

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

Institutional Profile



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

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Foreword

It is our foremost mission at the University of the Free State (UFS) to generate and impart new knowledge that supports societal development.

As we envision the future of higher education, we anticipate unprecedented change driven by technological advancement, increased internationalisation, and a renewed emphasis on actively and sustainably advancing societies worldwide. Embracing this future with boldness and confidence is what we are preparing for today.

We use state-of-the-art equipment to create interactive and engaging classroom experiences, positioning ourselves as a leader in quality learning, teaching, and student success in South Africa. Our student success rate currently stands at 83%, and I applaud the efforts of the team in the Centre for Teaching and Learning and all the faculties for their contributions towards this achievement. We



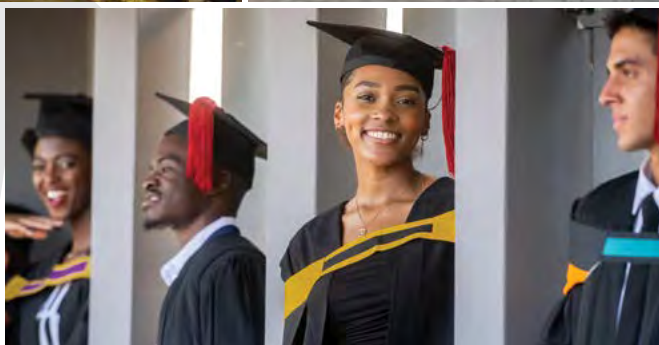
encourage our students to grasp opportunities and engage in a vibrant student life, fostering a forward-thinking educational experience.

Aligned with the United Nations' Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, we address the most pressing global issues. Our research investments tackle local, national, and global challenges, with our internationally recognised researchers excelling across various fields.

The three campuses feature environmentally friendly spaces, stunning artworks, and energy-saving systems. Committed to enhancing our environmental footprint, we implement

initiatives such as solar plants and water-saving systems. Infrastructure and student accommodation are benchmarked among the best in the country, reflecting our dedication to continuous renewal, vitality, and relevance.

The university is dedicated to providing both students and staff with an exceptional university experience. Anchored in our core values of excellence, innovation and impact, sustainability, care, social justice, and accountability, we have maintained relevance in a challenging higher education landscape. With unwavering dedication, we will continue to transform lives and make a lasting impact on society.



Our story

For more than 120 years, the UFS 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, our *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.



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 and 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



118
international
postdoctoral
fellows



3 184
permanent staff

39 701

total number of students

32 848

total undergraduate students



6 623

total postgraduate students

230

occasional students



843

international
students



Data as on 27 May 2024.



390

students
in distance
qualifications
(on South Campus)

