



the International Office



Guide for International Students and Staff



RHODES UNIVERSITY

Guide for International Students and Staff

1

Please use this booklet in conjunction with the Rhodes University Calender and the website www.ru.ac.za

As an international visitor you are very welcome as a member of a very important section of the Rhodes community.

We value the international perspectives you bring to the life of our university and we hope you will feel completely at home during your stay with us.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with the Rhodes International Office at any time. We are here for you.

Find us on campus:
Rhodes International Office, Eden Grove Complex, Lucas Avenue

Postal address:
International Office,
Rhodes University,
PO Box 94
Grahamstown
6140 South Africa.
Tel: +27 (0)46 603 8225
Fax: +27 (0)46 603 8209
e-mail: internationaloffice@ru.ac.za
Website: www.ru.ac.za/international

Cover photographs: Obie Oberholzer

CONTENTS

- 4 Welcome
- 6 How to get here
- 7 What to bring
- 8 Money and fees
- 9 Visa and study permits
- 10 Orientation
- 11 Registration procedure for students
- 12 Comparative grading of academic work
- 13 Library and computers
- 14 Living in an undergraduate residence
- 15 Living in staff housing or postgraduate housing
- 16 Campus map
- 18 Health
- 20 Safety and wellbeing
- 22 Cultural engagement
- 24 Getting involved
- 25 Sport and outdoor recreation
- 26 Shopping and eating out
- 27 Getting around
- 28 South Africanisms
- 30 Checklist for international students
- 32 Grahamstown centre map

WELCOME TO RHODES UNIVERSITY

Rhodes University is one of the oldest South African universities. It celebrated its centenary in 2004. It is also the smallest university in South Africa with just over 6 000 students. Imagine a US liberal arts school that also does research in a big way. Rhodes scores high on three important indicators of quality: student/staff ratio (15), research output per capita, and percentage of international students (25%). The University is set in a beautiful and safe campus and offers comfortable accommodation and modern facilities. Recent honorary doctorates include Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Ex-President Nelson Mandela and economics Nobel laureate Amartya Sen.

Grahamstown is a pretty, historic town. It started as a garrison in 1812 on the old Eastern Frontier where the British Empire met the Xhosa people. The old town has a beautiful cathedral, a High Street, and the look is Georgian. Today it is a major educational and legal centre. It hosts the two premier South African Festivals: the Grahamstown National Arts Festival and the Sasol Science Festival. The town offers the visitor a snapshot of South Africa — its history of splendour and misery, human achievement and suffering.

Grahamstown lies in the Eastern Cape, one of the poorest of South Africa's nine provinces. The closest city (and airport) is Port Elizabeth, 125 km to the west. The Eastern Cape has a rich cultural tradition (Xhosa, Afrikaans and British) and a fasci-

nating history of war and struggle. It also boasts incomparable natural beauty: the austere dry Karoo, thickly forested mountain ranges, and pristine beaches. Grahamstown is close to the Addo Elephant National Park (an unrivalled opportunity to see the Big Seven: elephant, rhino, lion, buffalo, leopard, whales and great white sharks) and is surrounded by a range of private game reserves. The Eastern Cape is malaria free.

Two semesters

Our year is divided into two semesters (February to June and July to November), with partial semesterisation of courses.

English Language Requirement

All courses are presented in English. (Apart from courses in the School of Languages.) As part of your application to study at Rhodes, you must provide evidence that you have attained a certain level of proficiency in English.

English Foreign Language (EFL) applicants whose primary language is not English are required to submit either

- a recent score (obtained within three years before application to Rhodes) of at least 570 (paper-based test) on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or
- a recent overall band score of 7.0 (with no individual element of the test scoring below 6.0 on the International English language Test System (IELTS).

For more information check the websites www.ets.org/toefl/ and www.ielts.org/

Note: An EFL country is defined as one in which English is not, for example, the medium of communication between educated groups and people who do not share a common language, or is not the medium of instruction in schools or a significant medium of written communication.

6

HOW TO GET HERE

Although you will have to clear customs and immigration at either Cape Town or Johannesburg international airports, many international airlines can book you through to Port Elizabeth, the closest major airport to Grahamstown. If your international airline cannot book you through on an add-on connecting fare, you can book a flight from Johannesburg, or Cape Town on the Internet. South African Airways (www.flysaa.co.za), Nationwide (www.flynationwide.co.za), Kulula.com (www.kulula.com) and British Airways/Comair (www.comair.co.za) all fly the route.

Allow about three hours between your estimated landing time and the departure time of your domestic flight to Port Elizabeth. This flight will take about 90 minutes. Try to ensure you do not land in Port Elizabeth later than mid-afternoon as you need time to get to Rhodes.

The drive from Port Elizabeth airport to Grahamstown is about 125km and you can expect to be on the road for about 90 minutes.

