



14 June 2022

Dear Parent / Guardian

We at the EMS Faculty, has identified the need for more information on the university environment to reach the parents/guardians of our senior students. The purpose of this letter and appendix is to provide you as parents / guardians some background on your child's / charge's studies in the faculty. Irrespective of whether you have studied at a university yourself or have not, things have changed dramatically over the last number of years and I believe you should be informed of the latest arrangements to provide optimal support and guidance.

By paying careful attention to the matters set out below, you will be able to contribute greatly to the success of your child / charge and will be providing your child / charge with the necessary support at the requisite time to ensure that he / she / they will complete his / her / their degree in minimum time (i.e. three years, known as N at EMS), for a BAdmin or BCom undergraduate degree at EMS.

Completing a degree in the minimum time period of three years is an important step towards ensuring that your child / charge does not join the ranks of the more than 60% of young people between 18 and 24 years of age in South Africa who are unemployed. To obtain a bachelor's (first) degree is one of the most important tools available to combat unemployment and this is evidenced by the fact that graduates in the same age bracket (18 to 24) currently have an unemployment rate of merely 2,4%.

The appendix included below deals with 15 topics that have been listed below with a brief description of what is addressed under each topic where it is not clear from the heading in an attempt to save you time. It would be ideal if you could read through the entire document (including the appendix) to get a thorough understanding of your child's / charge's experience and challenges as a senior student. However, we understand that time is limited and hence you can click on the relevant link should you need more information on a specific topic. I would suggest you read, **as a minimum, points 1, 2, 4, 5, 11 and 15 in detail.** The complete list of topics is as follows:

1. [Primary objective of attending a university](#) – to study and acquire skills and knowledge for the world of work.
2. [Maximum period of study allowed by the University of Pretoria for a 3-year degree and prerequisites](#) – UP allows N (N is the minimum time for a first (bachelor's) degree and is 3 years for EMS) plus 1 additional year as a maximum. Four (4) years is also the maximum allowed by NSFAS, so be aware!
3. [Student numbers versus number of lecturers](#) – classes are 5 / 6 times larger than at school.
4. [Structure of a bachelor's degree](#) – Bachelor's degrees are structured in a largely similar manner and this section explains how that works.
5. [Degree credits](#) – indicates the time per module, students should devote to their studies as well as total time for completing a degree
6. [Other relevant matters that deserve your attention](#) – 60% should be the aim and a range of help is available!
7. [Exam entrance for EMS modules](#) – to gain entrance to the exams, students must achieve a semester or year mark of at least 40%, otherwise they may not write the exam and this will mean that they extend their studies by another costly year including accommodation, food, study fees and books.
8. [Limit on number of credits a student is allowed to enrol for in an academic year](#) – maximum +10% of prescribed credits.
9. [Study guides](#) – "contract" with the student with all relevant information pertaining to each subject (module).
10. [ClickUP](#) – online learning management system (LMS) at UP.
11. [Lecturer consultation](#) – students must consult with lecturers or tutors immediately if they struggle after trying to solve the problem themselves.
12. [Tutors](#) – tutorials are included in study fees and students must make use of those to improve their understanding of study material.
13. [Class attendance and preparation](#) – research shows that this is the key to success, but it is the student's responsibility to attend, not ours.
14. [Reading proficiency, reading speed and reading comprehension](#) – one **reads** for a degree; thus, reading is important.
15. [Dates of examinations and supplementary examinations](#) – these are provided to assist you with planning your life.

We would like to thank you in advance for the invaluable contribution that you, as a parent / guardian, will make towards the success of your child / charge in their BCom or BAdmin degree during 2022 and thereafter. They really do need your support in this highly taxing, but life-changing and worthwhile endeavour.

Your assistance in this regard is much appreciated. Please feel free to contact us on emsdean@up.ac.za, should you have any further queries.

Yours faithfully,

M Chitiga-Mabugu (Prof)

Dean: EMS Faculty

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION AND EXPLANATION OF MATTERS UNDER EACH TOPIC LISTED IN THE BODY OF THE LETTER

1. Primary objective of attending a university

The primary objective of attending a university is to dedicate time and effort to obtain knowledge and competencies that will equip students for their future careers after completing their degrees. While your child / charge has been fortunate to be selected to study at university, you as a parent / guardian should bear in mind that UP is a full-time residential university (even if COVID rules force some online teaching and learning) and hence, we request that you carefully consider that he / she / they will not have a lot of time for extra-curricular activities and household tasks.

