



UNIVERSITEIT·STELLENBOSCH·UNIVERSITY  
jou kennisvenoot · your knowledge partner

*A guide to*

# LIVING

*in Stellenbosch*





# WELCOME

*to Stellenbosch!*

Having received this booklet means that you, as a new postgraduate or international student or visitor, have arrived safely. At the Postgraduate & International Office, we aim to make your transition into your new environment, or your short stay in Stellenbosch, as trouble-free as possible. This booklet is one of the tools that we use to help you find your feet. It will provide you with information about Stellenbosch, the university and South Africa in general.

When living in Stellenbosch, it is difficult to separate the university from the town. Nestled among picturesque mountains in the heart of the Cape Winelands, a large part of the town's identity can be attributed to the presence of more than 19 000 resident students. This makes for a vibrant environment, alive with different cultures and activities.

Stellenbosch University is recognised as one of the top four research universities in South Africa. It takes pride in the fact that proportionally, it has one of the country's highest numbers of postgraduate students of which almost ten percent are international students. We have a significant role to play in the development of South Africa and our continent. We strive to achieve this through aligning our efforts with national priorities and in doing so, are helping to build the intellectual, scientific and technological capacity of Africa.

As a student or visitor to our university, it is our hope that your stay here will be a pleasant and enriching experience, and that you will return to South Africa again.



# The Postgraduate & International Office (PGIO)

The Postgraduate & International Office (PGIO) provides services catering for the specific needs of postgraduate and international students. The PGIO offers a range of services from logistical to academic and social with the aim to be a one stop, administrative hub for all postgraduates and internationals on campus, as well as promoting internationalisation at the university.

## **Office hours**

*The PGIO is open for students on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays: 10:00-13:00 ; 14:00- 15:00, but closed on Wednesdays for staff matters. The reception is open from Monday to Friday between 08:00 to 16:30. Please respect these consultation hours.*

## **Orientation**

At the start of each semester the PGIO organises a special orientation programme for all new international students at the university. There is also a separate orientation programme for postgraduate students.

At orientation the following topics are covered, as appropriate:

- general introduction to Stellenbosch and South Africa
- cultural adjustment
- safety and security issues on campus
- introduction to services on campus: Health Care Service, Protection Services, Unit for Counselling Psychology, Sport facilities, Societies, Performing Arts (drama, fine arts, music)
- academic expectations
- South African politics and economics
- registration
- visas and other documents

Tours of the campus, Stellenbosch town and Cape Town normally form part of the orientation events.

## **Accommodation**

The university provides students with accommodation in 26 university residences (nine for men, 12 for women and five mixed), 30 university houses and five blocks of flats. Approximately 7 000 full-time students live in these university residences and houses which are located on campus and within walking distance of most of the academic buildings. On the Tygerberg Campus students can stay in one of the three university residences located on that campus.

Academia and Concordia were built by the university to house senior and international students. A place in one of these residences can be secured through the PGIO. However, despite approximately 250 places in these residences being reserved for international students, university accommodation is very limited. While the PGIO assists where possible, it is the individual responsibility of each international and postgraduate student to ensure they have accommodation.

The Postgraduate & International Office (PGIO) provides services catering for the specific needs of postgraduate and international students.

Another accommodation option, which many senior students make use of, is to board in a private house or a flat. For more information on this and a list of rental agents operating in Stellenbosch please consult our website. Private accommodation is also advertised in one of the local newspapers, *Eikestadnuus*, which is on sale every Friday. You are encouraged to check the campus notice boards for available accommodation. Many students also find a place to stay by word of mouth. So, keep your ears open!

### **Organisation for international students**

#### **International Student Organisation of Stellenbosch (ISOS)**

ISOS was established in 1996 and aims to bring together all international students. It assists in supporting, facilitating and orientating international students and goes a long way in serving the social needs of international students on campus. Local students are also strongly encouraged to become members.

The ISOS mission statement outlines its three aims as follows:

- ISOS aims to assist in the orientation of international students – a general introduction to Stellenbosch – and information regarding the basic services offered by the university.
- ISOS will arrange excursions and social events that will assist international students in learning more about South Africa, its culture and people.
- ISOS forms a support group for international students, which addresses various needs such as housing arrangements and aid in crisis situations.

The success of ISOS depends on the enthusiasm and participation of the international students it serves. You are encouraged to stay informed by reading the ISOS notice board at the PGIO regularly and students should also forward their e-mail addresses to the student co-ordinator at [isos@sun.ac.za](mailto:isos@sun.ac.za) if they wish to be on the distribution list.

### **Support for your family**

#### **Spouse group**

The PGIO initiated an organisation specifically for the spouses of international students and post-doctoral fellows as well as academics. Spouses meet every Tuesday for excursions and other activities. If you or your spouse is interested in joining this group, please contact the PGIO to get in touch with the group's current leadership.

#### **Schools**

If parents have the necessary documentation to work or study in South Africa, their children will be allowed to enrol at a local school on condition that the foreign child does not take the place of a South African child; and depending on the availability of places within the grade. At public schools, all students are under obligation to wear the correct school uniform. School fees are payable directly to the school and a refundable entry fee may also be required.

*The following schools serve the English-speaking community of Stellenbosch*

#### **Pre-primary school**

Babin Pre-primary School and Daycare Centre, Banghoek Street.

#### **Primary school**

Rhenish Primary School, Doornbosch Street.

#### **Secondary schools**

Rhenish Girls' High School, Koch Street.

Paul Roos Gymnasium (Boys), Suidwal Road.

If you are interested in Afrikaans schools you may enquire at the Postgraduate & International Office.

# Stellenbosch University: General Information

## **Campuses and Faculties**

Stellenbosch University has four campuses and a total of ten faculties:

### **Stellenbosch**

Arts (and Social Sciences), Science, Education, AgriSciences, Law, Theology, Economic and Management Sciences, Engineering

### **Tygerberg (Bellville)**

Health Sciences

### **Bellville Park**

Graduate School of Business, School of Public Leadership and Part-time Studies Division.

### **Saldanha**

Military Science

## **Language requirements**

Stellenbosch University is committed to the use and sustained development of Afrikaans as an academic language in a multilingual context. Language is used at the university in a manner that is directed towards engagement with knowledge in a diverse society.

The university acknowledges the special status of Afrikaans as an academic language and accepts the responsibility to promote it. At the same time, it takes account of the status of English as an international language of communication and of isiXhosa as an emerging academic language. The official language Policy and Plan of Stellenbosch University

was approved by the university's Council in 2002. The Language Policy and Plan has evolved over time and is subject to annual adjustments.

Following the example of the Faculty of Engineering which has offered the first year of study by way of parallel medium instruction (separate streams for Afrikaans and English) for a number of years, the three faculties of Economic and Management Sciences, Science and AgriSciences implemented parallel medium instruction (separate streams for Afrikaans and English) in the first year as of 2010.

Language is used at the university in a manner that is directed towards engagement with knowledge in a diverse society.



### Academic information

South African academic life is very similar to the European tradition. Courses are a mixture of lectures and seminars with individual laboratory time and library work. Students specialise early and study one or two disciplines for three or four years. In most subjects, assessment relies on continuous evaluation with assignments, orals, presentations, one mid-semester test and a concluding examination.

Honours programmes are generally a combination of taught modules (with seminars and laboratory time) and a research thesis component. Masters programmes are either a combination of taught modules

(with seminars and laboratory time) and a substantial research thesis component or programmes based on research only.

Doctoral programmes have a minimum registration period of two years before the degree may be conferred. Students however typically study for around three years and are expected to work independently under the guidance of a supervisor. Doctoral candidates in all faculties must submit a substantial dissertation and will generally be required to complete an oral examination.

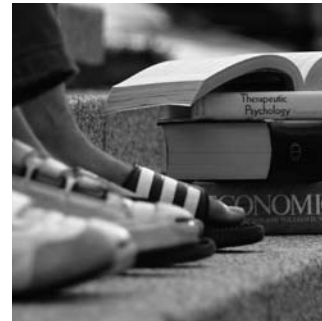
### Matie Community Service

Stellenbosch University is committed to enabling the community to benefit from the knowledge and skills of its staff and students. Matie Community Service, or MGD as they are known on campus, provides the infrastructure for active student participation in community development projects. All students are welcome to offer their services on a voluntary basis or through practical exercises and/or projects of the different university departments. Matie Community Service is active both on the Stellenbosch and Tygerberg campuses and students are trained annually within a well-organised structure.

Activities co-ordinated by Matie Community Service include:

- Khanyisa learning project (Saturday school for children with an educational backlog)
- The literacy project
- Entrepreneurship development project – for adults and high school learners
- Feeding scheme
- The lifeskills programme (primary schools)
- Assistance to the handicapped
- The Stellenbosch Work Centre
- Clinic service, prevention programmes and rural outreach projects

Stellenbosch University is committed to enabling the community to benefit from the knowledge and skills of its staff and students.



# Important places

## **The JS Gericke Library**

The JS Gericke Library, named after a former Vice-Chancellor (Rector) of the university, is one of the biggest subterranean libraries in the world. It houses more than 600 000 volumes of books and bound periodicals. Its total floor space is the size of three rugby fields (17 000 m<sup>2</sup>).

