



Admissions Policy

2012

Preamble

Our policy is to be flexible on access, active in redress and rigorous on success.

Our *admissions* policy is about access and about redress. It is designed to ensure that we recruit the best students we can. It is designed to ensure that we have a diverse student body (where the South African component of our student body increasingly reflects the demographic diversity of the South African population and which has a significant number of international students) because we believe that everyone gains from a diverse student body.

And it is designed for redress. The lawⁱ requires this. The legacy of decades of inequality, and in particular structural educational inequality, in South Africa and the continuing (and in many cases increasing) disparities in public education provision is a reality with which our admissions policy must deal. We interpret this as placing an obligation on us to provide redress for past racially-based discrimination in our society, in our schools and in public higher education; and because we acknowledge that the effects of pre-1994 discrimination remain in our society.

In order to meet this obligation we divide South Africanⁱⁱ applicants into categories: those whom we judge to have been affected by inequality and disadvantage (*the redress categories*), and those who have not (*the open category*). We do this on the basis of the self-declared race category of each applicant. International applicants are a separate category.

If you are a South African we ask you to indicate whether or not you belong to one of the following previously-disadvantaged categoriesⁱⁱⁱ and we will apply our redress measures to those who do so:

- black South African; or
- Indian South African; or
- coloured South African; or
- Chinese South African.

These four are referred to as the ‘redress categories’ in the tables that follow in the faculty entries. We will use your indication as a member of a previously disadvantaged category for effecting redress because it remains the best initial, broad-brush measure of past structural inequality. We are working towards alternative measures for identifying disadvantage; a test for such measures must be that they identify disadvantage so that we can give disadvantaged South Africans of ability the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

South Africans who choose not to categorise themselves in this way or who categorise themselves as a white^{iv} South African will be administered in the open category, and our redress measures will not apply to them.

An important aspect of our policy is our commitment to achieving better success and throughput rates. Our academic development and intervention programmes are key to this. 1- These are described in more detail in this Prospectus. Many of these academic and intervention programmes are deliberately designed to enable the University to reach our admission goals of redress and diversity, and admission to them is limited to applicants whom we judge to have been affected by inequality and disadvantage.

International Applicants

We do not require international applicants^v to classify themselves in these ways. And as our redress policies are designed to deal with the South African legacy, they apply only to South African citizens or South African permanent residents

Selection methods

Selection of applicants is based on Admissions Points Scores (APS) (see below for the way these are derived for different qualifications and programmes). Admission to all undergraduate programmes is competitive. Our process involves four key steps: these are as follows.

1. We set the class size for the qualification (both for regular programmes and for extended degree and academic development programmes);
2. We set the minimum requirements for the qualification (e.g., for Engineering qualifications we prescribe minimum achievement levels in Mathematics and Science) and the minimum admission admissions point score (APS) below which we will not admit; these minima differ for regular and extended degree/academic development programmes. (These will be levels below which we think that there is no reasonable chance of success.)
3. For each qualification or group of qualifications we will set target redress enrolment targets for each redress category, and (where we need to do so) we will set limits for international enrolments for each qualification.
4. We offer places to the best applicants in each category, who have met or exceeded the minimum achievement levels.

How does this work in practice?

The following example which applies to applicant for the MBChB illustrates this. It relates to applicants who categorise themselves as black South African. We set a target number of MBChB places which we hope to give to qualified black South African applicants. This will be a proportion of the total 200 first year MBChB places. We set this target because we aim for a diverse MBChB class, and in order to give redress to black South Africans. We then offer places to the best qualified of this category who meet our minimum requirements, up to the target number. Competition for the MBChB is tough and the cut-off point will be high (and higher than our minimum). But because of the legacy which is the basis for the redress policy we have adopted, we expect that the cut-off for black South African applicants for the MBChB may well be lower than the cut-off in the other categories and in particular, in the cut-off for successful applicants in the open category.