Visiting lecturers and senior scholars often have their transport arranged by their host departments. Otherwise there are several options:

- Rhodes provides transport to and from the airport at the beginning and end of each term for students. Buses run from 9.30am until the last flight of the evening. Advise the Rhodes Transport Office of your arrival date and time at the Port

Elizabeth Airport at least seven days before you begin your journey. Email your request to student.transport@ru.ac.za quoting your student number and full names as reference. You can expect to receive confirmation within 48 hours. The service is free, but you will have to pay a penalty if you don't take up your booking and fail to notify the transport office of your cancellation at least 24 hours in advance.

- Beeline Taxis cover the route and you can often share a taxi with others, reducing the cost. Tel: +27 (0)82 652 0798 or +27 (0)82 651 6646
- Imperial car hire has offices at the airport and at Rhodes and they will supply you with a road map. Book a car in advance on www.imperial.co.za
- Before you start traveling, email the Tourism Grahamstown office (info@grahamstown.co.za) for current details of any other bus or coach services that might currently be running from the Port Elizabeth airport and Grahamstown.

Should you choose to travel by coach from Cape Town or Johannesburg you would need to book a ticket on one of the following overnight services:

- TRANSLUX Central Reservations:
Tel: +27 (0)21 449333
- GREYHOUND Central Reservations through Computicket
Tel: +27 (0)11 2768600

Confirm the city pick-up point in both cases: neither operates from the airport.

WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU

South Africa's domestic airlines limit each passenger's luggage to 20kg in the hold and about 7kg carried on.

Bring essential medication and prescriptions for your contact lenses and/or spectacles so if they are lost or damaged they can be replaced easily in Grahamstown. Consult your pharmacy at home about a basic traveller's first aid kit.

Toiletries and stationery can all be bought in Grahamstown.

If you are going to be living in university accommodation, you need to supply your own towels – these can also be bought locally.

Bring a range of casual clothing that you can wear in layers as our weather is changeable. Bear in mind that our rainfall is low so a light waterproof jacket (doubling as a wind-cheater) and a folding umbrella will be adequate for wet weather. The temperature very seldom drops below 5°C (41°F) or rises above 35°C (95°F). Clothing should be casual and washable as the local dry cleaners cannot handle delicate or exotic textiles. Pack one semi-formal dress-up outfit to wear to special occasions, dinners and cocktail parties.

Electronic appliances

We use 240 volts AC electricity: you will damage appliances that are not compatible if you try to use them here. Adaptor plugs are readily available here.

Mobile phones

Any mobile phone compatible with a GSM network can be used here. You could purchase a local sim card for your existing phone, or buy a new phone from one of our three mobile service providers (all have shops in Grahamstown). Airtime can be purchased on a 'pay-as-you-go' basis. All telephone calls are comparatively expensive in South Africa.

Also useful

An international driver's licence in case you get a chance to drive.

Six passport-size photographs of yourself for use in registration. (You can get these taken at several places in Grahamstown.)

MONEY

The South African currency is the Rand (100 cents). Most visitors rely on their credit cards and/or international debit cards to pay for goods and services and to withdraw cash – both Visa and MasterCard are readily accepted in South Africa. (Inform your bank at home in advance of the duration of your stay in South Africa.)

It is advisable to buy about R500 in cash at your departure point. This should cover contingencies during your first couple of days in South Africa. Get a couple of R2 and R5 coins for tips as soon as you can after landing.

There are three major banks in Grahamstown (The Standard Bank, First National Bank and Absa) and all of them exchange foreign currency or traveller's cheques. You may decide to open an account if you are going to be at Rhodes for any length of time.

STUDENT FEES

All degree-seeking international students are required to pay their tuition and residence fees, for the full year, by early January each year.

If you are attending Rhodes in the first semester, (February to June) you must pay your tuition and residence fees before mid-January. For the second semester, full payment must be made before mid-June.

Fees can be paid by direct transfer to Standard Bank Grahamstown (Church Square), Branch Number: 0509174. The account name is Rhodes University Student Fee account, the account number is 082000689 swift code: SB ZA ZA JJ

You must fax proof of the transfer to the Rhodes University Student Fees Office Fax: +27 (0)46 622 2770.

Your full name and student number must appear on the proof of transfer.

Make sure you get a confirmation of receipt of your fax and bring the proof of transfer document as well as the confirmation with you when you come to register at Rhodes.

VISAS FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITORS, LECTURERS AND RESEARCHERS

The International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) has produced an easy-to-read booklet called Immigration Act Guidelines. This contains essential information for anyone planning to visit South Africa for academic purposes. It explains all the major regulatory and policy issues.

