



# University of Cape Town

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR UNDERGRADUATE APPLICANTS TO THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE 2025

### ADMISSION GUIDELINES

NSC results are the primary guide for admission to the BSc degree. However, all applicants to the Science Faculty are required to write the NBTs (the National Benchmark Tests in Academic Literacy, Quantitative Literacy and Mathematics) as this is a university requirement. The results of the NBTs are not taken into account for admission to the Science Faculty, but will be used for placement in the extended degree after registration.

#### (i) Admission criteria for applicants holding the National Senior Certificate (NSC)

Besides taking the NSC results into account for admission, other factors including availability of places and educational or social/home background, will be considered.

#### Faculty Points Score (FPS) and expected level of achievement

The FPS (a score out of 800) is calculated as the sum of the percentages achieved in the best six NSC subjects, including English but excluding Life Orientation, and doubling the percentages achieved in Mathematics and Physical Science. Admission to the Faculty of Science requires a FPS of 550 or above. Results below 40% for any subject do not attract a score. Refer to page 16 of the 2025 Undergraduate Prospectus.  
<http://www.students.uct.ac.za/students/prospective/undergraduate-prospectus>

#### Example of a FPS calculation:

Subjects	NSC results	POINTS
English Home Language	85%	85
Afrikaans/isiXhosa First Additional Language	89%	89
Mathematics	84%	84
Life Sciences	86%	86
Geography	79%	79
Physical Science	81%	81
Life Orientation	80%	0

$$FPS = 85 + 89 + (84 \times 2) + 86 + 79 + (81 \times 2) = 669$$

**Early conditional offers** are made to applicants who submit preliminary results and obtain a FPS of 660 or more, and at least 70% for Mathematics and 60% for Physical Science.

#### Subject entrance requirements

Applicants for the Bachelor of Science degree must meet the following subject requirements:

- Mathematics at 70% or above
- Physical Science at 60% or above (see notes 2 and 3 below).
- Where an applicant has not completed Physical Science, Information Technology or Life Sciences may be doubled (refer to notes 2 and 3 below).

Meeting these requirements does not guarantee admission. Admission may be limited by available capacity. Placement is competitive and is determined by the size and strength of the application pool.

**Admission criteria for applicants holding the National Senior Certificate (NSC):**

ELIGIBLE		ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS
All applicants	Band A (FPS)	<p><b>GUARANTEED ADMISSION</b></p> <p>FPS of 660 or above Mathematics 70% or above and Physical Science 60% or above(see <i>Notes 2 &amp; 3</i>) NBTs in Mathematics, AL &amp; QL to be written*</p>
	Band B (WPS)	<p><b>ADMISSION VERY LIKELY</b></p> <p><i>(The Weighted Points Score (WPS; only in Band B) will be determined by applying a weighting factor to the FPS, adjusted by a maximum of 10%, to accommodate school or home background)</i></p> <p>WPS of 640 or above Mathematics 70% or above and Physical Science 60% or above(see <i>Notes 2 &amp; 3</i>) NBTs in Mathematics, AL &amp; QL to be written*</p>
SA applicants in targeted redress race groups	Band C (FPS)	<p><b>ADMISSION POSSIBLE</b></p> <p>FPS of 550 or above Mathematics 70% or above and Physical Science 60% or above(see <i>Notes 2 &amp; 3</i>) NBTs in Mathematics, AL &amp; QL to be written*</p>

\*The NBT results are not factored into the Science Faculty Point Score (FPS) calculation for admission (*see Note 4*)

Applicants are required to choose **two majors** from the list below.

- Applied Mathematics
- Applied Statistics\*\*\*
- Archaeology (see Note 2)
- Artificial Intelligence - 2025 new major
- Astrophysics
- Biology
- Biochemistry
- Business Computing\*\* (see Note 3)
- Chemistry
- Computer Engineering\*\*
- Computer Science (see Note 3)
- Environmental & Geographical Science (see Note 2)
- Geology
- Genetics
- Human Anatomy & Physiology
- Marine Biology
- Mathematical Statistics\*\*\*
- Mathematics
- Ocean & Atmosphere Science
- Physics
- Quantitative Biology
- Statistics & Data Science\*\*\*

\*\*These majors must be taken together with the major in Computer Science.

\*\*\*Only one of the Statistical Sciences majors (*Applied Statistics or Mathematical Statistics or Statistics & Data Science*) can be

taken.

**Note 1:** *Acceptance into the Science Faculty does not guarantee acceptance into a chosen major* because some majors (currently Biology, Biochemistry, Genetics, Geology and Human Anatomy & Physiology) have limits on the number of students that can be accommodated. Selection for these is based on academic criteria which will be clearly communicated to students during the first year of study. Students will be advised in their first year to take courses which could lead to several majors.

**Note 2:** If you have not completed Physical Science or Information Technology in your school-leaving examinations, your choice of majors will be restricted to Archaeology and Environmental & Geographical Science.

**Note 3:** For majors in Computer Science and Business Computing, the Physical Science requirement may be replaced by Information Technology (*only where Physical Science was not taken*).

**Note 4:** The NBTs are not used as part of the admission point score calculation, but we require all applicants to write these tests as it is used (together with the first class test results and NSC) to identify the first-year students who will be transferred into an extended degree.

