



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn



Faculty of Commerce 2025

UNDERGRADUATE
INFORMATION





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Undergraduate information
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Faculty of Commerce

The Faculty of Commerce is the second largest faculty at Rhodes University with approximately 16% of the student population registered for qualifications in the Faculty.

The Faculty comprises four departments (Accounting, Economics, Information Systems, Management), and a Business School.

A host of qualifications are offered at the undergraduate level including the flagship Bachelor of Business Science, Bachelor of Commerce, and Bachelor of Economics all of which give access to the Faculty's post-graduate programmes. The four Faculty departments and Business School together with key departments in the faculties of Science, Humanities and Law provide the courses of which the various degrees comprise. Indeed, the interfaculty flavour of the various offerings is a distinctive feature of the Faculty.

Clustered in specific disciplinary areas within the Faculty departments and Business School, staff of the Faculty enthusiastically approach teaching and learning and knowledge creation with the many students who demonstrate similar levels of enthusiasm. Highly-qualified and well-recognised staff cooperate and collaborate with colleagues in other institutions of higher learning, as well as industry partners as they provide students with coursework and research opportunities of the highest level.

Students with wide-ranging career aspirations have found an excellent home in the Faculty. On completion of their degrees/diplomas, they have used the knowledge acquired as a basis for equally wide-ranging careers during which time they have made and will continue to make huge contributions to business and society.

Staff and current students of the Faculty are ready to welcome new students to a place 16% of students at Rhodes University call home. Admission is an application form away!

Why Commerce?

Well into the 21st century, business and commerce in South Africa continue to face new and exciting challenges. On the one hand, the world has become a global village in terms of speed of transfer of information and technology, and the exploitation of markets calls for highly sophisticated expertise to acquire and maintain a competitive edge. On the other hand, our country continues to grapple with the development of its economy, starved of competitive participation internationally for decades, whilst also taking up the challenge of being a key participant in the regional economy. The men and women who will make South Africa a winning nation by providing the business and commercial skills necessary to uplift our people and to launch our country into the global economy will be those who are equipped with the knowledge and particularly the adaptability to compete in today's information driven world. Additionally, the role played by social media and the increasing prevalence and importance of use of Artificial Intelligence in business and society demands that graduates be ever alert and responsive to all the opportunities, complexities and challenges afforded by these technologies.

The Faculty of Commerce offers a number of undergraduate degree study programmes including a Bachelor of Business Science, a Bachelor of Commerce and a Bachelor of Economics. The Faculty also offers an Extended Studies Programme which provides access to students who do not meet minimum admission criteria. Students enrolled in the Programme receive additional literacy and numerical instruction via extended, augmented or developmental courses whilst at the same time undertaking courses from the regular Bachelor of Commerce curriculum.

Upon graduation, students can elect to pursue any one of a number of post-graduate qualifications including post-graduate diplomas in a range of areas. Here, the Post-Graduate Diploma in Enterprise Management is aimed at improving the flow of qualified entrepreneurs to our economy.

Through its structured curricula the Faculty of Commerce at Rhodes University prepares its graduates for the leading roles they will be expected to play in their professional lives. Our programmes span the entire range of Accounting, Economics, Management, Information Systems, Mathematical and Statistical Sciences as well as the fields of Commercial Law and Organisational Psychology, to name but a few.

Our degrees and diplomas receive wide recognition, in both the academic and professional communities. Graduates of the Faculty are enthusiastically welcomed by a wide range of employers both within the private and public sector.

One of the factors which sets the Commerce Faculty at Rhodes University apart from others is the integration of the academic and social experience enjoyed at a high quality institution. Modern business is not only about technology and know-how, but also to a very large extent about people. With fifty percent of undergraduate students resident on campus, students gain critical social skills which will be invaluable in later life.

Degrees offered by the Faculty of Commerce

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES

A number of undergraduate degrees are offered by the Faculty:

Bachelor of Business Science (BBS)

The degree of Bachelor of Business Science is a four-year career-focused degree premised on the application of quantitative methods. The curriculum for this degree aims to provide a thorough grounding in the principles of the candidate's chosen field of expertise to the postgraduate level, supported by ancillary subjects which will equip candidates for the professional and managerial requirements of their chosen field at the highest level. Five specialised curricula are offered each of which enable a student to specialise in one or more of the following fields: Economics, Information Systems, Management, Quantitative Management, and Computer Science. Entry into the second and fourth years of study for the degree is by permission of the Faculty Board.

