

ENTER

TRANSFORMATION REPORT 2024



TOWARDS VISION 2030: APPRECIATING
SHIFTS, ANTICIPATING POSSIBILITIES



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Vice-Chancellor's Foreword

Transformation Report 2024

Thirty years into our democracy, the work of transformation remains ongoing for our country – and for our university. The progress we have made at the University of Cape Town (UCT) aligns with the understanding that transformation is not a policy exercise or a compliance checklist. It is a journey of restoring dignity, deepening inclusion and unlocking the full potential of our people.

When I took office in 2024, I joined a community that had already travelled far in re-imagining itself. Our student body today is far

"transformation has become one of the most pervasive yet contested discourses in South Africa. At institutions like UCT, it is often approached through the lens of representational equity"

more diverse than it was three decades ago; and our academic and research achievements continue to inspire pride across the continent and beyond. Transformation is not a destination we arrive at; it is a practice that must be renewed daily through our actions, our values and our relationships.

True transformation, for me, begins with people. It is about creating a university culture where every person – student or staff member – feels seen, heard and valued. This means building an environment that is psychologically, culturally and intellectually safe; an environment grounded in ubuntu, kindness, empathy and mutual respect. These are the conditions that allow talent to thrive and excellence to flourish.

UCT's transformation journey has evolved from counting numbers to changing lives. The early focus on equity and representation was necessary to reveal the structures of exclusion. But we now need to move beyond metrics towards meaning – from compliance to conscience. Transformation must be about shifting systems, re-imagining cultures and broadening the idea of excellence to include the richness of our African identities and knowledges.

The Transformation Report 2024 invites us to reflect honestly on where we are and to think about where we want to go. It recognises that transformation and excellence are not competing goals; they are inseparable. Without transformation, excellence loses its moral centre. Without excellence, transformation loses its credibility.

In the next phase of UCT's transformation, our focus must be on nurturing belonging, advancing equity and ensuring that every graduate is equipped to contribute to society's renewal. As universities, we carry a responsibility not only to produce employable graduates, but to cultivate citizens who can create opportunities for others – people who can transform communities through knowledge, innovation and compassion.

The task before us is complex. We must strengthen redress and inclusion while maintaining our global competitiveness as a leading

research university. We must remain rooted in Africa while engaging the world with confidence. This is what transforms UCT – it is about shaping a future that is both locally grounded and globally relevant.

As we move forward, the journey of transformation requires all of us – students, staff, alumni, partners and friends – to walk together with open hearts and open minds.

May this report inspire us to keep building a university that reflects the best of who we are and the promise of who we can become. Because together, we are UCT.



Professor Mosa Moshabela
Vice-Chancellor: University of Cape Town

Introduction by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Transformation, Student Affairs and Social Responsiveness

As a top university in Africa, the University of Cape Town (UCT) is recognised as a leader in addressing the social and political challenges that plague the higher education sector in the Global South. Transformation is central to this as one of the pillars of our institution's Vision 2030.

The 2024 Transformation Report goes beyond documenting our institution's progress. It serves as an opportunity to reflect deeply on how we conceptualise, measure, and enact transformation at UCT. While UCT has made progress in the last three decades, we are now at a pivotal moment where we must ask ourselves questions that go beyond compliance and statistical representation: What lies beneath the numbers? Where are the gaps between institutional intention and lived experience? There is growing concern that transformation risks becoming a procedural exercise — reduced to metrics and disconnected from the daily realities of marginalised communities within our university.

One striking example cited is the increase in black students, yet not enough change in the epistemological frameworks or demographic makeup of academic staff. Similarly, while progress has been made in staff and middle management diversity, there is still room for improvement in strategic decision-making spaces.

These examples point to what the report calls “superficial transformation” — where partial demographic shifts occur without disrupting the structural conditions that perpetuate inequality.

We have many reasons to believe that we are on the right track to challenge and change that. We need more than policies; we need dialogue, critique, and engagement across the university community.

We must build what the report refers to as intellectual ecosystems within our academic, operational, and governance spaces, where transformation is not confined to reporting imperatives, but debated and redefined continuously.

Encouragingly, UCT is already demonstrating what this could look like. Several faculties and departments are embedding transformation-related operational research into their curriculum development, community engagement, and staff development strategies. This aligns with global best practices, such as those seen in the International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU), where research and operations work hand-in-hand to drive systemic change.

The approval and drive to implement the new UCT Language Policy is one of the initiatives that show that true transformation can be achieved. Its implementation will require the active participation of staff and students, and I urge all members of our community to support such initiatives with a high level of commitment.

I want to commend the continuous commitment and hard work of the UCT community who have been the driving force behind transformation, especially those who serve on transformation committees: the Transformation Forum, the Employment Equity Forum and the Institutional Forum, as well as the Office for Inclusivity and Change (OIC) and the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Special Tribunal.

As with all transformation work, this report represents both progress and unfinished business. It reminds us that transformation must be understood as a continuous, reflective practice. It is not a burden — but a shared intellectual and ethical responsibility.



Sincerely

Professor Elelwani Ramugondo

Deputy Vice-Chancellor:

Transformation, Student Affairs and Social Responsiveness

An illustration of a person with short dark hair, wearing a green jacket over a dark sweater and blue pants, carrying a backpack. They are holding a pen and a stack of papers. The background is a vibrant blue with large, white, stylized geometric shapes and small white dots.

Key highlights 2024



3. Key highlights 2024

The University of Cape Town (UCT) celebrates the systemic changes that took place in 2024, these interventions respond to barriers to inclusion at a systems level, and contribute overarchingly to build a culture of inclusion and serve as mechanisms that respond to manifestations of harm, for example the [UCT Language Policy](#), which promotes multilingualism, with English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans as the official languages of the university. In addition, the policy recognises Afrikaaps (Kaaps), South African Sign Language (SASL), Khoekhoegowab and N|uu as languages for development by UCT. The policy emphasises promoting marginalised South African indigenous languages in teaching, learning, research and communication. This includes supporting isiXhosa as a language of instruction, alongside English, and encouraging students and staff to incorporate [multilingual approaches into their academic work](#).

3.1 Building capacity for disability services in South African Higher Education Institutions

The Department of Higher Education and Training's 2018 Disability Framework highlights a critical gap in the capability of South African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to effectively support students with disabilities. Very few institutions possess the necessary knowledge, resources and institutional structures to run successful

disability services. This gap underscores the substantial need to enhance the capacities of these institutions to better serve students with disabilities.

Recognising this pressing need, this collaboration responds to FirstRand Foundation's (FRF) request to UCT to develop a joint proposition to address the limitations relating to or absence of services for students with disabilities at several HEIs in South

The policy emphasises promoting marginalised South African indigenous languages in teaching, learning, research and communication.



Africa. The partnership entails developing and implementing a comprehensive model to establish and strengthen disability units (DUs) within these institutions.

3.2 Introduction of Trauma-Releasing Exercises Intervention Programmes for Survivors

Tension and Trauma Releasing Exercises (TRE®) is a therapeutic intervention facilitated by a survivor support specialist (TRE practitioner), with the implementation of the intervention being a self-practised therapeutic tool that a survivor can use in the long term and on their own, without facilitation. TRE is a body-based technique that activates the natural response of trembling in a safe

and healing approach to reduce the instances and the intensity of activation in the autonomic nervous system.

3.3 UCT mediators

Mediation is used widely by students and staff for incidents ranging from relational disputes to complex conflicts arising out of interpersonal racism and related systemic practices. The mediation program is the restorative justice program, as well as associated educational interventions, comprised of academics and administrative support and service (PASS) staff; and members are located across UCT campuses. UCT's restorative justice programs contribute to strengthening relationships, especially where there is

relational breakdown, it also highlights systemic challenges that surface as a result of a mismatch between policy and practice.



3.4 UCT gender advisors

The Office for Inclusivity and Change (OIC) is enhancing [the university's existing support](#) systems for individuals affected by gender-based violence (GBV). In collaboration with the non-governmental organization (NGO) Rape Crisis, the OIC conducted a first-responder workshop. This workshop was aimed to train and equip students, student advisors and staff who are trusted confidantes of GBV survivors, helping them provide effective support due to their caring nature.

3.5 Humanitarian response

In July 2024, UCT accepted 27 final-year medical students from Gaza as a humanitarian response.

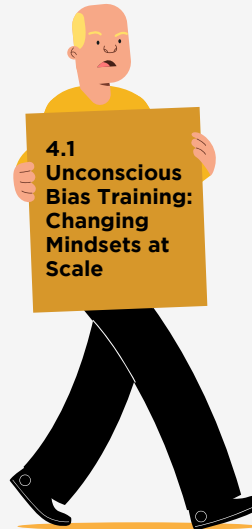
Inclusivity & Culture Change





4. INCLUSIVITY AND CULTURE CHANGE

UCT's Culture Change programme focuses on developing the agency and capacity of students and staff to cultivate spaces of belonging for all. Educational programs and workshops are tailored around a humanising praxis and responds to prejudice and discrimination holistically. It centres the idea of co-creating spaces where people flourish regardless of race, gender, religion and other identity markers. Informing UCT's Inclusivity Strategy was the Inclusion Index, first administered in 2019 and concluded in 2024. During this period, faculties and departments grappled with their barriers to inclusion, utilising internal and/or external support to conceptualise and implement their cultural change programmes. Details on the university-wide initiatives for inclusion can be accessed [via this progress report](#). Cultural interventions consist of individual or team programmes, over three to six months. Centralised offerings for cultural change included the following combinations:



- Delivered targeted training to 740 staff members, significantly boosting awareness of unconscious bias and providing practical tools to combat it in daily interactions and decision-making.
- Participants emerged more confident and empowered to address microaggressions and drive an inclusive workplace culture.



- Created a safe, transformative space for healing racial trauma through collective dialogue and mutual support.
- Fostered deep trust, resilience and solidarity, strengthening the university's commitment to emotional well-being and racial equity.
- Equipped peer supporters to provide ongoing emotional support to individuals affected by racial discrimination, harassment and systemic racism.



- Engaged participants in hands-on workshops demystifying the university's anti-racism policies and outlining clear steps to confront racial harassment.
- Resulted in a sharper grasp of institutional expectations and an increased sense of individual accountability in promoting inclusivity.



- Facilitated sessions to build value-based alignment among teams, enhancing clarity around shared goals and cultural priorities.
- Developing stronger team cohesion, improved collaboration and a clearer sense of direction.

Cultural change programmes can often intersect with the academic, research and operational goals of faculties and departments. These interventions range from student support to educational support.

Above are key highlights from across the university. Each environment has shared its 2024 transformation programme, with links provided for a deeper look into their work.



4.5 Cultural Change Interventions at faculty and department level

Supporting Student Access and Success through Financial Support

4.5.1 [Faculty of Health Sciences-Final Transformation Report 2024](#)

- Bursaries and internal support
- The Department of Medicine allocated internal funds to provide bursaries for students experiencing financial difficulties.

Postgraduate fellowships

Due to financial barriers, two postgraduate students (MSc and PhD) were at risk of dropping out. The Departmental Research Committee (DRC) provided funding that enabled them to complete their final-year studies.

Grant-based transformation funding

The Transformation and Equity Committee (TEC) proposed the transformation-related costs such as bursaries and training be integrated with research grant applications. This has been adopted by multiple divisions, including pulmonology.

Specific support programmes across divisions

Pharmacology

- R500 000 to support a PhD student.
- Two postdocs funded for international research training.
- Around R2 million in MSc/PhD bursaries provided

over four years. Some of the students became scientific officers.

Clinical Haematology

- Nine scholarships awarded at MSc & PhD levels.

Infectious Diseases

- Provided financial support for international training and conferences for research fellows and medical officers.

Medical Genetics

- Closed funding gaps for two MSc students.

Inclusive research fellowships

The Desmond Tutu HIV Foundation (DTHF) has launched the LGBTQI+ Health Research Fellowship. The programme aims to enhance the research skills of early-career health researchers, focusing on sexual and gender minorities. It has funded five early-



career researchers to conduct mentored studies on healthcare access and psychosocial care for LGBTQI+ communities.

4.5.2 [Faculty of Law Transformation Report 2024](#)

In 2024, R14 067 383 was spent on Bachelor of Laws (LLB) and postgraduate scholarships. The majority of these awards were intended for students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds, supporting the demographic transformation of both the faculty and, over time, the legal profession in South Africa.

4.5.3 Faculty of Commerce

The African Institute of Financial Markets and Risk Management (AIFMRM)

- Aims to develop high-level financial skills and drive demographic transformation in the financial industry.
- Preference is given to female and black South African students.
- In 2024, scholarships of R6 million were awarded through donor support.

• Equity participation targets:

- 80% black (comprising African, Indian, coloured): Achieved 67% in the latest data collection process.
- 50% black African: Achieved in 2022 (50%) and exceeded in 2023 (58%).

Thuthuka Bursary Programme

- Established by the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) in 2005 to support transformation in the accounting profession.
- Provides financial and academic support to disadvantaged African and coloured students studying towards chartered accountancy qualifications.
- Designed to increase diversity and representation in the accounting sector.

4.6 Disability and culture change

4.6.1 Collaboration and implementation work



+ Strengthen connections between HR, EE, and the OIC.

4.6.2 Registration and verification process

- Staff complete an online registration and upload medical documentation.
- One-on-one interventions and faculty-level discussions.
- Verification of disabilities and confirmation of reasonable accommodations.

4.6.3 Accommodations and support

- Application for assistive devices/reasonable accommodations via the EE subcommittee
- SWIFT implementation of assistive devices, software, hardware, and services
- Support for newly identified disabilities, eg:
 - Accessible transport
 - Assistive devices
 - Workspace modifications
 - Orientation support

4.6.4 Outcomes and next steps

- Successful verification of staff with disabilities and updated internal records
- Identification of staff needing accommodations and ensuring implementation

No Verification	2022	2023	2024
Per Year	18	9	8
Grand Total	18	9	8

Staff registration by gender	2022	2023	2024
Men	14	7	9
Other	1	-	-
Women	27	15	11
Grand Total	42	22	20

Job Title	2022	2023	2024
(blank)	1	-	-
Academic	8	8	7
PASS	32	14	13
PASS Chief Scientific Officer	1	-	-
Grand Total	42	22	20





Pay Class and Occupational	2022	2023	2024
Professionally qualified, mid-management (PC13PG4/PC13PG5/PC12) or Deputy	2	-	1
Dean, Professors, Associate Professors (includes Senior Research Scholar, Senior Scholar, Principal Research Scholar, Chief Research Officer, Academic Director)	6	3	3
Semi-skilled and discretionary decision making (PC07/PC06/PC05/PC04/PC03) Skilled technical, academically qualified, junior management	6	6	5
(PC11/PC10/PC09/PC08) or Senior Lecturer, Lecturer, Assistant Lecturer, Senior Clinical, Junior Research Fellow, Clinical Educator, Junior Research Officer	28	13	11
Grand Total	42	22	20

Disability Category	2022	2023	2024
Blind	2	-	-
Chronic — mobility difficult	5	7	3
Deaf	1	1	4
Hearing impaired	5	1	1
Mobility impairment	13	6	11
Psychosocial	7	7	1
Specific learning disorder — reading	2	2	-
Speech impairment — speaking by means of a valve	1	-	-
Visually impaired	5	2	1
Wheelchair user	1	-	-
Grand Total	42	26	21

4.6.5 Executive summary

The Disability Service (DS) at UCT has made significant strides in promoting inclusivity and accessibility for staff with disabilities, in alignment with the UCT Disability Policy (2021), Vision 2030, and national legislative frameworks. The department is committed to removing cultural, social and physical barriers through tailored interventions and reasonable accommodations.

4.6.6 Verification of staff disabilities

To support effective programme implementation and policy compliance, the DS launched a university-wide Disability Declaration Drive, a key initiative aimed at encouraging staff to formally declare their disabilities. This process supported:

- clarification of ‘disability’ and promotion of the disclosure process
 - collection of statistical data to monitor inclusion and equity efforts
 - improved communication about the benefits and confidentiality of registration
 - strengthened collaboration with HR and the EE office.

The declaration and verification process involved:

- completing an online form
- uploading medical documentation
- undergoing consultation and site verification meetings.