Students per campus



30 097

Bloemfontein Campus

7 219

Qwaqwa Campus



2 385

South Campus



177

postdoctoral
fellows



741

postgraduate
diplomas



617

master's degrees



189

doctoral degrees

6 547

undergraduate
students



1 047

honours degrees

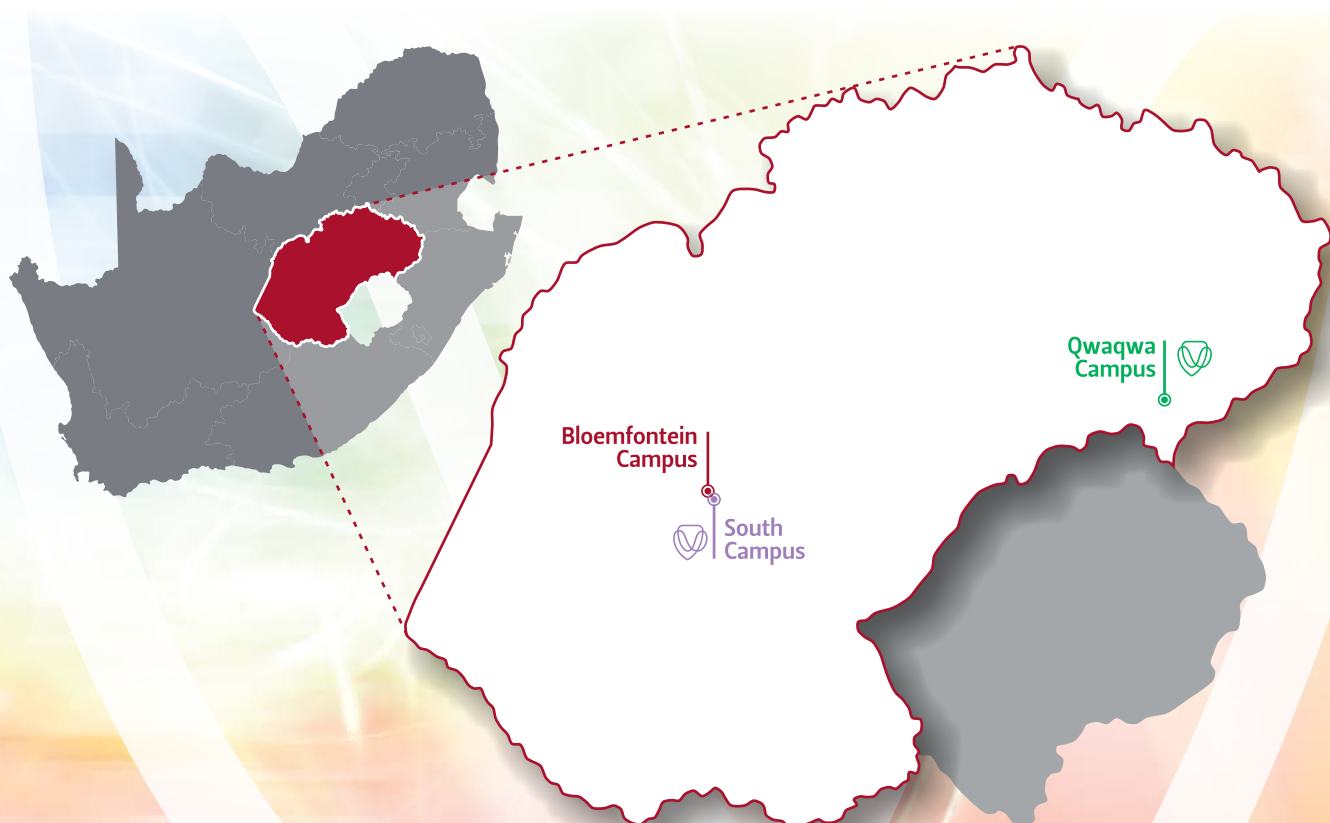


*Graduated in 2023.

Our campuses

The UFS multi-campus management model offers an integrated higher education experience across central South Africa. Our Bloemfontein and South Campuses are situated in the capital of the Free State while the Qwaqwa Campus is based in the picturesque Eastern Free State.

Where we are situated





The **Bloemfontein Campus**, located in the capital of the Free State in central South Africa, offers undergraduate and postgraduate studies across all seven faculties. The campus features unique architecture and artworks, state-of-the-art research, learning, teaching, and sports facilities, as well as 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 **South Campus**, nestled in the hills 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). Using its state-of-the-art multimedia production studio, BLISS aims to provide comprehensive services and support for the UFS' blended learning initiatives.

Additionally, the BEd Foundation Phase programme is offered on this campus, providing a well-rounded education that equips graduates with the knowledge and skills to teach learners aged six to nine years.

A grayscale photograph of a young woman with long hair, wearing a graduation cap and gown, smiling broadly. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent geometric pattern of overlapping triangles and a light dusting of white dots. The text 'Academic excellence, quality, and impact' is written in a large, red, sans-serif font on the right side of the image.

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

The faculty prepares students for the world of work and the world at large, in order to be successful professionals and active citizens.



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 the 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.



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 a 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 contributions of this chair was a broad overview of the South African space economy and the role of metropolitan areas in the South African economy.



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 (but is not limited to):

- New Managers Programme
- Management Development Programme
- Senior Management Development Programme
- Executive Development Programme
- Project Management Programmes





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.



Exceptional programmes:

The faculty offers a wide range of non-selection undergraduate 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:

- 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.







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 Sciences modules in 2022, contributing towards the UFS' drive to decolonise the curriculum and inculcate specific graduate attributes in 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 represents 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.





