

University of the Free State Institutional Profile

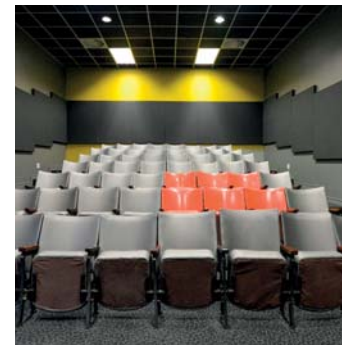
www.ufs.ac.za

*Inspiring excellence.
Transforming lives.*

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







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Message from the Rector and Vice-Chancellor:

Prof Francis Petersen



The University of the Free State (UFS) is a progressive university focused on transformation as a core strategy. Apart from being a university that excels in teaching, learning, and research, the UFS is focused on making a social impact on society.

At the UFS, we have implemented cutting-edge measures for teaching at all levels. State-of-the-art equipment allows for interactive and engaging classroom experiences, helping us to create the class of the future. We have become a leading institution in South Africa in terms of quality learning and teaching and student success.

Our students are encouraged to grasp every opportunity and to take part in student life activities. We are working hard to provide them with an experience filled with the opportunity to build a better tomorrow for themselves.

In terms of research, we invest in areas that will address relevant local, national, and global problems. Our researchers and academics are excelling in various fields and have achieved international recognition for their work.



When visiting our three campuses, visitors are met by social and environmentally friendly spaces that seeks to make the campus a comfortable home away from home with stunning artworks, impressive facilities, and buildings where energy-saving systems were introduced.

We also do not back away from the challenges in enhancing our environmental footprint; with among others solar plants, and water saving initiatives such as waterwise gardens and greywater systems we incorporated eco-friendliness, and sustainability into our planning and implementation processes.

Our infrastructure and student accommodation projects are considered the best in the country, benchmarked against other institutions.

In pursuing excellence, we strive to provide an environment that is enabling and facilitates a sense of caring for our staff and students.

We have certainly come a long way since we opened our doors in 1904, and today we stand proud as an institution that lives up to its motto of inspiring excellence and transforming lives.



Our vision

The UFS is a research-led, student-centred, and regionally engaged university that contributes to development and social justice through the production of globally competitive graduates and knowledge.

Our motto

IN VERITATE SAPIENTIAE LUX

(In Truth is the Light of Wisdom)

The UFS in numbers



established in
1904

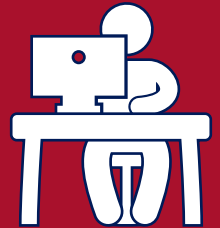
7
faculties



total permanent
staff

2 581

(including research
instruction staff = 822)



1 888

distance-learning students,
South Campus



41 locations
of teaching

127

departments
where
academic staff
have been
appointed



34 822

total
undergraduate
students

6 403

total postgraduate
students



8 606

graduates per annum

1 156

international
students

(not including
South African
headcount)



41 675 total students

29 086 Bloemfontein Campus

8 147 Qwaqwa Campus

4 442 South Campus

(including occasional students = 450)

Our campuses

Bloemfontein Campus

The Bloemfontein Campus is situated in Bloemfontein, the capital of the Free State. Situated in central South Africa, it is the oldest and biggest of the three campuses.

Undergraduate and postgraduate studies in all seven faculties are presented on this campus.

The campus houses the historic Main Building and Abraham Fischer Residence, numerous new student residences, lecture and study spaces, and sports facilities. All campus facilities are available in one location and going to a class or a meeting, one can enjoy the beautiful surroundings, including the gardens, artworks, buildings, and other facilities. The magnificent Red Square with its modern, urban landscaping, celebrates the university's diversity with its welcoming social spaces that promote a community environment. The area includes a low-maintenance and waterwise garden with lush greenery. Often, students can be found relaxing or passing the time between classes under the shady trees.

Braille-guided areas, ramps, and elevators for visually and mobility impaired students contribute to a culture of care and kindness.



Qwaqwa Campus

The vibrant Qwaqwa Campus in the picturesque Eastern Free State serves a rapidly growing number of rural students from the immediate area and surrounding provinces. The campus, incorporated on 1 January 2003, also has a number of international students completing their studies in the beautiful surroundings at the foot of the majestic Drakensberg.

