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Investigating the Academic Progress of Namcol Tertiary Programme Students Admitted Through Recognition of Prior Learning 2019-2020

Victoria Magano Amakali

Distance Education Coordinator, NAMCOL,Namibia, Windhoek

Abstract
The intention of this study was to report on the progress of students admitted through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for the academic year 2019 and 2020 at the Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL). The experience of students admitted through RPL seems under researched, given the number of limited studies undertaken at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) offering Open and Distance Learning (ODL). The study aimed to explore the progress of students admitted to certificate programmes offered by NAMCOL through RPL. This study used Abraham Maslow's Need Theory as a theoretical framework. The research followed a qualitative research method. A descriptive research design was employed for the study. The population comprised certificate students admitted through RPL during the 2019 and 2020 academic years. Purposeful sampling technique which comprised a sample of 30 students was used. Data were collected through a structured interview guide. Students 'academic records were reviewed to determine their progress. Data were analysed and presented thematically. Main outcomes of the study showed that several factors affect students' performance positively and negatively. Factors contributing positively include the delivery of face-to-face contact sessions and discussions with other students. Aspects contributing negatively to the academic success of students include distance, work, and family responsibilities. The study, therefore, recommends that more face-to-face contact sessions should be made available to students. These could be offered online synchronously or asynchronously to enable students to play and review sessions on their own time.

Keywords: Recognition of Prior Learning, Academic Progress, NAMCOL, Certificates

1. Introduction

Garnett and Cavaye (2015), pointed out that the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a system of giving academic recognition to those with uncertified formal learning opportunities. RPL is therefore alluded to as prior since the candidate attains learning before being assessed for admission to a course of study. Berglund and Andersson (2012) argue that RPL is important for the reason that the knowledge and skills gained through work experiences are usually unevaluated and undocumented through a formal and structured process.

Those without academic qualifications and disadvantaged learners are attracted to enter institutions of higher education through RPL (Khan, et al., 2022). However, there seems to be limited literature on how students admitted through RPL perform in their academic journey in Namibia. Garnett and Cavaye (2015) report developments in RPL in western countries. In 1992, as part of the national structure for the recognition of training, Australia introduced RPL. RPL was intended for training, trade education at the Australian Polytechnic, and adult education. The Australian institutions of higher learning adopted RPL for various reasons. Firstly, the Australian Qualification Framework then recognized RPL as a passageway for entry available to applicants into any course at some levels. Secondly, the Australian administration shifted a policy towards the achievement of higher levels of education among its population. RPL approaches in Europe have been developed as part of the lifelong learning process. In France, RPL has been recognized for confronting issues related to lifelong learning, occupation, and social presence.

In South Africa, RPL has remained rooted in legislation and education policies to serve the aim of access, change, and lifelong learning. South Africa amended its RPL policy of 2019 to propose a mechanism for guiding RPL in the country; including facilitating transformation in the lives of the RPL students, applicants, and workers (South African Qualifications Authority [SAQA], 2019). The University of South Africa (UNISA) is an open distance learning institution that has been implementing RPL. RPL at UNISA is predominantly applied to provide access to undergraduate qualifications (Stephenson, 2014). There are considerable requirements involved in completing an undergraduate qualification, therefore, UNISA is committed to ensuring the success of students admitted through RPL (UNISA, 2016c). Hence, there is a need to conduct continuing research on the RPL process in institutions of higher learning.

One factor that reduces graduate throughput is the high failure rates and poor academic performances of students in Institutions of Higher Education. Jayanthi, et al. (2014) the use of et al report that admission opportunities for students seeking certificates, diplomas, and degrees reduce. A topic that has always been of interest for education in higher education is students' academic performance. As a result, there has been interest in educators and researchers in understanding and identifying the variables that contribute to academic quality. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the academic performance of students admitted through RPL. The research also sought to identify and understand factors that contribute may contribute to their success.

2. Problem Statement

Shaketange (2014) report that experiential learning or the evaluation of RPL is globally justified and appreciated through policies and frameworks. A number of government policies (NDP3, 2001 to 2011, Vision 2030, 2004; National Policy on RPL, 2010) in Namibia, made several calls to expand access through different paths to higher education. It is a common course that the performance of students admitted through Recognition of Prior Learning should be at the same pace as those admitted with formal (minimum) qualifications, however, it is assumed that there is a high failure rate among this group of students. It is speculated that the level of their qualification, the level of the actual qualification admitted to and the mode of delivery has some contributing factors to the low performance of these students. It is concluded that the college should offer a bridging course and intense support for RPL-admitted students.

