

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

Institutional Profile



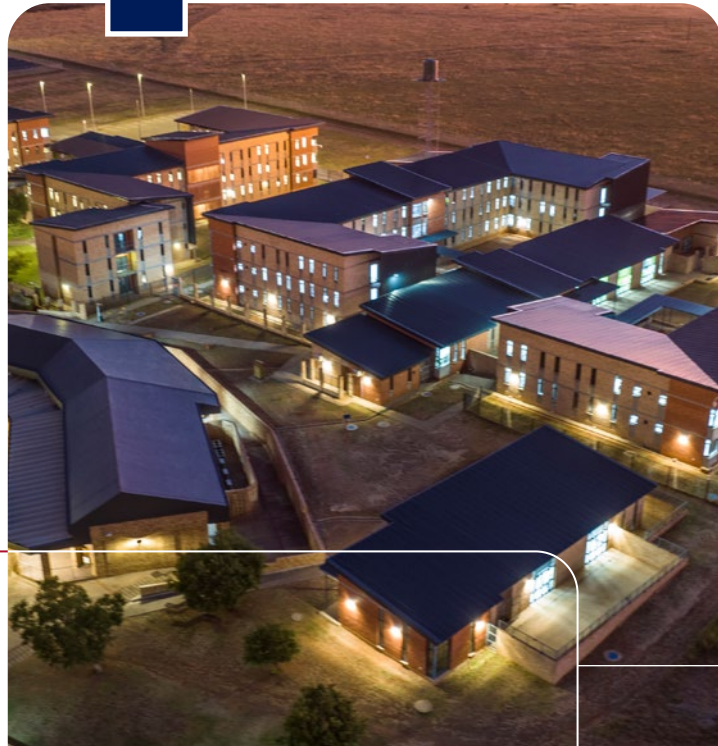
www.ufs.ac.za

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

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



UFS
SOUTH AFRICA



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FOREWORD

At the University of the Free State (UFS), we are committed to **Responsible Societal Futures**, using our knowledge and resources to build a more just, sustainable, and humane society.

We strive to be a university with a consistent outward focus, delivering profound results – building on past achievements while constantly transforming ourselves to stay relevant in the dynamic and ever-changing international higher education sphere.

Built on the values of *Accountability, Care, Excellence, Innovation and Impact, Sustainability, and Social Justice*, our university community constitutes an entrepreneurial knowledge ecosystem where brilliant minds converge to address humanity's most pressing problems.

We are proud of our well-rounded graduates who are equipped with academic and personal skills that make them sought-after professionals in workplaces around the world, as well as responsible, society-focused future leaders.

We are student-centred, innovative, research-led, regionally engaged, and globally relevant.

We lead through service with impact.

And we walk with purpose.

Welcome to the University of the Free State.

Prof Hester C. Klopper

Vice-Chancellor and Principal



UFS IN NUMBERS



Established in **1904**



3 campuses



7 faculties



ECONOMIC AND
MANAGEMENT SCIENCES



EDUCATION



HEALTH SCIENCES



THE HUMANITIES



LAW



NATURAL AND
AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES



THEOLOGY AND
RELIGION



BUSINESS SCHOOL

Students
(2025 registrations)


40 248



Students
(2024 graduates)

9 250

Registered



39 196
contact


1 052
distance

Research chairs:
6 SARCHI¹
Chairs


1 SANRAL² chair
in Mathematics, Natural Sciences
and Technology Education

1 ETDP–SETA³ chair
in Mathematics Education


7 Chairs under the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), the Department
of Agriculture, and the University of the Free State (UFS) (ARC–DoA–UFS)
research chair initiative




5 018
staff (permanent
and temporary staff)




247
NRF⁴–rated
researchers




650
master's
graduates




196
Postdoctoral fellows
(68% from outside the UFS)




496
research
fellows



163
doctoral
graduates




3 959
international collaborating
institutions



With high-tech solar plants

lighting up all three campuses, the university is turning sunlight into savings and solutions. With the first pilot plant in 2017 and rapid expansion since 2022 to a total of 8 MW solar PV, these systems have already saved over R41 million; sharply reducing the effects of load-shedding and shrinking the institution's carbon footprint.



Water-wise thinking

flows through every level of campus life. The UFS has redesigned its outdoor spaces with indigenous plants, smart irrigation, and greywater systems. Rainwater harvesting, waterless urinals, and pressure-controlled systems work quietly in the background; but make a big difference in saving resources.