A total of 49 consultation and verification meetings were conducted, which involved HR, the DS, line managers, and affected staff members.

4.6.7 Implementation of reasonable accommodations

The DS ensured that staff who declared disabilities were provided with necessary accommodations, including:

- assistive technologies and devices
- accessible parking and transport services
- Sign Language interpretation
- physical workspace modifications (E.g installation of strobe lights)
- mobility orientation for new disability cases.





These services are guided by Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and the Interactional Approach to disability, ensuring that both individual needs and environmental barriers are addressed.

Ongoing support includes:

- liaising with line managers for tailored support
- providing assistive tools for Deaf staff and those with mobility challenges
- facilitating psychological and learning disorder assessments.

4.6.8 Confidentiality and compliance

The DS adheres to strict confidentiality as outlined in the disability policy and the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), ensuring personal information is securely managed and used only for service improvement and equity monitoring.

4.6.9 Challenges and learnings

- Limited participation in the declaration drive highlights ongoing stigma and hesitancy.
- Need for broader awareness and education on the confidentiality and benefits of disability disclosure.
- Some staff have yet to submit verification documents; engagement continues to encourage participation.

4.6.10 Recommendations

To enhance future verification and accommodation implementation efforts, the DS recommends:

- expanded awareness campaigns to demystify disclosure and its benefits
- automation of the registration process for improved user experience
- stronger inter-departmental collaboration for systemic improvements
- sustained training for HR and line managers to build inclusive leadership.

Faculty/Department	2022	2023	2024
(blank)	1	-	-
Centre for Higher Education Development	4	-	-
Department of Student Affairs	2	-	-
Commerce	5	3	4
Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment	2	1	1
Faculty of Health Sciences, Division of Chemical and Systems Biology	1	-	-
Faculty of Health Sciences	6	5	4
Faculty of Humanities	2	4	1
Faculty of Science	1	2	-
Finance, HR, Properties and Services, ICTS	5	3	1
Graduate School of Business	1	-	-
Department or faculty not listed	3	-	5
Libraries, Baxter Theatre, Institutional Planning, Development and Alumni	3	2	3
Office of the Vice-Chancellor, Office for Inclusivity and Change, Office of the Registrar, Communication and Marketing Department	5	1	-
Research Office, Research Contracts and International Academic Programmes Office	1	2	1
Grand Total	42	23	20

4.6.11 Conclusion

The DS has demonstrated effective leadership in driving UCT's disability inclusion agenda through the verification of staff

disabilities and the provision of reasonable accommodations. These efforts significantly contribute to UCT's transformation goals and set a strong foundation for long-term inclusivity in the workplace.



Research Engagements for UCT and External Partners

Disability Awareness and Sensitisation Training

Disability Awareness and Sensitisation Training (DAST) is an ongoing programme provided to UCT staff, as advertised in the UCT Staff Training manual. Conducted quarterly by a DS specialist, it requires interested UCT staff to sign up via the UCT Success Factors Training platform. Despite its inclusion in the HR staff training manual, the uptake of this training remains low, with no more than three staff members signing up for each quarterly online session.

In response to the challenges in staff participation, towards the end of 2023 and at the mid-point of 2024, the OIC DS manager took proactive steps to explore alternative approaches within the institution to address this issue. After consultation with the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT) team, it was agreed that the DS would collaborate with CILT, specifically involving the Head of Online Education and Course Curriculum Design/ Acting Head of the Digital Media Unit, to automate the Disability Sensitisation Training modules.

The collaboration and discussions fostered a fruitful partnership in the development of accessible online course modules. The OIC DS specialist and the CILT teams had weekly check-ins around the development of the course modules over a full semester. The OIC extends its immense gratitude to the CILT team for their efforts in creating the accessible online training course. This course effectively showcases inclusion in its full entirety for persons with disabilities. Further information is presented under the heading Disability Advocacy.



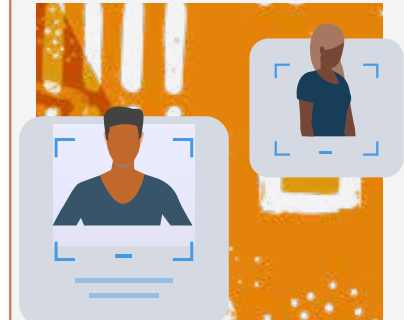
Building Capacity for Disability Services in South African Higher Education Institutions

The Disability Framework reveals a critical gap in the capability of HEIs to effectively support students with disabilities. Very few institutions possess the necessary knowledge, resources, and structures to provide disability services. This gap emphasises the need to enhance the capacities of these institutions to better serve students with disabilities. Recognising this, the collaboration responds to FirstRand Foundation's (FRF) request to UCT to develop a joint proposal to address limitations in services for students with disabilities at several higher education institutions. The partnership focuses on developing and implementing a comprehensive model to strengthen DUs within these institutions.



The UCT, HEDSA and FRF collaboration

This ambitious project is the result of extensive collaborative efforts between UCT, HEDSA and FRF. Through a series of intensive workshoping sessions, including two full-day workshops in February 2022, key stakeholders have merged their expertise and strengths. These workshops facilitated the exchange of valuable insights and strategies, focusing on the DS provision and capacity building. The overarching goal of this project is to disseminate best practices and develop a network of skilled and connected DU professionals and enhance the overall support structure for students with disabilities in South Africa.



FRF Interns

The DS has successfully onboarded the 2024-2025 cohort of FRF-sponsored interns. This cycle comprises three interns, continuing from five in the previous cycle. Each intern has been strategically allocated to a relevant portfolio within the DS, including advocacy, barrier-free access, and psychologist/ administrator support. The interns have received extensive training in various competencies including lay counselling, business management, financial management, and other skills tailored to their development plans. The training aims to equip them with both the technical expertise and the practical experience necessary to contribute to their respective portfolios and future professional goals.





Staff Access,
Support and
Success

5.1 Faculty of Commerce

5.1.1 Leading with Care and Transformation

- The Dean's Advisory Committee took part in a guided leadership journey, supported by an external inclusion coach.
- Through five co-learning circles, staff reflected on their leadership styles, built confidence in handling difficult conversations, and committed to leading with care, courage, and a focus on transformation.

5.1.2 Commerce Engage

- Established in 2022, this platform brings academic and PASS staff together to engage on inclusion and transformation.
- It encourages connection across roles, builds shared understanding, and deepens a collective sense of responsibility for change.

5.1.3 Review to Renew

- This reflective series gave staff a chance to pause, think critically about their roles, and map the way forward.
- The sessions included mindfulness, guided journalling, and peer discussions – all designed to support more intentional, values-driven work.

5.1.4 College of Accounting Mentorship Programme

- New staff are paired with experienced colleagues to help ease their transition into the faculty.
- This creates a safe space to ask questions, build relationships, share knowledge, and navigate institutional culture with support.

5.1.5 Information Systems Strategic Planning

- A full-day departmental workshop aligned the team's direction with the faculty's transformation goals.
- Key outcomes included forming task teams for mentoring and communication, integrating regular reflection into meetings, and hosting sessions with the OIC on bullying and professional conduct.



5.2 Graduate School of Business (UCT GSB)

5.2.1 Brown Bag Wednesday Initiative

- This initiative is a long-standing GSB tradition, now reimagined to

align with South African commemorative days and shared histories.

- It offers staff and students a space to reflect, connect, and celebrate their identities and contributions.
- By integrating storytelling, memory and community outreach, the initiative strengthens a culture of collegiality, care and inclusion while keeping transformation work grounded in everyday relationships.



5.3 Faculty of Humanities

5.3.1 Values-Based Culture Shift

- In 2024, the faculty launched a values survey to inform department-level workshops.
- The insights gathered contributed to the co-creation of a Faculty Values Manifesto, scheduled for finalisation in 2025.
- This initiative supported inclusive leadership and encouraged shared ownership of transformation.

5.3.2 Leadership Development and Inclusion

- The faculty hosted bi-annual Head of Department workshops to strengthen leadership capacity for inclusive change.

- These workshops focused on inclusive scholarly communication, equitable access, and the development of future academic leaders.

5.3.3 Languages and Literatures Transformation Symposium

- Annual scholarly event exploring epistemic justice, multilingualism and pedagogy in institutional culture.
- Grounded in UCT's transformation goals, it promotes critical reflection and dialogue.

5.3.4 Global Summit on Diamond Open Access

- Hosted by the Department of Knowledge and Information Stewardship (DKIS) to promote curriculum transformation in Library and Information Studies (LIS) education.

- Focused on inclusive scholarly communication, equity in access, and developing future academic leaders.

5.3.5 Infecting the City Festival

- The Institute for Creative Arts curated the Infecting the City Festival to activate public spaces through performance and dialogue.
- The festival engaged staff, artists, and communities in transformative urban engagement and social justice.

5.4 Faculty of Law

5.4.1 Mentorship for Academic Growth

- The departments offer mentorship to new and early-career academics.
- The Private Law Teaching Assistant Mentorship Programme offers support for research, co-authorship and conference participation.

5.4.2 Collaborative Research and Belonging

- Joint projects between staff, students and community partners on issues such as gender equality and disability rights.
- Builds a sense of purpose and shared learning aligned with social justice.

5.4.3 Career Advancement for PASS Staff

- There is dedicated funding to support PASS staff in pursuing postgraduate qualifications.
- In 2024, three staff members received support, one of whom completed a master's in law.

5.4.4 Inclusive Governance

- Law Board reforms strengthened diversity and representation in faculty decision-making.





- The chairperson of transformation now sits on key strategic committees, ensuring transformation priorities are embedded.

5.5 ICTS and HR

5.5.1 Succession Planning Pilot

ICTS served as the pilot site for UCT's Succession Management Programme, a key initiative under the Integrated Talent Management Framework (ITMF). The pilot focused on identifying and developing critical talent, testing succession planning tools and processes, and gathering insights to inform a future university-wide strategy. Activities included talent reviews, succession nominations, and action plans aimed at leadership development and long-term skills retention.

5.6 Properties and Services (P&S)

5.6.1 Skills Development and Advancement

- Secondment opportunities support internal upskilling across divisions.
- Computer Literacy Programme: Nearly 100 Estates and Custodial staff completed Phase 2; expansion planned for UCT Shuttle service staff.

- Computer access improved through installations in staff tea rooms.
- Lab training partnerships enabled some cleaning staff to transition into lab assistant roles.
- Grade 12 support offered to staff pursuing school completion certification.

5.6.2 Inclusive Infrastructure

- Barrier-free design was implemented through close collaboration with DU.
- Projects include accessible toilets, ramps, and adapted lecture seating (eg John Day Theatre).
- The Sports Centre Disability Lift Project was launched with Students' Representative Council (SRC) and ParaSports partners.

5.6.3 Access and Support Services

- UCT Shuttle services provide free, safe transport for students, including first-year collection from transport hubs.
- Campus Protection Services (CPS) and the Office of Health, Safety, and Environment (OHSE) offer 24/7 medical and emergency response support.

5.6.4 Mental Health and Environment

- Grounds teams maintain welcoming green spaces, promoting mental health through access to nature.

5.7 Faculty of Science

5.7.1 Onboarding and Promotion

- A formal mentorship programme and an onboarding guide was developed for all new staff.
- The faculty reviewed ad hominem promotion criteria to align with Vision 2030, ensuring support for equity, diversity and transparency.

5.7.2 Paid Research Assistantships

- Funded 20 undergraduate students from designated groups across nine departments.
- Participants gained practical lab experience, mentoring, and research skills.

This is what participants had to say about the value of the internship:

Participant one: "[The internship] offered a professional experience. I learned to adapt to a 9-to-5 work routine, manage tasks independently, and develop as a junior scientist."

Participant two: "This position gave me an avenue to socialise and learn from [more experienced postgraduates], which really made science feel like more of an open, welcoming pathway."





5.7.3 Departmental Culture Change Initiatives

- The Women in Physics and Astronomy Lunch promoted inclusion across career stages.
- The Decentring Whiteness (ACDI) initiative fostered racial literacy and cultural reflexivity.
- The Wellness and Bias Workshops (BIO) focused on GBV prevention and unconscious bias.

- Molecular and Cell Biology (MCB) and STA hosted talks on sexual consent, cis-normativity, and inclusive teamwork practices.
- Construction and Economics Management (CEM): Panel with female academics on navigating academia and mentoring the next generation of women in science.
- H3D: Stress management workshop during Mental Health Awareness Month.

- MCB: Motherhood in Science panel discussion with SEA, BIO, and MCB. Talk on GBV Prevention and Sexual Consent Policy Matters facilitated by the OIC; talk on Navigating Cis-tems facilitated by Gender Dynamix; heritage brunch; unconscious bias training facilitated by the OIC; followed up by a journal shared with the department, which encouraged members to continue the learning journey.
- STA: The OIC-led seminar on inclusion and belonging to support psychologically safe, high-performing teams.

5.8 Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment

5.8.1 Mechanical Engineering isiXhosa Glossary

Launched by CHED's Multilingualism Education Project in 2023, the Mechanical Engineering isiXhosa Glossary introduces over 300 verified technical terms to support first-year student comprehension and success. Following this, the Department of Mechanical Engineering has embarked on a process to rename the Electro-Mechanical Building with an isiXhosa name, aiming to foster a culture of inclusivity within the faculty.

5.8.2 EBE Fun Day

This event was launched in collaboration with the EBE Student Council, and fostered informal staff-student interaction through departmental games and competitions.

5.8.3 Off-Campus Engagements

Departments organised informal activities to help students, particularly first-years, build peer connections and engage with staff beyond academic spaces.

5.8.4 Heritage Day Potjiekos Competition

This annual faculty event celebrates cultural diversity and shared heritage, strengthening community engagement between departments.



5.8.5 Mechanical Engineering Open Sessions

These weekly drop-in sessions with the HoD create a welcoming space for students to ask questions, seek guidance, and reduce hierarchical barriers.

5.8.6 Engineering and Social Responsibility Research

Academics launched a research project to examine how engineers navigated apartheid South Africa, and how to integrate these insights into engineering education.

5.8.7 Publications and Impact

The research has produced conference papers and a journal article (Engineering Under Oppressive Regimes), exploring engineers' roles in society and ethical responsibilities under oppressive systems.

5.8.8 Curriculum Enrichment

Findings have deepened student engagement in the Engineer in Society course, challenging resistance to engineering as a socio-technical field and highlighting engineers' agency in shaping societal outcomes.

5.9 Faculty of Health Sciences

5.9.1 Emotional Well-being

The TEC implemented an initiative to focus on staff and student wellness, with a particular focus on mental health. The initiative included the provision of free weekly guided meditation sessions which ran successfully from May to August, fostering a culture of mindfulness and emotional well-being.

5.9.2 Family-friendly Work Environment

The Anaesthesia and Perioperative Medicine department established a 'Breastfeeding and Wellness' Room to support staff well-being. It provides new mothers with a peaceful space to express breast milk

and is widely used by both internal and external members of the department.

5.9.3 LGBTQ+ Health and Advocacy Symposium

The faculty co-hosted the LGBTQ+ Health and Advocacy Symposium with DTHF, in partnership with IAM, the Triangle Project, and Gender Dynamix. The event brought together healthcare professionals, advocates and academics to address critical issues in LGBTQ+ healthcare.

5.9.4 The FHS Culture Indaba: Implementation of the New Language Policy

The Indaba aimed to reflect on the application of UCT's new language policy and how multilingualism can be better incorporated. The day also featured a dedicated session on the importance of self-care, which is increasingly being recognised as critical to staff, especially those engaged in transformation work.

5.10 Department of Human Resources

5.10.1 Strategic Culture Change Enablers

- HR Analytics projects have automated key systems to increase access for all staff – especially those previously excluded from digital platforms – supporting redress and inclusive development.
- Refined Exit and Stay Interviews: Updated tools were rolled out in 2024, with quarterly data shared to inform retention and inclusion strategies across faculties.
- Scarce and Critical Skills Audit: Completed to guide targeted recruitment, retention, and equity-focused development.

5.10.2 Equity-Aligned Policy and Practice

- Policy Development: HR contributed to transformation-enabling policies, including the Policy Addressing Bullying, and expanded access to benefits (eg Kaelo Clinic for lower-income staff).



