

# International Students

*Whether you're just starting out or have definite career plans, UCT's Career Service can help you explore your next steps, find relevant information and make informed decisions.*

How you can make the most of your time at UCT as an international student and get ahead on your career journey.

## International experience enhances Employability

Employers recognise that students who spend some time studying in a foreign country grow in maturity, independence, flexibility and responsibility and often display developed levels of empathy, open mindedness, respect, global awareness, cultural adaptability and self-awareness. Languages, networking and self-management are sought-after skills that an international study experience can cultivate.

In order to benefit fully from your international experience, consider what you've developed and how this will help you contribute to the world of work, then communicate this effectively to potential employers in your applications and interviews.

### Types of work experience to consider

- Part-time work (tutoring, waitering, marketing etc.)
- Vacation work (paid block of work, either in SA or your home country)
- Project work (with external organisations, often as part of your course)
- Voluntary work (unpaid, for a charitable organisation)
- Internships (usually a couple of months and unpaid, for an organisation in your area of interest)

## Making the most of your time at UCT and in Cape Town

### Part-time/voluntary work

Getting work experience while at university is critical. As an international student, with a Study Visa to be in South Africa, you are permitted to work in a voluntary capacity or may be paid to work for up to 20 hours per week on a part-time basis. While all work experience is worthwhile and increases your commercial awareness and employability skills, you'll gain a better understanding of your sector (as well as a useful network) in the South African context if you try to find some work exposure in your area of interest.

### Involvement in societies/sport

UCT has numerous clubs, societies and sports on offer. Find something that you're interested in or passionate about and get involved. Not only will this help you to make friends and grow your network, but it will also allow you to build the soft skills that are so vital in the world of work. Try to get involved in leadership roles, mentoring and service activities. When it comes to applications and interviews you will have interesting experiences and examples to refer to.

## Career management

UCT Careers Service provides numerous ways to assist you with your career development and planning - for example, we can help you reflect, develop a great CV and prepare for interviews. Make sure to register on [www.mycareer.uct.ac.za](http://www.mycareer.uct.ac.za) and attend talks, workshops and events, make use of the resources and book an appointment if you need advice.



## Networking

No matter what you are planning to do after leaving UCT, use the time here to network and find out what companies are doing in the region and globally. The Careers Service facilitates a number of activities that bring employers onto campus, such as expos, company showcases and presentations. Attending these will give you an opportunity to talk to potential employers about working locally or internationally.

Building a network of useful contacts in South Africa in sectors that interest you (through your faculty, work experience, campus engagements and other activities), will help you to explore different careers and industry options and get insider tips.

It's also important to foster your network back home, and to stay in touch with what is happening in your areas of interest and the job market. (LinkedIn can be useful for this.)

### Networking opportunities

Expos and presentations  
UCT contacts (faculty staff and classmates, societies, clubs, sports, residence)  
Conferences and seminars  
Work experience  
Social media  
Alumni

## What next?

As an international student at UCT, you have many possibilities after graduation. Options may include further study, returning to your home country to work, applying to stay and work in SA, or looking for an opportunity elsewhere in the world.

### Further study

If you're thinking about studying further, you're welcome to come and discuss this with us at the Careers Service; you can also talk to faculty staff and UCT's Postgraduate Funding Office.

### Working back home or internationally

Remember to emphasise your knowledge of English and the skills and attributes that you have developed while studying abroad.

Many of the employers who engage with UCT have global operations, so do your homework in researching them and then target those who may be able to help you explore your options.

Make sure you get a written reference from a supervisor or staff member at UCT before you leave, and get permission to list someone suitable on your CV as a referee.

There are always numerous opportunities, both local and international, listed on MyCareer that you are welcome to apply for. In addition, the Careers Service produces an annual guide that list companies, who they are looking for and if SA citizenship is required.

### Staying in South Africa to work

The Department of Home Affairs is responsible for visas - information can be found on their website: <http://www.dha.gov.za/index.php/types-of-visas>.

General work visas are issued only to foreigners where South African citizens with the relevant skills are not available; it is worth investigating if you are entitled to apply for a Critical Skills Work Visa.

Visas are issued for a set duration, which varies on the type of work visa, and applications are made through Visa Facilitation Services centres (VFS): [www.vfsglobal.com/dha/southafrica/](http://www.vfsglobal.com/dha/southafrica/)