



UCT LEAD
POWERED BY  Department of Student Affairs

STUDENT LEADERSHIP ACADEMY MANUAL





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Excellence, transformation and sustainability are the three pillars upon which the University of Cape Town's Vision 2030 stands. The Department of Student Affairs (DSA) supports the aspirations of Vision 2030 'to unleash a human potential for a fair and just society'. It is guided by Vision 2030 and rooted on these three pillars through its strategic plan, Vision 2035, which goes 'beyond science and logic in pursuit of the Agenda of the Soul, to liberate the soul for student well-being and academic success. DSA Vision 2035 is based on cultivating a humanising student experience through healing, nurturing, wise counsel, resilience, integrity, kindness, compassion, strategy, policies and data analytics.

UCT LEAD incorporates three pedagogies (3Ps) into its programming, namely the Humanising Pedagogy (which values humanity, humaneness and human dignity in all teaching and developmental practices), the Pedagogy of Discomfort (which recognises that material growth and development happen at the point of discomfort) and the Pneumatological Pedagogy (which acknowledges the unique human capacity for spiritual pursuit and the need of humans to seek meaning and purpose). The 3Ps hold space for the 3Rs to manifest: Rekindle the dying embers of the soul, Rehabilitate the soul in order for the soul to Radiate. Once the soul radiates, we Flourish Ad Infinitum [3R=F Ad Infinitum] – a concept that is described in this manual.

UCT LEAD therefore comprises inclusive, dynamic, transformative programmes for the well-being and academic success of students, which ultimately leads to unleashing their potential, for a fair and just society.

We welcome you on this journey of student development, uncertainty, discomfort, and rekindling, rehabilitating, radiating and liberating the soul.

October 2023

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Pura Mgolombane

Executive Director: Department of Student Affairs



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01 CREATING A COMPREHENSIVE ACADEMY

The University of Cape Town (UCT) recognises the importance of nurturing human potential to create a better world. Its strategic vision for the future – Vision 2030 – therefore guides the intentional development of student leaders. While UCT already boasts many commendable leadership development initiatives, the Division of Student Affairs (DSA) identified an opportunity to integrate these diverse streams into an institutional system that maximises student leadership development at the university, and extends the university's impact across the Afrikan continent, making a substantial contribution beyond South Africa. To realise this vision, the DSA established the UCT Leadership Academy, known as UCT LEAD.

The UCT Leadership Academy Conceptual Framework was developed in April 2022, and the official launch of UCT LEAD was on 15 August 2023, marking the beginning of a transformative journey in human-centric leadership development for UCT students and the broader community.





02

DEVELOPING FUTURE LEADERS

UCT LEAD is designed to attract and retain outstanding leaders from South Africa, the continent of Afrika, and the world, who have demonstrated the potential to become transformative leaders in society.

Transformative learning encounters related to student leadership development are delivered through socially engaged co-curricular and extra-curricular offerings that add to UCT's continuous education. This includes formal and non-formal developmental opportunities that are contextually relevant and that enable individuals to create their own unique developmental journeys. This holistic, individualised approach acknowledges that the goal of (leadership) development is the actualisation of a person's full potential in all aspects of their humanity, supported by a collective community effort and the institutions within that society.

UCT LEAD develops student leaders who can lead themselves with integrity and ethical character. These leaders will serve society with their professional knowledge and expertise to provide practical, innovative and sustainable solutions to the real needs of real people in real communities – locally, continentally and globally. The leadership academy seeks to develop leaders who are humane, and who can heal and nurture human relationships on a deep and meaningful level.

The academy also promotes the spiritual development of students as a critical part of leadership – consistent with DSA's vision to go beyond science and logic in pursuit of the agenda of the soul.

03

GUIDING ETHOS

UCT LEAD fosters a learning environment that is nurturing, caring and engaging, offering a sense of belonging and mutual respect amidst diversity. The leadership academy values authenticity and inclusivity, and upholds pedagogical practices that are humanising and collaborative, while prioritising the social-cultural dimensions of learning. Its consultative approach to problem-solving comes with a sense of collective ownership, co-creation and co-learning, thus advancing the authentic engagement and courageous conversations about complex historical issues and challenging topics concerning current and future issues. A learning environment that honours the inherent nobility of each participant assists students and staff to embrace discomfort and uncertainty towards transcending limitations and unlocking innovation.






04 THE VISION FOR UCT LEAD

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Create transformative learning encounters, facilitate developmental opportunities that are contextually relevant and enable individuals to create their own unique developmental journeys, while fostering a learning environment that is nurturing, caring, engaging and places a strong emphasis on the well-being of individuals.