* Data: Research (2024 outputs); graduations and registrations (September 2025 records)

¹ South African Research Chairs Initiative. ² South African National Roads Agency Limited.
³ Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority. ⁴ National Research Foundation.



OUR STORY

The UFS has been shaping futures for more than 120 years. In 2034, we will celebrate 130 years of academic excellence and impact. Through our Vision 130, we are working to become a globally recognised university that is relevant, inclusive, and drives real impact. With three campuses in the heart of South Africa, we are all about diversity, inclusion, and making a difference in society.

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

Our values of excellence, innovation and impact, accountability, care, social justice, and sustainability shape and inform the UFS culture and provide a framework for our actions and decisions.

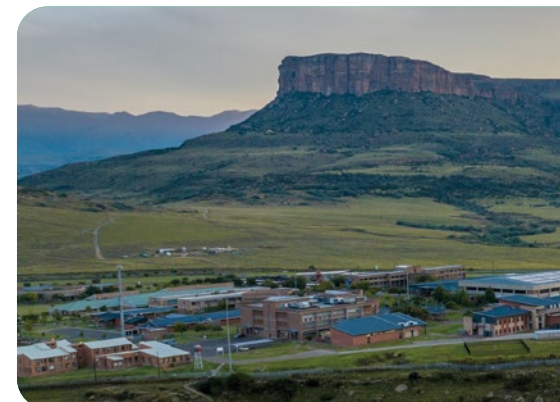
Our mission

The UFS is committed to impart and generate new knowledge that impactfully supports societal development.

OUR CAMPUSES

The UFS brings learning to life through its campuses in central South Africa. In Bloemfontein, the Bloemfontein and South Campuses share space in the bustling heart of the Free State. Further east – surrounded by mountains – the Qwaqwa Campus offers a more scenic setting. This multi-campus setup offers an integrated higher education experience, connecting people from different places and backgrounds.

On the **Bloemfontein Campus**, students from all walks of life come together to study in one of seven faculties – from first year to postgraduate level. It is a place where old buildings and modern design stand side by side, where unique artworks catch your eye, and where state-of-the-art research, learning, teaching, and sports facilities shape every experience.



The **Qwaqwa Campus** is a vibrant learning space for students from nearby towns and neighbouring 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** is a hub of innovation that houses the Blended Learning Innovation Support and 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. This campus also hosts the BEd Foundation Phase programme, which trains future teachers to work with young children aged six to nine.



OUR FACULTIES

The UFS is home to seven faculties offering quality programmes, led by passionate and experienced staff members who are focused on making a real-world impact in their fields.



Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

The Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences equips students with the skills and knowledge to thrive in the workplace and contribute as active citizens. Whether you are aiming to build a career in finance, accounting, or management, this faculty offers programmes designed to prepare you for success.

Exceptional programmes:

- **Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) in Finance:** This programme carries Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) accreditation, meaning it meets the high standards set by the CFA Institute – a leader in finance education.
- **Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting and Bachelor of Accounting:** These programmes are accredited by several top professional bodies, including 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). This ensures that they meet strict

professional standards, helping graduates qualify for respected accounting careers.

Excellence in teaching and research:

- **SARChI Research Chair in Higher Education and Human Development:** Prof Melanie Walker leads this research chair, which uses the capabilities approach to explore key issues in education and human development in South Africa. In the co-edited book *Low-income students, human development and higher education in South Africa: Opportunities, obstacles and outcomes*, she and her colleagues unpack the challenges and opportunities faced by low-income students in their pursuit of higher education.
- **SARChI Research Chair in Urban-Regional Economics:** Headed by Prof Ivan Turok – one of South Africa's most cited social scientists – this chair studies how cities and regions drive economic growth and development. 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 UFS Business School is a national leader in management and leadership training, fully accredited by the Council on Higher Education (CHE). Our programmes combine expert facilitators with the latest training methods to deliver practical, results-driven learning.

Short Learning Programmes include the following:

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





Faculty of Education

The Faculty of Education plays a key role in shaping future educators by preparing pre-service teachers with a strong academic foundation for the classroom. We also support in-service teachers through continuous learning and development.

