

FUTURE **lead** CHALLENGE



FLC Leadership
Development
Programme

 UFS
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Kovsies**

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

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



UFS

STUDENT AFFAIRS
STUDENTESAKE
DITABA TSA BAIHTHUTI
STUDENT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The University of the Free State's (UFS) FutureLEAD Challenge (FLC) is a co-curricular student leadership development programme designed and established in partnership by the Office for Student Leadership Development and the Unit for Institutional Change and Social Justice.

FLC is a voluntary, non-credit bearing programme open to all students at the UFS. Implemented for the first time in 2019, the programme has evolved and matured over the past four years into its current format. The FLC utilises Blackboard as a learning platform, running over a period of four to seven months, to virtually engage students on and around understanding and using leadership in various situations and environments.

This brochure highlights the evolution of the programme since 2019, the student engagement trends in the programme and provides students' perspectives and experiences of the programme between 2019 and 2022, as derived from the Executive FLC Report of 2023.

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The programme's evolution through the years has gone hand-in-hand with improvements in student participation, achievement, and general satisfaction, especially noticeable in 2021 and 2022.

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STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Enrolment and participation

Programme Reach

Over the four years of the programme, more than 12 000 students have accessed content related to one or more module and were considered active. 1985 students have written at least one module test, and can be considered as engaged in the programme. There were 577 highly engaged students, who wrote all four module tests, of whom 247 also completed and passed the final assignment to receive a certificate of completion. A further 819 students received certificates of participation. The programme has thus achieved a wide reach over the four years.

Reach of the FLC programme

>12 000		ACTIVE STUDENTS	Accessing content for one or more module
1985		ENGAGED STUDENTS	Writing at least one module test
577		HIGHLY ENGAGED	Writing all four module tests
819		RECEIVING CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION	Dependent on criteria for year
247		RECEIVING CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION	Programme completers

Participation and Achievement Statistics



The proportion of registered students actively participating in the programme increased through the years, reaching a peak of 90% for modules 3 and 4 in 2022.



The number of tests written, the percentage of tests passed, and the average score obtained per test increased substantially in 2021 and 2022.



The pass rate peaked at over 90% of tests written across all four modules in 2021 and 2022.



Test averages increased from a maximum of 80% for a module in 2019 and 2020 to over 85% for all four modules in 2021 and 2022.

Top Achievers

In 2022, the top three performing students in the FLC were acknowledged at the Executive Director's Students Awards (EDSA). The students who received the awards obtained the highest overall marks in the module tests combined with the FLC journal assessments.



STUDENT FEEDBACK

An annual survey was distributed to evaluate students' experiences and satisfaction with the programme. The survey asked students to rate their experience of the programme's learning content, format, structure, platform, technology, and communication by the FLC team. In addition, the survey included questions on personal benefits students gained from the programme and how valuable they found the programme to be.

Overall experience

Overall, students reported that the programme challenged their views and beliefs about leadership, that they gained new knowledge and skills around leadership through the programme, and indicated that they would be able to apply what they learnt in the programme.

In all four years of the programme at least three-quarters of students indicated that they would be able to apply what they learnt in the student community, their future career or more broadly within society.

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I have learn a lot things, like using reflective thinking and design in solving [problems]. The way I see things now, I can proudly say I have changed.

Student Feedback

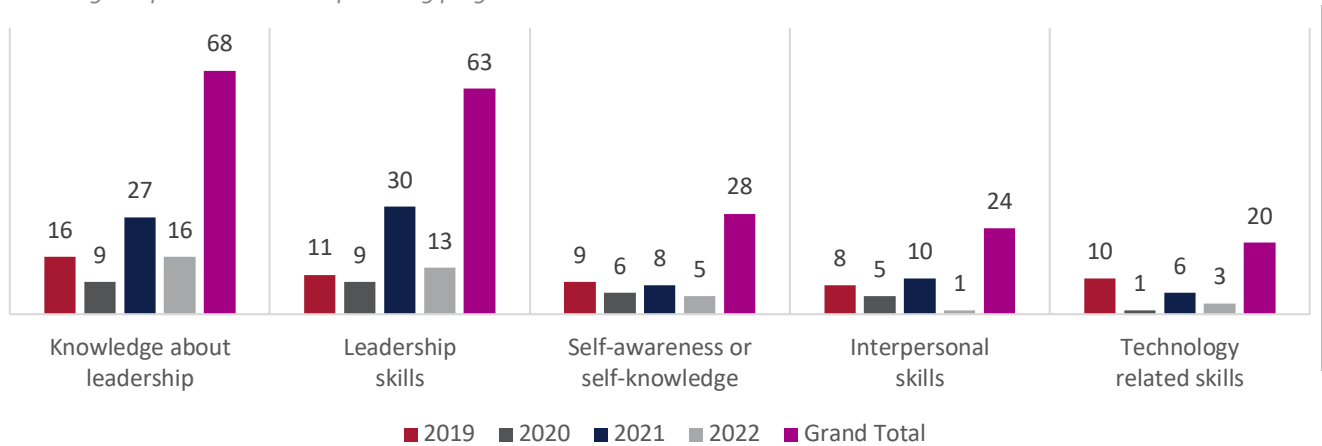
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Student likelihood of recommending the FLC programme to others