The campus has a strong focus on socio-economic development, informed by a rural context. Programmes, underpinned by a strong research agenda, focus on identifying the best possible strategies to create jobs and stimulate economic growth in this area.

Another strong focus is the mountain research conducted in the Afromontane Research Unit (ARU), a continental leader in African mountain research. The ARU facilitates the development of a high-excellence African-based mountain research 'community of practice' that leads African mountain research from within Africa.

The Qwaqwa Campus brings higher education, research, and community engagement to this area.



South Campus

Our South Campus provides alternative access to higher education for promising students who did not obtain the required marks in their final school examinations. Several programmes are in place that offer students the opportunity to access higher education. Through these programmes, students can ultimately enter the mainstream curriculum after completing the preparation courses. By offering this opportunity, students who might otherwise not have been able to enter university, now get to develop their full potential and realise their dreams.

Since its incorporation in 2004, the campus has been playing a significant role in the economy of the region, the enhancement of its people, as well as being a hub for distance-learning programmes offered by the UFS. This campus, nestled in the hills overlooking Bloemfontein, can accommodate 4 000 students.



Accessible and inclusive campuses

The UFS is committed to providing inclusive and accessible living, teaching, and learning spaces. Our UFS Center for Universal Access and Disability Support helps to create and sustain a universally accessible environment that is welcoming and accepting to persons with disabilities. Ongoing developments at the university to address the challenges facing persons with disabilities include tactile paving, ramps at the entrances of some buildings to make the premises accessible, signage inside and outside buildings, and dedicated seating in lecture rooms.

While the centre coordinates academic support for students with disabilities, the university also has a well-established South African Sign Language interpreting service for deaf students. With a large population of students with visual impairments, we provide study material in different accessible formats, i.e. Braille.

Our faculties

The university offers a range of high-quality and internationally accepted degrees, diplomas, and certificate courses in its seven faculties (listed below are some of the programmes on offer):



Faculty of Health Sciences: National Control Laboratory for Biological Products, Clinical Simulation and Skills Unit, Cardiothoracic Surgery, Community Health, School of Nursing, Simulation training, Virology, Pathology and Biomedical Sciences, Medical Physics



Faculty of Law: Free State Centre for Human Rights, School of Financial Planning Law, UFS Law Clinic, Mercantile Law, Public Law, Private Law

Faculty of Education: Early Childhood Development, Mathematics and IT Education, Natural Sciences Education, Technology Education



Faculty of Theology and Religion: Historical and Constructive Theology, Practical and Missional Theology, Old and New Testament Studies, Religion Studies

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences: Plant Pathology, Chemistry, Geology, Disaster Management, Microbial, Biochemical and Food Biotechnology, Physics, Animal, Wildlife and Grassland Sciences, Sustainable Agriculture, Rural Development and Extension



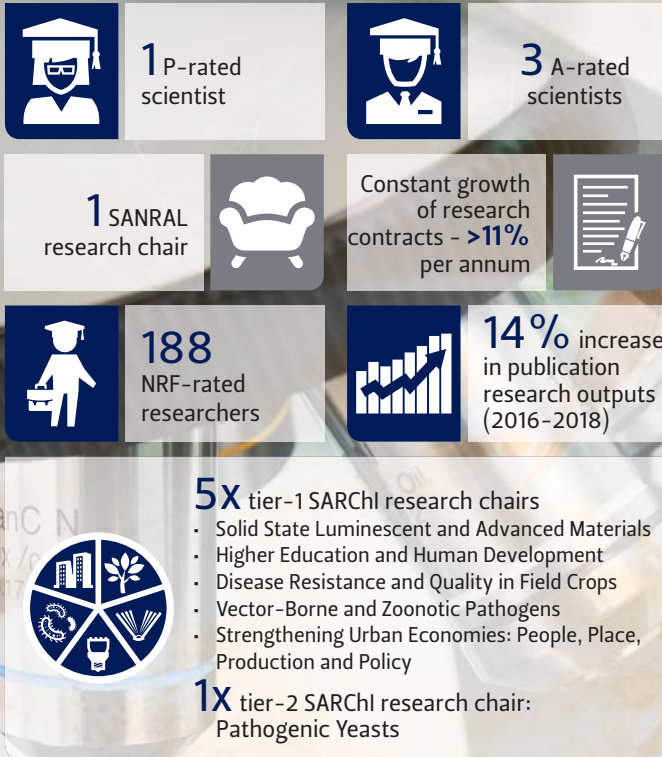
Faculty of the Humanities: Film and Visual Media, Fine Arts, Drama and Theatre Arts, Odeion School of Music, South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies, Political Science, Africa Studies, Gender Studies

Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences: Business School, Business Management, Centre for Development Support, Department of Public Administration and Management, Department of Industrial Psychology, School of Accountancy, Economics and Finance





Research that matters



Research goals

Our ultimate goal is to make the UFS an internationally competitive research university, while remaining focused on local, national, and continental priorities. This represents a direct and strategic route to excellence, while simultaneously optimising the use of scarce resources.

Areas of impact

Our focus is on being the best in a selected range of areas. We are investing in areas that are and have the potential to become pillars of excellence and that will address relevant local, national, and global problems. Our current areas of research excellence are grouped in five research themes:

1. Local and regional socio-economic development:

We excel in research related to the mountainous areas of the continent through the Afromontane Research Unit (ARU) on our Qwaqwa Campus. The ARU is of crucial importance in providing a blueprint for community-centred research and development in montane areas across the continent. The focus of the project ranges from conservation and the sustainable use of Afromontane biodiversity, to living and doing business in mountainous environments, investigating aspects such as sustainable tourism, food security, and connectivity. Focusing on the SADC region – we also pay attention to improving the quality of life and the sustainable utilisation of our natural resources through our research on gender, peacebuilding, human security and liberation movements in Africa, work on religious and political fundamentalism, as well as a focus on regional and national economic development. We believe that our studies on the local consequences of mining on mining towns will add value to this area.

Accredited laboratories at the UFS:

- Laboratory with ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation from the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS): National Control Laboratory for Biological Products
- Laboratory with ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation from SANAS and the World Anti-doping Agency, based on the accreditation from ILAC (the foundation of ISO: IEC 17025): South African Doping Control Laboratory
- Laboratory with ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation from SANAS: Institute for Groundwater Studies Laboratory



2. Food security and land reform: Our academics are involved in research along the entire agricultural value chain, ranging from input, production and collection to processing and retailing, with a special focus on developing the skills of emerging farmers. Agriculture dominates the landscape of the UFS's home province, with the majority of its residents living in rural and farming areas. The university continues to explore and develop innovative farming techniques to work towards food security and the sustainable use of natural resources. With our Agribusiness Transformation Programme, we have joined forces with the public and private sector to develop black commercial farmers and sustainable black-owned agribusinesses in the province. We also make a local difference, enhancing the livelihoods of communal wool producers with the support of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture, where we transform communal wool growers' production from an underachieving enterprise to a profitable, sustainable, and renewable venture.

Our researchers are also attentive to agricultural and food processing, plant diseases, and disease resistance of field crops to *improve food security in Africa*. Through the genetic improvement of staple crops in our Department of Plant Sciences, seeds are developed with an inherent resistance to disease.

Our Department of Soil, Crop, and Climate Sciences also breeds novel plant varieties that are adapting to a changing global climate. Researchers are investigating the effects of weather and climate on crops, trees, grasslands, and livestock production systems and developing agrometeorological services, such as early warnings, irrigation scheduling, microclimate manipulation, and weather forecasts to cope with a changing and increasingly variable climate.

3. Health and well-being: Research is conducted in key health areas to improve the health of South Africans. These include cardiothoracic surgery, cervical cancer research, radiation treatment, understanding



and preventing zoonotic diseases, and a contribution in the field of pathogenic yeasts, with a focus on the development of disease in people with compromised immune systems.

- 4. With our focus on human rights, social justice and reconciliation,** the research of UFS academics focuses on societal challenges, with an emphasis on diversity, change, social justice, and the removal of inequalities in and through higher education. With the Free State Centre for Human Rights in the Faculty of Law, the UFS aims to strengthen a human-rights culture both locally and across South Africa through research, advocacy, and litigation. Within this theme, we also focus on education-related research, with studies on higher education and human development, student engagement, and mathematics and science.
- 5. New scientific and industrial challenges.** The UFS is researching and innovating in niche areas to develop new socio-economic solutions and knowledge in pace with the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences has a national and international reputation as a world leader in the field of nanoscience and the development of new materials. In Astrophysics, we are at the forefront of gamma-ray research and are leading the UFS's contribution to innovation with impact. In the medical field, our Next Generation Sequencing Unit is working to advance genomics research.

