



CORNERSTONE INSTITUTE

Student Handbook 2025

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REFERENCE LIST

1. WELCOME

It is a privilege to extend the warmest greetings from Cornerstone Institute. At Cornerstone Institute, our greatest joy lies in engaging with you holistically, beyond the academic realm. We believe that education transcends mere cognition and comprehension; it is about fostering meaningful connections of thought between individuals. This dynamic interchange among all of us – students, faculty, and the broader community- is an exciting and enriching process.

We eagerly anticipate engaging with you, learning from you, teaching you, and growing with you. Throughout this process, we hope you will develop in many areas of life and recognize your value and potential to contribute to our beautiful world. We are deeply honoured to be a part of your journey to becoming leaders in society; value-driven individuals with a heart for people, the community, and South Africa; while also becoming active change agents in the world.

This booklet has been prepared to assist you in this new venture at Cornerstone Institute. We encourage you to take the time to familiarise yourself with its contents, which include essential information regarding, academic integrity, library use, exams, Funda and class behaviour. If you need support along your journey, please contact the Student Development and Support team. We are eager to assist you in any way that we can.

Martin Luther King Jnr. once wrote, "The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education." We hope that your time at Cornerstone Institute will help you achieve this goal of true education. Thank you for trusting us to partner with you as we together change our world!

Best wishes as you embark on this academic journey!

2. CORNERSTONE & YOU

2.1 Our Education Philosophy

While we embrace students from all groups and walks of life, we aim to produce graduates of equal caliber, fully capable of contributing positively to their communities and the world at large in a spirit of love and reconciliation, justice, and peace. The Cornerstone learning philosophy is based on engendering a high value for people, openness to continual learning, and growth towards wholeness.

2.2 Our Shared Values

- Respect – *Valuing self, peers, staff, authority, others, and their property.*
- Integrity – *Openness, honesty, truthfulness, and fairness in all interactions.*
- Inclusivity – *Recognising and respecting the dignity of others.*
- Unity – *Working together towards the common good.*
- Creativity – *Having innovative approaches to learning and problem-solving.*
- Excellence – *Striving to reach the highest quality of achievement.*



3. CONTACT INFORMATION

All queries **must** be directed to: helpdesk@cornerstone.ac.za

Queries sent to the helpdesk can be directed to the relevant parties. In this way, you query can be tracked as you will receive a ticket number. Queries sent to other email addresses are not tracked so it is in your best interest to send queries to the helpdesk.

Front Desk: cifdesk@cornerstone.ac.za

Only for programme-specific queries contact the relevant departmental administrator which can be found in the list below:

Education Department: edu-admin@cornerstone.ac.za

Psychology Department: psychadmin@cornerstone.ac.za

Theology Department: theol-admin@cornerstone.ac.za

Sociology & Community Development Department: socdev-admin@cornerstone.ac.za

Business Department: businessstudies@cornerstone.ac.za

Alternative Education: alternativeeducation@cornerstone.ac.za

Faculty Department: facultyadmin@cornerstone.ac.za

4. FINANCE INFORMATION

2025 FEE STRUCTURE

Non-refundable Initial Payment of R5000.00 payable at registration		
Registration Costs		
Application Fee	All new students	R330.00
Student Card	All 1 st Years/Replacement	R120.00
Technology Fee	All students annually	R650.00
Student Services Fee	All students annually	R1200.00
Annual Payment Plan Fee	All students annually	R3000.00
Programme	Maximum credits per year	Cost per Credit
Higher Certificate in Community Counselling (min. 1 year)	124	R330.00
Higher Certificate in Business Leadership (min. 1 year)	120	R330.00
Higher Certificate in Christian Ministry (min. 1 year)	120	R330.00
Higher Certificate in Community Development (min. 1 year)	120	R330.00
Bachelor of Theology in Community Leadership (min. 3 years)	124	R590.00
Bachelor of Arts (min. 3 years)	124	R590.00
Bachelor of Commerce (min. 3 years)	124	R590.00
Post Graduate Certificate in Education in Intermediate Phase (min. 1 year)	135	R485.00
Post Graduate Certificate in Education in Foundation Phase (min. 1 year)	136	R485.00
*Note: PGCE Additional undergirding modules are charged at Bachelor of Arts rate.		
BA Honours in Community Development (min. 1 year)	130	R600.00
BA Honours in Psychology (min. 1 year)	132	R600.00
BPsych Equivalent: Course Work (12 months)	132	R740.00
BPsych Equivalent : Practicum and Supervision (6 months)		R22 050.00
Other Costs		
Recognition of Prior Learning	25% of module cost	
Credit Accumulation Transfer	Per application	R350.00
Reprint of Transcripts, SACE letters, etc.	Per document	R165.00
Reprint of Certificates	Per document	R600.00