- Integrated Union Forum: Established a single bargaining forum for all PASS staff, promoting fair representation regardless of pay class.

5.10.3 Embedded HR Advisory in Transformation

- HR Business Partners contribute towards shaping faculty transformation plans through roles on management committees.
- Translation of DD materials into isiXhosa and Afrikaans enhances access and linguistic inclusion for Properties and Services and Student Housing staff.



5.10.4 Human Resources Staff Learning Centre (SLC)

5.10.5 Supporting the UCT Strategy for Inclusivity and Change: Training Participation by Thematic Area

- Organisational Strategy and Culture: 260 courses completed
- Creating a 'Safe Space' Workplace: 304 courses completed
- Change Management: 170 courses completed
- Developing Talent: A structured, cross-disciplinary induction programme for all new staff. A comprehensive learning offering that is aligned to the [UCT Competency Framework](#), and where programmes are offered at the various competency levels as laid out in the Competency Framework.
- Staff have completed a total of 4 639 courses in this suite.

5.10.6 Formal Learning Pathways

(Internships, Learnerships, Apprenticeships)

- 2020: 33 participants
- 2021: 52 participants (+58%)
- 2022: 70 participants (+35%)
- 2023: 91 participants (+30%)
- 2024: Data collection underway

5.10.7 Staff Education and Bursary Scheme

The Staff Education and Bursary Scheme offers all staff, irrespective of pay class/academic rank, the equal benefit of a 100% bursary to a maximum of R18 000.

5.11 Research Office

5.11.1 Wellness and Psychological Safety

- The Women's Month event included breathing, grounding, and motivational dialogue, facilitated by staff across units, fostering peer-led support and emotional well-being.
- Staff Wellness Committee introduced:



- o Afternoon hikes and breathing exercises.
- o Use of the emotions wheel in shared spaces to support emotional literacy and inclusive dialogue.

5.11.2 Addressing Workplace Harm

- Anti-Bullying Seminar (Oct 2024) was attended by 50 staff and facilitated by the Employee Relations department.
- HR created shared language and awareness around bullying and respectful engagement.

5.11.3 Reflective Institutional Engagement

- Guided Campus Tour (with former UCT Registrar Hugh Amoore) built historical awareness of UCT's land and institutional context, supporting deeper institutional connection and critical reflection.

5.12 The OIC Initiatives and Academic Collaborations

5.12.1 Unconscious Bias and Inclusion Training Programme

Unconscious bias training (UBT) has gained prominence both internationally and locally as a strategy to improve awareness of implicit biases – automatic, unintentional stereotypes or prejudices that influence decision-making and behaviour (Atewologun, Cornish & Tresh, 2018; Greenwald & Krieger, 2006; Naidoo, Pillay & Sibiya, 2025).

In 2024, a series of Unconscious Bias, Microaggressions and Inclusion workshops were conducted across UCT, reaching 740 participants through both in-person and online sessions. The workshops were designed to:

- raise awareness of unconscious bias and its impact on interpersonal interactions
- provide strategies to recognise and address microaggressions
- develop participants' capacity for self-reflection on their own biases
- and equip staff with practical tools to embed inclusive practices in their daily work.

Feedback received highlights the success of the unconscious bias training in both educating participants and providing them with practical tools to address bias. It underscores the value of such training in promoting a more inclusive organisational culture through interactive workshops, values-based conversations and case studies.

5.12.2 Anti-Racism Policy Education Workshops

The Anti-Racism Policy Education workshops promote institutional accountability and awareness through policy education. They focus on building shared understanding of UCT's Policy on Anti-Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Racial Harassment (2022), and equipping staff and students to identify, prevent and respond to racism in the university context.





The workshops support the implementation of UCT's Policy on Anti-Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Racial Harassment (2022), equipping staff and students to identify, prevent and respond to racism within the university context. The workshops aim to:

- clarify the purpose and scope of the policy,
- strengthen participants' ability to respond to incidents of racial discrimination and harassment,
- and support consistent application of anti-racism principles across faculties and departments.

The sessions, conducted with 120 participants, increased awareness of the anti-racism policy and established a foundation for ongoing efforts to prevent and address racism and discrimination across all levels of the university.

5.12.3 Shared Paths to Healing Racial Trauma Peer Support Programme

The racial trauma peer support programme was piloted by the OIC to offer staff a psychologically safe space to process racial trauma through facilitated, peer-led engagement. Racial trauma, also referred to as race-based traumatic stress (RBTS), encompasses the psychological and emotional harm caused by encounters with racism, racial discrimination and racial harassment. Bryant-Davis & Ocampo (2005) suggest that racial trauma significantly affects mental health and well-being, leading to outcomes such as chronic stress, anxiety, depression and hypervigilance. Gobodo-Madikizela (2013) explored the profound impacts of racial trauma in post-apartheid contexts, emphasising the need for collective healing. Peer support originates from grassroots social movements –

particularly the mental health advocacy, disability rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and civil rights movements – when people with lived experience came together to support one another in contexts where formal systems failed or excluded them (Mead, Hilton & Curtis, 2001; Dennis, 2003; Repper & Carter, 2011).

The group included PASS and academic staff. As a key outcome of the programme, a cohort of trained peer supporters has emerged, ready to be deployed to support others across the university community.

The programme aligns with UCT's Policy on Anti-Racism, Racial Discrimination and Racial Harassment (2022), and was designed to:

- provide a safe, empathetic space for sharing and healing
- build resilience through reciprocal peer support
- train a cadre of peer supporters capable of assisting others with similar experiences.

The sessions provided a space to express experiences that were previously difficult to share, contributing to increased emotional validation and connection. Participants reported a reduced sense of isolation and a greater ability to name and understand the effects of racial trauma in their work environment.

5.12.4 Decentring Whiteness Programme

The programme of the Anti-Racism Working Group constitutes a crucial component of UCT's comprehensive strategy for the institutional dismantling of racism. The Decentring Whiteness Working Group undertakes efforts to eradicate racism through a multifaceted approach that involves education, capacity building, advocacy and consciousness-raising. The initiatives aim to recognise and comprehend more thoroughly the manifestations of racism and white privilege in both personal and institutional environments. The report, [Encountering our Whiteness: Disrupting patterns of white privilege at UCT](#) encapsulates the evolution of the project from December 2020 to December 2022.

5.12.5 Partnerships with Civil Society and Student Organisations

Gender Dynamix (GDX)

The partnership between Gender Dynamix (GDX) and the OIC aims to address the systemic exclusion, discrimination, and marginalisation faced by trans and gender-diverse staff and students in higher education institutions. Through awareness campaigns, policy advocacy and sensitisation workshops, the collaboration promotes inclusive practices and policies that foster safer and more equitable campus environments.

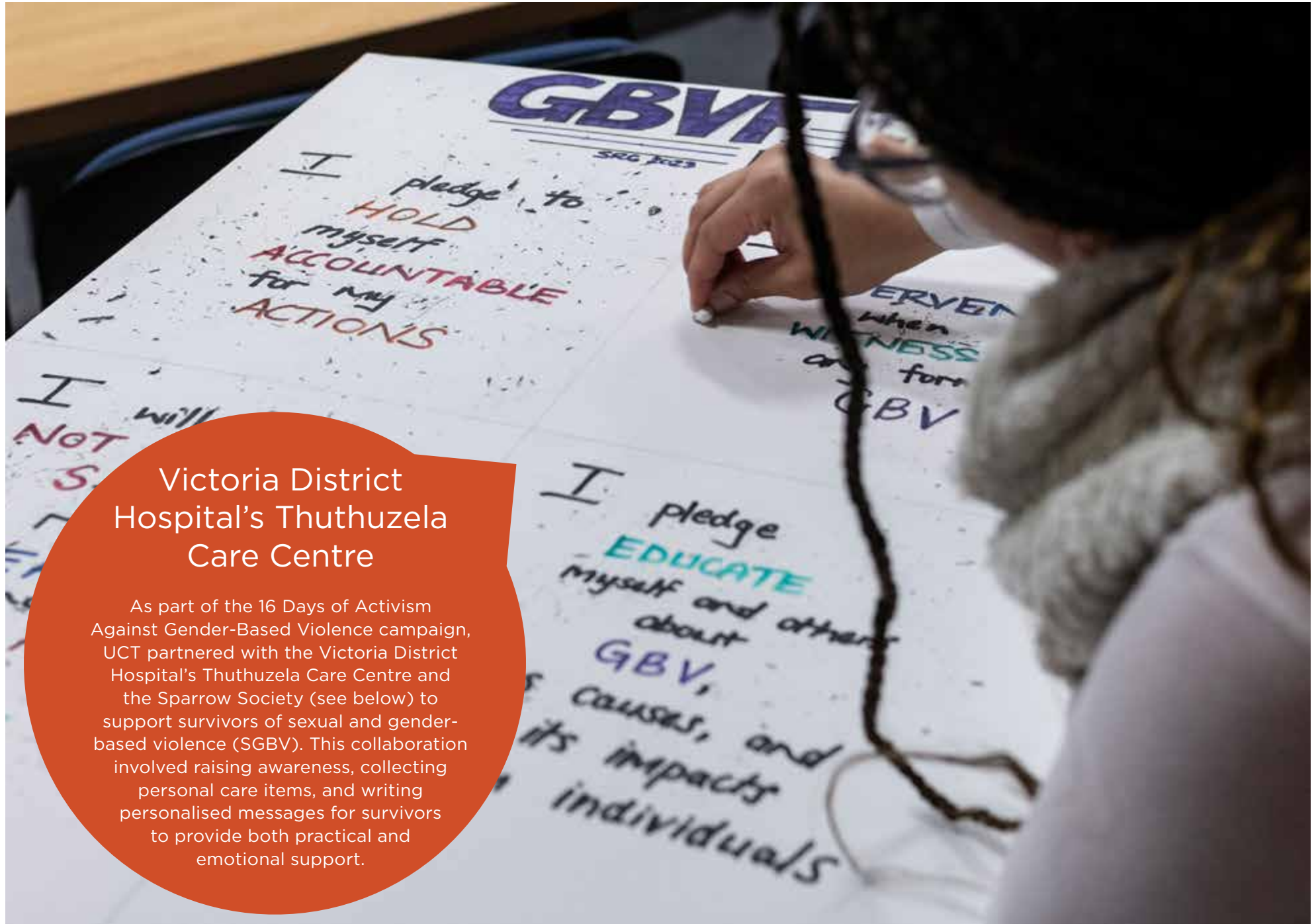




Rainbow UCT

The collaboration between Rainbow UCT and the OIC aims to promote culture change by fostering an inclusive environment for sexually diverse orientations. The goal is to work together to make UCT a more welcoming and supportive place for sexually diverse students and staff.





Victoria District Hospital's Thuthuzela Care Centre

As part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign, UCT partnered with the Victoria District Hospital's Thuthuzela Care Centre and the Sparrow Society (see below) to support survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). This collaboration involved raising awareness, collecting personal care items, and writing personalised messages for survivors to provide both practical and emotional support.





The Sparrow Society

The Sparrow Society empowers survivors through skills development, job creation and psychosocial support, including the production of reusable sanitary pads that have reached over 25 000 women across Africa. By restoring economic power to survivors, the organisation provides a pathway towards stability, independence and long-term security.



Employment
equity



6. Employment equity

A commitment to EE is a statutory requirement for all organisations in South Africa with more than 50 employees. The EE Act (1998, amended 2014) specifies that:

“The purpose of this Act is to achieve equity in the workplace by (a) promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination; and (b) implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, in order to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational levels in the workforce.”

Achieving an equitable staffing profile is a core objective of the University’s Vision 2030 strategy.

UCT is committed to EE through the setting of realistic, achievable targets and goals benchmarked against the National and Provincial Economically Active Population (EAP) statistics, and by acquisition, onboarding, progression, development and retention of staff to achieve the university’s EE goals. In addition to and following the EE Planning process, UCT provides multiple ongoing qualitative monitoring methodologies to remove and reduce barriers to EE through prevention/proactive advocacy and awareness raising and through responsive development and provision of systemic, sustainable affirmative action measures that aim to eliminate these barriers.

The university is committed to addressing EE barriers through several strategic institutional programmes aligned with Vision 2030, which aims to unleash human potential and foster a fair and just society. Progress on these initiatives is monitored quarterly and tracked annually. Key programmes include:

- Accelerating the Transformation of Academia Programme (ATAP)
- Developing the Next Generation of the Professoriate (NGP)
- Advancing the New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP)
- Supporting Emerging Researchers Programme (ERP)
- Dismantling Racism
- Promoting Inclusivity through a Validated Inclusion Scale (IS)
- Expanding Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
- Investing in Talent Development
- Enhancing the Built Environment (place and space)

Key affirmative action measures to address the EE barriers include effective onboarding, recruitment and retention of employees within the designated groups, including people with disabilities. Medium to long-term strategies for redress and achieving equity, focusing on

the continuous support of the designated groups in employment (especially academics), are imperative at the university.

The EE Fund is one such strategy. This is a ring-fenced pool of money allocated via the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC): Transformation, Student Affairs and Social Responsiveness to enable the acquisition of talent for which there is no current budgetary provision. In other words, it is a form of bridging finance that creates a ‘breathing space’ in the university’s employment capacity. Salary costs are carried for up to three years and recipient departments commit to creating permanent posts by the end of the period. The EE Fund is prioritised for succession funding and to strengthen succession planning for key staff, especially for building the black professoriate.

The table below summarises the number of applicants approved per faculty from 2017 to 2025 by race and gender.

Faculties	Female			Male			Total
	A	C	I	A	C	I	
Centre for Higher Education Development	1	-	-	1	-	-	2
Commerce	-	-	1	2	2	2	7
Health Sciences	5	2	-	7	1	-	15
Engineering & the Built Environment	1	-	-	4	1	-	6
Science	1	-	-	1	1	-	3
Humanities	2	3	-	-	-	-	5
Law	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
CMD	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Libraries	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	13	6	1	15	5	2	42





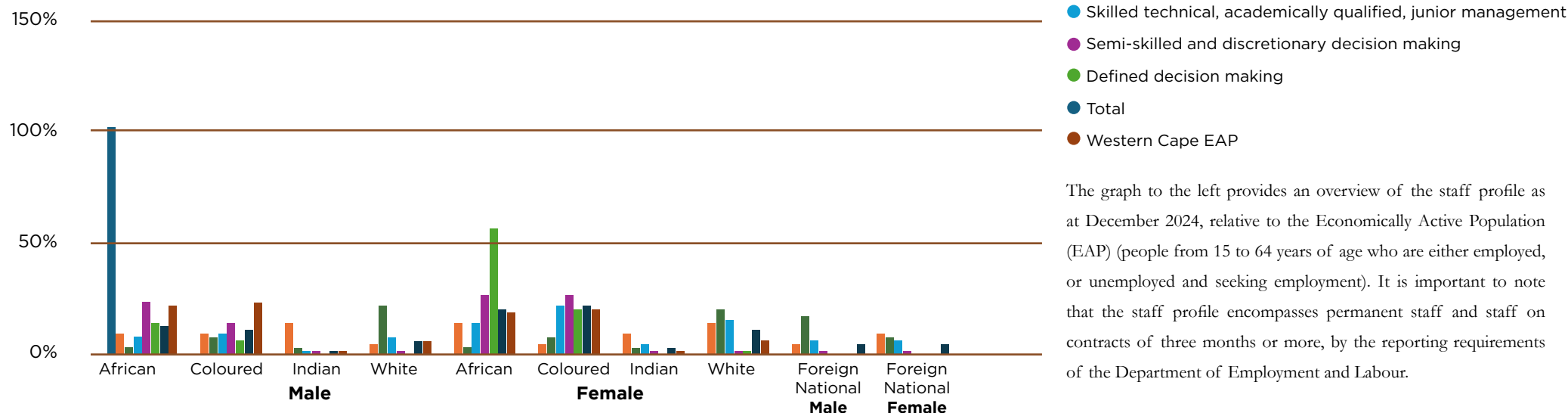
These initiatives demonstrate the university's commitment to removing barriers and promoting EE and inclusion. A progress report on the implementation of the Affirmative Action Measures as outlined in the [university's EE Plan may be found here](#).

The EE Act requires the university to monitor staff progress against specified 'occupational' levels. UCT equivalents are provided in the table below.

