

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

# Institutional Profile



2023

[www.ufs.ac.za](http://www.ufs.ac.za)

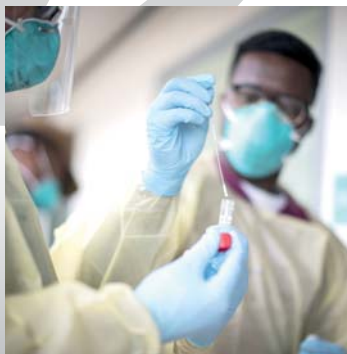
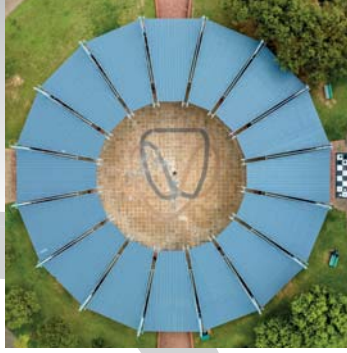
*Inspiring excellence, transforming lives  
through quality, impact, and care.*

VISION **130**  
*Renew and Reimagine  
for 2034*

UNIVERSITY OF THE  
FREE STATE  
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE  
VRYSTAAT  
YUNIVESITHI YA  
FREISTATA







**VISION130**  
 Renew and Reimagine  
 for 2034

# Towards 2034

Welcome to our future.  
 Re a o amohela bokamosong ba rona  
 Baie welkom by ons toekoms  
 Siyakwamukela ekusaseni lethu

## Index

Message from the Vice-Chancellor and Principal	2	Research	32
Our story	4	Innovation and impact	34
The UFS in numbers	6	Internationalisation	38
Our campuses	8	Community impact and care	40
Where we are situated	8	Alumni and donors	41
Our faculties	14	Student life and success	44
Learning and teaching	28	Social justice	50





## **Message from the** Vice-Chancellor and Principal: Prof Francis Petersen

The University of the Free State (UFS) is a progressive university focused on transformation as a core strategy. Apart from being a university that excels in teaching, learning, and research, the UFS is focused on making a social impact on society.

At the UFS, we have implemented cutting-edge measures for teaching at all levels. State-of-the-art equipment allows for interactive and engaging classroom experiences, helping us to create the class of the future. We have become a leading institution in South Africa in terms of quality learning and teaching and student success.

Our students are encouraged to grasp every opportunity and to take part in student life activities. We are working hard to provide them with an experience filled with the opportunity to build a better tomorrow for themselves.

In terms of research, we invest in areas that will address relevant local, national, and global problems. Our researchers and academics are excelling in various fields and have achieved international recognition for their work.

When visiting our three campuses, visitors are met by social and environmentally friendly spaces that seek to make the campus a comfortable home away from home with stunning

artworks, impressive facilities, and buildings where energy-saving systems were introduced.

We also do not back away from the challenges in enhancing our environmental footprint; with among others solar plants, and water-saving initiatives such as waterwise gardens and greywater systems, we have incorporated eco-friendliness and sustainability into our planning and implementation processes.

Our infrastructure and student accommodation projects are considered the best in the country, benchmarked against other institutions.

The UFS is committed to continuously renew itself to ensure the retention of our vitality and relevance. With our Vision 130 we aim to bestow an institution onto the next generation that is different from the past.

We have certainly come a long way since we opened our doors in 1904, and today we stand proud as an institution that lives up to its motto of inspiring excellence and transforming lives.



## Our story

The University of the Free State (UFS) has become a respected, well-known institution since its founding in 1904. For close to 120 years, it has grown to become a multi-campus university contributing to local, national, and international knowledge production, remaining relevant in a rapidly changing global higher education landscape.

In 2034, the university will reach an important milestone – celebrating 130 years of existence.

Looking ahead to the future, the university's Vision 130 seeks to position the UFS as a globally recognised institution known for its academic excellence, quality, and impact. Located in the heart of South Africa, we strive for maximum societal impact and sustainable relationships, and we are committed to being a diverse, inclusive, and equitable university.

With Vision 130, the university aims to be a driving force for excellence, innovation and impact, accountability, care, sustainability, social justice, and positively impacting the world now and for generations to come.





## OUR VISION

The UFS is a research-led, student-centred, and regionally engaged university that contributes to development and social justice through the production of globally competitive graduates and knowledge.

## OUR VALUES

Excellence / Innovation and Impact / Accountability / Care / Social Justice / Sustainability

Our values shape and inform the UFS culture and provide a framework for our actions and decisions.

## OUR MISSION

To impart and generate new knowledge that impactfully supports societal development.