In general, a lot of investigation has gone into the issues that influence academic performance; nevertheless, limited research has been conducted on how students that are admitted through RPL perform. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the academic performance and progress of RPL students at NAMCOL.

3. General objective

This study intended to establishing the performance and progress of students admitted through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

3.1 Specific objectives

3.1.1 To extract examination results of students admitted through RPL.
3.1.2 To analyse examination results of students admitted through RPL.
3.1.3 To establish factors affecting the performance and progress of students admitted through RPL.
3.1.4 To devise strategies to improve the performance and progress of students admitted through RPL.

4. Literature Review

4.1 What is Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

According to VETA [Vocational Education and Training Authority] (2014), the method of identifying, assessing, and verifying knowledge, skills, and capabilities is known as RPL. This process disregards how, when, or where the learning occurred. Srivastava and Jena (2015) noted that people who have been left out from learning are brought back into training and education by using the internationally widely used tool known as RPL. The knowledge and skills already acquired by these people are recognized by giving credit, and in the process boosting self-esteem and allowing them access to training opportunities to widen employment opportunities.

4.2 RPL student's academic performance

There exist specific elements suchlike age, gender, and former educational experiences that impact students' satisfaction and performance (Schwartz, 2013). These factors are said to influence human cognitive behavior as a possible reason for the student's performance and satisfaction during their schooling years. Baba et al. (2013) found that sex and age are positively related to class achievement. A study by Wider et al. (2017) found that ethnicity, gender, and apparent adult standing display a substantial indicator of academic change. Wider (2017) further reported that higher academic achievement is recorded among female students than male students. Students are admitted to various institutions of higher education through various means. Some gain admission through RPL or Mature age entry and others are admitted following the normal admission criteria. A study by Alducin-Ochoa and Vázquez-Martínez (2016), found that there are no significant differences in variables such as gender, type of school (private or public) attended, and university admission score.

A study by Dawborn-Gundlach (2018), investigated the influence of the social transition of mature-age students' admission and enrolment for undergraduate studies. They found that there are challenges facing mature-age students. These challenges were found to be in their social transition. Social transition challenges reported include matters of acceptance and communication, loneliness, isolation, and campus friendships. When older students are surrounded by younger students with different life experiences and interests, they feel socially disoriented (Dawborn-Gundlach, 2018). Students' primary supports were families and friends (Heagney and Benson, 2017). In addition, Heagney and Benson (2017) found that students did not employ the use of institutional support services. It was further reported that students lacked the poise to approach university staff, while others were not aware of the existence of support services or did not have time to access them. Mallman and Lee (2016) conducted a similar study and found that younger students dominated university culture. As a result, younger students were reported to stigmatize older students because of their academic practices.

4.3 Factors contributing to the performance and progress of RPL students

Specific factors such as previous educational experiences, gender and age influence the performance and progress of students (Helal, 2018). It was reported that these factors may influence the cognitive behaviour of humans. Researchers (Niedzwiedz et al., 2019) in their studies revealed that sex and age were found to be related to the performance and progress. A study discovered that both age and sex were linked to the grades attained during their studies. In support of this statement, Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (2017) results indicated that gender, traditions, and adult position display a substantial predictor on academic change. Female students specifically have been reported to have higher academic success than their male counterparts. In Munuhe et al., (2019) study, no major variances were detected in the variables gender, age, traditional background and, previous education experience. A study carried out by Bonsaksen, Brown et al. (2017) uncovered- that older students who are more engaged in self-study activities performed better during their academic journey. Dawborn-Gundlach (2018) investigated the influence of transition on mature-age entry students at a University in Australian. Results displayed that there are concerns about factors influencing the performance and progress of mature-age students. These include issues such as social transition, which may include interaction and acceptance, isolation, and loneliness. Older students admitted through mature age entry experience disorientation when surrounded by younger students who may have different life experiences and interests.

