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## **UCT's d-school Afrika reaffirms leadership with second 6-Star Green Star rating**

The University of Cape Town's (UCT) [Hasso Plattner d-school Afrika](#) has once again achieved a 6-Star Green Star rating, this time the as-built rating from the Green Building Council South Africa (GBCSA). This second 6-Star rating, following the d-school Afrika's initial recognition in 2023 for the design rating, reaffirms UCT's sustained commitment to environmental sustainability.

The rating was awarded after GBCSA's independent review of the completed project construction documentation, applying the Green Star Public and Education Building v1 standard. The d-school Afrika remains the first academic building on the African continent to achieve this prestigious rating for new buildings, with the 6-Star Green Star designation representing 'World Leadership' in sustainability, according to the GBCSA. This milestone further reinforces UCT's role as a pioneer in environmentally responsible building design, aligning with the [university's Vision 2030](#) strategy prioritising sustainability, transformation and excellence.

### **Green buildings: a holistic approach to sustainability**

Green buildings, as defined by the GBCSA, are purposefully designed to benefit both the environment and the people who occupy them. These structures embody high-performance design principles and prioritise energy efficiency, resource conservation and the use of eco-friendly materials. Beyond environmental benefits, green buildings emphasise occupant comfort, economic viability and resilience, setting a benchmark for excellence in both functionality and sustainability.

Reflecting on this rating, UCT Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mosa Moshabela, said: "This second 6-Star Green Star rating reinforces UCT's commitment towards environmental sustainability. It reflects our long-standing commitment to embedding environmental sustainability into the very fabric of how we educate, innovate and contribute to society. UCT continues to set the bar for excellence in green design, not just in Africa, but globally. This recognition is a testament to our vision of creating a future where sustainability is integral to every aspect of university life."

Manfred Braune, UCT's director for environmental sustainability, praised the accomplishment: "Achieving this second 6-Star Green Star rating is a wonderful demonstration of UCT's sustained commitment to reducing its environmental footprint. The

d-school Afrika not only serves as a model of green design but also functions as a living lab, where staff and students experience sustainability in action. A heartfelt congratulations to everyone involved in securing this as built certification of the building's green credentials."

Richard Perez, the founding director of the d-school Afrika, expressed his excitement. "This achievement is a powerful affirmation of our dedication to sustainability and innovation," Perez remarked. "It exemplifies how design thinking can not only inspire creative solutions but also make a tangible impact on the environment. Our d-school Afrika continues to lead by example, fostering a learning environment that prioritises both the planet and future generations."

### **UCT's growing green campus**

UCT's commitment to green building design continues to gain momentum, with five GBCSA-certified buildings currently on its campuses. These include four 4-Star Green Star-rated facilities: the New Lecture Theatre on Upper Campus, the Graduate School of Business Conference Centre at Breakwater Campus, Avenue Road Residence on Lower Campus, and the Neville Alexander School of Education on Middle Campus.

The d-school Afrika's repeated achievement aligns with UCT's green building policy, which mandates that all new buildings on campus achieve a minimum 4-Star Green Star rating. This policy, updated in 2023, now includes refurbishments exceeding R20 million and sets specific energy and water efficiency targets. It supports UCT's broader sustainability goals, including becoming a net-zero energy, carbon, water and waste-to-landfill campus by 2050 or sooner.

### **Sustainable features of the D-School**

The d-school Afrika boasts a range of cutting-edge sustainable features, earning it the prestigious 6-Star rating across nine environmental categories. Notable innovations include:

- A rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) system
- Rainwater harvesting and reuse systems
- Low-energy lighting and HVAC systems
- Thermally activated building system for cooling and heating
- Natural and mixed-mode ventilation
- Low-carbon concrete and steel
- Electric vehicle charging points
- Flexible interior spaces with mobile furniture for versatile teaching environments

The building's standout feature is a large, glazed atrium that provides ample daylight to all floors while controlling heat ingress using low-emissivity fritted glass. The rooftop, accessible to students, offers firsthand insight into the building's solar PV system and other sustainable elements, making it an educational tool for visitors.

### **A commitment to environmental leadership**

UCT's Minimum Green Building Construction Standard, approved by the university's Council in June 2023, underscores its dedication to environmental sustainability. The d-school Afrika's as-built 6-Star Green Star award solidifies UCT's position as a leader in sustainable innovation, and the university remains steadfast in its goal of addressing global environmental challenges through visionary education and green design.

***ENDS***

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