## The UFS in numbers

Established in  
**1904**



**108**  
International  
postdoctoral  
fellows



**39 338**  
Total number of students

**32 934** Total  
number of  
undergraduate  
students



**6 243**  
Total number of  
postgraduate  
students



**367**  
Distance  
learning  
students  
per year

**872** International  
students

**127**  
Departments







## Students per campus



**29 684**  
Bloemfontein  
Campus



**6 929**  
Qwaqwa  
Campus

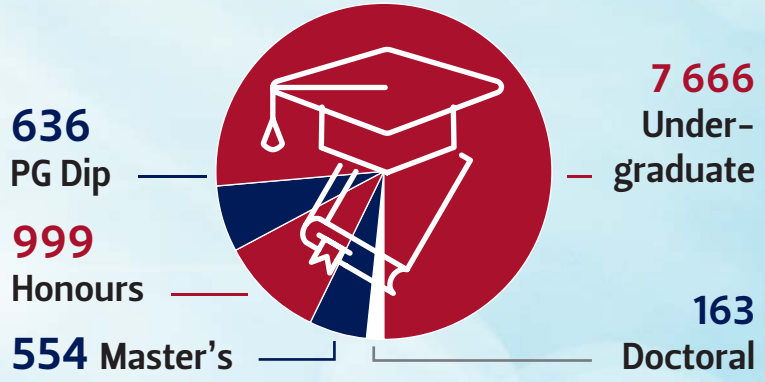


**2 725**  
South  
Campus

**74**  
South  
African  
postdoctoral  
fellows

**Ranked 801-1000**  
(according to the  
Times Higher Education World  
University Rankings 2023)

## 10 018 graduates



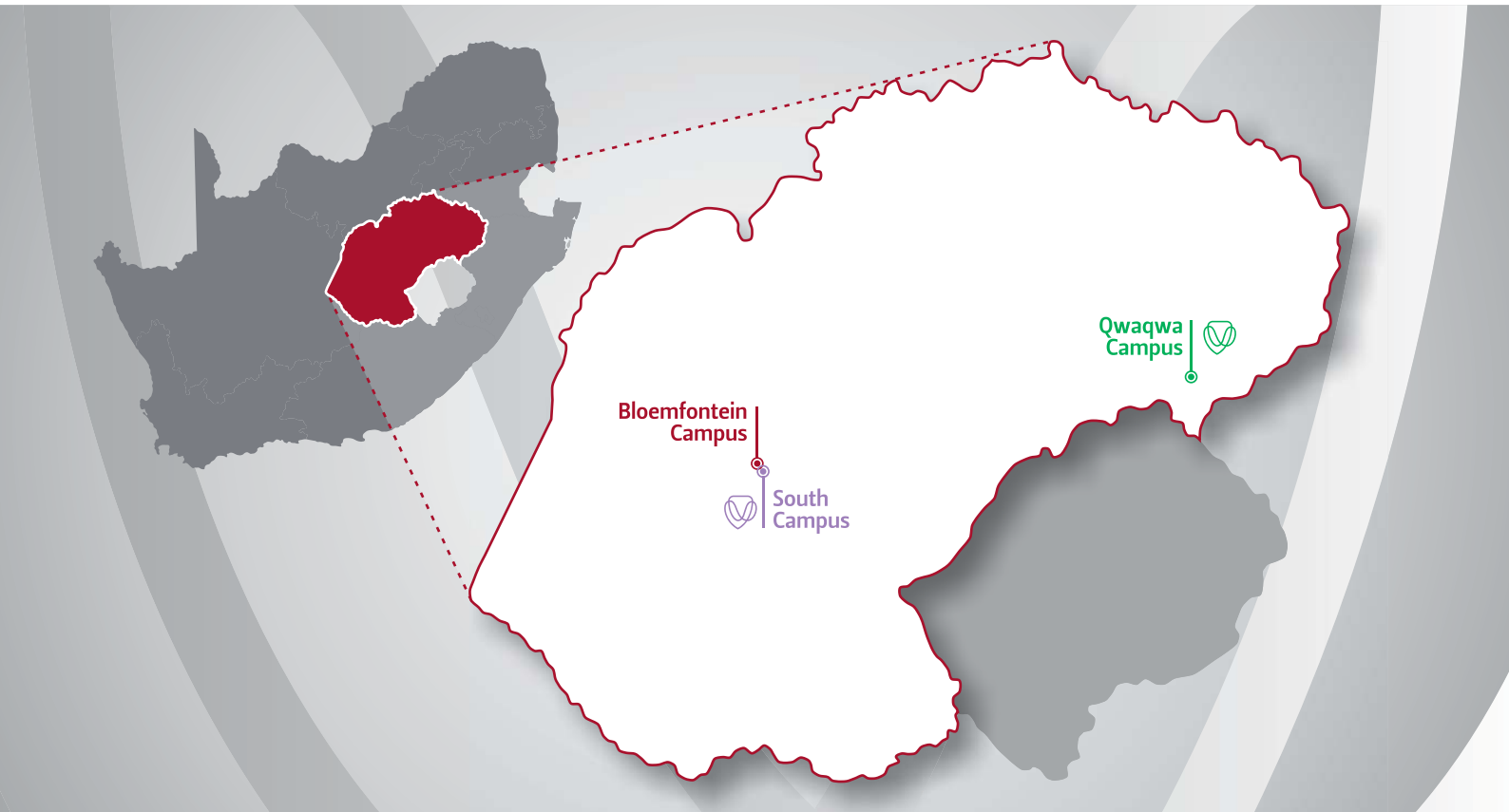
**3 066**  
**Total permanent staff**  
(on the payroll, active and in primary positions)

Statistics as at July 2023.

## Our campuses

The UFS multi-campus management model offers an integrated higher education experience across central South Africa. The Bloemfontein, Qwaqwa, and South Campuses each serve a unique purpose: forming one university operating through three distinct campuses.

## Where we are situated







The **Bloemfontein Campus** is situated in the capital of the Free State in central South Africa.

Undergraduate and postgraduate studies in all seven faculties are presented here. All campus facilities are available in one location, characterised by unique architecture and artworks, state-of-the-art research, learning, teaching and sports facilities, and eco-friendly, waterwise gardens.

Braille-guided areas, ramps, and elevators for visually and mobility-impaired students contribute to a culture of care and social justice.



The beautiful **Qwaqwa Campus** at the foot of the Maluti Mountains in the picturesque eastern Free State serves students from the immediate area and surrounding provinces.

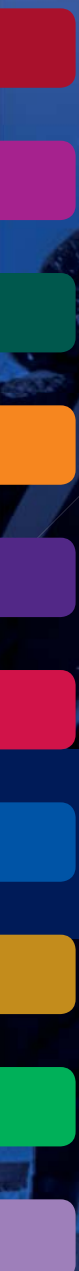
The campus has a strong focus on socio-economic development, informed by the rural context in which it is located. Programmes, underpinned by a strong research agenda, focus on identifying the best possible strategies to create jobs and stimulate economic growth in this area. The campus is home to the internationally acclaimed Afromontane Research Unit (ARU), a high-excellence multi-disciplinary mountain research 'community of practice' that leads African mountain research on the continent.





The **South Campus**, nestled in the hills to the south of Bloemfontein, is home to the university's Blended Learning Innovation and Support Services (BLISS), a subdivision of the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL). Utilising the South Campus' state-of-the-art multimedia production studio, BLISS has the primary goal of providing holistic, integrated services and support towards a new blended learning future for the UFS.

The BEd Foundation Phase programme is also offered on this campus, providing a well-rounded education that equips graduates with an integrated knowledge and understanding of teaching learners between the ages of six to nine years.



# Academic excellence,





quality, and impact

# Our faculties

The UFS has seven faculties delivering top-quality programmes, driven by dedicated and highly qualified staff committed to making a real-world impact in their fields.



## Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

In promoting its mission to be dynamic, innovative, and quality-driven in the field of economic and management sciences, the faculty is offering a diverse academic spectrum ranging from public and private sector management to specialised training for accountants on undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

The faculty prepares students for the world of work and the world at large, in order to be successful professionals and active citizens. We provide a pathway for students to leap from poverty and lack of opportunities into the digital, globalised world of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Students from the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences are successful entrepreneurs, economists, managers, accountants, C-suite members (Chief Executive Officers, Chief Financial Officers, and Chief Operating Officers), and development specialists.



### Exceptional programmes:

**Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) in Finance:** This programme's Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) accreditation indicates that the curriculum aligns with the rigorous standards set by the CFA Institute, which is highly regarded in the finance industry.

**Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting and Bachelor of Accounting:** These programmes have accreditation from several professional bodies, namely the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA), South African Institute of Professional Accountants (SAIPA), Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), and South African Institute of Taxation (SAIT).

Having these multiple accreditations implies that the programmes have undergone rigorous evaluations and meet the professional standards set by each respective body. This not only enhances the credibility and reputation of the programme, but also provides students with a solid foundation and potential career advantages within the finance and accountancy fields.



### Excellence in teaching and research:

**SARChI Research Chair in Higher Education and Human Development:** Prof Melanie Walker heads this chair, which largely uses the capabilities approach to understand education and human development concerns in South Africa. In her latest co-edited book, *Low-income students, human development and higher education in South Africa: Opportunities, obstacles and outcomes*, Prof Walker and colleagues analyse the human development concerns associated with low-income students.

**SARChI Research Chair in Urban-Regional Economics:** Prof Ivan Turok, one of the most cited social scientists in South Africa, heads this chair that focuses on urban systems (demographics and economics), economic sectors in space, dynamic places, and strategic urban assets. One of the latest contributions from this chair was a broad overview of the South African space economy and the role of metropolitan areas in the South African economy.



### Engaged scholarship:

At the beginning of 2023, the School of Accountancy presented an entrepreneurial training workshop on behalf of





the National Youth Development Agency, in which more than a hundred learners participated.

Some of the other projects include:

- **Department of Business Management:** Various projects, presentations and lectures on entrepreneurship, marketing and skills development to educational institutions and private sector companies.
- **Centre for Development Support:** Project on supporting youth social entrepreneurship in sub-Saharan Africa.
- **Department of Economics and Finance:** Project on educating learners in the Mangaung area on finance and economics.

## UFS Business School

The school has firmly established itself as a leader in the provision of management and leadership programmes in South Africa, with full accreditation by the Council on Higher

Education (CHE), as well as the Central and East European Management Development Association (CEEMAN).

The UFS Business School offers the highest quality training material and cutting-edge training and delivery methodology. We employ industry expert facilitators, delivering result-focused, relevant training.