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The above vision guides the work of UCT LEAD, which operates with the following principles:

- 
- Develop and retain leaders who have demonstrated their potential to be transformational leaders in South Africa, the continent and the globe.
 - Adopt an experiential, socially based learning framework underpinned by the Humanising Pedagogy, a Pedagogy of Discomfort, and the Pneumatological Pedagogy.
 - Establish non-hierarchical, consultative spaces with both students and staff.
 - Create an enabling environment with the appropriate systemic support for each participant to follow a unique developmental journey in all aspects of their humanity in order to reach their full potential.
 - Utilise scientific, evidence-based approaches to leadership development, praxis and management decision-making.

OUTCOME STATEMENT:

“By 2026, UCT LEAD will be an established leadership academy that is visible and operationally effective.”

This outcome statement guides the leadership academy to establish its visibility and conduct effective operations, as explained below.

VISIBILITY

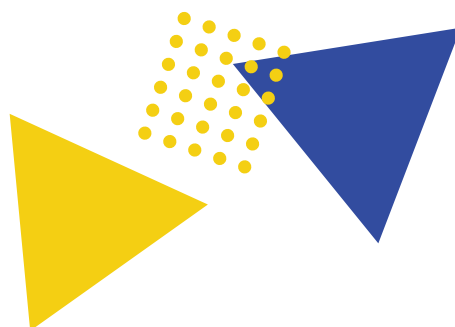
UCT LEAD's marketing strategy, comprehensive reference pack (published in June 2025, with a manual, prospectus, terms of reference for the advisory and steering committees, a Memorandum of Understanding, pamphlets and templates) and knowledge-sharing outputs and publications (one scholarly publication and workshop per annum, and four webinars and discussions held annually) will increase UCT LEAD's visibility.

Academic staff, support staff and UCT students are to have an increased awareness of UCT LEAD by 2026 than current levels in 2024 – 25% more awareness among academic staff, 30% more among support staff and 45% more amongst the student population. This awareness is monitored by means of an annual questionnaire.

EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS

UCT LEAD's operations are to follow a systemic process that aligns the academy's learning experiences. By November 2024, all DSA divisions will have attended a workshop in this regard. The aim is to have 25% of the learning experiences aligned with the UCT LEAD process by June 2025, and 75% of these learning experiences aligned by June 2026. In addition, the percentage of UCT LEAD learning experiences aligned with the newly defined process should be increased from current levels to 50% by October 2025, and to 100% by November 2026.

An annual questionnaire will measure the effectiveness of operations, and success will be indicated when staff, student participants and partners experience the effectiveness of UCT LEAD's operations as having increased by 80% from current levels.



05 STRUCTURED MANAGEMENT



UCT LEAD is guided by an advisory committee, steering committee and UCT LEAD Collective, as detailed below.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A UCT LEAD advisory committee will be established by June 2024. Based on reports submitted to it, the committee will provide strategic recommendations and expert advice to the steering committee regarding best practice. It may also seek expert advice from elsewhere, while establishing and maintaining national and global connections.

This advisory committee, which meets twice a year, provides advice on the following:

- Evaluation of the performance of the UCT LEAD programmes.
- Assessment of these programmes.
- Funding, networking and partnership strategies.
- Development of programme policies.
- Establishment of sub-committees to advance this committee's work.
- Establishment of ad-hoc committees to address specific needs of UCT LEAD.

The advisory committee may be made up of both internal and external stakeholders.

Internal stakeholders include:

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) Transformation and Student Affairs (Ex Officio)
- Executive Director: Student Affairs
- Dean of the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED)
- Student Representative Council (SRC) Representative

External stakeholders include:

- Student Development Communities of Practice, i.e. National Association for Student Development Professionals (NASDEV) and the Association for College and University Housing Officers – International (ACUHO-I)
- Allan Gray Orbis Foundation
- Higher Education Leadership and Management (HELM)
- African Leadership Institute (ALI)
- Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC)
- National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)
- International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS)

Advisory committee members are appointed for a three-year term, except for the SRC representative, who is appointed for one year only. The chairperson of the advisory committee is elected by the majority of its members on its first sitting. It is recommended that this person be from outside UCT. In terms of support, the Department of Student Affairs provides a servicing officer for this committee.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The primary objective of the steering committee is to realise UCT's and DSA's strategic vision with respect to student leadership development, by way of fostering leadership skills and personal growth among UCT students. This steering committee, which meets quarterly, oversees the strategic direction and operational aspects of UCT LEAD, and reports to the UCT LEAD advisory committee twice a year, through the ED: DSA.

