

Internationalisation at Rhodes 2011

Information for
International Students

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The International Office is a small office that deals predominantly with exchange and study abroad students, and is responsible for internationalisation at Rhodes.

What does the International Office do?

The International Office:

- serves as a contact point for study abroad and exchange students, staff and visitors;
- supports Rhodes staff and students who travel and study abroad on official exchange programmes;
- develops international opportunities, links and exchanges for Rhodes staff and student;
- liaises with the international offices at other universities;
- researches internationalisation at Rhodes;
- participates in the activities of both local and other international education societies.

What are some of the activities that the International Office does at Rhodes?

The International Office tries to establish an international culture at Rhodes, amongst students and staff, through the following activities:

- a weekly International Filmfest, in conjunction with the School of Languages, in which free screenings of international films are shown;
- an annual Africa week, in which various events celebrating Africa are held, and an annual China Week, in conjunction with the Confucius Institute, in which various events celebrating China are held;
- a survey of all international students, to research and improve their experiences at Rhodes University;
- an annual International Day, during which our international students can showcase their cultures;
- strategic workshops to develop internationalisation at Rhodes, incorporating staff and students;
- an Internationalisation Committee to research and develop internationalisation at Rhodes, which meets every term;
- facilitating the visits of international visitors;
- an annual International School for short term students over the July vacation.

The International Office's concern is primarily with internationalisation at Rhodes University.

Internationalisation at Rhodes

Internationalisation is the process of integrating an international dimension into the research, teaching and service functions of an institution of higher education.

Internationalisation at Rhodes is important for a variety of reasons. International scholarship is a key element of Rhodes' Mission. Rhodes staff, both academic and management, have strong relations with the international academic community. And the number of foreign students at Rhodes has grown remarkably. In recent years, approximately 22% of Rhodes students have been international students. These students form a complex group of degree-seeking undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as short term exchange and study abroad students.

In 2004 the Director of the International Office was appointed to develop and support internationalisation at Rhodes. The Director's brief is to report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Development, and the Internationalisation Committee of Senate, to develop the internationalisation strategy at Rhodes within the guidelines of the Internationalisation Policy, and to manage the International Office.

What is internationalisation?

Internationalisation is the process of developing an international dimension to all aspects of the core business of a university (teaching, research and community service) at all levels (academic, administrative and support services). Some examples:

- Supporting student and staff mobility (exchanges, cooperation);
- Enriching the teaching and research experience with short term foreign academics;
- Infusing a global comparative perspective into what is taught and how it is taught;
- Stimulating interest in and discussion of international political, economic and cultural topics on campus.

Why does Rhodes take internationalisation seriously?

The short answer to why Rhodes takes internationalisation seriously is because it has become one of the key indicators of the quality of a university. Internationalised universities are better universities. If you want to have a look at the top universities in the world, go to <http://www.arwu.org>.

Universities internationalise for two reasons: (1) because of the economic benefits (vast numbers of students are now highly mobile and can go to where they get the best educational deal - universities in Australia and Europe are heavily into this market); or, (2) because of the educational and cultural benefits (the ideal of global understanding and citizenship). Rhodes focuses on (2). We do not actively market to attract international students.

Why should I take internationalisation seriously?

Magnet Communications did a survey for the Sunday Times on what students want from an employer (Sunday Times, December 4, 2005) and reported that 'overall, international career opportunities and a life-work balance are the two most important goals.' Obviously, no company is going to offer you opportunities in the rest of the world if your CV and general attitude show that you have the mindset of someone from a dorp. So, one answer is: take internationalisation very seriously and get it into your CV! Another answer - as important as the first - is that the big wide world is an interesting place and people from other cultures are often fascinating. Since that world and those international people are

directly involved in your own life, you better work to understand them. If you are South African, a good place to begin is right on campus: the rich variety of people offers a unique opportunity.

Who drives internationalisation at Rhodes?

The Director of the International Office does. She works with academics, administrators and students to develop all kinds of projects, and reports directly to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Development, Dr. Peter Clayton. She is responsible for:

- new exchange agreements with international partner institutions;
- events and lectures on campus;
- changes to the curriculum;
- links with professional bodies, and so on.

I am an International degree-seeking student - what can the International Office do for me?

International Degree-seeking students are treated administratively in the same manner as South African students, and all admissions, administration, accommodation, course and financial queries are to be directed to the Student Bureau.

The International Office assists with the aspects that are peculiar to international students.

Visa assistance

Please note that Grahamstown does not have a visa office. Students should apply for their study visas in their home country before coming to Rhodes University. Should a student need to extend or change his/her study visa, s/he needs to go in person to the Home Affairs office in Port Elizabeth to do so.

The International Office can assist by providing the following forms (also available on our website):

- the application form for a study visa
- the application form to renew or extend a study visa
- a medical certificate form
- a radiological report form

The rules and regulations concerning visas differ for every country, so if students have queries regarding visas, they should call this toll-free number: 0800 601 190.

Medical Aid assistance

All international students are legally required to have membership to a South African Medical Aid for the duration of their study at Rhodes University. This is a requirement by the South African Government, under the Immigration Act 10 (2004), which requires that students must provide proof of medical cover with a medical scheme registered in terms of the Medical Schemes Act 131 (1998).

