

19 March 2020

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## Statement by the Director of The Independent Institute of Education: Graduation 2020

We note, with a mixture of understanding and disappointment, the mails, messages and petitions about our decision to cancel graduation ceremonies. You will know that this decision is the same one that has been made, for the same reasons of guest and graduate and staff safety, by virtually every other higher education institution in the country. Very few have signalled that their decision is a postponement and even those, are going to be facing the same challenges we all are in several months' time.



The reasons that most institutions have cancelled rather than postponed are clear to us but perhaps not to students – we do not know when a semblance of normalcy will return to public gatherings and we do not want to delay releasing your certificates to you so that we avoid hampering you gaining employment or presenting proof of graduation to further studies institutions or employers. As soon as we can, as already communicated, we aim to find a way to celebrate your success with you. Your campus will communicate the plans that are possible when the safety considerations have been adequately canvassed much closer to the time.



Your qualification has been successfully completed and you are right to be very proud – as are we. Right now, internationally, there are real challenges as higher education institutions aim to ensure that current students will also be able to finish their qualifications and their academic year. Campus teams are working around the clock to ensure that our current students can join you timeously as graduates of our institution.



We understand the disappointment as we share it – for many of our staff the graduation of their students is the single most important event of the year. It is undoubtedly true that you have been deprived of a significant celebration. We also understand that anger is a very normal human reaction to disappointment. We would request though, that you consider the way you are expressing these emotions – not only in this situation but in any other. We appeal to you to remember the contribution made by the teams to whom you are directing your anger, and their support of you in your journey to completion. We also ask you to recognise the work they are doing now to ensure that the next cohort can also complete.

We are grateful to those students who have written to thank us for the decision and have distanced themselves from some of the methods chosen to express disappointment. Campuses have now been asked to focus on the logistics of releasing certificates when they are ready and preparing to support the learning journey of existing students.

In closing I would like to reiterate that no decisions are ever taken lightly – this one is one of the hardest to date. We hope that the curve flattens sooner than has been the case internationally. By making clear and definite decisions we are supporting the strategies required.

We are sorry that your graduation has been impacted.



Dr Felicity Coughlan  
Director: The Independent Institute of Education

ADVTECH HOUSE

Inanda Greens  
54 Wierda Rd West  
Wierda Valley 2196  
P.O. Box 2369  
Randburg 2125