The aim of this committee is to rekindle, rehabilitate and radiate the soul (3Rs) through the 3Ps: Pedagogy of Discomfort, Humanising Pedagogy and Pneumatological Pedagogy. It works, therefore, to develop and retain leaders who embody the 3Rs, and who have demonstrated their potential to be transformational leaders.

The steering committee creates an enabling environment with the appropriate systemic support for each participant, while using evidence-based approaches to student leadership development.

More specifically, the steering committee fulfils the following strategic objectives:

- Overseeing the development, design and review of programmes.
- Providing programme and budget approval.

- Offering oversight on the development of quality-assurance mechanisms and standards for programmes.
- Guiding UCT LEAD's operations.
- Creating growth opportunities for UCT LEAD.

Committee members include:

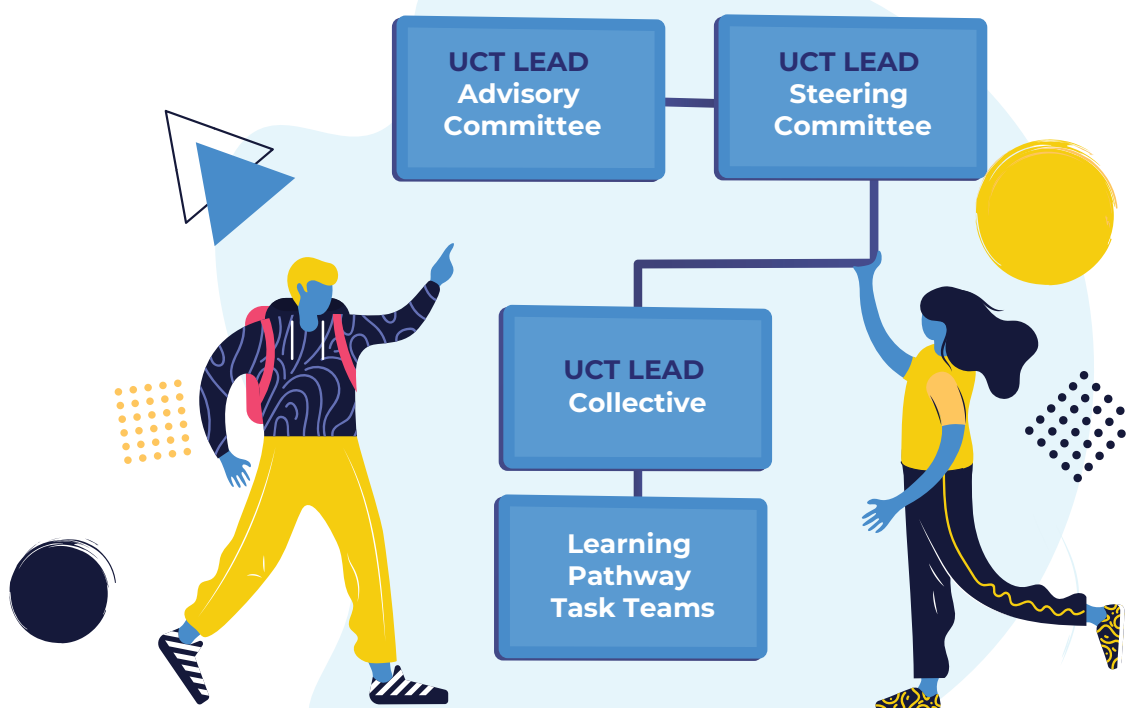
- Executive Director: Student Affairs (EDSA) – Chairperson
- DSA Project Manager - Servicing Officer
- Director Student Housing & Residence Life
- Director Student Development
- Director Student Wellness Services
- Director Student Financial Aid
- Key Strategic Area (KSA) Lead
- Manager Residence Life
- Manager Student Life and Governance
- Manager Sports and Recreation
- A student nominated by the Student Representative Council (SRC)

UCT LEAD COLLECTIVE

This team is responsible for implementing UCT LEAD's operational goals and objectives, and is accountable to the steering committee. Learning pathway task teams report to this collective.

The UCT LEAD Collective serves various functions, including accreditation, assessment, quality assurance, risk management, data management and servicing, as well as co-curriculum development for all clubs, development agencies, house committees, Residence Life, sports clubs and recreation.

UCT LEAD MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



06 CO-CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

The UCT LEAD curriculum is designed to align with DSA's Vision 2035 and is built upon the three pedagogies (3Ps) – the Humanising Pedagogy, the Pedagogy of Discomfort and the Pneumatological Pedagogy – which are explained later in greater detail.

This co-curriculum has four distinct learning pathways that are aimed at developing strong leadership capacity.