Inspiring excellence. Transforming lives.

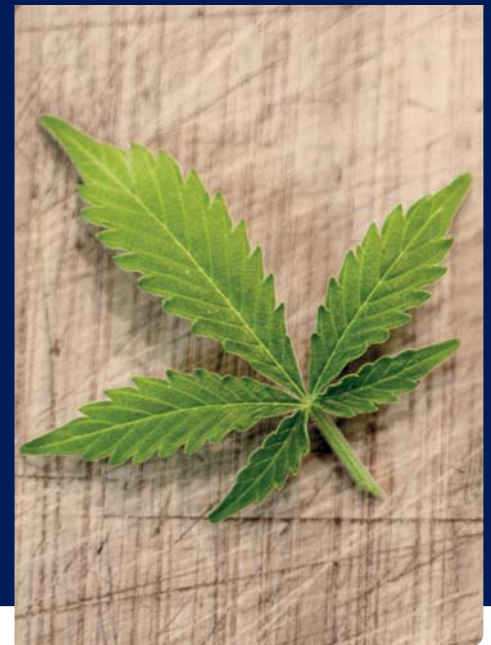
With our state-of-the-art equipment and facilities, we are ready to teach the class of the future.

The Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences undergraduate microscope laboratory is the most advanced and largest digital classroom of its kind in Africa and the third largest in the world. The microscope laboratory, with 227 microscopes connected to 67 computers, is proof that the faculty continues to upgrade and expand its training and research equipment, giving students a relevant learning experience with the latest, most modern equipment.



The UFS is the first and only university in South Africa to be issued and granted a research permit for cannabis. Our research work on the use of cannabis in treating drug-resistant cancers has been widely recognised and awarded. We are leaders in pharmacological research and product development of cannabis in Southern Africa.

Serving the entire continent: We are home to the South African Doping Control Laboratory (SADoCoL), the only laboratory in Africa accredited by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) to perform analysis for prohibited substances on samples of any athlete from any of the sporting codes underwritten by WADA.





The UFS-based clinical research organisation FARMOVS has established a reputation as one of the foremost clinical research units in the world. The facility, the largest Phase 1 clinical research company in the country, has conducted more than 3 000 successful clinical studies over the past 45 years, testing new medicines for pharmaceutical companies from all over the world.

FARMOVS recently participated in the **Public Health Emergency Solidarity Trial** initiated by the **World Health Organisation (WHO)**. This international randomised trial evaluates four treatment options (remdesivir, lopinavir/ritonavir, lopinavir/ritonavir plus interferon, chloroquine or hydroxychloroquine) for the treatment of COVID-19.

Simulation training provided by the Clinical Simulation and Skills Unit (in our School of Clinical Medicine) imparts a hands-on practical training and learning opportunity, allowing for deliberate practise and mastery of learning. Human patient simulators provide a tool to enhance the education and training of medical students by expanding the teaching platform. Our School of Nursing also boasts state-of-the-art simulation laboratories. The Clinical Simulation Unit in the School of Nursing offers healthcare students exposure to training in a safe environment without harming the patient, using computer-based interactive mannequins.



Regionally engaged and globally active



1 156
international
students



1 340
SADC students



59
partnerships
entrenched in
signed MOUs



101
international
postdoctoral
fellows



2 357 publications
co-authored with **1 660**
collaborating institutions
(2015–2019)

Focus on internationalisation, Africanisation, and decolonisation

In line with the South African policy priorities, the internationalisation process at the UFS now has a stronger focus on the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Africa, BRICS, and the Global South. International partnerships were strengthened, with the university establishing new collaborations in Africa and the Global South.

The university, however, continues to strengthen and expand its relations and partnerships in the Global North.

