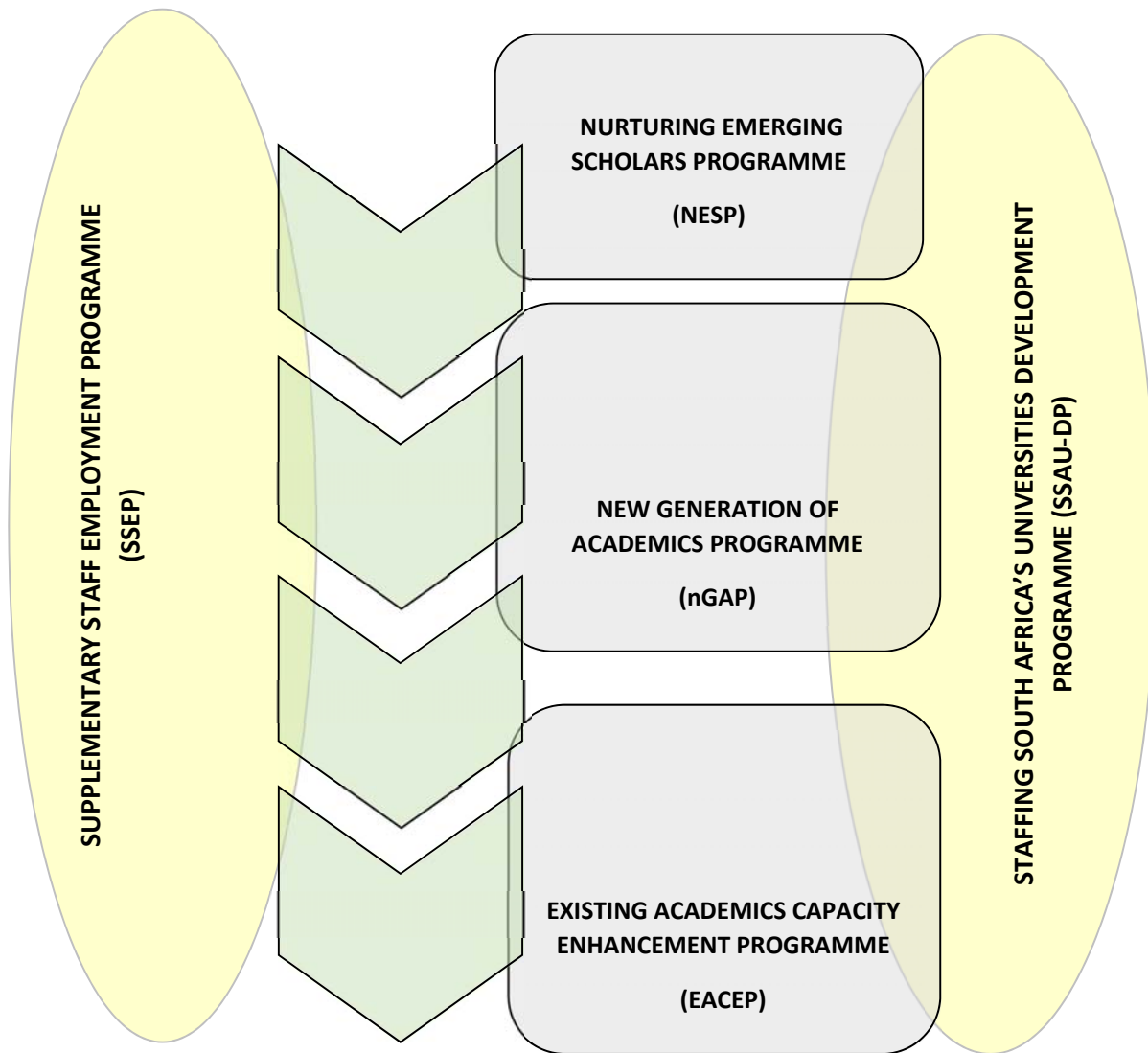


## **STRENGTHENING THE PATHWAY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMICS THROUGH THE SSAUF**

- ❖ The development pathway leading to an academic career is long and complex. From the point of view of higher education – that is, from the end of schooling - the pathway typically includes the following stages: undergraduate, Honours (or the 4th year of a 4-year Bachelor's degree), Master's, Doctorate, and Post-doctorate.
- ❖ The quality of the learning experiences and opportunities of each of these stages impacts dramatically on the likelihood of individuals progressing to the next stage, and ultimately achieving their ambitions, and on the person-power needs of the country being adequately and effectively met.
- ❖ Clearly, the kinds of support, development and challenge that are appropriate at each stage differ considerably, and there are differences too in the approaches that need to be used in respect of different disciplines.
- ❖ Potential academics are often left to navigate this pathway on their own, with little signposting, and fragmented support along the way. This contributes to low retention, and to scholars taking a very long time to complete their formal studies. Many academics are already well into their careers before they are able to achieve a doctoral degree.
- ❖ The SSAUF recognizes the opportunities and need for different kinds of support along the academic development pathway, and puts in place a series of programmes to provide appropriate and relevant support at different points on the pathway, as shown in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Staffing South Africa's Universities Framework (SSAUF)**



- ❖ The SSAUF consists of three core programmes linked to the academic development pathway, and two cross-cutting support programmes:
  - ◆ the *Nurturing Emerging Scholars Programme* (NESP) will identify students who are beginning to demonstrate academic ability at relatively junior levels (senior undergraduate or Honours), and who might be lost to

the system unless structured, attractive prospects and opportunities are available and active recruitment efforts undertaken;

- ◆ the *New Generation of Academics Programme* (nGAP) aims at recruiting new academics against carefully designed and balanced equity considerations and in light of the disciplinary areas of greatest need, drawing from promising current senior postgraduate students or past students who hold appropriate post-graduate degrees and who have ambitions/can be attracted to become academics. This group of current students/past graduates will form the major cohort of what the SSAUF calls nGAP Scholars;
  - ◆ the *Existing Academics Capacity Enhancement Programme* (EACEP) will support the development of existing academics, for example through support to complete their doctoral studies or through addressing specific gaps with respect to teaching development, research development, social engagement and academic leadership;
  - ◆ the *Supplementary Staff Employment Programme* (SSEP) will enable universities to recruit specific skills on a needs basis, in a temporary capacity, to address specific gaps as the overall staffing challenge is being addressed, and is a cross-cutting programme that will also support the implementation of other core SSAUF programmes underway at the university; and
  - ◆ the *Staffing South Africa's Universities Development Programme* (SSAUF-DP) cuts across the core programmes and supports teaching and research development needs in each programme. This component of the Framework is designed so that the different categories of academics/scholars are supported sufficiently to enable a better chance of success in their development and to ensure greater retention and throughput.
- ❖ The SSAUF has a focus on both research development and teaching development, and this aspect of the framework will ensure that academics who are supported through programmes in the framework emerge as stronger teachers as well as researchers, and are able to function effectively over the full spectrum of academic roles.