

## MESSAGE

# KZN medical student reflects on achievements and fears post matric

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SEJAL Dwarka was among the top achievers when she was placed third at Westville Girls' High and was the only pupil to receive nine distinctions from the Class of 2021.

In October, she was placed fifth and obtained the maths and information technology prizes, as well as two special awards – The Life Westville Hospital Mathematics Award and the Double Helix Life Science Award.

Dwarka is studying for a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB) degree and is completing her second year at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN).

Dwarka achieved nine distinctions despite the challenges presented by Covid-19. She said she had actually benefited from Covid-19 as it allowed her to work at her own pace and use her time efficiently.

“From a very young age I’ve had a fascination for science and maths-related topics, so my subject choices are easily aligned with these interests.”

Dwarka shared her experience of making the transition from high school to university and said she initially had been filled with anxiety.

“I was anxious about the differences between my high school environment and university. However, my excitement and passion for my degree made this transition much easier than I’d anticipated,” said Dwarka.

Highlights in her first year included learning skills – how to perform CPR and measure blood pressure; going to the dissection hall; buying her first stethoscope; attending the white-coat ceremony; and being accepted into the Caprisa (Centre for the Aids Programme of Research in South Africa) research placement programme as a trainee.

Her message for the Class of 2022 who are about to receive their results:



MATRIC Class of 2021 top achiever Sejal Dwarka with her awards during the Valedictorian Ceremony at Westville Girls' High School.



DWARKA in her white medical coat. She is studying medicine at UKZN.

“Never doubt your capabilities. Nothing is impossible, so dream big and think positively because you can achieve anything you want,” said Dwarka.