Exceptional programmes:

From undergraduate degrees to postgraduate certificates, honours, master's, and doctoral study programmes, we offer a wide range of study opportunities without selection barriers. These include:

- Bachelor of Education in Foundation, Intermediate, or Senior and FET Phases
- Postgraduate Certificate in Education
- Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education
- Bachelor of Education Honours
- Master of Education
- PhD in Education

Excellence in teaching and research:

- **SANRAL Chair in Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology Education:** Led by Prof Loyiso Jita, this chair supports teacher training and mentoring, with a strong focus on building schools into centres of excellence. It also supervises a growing group of master's and PhD students, while also contributing valuable research in mathematics, science, and technology education.



Faculty of Health Sciences

We are proud of the highly skilled health professionals trained across our five schools: 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 (DHSE)** supports excellence in health care and scholarship by building a community of forward-thinking, adaptable health-care educators. DHSE focuses on postgraduate programmes, health professions education research, and faculty development to develop research, educational, and leadership expertise, as well as a strong emphasis on innovation.
- The Faculty of Health Sciences recently launched its **Division of Public Health**, expanding its academic footprint with new postgraduate offerings at both master's and doctoral levels. To further support academic excellence, the faculty opened a state-of-the-art Postgraduate Hub, a dedicated space designed to serve postgraduate students across all levels within the faculty.



- In a groundbreaking development, the faculty – in collaboration with partners – became one of the first in Southern Africa to introduce a **surgical robot** at the Universitas Hospital in Bloemfontein, South Africa.
- Simulation training by the **Clinical Simulation and Skills Unit** in the School of Biomedical Sciences offers a hands-on training and learning opportunity for medical and other health-care students. Using human patient simulators, task trainers, and simulated patients, students are provided with a safe space to practise, refine, and master key health-care skills.
- The School of Nursing is home to state-of-the-art simulation facilities known as **the SPACE** – a modern learning environment for tomorrow's nurses.

Excellence in teaching and research:

- **SARChI Research Chair in Vector-borne and Zoonotic Pathogens:** Led by Prof Felicity Burt, this team focuses on host immune responses to zoonotic infections and arboviruses and raising awareness of these diseases. Moreover, the chair also develops tools for surveillance programmes – contributing to understanding these pathogens and the public health implications.
- **Next Generation Sequencing Unit:** A high-tech research facility with a focus on genomics sequencing, providing advanced services for researchers and valuable practical training opportunities for visiting and internal scientific interns.
- **African Medicines Innovations and Technologies Development (AMITD):** Based in the Department of Pharmacology, this platform focuses on recruiting and employing the best skills throughout the research, development, and herbal-medicine manufacturing value chains. It includes state-of-the-art, good

laboratory practice (GLP) and ISO 17025-accredited laboratories that will be a centre of excellence for the government, the World Health Organisation (WHO), and the African Union's (AU) Commission for Social Development. It has also been earmarked as the BRICS Natural Medicines Institute for research, teaching, and training on natural products.

- **Robert WM Frater Cardiovascular Research Centre:** One of the leading cardiovascular research platforms in sub-Saharan Africa, offering an interdisciplinary training and research platform for clinicians and scientists working in cardiovascular and thoracic surgery and related fields.



Faculty of The Humanities

The Faculty of The Humanities is home to a rich mix of disciplines. Our graduates make a meaningful impact on society through knowledge, creativity, communication, and care – enriching communities through the arts, social services, and cultural understanding. The faculty also offers a variety of language programmes – including a highly regarded South African Sign Language programme.

Exceptional programmes:

Two compulsory multidisciplinary Social Sciences modules help to inculcate specific graduate attributes in students and support the UFS' drive to decolonise the curriculum.

Excellence in teaching and research:

- **International Studies Group (ISG):** A globally recognised research group attracting PhD students, postdoctoral fellows, and visiting academics who explore the histories of Central and Southern Africa in particular, and African and global history more generally.
- **Centre for Gender and Africa Studies:** An interdisciplinary postgraduate and research centre focused on critical postcolonial work, covering themes such as gender mainstreaming, peacekeeping, and indigenous knowledge systems and heritage.
- **Centre for Health Systems Research and Development:** The centre produces high-impact research to inform and improve health systems, including policies, strategies, priority programmes, and practices.
- **Unit for Professional Training and Service in the Behavioural Sciences (UNIBS):** UNIBS trains professionals in the field of psychology at registered counselling psychologist level, with additional public service and research functions.
- **Women Researchers in The Humanities (WoRiTH):** A supportive initiative aimed at growing the next generation of women researchers through mentorship and targeted interventions towards completing their PhD degrees.



Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

The Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences embraces a multidisciplinary way of thinking about education and research. With 25 divisions covering natural, agricultural, and building sciences, the faculty allows students to explore a wide range of study fields.

Exceptional programmes:

- **Master's and PhD in Architecture – with specialisation in Design:** A practice-based research programme, the first of its kind in South Africa.
- **BSc in Forensic Sciences – with specialisations in Forensic Genetics, Chemistry, Entomology, and Anthropology:** A career-focused programme specifically for police and forensic operations.
- **Agricultural studies:** With 15 undergraduate degree options, students gain practical experience at the Paradys Experimental Farm, where training includes dairy production, fermentation, and animal and crop sciences. The faculty also introduces students to modern agritech through close industry collaboration.

Excellence in teaching and research:

- **SARChI Research Chair in Pathogenic Yeasts:** Led by Prof Carolina Pohl-Albertyn, this chair explores 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 works on improving 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 trains MSc and PhD students across Africa, focusing 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 offers world-class electron microscopy equipment, providing the infrastructure to do exceptional and globally competitive research.
- **Centre for Mineral Biogeochemistry:** Connects students with top-tier equipment and industry partners for applied research in biogeochemistry and bioaugmentation.
- **Crop Research Platform:** Works on breeding crops with better nutritional value to meet growing consumer and health demands.
- **Green Futures Hub:** The Green Futures Hub drives agricultural and environmental sustainability by connecting researchers with government, industry,

and communities to co-create practical, nature-based solutions. It focuses on land rehabilitation, food and water security, and climate resilience, serving as a platform for applied science that delivers real-world impact.

- **Complex Systems Hub:** The Complex Systems Hub equips multidisciplinary teams to address global challenges through advanced modelling, AI, and data-driven science. It brings together diverse research fields to transform complexity into opportunity and foster scalable, integrated solutions.
- **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 network of academic, industry, and business leaders promotes cross-sector collaboration to address Africa's most urgent sustainability challenges.
- The **Afromontane Research Unit**, located on our Qwaqwa Campus, actively engages in and promotes research on Southern African mountains to encourage a stronger science-policy-practice interface through a wide variety of domestic and international partnerships.

The UFS proudly hosts seven research chairs, which form a centre of excellence in collaboration with the Agricultural Research Council and the Department of Agriculture. They are the Research Chairs for

- Climate Change and Agriculture;
- Innovative Agro-Processing for Climate-Smart Food Systems;
- Agriculture Risk Financing;
- Sustainable Livestock Production;
- Breeding of Climate-Resilient Vegetables and Grains;
- Impact Assessment of Climate-Smart Interventions; and
- Communication for Innovation.





Faculty of Law

The Faculty of Law is committed to academic excellence, social justice, and transformative legal education, and to producing graduates who are well equipped to shape the legal landscape of South Africa and abroad.

Exceptional programmes:

The faculty offers a distinguished blend of academic rigour and practical relevance, equipping students with the knowledge and skills to engage confidently with complex legal systems. A key strength of the faculty is its Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) programme, which bridges the gap between legal theory and professional practice. Through placements in courts, law firms, and prosecutors'

offices, students gain valuable hands-on experience and industry exposure.

At the faculty, students gain access to a comprehensive range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes covering critical areas of law, while also providing opportunities for specialisation in fields such as customary law, medical law, environmental law, human rights, and banking law, among others. These programmes are designed to prepare students for a wide range of careers that require the application of law across the legal professions and beyond.

- Both our **LLB and postgraduate qualifications** open doors to diverse legal and non-legal careers where a deep understanding of law is essential.
- The **School of Financial Planning Law** continues to lead in its field, with the Postgraduate Diploma in Financial Planning recognised as a key stepping stone to becoming a Certified Financial Planner (CFP®).
- Our **Postgraduate Diploma in Labour Law (PGDLL)** supports specialisation in labour-related legal matters and reflects our drive to provide relevant, workforce-focused education.
- The university also collaborates with the **Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA)** and key bargaining councils to offer a comprehensive Labour Dispute Resolution Practice programme integrated into the PGDLL to prepare students with in-demand dispute resolution skills.

