

Academic Accreditation



Your Right To Know



The IIE's Varsity College was founded over 25 years ago. Today it is at the forefront of private tertiary education in SA. The IIE's Varsity College is a forward-looking brand of The Independent Institute of Education (The IIE), who aim to create an educational experience tailored around each student's strengths and preferences, teaching them how to think critically and creatively, and thrive in their own way.

Through The IIE's Varsity College's partnerships and The IIE's accreditation, students can be sure that their learning experience meets international best practice standards.



What you need to know before choosing an Educational Institution

Education is an incredibly important investment of time and money. The importance of registration, accreditation and licensing of institutions, qualifications and conferring bodies cannot be over-emphasised. However, it can be confusing – a fact that some institutions will regrettably trade on, communicating misleading and even illegal presentation of credentials. In addition to the many highly recognised and accredited Higher Education Institutions in South Africa, there are also unscrupulous providers and poor-quality programmes.

Armed with the right information and a few key questions, you'll have all the facts you need to be certain you're making a wise decision. You'll also be able to explain this to your peers and others who do not have this information.

It is important to understand the difference between Higher Education (HE) and Further Education and Training (FET)

The IIE is a Higher Education (HE) Institution – The IIE qualifications offered at The IIE's Varsity College are of the same type and level as other Higher Education Institutions like universities.

There are several private Education Institutions that offer qualifications that are Further Education and Training (FET). The Department of Higher Education and Training manages both these sectors and maintains two registers for private education institutions – one for HE and one for FET. If you are wanting a Higher Education qualification, one of the first things you need to check is which level the institution is registered on, as you can only get that qualification from a registered Higher Education Institution.

For your information – Further Education and Training Qualifications are “non-school” qualifications at NQF Level 1 to 4 and they are accredited and quality assured by Umalusi. These are valuable qualifications in trades and occupations but they are not Higher Education qualifications.

Higher Education qualifications are accredited by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) for both public and private Higher Education Institutions (that includes universities). They are all post-school level and are on levels 5 to 10 of the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (which is the top part of the National Qualifications Framework).

Questions to ask:

1. Is the institution registered by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) as a Higher Education Institution?

All providers of Higher Education MUST be registered with the DHET. Remember that IIE Varsity College is a brand of The Independent Institute of Education (The IIE) which is registered with the DHET as a private Higher Education Institution, so you will find the registration details in the Register of Private Providers of Higher Education under The IIE. The Register can be found on the DHET website at <http://www.dhet.gov.za/SitePages/DocRegisters.aspx>.

All registered qualifications together with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level and a number of credits can be found on South Africa Qualifications Authority (SAQA) saqa.org.za, under The Independent Institute of Education.

2. If the institution is registered, great, but is the qualification I am studying, or want to study, registered? At what level is it registered?

A Higher Education qualification is one that has been accredited by the HEQC. Once it is accredited it can be registered by SAQA on the NQF. Only registered and accredited qualifications can be offered as Higher Education qualifications.

You can find a list of current registered qualifications on the SAQA website. Search under, "Originator: The Independent Institute of Education."

3. How do I check qualifications on SAQA?

To search for a qualification and the conferring body visit <https://allqs.saqa.org.za/>, then click on the right-hand side of the page titled, '**ALL QUALIFICATIONS AND UNIT STANDARDS**', to search for the qualification.

4. Some courses are advertised as programmes and others as qualifications. What is the difference between a qualification and a short learning programme?

This is important as some institutions use this language to mislead. A qualification is only a qualification if it is registered on the NQF, accredited by the HEQC (if it is Higher Education) and registered to that institution by the DHET.

It can only be registered and accredited as a qualification if it is at least 120 credits (a full year of study) and is in the format that is required. Sometimes qualifications are called programmes or have programmes in them (an academic year could be called a programme). The key point to keep in mind is that a short learning programme or short course is not a qualification.

If what you need is a particular skill for a particular reason (like a promotion or an upgrade of legal knowledge) a short learning programme or short course may be the right course of study for you – it is just important to know that it is NOT a qualification and cannot usually be used to gain access to further study at a higher level.

A South African qualification must then be registered and accredited here in South Africa – by the HEQC – and needs to be listed on the NQF.