Courier for documents	As required	R150.00
Continuation Fee:		
Undergraduate (Senior Project Paper, Fieldwork)	Per annum payment	R2000.00
Postgraduate (Research Projects)		R2500.00
Dean's Assessment (graduating students only)	Per module	R800.00
Re-evaluation Assessment (payable <u>prior</u> to the assessment)	Per module in advance	R520.00

NEDBANK: CORNERSTONE INSTITUTE | A/C 1075030269 | BRANCH CODE: 198 765 | REF: STUDENT NUMBER

4.1 General

- The fee structure applies to African countries only.
- The fee structure indicates the cost per credit. Modules are allocated a specific number of credits, which is based on the workload and content.
- The annual fee is determined by the number of credits the student registers for the academic year (January – November). Students are only invoiced for the modules that they register for in the current year and not for the entire course.
- A minimum of 32 credits per semester is required.
- Each student (including July intake) is required to register in January each year and pay the initial payment.
- Students who register in July are registered for the second semester of the academic year (July-November).
- Students studying for non-credit purposes (AUDIT) pay half of the tuition fee applicable.
- Tuition fee rate is double for International students. (Excludes African Countries).
- Campus-based students who require a study visa to study at Cornerstone must pay 60% of the tuition fee in advance before a visa letter can be issued. (This includes African Countries).
- Financial aid applications for new students registering for the January intake closes at the end of January.
- Financial aid applications for new students registering for the July intake closes at the end of June.
- Financial aid applications for current students registering for the following academic year closes at the end of October
(<https://cornerstone.ac.za/finance/financial-aid-application/>)

4.2 Payment of Fees

- Students are responsible for the full payment of all fees and expenses according to their annual statement.
- If a student is being sponsored, it is the student's responsibility to contact sponsors to ensure payments are met. Fee statements are only sent to the student.

- Students must use their student number and surname as a reference for ALL financial correspondence.
- Statements are sent via email. Students must ensure that their statements are correct and matches the proof of registration issued by the registrar department.
- [Payments can be made via EFT, bank deposit and the Karri App.](#)
- Information regarding the Karri app and monthly QR code can be obtained from the finance office.
- Proof of payment receipts should be emailed to the bursar - bursar@cornerstone.ac.za
- Promotional discounts may be offered from time to time. Conditions apply.

4.3 Payment Plan

- For the January intake, an Initial Payment of R5000.00 is payable before or at registration. The balance of the fees will be divided into a 10 month payment plan, from February – November.
- For the July intake, an Initial Payment of R5000.00 is payable by the end of June. The balance of the fees will be divided into a 5-month payment plan, from July – November.
- Should the tuition fees not be settled in full at the beginning of the semester, the payment plan must be used.
- By the end of the first semester, the semester 1 invoice OR half of the students' total outstanding fees, must be settled in order for a grade report to be issued.
- Students who choose to register per semester must settle their semester fees before they are able to receive their grade report.
- The R3000 annual payment plan fee will be deducted if the total account is settled by the end of February (January Intake) or July (June intake)
- The Initial Payment of R5000 is applied to the administration fee and the balance to the tuition fee.

4.4 Refund of Fees

- **The R5000 initial payment is non-refundable.**
- **All administration fees due at registration will not be refunded.**
- A student is able to make changes to or cancel their module selection within the first 10 days at the start of the semester. Thereafter, the student will be liable for the payment of the semester fees. □ Non-compliance with withdrawal/cancellation procedure will result in **no** refunds.

4.5 Non-Payment of Fees

Students who are more than **30 days outstanding will be put on financial suspension**, resulting in the following consequences:

- The student may not attend class and access to course material on the student portal will be withheld.
- Examination results and/or qualifications will be withheld.

- Should a student's first semester fees not be settled by the end of the first semester, the second-semester modules will be cancelled and an automatic fee suspension will be applied
- Registration for the following year is not permitted unless the student's account is settled in full.
- Failure to meet the agreed payment plan will result in the outstanding fees being handed over for collection with costs.