Key topics covered in the guide include:

- Application documents and requirements for a visa
- Visiting or studying at a university in South Africa
- Working at a university in South Africa (work permits etc)
- Frequently asked questions
- Countries whose nationals are exempt from visas

To download a PDF format copy of the guide, go to the web page www.ru.ac.za/international/intvisitors.php and click on Immigr1b.pdf

Bear in mind it can take weeks or even months to get the requisite visa. You should go to your nearest South African embassy or representative as soon as possible and pick up application forms. You will need to submit supporting documentation from Rhodes and this will be issued by the relevant department or division, once your application to Rhodes has been approved.

STUDY PERMIT

All international students registering at a South African university must obtain a valid study permit. This permit should be obtained before you leave your home country. If you do not have the correct study permit, you will not be allowed to register at Rhodes. Study permits are issued for a particular degree at a particular institution. If you make any changes, you will have to obtain a new permit.

Applications for study permits can be made at your nearest SA High Commission, Embassy, Consulate or Trade Mission.

In order to apply for a study permit, you will need the following:

- a valid passport (which should be valid for 6 months exceeding the length of your proposed study abroad)
- a letter of acceptance from Rhodes University, indicating the period of study
- proof of adequate medical coverage in South Africa (a letter from your health insurers indicating the type of cover and confirmation of its validity in SA)
- a repatriation deposit
- a return air ticket
- a study permit application fee
- a recent radiological report (not older than six months)
- a police clearance certificate

Costs and required documentation may vary depending on the country from which you are applying. Processing of a study permit application can take between six and eight weeks, so apply well in advance of your date of departure.

TAKE A TOUR OF THE CAMPUS

International visitors can take a walking tour of the campus with a charming and well-informed guide from the Registrar's Division. This is an excellent way to start a visit and get your bearings. Contact Michael Marangxa (046 603 8214) to make arrangements.

STUDENT ORIENTATION

A campus tour is part of the orientation programme for new students, at both the beginning of the academic year and prior to the start of the second semester. The programme covers information on the various academic disciplines on offer; the residence system; student support and health; academic support; rules, discipline and security.

An orientation booklet will be issued to you when you complete your administrative registration.

You will need to comply with the various University requirements and regulations. Failure to do this may result in unnecessary financial cost – especially with regards to the registration process. So don't forget to study your booklet carefully.

DEGREE AND COURSE STRUCTURE

Credit weighting for study abroad or visiting students is calculated on a similar basis to the American system to facilitate transfer of courses and grades.

All exchange or visiting short-term students are required to take a full-time course load (equivalent to 16 semester hour credits per semester) for the duration of the semester.

Courses at first and second year level are weighted at four semester credit hours and courses at third year level are weighted at eight semester credit hours. Where a course is divided into papers (sub-courses), you will be required to take all necessary papers to make up the full semester course. Your acceptance into a course is subject to approval by the relevant Head of Department, space in the class, lecture time-tabling and pre-requisite restrictions. You will be required to write examinations at the end of the semester and may not leave the university before all examinations have been completed.

ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTRATION

On arrival in Grahamstown, your first step is to register administratively. This is done at the Eden Grove Complex, Lucas Avenue. You will need your passport and study visa, proof of medical insurance, and proof that your fees have been transferred to Rhodes.

MOVE INTO RESIDENCE ACCOMMODATION

Once you have completed your administrative registration, you will be issued with a student card and will be clear to move into your allocated residence accommodation (providing you have reserved a room). Should you arrive after hours, you will report to your residence first and complete administrative registration the following day.

ACCESS TO FACILITIES

Your student card is your access to various facilities on campus such as the library. An e-mail address and password will be generated for you at administrative registration but please note that this takes 24 hours to activate from the time of registration. A number of computer laboratories are available on campus and students are able to use these at certain times for e-mail and web access.

ORIENTATION

The Orientation Programme covers introductory activities, plenary information sessions, and meetings with Deans of Faculties, pre-registration talks by academic departments, academic registration and house meetings in residence with Hall and House wardens. There is a special orientation programme for exchange and study abroad students.

ACADEMIC REGISTRATION

Towards the end of orientation week, you will be required to complete your academic registration. This is done at the Eden Grove Building in consultation with the relevant academic Dean or his/her representatives. Exchange and study abroad students register at the International Office.

DEPARTMENTAL REGISTRATION

You need to "sign-up" at each department in which you will be taking courses. You will be placed in practical and/or tutorial groups.