Our quality short learning programme offering includes:

- New Managers Programme
- Management Development Programmes
- Executive Development Programme
- Specialised formal programmes:
  - Bachelor of Management Leadership
  - Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration
  - Master of Business Administration
  - Doctor of Philosophy with specialisation in Business Administration



## Faculty of Education

The Faculty of Education prepares pre-service teachers for their work in schools, ensuring that they have a strong disciplinary base for their professional work. We also provide teaching to in-service educators.

A key teaching-and-learning tenet is reflection, with an emphasis on teaching prospective teachers about teaching, as opposed to only teaching them how to teach – ensuring a culture of excellence in education.



### Exceptional programmes:

The faculty offers a wide range of non-selection undergraduate certificates, diplomas, and degrees, as well as postgraduate certificates, honours, master's, and doctoral study programmes.

We are home to teacher education programmes on various levels, such as:

- Diploma in Grade R Teaching
- Bachelor of Education in Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase or Senior and Further Education and Training (FET) Phase
- Postgraduate Certificate in Education
- Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education
- Bachelor of Education Honours
- Master of Education
- Doctor of Philosophy



### Excellence in teaching and research:

**SANRAL Chair in Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology Education:** Prof Loyisa Jita heads this chair, which helps to train teachers, support student-teacher interns, and incentivise education results so that participating schools become centres of excellence. At an academic level, the SANRAL chair is supervising a cohort of doctoral and master's students, while also guiding research and publications in mathematics, science, and technology education.



### Engaged scholarship:

**Enhancing entrepreneurship training:** The faculty received an award from the Insurance Sector Education and Training Authority (INSETA) to train fifty young entrepreneurs from Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) Colleges. The aim of the project is two-fold:

- To give youth entrepreneurs basic business start-up skills.
- To work in partnership with TVET Colleges to enhance the training of their students by addressing curriculum and other training-related issues.

**ICT training for the construction sector:** In partnership with CETA, the Construction Sector Education and Training Authority, we are training thirty participants in Teacher Professional Development for Digital Mobile Learning.

**Training of mathematics subject advisors:** The professional development of Mathematics and Science teachers and their subject advisors is an ongoing endeavour between the Faculty of Education and the Free State Department of Education.











## Faculty of The Humanities

This diverse faculty comprises multidisciplinary offerings that reflect human lived experiences contained in professional programmes, encompassing fields such as the Arts, Psychology, and Social Work. We deliver graduates who impactfully contribute to the well-being of communities through healing, culture, and entertainment. We encourage our students to be engaged citizens and prepare them to become humanitarian leaders. The faculty also offers a variety of language programmes, including a highly acclaimed sign language programme, and contributes towards multilingualism projects of national and international significance.



### Exceptional programmes:

The faculty introduced two compulsory multidisciplinary Social Science modules in 2022, contributing towards the UFS drive to decolonise the curriculum and inculcate specific graduate attributes among students.



### Excellence in teaching and research:

**International Studies Group:** The highly acclaimed International Studies Group (ISG) attracts scholars from all over the world. It comprises PhD students, postdoctoral fellows, and visiting academics with an active research interest in the histories of Central and Southern Africa in particular, and African and global history more generally. ISG members are mentored to produce books and publish articles in leading international journals.

**Centre for Gender and Africa Studies:** This interdisciplinary research and postgraduate centre represent two cognate intersectional fields that share a commitment towards postcolonial critical scholarship. Research areas include indigenous knowledge systems and heritage, gender mainstreaming, sexual violence, and peacekeeping.

**Centre for Health Systems Research and Development:** This centre generates and disseminates scientific knowledge on health and health systems, including policies, strategies, practices, and priority programmes to promote the strengthening of health systems.

**Unit for Professional Training and Service in the Behavioural Sciences (UNIBS):** UNIBS coordinates the training and delivery of professionals in the field of psychology at registered counselling psychologist level, with additional public service and research functions.

**Women Researchers in the Humanities (WORiTH):** This is an ambitious initiative to promote women researchers in the humanities through mentorship programmes and targeted interventions that contribute towards female academics completing their PhDs.



### Engaged scholarship:

**Soutpan Community Engagement:** This flagship partnership with the community of Ikgomotseng near Soutpan features engagement on many levels, such as

- Psychology students presenting parenting projects at daycare centres;
- Drama and Theatre Arts students presenting puppet shows to stimulate young minds; and
- History students collaborating with the community on heritage issues.

**Philippolis Public Speaking Competition:** The aim of this competition is to emphasise the importance of mother tongues within the context of education and to improve learners' academic performance. Learners participate in Afrikaans, Sesotho, Setswana, and isiXhosa – building pride, confidence, and a greater awareness of multilingualism.







## Faculty of Health Sciences

The Faculty of Health Sciences is considered one of the best in the country, and we are proud of the high-quality health professionals produced in our five schools, namely the **School of Clinical Medicine**, the **School of Biomedical Sciences**, the **School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences**, the **School of Pathology**, and the **School of Nursing**.



### Exceptional programmes:

The **Division of Health Sciences Education** offers postgraduate training to health-care professionals in health professions education. We are committed to supporting academic staff members according to their needs, and presenting faculty development sessions online, face to face, or in hybrid format.

Simulation training provided by the **Clinical Simulation and Skills Unit** in our School of Clinical Medicine provides a hands-on training and learning opportunity, allowing for deliberate practise and mastery of learning. Human patient simulators provide a tool to enhance the education and training of medical students by expanding the teaching platform.

Our School of Nursing also boasts state-of-the-art simulation laboratories known as **the SPACE**.

The new **Public Health Programme** addresses the great need to provide high-quality health-care services within the public health system.



### Excellence in teaching and research:

**SARChI Research Chair in Vector-borne and Zoonotic Pathogens:** Prof Felicity Burt heads this research group, which focuses primarily on host immune responses to arboviral and zoonotic infections, as well as raising awareness of these viruses, defining associated diseases, and developing tools for surveillance programmes –

contributing to understanding these pathogens and the public health implications.

The **Next Generation Sequencing Unit** is a cutting-edge research facility with a distinct focus on genomics sequencing. Committed to advancing scientific knowledge, the unit provides comprehensive genomics services to researchers upon request, while also offering valuable practical experience to visiting and internal scientific interns.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems in the Department of Pharmacology established the **African Medicines Innovations and Technologies Development (AMITD)** research and teaching programme, which strives to recruit and employ the best skills throughout the research, development, and herbal-medicine manufacturing value chain.

The **Department of Pharmacology** is also developing one of the most advanced pharmacology Good Laboratory Practice (GLP)-accredited research and development laboratories in the country, which will be a centre of excellence for the government, the World Health Organisation (WHO), and the African Union's (AU) Commission for Social Development.

The **Robert WM Frater Cardiovascular Research Centre** is a leading cardiovascular research institution in sub-Saharan Africa, providing an interdisciplinary training and research platform for scientists and clinicians from different backgrounds to develop as researchers and collaborators in cardiovascular and thoracic surgery and related domains.



### Engaged scholarship:

**Rural Community Collaborative Platform:** The Faculty of Health Sciences Rural Community Initiative (FHSRCI) in the Southern Free State presents a unique opportunity for senior students of the faculty to spend at least a week in interprofessional groups in primary health-care facilities in the Kopanong community.





## Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

The faculty embraces a multidisciplinary approach to education and research. It offers a wide range of disciplines found in 25 divisions within the natural, agricultural, and building sciences, allowing students to explore diverse fields and encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration leading to innovation and impact. This approach fosters a holistic understanding of complex scientific challenges and prepares students to tackle real-world problems from multiple perspectives.



### Exceptional programmes:

**Master's and PhD in Architecture – with specialisation in Design:** This new practice-based research programme is the first of its kind in South Africa.