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 aims to achieve excellence in health care and scholarship by nurturing a community of innovative, adaptable health-care educators. The DHSE focus areas include postgraduate programmes and research in health professions education and faculty development initiatives to develop research, educational, and leadership expertise, as well as an emphasis on innovative educational approaches.
- Simulation training provided by the Clinical Simulation and Skills Unit in our School of Biomedical Sciences provides a hands-on training and learning opportunity for medical and other health-care students, allowing for deliberate practise and mastery of learning. The full range of simulators – from human patient simulators, task trainers, and simulated patients – provide tools to enhance education and training in a simulated environment and help to expand the teaching platform.
- Our School of Nursing also boasts state-of-the-art simulation laboratories known as the SPACE.
- The training offered through the new master's and doctoral Public Health programmes addresses the great need for high-quality skills and relevant public health interventions within both the academic environment and the 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, better known as African Medicines Innovations and Technologies Development (AMITD), is a national research and teaching platform that strives to recruit and employ the best skills throughout the research, development, and herbal-medicine manufacturing value chains. AMITD has also built one of the most advanced pharmacology good laboratory practice (GLP) and ISO 17025-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. AMITD is now earmarked as the BRICS Natural Medicines Institute for natural products research, teaching, and training.
- 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.





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.



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.
- **Agricultural studies:** The faculty offers 15 undergraduate degrees in agricultural sciences. The Paradys Experimental Farm provides facilities for hands-on training in various areas, including dairy farming, cheese and yogurt making, fermentation, and animal and crop production. Collaborating with industry, the faculty integrates cutting-edge technologies into the experimental farm to educate students on agritech and prepare them for employment upon graduation.



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,

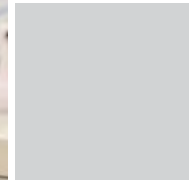


dosimetry, and thermometry. This chair was key in the development of processes to synthesise and deposit thin films of various types of semiconductor nanoparticles, which will enhance the colour, luminescent intensity, and lifetime of such displays.

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



- **Green Futures Hub:** The Green Futures Hub envisions itself as a global leader in advancing the understanding and application of sustainable practices for life with land and water in developing contexts. Leveraging the latest advancements in research, technology, and innovation, it aims to create a thriving future where communities harmonise with natural and agricultural environments, ensuring the well-being of current and future generations.
- **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.
- **Ecological Engineering Institute of Africa:** This group of leaders comprise business leaders, academics, and private sector leaders united by a shared goal: to promote inter-collaboration in Africa that would enable us to effectively address the continent's most pressing sustainability challenges.





Faculty of Law

The UFS Faculty of Law is renowned for its comprehensive legal education, fostering a commitment to justice and diversity through its three distinct departments, namely Mercantile Law, Private Law, and Public Law. Additionally, the faculty is home to the School of Financial Planning Law, the UFS Law Clinic, and the Free State Centre for Human Rights.



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 well-known for the Postgraduate Diploma in Financial Planning, which is a cornerstone qualification in becoming a Certified Financial Planner (CFP®).
- The **Postgraduate Diploma in Labour Law (PGDLL) programme** is designed to enable individuals to specialise in the broad field of labour law. It reflects the UFS' commitment to providing advanced legal education that meets the evolving needs of the workforce.
- The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) and bargaining councils partnered with the UFS and five other universities to offer a **comprehensive programme in Labour Dispute Resolution Practice**. It forms an integral component of the PGDLL qualification, equipping students with essential skills for effective labour dispute resolution.



Excellence in teaching and research:

- The **Free State Centre for Human Rights** serves as a dynamic hub at the nexus of human rights and transformation. Focused on research, advocacy, and legal practice, its work centres on themes of impoverishment,



democracy, and identity, drawing from various disciplines to effect impactful change.

- The **UFS Africa Reparation Hub**, situated in the Department of Public Law, is dedicated to leading discussions on Africa's reparations. It serves as a hub for research, teaching, and advocacy in Pan-African reparations, with a notable presence nationally and internationally.
- The **Disability Rights Unit** champions disability rights, ensuring equal access and participation for all individuals, regardless of ability.
- Nestled in the judicial heartland, the **UFS Law Clinic** is a vital provider of free legal services, unique to the Free State and Northern Cape regions. The clinic uses the expertise of seasoned attorneys to offer aid and mentor final-year Law students, merging legal theory with practical experience. With programmes such as the Annual First-Year Kopsie Moot Court Competition, the clinic bridges the gap between theory and practice in a tangible and sustainable manner.