HOW THE MARKS COUNT

Grading in South Africa may be different to what you are accustomed to either as a lecturer or a student. This comparison illustrates:

SA	USA(GPA)	USA(Grade)	German	UK	Netherlands
90+	4	A+			10
80+	4	A	1.0	1	
78/79	3.9	A-			
77	3.8	A-			
76	3.7	A-			
75	3.6	A-	1.3		8.0
74	3.5	B+		2.1	7.75
73	3.4	B+			
72	3.3	B+			
71	3.2	B			
70	3.1	B	1.7		
69	3.0	B			
68	2.9	B			
67	2.8	B-	2.0	2.2	
66	2.7	B-			
65	2.6	B-	2.3		7.0
64	2.5	C+			6.75
63	2.4	C+			
62	2.3	C+	2.7		
61	2.2	C		3	
60	2.1	C	3.0		
59	2.0	C			
58	1.9	C			
57	1.8	C-	3.3		
56	1.7	C-			
55	1.6	C-			
54	1.5	D	11		
53	1.4	D	3.7		
52	1.3	D			
51	1.2	D			
50	1.1	D	4.0		6.0
49	F	F	5.0	F	F

RESEARCH RESOURCES

Library

With a print collection of well over 400,000 volumes and MAP (Millennium Access Plus) software offering metasearch capabilities across our diverse resources, the library is a superb research facility. Top quality electronics include alphabetical and subject access to over 50 subscription databases, many full-text, with additional links provided to many other free resources on the internet.

For users' convenience, there are more than 50 computers connected to printers and backed up by Student Technical Operators trained to offer assistance. OPAC (the library catalogue) can be accessed via 19 computers.

Ten copiers and a fully-equipped DVD and video viewing room are available to all users.

Two other important research libraries are associated with Rhodes: the Cory Library for Historical Research and the National English Literary Museum.

Internet and computer facilities

Round-the-clock internet access is free to all members of staff and students. Rhodes has a combined 2 megabit/second link to the Internet via the South African Tertiary Education Network, TENET. There are four undergraduate computer laboratories and five dedicated postgraduate computer laboratories.

Access to South African sites and to other regional tertiary institutions is via a separate 1 megabit/second circuit.

Off-campus access for staff and postgraduate students at home is supported by a modem pool handling dialup PPP.

There are computer network points in most student rooms in Rhodes residences. If you wish to use one of these points, you will need to apply to your house representative. There is a fee involved.

LIVING IN AN UNDERGRADUATE RESIDENCE

Large numbers of undergraduates live on campus, giving Rhodes life its special flavour. There are nine Halls of Residence, each including three or four houses of between 50 to 120 students, grouped around a central dining hall. For lunch and supper, you can choose from six meal types, including vegetarian and Halaal food.

The communal life is directed by a house committee of elected students, student sub-wardens appointed by the university and a house warden. Most students are accommodated in private rooms equipped with basic furniture. Curtains and bedding (duvets, sheets, pillow slips and pillows) are supplied, but you need to bring your own towels. There are computer network points in most student rooms. If you wish to make use of the residence network (ResNet) you must provide your own computer and pay a usage fee for a 24/7 ethernet connection.

Each residence is equipped with a microwave oven and at least one fridge. You may keep a kettle in your room. Washing machines, tumble driers and ironing facilities are available in designated laundry areas. Communal living rooms are equipped with television sets.

There are public telephones (landline) in each residence but private phones are not available in individual rooms.

Accommodation during vacations

If you need to stay in residence during the April and September recesses, you must apply in writing to the Student Bureau one week prior to the start of the vacation in question. One women's and one men's residence will be open. No residence accommodation is available during the mid-year recess or during December and January. Many residences are used for conference delegates at those times. You may be required to clear your room during one of these long recesses. Temporary storage is provided in the residence box room.

LIVING IN RHODES VISITING STAFF HOUSING

Your host department or division would be involved in arrangements for you to stay in university accommodation. Rhodes has several houses on campus for visitors and staff families in transit. There are also two blocks of flats and a duplex town-house complex each within five minutes walk of the campus.

A visiting lecturer or researcher travelling alone could expect to be accommodated in one of the flats.

The furnishing is very basic and simple and one set of bed linen is provided – no towels. The kitchen is equipped for self catering with crockery and cutlery, pots and pans, fridge, stove, microwave, toaster and kettle.

Some units have television sets and some have washing machines. There is a Laundromat in the Peppergrove Mall and a laundry in New Street.

LIVING IN POST-GRADUATE ACCOMMODATION

You may be allocated a room in a post graduate residence, or, if these are full, you may be offered a place in an undergraduate residence.

In either case the facilities are the same so check the details on page 14 (Living in an Undergraduate Residence).

The other option is accommodation at the Gavin Reilly Postgraduate Village which is a stiff walk away from the main campus up the hill behind Rhodes. Accommodation is in free-standing single storey bungalows dotted about in the

kind of graciously-landscaped African garden that is a Rhodes hallmark.

Here you will live in a simply furnished bed-sitter with a kitchette and an en suite bathroom.

Bring your own towels, but curtains and bed linen will be provided.

You are responsible for doing your own laundry - there are communal laundry facilities as in residence.

The kitchenette is equipped with a stove and fridge but you need to buy your own basic kit of cutlery, crockery and cooking pans.

Most rooms have an internet access point but an additional fee is payable if you wish to make use of this.

If you want to bring a partner or your family to live with you while you are studying at Rhodes you will need to apply for the kind of housing provided for visiting lecturers — see the details on these pages.

