

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়
মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চ শিক্ষা বিভাগ
বৃত্তি ও প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় শাখা
www.shed.gov.bd

স্মারক নং: ৩৭.০০.০০০০.০৮০.৯৮.০০১.১৮ (অংশ)-১১৫


তারিখ: ২০ জ্যৈষ্ঠ ১৪৩৩
০৩ জুন ২০২৬

বিষয় : আন্ডারগ্র্যাজুয়েট, গ্র্যাজুয়েট, পোস্ট-গ্র্যাজুয়েট এবং ডক্টোরাল স্টাডিজসহ শিক্ষক ও শিক্ষার্থী এক্সচেঞ্জ প্রোগ্রাম প্রভৃতি বিষয়ে সহযোগিতার নিমিত্ত আগ্রহী পাবলিক ও প্রাইভেট বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়সমূহ হতে সমঝোতা স্মারক সংগ্রহকরণ।

সূত্র : পররাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়ের পত্র নং-৩০৪; তারিখ: ০৭/০৯/২০২৫।

উপর্যুক্ত বিষয়ে সূত্রোক্ত পত্রে উল্লিখিত দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকার University of Cape Town ও Stellenbosch University-এর সাথে আন্ডারগ্র্যাজুয়েট, গ্র্যাজুয়েট, পোস্ট-গ্র্যাজুয়েট এবং ডক্টোরাল স্টাডিজসহ শিক্ষক ও শিক্ষার্থী এক্সচেঞ্জ প্রোগ্রাম প্রভৃতি বিষয়ে সহযোগিতার নিমিত্ত আগ্রহী পাবলিক ও প্রাইভেট বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়সমূহ হতে সমঝোতা স্মারক সংগ্রহপূর্বক মতামতসহ এ বিভাগে প্রেরণের জন্য নির্দেশক্রমে অনুরোধ করা হলো।

সংযুক্তি: বর্ণনা মোতাবেক (০৬) ছয় ফর্দ


(কাজী নূরুল ইসলাম)
উপসচিব

ফোন: ০২৫৫১০১০৩২

ইমেইল: ds_stp@moedu.gov.bd


চেয়ারম্যান
বাংলাদেশ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মঞ্জুরী কমিশন
আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা

স্মারক নং: ৩৭.০০.০০০০.০৮০.৯৮.০০১.১৮ (অংশ)-১১৫

তারিখ: ২০ জ্যৈষ্ঠ ১৪৩৩
০৩ জুন ২০২৬

সদয় অবগতি/ অবগতি ও প্রয়োজনীয় ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের জন্য অনুলিপি প্রেরণ করা হলো:

১. অতিরিক্ত সচিব (বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়), মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চ শিক্ষা বিভাগ, শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়, বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা।
২. মন্ত্রীর একান্ত সচিব, শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়, বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা।
৩. সচিবের একান্ত সচিব, মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চ শিক্ষা বিভাগ, শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়, বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা।
৪. সিস্টেম এনালিস্ট, মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চ শিক্ষা বিভাগ, শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়, বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা (বিজ্ঞপ্তিটি ওয়েবসাইটে প্রকাশের অনুরোধসহ)।
৫. অফিস কপি।


(কাজী নূরুল ইসলাম)
উপসচিব

- 66 -

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Africa Wing
Segunbagicha, Dhaka
www.mofa.gov.bd

No: 19.00.0000.475.75.301.17. 304

07 September 2025

Sub: Request to explore academic cooperation with the University of Cape Town and the Stellenbosch University, South Africa.

In connection with the above-mentioned subject, this is to inform that recently the High Commissioner of Bangladesh to South Africa paid an official visit to the University of Cape Town (UCT) and Stellenbosch University (SU), South Africa and had fruitful discussions with the Deans of Engineering and Architecture, as well as with the respective Faculties of Engineering, regarding the prospects of academic cooperation with these two universities.

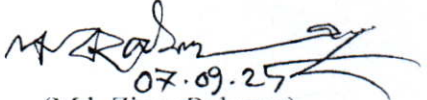
02. During meetings, the Deans of the universities expressed their willingness to explore avenues of collaboration with leading universities of Bangladesh, particularly in the areas of undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate, and doctoral-level studies, as well as faculty and student exchange programmes under suitable arrangements.