Equity Targets

We set overall enrolment targets and equity targets per programme. These are aspirational targets, not quotas. All faculties will aim to admit specified minimum numbers of eligible South African Black, Chinese, Coloured and Indian students in accordance with these targets.

a.) First and Second Choices

Applications will be considered regardless of whether the programme is the applicant's first or second choice. Exceptions to this principle apply in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

b.) Closing date

The closing date for all undergraduate applications for admission in 2012 is 30 September 2011.

c.) Places reserved for decanal discretion

We may allocate a small number of places (fewer than 5%) for decision by decanal discretion in the following cases:

- (i) Disabled applicants
- (ii) Repeat applicants (provided they are still sufficiently competitive)
- (iii) Mature age applicants (who may be admitted on the basis of Recognition of Prior Learning if they do not have matriculation exemption.)
- (iv) In special cases in undergraduate programmes in the Faculty of Health Sciences where (see detail in Faculty entry below)

Applications in each of the above cases will be considered on merit.

d.) Conditional Offers and Early Conditional offers

We may make conditional offers to high achievers based on final Grade 11 results, and/or Grade 12 April, June and September examination results. Early conditional offers will also be made to high achieving international applicants. Conditions are attached to early offers; the person to whom an early conditional offer is made must meet a specified level of performance in his or her final examinations for the conditional offer to be confirmed.

Conditional offers lapse where the applicant fails to meet the specified level of performance in the final examination, or any other condition set in the offer. Early conditional offers may be made to high achievers, but most applications will be considered together, after the closing date of 30 September 2011. Where we can we will make conditional offers at this stage but some decisions will be not be made until we have the NSC results in early January 2012.

Applicants who do not secure conditional offers are reconsidered when their final results become available.

e.) South African school-leaving certificates

Undergraduate applicants who have completed their schooling in South Africa may hold either the National Senior Certificate (NSC), or the Senior Certificate (SC). The admission criteria reflected in this document will cover both qualifications.

f.) The National Benchmark Tests (NBTs)

All first-time entering undergraduate applicants normally resident in South Africa are required to write the National Benchmark Tests (NBTs) prior to admission. In some cases, transferring students to UCT may be required to write the NBTs as well. Applicants are required to meet the costs of writing the NBTs (currently R50 per test, plus R10 administration fee). Where

applicants are not able to write the NBTs because of distance from a testing venue, the onus is on the applicant to contact the University in order to make alternative arrangements, or to apply to be exempted from writing the test/s prior to admission. If exemption is granted you will be required to write the NBTs at a later date.

There are two NBTs:

The Academic and Quantitative literacy test (AQL) consists of two components, namely, academic literacy and quantitative literacy. While one test is written, an applicant will be awarded separate scores for each component. Applicants to all faculties write the AQL.

The Mathematics test is based on the Mathematics Grade 12 syllabus and therefore will only be offered from August each year. Applicants who wish to enter a programme with mathematics-based coursework are required to write the Mathematics Test. One score is awarded for the Mathematics Test.

g.) Scoring percentages achieved in the National Senior Certificate

The percentages achieved in National Senior Certificate examinations (preliminary and final examinations) will be allocated an admissions score equal to that percentage (see Annexure A). The sum of six subject scores, excluding Life Orientation, but including English and any other required subject(s) for the relevant programme, is considered when deciding on admission. (In other words, for a given programme where Maths, and Physical Science are required, we will take the scores for English, Maths, Physical Science and the next three best subjects other than Life Orientation to compute the NSC score towards the APS.)