4.6 Financial aid policy

4.6.1 Purpose

- The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework and guidelines for establishing and managing the application, selection and review processes and procedures of the Cornerstone Financial Aid Programme. The Financial Aid Committee are the sole custodians of fund allocations.
- The Financial Aid Programme is established to assist students, where possible, to access tertiary study and to succeed through the provision of financial assistance. Financial assistance is usually in the form of partial remission of fees and is dependent on the availability of funds and the criteria in section 6 below. The responsibility for financing the fees rests with the student, as specified in the Cornerstone Yearbook under Fee Structure.

4.6.2 Funding

- Cornerstone provides financial aid from external funders as well as from internal resources as determined from time-to-time by Management. External funders include individual funders, organisations, trusts, churches or donors. Selection criteria may be applied as specified by a particular donor in relation to their grant funds.
- Financial Aid Students are not exempt from complying with the Financial Policy.
- All students who receive funding from Cornerstone Institute and/or External Funders are required to complete the Financial Aid form.
- As a private higher education institution, Cornerstone does not receive any financial assistance or subsidy from the government.
- We note that annually there are more applications than can be supported by the Cornerstone Institute Financial Aid Fund. Students are advised to apply to other sources.
- This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Financial Policy.

4.6.3 Responsibility for implementation

- The Financial Aid Committee (FAC) holds responsibility for the implementation and ongoing compliance of this policy. The FAC must comprise of at least the first five office bearers below and should ideally consist of all of the following:
 - Financial Manager (Chairperson)
 - The CEO or his/ her representative.

- Financial Administrator.
- Director of Student Development and Support.
- A Faculty member.
- Financial Aid Officer.
- Advancement Officer.
- Alumni Representative.
- Board Representative.
- Any other staff members who can make a valuable contribution may be co-opted.
- Financial Aid meetings occur no less than four times per year, using an agenda that must include:
 - A spreadsheet on the availability and allocation of funds from the Finance Office.
 - A funder report
 - Allocation of funds (if applicable)

4.6.4 Administration of financial aid

- The FAC is responsible for the administration of the Financial Aid Programme.
- The FAC reviews the process of awarding and administering financial aid on an annual basis, based on eligibility criteria (see section 6 below).
- The FAC reviews the resources available for financial aid for the following year.

The financial aid file for each student, must comprise the following:

1. Completed Financial Aid Application Form.
 2. The bi-annual Funder Thank-you Letters.
 3. Personal Profile, updated when necessary.
- The latter two documents can be made available to funders and donors and lend support to any further financial aid allocations, with approval by the student as laid out in the Financial Aid Application Form.
 - A report will be provided bi-annually to Management which includes information about the allocation of financial aid.
 - Financial Aid is publicly promoted bi-annually, and students apply via a formal application process.
 - Financial Aid applications for current students must be submitted by 31st October for the following year.
 - Financial Aid applications for new students applying for the January or July intakes must be submitted by the 31st of January and the 30th of June, respectively.
 - Funding is allocated when donations are available. Students must re-apply annually for continued eligibility for financial aid.
 - Some external funders or donors specify criteria for the awarding of their financial aid, e.g., academic excellence, a particular field of study or community involvement. The FAC is therefore obliged to ensure that students meet the eligibility criteria and will allocate the funds as per the funder's request.

4.6.5 Appeals

- An Appeals Committee will be appointed by Management on a case-by-case basis.
- A financial aid applicant who is not allocated funding, or a recipient whose funding is withdrawn, is entitled to lodge an appeal if they consider that their case has not been considered correctly or fairly.
- In the case where an applicant has not been successful, the following process should be followed:
 - (1) They should seek explanatory feedback from the FAC in writing. Feedback from the FAC is expected to be provided to the student within five working days.
 - (2) If the student is dissatisfied with the explanation provided by the FAC, an appeal against the decision can be made in writing, outlining the grounds of the appeal and addressed to Management. Students may include any material lending support to their case with their appeal.
- In the case of a student who wishes to appeal against a decision to have financial aid withdrawn, they must do so in writing to the FAC. The appeal must be received within ten working days of the date of notification of the decision. Students may include any material lending support to their case with their appeal. The FAC will escalate the appeal through Management, who will advise on the action steps to be taken. Management will consider the appeal and any decision that is reached will be final.
- If an appeal is not lodged within the specified timeframe, the original FAC decision stands. The outcome of an appeal is provided to the student within twenty working days of receipt of the appeal. Students will be notified of any unforeseen delays in finalising consideration of an appeal.
- In the case of financial aid that is withdrawn, the funding in question will be suspended until the outcome of the appeal process has been determined. In the event that no appeal against a withdrawal decision is lodged, the withdrawal decision stands, and the recipient will not be entitled to re-apply for any further Cornerstone financial aid within the current year. If a withdrawal decision is upheld, the recipient will forfeit the remainder of the FAC funding for that year.

