

The background of the entire page is an abstract composition of overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in various shades of red and pink. These shapes create a sense of depth and movement, with some areas appearing more saturated than others. The overall effect is a modern, artistic backdrop for the text.

CHARTING YOUR COURSE TO UCT'S FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

NAVIGATE YOUR PATH FROM HIGH SCHOOL INTO UNIVERSITY
ISSUE 1 2025

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Aspiring Healthcare Professionals,

It is with great excitement that I introduce you to this comprehensive guide, designed to support you on your journey towards a career in health sciences. As a third-year medical student, published author, and the 2023/2024 Director of Media and Marketing for the African Research Society, I have always believed in the power of storytelling to inspire and inform. My personal passion lies in merging the world of healthcare with content creation, and I hope this guide reflects that vision.

Having grown up in the beautiful coastal town of Port Shepstone in KwaZulu-Natal, I have a deep appreciation for community and the diverse stories that shape us. It is this background that has driven me to create a resource that not only provides practical advice but also connects on a more personal level, helping you navigate the often complex and overwhelming process of applying to the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Cape Town (UCT).

In this guide, you'll find everything you need to know about gaining admission into UCT's prestigious health sciences programmes.

I have broken down the requirements, offered insights into university life, and shared real-world advice from students who have walked this path. This is the first of many editions, each of which will be updated with fresh content, new information, and personal stories, ensuring that it remains a valuable tool for you, the future generation of healthcare professionals. I hope this guide empowers you to take confident steps toward your future in health sciences. Remember, this journey is about more than just meeting admission requirements – it's about discovering your unique path and how you can make an impact in the world of healthcare.

Sunali Parbhoo

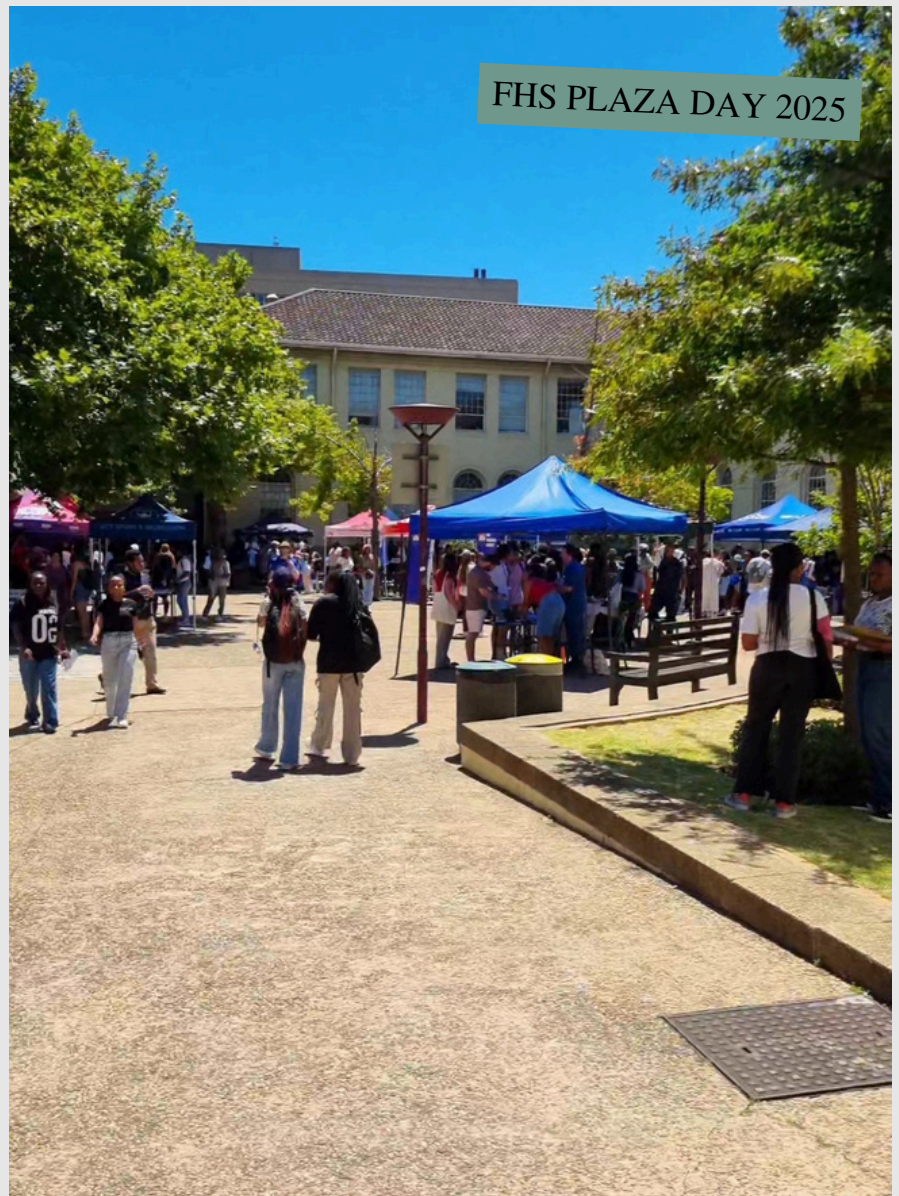
EDITOR, AUTHOR AND THIRD YEAR MEDICAL STUDENT



