



**24 August 2020**

## **Public universities are accepting 2021 applications; closing dates vary from May 2020 to January 2021**

Notwithstanding the disruptions suffered in the higher education sector – as in all sectors of society – on account of COVID-19, public universities are preparing to accept a new cohort of school leavers into the system, in 2021.

To that end, the applications season is open at all public universities, with the exception of the University of South Africa, which will start accepting new applications for first-time entrants on 1 September 2020. Most other universities started receiving applications at varying stages of the year. While applications are now closed at most institutions that offer programmes in the Faculties of Health Sciences, Sefako Makgatho University of Health Sciences and Walter Sisulu University are exceptions, continuing to accept applications to their Health Sciences programmes until 7 and 30 September 2020, respectively.

At a large majority of institutions, applications for 2021 remain open beyond August. Thirteen (13) universities are prepared to receive applications until 30 September; four (4) have allowed aspiring students to apply until 31 October while six (6) will still be accepting new applications until 30 November, respectively. The University of Zululand is the only exception, keeping applications open until 29 January, 2021.

Students aspiring to enter university for undergraduate studies in 2021 are notified that at some institutions, such as Stellenbosch University, applications already closed in July. At the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS), applications closed on 30 June for some programmes (i.e. those in the Faculty of Health Sciences; Bachelor of Architecture; Bachelor of Audiology, Bachelor of Speech-Language Pathology; Film and TV). For all other programmes at WITS, applications remain open until 30 September. At the University of Pretoria, applicants are advised to visit the University website to see which programmes still have spaces. As soon as programmes fill up, they close doors.

As public universities continue to strive to complete the 2020 academic year, they remain steadfast in their resolve to accommodate all students whose academic progress was delayed or hampered by infrastructure deficiencies in their home localities. Professor Ahmed Bawa, Chief Executive Officer at Universities South Africa, continues to assure the nation that institutions are either allowing the vulnerable students to catch up in one way or other, **or** they are extending the 2020 academic year to 2021 to ensure that no student is left behind.

A full list of closing dates for 2021 applications (**see Annexure 1**) is attached for reference.

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