

Our ref. C.13984

16 March 2020

Dear Students

### The Independent Institute of Education Graduations 2020



The Independent Institute of Education has made the very difficult decision, in the best interest of the health of our communities, to cancel all graduation ceremonies this year. Graduations are such an important symbolic ceremony that this decision was not an easy one to take but we are indeed living in extraordinary times calling for several tough decisions. Given the concerns about the way in which the virus is spread it does not make sense to have so many people in an auditorium.



Your certificate, your details for your personal online CV (IIEMarque) and a copy of the graduation programme listing the names of your fellow graduates, will be available on your campus from the day your ceremony was originally scheduled. If you are not able to collect them, arrangements will be made for secure delivery to you. Your campus will be in touch with the details.



As we will not be able to share The IIE's graduation address with you at the ceremony it is attached to this letter. You have much to be proud of. As we rebuild our nation and economy post COVID19 we are confident that our graduates will make a significant contribution to this process.



We look forward to you pursuing your studies with us in future and hope that you will stay in touch. We are sorry that we have not been able to celebrate your success with you.

Yours sincerely



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## **Director's Address – Graduation 2020 – The Independent Institute of Education**

Members of the academic procession, invited guests, parents and family and, of course, graduates: Good morning/ afternoon/ evening and a warm welcome to you on this joyous occasion. First, congratulations to those of you who are closing one chapter of your life today and moving on to the next exciting part of this story of success and celebration.

Graduating is an exciting moment. It marks achievement denied to many. Today is all about celebration – stop for a moment and think about what you have achieved and what it took to get here. We know that about 45% of those who start school finish school, so your Grade 12 was already a victory. Now, you are one of only 10% of young people who have finished both school and have gained a higher education qualification. You have clearly demonstrated your ability to succeed!

I am sure many of you are somewhat uncertain, if not a little scared and even if you have already started succeeding in the next phase of your life there are probably many questions to answer. There may be fewer questions if you are already pursuing another qualification or have been privileged enough to secure employment already.

Either way, your qualification is only one of the things you have gained and as you begin to sell yourself to the world at large we would like to remind you what else you have achieved by reaching this milestone. Remember that you have developed **emotional and social intelligence** – some of it as a result of simply being older but also as a result of interacting in class and on campus (or online) with people different from yourself. You have had to become introspective and to spend more time making sense of how others see you. This means that you should have developed a certain degree of **tact and empathy**. In employability terms, this makes you **good at communicating** and a capable **team player**. These are invaluable life skills.

You would also have learned **written communication skills**. Whether an assignment, a research paper or an exam, you would have learned how to **write for a specific audience**. To have done this required **research skills, planning and organising, time management, independent working** and **critical analysis and learning to present information and structure a persuasive argument**. You would also have had the opportunity to **share opinions, lead discussions** and even present topics to the class. And the list goes on.

If you still don't know what exactly you want to do now, you may have more options than you think. There are jobs in law, finance, IT and management that are open to graduates from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds. So even if you don't know what the practical applications of your qualification are, many employers do. They recognise that during your time at a higher education institution you will have developed as a person. You will have matured, gained independence and learned how to manage yourself – and you have gained plenty of valuable transferable skills along the way. As a result, your life is now enriched with opportunities that are not available to many others. The world is at your fingertips.

It is always valuable to draw on the experiences and lesson of others. Who better than to look at successful South Africans like businesswoman DJ Zintle, Romeo Kumalo, venture capitalist and CEO of Washirika Ltd, Mogau Seshoene, founder of the home cooking brand

The Lazy Makoti and the late Dr Richard Maponya, Sowetan business icon and founder of Maponya Group. Collectively they have proven the value of the following life principles and given their successes, it may be a good idea to take note:

**1. Plan and prepare** - make sure you have everything you need in a particular context – this includes things like your laptop, phone, calculator, journal and ruler so that you are not distracted from what you need to do.

**2. Nurture relationships** - You work out later in your career how important it is to establish and nurture relationships in business. In the early stages of your career, you need to establish those, and you should move between positions without burning bridges. The world is smaller than it seems.

**3. Be open-minded and adaptable** - Always give your best because you really never know who is watching and what door they could open.

**4. See your customers as people** - You need to look at people as people, not as numbers.

**5. Identify and work on your unique skills** – We are all different, so focus on your talents. That will allow you to focus on what you are good at, but with the same goal in mind as those around you in your setting.

In closing, please keep in touch with us. Offer to mentor or sponsor new students when you can do so; come back and study with us again; share your stories on the World of Work website and celebrate your achievements in your own IEMarque space. It is, ultimately, your life and we look forward to watching you make it count.

I believe that all life has a purpose – what *is yours*? Find your passion, be courageous and live with honour. Again, congratulations on your graduation and all the best with your choices going forward.

Thank you.

19 March 2020

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## Statement by the Director of The Independent Institute of Education: Graduation 2020

We note, with a mixture of understanding and disappointment, the mails, messages and petitions about our decision to cancel graduation ceremonies. You will know that this decision is the same one that has been made, for the same reasons of guest and graduate and staff safety, by virtually every other higher education institution in the country. Very few have signalled that their decision is a postponement and even those, are going to be facing the same challenges we all are in several months' time.

The reasons that most institutions have cancelled rather than postponed are clear to us but perhaps not to students – we do not know when a semblance of normalcy will return to public gatherings and we do not want to delay releasing your certificates to you so that we avoid hampering you gaining employment or presenting proof of graduation to further studies institutions or employers. As soon as we can, as already communicated, we aim to find a way to celebrate your success with you. Your campus will communicate the plans that are possible when the safety considerations have been adequately canvassed much closer to the time.

Your qualification has been successfully completed and you are right to be very proud – as are we. Right now, internationally, there are real challenges as higher education institutions aim to ensure that current students will also be able to finish their qualifications and their academic year. Campus teams are working around the clock to ensure that our current students can join you timeously as graduates of our institution.

We understand the disappointment as we share it – for many of our staff the graduation of their students is the single most important event of the year. It is undoubtedly true that you have been deprived of a significant celebration. We also understand that anger is a very normal human reaction to disappointment. We would request though, that you consider the way you are expressing these emotions – not only in this situation but in any other. We appeal to you to remember the contribution made by the teams to whom you are directing your anger, and their support of you in your journey to completion. We also ask you to recognise the work they are doing now to ensure that the next cohort can also complete.

We are grateful to those students who have written to thank us for the decision and have distanced themselves from some of the methods chosen to express disappointment. Campuses have now been asked to focus on the logistics of releasing certificates when they are ready and preparing to support the learning journey of existing students.

In closing I would like to reiterate that no decisions are ever take lightly – this one is one of the hardest to date. We hope that the curve flattens sooner than has been the case internationally. By making clear and definite decisions we are supporting the strategies required.

We are sorry that your graduation has been impacted.



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