Your other option would be to find accommodation in town. Email Tourism Grahamstown (info@grahamstown.co.za) for information about the choices open to you and the contact details for leasing agents.

HEALTH Insurance

It is essential that you are adequately covered by your own medical insurance.

You will not be able to register as a student without proof of adequate medical insurance. You can either extend the cover provided by the scheme you belong to in your home country, or you can become a member of a South African medical insurance scheme.

Many international schemes are not recognised by practitioners in Grahamstown so you would probably have to pay for consultation and treatment and then claim the costs back from your insurer.

It is preferable for students to take out local insurance. You may be interested in one of the following plans which have been specifically tailored for international students.

- Prosperity Health Africa
www.prosperitystudent.com/prosperitystudent.asp
or
- Protea Medical Aid
www.studenthealth.co.za

You apply and pay annual membership fees in full before confirmation of membership is issued.

You do not need to have any specific vaccinations before traveling to Grahamstown. We are about 1000 km from the nearest malaria area, and if you decide to visit a malaria area, one of our local doctors can prescribe effective prophylactic medication.

If you are taking medication, stock up before leaving home and bring a letter from your doctor confirming your use of the medication and its generic equivalent so you can buy replacements during your stay.

It is also a good idea to bring your contact lens and/or spectacles prescription so if these are lost or broken, you can replace them in Grahamstown easily.

We have a number of doctors (general practitioners) who are listed in the Grahamstown phone book under "Medical". There is also a specialist physician and a chiropractor, as well as several physiotherapists, dentists and optometrists. A pharmacy or the staff at the Rhodes Sanatorium will give you contact details.

There are several pharmacies in Grahamstown, all with qualified pharmacists who can give you advice and dispense some medicines. They will tell you which medicines can only be sold to you if they have been prescribed by a doctor.

The Mustard Seed, a shop in the Peppergrove Mall (African Street) stocks alternative and natural remedies as well as specialised 'health' food and ingredients.

HIV/Aids

Rhodes University is dedicated to preventing HIV infection of staff and students.

Read our policy at www.ru.ac.za. It ensures students and staff complete confidentiality regarding AIDS status and ensures that discrimination will not occur.

The campus Sanatorium offers free HIV/Aids testing to staff and students on the proviso that you go to the Counseling Centre for support before the test and when you get your results.

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is spread from one person to another in these ways

- having unprotected sex with an infected person
- through contact with infected blood
- from an infected mother to her newborn (or unborn) baby.

You cannot be infected in other ways – for instance by coughing, touching or even hugging. You cannot tell if a person is infected by looking at them. So you cannot tell if your sexual partner is infected unless he or she tells you. They might not even know themselves.

HIV can be prevented by practicing safe sex and by preventing direct contact with blood by using gloves, plastic bags or other barriers.

The Rhodes Sanatorium (Tel: 046 603-8523)

The Sanatorium is staffed by four qualified nursing sisters who can attend to minor ailments, dispense medicines, render first aid and also remove stitches, dress wounds and give injections. Clinic times are set, but for emergencies, there is a sister on duty or on call 24 hours a day. A doctor can also be called out at any time — you or your medical aid scheme would be responsible for the costs of consultation, treatment and medication.

The Sanatorium has a free 16-bed in-patient facility for students in residence (including postgraduates in Rhodes accommodation). They take care of patients suffering from diseases or ailments, or recovering after surgical procedures. It is also a haven if you are suffering from stress, anxiety and depression.

Rhodes Psychology Clinic (Tel: 046 603-8502)

A training centre for professional psychologists, the clinic offers a wide range of services - both to students, staff and the general public. They offer psychological assessments and testing, short and long-term psychotherapy and family therapy for persons experiencing emotional or interpersonal difficulties. Anxiety, depression, drug abuse, eating disorders, stress related problems, and sexual problems all receive confidential evaluation and treatments. Fees are charged at half the regular rate for such services.

SAFETY AND WELLBEING

The Counselling Centre

Tel: 046 603 8855

24 hour crisis line 082 8030 1777

There are seven full-time counsellors and one part-timer. Go to them if you are being harassed or experiencing emotional and psychological problems. They also offer pre- and post- HIV/Aids test counselling. They provide professional personal counselling and short-term psychotherapy free of charge. Crisis intervention is available in conjunction with other campus services.

The Student Career Centre

Tel: 046 6038180

e-mail: careers@ru.ac.za

They offer educational counselling, and can help you overcome any of a wide range of academic and study problems, such as essay writing, note taking, study skills and time management.

SRC Student Counselling Service

Tel: 046 6038089

e-mail: srccounsellor@ru.ac.za

An experienced counsellor offers assistance with any kind of problem, be it academic or personal. This mornings-only service is confidential and free of charge.

The Rhodes Legal Aid Clinic

046 622 9301

Talk to their trained staff at no charge if you feel you need legal assistance of any kind.