In higher education, the term 'pathways' refers to organised and structured routes that guide students through their academic journey and personal growth. Pathways offer clarity, support and resources to ensure students engage in educationally purposeful activities. In the case of UCT LEAD, co-curricular pathways have been specifically designed to complement individual goals and aspirations concerning leadership development in four meaningful areas.

The four pathways are: Capacity Building, Student Governance, Student Life and Innovation. Co-curriculum leads are appointed for each learning pathway, and these leads coordinate a team of programme developers.

Each pathway consists of a set of themes (as set out in the diagram below, under each of the four pathways). Within these themes lie various learning experiences (a pre-determined number of learning experiences exists for each theme), which bring the theme and its holding learning pathway to light.

Following involvement in such programmes, students receive recognition in the form of a certificate of completion or participation.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW DIAGRAM





07 TRANSFORMATIVE PEDAGOGIES

The three pedagogical approaches incorporated into the development of UCT LEAD programmes are described below, giving insight into the valuable opportunities that student leaders can gain from the academy's offerings.

HUMANISING PEDAGOGY

The Humanising Pedagogy values humanity, humaneness, human dignity and nobility in all its teaching and developmental practices. It is underpinned by a liberatory educational philosophy, and seeks to remove all systemic barriers by creating equitable access to opportunities. This pedagogy recognises the unique potential of each person and honours the freedom of choice to seek opportunities that resonate with their personal development, needs and aspirations.

Such a focus on agency empowers students to use and transform available resources individually and collectively, in ways that allow them to reach their life goals.

The Humanising Pedagogy holds the following guiding principles in relation to the teaching and learning practices at UCT LEAD:

- Valuing humanity, humaneness, human dignity and human flourishing.
- Creating equitable access to a variety of leadership development opportunities.
- Enabling individualised student leadership journeys.
- Fostering student agency.
- Creating a learning environment for individual and collective transformation.

PEDAGOGY OF DISCOMFORT

The Pedagogy of Discomfort recognises that material personal growth and development happen at the point of discomfort. It assumes that learning experiences must create appropriate cognitive dissonance to be truly transformational and developmental. However, this pedagogy also acknowledges that challenging learning experiences should be coupled with the necessary support to ensure a sense of safety and optimal development.

The Pedagogy of Discomfort provides the following guiding principles to the leadership academy:

- Creating discomfort through transformative learning experiences. In this regard, UCT LEAD facilitates difficult conversations and challenging learning encounters, especially about complex problems (locally and globally) that are encountered currently and in the future.
- Establishing socially cohesive communities of learning that provide the necessary supportive relations to assist students in their personal and mutual meaning-making and healing processes.

PNEUMATOLOGICAL PEDAGOGY

The Pneumatological Pedagogy acknowledges the unique human capacity for spiritual pursuit and the need for human beings to seek meaning, purpose and a path of liberation in life through a spiritual dimension that exists beyond rational human knowing. From a neuroscientific perspective, it recognises humans as spiritual beings who are looking for a connection with something greater than themselves (i.e. a higher power).

The Pneumatological Pedagogy also assumes the importance of spiritual development to attaining personal wholeness and deeper meaningful relationships with oneself and others (an aspect that aligns with the Humanising Pedagogy mentioned above). This pedagogy also underlines the role of faith, and the paradigm that various faith and spiritual traditions provide to direct spiritual encounters.

The Pneumatological Pedagogy offers the following guiding principles for UCT LEAD:

- Recognising humans as spiritual beings.
- Allowing spirituality to create deeper meaning, purpose and the pursuit of spiritual pathways in the lives of individuals.
- Valuing the importance of spiritual development to attain personal wholeness and deeper meaningful relations with oneself and others.
- Recognising the role of faith in creating specific paradigms for individual spiritual encounters.
- Recognising that human beings have the capacity to develop mental, moral and ethical structures and reasoning in relation to their actions.

In addition to incorporating the above pedagogies, programme developers take into account the principles of transformation, diversity and inclusiveness in the development of programmes for UCT LEAD. Experiential learning and social dimensions of learning (including mentorship and collaboration) are also integrated, in order to create transformative learning encounters.



08 FOUR PATHWAYS TO LEADERSHIP

The four learning pathways identified by UCT LEAD are detailed below, along with the appropriate themes clustered under each one.

STUDENT GOVERNANCE

The Student Governance pathway focuses on leadership development for positional leaders, with a primary emphasis on building competencies relevant to specific leadership roles, as well as for representation.

These roles relate to positional leadership for elective leadership positions in student governance structures, e.g. the Student Representative Council (SRC), Residence Committee members, leaders of student associations, etc. Training includes, but is not limited to, pre- and post-election training.