4.6.6 Financial aid criteria

- Applicants are considered for financial aid based on the following criteria.
 - New Applicants (also read the additional criteria for all students)**
 - The applicant has completed the financial aid application form and submitted all supporting documents before the application closing date.
 - The applicant is from RSA or from SADC.
 - The applicant has made the initial payment to Cornerstone as indicated in the fee structure and is compliant with arrangements for the outstanding balance of the tuition fees for the current year.
 - This is the applicant's first year of tertiary education.
 - Current Students (also read the additional criteria for all students)**
 - The student is not on academic probation.

- Students that have failed an academic year or modules may not re-apply for assistance for that same academic year or modules
- The student has settled any outstanding balances of the previous year and made initial payments as indicated in the fee structure by 31st January.

Additional criteria for all applicants:

- The student has signed the agreement and declaration form.
- The student disclosed all necessary information that may influence the awarding of a bursary.
- The student is taking at least 80 credits per year or 40 credits per semester.
- Indication of their own initiative to secure other funding
- A willingness to provide community service inclusive of voluntary services to Cornerstone Institute by agreement and arrangement
- The student's compliance with the Financial Policy is compulsory.
- No financial aid allocation will be made if the student does not comply with the fee policy in all respects. The fee policy supersedes the financial aid policy.

Qualitative criteria for all applicants would include:

- Student's attitude and conduct towards their educational journey
- The students' community involvement and commitment to social justice
- The expected year of graduation
- The financial need of the student
- A financial and academic update
- Additional eligibility criteria may be considered as per a donor's requirements.

4.6.7 Disclaimers

- Only completed Financial Aid application forms with all supporting documents will be considered.
- Only South African students and students from SADC countries may apply for financial aid.
- The initial specified payment as indicated in the fee structure must be paid at registration to activate the approved funding.
- Returning students have to ensure that their student account is up-to-date before they can be considered for financial aid for the next academic year.
- All financial aid recipients are required to submit a bi-annual Funder Thank-you Letter to the Director of Student Development and Support and to update their Personal Profile, to be made available for funders.
- The student must commit to complete the qualification (failing which all monies granted must be repaid) and sign an undertaking accordingly.
- Module failures as well as additional modules taken are not eligible for financial aid.
- Failure of an applicant to disclose information that may influence the awarding of financial aid will result in cancellation of funds awarded.

- Download a copy of the [Financial Aid Application form here](#). Send completed application form with all supporting documentation to bursar@cornerstone.ac.za or drop it off at the Cornerstone Institute reception desk in a sealed envelope addressed to The Bursar.

5. EMAIL ACTIVATION

1. You will receive an email to your personal email account, with the following information:

Cornerstone email address: *|Cornerstone email|*

Password: *|password|*

2. Activate/Use your Cornerstone email account as follows:

- Using any web browser (Chrome, Firefox, etc.), enter the URL <https://www.google.co.za>
- At the top right of the Google page, click on either the blue ‘SIGN IN’ button or the ‘coloured disk’ with an initial on it. Only one will be shown.
- The ‘Choose an Account’ screen will be displayed. Select – ‘Use Another Account’
- On the next screen, enter your Cornerstone email address
- The following display will ask for your Cornerstone-supplied password.
- At the bottom of the ‘Welcome to your New Account’ display, click ‘Accept’
- You may now be prompted to create your own new password. Should this happen, please enter a password of your choice.
- On the next screen, please click on the ‘Mail’ button at the top right of the display.
- Your Cornerstone email account will now be active.

We recommend that you proceed immediately to the website and activate your email.

