



FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

ORIENTATION BOOKLET

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Study tips



Find your centre

Make an active effort to create a study environment that works best for you. If that means making a cup of coffee, finding the right place to study in, switching your phone off, using the Pomodoro technique, or studying in groups - explore whichever combination works best for you and stick to it.

Terri Nkosi

Construction Economics and Management



Welcome to the Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment

Dear first year students,

Welcome to the Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment (EBE). You are joining a dynamic faculty led by passionate staff.

As future engineers and built environment professionals, you will step into roles that shape society and strengthen our country, continent and beyond. You will also help develop new solutions for global challenges related to sustainability, climate change, water quality, transport, energy, food and many more. There are exciting opportunities ahead, and we encourage you to get involved and explore all the options available to you.

To succeed in your studies will require commitment and hard work on your part. Attend all your lectures, keep up with deadlines, and make full use of the study resources available to you. As a faculty, we are here to guide and support you throughout your journey, but the drive and hard work ultimately rest with you.

The challenges of university life can be overwhelming at times, with demanding academic requirements and the pressure to perform. But it's equally important to prioritise your mental well-being, take breaks when needed, and seek support from friends, family, or the university counselling services. A work-life balance is important for you to stay afloat during the busy academic schedule.

The academic programmes offered by the faculty will challenge you intellectually, emotionally, and physically, but they will be rewarding once you complete your degree. In this orientation booklet, you will find guidance and answers related to registration, key departmental contacts, and the various support systems available to you.

On behalf of everyone in the EBE Faculty, I wish you every success in your studies at UCT.

Warm regards,

Professor Aubrey Mainza
Dean: Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment

The orientation programme has been designed to introduce you to the academic (and including the online) environment here at UCT. It will introduce you to a variety of issues that are important as a student at this university.

Digital and computer literacy assessment

During orientation, all first year UCT students are given a brief introduction to the online environment and are required to complete a self-evaluation to enable us to evaluate the level of digital computer literacy among new students arriving at UCT.



Laboratory safety induction

All students who will be working in laboratories as part of their studies will be required to complete a Lab Safety induction online. This is to receive a digital badge that will give you access to the labs.



Registration

Once a student has accepted their firm offer, they will receive an email directing them to PeopleSoft Self Service where they will register.

Academic calendar 2026

1st quarter	16 February to 27 March
Mid-term vacation	28 March to 6 April
2nd quarter	7 April to 15 June
Mid-term break	16 June to 26 July
3rd quarter	27 July to 4 September
Mid-term vacation	5 September to 13
September	
4th quarter	14 September to 18 December

Accessing the student network

All computers in the EBE computer labs are connected to a network, and students registered for any course in the EBE Faculty will automatically have their login account enabled for these labs as well as for general computer stations around the University. You will have been given a student number and an initial password with your original letter of acceptance to UCT.

The login ID which enables you to log in to this network is your student number, followed by your password. If you have lost or forgotten your password, don't panic! – email [Theo Armstrong](mailto:theo.armstrong@uct.ac.za) to obtain a new temporary password.

after registration...

checking your registration details online

It is your responsibility to check that your registration details are correct. You should do this during the first week of term by logging onto the UCT website. Check that your courses are correctly listed and report any errors to your Department/School as soon as possible. Make a habit of checking these details each semester while you are at UCT. You can also check your fee account balance on this page. Access your details as follows:

- from a browser go to the URL <http://www.uct.ac.za>
- position your cursor over the “Current Students” tab at the top of the page
- click on “Undergraduates” on the drop-down menu
- click on “Online services & resources”
- click on “Student Administration Self Service (PeopleSoft)”
- enter your Network login name and password and click on “login”
- You will go directly to your “Student Centre” where you can navigate to “Proof of Registration”.

NB: A printout of your registration details from this source may be used if you need to produce proof of registration for a sponsor or other third party.

Changing or updating your details

To apply to change your curriculum (adding or dropping courses, changing programmes, etc.) you need to complete [ACA09 Change of curriculum form](#)

Please check for deadlines regarding curriculum changes. Changes cannot be made after the deadlines have passed! The deadline dates can be found in “General Rules & Policies”, Handbook No 3.

Change of address

If you change your address after you have registered, you must ensure that the University is informed of the details. This includes your term-time, home, fee and next-of-kin addresses. You MUST do this through the UCT Home Page. Access by following the instructions under “Checking your Registration”.

Please note that you are responsible for keeping UCT informed of any change of address.

Cancellation of registration

If you wish to cancel your registration for the year and not return to UCT next year, you must complete [ACA08 cancellation form](#). The completed form must be sent to the Faculty Office with your registration card. The date the form is submitted will be used to determine whether you are eligible for any fee rebates. Inform Student Housing as well if you are in a residence.

Payments/refunds to students

Payments to students will only be made to valid bank accounts. If you expect to receive any sort of payment from UCT (e.g., Financial Aid, bursary advance or other form of refund) you must provide UCT with your active bank account details, via the Student Self Service System.