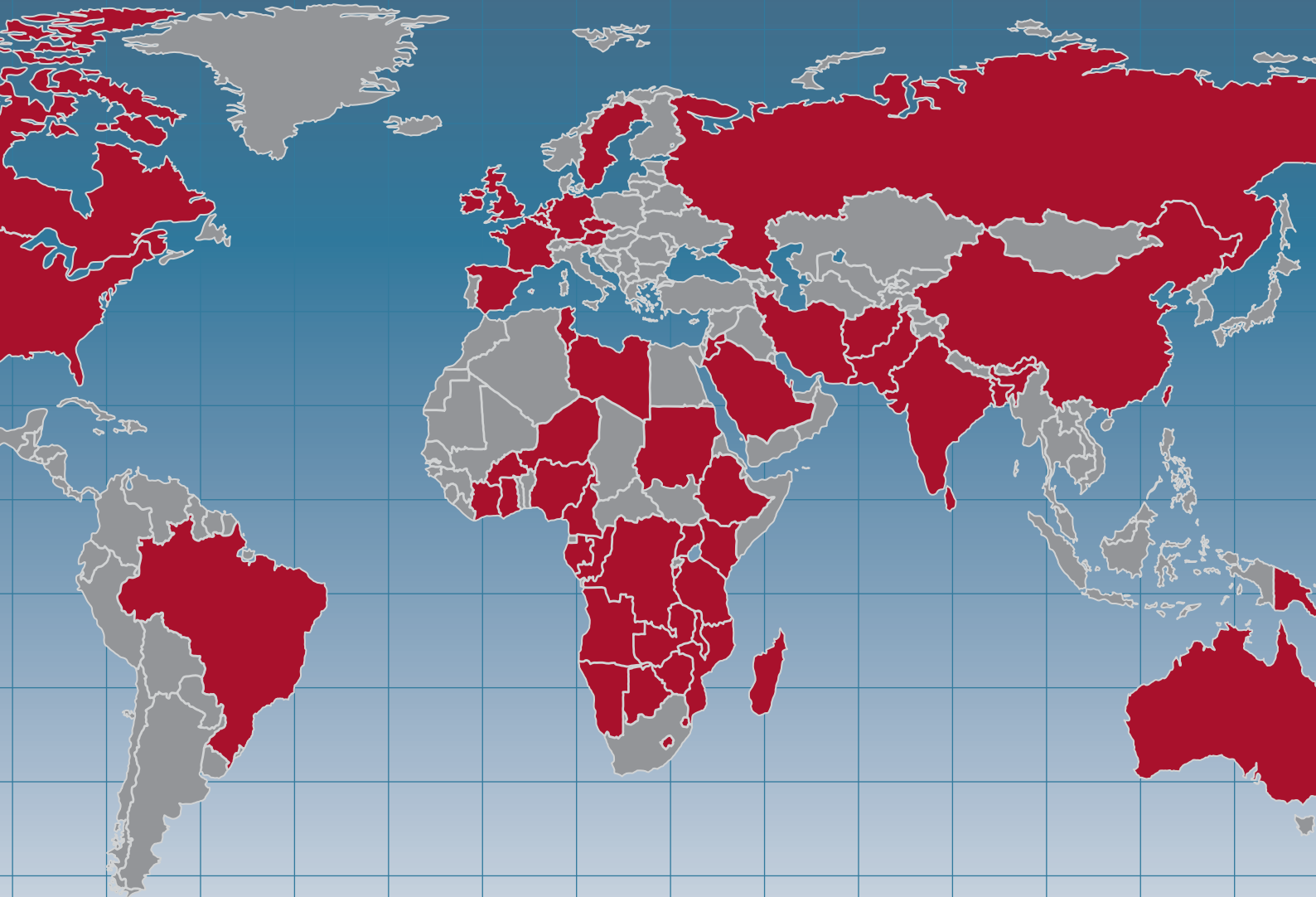
Internationalisation at home

The UFS internationalisation-at-home process purposefully integrate international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum of all UFS students within their domestic learning environments.

Advancing internationalisation at home, the Umoja Buddy Programme enables students to receive an international experience on home ground. The programme connects international and local students through meaningful lifelong friendships and fosters their academic, social, and cultural integration. With this initiative, senior Kovies provide a warm, welcoming, friendly face, and a helping hand to first-entry international students.

The intellectual cross-fertilisation between students from different backgrounds provides opportunities for the acquisition of international and intercultural competencies by all students, and results in the enhanced employability of our graduates.