Should you have any problems activating your Cornerstone email, please send a support request to helpdesk@cornerstone.ac.za

6. STUDENT VIRTUAL PLATFORM (FUNDA)

Our virtual learning and teaching platform is called "Funda". This will be your “go-to” site for all your modules where you can access lectures and submit assignments. You will be able to access Funda at the following web address: <https://current.cornerstone.ac.za/portal>. You will be asked to sign in with your Cornerstone ID and a password provided to you by Cornerstone. To help

familiarise you with the Funda platform, a series of video tutorials are made available as a part of the Orientation module. In addition, you will have access to the Funda student manual.

You can also access the demo account to get an idea of the learning platform prior to receiving your personal account details. This is a ‘dummy’ account that you can access using the following login details:

Username: demo

Password: demo

If you have a Funda suggestion or complaint, please send an email to helpdesk@cornerstone.ac.za. Make sure to use this email address so that your query can be directed correctly.

It is recommended that the [Chrome browser](#) is used for full functionality of the Funda platform

7. LIBRARY & E-BOOK INFORMATION

7.1 General

A library is located on the main campus.

The library hours are as follows:

- Monday – Friday: 08h00 – 16h30
- The library is closed during public holidays.
- To ensure building security, all users are required to vacate the premises at least 10 minutes before closing.

7.2 Computer Laboratory

The library features a computer laboratory designed strictly for academic purposes. Access to the laboratory is during library opening hours.

7.3 Books and Journals

The library offers a lending section with a diverse collection of approximately 20 000 volumes covering a wide range of topics. A limited number of textbooks is also kept on reserve for in-library use only.

7.4 Databases and Online Resources

Students have access to online resources through Funda on EBSCOhost research platform

The library welcomes suggestions for enhancing services particularly for distance education students. Please feel free to contact the Librarian for any feedback or queries.

Library contact details:

- Website: Tidio instant chat (chat with library staff during working hours).
- Email: Library@cornerstone.ac.za
- Extension: 2219

8. STUDENT DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORT (SDS)

8.1 About us

The Student Development and Support team partners with students in their academic journey - walking alongside them from orientation to graduation, ensuring they finish triumphantly. They strive to be the hands that carry, the hearts that hear, and the mouths that motivate for the ultimate success of everyone, for the advancement of Cornerstone, and for the community at large. They believe in the core values of Cornerstone and aspire to display **excellence** and **creativity** in all they do. The team interacts **respectfully** with students and staff, and in all our dealings we work with **integrity** to keep **unity** within the Cornerstone community and the larger social circle, ensuring that no matter whom they serve or work alongside, there is a feeling of **inclusivity**.

8.2 Our services

The services offered by the Student Development and Support team are designed to meet the diverse needs of our student body and ensure the holistic development of all students. The key areas of development and support are academic, social, emotional, and personal.

8.2.1 Orientation

Our Orientation offering is designed to welcome new students to Cornerstone and provide them with the knowledge required to get started. Students who participate in Orientation are more likely to feel prepared for their tertiary journey with us. Students are provided with information related to their studies as well as initiation into the Cornerstone culture. The information is documented

in the Cornerstone Academic Guidelines, the Student Handbook, the Policies and Procedures Manual, the Funda Manual, and the Cornerstone Institute Yearbook. Moreover, Orientation provides students with an opportunity to meet Cornerstone staff as well as fellow students before the first day of classes. Students have the opportunity to meet their SRC. In addition, the Orientation process includes training on our learning management system, Funda. A virtual orientation is available on our website and can be accessed via this link: <https://cornerstone.ac.za/orientation/>.

8.2.2 Academic Development and Support

This service aims to develop student-centered strategies and interventions that enhance students' academic thinking. It also assists students in achieving their full academic and personal potential. The services include one-on-one sessions, academic workshops, and study groups. For more information or to schedule an appointment email academicsupport@cornerstone.ac.za.

8.2.3 Social Support

Student Development and Support works alongside students to create a vibrant and engaging student environment on campus and online. We encourage student initiatives that aim to progressively build healthy supportive relationships within the Cornerstone community. This is achieved in collaboration with the Student Representative Council (SRC) and the general student body by supporting student events, societies, and groups. To make suggestions or start a society, email societies@cornerstone.ac.za.

8.2.4 Emotional Support

The Student Development and Support team is available to advise and encourage students on matters that may affect them beyond their academics. Where needed, we refer students to our counselling service where students are assisted with personal, emotional, or psychosocial matters. The counselling service is available through direct appointment via email with one of the counsellors who can be contacted by emailing counselling@cornerstone.ac.za. In addition, we host a range of workshops related to student emotional well-being, such as burn-out, self-esteem, and coping mechanisms. Keep an eye on your email for information on those.