There are study desks for more than 1 400 students and 27 study cubicles are provided for postgraduates. Several seminar rooms for discussion groups are available (to be reserved in advance at the reception desk). The library has collections scattered around the campus outside of the main facility, all of which are catalogued on a computerised database. There

are several other satellite libraries servicing the different faculties, including the Theology Library, Law Library, and Tygerberg Medical Library. The Conservatoire Library has a large selection of music, which can be listened to in individual listening cubicles, and a vast collection of sheet music.

To access online databases and journals as well as reserving books and requesting inter-library loans, consult the library website. The desk for national and international periodicals and newspapers is situated on the lower level. There is also a photocopying room on the upper level. The photocopiers can be operated with student cards.

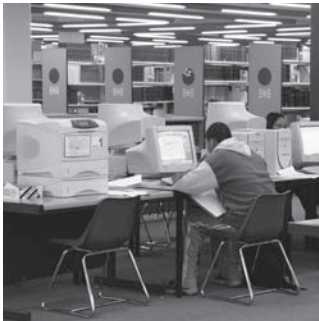
Registered students need their student cards to enter the library and borrow books.

## **Research Commons**

The JS Gericke Library on the Stellenbosch campus opened its state-of-the-art research commons earlier in 2011. This high-level research environment is intended for exclusive use by masters and doctoral students as well as researchers. The aim of the commons is to create an environment for research exchange and production, and scholastic debate. Located on the lower level of the library, the commons offer researchers the flexibility of engaging in debate and exchange in the seminar rooms, relieve stressed minds in the lounge area or engage in rigorous self study at the designated computer work areas

## **Learning Commons**

Located on the upper level of the JS Gericke Library, on the main Campus of Stellenbosch University, the Learning Commons provides an innovative and stimulating learning environment and makes the Library a vibrant extension of the classroom. The facility is reserved for registered students and staff of the University by means of access control.



The JS Gericke Library, named after a former Vice-Chancellor (Rector) of the university, is one of the biggest subterranean libraries in the world.



**Hours**

Monday to Thursday 08:00 – 22:00  
 Friday 08:00 – 17:30  
 Saturday 10:00 – 16:30

**Holidays**

Monday to Friday 08:00 – 17:30  
 Saturday 10:00 – 13:00

*The library is closed on public holidays and Sundays.*

Time changes are advertised at the library entrance, so be on the lookout for any changes, or phone the information desk at the library.

[www.sun.ac.za/library](http://www.sun.ac.za/library)

Students may also join the Stellenbosch Public Library in PleinStreet. A passport or SA identity document and proof of residence in Stellenbosch is required to join the Public Library.

**Computer facilities**

Several computer centres on campus provide computers with internet access which can be used by students. Access to the network is only available after registration and requires a username and password. Once you have registered, you will have 24-hour access to the computer room. Your student card provides entry.

Connections for personal computers and laptops are available in most university residences. An application form (available at [www.sun.ac.za/infoteg](http://www.sun.ac.za/infoteg)) must be completed to apply to be connected.

Students can register for the computer facilities at the respective computer rooms listed here. The registration fee is determined annually and is charged per semester. This fee covers unlimited

e-mail access, but an extra fee must be paid to gain access to external sites. Access to the Stellenbosch University homepage is free of charge. Please note that the computer laboratory you use depends on the faculty you study in. If you will have computer access in your academic department you should rather not register in a computer laboratory since this will save costs.

Faculty	Location
Arts and Social Sciences, Law, Education, Theology	Humarga Arts Building Third Floor
AgriSciences, Science	NARGA Admin A
Economic and Management Sciences	FHARGA Accounting and Statistics
Engineering	FIRGA Engineering Building

**The Langenhoven Student Centre (Neelsie)**

The Langenhoven Student Centre, better known as theNeelsie, is the social heartbeat of the campus. It is named after an Afrikaans author, CJ Langenhoven, who was an alumnus of the university.

This modern centre offers students a wide variety of commercial, financial and entertainment services. The food hall provides seating for 1 200 students and the various food and fast-food outlets cater for a wide variety of tastes ranging from full homestyle meals to light meals and takeaways.

You will also find a number of coffee shops, adventure and travel shops, health and beauty shops, bookstores, a convenience store, a laundry, clothing boutiques, plenty of gift shops and a number of academic and business services. There is also a photocopy room where you can use your student card to make photocopies.

Four banks have branches in the Neelsie: Standard Bank, Absa Bank, Nedbank and First National Bank. Absa offers foreign exchange services. You can open an account and use the ATM facilities at any of these banks.

### Hours

**Nedbank**  
Monday to Friday 09:00 – 15:30

**Standard Bank**  
Monday to Friday 09:00 – 15:30  
Saturday 08:30 – 11:00

**Absa Bank**  
Monday to Friday 08:00 – 15:30

**First National Bank**  
Monday to Friday 09:00 – 15:30

The upper floors of the Neelsie house a dance hall, two dining halls, the offices of the Student Representative Council (SRC), various clubs and societies, the editorial office of the student newspaper *Die Matie* and a broadcasting studio for the campus radio station *Matie FM* (tune in to 92.6 FM), a dark room for the photographic club and a restaurant.

In the Neelsie you can also find the Matieland Post Office.

### Hours

*Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday* 08:30 – 16:30  
*Wednesday* 09:00 – 16:30  
*Saturday* 08:00 – 12:00

Post is collected at 13:00 on weekdays.

### What do I need to open a bank account?

- Passport
- Letter of confirmation that you are registered at the university (available from the PGIO)
- Verification of residential address

## The Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD)

The CSCD aims to provide psychological services, development services and career planning services to students, as well as to its prospective students, in order to promote a well-informed, psychologically healthy community.

The functions of the CSCD can be divided broadly into seven services:

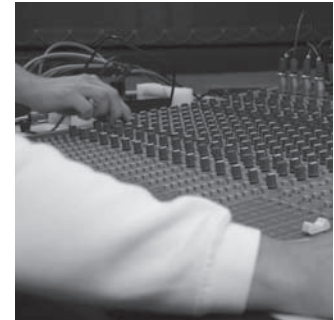
1. Academic counselling
2. Occupational guidance and development
3. Individual and/or group therapy
4. Contemporary developmental workshops

5. An Office for Students with Special Learning Needs
6. Consultations
7. Training and supervision of intern psychologists

The services offered, including group and individual therapy, are free to all registered students. If you need to consult a psychiatrist, a fee will be levied. Some of the workshops and occupational guidance also require a fee.

**Visit the CSCD's website at [www.sun.ac.za/counselling](http://www.sun.ac.za/counselling), or go straight to their offices at 37 Victoria Street.**

**24-hour crisis service**  
082 557 0880 or 021 808 4707



### Language centre

The Language Centre of the university offers instruction in language and text skills (as well as conducting research in these fields).

The Centre has six units: the Unit for Afrikaans, the Unit for English, the Unit for isiXhosa, the Unit for Document Design, the Writing Laboratory, and the Language Service. These units provide a variety of services for students.

- Writing skills development. Students needing support with their writing assignments

can come to the Writing Laboratory for free one-on-one consultations. The Laboratory also presents group consultations and workshops on scientific writings skills – like those needed to tackle and complete an assignment or thesis.

- Academic literacy. The Units for English and Afrikaans offer courses chiefly to mother tongue speakers on how to elicit information from academic texts.
- Training for second or foreign language speakers of Afrikaans,

English and isiXhosa. Students who wish to learn one of these three languages anew, or wish to improve on a limited proficiency, can attend a course at the Language Centre. Individual courses are offered for those who have no knowledge of a specific language and for those who are at an intermediate level of development. Students can develop their speaking, listening, writing and reading skills through the creative use of interactive and accelerated methods of instruction.

- A language service. The Language Centre provides editing and translation services at a fee.
- Services in the e-learning environment. Interesting tips about writing scientific texts are available on the Language Centre's website.

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### Language Centre

Crozier Street

021 808 2178

[www.sun.ac.za/taalsentrum](http://www.sun.ac.za/taalsentrum)

Students can develop their speaking, listening writing and reading skills through the creative use of interactive and accelerated methods of instruction.



# Health and safety

## Medical insurance

The Department of Home Affairs requires proof of adequate medical cover before a study permit will be issued or extended. Medical care can also be very expensive, thus, we strongly advise students to obtain suitable medical cover. Information and recommendations regarding medical insurance can be obtained at the Postgraduate & International Office.

Students are strongly advised to read the contents of their medical cover carefully. You are responsible to ensure that you know the correct procedure for contacting your medical insurance in case of an emergency. It is also important that you ascertain how payments will be made, i.e. whether you must personally pay upfront and claim later, or whether your medical insurance will pay directly to the service provider once invoices are received.

## Personal insurance

We strongly advise that you take out insurance for your personal belongings such as digital cameras and laptop computers. It is important that you are aware of the conditions of your personal insurance.

## Hospitals

All students who are covered by adequate medical insurance will automatically be admitted to the private hospital in Stellenbosch (Medi-Clinic) in case of emergency or if prior hospital authorisation has been obtained.

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### Medi-Clinic

Saffraan Avenue  
Die Boord (on the R44)  
021 861 2000

### 24-hour emergency service

021 886 9999

## Health care service of the university

The Health Care Service of the university is available at Medical Council guideline tariffs. This service has a number of doctors who take care of the medical needs of students. You are advised to make an appointment.

