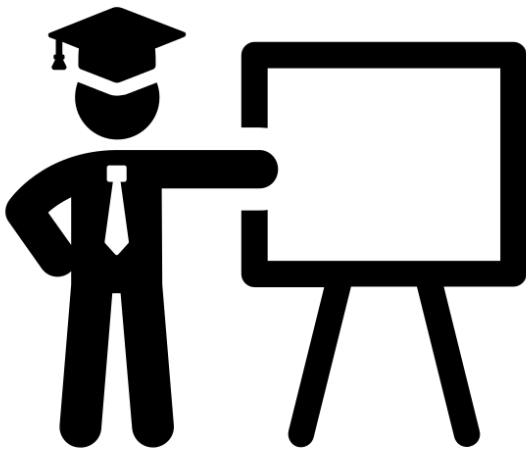


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# How many teachers are universities producing?

Bianca Böhmer and Irene Pampallis (10 Nov 2022)

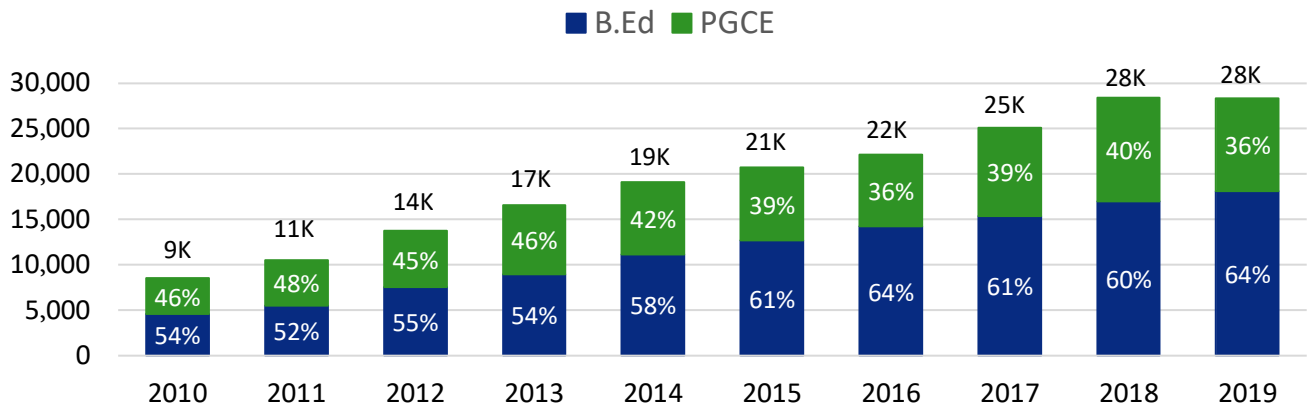


 **RESEP**  
Research on Socio-Economic Policy

Teacher Demographic Dividend.

The number of graduates from initial teacher education (ITE) has increased substantially, tripling from about 9,000 in 2010 to over 28,000 in 2019. This is according to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET's) Annual Reports from 2011/12 to 2020/21. This is a remarkable increase of over 200% in ten years. The proportion of teaching graduates with a B.Ed has increased slightly since 2010, but has been relatively constant and in the range of 60-65% since 2015 (see Figure 1). This shows that both B.Ed and PGCE graduates have been increasing at about the same rate over this period.

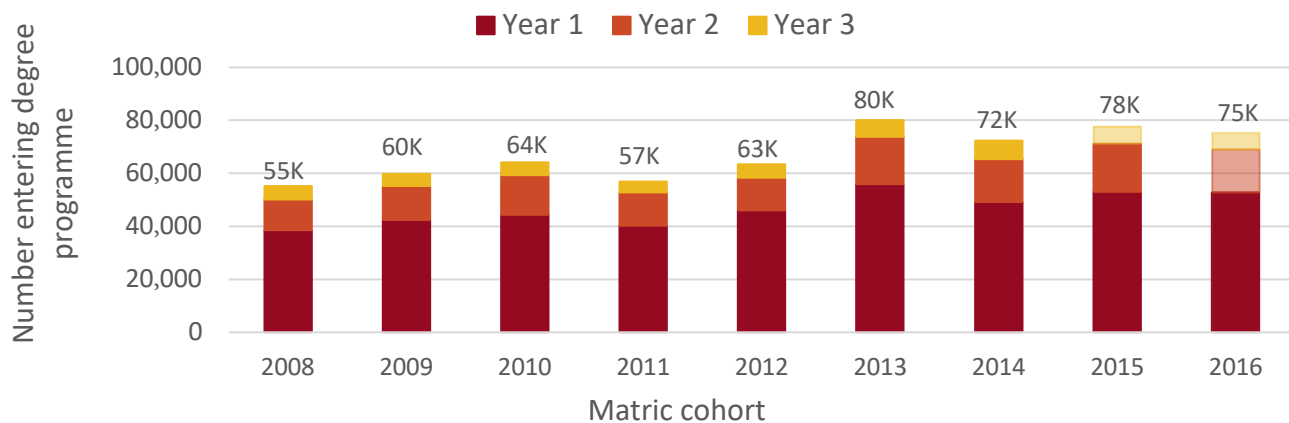
**Figure 1:** Number of Initial Teacher Education graduates from South African universities, 2010-2019



Source: The numbers for ITE graduates are taken from the DHET annual reports from 2011/12 to 2020/21. The latest report contains numbers on 2019 graduates. Split between B.Ed and PGCE calculated using graduates information on PowerHEDA.