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:

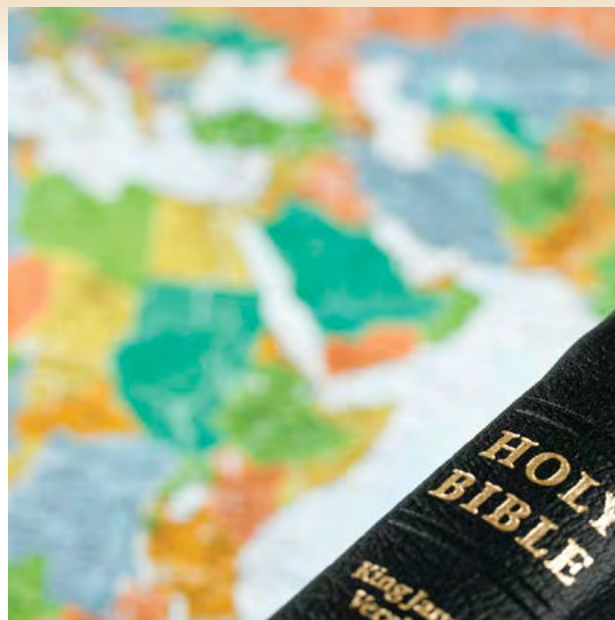
- **Bachelor of Divinity:** A professional bachelor's degree designed in consultation with Christian denominations and thus recognised by churches, associations, and societies. It develops graduates to demonstrate meaningful initiatives and responsibilities in a professional context.
- **Postgraduate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

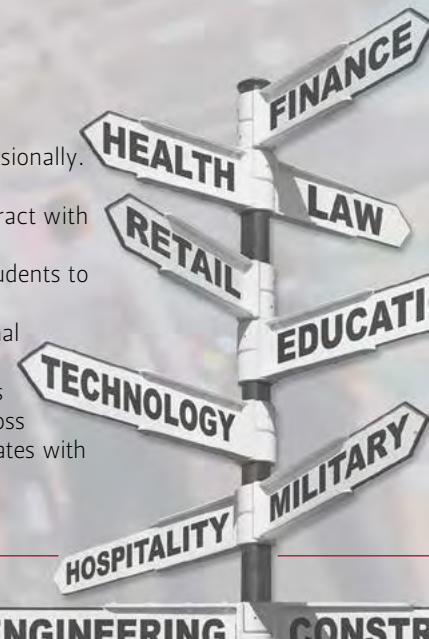
Our innovative, nationally, and globally recognised initiatives include:

- High-impact practices (HIPs) such as the UFS Student Success Skills module (UFSS), academic advising, language and literacy development, and the Academic Student Excellence Tutorial Programme (A_STEP). These initiatives, powered by data analytics, have reduced first-year dropout rates, improved undergraduate success rates, and narrowed achievement gaps between different groups.
- Leading the South African Surveys of Student Engagement (SASSE) to provide data for improving learning, teaching, and student success.
- The Central Academic Advising Office helps students align personal, academic, and career goals through sessions and digital platforms. CTL offers South Africa's only professional academic advising training programme.
- Coordinating the Digitally Enhanced Student Success and Employability Programme (DESSEP), which empowers students with digital skills and career pathways. These services are integrated into the GPS@UFS (Graduate Positioning System@UFS).

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) offers a world-class, user-centred information hub supporting teaching, learning, and research.

Students have access to resources in five libraries across three campuses:

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

In addition to our information resources hosted on physical and digital platforms, the UFS LIS features unique makerspaces on all three campuses to enhance digital literacy.

Other specialised spaces include:

- The Postgraduate Research Unit with highly qualified librarians supporting researchers throughout the research cycle.
- Archive for Contemporary Affairs and Africana, offering rare collections.
- Equipped learning commons with faculty-specific librarians supporting undergraduate programmes.
- Multifunctional rooms for teaching, learning, and research needs.
- Collaborative Space for remote education, tutoring, collaboration, content creation, meetings, socialisation, and studying.
- Digital Scholarship Centre with advanced technology to assist researchers with collaboration, software development, and other high-performance computing.
- Latest digital self-help services, including a library mobile app and self-check technologies aligned 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 m² 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 multifunctional 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

The Centre for Graduate Support (CGS) contributes to research and the Academic Project of the university, providing funding to qualifying postgraduate students and offering excellent support in terms of research capacity development (RCD) and academic writing. Both face-to-face and online offerings help to ensure that UFS postgraduate students receive researcher support in any part of the world. The centre facilitates postgraduate student applications, admissions, and enrolments, as well as the examination process. The goal of the CGS is to create an enabling environment for postgraduate students and staff to complete their studies within acceptable time frames.