Sunali Parbhoo photographed at UCT FHS Open Day (2025) by Raabia Ravat

UCT FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Turn the page to explore how UCT FHS is shaping the future of healthcare and making a difference in communities both locally and globally!



UCT FHS Plaza Day (2025) photographed by Sunali Parbhoo

UCT FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

The University of Cape Town's Faculty of Health Sciences (UCT FHS) is a leading institution in medical education and healthcare innovation in South Africa, established in 1912 as the oldest health sciences faculty in the country. It has a rich history intertwined with the socio-political landscape of South Africa.

UCT FHS has been a pioneer in adapting to the evolving healthcare needs of society, offering a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. In this guide, we will be focusing on the undergraduate programs offered by the faculty. Each programme aims to equip students with the essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to excel in their fields and serve diverse communities. The faculty emphasizes a patient-centered approach, encouraging students to engage with communities and understand the broader social determinants of health. Through outreach programs and partnerships with local health organizations, UCT FHS bridges the gap between academic learning and real-world healthcare challenges.

The faculty houses numerous research centers and institutes, including the Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine (IDM), which conducts vital research on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and emerging infectious diseases. The faculty's research efforts have gained national and international recognition, significantly contributing to scientific advancements and public health policies.

As UCT FHS embraces the future, it remains committed to improving health outcomes through education, research, and community engagement. With its legacy of excellence and vision for a healthier future, UCT FHS stands as a pillar of hope and transformation in health and medicine, inspiring students and professionals to make a meaningful impact on society.



ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

To be considered for admission to UCT's Faculty of Health Sciences, students must meet the following criteria:

- Academic Prerequisites (Subject requirements and performance levels)
- National Benchmark Test (NBT)
- Application Process: Applications are submitted online through the UCT portal. The deadline is generally in July of the year preceding the intended start of studies

When applying for Health Sciences degrees, your admission is based on a point system.

1. APS (Admission Points Score): This is your school exam score. It's calculated by adding the percentages of your three main subjects plus the next three best subjects, excluding Life Orientation.
2. NBT (National Benchmark Tests): These are tests you need to take. The score is out of 300, and your results will fall into three categories: Proficient, Intermediate, or Basic.
3. FPS (Faculty Points Score): This combines your APS and NBT scores to give you a total out of 900.
4. WPS (Weighted Points Score): This is used in special cases and adjusts your FPS based on specific factors such as your background. It can go up to 1080.

For more details on requirements including all the point systems per programme and the guaranteed admission* criteria, check page 44 - 49 of the UCT 2025 Undergraduate Prospectus!

MBChB (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery)

- Subjects requirements and performance levels: Mathematics and Physical Sciences at 70%, English (Home or First Additional Language) at 65%, and 70% for the next three best subjects excluding Life Orientation.
- National Benchmark Test (NBT): Required. Intermediate range or above.
- APS: A minimum Admission Points Score (APS) of 450.

Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy

- Subjects requirements and performance levels: Mathematics at 60% / Mathematical Literacy at 70%, Physical Sciences or Life Sciences at 65%, English (Home or First Additional Language) at 65%, and 60% for the next three best subjects excluding Life Orientation.
- NBT: Required. Intermediate range or higher.
- APS: Minimum APS of 340.

Bachelor of Science in Physiotherapy

- Subjects requirements and performance levels: Mathematics at 60%, Physical Sciences or Life Sciences at 65%, English (Home or First Additional Language) at 65%, and 60% for the next three best subjects excluding Life Orientation.
- NBT: Required. Intermediate range.
- APS: Minimum APS of 360.

Bachelor of Science in Audiology

- Subjects requirements and performance levels: Mathematics at 60% / Mathematical Literacy at 70%, Physical Sciences or Life Sciences at 65%, English (Home or First Additional Language) at 65%, and 60% for the next three best subjects excluding Life Orientation.
- NBT: Required. Intermediate range.
- APS: Minimum APS of 340.

Bachelor of Science in Speech-Language Pathology

- Subjects requirements and performance levels: Mathematics at 60% / Mathematical Literacy at 70%, Physical Sciences or Life Sciences at 65%, English (Home or First Additional Language) at 65%, and 60% for the next three best subjects excluding Life Orientation.
- NBT: Required. Intermediate range or higher.
- APS: Minimum APS of 340.

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL BENCHMARK TEST (NBT)?

The National Benchmark Tests (NBTs) are assessments in South Africa designed to measure the academic readiness of prospective university students. These tests primarily focus on two key areas: the Academic Literacy Test (ALT) and the Quantitative Literacy Test (QLT), as well as the Mathematics Test (MAT) for certain programs. Calculators and electronic devices may not be used during these tests.

Academic Literacy Test (ALT):

- Measures reading and comprehension skills, as well as the ability to interpret and analyze various texts.
- Focuses on understanding academic language and the capacity to engage with academic materials.

Quantitative Literacy Test (QLT):

- Assesses the ability to reason with numbers and understand quantitative information.
- Tests skills related to interpreting data, financial literacy, and general problem-solving with numbers.

Mathematics Test (MAT):

- Required for students entering programs that need strong mathematical skills (e.g., engineering, sciences).
- Measures proficiency in mathematical concepts and skills, including algebra, geometry, and functions.

Importance of the NBTs

- Many universities in South Africa use NBT scores as part of their admission criteria.
- Results can influence course placement and support services offered to students based on their readiness levels.
- NBTs assist in identifying areas where students may need further development or support before starting their university studies.

Ensure your results for your NBT arrive before the closing date for UCT NBT results acceptance. Cross-check the NBT website and the UCT website to compare these dates.

YANELISA PULANI

RESEARCH, RESILIENCE AND LEADERSHIP IN MEDICINE



Yanelisa Pulani photographed at the UCT ARS Inside the Researcher's Mindset event (2024) by Jordyn Nitch ©

Yanelisa Pulani's journey is a testament to resilience, passion, and the power of turning setbacks into opportunities. Currently a final-year MBChB student and second-year MMedSc student in Neuroscience, she has already made waves in medicine and research.

Her love for science was born from personal loss—losing both her grandmother and aunt to cancer within months. Determined to make a difference, she pursued medicine with the dream of finding solutions. But the road wasn't easy. In her first year, she faced personal trauma and depression, leading to a failed module and an unexpected academic setback. What seemed like a detour became a defining moment. Through UCT's Intercalated Programme, she discovered neuroscience, going on to earn a First Class BMedSc (Hons) in Neuroscience and Physiology.

Instead of stopping there, Yanelisa founded the African Research Society, a platform that promotes African-led, locally relevant research. She now juggles multiple roles, including UCT Global Surgery Research, Advocacy & Innovation Fellow and REACH Alliance Researcher, and was recognized as a Mandela Rhodes Scholar and SA Health Excellence Awards Rising Star 2023.