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### Health Care Service

Claassen Street (off Bosman Street,  
next to Heemstede Residence)  
021 803 3496

### Hours

Monday to Friday      08:00 – 12:45  
   14:00 – 16:30

The Health Care Service is closed after hours and on weekends. All students requiring emergency medical treatment must call a private general practitioner or go to the casualty ward of the provincial hospital or the Medi-Clinic. Every day from 17:00 to 19:00 medical staff are available to attend to sports injuries at the Coetzburg Stadium.

Medical care can be very expensive, thus, we strongly advise students to obtain suitable medical cover.

## After hours and weekends

### General practitioners

*Stelkor Medical Centre*  
Piet Retief Street  
021 887 0305

*Bosman OJ & Associates*  
147 Dorp Street  
021 887 2820

### Dentists

*Dr Dewald Cloete*  
10 Vrede Street  
021 887 8940

*Dr Henco Neethling*  
6 Van Riebeeck Street  
021 887 6787

## Vaccination

On entry into South Africa, there are generally no vaccination requirements. The Western Cape region is not a malaria or tropical disease infested area. Since certain areas are known for tropical diseases, you are strongly advised to contact the Student Health Service before travelling.

### Travel clinics and information

*British Airways Travel Clinic*  
011 807 3132

*Kruger Park Malaria Hotline*  
082 234 1800

*Cape Country Travel Clinic,*  
Somerset West  
021 852 8670

[www.malaria.org](http://www.malaria.org)

## Emotional and psychological health

The Centre for Student Counselling is available to all students who may experience personal or emotional problems or require assistance with academic problems.

### 24-hour crisis service

37 Victoria Street  
082 557 0880 or 021 808 4707

### Sexual health

Contraceptives like the contraceptive pill and condoms can be obtained from the Health Care Service and the Stellenbosch Clinic free of charge or can be purchased at a nominal cost at pharmacies displaying the "Family Planning" logo. The morning-after pill is also available at the above-mentioned venues. Condoms can also be bought.

### Stellenbosch Clinic

Victoria Street  
021 808 8496

### Hours

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday  
08:30 – 15:00

## Emergency services

### Ambulance

10177 / 021 937 0500

### University's Protection Services (USBD)

021 808 2330/112/3 or  
0800 60 11 37 (toll free)

### Fire Brigade

021 808 8888

### Hospital: Stellenbosch

021 887 0310

### Hospital: Medi-Clinic

021 861 2000

### Lifeline

021 461 1111

### Police: National Emergency

10111

### Police: Stellenbosch

021 809 5000/314

### Water and Electricity

021 808 8111

### Telephone out of order

10212

### Yellow Pages

10118

### Info Directory

1023

## Personal safety

Be sensible about your personal safety in Stellenbosch in the same way as you would be anywhere in the world. Make use of the **Green Route** on campus which is a preferential route that covers all the academic buildings, residences and computer centres. Students and university security officials wearing fluorescent orange armbands patrol it for your safety.

Be street-wise in town by staying in a group and using the main streets where there are usually people at all times of the day or night. It is not advisable to walk alone at night. Keep your Postgraduate & International Office Emergency Card with you at all times.

Thefts do occur, both in the town and in university buildings. You are advised never to leave valuable articles unattended. Do not carry large sums of money with you. Use a U-lock to secure your bicycle and/or lock your car doors. All bicycles should have a light for cycling at night. Close your windows and lock the doors of your home when you go out and at night.

## Stellenbosch University Protection Services (USBD)

The Stellenbosch University Protection Services (USBD) is a service division which assists all students and staff and visitors in creating a safe and orderly environment for the university community. USBD guards patrol the grounds of the university and the Green Route 24 hours a day and are trained to ensure the safety of the university community and to assist in emergencies.

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***USBD is situated at 62 Merriman Avenue, on the corner of Merriman Ave and De Beer Street and can be contacted on 021 808 2330 (24/7).***

## Some tips for ensuring your safety

### Factors placing students at risk

- You may be new to the country or town
- You may not speak the local language well
- You may be travelling to new places and making new friends
- You may generally be travelling by public transportation
- You are probably curious about your new home and the new culture you are living in
- You probably stand out in a crowd
- You may not yet have learned the best way to say no in this culture
- You may not yet be able to pick up the "clues" specific to this culture that you are in danger
- You may not yet have established personal daily routines in your new home

### Strategies for reducing risk

Safety is ultimately an individual responsibility and each person should actively develop his or her own personal safety strategies. Administrators can assist you in developing personal awareness and personal safety strategies. Some suggestions are:

## Where you live

- Establish relationships with hosts, neighbours and local authorities.
- Always lock your door.
- If you live on the ground floor, do not place valuable items close to an open window.
- Ensure access to emergency medical care.
- Develop an emergency support/communications network.
- In case of an emergency at Concordia or Academia contact Mr Schalk Opperman: 021 808 3718 or 021 808 4655. During office hours you can also contact the person on duty at the front office.
- Make sure you know where the University Protection Services is situated in Merriman Avenue. In case of an emergency on campus, you can phone their free number: 0800 60 11 37 or 808 2330/1/2/3
- Screen night visitors – do not give the access code to your apartment in Concordia or any other residence to anyone and do not allow other people to make use of your student card.

*When you travel*

- Notify the Postgraduate & International Office of your travel plans and possible contact number(s).
- Wear suitable attire.
- Restrict night-time travel.
- Project certainty regarding your route and destination.
- Avoid “high risk” regions. Check with the Postgraduate & International Office regarding unsafe areas in South Africa.
- Travel with a friend/ trusted other.
- Inspect vehicle for safety (tires, overloading, brakes, etc.).
- Make sure that you know the traffic laws of SA.
- Establish rapport with regular drivers.
- Determine the risk levels of different means of transport (bus, train, taxi).
- Do NOT hitchhike.
- Do NOT use your cell phone while driving.
- Do not drive after consuming alcohol or medicine influencing alertness or judgement.

*Common-sense precautions*

- Listen and heed the counsel you are given.
- Do not draw undue attention to yourself, either through expensive dress, personal accessories (cameras, radios, sunglasses etc.) or careless behaviour.
- Report any suspicious persons loitering around residences or instructional facilities or following you to the responsible authority; keep your residence area locked; use common sense in divulging information to strangers about your study programme and your fellow students.
- If you travel to countries beyond your programme site and expect to be there for more than a week, register your arrival at your consulate or the embassy with jurisdiction over the location.
- Make sure the Postgraduate & International Office, resident director, host family or university official who is assigned responsibility for your welfare always knows where and how to contact you in an emergency. Also provide them with your schedule and itinerary if you are travelling, even if only overnight.
- Develop a plan for regular telephone or e-mail contact with your family so that they are at ease about your safety.
- Do not pick up hitch-hikers!
- While travelling: Do not overnight in your car or take a nap. When tired, drive to the nearest town and rest.
- IMPORTANT: Tourists are sometimes targeted at Automatic Teller Machines (ATM) and approached by people that either seek assistance or offer assistance. Keep other people at a safe distance when using an ATM (ask them to step back and stay behind the line). Do not offer assistance but rather indicate that they phone the helpline. If you encounter any problems at an ATM, leave immediately but in the case of your card being ‘swallowed’, stay and call the number as indicated at the particular ATM. It is possible to draw money inside a bank or, if after hours, rather make use of an ATM machine situated at a bank.

**Drugs and alcohol**

Avoid any involvement with drugs. Drug laws can be severe, regardless of whether the drugs in your possession are for personal use or for sale to others. Bail might be granted under certain conditions, but do remember that the Postgraduate & International Office does not take responsibility for paying bail for students. Do not assume that buying or carrying small amounts of drugs cannot result in your arrest. Spending a night in jail will be a traumatic experience!

Be aware that alcohol abuse does occur amongst students at universities. This may occur for several reasons: as an international visitor, one may have a mistaken impression of how alcohol is used in the new country, South Africa may have a lower drinking age than elsewhere, or people abuse alcohol in an attempt to fit in.

**Responsible social drinking is acceptable, but the use of drugs is not permitted under any circumstances. Never drink and drive – this is a criminal offence.**

# Transport

If you are interested in exploring South Africa, or just going on a short outing, there are plenty of options for hiring a car in Stellenbosch or Cape Town, for a weekend or even longer. If you intend to stay in Stellenbosch for several months, it may be the less expensive option to buy a car and to sell it when you leave.



To hire a car you should be at least 21 years of age and be in possession of a valid driver's licence

## **Car rental**

To hire a car you should be at least 21 years of age and be in possession of a valid driver's licence (some companies only accept drivers who are at least 23 years of age). It is very important that you have insurance to cover any possible accidents. We strongly recommend that a "complete package" of insurance be taken. This should include personal accident insurance, the collision damage waiver and the theft waiver. There are many car rental companies around Cape Town and Stellenbosch, so shop around for the best deal. Please note that you need a credit card in order to rent a car. It is very easy to get information on car rental companies on their websites.

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*Avis Car Rental*  
[www.avis.co.za](http://www.avis.co.za)

*Hertz Rent-a-Car*  
[www.hertz.co.za](http://www.hertz.co.za)

*Budget Car Rental*  
[www.budget.co.za](http://www.budget.co.za)

## **Buying a car**

Students who intend buying a car should consult the Yellow Pages telephone directory or the classified section of the weekend newspapers for second-hand car dealers or second-hand car sales. Students should be extremely cautious when buying a car, since from experience we know that students often spend more money repairing a second-hand car than the initial amount which was paid for the vehicle. Students must ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, registered and insured.

