

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
- Values-driven, transformative institutional culture that embodies the legacy and ethos of Nelson Mandela
- 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
- 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



WEAKNESSES

- Cumbersome administrative processes and procedures
- Insufficient flexible educational opportunities for the adult market
- Inadequate, affordable on-campus student accommodation
- Need for integrated enrolment management system to address low conversion of applications and admissions to enrolments
- Need to review programme and qualifications mix, academic size and shape, modes of delivery, and pedagogical approaches to enhance readiness for future world of work
- 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
- Highly competitive market for talented, diverse employees, especially in scarce and critical skills
- Holistic student and employee wellness in a post-pandemic context
- Constrained financial resources and relatively high dependence on government funding
- Cost of rising demands for wraparound student support (e.g., accommodation, transportation, catering, data connectivity, etc.)
- Inadequate unencumbered third-stream income to fund strategic imperatives and aspirations
- Broad-based black economic empowerment (BBEE) recognition level



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, and machine learning for the renewal of institutional systems, processes, workflows, policies, service delivery, and blended/online learning
- 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
- Digital and circular economy
- High-technology industrialisation
- Big data analytics
- Nano- and biotechnologies
- Healthy nutrition for all
- Water security
- Improving access to quality healthcare
- Just energy transition - renewable energy sources and technologies
- Localisation and SMME development



THREATS

- Weakening global economy
- Rising global geo-political tensions and nationalism
- Persistently high levels of unemployment, poverty, and inequality
- High interest rates 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 fiscus and impact of Government austerity measures
- Financial sustainability within the higher education sector – rising costs, declining state subsidies, and NSFAS administration challenges
- Rising student debt
- 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 alcohol/drug abuse
- Gender-based violence and gender inequality
- Digital divide and unequal access to mobile devices and data connectivity
- Rising cybersecurity and privacy concerns (e.g., cyber-attacks and data breaches)
- Outbreaks of new variants of Covid-19 and other infectious diseases and pandemics