4.4 Strategies to improve RPL student's performance and progress

Significant attention in the education context has been gained through RPL as a means to validate and acknowledge the knowledge and skills acquired through informal learning experiences {Bohlinger, 2017). It remains a complex challenge to ensure the progress and performance of RPL students. Therefore, it has been reported that the development and implementation of a comprehensive assessment framework is one key strategy (Chan, 2017). According to (Shelembe, 2021) assessment frameworks include different methods such as workplace assessments, interviews and other holistic ways of evaluating RPL students' abilities. Guidance and clear communication was reported to be an important supporting process for RPL students in the journey to assist them improve progress and performance (Winstanley & Cunningham, 2023). The provision of information to RPL students helps them understand what is required of them and maybe vital to their success. Guidance and feedback which is personalised enable RPL students to overcome challenges enhance their performance and nurture a conducive learning environment for their progress.

5. Theoretical Framework

The research study is framed by Abraham Maslows Needs theory. The theory put forward that people have numerous basic needs. These needs should be met before people move up the hierarchy to chase social, emotional, and self-actualising needs (Dohlman et al., 2019). Güss et al. (2017), indicate that the theory suggests that behavior is influenced by a person's needs. A person may go to lengths to fulfil needs that are not met.

Lester (2013) reports that needs follow a particular order or hierarchy. Physiological needs, which are bottom must be met first. These include food, clothing, air, and shelter. The physiological needs are followed by the safety needs. Safety needs take account of the desire for expected safe surroundings. Subsequent to the safety needs is the need for love and belonging. The need for love and belonging take account of acceptance having a reassuring and communicative university system as well as schoolmates (Taormina & Gao, 2013). The esteem needs are the fourth level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. The fourth need consists of the need to be appreciated, respected, valued, and attention to proficiency mastery, and free will. The need for self-actualization is the last need on the hierarchy, which includes the desire to achieve one's dreams. The need theory expounds factors that affect the academic progress of RPL students. Gill et al. (2015) reveal that several older students display a motivation to engage with their programmes of study. This motivation has remained the focus of several studies that have recognised the vocational drivers for many RPL students. Included is the ability to explore the logic of unfulfilled possibility borne by those who chose to return to education. An example of the physiological level of needs entails that RPL students focus on their academic endeavours if this level of needs is met. Physiological needs at this level that should be met include a favourable learning environment, having enough food for themselves and their families, and being able to afford the payment of necessary services such as water and electricity.

Safety needs mean that RPL students require to be safeguarded from threats from fellow students, tutor-markers, and, program coordinators if they are to perform well scholarly (Messineo et al., 2019). Wouters et al. (2017) explained that students may find themselves in different situations which drive their need to feel loved. Feeling loved creates a sense of belonging which motivates students to work hard irrespective of how tough the course may be. In circumstances where students may face struggles in a course, they need to get encouragement from their friends, tutor-markers, and program coordinators. In the event, the students fail an assignment or examination, the feeling of belonging diminishes and they tend to become discouraged.

6. Method

This research followed a qualitative research approach. A exploratory research design was utilised for this study. In this study, the target population included current and former CECD, CED, CLGS, and CWCY NAMCOL students who were admitted through RPL during the 2019 and 2020 academic years. The study used a purposive sampling technique to include a sample of 23 students.

Two instruments were used to collect data, firstly; a structured interview guide. Secondly, document review was used to collect data by reviewing existing documents, such as student records. The structured interview guide was used to gather information around factors affecting the performance of current and former RPL students. Documents analysis was used to review RPL students' study records for triangulation purposes.

Data analysis involved organising data into themes obtained from the structured interview guide. Themes were identified. Responses from students were confidential in the sense that the researcher could not link responses to individual students. No identifying information was requested to ensure that respondents' responses remained anonymous.

7. Results

The data outlined students' demographic data, covering gender, age, current program, English proficiency, employment status, duration, and work experience. Results showed 91% female and 9% male respondents, consistent with Mőwes and Siacinewa (2000) findings on distance education gender distribution. Participant ages ranged from 29 to 50, with the highest numbers (52%) aged 31-35, followed by 36-40 (17%). Most (61%) were enrolled in the CECD program, with smaller numbers in BECJPE, CWYC, and DECPPE.

English proficiency varied: 6 participants each rated as excellent and very good, while 11 were good. 61% were employed, indicating a focus on career advancement. Employment duration varied, with 13 participants over 3 years, 8 for 3 years, and 2 for 1 year or less. 61% had education beyond grade 12, while

39% had grade 10 plus experience. The second section of the structured interview guide contained open-ended questions and was mostly based on the participant's opinions.

