

Admission requirements and selection criteria for undergraduate programmes

This document applies to candidates who wish to study in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in 2026. Please consult the **Faculty Yearbook** for information about the different degree programmes we offer.

1. What is the purpose of this document?

This document is an extension of the Faculty Plan and focuses specifically on the practical aspects of managing first-year enrolments.

If you want to enrol for any of the undergraduate programmes in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, you must first be selected for that programme; in other words, all the programmes in this Faculty are selection programmes. This document describes how the selection process works.

2. Why must I be selected for a programme before I can enrol at the University?

Each year, the Stellenbosch University (SU) Council sets specific targets for the numbers of undergraduate students that can enrol at SU. These targets ensure that SU maintains academic excellence, that our student body is racially diverse and that we give opportunities to socio-economically disadvantaged students. (For a fuller explanation, see the Faculty Yearbook.) The Faculty selects students to reach the above-mentioned targets. This means that we select the best students to enable SU to reach its goals. It also means that some applicants will not be selected immediately and others not at all.

3. How many places are available in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences?

Places available

General selection	655
Own selection	345
ECPs	100
Other faculties	60
Other institutions	40
Total	1200

There is a total of 1200 places available in the Faculty for first-time registrations. Of these, **1100 places** are reserved for new first-year students. The remaining 100 places are for students from other faculties at SU (± 60 places) or other tertiary institutions (± 40 places). Of the 1100 places for new first-years, **655** places are in programmes using the Faculty's general selection process, **345** are in programmes with programme-specific selection processes, and **100** are in the extended curriculum programmes.

4. The Faculty's admission requirements

4.1 Which examination bodies' Grade 12 results are accepted?

The Faculty accepts the Grade 12 examination results of the National Senior Certificate (NSC), the Independent Examination Board (IEB) and the South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI).

4.2 What about international applicants and applicants who have not written the NSC, IEB or SACAI examinations?

The marks used for applicants who have not written the NSC, IEB or SACAI exams are determined as follows:

- i. For applicants who have a **South African Senior Certificate received in 2007 or earlier**, we use the average percentage in their final school examination for the selection process.
- ii. The final school certificate of those who wrote the **Cambridge, Home School, School of Tomorrow or other Grade 12 exams, and all international applicants**, is referred to the SU International Services Centre. The Centre uses a conversion table to award them a comparable final average mark to be used in the selection process. (The conversion table is compiled and maintained by the Registrar's office in conjunction with the SU International Services Centre).

4.3 What are the Faculty's minimum admission requirements for first years?

To be admitted to any programme in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, you must first meet the Faculty's general minimum admission requirements. The required subjects and minimum mark you must have can be found in the Undergraduate Programmes chapter of the Faculty Yearbook. However, *since places are limited, meeting the minimum admission requirements does not guarantee that you will be accepted to the Faculty or placed in a programme.*

4.4 Do some programmes and subjects have their own admission requirements?

Yes, apart from the general admission requirements, programmes may have their own admission requirements, and some subjects may too.

The following programmes do not have their own selection processes, but they may have minimum admission requirements that are *higher* than the Faculty's minimum admission requirements. Programmes that are also offered as extended curriculum programmes (ECPs) are indicated with an asterisk (see point 6.4 below for more on the ECPs).

- BA (Humanities) *
- BA (Language and Culture) *
- BA (International Studies) *
- BA (Human Resource Management) *
- BA (Development and Environment) *
- BA (Political, Philosophical and Economic Studies)
- B in Data Science (Focal area: Geoinformatics)

Please consult the Faculty Yearbook for more details: For the detailed programme-specific requirements, have a look in the Undergraduate Programmes chapter, and for subject-specific requirements, see the Subjects, Modules and Module Contents chapter.

4.5 Which programmes also have their own selection processes?

In addition to their specified admission requirements, the following programmes also have their own selection criteria for making the final decision on who is accepted to the programme. These programmes can fill only a fixed number of places (shown in brackets):

- BA (Drama and Theatre Studies) [60]

- BA (Law) [50]
- BA (Visual Arts) [55]
- B in Social Work [100]
- Department of Music: [80]
 - Higher Certificate in Music
 - Diploma in Practical Music
 - Advanced Diploma in Practical Music
 - BA (Music)
 - BMus

You can find more details in the Faculty Yearbook under "Undergraduate Programmes".

5. Should I write the National Benchmark Tests (NBTs)?

NBT results are normally *not* compulsory for applicants who wrote the NSC, IEB or SACAI exams, but some programmes may require you to write NBTs. Please check the Faculty Yearbook for the admission requirements of the programmes you want to apply for.

If you are a School of Tomorrow applicant to Stellenbosch University, you must write your NBTs before **30 September** of the year before you wish to study at SU. This will help to ensure that your admission and placement is finalised before the end of that year.