Students were asked to describe what they gained from the programme in a qualitative question. Students most frequently responded that they gained knowledge about leadership and leadership skills. Other often-mentioned gains include interpersonal skills, self-awareness or self-knowledge, technology-related skills, self-management knowledge, and emotional intelligence.

Personal gains from the leadership training programme



In addition to the above, it is encouraging to note that, when asked what was least valuable about the leadership training programme, the most frequent response (by 71% of students who provided a response) was that **nothing was not valuable**. In the survey's general comments and recommendations section, students most frequently responded with positive comments. They complimented the programme in general and emphasised how helpful they found it.

Programme objectives



GROWTH

Achieving the knowledge to develop and **grow** as future leaders, in students' personal life, career ambitions or in communities.



PREPARATION

Preparing students who are interested in student leadership roles on campus.



APPLICATION

Acquiring the knowledge, skills and values of leadership – a **“soft skill”** highly valued by the corporate market.

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I found the entire online platform to be exceptional. I enjoyed the online material and found that, being presented with the material online, I could peruse on my own, learn from it more and engage with the content more thoroughly. If the course did not have this online aspect, I would not have bothered to participate whatsoever.

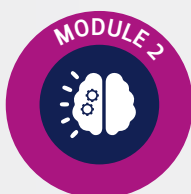
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COGNITIVE COMPLEXITY

*Design thinking
(and leadership in problem solving)*

- Understand how challenges create opportunities for Leadership, Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Discuss how finding solutions to challenges requires empathy, creativity, critical and analytical thinking
- Formulate a new approach to a challenge



COGNITIVE COMPLEXITY

*Reflective Thinking
(and personal development)*

- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of reflective thinking and personal development as a leader
- Distinguish between the steps of the Ladder of Inference
- Discuss the process of reflective thinking
- Apply steps on how to think reflectively and to create positive changes and new ways of self-management



INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCE

*Interpersonal Relations
(and relating positively to others)*

- Critically analyse what it means to successfully 'lead' an idea/ association/ team/ project
- Recognise the steps of the process to become a Transformational Leader
- Describe the value of a leader being Emotionally Intelligent
- Identify and discuss why leaders also need the skills of Collaboration and Conflict Management



PRACTICAL COMPETENCE

Technological Competence (in leadership)

- Critically analyse the role of technology in leadership
- Describe the challenges that technology has posed to the relationship leaders have with followers
- Identify and discuss the influence that technology has had in changing how collaboration works
- Recognise the capabilities needed and best strategies to lead with technology

Programme functioning:

The FLC content is presented over 4-7 months on Blackboard, along with one onsite panel discussion per theme. Each theme is active for a period of two weeks, after which a test is written. The content remains available for students to access after a theme is completed.

The element of convenience is the greatest asset of the programme – students can work at their own time and pace within the specified timeframe. The theme-based approach provides in-depth exposure to topics.

The online programme was expanded to the South and Qwaqwa campuses during 2020 – with strong interest from students on these campuses. Each module includes a presentation, reading material, videos, practical assignments, an expert panel discussion and an online assessment. The fully-online format of the programme meant that students could participate despite the COVID-19 lockdown measures.

The programme is designed to offer students two different types of achievement – acknowledging **participation** and **completion**.

2023

Participation

Complete at least 1 module



Online content



View recorded discussion



Pass test with 70%

Certificate shows all modules passed

Completion



Complete all themes and pass all tests



Participate in reflection journal and pass with 60%







In conclusion, the FLC's evolution into its current format was accompanied by clear improvements in student participation, achievement and general satisfaction. Although there are plans for growth and further evolution, the programme can be deemed successful and, in students' own words,

“an amazing experience”,

“excellent”,

and “the best programme ever”.

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