



STAFF INCLUSIVITY SURVEY

Your voice matters – and it leads to change

We want to hear from all UCT staff. **Have your say!**

The survey is administered by an independent consultant, Aephoria. Your response will be **strictly confidential**.

Lookout for an email, SMS, WhatsApp or MS Teams message from
21 August 2025



Administered by
aephoria
sustainable human flourishing

UCT Staff Inclusivity Survey

FAQ Document – English

A. The Big Picture

Why is UCT doing this survey?

In 2019, the first-ever Staff Inclusivity Survey gave UCT vital baseline data on inclusion, belonging, and workplace culture. Since then, your voices have driven meaningful change.

From 2020 to 2025, UCT has taken action:

- Developed new programmes to address bullying, emotional wellbeing, harassment, and discrimination
- Established the Transformation Benchmarks to guide institution-wide efforts, aligned with the national Transformation Barometer
- Rolled out initiatives led by senior academics and professional staff, all designed to create a more welcoming and respectful working environment.

These actions were monitored through UCT's [Annual Transformation Reports](#) and remain publicly accessible on the [UCT Inclusivity Strategy](#) page on the UCT Staff website.
(<https://uct.ac.za/staff/inclusivity-strategy>).

Now, it's time to assess how far we've come – and where we still need to grow. UCT is partnering again with Aephoria – an independent, expert organization – to conduct a confidential follow-up Inclusivity Survey using the InclusionIndex, a globally respected and scientifically validated to measure inclusion, belonging, and workplace culture.

What is the survey all about?

At issue is the question of inclusivity at UCT, for staff. Broadly, it is about whether the university community feels a sense of belonging, and, for staff particularly, whether they feel engaged, represented, valued and respected for who they are and their contribution to the institution.

The survey comprises a quantitative phase (questionnaire) followed by a voluntary qualitative phase (interviews and focus groups). The outcome UCT is seeking is a retest of the perceptions of inclusion, belonging and culture using the same tool as in 2019.

Why should I participate?

Your voice influences UCT's future policies and culture.

- This survey has a proven track record – previous results led to real, visible change.
- It's your opportunity to help create a more respectful, inclusive workplace.
- Confidentiality is guaranteed – no risk, just impact.

A wide number and variety of perspectives and voices are essential to help UCT get to grips with the concept of inclusivity and what's needed to achieve it on campus. By not participating, or withholding your input, you miss the chance to voice your opinions and so help to shape the institution at which you work. The university, meanwhile, misses out on your input into the implementation of critical interventions essential to making UCT a home for all staff.

Will the survey change anything?

This is a campus-wide opportunity to reflect, act, and grow. The time when issues of institutional inclusivity and belonging could be swept under the carpet are long gone. The Executive recognises that these are crucial strategic issues that will impact on the performance, relevance and sustainability of UCT into the future.

How will the results be used?

The results will be made available by March 2026 and will be used to inform and implement interventions that improve inclusivity and institutional belonging.

The results will **not** be used to:

- victimise or bully staff
- identify people and their viewpoints
- increase exclusion and alienation
- drive a particular political agenda.

In addition, UCT will **never** have access to the raw data, nor will the institution be provided with any data analysis for demographic groups comprising fewer than 10 members. This serves to further safeguard respondents' anonymity.

How and when will the results be shared?

The results will be shared in a report by the end of March 2026 and will include the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative research phases, as well as recommendations for further interventions. There will be further feedback via a VC Desk and other institutional channels in respect of the planned interventions and follow-up activities.

Who is being asked to complete the survey?

All staff, excluding tutors, are invited to take part. This includes permanent and contract staff, whether employed in full- or part-time positions.

Is it compulsory to take part?

No, it isn't. However, UCT really wants to hear from as many staff members as possible to ensure that everyone's input is included, and all voices are heard. We appeal to you to take the time to make UCT a more inclusive institution by completing the questionnaire. It will only take 20–30 minutes of your time.

Have the UCT unions been consulted?

On 16 July 2025 the leadership from all the unions represented at UCT were informed about the survey and the service provider, Aephoria. Additional sessions can be arranged to answer questions regarding survey deployment and the languages to be used.

How have decisions about this project been made?

Decisions regarding the Inclusivity Survey have been made through established governance structures aligned with the university's Inclusivity Strategy Framework:

Inclusivity Strategy Advisory Group (ISAG) provides strategic oversight through:

- Supporting implementation of approved initiatives
- Making governance decisions and approving deliverables
- Monitoring progress and ensuring compliance

Inclusivity Strategy Working Group (ISWG) leads operational implementation by:

- Planning, monitoring, and reviewing key institutional offerings and initiatives
- Addressing focal areas identified in the Inclusivity Strategy
- Making recommendations to ISAG for strategic review and approval

The executive and the unions have been informed of the project.

