



University of Cape Town
Universiteit van Kaapstad • University of Cape Town • Iyunivesithi Yasekapa

About the University of Cape Town





Welcome to the University of Cape Town



UCT aspires to become a premier academic meeting point between South Africa, the rest of Africa and the world. Taking advantage of expanding global networks and our distinct vantage point in Africa, we are committed, through innovative research and scholarship, to grapple with the key issues of our natural and social worlds. We aim to produce graduates whose qualifications are internationally recognised and locally applicable, underpinned by values of engaged citizenship and social justice.



“The University of Cape Town (UCT) is Africa’s top-ranked university that attracts brilliant minds from across the continent and the world. With over 100 of our researchers ranking among the world’s top 2%, we produce cutting-edge research that answers complex problems; and prioritise academic excellence. Our graduates are sought after by top companies globally and that is because we offer innovative, socially engaged curricular, equipping our students with skills to be innovators, change makers and problem solvers.”



Professor Mosa Moshabela
Vice-Chancellor



A brief history



1829

The South African College (SAC), UCT's predecessor, established as a private secondary school for boys.

1873

The University of the Cape of Good Hope opened, and the SAC began preparing its pupils for tertiary education, moving its junior classes to the newly created South African College School (SACS).

1887

The SAC grew steadily and admitted women for the first time.

1900

The SAC transferred all of its school pupils to SACS, in effect becoming a university college under the University of the Cape of Good Hope.

1918

The new University of Cape Town (UCT) made teaching its first priority with the establishment of five new faculties.

1928

The bulk of UCT's campus moved to the Groote Schuur Estate, and its student body swelled by 65% to over 4 200 students.

1950

While UCT gave increasing support to teaching and research, the apartheid regime barred black students from enrolling without government permission.

1968

The number of black students at UCT fell to 411, from 552 just 10 years earlier. When UCT revoked the appointment of a black lecturer, Archie Mafeje, student outrage boiled over, resulting in a nine-day sit-in at the Bremner building.

1969–1985

UCT students increasingly opposed apartheid policies, clashing more directly with police both on and off campus. Despite this turbulent environment, UCT strengthened teaching and research by providing more facilities and new buildings to house them.

1985–2025

The waning of apartheid opened the way for increasingly rapid transformation of the campus community, even before the first democratic elections in 1994. The 1996 appointment of the first black Vice-Chancellor + the 1999 appointment of the first black Chancellor.

Where do our students come from?

Students come to UCT from all over Africa and the world ... In 2025, 29 427 students were registered for studies at UCT, including 25 450 South African students, 1 105 international students, 2 205 SADC students, 667 students from the rest of Afrika.

After graduating, UCT students take up positions in every sector of the economy, around the world. UCT's Development and Alumni Department is in contact with over 200 000 alumni in 164 countries, some 142 000 of whom live in South Africa.



UCT
today

There are six faculties

Students by faculty (undergraduate and postgraduate) in 2025.



Commerce
7 464



Engineering
& the Built
Environment
4 355



Health
Sciences
5 201



Humanities
7 690



Law
1 289



Science
3 397



The Centre for Higher Education and Development (CHED) partners with the six faculties to ensure students don't just gain access to UCT, but also succeed here. They work to improve UCT's teaching and learning environment.

Approximately 29 396 students are enrolled to study at UCT each year (17 518 undergraduates, 11 439 postgraduates, 439 occasional)

4984 staff. Over the course of the year, anywhere between 100 and 1 000 students are employed by the university





8 300 students lived in UCT's 39 catered or self-catering student residences in 2024.



Students societies

100+ student societies are active on campus, divided into five categories: academic, national/cultural, faith, special interest and political. Students can choose to participate in almost 40 sporting codes, including such diverse sports as jiu jitsu, fencing, soccer, rowing and rugby.

1.2 million print volumes and an estimated 53 km of shelf space are available at UCT Libraries.

25 km² The total size of the UCT campuses, including its satellite campuses in Observaatory, home to the Faculty of Health Sciences; Gardens, where the Hidding campus for fine art, film, media, and drama studies is located; and the Atlantic Seaboard, where the Graduate School of Business' Breakwater campus is located.

Massive open online courses (MOOCs) 23 MOOCs are currently running at UCT and have attracted more than 280 000 participants from over 100 different countries across the globe.



Research

We are committed to both protecting and encouraging curiosity-driven research that has a real impact on our communities and environment.

442 of South Africa's (SA) National Research Foundation (NRF)-rated scholars are UCT's academic staff. The NRF allocates ratings based on the academic's recent research outputs and impact, as perceived by international peer reviewers.

35 of SA's NRF A-rated scholars are researchers at or affiliated with UCT and recognised as international leaders in their respective fields of research.

22 of the country's South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI) chairs are held by researchers at UCT.

Research and innovation in numbers



- R4 billion value in external research contracts approved in 2024
- Accumulated income of more than R50 million from intellectual property commercialisation.
- >R250 million of equity in spin-off companies in 2024.
- 1889 research contracts signed in 2024.
- 178 active inventions, with 44 patent applications filed and 26 patents granted in 2024.
- 40 spin-off companies emanated from UCT research
- Over 500 jobs created by spin-off companies