03. Both UCT and SU authorities have expressed keen interest in receiving draft Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) from reputed public and private universities of Bangladesh interested in seizing the opportunity of academic cooperation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs would facilitate concluding such MoUs.

04. Brief literature on the University of Cape Town (UCT) and Stellenbosch University (SU) is attached herewith for your kind reference.

05. This is for your kind information and necessary action.

Encl: As stated


07.09.25

(Md. Ziaur Rahman)
Senior Assistant Secretary (Africa)
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Secretary
Secondary and Higher Education Division
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Dhaka-1000

The University of Cape Town: Africa's Premier University and a Global Academic Partner

Introduction:

The University of Cape Town (UCT) occupies a unique place in the global academic landscape. Situated on the dramatic slopes of Table Mountain in Cape Town, South Africa, UCT is the oldest university in the country and one of the most prestigious on the African continent. Its history, spanning nearly two centuries, reflects both the turbulent political transformations of South Africa and the broader evolution of higher education in Africa. Today, UCT consistently ranks as the top university in Africa and among the leading universities in the world.

The university is recognized for its academic excellence, cutting-edge research, and leadership in areas that range from health sciences to environmental sustainability. At the same time, UCT plays a critical role in African higher education networks and maintains robust partnerships with global institutions. This dual role — being both rooted in Africa and connected globally — underpins UCT's identity as not just a South African institution but an African and international leader in education and research.

This essay explores the University of Cape Town in depth, focusing on its history, faculties, research strengths, student life, and collaborations with African and global partners. It argues that UCT exemplifies how an African institution can serve as both a custodian of regional intellectual growth and a vital contributor to the global academic community.



Historical Background:

The University of Cape Town was established in 1829 as the South African College, a small school for boys. At the time, Cape Town was still a colonial port city, and higher education in South Africa was limited. By the late nineteenth century, the college expanded into a higher

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education institution offering degrees in the arts and sciences. The admission of women in 1880 marked an early step toward inclusivity, though the broader context of South Africa's racial segregation remained a major obstacle to equity.

In 1918, the South African College officially became the University of Cape Town, with faculties in Arts, Science, and Engineering. The interwar period witnessed further expansion, and UCT gradually developed into a comprehensive university. However, its growth and prestige were shaped and constrained by South Africa's racial politics.

During the apartheid era (1948–1994), UCT stood at the intersection of intellectual freedom and systemic racial exclusion. The apartheid government imposed laws that restricted black students' access to higher education. Despite these pressures, UCT developed a reputation as a site of opposition, with faculty and students frequently protesting against apartheid policies. Notable intellectuals and activists, including some who later played key roles in post-apartheid governance, were associated with UCT.

With South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994, UCT entered a new phase of transformation. The post-apartheid era demanded that the university confront its past and actively pursue equity and redress. UCT has since committed to widening access for historically disadvantaged groups, diversifying its faculty, and promoting African-centered scholarship.

Today, UCT stands not only as an elite university but also as a symbol of South Africa's broader project of reconciliation and development. Its location — overlooking Cape Town and framed by the natural beauty of Table Mountain — has become both a cultural and academic landmark.

Faculties of the University of Cape Town:

UCT is structured into six faculties and a Graduate School of Business (GSB), each of which contributes to its academic reputation.

1. **Faculty of Commerce:** The Faculty of Commerce provides training in economics, finance, accounting, and business sciences. It is widely respected for producing graduates who occupy leadership positions in South Africa's corporate, financial, and public sectors. A notable highlight is the **Graduate School of Business (GSB)**, located at the V&A Waterfront. The GSB's MBA program is ranked among the best in the world by the *Financial Times* and is the only African business school listed in several global rankings. The GSB also operates the **Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship**, which emphasizes socially responsible business practices and inclusive growth.
2. **Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment (EBE):** The EBE faculty is central to South Africa's development agenda. It trains engineers, architects, and urban planners who tackle challenges in infrastructure, energy, and sustainable development. Notable research areas include renewable energy systems, water resource management, and green building design. UCT's Department of Electrical Engineering has contributed significantly to telecommunications research in Africa, while its urban planning programs are pioneering work in inclusive city design.

