



UCT ONLINE HIGH SCHOOL

POLICIES

ACADEMIC HANDBOOK

SA Senior National Certificate (CAPS)

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1. Introduction

UCT Online High School (UCT OHS) is an innovative online school seeking to level the education playing field and create a new opportunity for learners throughout South Africa to choose an aspirational school regardless of their circumstances. The UCT OHS ecosystem has been designed to service learners from a broad range of socioeconomic means. UCT OHS seeks to break down the silos between secondary and tertiary education, and provide a learner-centered education arc where their secondary schooling sets our learners up for success in their post-secondary schooling journey. All enrolled learners have access to the same teachers, irrespective of where they live. All learners also have access to the same learning content on our Online Campus. This is to ensure that learners across our school receive the same quality of education from the comfort of their learning environment.

The entire curriculum is an Open Educational Resource, giving free access to anyone wanting to learn. Learners can sign up on the online campus to create an account, and can either access any of the content without enrolling, or they enroll into courses for free to be able to track their progress through the material and the scores they achieve in the auto-graded assignments. Finally, we also prioritise learners' socio-emotional and behavioural needs. We encourage learners to interact with the rest of their academic community through live sessions with Support Coaches as well as virtual clubs.

This Academic Handbook will provide you with an overview of our learning model, subjects offered in the NSC programme as well as any other relevant information for your academic journey. This handbook should be read together with the UCT Online High School's Terms & Conditions as well as the policies and handbooks available on the UCT Online High School website. This handbook may be reviewed, amended or updated at any time. Any changes made to this Handbook will come into effect from the date that the amended Handbook is made available on the UCT Online High School website.

2. The learning model

Joining and onboarding

- UCT Online High School follows a four term calendar.
- Learners in Grades 8-11 can join our school at the beginning of Terms 1, 2 and 3.
- Learners in Grade 12 can only join our school at the beginning of Term 1.
- Learners complete an orientation programme (General orientation module) that teaches them the foundations of the skills they will need to be successful in online education. Their support coach will then continue this skills development in dedicated learning skills sessions on an ongoing basis.
- The technical support team assists learners with their onboarding process, and supports them throughout their high school career.

Academic engagement

Accreditation

- UCT Online High School has chosen to apply for registration for Grades 10-12 with SACAI, and deliver a CAPS-aligned curriculum that prepares students for the NSC examinations.
- Guardians of learners in grades 8 & 9 are required to comply with any home education regulations, as your children are in a compulsory schooling phase.

Mastery-based

- Building a house requires a strong foundation, or it will crumble. Just like a wall with missing building blocks runs the risk of falling over, moving on from a lesson when you haven't grasped a key concept leads to difficulties later on.
- Although the onus is on the learner to ensure they stay on pace, we help learners to honour their commitment by carefully monitoring their progress and their grades. If it looks like a learner is falling behind, there will be notifications to help them get back on track. If they are not reaching their potential with their grades, their support coach intervenes to help them get back on track.

- Learners can view and monitor their grades on the online campus as well as their portal.
- Guardians can stay updated with their children's progress through the use of a guardian portal and the ConnectEd mobile app.

Ask Me Anything sessions

- Ask Me Anything sessions are live sessions with the academic team. This is used in addition to the Online Campus to support ongoing learning.
- Learners are expected to have engaged with the content before the Ask Me Anything session to ensure they can engage constructively with the lesson and derive maximum benefits from the live session.
- Ask Me Anything sessions focus on reinforcing and clarifying core concepts as well as giving learners the opportunity to apply what they have learnt.

Formal Assessments, also known as School-Based Assessments (SBAs)

- Formal assessments, also known as School-Based Assessments (SBAs), are formative assessments completed throughout the year.
- All formal assessments must be completed within a stipulated date in order to complete your termly and grade-level portfolio.
- The marks obtained in your formal assessments are used to calculate your term mark, and subsequently, whether you meet the progression requirements for the grade.
- Any formal assessments that are not submitted may impact your report mark.