Department of Employment and Labour Occupational Level	UCT equivalent
Top Management	Vice-Chancellor
Senior Management	PC13, Pay Grades 1–3
Professionally Qualified and Mid-Management	PASS staff: PC12; PC13, Pay Grades 4–5 Academic Staff: Associate Professor and Professor
Skilled technical and academically qualified	PASS staff: PC8–11 Academic staff: Lecturer and Senior Lecturer
Semi-skilled	PASS staff: PC 3–7
Unskilled	PASS staff: PC 1–2



Staff profile as at December 2024 relative to the Economically Active Population (EAP)



The graph to the left provides an overview of the staff profile as at December 2024, relative to the Economically Active Population (EAP) (people from 15 to 64 years of age who are either employed, or unemployed and seeking employment). It is important to note that the staff profile encompasses permanent staff and staff on contracts of three months or more, by the reporting requirements of the Department of Employment and Labour.





1. Top Management ●

Top management is occupied by one African male; this is the VC position, which is the only position at this occupational level.

2. Senior Management ●

Senior management is somewhat more diverse, but still misaligned with EAP benchmarks: African and coloured males, despite significant EAP shares (22.5% and 23.3%), are underrepresented at just 10% each. Indian males (15%) and white males (5%) are overrepresented relative to their much smaller EAP proportions (0.8% and 7.3%, respectively). Female representation is visible but modest across African, coloured, Indian and white groups (5%—15%). Overall, the Senior Management occupational level remains skewed towards Indians and whites, with Africans and coloureds still underrepresented when compared to the EAP.



3. Professionally Qualified and Mid-Management ●

White males (22.02%) and females (20.02%) dominate, despite representing only 7.3% and 6.7% of the EAP, respectively. African and coloured males and females have a modest presence (3% to 8%), far below their EAP. Foreign nationals are notably strong (17.02% among males), an element not comparable to EAP but indicative of recruitment beyond the local demographic. At this occupational level, Africans and coloureds are significantly underrepresented.



4. Skilled Technical, Junior Management ●

Coloured females (23.03%) and African females (15.04%) align closely or even exceed their EAP benchmarks. Coloured males (10.31%) and African males (8.71%) are slightly underrepresented, but closer to parity. Whites and Indians hold smaller shares here, better matching their lower EAP percentages. This occupational level shows the highest degree of racial and gender balance relative to the Western Cape workforce profile.



5. Semi-Skilled and Discretionary Decision-Making ●

At the semi-skilled level, African and coloured females and males dominate (24.24% to 27.57%), overrepresenting their EAP shares. Whites and Indians are marginally present, consistent with their lower EAP proportions. This strong showing suggests that Africans and coloureds are well represented at this occupational level.

6. Defined Decision-Making ●

This level is characterised by overrepresentation of African females (56.6%), followed by coloured females (21.24%). African males (15.27%) also have presence, but to a lesser degree. The high concentration of African females at the entry-level 'defined decision-making' stage suggests limited mobility into more senior or professional roles, which may reflect broader systemic barriers.



Student success,
agency, teaching
and learning





7. Student success, agency, teaching and learning

7.1 Promoting Equity, Access, and Student Success at UCT

UCT is committed to fostering a more inclusive and representative student body that reflects the diversity of South African society. This includes increasing the enrolment and success of black students, students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and those with disabilities.

To support this goal, UCT is implementing a range of initiatives aimed at improving access, promoting academic success, and providing comprehensive support for student well-being. These efforts are guided by a commitment to addressing historical inequalities in education without reinforcing stigma or labels.

The following section outlines key strategies UCT is undertaking to advance these objectives.

7.2 Institutional Profile

Who is our UCT student Gender	2024 Headcount
Female	16 887
Male	12 873
Trans	44
Undeclared	5
Total	29 809
In terms of gender, the highest number of students identify as female (16 887).	

Race/ International	2024 Headcount
African	12 578
Coloured	4 543
Indian	2 039
Chinese	158
White	5 828
International	3 662
NA/Unknown	1 001
Total	29 809
In terms of racial profile, the highest number of students identify as African (12 578).	



7.3 Educational Support across Faculties and Departments

7.3.1 Faculty of Health Sciences [Transformation Report 2024 docx](#)

- **Writing Lab**
Consultations, open resources and weekly ‘Shut Up & Write’ sessions for postgrads.
- **Educational Development Unit (EDU)**
Support through Extended Curriculum, Augmented Programmes and orientation for first-years.
- **Mentoring and Wellness Collaboration**
Joint workshops and training with peer counsellors to support academic and psychosocial needs.
- **Recovery Programme**
For students on probation: study skills, literacy workshops and near-peer guidance.
- **Near-Peer Support**
Senior students assist juniors across clinical programmes (Audiology, OT, MBChB, etc.).
- **Postgraduate Support**
EDU actively contributes to postgraduate well-being through targeted interventions.
- **Reasonable Accommodation**
The Division of Public Health Medicine (PHM) provided long-term support to a UCT medical graduate managing a chronic health condition and assisted in navigating internship and community service placement options aligned with their medical needs.



7.3.2 Faculty of Humanities - [Transformation Report 2024](#)

• Khanyisa Project

Curriculum reform to reduce student load and improve success. Winner of VC's Transformation Award (2023).

• Umthombo Centre for Student Success (UCSS)

A one-stop hub offering academic, mental health and inclusivity support, now with full-time counselling.

7.3.3 Faculty of Science Faculty [Transformation Report 2024](#)

• Siyaphumelela Network Recognition

Awarded in 2024 for UCT's data-driven student success strategies (chatbot, DASS, Phambili).

• STEM MentHER

Academic and industry mentorship to address female participation in STEM fields.

• Ocean Womxn Initiative

Established under UCT's Advancing Womxn projects, the program addresses the under-representation and challenges faced by black women in ocean science, driving equity in the field.

• Science is Tough, But So Are You!

A student-centred open-textbook project, incorporating content on subjects such as culture shock, consent, and other aspects of student life. Designed to support first-year BSc students at UCT in navigating their academic journey.

7.3.4 Faculty of Commerce Transformation Reporting 2024

Thuthuka Mentorship Support

The goal of this programme is to provide structured, holistic support to help students complete postgraduate studies.

- Each student is paired with a trained academic mentor (from the College of Accounting or academic staff).
- Four structured check-ins/year to monitor progress, support time management and academic development.



Partnership with the Association of South African Black Actuarial Professionals (ASABA).

This partnership was founded in 2005 to grow actuarial and quantitative skills among historically disadvantaged groups, through:

- Holistic mentoring for university students (including UCT and the University of Witwatersrand (Wits)).
- Students' vacation work placements with industry partners.
- Transforming access to the actuarial profession along racial lines.

Partnership with the South African Actuarial Development Programme (SAADP)

- Founded in the early 2000s to address the lack of black actuaries in South Africa.
- Provides financial and broader developmental support to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, ensuring equitable access and opportunities.
- Active support programmes established at UCT, Wits and the University of Pretoria to transform the profession and nurture new talent.

7.4 Psychosocial Support Across Faculties and Departments

7.4.1 Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment

- The faculty provides access to an on-site psychologist, supported by six part-time professionals, with strong student uptake and positive feedback.
- A faculty-based lecturer offers additional psychosocial support, originally for first-years but now used widely across the faculty.
- The Student in Distress Fund helps students facing challenges such as food insecurity and fee debt, especially close to graduation.
- Information about support services is shared regularly through the Dean's Desk and Vula.

Equity in Postgraduate Access

- Progress in diversifying the postgraduate student body has been driven by shifts in funding; many supervisors now prioritise marginalised and disabled students for bursaries and grants.

Supporting Vulnerable Students

- Regular contact between HoDs, convenors, admin teams and student representatives ensures early identification and support for students in need.
- Support includes extra exam time, extended deadlines, laptop loans, and help with data or connectivity issues.

7.4.2 Faculty of Commerce

Education Development Unit (EDU)

- Since 2020, EDU has expanded the definition of equity to include ongoing psychosocial and academic support.
- Key interventions include early risk detection and extended programme placement.



- In 2024, 86 students were transitioned from mainstream to extended programmes to enhance well-being, academic success and funding stability.

The Saville Foundation Advisor

- In partnership with EDU, the Saville Foundation funds a dedicated Student Development Advisor (EDU alumnus).
- Provides empathetic, individualised support to second- and third-year students.
- Focus areas: emotional growth, self-awareness, and peer connection to improve academic engagement.

Greenlight Movement Well-being Tool

- A collaborative project between EDU and the Saville Foundation.
- Introduced a student well-being assessment tool to help students reflect on their life circumstances and identify personal development goals.
- Enables the faculty to tailor psychosocial interventions and foster a more inclusive, responsive learning environment.

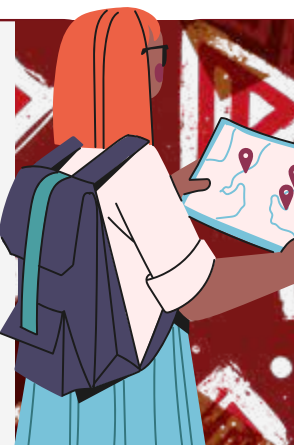
7.4.3 International Academic Programmes Office (IAPO)



7.4.4 The OIC offerings in 2024

International Student Buddy Programme

Introduced in 2023 to support international students in their transition to UCT. Peer mentors conduct regular check-ins, offer practical guidance, and refer students to relevant services. Students who complete 35 hours of service are eligible for UCT Plus Leadership recognition and transcript notation.



Semester Study Abroad Programme (PMR Unit)

Incoming exchange students are linked to community service opportunities via SHAWCO. This facilitates meaningful engagement with local communities, encourages intercultural learning and builds awareness of social inequality, while supporting fuller integration into campus life.

7.4.4.1 Capacity Strengthening and Training

From January to June 2024, the ICB portfolio conducted capacity-building interventions, reaching approximately 2 046 participants through 75 workshops/lectures/consultations in departments or other spaces. These interventions focused on a range of topics and themes related to transformation, inclusivity and diversity.

While the capacity-strengthening interventions are often developed in collaboration with departments and faculties, several institutional offerings were available in this reporting period.

These included:

- Critical diversity workshops, video content and in-person workshops.
- From Idea to Action: a multi-session capacity-strengthening intervention which assists TCs to develop action plans.
- Building Brave Classrooms: a set of capacity-strengthening tools aimed at introducing content related to transformation, inclusion and diversity in the classroom.

- Transformation Reflection Circles
- Consultations and debriefing sessions
- Becoming Professional HIV workshops
- Bespoke sessions on transformation, inclusion and diversity as requested by environments.
- Mediation

7.4.4.2 Agents for Change Education programme

In total, 28 peer facilitators were trained to deliver Policy Education through small group sessions focusing on topics such as sexual consent and survivor support. They acquired teamwork and collaboration skills as well as self-awareness skills. They transferred the TID skills acquired to the first-year students who participated in the orientation-week (O-week) programme.

Over 4 000 first-year students participated in the O-week workshops that created awareness about sexual consent, reporting sexual assault, survivor support and debunking rape myths. Seventeen workshops/talks were delivered across six faculties, and 16 talks were delivered across 16 residences.



What changes in knowledge, competencies, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviour occurred after conducting the policy education?

According to evaluation results, first-year participants presented the following actions as measures they would take (or do differently) to address GBV, after attending the sexual consent talks:

- Share information about how to report.
- Practise consent and be more aware of it.
- Shift the narrative towards the perpetrator and not the victim.
- Talk more about consent and sexual assault.
- Be more aware of what happens in my environment.
- Support friends who have experienced sexual assault.
- Report sexual assault and speak against it.
- Stop victim blaming.
- Access the support services available.
- Be mindful when interacting sexually and physically with others.

7.4.4.3 Gender Marshal Programme (bystander intervention programme for students)

The Gender Marshal Programme equips student volunteers with skills and knowledge to disrupt rape culture by intervening when faced with a harmful situation. Student volunteers signed a pledge and activated an anti-GBV campaign that was posted on the OIC social media platform to raise awareness about GBV and take a stance against it. In total, 121 students attended and participated in the workshop.

The Agents for Change Programme participants (ACEs) acquired the following skills while on the ACES programme: Build Self-awareness and Self-reflection skills, Build Leadership and Teamwork skills. The university community benefited from the Gender Marshals being trained in that through UCT's Leadership Academy, student leaders were equipped with TID competencies to thrive in their roles and in a diverse UCT context:

UCT Lead Student group	Participant total	Success indicators from the programme	Achieved Transformation, Inclusivity and Diversity competencies
ACES (TID) peer education programme	18 student facilitators	1. Building confidence to host TID conversations about anti-oppressions, eg anti-GBV and anti-racism. 2. Building empathy and active listening for understanding. 3. Creating spaces to engage in sensitive conversations without passing judgement. 4. Challenging oppressive systems through community engagement. 17 anti-racism and 24 anti-GBV dialogues implemented in the residences.	Leadership Teamwork Facilitation Collaboration Appreciation for diversity Self-awareness
House committee training	220 student leaders served in this role	Presenting and executing a leadership strategy for residences through humanising pedagogies.	Leadership Self-awareness
Sub-warden training	120 student employees served in this role	Providing support to the wardens by co-ordinating residence activities to ensure the residence functions effectively.	Leadership Self-awareness
Gender Marshal Training	180 student volunteers graduated and served in this role	1. Creating safe spaces by directly intervening to disrupt sexual assault incidents at residence events 2. Supporting survivors of sexual assault to report cases. 3. Educating peers about the meaning of an empowered bystander.	Leadership Teamwork Advocacy Self-awareness
Sweep Conference	150 students participated	Building capacity to engage in discourses about GBV awareness and prevention both nationally and institutionally.	Leadership Self-awareness
Agora Dialogues	60 students participated	Build capacity to engage in dialogues about GBV awareness and prevention, focusing on residence programmes improvement.	Leadership Self-awareness



STUDENT JOURNEY

7.4.5 International Academic Programmes Office (IAPO)

Student Inclusion and Engagement

- Bi-weekly Inclusive Dialogue Sessions launched at the Confucius Institute (CI) to address equity and belonging.
- Diverse governance structures established at CI, including student and teacher representation.
- Student Voice Integration in IAPO through structured engagement with the SRC and student societies.
- Improved international student support based on feedback around cultural adjustment and language barriers.

Leadership and Social Responsibility

- MCF Scholars Leadership Camp is hosted in Tulbagh to strengthen student leadership and civic engagement.
- Community outreach initiatives delivered at Ons Plek (Mowbray) and under-resourced primary schools, linking education with social impact.

7.5 Disability

For persons with disabilities, academic success is more likely to be attained when barriers to access are identified and reduced.

7.5.1 Reasonable accommodations in the Selection Process

The Disability Advocacy portfolio at UCT is dedicated to embedding disability-inclusive practices into the university's core values. This key initiative involves minimising barriers to access to UCT for prospective students with disabilities, thereby attracting scholars with disabilities to the institution. Advocacy was done to ensure that UCT's Admissions Committee established an agreement with Faculty Admissions Committees to involve the OIC in reviewing potential applicants before acceptance. This



led to the creation of an Admissions Sub-Committee (which includes the Disability Advocacy Specialist) tasked with reviewing application processes for accessibility, providing guidance on admissions criteria, developing operational procedures, and aligning efforts with UCT's V2030 goals. This resulted in specialised accommodation for the entry of prospective students

with disabilities, as well as a stronger partnership with the National Benchmark Test Coordinators to ensure that reasonable accommodations are provided for the scholars with disabilities who undertake these tests. Through these measures, UCT aims to enhance academic success for individuals with disabilities, fostering a more inclusive community.