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**Contact the traffic department:**  
**021 808 8822**

It is a good idea to take out insurance for your car. Feel free to inquire at the Postgraduate & International Office about a recommendation in this regard.



### Driving in South Africa

In South Africa we drive on the left-hand side of the road. Visitors who are new to driving on the left-hand side of the road must make a concerted effort always to look to the right first, before proceeding. You have to be 18 years of age and hold a valid driver's licence to drive a car. Most drivers' licences issued in other countries may be used in South Africa, providing they bear the driver's photograph and are in English. It is still recommended though, to obtain an international driver's licence. Please check the period of validity of your international driver's licence with your insurance company. Once expired, one must apply for a local driver's licence at the local traffic department.

#### Overtaking

When driving on a freeway with several lanes, the driver must overtake on the right.

#### Road shoulder (driving in the yellow lines)

It is regarded as polite road behaviour for vehicles (especially heavy vehicles) travelling slowly, to give way and to allow others to pass. However, they are not obliged to drive on the shoulder. To avoid accidents, drivers must ensure at all times that the road on the shoulder is clear of pedestrians/animals/cyclists/broken-down vehicles before giving way. Giving way should also be avoided if you are going up a hill or around a corner, because your vision of the road ahead is obscured. If an emergency forces you to stop on the shoulder, it is important that your hazard lights be switched on immediately.

#### Traffic circle

Drivers should yield/give way to traffic approaching from the right.

#### Three/four-way stop

The first driver to stop is allowed to drive first. Drivers should proceed cautiously.

### Bus, rail and air travel

Although there is no bus service to travel between Stellenbosch and Cape Town, it is possible to travel by rail. For more information regarding costs and the train schedule, you can visit [www.metrorail.co.za](http://www.metrorail.co.za).

Longer distances can be travelled by bus, train or airplane. With a student card the train will be the least expensive way of travelling, but it will take a lot more time than travelling by bus, or flying if it's a very long distance. There are a number of bus services and airline companies in South Africa, and you can find information about them and make bookings quite easily on the internet.

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*Kulula.com (low-cost airline)*  
[www.kulula.com](http://www.kulula.com)

*Mango (low-cost airline)*  
[www.flymango.com](http://www.flymango.com)

*Computicket*  
(handy for booking buses and flights)  
[www.computicket.com](http://www.computicket.com)

### Taxis and airport shuttle service

Several taxi companies operate in and around Stellenbosch. For transport to and from Cape Town International Airport you can make a reservation at the airport shuttle services. Feel free to consult the Postgraduate & International Office for a recommendation.

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#### Shuttle and Tour Services

*Calvyn Heynes*  
084 290 0460

*John Minnaar*  
083 403 0956

*Bettina Shuttles*  
082 076 2958



# Student life

## Religion

Stellenbosch offers a variety of options for students from different faith communities. The town has numerous churches, as well as a synagogue and mosque. For more information on places of worship, feel free to consult a staff member at the Postgraduate & International Office.

## Entertainment

Stellenbosch is a vibrant town with a lot of activities on offer for everybody – from young to old! From an eclectic mix of restaurants and pubs, to picturesque wine farms, theatres to music halls, you will always find something to keep you entertained in Stellenbosch.

Going on a **wine tour** is one of students' favourite pastimes. Stellenbosch is surrounded by beautiful vineyards, and many of these farms offer free wine tasting to the public. It is also possible to enjoy a cup of coffee or even a meal at most of them. You will find brochures with the different wine routes in the region at most of the tourist agencies. Also keep your eyes open for food and wine

festivals that take place around Stellenbosch.

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**See [www.wineroute.co.za](http://www.wineroute.co.za) for more information on the Stellenbosch wine route.**

In the mood for a movie? Stellenbosch has a **film theatre**, which is located in the Eikestad Mall, where Hollywood movies can be seen. Outside of Stellenbosch the most popular cinemas are housed in Somerset Mall, Tygervalley Centre, Cavendish Square, Century City and the Waterfront in Cape Town. The latest art movies are shown at Cinema Nouveau's (Cavendish Square and Waterfront). If you prefer unusual movies, go to the Labia Theatre, close to Gardens in Cape Town.

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**For the latest information on movies showing at these cinemas:**

[www.sterkinekor.com](http://www.sterkinekor.com)

[www.labia.co.za](http://www.labia.co.za)

[www.numetro.co.za](http://www.numetro.co.za)

There is also a variety of options for lovers of **art, music and theatre**. The Conservatoire hosts regular shows in the evenings, and even

during lunch hours. Shows range from performances by music students, to choirs and orchestras and internationally acclaimed performers.

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**The concert programme can be viewed at <http://academic.sun.ac.za/music/concerts.html>.**

The HB Thom Theatre in Victoria Street showcases theatre productions of a very high quality. Other theatres in the area include the Oude Libertas Amphitheatre, Spier Amphitheatre. More options are available in Cape Town, where you will also find the Artscape Theatre, the Theatre on the Bay, and the Baxter Theatre. Most newspapers contain listings for these theatres.

Rich in historical buildings that pay testament to the town's heritage, a stroll down Dorp Street is as good as a visit to any museum or art gallery.

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**Stellenbosch art galleries and museums**

*The Stellenbosch University Art Gallery (c/o Dorp and Bird Streets)*

*The Sasol Art Museum (Ryneveld Street)*

*The Village Museum*

*The Stellenbosch Museum*

### Restaurants

Numerous restaurants, coffee shops and fast-food outlets in Stellenbosch cater for all kinds of tastes, and budgets. These are located all over the town. The area around Dorp, Church, Andringa and Ryneveld Streets is particularly inviting, and you will find South Africans and tourists sitting down to a meal, coffee or a glass of wine all over the pavements.

### Sport and recreation

If you enjoy sport, Stellenbosch University is the ideal place to study. The university prides itself on its history of outstanding sporting achievements. The home of sport is Coetzenburg, where not only provincial and national players are produced, but where thousands of students participate in a variety of sports for recreation and sheer enjoyment. Situated between Stellenbosch Mountain and the Eerste River, and facing the magnificent mountain scenery of the Jonkershoek Valley, it is one of the finest sporting complexes in the country. Coetzenburg is also used as a training ground for international super athletes.

There are more than 20 competitive sport clubs for achievement sport in various disciplines. Of these, the Matie Rugby Club, founded in 1880, is the most popular. It has produced at least 150 players for the national Springbok team and no fewer than eleven Springbok captains. Other sport clubs at the university have also made their mark, especially the athletics club and the hockey club.

The sports offered at the university: athletics, badminton, basketball, canoeing, cricket, cross-country, cycling, diving, fencing, golf, gymnastics, hockey, horse-riding, judo, marksmanship, netball, parachuting, rowing, rugby, soccer, squash, surfing, swimming, synchronised swimming, table tennis, tennis, triathlon, underwater sports, volleyball, water polo, wrestling.

### Stellenbosch University Gymnasium

A fully equipped gymnasium with indoor and outdoor swimming pools, squash courts, cloak rooms and saunas also forms part of the university's sport complex.

#### Hours

<i>Monday to Thursday</i>	<i>05:30 – 22:00</i>
<i>Friday</i>	<i>05:30 – 21:00</i>
<i>Saturday</i>	<i>07:00 – 20:00</i>
<i>Sunday</i>	<i>closed – pool access only: 10:00 – 18:00</i>

*For more information on sports and the gymnasium, visit [www.suspi.co.za](http://www.suspi.co.za).*

### Die Matie

The university's student newspaper, Die Matie, is published fortnightly on Wednesdays. It is distributed free of charge on campus. It is quite informative and an easy way of keeping up with current affairs and social activities on campus. Although primarily in Afrikaans, Die Matie also contains some English articles.

### Societies

There is a wide variety of societies that are established and run by students who share a common interest. These include a hiking club, numerous religious societies, and also other common interests like poetry, drama and movies. Please consult the Student Representative Council (SRC) Office (located on the 3rd Floor of the Neelsie) for more contact details of the different societies.

There are more than 20 competitive sport clubs for achievement sport in various disciplines.

# Need to know for postgraduate students

## **Postgraduate support and skills development**

The main purpose of postgraduate studies is to develop independent research skills. When doing a postgraduate degree you are expected to find things out for yourself and to create your own work structure.

This does not mean that there is no support for postgraduate students. Stellenbosch University has a host of courses, facilities and support services available to enhance the quality of your research and to support you through the completion of your postgraduate degree.

It can, however, be a daunting task to identify which support and skills you need at each stage of the research process, and then find the appropriate service providers to meet your needs.

For this reason the Postgraduate & International Office has established a service to:

- Assist postgraduate students in
  - Understanding the research process
  - Establishing which skills they need to develop

- Finding the correct service provider on campus to address these needs
- Offer courses and events specifically for postgraduate skills development, for example the research orientation day, dissertation writing workshops, grant writing workshops, postgraduate support groups etc.

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## **Postgraduate Skills Development**

Ronel Steyn

[ronels@sun.ac.za](mailto:ronels@sun.ac.za)

021 808 9157

Postgraduate & International Office,  
Admin A

[www.sun.ac.za/international/postgraduate-support-a-skills-development](http://www.sun.ac.za/international/postgraduate-support-a-skills-development)

*The website lists all the service providers on campus that will help you to complete your dissertation successfully and on schedule.*

## **Language services**

The Language Centre of the university provides editing and translation services at a fee. The PGIO also has a list of freelance editors available.