The majority of the student's time (40+ hours per week or eight hours per day, including lectures) should therefore be devoted to studying in order to succeed. It is similar to a full-time job – you need to spend at least 40 hours a week to get the work done. Whether you or a bursar are funding the student's studies or whether the taxpayer does this via the NSFAS system, is irrelevant – the student(s) under your care should complete their studies at EMS in three years or a maximum of four years as explained in the next section.

2. Maximum period of study allowed by the University of Pretoria for a 3-year degree and prerequisites

UP is a residential university and the EMS Faculty prides itself on being a faculty with one of the highest numbers of students completing their degrees in minimum time (three years). Students habitually refer to this as "record" time, but it is merely the prescribed time! It is also extremely important to note that the General Regulations at UP have changed with effect on 1 January 2022 and that in future (that is commencing 2022), a student will only be allowed to spend four (4) years on completing their three-year BCom or BAdmin degree. Thereafter a student who fails to do so will be excluded from further studies at UP. This means that your child / charge has only one opportunity to slip up and add a year to their studies, and thereafter they will not be allowed to come back and complete their degree, unless there are very compelling reasons for them taking more than 4 years to complete their degree. Obviously, the plight of students that are already in their fourth or fifth year of study in 2022, will be considered on a case by case basis, as they are in the transitional period. But, they will have to make very sure that they complete their degrees **as soon as possible**. Students in danger of being dismissed sometimes offer excuses like forgetting to study or partying too much, but those unfortunately do not qualify as compelling reasons. By contrast, being in hospital for 7 months of the year due to a COVID infection, would be considered a valid reason.

The above is a very important point and you as parents / guardians should please take careful note of and assist where possible to ensure that your child / charge completes his/her/their degrees in three (3 = N) or maximum (4 = N + 1) years.

3. Student numbers versus number of lecturers

Approximately 1 800 first-year students register at the EMS Faculty during every academic year and this number is also approximately the number of students in second and third year. Note that class sizes are about 5 to 6 times that of school classes (around 160 to 300 students per class) and the responsibility to approach the lecturer when a student does not understand a particular topic, rests squarely on the student, not the lecturer. It should therefore be clear that students must study independently and attempt to master the work by themselves, but the lecturers provide numerous opportunities to assist students to consult and ask for assistance either in class, during consultation times, tutorials or via email.

4. Structure of a bachelor's degree

All BAdmin and BCom students are expected to complete **all** the prescribed modules (subjects) that are registered at the Department of Higher Education for the specific degree they are enrolled for. This implies that a student is responsible for and should make very sure that he / she / they complete ALL modules prescribed for a specific degree by the end of their studies.

Note that the majority of modules in the first year of any **BCom** degree are generic (that is, appear in all degrees) and are meant to provide students with a broad basis of the commercial environment in which they will eventually operate. Included amongst these modules are Accounting, Business Management, Economics and Statistics which all students enrol for during the first semester and mostly also in the second semester of the first year.

In the second semester of the first year, specialisation modules are slowly introduced that are specific to the specialised field. For instance, for a BCom (Marketing Management) degree, Marketing Management is introduced and for BCom (Human Resource Management), Industrial and Organisational Psychology is introduced. These two modules would be followed up by similarly named second- and third-year modules in Marketing Management and Human Resource Management, respectively.

Generally speaking, the major modules (taken at first, second and third year) of a degree are derived from the name of the degree. For instance, BCom (Accounting Sciences) will have as a major (amongst others) Accounting, Business Management is a major for the BCom (Business Management) degrees, while BCom (Marketing Management) students will specialise in Marketing Management and so on and so forth. It is vital that your child / charge performs well in their majors at first-, second- and third-year level.

BAdmin students are registered for some similar modules in their first year of studies, but because of this being a BAdmin degree, other modules like Politics, and Public Administration replace modules such as Accounting and Business Management. Again, the majors will include the term Public Administration in most instances and students should try to perform well in these modules at all levels of study.

Note that if students fail a first-semester or year module in any year, they will in many instances not be able to continue with the subsequent second-semester or year module. For example, if a student failed Financial Accounting (FRK) 201, he / she / they will not be able to continue with FRK 300 in the third year. This is a major setback and should be avoided at all costs because it will result in an additional year of study with all associated expenses.