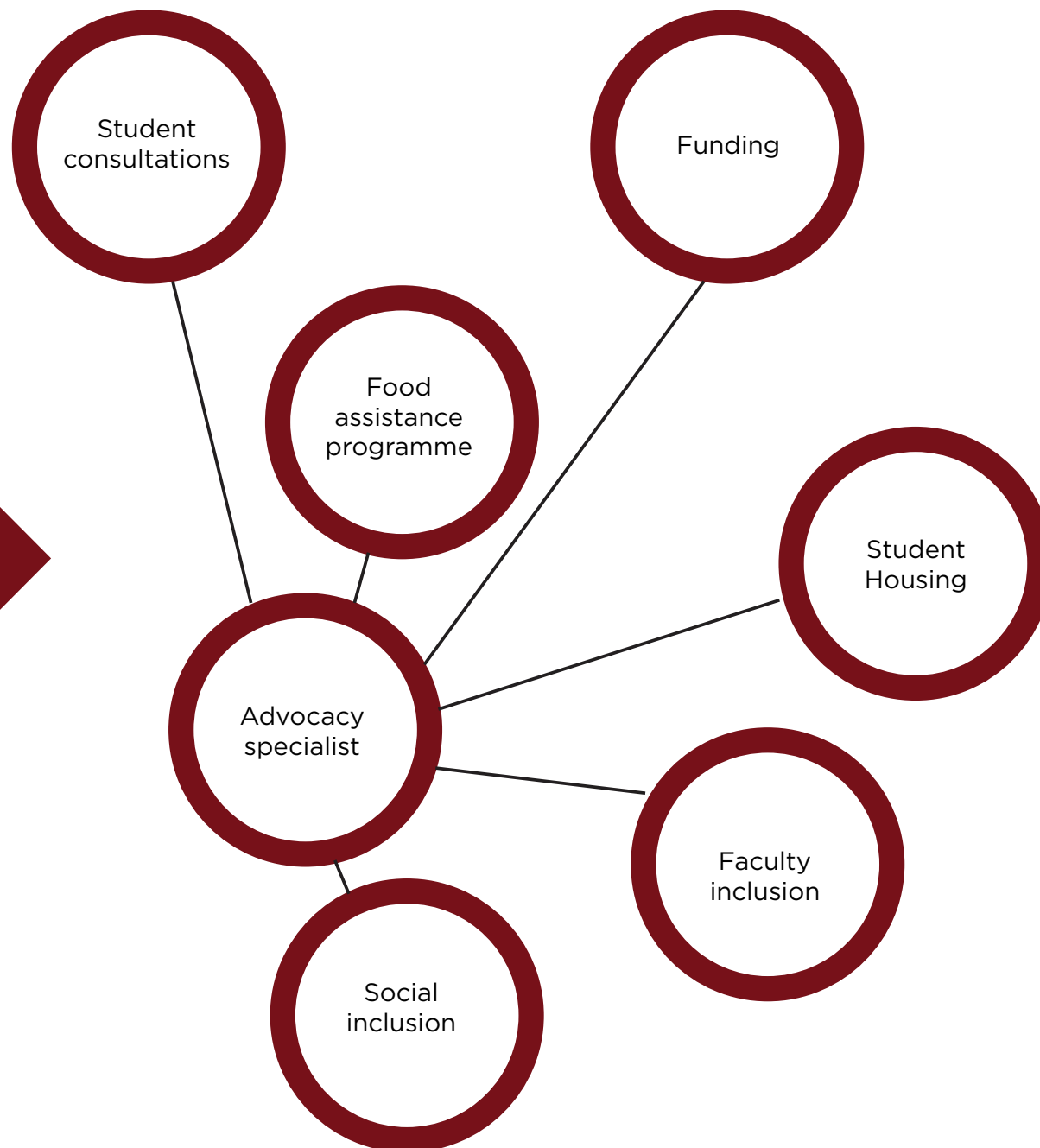


Reasonable accommodations in the admissions process

The OIC support of persons with disabilities starts even before the person becomes a registered UCT student. The Disability Advocacy Specialist reaches out to each individual who has indicated that they have a disability when applying to UCT, to enquire about the support and services they require. This key initiative serves to ensure that the university is prepared for the exact disabilities it will encounter, and is equipped to accommodate them through infrastructure, inclusive teaching and learning, and suitable funding.

By the time students with disabilities are accepted into the institution, their reasonable accommodations are planned for. Each student's needs are attended to according to the portfolios of the specialists.

Support and Services provided by the Disability Advocacy Portfolio





Examples of Good Practice

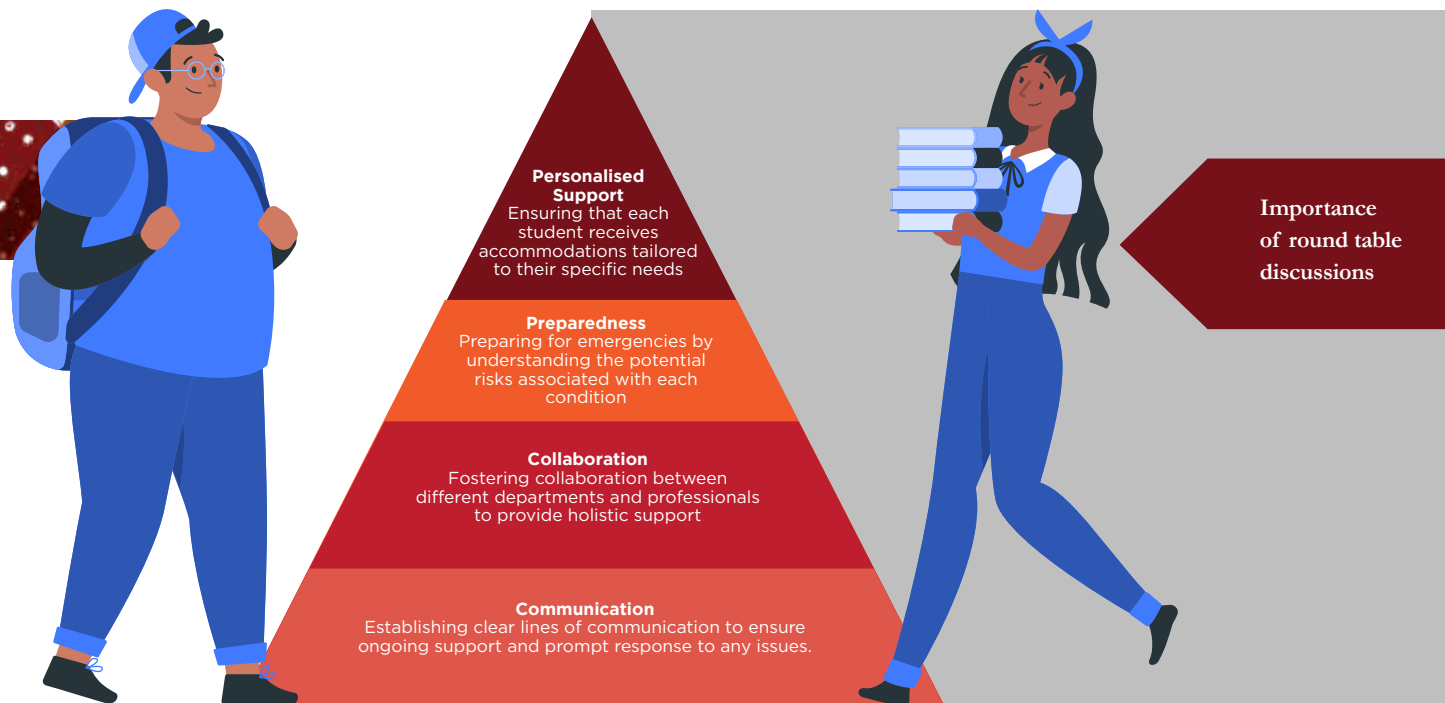
1. One-on-one engagements with students

Through personalised interactions with each student, the specialist engages in complex discussions that often lead to the disclosure of various challenges the student faces in their academic and/or residential environments. The approach involves:

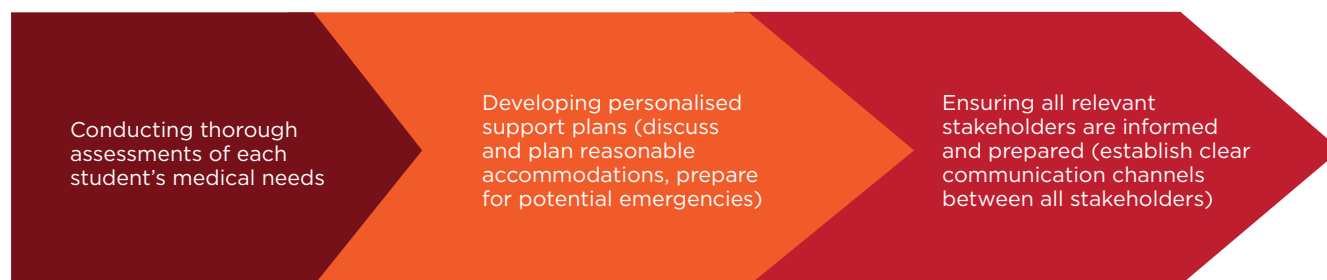
- **Listening and understanding:** Establishing a safe space for students to share their difficulties.
- **Referral to appropriate colleagues:** Connecting students with the correct resources and personnel for their specific needs.

In 2024, the Disability Advocacy Specialist facilitated 27 one-on-one engagements, which resulted in the facilitation of the following reasonable accommodations:

- **National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) queries:** The most common concern raised by students was related to financial support through NSFAS. Ten round-table sessions were dedicated to resolving issues regarding the disbursement of funds, eligibility criteria, and other related queries.
- **Residence placements:** Five consultations focused on the challenges students face in securing suitable accommodation and finding solutions to these challenges, which included either physical adjustments made to the rooms or res relocations.
- **Funding opportunities:** Four round tables were held to discuss available funding opportunities; students were provided with guidance on applying for scholarships, bursaries, and other financial assistance programmes.



Process Flow of Round Table Discussions



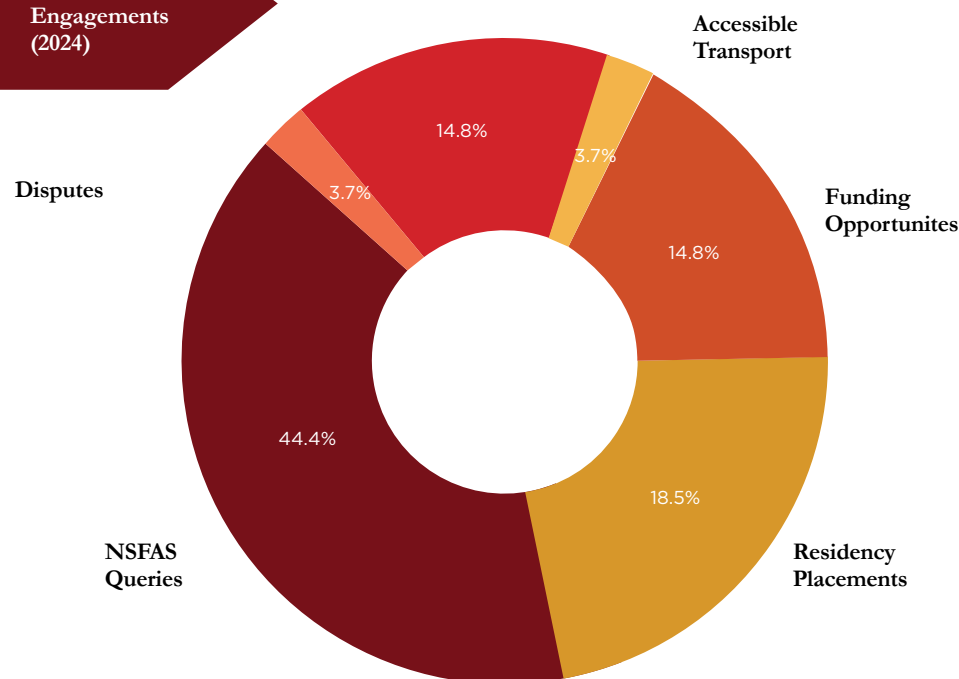
- **Accessible transport:** One session addressed concerns around transportation accessibility, particularly for students with mobility challenges who require reliable and accessible transport to and from campus.
- **Food assistance programme:** Four round tables focused on the

Food Assistance Programme; students sought support with food insecurity, and discussed ways to improve access to food resources.

- **Disputes:** One consultation was dedicated to resolving student disputes; students were provided with guidance on mediation processes and support in managing conflict effectively.

2. Inclusion in orientation programmes

Distribution of One-on-One Engagements (2024)

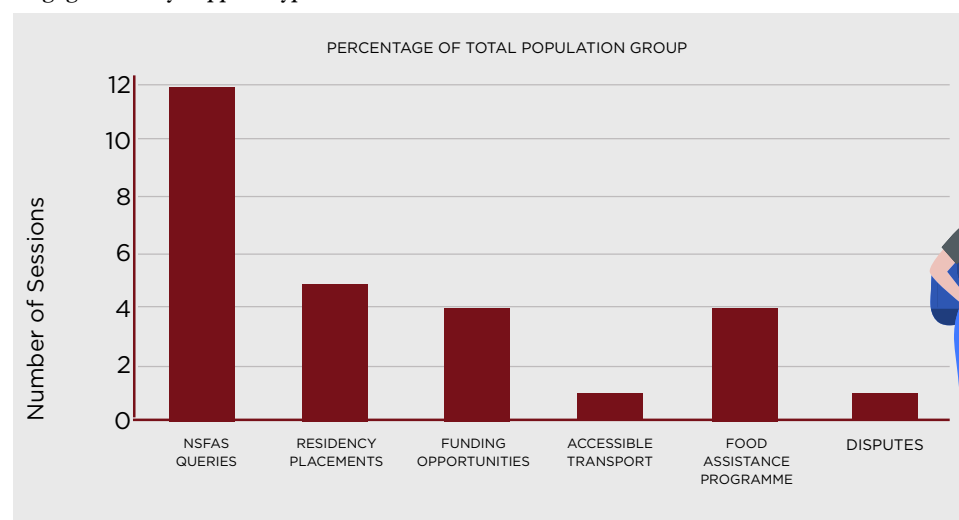


ORIENTATION LEADERS

FACULTY ORIENTATIONS

ORIENTATION IN UCT RESIDENCES

Engagements by Support Type



The inclusion of the DS in orientations across the institution is valuable for the participants, as it bears the following fruits:

- Orientation leaders are equipped to guide students with disabilities
- Students are empowered with information on how to access the support and services available within the DS.

Here are examples of the feedback received from students after they had accessed the support and services from the DS as a result of attending the OIC DS Sessions of the Orientation Programme:



Collaboration with the Communication and Marketing Department (CMD)

The Disability Advocacy Specialist has developed a strong working relationship with CMD. This collaboration has supported the work of greater awareness and visibility of motivational stories about students with disabilities to a wider audience. The coverage of these stories was featured on the UCT News website and social media pages, including:

- World Autism Day: The DS Educational Psychologist was interviewed in the article [“World Autism Day: Giving Students a Space to Flourish”](#), providing insights into creating supportive environments for students with autism.
- Workers Day: Deaf UCT staff members were interviewed in the article [“Workers Day: When Silence Speaks”](#), with the DS South African Sign Language (SALS) interpreter facilitating communication between the Deaf staff and the CMD writer.

The coverage of these stories has had a significant impact:

- Visibility: Increasing the visibility of the experiences of persons with disabilities within the UCT community.
- Empowerment: Empowering students with disabilities by validating their experiences and celebrating their achievements.
- Awareness: Raising awareness about the importance of accessibility and inclusivity.

UCT's strong network of students with disabilities serves as a beacon of resilience and determination. Through the collaborative efforts of the Disability Advocacy Specialist and CMD, these inspiring stories are shared widely, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment. By highlighting these narratives, UCT not only celebrates the achievements of its students with disabilities but also provides motivation and hope to younger generations facing similar challenges.

Voice and Agency

E-booklet on Disability Rights

The Disability Advocacy Specialist created and collated Human





[Rights Day 2024](#), an e-booklet consisting of stories from UCT students with disabilities that was published on Human Rights Day 2024 in commemoration of the rights of persons with disabilities. This electronic booklet brings together a collection of powerful narratives written by UCT students with disabilities.

The Disability Advocacy Specialist collated and published the second edition of [Disability Matters](#) online magazine, which focuses explicitly and exclusively on disability-related matters as it aims to educate readers on disabilities, advocate for disability accessibility and inclusion on campus and in broader society, and celebrate the wins within the disability sphere.

