropriate financial records and controls relating to GTDP expenditure, monitor compliance with approved funding arrangements, and provide financial information and reports to the relevant University structures as required.

8.1.6 DVCs, Deans, Associate Deans, Directors and Heads of Department

DVCs, Deans, Associate Deans, Directors and Heads of Department shall:

8.1.6.1 Provide strategic leadership and an enabling environment for the effective integration, development and professional growth of GTDP participants within their respective portfolios, faculties, schools, directorates and departments.

8.1.6.2 Ensure institutional and operational alignment by identifying appropriate developmental and placement opportunities that support NUST's strategic priorities, workforce requirements and the approved Work Plans and Personal Development Plans (PDPs) of participants.

8.1.6.3 Ensure compliance and accountability by monitoring the implementation of the GTDP within their respective areas of responsibility and ensuring adherence to this Policy, associated Procedures and applicable University policies, while promptly addressing and escalating any material concerns or non-compliance.

8.1.7 Programme Participants

Programme Participants shall:

8.1.7.1 Take full responsibility for their performance, professional development and compliance with all applicable institutional policies, contractual obligations and programme requirements, including postgraduate study and workback commitments applicable to Staff Development Fellows (SDFs).

8.1.7.2 Actively participate in mentoring, professional development and leadership activities provided under the GTDP and fulfil all associated development and performance requirements.

8.1.7.3 Uphold institutional integrity and ethical standards by promptly disclosing any actual or potential conflict of interest to the Human Capital Department and refraining from corruption, dishonesty, plagiarism, research fraud, nepotism, favouritism or any other conduct that breaches institutional integrity standards.

8.2 Support and Advice

The following support structures are available to all GTDP participants:

8.2.1. Human Capital Department: Primary administrative contact. | hrs@nust.na

8.2.2. ODL Section: Development facilitation, training co-ordination and PDP support.

8.2.3. Academic Supervisors (SDFs): Postgraduate study guidance, research support and pastoral mentoring.

8.2.4. Line Managers / Supervisors (Admin Stream): Day-to-day mentoring and professional development support.

8.2.5. Employee Wellness Programme: Confidential support for personal, professional and psychological wellbeing.

8.3 Communication

This Policy shall be communicated through:

8.3.1. Official publication on the NUST website and Policy Register.

8.3.2. Email circulars issued by the Office of the Registrar and the Director: Human Capital to all staff and Heads of Department.

8.3.3. Induction briefings for all incoming Graduate Trainees and SDFs.

8.3.4. Annual programme briefings to Deans, Executive Directors and Heads of Department prior to each recruitment cycle.

8.4 Mentorship and Leadership Development

NUST shall provide mentorship, coaching, leadership development and professional growth opportunities.

8.5 Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Reports

Annual M&E reports shall, as a minimum, cover:

8.5.1 Programme completion and outcomes, including completion rates for both streams, SDF qualification completion rates, and participant retention and absorption into NUST or external employment.

8.5.2 Participant diversity and equity indicators, including gender, regional origin and disability status.

8.5.3 Programme impact and institutional value, including its contribution to NUST's institutional

capacity and the achievement of the ISBP 2026–2030 Human Capital targets.

8.6 Diversity, Inclusion and Transformation

Recruitment and selection practices shall support NUST's Affirmative Action and Transformation objectives.

8.7 Financial Support Framework

Funding provisions shall be determined annually based on approved budgets and institutional priorities.

8.8 Talent Pool Management

The Human Capital Department may maintain a Graduate Talent Database for workforce planning and succession planning purposes.

9. COMMENTS

All members of the NUST community are invited to provide feedback on this Policy. Comments may be submitted to the Director: Human Capital at hrs@nust.na or through the online feedback portal on the NUST website. All feedback will be reviewed by the GTDP Committee and the Policy Custodian as part of the scheduled policy review process.

10. NON-COMPLIANCE

Non-compliance with this Policy may result in:

10.1. Removal of a Department or Unit from Priority Placement Area consideration for subsequent cycles.

10.2. Withdrawal of a Graduate Trainee or SDF from a non-compliant Host Department.

10.3. Disciplinary action for staff members who breach recruitment protocols, supervisory obligations or the provisions of this Policy, in accordance with applicable HR policies.

10.4. Recovery of financial contributions from SDFs who breach their Workback Agreements, in accordance with the terms of that agreement.

10.5. Programme Risks and Mitigation provisions dealing with attrition, budget constraints, qualification completion and workback obligations.

11. REVIEW

This Policy shall be reviewed at least every five (5) years from the date of its approval by Council, or earlier where necessary to ensure its continued relevance, effectiveness and alignment with applicable legislation, institutional priorities and strategic developments. The review process shall commence during the fourth year of the Policy cycle to allow sufficient time for consultation, revision and approval, with the revised Policy targeted for approval by Council before the expiry of the fifth year..

NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Department of Human Capital



13 Jackson Kaujeua Street
Private Bag 13388
Windhoek
Namibia

Enquiries
Ms Riette Duvenhage
Director: Department Human Capital

T: +264 61 207 2448
E: rduvenhage@nust.na