

From three setbacks to success: Only with Milpark

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Audit manager Stephanie White, 37, had always hoped to become a chartered accountant CA (SA) but a few years ago, she saw her prospects slipping away. She failed the Certificate in the Theory of Accounting (CTA) programme at a distance learning academic institution and, as she had to work full-time, she felt she was running out of options.



Applying to CA Connect at Milpark Education was to be her very last go at becoming a CA – and she was accepted to the programme. Given another chance, she held onto it with both hands and focused her sights on completing Milpark’s Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting (PGDA, the same qualification as the CTA at Milpark) at the start of 2023. For anyone still looking for reasons to choose Milpark Education as a study partner, Stephanie has five:

1. Milpark has different acceptance criteria

“CA Connect and Milpark gave me a shot when no one else would,” says Stephanie, who wrote her first SAICA ITC board exam in 2023, following completion of the PGDA earlier in the year.

Academic co-ordinator for CA Connect at Milpark Education, Louise Maritz, explains, “CA Connect is not lowering the bar when it comes to entrance requirements for the PGDA and CTA. Students still need to have an appropriate degree, same as elsewhere. But we are more openminded when it comes to marks and are also more flexible on other requirements and study particulars.”

2. Milpark is flexible and understanding of student needs

Stephanie started 2022 off on a high note, eager to get stuck into the PGDA. Then disaster struck and she became ill, battling one medical condition after another. After a bout of swine flu, she developed sinus problems so severe she needed an operation, causing her to lose several precious weeks of study time.

“I was all set to write my exams but then the surgery was scheduled right before them. I explained everything to Milpark and they gave me a deferral, enabling me to write at a later date.” She finally wrote the exam in January 2023 and was delighted to hear she had passed shortly after, signing up for her first ITC board exam, which she wrote in June 2023.

3. Milpark really is different from other academic institutions

When Stephanie compares her experience of studying for the CTA/PGDA at her previous university to her studies at Milpark, she says: “Milpark prepared me far more. The system of support here is so much better – from the way the course is structured, with videos and interactive content, to the time you have with lecturers to explain difficult concepts.”

The addition of motivational content and inspirational messages that helped to buoy Milpark students after poor test results, was another feature nonexistent at other institutions. “At my previous university I felt like I was doing this alone. That is not the case at CA Connect.”

4. Talks and advice from ex-students really help

Stephanie found an invaluable resource in the stories of former Milpark students, who gave presentations to current students about their own study journeys. “I can’t remember her name, but there was one woman whose story was almost exactly the same as mine. She kept trying and trying and felt despondent because she just couldn’t pass. But she kept going, doing more practice questions until she was successful. I really took that to heart.”

5. Writing at physical venues

This was a gamechanger for Stephanie. “That really sold Milpark to me,” she says, describing how her weak Internet at home added stress to completing assignments and exams. “With loadshedding and having to do tests online, I didn’t want to take that risk.” Fortunately, Milpark offers students the option of writing exams in person.

Stephanie is conscious of that fact that she’s an older student, but she wants others to know that no matter what the stage of life, a learning journey is still possible. Today, she’s thinking of training further and becoming a qualified auditor. “If there is one thing I have learned, thanks to Milpark, it’s that it’s never too late to realise your dreams.”

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Milpark Education was established in 1997, becoming one of the first private providers of higher management education in South Africa. Milpark services the higher education needs of various corporate entities as well as public students, through the qualification offerings of four schools: the School of Professional Accounting (incorporating CA Connect), the Business School; the School of Commerce; and the School of Financial Services. It currently offers 23 accredited programmes in higher education.

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