

# Why visit the campuses of Northlink TVET College on their open day?

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Because many college aspiring students are indecisive about which tertiary institution to attend, it is a choice which should not be taken frivolously. This is why you should attend an open day at Northlink College. The college has seven campuses, and to find out more information about the course offerings, prospective students can visit any of the campuses during an open day. Recently Covid-19 has had an inhibiting effect on a college open day spirit. Due to restrictions in movement and observation of Covid-19 protocols, no date has been set aside for an open day as yet. A date for an open day date will be communicated on the college website and social media platforms.



TVET colleges in South Africa offer National Certificates Vocational (NCV) and National Accredited Technical Education Diploma (Nated) qualifications. These training programmes are primarily aimed at developing vocational skilled future workers, which is needed in the South African economy. Whether a student is applying for an NCV, Report 191, or the occupational programme, it is always a good idea to perform in-depth research before deciding on which tertiary institution will suit you best. The most effective way to do this is by paying a personal visit or joining virtual open days. Of course a personal visit is preferred, with all covid-19 protocols observed.

## **Opportunity to learn about Northlink College and the courses on offer**

There are many reasons and advantages to doing this in person. Through online research, the prospective student might already have an idea of which course they want to embark on, and an open day can give the prospective student the opportunity to speak to the lecturers and gain more information on what the course offers.

When the student is unsure which career or study field to pursue, with this visit a student can gain a better understanding of which field is best suited to them, in line with their strength in certain subjects and skills interests, and what they want to achieve at the end of their time at the college.

In order for the student to pursue an NCV qualification, they need to have at least passed grade 9 to enrol in Level 2 qualification. In some of the courses, students are required to have passed pure mathematics (not maths lit) at grade 9 for entry into engineering-related courses. Once again, the requirements and suitability are best explored on these visits. Also,

to explore are the Nated qualifications.

Nated qualifications are also offered per semester and trimester, so a student will have the opportunity to apply at various intervals in the year. In these programmes, a student will undergo three levels of the theoretical component for a period of 18 months, namely N4, N5 and N6 (for 6 months each), and receive a certificate for each. A National Diploma will only be issued after completion of the work-based practical training (work integrated learning, also known as WIL).

Application for the Nated programmes is done a year ahead of the intended academic year for semester 1. Semester 2 applications only open in April/May and their classes starting in July after the semester break. Northlink TVET College offers different courses, so prospective students should find out precisely what they will be learning in each one, especially if they have a particular career path in mind.

A prospective student should ask about the structure of the course, the entry requirements, and what the compulsory components are. They need to establish whether there are optional modules that are necessary for the student's particular career path. Some of the issues that a prospective student should consider, include:

- Does teaching incorporate enough practical element?
- What does this course aim to equip its graduates with?
- How is the course assessed?
- What is the duration of the course?





### **Campus facilities, service and campus location**

Attending college is not just about choosing the right course to suit you. It is also important to find out about the support services and facilities on offer to you. These include open learning centres (OLC), the student representative council (SRC), work integrated learning (WIL) presence, assistance with application procedure, and other student support services including special support due to disabilities.

The open day is an ideal way to explore a range of campus facilities and what they have to offer, so you know they are catering for your needs before you apply. The staff at the campus will be more than happy to show you around the facilities on an open day, so you can ask as many questions as you wish. If you are intending on relocating to attend college, take the time to find out more about the local area and the availability of accommodation. An open day is a perfect way to do this, and if you have any concerns, raise them with the college staff. They can tell you about educational resources available so that you can see beforehand whether this is the right place for you.

### **Talk to current students**

A prospective student should find out what it is like to study at the college straight from the horse's mouth so to speak. In doing so, you will be able to get an accurate first-hand account of college life. In addition, see if you can find someone in your community or college who is taking the same course you are intending to apply for, and ask for their honest opinion about the college.

### **College course funding opportunities**

This is a critical point, make sure you find out whether the course you are intending to apply for is funded by the National

Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) so that you can look for alternate funding if it is not funded. Ask if there are any other scholarships, bursaries, or funding opportunities you can apply for to help ease the financial burden. If you already have an idea of how much the fees will be, this is a chance to find out if there are any other costs associated with the course, such as field trips, workshops and equipment. You can also ask about accommodation costs, and how much this is likely to amount to, during your 2–3 years at the college.

### Meet other people and visit possible accommodation

Attending college for the first time can be extremely daunting, especially if you do not know anyone. An open day gives you the chance to meet students and lecturers at the college so you will have a friendly face when you start for the first time. You will also get the opportunity to meet people who are in the same boat as you, so you might even make some new friends before you even register.

If you will be moving away from home for your years at college, and maybe living in student residence in your first year, take advantage of the opportunity afforded on open days to have a look around the student residence blocks. Make sure the college you apply for has accommodation that is acceptable to you. Things you could be looking out for include:

- How are the bathroom facilities?
- Are there communal or separate kitchens?
- Does it seem safe and secure?
- How far is the accommodation from the campus for lecture attendance?

### Decide on the correct fit

If you are happy with the course, and the students and staff calibre, you should ask yourself: Can I settle here for the next few years? Is it somewhere I could settle into and enjoy? What appeals to me about the environment?

Only you can decide whether the college is the correct fit for you. If you leave an open day with doubts or are not 100% certain, then it is probably best to do more consultation by arranging an appointment with student support service for career guidance.

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