

Engen helped secure our success, say star Western Cape matrics

Four standout Western Cape matriculants, all named among the top 50 in the province, say they have Engen's Maths and Science Schools (EMSS) to thank for helping put them firmly on the path to career success.

Huda Adams, Shazia Amoo, Meeka-El Hendricks and Zakiyyah Petersen, began their tertiary studies this month at the universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch, with nothing but praise for Engen's national initiative, which aims to address key national skills shortages in engineering and other technical fields.

Proof beyond doubt of the value of the hours they spent in the Saturday classes at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, most since Grade 10, is the swathe of distinctions notched up by the four, along with the enormous honour of receiving 'Excellence in Academic Achievement' awards from Western Cape Premier Helen Zille. These awards, which come with a R10 000 prize, are awarded to the Western Cape's top 50 matric candidates annually.

All four were also placed in the EMSS's top 10 nationally for 2017, with Cape Town learners accounting for more than half the top spots. A total of 555 EMSS learners wrote the Grade 12 National Senior Certificate Examinations at the end of last year, with 366 achieving Bachelor passes. For Cape Town specifically, 46 of 49 learners involved in the programme achieved Bachelor passes.

"We are so incredibly proud of these four learners, who epitomise the quality of the young people we work with around the country every year. Our ultimate reward is to help set them up to pursue stimulating careers that won't only benefit them personally, but also the economy as a whole," says Adhila Hamdulay, Corporate Social Investment Manager at Engen.

Huda, who attended South Peninsula High School, will spend the next four years studying mechanical engineering at UCT, after coming second in matric at her school. She achieved seven distinctions, including 86% for science and 87% for maths.

The 19-year-old Grassy Park resident attended the EMSS every Saturday during term time from Grade 10, saying the classes helped keep her marks high, especially as the work became more challenging.

"It's often difficult to get down to work, especially on the weekends, and this dedicated time with amazing teachers really helped create an environment of excellence," says Huda.

Meeka-El from Athlone came top in his matric class at Livingstone High School with a 97% aggregate, and 92% for science and 82% for maths. He says he never doubted the incredible opportunity afforded by the Engen classes.

"I could have been going out with my friends, but in the end, each of the classes I attended gave me deeper insights into my subjects. They especially helped me in Grade 12, and the commitment was worth every minute," says 18-year-old Meeka-El, who has registered to study actuarial science at the University of Stellenbosch.

Another Athlone resident, 19-year-old Rylands High learner Shazia came second in her school with an 87.7% aggregate, and is studying chemical engineering at UCT this year, while Zakiyyah, who matriculated from Claremont High School is studying civil engineering at Stellenbosch University.

Both agree that taking advantage of the extra Engen sponsored classes in maths, science and English, offered an exceptional opportunity that helped cement their excellent year-end results.

“They really built my confidence. By Grade 11, I was selling everyone on the classes because they were helping me so much,” says 18-year-old Zakiyyah, a resident of Mitchell’s Plain.

There are currently nine EMSS schools across South Africa, with classes in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. EMSS provides a high-quality learning experience, including teaching and educational materials, for learners from Grade 10 to 12. Overall, the EMSS matric class of 2017 attained an impressive 94% pass rate, with the Cape Town classroom, along with two in KwaZulu-Natal, achieving 100% pass rates.

Engen’s Hamdulay says it is extremely gratifying receive such positive feedback from the Western Cape’s star learners.

“We strongly believe that we have a responsibility to help young people realise their full potential, and we feel enormously privileged to have played a role in their impressive achievements,” she says.