6. How we process applications and make placements

6.1 What is the closing date for applications?

Your application must be submitted electronically by **31 July** of the year before you intend to study at SU. Late applications will only be considered on merit, and placement depends on whether there are any places available.

6.1.1 Other important dates:

- **30 September:** Date by which to accept your conditional offer (see point 6.2.2 below).
- **31 October:** Date by which to submit your request to be allowed to revert to a rejected offer from this Faculty (see point 6.3 below).
- **25 January** of the year in which you want to start your studies: Due date for requesting to be admitted to an extended curriculum programme if, based on your final Grade 12 results, you were not admitted to the mainstream programme (see point 6.4 below).

6.2 How are applications processed?

6.2.1 Only *complete applications* are considered. A complete application is an application that includes all the supporting documentation as described on the application form. We take the day on which the *complete* application is received as the application date. If the application is marked as complete only *after* 31 July, it will count as a late application.

6.2.2 Applications received by 31 July for **programmes that don't have their own selection process** but use the Faculty's general selection process are handled as follows:

- i. Each year, the Faculty management determines the lowest average mark required for applicants to automatically be granted conditional admission – this is the *cut-off mark*. This decision is based on past trends in admission and registration.

- ii. **Automatic selection:**

Applicants with a final Grade 11 mark equal to or higher than the cut-off mark and who meet the Faculty's minimum admission requirements, as well as any relevant programme-specific or subject-specific admission requirements, are selected automatically. You will receive a *conditional offer* of acceptance, regardless of your

race or socio-economic status. You must accept this offer by **30 September**, or it will lapse. (You will receive your final offer once your final Grade 12 results are available in January.)

Applicants with a National Senior Certificate (NSC) and a Grade 12 average *equal to or higher than* the cut-off mark and who meet the Faculty's minimum admission requirements, as well as any relevant programme-specific or subject-specific admission requirements, automatically receive a *final offer* of acceptance. You must accept this offer by **30 September**.

iii. **Further selection:**

After the round of automatic selection, applicants who have *not* been accepted undergo further selection based on the following:

- the available places
- your academic merit
- the targets for Coloured, Black, Indian and Asian (BCIA) students
- your socio-economic status.

If your application is successful, the Faculty will inform you that you have been selected and conditionally admitted.

6.2.3 Applications received by 31 July for **programmes with their own programme-specific selection process** are handled according to the relevant programme's selection policy. This selection process, however, takes time to complete, so you will receive *conditional acceptance* to *another* programme that follows the Faculty's general selection process, as long as you meet the relevant programme's requirements.

If you then later receive an offer for a programme with its own selection process, you may choose to decline the first conditional offer and accept the new offer on or before the date stated in your offer letter.

If there are any unfilled places in programmes with programme-specific selection processes, these places may be transferred to programmes that only follow the Faculty's general selection process.

6.3 May I accept more than one offer at a time?

No, if you receive and accept an offer from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and then want to accept an offer from another faculty, you must *first decline* the original offer from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences before accepting the offer from the other faculty. If you later decide to revert to the original programme in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, you must submit a request to that effect by **31 October** of the year of your application. We will consider your request if there are still places available.

6.4 How am I selected for an extended curriculum programme?

There are a maximum of 100 places in extended curriculum programmes (ECPs), and only candidates who meet the SU requirements for admission to an ECP are admitted.

To be considered for an ECP, you must have an average of at least 60% in the NSC/IEB/SACAI exam, excluding Life Orientation. We fill ECP places with candidates who have a Grade 12 average in the bracket immediately below the cut-off mark for the mainstream programme. This is a *moving-target approach* wherein the actual minimum mark for admission to an ECP can change from year to year according to the marks of the candidates admitted to the mainstream programme. Your socio-economic status is also taken into consideration for admission to an ECP.

If you were accepted into an ECP, you cannot, when the final NSC/IEB/SACAI results are available, request to be transferred to a mainstream programme.

If you were conditionally accepted to a mainstream programme, but your final NSC/IEB/SACAI marks are not high enough for admission to that programme, you may request to be admitted to an ECP. Submit your request to askfass@sun.ac.za by **25 January** of the year in which you

intend to register at SU. Please mark the request as "FASS: Reconsideration for ECP". Your request will be considered if there are places available in the ECP after the already-accepted students have registered.

7. How does overbooking work and is there a waiting list?

We follow an overbooking system because not all applicants who are selected eventually take up their places and register at the University. Each year, we determine a realistic rate of overbooking, based on historic trends and the number of applications received and the applicants conditionally admitted by 31 July.

There will be a waiting list only if the projections based on historic registration figures indicate that places might still be available.