



UNITY COLLEGE  
Special Needs Education

**CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE**  
Celebrating 25 years

## **OVERVIEW OF UNITY COLLEGE** **(For Prospective Parents)**

Unity College is an independent special needs school which promotes the potential of learners through the provision of high quality education in order to equip each learner with skills to become productive, integrated members of society.

Most of our learners have some learning difficulties or developmental delay, making Unity College ideal for the learner who has experienced academic difficulties in a mainstream or remedial school but is sufficiently able to access our specialised curriculum offering. We follow a three pronged approach to our curriculum:

1. The acquisition of formal academic qualifications. This is achieved through admittance to the ABET series of examinations in Numeracy and Literacy under the auspices of the IEB. The students also are enrolled in a progressive computer course underwritten by Knowledge Network.
2. Life - and work skills are provided by following an internationally accredited course culminating in an award, certificate or diploma.
3. The application of #2 through a comprehensive graded Work Experience Programme as well as continuous life and social skills mentoring by accredited counsellors.

Our annual results of nationally written ABET examinations, Knowledge Network examinations, plus our Accredited courses for life and work will attest to the pertinence and quality of teaching and learning at Unity College.

Our staff comprises a core of highly skilled and qualified educators who have had many years of experience within the field of specialised education. Supporting the teachers, we have a multi-disciplinary team consisting of occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, counsellors and an educational psychologist.

Catering for learners between the ages of 6 and 20 years or more, class sizes are kept small to accommodate individual needs. Twice a year an Individual Development Plan (I.D.P.) is formulated for each child. An I.D.P. is an in depth assessment of each learner's progress during a six month period as well as a detailed progression plan designed specifically for each learner, promoting the targeted growth of academic, social and emotional skills. The I.D.P. process also serves as a vehicle to establish communication between parents and school personnel as equal partners, to make joint, informed decisions regarding:

- the child's needs and appropriate goals
- auxiliary services and therapies needed to support the child, to achieve his/her potential.

**Directors | JA Dannhauser, AM Kelly, BG Lindsay, PJ Maddox**  
**Member of ISASA (Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa)**

*Proud participants of*





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The school has one class per year level. There are twelve years in total with an option for a further year of study as a college student as well as a planned early intervention centre spanning an initial three years.

### **Early Intervention Centre:**

Unity College's Early Intervention Centre caters for children from the ages of 3 to 6. In this initial phase of education we aim to provide adapted schooling and therapy to children with a variety of disabilities. Unity's Early Intervention Centre aims to bridge children toward formal schooling through individual objectives determined for each child, thereby improving their functional prognosis, and enhancing their potential to become a functional adult, able to contribute to society.

The Early Intervention Centre, which is situated on the same premises as the College, provides therapeutic activities and independence training to children with disabilities, who are unable to follow an academic curriculum and ensure that their potential for independence in self-care, and communication are enhanced.

Our ultimate goal is to enhance the quality of life of children with disabilities, and that of their families, through various interventions, a supportive environment, caring and committed staff, in an attitude of perseverance and gratitude.

We provide an educational environment that does not penalise a child for having a disability and teaches special skills to help the child cope. These skills should also help the child overcome some of the limitations imposed on learning and the normal everyday activities experienced by neuro-typical children.

The centre aims to create alternative ways for the child to learn and perform through the use of special materials, adaptive equipment, and teaching techniques and to teach the child pertinent developmental skills that should be acquired.

We further aim to help the child acquire adaptive skills leading to greater independence and competence so that he/she can function within the College and achieve a sense of self-mastery and a positive self- image. Collaboration between professionals of all disciplines associated with early intervention of children and active parental involvement programmes will be encouraged and provided by Unity College.

### **Junior Phase**

The key focus is on perceptual skills, mathematics and language for CAPS purposes and skills for life and learning. There is a strong emphasis on empowering every child to acquire sound communication skills, both verbal and written. Within this phase, children progress on to the follow up class once specific skills are reached ensuring emotional and academic stability of progress. Therapeutic support consists of pull-out individual therapy sessions flowing into an integrated approach into the classroom, to ensure skills learned in therapy are transferred to another environment. Class size varies from six to twelve learners.



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This year we have launched a **Junior “Skills for Learning”** class to serve as a springboard to the Junior Phase which focuses on the foundations of developing skills of independence.

### Intermediate Phase

There are two streams available within the intermediate phase:

- **A Life and Workskills stream** that delivers an innovative curriculum in a manner that caters for those learners who require additional time to acquire Language and Mathematical skills and the skills for independence as well as pre-vocational skills.
- **A Vocational / Academic stream.** In these classes, learners follow an adapted CAPS type curriculum wherein most of the regular subjects are covered.

The teachers offer a differentiated approach thus catering for each child's ability. There are five classes in this phase. Class size is usually twelve learners.

### Senior Phase

The Senior Phase aims to equip learners for life and work after school / college. The phase spans three to five years depending on each learner's maturity and ability to cope with independent or assisted living as well as the responsibilities of appropriate employment. The culminating year for the phase focuses on preparing learners for work.

The following courses are offered:

- **Literacy and numeracy** (Functional, Bridging or IEB accredited ABET levels)
  - All literacy and numeracy / mathematical literacy classes run concurrently ensuring that each student is able to work at his / her level and pace.
- **Computer literacy** levels accredited through Knowledge Network
- **Educare** (a three year Crèche Assistant Course accredited through the Professional Child Care College)
- **Life and work skills courses** accredited internationally through Pearson Edexcel.
  - These courses run on three levels progressing from predominantly life skills, to a blend of life and work skills, to skills for work in a final College-like year. On each level learners accumulate credits towards Awards, Certificates and Diplomas in succession.
  - Lessons have both knowledge and practical based components and are presented in a variety of ways for maximum transfer of information and skills. There are clear learning outcomes with assessment criteria that must be achieved, assessed and verified before credits are awarded.



