



**6 November 2020**

**Universities SA expresses confidence in the NSC Class of 2020 and wishes them well in the final examination**

As South Africa's Class of 2020 enters the third day of their final National School Certificate (NSC) examinations, Universities South Africa (USAf) wishes to express its well-wishes to the over 1 million learners who are sitting their school-exiting examinations during this month.

Speaking from his office in Pretoria, this morning, Professor Ahmed Bawa, Chief Executive Officer at USAf, said that notwithstanding the difficulties that CoViD-19 dealt our education system in 2020, USAf has complete faith in the measures that the Department of Basic Education put into place to salvage basic teaching and learning. "Many of you, young people, will remember that many teachers contracted the virus and were forced to go into self-quarantine. Some were hospitalised and we also sadly lost others along the way. We are confident of the commitment and innovation of our teachers and schools and of the resilience and genius of the Class of 2020.

"We cannot pretend that our education system was flawless in its endeavours to save learning. This is an unprecedented crisis that has upended our entire education system. Therefore, any measures that every sector took to continue operations and to stay afloat, boiled down to trial and error.

"Things were no different for our universities. That explains why over half of our 26 public universities will only complete the 2020 academic year in the first quarter of 2021."

Professor Bawa encouraged the NSC Class of 2020 that, whatever they are going through, they are not alone. "Like in every other sphere of life, what you put in -- to a large extent -- determines what you will get out." Underlining that learners are as responsible for their own study outcomes as their teachers, their schools and the education system, Professor Bawa said he had confidence that those who put in the requisite effort would do well in these examinations.

"You are the cohort that we will be welcoming into the university system in March 2021. Do us proud. CoViD-19 or not, we expect the same calibre of first-entering students in 2021, that we would have admitted during any other year in the past. Understanding the extraordinary circumstances of this year, the universities will work with you to make the 2021 academic year successful. So take heart. Prepare well and read every paper carefully before you begin to tackle it.

“We look forward to celebrating the outcomes with you, in February, and also to a better start to the first semester of 2021, all round, than we did, in 2020. We wish you everything of the best.”

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