**BSc in Forensic Sciences – with specialisation in Forensic Genetics, Chemistry, Entomology, and Anthropology:** The degree is streamlined specifically for police and forensic operations.

**Experimental Farm:** The mixed farming activities on the Paradys Experimental Farm serve a teaching and research purpose for the faculty. The experimental farm also hosts novel projects with potential commercial value, which are being developed for successful commercialisation. Start-up companies include a brewery, cheese factory, and plant-growth stimulator production, grouped within a newly developed agribusiness park.



### Excellence in teaching and research:

**SARChI Research Chair in Pathogenic Yeasts:** Prof Carolina Pohl-Albertyn established her research focus in the field of bioactive lipids in pathogenic yeasts. Research under this chair focuses on the role of fatty acids and the production of immunomodulatory lipid metabolites (e.g. prostaglandins) in pathogenic yeasts. The Pathogenic Yeast Research Group brings together expertise in yeast molecular biology, yeast lipid metabolism, and immune response.

**SARChI Research Chair in Solid-state Luminescent and Advanced Materials:** Prof Hendrik C Swart focuses on the improvement of luminescent materials for applications in flat panel displays, solar cells, solid-state lighting, dosimetry, and thermometry. This chair has been key in the development of processes to synthesise and deposit thin films of various types of semiconductor nanoparticles, which will enhance the colour, luminescent intensity, and lifetime of such displays.

**SARChI Research Chair in Disease Resistance and Quality in Field Crops:** Prof Maryke Labuschagne is involved in the training of PhD and MSc students from all over Africa and South Africa. A specific focus of this research group is on the genetic improvement of the nutritional quality of staple crops in Africa. Students trained under this chair have gone on to release a large number of new crop cultivars all over Africa, which has contributed to food security in a number of countries.

**Centre for Microscopy:** The centre boasts cutting-edge electron microscopy equipment, providing the infrastructure to do exceptional and globally competitive research.

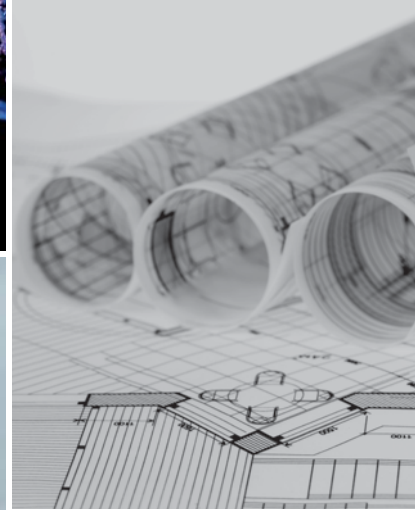
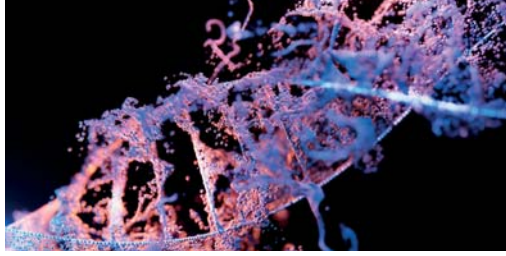
**Magic Lab:** The Merensky Group for Aerial Geological Image Classification (MAGIC) develops drone-based geological imaging in South Africa, with specific attention to mineral and groundwater exploration.

**Crystallographic Lab:** The Roodt Crystallographic Laboratory is a state-of-the-art research centre in the Department of Chemistry, using specialised and advanced crystallographic equipment.

**Crop Research Platform:** This platform focuses on improving crops with enhanced nutritional content to meet consumer demands.

**Centre for Mineral Biogeochemistry:** This centre exposes UFS students to world-class equipment and industry partners through applied research opportunities in the field of biogeochemistry and bioaugmentation.





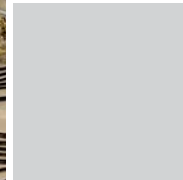
### Engaged scholarship:

**Food Garden Project:** Vegetable tunnels have been built that improve student well-being and establish a culture of caring through collaborative food provisioning initiatives.

**Agri Relief Foundation:** This non-profit organisation focuses on helping individual agriculture producers who are in need – financially or otherwise.

**Information Technology Project:** This project is aimed at addressing South Africa's digital divide by providing computer literacy training to local community members.

**RUFORUM Wool Project:** The Department of Sustainable Food Systems and Development has secured a grant from the Regional Universities Forum (RUFORUM) to build competitiveness for communal farmers through developing the wool value chain in the Free State.





## Faculty of Law

The Faculty of Law is home to the **Department of Private Law**, the **Department of Public Law**, and the **Department of Mercantile Law**, as well as the **School of Financial Planning Law**, the **UFS Law Clinic**, and the **Free State Centre for Human Rights**. It boasts an academic staff complement that is diverse in their representation of the South African society, and boasts dynamic specialised research areas and legal practice expertise, providing students with the latest knowledge, legal developments, and socially responsive perspectives.



### Exceptional programmes:

The faculty offers exceptional undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in a variety of legal disciplines. We also present scholarly specialisation in education law, freedoms related to cultural and religious beliefs, and environmental law. Both our



LLB and Postgraduate programmes provide a pathway to a wide variety of careers that necessitate the application of law, in addition to litigation careers.

The **School of Financial Planning Law** is especially well-known for the Postgraduate Diploma in Financial Planning, which is a cornerstone qualification in becoming a Certified Financial Planner (CFP®).



### Excellence in teaching and research:

Our success is grounded in the capacity of the faculty to take account of up-to-date legal developments in the country and across the world and to synchronise this knowledge into the teaching processes of the faculty. This also allows our curricula to gain local, national, and international relevance. Our undergraduate programme further recognises the diversity available in the country and is designed around that, to enable our students to develop a diversity consciousness that would allow them to relate well with people beyond the institution.

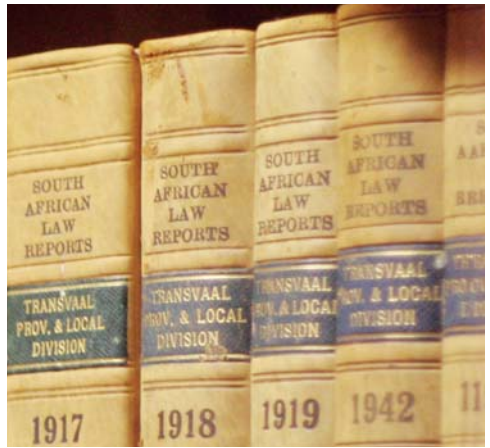


### Engaged scholarship:

**Free State Centre for Human Rights:** The Centre is an excellence hub for human rights studies, drawing together academics from various disciplines, practitioners, and activists. The Centre's commitment to research embedded in advocacy and the provision of legal services distinguishes us as a leader in our field, and we are committed to having a significant and lasting impact on the community.

**UFS Law Clinic:** It is one of a handful of university law clinics in South Africa with reportable and legal development judgements. As the only law clinic in the Free State, collaborating with various legal entities and community partners, the clinic served more than 750 clients from all over the province during its last reporting period. The Law Clinic also presents several moot court programmes and externships.









## Faculty of Theology and Religion

The faculty offers an undergraduate theological degree that empowers students to become dynamic church leaders who can impact communities with hope, love, and peace through responsible Bible interpretation, ethical and empathetic community involvement, and critical discernment to engage with complex societal issues.

The faculty also offers master's and doctoral degrees in all theological disciplines. It has enthusiastic and dedicated academics who will guide postgraduate students in developing novel insights and creating academic contributions that make a difference.