The themes under Student Governance are:

- Ethical Leadership
- Good Governance
- Inductions
- Legislative and Policy Frameworks

STUDENT LIFE

Interest-based leadership development within the Student Life pathway engages students in discussions on pertinent topics and complex challenges. The objective is to create transformative learning experiences, targeting a broader student audience, in order to involve as many students as possible.

This learning pathway provides access to a wide variety of programmes, activities and projects from which students can choose to create their own individualised learning journey. The Student Life category also includes the development of non-elective student leadership roles, e.g. peer mentors, peer educators, etc.

The themes under Student Life are:

- Self-Care, Self-Authorship and Well-Being
- Leading
- Interpersonal Skills
- Diversity and Inclusion

INNOVATION

The Innovation pathway encompasses leadership development initiatives centred around entrepreneurship, including social entrepreneurship. It highlights students' ability to identify end-users' needs and desires and develop innovative solutions around these findings. Competencies developed in this category enable students to address local and global challenges and create sustainable solutions within communities.

The themes under Innovation are:

- Entrepreneurship
- Citizenship and Democracy
- Creative Expression

CAPACITY BUILDING

The Capacity Building pathway includes leadership development programmes designed for practical skills' development. These programmes and projects follow structured procedural guidelines, resulting in the acquisition of useful skills.

The themes under Capacity Building are:

- Administration and Project Management
- Financial Management
- Communication
- Strategic Planning
- Team Dynamics



09 DESIGNING FOR FLEXIBILITY

The four learning pathways can be accessed individually, or in a complementary manner, offering the sort of flexibility that allows students to curate their own journey in personal development and leadership. UCT LEAD therefore brings co-creation to the forefront, affording unique experiences tailored to different needs.

On the one hand, a student engaged in UCT LEAD's programmes may be required to follow a specific pathway based on their leadership role. For example, if they are following the Student Governance pathway, they would participate in each programme (learning experience) offered under that pathway.

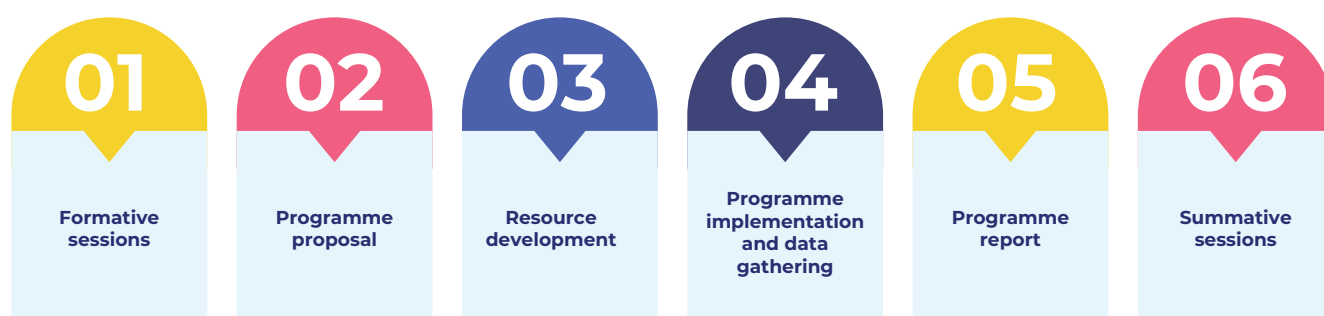
Alternatively, students have the flexibility to select a variety of themes from different pathways. For instance, a student could combine themes like 'Strategic Planning and Financial Management' from the Capacity Building pathway with 'Good Governance' from the Student Governance pathway and 'Interpersonal Skills and Leading' from the Student Life pathway.

This adaptability allows for customisation, to meet the unique requirements of specific leadership groups, whether they are preparing for leadership roles within the university's various structures or seeking personal development in areas of interest, regardless of their affiliation with specific leadership positions.



10 PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

To ensure that programmes are aligned with UCT LEAD's vision, programme developers follow six steps:



STEP 1: FORMATIVE SESSIONS

A formative session is attended by new programme developers, serving as their introduction to UCT LEAD. In this session, the quality assurance task team presents the vision, methodologies, learning pathways and pedagogies underpinning all programmes developed through UCT LEAD. The session also includes a collaborative programme-design workshop led by the co-curriculum leads.

STEP 2: PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

Programme developers complete a programme proposal form, listing the programme's objectives and alignment with UCT LEAD. This form houses the data required for onboarding programmes onto the online platform. These programmes are then recommended for approval by a member of the UCT LEAD Collective, to the steering committee, which meets quarterly.

