

# SECOND CHOICE IS SOMETIMES THE BEST

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ot being accepted by her university of choice and then having her first sponsor withdraw their internship offer were bitter pills to swallow at the time, but also led to Nada Nyakaza ending up exactly where she was meant to be.

She now holds a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree in Finance from TSiBA, a Cape Town-based not-for-profit higher education institution, and she started her graduate internship at Coronation Fund Managers in January 2024. And she couldn't be happier.

She had been on course to do the practical aspect of the ASISA Academy IMACS@TSiBA Internship in August 2023 with another investment manager, but shortly before she was due to start, the sponsor advised that they would not be able to host her for the internship component of the programme.

"I was very taken aback and confused, but I didn't want to hold it against them. I was eager to focus my energy on finding a new sponsor," says Nyakaza, adding that this was when she spoke to Alicia Davids, CEO of the ASISA Academy.



Nada Nyakaza earned her Bachelor of Business Administration degree in finance from TSiBA

"She really helped me through the whole process. She took my CV and said, 'Let's run, let's go!', and started distributing it to other companies. The very next day, I had an interview with Coronation Fund Managers."

Things kept moving quickly, and that same day Coronation Fund Managers offered Nyakaza a sponsorship.

"That was a very stressful journey, but everything happened so quickly, and I didn't get any sense of doubt from the ASISA Academy. They always made me feel like I was going to be okay."

She says: “When I got to Coronation Fund Managers, I felt like I was where I was supposed to be, and everything aligned for me.”

Abdurosheed Emandien, Personal Investment Validations Team Leader at Coronation Fund Managers, agrees that things have worked out very well, although he believes that Nyakaza “would have excelled at any company that she had joined”.

The ASISA Academy IMACS@TSiBA Internship students participate in the programme over 12 months while completing their Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degrees. Those who complete all their courses intern at their sponsors for four months in the final semester of their studies. Students who perform very well during the internship may be offered a graduate internship, as was the case with Nyakaza.

Her colleagues have really made her feel comfortable from the start, she says, and she feels like she is “growing every day”. “The support is crazy; I couldn’t have imagined it. In our industry everything seems so fast-paced, yet I can ask my manager anything. He made sure I knew that from day one.”

Another thing that surprised her about the workplace was the diversity. When she turned up at work, Nyakaza says, “I didn’t really expect to see people like me”. She had worried that, as a young Black female, she wouldn’t fit in at Coronation Fund Managers, but there were positive surprises regarding gender as well as race.

Her team leader has nothing but praise for her. She has been “doing exceptionally well ... grabbing at opportunities to learn and grow”, says Emandien.

He is impressed with “how she conducts herself and engages with any content that comes her way”. He adds that it is her potential he is most excited about: “I can assure you there is great deal of potential with this vibrant young woman”.

Nyakaza’s route to her internship at Coronation Fund Managers was not the first time she has taken a detour and ended up at exactly the right place. She did her degree at TSiBA, commencing in March 2021, on a full scholarship after not winning a place at her first choice, a more mainstream university.

She says not being accepted into her first choice of university, and then her first sponsor pulling out have been two big lessons in trusting the process. In both cases, the second opportunity ended up being the perfect fit.

Nyakaza says she thoroughly enjoyed the teaching style of the ASISA Academy: “Every single lesson we would meet people in the industry from different companies. Each topic would be taught by an expert working in the field. It was a great way to learn and the students were always encouraged not to be shy or insecure, but rather to connect with the experts.”

The support came from all sides, she says. “We could always reach out to Zubeida [Ebrahim], the course co-ordinator at the ASISA Academy, for support. We could ask the programme champion, Anton [Berkovitz] anything.”

In fact, she says, they had a WhatsApp group with Berkovitz, where they could ask him questions, to which he would provide “long, thoughtful answers”.

Another crucial aspect of the course for her, says Nyakaza, was the lessons in work readiness. “They made a point of letting us know that they were not teaching us just so that we could pass our exams, but rather to be able to work.”