Students can also access the following services from the Language Centre or other independent service providers: writing skills development, academic literacy, training for second or foreign language speakers of Afrikaans, English and Xhosa and also services in the e-learning environment.

## **Research commons**

The JS Gericke Library on the Stellenbosch campus will be opening its state of the art research commons early 2011. This high level research environment is intended for exclusive use by master's and doctoral students as well as researchers. The aim of the commons is to create an environment for research exchange and production, and scholastic debate. The commons will be located on the lower level of the library, offering researchers the flexibility of engaging in debate and exchange in the seminar rooms, relieve stressed minds in the lounge area or engage in rigorous self study at the designated computer work areas.

The commons will consist of the following facilities and services:

- 32 carousel computer workstations

- Plasma screens
- Wireless internet connection
- High speed internet access
- Lockers
- Coffee bar
- 2 seminar rooms with conferencing facilities
- Group discussions rooms
- Linux mini cluster room
- Lounge area
- Fast high quality printing, copying and scanning area
- Personalised assistance by highly skilled librarians
- Workshops and presentations to enhance research skills
- Events to enhance research discourse and exchange.

### Postgraduate portal

Stellenbosch Connect ([www.mymaties.com/postgrad](http://www.mymaties.com/postgrad)) was developed to address the specific needs of postgraduate students. The portal contains the necessary administrative support (e.g. online registration, academic history, financial records and much more) on a virtual platform, as well as access to other vital support services. Furthermore, the Research Toolkit is aimed at guiding SU students through the research process, without negating the role of an academic supervisor and department. The Skills Development section serves as a space where students can access a range of opportunities for acquiring the necessary skills that will not only be of value with regards to the obtaining their degree, but also for their future career. Students can also stay updated on research and innovation at Stellenbosch University.

### Funding for postgraduate students

Funding for postgraduate students can be divided into two main types:

- Bursaries and scholarships that cover cost of registration / tuition and in some cases accommodation and books
- Research grants – grants for covering costs of research (for example photocopying and printing, laboratory costs, fieldwork expenses, consumables, travelling to do field work) and travel grants for attending or presenting your findings at conferences.

Many postgraduate students underestimate the cost of research or do not realise that money to cover research costs is not freely available from the university. While there are numerous bursaries and scholarships covering tuition and registration, most scholarships explicitly exclude funding your

research, so you need to find other sources of funding. This is not so easy for postgraduate students – most research grants are only given to established, rated scientists (in other words researchers who already hold a PhD.)

### Bursaries based on academic performance

- The National Research Foundation (NRF) grants bursaries for full-time studies in all fields. Most of these bursaries are made available to professors and other university teachers who hold research grants of the NRF, and who can then nominate bursary candidates. A limited number of prestige bursaries are available to candidates whose academic performance in their previous studies has been outstanding. Enquiries, applications and nominations should be addressed to the Postgraduate Student Funding Section within the Postgraduate & International Office.
- Postgraduate bursaries are made available by the university for full-time studies in all fields based on previous academic performance.

The aim of the commons is to create an environment for research exchange and production, and scholastic debate.

- A number of bursaries for postgraduate studies are available from the funds of private donors and trusts that are administered by the university according to the donors. These bursaries are mostly limited to specific fields of study. The Postgraduate Student Funding Section advertises bursaries periodically by means of notices on campus and on the website. Particulars may be obtained from the Postgraduate Student Funding Unit or from Part 2 of the University Calendar.
- Some departments have funds of their own that may be used for postgraduate bursaries in terms of the university's prescribed financial guidelines. In this regard, prospective students should consult their supervisors.

#### **Bursaries on the grounds of financial need**

- To qualify for a bursary on the grounds of financial need, candidates have to state their personal financial particulars on the prescribed form and attach documentary proof. Only those who are found to be genuinely needy in terms of the means test used by the university qualify for these bursaries.
- Postgraduate Study Bursaries are available for full-time and part-time studies in all fields of study, on condition that candidates have a satisfactory academic record or are making satisfactory progress with their postgraduate studies.
- In the award of some bursaries from private sources or trusts, students' financial needs are also taken into account.

#### **Funding for international students**

As a rule the university does not make bursaries or financial aid available to international students, with certain exceptions.

#### **Funding enquiries and applications**

All enquiries may be addressed to the Postgraduate Student Funding Section. Full particulars are given in the University Calendar, Part 2. Please note that:

- Any correspondence and negotiation with the NRF or with other bursary donors, whose bursaries are administered by the university must go via the Postgraduate Student Funding Section;
- Postgraduate students who register with Stellenbosch University for the first time must furnish a certified copy of the complete record of previous studies with performance reflected in percentages throughout; and
- It is university policy for any late applications to be placed on a waiting list and to be considered only if funds subsequently become available.

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#### **Postgraduate Student Funding**

Admin A Building

[postgradfunding@sun.ac.za](mailto:postgradfunding@sun.ac.za)

[www.sun.ac.za/postgraduate](http://www.sun.ac.za/postgraduate)

#### **Research grants**

Ideally you should give the issue of research costs some thought before deciding on a topic. Your research could very well be dependent on the availability of funding. Here are some of the things you should consider:

- Try to join an existing research team that has access to such grant funding through the project leader.
- Some faculties or departments have small funds available for postgraduate research. Speak to your (prospective) supervisor.
- If you are employed, perhaps your employer could be convinced to sponsor you, especially if the research benefits them.
- Depending on your field of study, you might be able to pay for the research expenses yourself, and might in fact be expected to do so.

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**Visit [www.sun.ac.za/international](http://www.sun.ac.za/international) take-note for announcements on research and travel grants.**

### **The Centre for Statistical Consultation**

The aim of the Centre for Statistical Consultation is to assist researchers and postgraduate students of the university with statistical aspects of their research. Where necessary, assistance is provided with the analysis and interpretation of results. The service is also available to persons and institutions outside the university.

The centre provides the following expertise:

- Advice and guidance on the planning and structuring of research projects and experiments

- Assistance in organising electronic data capturing to ensure that data is in the correct format for statistical analysis
- Extraction of useful information from large databases (data mining)
- Analysis of statistical data
- Interpretation of results
- Presentation of short courses with the aim of introducing statistical concepts to researchers

The centre is staffed by two senior statisticians with a long history of client-driven practical experience, who keep themselves up to date with the latest statistical developments, data mining and

other statistical software in order to provide an effective consultation service to researchers. A close relationship with the statistics department makes a further extensive source of knowledge and expertise available to the centre.

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### **The Centre for Statistical Consultation**

*First Floor, Van der Sterr Building  
021 808 2561  
<http://academic.sun.ac.za/statistics/consult>*

A close relationship with the statistics department makes a further extensive source of knowledge and expertise available to the centre.



# Need to know for international students

## Telephone

Telephone calls can be made at two types of public phones: coin or card-operated booths. Telephone cards are available at a cost ranging from R10,00 to R200,00 and can be bought at the post office or other shops that advertise them.

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### Telephone enquiries and information

<i>Local enquiries</i>	<i>1023</i>
<i>International calls</i>	<i>10903</i>
<i>Time check</i>	<i>1026</i>

## Cell/mobile phones

Since rooms in residences do not normally have phone connections, most students opt for a cell phone. South Africa has the following cell phone providers Vodacom, MTN, Cell C and Virgin Mobile. Pre-paid sim cards for these networks can be bought at most supermarkets but please note that you need to present both your proof of residence (a lease document or

university print out stating your address) and a valid ID document to buy one of these. Airtime credit to make calls and send text messages can also be bought at most supermarkets and shops.

## Mail and faxes

Post Office facilities are easily accessible at the Neelsie and the main Post Office in Plein Street. The Post Offices are usually open from 08:30 to 16:30 Monday through to Friday, and 08:00 to 12:00 on Saturday. Stamped letters can be posted at any of the red post boxes spread around town. The collection time is displayed on the post boxes.

Please note that students should make use of faxing facilities in town if they need to send faxes. You may however receive faxes at the Postgraduate and International Office.

## Supermarkets

All the major supermarkets have outlets in Stellenbosch. Shop around for the cheapest prices and special offers. Remember to take your own bags for packing your shopping. Additional bags (plastic or cloth) may be purchased at a small cost as required.

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## Hours

### *Pick n Pay*

<i>Monday to Friday</i>	<i>08:00 – 20:00</i>
<i>Saturday</i>	<i>07:00 – 17:00</i>
<i>Sunday</i>	<i>09:00 – 14:00</i>

### *Shoprite*

<i>Monday to Friday</i>	<i>08:30 – 18:00</i>
<i>Saturday</i>	<i>09:00 – 15:00</i>
<i>Sunday</i>	<i>09:00 – 13:00</i>

### *Woolworths*

<i>Monday to Thursday</i>	<i>08:30 – 17:30</i>
<i>Friday</i>	<i>08:30 – 18:00</i>
<i>Saturday</i>	<i>08:00 – 14:00</i>
<i>Sunday</i>	<i>09:00 – 13:00</i>

### *Checkers*

<i>Monday to Friday</i>	<i>08:00 – 19:00</i>
<i>Saturday</i>	<i>08:00 – 17:00</i>
<i>Sunday</i>	<i>09:00 – 13:00</i>

Stamped letters can be posted at any of the red post boxes spread around town.



