

No matric exemption... What now?

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Though a matric with university entrance is one of the primary goals of secondary education, not everyone gets this but there are still opportunities for these matriculants.



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One of the first options for matriculants, who do not have university entrance, is to go straight into the job market. There are several immediate advantages to this. For a start, money starts flowing in quickly and there is no need to go into debt in order to study further.

Finding a job straight out of school can be a tough undertaking, however. The current employment scenario is not a particularly good one for school-leavers, with a very high unemployment rate in this segment of the population. In addition, where there are jobs available, prospective employers more often than not look for a certain amount of experience, which school-leavers obviously lack.

For these reasons, we need to look at other options for matriculants, to improve their employability and make them more attractive and desirable in the job market.

There are other study options open. In choosing a tertiary education direction, the first step is to decide on a desired vocation. This will determine what type of institute to study at or whether to take a different approach.

Institutions offering diploma courses to matriculants are plentiful in the major centres of South Africa. For instance, for

those interested in marketing there is the IMM Graduate School of Marketing, or for those wanting to pursue a digital design career there is the Vega School and so on. There are also plenty of general-purpose colleges offering a wide range of diploma courses for matriculants.

Another option is to go into a trade and take courses at a technical institute. These are often linked to real-world work experience programmes, which can lead to employment once the necessary certification is obtained. There are also workplace apprenticeships, in which a school-leaver can enrol, which can give the advantage of generating income while learning a trade.

There is a further option for school-leavers - entrepreneurship. This is taking on ever-increasing importance in the context of South Africa as a developing country. With its relatively slow economic growth rate and high unemployment, the South African economy needs as much stimulus as possible. Entrepreneurship has the ability to create jobs, generate taxable income and provide growth.

For matriculants with the right mindset, starting a business, however small, is certainly a viable option. One might almost say that in order to meet the country's entrepreneurship needs, it is also a necessity that a certain number of people start their own businesses, with an eye on growth and sustainability.

Finally, if you are a recent matriculant who is completely unsure of what direction to take, there is the increasingly popular option of a 'gap year'. This will give you the time to take stock and discover what it is that you really want to do. You can take this opportunity to travel, if that is affordable, or else take a part-time job to get some work experience.

Whatever your preference, it's important to realise that matriculating without a university entrance is by no means something that needs to curtail the opportunities available to you.

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