### Exceptional programmes:

**Bachelor of Divinity:** A professional bachelor's degree designed in consultation with Christian denominations and thus recognised by churches, associations, and societies. It develops graduates to demonstrate meaningful initiatives and responsibilities in a professional context.

**Postgraduate Diploma in Theology:** A multidisciplinary qualification that develops a student's knowledge of theology, with a high degree of focus on contextual interaction and ministerial skills.



### Excellence in teaching and research:

A **research project on the Psalms** studies the Psalms from a comprehensive perspective (issues such as bodily interpretation, warfare language and imagery, and literary spatial theoretical perspectives), with the research findings being appropriated for existential problems in Southern Africa. Aspects such as war, violence, gender, wrath, and revenge are considered.

The **Andrew Murray Prize** for theological books in Afrikaans was awarded to a faculty member, whose publication *Publieke teologie as profetiese teologie (Public theology as prophetic theology)* addresses the relationship between public theology and prophetic theology, in conjunction with the theology of Karl Barth.



A research project on **African Christianity** focuses on the interplay between religion, identity, and culture.



### Engaged scholarship:

The faculty has a relationship with the Heidedal Child and Youth Care Centre, where it co-creates sustainable solutions to challenges facing this embattled community's young residents.

Second-year BDiv students in Missiology are involved in various community upliftment initiatives with the Towers of Hope project.

Third-year students in pastoral theological studies have regular interaction with the Martie du Plessis School for learners with cerebral palsy and physical and learning disabilities.





## Learning and teaching

The UFS Learning and Teaching component is characterised by continuous and substantial transformation and realignment, fulfilling its role as an integral part of a high-performance 21st-century African university, that is nationally, continentally and globally relevant.

### Centre for Teaching and Learning

Over more than a decade, the UFS has become a leading institution in terms of excellence in learning and teaching and student success in South Africa through the innovative collaboration between the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and faculties.

Our innovative nationally and globally recognised initiatives include:

- Scaled, High Impact Practices (HIPs) that include the UFS student success skills module (UFSS), academic advising, academic language and literacy development, and the *academic student excellence tutorial programme* (A\_STEP). These initiatives are powered by advanced data analytics and have reduced the first-year dropout rate, improved the undergraduate success rates, and narrowed achievement gaps between different groups.
- Nationally CTL leads the South African Surveys of Student Engagement (SASSE), providing critical data to help institutions improve quality learning and teaching and student success.
- The Central Academic Advising Office in CTL enables students to align their personal, academic, and career aspirations through individual and group sessions, as well as through digital platforms. CTL offers the only professional academic advising training programme in South Africa.
- CTL leads and coordinates the Digitally Enhanced Student Success and Employability Programme (DESSEP), which is focused on innovative approaches to developing student success and enhancing their employability.

## Career Services

UFS Career Services increases the employability of our graduates.

- We help students to craft a **professional** CV, cover letter, LinkedIn profile, and career plan.
- During mock interviews, students learn how to **communicate** and present themselves professionally.
- Our faculty-specific career weeks offer students an **inside view** of their chosen profession.
- Industry-focused career fairs usually conclude our career weeks and allow students to **interact** with potential employers who exhibit their companies and offerings.
- We encourage an **entrepreneurial** mindset, and several **volunteering** opportunities expose students to local community needs.
- Our popular Career Closet is a 'crowd-funded' initiative where students pick a professional **outfit** for an interview or for their first day at work. They get to keep the clothes they select.
- Our **CareerHub** is a comprehensive online platform designed to simplify the job search process and enhance the overall hiring experience. With an extensive database of job opportunities across various industries and a user-friendly interface, our platform strives to match qualified candidates with their ideal roles and support employers in finding the perfect fit for their organisations.





## Library and Information Services

The Department of Library and Information Services (LIS) provides a world-class, user-centred information hub in support of teaching, learning, and research projects at the UFS.

Students have access to study resources in five libraries situated on our three campuses.

- UFS Sasol Library (Bloemfontein Campus)
- Frik Scott Health Sciences Library (Bloemfontein Campus)
- Music Library (Bloemfontein Campus)
- TK Mopeli Library (Qwaqwa Campus)
- Neville Alexander Library (South Campus)

Besides the rich collection of information resources housed physically and on our online and digital platforms, the UFS LIS boasts unique makerspaces on all three campuses, which contribute towards the digital literacy plans of the university.

Other purpose-driven spaces include:

- The **Postgraduate Research Unit**, which has computer workstations with specified research software.
- The **Collaborative Space**, used for remote or online education, tutoring, collaboration, content creation, meetings, socialisation, and studying.
- The **Digital Scholarship Centre** is a research engagement area capacitated with state-of-the-art technology to assist researchers with collaboration, software development, and other high-performance computing.
- The UFS LIS has also introduced the latest **digital self-help services**, which include the library mobile app and self-check technologies in line with 4IR trends.





### UFS VALUE: EXCELLENCE

We look at excellence as an idea that is more than a benchmark, more than a goal, more than a distant destination. In the context of the Academic Project, excellence is the foundation of rigour in our scholarship, including the advancement, imparting, and the application of knowledge. It informs our learning and teaching, wider engagement, as well as our management and governance processes. It is also reflected in our facilities and physical environment.

## Study centres on campus

The UFS is committed to pursuing **excellence** in every aspect of university life. A direct outflow of this is the ample provision made for study centres – many of which are available to students 24/7 – providing a conducive learning environment. A total of 2 050 study stations comprising 6 775 m<sup>2</sup> are offered in different locations across our three campuses.

The Modular Lecturing Space and Assessment Centre on the Bloemfontein Campus, is an example of how innovative multi-functional spaces can accommodate the learning and study needs of students. Among the facilities offered, are spaces for large- and small-scale lectures or group work that can be innovatively converted as needed. There is also an aesthetically pleasing communal area where students can pause and study in groups around tables, with a laptop-friendly study ledge that runs along the length of the space, promoting optimal engagement with learning.







## Centre for Graduate Support

Our Centre for Graduate Support (CGS) contributes to the Academic Project of the university, providing funding to qualifying postgraduate students in need of financial aid, and offering excellent support in terms of research capacity development (RCD) and academic writing. This allows the CGS to accomplish its goal of creating an enabling environment for postgraduate students and staff to complete their studies within acceptable time frames. The centre facilitates postgraduate student applications, admissions, and enrolments. It also provides RCD workshops in provinces and countries where UFS postgraduate students reside. Our online offerings help to ensure that postgraduate students receive RCD and academic writing support in any part of the world.

## Academy for Multilingualism

The academy was born from the UFS' commitment to multilingualism and is linked to our pursuit of social justice.

Four drivers have been identified to implement multilingualism across the three campuses:

- Advancing Sesotho and isiZulu as academic languages
- Incorporating multilingualism into learning and teaching
- Promoting multilingualism as a social asset
- Improving English as a language of instruction

The Academy for Multilingualism also promotes the publication of books in African languages through the *UFS African Language Press*.







## Research

The UFS aspires to be a research-led institution, emphasising the parity between research, teaching, and learning for impact, with the express intention of significantly increasing our research capacity and capability. We are steadily increasing the number, quality, diversity, and output of our research scholars, making significant contributions to global knowledge in various fields.

### Research in numbers



## A-rated scientists:



**Prof Melanie Walker** received an A rating from the NRF in the field of higher education and human development. Her two most recent books from the selection of more than 140 books she has authored, focus on higher education and human development, as well as educating 'public good' professionals. She is also the Global South's first President of the Human Development and Capability Association (HDCA).

**Prof Maxim Finkelstein**, a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Mathematical Statistics and Actuarial Science, is the only researcher with an A1-rating in South Africa in probability, statistics, and operational research – recognising him as a world leader in his discipline. Prof Finkelstein's area of expertise is the modelling of random events and quantifying probabilities of their occurrence.