Excellence in teaching and research:

The faculty is anchored by three core academic departments: Mercantile Law, Private Law, and Public Law, and also comprises additional academic and

professional units, including the following:

- **The Free State Centre for Human Rights:** The centre is a vibrant focal point for scholarship, advocacy, and legal engagement at the intersection of human rights and social transformation. Its work explores the intersections of poverty, democracy, and identity, drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives to drive meaningful change.
- **The UFS Africa Reparation Hub (in the Department of Public Law):** The hub plays a leading role in shaping national and international dialogue on reparations for the wrongs caused by colonialism and apartheid. It acts as a central space for research, teaching, and advocacy on historical justice and redress.
- **The Disability Rights Unit:** The unit plays a pivotal role in advancing the rights of persons with disabilities through a multi-faceted approach. Its work is grounded in rigorous research and advocacy aimed at enhancing the implementation of key international instruments such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the African Protocol on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- **The UFS Law Clinic:** The clinic offers essential pro bono legal services, public impact litigation, community service learning, and clinical legal education opportunities. Strategically located in the judicial capital, the clinic combines professional legal services and community engagement with hands-on training for Law students, ensuring that students gain unique and invaluable experience in the legal profession. Further initiatives, such as the Annual First-year Koviesie Moot Court Competition at the Supreme Court of Appeal, helps to bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world competencies.



Faculty of Theology and Religion

Rooted in Africa, engaged with the world, the faculty offers an undergraduate theological qualification designed to prepare students for transformative leadership within faith and the broader society. Through responsible biblical interpretation, ethical and empathetic community engagement, and critical reflection on social issues, students are equipped to inspire hope and contribute to positive change. Postgraduate students benefit from a supportive academic environment and expert supervision across theological and religious disciplines. The faculty's master's and doctoral programmes promote original thinking and research that contributes meaningfully to theology and society, that is shaped by African realities, open to diverse traditions, and responds to global shifts.

We are building a faculty that does not just respond to the times, we help shape them.

Exceptional programmes:

- **Bachelor of Divinity:** A professionally oriented degree developed in consultation with Christian denominations and widely recognised by churches and religious bodies. 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.
- **Multi-religious curriculum:** The Department of Religion



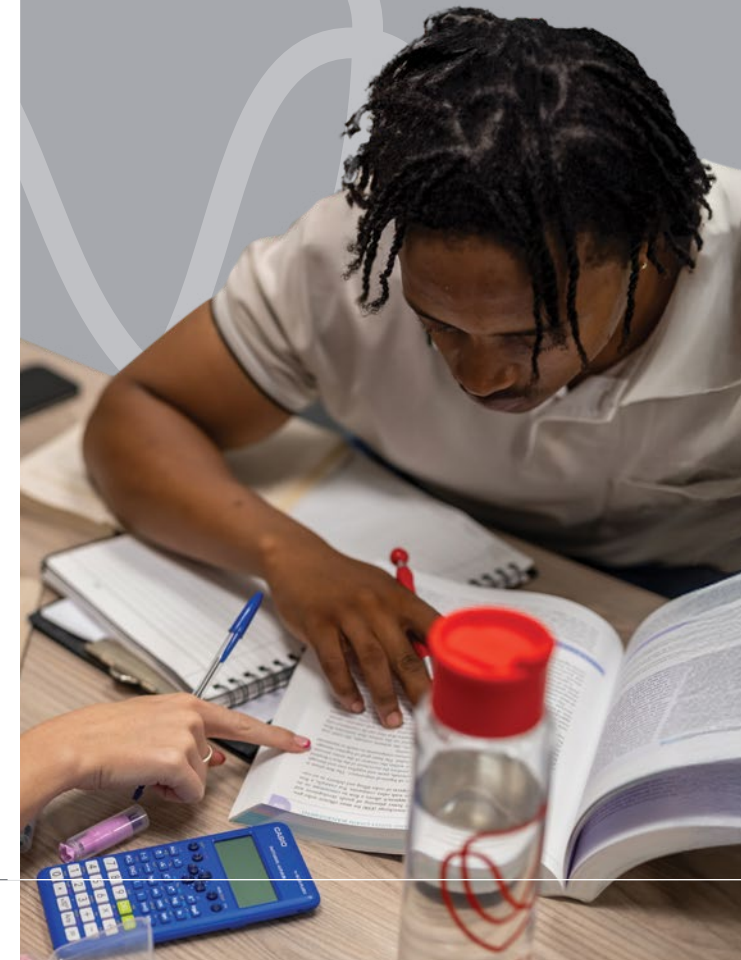
Studies offers a multi-religious curriculum grounded in the scientific study of religion, promoting tolerance, plurality, and inclusion. Modules explore religion's sociological, historical, and comparative dimensions, equipping students to analyse its role in society through diverse theoretical approaches.