Cycle Tests

- Cycle Tests are written at set times in the term. They cover a number of modules and form a part of the report mark.
- All cycle tests are internal and are proctored exams, written online.
- All rules relating to cycle tests are set by the external assessment body. Valenture Institute and UCT OHS are required to ensure adherence to these rules.
- Students are required to familiarise themselves with the rules pertaining to cycle tests and must abide by these rules at all times.
- For any special accommodations, such as extra time, larger print, dyslexia font, or use of a scribe, the student's parent / guardian is required to contact the Support Coach, who will advise on the process to follow.

Examination

- Examinations are written in Terms 2 and 4, with the exception of Grade 12 Prelims, which are usually scheduled in Term 3.
- They cover a number of modules, usually half of or the entire year's work, and form a part of the report mark.
- All exams, with the exception of the Grade 12 final examinations, are considered internal examinations.
- Internal examinations are proctored exams, written online.
- The Grade 12 final examinations must be written in person at a certified exam centre, allocated by our accreditation body. It is the responsibility of each parent / guardian to ensure that they make the necessary arrangements for the learner to write the external examination.
- All rules relating to examinations are set by the external assessment body. Valenture Institute and UCT OHS are required to ensure adherence to these rules.
- Students are required to familiarise themselves with the rules pertaining to examinations and must abide by these rules at all times.
- For any special accommodations, such as extra time, larger print, dyslexia font or use of a scribe, the student's parent / guardian is required to contact the Support Coach, who will advise on the process to follow.

Socio-emotional and behavioural development

- To ensure learners can still build community and make friends, we create opportunities for live online sessions for human connection and relationship building.
- Learners also meet with their support coach to learn more of the skills they need to be successful in online learning.

Social engagement type	Definition	Frequency
Group academic sessions	Ask-me-anything sessions that are scheduled to target specific learning outcomes that are deemed at-risk according to the data.	Weekly
Support Pitstops	Learners engage with their Support Coaches to learn the skills they need to succeed in online learning.	Weekly
Live Check-ins	Live check-ins happen every Monday, Wednesday and Friday and serve as a time where Support Coaches will give their learners important updates and reminders for the upcoming week.	Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday
Virtual clubs	Learners engage with each other and a facilitator on topics such as music, debating, and sustainable living.	Depends on what is appropriate for the club and what the learners want.
Assembly	Assembly affords our learners, principal, teachers, and support coaches the opportunity to come together every week. The aim of the assembly is to instill school culture, values, and spirit through motivational talks and sharing important school announcements.	Weekly



3. Curriculum plan

Subject offering

	GRADES 8 -9 (min of 9 subjects) SENIOR PHASE A learner could take a 3rd language as an additional subject.		GRADES 10-11 (min of 7 subjects) FET PHASE Compulsory subjects: Two languages, one of which must be a Home language. Mathematical Literacy or Mathematics. Life Orientation. 3	
1	Home Language (English)		Home Language (English)	
2	Choose one (or do the 2nd as an extra subject)	First Additional Language (Afrikaans)	Choose one (or do the 2nd as an extra subject)	First Additional Language (Afrikaans)
		First Additional Language (isiXhosa)		First Additional Language (isiXhosa)
		First Additional Language (isiZulu)		First Additional Language (isiZulu)
		First Additional Language (Sesotho)		First Additional Language (Sesotho)
3	Mathematics		Mathematical Literacy	
4	Natural Sciences		Mathematics	
5	Social Sciences		Life Orientation	
6	Technology		Accounting	
7	Economic Management Sciences		Business Studies	
8	Life Orientation		Computer Applications Technology (CAT)	
9	Creative Arts		Information Technology (IT)	
10			Economics	
11			Geography	
12			History	

13		Physical Sciences
14		Life Sciences
15		Visual Arts
16		Tourism (Grades 10 only)
17		Engineering Graphics and Design (Grade 10 only)

SENIOR PHASE

Learners who are in the Senior Phase must be enrolled in nine (9) subjects as listed below. Two (2) of these nine (9) are two official languages; one at Home Language level and one at First Additional Language level.