Note that the pass rate at any university is 50% and **not** the 30% that the Department of Basic Education prescribes for students in the secondary school system. Achieving 50% for a module technically means that a student can only answer one out of two questions posed to him / her / them.

5. Degree credits

Each year of a degree carries between 120 to 171 credits in total – it varies from one degree to the next and degrees accredited by professional bodies generally carry higher credit loads to ensure compliance with the requirements of the professional body. One credit equates to 10 hours of study time (this includes preparation for classes, class attendance, tutorials, homework, self-study and consulting).

This would mean that in each year, the student should spend between approximately 1 200 to 1 710 hours on their studies merely to pass and that excludes time spent on exams.

This total number of hours translates into approximately 40 to 45 hours per week or 8 / 9 hours per working day of consistent work excluding time spent on writing assessments. If a student devotes less time than this to his / her / their studies, the likelihood of failing one or more modules is, in our experience, high. **At UP students are studying full-time and hence they should study 8 / 9 hours per day as would be the case for any person working full-time.**

At EMS we are more than aware that COVID has resulted in many students studying online, and we believe that this is not ideal. However, parents / guardians should note that universities are bound by the rules and regulations of the Department of Higher Education and not the Department of Basic Education. The rules for the two departments are different and change from time to time. We will keep your child / charge up to date with regular communication in this regard.

Failing modules (not obtaining the credits) would mean that the student does not meet prerequisites and can thus not continue with the follow-up modules in the second semester or second year (also see point 4). In particular, students appear to struggle with modules that are cumulative and require consistent and hard work throughout the semester or year.

It should be evident from the above lists of modules, that your child / charge will have a busy schedule attending class and allocating sufficient time to study for each of the modules. **Parents / Guardians are thus requested to, if at all possible, give their children/charges sufficient time to study as was also explained under point 1 above.**

6. Other relevant matters that deserve your attention

Please bear in mind that many students initially experience that their marks drop drastically when moving from one academic year to the next, but if students continue to work hard and consistently, their marks should gradually increase as the year progresses. ***Learning is a process, not an incident!***

Please note the explanation in respect of online learning provided under point 5.

To have a reasonable chance of grasping their study material and to pass at the end of the year, it is strongly recommended that a student's progress / semester marks for all modules should be around 60%. Students with a semester or year mark below 40% after completing the first semester are at serious risk of not passing their modules by the end of the year. Such students must consult with the lecturers and/or **Faculty Student Advisors (FSAs) (they assist with time management, study techniques, goal setting and emotional challenges for free)** immediately and increase the effort put into their studies.

Students often find the jump from one academic year to the next quite challenging as the work becomes more integrated and difficult and we have communicated or will communicate with students that the March / April or September / October holiday period should be used (partly) to catch up on the first or third quarter work if their progress mark is not at an acceptable level (it should be at least 50%, but preferably 60%). The first and third quarter work is the foundation of the work to be dealt with in the rest of the year, as well as the entire degree and it is crucially important that this foundation is solid. A 50% mark, although a pass, is not sufficient to ensure a proper academic base for future and postgraduate studies.

7. Exam entrance for EMS modules

We would also like to draw your attention to the fact that students may only write their final exams if they have achieved a semester or year mark of at least 40%. Although a 40% semester or year mark will provide access to the exam, students / parents / guardians should be realistic: If a student could not manage to accumulate a semester or year mark of 40% or more when being assessed over small parts of the work during the semester or year, their chances of succeeding during the exam are extremely slim. Note that exams cover the work of the entire semester, is a stressful experience and 60% would be required in the exam to pass the module if the student enters the exam with a year or semester mark of 40%. In summary: If a student writes the exam and obtains a final mark (semester / year mark and exam mark combined) of 50% (say $(40\% + 60\%)/2$) or above, they pass. If the final combined mark (say $(40\% \text{ plus } 50\%)/2$) is between 45% and 49% they are allowed to write a supplementary exam and if the combined final mark is below 45%, they fail. Let us emphasize, a pass mark of 50% is required for a student to proceed to his / her / their second semester or second or third year of studies and if 50% is not achieved, the student fails. We would also like to reiterate that a 50% mark, although a pass, is likely to result in problems during the following semester or year, unless students substantially increase their effort.