## Placement

Admission to the Science Faculty will be directly onto the regular, three-year degree programme. All students will be required to write a set of formal class tests at mid-term of the first semester and based on the results of these tests, together with NSC and NBT results, selected students will be counselled to convert to the four-year Extended Degree Programme (EDP). The EDP is structured such that students entering the programme will receive additional academic and general support to improve the chances of graduating in minimum time. The EDP is run in association with the Academic Development Programme (ADP) and offers students who are struggling the opportunity to establish a sound educational foundation, with an appropriate distribution of their academic load over a four-year period. The minimum time for a student on the EDP to complete the BSc degree is four years.

### (ii) Minimum requirements for applicants with school-leaving examinations other than the NSC

For applicants in possession of or writing other than South African qualifications, offers of places may only be made subject to the equivalent bachelor's endorsement (**Matriculation Exemption**) being obtained from the South African Higher Education (Matriculation) Board (refer to <https://mbit-application.usaf.ac.za/assessment/> for further information and on-line assessment). In addition, candidates must meet the following minimum requirements; meeting these requirements does not guarantee admission which is limited by available capacity:

#### Applicants must take at least:

English, Mathematics and Chemistry and/or Physics (or Physical Science)

- Chemistry is required for the following majors: Biology, Marine Biology, Biochemistry, Chemistry, Genetics, Geology, Human Anatomy & Physiology and Ocean & Atmosphere Science.
- Physics is required for majors in Applied Mathematics, Applied Statistics, Artificial Intelligence, Astrophysics, Chemistry, Computer Engineering, Geology, Mathematics, Mathematical Statistics, Ocean & Atmosphere Science, Physics, Quantitative Biology and Statistics & Data Science.
- Chemistry/Physics may be replaced by Computer Science for majors in Computer Science and Business Computing only.
- Chemistry/Physics may be replaced by Geography for the major in Environmental & Geographical Science

Applicants writing A-level, AS-level, HIGCSE/IGCSE or IB examinations must meet the following minimum subject requirements:

English: C at O-level (A, AS); C at IGCSE (HIGCSE); grade 5 SL (IB)

Mathematics: B for A-level; B for AS level; level 1 for HIGCSE; grade 5 HL or grade 6 SL for IB (Maths Analysis)

Physical Science (or Chemistry or Physics): C for A-level; C for AS level; level 1 for HIGCSE; grade 5 HL or grade 6 SL for IB.

#### Faculty Points Score (FPS) for non NSC examinations.

Admission to the Faculty of Science requires an applicant to have achieved a FPS of 34 points or above, based on the five best subjects (including the required subjects), obtained using the scoring table below.

FPS	A levels	AS levels	NSSC HL	IGCSE	IB HL	IB SL
10	A				7	
9	B				6	
8	C	A	1		5	7
7	D	B	2		4	6

6	E	C	3	A	3	5
5		D		B		4
4		E		C		

**Note:** Due to capacity constraints offers are unlikely to be made to applicants who only meet the minimum admission requirements.

Applicants writing other international authority examinations will be assessed on their individual merits.

### English proficiency

All international students for whom English is not a first/home language or have not passed English at Grade 12, O-level, AS-level, IGCSE or HIGCSE level or equivalent, must provide proof of English language proficiency. Applicants are required to achieve one of the following:

1. A score of at least 51% for the Academic Literacy (AL) component of the National Benchmark Tests (NBTs)
2. A pass in the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) with a score of at least 570 on the paper-based test, or 230 on the computer-based test; or 88 on the internet-based test
3. An overall band score of 7.0 (with no individual element of the test scoring below 6.0) on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS)
4. A score of 64 on the Pearson PTE Academic test. The tests must be taken at your own expense, before applying.

These are the minimum levels of English proficiency required for consideration for admission to UCT.

### (iii) Transferring Students

Transferring applicants are required to write the National Benchmark Test (NBT), submit certified copies of secondary-leaving and tertiary transcripts of results and a letter of motivation in support of the application, providing details of activities since leaving school and reasons for wanting to transfer to the Faculty of Science. We have a limited number of academic places in the Faculty of Science, so offers will be made to the best candidates in this category. Particular attention will be given to courses relevant to the Science Faculty and to the proposed majors. **It is unlikely that students who have failed one or more courses will be accepted and/or who have an overall percentage below 60 for subjects completed at tertiary level.**

Transferring students are expected to have school-leaving and NBT results competitive with the current applicant pool and must have:

- passed all first-year courses in their first year at another institution, and bring with them at least four full courses (or the equivalent) that earn credit and exemption at UCT;
- not been refused readmission by another tertiary institution; and
- not been registered at another tertiary institution for more than two years.

All students who transfer from other Universities must register for a minimum of two years for the BSc degree, and complete all the senior courses of their majors, at UCT.

### Transferring of credits

UCT may give credit for, and/or exemption from, a maximum of four full courses (or the equivalent in half courses) completed elsewhere if these courses are recognised by UCT.

#### Note:

- It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain, from the relevant UCT departments, signed approval of credit and exemption for the courses they wish to transfer before their applications will be considered.
- Senior major courses may not be transferred for credit or exemption.
- Tertiary courses required for matriculation exemption purposes will not be credited.