7.1 Influence on academic performance

Participants were questioned about the impact of workshop attendance on academic performance. Findings from 61% of students indicate workshops enhance subject understanding, promote well-being, and facilitate interaction with facilitators. Attendance positively affects performance by preparing students for semester expectations and aiding comprehension of various topics, aiding in formative assessment engagement. However, 26% cited non-attendance due to logistical challenges like distance, costs, and work commitments, as workshops are only available in select towns. Additionally, 13% reported no positive impact, noting superficial workshop content and ineffective engagement. It's inferred that students attending NAMCOL workshops experience academic progress.

Regarding factors affecting academic performance, distance from learning centers is prominent, hindering workshop attendance and assignment assistance. Internet issues compound the problem, as students lack devices for eLearning access and face platform failures during assignment submission, leading to exam ineligibility and program extension. Financial constraints, including tuition fees, contribute to dropouts. Late assignment submission, exacerbated by poor internet and short deadlines, also hampers performance. Finally, work commitments impede study time, as students struggle to balance school, family, and employment responsibilities.

7.2 Reducing factors affecting academic performance by NAMCOL

In response to the question about what students think can be done by NAMCOL to help reduce factors affecting their academic performance, responses were varied. Information received proposed that they should be allocated more time for assignment submission. Students would the college to arrange for students to have face-to-face contact sessions with facilitators twice per week and not twice a semester. Provision should be made for employed students to attend this proposed face-to-face session on Saturdays. In terms of assignment submission dates, students cited that they should be given different days to submit their assignments instead of having them submit all their assignments on the same day. Students also cited the need for NAMCOL to open up more centres where they can walk in and get assistance.

7.3 Improving student's academic performance

Firstly, increasing face-to-face sessions, especially during evenings or holidays, and expanding them to more regions to facilitate regular interaction with subject content guided by facilitators. Secondly, offering second chances to rewrite failed modules and exams for those lacking sufficient Continuous Assessment marks. Thirdly, providing students with internet access and necessary technological devices for timely assignment submission. Lastly, enhancing the network system. Regarding the difference between assignment and exam performance, some students noted minimal disparity, while the majority reported better performance in assignments due to assistance received. Poor exam performance may stem from limited interaction with study materials and lack of guidance in exam preparation. Students expect various forms of support from tutors, including course information, general inquiries, and face-to-face online classes for module briefings. They also anticipate receiving examination tips and assistance on the eLearning platform, with tutors accessible for addressing module-related queries.

7.4 Improving group academic performance through group discussions

This question asked students to express their views on whether they think having group discussions with fellow students can improve their academic performance. Information received revealed that 87% allude that having group discussions will improve their performance because different types of information will be shared. Students cited that group discussions will aid in the sharing of ideas and assisting each other. 13% cited that group discussions will not help because some students may not have smartphones to be able to connect to the internet to take part in group discussions. In addition, it was also reported that some students may discuss unnecessary things instead of discussing important course information.

7.5 A summary of the performance of student

Twenty-three student records admitted through RPL were randomly sampled to assess their performance. This number corresponds to respondents to the online questionnaire to maintain anonymity. Records from each program were represented: CED, CBE, CWCY, and CLGS included all relevant records, while the majority were from CECD due to its higher enrollment post-RPL admission. Reviewed records encompassed registration year, performance, completion status, and duration to completion. CECD records comprised 65%, CBE 9%, CWCY 9%, CLGS 4%, and CED 13% of the sample.

Table 1: Performance of students

Candidate	**Programme**	**Duration and number of modules**	**Year started**	**Progress**	**Status**
CECD (to complete the programme, the student must pass all 12 (old curriculum) or 13 (new curriculum) modules					
Candidate 1	CECD	18 months	2019 2020 2021	Registered for both semesters. Passed 5 out of 8 modules. Registered for both semesters. Passed 5 out of the 7 registered modules (repeating modules included) Registered and failed all modules	Dropped out. No registration recorded for 2022 and 2023.
Candidate 2	CECD	18 months	2019 2020 2021	Registered both semesters. Passed 3 out of the 8 registered modules. Registered only one semester. Passed 2 of the 3 registered modules. No registration was recorded.	Dropped out.
Candidate 3	CECD	18 months	2019 2020	Registered only for the first semester. Passed 1 out of the 4 registered. Registered for both semesters. Passed 2 out of the 6 registered modules.	Dropped out.
Candidate 4	CECD	18 months	2019 2020	Registered for both semesters. Passed 2 out of the 8 registered modules. Registered only for 1 semester. Failed all 4 registered modules.	Dropped out.
Candidate 5	CECD	18 months	2020 2021	Registered for both semesters. Passed 3 out of the 9 registered. Registered only for 1 semester. Did not write exams for any of the modules	Dropped out
Candidate 6	CECD	18 months	2019	Registered for both semesters. Passed 6 out of	Awarded the qualification in