3. **Faculty of Health Sciences:** UCT's Faculty of Health Sciences is internationally renowned. The historic **Groote Schuur Hospital**, affiliated with UCT, was the site of the world's first successful human heart transplant in 1967, performed by Dr. Christiaan Barnard. Today, the faculty is a leader in infectious disease research, particularly in HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. The **Desmond Tutu HIV Centre**, housed within the faculty, is at the forefront of HIV prevention and treatment research. UCT is also deeply engaged in public health research, focusing on the intersection of poverty, inequality, and disease.
4. **Faculty of Humanities:** The Faculty of Humanities encompasses disciplines such as literature, languages, history, sociology, political studies, psychology, and fine arts. It plays a vital role in advancing postcolonial studies and African intellectual traditions. The Centre for African Studies is a key hub for scholarship on decolonization, cultural identity, and African knowledge systems. The faculty also fosters creativity through its Drama and Music departments, which contribute to South Africa's cultural life.
5. **Faculty of Law:** The Faculty of Law is a cornerstone of UCT's academic reputation. It offers undergraduate and postgraduate programs in constitutional law, commercial law, and international law. UCT law graduates have shaped South Africa's legal system, particularly during the democratic transition. The **Centre for Comparative Law in Africa (CCLA)** positions UCT as a hub for legal research on African jurisprudence, while the **Refugee Rights Unit** provides both legal assistance and academic expertise in migration law.
6. **Faculty of Science:** The Faculty of Science is one of UCT's most research-intensive faculties. It has internationally recognized strengths in oceanography, physics, chemistry, astronomy, and biodiversity studies. UCT is home to the **Marine Research Institute** and contributes to the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) project, the world's largest radio telescope. These initiatives position UCT at the forefront of global scientific innovation.



Research and Innovation at UCT:

UCT's identity as a research-intensive university is evident in its consistent ranking as the top producer of research output in Africa. The university has over 35 research institutes and more than 60 specialist research units. Its areas of focus reflect both global scientific frontiers and the particular challenges facing Africa.

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Key examples include:

- **African Climate and Development Initiative (ACDI):** Researches climate change adaptation and resilience strategies, particularly relevant to African contexts.
- **Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine (IIDMM):** Focuses on HIV, tuberculosis, and emerging infectious diseases.
- **Energy Research Centre:** Advances renewable energy technologies and energy policy.
- **Centre for Information Technology and National Development in Africa (CITANDA):** Examines how digital technologies can support socio-economic development.

UCT's innovation ecosystem includes partnerships with government and industry. The **UCT Innovation Hub** supports the commercialization of research, encouraging entrepreneurship among students and faculty.



Collaboration with African Universities:

UCT's continental leadership is embodied in its commitment to strengthening African academic capacity. As a founding member of the **African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA)**, UCT collaborates with over a dozen leading African universities to advance research on health, climate, governance, and development.

Examples of African partnerships include:

- **University of Nairobi (Kenya):** Collaborative projects in public health and governance.
- **Makerere University (Uganda):** Joint research in infectious disease and agriculture.
- **University of Ghana:** Cooperation in the social sciences and law.
- **Stellenbosch University and University of the Witwatersrand (South Africa):** National collaborations to strengthen South Africa's research system.

UCT's African collaborations emphasize capacity building, doctoral training, and the development of African-led research agendas. By leading networks such as ARUA, UCT ensures that African voices are prominent in global academic debates.

Global Collaborations and Networks:

UCT's global footprint extends across Europe, North America, Asia, and Australia. It is a member of prestigious networks such as the **Worldwide Universities Network (WUN)**, the

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International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU), and the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU).

Key international collaborations include:

- **Oxford University and University of Cambridge:** Joint projects in climate change, governance, and social justice.
- **Harvard University:** Partnerships in medical research, particularly HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis.
- **University of Amsterdam and Leiden University:** Joint research in law and social sciences.
- **Peking University and Tsinghua University:** Collaborations in economics and innovation studies.
- **Australian National University:** Exchange programs in environmental sciences.