Academy for Multilingualism

The Academy for Multilingualism (AFM) at the UFS promotes multilingualism, linked to our commitment to social justice. Four drivers are identified to implement multilingualism across the three campuses:

- **Developing Sesotho, isiZulu, and South African Sign Language (SASL) as academic languages:** This includes terminology development in various disciplines, translating PhD abstracts from the library repository into Sesotho, Afrikaans, and isiZulu, publishing books in African languages, and conducting and publishing research on multilingualism initiatives.
- **Incorporating multilingualism into learning and teaching:** Efforts include a translanguaging tutorial system, training staff in multilingual pedagogy, hosting seminars and conferences on multilingualism, and implementing conversational modules through faculties.
- **Promoting multilingualism as a social asset through institutional events:** Key events such as the Kovsies Multilingual Mokete, Language Awareness Week, International Mother Tongue Day, and multilingual dialogues for staff and students help in promoting multilingualism.
- **Improving English as a language of instruction:** This involves promoting academic literacy of undergraduates through ULD as well as multilingual postgraduates' academic writing with CGS.



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



214

NRF-rated
researchers

6,03%

increase in
research outputs

(articles, books, and
conference contributions)
from 2020 to 2023



158

postdoctoral
fellowships

A-rated scientists:



Prof Melanie Walker, who holds an A-rating from the NRF in the field of higher education and human development, has authored over 140 books, with a focus on higher education, human development, and educating 'public good' professionals. She is also the Global South's first President of the Human Development and Capability Association (HDCA).

Prof Maxim Finkelstein, Distinguished Professor in the Department of Mathematical Statistics and Actuarial Science, is the only researcher in South Africa with an A1-rating 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 Victor Houliston is a literary historian, bibliographer, and textual critic, specialising in early English Jesuits. His passion for this field was sparked by editing and translating a Latin play from the Jesuit seminary at St-Omer. His work on Robert Persons, SJ, has taken him to the Institute of Jesuit Sources in St Louis and Campion Hall, Oxford. Currently, he is the lead editor of the correspondence of Robert Persons, with two volumes published (2017 and 2024) and a third in preparation, while also translating his Latin works.

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.





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

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.

- The **South African National Control Laboratory for Biological Products (SANCLBP)** is one of only 14 laboratories worldwide contracted to perform vaccine testing for the World Health Organisation. The SANCLBP 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)**. The laboratory is tasked with the research and analysis of samples from elite athletes and boasts the international accreditation of the ISO/IEC17025. SADoCoL is servicing the countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, with a significant footprint as far north as Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria. SADoCoL, which exists for 40 years, provides this service to several international federations, and Olympic committees.



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 also has a training platform that offers accredited online SA GCP and GLP 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 academics and students from all seven UFS faculties can work together to foster learning, interaction, and research. Research projects are also focused to act as a conduit for interaction 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