Bachelor of Commerce (BCom)

This is a three-year degree aimed at providing the graduate with a good academic grounding in the major subject areas of Commerce. The curricula provide for specialisation up to third year level in two or more of any of the following fields : Accounting, Economics, Information Systems, Law, Management, Science, Social Science and Statistics, in any of four curricula as follows:

The General Curriculum allows for a wide combination of subjects in second and third year including at least two major subjects. Provided the appropriate combination of courses is chosen, the curriculum enables students to qualify as members of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries and Administrators with the minimum of additional examinations. Further particulars are available from the Student Adviser. Extensive exemption is also available from the examinations for the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA).

The Accounting Curriculum is intended for students wishing to enter the accounting profession or to take the BCom degree with an accounting emphasis. If this curriculum is followed, the Postgraduate Diploma in Accountancy (PGDip(Accounting)) can be completed in one further year of study after credit is also obtained for Auditing 3, Management Accounting and Finance 3, and

Taxation 3. Students who obtain a BCom degree with this curriculum will qualify for exemption from the entire Foundation Stage of the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants (ACCA) examinations together with papers 5 and 8 in the Certificate stage. Extensive exemption is also available from the examinations for the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA). Further particulars may be obtained from the Head of the Department of Accounting.

The Law Curriculum is intended for students wishing to enter the legal profession, or to take a BCom degree with a legal emphasis. Following this curriculum, a candidate can obtain enough exemptions from the Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree subjects to complete the LLB requirements in two further years of study.

The Interfaculty Curriculum enables students to include a major subject in the Social Sciences in their BCom degree, and, depending on the subjects chosen, is suitable for candidates interested in personnel management or industrial relations. This curriculum also enables students to include a Science major or any Humanities major in their degree.

Bachelor of Economics (BEco)

This is a three-year degree which is designed for students who wish to include the maximum number of Economics courses and related subjects in their curriculum. The BEcon degree offers a suitable preparation for candidates interested in economic forecasting and analysis and economic planning, in both the public and private sectors. The following specialised curricula are offered:

The **Bachelor of Economics (Environmental Science)** is intended for students wishing to pursue careers in the economic aspects of environmental studies. The curriculum is designed to train students in the application of economic principles to environmental studies, and combines courses from the Faculties of Science and Commerce.

The **Bachelor of Economics (Mineral Economics)** is intended for students who wish to become economists with a geological background. The curriculum is designed to apply economic principles to the exploitation of mineral resources, and combines courses from the Faculties of Science and Commerce. Because of timetable constraints this degree cannot be completed in the minimum period of three years.

Commerce Extended Studies Programme

This programme is intended to supplement the instruction of major subjects within the Commerce Faculty. Students enrolled in the Commerce Extended Studies Programme receive additional literacy and numerical instruction via extended, augmented or developmental courses. Successful completion of the programme is recognized with the awarding of a certificate. Students, after successfully completing the two years of the programme, are awarded with 165 SAQA credits and may proceed to the regular degree streams – BCom, BEco - offered by the Faculty.

POSTGRADUATE DEGREES

The Faculty also offers a number of post-graduate diplomas and degrees.

- **Postgraduate Diplomas:** in Accounting; Business Analysis; Enterprise Management; Taxation
- **Honours:** in all Faculty discipline areas
- **Masters:** in all Faculty discipline areas, as well as specialisations in Taxation, Financial Markets, as well as a Master of Business Administration
- **Doctorates:** in all Faculty discipline areas

The one-year Postgraduate Diploma in Accountancy (PGDip(Accounting)) which is taken by students who have completed the BCom(Accounting) degree and who wish to pursue a career as a Chartered Accountant deserves special mention:

Postgraduate Diploma in Accountancy (PGDip(Accounting))

This diploma is accredited by the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants as fulfilling part of the requirements for admission to Part 1 of the South African Institute's Initial Test of Competence (ITC). However the diploma does not confer any professional rights. Graduates are entitled to complete their training contracts in three years instead of five and graduates with the Postgraduate Diploma in Accountancy are entitled to write Part 1 of the South African Institute's Initial Test of Competence at the first opportunity after being awarded the Diploma.