Notable case studies:

- **HIV/AIDS research:** UCT researchers have worked with institutions like Johns Hopkins University and the U.S. National Institutes of Health to develop new therapies and prevention strategies.
- **Marine science:** Collaborations with European universities have advanced knowledge of Southern Ocean ecosystems, critical to global climate regulation.
- **Digital education:** UCT is a leading African partner in the global MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) movement, collaborating with platforms such as Coursera to make African scholarship globally accessible.

Rankings and Recognition:

UCT consistently ranks as the top university in Africa. According to the 2024 QS World University Rankings, UCT is placed within the top 200 universities globally. It is particularly strong in subject rankings, with notable global positions in Development Studies, Geology, and Environmental Sciences.

The university has produced numerous Rhodes Scholars and Fulbright Fellows, and its faculty includes several National Research Foundation (NRF) A-rated scientists. These achievements underscore UCT's academic prestige and its ability to attract top talent.

Student Life and International Community:

UCT's student body reflects both South Africa's diversity and the university's international connections. With more than 30,000 students, including thousands from other African countries and abroad, UCT fosters a cosmopolitan learning environment.

Student organizations, cultural societies, and academic clubs provide avenues for leadership and community engagement. The campus is also home to debates on social justice, decolonization, and transformation, reflecting the political vibrancy of South African society.

International students are supported through exchange programs, orientation services, and cultural integration initiatives. This diversity enriches campus life and strengthens UCT's global academic identity.



Conclusion:

The University of Cape Town stands at the crossroads of African transformation and global academic excellence. Its rich history reflects both colonial legacies and postcolonial aspirations, while its faculties and research institutes drive innovation and social change.

UCT's commitment to collaboration is a defining feature. By working with African universities, it strengthens continental academic capacity and ensures African leadership in addressing regional challenges. Through global networks, UCT contributes to worldwide research and fosters dialogue across cultures and disciplines.

As higher education faces new challenges — from digital transformation to global crises such as pandemics and climate change — UCT is uniquely positioned to lead. Its dual identity as both an African and a global institution enables it to bridge diverse perspectives and contribute to solutions of international significance.

In its pursuit of academic excellence, social justice, and international collaboration, the University of Cape Town exemplifies the possibility of a university that is simultaneously **world-class in Africa and an African university in the world.**

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Stellenbosch University: Africa's Leading University for Academic Excellence and Global Leadership

Introduction:

Stellenbosch University (SU), situated in the picturesque town of Stellenbosch in South Africa's Western Cape, is one of Africa's premier research institutions. Nestled among vineyards and framed by mountain ranges, the university is both a cultural and academic landmark. Since its formal establishment in 1918, SU has been recognized for its strong academic programs, research excellence, and distinctive role in shaping South African society.

While Stellenbosch carries the weight of a complex history — particularly its association with Afrikaner nationalism during the twentieth century — it has transformed into an inclusive, multilingual, and globally connected institution. Today, it stands as a leader in research and innovation, producing groundbreaking work in agriculture, engineering, health sciences, and sustainability.

This essay examines Stellenbosch University in depth. It traces its history, explores its faculties, analyzes its research and innovation capacity, and highlights its collaborations within Africa and across the world. It concludes by reflecting on Stellenbosch's continuing role as an African university with global influence.



Historical Background:

The roots of Stellenbosch University can be traced to the Stellenbosch Gymnasium, established in 1866 to provide higher education in the Cape Colony. This institution evolved into the Victoria College in 1887, which later became Stellenbosch University in 1918, when it was granted university status by an act of parliament.

From its inception, Stellenbosch played a central role in the intellectual life of Afrikaners, the descendants of Dutch settlers in South Africa. The institution became a cultural hub for the promotion of the Afrikaans language and identity. SU graduates and academics contributed to

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the development of Afrikaner nationalism, and the university has historically been associated with political leaders who shaped South Africa's apartheid policies.