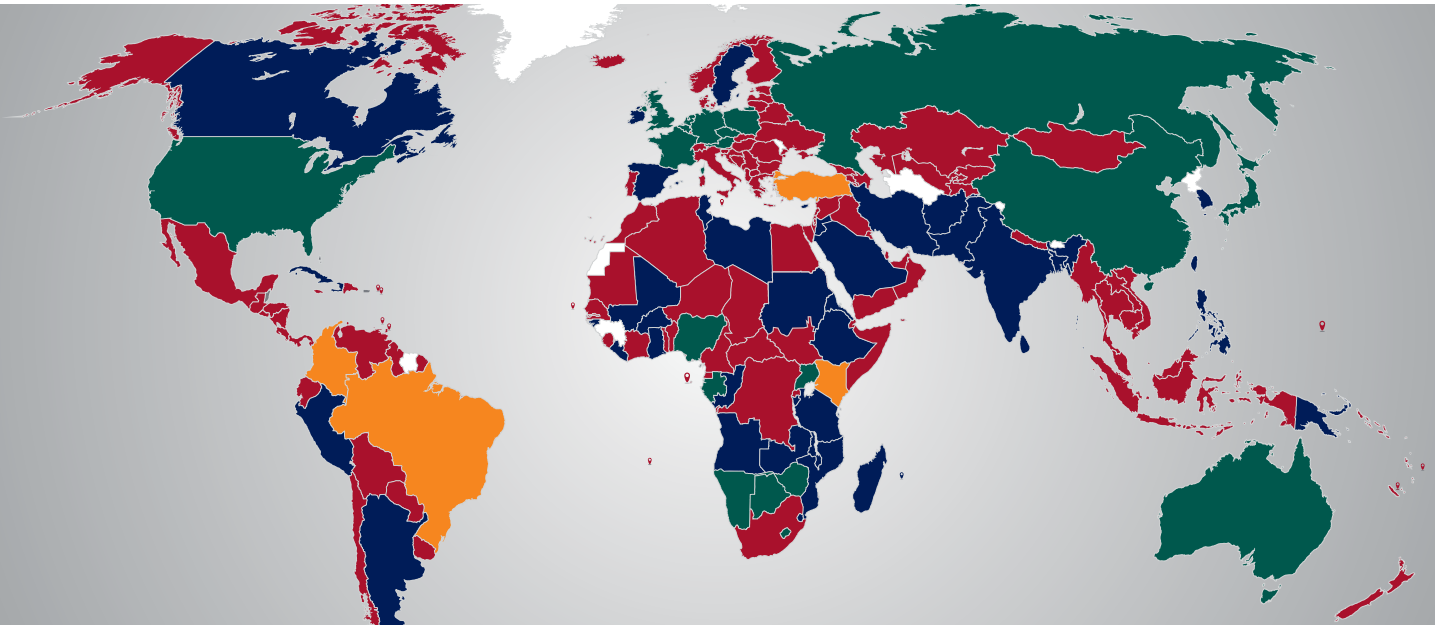
A regionally and internationally engaged university, producing globally competitive graduates and knowledge.

The university follows a comprehensive internationalisation approach, strategically aligning and integrating programmes and activities to be globally relevant and competitive while being locally grounded. International engagements enable the UFS community to critically engage with diverse views and perspectives, foster research collaboration, learning exchanges through both mobility and virtual collaboration, and community engagement across divides. By embracing internationalisation, students and staff contribute to addressing the United Nations SDGs, while gaining recognition for their ideas worldwide.

Since 2018, UFS researchers have published 6 752 papers in internationally recognised journals, collaborating with 3 721 institutions world-wide. Our students from various countries enrich campus diversity. Groundbreaking projects with strategic international partners, such as the iKudu project funded by the European Commission, integrate international virtual exchanges into our curricula. The new iKudu Network furthers this initiative. Our students and staff frequently receive prestigious international scholarships. For example, Michael Skosana received the 2023/24 Ernst Mach Grant for an exchange at the University of Applied Sciences in Austria, and Kagiso Ngake was selected as a 2024 Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders at Arizona State University. Curriculum internationalisation is a priority, advancing Africanisation and decolonisation while enabling the student to engage with peers across the globe.

Students and staff regularly engage in various established international networks, such as in the South Africa-Sweden University Forum (SASUF). Based on research collaboration data obtained from Scival on 28 April 2024, spanning from 2018 to 2024, the UFS has engaged in collaboration with 32 institutions in Sweden, resulting in the co-authorship of 311 publications. Among these publications, 95 were co-authored between 2018 and 2024, with UFS academics ranking among the top 10 co-authors. The establishment of a student-led SASUF structure at the UFS in 2023 amplifies student voices within the broader SASUF framework. The UFS' continuing celebration of cultural diversity in higher education through various initiatives, including the International Intercultural Diversity Festival and Africa Day dialogues, fosters inclusivity and stimulates critical debates, preparing individuals for success in a globalised world.