8. Limit on number of credits a student is allowed to enrol for in the first year

As explained under point 5, modules are linked to credit loads. If the student decides that he / she / they want(s) to enrol for more credits for some or other reason, this is possible, but to a limited extent, as students sometimes overextend themselves and set themselves up for failure. We have to temper their actions somewhat to protect them and **advise strongly against enrolling for extra credits and hence the extra credits are limited to a maximum of 10% more than the prescribed credits for a specific academic year.**

9. Study guides

Each module that a student registers for has a study / learners' guide. This study guide is available on ClickUP (see 10 below) once the student is enrolled for the module. This guide is the "contract" between the student and the lecturer(s) of that module. This guide contains very important information with which the students should familiarise themselves, i.e. test dates, lectures and lecturer(s) information, textbooks, consulting hours of lecturer(s), learning objectives and procedures to be followed when absent from tests with a valid reason. It also contains the weighting of the various assessment opportunities in the respective modules.

10. ClickUP

The University has an internet-based educational learning management system called ClickUP. This resource can be accessed through the University of Pretoria website and is available both on and off campus. Students can also download an application (App) for their phones. Each module for which the student is registered, appears on ClickUP. The student can obtain important information about the module, learning material (for example class notes, past papers and practice questions (exactly what is made available, depends on the module)), continuous assessments, e-classes (video recordings), announcements and marks on ClickUP. Note that you will be able to access your child's / charge's grades on ClickUP if he / she / they provides you with his / her / their username and password and we encourage you to track their progress.

11. Lecturer consultation

If students still do not understand the work explained in class after they have studied and attempted it on their own, they **must consult** with the relevant lecturers in their offices (or tutors) **as soon as possible**.

All lecturers have set aside time for students to come and consult with them (either face-to-face as COVID allows or electronically), but the responsibility to consult lies with the student. The lecturer consultation times are available in the study guide and on ClickUP. Again, please encourage your child to see the lecturer as soon as he / she / they encounter(s) a problem with the module content and they must be as specific as possible. A general statement that they for instance do not understand Economics, makes it extremely difficult to address their problem – surely not to understand a single thing contained in a module is not possible? Therefore, we encourage students to be specific with their questions when they consult. To postpone seeing the lecturer until the end of the semester or the year is not advisable because at that stage there is very little we can do to rectify the situation.

12. Tutors

Many modules (not all) have senior students as tutors who are available to assist students with work that they are struggling with. Since the tutors are closer in age to your child / charge, students may find it easier to talk to them. Please encourage your child / charge to go to the tutor classes and consult with the tutors in their consultation times. This is voluntary, but included in the module fee – **just do it and they should pass their module and finish their degrees in minimum time!**

13. Class attendance and preparation

Please note that as UP is a full-time university, it is **compulsory** for the EMS Faculty student to attend all his / her / their lectures and or video lectures as the case might be. Students' class attendance is extremely important and contributes greatly to their chances of passing their modules.

In terms of learning theory, UP believes that students actively construct their own knowledge and understanding of topics. The flipped learning model for full-time students at UP assumes three phases in teaching and learning, namely: **(a) preparation before class, (b) engagement in class and (c) consolidation after class**. Quality instruction requires students to come to class prepared, as this enables new teaching to build actively on existing knowledge. Students can prepare for the class using traditional textbooks, eTextbooks, PDF & Word files, videos or publishers' learning systems.

14. Reading proficiency, reading speed and reading comprehension

You are kindly reminded that students at university level perform optimally if their reading speed is in the vicinity of around 200 to 300 words per minute, with a comprehension level of between 75% and 80% when they read at that speed. It may be worth your while to have your child's / charge's reading speed assessed at a reading clinic such as the *Tina Cowley* clinics as soon as possible and if it is not up to standard, to take corrective action during the March/April or July or January holidays. **A higher reading speed makes study time more effective and also assists students in completing their tests and exams within the time allotted.**

15. Dates of examinations and supplementary examinations

Lastly, we would like to draw your attention to the provisional dates and timeslots of the June and November examinations and supplementary examinations. Please ensure that you plan holidays outside of Pretoria around these dates, **since we cannot accommodate students who miss examinations or supplementary examinations due to holiday arrangements**. Please note that the supplementary examinations commence only after examinations have been completed and for your convenience the timeslots of both exams periods are provided here.

Examination type	June	November
Examinations	11 June – 30 June 2022	12 November – 30 November 2022
Supplementary examinations	4 July – 9 July 2022	1 December – 7 December 2022