This legacy has been both a source of pride and a burden. In the post-apartheid era, Stellenbosch has undergone profound transformation, striving to address its past while embracing inclusivity. English has gained prominence alongside Afrikaans as the main medium of instruction, and the university has adopted a multilingual approach that reflects South Africa's linguistic diversity. Policies promoting equity, diversity, and redress have reshaped the institution's student and faculty demographics.

Culturally and architecturally, Stellenbosch University reflects its history. The oak-lined streets, Cape Dutch architecture, and vineyards surrounding the town provide a unique academic atmosphere. At the same time, the campus is home to modern research facilities, symbolizing the institution's commitment to global competitiveness.

Faculties and Academic Programs:

Stellenbosch University consists of ten faculties, each contributing to its academic prestige.

1. **Faculty of Agri-Sciences:** Agriculture has been a cornerstone of Stellenbosch since its founding. The Faculty of Agri-Sciences is internationally renowned for research in viticulture, oenology (wine science), crop production, and food security. Its location in the Cape Winelands provides a unique environment for agricultural innovation. Research programs in sustainable farming, water resource management, and biotechnology address both regional and global challenges.
2. **Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences:** This faculty encompasses the humanities, languages, social sciences, and arts. It plays a vital role in exploring South Africa's cultural identity and in advancing scholarship on transformation, democracy, and social justice. Departments such as Philosophy and Political Science contribute to international debates, while the Music Department is central to the cultural life of Stellenbosch.
3. **Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences:** Offering programs in economics, management, and accounting, this faculty produces graduates who enter leadership roles in business and government. Its School of Public Leadership is particularly significant, focusing on governance, development, and policy analysis across Africa.
4. **Faculty of Education:** The Faculty of Education trains future teachers and educational leaders. It emphasizes multilingual education, inclusive teaching methods, and the integration of technology into classrooms. The faculty plays a key role in improving education across South Africa and the continent.
5. **Faculty of Engineering:** One of Africa's top engineering faculties, SU's Faculty of Engineering is known for its excellence in civil, electrical, chemical, industrial, and mechanical engineering. Research initiatives focus on renewable energy, water systems, sustainable infrastructure, and aerospace engineering. Its graduates contribute to Africa's technological and industrial development.
6. **Faculty of Law:** The Faculty of Law has a strong reputation in constitutional, international, and commercial law. The **African Human Rights Moot Court Competition** and the **Stellenbosch University Legal Aid Clinic** provide practical training and contribute to social justice.

- 7. **Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences:** Based at Tygerberg Hospital in Cape Town, this faculty is a leader in biomedical research, clinical training, and public health. It plays a central role in tackling diseases such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, both through laboratory research and community health projects.
- 8. **Faculty of Military Science:** Unique among African universities, this faculty is based at the South African Military Academy in Saldanha Bay. It trains officers for the South African National Defence Force and provides research in military strategy, technology, and security studies.
- 9. **Faculty of Science:** This faculty supports both pure and applied sciences, with strengths in mathematics, chemistry, physics, and biological sciences. SU is involved in the Square Kilometer Array (SKA) project, contributing to global astronomy research. It also houses the Centre for Complex Systems in Transition, which focuses on sustainability and resilience.
- 10. **Faculty of Theology:** Theology has long been part of Stellenbosch's identity. While historically tied to the Dutch Reformed Church, today the faculty promotes ecumenical dialogue, interfaith understanding, and research into religion's role in African societies.



Research and Innovation

Stellenbosch University is consistently ranked among Africa's top research-intensive universities. Its research output spans agriculture, health, science, engineering, and the social sciences.

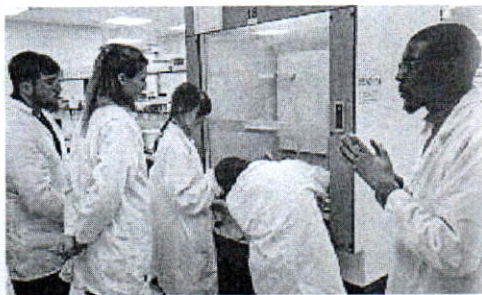
A key institution is the Stellenbosch Institute for **Advanced Study (STIAS)**, which brings together scholars from across the world to pursue interdisciplinary research. Modeled on institutions like Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study, STIAS enhances Stellenbosch's global profile.