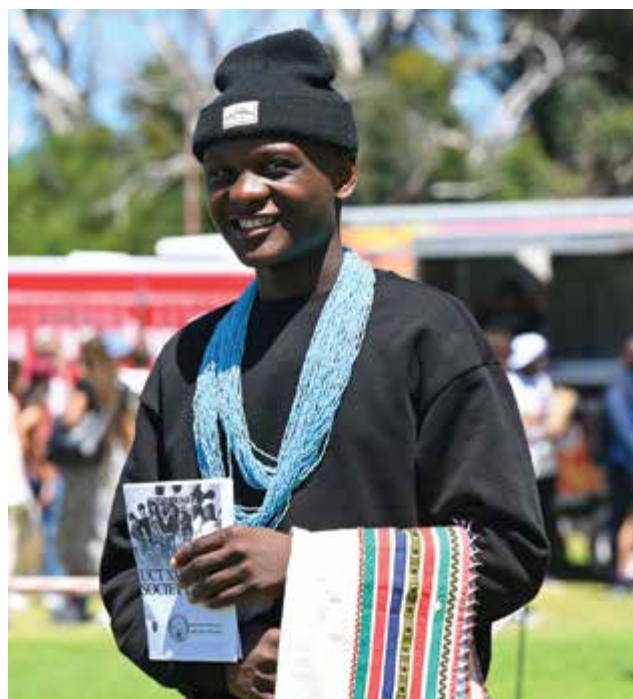
The Disability Advocacy Specialist collaborated with the Students with Disabilities Forum (SWDF) on this exciting initiative. The SWDF is a UCT student governance structure for students with disabilities, anchored on “educate, advocate and celebrate” as its pillars.

Society fee adjustments for UCT parasports

With the support of the DS Manager and the OIC Director, the Disability Advocacy Specialist has worked diligently to ensure holistic inclusion for parasports members. As a result of these efforts, the society fee for parasports has been set lower than that of other societies, at R100 per member. This adjustment is recognised as a reasonable accommodation for members with disabilities, promoting inclusivity and equal opportunity for participation in sports.

Impact and benefits

The planned upgrades to the Sports Centre will significantly enhance accessibility for wheelchair users, allowing them to navigate the facilities with ease. Lowering the society fee ensures that financial



barriers do not prevent students with disabilities from participating in sports. These initiatives reflect UCT's commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for all students, regardless of their physical abilities. The collaborative efforts led by the Disability Advocacy Specialist and supported by the disability manager and the OIC director have resulted in significant strides towards improving accessibility and inclusivity at UCT. The planned renovations to the Sports Centre and the adjustment of the society fee for parasports members demonstrate the institution's dedication to providing equal opportunities for all students.

New paths

Impact of Participation in orientation programme

Every year, the active participation of the DS in the Orientation programme leads to a significant increase in the number of students registering with the DS to gain access to the reasonable accommodations they require. This surge in registrations has had a twofold impact:

- Enhanced accessibility: There has been a welcome spike in the number of UCT students who have gained access to the reasonable accommodations available at the institution.
- Increased workload: The responsibilities and workload of all portfolios within the DS have increased.

To address the challenge posed by the increased workload, the DS manager has collaborated with First Rand to appoint interns. These interns have provided tremendous support to the various portfolios of the DS. This strategic move has alleviated the burden on current staff, ensured continued high-quality support and services for



students with disabilities, and enhanced the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the OIC Disability Service.

However, the sustenance of this capacity is fragile, as it depends on an external source. To maintain the quality of the support and services provided to the growing number of students who register with the DS, it would be in the best interests of all for the institution to absorb the interns who are contracted on a short-term basis.

Resilience in action

The DS cannot operate in isolation, and does not want a student with disabilities to feel categorised in a specific unit; thus a collaborative approach is more favourable, as it promotes departments and faculties working together to meet the needs of the students with disabilities. Through collaborations led by the Disability Advocacy portfolio, the DS has achieved the following uncharted initiatives:

CILT: Transformation through Disability Inclusion Online Course

A disability-inclusive online course titled 'Transformation through Disability Inclusion' was launched as a result of collaboration between the DS and CILT. The course adopts a practical and reflective approach to disability inclusion, equipping staff with the knowledge to foster a more equitable campus.

Multilingual Education Project (MEP): UCT Language Policy

The OIC is represented by the Disability Advocacy Specialist, who was a member of the Language Policy Committee that worked tirelessly on updating the UCT Language Policy and its framework for implementation. This policy recognises SASL as a developing language at UCT.



7.5.2 South African Sign Language interpreter (SASLi) portfolio

SASLi programme offering at UCT

The SALS interpreter programme may be found [here](#).



NBT Website Project

UCT is the first institution in South Africa to make a website fully accessible in SASL. This was a pilot project with the UCT National Benchmark Testing Project (NBT) department to ensure that all relevant information is accessible to Deaf prospective students and the Deaf community, in SASL. In addition, 78 NBT head invigilators who might encounter a Deaf or hard of hearing student in the exams they invigilate have been capacitated.

First library tour in SASL: Enabling UCT facilities to be Deaf friendly

The UCT Library Tour has been made accessible to Deaf and hard of hearing students and visitors. It's the first audiovisual tour of its kind in South Africa. The university is expanding partnerships, building on this success with libraries to extend accessibility to the Bongani Mayosi



Health Sciences Library and the Brand van Zyl Law Library tours.

SASL workshops: Capacitating staff to communicate with Deaf community members

These workshops were offered to the UCT departments that are most likely to interact directly with Deaf students and Deaf staff, and reached a total of 41 attendees.

Community engagement

We collaborated with the Deaf Community of Cape Town (DCCT) NPO to offer Deaf sensitisation and an introduction to South African Sign Language and Deaf Culture, as a part of our commitment to community engagement.





Office for Inclusivity and change Disability Service 2024

South African sign language (SASL) Interpreting service

Student Support

SASLI PROGRAMMES:
WWW.UCT.AC.ZA/The_OIC/SASKI/PROGRAMME



84

Hearing students and staff benefiting from the service

104

Academic South African Sign Language (SASL) Interpreting

Vocabulary bank: Enhance student inclusion and accessibility in academic settings.

- Aid in development of a SALS academic directory for all courses taught SALS in SA universities.
- Identify and establish new signs for unfamiliar terms uses in the curriculum for Deaf students in specific courses.
- Facilitating better understanding and communication within the classroom environment.



1st Library tour in SASL

UCT Library tour made assessable to students and visitors. It's the first audio tour of it's kind in South Africa.

Expanding Partnerships: Building on this success with Libraries to extend accessibility to the Bongani Mayosi Health Sciences Library and the Brand van Zyl Law Library tours. www.lib.uct.ac.za/library-audio-tou



445

Hearing staff and students benefiting from the service **Total 113 Hours**

Staff support Interpreting

- Capacitating staff members
- Deaf staff members have a sense of belonging and inclusion in the workplace

41
ATTENDEES

SASL Workshops: Capacitating staff to communicate with Deaf community members

- **Community engagement:** Collaborated with the Deaf community of Cape Town (DCCT) NPO to offer Deaf sensitization and an introduction to SASL & Deaf Culture.



NBT Website Project: UCT is the first institution in SA to make a website fully accessible in SASL a pilot project with the UCT National Benchmark Testing Project (NBT) department to ensure that all relevant information is accessible to Deaf prospective students and the Deaf community in SASL.

Capacitated 78 NBT head invigilators: www.nbt.uct.ac.za

7 Deaf staff members

Using the SASL Interpreting service at UCT

113 Hours

SASL interpreting service for Deaf staff at UCT

445 Hearing staff and students

Benefiting form SASL interpreting service of Deaf staff

Vice-Chancellor's Installation

Interpretation provided at the installation of UCT's 11th Vice-Chancellor [CLICK HERE](#)

21 Graduation Ceremonies

March 2024 Graduation
UCT News | **Graduation September 2024** | Applicants & Students

LPC Language Indaba

Promote understanding of South African Sign Language (SASL) and Deaf culture

First-Year reception & UCT Open day

Interpreting support for prospective students and families, including one-on-one guidance.





7.5.3 Psychological support services

The psychological services section at the DS is responsible for the provision of accommodations and concessions to students with mental health disorders and specific learning disorders. To qualify, students must have a mental health condition that has been present for more than one year and causes significant impairment in daily functioning. The number of students registering with the DS for mental health and specific learning disorders is monitored, as well as the number of students applying for extra time and verified accommodations letters. We also monitor the number of students being assessed by our psychometrist.

During 2024, the number of students registering for mental health and specific learning disorders superseded the number of students

registering for chronic illnesses and visual, auditory, sensory and motor impairments. This reflects a growing increase in the number of students presenting with neurodiverse conditions. It also reflects post COVID-19 trends in students presenting with mental health challenges. Consultations were held with 218 students to assess their needs. The aim was to provide the necessary support for them to succeed in their studies. Of these students, 110 students applied for extra time through the DS. A further 45 DS students applied for extra time through SWS. A total of 155 applications were therefore processed for the year. Seventy students were referred to the Direct Services Specialist for secluded venue, reader, scribe, notetakers, computer-use, read and write software, prompters, etc. Twenty-four students were assessed internally by our Psychometrist.

During 2024 we noted an increase in the number of students registering with the DS for mental health and specific learning disorders. We also noted an increase in the number of extra time applications. There was also a slight increase in the number of students being assessed. The increase in registrations and extra time applications reflects a global, national and local increase in the number of students accessing accommodations and concessions.



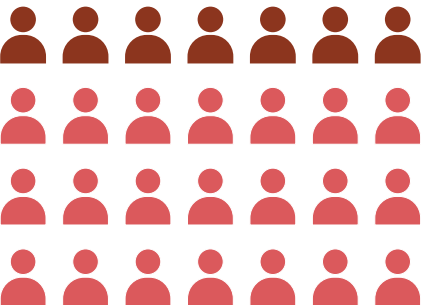
During 2024 we noted a decrease in the number of student consultations. We also noted a decrease in the number of referrals to the Direct Services Specialist and a subsequent decrease in the number of students qualifying for secluded venue. This was purposeful. We had to increase the criteria for students qualifying for a secluded venue, due to resource constraints.



Office for Inclusivity and Change Disability Service 2024

Psychological Services

Focus: Mental Health and specific learning disorders



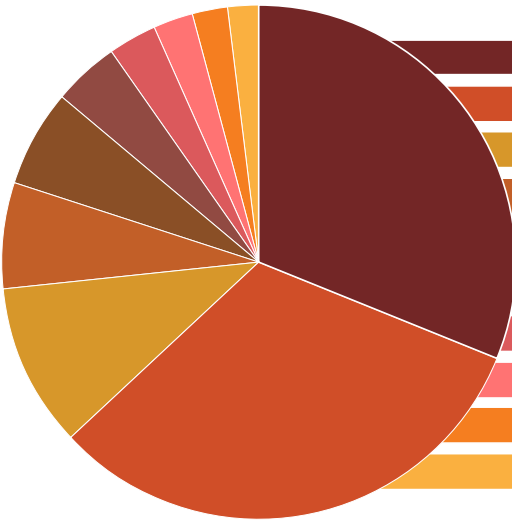
218

Consultants

70

Referrals to direct services

2024 Registrations: Total 556



Psychological:	178
Specific Learning Disability:	173
Chronic illness:	58
Motor Impaired:	36
Temporary Disability:	34
Unsure:	24
Hearing impaired:	16
Visually Impaired:	15
Wheelchair Access Required:	12
Neurological Impairment:	10

SLD Accomodations and concessions for tests and exams: Extra time, secluded venue, readers scribbles, notemakers, computer use, read-and-write software, prompters, etc

Invisible Disabilities
There is a marked increase in the number of students registering with mental health and specific learning disorders.

Mental Health Accomodations and concessions: Flexible assignment deadlines, adjustments to lecture and tutorial requirements; access to deferred tests, etc.

110 SLD Extra time applications

- These were the extra time applications
- Applications processed through D5

45 Physical Extra time applications

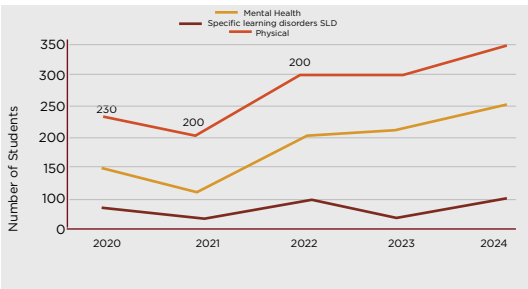
- These were the extra time applications
- Applications processed through SWS

73 Verified accommodation letters

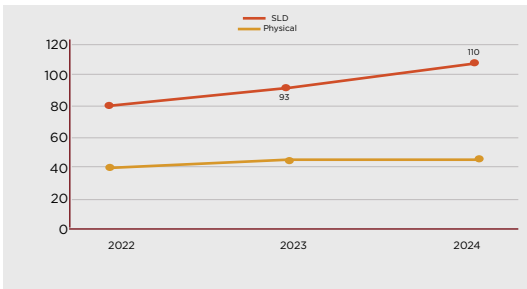
- These were students who qualified for accommodations and concessions based on mental health challenges



Trends in Mental Health, SLD and total registrations 2020 -2024



ET Application



7.5.4 Direct Services

The increase in the number of students registering with the DS and applying for extra time or mental health accommodations and concessions has increased, reflecting the efficacy of the actions. It is important to continue the good advocacy and exemplary service to students, in order for them to access the accommodations and concessions due to them.

Student support in action

We have a student who suffered a stroke in 2023. It seems that his rehabilitation focused on his physical healing and neglected to examine his cognitive damage. Much of the time, he appeared confused and unable to understand what is expected of him. His lecturers expressed concern about his ability to read and use a computer, in addition to his handwriting challenges. They were particularly concerned about him being in the lab with chemicals and not understanding instructions. A lab assistant was allocated to him. In the middle of the year, there were concerns that the support provided was not sufficient to assist him to be successful; and that the damage from the stroke could be permanent. Dr Young recommended a leave of absence until an assessment could be done. However, the DS team decided to offer more support to the student in the form of a lab assistant for each practical, read and write software, and enlarged print. At the end of the year, the student reported that his exams went well and he feels positive about the results.

The uncharted

The DS has received queries on how to distinguish between disability and neurodiversity. These have come both internally, from the Readmission Appeal Committee (RAC) for Humanities, and externally, from occupational therapists and neurodiversity centres. Some specialists and researchers argue that neurodiversity is not disability, and that we should have both a disability unit and a neurodiversity unit. In future, in-depth discussions could be held around this topic.

