



Faculty of Law





Welcome to the Faculty of Law

The Faculty of Law might be the smallest at UCT, but its footprint is large – whether you're talking about the impact of its staff and students on society, the largesse of its alumni or the diversity of its research. The faculty strives to make a significant contribution to legal education and intellectual discourse, both nationally and internationally.

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“Through scholarship, research, teaching and engagement with a wide range of communities beyond the University, UCT's Faculty of Law community shapes legal practice and policy in a wide range of environments - from contracts to taxation, intellectual property, mining, children's rights, privacy rights, the environment and much more. Our students find numerous opportunities to participate in a wide range of research projects and are able to access guidance and leadership in areas of specific interest. Together, our staff and students pursue new paths, many of which intersect in innovative ways with other disciplines, and contribute to influencing legislation and policy in South Africa, on the continent and internationally.”

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Professor Damwood Chirwa
Dean of Law

Did you know?

1. The Faculty of Law is the oldest law school in South Africa – with the first lecture given in 1859 – and is ranked in the top 150 law schools worldwide.

2. The faculty has a range of international agreements that enable students and staff to pursue exchanges and research relationships in Australia, Canada, Ethiopia, Europe, Kenya, the United Kingdom and the United States.

3. Students and alumni from the faculty work across the globe, contributing excellence to the legal profession, the development of law, and research in the field.

4. The faculty's Law Students Council has regularly won students leadership awards.

5. The faculty has alumni working across the globe – contributing excellence to the legal profession, the development of Law, and research in the field.

6. The faculty runs a funding campaign – Excellence in Law – to attract support for student scholarships (among other projects). The faculty's Endowment Fund supports in the region of R2.5million in undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships each year. These scholarships are in addition to a range of other faculty scholarships, and to core university initiatives to provide fee support to students.





How do I apply?



UCT holds an annual Open Day for prospective students to visit the campus and find out more about degree programmes they are interested in.

The Faculty of Law encourages you to attend Open Day if possible – come and find us at middle campus.



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Law Faculty Alumni

Each LLB class that graduates forms part of our growing cohort of Law Alumni, who are active supporters of the faculty, giving their time, energy and generous funding support to our work. We strive to keep these alumni posted on our activities, achievements and faculty initiatives, and we hold regular alumni events, such as the annual reunion. To connect with your classmates and to find out what being a Law Alumnus is all about, join UCT Alumni Connect by visiting <https://uctalumnicconnect.com/>.

Law Faculty Students

The Faculty of Law is home to almost 1 400 students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Our students are from diverse backgrounds, with at least 19% of our students coming from other countries.

Our teaching and research staff are leaders in their fields:


- The first National Research Foundation (NRF) chair in Humanities was given to the Law Faculty, which is currently home to two NRF SARCHI Chairs. Two of our UCT law professors are NRF A-rated researchers. 22 UCT law academics are NRF-rated. Our academic staff are among the leading public intellectuals in the country.
- Thanks to the generosity of alumni, the faculty is able to offer financial support annually to around 30 LLB students, as well as multiple postgraduate scholarships – including the Dikgang Moseneke Postgraduate Fellowship.
- The law school has ensured an enormous increase in the number of black South African LLB students in the last decade. This is critical to the faculty's mission to contribute to the transformation of South Africa's legal profession.
- The faculty teaches undergraduate law courses to thousands of students in other faculties.



Careers in Law

The faculty teaches undergraduate law courses to over 3 000 students in other faculties. Just over 50% of our graduates pursue a career in traditional legal practice through corporate law firms. The rich variety of law-based careers, however, also includes career paths in the corporate world, in government service, in the non-profit sector and in academia.



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- Three departments
1. Commercial Law
 2. Private Law
 3. Public Law



Commercial Law

The Department of Commercial Law covers a wide range of legal fields. Apart from the core LLB courses – corporation law and business transactions law – the department is also responsible for professional courses in business law, company law and labour law.



Private Law

The Department of Private Law is made up of active researchers whose fields of study cohere closely with our teaching. Key areas of interest include the doctrine and theory of the law of delict; customary law; land law and land redistribution; unjustified enrichment; family law, including Muslim family law; law of contract; law of succession; adjectival law, in particular civil procedure, comparative law and the nature of legal systems; various facets of legal history, including Roman law; the theory of legal education and the jurisprudential context of private law.



Public Law

The Department of Public Law is responsible for undergraduate and postgraduate courses in specialised topics within the broad fields of constitutional law, administrative law, human rights, environmental law, international law and criminal justice. Within the Department of Public Law several research projects that have significant resonance for our constitutional democracy are currently under way. One project concerns violence against women and especially the issue of sexual assault rape; another looks at safety and security, particularly within local communities in Cape Town.



Socially responsible graduates

All students studying an LLB at UCT are required to complete 30 hours of unpaid community service, which includes time offering services through one of the two law clinics housed in the faculty. In addition, there are a range of other student-led initiatives and societies to get involved in. These include the Law Students' Council; the UCT branch of SLSJ (Students for Law and Social Justice); the UCT Moot Society; SHAWCO Law, a law-focused society linked to SHAWCO; UCT Women in Law; and others. A quick search on Facebook provides a view into the extra-curricular work of UCT Law students.



Internationally recognised research



The faculty's research is recognised for its great relevance to the national and international needs of industry, as shown by the considerable industrial funding of research programmes and projects. Apart from the active research members in each department, there are 12 research units based in the departments pursuing specialised areas of research and practice. These include the innovative UCT Law Clinic and UCT Refugee Rights Unit, both of which provide opportunities for students to do their community service hours as part of the LLB programme. In addition to the two clinics, the faculty's eight research units include the Centre for Comparative Law in Africa, the Centre of Criminology, the Democratic Governance & Rights Unit, the Institute of Development & Labour Law, the Intellectual Property Unit, the Centre for Law & Society, the Institute of Marine & Environmental Law, and the Land and Accountability Research Centre.

