

Making smart choices after your matric results

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Matric results are in for the 2022 cohort, and a new phase of life is about to begin for the country's latest school-leavers. Some will step onto their chosen tertiary or vocational pathways, but for many, the way ahead is not yet clear...



The gap year is a popular way to take time out after matric to travel, broaden one's horizons and consider the future from fresh perspectives. However, this may not be affordable for most families in these tough economic times. If you're not ready to start out on a long-term study path this year, and travel is out of the question, what can you do that is meaningful, and that can move you towards greater clarity about your future?

Dr Lauren Martin, the deputy dean of Learning & Teaching at [Sacap \(The South African College of Applied Psychology\)](#) says: "What's important is to take stock, consider your options, reflect on your goals, strengths and interests, and then take a positive step forward in 2023. It's important to focus on your individual situation, and avoid comparing yourself to others. It's not unusual, or any way shameful for school leavers to feel uncertain about their next steps. In fact, very few school leavers feel absolutely sure about which study path to pursue. Whether you are disappointed with your matric results or confused about the way ahead for you, there are some great options for building skills and gaining valuable experience that can set you on a favourable, flexible track. What is important to remember is that your first year out of school is the very start of your study journey. The aim is just to get out of the starting block."

Have you considered a higher certificate qualification?

Short educational programmes offered by tertiary institutions are becoming increasingly popular as a bridge between leaving school and choosing a study or career path. The best of these are typically one-year programmes offering an accredited higher certificate qualification that can improve a student's readiness for tertiary education, make up for a matric without a bachelor's pass and enhance critical skills for success not just on your next study path, but in your future work life as well.

Martin says: "The strength of a solid higher certificate programme is that it gives you a valuable stepping-stone into the

world of tertiary education. You have time to more fully consider the direction you want to go in, and you gain insights and experiences about what is expected of you at the tertiary level. Meanwhile you are actively building workplace skills that are valuable across a wide range of industries. Some higher certificate programmes are vocational, and can even help you enter a field of work at a junior level. ”

A higher certificate programme may be for you:

- **If you passed matric without exemption**

You may have set your heart on studying for a certain degree but matric didn't turn out how you hoped it would and you didn't achieve a bachelor's pass. You can give it another go by signing up to rewrite up to two supplementary matric exams or go the matric upgrade route. However, if the thought of a matric 'do-over' sinks your spirits, then rather consider an accredited higher certificate programme. “Graduating from any of Sacap's higher certificate programmes in 2023 can not only help you get back on track, but set you off with some important advantages,” says Martin. “You will not only meet the minimum entrance requirements for degree studies around the country, but you will lay the foundations for good academic literacy, setting you up for success in your further studies.”

- **If you don't feel sure you will be able to succeed at university**

Many school leavers might not feel confident about their ability to cope yet at a university level. “Engaging in a higher certificate programme will give you this year to build confidence and empower you to continue your journey into higher education,” says Martin. “Look for institutions that offer small classes with plenty of teacher and peer contact. For instance, Sacap has classes of no more than 25 students which are ideal for finding your feet in the tertiary education environment and developing the confidence to engage and actively participate in your learning.”

- **If your interests are broad and you are not yet ready to choose specific degree studies**

Sacap's higher certificate programmes are gateway to further studies in Social Sciences and business fields. The Sacap higher certificates in Business Management and Human Resources Management include industry-oriented content and applications offering not only a bridge to further studies but also a vocational pathway into the South African business sector.

In addition, the Sacap higher certificate in Counselling and Communication Skills is a great qualification for anyone who wants to develop their interpersonal skills and improve their abilities to interact and work with others. Martin says: “There are key features of this qualification that offer invaluable knowledge and insight into human behaviour and a better understanding of human diversity which are currently sought-after capabilities across a wide range of workplaces.”

She concludes, “Sacap's concise, one-year higher certificate programmes give students a taste for a field of study without a long-term commitment and provides them with a registered qualification and practical skills at the end. Along with our student-centred approach, it is also a voyage of self-discovery enabling greater awareness and understanding in relation to others as well as a deeper relationship with self.”

Applications for Sacap's higher certificate programmes are now open. Please visit sacap.edu.za to register.

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