**Prof Willem Boshoff** is a conceptual artist who primarily engages with text and language. For more than four decades, his visual artworks have commented on established language systems and how these function in society to empower or to exclude. His artistic practice involves extensive interdisciplinary research in the fields of lexicography, botany, philosophy, as well as music, with a special interest in contemporary New Music composers.

## P-rated scientist

**Dr Matteo Grilli** is a historian from the UFS International Studies Group and a P-rated scientist in the field of political history. He specialises in the political history of Ghana and Southern Africa, as well as in the history of Italian communities in Africa. He has published articles in *History in Africa* and the *South African Historical Journal*, and his first monograph, *Nkrumalism and African Nationalism*, was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2018.





---

**UFS VALUE:  
INNOVATION  
AND IMPACT**

---

Our ultimate goal is to be a university that impactfully supports societal development. We value and encourage creativity and strive to identify, question, and challenge the status quo. Our knowledge will continue to contribute to the development of the Free State, South Africa, and the African continent, and to advance global knowledge and understanding.

## Innovation and impact

### Accredited laboratories

The **National Control Laboratory for Biological Products (NCL)** is one of only 12 laboratories worldwide contracted to perform vaccine testing for the World Health Organisation. The NCL is also the only vaccine testing laboratory in the country that performs the final quality-control testing of all human vaccine batches marketed in South Africa on behalf of the South African Health Products Authority (SAHPRA).

The UFS is also home to the **South African Doping Control Laboratory (SADoCoL)**, an ISO17025 and World Anti-Doping Agency (ADA)-accredited service laboratory. SADoCoL is the only WADA-accredited laboratory on the African continent.

The measure of the impact of our scholarship, research, learning and teaching, is informed by the extent to which we contribute to the development of our province, our country and the global society. As part of our commitment to aspire for maximum societal impact, we have identified unique and distinctive focus areas that distinguish the UFS from other universities. These focus areas include a number of specialised units and centres.







**FARMOVs** is a world-class clinical research facility that has conducted more than 3 000 clinical trials since 1974. Among its facilities are a large GLP-certified bioanalytical laboratory, a registered pharmacy, and a 98-bed clinic with an on-site ISO 15189-accredited clinical laboratory. FARMOVs offers accredited online SA GCP courses for first-time learners and those seeking to renew their current certificate.

The **Interdisciplinary Centre for Digital Futures (ICDF)** is a collaborative, co-creative, synergistic space where social scientists, natural scientists, data scientists, engineers and health scientists collaborate, learn, and interact with industry, the private sector, government, and community partners to provide a unique intellectual ecosystem that drives the digital future responsibly and critically for the benefit of society.



The **Afromontane Research Unit**, located on our Qwaqwa Campus, actively engages in, and promotes research on Southern African mountains in order to encourage a stronger science-policy-practice interface through a wide variety of domestic and international partnerships.



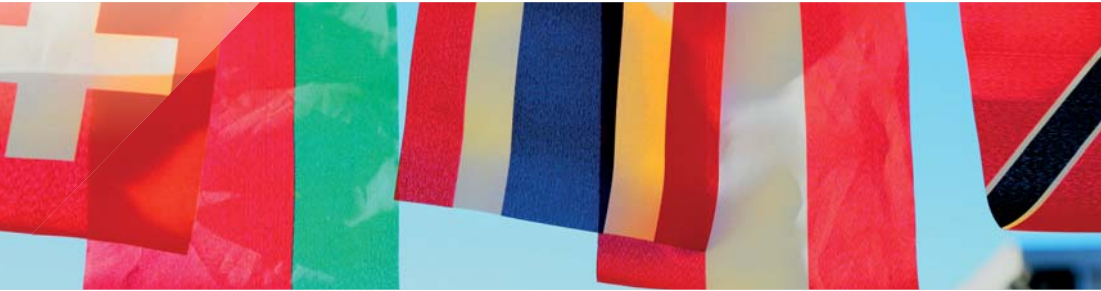
# Societal impact with





# sustainable relationships





### UFS VALUE: ACCOUNTABILITY

We recognise our obligation towards our students, staff, stakeholders, society in general, and the global knowledge community. To this end, we will be stewards of good governance who are accountable, responsible, and dutiful in our actions. We will be conscientious in our utilisation of the financial and physical resources of the university, as well as concerning our impact on the wider environment.

## Internationalisation

A regionally and internationally engaged university, producing globally competitive graduates and knowledge.

The UFS is a highly internationalised university and has a proud record of international engagements. Research collaboration, staff and student mobility, digital internationalisation as well as other projects are implemented comprehensively. This include:

- More than 70 formal high-quality and productive institutional collaborations with universities and institutions around the world.
- Approximately 1 000 international students, and close to 200 international postdoctoral fellows as well as international scholars on campus contribute to research and innovation.
- In the five-year period (1 January 2018 to 31 December 2022), UFS researchers co-authored 3 940 publications with 3 026 collaborating international institutions.
- To deepen its understanding of the internationalisation process, the university's Office for International Affairs has established a portfolio which engages with the scholarship of internationalisation.

Comprehensive internationalisation at the UFS ensures that all UFS students and staff benefit from internationalisation and contribute as global citizens to address the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Fair, mutually beneficial global engagements result in knowledge co-creation and global recognition for ideas emanating from the UFS. Internationalisation, Africanisation, and decolonisation are considered complementary processes. In line with the South African policy priorities, the internationalisation process at the UFS includes a focus on the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Africa, BRICS, and the Global South. The university integrates international and intercultural dimensions in all aspects of its core business and service functions. It specifically focuses on the international visibility, impact, and connectedness of research and innovation. It strives for excellence in all aspects of its internationalisation process, including support for international students and staff.

## International partnerships



From 2022.

## Where our international students come from





### UFS VALUE: CARE

We are committed to creating circumstances that are not only conducive to high-quality teaching, learning, and scholarship, but doing this in ways that emphasise the well-being and happiness of the university community. We are therefore committed to caring for ourselves, our fellow humans, and the natural environment. We seek a new citizenship and new ways of belonging to the UFS that are premised on respect, inclusivity, listening, and empathy.

## Community impact and care

**Sci-Ed Science Education Centre:** It is widely accepted that the UFS' school involvement initiatives have contributed significantly to the Free State's excellent matric results in recent years. It is envisaged that the new Sci-Ed Science Education Centre at the UFS will create a platform and space for continued and enhanced involvement and impact. Since Sci-Ed will accommodate learners from all grades, it will also contribute towards laying sound foundations in the early school years for success later, especially in mathematics and science. Teacher professional development, learner support, and parent empowering initiatives are at the base of the activities offered at Sci-Ed.

**University Engagement Citizenship Programme:** In line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the UFS collaborates with individuals and communities to discover and access assets within themselves and their environment that lead to development. The university partners with communities and facilitates training to expose communities to the concept of 'self-reliance, self-sufficiency, and self-sustainable living'. This programme encompasses excellence in entrepreneurship, supporting communities to understand how they can adopt the concept to transform their own lives.

**Agape Foundation:** The Agape Foundation for Community Development has been actively involved with the UFS for a number of years, with combined projects in entrepreneurship, food security, tutor programmes for school learners and many others in Qwaqwa and Bloemfontein.



**Boyden Observatory and Naval Hill Planetarium:** These two unique facilities form vital components in the display and communication of South Africa's astronomical heritage. The Naval Hill Planetarium is the first digital planetarium in sub-Saharan Africa. The Centre for Earth and Space that houses the planetarium, is used by the UFS Department of Physics to educate school children and the general public about the natural sciences.