The Campus Protection Unit

Tel: 046 6038146/7

Open 24 hours a day, the unit provides highly visible patrols on campus. It also controls traffic, locks and unlocks certain buildings and looks after lost and found property.

A guard will walk you home at night if you ask for help.

Day care centre

046 603 8585

Safe and kindly day care for young children between the ages of one and five is offered in a comfortable cottage on campus. Approach them in advance about availability and cost.

Safety Tips

- Always keep an eye on your possessions.
- Keep your residence room locked when you go out. If you are in other accommodation ensure that no-one can slip in through a window or open door while your back is turned.
- If you have been allocated a study in your department, keep it locked when you go out.
- Note that some thieves fish things out through open windows, past burglar bars.
- Make sure that you don't make it easy for a pickpocket to snatch your bag, camera or mobile phone from you in the street.
- At night, avoid isolated dark places, even if you are with a companion.
- Do not walk around town at night on your own.
- Be aware of your surroundings and people around you.
- Talk to the friendly officers at the Campus Protection Unit if you are worried about anything, or you need advice on how to handle a situation.

See the section 'Driving in and around Grahamstown' (page 27) for more safety tips.

CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

Grahamstown offers a wealth of easy-access experiences to introduce you to what it means to be a South African here and now.

Our two major festivals are projects of the Grahamstown Foundation and based in the 1820 Settler's Monument, an extensive performance, exhibition and conference facility.

National Arts Festival (www.nafest.co.za)

In the first week of July each year, the biggest arts festival on the continent transforms the whole of Grahamstown into a throbbing non-stop African culture emporium. It's the première showcase for South African visual arts, music, theatre, dance, writing and film.

Sasol Science Festival (SciFest) (www.scifest.org.za)

In March every year Scifest offers an exciting interactive introduction to dozens of different aspects of science, engineering and technology, with hands-on workshops and exhibitions. Leading local and international scientists present lectures and demonstrations.

Between festivals

Grahamstown's museums (all associated with Rhodes University) offer a world of discovery to the inquiring mind. They include The Observatory Museum (Bathurst Street), the Cultural History Museum and the Natural History Museum (both in Somerset Street). The International Library of African Music (Prince Alfred Street) is a precious archive of the ancient music of the continent.

There are usually one or two fascinated international researchers poring over unique documents in the National English Literary Museum (Beaufort Street) and the Institute for the Study of English in Africa houses a world class dictionary unit.

The Departments of Drama, Fine Art and Music stress performance and production so the city enjoys regular concerts, dance and drama events and exhibitions.

Grahamstown societies

Visitors are always welcome and details of events are usually posted in our local bi-weekly newspaper, Grocott's Mail.

The Music Society – they arrange a concert each month.

The Historical Society – their monthly meetings feature talks and field trips.

The Wine Tasting Circle – they have space for one visitor per meeting contact j.haig@ru.ac.za

Friends of the Library organise lecture series of general interest.

Student societies

There are over 50 special interest student societies at Rhodes. These include Amnesty International, the East African Society and the French Society. For more information pop in at the SRC offices, go to www.ru.ac.za/studentZONE/studentlife/ or ring 046 6227122

Cinema and radio

The Roxbury Theatre (www.roxbury.co.za) in the Peppergrove Mall has three intimate cinemas, each with as many as four daily screenings.

The student-run campus radio station, Rhodes Music Radio (RMR) broadcasts 24 hours a day on 89.7fm, reaching Grahamstown and the surrounding areas. Fun, experimental and informative, programming consists of 40% talk and 60% music with special emphasis on local bands. News is read in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa.

FREE FILMS ON CAMPUS

Every Tuesday evening at 19h00 throughout the academic year, the Rhodes International Office and the School of Languages show an international film. The venue is Eden Grove Red Lecture Theatre. Everyone is welcome and admission is free. Check the programme at www.ru.ac.za/filmfest/

GETTING INVOLVED

Opportunities for Community service

The majority of our citizens subsist on state pensions and medical and welfare grants for their sole income. A number of community service organizations are working to improve both the psychological and material welfare of these families. If you could spare some time to help with the young, the old, the hungry or the sick, you could find yourself personally enriched by the close and meaningful contact with the Grahamstonians many visitors never get to know. The Centre for Social Development (046 6038573) will tell you what's needed and put you in touch.

Meet an isiXhosa-speaking family

Township Homestays is an association of isiXhosa speaking families who take bed and breakfast guests into their homes which are all strictly vetted by the association. Spend a weekend and get to know the family and maybe have an informal isiXhosa lesson - they all speak English as well. Contact them through Tourism Grahamstown Tel: 046 622 3241

Other introductions can be made by the Umthathi Training Project. Tel: 046 622 4450. A visit to their food gardens is an uplifting experience. Attending a township church service is another unforgettable experience.