Courses of study

Degrees are comprised of courses offered by the faculty and other faculties, some examples of which include:

Accounting: Accounting is essentially an information system concerned with gathering, recording, analysing and interpreting financial data about the activities of businesses and other organisations. It is concerned with interpreting and communicating this information to managers and others who use it to make business decisions. Accounting can be regarded as 'the language of business', since it forms a part of the language used by business managers, lawyers and economists.

Economics: Economics is a social science that concentrates on the aspects of human behaviour involved in the consumption and production of goods and services. It sets out to understand and explain how individuals, business firms, government and other agencies apply resources – labour, land and capital – and how their decisions collectively impact on employment, prices and the welfare of people and countries. Economics graduates are sought after in both the private and public sectors of the economy. Jobs in banking and other areas of the corporate world draw particularly on the skills of the economist. Similarly, graduates with economic training are in high demand in government departments such as Finance and Trade and Industry.

Information Systems: information systems is the study of systems (mostly computer-based systems) which are used by people and organisations to collect, process, create or distribute information. Information systems focuses on the effective analysis, design, construction, delivery, management and use of information and communication technology in organisations and society. The computer-based systems that enable people to deposit and withdraw money at an ATM, purchase a ticket to a rock concert online, or pay for goods purchased with a debit/credit card are all information systems. Information systems graduates are often initially employed as business analysts, systems analysts, programmers or consultants. However, due to the integrated use of information systems in organisations, many information systems professionals are employed in a variety of other disciplines that require an understanding of information systems.

Management: Management as an applied social science is concerned with the study of those factors, principles and methods which will lead an organisation to attain its objectives as a component of a wider system. The total field of management is divided into six main functional areas: the general management function; the marketing function; the financial function; operations management function; the purchasing (supply chain) function; and the human resources management.

Commercial Law: Contract is the essence of commerce. Commerce graduates require a basic knowledge of the law of contract within the context of our legal system without which they would not be able to perform optimally in the commercial world. Commercial Law provides such legal knowledge and skills.

Legal Theory: Legal Theory forms the basis of law studies for students wishing to follow a career in law. A student who has majored in Legal Theory and who satisfied the criteria of the Faculty of Law for admission to the LLB degree is able to complete the LLB degree at Rhodes University in a further two years of full-time study. Because of the nature of the work involved, the BCom (Law) degree is an excellent undergraduate qualification for prospective attorneys. It provides a sound background for LLB candidates wishing to specialise in the field of commercial and corporate law.

Statistics: Statistics is the science of decision making in the face of uncertainty, and finds application in such diverse fields such as gambling, life insurance, design and analysis of surveys, design of factorial experiments, quality control and analyses of reliability of complex systems. Mathematical statistics provides the theory and the tools for statistics and also for the study of dynamic phenomena which can be described in terms of the laws of chance, such as queues, inventory systems, communication systems, time series, quantum mechanics. Statisticians find employment in commerce and industry, research institutes and government departments where they are in demand not only for their specialised training, but also for their logical approach to diverse scientific and technical problems.

Sociology: Sociology as a discipline aims at understanding the social influences which help to shape our lives. A sociologist's main task is to understand what lies beneath the visible aspects of social life, as well as what factors influence the behaviour of people. Students complete a core year of general sociology (a scientific analysis and understanding of society) and then specialise at second and third year in industrial and economic sociology

(application of sociological knowledge to the industrial sphere). Industrial and economic sociologists are concerned with understanding the nature and functions of industry, and its impact on society. This ranges from a study of the rise of modern corporations and the spread of industrialisation to an examination of changes in managerial strategies.

Psychology: Psychology is the scientific study of human experience as it is lived in different political, socioeconomic and cultural settings. It offers a description of the range of human emotions, abilities and thought processes and examines people’s attitudes and motives, both conscious and unconscious. Psychology includes important areas of study such as clinical and counselling psychology, educational psychology and organisational psychology. Regarding the latter, this refers to the application of psychological research and theory to enhancing productivity and job satisfaction as well as solving problems related to work and with organisations.

