

# DSA Global Citizenship Developmental Program (2025)

University of Botswana & University of Namibia

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# 1. Introduction

The Division of Student Affairs (DSA) launched a global citizenship developmental program in 2024 in partnership with the University of Zambia (UNZA). The DSA is intentional about an African global agenda as supported by the University of the Free State (UFS) Vision 130. The DSA annually expands its partnership with various African universities. This developmental program aims to:

- To promote global citizenship amongst UFS students.
- To enrich the minds of young leaders to lead in the context of diversity and change.
- Develop future leaders equipped with the skills and knowledge to navigate international environments and drive meaningful global impact.
- Provide a platform for the best practise of systems and initiatives of student support and student welfare.

In 2025, the program will partner with the University of Botswana (UB) and the University of Namibia (UN). A selected group of students, through a rigorous selection process, will spend six days at universities in Namibia and Botswana to experience student life and learn about leadership and diversity.

## 2. Shared Institutional Values

While there are certain values which are unique to UFS, UN and UB, there are also values which do overlap with one another. While these may be differently named or defined by the individual institutions, there are adequate similarities for them to be seen as complementary.

	VALUE	UFS	UB	UNAM
1	<i>Excellence/ Academic Freedom</i>	x	x	
2	<i>Innovation and Impact/ Productivity</i>	x	x	
3	<i>Accountability/ Public Accountability</i>	x	x	x
4	<i>Care/ Students</i>	x	x	
5	<i>Social Justice/ Equity</i>	x	x	x

Finally, it should be noted that all three institutions emphasise an awareness of social issues and prioritise the equitable treatment of all groups impacted by the institution. Thus, it is clear that while all three universities have unique values, they also share a significant level of overlapping values.

## 3. Institutional Strategies

### 3.1 University of the Free State

The UFS (DSA) (2021) highlights four Key Strategic Areas (KSA) on which their programmes and activities focus, namely:

- Goal 1: Student Success
- Goal 2: Student Well-being
- Goal 3: Student Development
- Goal 4: Student Experience

The current project emphasises the development of transformational leaders, while also focusing on the development of student employability and entrepreneurship (University of the Free State Department of Student Affairs, 2021). In pursuing these goals, appropriate effort may be placed on encouraging the development of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, as well as the encouragement of student participation in these activities. Finally, the positive value of developing collaborative partnerships to foster and support continuous student development, should be noted.

### 3.2 University of Botswana

It appears that UB does not have publically available. As such the following information is based on the university's stated values and available programmes.

Firstly, UB's value of *Students* aims to develop students in a holistic manner. This is supported by the values of *Academic Freedom* and *Academic Integrity* which aim to facilitate students' development as thinkers. Additionally, the values of *Social Responsibility* and *Equity* aim to ensure an awareness of a broad range of social challenges, as well as a sense of fairness and non-discrimination. What we can infer from this is that the UB focuses on producing well developed, socially conscious and well trained graduates.

In support of this the university offers access to their Health and Wellness Centre, counselling, disability support, and cultural, sport and recreation facilities. The Health and Wellness Centre aims to promote healthy lifestyles among staff and students. In pursuing this goal health education, prevention programmes and psychological care are offered to staff and students (*Health and Wellness Centre, University of Botswana, n.d.*). In support of this the Careers and Counselling Centre offers support and counselling relating to academic courses, internships, student employment, volunteering opportunities, career and social interactions as well as graduate employability (*Counselling, University of Botswana, n.d.*). In pursuing the value of equity, the university also offers support to disabled students through the disability support unit (*Disability Support, University of Botswana, n.d.*). In support of the physical and cultural well-being of students the institution also has a range of sports and cultural facilities and coaches

available to aid in students' holistic development (*Culture, Sports and Recreation, University of Botswana*, n.d.). Finally, the institution offers workshops and seminars relating to sports, fitness, motivation, culture and arts to members of the UB community as well as the wider community (*Culture, Sports and Recreation, University of Botswana*, n.d.). Thus, it is clear that the university aims to not only develop its own students, but also give back to the wider community.

### 3.3 University of Namibia

It appears that UNAM does not have publicly available. As such the following information is based on the university's stated values and available programmes.

The value of *equity* indicates that the university aims holistically develop students who are aware of social issues and value fairness and non-discrimination in their interactions with others. Furthermore, through the combined impact of *professionalism*, *integrity* and *accountability* it becomes clear that the university aims to set a clear example to students and develop them into responsible professionals who can enter into the workforce and have a positive impact.