Excellence in teaching and research:

- The Faculty of Theology and Religion combines academic depth with practical application, using a blend of classroom, community-based, and online learning methods to create an engaging educational experience.
- Teaching is continually updated to reflect relevant, contextual, and decolonial perspectives, preparing students to respond to real-world challenges.
- Research in the faculty addresses urgent theological and societal questions, with notable contributions in areas such as the Psalms, African Christianity, and public theology, enhancing both national and international discourse.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

The UFS learning and teaching environment is constantly evolving, reshaping itself to meet the needs of a changing world and to equip students for impact in a global, digital, and diverse society. This plays a key role in positioning the university as a future-focused, high-performance institution with local relevance and international reach.



Centre for Teaching and Learning

Our advanced initiatives are celebrated both nationally and internationally:

- 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), which provides data for evidence-based change in learning, teaching, and student success.
- The Central Academic Advising Office helps students align personal, academic, and career goals through, among others, the GPS@UFS (Graduate Positioning Support@UFS). CTL offers South Africa's only professional academic advising training programme.
- Offers internationally benchmarked academic staff development in teaching and learning, such as curriculum transformation, academic leadership, and blended learning.
- Continuously improving the digitally enhanced, engaging, personalised learning (DEEP Learning) approach, as well as the Senior Student Experience, to prepare desirable graduates for a responsible, sustainable future.

Career Services

At the UFS, Career Services is where ambition meets opportunity, helping students bridge the gap between university life and the world of work.

- 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 of 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.

The Kovsie Phahamisa Academy

At the UFS, we foster lifelong learning for people from all academic backgrounds. The Kovsie Phahamisa Academy (KPHA) serves as a dynamic bridge between higher education, industry, and government, driving skills development, social transformation, and economic growth.

The KPHA's core mandate is to coordinate and oversee the design of flexible, high-quality learning pathways. These range from short learning programmes to executive education and are tailored to meet the evolving needs of the labour market and Africa's development priorities.

The KPHA forges strong partnerships with corporate leaders, public sector bodies, and international agencies. These collaborations ensure that programmes are academically rigorous, practically relevant, and designed to equip learners with future-ready skills in the UFS' key areas of expertise.

Inclusivity and access are championed by the KPHA, leveraging technology to reach diverse learners across urban and rural areas, while aligning with national development frameworks and contributing to the knowledge economy.

Beyond training, the KPHA positions itself as a thought leader, conducting applied research, offering effective training advice, and co-creating solutions with stakeholders for sustainable impact.

KPHA is not just an education provider; it is a catalyst for creating lifelong learning ecosystems, employability, and global competitiveness.



Library and Information Services

The UFS Department of Library and Information Services (LIS) is a vibrant, tech-forward knowledge hub that empowers students and researchers to thrive in a connected, academic world.

Students have access to 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)

Beyond traditional resources, LIS enhances digital literacy and innovation through fully equipped makerspaces on all three campuses.

Other specialised spaces include the following:

- 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.
- 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, self-check technologies, and return chutes aligned with 4IR trends.

Study centres on campus

The UFS creates space for excellence. Literally. Across our three campuses, students have access to more than 2 000 study stations spread across close to 7 000 m², many of which are available 24/7, offering quiet corners, collaborative areas, and everything in between to support focused learning.

A standout example is the Modular Lecturing Space and Assessment Centre on the Bloemfontein Campus – a flexible, future-facing facility. 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 running the length of the space, promoting optimal engagement in learning.



Centre for Graduate Support

Where research ambition meets dedicated support, the Centre for Graduate Support (CGS) helps turn postgraduate goals into academic milestones. From funding opportunities to research development, CGS is a key driver of postgraduate success at the UFS.

The Centre for Graduate Support (CGS) contributes to the Research and Academic Projects 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, as well as the examination process. The goal of the CGS is to create an enabling environment for postgraduate students and staff, and to track the progress of postgraduate students' journeys to assist UFS students in completing their studies within acceptable time frames.

Academy for Multilingualism

At the UFS, language is more than a means of communication. It is a tool for inclusion, identity, and transformation. The Academy for Multilingualism (AFM) champions multilingual practices across all campuses, rooted in the university's commitment to social justice and equitable access to knowledge.

