



Frequently Asked questions on Financial and Admissions Context for 2026

1. Why does UJ maintain a free online application system?

UJ was among the first South African universities to remove application fees, reinforcing its digital-first strategy and commitment to accessibility. Digital applications are significantly more cost-effective than manual processing, and this efficiency offsets the cost of absorbing the application fee. Strict financial controls during registration, including upfront payments and debt-management systems, ensure sustainability.

2. Why am I on a waiting list?

A prospective student is placed on a waiting list because their application met the minimum admission criteria but there are not enough places, or their grade 12 results are not what was expected, meaning they are in a queue for potential admission if space opens or results improve. UJ uses an [APS \(Admission Point Score\)](#) and programme demand to rank applicants, so they are not rejected but are waiting for confirmation as others accept/decline or space becomes available.

3. What are the most popular courses for 2026?

The most popular qualifications are in health sciences, education, law, and commerce. Bachelor of Nursing, LLB in Law, Education programmes across all phases, as well as Social Work, Diagnostic Radiography and Accounting attracted the highest number of applications. In many cases, tens of thousands of applications are received for programmes with fewer than 150 available first-year places. This significant gap between demand and available spaces means that many applicants who meet the minimum requirements may still be placed on waiting lists. Admission decisions are therefore based on APS ranking, programme quotas and space availability, with comparisons to 2025 showing consistently high demand year on year.

4. Why must international self-funded students pay an 40% registration fee?

This payment covers the ICT levy, registration fee and part of semester tuition. It stabilises cash flow at the start of the academic year, particularly as DHET subsidy disbursements only begin in April. This approach supports operational continuity and limits the accumulation of new student debt.

5. What is UJ's historical student debt position and why must return students pay?

As of September 2025, UJ carried approximately R1.1 billion in historic student debt. This total comprised R491 million owed by students who were no longer registered in 2025, and R609 million owed by self-funded students who were registered in 2025. To re-register, students with outstanding debt must pay at least 50% of their balance, settle the registration fee, sign an acknowledgement of debt, and commit to a debit-order payment plan. This approach strikes a balance between financial accountability and continued academic access.

6. Does the NSFAS accommodation cap affect students in metropolitan areas?

The NSFAS accommodation cap remains a challenge in high-cost urban areas, such as Johannesburg. While UJ works with private providers to remain within the cap, some University-owned residences exceed it due to operational costs. In these cases, limited bursary support is provided to mitigate hardship, although this places additional financial pressure on the institution.

7. Academic Opening and First-Year Welcome

All UJ staff, registered first-year students, and their parents are invited to attend the Academic Opening and First-Year Welcome event, which will take place on Friday, 6 February 2026, at the AW Muller Stadium. The formal programme will begin at 11:00. Attendance will be limited to 5 000 guests, and access on the day will be strictly managed through a compulsory RSVP system and controlled entry at the stadium gates. Intercampus bus services will be provided to transport students from the three campuses to the Auckland Park Bunting Road Campus.