The EBE Faculty Office

Room 5.05, Level 5, New Engineering Building

Faculty Office hours: Mon to Fri 08h30 – 16h30; Tel: 021 650 2699

The Faculty Office manages the faculty's academic administration, and the staff are responsible for the smooth functioning of all administration concerned with admissions and registrations, concessions, changes of curricula, progress reports and any related student matters.

FACULTY OFFICE STAFF		
Position	Name	Email
Dean	Professor Aubrey Mainza	Dean.ebe@uct.ac.za
Dean's assistant	Ms Gadija Salie	Gadija.Salie@uct.ac.za
Faculty Manager	Mr Lefa Legalamitlwa	Lefa.Legalamitlwa@uct.ac.za

Departments & contacts in the faculty

If at any time you have questions or issues regarding a course, the table below will help you identify the appropriate person to contact. The Administrative Assistant is often the first person to speak to about any administrative matters. Questions of a general nature may be put to the Head of Department.

Head of Department	Programme	Admin Assistant
School of Architecture, Planning & Geomatics		
A/Prof Alta Steenkamp	Architectural Studies	Janine.Tobin@uct.ac.za
A/Prof Patroba Odera	Geomatics	Junita.Abrahams@uct.ac.za
Chemical Engineering		
Prof Niyi Isafiade	Chemical Engineering	Bridgette.Cloete@uct.ac.za
Civil Engineering		
Prof Mark Zuidgeest	Civil Engineering	Lorenzo.Plat@uct.ac.za
Construction Economics & Management		
Prof Manya Mooya	Construction Studies	Afroze.Ismail@uct.ac.za
	Property Studies	
Electrical Engineering		
Prof Azeem Khan	Electrical Engineering	Verona.Langenhoven@uct.ac.za
	Electrical & Computer	
	Mechatronics	
Mechanical Engineering		
Prof Tunde Bello-Ochende	Mechanical Engineering	Ragmah.Jakoet@uct.ac.za
	Mechanical & Mechatronic	

Mentoring programme for first year students



Many first-year students find it difficult to adjust to life at university. Familiar sources of support are no longer there to help ease the transition to an unfamiliar environment. The first weeks on campus can be a lonely time. You might get homesick. You may struggle to form friendships. University classes are a great deal more difficult than high school. Managing your time, right from the start of the semester, is a crucial skill that you need to develop.

To assist you to settle in and to cope with new challenges, the Faculty has a well-established, successful mentoring programme in place which is run within your department. Each first-year student will be assigned a mentor from their department in orientation week. Your mentors are senior students who have successfully survived the first year of the degree. Your mentor will help you to make sense of life at UCT. You are expected to meet with your mentor regularly during the first semester, especially the first few weeks of term. Your department will inform you of who you should approach with any questions about the mentoring programme.

A mentor is not a tutor - academic assistance is handled by a lecturer or tutor. Your mentor is there for informal support, advice, information and referral. Make use of this valuable resource. Whether struggling in class or with a personal issue, it is important to speak to someone.

Do not leave any difficulties unattended – resolve them as soon as possible.

You may in your time at UCT experience physical health difficulties and/or mental health challenges (e.g. depression, anxiety). Should this happen there are a range of support services available to students including:

EBE student psychologist

The EBE faculty has a dedicated student counsellor, Nazeema Ahmed, who is a qualified clinical psychologist. If you feel that you are struggling with personal issues during the course of the year at UCT and feel the need for professional assistance, you can send an email to nazeema.ahmed@uct.ac.za to arrange an appointment.

Other sources of help

- Student Wellness Service 021 650 1020/1017 (during office hours) where there is a team of psychologists, medical doctors, nurses and psychiatrists.
- UCT Student Careline 0800 24 25 26 - free from a Telkom line/ 31393 - for a call-me-back
- [S'akha Sonke](#) is a support and advocacy group for all UCT students suffering from mental illness, and any supporters who are also affected by mental illness
- Life-Line 086 132 2322 (Toll free-24 hours)
- South African Depression and Anxiety Group 0800 567 567 (Toll free 8am-8pm)
- Suicide Crisis Help-Line 0800 567 567 (Toll free 8am-8pm) SMS HelpLine 31393
- Substance Abuse Helpline 0800 121314 (Toll free 24 hours)



ASPECT – Academic Support Programme for Engineering in Cape Town

ASPECT provides academic support to struggling students in the EBE faculty in the early years of their studies. The transition from school to university can be difficult and even traumatic for students. The quantity of work, the pace at which material is covered to complete the degree in four years and the conceptual complexity are all greater than students experienced at school, even though some of the topics covered appear the same. Working hard at the start of the year (even if some of the early material seems familiar), getting used to the long hours and ensuring dedicated practice is imperative to succeed.

ASPECT provides academic support for the planned 5-year engineering degree

Many students that struggle at the start of their engineering studies choose to take the 5-year degree option. The 5-year option allows students to take the same courses as the 4-year degree but spread these courses over 5 years. This means student on the 5-year option take fewer courses each year and therefore can focus more on the courses taken.