1. English (Home Language);
2. First Additional Language (one choice from those offered)*;
3. Mathematics;
4. Life Orientation;
5. Natural Sciences;
6. Technology;
7. Economic Management Sciences;
8. Social Sciences; and
9. Creative Arts.

Further Education & Training Phase (FET)

The Further Education & Training Phase (FET) covers a three year period from Grades 10 - 12. At the end of the Senior Phase, learners who are promoted / progressed are required to take a minimum of 7 subjects from the start of the FET phase. The 7 subjects must include 4 compulsory subjects and 3 subjects that a learner can select from those offered by UCT Online High School. The choice of the 3 subjects is made ahead of being enrolled in Grade 10.

Compulsory subjects

All learners enrolled in the FET phase are required to take these compulsory subjects throughout the full duration of the phase:

1. English (Home Language);
2. First Additional Language*
3. Mathematics **or** Mathematical Literacy; and
4. Life Orientation.

Elective subjects

Choice of 3 or more subjects:

Any of the following 3 subjects may be chosen, within the following parameters. Please do note that some subjects do have prerequisites.

- Physical Sciences [Mathematics is a prerequisite]
- Life Sciences
- Geography
- History
- Accounting
- Business Studies
- Economics
- CAT
- Visual Arts
- Information Technology
- Tourism (**Grade 10 only**)
- Engineering Graphics and Design (**Grade 10 only**)

Please note: Life Orientation is a requirement for the entire FET phase. A learner must have selected and done Life Orientation in grade 10 in order to be eligible for admission into grade 11. As a result, new learners without Life Orientation can only be admitted if they are willing to repeat grade 10 and select Orientation Life.

Additional subjects

A learner may take more than the required minimum of seven subjects, provided that they comply with the following requirements:

- Learners can only take a maximum of two additional subjects.
- Learners cannot select more than one First Additional Language subject. Only one FAL is allowed.
- The additional subjects must be taken for all three years of the FET phase.
- All the School-Based Assessment and the Practical / Oral Assessment Task requirements for the required subjects, where applicable, must be met for all three years of the FET phase.

Exemptions for First Additional Language

Taking a First Additional Language from those available is mandatory for the National Senior Certificate. Exemptions will only be considered in the following circumstances:

- An immigrant learner: The learner must be in possession of the official relevant documentation confirming immigrant status from the Department of Home Affairs;
- A child or a dependant of a diplomatic representative of a foreign government accredited in South Africa;
- A person / learner who first enrolled at and entered a South African School in Grade 7 or a more senior grade;
- A learner who, having begun his or her schooling at a school in South Africa, has attended school outside South Africa for two or more consecutive years after Grade 6 or its equivalent.

Subject changes

Subject change rules and deadlines

Although subject changes are permitted, it must be noted that UCT Online High School has the discretion and final say on subject change requests. Generally, subject changes that are not in the best interest of the learner are likely to be declined. All subject change requests must be submitted before the expiry of the following prescribed deadlines.

- **Senior Phase:** First Additional Language (FAL) change is allowed once a year, provided this is done before 27 June of the specific grade. No other subject may be changed except for the FAL.
- **Grade 10:** two subject changes are allowed, provided they are done before 27 June of the Grade 10 year.
- **Grade 11:** two subject changes are allowed, provided they are done before 27 March of the Grade 11 year.
- **Grade 12:** one may be requested, provided that this is done before 9 December of the year preceding the Grade 12 year. As stated earlier in the policy, changing subjects in Grade 12 is not advisable. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Please note that swapping a Home Language with an FAL subject constitutes a subject change and amounts to two subject changes. For example, a learner who has been taking Afrikaans as a Home Language and English as First Additional Language will have to swap these around. This will be regarded as two subject changes.

The school has discretion over when all approved subject changes will take effect. In other words, the school may decide that subject change requests that were submitted and approved in the first term will take effect in term 2. Which means the learner is expected to continue with the subject until the end of the first term.