## Climate

Spring	
September to November	19–24 °C/66–75 °F Mild
Summer	
December to February	25–35 °C/77–95 °F Hot with a strong southeaster
Autumn	
March to May	16–25 °C/61–77 °F Mild
Winter	
June to August	3–19 °C/37–66 °F Cold and rainy

While these are the average temperatures in these seasons, Stellenbosch is known to display all of these in one day.

**Visit the South African Weather Service's website for a daily forecast: [www.weathersa.co.za](http://www.weathersa.co.za).**

## Money matters

The currency in South Africa is the Rand (ZAR), which is equal to 100 cents. Bank notes are currently R10, R20, R50, R100 and R200, and coins are 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, R1, R2 and R5. There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency

you may bring into the country, but it must be declared at Customs & Excise when you arrive. You may need some cash upon arrival, but it is wise to bring most of your money in traveller's cheques. Most major banks offer foreign exchange services, and Stellenbosch also has a Thomas Cook (represented by Rennies Travel, Bird Street) and an American Express branch (Bird Street). Almost all hotels, shops, restaurants and airlines accept major credit cards, such as VISA, MasterCard, American Express and Diners Club, and you can withdraw cash with a credit card at most automatic teller machines (known as ATMs).

When it comes to paying for fuel, you may have to pay cash. South African filling stations can now take credit card payments – regulations allowing them to do so came into effect in July 2009. However, many filling stations (or garages, as we call them) may take a while to adjust, or may choose not to. Look out for the “cash only” notices.

Road tolls, on the major routes between cities, can be paid using MasterCard or Visa.

## Value added tax

Value added tax (VAT) of 14% is included in the price of most goods and services. Foreign visitors may claim refunds of the VAT paid on goods taken out of South Africa. Information leaflets are available at our international airports.

## Measure for measure

Liquids
1 litre = 0,26 gallons (US)
10 litres = 2,6 gallons (US)
5 litres = 1,3 gallons (US)

Weight
25 grams = 0,89 ounces
50 grams = 1,8 ounces
1 kilogram = 2,2 pounds
5 kilograms = 11 pounds
15 kilograms = 33 pounds

Temperature	
Celsius	Fahrenheit
40 °	104 °
30 °	86 °
20 °	68 °
10 °	50 °
0 °	32 °
-10 °	14 °

Driving speed	
Kilometres/hour	Miles/hour
30	19
50	31
70	43
90	56
110	68
120	75



# Appendix I Grade Point Comparison

SA	USA GP	USA Grade	Germany	UK	The Netherlands
90+	4	A+			10
80+	4	A	1.0	1	
78/79	3.9	A-		1	
77	3.8	A-		1	
76	3.7	A-		1	
75	3.6	A-	1.3	1	8.0
74	3.5	B+		2.1	7.75
73	3.4	B+		2.1	
72	3.3	B+		2.1	
71	3.2	B		2.1	
70	3.1	B	1.7	2.1	
69	3.0	B		2.1	
68	2.9	B		2.1	
67	2.8	B-	2.0	2.2	
66	2.7	B-		2.2	
65	2.6	B-	2.3	2.2	7.0
64	2.5	C+		2.2	6.75
63	2.4	C+		2.2	
62	2.3	C+	2.7	2.2	
61	2.2	C		3	
60	2.1	C	3.0	3	
59	2.0	C		3	
58	1.9	C		3	
57	1.8	C-	3.3	3	
56	1.7	C-		3	
55	1.6	C-		3	
54	1.5	D		3	
53	1.4	D	3.7	3	
52	1.3	D		3	
51	1.2	D		3	
50	1.1	D	4.0	3	6.0
49 (Fail)	F	F	5.0	F	

# Appendix 2

## Culture Shock

### SECTION I Introduction

**PLEASE NOTE:** This is not a research paper on the entire issue of Culture Shock, but rather a very basic outline to guide you through your stay in South Africa. For more information on the subject, please see the list of readings at the end of this document.

Moving from the cosy confines of wherever you call home to the strange and wonderful (or initially far from wonderful) ways of a new land, a new people and a new culture, is certainly no easy task. In fact, it rates very high upon the ladder of the most stressful things we do in our lives.

The term “culture shock” was coined by Kalvero Oberg in 1954 when he first described the anxiety of those arriving in a new place when experiencing new and unfamiliar surroundings. Cultural cues like gestures, customs, idioms, language, beliefs, etc. in the new surroundings must still be learnt and understood. You thus feel like an outsider because you do not understand the local routines and traditions. This heightens your awareness of your own culture because at home you knew exactly

how to behave and function. You are effectively “like a fish out of water” (Oberg, 1954).

To minimise the stress and hassles, inconveniences and insecurities – **be well informed about each aspect of your new life.**

Keep the following in mind during your stay in South Africa:

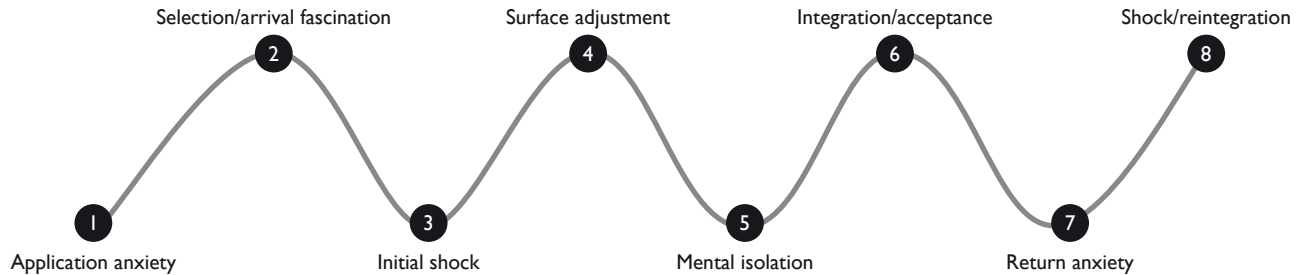
- Endeavour to understand the high and low points of this troubled land’s history. Understanding the realities of racial discrimination as it was legally applied in South Africa is a good start to unravelling the sensitivities. Racism does not die overnight!
- It is important to try to understand the cultural heritage of South Africa’s different people: They are as different as day and night, but now determined to forge a new life for a new country where equality pervades.
- Remember that to experience culture shock is an integral part of the study abroad process. This is how much of your culture learning takes place. Ultimately, you will learn just as much about yourself as the people of your host culture.

**The four stages of culture shock**

- Initial euphoria
- Irritability and hostility
- Gradual adjustment
- Adaptation or bi-culturalism

**The intercultural adjustment cycle**

As people move from one society to another and begin to deal with the cultural differences encountered, experience has shown that there are some specific stages that they encounter in their adjustment process. However, not every person will experience culture shock in the same way or at the same time. It would be amazing if people could leave their communities, their families, and their home and go abroad for a period of time without feeling some anxiety. Naturally, the severity and length of adjustment phases that a person will go through depends upon the length of time that s/he will be away from home and the support that s/he is given. Regardless of how short a time you are a visitor in a foreign country, you can be relatively certain that you will feel many of the emotions outlined in the intercultural adjustment cycle:



### 1) Application anxiety

When waiting for an opportunity to go abroad, people experience anxiety over their chances of selection and their ability to handle their new opportunity. During this time many anticipate cultural differences but have only a superficial awareness of potential adjustment problems.

### 2) Selection/arrival fascination

When a person hears that s/he will be going abroad, they experience a tremendous amount of elation. This excitement continues (with some small exception just before departure, when anxiety may crop up again) until some time after the individual arrives in the foreign country. During this stage, expectations for the visit are high and the

pre-departure proceedings, as well as the arrival introductions are overwhelming and blissful in attention and activity. The new arrival is shown respect and concern, which s/he may seldom receive in their home country.

### 3) Initial culture shock

Initial fascination, along with the rounds of introductions and parties, will soon fade for a visitor who is remaining in a community over a period of time, especially a period as long as six months or a year. Even with visitors coming to South Africa or South Africans going overseas for a similar experience, the novelty of a foreign culture wears off after a few weeks and most people enter a decline known as initial culture shock. Characteristics of this period are

possible changes in sleeping habits, disorientation about how to work with and relate to others, and probably language difficulties and mental fatigue from speaking and listening to a foreign language or accent all day.

### 4) Surface adjustment

After this initial “down” which usually does not last more than a few days to a week, an adjustment takes place and the visitor settles into his/her situation. Language improves, so that s/he can communicate basic ideas and feelings without fatigue, and s/he learns how to navigate within a small group of friends and associates.

### 5) Mental isolation

At some point, however, the novelty wears off completely and

the difficulties remain. Frustrations increase, and a new and more pervasive sense of isolation can set in. Many times this period is accompanied by **boredom and a lack of motivation** as the individual feels little stimulus to overcome the deeper and more troublesome difficulties s/he may be facing. There may be unresolved conflicts with friends, hosts, or basic language problems that continue to cause difficulty long after initial language adjustments.

### 6) Integration /acceptance

When the visitor is finally at ease with his/her professional or school interest, as well as with language, friends, and associates, s/he is able to examine more carefully the new society in which s/he is living. Deeper differences become

understandable and s/he finds ways of dealing with these. S/he may complain of the lack of true friendships, but there is generally recognition for the fact that this may not be deliberate on the part of the people that s/he is associated with. Eventually greater integration into the surroundings takes place and s/he comes to accept both his/her situation and their place in it. Acceptance of these two realities will allow the individual to relax and feel at home in the new surroundings.

