



ASISA Academy Newsflash – January 2021

After the many trials and tribulations of 2020, it was fantastic to be able to start the New Year on a celebratory note with the annual ASISA Academy graduation ceremony. Our graduation ceremony is a highlight on our January calendar, because it allows us to reflect with gratitude and pride on the achievements of the previous year as we embark on a new year of learning.

Despite the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, we were not going to break with tradition this year. With a heavy heart we therefore accepted that a physical event was out of the question and instead took our graduation ceremony online. I have to admit that, in hindsight, the online event turned out to be a very special event in that it enabled us to combine what would have been separate ceremonies in different regions into one virtual ceremony.

We were joined by over 100 guests, including our UCT short course delegates, interns from Bloemfontein, Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg, East London and Port Elizabeth, and their family members, colleagues, managers and mentors. The ceremony was also attended by the ASISA Academy's programme champions who have to be commended for having pulled out all the stops last year to ensure a quick and smooth transition to an online learning environment, literally overnight.

Held on Tuesday, 26 January, the graduation ceremony celebrated and acknowledged delegates who successfully completed the following [courses and internships](#) in 2020:

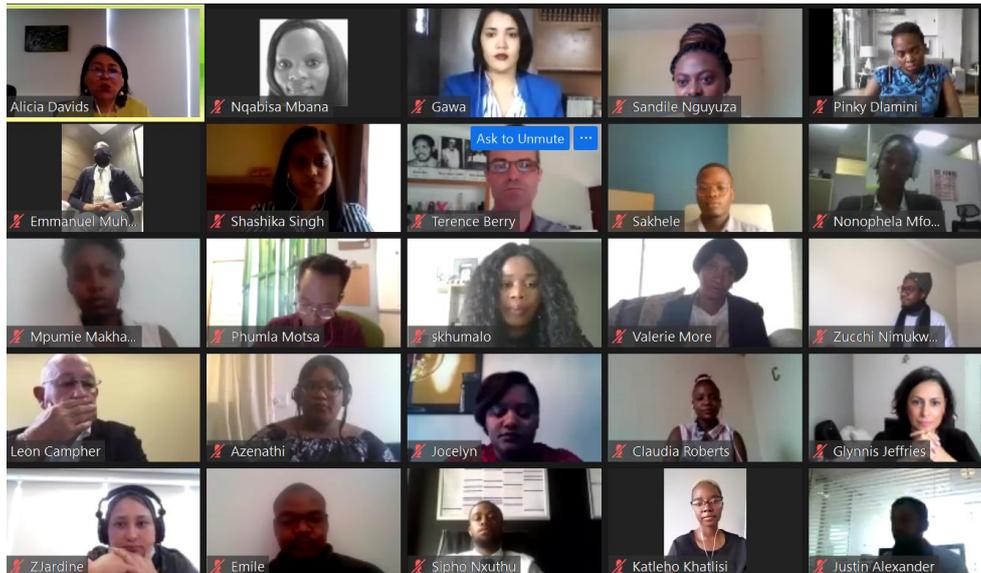
- The UCT endorsed [Collective Investment Schemes \(CIS\) Short Course](#);
- The UCT endorsed [Investment Management Administration & Client Servicing \(IMACS\) Short Course](#);
- The UCT endorsed [Life Insurance Claims Assessors Short Course](#); and
- Our three internship programmes – [IMACS@TSiBA](#), [Investment Management Work Ready \(I'M Work Ready\)](#), and the [Independent Financial Advisor \(IFA\) Internship](#).

We were privileged to have Nerina Visser, Director of etfSA Portfolio Management and President of the CFA Society South Africa, as the guest speaker. No stranger to our courses, Nerina is passionate about education and empowering people through knowledge.

She reminded our graduating delegates that honesty and integrity are the cornerstones of being a financial services professional. She therefore called on all financial services professionals to continuously hone their ability to discern between real and fake and to be "truthful and honest and have integrity".