5. What is the Council on Higher Education (CHE)/Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC)?

To ensure that all South African qualifications offered by private and public institutions are of the same standard, the HEQC is the body established by law to accredit (quality assure and approve) all Higher Education qualifications. The HEQC is a subcommittee of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) which is a body established by the government to oversee Higher Education – particularly the quality of South African qualifications and the institutions that offer them.

6. How do I check the legitimacy of a foreign qualification?

You need to check the registration of the qualification and the institution in its country of origin.

You can also approach SAQA to check if a particular qualification would be recognised for further study in South Africa, and, if so, at which level they may need you to get more details from the other institution to do this. They will not be able to do this if the other qualification or institution is not registered or accredited by a recognised body in its country of origin.

7. What is the difference between the conferring body or institution and a brand of an institution?

The conferring body or institution is the organisation that confers or awards the final qualification, should all the examinations and requirements have been passed. This is the institution that is registered with the DHET for the qualification.

Some registered institutions (like The IIE) work through groups of campuses organised under brand names, for example, IIE Varsity College, IIE Rosebank College, IIE Vega, IIE MSA and The IIE School of Hospitality and Service Management campuses. These campuses are registered under The IIE. (Be sure to check the register for the institution name and not the brand name. If you are not sure and cannot find your brand on the register, check that you are searching for the right thing).

What is the difference between a public and a private Higher Education Provider/Institution?

Public Higher Education providers are institutions that have been established and funded by the State. Public providers can be referred to as universities, universities of technology and comprehensive universities. There are 26 public universities in South Africa.

Private Higher Education providers, on the other hand, are owned by private organisations or individuals. Although many of them offer the same qualifications as public providers, private institutions are not subsidised by the State and are mostly funded through student fees. All Private Higher Education providers must be registered by the DHET and are regularly audited to ensure quality of provision.

The qualifications of both public and private Higher Education Institutions must be accredited by the HEQC and registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). They are thus equivalent and carry the same standing both locally and internationally.

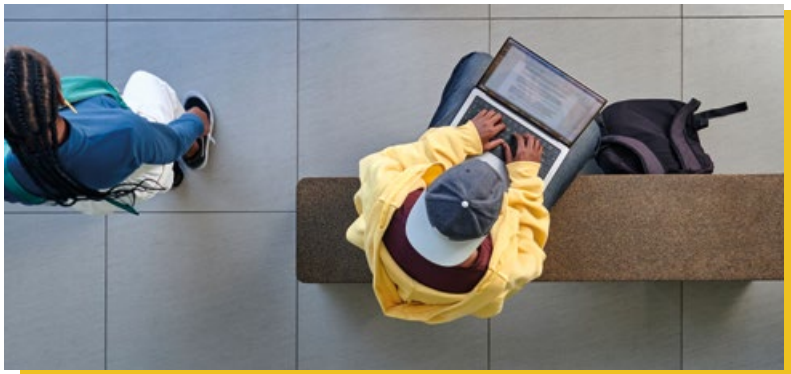
Other methods of checking quality

1. Quality of lecturers

To teach on an accredited Higher Education qualification, one is required to hold a qualification a level higher than the one on which you teach in a similar and/or relevant area. It's worth checking if this standard is adhered to. It is also worth checking whether lecturers have any experience in the industry that they are lecturing about.

2. What are the campus facilities like?

Please ensure you visit the campus that you intend to study at before registering. The campus itself, in terms of buildings, geography, security, staff, classrooms, libraries and facilities, is also evidence of the quality of the institution. It will give you an opportunity to observe the overall environment.



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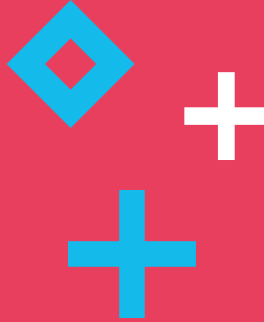
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Education by design

www.varsitycollege.co.za



Varsity College is an educational brand of The Independent Institute of Education (Pty) Ltd which is registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training as a private higher education institution under the Higher Education Act, 1997 (reg. no. 2007/HE07/002). Company registration number: 1987/004754/07.



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