It must be noted that a learner cannot change or replace Maths Literacy with Mathematics. However, Mathematics can be replaced with Maths Literacy.

Although subject changes are permitted, it should be noted that UCT Online High School has the discretion and final say on subject change requests. Subject change requests may be declined if it is not in the learner's best interest. Please note the technically demanding subjects listed in **column A** below, which require a deeper level of understanding. Our observations are that learners who select these subjects mid-year often face significant challenges and, in many cases, struggle to pass. We strongly advise against selecting any of these subjects for the first time in Grade 11 or 12. Instead, we recommend subjects from **column B**, which may be more suitable for late selection and provide a stronger foundation for academic success.

Grade 11 subject change and selection

Column A	Column B
1. Mathematics 2. Physical science 3. Accounting 4. Information Technology	1. Business studies 2. Visual arts 3. Economics 4. Geography 5. History 6. CAT

Grade 12 subject change and selection

Column A	Column B
1. Mathematics 2. Physical sciences 3. Life Sciences 3. Accounting 4. Information Technology 5. CAT 6. History 7. Geography	1. Business studies 2. Economics 3. Geography 4. Maths Literacy

Subject change process

1. **Guardian subject change requests:** Subject change requests must be submitted by the learner's guardian using the prescribed SACAI Subject Change form. The request must be submitted via the Guardian Portal before the deadline.
2. **Governance:** Reviews the subject change request in terms of SA CAPS rules and approves or rejects the request. If the request is rejected, the guardian will be notified with reasons.
3. **Submission of form to SACAI:** As part of the learner registration process, the subject change form request is submitted to SACAI for review and decision.
4. **Fee impact:** Only applicable to additional subjects. The finance team will confirm the impact on the learners' billing and will contact the guardian for approval.
5. **System changes:** Our technical team facilitates the changes on our CRM and Learning Management System.

Grade 12 subject changes:

A subject change request in grade 12 must be made in writing by the learner and must be fully motivated. The learner's guardian must clearly endorse the request. The Head of the School will, after consulting the teacher for the new subject, process and decide the request, taking into account what is in the best interest of the learner.

*NOTE: **ALL** Grade 12 subject change requests **MUST** include a letter of motivation from the guardian along with the subject change form and Gr 11 report.*

List of subjects below which Grade 12 learners will NOT be allowed to take for the first time in Grade 12.

1. Accounting
2. Physical Sciences
3. Life Sciences

4. CAT
5. History
6. IT
7. Visual Arts
8. Economics
9. Geography
10. Business studies

The following subjects **MAY** be taken for the first time in Grade 12

1. Mathematics Literacy

Important: Subject changes in Grade 12 are only permitted under *exceptional circumstances*. If a learner changes to **Mathematical Literacy**, they may not take subjects that include **Practical Assessment Tasks (PATs)** or that require specialised skills (for example, Geography mapwork).

Learners are reminded that it is **their responsibility** to catch up on all **Grade 10 and Grade 11 content** for the new subject, as the final examination will assess knowledge and skills from all three years of study.

4. Academic outcomes

Reporting

Learners' termly marks, achievement, and progress will be available on the termly report for learners and guardians to refer to. Other informal methods of reporting will be used where this is appropriate, such as through messaging, telephonic, and e-mail communication with guardians and learners.

Achievement levels

Achievement levels are based on the CAPS system of grading. They are indicators read on a per subject basis, and given as follows:

PERCENTAGE RANGE	ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL
0% - 29%	1 - Not achieved
30% - 39%	2 - Elementary achievement
40% - 49%	3 - Moderate achievement
50% - 59%	4 - Adequate achievement
60% - 69%	5 - Substantial achievement
70% - 79%	6 - Meritorious achievement
80% - 100%	7 - Outstanding achievement

Termly Achievement codes

The following codes are used to indicate whether your child has met the promotion requirements. These codes are determined by taking into account the combination of subject marks for the term. They are not determined by the term average:

RESULTS CODES	MEANING
Achieved	Met the minimum promotion requirements
Did not achieve	Did not meet the minimum progression requirement

Minimum Promotion requirements

Senior Phase promotion requirements:

- Above 50% for their first language,
- Above 40% for second language and mathematics
- Above 40% for three other subjects and above 30% for two subjects.

