

TERTIARY STUDY

- THE FIRST STEP TO YOUR CHILD'S FUTURE.



Varsity
College

Some of the best questions to ask around the tertiary education space and what to look for in the answers.

It's so important as a parent to get involved with and support your child with the very important next step after Matric – tertiary education. Not only is this a huge financial investment, but it also acts as your child's preparation for the world of work. Choosing the right career path makes all the difference.

So how does one decide on what the next step is in your child's education? Questions such as; does one choose public or private tertiary education and what the best qualification is to register for, are often top of mind. Listed here are objective typical questions and answers that may serve as a guideline for some, information you as a parent should have access to in order to make the best tertiary education decision with your child.

1. Which is better – studying in South Africa or abroad?

This is personal preference. Studying abroad is more expensive, and extensive research needs to be done on entrance criteria, accreditation of qualifications and student visas. Studying in South Africa means your child will be close to home and in a familiar “context” which is, generally, conducive to success.

2. What are some of the main differences between public and private tertiary education institutions in terms of ownership and accreditation of qualifications?

Public tertiary education universities are established and subsidised by government, viewed as more traditional and have more students per classroom. Private tertiary education institutions are owned by private organisations or individuals, are funded through student fees (no government subsidies), viewed as more progressive and have fewer students per classroom.

Public and private tertiary education institutions' qualifications must be accredited, by law, by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) and registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The accreditation process is identical for all tertiary education institutions – public and private.

3. Is accreditation in the higher education sphere important and does international affiliation have an impact on the graduate?

The importance of registration, accreditation and licensing of institutions, qualifications and conferring bodies cannot be overemphasised. Unscrupulous institutions unfortunately present illegal credentials and provide poor quality programmes which renders graduates unemployable (visit www.saqa.org.za to check accreditation). Depending on the field of study, international affiliation may improve graduate employability.

4. What steps can a Grade 11/12 student take to help with the decision on what to study?

Explore different options with the idea that it should match one's abilities, interests and passion. Investigate work experience opportunities. Make an appointment with the institutions Student Advisor for professional guidance and detailed information, on the most suitable and best qualifications available. They are the experts and may play a key role in making the right decision. Remember to make sure that the qualification's curriculum is relevant to the world of work and the current expectations of the economy and society.

5. What is the difference between full-time and part-time studies?

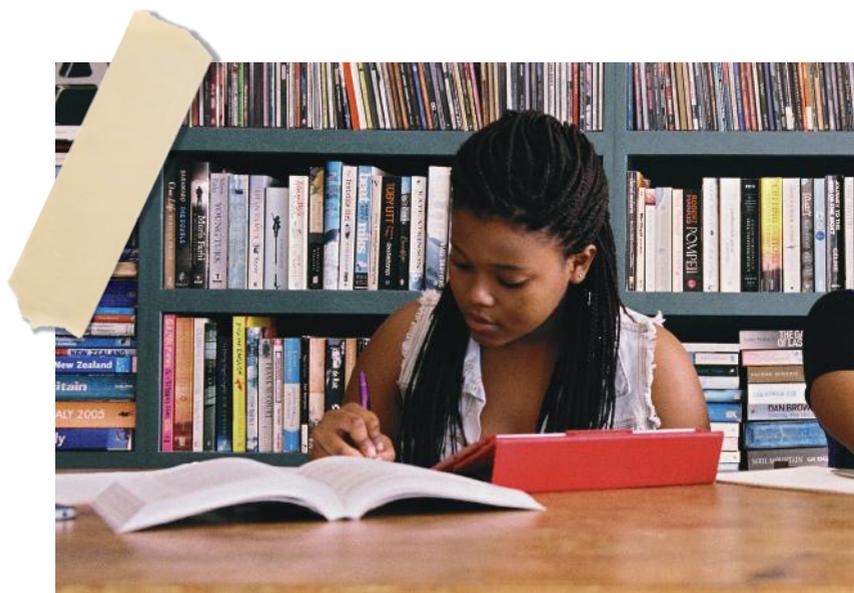
Time and money. Studying full-time is faster but involves an immediate financial investment. Studying part-time takes longer but can be done at one's personal financial pace.

6. Why is it important for an institution to offer a pathway to further studies?

Having access to further one's studies through the same institution either full or part time offers the opportunity to build on qualifications which result in best employment opportunities.

7. Do institutions all have admission requirements and why do these apply?

All institutions have admission requirements. These ensure that students applying and registering are suitably "equipped" to handle the requirements and demands of the qualification they wish to obtain. The admission requirements may vary depending on the institution and the qualification. A National Senior Certificate (NSC) with matric endorsement is the minimum requirement for degree studies. Additional admission requirements may be applicable to some qualifications. Mature age exemption may also apply in some instances, depending on the institution and the qualification.



