

STRENGTHS



- Largest comprehensive higher education institution in the Eastern Cape
- Wide range of programmes and qualifications from certificate to doctoral level
- Humanising pedagogies and proactive student support interventions (academic, psychosocial, and financial) that enhance student access for success
- Growing contribution to public intellectual discourse
- Extensive engagement and collaboration with communities, business, industry, government, and civil society in the service of society
- Leader in transdisciplinary sustainability sciences
- Socially responsive and impactful science, innovation, and technology to promote the public good
- University with the only dedicated ocean sciences campus in South Africa
- Innovative, interprofessional approach to medical and health education
- Wide-ranging efforts to promote social justice, equality, and non-discrimination
- Expanding support for student entrepreneurship and youth employability
- A growing alumni network nationally and internationally
- Investment in technologically enabled learning and teaching spaces and modernised infrastructure
- Multi-campus university with distinct niches for each campus
- New state-of-the-art Science Centre launched at the Ocean Sciences Campus
- Stable, ethical governance and management
- Dedicated, highly skilled employees
- Growing pool of research associates, postdoctoral fellows, and honorary, emeritus, ad personam, visiting, and adjunct (HEAVA) professors
- Innovative solutions to sustainability challenges (e.g., energy and water scarcity)
- Establishment of Virtual Academy

OPPORTUNITIES



- Africa's demographic dividend – burgeoning youth population
- Increased collaborations with industry and employers to enhance curriculum responsiveness and graduate employability
- Stackable credentials and fully online offerings in support of lifelong learning
- Digitalisation – leverage innovative technologies, artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, machine learning, 5G and edge computing
- Expanded international partnership footprint, particularly in Africa and the global South
- Flexible/hybrid ways of working to enhance the employee value proposition
- Strengthened engagement and partnerships with TVET and community colleges to facilitate integrated post-school education and training
- Partnerships with schools to improve quality of basic education
- Education and skills for the future world of work
- High-technology industrialisation, automotive sector and e-mobility
- Nano- and biotechnologies
- Oceans economy
- Agricultural production and agri-processing
- Healthy nutrition
- Improving access to quality healthcare
- Just energy transition - renewable energy sources & technologies
- Localisation and SMME development
- Presidential PhD Initiative
- The Comprehensive Student Funding Model
- Implementation of a new streamlined work visa application system to attract skilled immigrants
- Opportunities presented through BRICS & its expansion to 10 member countries

WEAKNESSES



- Cumbersome administrative and lifelong learning processes and procedures
- Insufficient flexible educational opportunities for the adult market
- Inadequate, affordable on-campus student accommodation
- Need to review programme and qualifications mix, academic size and shape, modes of delivery, and pedagogical approaches
- Limited financial assistance for “missing middle” and postgraduate students
- Declining postgraduate and international student enrolments
- Inadequate career pathing and promotion opportunities for employees
- Proportion of academic staff with doctoral qualifications below the national average
- High student: staff ratios and limited postgraduate supervisory capacity in certain academic disciplines/fields of study
- Declining research outputs of permanent academic staff
- Retention of talented, diverse employees, especially in scarce and critical skills
- Holistic student and employee wellness
- Constrained financial resources and relatively high dependence on government funding
- Inadequate unencumbered third-stream income to fund strategic imperatives and aspirations
- Cost of rising demands for wraparound student support (e.g., accommodation, transportation, catering, etc.)
- Declining student success rates, and graduate outputs
- Rising student debt levels

THREATS



- Weakening national and global economy
- Rising global geo-political tensions, conflicts and nationalism
- Persistently high levels of unemployment, poverty, and inequality
- Increasing number of unemployed graduates
- High interest rates, inflation and households under pressure due to cost-of-living crisis
- Pervasive food insecurity and hunger
- Rising social unrest
- Rapid urbanisation and uneven access to quality human settlements
- Constrained national and provincial fiscus and impact of Government austerity measures
- Financial sustainability within the higher education sector – rising costs, declining state subsidies, and NSFAS administration challenges
- Study loan burden for the “missing middle”
- Environmental risks - water and energy insecurity, as well as the impacts of climate change, natural disasters, pollution, and loadshedding
- Quality of basic education and schooling, especially poor performance in mathematics and science
- Increased national and global competition for talent
- Crime, violence, and substance abuse
- Gender-based violence and gender inequality
- Digital divide and unequal access to mobile devices, data connectivity and high data costs
- Rising cybersecurity and privacy concerns
- Outbreaks of new infectious diseases/pandemics
- Instability caused by coalitions in provincial and local government, governance failures within municipalities and poor public service delivery
- Poor local maintenance of city infrastructure