Research highlights include:

- **Agriculture and Food Security:** Advances in viticulture, biotechnology, and sustainable farming methods.
- **Health Services:** World-class tuberculosis research, HIV/AIDS interventions, and biomedical innovation.
- **Renewable Energy:** Projects in solar power, biofuels, and sustainable energy systems.

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- **Engineering and Technology:** Contributions to aerospace engineering and water resource management.
 - **Social Sciences and Humanities:** Scholarship on transformation, democracy, and multilingualism in South Africa.

SU also prioritizes technology transfer and entrepreneurship. The **LaunchLab**, Stellenbosch's start-up incubator, supports student and faculty innovation, linking research to commercial application.



African Collaborations:

As a member of the **African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA)**, Stellenbosch University is deeply engaged in continental partnerships. Its African collaborations emphasize food security, health, governance, and sustainable development.

Examples include:

- **Collaborations with Makerere University (Uganda) and University of Ghana** on agricultural innovation and food systems.
- Joint health sciences research with the University of Nairobi and South African partners.
- Doctoral training programs for African students, strengthening research capacity across the continent.
- Partnerships in African languages and cultural studies, advancing indigenous knowledge.

These initiatives highlight Stellenbosch's role in shaping Africa's intellectual and developmental agenda.

Global Collaborations and Networks:

Stellenbosch has extensive international connections, particularly with European universities, reflecting its historical ties to the Netherlands and Germany. It collaborates with institutions such as Leiden University, Wageningen University, and the University of Freiburg.

Its global reach extends to North America, Asia, and Australia. Partnerships include:

- **Harvard University and Johns Hopkins University** (medical research).

- **Lund University (Sweden)** and **KU Leuven (Belgium)** (sustainability and social sciences).
- **Australian National University** (climate science).
- Participation in global networks such as the **Worldwide Universities Network (WUN)** and the **Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU)**.

Case studies:

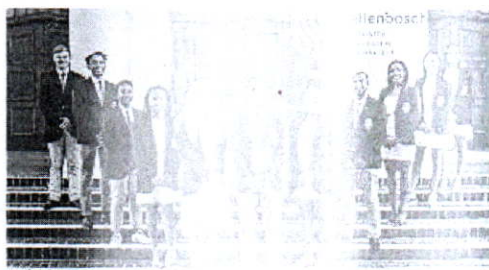
- Joint tubular research projects with U.S. and European partners.
- Collaborative research on renewable energy with German universities.
- Climate science partnerships with Scandinavian institutions.

Student Life and International Community:

Stellenbosch is renowned for its vibrant student culture. The town itself is a university community, with its identity woven into its fabric. Residences, societies, and sports clubs create a strong sense of community.

The university is bilingual, with English and Afrikaans as primary languages of instruction, though efforts to promote multilingualism reflect South Africa's diversity. International students, drawn from across Africa and the world, contribute to a cosmopolitan campus environment.

Sports, particularly rugby, are integral to student life, as are cultural societies, music, and community service. Stellenbosch's location in the Cape Winelands adds to the unique lifestyle and scenic beauty.



Rankings and Reputation:

Stellenbosch University consistently ranks among the top three universities in Africa. According to the Times Higher Education University Rankings 2024, it is placed within the global top 300. It is particularly renowned in fields such as agriculture, engineering, and development studies.

The university has produced notable alumni, including politicians, business leaders, scientists, and entrepreneurs. Graduates play influential roles in South African society and increasingly in international contexts.

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Conclusion:

Stellenbosch University embodies both tradition and transformation. Rooted in a complex history, it has evolved into a modern, inclusive, and globally connected institution. Its faculties span the sciences, humanities, and professional disciplines, while its research addresses both African challenges and global questions.

Through African and global collaborations, Stellenbosch enhances knowledge networks and contributes to international solutions in health, agriculture, and sustainability. Its vibrant student life and international community reflect the university's growing diversity and global outlook.

As it looks to the future, Stellenbosch faces the challenge of balancing its historical legacy with its role as a progressive African university. Yet in its pursuit of academic excellence, innovation, and collaboration, Stellenbosch University is well-positioned to remain a leading force in both African and global higher education.