Why aren't students being included?

Our strategic focus for this project is on staff. UCT students participate in the national South African Survey of Student Engagement (SASSE) survey every two years. The next survey is planned for later this year. The aim of SASSE is to provide institutions with high- quality data to encourage changes in the learning environment intended to promote student success. The results of this student survey will be considered and aligned with the outcomes and initiatives to be implemented for staff.

B. Timelines and Process

What is the timeline for this project?

- Survey announcement: 7 August 2025
- Survey opens for completion: 21 August to 11 September 2025
- Preliminary analysis of quantitative data: 19 September to 3 October 2025
- Interviews and focus groups: 6 to 31 October 2025
- Analysis of quantitative and qualitative data: 7 to 14 November 2025
- Draft report to Working Group and Executive: 19 January 2026
- Release of final report: 31 March 2026

How can the survey be completed?

The majority of staff will receive a unique link via email to their UCT email address which will take them to the questionnaire. It can be completed online using a computer, tablet or mobile phone.

Some staff, specifically those in the Department of Student Affairs as well as the Department of Properties and Services, will receive a paper-based questionnaire to complete in facilitated in-person completion sessions.

Please contact help@aephoriagroup.com or WhatsApp 068 435 2859 if you have any questions about when the sessions will be taking place.

When will I have access to the survey?

If you are completing an electronic survey, you will receive the relevant link in an email from do-not-reply@mindsetmanage.com on 21 August 2025.

If you are completing a paper-based survey, your director will make an arrangement with you during the first two weeks of the survey (21 August to 5 September 2025).

If you have not received your survey, please contact help@aephoriagroup.com or send a WhatsApp to 068 435 2859.

What is the deadline for completion of the survey?

The survey must be completed by 23:59 on Thursday, 11 September 2025. Don't leave it until the last minute!

What happens after the questionnaire is completed?

The preliminary results will be analysed to identify areas of excellence, as well as areas of concern in the institution. Follow-up interviews and focus groups will be conducted to deepen the findings.

You will not be asked to participate in this part of the research based on your individual responses, as these cannot be linked to you. A general notice will be sent to all staff to request participation in this phase of the research based on specific demographic groups that have been identified as important to further research. Whether or not you completed the survey is irrelevant to your participation in the qualitative research process. You don't have to accept an invitation to be part of a focus group or to participate in an interview. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

If you want to volunteer to be part of the qualitative phase of the research, please email volunteer@aephoriagroup.com with a short reason why you would like to be interviewed.

How and when will the results be shared?

A report of findings will be made available to all UCT staff by the end of March 2026. Further opportunities for feedback will be finalised with the Executive.

What happens after 2025?

The survey results will inform a number of interventions and transformation activities aimed at improving inclusivity at UCT.

C. Confidentiality and Security

How is my anonymity protected as a participant in the survey?

UCT does not have access to any individual responses and will not know whether or not you even participated. Your data and responses are secure. All data is handled by the service provider, and the database of results does not include your email address, name or surname. No reporting or aggregated results for groups of respondents numbering fewer than 10 people will be shared with UCT.

In some of the demographic questions there is an option to "rather not say", should you be concerned about being identified.

How can I be sure that the data won't be used to identify me?

The external service provider, Aephoria (with Engage EX platform – Mindset Management), handles all data and is contractually bound to not share your individual data or responses with UCT. The company has conducted this kind of survey for more than 60 000 people globally and has never experienced any issues with data security or breaching of this aspect of anonymity in any previous projects.

Then why are you asking for my demographic data?

This data will only be used to identify trends and patterns of exclusion and inclusion at UCT. The survey needs to include these questions because without some demographic data, the service provider will be unable to identify who is feeling included or excluded, or to identify patterns of inclusivity and exclusion. The categories within demographic questions have been made significant, but safe, to maximise participants' anonymity.

Will my manager know what I've said in the survey?

Your manager will **not** under any circumstances receive your responses. If you are a member of a very small department with fewer than 10 staff members who completed the survey, the results for your department will be included in a larger pool, e.g. within your faculty.

Who will have access to the data and responses?

The data and responses are only accessible to the Aephoria project team (with Engage EX platform – Mindset Management) as the external service provider. The database they work with in analysing responses is already anonymised, as it does not contain any email addresses, names or surnames.