For Yanelisa, the key isn't balancing everything perfectly—it's prioritizing what truly matters. "Stepping outside of medicine has broadened my perspective and made me a better researcher and future doctor." Her advice to students? "Clear out all negativity—internal and external—and just go for it! Find a mentor, embrace the challenges, and trust the journey—it's an amazing ride."

WAHEED AMANJEE

PIONEERING THE
FUTURE OF
MEDICINE AND
INNOVATION



Waheed Amanjee photographed at the UCT ARS Inside the Researcher's Mindset event (2024) by Jordyn Nitch ©

From a small farming town in KwaZulu-Natal to the forefront of medical research, Waheed Amanjee is a clinician-scientist, entrepreneur, and leader passionate about the intersection of healthcare, science, and entrepreneurship. Currently completing his MBChB at UCT, he also holds a Medical Science Honours degree in Bioinformatics, where he graduated with First Class Distinction and as the top academic achiever. Now, as a 2025 Mandela Rhodes Scholar, he is conducting his MSc in Medicine at the Neurogenomics Lab, fueled by his passion for merging clinical care with scientific innovation.

Waheed is the co-founder of WiZmed, South Africa's largest stethoscope distributor, and the visionary behind The WiZmed Foundation, which funds medical equipment for students in need. He also co-founded the African Research Society (ARS), where he led operations and built systems that power an interdisciplinary research community of students across Africa. His leadership extends into UCT's Student Parliament, Societies Sub Council, and Student Curriculum Lekgotla, where he works on improving medical education.

A three-time gold medalist at the Eskom Expo for Young Scientists, Waheed's projects in renewable energy and engineering took him to international science fairs in Zambia and Turkey. Today, he continues to give back as an Expo mentor, judge, and committee member, ensuring young innovators have access to the same opportunities that shaped his journey. His Suleman Bux Memorial Award honors his late grandfather's legacy by supporting young scientists in South Africa.

Beyond medicine and research, Waheed is a creative at heart—blending graphic design, web development, and entrepreneurship. He believes in innovation with impact, championing a future where science, technology, and business intersect to transform healthcare. His advice? "Embrace interdisciplinarity. Explore where your diverse passions intersect and let that be the foundation of your journey. Stay relentlessly curious, keep learning, and remain open to collaboration—your unique perspective is your greatest asset. Fine-tune and blend your interests into something greater, and let that drive your pursuit of transformative work."

NOKUBONGA SINETHEMBA NTSELE

REDEFINING SUCCESS IN SCIENCE AND MEDICINE

Nokubonga Sinethemba Ntsele's journey is a testament to resilience, adaptability, and the power of embracing new paths. Now a second-year MSc (Med) student in Anatomical Pathology, she holds a BMedSc Honours in Applied Anatomy (2023) and a BSc in Biochemistry, Human Anatomy, and Physiology (2020–2022) — qualifications that reflect her unwavering commitment to science and healthcare.

Since childhood, Nokubonga dreamed of becoming a doctor in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, applying to medical schools across South Africa. When acceptance didn't come, she chose to forge her own path through science, hoping to bridge into medicine. But through her honours research at UCT, she had a realization—not everyone has to become a medical doctor to save lives. Today, she works alongside leading experts in pathology, studying placental pathology in HIV-positive pregnant women, proving that impact in healthcare comes in many forms.

Yet, science is just one piece of who she is. Nokubonga thrives in creativity—singing, dancing, drawing, and painting—a side of herself she calls her truest form of self-expression. This passion has led her to volunteer with organizations that promote peace and holistic living, allowing her to connect deeply with people beyond the laboratory. Her story is one of breaking barriers, rewriting expectations, and embracing every opportunity to grow.

Her advice to students?

“Dream bigger. There is not one way of doing things in life and your journey is unique. If you find yourself in a position where you cannot do what you wanted at that time, make the most of what you have. Always have hope, an open mind, work hard and make good connections.”

Nokubonga Ntsele photographed at her UCT Graduation Day (2024) on her iPhone



CAMPUS LIFE

UCT campus life is a dynamic mix of academic achievement and cultural diversity. Students engage in various activities, from academic societies and sports to cultural events, fostering community and dialogue on important issues. The campus features ample amenities, including libraries and recreational facilities, promoting a balanced lifestyle. UCT prioritizes student well-being, creating an inclusive environment where individuals can grow intellectually and personally.