The number of matriculants enrolling in any degree programme increased by about 40% between 2008 and 2016. More than 75,000 students from the 2016 matric cohort enrolled in a degree within three years, while only 55,000 of the 2008 cohort did so (see Figure 2). Two trends have caused this increase: growth in the number of learners writing the National Senior Certificate (NSC/matric) exams, and an increase in the proportion of matriculants who are enrolling in degree programmes. The percentage of a matric cohort starting a degree within three years of matriculating has increased from 10% of the 2008 matric cohort, to 14% of the 2013 matric cohort.

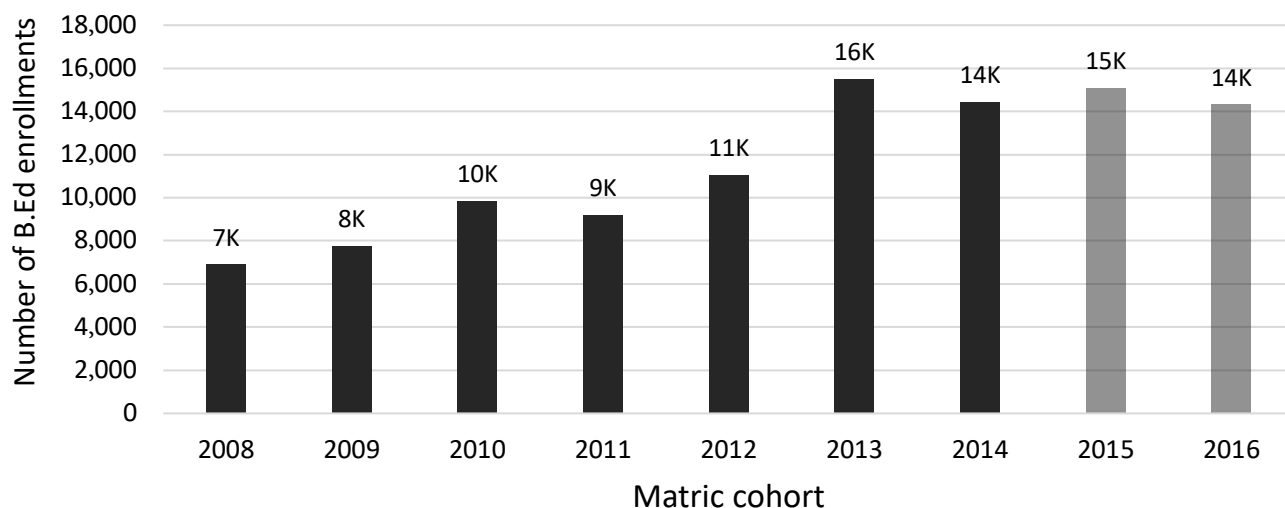
**Figure 2:** Number of NSC candidates that start a degree within 3 years of matriculating



Source: NSC-HEMIS-PERSAL dataset from 2008-2017. The first three years capture 80-85% of those who enrol in a degree within 10 years after matriculation. In 2015 and 2016 the access rate shown by the lighter bars is estimated using 2010-2020 DHET enrolment data available on PowerHEDA.

**The number of students enrolling in B.Ed programmes doubled from the 2008 matric cohort to the 2014 matric cohort.** As illustrated in Figure 3, only 7,000 students enrolled for a B.Ed from the 2008 matric cohort, while from the 2014 matriculants 14,000 enrolled in a B.Ed within three years of matriculating. This number is estimated to have remained relatively constant for the 2013-2016 matric cohorts. The current analysis is only possible by merging NSC and HEMIS data. The research team currently only has access to the 2008-2017 data and thus additional data would need to be made available to extend the analysis beyond 2017.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 3:** Number of B.Ed enrolments for first-time degree students within 3 years of matriculating



Source: NSC-HEMIS-PERSAL dataset from 2008-2017. The numbers for 2015 and 2016 are estimated using DHET administrative data on headcounts within selected qualifications types in the CESM Education for 2010-2020 available through the PowerHEDA online tool.

**The growth in B.Ed enrolments has been much higher than for other undergraduate degrees.** Among 2008 matriculants who started undergraduate degrees between 2009 and 2011, 13% (one in eight) enrolled in B.Ed degrees. By the time the 2014 matriculants entered higher education, this number had jumped to 20% (one in five). This suggests that universities opened more spaces or otherwise encouraged students to study teaching, or alternatively the teaching profession gained popularity among students for other reasons. More recently, there has been a clear strategy to increase the production of ITE graduates by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) as a part of their Teaching and Learning Development Capacity Improvement Programme.<sup>2</sup>

**If growth in the number of ITE graduates is to be sustained, it will be necessary to improve matric outcomes and hire all graduating teachers.** If we do not increase the number of high-achieving candidates writing the NSC exams, it is likely that with further growth in student numbers, the average quality of the students entering ITE will drop. It is also critical that new teaching graduates are subsequently hired by provinces. If they are not, high rates of unemployment among new teacher graduates may create a perception of low demand for teachers, which may decrease the incentives to study teaching which, in the long run, may negatively affect ITE graduate targets. This is in addition to the problem of rising class sizes as a result of provinces not hiring teachers that are already being produced.

<sup>1</sup> The data employed for this analysis was merged by DHET with the support of the DBE and made available to Resep in anonymised form for the earlier study. Currently, concern about the POPI Act has prevented further data merging of NSC examination data with HEMIS data to take place, which has limited analysis of more recent trends.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Higher Education and Training. (2021). *Annual Report 2020/21*. Pretoria. Pp.35 and 81.