Religion

All our local religious establishments welcome visitors and students.

- Cathedral of St Michael and St George (Anglican: Church of the Province of South Africa CPSA) Church Square Tel: 046 622 2445
- Christ Church (Anglican: CPSA) Speke Street Tel: 046 622 4006
- Christians at Rhodes (a community of staff and students from all traditions) services in the Rhodes chapel. Contact p.rose@ru.ac.za
- Commemoration Church (Methodist) High Street Tel: 046 622 7210
- Dutch Reformed Church (services conducted in Afrikaans) Hill Street Tel: 046
- Hindu Mandir (Kettlewell Street) contact s.daya@ru.ac.za
- Jamaat Khana (Muslim) Rhodes Campus contact the Muslim Students Society via the SRC
- Saint Bart's Church (Anglican: CPSA) Market Street Tel: 046 622 2786
- Saint Patrick's Church (Roman Catholic) 47 Hill Street Tel: 046 622 2808
- Seventh Day Adventist Church African Street Tel: 046 622 2180
- Trinity Church (Presbyterian) 55 Hill Street Tel: 046 622 4254
- uMariya uMama weThemba Monastery and Guesthouse (services and retreats) Tel: 046 622 8111
www.imaginet.co.za/holycross

SPORT

The 29 Rhodes sports clubs include Aquatics, Canoe, Cricket, Mountain, Rowing, Rugby, and Surfing clubs. In addition, there is a well-equipped Health Suite consisting of weight training, cardiovascular, aerobics and spinning facilities, a heated swimming pool, a floodlit artificial hockey surface, a 50m floodlit rifle range, a rowing tank, an indoor climbing wall and a rowing and sailing clubhouse at Settlers' Dam. For more information, go to www.ru.ac.za/studentZONE/studentlife/ The professional staff at Sports Administration is always available to assist you.

Other activities in town that you can take part in include athletics, golf, cycling, parachuting, hang-gliding and riding. Boma Helicopters operates from Grahamstown's airport, home of the local flying club and the microlite fraternity. Contact them through info@grahamstown.co.za. Ask at the sports shop in Peppergrove Mall about fishing (sea and river).

OUTDOOR LIVING

The braaivleis (barbecue) is a ubiquitous feature of South African life and a fine way to make the most of our wonderful weather.

To work up an appetite, you need some action! Apart from the range of outdoor sports you can take part in, you could also go out with the Dias Bird Club, the Botanical Society, the Grahamstown Horticultural Society or the hiking club. The National Botanical Gardens which adjoin the campus is a refreshing green zone. There's an easy two-day hiking trail that begins in the caravan park at the entrance to town with a sleepover in a comfortable cabin on Thomas Baines Nature Reserve.

A number of the many local game reserves offer terrific day excursions or you could book in with some new friends for a weekend.

The golden sands of our famous Eastern Cape beaches are only 45 minutes drive eastwards through picturesque scenery.

Get all the details on these and more from Tourism Grahamstown:

- Tel: 046 622 3241
- info@grahamstown.co.za

RESTAURANTS AND COFFEE SHOPS

It's an easy walk from the campus to a variety of coffee shops where you can enjoy a mid-morning break or a light meal. There are a number of fast food, hamburger and pizza kitchens, some of which will deliver. All four of our local supermarkets have bakeries and deli counters selling ready-to-eat food. At the other end of the scale, Grahamstown boasts several upmarket restaurants with good food and good winelists.

PUBS AND CLUBS

Several of these casual and popular meeting places are to be found close to the campus in New Street. You'll soon learn which is best for watching sport in the afternoon, which serves the best pub lunch and where you can find your kind of people and your favourite kind of music.

SHOPPING AND SERVICES

There is hardly anything you can't buy and get done in Grahamstown. How do you find out where? Ask people: word-of-mouth is the most powerful communication medium in our city.

It isn't a bad idea to share information with your fellow international visitors as they will empathise, but may well not be fully informed. Remember local folk are interested in visitors and enjoy falling into conversation. You might care to ask a couple of people the same question and then weigh up their answers just to make sure you are getting the correct information.

The Tourism Grahamstown office carries a wide selection of brochures and leaflets and the staff is well informed about how things work in our city. (63 High Street just below the Cathedral, Tel: 046 622 3241, info@grahamstown.co.za.)

Our local bi-weekly newspaper, *Grocott's Mail*, is another good source of information: it carries a wealth of local advertisements.

GETTING AROUND IN GRAHAMSTOWN

Most visitors find they can get around on foot quite easily. Do not walk around Grahamstown on your own after dark. Walk with a friend, arrange a lift (easy in our friendly city) or take a taxi. (You need to pre-book: Beeline 082 652 0798 or 082 651 6646)

Students may join Rhodetrip a service that runs a nightly shuttle between different parts of town and the campus.

