



# CHANGING YOUR DEGREE

*If you are unhappy with your course, are failing or just bored, it is best to try and look at your alternatives, rather than to ignore the situation.*

## Why do students decide to change?

There are several possible scenarios that may hinder your ability or desire to complete your course:

- Not coping academically
- Change in personal circumstances
- Unsure about your choices
- Concerns about career prospects
- Course differs to expectations
- Not coping socially
- Illness or family issues
- Finding an alternative you really love

## Where do I start?

Start by asking yourself why you chose this course in the first place. Did you have limited access to information about your options? Did you not get into your first choice and are landed with a second choice you put down just for the sake of it? Or were you heavily influenced by your peers, a sibling, parent or teacher?

Look carefully at whether it is your whole degree that you are unhappy with, or just one or two courses, or even a part of a course. Sometimes that can put things into perspective and help you to identify your unhappiness. If you look back and identify that you took your degree for the wrong reasons, imagine that you were back at the beginning. Using the knowledge and experience gained, what would you study if you could choose all over again?

## How do I consider my options?

- See a Careers Advisor to chat through your options and get ideas for alternatives. You can book online by visiting [mycareer.uct.ac.za](http://mycareer.uct.ac.za). Or you can come to the Careers Service reception to make an appointment.
- You may want to consult a curriculum advisor in your faculty to find out the possibilities of changing streams or majors.
- If you are looking to change to a degree in another faculty, consult a curriculum advisor in that faculty to see if you would get credits for courses you have already passed.
- Ask other students in courses you want to move to if you can have a chat, look at their textbooks or course outlines.





## Who should I see before making a change?

- If you are a bursary holder, it is advisable to inform your bursars. Be honest about being unhappy and discuss options available to you, rather than keeping quiet, failing and losing your bursary anyway.
- Realise that if you are down, unmotivated and unhappy, it is very difficult to perform – you may need support from the UCT Student Wellness Service.
- Complete the Application for Change of Curriculum form (form ACA09) if you wish to change your curriculum and submit it to your faculty office.
- If you are changing faculties, you will need to fill in the Application for Change of Faculty form and inform the faculty you are leaving, as well as confirming that a move to the preferred faculty.
- If you wish to cancel your registration entirely (withdraw from the university) complete the Cancellation of Registration (ACA08) form and submit it to your faculty with your student card. Please note that this is not the same form you complete when you apply for Leave of Absence.
- To apply for Leave of Absence (LoA) please consult your faculty and complete the Application for Leave of Absence form (ACA37) and submit with all the supporting documents.

### Case Study 1: Change of course

Sylvia was a second-year student studying for a Bachelor of Commerce in Philosophy, Politics and Economics and she wanted to change her stream. She contacted the Commerce student advisor to inform the faculty that she wanted to change to Economics and Statistics specialisation. She filled out and submitted the ACA09. The student advisor helped her select the relevant courses and, because she did this at the start of the semester, there were no financial implications.

### Case Study 2: Leave of absence

Sibulelo was in his third year of studying Law when his father took ill. With no other family members alive to look after his father, he made the decision to take a break from studying and return home to offer his assistance. He contacted the Academic Administration Faculty Manager of his faculty and completed an ACA37 and submitted it with all the supporting documents (such as his father's medical certificate) to the faculty office. He had to pay for the semester, but could re-apply to be readmitted to his degree in the following year.

### Case Study 3: Leaving university

Maru, a first-year Science student found that living away from home and paying for his own text books, accommodation and food was costing much more than he had estimated. He did not feel comfortable asking his parents to act as guarantors for a larger loan. He discussed his options with the Science Student Advisor and with an Advisor from the Careers Service. He decided to deregister from the University and applied for job opportunities with the intention of continuing his studies at a later stage.