### 7) Return anxieties

Once a person is well settled in, the thought of leaving familiar friends, faces and the new

community raises anxieties similar to those the visitor felt during Stage 1, prior to departure. S/he begins to sense how much they have changed because of the experience and the individual may experience growing apprehension at the thought of leaving and returning home to people **who will not understand him/her and their new feelings and awareness.** S/he may even feel guilty for wanting to stay and not return home, because there are probably many people eagerly awaiting his/her return.

Going home? Going home! Going home@\$\$#

### 8) Shock/reintegration

Once the former visitor is back home, the **contrast of old and new** comes as a shock. S/he will probably have changed a great deal while away, and it will be difficult for family and friends to accept many of the changes. Likewise, having been the centre of attention in another country for a period of time, the returnee will be forced after a few days to realise that s/he has lost their glamour. They then face the problem of adjusting to being **one of the crowd** again, while longing for friends that have been left behind.

Returnees often find that no one is as interested in the details of the time abroad as s/he feels they should be. There may be **conflicts in readjusting** to family members and old friends and feelings of frustration may develop due to an inability to describe adequately the depth and nature of his/her life abroad. All of this makes the familiar surroundings even more depressing.

**Come and visit us at the Postgraduate & International Office if you need help or just want to talk!!**

### A person with culture shock may experience these symptoms

- Homesickness
- Boredom
- Withdrawal (i.e. spending excessive amounts of time reading, avoiding contact with host nationals)
- Need for excessive amounts of sleep
- Compulsive eating and/or drinking or loss of appetite
- Irritability
- Stereotyping of and hostility toward host nationals
- Loss of ability to work effectively
- Physical ailments (psychosomatic illness)

### Dealing with culture shock

- Recognise the causes and the symptoms of culture shock.
- Replace what you miss with something from the host country.
- Nurture friendships with host nationals.
- Talk to both host nationals and other internationals about your stress.
- Keep your sense of humour.
- Recognise that anxiety is normal and that you must be open about it.
- Take a few risks and laugh at your mistakes.



- Seek assistance from the university through the Postgraduate & International Office or the Centre for Student Counselling and Development.
- Suspect negative judgements about the host culture.
- Be honest. If you are confused or misunderstood, admit it instead of pretending that the situation is fine.
- Become actively involved in your new environment.
- Before you depart, become as knowledgeable as possible about the host culture.
- Resist the temptation to befriend other international students who are negative about the host culture.
- Look for logical reasons behind things which seem strange, confusing or threatening.
- Have faith in yourself, the essential good will of your hosts, and the positive outcome of your experience.

#### **Manifestations of stress**

- Irritability over small things
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty falling asleep
- Queasy stomach
- Desire to run away
- Constant feeling of tiredness
- Psychosomatic illness
- Feeling excessively critical of others
- Poor work performance
- Difficulty making decisions
- Being unusually introspective
- Experiencing guilt and anxiety

#### **Managing expectations**

The difference between what you expect and what you actually experience may determine the level of distress you feel. It is helpful, therefore, to review your expectations so that you are not surprised or even shocked by what you may find.

Understanding intercultural skills  
Students should understand that among the many intercultural skills required for successful adjustment in a different culture, intercultural specialists believe that being aware of one's own culture is most important.

- Other intercultural skills include
- Being aware of one's limitations
  - Respecting the other culture
  - Learning from interaction
  - Being non-judgmental
  - Avoiding stereotypes
  - Listening and observing
  - Tolerating ambiguity
  - Being persistent

“Being in a foreign country means walking a tightrope high above the ground without the net afforded a person by the country where he has family, colleagues, and friends, and where he can easily say what he has to say in a language he has known from childhood”

(from Milan Kundera's novel “The Unbearable Lightness of Being”)

## SECTION 2

### What is Third Culture?

Many studies have been done on American study abroad students and how they cope with their experiences. A pattern exists and it would be very helpful for you to know how things usually work so that you may recognise what may be happening to you. This way, you'll be better prepared to define your goals and then try to achieve them!

Obviously not all study abroad students are alike – some aim to integrate at any cost while others are just here to see what another culture is like. Students who commit to spending a long period (1 to 3 years) in the new culture will experience and even greater imperative to adapt. The majority of students are probably anxious to learn and adapt but find that it's not always so easy. You do need to be careful, however, to avoid the "third culture"... a kind of "safety net" that helps students "walking the tightrope" in a foreign culture to feel secure.

The "third culture" is formed when a group of students from the same country travel to another part of

the world and finds that they bond easily (after all, everyone's in the same boat, right?) and then unintentionally form their own "way of life" – which isn't the host country's nor their own but a new way of life created by the group in the foreign country. Many students seek refuge in this third culture and fall into the practice of:

- socialising almost exclusively with their fellow countrymen
- speaking English/Dutch/German amongst themselves
- maintaining constant contact with home (for example, speaking by phone with friends and family on a daily basis)
- travelling most weekends with people from the same country. Americans might frequent American style bars and restaurants and receive news solely from American sources

Basically, involvement in the third culture is a refusal of the host culture – South Africa – and its ways of doing things.

**Warning: it's very, very easy to fall into these habits!** You tend to feel that you're here for a very short period and you begin to value your new friends more than adapting to a new host culture that you don't

always understand and, therefore, often find easy to criticise. Motivation to learn and interact on the host country's cultural terms wanes little by little. You may feel guilty for having fallen into the trap but, since the rest of the students do too, you comfort one another and the bond actually grows stronger!

What should you do to avoid the third culture? Here are some ideas. First of all, you do not need to never speak to the students in your group again! But you do need to break away a bit. (Some members of the group may indirectly pressure you not to do this – because a group of students, by nature, tends to discourage cultural integration – but others will understand your priorities.)

**There are numerous opportunities surrounding you everyday... but you need to take advantage of them.** Stellenbosch University can encourage you to do this but, unfortunately, we cannot do it for you. Jump at every opportunity!

- Interact with your neighbours.
- Meet more often with other exchange or study abroad students and try to meet more

local student – have lunch at the Neelsie.

- Refrain from doing daily activities in large groups of friends from your home country.
- Get out and about and explore the area on your own or with one friend (better yet with a South African friend).
- If you enjoy sport, find a way to continue with it – the activity is also good for you!
- Try to occasionally read the local news in the local paper (not just the news about home) This will give you a whole new perspective and enable you to converse much more easily with South Africans about issues that are important to them.
- Watch some SA television. Watching TV will also give you insight as to how this culture ticks.
- Talk to people from different walks of life (younger or older than yourself... not just students) when a safe opportunity presents itself. (For example - a store attendant initiates conversation with you while you're shopping.)
- Try not to be too critical of the host culture and ways. And try not to constantly compare everything to home. Some things may work



wonderfully in your own country but others are better here...

Try to appreciate the culture for what it is – people over centuries have adapted their behaviour in different ways... making each culture so unique. Have an open mind, and let it enrich you.

- Don't always frequent the same bars, cafes, etc.
- Talking to South Africans that have visited your country about what they didn't like sometimes helps to open our eyes to the fact that, just maybe, your country isn't as perfect in every aspect as you thought.

If you feel like you've been "sucked into" the third culture vacuum, you may start to feel guilty, resentful and frustrated. So, we'd like to remind you that you, and only you, can resist the urge and pressure to integrate into the third culture and break away! Start today!!

*(Much of the information presented here is based on the NAFA conference paper "Short Term Study Abroad: Integration, Third Culture Formation, and Re-entry" by James L. Citron)*

**The world is a great book,  
of which they who never stir  
read only a page.**

- St. Augustine

**See the world while it lasts**

*Technology is infectious. Every time an antenna is raised in a remote village, another local culture becomes extinct. No society is equipped to withstand the onslaught. Every satellite launched, every cable laid, the death of every elder, hastens the end of cultural diversity. If you are 25, it will disappear during your lifetime. Forget about stopping it: you can't. Instead savour every chance you get to absorb a passing world, to experience as much as you can before it fades into a big version of anyplace.*

*Each and every culture, no matter how small or remote, represents a vast body of experience – of wars and adventures and art, of medicines and music and hairstyles, of living with parents, living with nature, playing, dancing, kissing. Together these cultures are the culmination of millions of years of practice living on a precious, fragile planet.*

*Go now. Go for the people, not for the weather. Go to learn. Pass along to your friends and later, your kids, the things you learned, wherever you went. Use the technology you have to record what you find. Take pictures, tape music and stories, make videos. And leave nothing behind. When you go back home, take things away in your head, not in your suitcase.*

*(From the international COLORS magazine, sponsored by Benetton).*



## SECTION 3

### Return Culture Shock

#### Don't let it catch you by surprise!

Return culture shock is what you experience when you return home and have to readjust to your own country. This is a difficult procedure for many people and is usually unanticipated. If you have trouble re-adjusting, the first thing to tell yourself is that this is completely normal. For some it is more difficult to readjust than it was to adapt to a foreign environment.

#### You can prepare yourself somewhat by considering the following factors

- Family and friends may show less interest in your stories and experiences than you expect. This may make you feel lonely, misunderstood, or unappreciated.
- If you are unhappy about your return home you may try to withdraw from or delay from re-establishing good relations with family and friends.
- You will no longer stand out in your surroundings. When you were a foreigner you may have attracted more interest and developed new friendships. Once you are home

your friends will not find you so unusual.