If you are stranded, ring Campus Protection Services (046 603 8147) and one of their officers will come out and walk you home.

If you do hire a car, note:

- We drive on the left hand side of the road. Unless signs indicate special limits, the speed limit is 120kmph on a highway, 100kmph on other roads and 60kmph in built-up areas.
- You are required to carry a valid driver's licence with you at all times. Get an international licence (if necessary) before you leave home.
- The blood alcohol limit for drivers in South Africa is 0.05 per 100 milliliters.
- Keep car doors locked at all times – even while you are driving.
- You and your passengers must keep seatbelts fastened.
- Always know where you are going: make sure you have an adequate map.
- Do not use your mobile phone while driving, unless you have a hands-free kit.
- Do not pick up strangers.

- Keep your speed down and stay alert because not all South Africans are good or careful drivers and you could well encounter pedestrians and animals on our roads and highways.
- Place valuables and parcels out of sight in the boot while your car is unattended so as not to tempt thieves.
- Car guards (identified by a vest) will expect a small tip for watching your parked car in town. They work in streets where there are no parking metres.
- Grahamstown's parking metres are hand-held. The onus is on you to call the attendant and pay what is due but it is not necessary to add a tip.
- Petrol attendants will fill your petrol tank, clean the windows and check tyre pressure, oil and water for you. A tip of between R2 and R5 is appropriate for this service.

SOUTH AFRICANISMS

South African English is richly textured, having appropriated many words out of the other ten official languages of the country. Here is a highly selective glossary of some commonly used South Africanisms:

aikona!: to express denial or surprised disbelief

babalaas: a hangover; being hung-over

bakkie: a pickup truck

biltong: salted meat dried in strips

braai(vleis): a barbecue

bunny chow: a hollowed-out loaf of bread filled with vegetable or meat curry

chakalaka: spicy sauce of chopped tomatoes, chillies and onions

cooldrink: a soft drink

dagga: cannabis, marijuana

dorp: small (boring) town in the platteland (Grahamstown is not a dorp!)

dwaal: a dreamy, dazed or absent-minded state (in a dwaal)

eish!: to express a variety of emotions such as wonder, surprise, relief and sympathy

gatvol: extremely fed-up or disgusted

gogga: a creepy-crawly

gogo: granny, or a respectful from of address for an elderly person, usually a woman

howzit!: a friendly greeting

imbizo: a meeting or workshop

jawellnofine: all right, c'est la vie

jol: a good time

just now: in a while

kif: cool

kwaito: a style of popular dance music featuring rhythmically recited vocals over an instrumental backing with strong bass lines

larney: seemingly wealthy or important person

lekker: good; pleasant; delicious ("local is lekker" is a slogan expressing pride in South African products or achievements)

naartjie: mandarin orange or tangerine

padkos: food for eating on a journey

pap: maize porridge

platteland: remote country districts

robot: traffic lights

rooibos: herbal tea

sangoma: traditional healer or diviner

sarmies: sandwiches

(ag)shame!: to express sympathy or pity

shebeen: unlicensed establishment or private house selling alcohol

slap chips: french fries

takkies: running shoes, sneakers

(boere)wors: sausage, usually for the braai

veld: open countryside or grassland

voetsak!: go away

yebo!: yes!

If you want to know more, please visit the website of the Dictionary Unit for South African English, an affiliated institute of Rhodes University:

<http://www.ru.ac.za/affiliates/dsae/>

QUIRKS

- Expect South Africans to braai (see previous page) a lot — it is immensely popular over here.
- Service is quite slow here — people tend to have a more relaxed attitude to service in Africa.
- You will see pedestrians, or even animals wandering across national highways in places. Watch out for cows — they don't move when they see you.
- A waiter in a restaurant will remove your plate even though everyone else is still enjoying their meal. They aren't rushing you, that's just how it's done here.
- If the waiter asks if you want a doggy bag, what he is really asking is whether you want to take your leftovers home with you.
- At supermarkets, there are people employed to pack your bags for you, and there are petrol attendants here to fill your petrol tank for you.
- Car guards will expect a small tip for watching your parked car.

CHECKLIST FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Please ensure that you have completed all the steps below:

- Informed the University that you will be accepting the offer of a place at Rhodes
- Made adequate arrangements for accommodation either on or off campus
- Obtained a valid study permit
- Obtained valid health insurance for the duration of your stay in South Africa
- Paid all fees due by the stipulated date in mid January (for all students with the exception of second semester study abroad students, whose fees are due in mid June)
- Obtained written confirmation that your fees have been received at Rhodes
- Converted sufficient currency to have between R500 and R1000 South African Rands to cover miscellaneous expenses during the first few days in South Africa
- Arranged necessary flights to Port Elizabeth and road transport to Grahamstown
- Informed the University if you will be arriving early or late prior to the commencement of orientation week and the semester
- Informed banks, health insurers etc of your envisaged stay in South Africa

