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## Response to Die Burger questions on UCT Financial Aid

**Please cite Ms Patricia Lucas, Manager: Media Liaison & Communication**

### **How many in the past two years did not finish their studies because of financial reasons?**

Between 2011 and 2012, 168 undergraduate South African students at the University of Cape Town who were academically eligible to continue their studies had outstanding debt, and as such were ineligible to re-register. Of these 168 students: By the end of 2011, 61 students did not register for 2012 and in 2012, 107 did not register for 2013. However, some of the students who could not pay their fees in 2011, did settle their fees during 2012 and are now registered students in 2013. It is unclear whether finances are the only reason for students to leave a programme.

### **How many students studying with bursaries do not complete their studies?**

During the same period, 54 of the students mentioned above were bursary recipients (19 in 2012 and 35 in 2013). It must be noted that UCT has a process of appeal to ensure that academically eligible bursary students are not excluded for financial reasons. Therefore it is unlikely that these students chose not to return as a result of financial problems. There are many possible reasons why a student may choose to take time away from studies or to leave the programme altogether.

### **What happens when students aren't able to pay required study fees? Are they allowed to write the exams?**

UCT does not exclude registered students from writing examinations. Students are allowed access to their mid-year results, but are not permitted to see the end-of-the-year results until their fees are settled.

UCT has a very generous financial aid system in place to help students in financial need: the university distributes some R250 million a year to our students, from UCT's own coffers as well as from donors and government NSFAS funding. The university undertook to implement its significantly improved financial assistance policy for South African undergraduate students in January 2013, making more funds available to a larger number of eligible students to cover a wider variety of needs. The policy guarantees the necessary financial support to any student who is accepted on academic grounds and is eligible for assistance.

UCT is committed to ensure that we enrol the best students from all parts of the country.

We know many of these students come from poor and lower-middle income families. All students and their families make a contribution towards the cost of study; in some cases this is as low as R1000 per year, but the amount depends on a number of factors. We have implemented this financial aid funding structure to ensure that a broad range of students have access to study at UCT.

***ENDS***

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