This process is further supported by the Directorate of Student Affairs and the services which they offer to students. Specifically the Career Services & Student Experience section offers academic counselling, career and special programmes, psychosocial counselling services, health and medical services, and disability services. Firstly, the academic counselling services aim to ensure that students have the opportunity to seek advice and support in their pursuit of academic excellence. This can take the form of support relating to study skills, as well as support relating to the individual's psychological well-being as there is also support for a wide range of psychological disorders. The career and special programmes section offers services related to recruiting, career planning and the development of job related skills. In relation to this this section aids in connecting students with future employers, as well as in getting part time jobs while still studying. The psychosocial counselling section aid in ensuring students' psychosocial well-being, by offering counselling and support to students relating especially to their psychological development, psychosocial challenges caused by the necessary adaptations that come with studying, as well as more serious issues like addiction or trauma. The health and medical services section deals with physical health issues experienced by students and aims to ensure that students are capable of maintain their health. This is achieved through a combination of primary healthcare services and education. Finally, the disability services desk aims to support students who are affected by a range of disabilities in such a manner that they are empowered to thrive at university (University of Namibia, n.d.b.).

## 4. Aligned Graduate Attributes

This program will develop and enhance the mentioned graduate attributes.

Graduate Attribute	Alignment to Outcomes
Critical Thinking	This program will develop critical thinking amongst participants as they analyse complex international issues and formulate solutions and strategies.
Oral Communication	A by-product of the program will be the enhancement of self-confidence from participants. Participants will be able to clearly articulate their thoughts in both oral and written communication.
Problem solving	Participants will develop the ability to create innovative solution to problems, and demonstrate resilience and adaptability.
Community Engagement	The program will develop intercultural competencies. Participants will learn to respect cultural differences, understand their diversities and improve communication.

Students are equipped with skills to contemplate, discuss, and engage on issues of diversity, leadership and citizenship in the programme abroad. As a set goal, these students need to acquire and enhance their growth in knowledge and skills, be able to compare what they learn internationally with the situation at the UFS, and ultimately initiate their role as agents of change upon their return.

## 5. The Selection Process

Students will be selected on the basis of strict criteria focused on their commitment to learning, academic record, leadership abilities, and student life participation.

The programme is three-fold:

- the selection and preparatory phase,
- the abroad phase and,
- the return-learning phase.

## 6. The Criteria

To be considered, applicants must meet **all** of the following requirements:

### 1. Student Registration

- Must be a **currently registered UFS student** (Bloemfontein, QwaQwa, and South Campus) for the 2025 academic year.
- Must have completed **at least three consecutive semesters** of study at UFS at the time of application.

### 2. Academic Performance

- Must have a **good academic record** (minimum average of 60% is recommended).
- Must provide an **official academic transcript** as proof of performance.

### 3. Student Conduct

- Must have **no history of disciplinary action** or unresolved matters with the **Student Discipline and Mediation Unit (SDMU)**.

### 4. Citizenship & Travel Requirements

- Must possess a **valid passport** (with at least 6 months' validity from the date of departure).
- Must be eligible and available to **travel for the duration of the programme**.

### 5. Leadership and Campus Involvement

- Must demonstrate **strong leadership qualities**, community engagement, or active involvement in student life activities.
- Must be willing to **participate in all phases** of the program:
  - Pre-departure preparation and training
  - Study visit abroad
  - Return-learning and student engagement phase

### 6. Personal Motivation

- Must submit a **motivational letter (500–700 words)** that clearly outlines:
  - Their motivation for applying
  - What they hope to learn
  - How they intend to contribute to UFS upon return

### 7. References

- Must provide **two reference letters**:
  - One from an academic staff member
  - One from a student affairs or student organisation advisor (e.g., SRC, residence head, society chair)

## 8. Preferred Attributes

While not mandatory, preference may be given to students who:

- Have participated in **volunteering, mentoring, or community outreach** initiatives.
- Have **held leadership positions** within student organisations or societies.
- Demonstrate a **keen interest in African development**, internationalisation, or intercultural learning.

## 9. Submission Requirements

A complete application must include:

- Completed application form (online)
- Academic transcript
- Motivational letter
- Valid passport copy
- Two reference letters

## 6.1 The Selection

A panel will be composed at the discretion of the Executive Director: Student Affairs will shortlist and interview all prospective delegates.

After shortlisting and interviews, the students will enter the last segment of selection. They will have to pass a designed course (inclusive of key information on Botswana & Namibia) with a minimum of 60%. This course will be designed, presented, and assessed by the Program Director: Africa Studies, Dr. Leshoele.

## 7. Return on Investment

Upon their return the students must be involved in student-life programmes on campus, establish volunteer programmes and initiate and establish mentoring programmes for their fellow students

## 8. Conclusion

It is clear that South Africa, Botswana and Namibia have much in common. This can be seen from the history of these countries, the shared futures and the shared values of the participating universities. As such, this program offers potential opportunities for the institutions and the students of these Southern African countries to build links and continue growing. On a final note, it is important not to forget existing partnerships. This project has the potential to build on the previous collaborative efforts with the University of Zambia, as well as other Southern African universities. Together the higher education institutions of Southern Africa can build a better future for their students, their communities, and even the world at large.



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