New paths

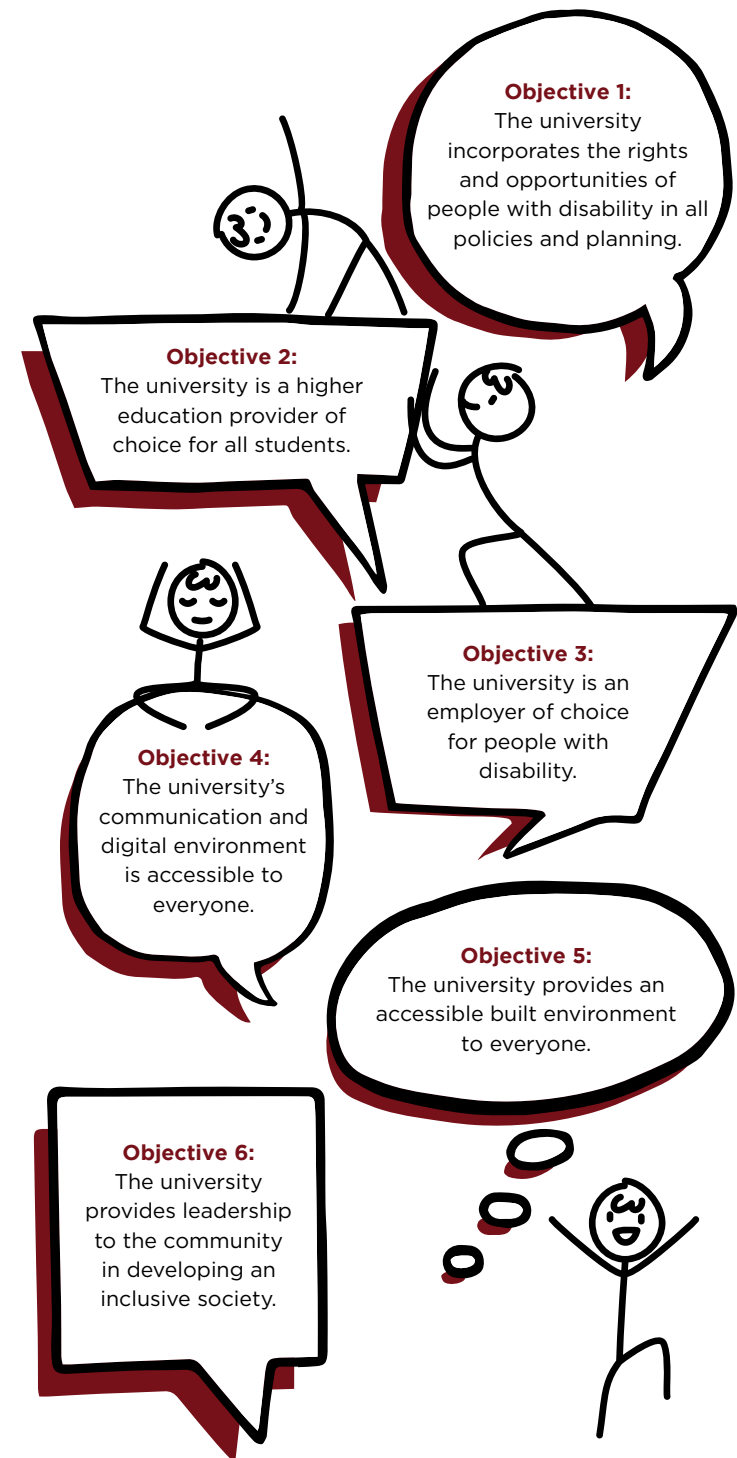
With the increase in numbers, we will look at alternative ways to operate. We will not have time to meet with each student and get to know them personally. We will have to attend in person to high-risk cases only. We will have to put accommodations and concessions in place based only on medical documents for others. This will mean losing the quality relationship we have with our students as a result of knowing each one by name and circumstance. We need to employ another psychologist on a short-term contract basis to assist with the extra-time applications. We will require an intern to assist with the administrative load.

Resilience in action

We had a case where a student from the FHS was doing poorly in her clinical rotations. She was having difficulty with her clinical educators/lecturers/supervisors. While she had registered with the DS in 2021 for a heart condition and received transport, she developed mental health challenges in 2023, and this was not recorded with the DS. She therefore did not receive accommodations and concessions for the mental health challenges for which she qualified. We had to get updated information from her psychiatrist, psychologist and cardiologist to inform her accommodations and concessions at the FHS for 2024. The director of the OIC was instrumental in ensuring that the student received the accommodations and concessions that she was entitled. After much difficulty, she graduated at the end of the year.

Critical analysis

UCT's Disability Inclusion is not occurring in the fullest sense at UCT. Decentralisation of most academic support services, advocacy and fully providing accessible education to students living with disabilities remains a contested area of negotiation. UCT's disability inclusion action plan has six key objectives to guide the university in upholding its accessibility responsibilities as an education provider. The university must embed these metrics into the strategic areas for teaching, research and innovation.





Research



8. Research

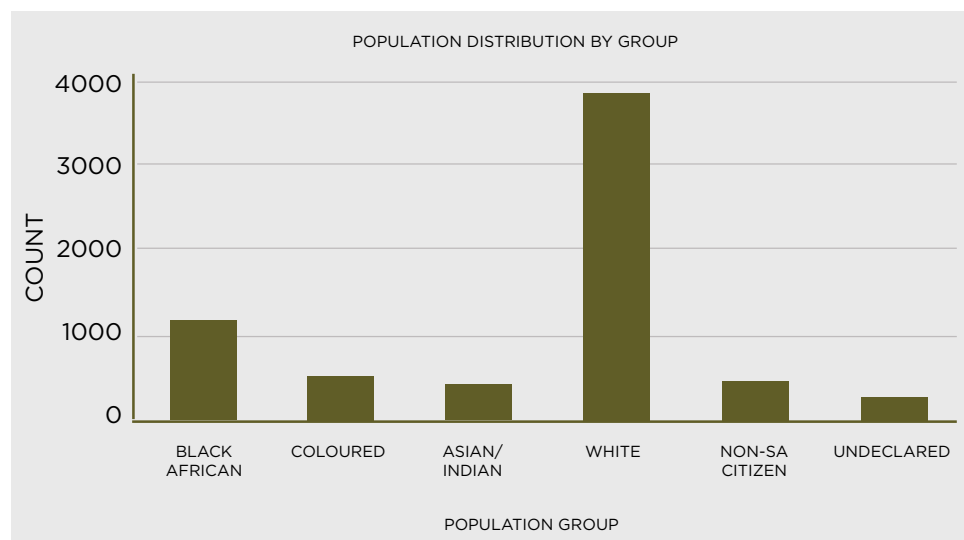
What follows is the demographic breakdown and key diversity insights for the year 2024 for academic publications at UCT.

8.1 Demographic overview

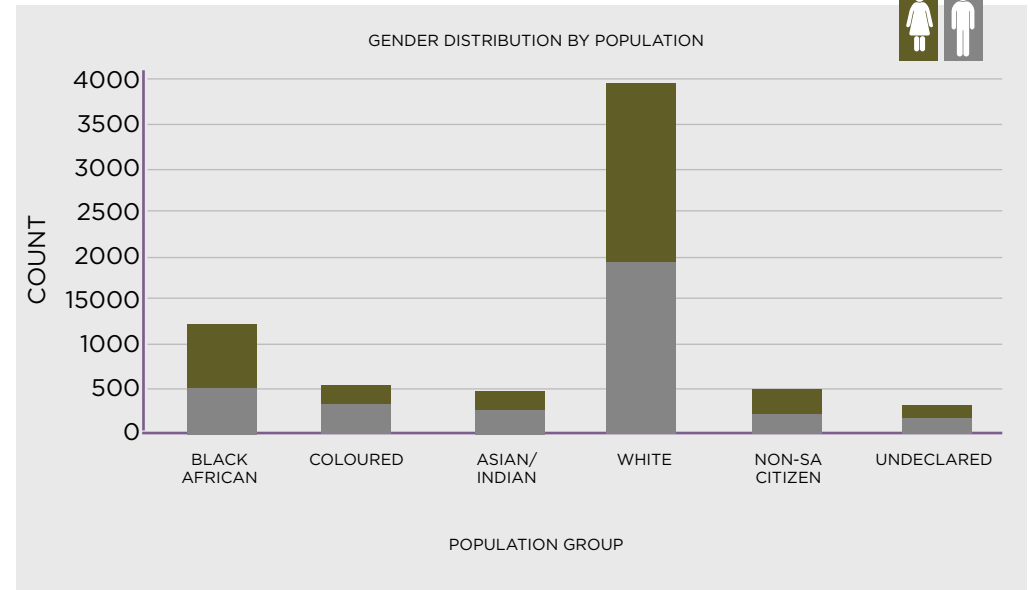
Population group	Total	Female 	Male 
Black African	1 235	503	732
Coloured	569	341	228
Indian/Asian	492	247	245
White	3 945	1 932	2013
Non-SA citizen	513	211	302
Undeclared	317	162	155

8.2 Visual data insights

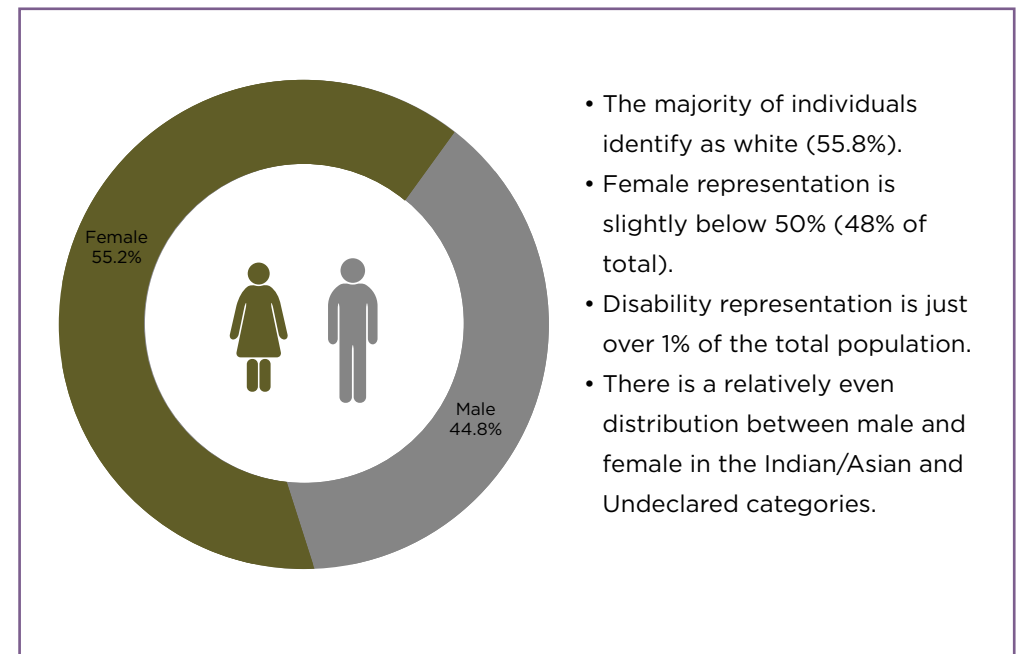
8.2.1 Population distribution across different groups



8.2.2 Gender distribution within each group



8.2.4 Key Insights





8.3 Narrative Analysis: Transformation, Inclusion and Diversity

The 2024 demographic data related to publications reflects important trends and opportunities from a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) perspective.

Research and diversity

The diversity profile of stakeholders who have published at UCT in 2024 is a broad spectrum of racial and national identities. While white individuals form the majority (55.8%), there is representation from black African (17.5%), coloured (8%), Indian/Asian (7%), and non-South African citizens (7.2%) populations. However, increasing the representation of historically underrepresented groups, particularly black African and coloured individuals, should remain a key focus in transformation efforts.

Gender equity in research

Gender representation is relatively balanced, with females accounting for 48% of the population. This reflects moderate progress towards gender equity, but highlights the need for deeper analysis across job levels and functions to ensure parity not just in presence, but also in influence and leadership.

Inclusion of persons with disabilities

Individuals with disabilities represent just over 1% of the population. While this figure is a start, it is significantly below national benchmarks and targets. An inclusive organisation should continue to examine and improve accessibility, recruitment and support structures to attract and retain talent with disabilities.

Intersectionality and transparency

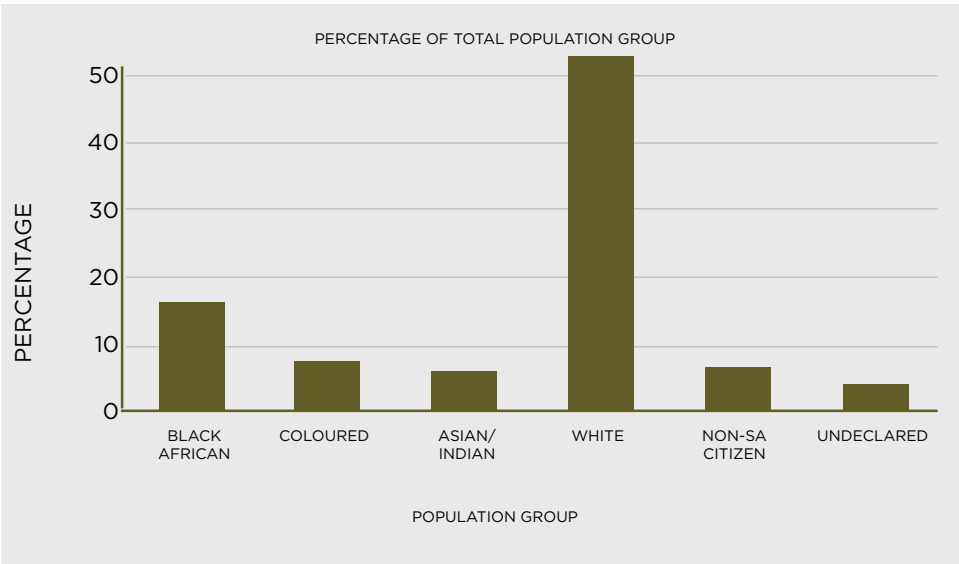
The ‘Undeclared’ category includes 317 individuals. Without declared identity data, it becomes more difficult to accurately identify and

address gaps in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Encouraging transparency and trust through inclusive culture-building initiatives could help to reduce this number over time.

8.3.1 Percentage Breakdown

Population group	Total	Female %	Male %	Total Count	Female Male
Black African	17.5%	40.7%	59.3%	1 235	503 / 732
Coloured	8.0%	59.9%	40.1%	569	341 / 228
Indian/Asian	7.0%	50.2%	49.8%	492	247 / 245
White	55.8%	49.0%	51.0%	3 945	1 932 / 2 013
Non-SA citizen	7.3%	41.1%	58.9%	513	211 / 302
Undeclared	4.5%	51.1%	48.9%	317	162 / 155

8.3.2 Percentage representation of each group:



Recommendations

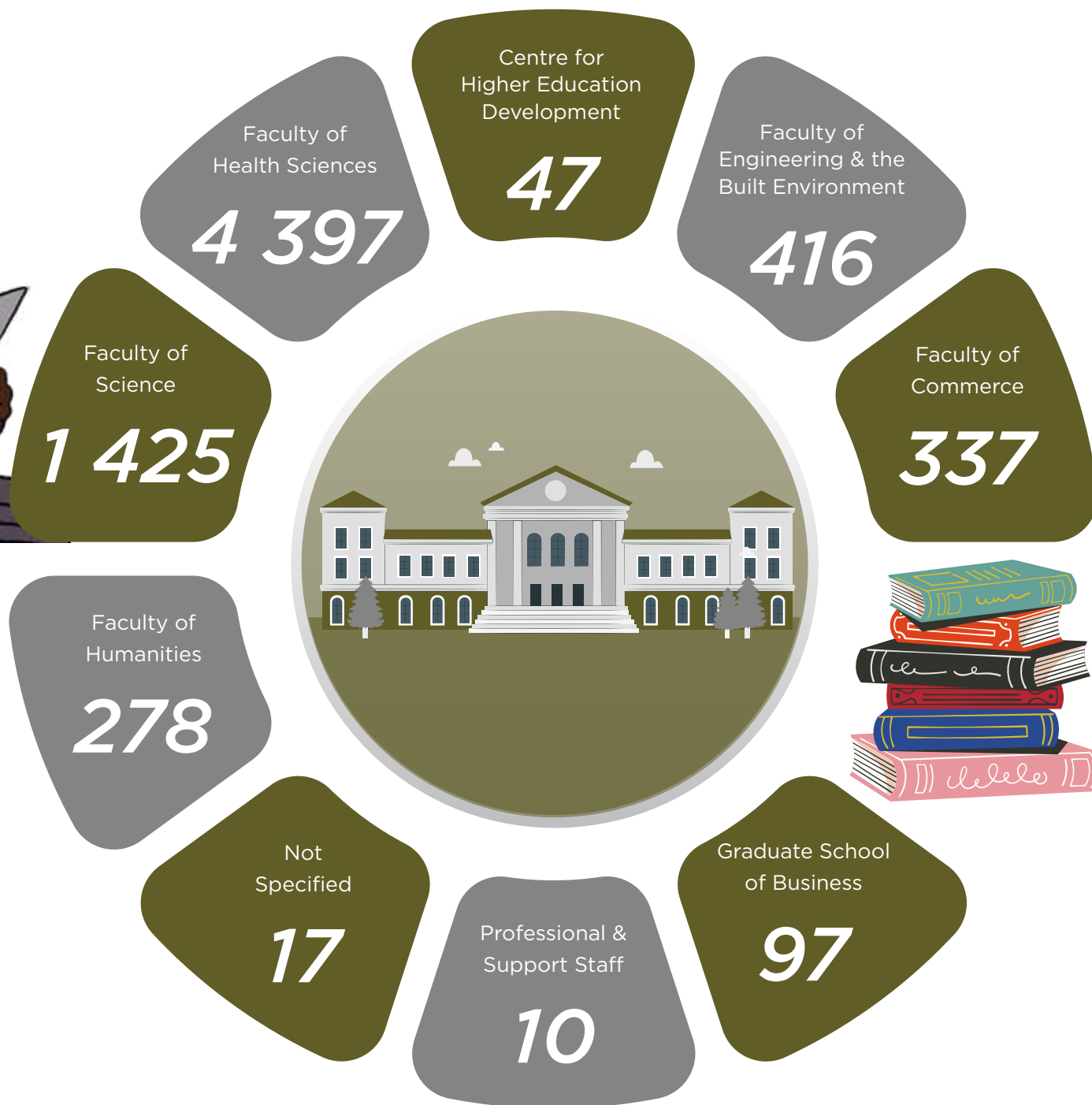
- Implement targeted recruitment and development programmes for under-represented groups.
- Expand leadership development opportunities for women and employees from diverse backgrounds.
- Create inclusive spaces and support systems for employees with disabilities.
- Improve data collection methods to reduce ‘Undeclared’ identity fields and foster a culture of openness.