UFS' collaboration



Afghanistan	Canada	Estonia	Iraq	Mauritius	Qatar	Syria
Albania	Central African Republic	Eswatini	Ireland	Mexico	Romania	Taiwan
Algeria	Chad	Ethiopia	Israel	Mongolia	Republic of Korea	Tajikistan
Angola	Chile	Federated States of Micronesia	Italy	Morocco	Russian Federation	Tanzania
Argentina	China	Fiji	Jamaica	Mozambique	Rwanda	Thailand
Armenia	Colombia	Finland	Japan	Myanmar (formerly Burma)	Saint Helena	The Netherlands
Australia	Comoros	France	Jordan	Namibia	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Timor-Leste
Austria	Congo (Congo-Brazzaville)	Gabon	Kazakhstan	Nepal	São Tomé and Príncipe	Togo
Azerbaijan	Costa Rica	Gambia	Kenya	New Zealand	Saudi Arabia	Trinidad and Tobago
Bahrain	Croatia	Georgia	Kyrgyzstan	Nicaragua	Senegal	Tunisia
Bangladesh	Cuba	Germany	Laos	Niger	Serbia	Turkey
Belarus	Cyprus	Ghana	Latvia	Nigeria	Seychelles	Uganda
Belgium	Czech Republic	Greece	Lebanon	North Macedonia	Sierra Leone	Ukraine
Benin	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Grenada	Lesotho	Norway	Singapore	United Arab Emirates
Bolivia	Guinea-Bissau	Guatemala	Liberia	Oman	Slovakia	United Kingdom
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Guyana	Guinea-Bissau	Libya	Pakistan	Slovenia	United States of America
Botswana	Haiti	Honduras	Lithuania	Palestine State	Somalia	Uruguay
Brazil	Hungary	India	Luxembourg	Panama	South Africa	Uzbekistan
Brunei	Iceland	Indonesia	Madagascar	Papua New Guinea	South Sudan	Venezuela
Bulgaria	El Salvador	Iran	Malawi	Paraguay	Spain	Vietnam
Burkina Faso	Equatorial Guinea		Malaysia	Peru	Sri Lanka	Yemen
Burundi	Eritrea		Mali	Philippines	Sudan	Zambia
Cambodia			Malta	Poland	Sweden	Zimbabwe
Cameroon			Mauritania	Portugal	Switzerland	

■ 2018-2024 Research collaborations | ■ 2018-2024 Research collaborations and 2019-2024 international students
 ■ 2018-2024 Research collaborations, 2019-2024 international students and partnerships | ■ 2018-2024 Research collaborations and partnerships



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

We are 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.

- It is widely accepted that the UFS' school involvement initiatives have contributed significantly to the Free State's excellent matric results in recent years. Beyond the province, the **Science-for-the-Future** initiatives of the Faculty of Education have an impact on educational communities across the country. 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.
- Kopsie ACT and the Department of Sustainable Food Systems and Development collaborates in the **vegetable tunnels** that have been erected on both the Bloemfontein and South campuses. The fresh vegetables produced are distributed to students in the No Student Hungry programme, contributing to the fight against hunger and malnutrition on campus.
- Since 2012, the **Tata International Postgraduate Scholarship Programme**, in collaboration with the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, has had a profound impact on students' lives. Final-year Strategic Marketing students from the Department of Business Management annually present innovative marketing ideas for Tata International's trucks and buses. Students get to apply classroom knowledge in real-life scenarios and develop marketing strategies for Tata Group companies, showcasing their creativity and problem-solving skills. For Tata, this offers valuable exposure to the student market.

- The **Boyden Observatory** and **Naval Hill Planetarium** form vital components in the display and communication of South Africa's astronomical heritage. The Naval Hill Planetarium was the first digital planetarium in sub-Saharan Africa. The Centre for Earth and Space, which houses the planetarium, is used by the UFS Department of Physics to educate school children and the general public about the natural sciences.
- The UFS, in partnership with the Free State Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and Standard Bank, established the **Agribusiness Transformation Programme**. This initiative leverages existing expertise, skills, and infrastructure to develop black commercial farmers and black-owned sustainable agribusinesses in the Free State. The programme aims to transform the agricultural sector, stimulate job creation, and improve food security in the region.



Alumni and donors

The UFS serves close to 40 000 students across three campuses and seven faculties. Many are first-generation students who require financial support. We are grateful to donors who create pathways for student success and integration into the workforce.

