



Faculty of Humanities

FACULTY FACT SHEET



ON GOOD AUTHORITY



Message from the executive dean, Prof. Dumi Moyo

The Faculty of Humanities strives to be the preferred choice by providing quality education that encourages students to understand and interpret human experiences and positively impact their workplace and communities.

The programmes in the faculty provide students with more than just critical-thinking and ethical-learning experiences, but also focus on empowering our students with essential soft and life skills. We pride ourselves on the fact that our programmes, research, and community engagement are informed by our rootedness in Africa.

Our faculty also strives to incorporate the NWU values into our practices by being inclusive, embracing diversity and motivating global participation.



THIS IS US

Community engagement in the Faculty of Humanities

Rooted in Africa. Engaged with communities. Connected to the world.

Community engagement in the Faculty of Humanities is embedded in our teaching, research and creative practice. Across all six schools, we integrate academic excellence with real-world impact – developing graduates who are socially conscious, professionally prepared and globally engaged.

In 2025, the Faculty of Humanities was instrumental in leading the jointly-organised NWU Community Engagement Showcase, highlighting innovative, high-impact projects across the university.

Teaching with impact

Our students participate in service-learning, work-integrated learning and community-based projects that address real societal challenges.

These include:

- Community music programmes, sustainability-focused “Green Songs” initiatives, and inclusive music education in special-needs settings.
- NGO communication strategy development and participatory research projects.
- Literacy development initiatives supporting primary and secondary school learners.

- NPO capacity-building and governance support projects.
- Heritage preservation and cultural tourism initiatives in partnership with regional stakeholders.
- Student internships with public and private sector organisations.

Through these initiatives, students apply disciplinary knowledge in meaningful contexts while contributing to community development.

Research that serves

Our research increasingly adopts participatory and community-based approaches. Faculty projects address:

- Social justice and community self-reliance
- Sustainable heritage and tourism development
- Housing and livelihood challenges
- Governance and constitutional literacy
- Gender equity and inclusion

These initiatives generate knowledge that supports policy development, sustainable economic activity and community empowerment.

Outreach and sharing our expertise

Faculty and students contribute beyond the classroom through:

- School outreach programmes and career guidance initiatives
- Literacy and reading interventions
- Writer mentorship programmes across Africa
- Annual school shoe and food security drives
- Public workshops, community radio engagement and governance education

Our staff serve on national boards, NRF panels, editorial committees and professional associations, and regularly contribute to public media and international academic forums.



Internationalisation with relevance

The faculty maintains active partnerships with institutions across Africa and Europe and further abroad. These collaborations strengthen research networks, postgraduate development, student mobility and cross-cultural scholarship – ensuring that our work remains globally connected while locally grounded.

- The School of Philosophy and Global Futures hosts the annual NWU Forum, which focuses on contemporary issues that cut across faculties.
- Another project from the School of Philosophy and Global Futures has established the first Southern African Society for Environmental Philosophy, of which the first conference was hosted in March 2024, and the second conference in August 2025 at the Sports Village. A third conference is planned for August 2026. See www.sasep.africa for more information.
- The Graphic Design subject group is actively involved in industry-aligned and community-engaged projects that promote meaningful knowledge exchange and contribute to social impact, and has recently embarked on an exciting new formal three-year international collaborative partnership with the University of Lincoln School of Design and Architecture

(United Kingdom). This partnership includes a structured joint research project spanning three years, as well as collaborative teaching initiatives. The collaboration strengthens international research output, expands global academic networks, and provides students and staff with direct exposure to cross-continental design practices and scholarship.

Our faculty in numbers

(Staff and student figures as on 1 April 2026)



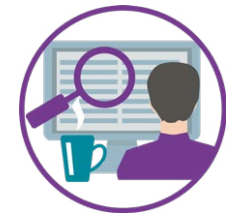
Undergraduate students:
7 269



Postgraduate students:
967



International students:
157



NRF-rated researchers:
43



Academic staff:
373

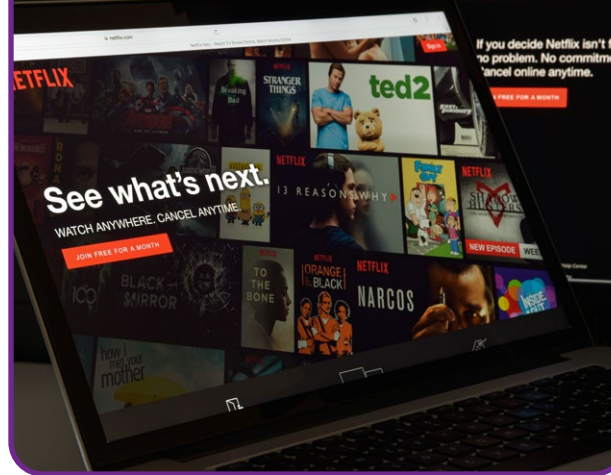


Support staff:
522

SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMMES

The faculty has six academic schools:

- **The School of Communication** produces dynamic and innovative students who can operate with authority and outstanding professionalism in different communication contexts and organisations.
- **The School of Government Studies** cultivates the leaders of tomorrow by providing them with the expertise to foster positive change nationally and internationally.
- **The School of Languages** offers specialisation in multilingualism and celebrates the richness and diversity of languages.
- **The School of Music and Conservatory** is a highly regarded institution for tertiary music study in South Africa that offers exceptional music instruction in various instruments and genres.
- **The School of Philosophy and Global Futures** aims to challenge students to think differently, stimulate and enhance analytical and critical thinking, and develop creative thinking and open-mindedness.
- **The School of Social Sciences** provides fascinating insights into and understanding of our society and the theoretical and practical skills that empower students to positively influence our future. The school has a strong internationalisation stream and sends staff and postgraduate students abroad each year to participate in academic programmes at our partner universities in countries like Germany and Zambia.



[Click here to see which undergraduate programmes we offer](#)

[Click here for our postgraduate diploma programmes](#)

[Click here for our M and PhD programmes](#)



RESEARCH

Research entities Research unit

- **Optimal Expression of Individual, Social and Institutional Potential (OPTENTIA)** – drives change through world-class, multidisciplinary research in the Faculty of Humanities, embracing social justice and strengths-based approaches. We aim to empower individuals and communities to overcome challenges and live with dignity, resilience and purpose.

Research focus areas

- **Indigenous Language Media in Africa (ILMA)** – focuses on issues of African languages in the media, the contrast between public and private financing of the media, the media and identity, media and politics, the internet, media and democracy, media and development, as well as African traditional media systems and their applications.
- **Research and Creative Outputs in Visual Arts and Music (ViAMUS)** – focuses on the study and production of narratives in visual art and design, and of music and well-being in musical practices in southern Africa and further afield. The research programmes and projects in the focus area are related to, among other things, the arts and communities, music theory, composition and aural training, positive psychology and music, art history, creative practice and artistic research, graphic arts, and design and sustainability.
- **Language and Literature in the South African Context** – supports linguistics, literature and language technology research across all NWU campuses and aims to become a hub for digital humanities.

- **Population and Health** – focuses on high-quality research addressing equity and sustainable development, with a particular emphasis on sub-Saharan Africa. The entity comprises five subprogrammes, each with various research projects. These are on gender, population dynamics, sustainable development, sexual reproductive health, and sociologies.
- **Social Transformation** – focuses on multidisciplinary and inter-disciplinary research, with the emphasis on sustainability challenges faced by society, locally and globally. We strive to create and disseminate knowledge that informs policy and practice, empowers communities and could potentially contribute to the advancement of more globally oriented social outcomes, such as those encapsulated in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The four research programmes in the entity focus on social and reparative justice, management for sustainability, social sustainability, and pedagogies and philosophies of science.
- **Understanding and Processing Language in Complex Settings (UPSET)** – focuses on linguistics across languages with an eye for the complex settings of multilingualism, including language learning and teaching, language policy, language practice and language contact.

Research niche area

- **Visual Narratives and Creative Outputs through Interdisciplinary and Practice-led Research (VINCO)** – endeavours to be a leading research hub for South African and African visual narratives, bringing together creatives and scholars across design, art history, film, literature, music, digital media and more. Research focuses on art and visual culture at the intersection of politics, crises and technological innovation.

Two new centres added to the mix

- **Digital Humanities Centre** – to advance digital humanities scholarship by enhancing existing knowledge and related digital methods and skills. The centre aims to create new forms of digital knowledge, tools, techniques and methodologies, and explore the effect of digital domains on humanities-based disciplines. A crucial component is the human factor: how it interacts with and is affected by technology, and how it can be integrated. [More information](#)
- **Centre for Geopolitical and Security Studies** – aims to produce research and policy guidance to further the role of South Africa in global and continental peace and security. Based in the Global South, the centre endeavours to focus on African issues while remaining globally relevant.

Centres offering support for staff and students

- ATKV School of Creative Writing
- NWU Writing Centre
- Centre for Translation and Professional Language Services (CTrans)



Hosted platforms, centres and institutes

- **The South African Centre for Digital Language Resources (SADiLaR)** – a national research infrastructure established and funded by the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) as part of the South African Research Infrastructure Roadmap (SARIR). SADiLaR has a strategic function to create, manage and distribute digital language resources and applicable software for all official languages in South Africa through its digitisation program.
- **Setswana National Lexicography Unit (Sefala NLU)** – The unit is situated on the Mahikeng campus. Officially launched in 2001, it is one of the PanSALB structures that represent our official languages.
- **Centre for Text Technology (CTexT)** – conducts research in human language technology and develops language technology products for South African languages, combining research expertise with technical and administrative support to create innovative text technology resources and applications.





APPLICATIONS

Admission requirements

Please [click here](#) for information about application requirements.

How do I apply?

Please refer to our [website](#) for online applications.

Money matters

For a wide range of bursaries and financial support, please contact 018 299 2672 or visit our [website](#).

We want to hear from you

Phone 018 299 4003/4, or send an [email](#) for more information about our faculty. You can also visit our [website](#) or our [Facebook](#) page.