Paper-based questionnaires are handled by supervised data capturers from Aephoria and shredded once data has been captured.

The metadata is only visible to the Aephoria ICT lead (with Engage EX platform – Mindset Management), who is contractually bound by a non-disclosure agreement. UCT does not have access to any individual responses or any identifiable data.

Will my information be used for anything other than this survey?

Your email address will be used to send you the link to the survey and the reminders to complete it. It will also be used to send you a general email inviting you to volunteer for the focus group sessions or interviews required in the qualitative phase. This will be a general invitation, and it will not be based on your survey participation or individual response to the questionnaire.

Once the two phases of the research have been concluded, the database will be destroyed. Your personal contact information will not be used for any other purpose, and you will not receive unsolicited mails or offers from the service provider, Aephoria.

When you start the questionnaire, you also have the option to make the data available for further academic research purposes. You can accept or decline this invitation but, whatever you decide, you will still be asked to complete the questionnaire. If further academic studies are undertaken, it will only include those individuals who have given their consent. Data used for such studies will be used in anonymised form.

How secure are the servers on which the data will be stored?

All data within the InclusionIndex is stored within an encrypted database using RSA encryption. Connections to this database have been firewalled to ensure that data ingresses from and egresses to authorised hosts within the virtual private cloud in which the platform is hosted.

The InclusionIndex inclusivity survey system uses an SSL security certificate to ensure that your sessions and responses cannot be intercepted by any third parties or hackers.

Always make sure that the status bar in your browser indicates that you are connected securely to the platform. Once the survey is complete, all the data will be retrieved from the platform and set aside to be archived for cold storage.

How do you ensure participants complete the questionnaire only once?

Each staff member receiving an electronic questionnaire will receive a unique link via email. This can only be used once. If you forward your link to someone else after completing your questionnaire, it will only take them to a screen thanking them for their participation.

Each staff member receiving a paper-based questionnaire will receive a booklet with specific markings that cannot be replicated through photocopying or scanning. Only original paper-based questionnaires will be accepted and captured in the database.

Does this survey have UCT ethics clearance?

Yes, it does. The ethics application was reviewed and passed by the Faculty of Commerce. The ethics application number is IFHREC/01930/2025 and is valid for one year until July 2026 and can be renewed thereafter.

D. Questionnaire Preview

In what languages will the questionnaire be available?

The questionnaire is available in Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa.

Is the survey accessible to people with visual impairments?

Yes, the questionnaire has been developed to accommodate people with visual impairments who make use of JAWS (screen readers). If you are having trouble with this, please email help@aephoriagroup.com or send a WhatsApp to 068 435 2859.

How long does it take to complete?

It takes 20–30 minutes to complete.

How many questions are included?

There are 114 questions in total, including tick-box type questions and optional spaces for providing short written answers.

What kinds of questions can you expect?

The questions cover a range of topics relating to inclusivity, such as leadership, recruitment, bullying and harassment, and discrimination. Most of the questions are answered on a five-point scale where you choose an answer ranging from “strongly disagree” through to “strongly agree”.

Here is an example question you may be asked to complete:

- People at UCT are well informed about diversity, inclusivity and transformation topics.

What demographic/biographical data can you expect to be asked to provide?

The demographic data is aimed at enabling the useful analysis of results and will help to identify where exclusion and inclusion are occurring.

We **do not** ask for:

- your name and surname
- your personnel number
- your email address
- your contact numbers.

We **do** ask for:

- gender
- nationality
- faculty/department
- race
- age
- religion.

In some of these questions, you can opt out of answering by choosing the “I’d rather not say” option.

What is the difference between the paper-based and electronic versions of the questionnaire?

They are exactly the same.

E. The Qualitative Interview and Focus Group Process

Who will be invited to interviews and focus groups?

Once the quantitative survey is complete, the preliminary results will be analysed to identify areas of excellence as well as areas of concern in the institution. Based on this, a general email inviting people who belong to specific groups or areas of interest to volunteer for focus group sessions or interviews will be sent to all UCT staff. This will be a general invitation, and it will not be based on your survey participation or individual response to the questionnaire.

You are also invited to volunteer to participate in this phase of the research. Please email volunteer@aephoriagroup.com with a short reason why you would like to be interviewed. This does not guarantee your inclusion in this phase, but the service provider will keep you informed either way.

When will these interviews and focus groups take place?

The interviews and focus groups will take place during 6 to 31 October 2025.

F. Practical Help

I can't find my questionnaire link on email.

Email help@aephoriagroup.com or WhatsApp 068 435 2859 to get your link resent.