The programme proposal form includes information such as the name and date of the proposed programme, the type of event, who the leader of the programme is, and the learning pathway under which it is categorised. Other information required is the mode of delivery, target audience, purpose of the course, skills to be targeted and learning outcomes. It also requires programme developers to identify which of the 14 graduate attributes listed are being targeted, as well as which of the three pedagogies will be used, with comments on how this will be achieved, along with various other requirements.

For a copy of the comprehensive proposal form, email nadia.wilson@uct.ac.za.

STEP 3: RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

UCT LEAD uses Amathuba/VULA and One Button Studio as tools to create new content, allowing programme developers to create online material for asynchronous learning. These resources should be easily accessible and beneficial to various leadership structures to avoid working in silos and replicating information.

STEP 4: PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND DATA GATHERING

After a programme has been designed, it is implemented over one or more sessions, each with specific learning outcomes (graduate attributes) for which data is gathered at regular intervals. This is done through online platforms such as MS Forms or Google Forms, in-session programme evaluation and reflection, or other tools that are available for impact-assessment activities.

STEP 5: PROGRAMME REPORT

The programme report drawn up by the programme developer should always include scientific, evidence-based information, assessing the impact of the programme. These reports are submitted to the steering committee. The reports should include quantitative and qualitative data that analyses the offering, while providing recommendations to improve it.

STEP 6: SUMMATIVE SESSIONS

The conclusion of each programme is followed by a check-in/reflection session that includes participating students as well as programme developers. This session offers an opportunity to reflect on experiences, challenges, successes, unintended outcomes, questions, comments and overall feelings about the programme. Further to this are the Community of Practice sessions which take place quarterly. In these sessions, all UCT LEAD programme developers and co-curriculum leads meet to discuss their learnings.





11 SUCCESS INDICATORS

Learning experiences are evaluated against specific indicators to assess the impact of UCT LEAD on a student's leadership journey. These indicators include:

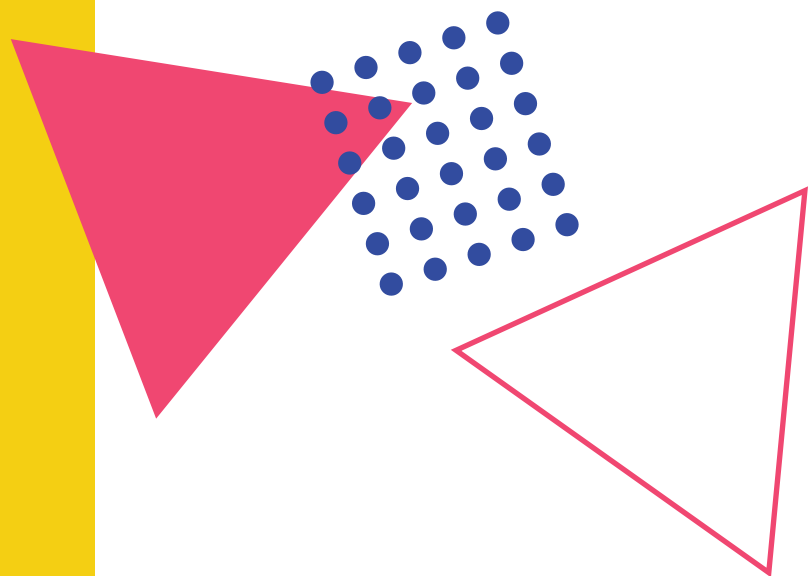
- The 3Rs and 3Ps are clearly ingrained in the programme.
- The programme fosters a consultative, collaborative learning environment that is nurturing, caring and engaging. This means that there is a sense of collective ownership between students and staff, removing power hierarchies in order to unleash potential and uphold co-creation and co-learning.
- The learning outcomes are aligned with specific graduate attributes.
- An empirical, evidence-based formative/needs analysis is conducted, and summative evaluations are carried out to inform and direct management decisions and endeavours.

12

RESOURCES

UCT LEAD is hosted by DSA and is made up of both *academic and support staff*. All *partnerships and collaborations* are established according to the UCT LEAD Memorandum of Understanding, as detailed later in this manual.

UCT LEAD makes use of current university facilities on a needs basis. The *space-sharing* approach pursued by UCT LEAD means that no new infrastructure is needed, and the leadership academy does not unnecessarily burden existing infrastructure. This principle also applies to *technology*.