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 Kovies 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 the academic literacy of undergraduates through ULD, as well as multilingual postgraduates' academic writing through CGS.

INTERNATIONALISATION

A university deeply rooted in its region, yet boldly connected to the world, the UFS shapes graduates and knowledge that thrive on the global stage.

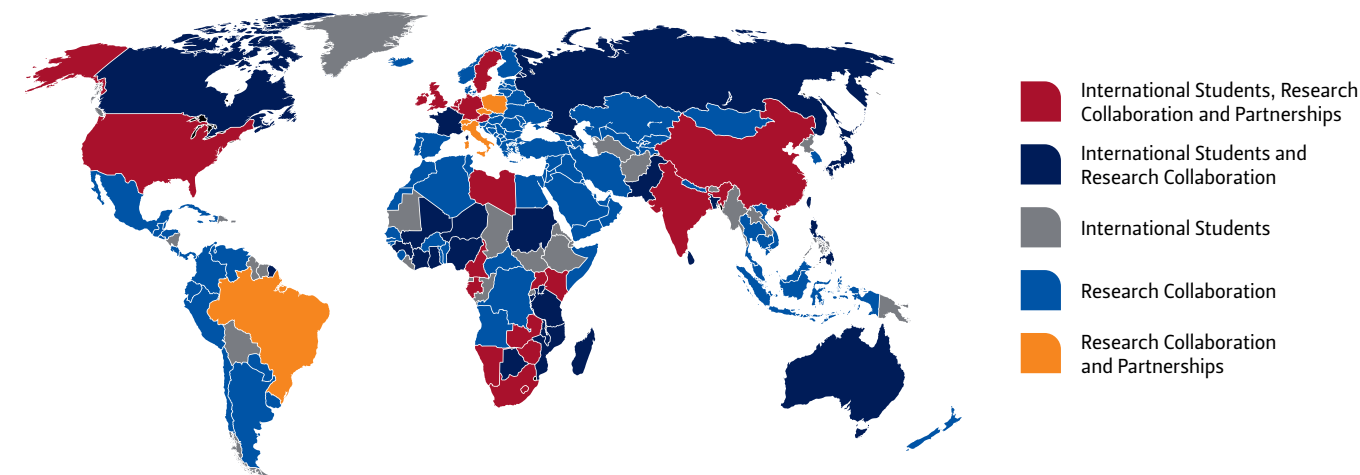
The university follows a comprehensive internationalisation approach, strategically aligning and integrating programmes and activities to be globally relevant and engaged while being locally grounded. International collaboration with all world regions enables the UFS community to engage critically with diverse views and perspectives, foster research collaboration and learning exchanges through both mobility and virtual exchange, 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 2021, UFS researchers have published 5 080 papers in internationally recognised journals, collaborating with 3 707 institutions worldwide. Our students from various countries enrich campus diversity. Curriculum

internationalisation is a priority, advancing Africanisation and decolonisation while enabling the student to engage with peers across the globe. Projects with strategic international partners, such as the iKudu project funded by the European Commission, integrate international virtual exchanges into our curricula. Our students and staff frequently receive prestigious international scholarships.

Students and staff regularly engage in various established international networks, such as the South Africa–Sweden University Forum (SASUF). The establishment of a student-led SASUF structure at the UFS in 2023 also 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.





STUDENT LIFE AND SUCCESS

At the UFS, we believe that student life is about shaping well-rounded individuals. That is why we place holistic growth and the overall student experience at the heart of everything we do.

On campus

Residences play an important role in campus life. Across all three UFS campuses, Housing and Residence Affairs (HRA) offers 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 to 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

Student accommodation is a significant aspect of the success of the UFS. HRA accredits or verifies accommodation to ensure a safe, supportive living and learning environment for UFS students living off-campus.

This process is guided by municipal by-laws, and the policy on minimum norms and standards for student housing at public universities (Government Gazette 39238, dated 29 September 2015), which off-campus accommodation service providers must adhere to in order to be accredited / verified by the UFS.

Our off-campus accommodation students are integrated into college communities and day residences, where they enjoy a full student life experience. These communities offer access to activities, including sports, culture, social activities, dialogues, concerts, and academic support, while also assisting first-time students with registration and orientation.