Where our international students come from





Changing our communities, changing lives

Science-for-the-Future (S4F) Family Maths and Family Science: This programme addresses some of the factors that are preventing learners from excelling in Mathematics and Science. The programmes focus on factors such as teachers' subject-content knowledge, teaching skills, teaching resources at school and at home, parental involvement, and the language of learning and teaching that differs from home languages. S4F also provides all project participants with sufficient activity material for the classroom and parent training sessions.

Promoting the culture of reading and writing: School libraries in local Bloemfontein schools and surrounding areas create platforms where learners will be prepared for lifelong learning and higher education studies.

No Student Hungry: The No Student Hungry (NSH) campaign has supported and continues to support hundreds of students with meal grants – several of whom have already graduated.

The Internet Broadcast Project (IBP): The UFS is reaching out to schools in and around its area with targeted interventions aimed at assisting learners, teachers, and school principals. With the IBP, cutting-edge webcasting technology is used to broadcast interactive lessons in more than 15 different subjects to high school learners (Grade 8-12) in participating schools on a daily basis. Currently, approximately 71 000 learners in about 80 schools are reached every week. The IBP has been widely acclaimed as playing a vital role in the vastly improved matric results of the Free State in recent years.



Student life and success



We deliver well-rounded students who are not only academically prepared, but also active outside of the classroom.

Playing a vital part in our students' academic experience is our Centre for Teaching and Learning, the Department of Library and Information Services, our Postgraduate School, and our Career Office.

Centre for Teaching and Learning

Through the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL), the university is becoming a leading institution in South Africa in terms of quality learning and teaching and student success. Our inputs are globally recognised:

- By combining data analytics with high-impact interventions that include the UFS student success skills module (UFSS), academic advising, academic language and literacy development, and the academic student excellence tutorial programme (A_STEP), CTL – in collaboration with faculties – managed to reduce the first-year dropout rate and contributed to the improvement of our undergraduate success rate.
- Nationally, CTL leads the South African Surveys of Student Engagement (SASSE), providing critical data to help institutions improve quality learning and teaching and student success.
- The Central Academic Advising Office at CTL offers the only professional academic advising training programme in South Africa. CTL plays a major role in academic advising, presenting workshops for other South African universities on how to assist students in aligning their personal, academic, and career aspirations.
- CTL is also a key role player in our focus on employability.

Careers Office

The Careers Office walks the extra mile in preparing our graduates for the world of work, by

- creating platforms for engaging with companies on student recruitment;
- motivating companies, donors, and funders to employ and fund our top graduates; and
- keeping our students informed on career opportunities and equipping them with the skills and grit to make them employable.



Library and Information Services

The Department of Library and Information Services provides students access to study resources in its five libraries situated on our three campuses. Students have access to:

- 29 212 audio items
- 67 0552 book items
- 165 034 serial items
- 52 databases
- collections such as Kovsiana, Africana, and the Archives for Contemporary History



Postgraduate School

Our Postgraduate School contributes to the Academic Project, provides funding to students in need of financial aid, and offers excellent support in terms of research capacity development (RCD), which accomplishes the goal of creating an enabling environment for postgraduate students to successfully complete their studies. The UFS Postgraduate School is the only school in the country that offers RCD workshops in provinces and countries where UFS postgraduate students reside.





Health and safety

Staff and students are our most valuable assets. A team of professionals are working hard to ensure the physical safety and mental health of our staff and students.

According to an online survey conducted by Universum, the global leader in the field of employer branding and talent research, UFS students see our secure campus environment as the most important attribute of the university.

The services of the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) are available to staff and students to report incidents of gender-based violence, sexual harassment, and any act of prejudice or discrimination.



Residences

We offer a variety of accommodation options to our students on all three campuses, including junior men's and ladies' residences, senior men's and ladies' residences, co-ed residences for men and ladies, and the recently added faculty-based residences (Faculty of Health Sciences).

Residences are being optimally designed according to the Department of Higher Education and Training's norms and standards at a cost per bed that is of the lowest in the country. Our student accommodation is conducive to living and learning, and offers uniquely designed bathrooms, study areas, and kitchenettes in each corridor, as well as a corridor that is fully accessible to people with disabilities. Access-control systems in our residences also contribute to the safety of students.