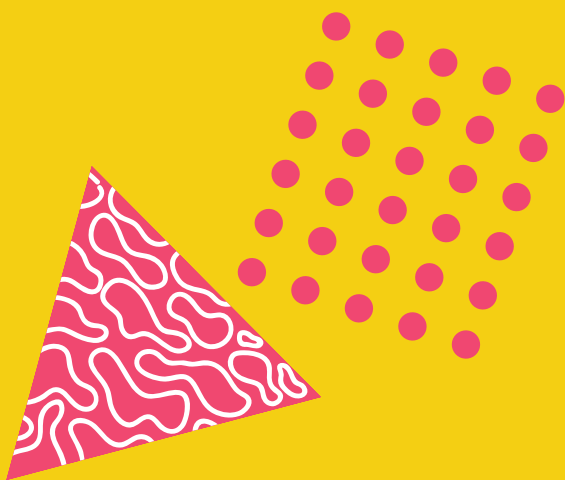


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WORK IN PROGRESS

UCT LEAD is currently developing a *code of ethics* in line with its principles and purpose, which all stakeholders will be expected to uphold.

The *UCT LEAD alumni* will offer participants (past and present) access to a network that provides opportunities for continued growth and engagement. A framework for this alumni will be developed in collaboration with the UCT Development and Alumni Department.



14 STUDENT APPLICATIONS

Students from all faculties and backgrounds are encouraged to apply to UCT LEAD, and everyone who is a student at UCT is eligible to participate.

Student leaders will gain access to the *Student Governance pathway* by virtue of their elected leadership position. There will, therefore, not be an application process for this pathway, but attendance at Student Governance learning experiences will be mandatory.

There is an application process for learning experiences that fall within the *Student Life pathway* as well as the *Innovation pathway*.

The *Capacity Building pathway* and its associated learning experiences are open to all students via a sign-up process. Staff also recommend that student leaders sign up for the learning experiences in this category that are relevant to their leadership positions.