I've lost/deleted my link. Can I use the link my colleague was sent?

No, you cannot. Each link can only be used once. Please email help@aephoriagroup.com or WhatsApp 068 435 2859 to get your link resent.

The power went off while I was busy with the questionnaire – what now?

No problem. The system saves your answers as you complete each section. You don't have to redo the entire questionnaire. Simply click on the link in the email you received, and you will be asked to continue where you left off.

What device should I use to complete the questionnaire?

The questionnaire is compatible with computers, tablets and mobile phones. You can use the device and browser of your choice. It is sometimes helpful to have a full keyboard available for the optional free text parts of the survey.

When and where will the sessions be held to complete the questionnaire?

Department of Student Affairs and Properties and Services staff will be informed of the times, dates and venues of sessions where they can complete the questionnaire. These will be at your department's chosen times between 25 August and 11 September 2025.

G. Provider and Questionnaire Credentials

Who is the service provider for this project?

The service provider that was appointed to run both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the project is a local Cape Town-based consultancy called Aephoria.

How were they appointed?

A working group, originally led by Professor Feris as Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Transformation, oversaw the procurement and appointment of the service provider. A competitive procurement process was conducted during 2018 and the provider was appointed as the most suitable provider. As this is a repeat survey, the provider will provide comparative results, findings and recommendations for 2019:2025.

Is InclusionIndex a valid and reliable questionnaire?

Yes, the instrument has been validated and has been deployed to more than 60 000 people in Southern Africa, the UK, Europe and the USA to date.

InclusionIndex has been developed specifically to measure inclusion and has been subjected to a high level of academic scrutiny to ensure its validity and integrity. During the course of reviewing InclusionIndex's psychometric elements to check its consistently strong properties, the following tests have been carried out:

- descriptive data analysis of the individual items
- correlational analysis to investigate whether the items are sufficiently intercorrelated as indicated by the KMO Index
- principal component analysis
- analysis of the internal consistency of each item with Cronbach's Alpha used as a
- measure of reliability of the sumscales
- correlational analysis involving all the sumscales to investigate their degree of convergent validity
- a profile of the means of the scales to evaluate the "traffic lights" scoring system
- a frequency analysis of the traffic light scores.

This rigour sets InclusionIndex apart from the more generic employee opinion surveys conducted by many organisations.

Where else has this questionnaire been used?

The institutions and organisations that have worked with the survey range from universities and government departments to agencies and for-profit organisations. Although other universities have used this tool, UCT was the first South African university to complete the InclusionIndex.

What results and actions have come from previous uses of this survey?

Some improvements, actions and interventions that have come from the use of this survey include:

- A global consumer goods company reviewed and changed its promotion and recruitment processes. They also established structured feedback channels for minority groups.
- A UK university initiated a wholesale overhaul of its bullying and harassment procedures to make it significantly easier to report incidents.
- A financial services group rolled out a new employee assistance programme to ensure that its staff had access to counselling for stress.
- An engineering company added specific diversity and inclusivity metrics to the key performance indicators for its Executives.

H. Support and Assistance

The questionnaire made me feel uncomfortable and unsettled while/after completing it. Who can I contact for further support or counselling?

You may access the [UCT Employee Health and Wellness Programme](https://hr.uct.ac.za/remuneration-benefits-organisational-health-employee-assistance-occupational-health/counselling) or phone the toll-free number 0801 113 945 free from a Telkom line (available 24 hours a day).

<https://hr.uct.ac.za/remuneration-benefits-organisational-health-employee-assistance-occupational-health/counselling>

You can send an email to: callback@icas.co.za (for call-back requests)

You can also make an appointment to talk to an on-site counsellor.

On-site counsellors

All the counsellors are only available at specified times. Should you wish to make an appointment to see a Lyra Wellbeing counsellor, please call the toll-free line to make a booking: 080 111 3945 or the contact person as indicated.

- UCT Bremner Building: 10:00–14:00 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
- UCT Faculty of Health Sciences: 10:00–14:00 on Monday, Wednesday, Friday.
- UCT Graduate School of Business (GSB): 09:00–13:00 every last Wednesday in the month.

I want support when completing the questionnaire. How do I get help?

Ask your director about the time, date and location of the next group session where support will be available in Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa.

If you have received an electronic link to the questionnaire and need support, email help@aephoriagroup.com or WhatsApp 068 435 2859.

I. Contact Details

How do I contact the service provider?

You can speak to the team from Aephoria by sending an email to help@aephoriagroup.com or WhatsApp 068 435 2859.