Rhodes University has appointed an ABSA Health Care Consultant to assist international students with all queries relating to appropriate medical cover and applications for membership, or renewals thereof. This service will be at no additional cost to either the student or the University. Please note that all international students must have their South African medical cover facilitated via ABSA Health Care Consultants in order to be acceptable for Rhodes University registration purposes.

The appointed ABSA Health Care Consultant is Ms. Marinda Potgieter. She can be contacted via email on absahealthcare@absa.co.za or telephonically on 0860 100 380.

Marinda will also run a help desk at the International Office EVERY SECOND THURSDAY between 09:00 and 12:00 to answer queries in person.

Financial Aid

Please note that the International Office does not offer financial aid to students.

The International Surcharge

The surcharge is determined by the Council of Rhodes University. The International Office is not involved in the process, and is funded by the general budget of Rhodes University. Should you have any queries regarding the international surcharge, please contact the Finance Division.

International Events

The International Office is tasked with developing the international culture at Rhodes University. One way it does this is to facilitate and host events that have an international dimension, often in conjunction with the SRC International Societies. So keep an eye out for our adverts for International Day, Africa Week, and the Post-grad Oakdene/Celeste House Braai, amongst other events.

International Student Forum

Rhodes University is concerned with the welfare of its international students. To ensure that international students have a voice, the International Office holds an annual International Student Forum, in which students are given an open forum to ask questions which will be answered by various members of staff.

The International Office also, in a bid to research the level of internationalisation as perceived by students, conducts a survey to evaluate various aspects of the students' lives at Rhodes.

English competency tests

The International Office does NOT offer TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language System) tests. International students whose first language is not English are required to prove their academic competency in English by completing the IELTS test, but need to do so independently and provide proof of their results when they apply to Rhodes University. Please note: TOEFL test results are not accepted at Rhodes University.

Information about the test can be found at: www.ielts.org

Website: <http://www.ru.ac.za/international/internationalstudents/degreeseekingstudents>
<http://www.ru.ac.za/international/internationalstudents/frequentlyaskedquestions>

I am an exchange/ study abroad student - what can the International Office do for me?

For all exchange and study abroad students, the International Office is the first port of call. The International Office deals with all admissions, and facilitates the students' arrival at Rhodes. This includes arranging accommodation and transport from the Port Elizabeth airport for incoming students, advising on course selection, and orientating students to their new environment. The International Office is also responsible for issuing the accounts and academic transcripts for these short term students.

Short term students should come to the International Office for all fee queries, course selection queries, and medical cover queries.

Website: <http://www.ru.ac.za/international/internationalstudents/frequentlyaskedquestions>

I am interested in going on exchange - what can the International Office do for me?

The International Office has established partnerships with many universities across the world, and Rhodes students may study at one of these universities for a semester. Every year, the International Office recruits students to take part in the exchange programme, and will facilitate the exchange administratively.

If students are interested in becoming an exchange student, they should visit the International Office website, where they can download an application form to complete. Applications are due in August, and interviews are held shortly thereafter for the following year's programmes.

Website: <http://www.ru.ac.za/international/rhodentsonexchange>

I am a Rhodes student interested in transferring to another university - what can the International Office do for me?

The International Office cannot assist students who wish to transfer abroad, and can offer no advice on the visa requirements for their host country. We do not offer SAT tests, cannot convert a student's Rhodes results to another grading system, and cannot calculate a GPA score.

Students are advised to contact the university that they wish to attend, and to seek information from them.

How do I keep up with all the information?

The best way is to check our website regularly. We also advertise our events on StudentZone and via the various mailing lists. Keep an eye open for posters with the distinctive International Office logo.

the
International Office 

Our website: www.ru.ac.za/international

For queries, feel free to contact the International Office at internationaloffice@ru.ac.za

What does the SRC International Affairs Councillor do?

The SRC also has an International Affairs Councillor, whom international students can contact regarding queries related to student life. The councillor for 2011 is Nguhi Mwaura.

Email: srcinternational@ru.ac.za

The SRC website is www.ru.ac.za/studentrepresentativecouncil/

The SRC International Councillor is a student elected by YOU, to represent the needs of international students as well as the needs of students who go on exchange, to the greater Rhodes University body.

The mandate of the International Councillor is to help you feel like Rhodes is where you belong as an international student. So, they should be the first port of call for any grievances that you have with regards to being an international student at Rhodes.

The International Councillor is also there to help facilitate you going on exchange. So, they can help direct you to the right place if you have any queries or issues regarding the exchange programme.

The SRC is here to serve you, so please feel free to contact your SRC representatives with any issues that you may have.

International Office - Contact Us

Telephone: +27 (0)46 603 8217

Fax: +27 (0)46 603 8209

Email: internationaloffice@ru.ac.za

Postal address:

International Office

Rhodes University

PO Box 94

Grahamstown

6140

South Africa

Physical Address:

International Office

Eden Grove Building

Lucas Avenue

Grahamstown

6139

South Africa

Please note: The International Office is only open to student enquiries in the mornings, between 08:30 and 12:30.