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### **Work Experience Programme:**

All senior learners participate in our weekly **Work Experience Programme** as part of our curricula without remuneration. Learners start with an introductory work skills development programme and move onto more independent work experience in the open labour market when ready. Work Experience provides learners with opportunities to practise the skills covered in class, to develop work profiles and to gain a practical sense of reality in terms of the goals and expectations of the job market.

Learners who need a lot of support within the school programme can be accommodated in the **Life Orientation Class**. The provision of a home teacher and classroom ensures security and structure, and lessons are presented at a pace accessible to each learner. Learners access all the above mentioned courses according to their ability.

### **Enrolment:**

Should you wish to consider Unity College as an option for your child, an appointment needs to be set up with the School Head. Parent and child are invited to attend an initial interview. All learners wanting to enroll at the college are required to bring with them a full psycho-educational assessment, a speech and language and an occupational therapy assessment depending on the age of the applicant. These assessments help staff identify the level at which your child is working. Learners may then be invited for a two week trial period at the school to ascertain whether Unity College is the most suitable placement. The school has a waiting list, which governs placement into classes. Applicants are organised from the date of registration.

### **Trial Process:**

Within this two week period, we assess whether the learner is a suitable candidate for our school. If, after the trial period, our findings are that the child is not suitable, recommendations regarding an alternative placement will be made.

We not only observe the child on an individual level but also his / her interactions within the classroom with peers and staff members. During the course of your child's trial, you child will, in addition to his / her teacher/s, be seen by professionals who form the multi-disciplinary team. At the end of your child's trial, the team involved meet to discuss their findings. Once the child's profile is presented in total, a decision is made concerning placement. The trial feedback is then presented to the parents and, if appropriate, a place is offered at Unity College.

### **Unity Bus Service:**

Unity offers three bus routes at present with the following pick-up / drop-off points (in bold):

- **Parktown Bus Route:**  
**Temple Emanuel** (Oxford Road); **Rosebank Union Church** (Cnr. William Nicol and Sandton Drive) and **Loch Road** (off Cumberland Road, Bryanston).
- **Midrand Bus Route:**  
**Christ Church School** (Cnr 9<sup>th</sup> Road and 11<sup>th</sup> Rd), **Urban Life (Botshabelo)** (Main Rd).
- **Honeydew Bus Route:**  
**NHC Healthcare Centre** (Cnr Dolfyn St & Christiaan De Wet Rd) and **North Point Church** (Cnr. Bellairs Dr & Malibongwe Dr).

Further details are available from the school secretary and on our website.



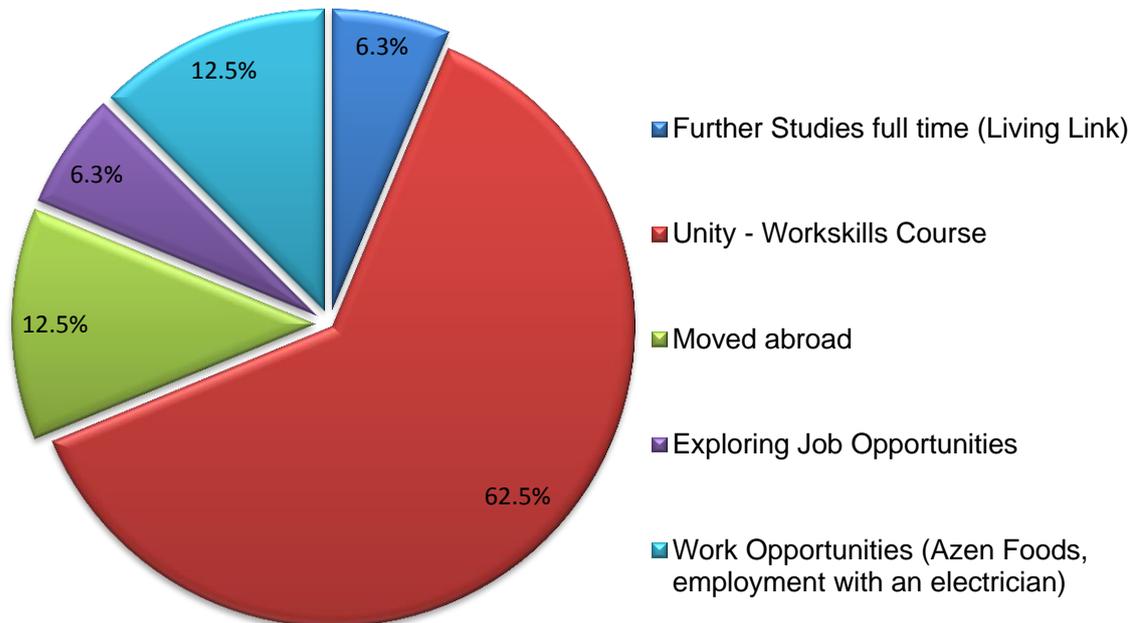
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### Senior Leavers:

We are proud to share the following graph with you. The graph indicates the progression paths of senior leavers on completion of their studies at Unity College. Please refer to our website for details of previous years.

### School Leavers' Stats 2014

Further Studies full time (Living Link)	1
Unity – Work Skills Course	10
Moved abroad	2
Exploring Job Opportunities	1
Work Opportunities	2



### Further information:

Please visit our home website [www.unity-college.org.za](http://www.unity-college.org.za) to find out more about us. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any additional information.