**Bloem Shelter:** This facility for homeless people has formed a valuable partnership with the UFS, with nursing, medical, occupational therapy, and physiotherapy students offering training in basic health care and assisting residents with disabilities. Students from Economic and Management Sciences also help with marketing plans for small enterprises that emerge after training in entrepreneurial skills.



## Alumni and donors

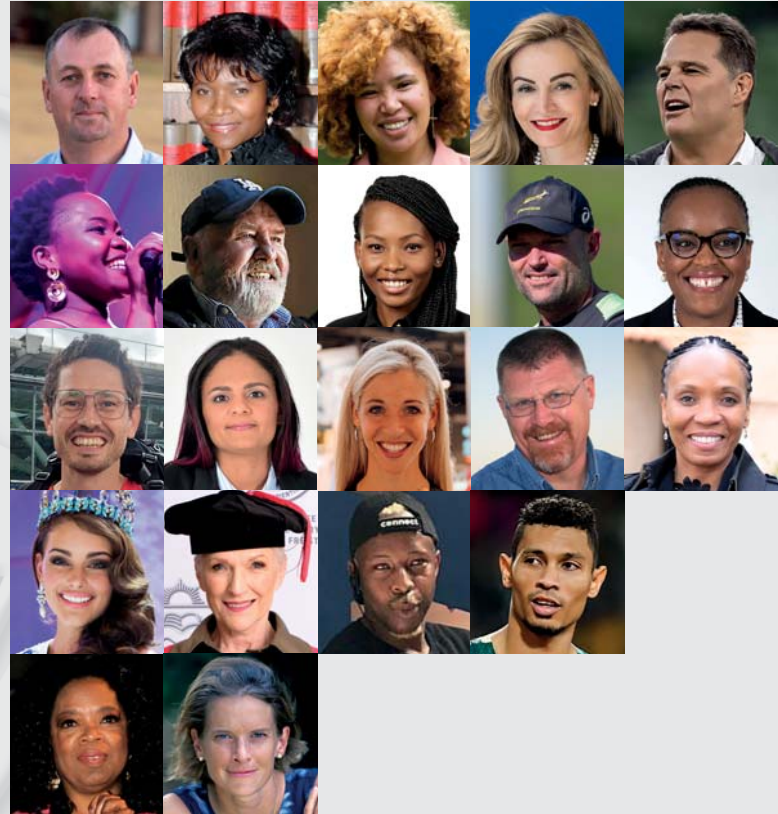
The UFS serves more than 40 000 students on three campuses across seven faculties. Many UFS students are first-generation students and the majority of our students need financial support. We are grateful to donors who help to create a pathway for student success and integration into the world of work.

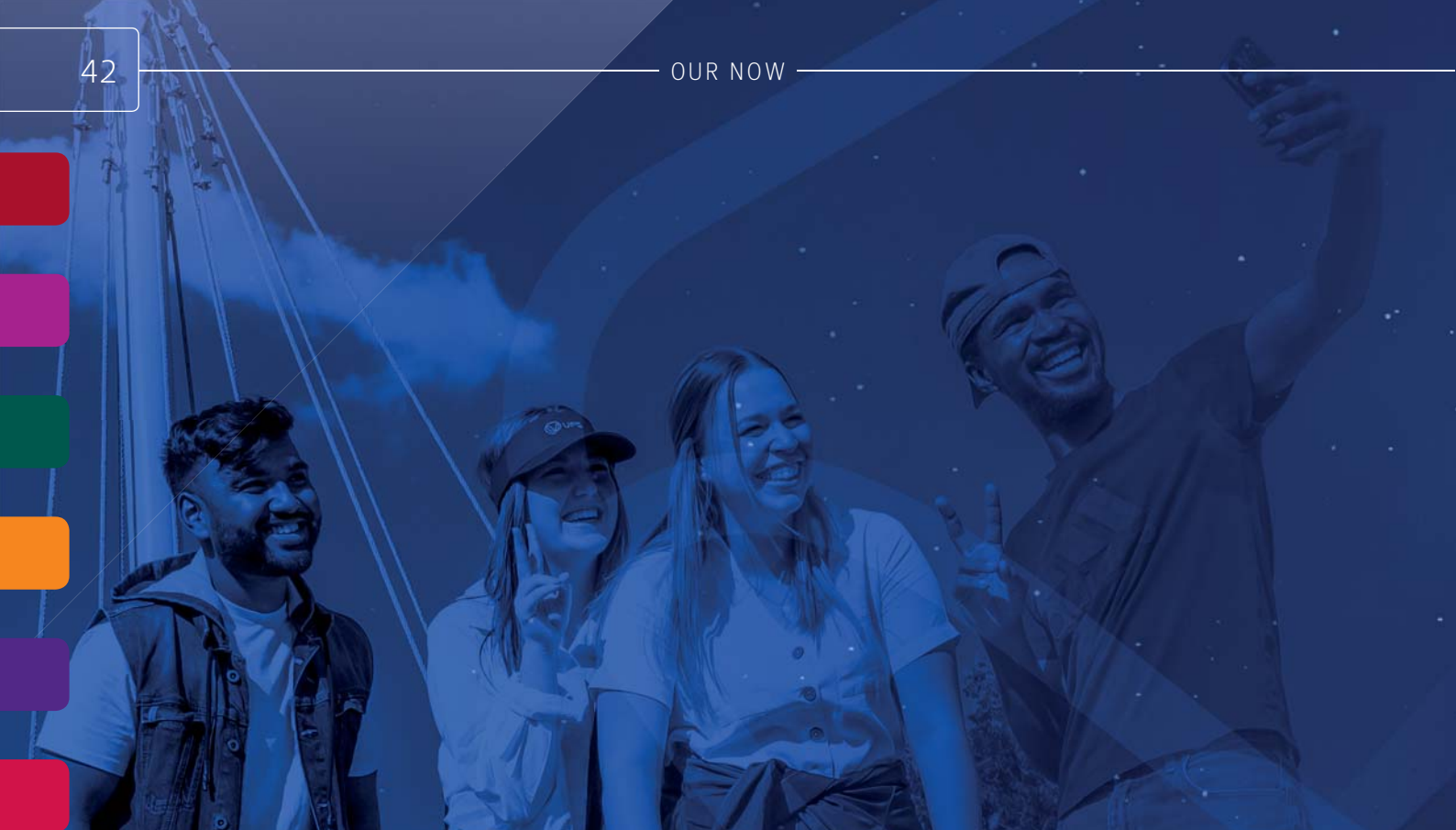
Many of our valued alumni are also responsible for providing internship and employment opportunities, scholarships, and bursaries for deserving students, reflecting our culture of care across our wider university community.

### Valued collaboration

The UFS has gained an enviable reputation as one of the best-value institutions in terms of cost, academic quality, and graduation rates. This can only be accomplished by fostering close relationships with both funders and the communities we serve to effectively address the most pressing needs with empathy.

We partner with loyal funders to support activities that further our vision of being a globally competitive university. Partnerships allow the university to invest in its facilities, students, and staff, in teaching, research, and innovative community projects to remain a university of choice for the brightest and the best.





# Diverse, inclusive and

# equitable university





## Student life and success

The UFS is committed to ensuring an outstanding student experience, with the holistic development of our students among our main priorities.

### Residences

#### On campus

Residences play an important role in campus life, particularly at the UFS where the individual residences have a long and respected tradition.

Across all three UFS campuses, Housing and Residence Affairs (HRA) offer a variety of accommodation to students on campus. Our accommodation includes junior, senior and co-ed residences, as well as day residences.