8.4 Number of publications by faculty

The graph on the right presents the distribution of research publications across various faculties. The data reveals a significant concentration of academic output at the FHS, which accounts for 4 397 publications, far surpassing all other faculties. Following this are Science with 1 425 publications, and EBE with 416. Commerce (337), Humanities (278), and Law (97) show moderate contributions. CHED, UCT GSB and PASS had relatively fewer publications. The 'Not Specified' category accounts for 17 publications. This distribution highlights research productivity and focus areas within the institution.



Discrimination,
SGBV and
harassment

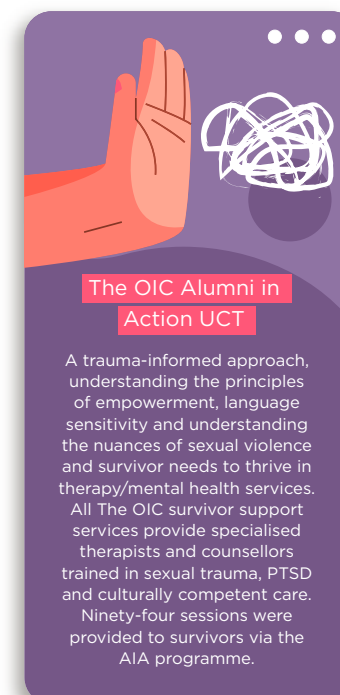
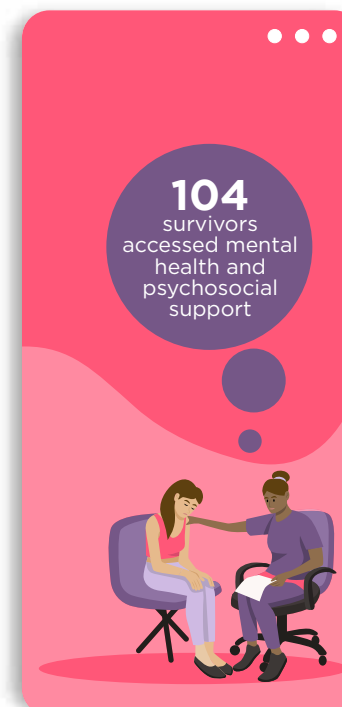
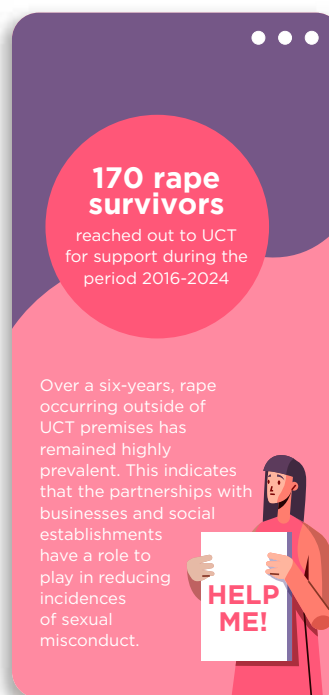
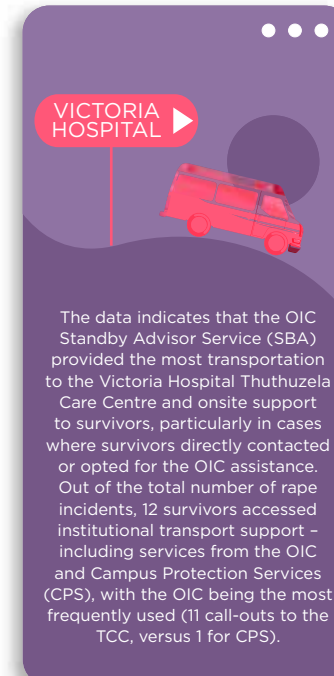


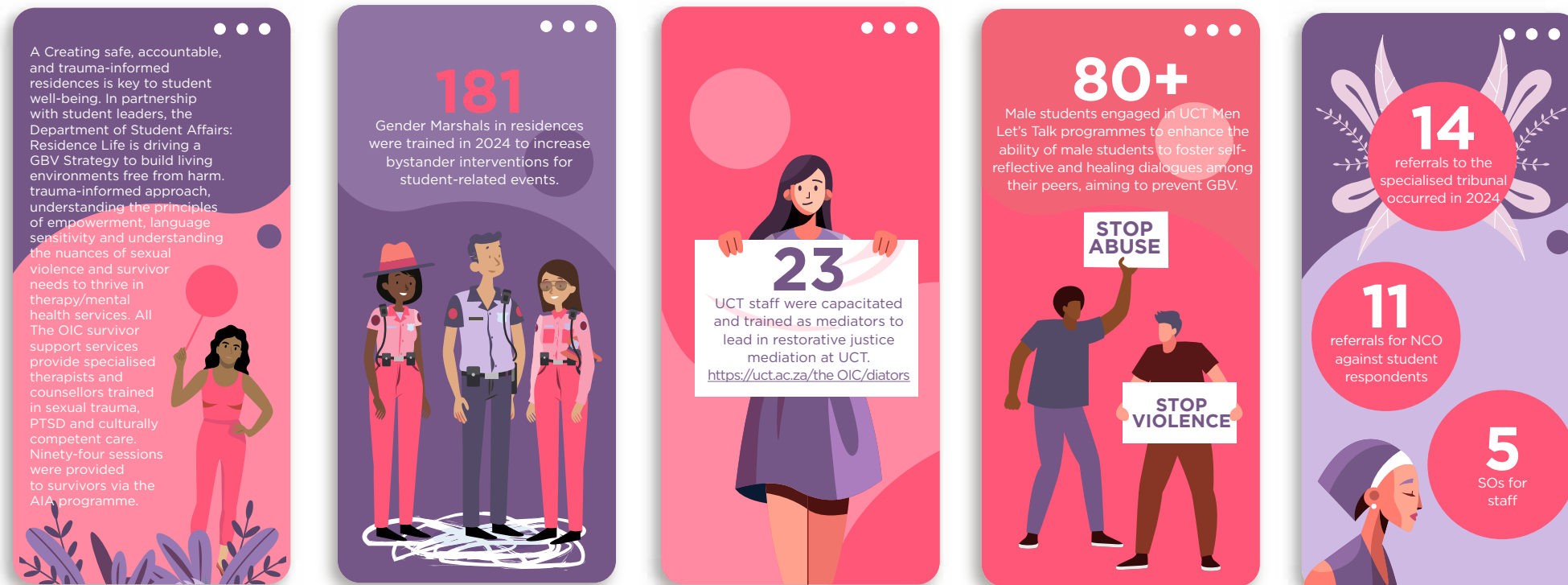
9. DISCRIMINATION, SGBV AND HARASSMENT

Introduction

UCT's policies for sexual misconduct and racial discrimination, and harassment in 2024—2025 incorporated practical insights that have impacted the scope and efficacy of the policies since 2021. Each year, the *Survivor Support Report* shares information on the prevalence and incidence of these issues and on the prevention work conducted by the various departments that support the university's survivor-centred approach. In addition, DSA released their *Gender-Based Violence Residence Strategy and Safer Campus report* to enable psychosocial programmes and infrastructural safety improvements in residences.

UCT's policies for Sexual Misconduct and Racial Discrimination and Harassment in 2024—2025 incorporated practical insights that have impacted the scope and efficacy of the policies since 2021. Each year, the *Survivor Support Report* shares information on the prevalence and incidence of these issues and on the prevention work conducted by the various departments that support the university's survivor-centred approach. In addition, the Department of Student Affairs (DSA) released their residence strategy and *Safer Campus report* to enable psychosocial programmes and infrastructural safety improvements in residences.





Critical analysis

Survivor support and community engagement are essential components of a comprehensive SGBV response strategy, as they foster healing, post-traumatic growth and sustained well-being. Survivors often carry the emotional, psychological and physical impacts of trauma long after the incident, and without appropriate support, these effects can manifest as anxiety, depression, self-harm or even suicidal ideation.

To address this, universities must facilitate ongoing, trauma-informed community engagements such as the peer-support circles which the OIC offers through the survivor support group; other interventions which can be considered are survivor-led workshops,

healing-centred group therapy, creative expression sessions, and mental health awareness campaigns specifically focusing on trauma and/or sexual trauma. These engagements can offer survivors a sense of solidarity and validation, but also equip the wider community with tools to respond empathetically and effectively, and have real insight into survivors' needs for peer support and engagement. Understanding the principles of empowerment, Rape Trauma Syndrome and mental health enables peers, staff and residence leaders to participate in long-term support, regardless of when the incident occurred or the survivor's or alleged respondent's institutional affiliation.

Moreover, wellness is deeply interconnected with residence life, social engagement, daily responsibilities and academic performance.

When support systems are absent, survivors may struggle with attendance, concentration, social isolation and emotional regulation – factors that can escalate to burnout or crisis states. Building a proactive culture of care within residences, where wellness and safety are prioritised alongside academic goals, ensures that survivors are not left to navigate trauma in isolation, and helps cultivate a resilient, informed and compassionate campus community.

The university must remain vigilant about widening gaps in its institutional response, driven by the ineffective implementation of SORMA, budget constraints, and insufficient human resources, especially as the demand for support from both UCT students and staff continues to grow.



Innovations
and mapping
the future



10. INNOVATIONS AND MAPPING THE FUTURE

Conclusion

Reclaiming the intellectual substance of South African transformation

In the decades following the democratic transition in 1994, ‘transformation’ has emerged as one of South Africa’s most pervasive and yet most contested discourses. It occupies a central position in policy, institutional reform and public debate. Yet despite its presence, the concept is often treated, conveniently so, with a kind of bureaucratic detachment – reduced to numerical targets, compliance matrices and demographic dashboards.

The South African state and its public and private institutions frequently frame transformation in quantitative terms: what percentage of leadership positions are held by black South Africans? How many women occupy executive roles? What proportion of procurement budgets are allocated to historically disadvantaged suppliers? These questions are important, but they are insufficient. They produce an illusion of progress through representational shifts, while leaving the foundational architectures of privilege and exclusion largely untouched.

The pitfalls of technocratic transformation

The technocratic reduction of transformation to data metrics carries several dangers. Firstly, it cultivates a compliance mindset. Institutions become preoccupied with meeting EE quotas, submitting Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) reports, and adjusting figures to reflect diversity without interrogating the deeper power dynamics that shape those numbers. Transformation becomes a tick-box exercise, detached from the lived realities of marginalised communities and unmoored from any deeper moral, political or intellectual purpose.

Secondly, this approach obscures systemic blockages. A university, for instance, may boast a significant number of black undergraduate students, but if the curriculum remains Eurocentric, the teaching staff is overwhelmingly white and epistemologies are unchanged, then the transformation is superficial. Similarly, a university may meet diversity quotas in middle management while continuing to reproduce racialised hierarchies in decision-making and strategic direction. In both cases, metrics serve as a veil, masking the persistence of structural inequality.

The *Human Sciences Research Report on the State of Transformation in Universities* describes this statistical approach as a “contested university” (Luescher et al., 2023). This approach is useful, yet narrow in its scope, as it flattens the complex historical and deeply structural character of inequality in South Africa. Transformation risks becoming a sterile exercise in statistical balancing, rather than a project of radical systemic change.

At UCT, the technocratic approach was initially useful, as it assisted the UCT stakeholders in making sense of the university’s architecture of privilege and exclusion. In doing so, the UCT community built their agency and produced transformation-related data connected to their unique strategic areas. It is timely that after five years of building UCT’s community response for transformation that the university shifts towards an analysis of its data, to aim for more authentic transformation that responds to the call for redress.



Towards an Intellectually Vibrant Transformation Discourse

What is needed is a shift from data-driven compliance to intellectually vibrant and historically grounded transformation. This requires a return to the original radical intent of transformation: the dismantling of apartheid's legacies in all their institutional, cultural and economic forms. It calls for critical reflection, ideological debate, and epistemic openness – qualities that are often eschewed in favour of technical fixes and administrative convenience.

Transformation must be reclaimed as a space of thought, imagination and critique. This means asking difficult questions: what are the underlying logics that sustain inequality, even in democratic South Africa? How do neoliberal policies, market-driven logics and institutional cultures collude to reproduce privilege? How

do race, class, gender and geography intersect to shape access to power and opportunity? Institutions must resist the temptation to depoliticise transformation by outsourcing it to consultants, reducing it to reporting lines, or framing it purely as a governance issue. Instead, they must cultivate intellectual ecosystems connected to the operational, academic and research centres where the meaning, goals and strategies of transformation are continuously debated and redefined. This includes engaging with critical scholarship, community the OIC, activist knowledge and historical consciousness. Evidence of successful models of integrated operational research are present in the International Alliance Research Universities (IARU), in which operational research begins to find impactful homes within the academic and research programmes of the university.

The Systemic nature of inequality

At the heart of this more robust approach is the recognition that inequality is not an accidental outcome of poor planning or insufficient effort. It is the product of systemic arrangements – legal, economic, cultural and epistemological. These systems do not disappear simply because demographic compositions change. They adapt, evolve, and often re-entrench themselves through new forms. For example, the persistence of spatial apartheid – where the poor remain consigned to underdeveloped peripheries – cannot be resolved through diversity hiring. Nor can the dominance of English or Afrikaans in educational and professional spaces be overcome through numeric representation alone. These are structural problems requiring structural solutions: land reform, linguistic justice, curriculum decolonisation, and the redistribution of resources and power.

Conclusion: Reimagining the project of transformation

If South Africa is to honour the promise of its liberation struggle, transformation must be reclaimed as a deeply political, moral and intellectual project. The current overreliance on technocratic metrics risks hollowing out its meaning, reducing it to a performative exercise devoid of critical substance. Numbers matter, but they must be interpreted within broader narratives of justice, history and power. They must serve as entry points for systemic critique, not endpoints of institutional comfort.

A genuinely transformative agenda demands that we move beyond compliance and towards consciousness – it should embrace complexity, foster dialogue, and confront the hard truths about who we are, where we come from, and what kind of society we're trying to build. Without this intellectual vibrancy, transformation becomes little more than bureaucratic window-dressing – impressive on paper, but impotent in practice.

Under the lens of a humanising praxis, led by the scholarship of Professor Ramugondo, the work of redress in the university



becomes embedded in UCT's strategic areas of teaching, research, and innovation. This strategic shift balances the technocratic limitations of transformation data analysis and combines this analysis with scholarship that contributes towards the sector's discourse for transformation.

11. Thank you

Our progress at UCT is the sum of many hands and hearts. We extend our deepest gratitude to the executive leadership whose strategic vision keeps transformation at the centre of the university's agenda; to the Transformation Committees and the Transformation Forum

for tirelessly guiding dialogue into action; and to the Institutional Forum for its steadfast governance and oversight.

We also thank the faculty and departmental champions who, year after year, turn bold goals into meaningful shifts in classrooms, laboratories, residences and offices across our campuses. Your consistent commitment seeds a culture of belonging and excellence that reaches far beyond any single reporting cycle.

At the core of this collective effort stands the OIC. Your unwavering advocacy, expertise and care animate every initiative described in these pages, ensuring that transformation is felt as well as recorded.

To every colleague, student and partner who has contributed time, insight and passion – thank you. Together we are charting a more inclusive, equitable and vibrant UCT.



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