- Being at home is not challenging and exciting in the way that life is in a foreign country where you have to struggle to make a success of everything from food habits to behaviour, dress codes and language. There is a sense of achievement in having to stretch yourself to meet challenges in a foreign country. A sense of achievement or personal growth is not the same at home where you do not face so many challenges.
- You may miss foreign friends as well as the culture, the climate, the food and the language.
- Your hometown may not seem as glamorous, interesting or exciting as the cities or towns you visited or lived in while you were abroad.

Many students experience return culture shock without realising what is happening to them. Not being aware of what you are suffering just adds to your feeling of anxiety or depression. Family or friends may not understand why you feel unhappy, depressed or even homesick for the country and friends you left behind. In fact, they may not realise what you are going through.

The good news is that eventually most people do get used to being home. They stop longing to go back to where they were. They start focusing on the future at home. With the passage of time they develop a more balanced view of the pros and cons of both home and abroad and put their study abroad experience in a more realistic perspective. Once this happens, feelings of depression, dissatisfaction or stress tend to subside.

However, study abroad is not something you need to "get over". The experience remains with you and your outlook on life changes in basic ways. Generally students find that they can make use of the best aspects of their study abroad experience and incorporate their newly acquired knowledge and skills into their future outlook on life.

#### Positive aspects of study abroad will always remain with you

- You will have a wider outlook, appreciation and understanding of the world.
- You will have knowledge of and sensitivity to another culture and people from another country that may increase your sensitivity

and awareness of the differences between yourself and many other people around the world.

- You will have acquired another language that will increase your appreciation of the literature, culture and people who speak that language. This may also provide you with skills that enhance your career prospects and make you a more attractive candidate to potential employers.
- You will be more independent, flexible and able to cope with new or difficult experiences.
- You may have a new set of friends with whom you will stay in touch
- **You will see your own culture more objectively than you did before.**

Living abroad is worth the effort and brings untold and indefinable rewards. As you struggle to re-adjust to your home environment, remind yourself that the rewards make it all worthwhile.

#### Further readings on Culture Shock

**Aten, Gary:** *Learning Across Cultures.*  
**Lewis, Richard:** *The Cultural Imperative.*  
**Weaver, Gary:** *Culture, Communication and Conflict.*

## Appendix 3

### Gender issues

Women may experience particular difficulties while abroad. Despite the fact that the rate of violence towards women, including rape, is higher in South Africa than in many other countries, facing the unfamiliar can raise your level of anxiety. This is compounded by language and cultural differences. Women from many of the developed countries in the West have a reputation for enjoying a lifestyle that contrasts with the traditional behaviour in many countries. This image is reinforced by distorted stereotypes used in TV, movies and advertising. Cultural differences extend to body language. American students for example, may encounter people who do not understand that their familiar way with strangers is a gesture of friendship. A smile, a hairstyle, the way you carry yourself, eye contact and the distance between people engaged in a

conversation can have profoundly different interpretations from culture to culture. Even smiling at a stranger may be misunderstood.

You are **your own best resource when preparing** to face a range of possible situations, from sexual comments or harassment, to the rare event of a physically threatening situation. Before leaving, take the time and initiative to learn as much as possible about your host country's language, religion, customs and appropriate dress for women. Talk to women and men who have visited your host country and, if possible, talk to people from your host country. It is very important to understand and respect the different cultures in South Africa, especially if you should work in a remote area or even if you are just visiting a black township such as the neighbouring Kayamandi. The

more familiar you are with your new country's customs, the more respect you will earn and the more you will break down reciprocal stereotypes. Such knowledge will increase your confidence and independence, which are important to your personal safety. Once in your host country, talk to local women. Follow examples of culturally appropriate dress and demeanour. Ask about women's organisations. While you can't change the culture around you, you can use your friends (and host nationals) as a safe haven for developing coping skills and venting frustrations.

**Remember, cultural differences should not be an excuse to endure verbal or physical abuse.**

Depending on the situation, remove yourself as quickly as possible, confront the person, or ask for support from others. Trust your intuition. If you are offered a ride and you feel some anxiety, decline the offer. If you are in a setting that makes you nervous, leave. **If your instincts send you warning signals, heed them!**

Remember, cultural differences should not be an excuse to endure verbal or physical abuse.

Precautions also apply to social situations. Most likely, you will find everyone you meet to be interesting and interested in you. However, you cannot make judgments about your safety based on another person's appearance or financial status. If you are uncomfortable with certain behaviour or the tone of the conversation, the following may help:

- Try to turn the conversation around by asking questions. Initiate rather than react. This puts you more in control. Bring up other subjects, such as local politics or history. Use a gracious sense of humour, so that saying "no" can allow the other person to save face.

- If this fails to deter, then tell the other person very directly that you want him or her to stop (whatever it is that disturbs you). Be specific. A calm and serious tone is usually the best. Your own body language should match your words. A giggle, smile or apology will undermine your message. **It is better to act assertively in your defence rather than to be passive.**
- If you need help in developing the skills necessary for assertive behaviour, take a women's self-defence class.
- Firmly say "no" to any invitation you don't want, and give your address only to people you trust. Be cautious until you understand

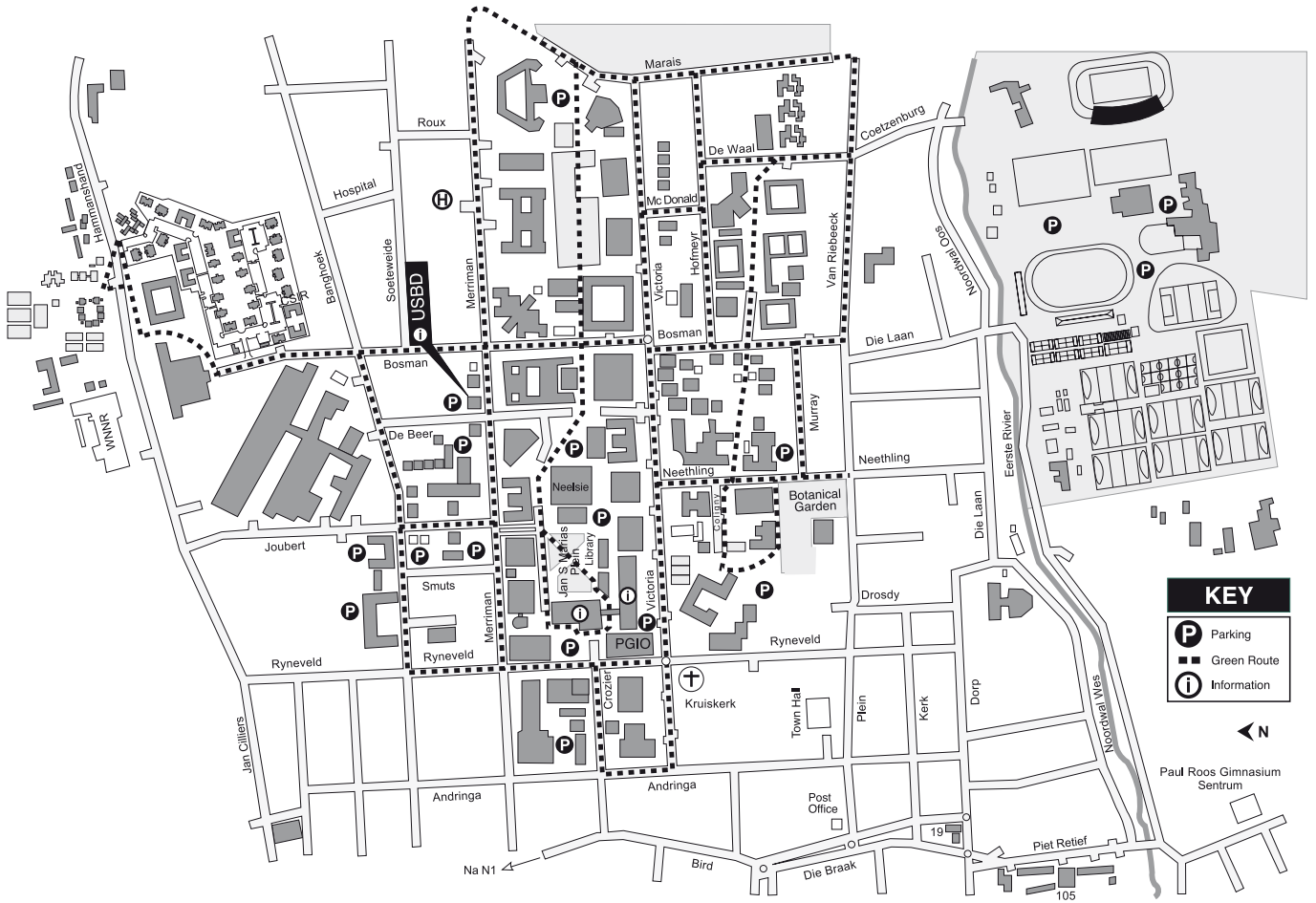
local values and customs. Learning to respect the local social rules will facilitate your relationships with the host nationals.

- Don't go to a secluded area (or even be alone in your room) with a man that you don't know well.
- **Don't walk alone at night, not even on campus.**
- In an extreme situation, appeal for help from other women or from the local authorities.

Only you can determine how best to handle a situation. However, if you prepare yourself before departure, you will have more options for dealing with situations.



Be cautious until you understand local values and customs.  
Learning to respect the local social rules will facilitate  
your relationships with the host nationals.



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