

LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL



Career and Study Choices

What do I need to think about when I make a career decision?

- 1. Think About Yourself:** choose a career option that suits your personality, interests, values and aptitudes. What will you enjoy and be successful at?
- 2. Think About What To Study:** find out about courses and programmes offered at various tertiary institutions. You also need to decide whether you are going to study part or full time and how you are going to finance your studies.
- 3. Think About A Career:** Find out which jobs are in demand and which skills you need to land such jobs.

WHAT OPTIONS DO I HAVE AFTER COMPLETING MY MATRIC?

1. FET Colleges – cater for learners who want to pursue vocational or artisan trades, catering for those who want to be plumbers, motor mechanics or electricians. Learners who have passed Grade 12 thus register for a National Certificate. Programmes consist of 18 months theoretical studies at colleges and 18 months relevant practical application in work places. On completion the learner will have an N6 Diploma. (Note that learners who have passed Grade 9, 10 or 11 can register for a 3 year NCV programme.)

2. Universities – Universities offer 3 year degrees as well as further degrees at Honours, Masters and Doctoral levels. These are academic institutions that offer study opportunities in fields that include Arts, Commerce, Science, Engineering, Law and Medicine. A few universities also offer vocational diplomas.

3. Universities of Technology – These institutions offer vocational certificates, national diplomas and degrees in technology and related fields e.g. a Diploma in Electrical Engineering.

4. Private Universities and Colleges - these include institutions like Birnam & Damelin. Check the registration status and credentials of an institution before registering. You can check with the Department of Higher Education and Training and you can verify the qualification by visiting: <http://regqs.saqg.org.za>. Privately owned universities and colleges do not qualify for state or government subsidies and you may not be able to access financial aid through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) if you choose to study through them.

5. Learnerships - these are work based learning programmes that lead to a nationally recognised qualification that directly relate to a non artisan

trade occupation such as a motor mechanic. Learnerships are administered by Sector Education and Training Authorities. Visit the Department of Labour's website to get the list of all the SETA's.

6. Employment – With a matric or an NCV level 4 certificate it is possible to get an entry-level job, although this may be difficult. If you want to explore this option you need to have well-written curriculum vitae, a motivation letter and you need to sharpen your interview skills. Labour Centres run by the Department of Labour run youth employment programmes and you can visit their website www.labour.gov.za or call them on 012 312 400 to ask about programmes run in specific Labour Centres. You can also visit websites of various companies and institutions as they often have a vacancies tab which lists jobs that they may have open for the public

WHAT INFORMATION ABOUT COURSES AND INSTITUTIONS DO I NEED TO MAKE PLANS FOR THE FOLLOWING YEAR?

Get brochures or look at websites, speak to students and other people to find out what courses are available. Look at the different faculties and courses, to see what meets your interests and abilities. You can go for career counselling if you are unsure about your choices.

You should also know your **Admission Points Score (APS)** which is the number of points you need to achieve in Grade 12 in order to be accepted at any Higher Education Institution. Calculate your APS points using the guide given by the institution. You may also need to meet other requirements, like having passed certain subjects or achieving above a certain mark in a particular subject.

Each institution uses a slightly different method of calculating the APS score so you will need to re-calculate it for each application.

Make a table like the one below for yourself.

You need to know the application deadlines of the institutions and courses you are considering				
Fill in the deadlines here.	Institution	Course	APS	Closing Date

You need to apply to write the National Benchmark Tests, if required.

Most universities require you to write the National Benchmark Tests. Check to see if you need to write these and apply to write them well ahead of time, as places are limited. Institutions may have deadlines around when the test needs to be written by. You only need to write the tests once, even if you apply to many institutions because all institutions will see your results.

(The tests are not for admission. See www.nbt.ac.za for more details.)

HOW DO I APPLY TO STUDY AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION?

Once you have decided on a course that you would like to do and the institution you would like to do it in, you now need to get the necessary application forms to fill out and take back to the institution.

An application fee which varies according to each institution needs to be paid before the form is sent in and the proof of payment as well as all the documentation required by the institution needs to be attached, i.e. certified copies of your ID, your Grade 11 school report, recommendations and references.

If you plan to stay at the institution's residence

during your study period you need to apply for that as well. Send your application form well ahead of the closing date.

After the institution has received your form, they will acknowledge receipt via letter, SMS or e-mail. The institution will inform you later if you have been provisionally accepted. Your grade 12 results will determine whether or not you are accepted.

WHERE WILL I GET THE MONEY TO PAY FOR MY STUDIES?

National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) offers financial assistance in the form of a **loan** or **bursary** that helps needy South African students to further their education at public universities and FET Colleges.

Bursaries have different selection criteria and cover different costs. Some cover tuition fees, accommodation costs, books and travel costs, while others offer a small financial contribution to your studies. Organisations like Gauteng City Region Academy offer bursaries to academically performing students only so you have to work very hard and ensure that you get good results. There are other bursary registers that can be accessed from sites such as www.sa-bursaries.co.za.

Scholarships and merit awards are offered mostly by tertiary institutions to academically exceptional students. There is normally no requirement to repay a scholarship or merit award at the end of your studies, but if you fail you will have to repay the money to the sponsor.

Most banks offer **student loans** at reasonable interest rates that may decrease for consecutive years of study. Bank loans cover the duration of study and are repaid once you start working or after graduating.

SO WHAT CAN I DO IF I DON'T GET ADMITTED INTO ANY OF THE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS OR A SKILLS PROGRAMME LIKE A LEARNERSHIP?

You can take a **gap year** and use the time to gain job experience and acquire new skills by doing free courses, volunteer work or job shadowing. You can contact the following agencies to request placement in their programmes e.g. Redcap Schools Programme, Jumpstart or Harambee. You can google their contact details. Sci-Bono's ICT centre also offers a free six month ICT training programme for out of school youth; contact them at **011 639 8452** or email matodzi@sci-bono.co.za or ezekiels@sci-bono.co.za

You can get help from the BHP Billiton Career Centre @ Sci-Bono at **011 639 8476** which also offers free career assessments to help you find out what career path to follow.

WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER ASSISTANCE OR ADVICE IF I STILL HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

You can contact the BHP Billiton Career Centre @ Sci-Bono Discovery Centre for free advice.

Call them @ 011 639 8476 or visit the Centre in Miriam Makeba Street, Newtown, JHB. Email: myfuture@sci-bono.co.za

You can also get more information from the following websites: www.sebenza.net; www.careerplanet.co.za; www.nsfas.org.za; www.labour.gov.za; www.gcracademy.gpg.gov.za/; <http://ncap.careerhelp.org.za/>; www.nyda.gov.za, www.ictjobs.co.za; www.careerweb.co.za; www.careerhelp.org.za.

Commercial websites are also available if you opt for employment.