Further Education and Training (FET) Phase promotion requirements:

- Above 40% for home language
- Above 40% for two other subjects
- Above 30% for three other subjects

Progression

A learner is required to meet the minimum promotion requirements in order to achieve a promotion status. Learners who are at promotion risk will be required to attend additional academic support.

Voluntary grade repeat

UCT Online High School has been receiving requests from guardians of learners who performed exceptionally well to be retained in the same grade despite meeting the promotional requirements to be promoted to the next grade. These requests are unusual because learners who have proven that they are academically strong ought to be promoted to the next grade, per promotion requirements.

Although these requests are discouraged, the School is willing to consider and decide them. Subject change requests must be fully reasoned and submitted in writing by the primary guardian to the learner's support coach. In deciding these requests, the School will be guided by the best interest of the learner principle taking into account the learner's age and the fact that a learner cannot be legally retained for more than four years in the same phase.

5. Appeals

UCT Online High School and staff, together with the relevant assessment body, are responsible for establishing the methods and criteria for evaluation and carrying out evaluations and assessments of the performance by learners.

Learners and guardians may appeal an academic decision if they believe that the decision was unfair or that the academic policies were not followed or applied incorrectly. All parties involved in the appeal have a right to a meaningful opportunity to be heard and to respond to information and documentation presented.

6. Admissions Appeals

1.1. Should a guardian disagree with the UCT Online High School's decision to admit the learner, an appeal may be lodged within one calendar week from the date on which feedback was sent to the said guardian.

1.2. The relevant appeal form must be sent to the Admissions counsellor.

- 1.3. All appeals must be accompanied by additional supporting evidence.
- 1.4. All evidence will be reviewed by The UCT Online High School's Committee in consultation with any other official or specialist whose input may be required.
- 1.5. A response will be given within 3 work days of submission of the appeal.
- 1.6. The decision of the UCT Online High School is final and no further internal appeals will be entertained.

7. Internal Appeals

Learners, or guardians- with the learner's input, may request a re-mark of a continuous assessment assignment within a reasonable amount of time. However, no re-marks will be considered after an assessment body's examination has been written. Re-marks may result in an increase, decrease or no change to your mark. A re-mark must be requested for review, with reasoning supporting the regrade request. Any such request must be submitted before any external assessment is written.

External Appeals: Assessment Body Examinations

After the viewing of an examination answer script, a candidate who wrote the National Senior Certificate examination may apply for a re-mark to the Independent Assessment body, in this case the South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI). The decision of the independent assessment body is final.

The candidate must follow the processes and requirements of the independent assessment body which may include the payment of a fee.

- Should a SACAI registered institution, guardian or learner disagree with SACAI's decision, an appeal may be lodged within one calendar month from the date on which feedback was sent to the registered institution.
- The relevant appeal form must be completed.
- All appeals must be accompanied by additional supporting evidence.

- An appeal fee is payable, for which you will be billed. (The institution will be issued with a bulk invoice for all applications submitted; no guardian should pay SACAI directly.)
- All evidence will be reviewed by SACAI in consultation with any other official or specialist whose input may be required.
- The decision of the relevant assessment body is final.

8. Progression Appeal

A guardian has a right to appeal the final decision made by the school to progress or retain a learner and must follow the following process;

To appeal a progression or retention decision, the guardian must submit a request by the first day of the school year, specifying the reasons why the progression or retention decision is being contested. An appeal that is based on one or more of the following reasons will be considered

1. Physical and/or emotional Health
2. Trauma
3. Bereavement
4. Barriers to Learner
5. Natural Disaster
6. Academic appeal on end-of-year exam

The appeal must be referred to the progression committee for consideration and decision.

The onus shall be on the guardian as the appealing party to show why the progression or retention decision should be overturned.

The committee shall make a final determination in this regard; and will be communicated, in writing, to the guardian.