Examples of degrees

Students are able to register for degrees in which a number of different subject combinations are possible. Here are a few examples – there are many more:

1. A Bachelor of Business Science with Information Systems as the specialisation:

First year	Second year	Third year
Accounting 1	Economics 2	Economics 3
Economics 1	Information Systems 2	Information Systems 3
Management 1	Management 2	Professional Communication
Mathematics 1	Mathematical Statistics 2	
Statistics 1C2	Commercial Law 1	
Computer Science 112		
Fourth Year:		
Information Systems Honours or Joint Honours with an optional paper in Strategic Management		

2. A Bachelor of Commerce with specialisation (majors) in Economics and Management:

First year	Second year	Third year
Accounting 1	Economics 2	Economics 3
Economics 1	Accounting 2	Management 3
Management 1	Management 2	
Commercial Law 1	Psychology 1	
Theory of Finance	Professional Communication	
Statistics 1C2		

3. A Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting leading to a PGDIP(Accounting) and Professional Qualification (Chartered Accountant):

First year	Second year	Third year
Accounting 1	Economics 2	Accounting 3
Economics 1	Accounting 2	Auditing 3
Management 1	Information Systems 2	Tax 3
Commercial Law 1	Principles of Professional Accountancy	Management Accounting and Finance 3
Theory of Finance	Professional Communication for Accountants	
Statistics 1C2		
Computer Science 112		

4. A Bachelor of Economics (Business Science):

First year	Second year	Third year
Economics 1	Economics 2	Economics 3 and 3B
Accounting 1	Accounting 2	Management 3
Management 1	Management 2	
Theory of Finance and	Psychology 1	
Statistics 1C2	Professional Communication	

5. A Bachelor of Economics (Mineral Economics):

First year	Second year	Third year
Economics 1	Economics 2	Economics 3
Accounting 1	Geology 2	Geology 3
Chemistry 1	Management 2	
Geology 1	Theory of Finance and	
Management 1	Statistics 1C2	
	Professional Communication	

Admission to study for a degree

Admission to study for a degree in the Faculty of Commerce requires applicants to satisfy a number of criteria: the applicant must qualify for bachelor degree study status on the National Senior Certificate (NSC); the applicant must satisfy Faculty admission requirements - Admission Point Score (APS); and the applicant must satisfy degree admission requirements. Please remember that if you meet the minimum admission requirements this only means that you are eligible for selection; it does not mean that you will necessarily be accepted.

CANDIDATES CURRENTLY AT SCHOOL DOING SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE (NSC)

Students leaving school at the end of 2024 will earn the National Senior Certificate (NSC). To qualify for the NSC with bachelor degree study status learners are required to take seven subjects, four of which are compulsory (two languages, Life Orientation and either Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy [Mathematics Literacy will not be considered for Commerce applications.]) and three of the learner's own choice from the subjects on offer at their school.

How to calculate your admission point score (APS)

The percentages achieved in National Senior Certificate examinations (preliminary and final examinations) will be allocated an admissions point score using the percentage obtained for each subject. The sum of six subject scores, excluding Life Orientation but including English and any other required subject(s) for the relevant programme is considered when deciding on admission. Results below 40% for any subject do not attract a score. Mathematics Paper 3 does not contribute to the APS score but the results will be captured for the Dean to note when making an admission decision. For example:

SUBJECT	PERCENTAGE	POINTS
English Home Language	73%	7.3
Afrikaans/isiXhosa first/Additional Language	69%	6.9
Mathematics	84%	8.4
Life Sciences	86%	8.6
Economics	90%	9.0
Accounting	69%	6.9
Life Orientation	70%	0
Mathematics Paper 3	50%	0
TOTAL POINTS		47.1

Faculty of Commerce admission requirements

The points required for admission to Faculty degrees is as follows:

ENTRY REQUIREMENT	POINTS			
BACHELOR OF BUSINESS SCIENCE Mathematics at Level 6 (70%) or above and English level 4 (50-59%) or above	45 points and above will receive a firm offer	38-44 points admission will be at the Dean's discretion		
BACHELOR OF COMMERCE and BACHELOR OF ECONOMICS Mathematics level 4 (50%) or above and English level 4 (50-59%) or above Maths Literacy will not be considered	45 points and above will receive a firm offer	Between 38-39 points admission will be at the Dean's discretion. Various factors will be taken into consideration.	Between 34-37 points applications will be considered by the Dean for the extended studies programme	33 points and below – the application is likely to be rejected

Admission and Dean's decisions

An application is usually (and wisely) made well in advance of knowing your final results, in which case the application form requires your school to supply provisional results, based on internal examinations. If your provisional scores are very promising you may well be offered a place to study even before you take the final examinations. Please note an offer is conditional subject to you obtaining "Bachelor Degree Status" and your admissions point score (APS) being maintained or improved.

If you do not meet the minimum admissions point requirements specified above, you may still be considered for a place at the Dean's discretion. Such places are usually offered with some extra conditions. Some places are offered to students with weak point scores who come from disadvantaged backgrounds on condition that they take their degree over a minimum of one more year than the normal period by enrolling in the Extended Studies Programme. It is therefore very important to give full information when completing the application form as this is the information that the Dean will use for making a decision.

National Benchmark Tests (NBTs)

It is recommended that all first-time entering South African applicants write the NBTs. If the applicant does not meet the automatic entry requirements, the NBT results will be used by the Dean to make decisions on applications. These test results can also be used if a candidate does not meet the entrance requirements in their final examinations.

There are two NBTs. The Academic and Quantitative Literacy test (AQL) consists of two components, namely academic literacy and quantitative literacy. An applicant will be awarded separate scores for each component, even though they are written as one test. Applicants to all faculties should write the AQL. The Mathematics test is based on the Mathematics Grade 12 Syllabus. Applicants who wish to enter Commerce should write the Mathematics Test. One score is awarded for the Mathematics Test.

For further information about the NBT's, dates and venues, please visit: www.nbt.ac.za or contact the NBT Office on 021 650 5462.

CANDIDATES WHO COMPLETED THE SOUTH AFRICAN SENIOR CERTIFICATE (Matric pre-2008) and INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
Please contact the Student Bureau directly for the prerequisites.
(046) 603 8276 or registrar@ru.ac.za

Merit awards, bursaries and financial aid

Merit Awards (South African applicants only)

Merit awards are calculated on your results obtained in the final Matric Examinations and will be automatically credited to your fees account after registration (in other words, you do not need to apply for this award). The Merit Awards for 2024 are calculated as follows:

South African NSC candidates		South African candidates with foreign qualifications	
APS	COMMERCE	APS	COMMERCE
53–56 points	Full Tuition	≥ 48 points	Full Tuition
51–52 points	R 35 251	46–47 points	R 35 251
49–50 points	R 33 779	44–45 points	R 33 779
47–48 points	R 29 940		

Old Rhodian bursaries

If you are the son or daughter of an Old Rhodian, you may request an application form for an Old Rhodian Bursary directly from the Financial Aid Office. There are no restrictions on family gross income for these bursaries, however, a means test is applied to determine the most needy applicants.

Financial aid (South African applicants only)

Financial assistance can help you afford a Rhodes education. On the second page of your application form, you are asked the question 'Do you require financial assistance from the University? (Yes or No)'. This question should be given very serious consideration. Applicants should only indicate that they require financial assistance if it is absolutely necessary and not 'just in case' they get an award. Applications for financial assistance are only considered if the gross family income is below a certain level. This level is determined from year to year depending on the amount available for financial aid.

Awards are based on your family's financial circumstances and your academic performance. The information required by the selection committee will be based on your application form, so a fully completed form is absolutely necessary. Financial assistance takes the form of bursaries, loans and scholarships. If finances are preventing you from studying, do not hesitate to apply for assistance.

Contact details

Student Bureau with regards to application forms, funding, etc:
(046) 603 8276 or registrar@ru.ac.za

Commerce Faculty Office:
(046) 603 7500 or n.searle@ru.ac.za

