



August 2015

Dear Final-year Undergraduate Student

I am writing to invite you to continue postgraduate studies at the University of the Free State (UFS) in 2016. At this stage in your academic career, you might be uncertain about whether to enter the job market immediately or continue studying towards an Honours degree or one of the other postgraduate qualifications on offer through your university. In recent years, the job market has become more and more fierce, even for graduates, and standing out is becoming increasingly tougher.

I would encourage you to continue postgraduate studies for the following reasons.

1. There is a marked difference in your income potential as you move from an undergraduate degree to a postgraduate qualification. A recent *Salary Survey* showed that, with an Honours degree, you could literally double your salary between the lower and upper end of the pay scales in some private sector fields.
2. The student with more than a first degree is much more competitive in the job market, and you therefore stand a much better chance of getting the position you want, than a competitor with only the initial qualification. For example, another study showed that a job seeker with just a Grade 12 certificate had a 40.6 percent chance of getting a job, compared to 63.7 percent for a bachelor's degree holder, and 71.2 percent for an honours graduate.
3. The postgraduate qualification gives you more options as far as work is concerned. For example, a BSc graduate who also gains a one-year Postgraduate Certificate in Education also has the option of teaching as a career now, or later in life.
4. The additional qualification gives you a platform to continue directly into master's degree studies now, or later in your career – and this is important because as more and more students graduate from university, the demand for higher level skills and qualifications will surely increase as well. In other words, you remain ahead of the pack, so to speak, in the workplace.



5. The additional qualification is much easier to obtain now, before you are older and settled into work and family life, when it is more difficult to find time to do full-time or even part-time studies.

Now, here is the good news. In order to enable you to continue with postgraduate studies, the UFS has decided to make it easier for you. We will provide you with FREE REGISTRATION for the Honours degree. To assist you, we have asked the deans of the various faculties to use the final year marks in your majors for the admissions decision; many students started poorly, so that taking your marks over all the years of study is often a disadvantage if you wish to enter postgraduate studies. And we have decided to double the UFS bursary fund available for Honours students, so that more students can study without the burden of tuition fees.

To further assist you, I will be hosting a **Postgraduate Open Day** on 27 August 2015 in the Odeion on the Bloemfontein Campus. The times are: 08:00 to 10:00; 10:30 to 12:30 and 15:30 to 17:00. You are invited to speak to me or the faculty representatives should you have any questions about continuing to your next degree, certificate or diploma with the UFS in 2016. More information on the Postgraduate Open Day will be available on the UFS website within days.

In the meantime, please contact the relevant faculty for specific information about Honours degrees or other postgraduate qualifications you might be interested in. The Postgraduate School in the Johannes Brill Building can provide information about all the scholarships and bursaries available for Honours students, as well as the research training support on offer. And the Marketing Department in the Wekkie Snyman Building can provide general information on postgraduate studies as well.

I look forward to seeing you in our postgraduate classes in 2016.

Sincerely Yours

Professor JD Jansen
Vice-Chancellor and Rector
University of the Free State