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 earned a reputation for offering exceptional value through affordable costs, high academic quality, and strong graduation rates. This success is built on strong relationships with funders and the communities we serve, addressing critical needs with empathy.

We collaborate with dedicated funders to advance our vision of being a globally competitive university. These partnerships enable us to invest in facilities, students, staff, teaching, research, and innovative community projects, ensuring that we remain a top choice for talented individuals.







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 to 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 be holistically prepared for the life of work after completing their studies at the UFS.

Off campus

HRA has 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, including sports, culture, social activities, dialogues, concerts, and academic support. The colleges and day residences also provide support with registration processes and introduction to campus facilities, among other services, to first-time entering students.



Arts and culture

The Arts and Culture Office within Student Affairs enriches student life and fosters a vibrant, inclusive student life experience. Its mission is to promote social justice, cohesion, and critical diversity through visual, literary, and performing arts, reflecting the UFS' core values of excellence, innovation, and societal contribution. The office supports academic success and personal growth through creative expression and critical engagement. It promotes inclusivity, community engagement, and social responsibility, enhancing student well-being, leadership, and communication skills, while advancing excellence and innovation.

Key initiatives include the Arts Week, UFS Choirs, and various arts communities:

- **Arts Week:** Engages students and the community in discussions on critical issues through artistic expression.
- **Community Engagement:** Provides platforms for students to creatively address social issues, fostering community involvement and awareness.
- **UFS Choirs:** Participate in events that showcase the university's cultural richness, engage in global exchanges, and unite students from all three campuses.

The Arts and Culture Office ensures that the UFS remains a beacon of innovation, inclusivity, and excellence nationally and globally.

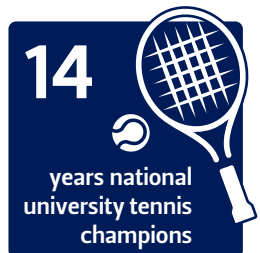


UFS VALUE: SUSTAINABILITY

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:

- A top-quality heated Olympic-sized swimming pool
- 2 Olympic-standard astro hockey fields, equipped with floodlights
- 18 tennis courts, 4 equipped with floodlights (for training purposes)
- 5 renovated squash courts
- 5 cricket fields and 20 nets
- 3 cross-country courses
- 3 soccer pitches
- 6 netball courts
- Shimla Park rugby stadium
- 4 additional rugby fields
- Pellies Park with a modern clubhouse and all the amenities
- A four-lane synthetic run-up that caters for long-jump and triple-jump competitions
- Floodlit sports facilities, featuring football fields and netball and basketball courts on the Qwaqwa Campus
- Multipurpose sports grounds on the South Campus, including two football fields, 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. CUADS also provides 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 a cherished value. A dedicated team of professionals is supporting students holistically, ensuring their physical safety and enhancing their mental well-being. Health and wellness facilities on all three campuses provide access to social workers, psychologists, and registered counsellors.

Student Counselling and Development offers workshops and programmes to equip students with skills to deal with life's challenges. Individual counselling sessions and a comprehensive website with mental health tools, resources, and helplines are also available.

The UFS has a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual-related offences. The Sexual Offences Response Team (SORT) provides support during incidents of gender-based violence, sexual harassment, and acts of prejudice or discrimination.

Physical safety

Committed to safety, the university ensures a secure campus environment for staff, students, and visitors. Protection Services is continually enhancing safety initiatives on and off campus, adhering to legislative restrictions. The operational centre is staffed 24/7, and both technical and physical security measures are in place to protect people, property, and information. Off-campus security is enhanced through cooperation with external law enforcement and public security entities, along with the deployment of armed response companies for incident response.





Social Justice

Diversity and inclusivity are hallmarks of our culture and commitment to social justice. The UFS fosters a space for competing views within an inclusive and excellent environment. We actively pursue diversity among students and staff, as well as in 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 institution dedicated to research, advocacy, and legal practice, focusing on the relationship between human rights and transformation.

The centre's work revolves 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.

In addition to its Research and Postgraduate Division, the centre includes an Advocacy Division, which engages in transformation-related human rights on the UFS campuses, and a Legal Services Division, operating as a Free State-focused public interest litigation unit in collaboration 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.**



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