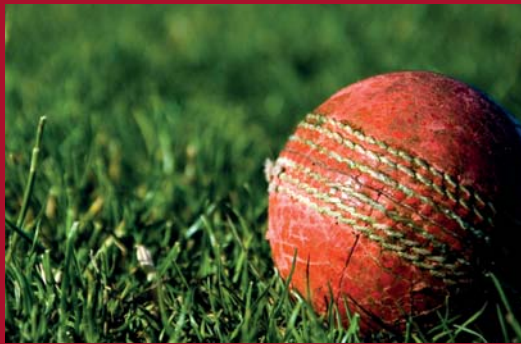
To enhance the safety and living conditions of off-campus students, we accredited off-campus student houses according to a list of requirements drafted in partnership with the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality.



Arts and culture

Students participate in numerous arts and culture-related events, including Stagedoor (sing-off theatrical performance), campus choirs, and performances at the annual Rector's Concert, to name but a few.





KovsieSport

We develop well-rounded graduates and not only boast with successes and achievements on the sports field, but also take pride in our facilities.



90
Springboks



1
Olympian gold medalist in the 400 m

84
national athletes



18
national women's hockey players



27
SA Sevens players



5
national men's hockey players

22
Protea netball players



2
Springbok cricket players



2019
national student champion in netball and tennis



4 coaches at the World Student Games in tennis, soccer, athletics, and swimming

The university is proud of its sports facilities, including the following:



One Olympic-sized swimming pool.

Two Olympic-standard hockey fields. For coverage of evening games, one of the fields is equipped with floodlights.



Eighteen tennis courts, four equipped with floodlights.

Five newly renovated squash courts.



A four-lane International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF)-approved standard synthetic run-up that caters for long-jump as well as triple-jump competitions, with a total runway length of 65 m from end to end.



Embracing the Kovsie brand

The KovsieGear, KovsieFit, and KovsieInn facilities on our campuses are within walking distance of students' teaching and learning environment. With everything in close proximity and situated on one campus, one has to embrace the Kovsie brand.

At KovsieGear, students, staff and visitors can acquire their favourite piece of clothing, bag or other mementos at the award-winning KovsieGear merchandise outlet. This facility is also available on our Qwaqwa Campus.

And for those who are serious about maintaining a healthy lifestyle, the KovsieFit commercial gymnasium has several training classes, state-of-the-art training equipment, and general fitness and wellness programmes on offer, to mention but a few.

KovsieInn on the western side of our Bloemfontein Campus is a home away from home for visiting guests and loved ones, offering long- and short-term stays in boutique-type accommodation, with scrumptious English or Continental breakfast included.





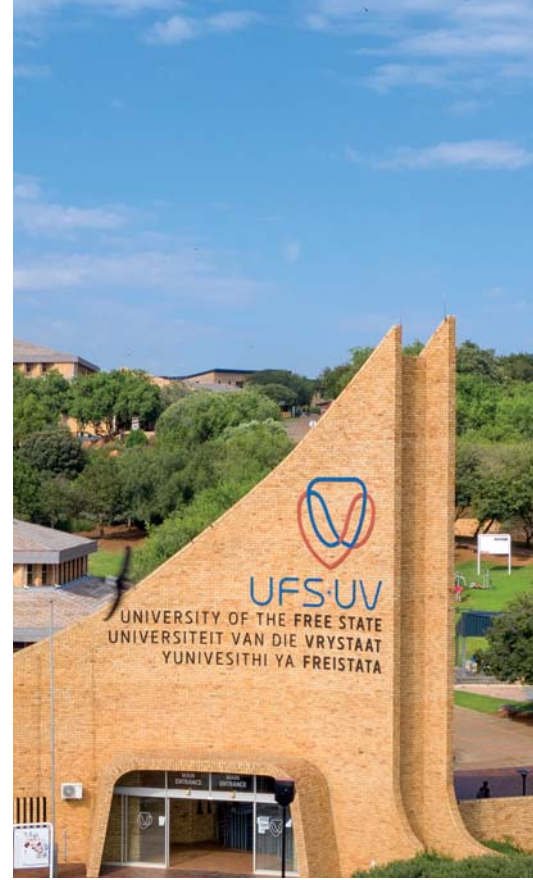
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