

## Advantages of being an ambassador



- You will receive formal training
- A certificate after completion of the semester as an ambassador
- An impressive entry on your curriculum vitae
- An opportunity to learn about international culture
- A chance to practise your language skills
- An opportunity to develop your communication skills
- An opportunity to build international contacts.

## Umoja Buddy Programme events

Each semester, the OIA will organise several events that you and your buddy can attend. Such events include the welcome function, integration activities, dialogue sessions, etc. You will receive email updates on upcoming training and social events from the UBP coordinator, so please keep an eye on your email.

You are not obligated to attend these events, but you are required to notify your buddy of such events.

## Things to do with your buddy

In addition to organising various events, the OIA will organise a welcome reception for you and your buddy as part of your first meeting. The OIA would also encourage you to take the initiative to plan activities for you and your buddy, particularly activities that will give them a taste of Bloemfontein life and South African culture. When planning such events, it is important to bear in mind that other cultures have different ideas about an enjoyable and appropriate way to spend one's leisure time. If you have any ideas for events that you would like to share with us, please email the Umoja Buddy Programme Coordinator at [RantsaneLP@ufs.ac.za](mailto:RantsaneLP@ufs.ac.za)



### Note

Maintain contact with your buddy and email them regularly.

## Communicating with your buddy

Maintain contact with your buddy and email or text them regularly. The beginning of the semester, the examination period, and the end of the semester are when your buddy may need you the most for extra support. Therefore, think carefully about how you communicate with them during times of great pressure.

### Here are some tips:

- Use clear language and explain South African slang.
- Check with your buddy if they understand.
- Be aware that building a good rapport with your buddy takes time and patience. Therefore, do not rush the process!
- You may want to research where your buddy comes from to gain a better understanding of their home culture and language.

Remember, people communicate differently, and non-verbal communication speaks the loudest. Therefore, be sensitive to this. While it is important to be yourself and to act naturally, keep in mind that other cultures may have different ideas and views about appropriate dress codes, personal space, physical and eye contact. Be mindful of how you engage with them at all times.

## Where to find more information

As an ambassador, you can't be expected to have all the answers, but you can direct your buddy in the right direction by helping them to find the right person or service provider.

### Student services

To find out more about the list of UFS student services offered on campus, please encourage your buddy to consult the following link and to make use of these services <https://www.ufs.ac.za/students>

Be sharing ... caring ... have fun ... and always remember that we are here to help. If you want ideas and advice or have any queries or concerns, contact the UBP Coordinator at the Office for International Affairs.



### Note to self

Note to self: As your buddy settles in, they will gradually need less and less of your support. This is a good sign. It means that you are doing an excellent job!

# UMOJA

## BUDDY PROGRAMME

## How To Guide

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# Thank you for being part of the umoja buddy programme!

This how-to guide will provide you with step-by-step instructions on how to become a successful ambassador. As an ambassador, you will assist with the adjustment process of new arrivals into the UFS culture and provide a friendly face and a helping hand. The University of the Free State (UFS) student environment is very rich, with diverse students hailing from all over the world. Each student is unique and has their own needs and expectations. It is therefore important for the ambassador to be open, flexible, and responsive to these needs and to assist these students with matters concerning their well-being.

## UFS international students

Every year, the UFS welcomes around 1 000 international students across our three campuses who enrol for a wide variety of different programmes. Students may be doing full-time undergraduate or postgraduate programmes or participate in study-abroad programmes such as Erasmus+, and Semester Exchange programmes.



### Note to self

You determine the method and frequency of communication with your Buddy! Also, how much of your personal life you want to share.

## Ambassador basics

### It is the responsibility of an ambassador to

- Initiate A Meeting With Your Buddy Upon Matching;
- Help Create A Welcoming And Friendly Environment;
- Give A Guided Tour Of The University;
- Help Locate Amenities Such As Banks And Shops On And Around The University Precinct;
- Be A Source Of Clarification, Where Possible, Of Policies, Procedures, And Protocol;
- Answer Frequently Asked Questions To Help Lessen Uncertainty;
- Be Patient And Positive;
- Help Ease The Cultural Shock And Uncertainties;
- Attend A Training Workshop (S); And
- Be A Good Representative Of The University Of Free State.



### Remember

When interacting with your buddy, you are an ambassador of the University of the Free State. You have a big role to play in providing them with a positive first impression of the university and making them feel welcome in their new home for the next few months. Make an effort to connect with your buddy and supporting them – be friendly, clear, and open-minded.

## So, What does an ambassador commit to?

- Spending face-to-face time together at least twice a month
- Staying in contact via email and phone
- Accompanying your buddy to international student and/or university activities
- Planning independent activities with your buddy during their semester
- Providing feedback to the Umoja Buddy Programme (UBP) Coordinator.

## How the Umoja Buddy Programme works

- The University of Free State Umoja Buddy Programme will run in the first and second semesters.
- For the first semester, the Office for International Affairs (OIA) will link all first-entry international students with matching ambassadors.
- Going forward, once the OIA receives a buddy request from new international students, the office will match them with an ambassador.
- The OIA will be responsible for the matching up, which will be based on the area of study, faculty, age, and language capability, and will endeavour to accommodate specific requests, where possible.
- The OIA will email the details of their buddy to the ambassador.
- The ambassador will be responsible for making contact with their buddy and organising the first meeting.