8. What do an institution's fees generally include and are payment methods and options available?

The rule of thumb is that fees are for tuition only and that additional costs such as travel, books and materials need to be budgeted for. Payment methods and options vary from institution to institution. Examples of these include discounted early settlement and monthly instalments.

9. Do institutions offer scholarships, awards and bursaries and how would one apply for these?

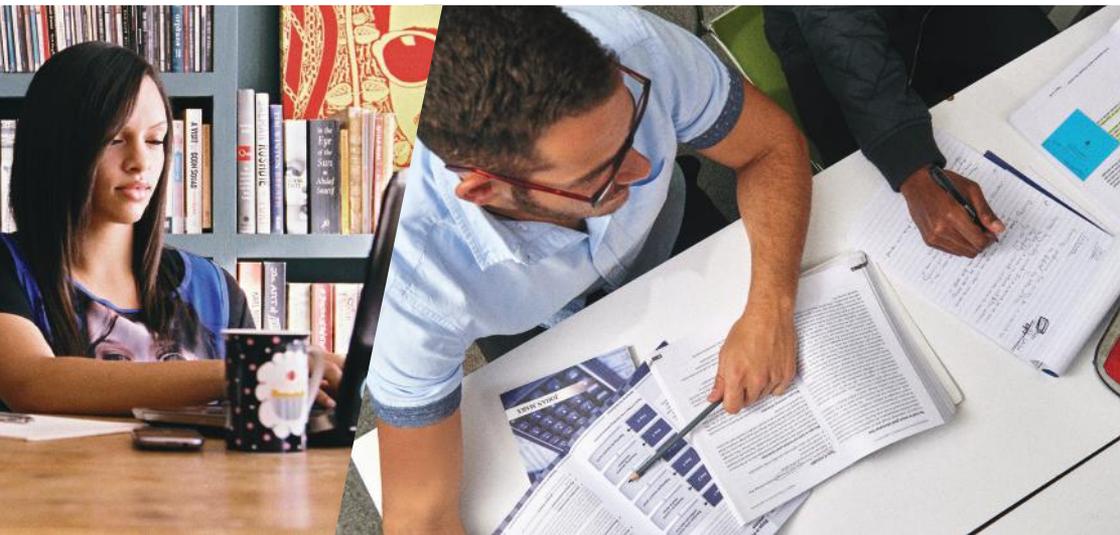
This may depend on the institution. Some have various categories of awards, bursaries and scholarships available for which one may apply provided one meets the requirements. Application procedures vary from institution to institution.

10. What is the average class size from first year to final year level and how does this impact on learning?

The number of students per classroom has a huge impact on the level of interactive and participative learning that takes place. Smaller numbers per classroom enables students to participate actively in their studies, engage with subject material, build understanding and develop critical thinking, all of which promotes academic excellence.

11. How important is an institution's approach to teaching and learning, and lecturer interaction with students?

The more authentic, modern and blended the student's learning experience the better. An interactive, participative and collaborative approach delivers the best results. Integrating learning into the world of work whilst studying is vital.



12. Why is it important to have a practical/experiential component in curricula?

The practical application of theoretical material to real-life situations makes content easier to understand. Through experiential learning, marketable skills are forged which students can include on their CVs.

13. What role does an on-campus career centre play?

Campus career centres use relationships they have formed with businesses to provide students with opportunities for possible part-time work experience and graduate placements. The centres also guide students on important processes and work related skills development. This, added to their academic qualification, gives the student a marketable industry edge.

14. What is the institution's campus life like and does it promote a balanced student life?

Although academia is mainly what being a student is all about, campus life should promote a balance through sport, social and cultural activities. This "broader experience" indirectly helps students develop essential life skills.

15. Why are on-campus student support services important?

A qualified professional on-campus student support team is able to identify and address (confidentially) challenges that students may be facing – be it personal or academic, on a one-on-one basis. This promotes the healthy holistic development of students.

16. Is on campus accommodation important?

This depends on where the institution is situated and in some instances students prefer private accommodation, even when on campus accommodation is available.

17. What basic steps can a prospective student take to prepare for the tertiary environment?

Visit the institution on its Open Days or make an appointment with a Student Advisor. Apply well in advance and register on time. Explore the local community. Learn to be independent and how to budget. Learn to manage time efficiently and how to be proactive. Get comfortable with asking for help and access support services available. Have a graduation plan.



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