To help students that choose the 5-year option, ASPECT provides extra academic support and teaching in the first-year courses, specifically Maths and Physics. This extra support ensures that students get a good understanding in these fundamental courses that are essential to the follow-on courses in the degree. The ASPECT staff also counsel students in curriculum and academic matters.

Students typically choose the 5-year option (with ASPECT support) at the start of the degree, if they are unsure of their preparedness, or after doing poorly in their first class tests at the end of the first term, or if they fail courses after the first semester exams. If you would like to discuss this option, then please email aspect@uct.ac.za and a meeting will be arranged to advise you of your options.

Difficulties/problems with academic courses - who to talk to

If you feel you need advice or are unhappy regarding something about your course, it is mostly a good idea to start with your LECTURER. If they can't help you, they should be able to direct you to an appropriate person.

Tell your CLASS REPRESENTATIVE if you have a complaint about your lecturer or the course, so that he/she can take this up with the lecturer concerned.

When there is more than one lecturer teaching a course, the COURSE CONVENOR will have the overall responsibility of coordinating this course. Consult the EBE Faculty handbook to see who the convenor is for your course.

A STUDENT ADVISOR is member of the academic staff who can advise you on how to complete your curriculum and any problems you might have with it. Complaints can also be heard by the relevant HEAD OF DEPARTMENT.

The Writing Centre

The Writing Centre offers a one-on-one consultancy service to students who need some advice about their academic writing. You can visit the Writing Centre with a full draft of an essay, or with notes to discuss an initial plan. The Writing Centre gives you the opportunity to chat about your writing to an attentive and non-judgmental reader.

In this way, you can explore new ideas, make sure that your argument makes sense, and work towards more effective writing. In addition, we can help with some general academic conventions like referencing, proposal formats, and so on.

The Writing Centre also identifies and analyses the language and learning difficulties in student writing to provide feedback to departmental staff. We collaborate with various departments who are interested in developing their students' writing skills.

Telephone: 021 650 5021 or email writingcentre@uct.ac.za



THE UCT CAREERS SERVICE

The Careers Service's office empowers students to take ownership of and make informed decisions about their futures through a broad range of advisory services and networking opportunities. The Service has been commended by both UCT students and employers locally and internationally for its professional service and support.

Visit the Careers Service where free careers consultations can be booked for all registered students.

To access MyCareer, log onto www.uct.ac.za/careers and click on My Career - students have 24/7 access to information, advice and opportunities suited to them.

Services and resources include:

- Information - options with your degree, graduate career stories, job search tools (CVs, LinkedIn, cover letters and interviews)
- Advice - careers consultations, alumni career conversation panels, CV consultations, programmes and workshops for undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- Opportunities - part-time work, graduate jobs and internships, career expos, employer presentations and showcases, and the Mock Interview programme.

The Careers Service is open from 08h30 - 16h30 throughout the year, student vacations included. The office is located on the ground floor in the Hoerlkwaggo Building, North Lane, Upper Campus.

Visit www.careers.uct.ac.za or call 021 650 2498

2026 EBE student council (EBESC)

The Student Council (elected each year by the student body) is concerned with promoting the academic and social interests of the students they represent. It plays an important role in the Faculty and meets quarterly with the Dean to report on the general feeling and concerns of the student body. Members of the EBESC sit on various committees in the Faculty where their input is valued and taken into consideration.

EBESC also organises events such as networking events, outreach programmes and debates. They are there to represent your interests and you should speak to them if any problems or issues arise.

Address: EBESC Office - Room 337, 3rd floor, Menzies Building

IT support and information

For more information on all aspects of computer use and IT support at UCT, go to www.icts.uct.ac.za

Visit the [ICTS YouTube channel](#)



STUDY TIPS

1. Always plan and stick to your schedule.
2. Understand the work and avoid cramming and ask for help when you need it.

Dzina Tshitangoni
Mechanical Engineering student

UCT's online learning system



Amathuba powered by [D2L's Brightspace](#) is UCT's new digital learning platform. The platform offers a [wide range of features](#), in an attractive, modern, and engaging user interface. Here are some of its strengths:

- Intuitive [drag-and-drop authoring](#) for creating engaging content including audio and video.
- Powerful [course templates](#) that make it easy to get going and support consistent course experience for students across courses.
- A rich [mobile learning experience](#) with responsive, accessible web pages and the Brightspace Pulse app which helps students stay in touch and connected with notifications, upcoming tasks, grades and course content which can be downloaded for offline access later.
- Assessment, feedback and grading features that support both [flexible grading schemes](#) and [Mastery views](#) for learning outcomes.
- Amathuba is a cloud service hosted on Amazon Web Services, with a consistent [99.99% global uptime](#), so it's available 24x7 when you need it.

Join the EBE Social media platforms

<p>ebe_uct</p> 	<p>@UCTEBEFaculty</p> 	<p>UCT Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment</p> 
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