

UCT Graduate School of Business is number 1 in South Africa

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Latest ranking of customised programmes from the Financial Times shows the University Cape Town Graduate School of Business is leading in South Africa.



The UCT Graduate School of Business (UCT GSB) has been ranked 56 in the world and number one in South Africa for its Customised Executive Education programmes by the latest *Financial Times* ranking – widely regarded as a leading benchmark of quality and relevance for business schools worldwide.

The UCT GSB was ranked top in Africa in terms of growth, which measures overall growth in revenues from customised programmes as well as growth in revenues from repeat business. It also scored in the top 40 worldwide for future use (the likelihood that clients will use the school again).

“These measures speak to the value that the school places on building relationships of trust with its clients,” says Kumeshnee West, Director of Executive Education at the UCT GSB. “Our rapid growth and rise in repeat business indicate that clients are seeing a return-on-investment and a return-on-value. I believe that this is a direct result of our responsiveness and agility and an endorsement of our ‘high touch’ client-centric approach. We spend a lot of time working closely with clients before, during and after programmes to understand what’s working and what’s perhaps not working as well. This gives us insight very quickly into how to pivot, adapt and update materials and learning methodologies as client’s business needs shift and as the programmes unfold.”

West explains that the FT ranking is based on a rigorous assessment of the customised process from the design and interaction with clients to how the programme is delivered, the facilities, teaching methods and materials that the school offers and the quantity and quality of programmes delivered.

“A large part of the *Financial Times*’ data is drawn directly from client feedback,” she adds. “We owe a big thank-you to our clients who stepped up to endorse us and provide the necessary data that awarded us this ranking.”

To participate in the annual *Financial Times* ranking, schools must be internationally accredited by either Equis or AACSB and have earned revenues of \$2m during the preceding financial year. This year, the UCT GSB was one of only three African business schools to make it into the ranking. It is also one of just three schools on the continent to be triple-crown

accredited meaning that it has accreditation from both EQUIS and AACSB as well as the Association of MBAs (AMBA).

Rayner Canning, Business Development Director at the UCT GSB, says that it is “particularly pleasing to see how the FT ranking aligns with our own client satisfaction data, notably on future use.” He adds that the international reputation of the school and its strength on the continent is an undoubted advantage when participating in the global rankings.

“In designing and developing programmes that work, we are able to leverage the most current thinking and practice from across the ecosystem of the UCT GSB — notably from our world-class faculty, the Hasso Plattner School of Design Thinking (d-School) and the Centre for Coaching. All of these play a key role in terms of innovation and shifting our thinking, enabling us to leverage capabilities across all our programmes,” he says.

Canning adds that this depth of expertise, along with the school's agility and client-centric attitude is going to become ever more important as the business school transitions into a post-Covid-19 world.

“We are well placed to co-create the new normal with our clients and are already partnering closely with them to build optimal solutions for remote learning using the most suited combinations of technology.”

Executive Education at the UCT GSB has had several significant endorsements in recent years. Last year, the school became the first business school in Africa to win a Gold Excellence In Practice Award from the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) for a case study on its long-standing partnership with Standard Bank to deliver a Masterclass in Strategic Client Management Programme (MSCMP) for its corporate and investment banking (CIB) managers across Africa.

In speaking of that programme Lenie de Waal, Senior Learning Partner CIB at Standard Bank, said that its success was a testament to the ‘true partnership’ between all stakeholders who continuously worked to ensure it delivered business impact and value.

Canning adds that this accurately captures why the UCT GSB has seen such success with its customised programmes to date and why it can expect to continue to flourish. “To be successful in the future, authenticity, collaboration and trust are going to be absolutely essential,” he says.

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