HRA's student accommodation is conducive for living and learning, offering uniquely designed study areas, computer rooms, bathrooms, and self-catering kitchenettes in corridors. Most residences are accessible for students with disabilities. HRA's access-control systems in the residences contribute to the safety and security of the students.

Through our residence colleges we create opportunities for a larger community of residents to come together for sports, social activities, academics, student support or experiential activities and programmes. This is where students can create a sense of community with other students and being holistically prepared for the life of work after completion of their studies at the UFS.

#### Off campus

HRA established an office to assist with off-campus accommodation and the accreditation thereof, thus ensuring a safe and conducive living and learning environment for UFS students in accredited off-campus accommodation.

Through student communities, our off-campus accommodation students can enjoy a full student life experience, in a caring and supportive environment. To experience this, our accredited off-campus accommodation students are allocated to residence colleges and day residences. Within the colleges and day residences our off-campus accommodation students can participate in various campus activities, that include sports, culture, social activities, dialogues, concerts, and academic support. The colleges and day residences also provide support, among other services, to first-time-entering students with registration processes and introductions to campus facilities.



## Arts and culture

The Arts and Culture Office within the Division of Student Affairs provides a platform for students to express themselves through the visual, literary, and performing arts. With the aim to explore different ways of understanding social relations through artistic encounters and to provide a rich student experience, the office offers both student artists and audiences across the campuses an experience of campus culture. The office achieves this through major annual events such as the Student Life Arts Week, which creates a platform for UFS students to showcase their talents while engaging on critical issues about the student lived experience. Students are clustered in visual and performing arts-based communities such as poetry, drama, music, dance, and visual arts.

The UFS choirs are integral to our institutional culture and national and global identity. The choirs participate in local, regional, provincial, national, and international choir activities that enhance the student experience. The institutional choir provides an intersectional point where students from all three campuses can sing together in one choir.



### UFS VALUE: SUSTAINABILITY

We commit to ethical and responsible stewardship of all institutional resources, processes, and practices to ensure operational, financial, environmental, and societal sustainability. Further, we aspire to live in harmony with our environment, and this will influence all our choices and decisions.



## Sport

The UFS develops well-rounded graduates and boasts several successes and achievements on the sports field.



The university is proud of its sports facilities, including the following:

- An Olympic-sized swimming pool
- 2 Olympic-standard hockey fields, equipped with floodlights
- 4 grass hockey fields
- 18 tennis courts, 4 equipped with floodlights
- 5 renovated squash courts
- 5 cricket fields and 20 nets
- 3 cross-country courses
- 3 soccer pitches
- 6 netball courts
- Shimla Park rugby stadium
- Pelliespark with a modern clubhouse and all the amenities.
- 4 additional rugby fields
- Qwaqwa Campus sports stadium with athletics tracks and netball and basketball courts
- A four-lane synthetic run-up that caters for long-jump and triple-jump competitions
- A badminton hall that caters for table tennis, badminton, indoor hockey, and volleyball
- Multi-purpose sports grounds on the South Campus, catering for a wide variety of sporting codes







## Universal Access

The UFS is committed to providing inclusive and accessible living, teaching, and learning spaces, and the **Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support (CUADS)** strives to co-create an inclusive environment where CUADS would be seamlessly and holistically integrated into every part of the UFS.

Through its core strengths of unity, compassion, expertise, integrity, and focus on social justice, it endeavours to make a sustainable impact on all mindsets towards disability.

While the primary focus of the support services offered by CUADS is to promote equity for students with disabilities in order to reach academic success, a holistic approach to student participation and success is followed to ensure a humanising experience, reflecting an environment of care.

Continuous developments at the university to address the challenges facing persons with disabilities include tactile paving, ramps at the entrances of some buildings to make the premises accessible, signage inside and outside buildings, and dedicated seating in lecture rooms. Universal access has also been adopted to be considered as part of all new building projects of the UFS.

The centre coordinates academic support for students with disabilities. The UFS also has a well-established **South African Sign Language interpreting service** for Deaf students and staff. We also provide study material in different accessible formats, such as Braille. Students with learning difficulties are accommodated through the provision of extra time during exams as well as human support.



## Wellness

### Counselling and development

Students are one of our most valuable assets, and a culture of care is one of our most cherished values. A team of UFS professionals supports our students holistically, working hard to ensure their physical safety and improve their mental well-being. With health and wellness facilities on all three campuses, students also have access to the services of social workers, psychologists, and registered counsellors.

**Student Counselling and Development** presents a variety of developmental workshops and programmes to equip our students with the necessary skills to deal with life's challenges. Additionally, individual counselling sessions are also available. A comprehensive website with mental health tools and resources, as well as a number of helplines are available.

The UFS has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual-related offences, with the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) assisting during incidents of gender-based violence, sexual harassment, and any act of prejudice or discrimination.

### Physical safety

The UFS is committed to the safety of its staff, students and visitors, and is viewed as a secure campus environment. Protection Services is constantly working to enhance on and off-campus safety initiatives, noting the legislative restrictions. The UFS ensure tight security on campuses and the operational centre is manned on a 24/7 basis and technical and physical security measures are deployed to ensure the safety and security of people, property and information. The enhancement of off-campus security is done in co-operation with external law enforcement and public security entities as well as through the deployment of armed response companies to respond to off-campus incidents.







## Social Justice

Diversity and inclusivity are hallmarks of our culture and commitment to social justice. The UFS is a place for competing views within the context of inclusivity and excellence. The UFS pursues diversity among its students and staff, as well as epistemic diversity of ideas, perspectives, and methodological approaches.

The vision of the **Unit for Institutional Change and Social Justice** is to create a more socially just and inclusive university through institutional change that involves high-impact practices and innovative research and advocacy.

The unit has an **Office for Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination** on all three campuses to deal with incidents of unfair discrimination, gender-based violence, as well as to conduct advocacy and training in these areas.

The **Free State Centre for Human Rights** is a critical, interdisciplinary, and contextually engaged research, advocacy, and legal-practice institution, focusing on the relationship between human rights and transformation.

The centre's work coalesces around three thematic focus areas: impoverishment; democracy; and identity. It has an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on a range of different disciplines and combining insights and wisdom from a variety of fields.

Apart from its **Research and Postgraduate Division**, the centre consists of an Advocacy Division that engages in transformation-related human rights advocacy on the UFS campuses, and a Legal Services Division that operates as a Free State-focused public interest litigation unit in cooperation with the UFS Law Clinic.



### UFS VALUE: SOCIAL JUSTICE

In the pursuit of social justice, we seek to advance the values of human dignity through ethical and transparent institutional responsiveness. We interpret social justice within the South African historical context to entail an emphasis on inclusiveness, the reduction of inequality, and the creation of opportunities and pathways out of poverty and dispossession. Our commitment to social justice is our call to everyone to build on the productive foundations laid by all, and to build new structures in the pursuit of truths and practices that will grant human dignity to everybody.

## #Towards2034

---

**By 2034,**  
the **UFS** will be recognised and  
acknowledged by peers and society as  
a **TOP-TIER** university in South Africa.

---

Our goal is to be ranked by appropriately  
chosen global ranking systems among  
the **TOP FIVE** universities in South Africa  
and among the **TOP 600** globally.

---



Compiled by  
**Department of Communication and Marketing**  
PO Box 339, Bloemfontein 9300, South Africa  
[www.ufs.ac.za](http://www.ufs.ac.za)

### Bloemfontein Campus

Nelson Mandela Drive  
Bloemfontein  
9301  
+27 51 401 9111

### Qwaqwa Campus

Kestell Road  
Phuthaditjhaba  
9866  
+27 58 718 5000

### South Campus

Oliver Tambo Road  
Bloemfontein  
9301  
+27 51 401 9111