Arts and culture

The Arts and Culture Office within Student Affairs enriches student life by promoting social justice, cohesion, and critical diversity through literary and performing arts. Through initiatives such as Kopsie Extravaganza, UFS Choirs, and community arts platforms, the office nurtures student leadership, enhances well-being, and supports academic success through creative expression and critical engagement. The portfolio amplifies student voices and fosters transformation by building inclusive, values-driven spaces for dialogue, identity, and celebration. This work positions the UFS as a national and global beacon of excellence, innovation, and cultural thought leadership.



Sport

With more than 15 sporting codes to choose from at the UFS, sporting excellence is part of shaping well-rounded graduates with a proud tradition of achievements and victories across a wide range of disciplines.



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

- A top-quality heated Olympic-sized swimming pool
- Two astro hockey fields with a clubhouse and an Olympic-standard Fives hockey field
- A tennis complex with 18 nets, four with lights
- Five renovated squash courts
- The cricket oval, with an excellent clubhouse and two outfields
- Three cross-country courses
- Main football field, clubhouse, and three other fields
- Netball facilities with six courts and a clubhouse
- Shimla Park rugby stadium with a fully equipped clubhouse, as well as four other rugby fields
- Pellies Park with a modern clubhouse and all the amenities
- Two basketball courts
- Two volleyball courts
- 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
- Sport Science Centre, mainly used as a rehabilitation centre
- High-Performance Centre where athletes and sport teams train
- KovsieFit Gym



Universal access

The UFS drives a campus culture where everyone feels welcome, ensuring that living, learning, and teaching spaces are accessible and inclusive. The Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support (CUADS) works hand in hand with the university community to weave inclusion naturally and comprehensively into every corner of university life.

The centre's primary focus is to promote equity for students with disabilities in order to achieve academic success, while also encouraging more inclusive attitudes and ensuring a holistic, humanising experience that reflects a caring environment.

Continuing developments at the UFS include tactile paving, ramps at building entrances, clear signage, and dedicated seating in lecture rooms to improve accessibility. Universal access is now a standard consideration in all new building projects. CUADS coordinates academic support and provides South African Sign Language interpreting services for Deaf students and staff. The centre also supplies study materials in accessible formats such as Braille and accommodates students with learning difficulties through extra exam time and human support.



Health and Wellness Centre

Counselling and development

Supporting a culture of care is a core priority. A committed team of professionals stands ready to support students in every aspect of their well-being. Across all three campuses, health and wellness centres provide access to compassionate social workers, skilled 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 sexually 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

At the UFS, your safety and security are our top priorities. Our dedicated team of Protection Services staff works around the clock to ensure a safe and secure environment for all students, staff, and visitors across our three campuses. We are committed to creating an atmosphere that supports quality learning, teaching, and research.

Our initiatives are designed to enhance the well-being of our university community: from 24/7 security patrols and surveillance systems to emergency response and support services, we strive to provide a secure and welcoming environment for everyone. We encourage all members of the UFS community to actively participate in maintaining safety – both on and off campus – by adhering to our security policies and reporting any suspicious activities.

Kovsie Health

Kovsie Health plays an important role in promoting student wellness on all three campuses. From consultations and providing medication to routine health screenings, students receive professional care in a safe and supportive setting. Included in Kovsie Health's services is a dedicated support group, *The Best Club*, for students living with or affected by HIV, creating a compassionate space for care, connection, and community.

HIV Office

The HIV Office works to empower students through health education, prevention, and care. With its flagship *First Things First* campaign, students are encouraged to take charge of their health by accessing free, confidential screenings for HIV, TB, STIs, and non-communicable diseases. Additional support includes mental health awareness, safe sex education, and access to Pap smears and dental screenings.



Bloemfontein Campus

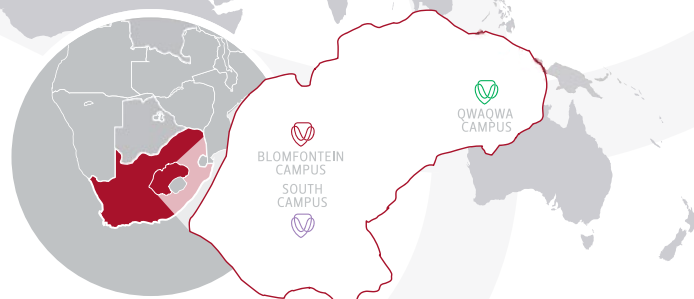
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