			2020	the 8 registered. Passed all modules.	August 2020.
Candidate 7	CECD	18 months	2019 2020 2021 2022	Registered both semesters. Passed 4 out of 8 registered. Registered one semester. Passed 1 module and cancelled 4. Registered 4 modules. Passes 3 out of the 4 registered. Registered both semesters. Passed all modules registered.	Completed course. Due to graduate.
Candidate 8	CECD	18 months	2019 2020	Registered for both semesters. Passed all 8 registered. Registered one semester. Passed all registered.	Awarded qualification in August 2020. Currently registered for DECPPE
Candidate 9	CECD	18 months	2019 2020	Registered both semesters. Passed 7 out of the 8 registered. Registered one semester. A passed all modules including those repeated.	Awarded qualification in August 2020. Currently registered for DECPPE
Candidate 10	CECD	18 months	2019 2020	Registered both semesters. Passed all 8 of the modules registered. Registered one semester. Passed all modules.	Awarded qualification in August 2020.
Candidate 11	CECD	18 months	2019 2020	Registered both semesters. Passed all 8 modules registered. Registered one semester. Passed all registered.	Awarded qualification in August 2020. Currently registered for DECPPE
Candidate 12	CECD	18 months	2019 2020	Registered both semesters. Passed all modules registered. Registered one semester. Passed all modules.	Awarded qualification in August 2020. Currently registered for the Bachelor.
Candidate 13	CECD	18 months	2019 2020	Registered both semesters. Passed all 8 modules. Registered one semester and passed all registered.	Awarded the qualification in August 2020. Currently registered for the bachelor.
Candidate 14	CECD	18 months	2020 2021 2022	Registered both semesters. Passed 5 out of 8 modules. Registered both semesters. Passed 2 out of the 6 modules, including the repeated.’	Awarded the qualification in April 2023.

				Registered both semesters. Passed all modules including the repeating	
Candidate 15	CECD	18 months	2019 2020	Registered both semesters. Passed 7 of the 8 modules. Registered both semesters. Passed 6 out of 7 registered.	Awarded the qualification in August 2021.
CBE (to complete the programme, the student must complete all 8 modules)					
Candidate 16	CBE	18 months	2021	The student registered for both semesters, did not show up to write exams due to a 'fail absent from exam' ruling on record. Other modules indicated no admission to exams.	Dropped out
Candidate 17	CBE	18 months	2021	The student registered for both semesters, did not show up to write exams due to a 'fail absent from exam' ruling on record. Other modules indicated no admission to exams.	Dropped out
CWCY/ (to complete programme, the student must pass all 6 modules)					
Candidate 18	CWCY	18 months	2021	The student registered for both semesters and passed only 2 modules out of 4. During the 2022 academic year, the student registered all modules and passed all modules including those from the previous year.	The student was awarded the certificate in April of 2023.
Candidate 19	CWCY	18 months 6 modules	2021 2022	The student registered for both semesters and during that academic year, passed 2 out of 4. During the 2022 academic year, the student passed 2 out of 4 modules.	No registration for the 2023 academic year.
CLGS (to complete the programme, the student must complete all 11 modules)					
Candidate 20	CLGS	12 months	2021	The student was not granted admission to exams	Dropped out.
CED (student must complete all 8 modules to pass the programme)					
Candidate 21	CED	1 year 8 modules	2021	Registered for both semesters. Semester 1, failed only 1 module. In semester 2, the student was not admitted to the exams	The student dropped out and did not return to complete the programme.
Candidate 22	CED	1 year 8 modules	2021	Registered for both semester 1 and 2. In total,	Student dropped out and did not

				only two modules were passed, failed one and was absent from exams for all semester 2 modules.	return to complete the programme.
Candidate 23	CED	1 year8 modules	2021 2022 2023	Registered for both semesters. Semester 1, failed only 1 module. Semester 2. Student only passed 1 module in semester 1. Semester 2, passed 1 module, filed the other and was not granted admission to others.	Student is still in the programme.