Where only the NSC contributes towards the admissions points score (APS), the APS is shown as a number out of 600 followed by NSC average percentage in brackets, in the tables.

h.) The recognition of Life Orientation as a subject in the National Senior Certificate

We recognise the importance of Life Orientation as a subject and the skills with which this subject equips students. Applicants to UCT who write the NSC must achieve a minimum rating of 4 (50%) in Life Orientation.

i.) Selection instruments used in the calculation of points for the Senior Certificate and National Senior Certificate

i. The Senior Certificate

Points are allocated per subject, and scores for six subjects (including subjects as required by individual programmes) are added together to produce an admissions point score (APS) per applicant. Annexure A outlines the allocation of scores.

ii. The National Senior Certificate

Points are allocated per subject, and scores for six subjects (excluding Life Orientation, and including English and the subjects as required for individual programmes) are added together to produce an admissions point score (APS) per applicant. (In some programmes the APS is derived from both the National Senior Certificate and the NBT.)

Scores achieved in the National Senior Certificate (final or preliminary examinations written in South Africa) are equal to the percentage achieved for that examination. Thus, a maximum of score of 100 is allocated to each subject score, allowing for a maximum score achieved of 600 (six subjects). Results below 40% for any subject do not attract a score.

Annexure A outlines the allocation of APS allocation for scores achieved on the NSC.

j.) Mathematics Paper 3 as part of the National Senior Certificate

We encourage all Grade 12 learners taking the NSC Mathematics who have the option to write Mathematics Paper 3. It is not a formal requirement for admission to any programme at UCT. But we advise applicants to take the Maths Paper 3 option where they can, and to write the Paper 3 examination; this is especially the case for applicants wishing to do programmes in Science and Engineering & the Built Environment as achievement in Paper 3 contributes to the APS.

k.) Selection instruments used in the calculation of points for School-leaving certificates administered by Cambridge International Examinations (CIE)

Applicants holding any CIE certificate must satisfy the requirements for Matriculation Exemption as stipulated by the Matriculation Board.

In the case of admission to some programmes only, the scores of CIE subjects are converted to an APS. See Annexure A for this table.

l.) Selection instruments used in the admission of holders of an International Baccalaureate Diploma

Applicants holding the International Baccalaureate Diploma (not the International Baccalaureate Certificate, which is not sufficient for admission) must satisfy the requirements for Matriculation Exemption as stipulated by the Matriculation Board.

The IB Diploma is assessed in different ways, and the criteria for admission listed below will stipulate how it is to be assessed. The diploma can either be assessed using only performance in specific subjects, or using such performance in conjunction with a score reflected in one of two ways. The first is to take the score reflected on the IB Diploma itself and the second is to convert the performance of all scores to a score for this purpose. The table in Annexure A shows the conversion of IB Diploma scores.

m.) Meeting the minimum requirements for admission (*matriculation*)

For applicants holding a *Senior Certificate*, the minimum requirements for admission to degree study is a Senior Certificate with matriculation endorsement or a certificate of matriculation exemption issued by the Matriculation Board.

For applicants holding a *National Senior Certificate*, the minimum is an NSC endorsed to the effect that the candidate has met the minimum requirements for admission to degree study, or, where the applicant wishes to be admitted to diploma or higher certificate programme, that the relevant eligibility is met.

For applicants holding *other forms of school-leaving qualifications*, the minimum requirement for admission to degree study is meeting the requirements for a certificate of matriculation exemption issued by the Matriculation Board.

In addition, *all applicants* must meet the requirements for proficiency in English, the medium of instruction at UCT. The English language requirements are stipulated in the Language Policy of the University.

ⁱ S37 of The Higher Education Act, No 101 of 1997 provides that the admissions policy: “must provide appropriate measures for the redress of past inequalities and may not unfairly discriminate in any way”.

ⁱⁱ South African citizens and South African permanent residents

ⁱⁱⁱ Our use of these categories must not be taken to imply that we accept the notions of race that were the basis of race classification in pre-1994 South Africa. We suggest that South African citizens and South African permanent-resident applicants should categorise themselves as they would, and as an employer would have to do under South African employment equity legislation.

^{iv} As for note iii above

^v This is also required by the Department of Higher Education and Training. Statistical reports require UCT to report on South African applicants and on all students by “race”.