

An update on Unisa's May/June examinations

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MEDIA STATEMENT

In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, Unisa's preparedness to operate as a fully-fledged Open Distance and e-Learning (ODEL) institution has been put to the test. The situation placed the University in a position where it had no choice but to forge ahead with the implementation of online operations, including the May/June 2020 examinations. It is important to note that 1 160 563 online examination submissions, and 215 514 non-venue based and continuous assessment submissions have been scheduled. This means that the university has to administer a total of 1 376 077 online submissions. It is in this context that Unisa examinations should be understood.

The University acknowledged that it was getting into uncharted territory and, even with thorough preparations, might experience "teething" problems. The internal systems had to be fully functional and operational to support the online examinations.

Some students, unfortunately, experienced some glitches during the first week of the examinations, which resulted in the postponement of the examinations for the affected modules, either to a different day or time. These changes were made to ensure that the system is able to carry and adequately support the examinations. The University acknowledges that the changes and problems inconvenienced some students.

The University has, however, made significant progress in stabilising the system and online examinations are now progressing well. Management would like to assure the student body that we are working tirelessly to resolve all issues concerning the online systems.

To support the students, the University secured a deal with MTN where students will get two months of free data (paid for by the University). The University is confident that through the free data and connectivity provided to the students, they will have the necessary tools to complete their exams.

While there is still a lot of work to be done, we are pleased to announce that by 6 June 2020, of the 284 789 students who were admitted to the May/June 2020 examinations, 206 700 have already written one or more examination. This constitutes just over 72% of all students who were eligible to write.

We will continue to communicate with the students and the media on the developments around the examinations. We sincerely appreciate the patience that our students have shown during these uncertain times.

The University is working on a solution for students who could not write their exams in the past weeks due to glitches or postponements. Students will be notified of the new exam dates soon.

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