



KwaZulu-Natal
Durban North
T. (031) 573 2038

Westville
T. (031) 266 8400

Pietermaritzburg
T. (033) 386 2376

Gauteng
Sandton
T. (011) 784 6939

Waterfall
T. (010) 224 4300

Pretoria
T. (012) 348 2551

Western Cape
Cape Town
T. (021) 685 5021

Eastern Cape
Nelson Mandela Bay
T. (041) 363 4223

January 2025

Dear Student,

Welcome to The Independent Institute of Education's Varsity College. We are certain that joining us is one of the best decisions you will ever make, and we trust that 2025 will bring you another step closer to your chosen future. We are determined to provide you with the best level of support during your time of study with us, leading to many great achievements and success.

As we prepare for the upcoming 2025 academic year, we would like to take this opportunity to inform you of the various aspects you need to be aware of before you come onto campus. You can watch a virtual tour of our campus [here](#).

Orientation Week

New student orientation will be held during the week of 10 - 15 February. Exact details of the week's events will be communicated to you via SMS and email. You can also find an overview of the Orientation week schedule [here](#).

Campus Community WhatsApp Group

The IIE VC Pietermaritzburg campus has a student community WhatsApp group that is used to communicate important information, reminders and updates on events happening in our student community. During orientation, you will be informed of how to sign up to the Campus Community WhatsApp group, and we highly recommend joining this group to stay up to date on matters relating to your student journey.



PMB



Harwin Road, Scottsville
Pietermaritzburg, 3201
Private Bag X7
Scottsville, 3209

T. (033) 386 2376
E. pmb@varsitycollege.co.za
www.varsitycollege.co.za



Directors: GD Whyte (UK), JDR Oesch, MD Aitken, SCD Lurie **Group Company Secretary:** CB Crouse

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Student FAQ BOT

You can find all important student-related information, by accessing our student FAQ BOT. The BOT is situated on the bottom right-hand side of the student portal [here](#)

Timetables

Timetables will be released no earlier than **one week before your classes** commence. Please understand that timetables remain subject to change throughout the year. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that timetable structures will remain the same during each year of your studies with us. You are required to attend classes to remain up to date with the academic programme. Whilst we encourage our students to pursue part time employment opportunities outside of the academic programme, you must prioritise your studies and avoid committing to work schedules until after you have received your timetable and academic calendar from the institution.

Student Relations Centre and VC Assist

Timeous and respectful communication and engagement between staff and students is fundamental to your journey ahead. The dedicated Student Relations Centre on campus provides you with direct access to the Student Relations Specialists, who are best positioned to provide you with information, assist with queries, or to just steer you in the right direction.

A key tool in supporting our students is VC Assist, our customer service management platform. The system ensures that your query is directed to the correct staff member and we are able to track the matter and escalate it, where necessary.

When raising a query via VC Assist, please note there is a 2-business day turnaround time for first response to your query. As such, whilst the VC Assist platform supports our commitment to query resolution and student support, in person engagement with the Student Relations Specialists remains our first choice when assisting our students. Please ensure you familiarise yourself with the whereabouts and operating hours of the Student Relations Centre.

Student Systems, Communication and POPIA

During the first few weeks of the academic year, we will provide you with onboarding sessions around the various Student Information Systems. In addition to these systems, each IIE Varsity College student is issued with an institutional “vcconnect” email. Once you have received training on how to access your vcconnect email address, the campus will no longer make use of your personal email address when sending out email communication.

We have shifted our communication protocols from including our parents/account payers, to include our students only and will thus engage exclusively with our students in relation to any academic or operational matters, including the release of academic results, which are only released on the student portal. This is consistent with the introduction of the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) which has come into effect. Although this may seem at times to run contrary to the provision of quality service, significant precedent within higher education indicates the need for students to develop their ability to navigate their own personal journey during their tertiary studies, whether it be academic, or service related. If not allowed the opportunity, in the time between secondary schooling and the workplace, this can later impact on a student’s confidence in their ability to navigate the wider world independently.

Academic Material

The Wize Books Portal for the ordering of academic material will open on 13 January 2025. Now that you have submitted your registration request, await an email from Wize Books with your

UNIQUE log-in link. Your prepopulated cart will be based on the modules you selected when you registered so, please ensure that the correct modules are selected. You will be required to log in using your new student number (starting with ST) and your ID number. We recommend that you do not order your books until you have received final confirmation of your registration from us to prevent a possible delay in the process. **DO NOT SHARE THE MAIL WITH ANYONE ELSE AS THIS IS UNIQUE TO YOU.** Without this UNIQUE link you will not be able to log in.

Student Card and Biometrics

The issuing of 2025 Student Cards will be done via the Wize Books portal. When ordering your 2025 academic material, you will be required to upload a clear head and shoulders photo to be used on your student card. Your student card will then be delivered to you along with your academic material from Wize Books.

Access to campus biometrics is linked to your 2025 student card. Please ensure you have completed your registration for 2025 and ordered your academic material and student card at least one week before your course start dates. Please contact the campus for more information.

Additional helpful information regarding the IIE's Varsity College Pietermaritzburg campus:

- Our canteen facility is open Monday – Friday 07:30-17:00.
- Students may use the student parking facility opposite the main entrance to the campus. Additional parking is available on Taylor Road. For easy identification and better management by our Security, our students who make use of the parking facilities will be required to fix a parking sticker to their windscreen. These are provided to you and will be available from Reception.
- Smoking is strictly prohibited within any area of campus outside the designated smoking area, which is situated behind the staff parking area.
- The Information Centre is situated on the 1st floor, above Lecture Rooms 14, 15 and 16. The Information Centre operating hours are as follows; Monday – Thursday 08:00-20:00, Fridays 08:00-17:00 and Saturdays 08:00-13:00.
- The Student Relations Centre Hours are Monday - Friday, 07:00-17:00.
- Reception Hours are Monday - Thursday, 07:00-18:00, Friday 07:00-17:00 and Saturday 08:00-12:00.

Looking forward to seeing you on campus,

The IIE's Varsity College Pietermaritzburg Team