The analysis of student records highlights various trends across different programs. For the RPL program, the majority of students registered in 2019, with a significant portion completing their certificates and qualifications within the prescribed timeframe, while a few dropped out. Similarly, among CECD students, most registered in 2019, with a mixed outcome of completions and dropouts. For CBE students, both registered in 2021, with one completing within the 18-month timeframe and the other dropping out. In contrast, a CLGS student from the 2021 academic year did not gain admission to exams, indicating potential issues with continuous assessment activities or performance.

Concerning CED students, all registered in 2021, but two have no records for the subsequent academic year, suggesting dropout, while one is still in the program, albeit struggling to complete within the 12-month duration. Overall, RPL students demonstrate efficient program completion, although some dropouts occur due to challenges such as online assignment submission issues. Notably, many RPL students' progress to further studies, including DECPPE and BECJPE programs, indicating successful academic advancement.

8. Discussions

Insight into the different aspects influencing the academic performance of students enrolled through RPL at NAMCOL was presented. An important contributor materialised is the attendance of face-to-face workshops. Workshops were found to play a critical role in contributing to improved understanding of the subject area and engagement with tutor-markers and peers. Lin et al, (2017) agreed with these findings by reporting that workshops have a positive influence on students' learning outcomes. The workshops served as a platform to prepare students for the start of a new semester's activities, and this is aligned with the research results of a study by Sisk et al. (2017) in which the importance of such interventions played a vital role in students' academic success.

A considerable number of students reported not attending workshops due to financial constraints, distance, work and family commitments. This emphasises the need for NAMCOL to work on expanding the workshop venue to all towns or find ways to ensure that students can connect virtually to such interventions. In addition, students expressed dissatisfaction regarding the quality of workshops offered, suggesting improvements in the way facilitation is conducted.

Several factors which impact academic performance were also identified. These include internet connectivity, distance from NAMCOL regional and sub-regional centres, and challenges in submitting assignments online. Existing literature by Shapiro et al. (2017) corroborates this finding by highlighting that there are many-sided barriers to academic success, especially in the distance education arena. These challenges can be lessened through technological support which is improved, diversity in the offering of contact sessions and offering flexible assignment deadlines.

The difference between the performance of students in their examinations, and assignments highlights the importance of the provision of ongoing academic support that extends beyond traditional assessment. Although students stated having performed better in their assignment, signifying a positive effect of guidance and assistance. Additionally, a lack of interaction with their study materials hindered their performance in the examination. The findings of Houston and Thompson (2017) are aligned with these findings by underlining that support enhances the student's outcomes in their assessments. In improving and addressing challenges experienced, valuable recommendations were provided by students, which included

increasing workshop facilitation sessions, resubmission of assignments to allow the second opportunity to pass, increasing access to resources such as technology and improving the network system. An important all-inclusive support mechanism including technological, pedagogical and administrative dimensions is accentuated by these suggestions. (Miller, 2023).

9. Conclusions

Research findings highlight workshops' positive impact on academic progress, with most students satisfied. However, challenges like distance, work, and family responsibilities hinder performance, underscoring the need for accessible centers. Students call for more online face-to-face sessions and network improvements for timely submissions. They prefer formative assessments like assignments and seek online tutor availability for guidance. Group discussions are valued for enhancing academic performance, emphasizing peer interaction's importance.

10. Recommendations

The following recommendations are suggested for consideration:

Offer online face-to-face sessions either synchronously (real-time) or asynchronously (recorded) to cater to all students. This will ensure students to access sessions regardless of their time zone or schedules.

Ensure the presence of tutor markers on the platform to attend to students' queries with regard to subject content in the form of discussion forums. Tutor-markers provide guidance and direction on specific subject matter to students though online discussion forums. Students interaction will be fostered through their active presence on the platform, which will enable students to engage in meaningful discourse. In addition, students will also be open and fee to seek guidance and their understanding will be deepened.

The Colleague should refrain from doing upgrades on the eLearning platform during an academic year and should do this at the end to avoid unnecessary disruptions of assignment submissions and other activities done online, consequently, it may lead to poor academic performance. Ensure the provision of internet devices to students to ensure timely access to the eLearning platform for assignment submission and searching for additional materials on different subject matters, which will improve performance. Have a dedicated group of staff members attending to students daily for improved academic performance.

In light of the conclusions, it is suggested that for students to perform academically, student support activities should be strengthened and expanded to all regions and major towns.

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