

Top 5 Reasons to take Further Studies Programmes

Overview

The university landscape, both locally and internationally, is incredibly competitive. Because of this, learners and parents often look to alternative learning options, like Further Studies Programmes, as an added advantage.

Previously, the only advanced curriculum you could take was Additional Mathematics (Add maths) and it existed as an additional subject part of the National Senior Certificate at the time. It was examined by both government and private schools as part of the DBE and IEB assessment bodies respectively. Today, high school learners are presented with three advanced curriculum subjects: Further Studies Maths, Further Studies Physics, and Further Studies English. Designed for academically advanced learners, the IEB's Further Studies subjects (formerly known as Advanced Programmes) are geared to improve self-discipline and critical thinking skills.

Here's why learners should consider taking any of these as additional subjects:



Further Studies undoubtedly have a positive impact on core subject results.

Ask any one of our learners and they will lay a testament to this. Further Studies challenge you to learn concepts and theories ahead of your time. It also makes your normal school subjects seem a bit simpler and helps build your confidence and improve your general subject ability.

Essentially, learners who engage in these challenging subjects are stretched further than their school subjects can, and they learn to approach each subject more broadly. This means that learners can apply more lateral thinking to their Core Mathematics, Physical Science and/or English Home Language subjects at school.

Further Studies, although it doesn't give you points, seem to be a helpful differentiator of University candidate selection.

In South Africa, we have an undersupply of higher education institutions and thus seats are limited at top universities. Differentiating yourself from the rest of the candidates is important. Although doing a Further Studies Programme at a school level does not grant you any points towards your university application there is no doubt that it helps build a case for your acceptance into your chosen degree, diploma or course over other candidates at the same level.

The likelihood of you getting through any degree that requires Mathematics is greatly increased.

University is difficult. The difficulty of the content increases considerably from school to university and the style of teaching goes from 'hands-on' to 'you are an adult now, ensure that you keep up!'. This is a big change for most learners and leaves some learners playing catch up from day one.

Doing Further Studies Programmes at a school level helps soften this sudden culture shock by helping to create a buffer of content that has already been learned at a school level. This gives you a slight advantage in the first year and allows you a bit more space to breathe and settle as you adjust to the heavy varsity life. It can also increase your chances of making it through some modules in your first year and hence increases your chances of excelling and successfully completing your chosen degree. As an example, in degrees where Mathematics and Physical Science skills are necessary, it becomes easier to excel in if you have taken Further Studies in Physics or Further Studies in Maths. These degree programmes include all engineering degrees, any subject where you will eventually use Statistics, Medical and Science degrees, Business Science and Actuarial Science.



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Tackling important topics.

Statistics is one of the most feared subjects, and it really shouldn't be! Further Studies Maths allows learners to tackle this module throughout Grades 10 to 12. This is an extremely beneficial module within Further Studies Maths because all learners going into higher education will at some point have to use Statistics in their research, regardless of field. Thus, getting insight and familiar with key topics in Statistics is really helpful and is yet another reason to do Further Studies in Maths.

Additionally, communication and being able to formulate strong, supported arguments is a critical skills to master. Further Studies English enables learners to master this important skill and expand their approach to tackling the written word. This essential skill can be applied across all degree programmes and will serve learners well throughout university and their working careers.

Pressure makes diamonds.

Further Studies Programmes are in no way easy subjects and taking any one of these subjects will put a lot of pressure on learners.

However, with this additional pressure, learners who take on these subjects inevitably develop a strong work ethic. All too often the top candidates at high school settle into bad habits because they are able to cruise through the content. This creates a false sense of security that learning will always be easy in all environments.

At university, the workload and content difficulty increases dramatically leaving some learners, who have not developed good habits in school, struggling to stay afloat. Putting yourself under pressure will force you to step up your game and work hard at something that isn't necessarily easy. This lays a strong foundation for further education and for life.



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