Nerina also compared the graduating delegates to diamonds that have reached their point of being valuable as a result of an ongoing journey of learning, which she likened to the process of cutting and polishing a diamond. She also reminded delegates that a diamond only shines if all its many facets are visible.

Nerina left the delegates with the following words of encouragement: "For you to really be a diamond of value and sparkle in the workplace you need to bring all of the facets that make you the diamond into the work place. So my message of encouragement to you today is embrace all the facets, all the aspects that make you unique and real. Take all of that into the workplace. You are valuable because of your unique value proposition."



A few attendees captured from the 2021 virtual graduation ceremony.

Wanted: opportunities for work ready interns

The difficult operating environment created by Covid-19 has resulted in a critical shortage of available internship opportunities in the financial services industry. At the same time the ASISA Academy received a record number of applications from black graduates for the limited internships on offer for 2021.

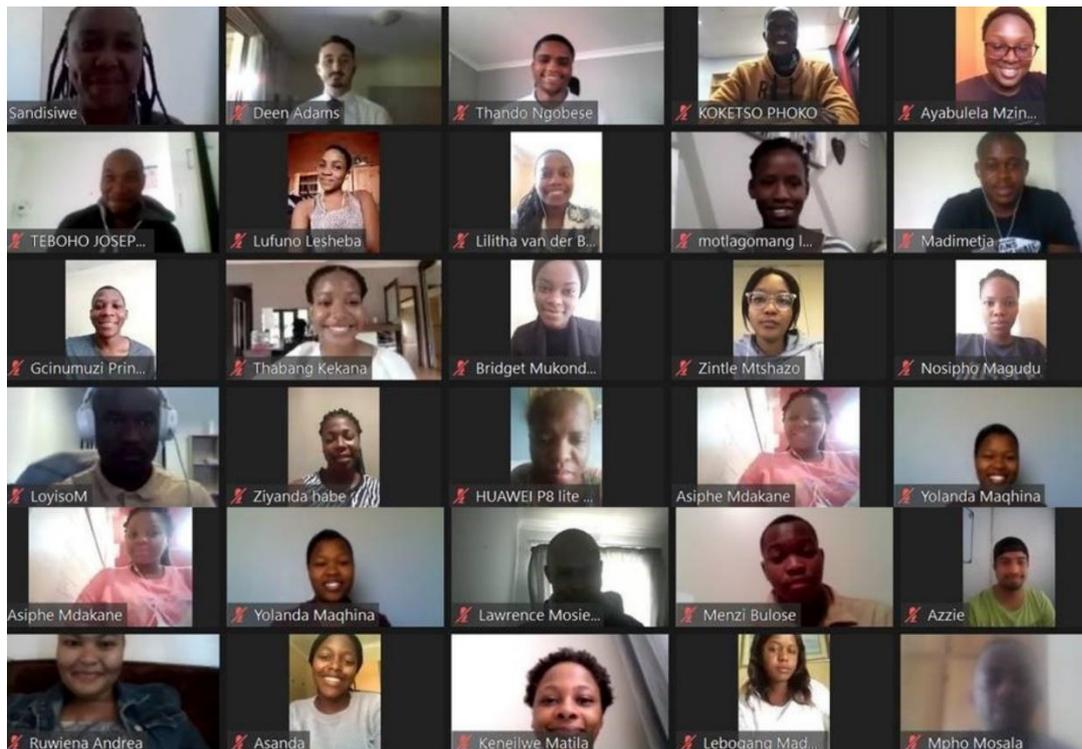
In an attempt to help the enthusiastic graduates who were not able to secure internships for this year, the ASISA Academy funded and delivered an online work readiness course over eight mornings in January. The intention was to provide these new job seekers with an extra set of skills and knowledge that will hopefully lead to opportunities and facilitate a smooth transition for the intern as they enter a workplace. Attended by 53 graduates, the course covered the following topics:

- **Industry knowledge:** Introduction to the Financial Services Industry, Introduction to Investments, Introduction to Life Cover, and "A day in the life of an Independent Financial Adviser"
- **Relevant legislation and regulation:** The Financial Intelligence Centre Act (FICA), the Financial Advisory and Intermediary Services Act (FAIS) and Treating Customers Fairly (TCF)
- **World of Work skills:** Office Etiquette, Effective Communication, Conflict Management, Teamwork, Time Management, Ethics and Professionalism, Cultural Diversity, Health and Wellbeing, Dealing with failure and building resilience, Presentation Skills, Setting Goals, Action Planning, Personal Finance, Networking and Career Management, CV Writing and Interview Tips

The graduates who successfully completed the work readiness course were rewarded with an ASISA Academy certificate of completion. The graduates hoping for internship opportunities have achieved a range of degrees ranging from BCom Finance and Investments to BCom Investment Management and Bachelor of Law with Specialisation in Financial Planning Law. The wide variety of degrees were obtained from the spectrum of South African universities, including the University of Cape Town, University of the Free State, University of Johannesburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Monash University, University of Pretoria, Rhodes University and TSIBA Business School.

If your company has the capacity to take on interns in 2021, please contact [Zubeida Ebrahim](#) for a selection of CVs. We believe that the graduates who attended the work readiness course are well equipped to make the transition to the workplace and that, with some mentorship, will grow to become valuable members of our industry.

Please also note that the Academy will be offering the NQF level 7 Financial Markets Practitioner Occupational Qualification later this year. This qualification will be offered as a learnership which is suitable for an employee or graduate working in an investment management business.



Some of the graduates who attended the work readiness course in January 2021.

Courses presented in December

- Three [Investment Sprints](#) were delivered in December to delegates from the JSE on the following topics:
 - Introduction to the SA savings and investment sector
 - Investment products and structures
 - Investment management business overview
- A bespoke online workshop on Investment Management was presented for the audit teams of the Office of the Auditor-General.
- We also delivered a [Retirement Fund Trustee Education \(RFTE\)](#) workshop on Death Benefits to the Political Office-Bearers Pension Fund.

Courses presented in January

- The first bespoke bootcamp for 2021 was delivered as part of the Ninety One graduate programme, designed to provide new employees with a platform to transition from university to the corporate workplace. Graduates who joined Ninety One in 2021 participated in a five-day Investment Management Administration & Client Servicing (IMACS) bootcamp.
- Four [Investment Sprints](#) were delivered for delegates from the RMB Corporate and Investment Banking divisions. The following topics were covered:
 - Investment management and legislative overview
 - Investment products and structures
 - Practical aspects of portfolio implementation
 - Unitisation and performance

Learn with us in 2021

Our popular [UCT Collective Investment Scheme \(CIS\) Short Course](#) and the [UCT Investment Management Administration & Client Servicing \(IMACS\) Short Course](#) have been scheduled to start on 9 March in an online format. We have a limited number of places left on both courses. Please click on the links provided above to enrol.

We have also released a comprehensive overview of our [2021](#) courses including dates and fees. Please visit our new [website](#) for more information and like our [Facebook page](#) for regular updates. We also invite you to interact with us on [LinkedIn](#).

Please feel free to [contact us](#) to discuss how we can support your learning requirements. As always, we welcome suggestions and proposals.

In closing

A warm welcome back to Zikhona Monkqoyana, a TSiBA graduate who interned with the ASISA Academy in 2020. Zikhona joined us in January 2021 as a part-time junior course coordinator responsible for ensuring the smooth running of our [Retirement Fund Trustee Education \(RFTE\)](#) workshops.

If 2020 taught us anything it is to be resilient in the face of adversity and to be creative and solutions driven. I am proud of the ASISA Academy team for having done just that in 2020 and I can assure you that we will continue to apply this approach in 2021.

Best wishes
Alicia Davids
ASISA Academy CEO