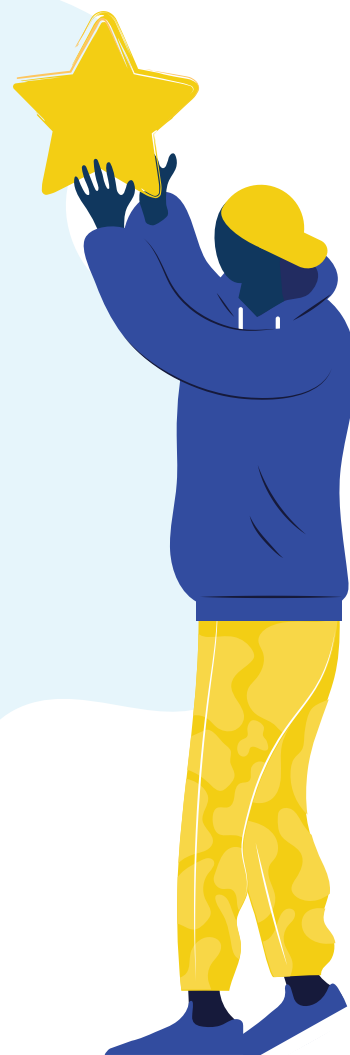


15 PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

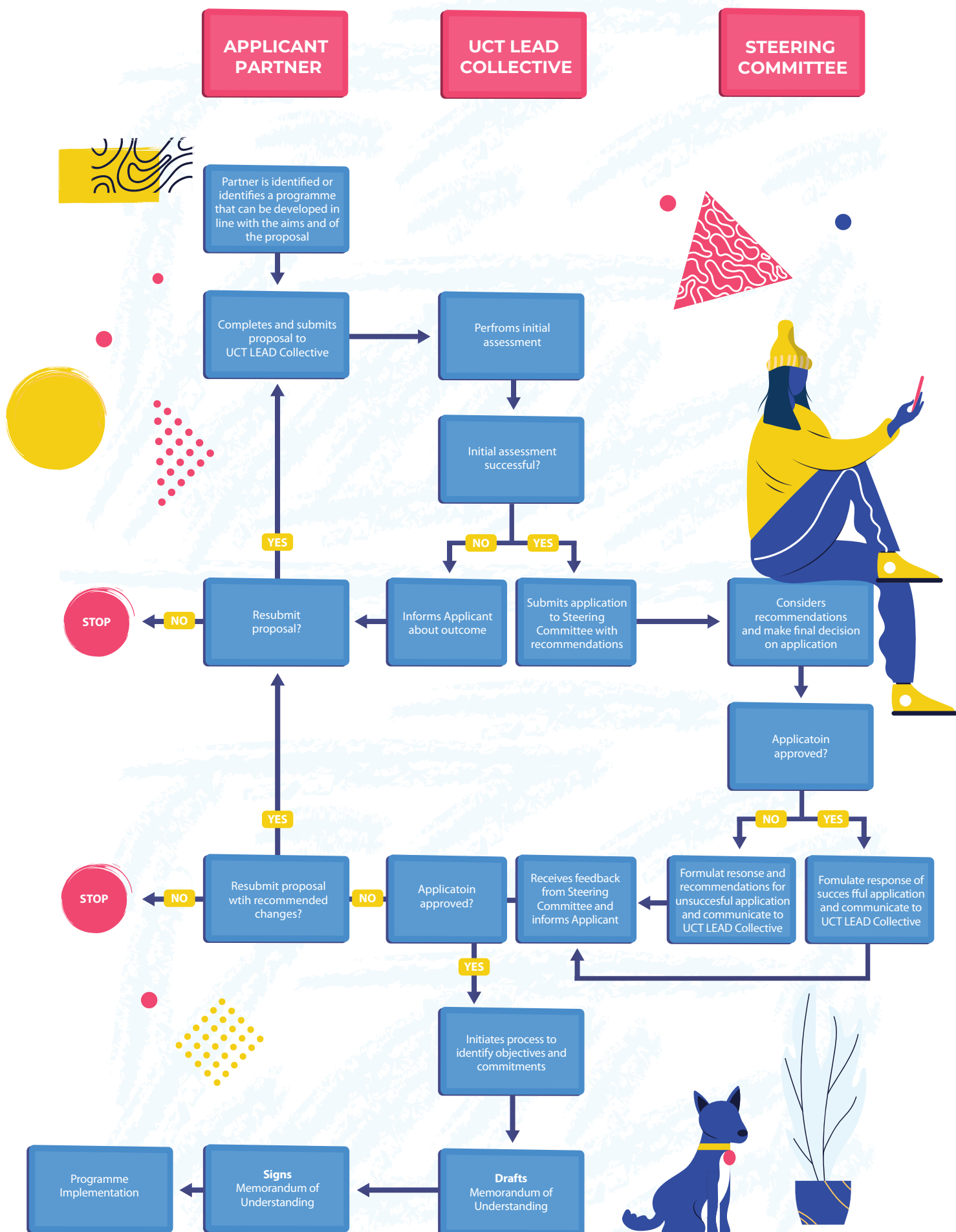
In order to enhance the impact of UCT LEAD, we welcome partnerships and collaborations with organisations and individuals. At times we are able to identify potential partners, and on other occasions they approach us to develop programmes within UCT LEAD. Either way, we are open to such engagement, and look forward to receiving proposals.

16 PARTNERING WITH UCT LEAD

Any individual and/or an institution who wishes to partner with UCT Lead should send a structured proposal to the UCT LEAD collective for initial assessment. This should outline the purpose and aim of the proposed initiative. If the Collective makes a recommendation for approval to the steering committee, then the proposal will be reviewed by the steering committee to determine its alignment with the 3Rs and the 3Ps. If the alignment exists and the proposal is deemed fit, a Memorandum of Understanding will be developed with the individual and/or institution who submitted the proposal to collaborate with UCT LEAD. In the case where the proposal is not in alignment and/or is not deemed to be fit for purpose, it will be referred back to the UCT LEAD Collective with reasons and recommendations.



APPLICATION PROCESS FOR PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS:



NOTES

[illegible]

NOTES

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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

For a comprehensive example of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), email nadia.wilson@uct.ac.za.

Below are some important highlights from such an MOU that partners and collaborators should be aware of:

- The MOU should specify the nature of the learning experience that encompasses the partnership or collaboration.
- All definitions should be clear and concise.
- The date or timeframe of the activity must be included, along with the date of termination of the agreement.
- Any postponements must occur within three months of the agreed-upon date.
- The agreement can be extended, if necessary, if written notice is received no less than 30 days prior to termination of the agreement, but this extension is at the discretion of UCT.
- All cost items and duties that are the responsibility of the partner/collaborator must be listed.
- The party is not to charge UCT LEAD for any costs pertaining to its obligations.
- Any area of responsibility that falls on UCT LEAD in order to assist with and support the initiative must be specified. This includes any space/venue requirements.
- The parameters of use of intellectual property should be included.
- UCT LEAD is to provide a report on the collaboration on an agreed-upon date.

DSA will provide a standard MOU for partners and collaborators.

CONTACT US

In our continued effort to enhance UCT LEAD, we welcome questions, comments and enquiries.

UCT LEAD

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DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Located in the Steve Biko Building

For general inquiries and support, please contact Nadia Wilson

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This UCT LEAD Manual is subject to periodic updates. Students are encouraged to consult the most recent version for accurate information on the programme.



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