1

CLUBS & SOCIETIES

UCT offers over 100 student-run clubs and societies, covering a wide array of interests like academics, politics, sports, arts, and culture. Whether you're into fencing or debating, these groups provide opportunities for social interaction and skill development.

Join Clubs & Societies



2

MENTORSHIP

First-year students benefit from mentor-mentee programmes designed to guide them through academic challenges and university life. Senior students help ease this transition by offering advice and support.



3

CAREER SERVICES

The Careers Service helps with CV writing, job applications, and internships.



4

STUDENT WELLNESS

Student Wellness provides medical and emotional support. Counselling services can be accessed in person or online within a day or two, offering individual and group therapy.

5

WRITING CENTRE

The Writing Centre aids students in improving their academic writing skills, enabling students to perform well in their writing tasks.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

APPLICATION PROCESS

When is the application deadline?

- Applications for UCT's Faculty of Health Sciences typically close on 31 July for the following academic year.

How do I apply to the UCT Faculty of Health Sciences?

- Applications are submitted online via UCT's application portal, where you create an account, fill in personal and academic details, upload required documents, and pay the application fee.

What documents do I need to submit with my application?

- Documents include academic transcripts, a copy of your ID or passport, proof of payment, and any additional documents specified by your chosen programme.

PROGRAMMES & COURSES

What undergraduate programmes are offered by the Faculty of Health Sciences?

- Programmes include MBChB (Medicine), BSc Physiotherapy, BSc Occupational Therapy, BSc Audiology, BSc Speech-Language Pathology, Higher Certificate in Disability Practice and Advanced Diploma in Cosmetic Formulation Science.

Can I apply to more than one programme?

- Yes, you can apply to multiple programmes, with a ranking of preferences. However, if you wish to apply for MBChB, your application will only be considered if it is added as your first choice of degree.



ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

What are the minimum academic requirements for admission?

- The requirements depend on the programme. For MBChB, strong results in Mathematics, Physical Sciences, and English are required. Refer to page 7 of this guide to browse the 2025 UCT FHS programme-specific minimum academic requirements.

Do I need to write any additional tests, such as the National Benchmark Tests (NBTs)?

- Yes, applicants are required to take the NBT, which is considered along with their school-leaving results.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

How much are the tuition fees for health sciences programmes?

- Tuition fees vary by programme and are updated annually. Check the UCT website for the latest fees as they are updated on an annual basis.

Are there scholarships or bursaries available for health sciences students?

- UCT offers several scholarships and bursaries based on merit and financial need. More details can be found on the UCT Financial Aid Office website.

STUDENT LIFE & SUPPORT

What support services are available to students?

- UCT provides academic advising, career counseling, mental health services, and mentorship programmes to support students throughout their studies.

What accommodation options are available for students?

- UCT offers on-campus residences, from shared dormitories to single rooms, and also provides assistance for off-campus accommodation recommendations.



POST-APPLICATION PROCESS

How will I know if my application has been successful?

- UCT will communicate the outcome of your application via email. If successful, you will receive an offer letter with further instructions. Probable acceptance does not guarantee final acceptance.

What should I do if I am placed on a waiting list?

- Being placed on a waiting list means you may be offered a place if spots open up. Keep your contact details up-to-date and respond promptly to any UCT communications.

Can I defer my acceptance if I am admitted?

- Deferment policies vary by programme. If you wish to defer, you must apply for deferment and provide a valid reason. Contact the admissions office for specific guidance.

WEBSITES TO FREQUENT IF YOU PLAN ON APPLYING TO UCT FHS:

1. <https://health.uct.ac.za/>
2. <https://uct.ac.za/>
3. <https://uct.ac.za/students/study-uct-handbooks/handbooks>
4. <https://uct.ac.za/dsa/student-funding-administration-financial-assistance/financial-aid>
5. <https://uct.ac.za/students/student-life/student-housing>
6. <https://www.nbt.ac.za/>

