

# Excitement builds ahead of the Mancosa mid-year graduation ceremonies

Issued by [Bullion PR & Communication](#)

12 May 2023

As we approach the second half of the year, the excitement starts to build up at tertiary institutions as they prepare for their mid-year graduation ceremonies.



*Professor Kiveshni Naidoo, academic director at MANCOSA*

"We cannot underestimate the achievements of these graduates," says Professor Kiveshni Naidoo, academic director at Mancosa. She adds that these achievements are significant to Mancosa as many students had to adjust to the change in the educational landscape.

## Dates and graduates

The first round of the mid-year graduations will be held in three regions, the first being in Cape Town on 13 May. The second will be held in Johannesburg on 19 and 20 May.

The final round of the mid-year graduations will be held in Durban on 2 and 3 June 2023.

"We are extremely proud of all of our graduates. Seeing the excitement on their faces when they receive their degree is why many of us choose a career in academia. However, it is important to point out that graduation ceremonies are not only for our students; their families make significant sacrifices to help them further their education. In some cases, whole communities raise money to help fund a student's journey. This provides a sense of achievement for us as we are educating for impact," says Professor Naidoo.

## Catalyst for change

Professor Naidoo points out that the accomplishment of these graduates is significant within the current South African context, given that the country is facing a challenging economic climate and that furthering one's education can be a significant financial commitment for many South African families.

"While funding tertiary education can be a significant undertaking, the financial repercussions of not furthering your education is far more significant. We exist in a hyper-competitive world where companies seek the best skills. With the rise of remote working, South Africans are not only competing with local talent, but they are also dealing with a global talent pool. Although many high school graduates are expected to find employment straight out of school to help provide for their families, they are aware of the hyper-competitive nature of the job market and still find time to further their education," says Professor Naidoo.

### **Influencing the national growth narrative**

South Africa is facing both an economic and an unemployment crisis. While this is significantly impacting the country, when the country is ready for economic growth, Mancosa graduates will lead the change.

"The foundation of growth in any country is education. South Africa needs to produce world-class educators. The programmes offered by the Mancosa School of Education are designed to cater to the specific challenges in the South African education system. Further, as we saw during the Covid Pandemic, the distance learning model is not limited to tertiary education. Primary and high school teachers need teaching experience that can be applied to the conventional learning model and the distance (online) learning model where it is harder to keep students engaged," says Professor Naidoo.

The second area that is in desperate need of skills is healthcare. "As we saw with the Covid Pandemic, a single event can expose the fragility of world-class healthcare systems. The Mancosa School of Healthcare deals with real-world issues and forces students to develop innovative solutions while leaning on what they have learned."

Finally, entrepreneurship is one of the critical areas that will fast-track economic growth in South Africa. Mancosa offers several courses and qualifications that will formalise potential entrepreneurs' experience.

"We cannot ignore the role that technology and digitalisation will play in the future of the workplace. There are now some jobs that did not exist as little as 10 years ago; these include app developers, driverless car engineers, cloud computing specialists, big data analysts and data scientists, drone manufacturers and coders. Coding is becoming essential as it is central to society's adoption of a technology-enabled future. In addition, there is a massive drive to migrate most services and products online to fit in with a digitised future. This means they will have to exist and work in a virtual environment. The MANCOSA School of Information and Digital Technology provides students the skills to succeed in a digitised future.

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