8.2.5 Personal Development

Within limits, the department aims to assist students with personal needs ranging from providing accommodation information (where available) and, within limits, assisting with wellness needs. We also offer personal student development opportunities in areas of leadership, career development and other opportunities for personal wellness through the distribution of career guidance resources, workshops, and one-on-one advising. For more information about this service contact sds@cornerstone.ac.za.

8.2.6 Queries, Grievances & Appeals

General Queries

For general queries email helpdesk@cornerstone.ac.za. All departments you may need to contact can be accessed via the helpdesk.

Student Grievance Procedure

The Student Grievance Policy outlines the procedures pertaining to complaints and grievances. Below are the 3 stages to be followed. ***Note: there is a different process for Academic-related grievances which is listed under appeals.***

1. Stage One

When a student feels aggrieved, the student must first attempt to resolve the matter informally with the relevant parties.

2. Stage Two

If the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved in stage one, the matter can be raised with the Director of Student Services. The student may request support or representation from one of the student leaders. The Director of Student Services will either resolve the complaint or advise as to whether the student should follow the formal grievance procedure in stage three.

3. Stage Three

If the grievance is not successfully resolved in stage two, the matter is referred to the Executive Dean for consideration and resolution according to the Grievance Policy. If the process fails to resolve the grievance, at the Executive Dean's discretion after consultation with the CEO, the matter is then referred to the Senior Management or a committee of the Senate. To note, student disciplinary committees are considered an ad hoc part of the structures of the Senate.

Academic Appeals

Students may go through the academic appeals procedure if they feel they have been unfairly dealt with. In such cases, at the discretion of the faculty, the student may be allowed the opportunity to resubmit the assessment. However, in the case of final papers submitted at the end of the term, there will be no chance for resubmission.

There are 3 stages to the appeals process within a specified time frame. At the end of each stage, there is an exit point to end the process, otherwise, it continues to the next stage. To appeal, an email should be sent to appeals@cornerstone.ac.za

Possible reasons for academic appeals:

- Unfair assessment
- Invalid assessment
- Unreliable assessment
- The assessor's judgement, if considered biased
- Inadequate expertise and experience of the assessor if it influenced the assessment
- Unethical practices

For further information about the procedure concerning appeals, email appeals@cornerstone.ac.za

9. STUDENT ADJUSTMENT

Whether you are a first-time student or returning to studies after some time, adjusting to a new environment along with new expectations can be challenging. We have included some useful

information in this section on facing change to support your adjustment process as you embark on this exciting journey.

9.1 Facing Change

There is no doubt that this will be a period of change, and these changes will come in many forms, ranging from finance, time, commitment, friendships and, for some, relocating from home. It is important that you prepare yourself mentally and emotionally for these changes. Along with the changes that you will experience, you might face feelings of being overwhelmed, anxious, unable, inadequate, and lonely. Know that you are not alone. Your peers are most likely experiencing some of the same changes and emotions that come with being a student. With all changes in life, we need time to adjust, and this adjustment period varies. Be patient with yourself and remember that what you are experiencing is normal. As you navigate your way through this new territory, make sure to reach out to those close to you and use the support available at Student Development and Support.

9.2 Time Management

One of the greatest challenges a student faces is managing their time well. This often comes as a result of not fully understanding the concept of time requirement of studies. Above and beyond lesson/class time, you will be required to do additional readings, assignments, discussions, tests, and exams. As a full-time student, you have signed up for an eight-hour day. As a part-time student, you may need to invest anything from four to six hours of your day in your studies. This is a considerable time adjustment, taking into account that you may have other commitments and still need to rest to lead a balanced and fulfilling life. It is therefore important to establish at an early stage whether this commitment is realistic for your life and that you have the tools to manage your time wisely. These tools include planning and being organised which can take different shapes and forms. You want to make sure that you use planners, calendars, and to-do lists that will ensure you can meet the necessary deadlines. For additional assistance with how to manage your time best, you can contact Student Development and Support who will gladly guide you with what will most likely be one of your biggest challenges. In addition, make use of workshop opportunities that will be offered to provide you with the skills to help manage your time best.

9.3 Being Independent

By now you must have heard that tertiary education is very different to school and one of the main differences is that you are required to be an *independent learner*. While most students know this, they often do not understand what exactly this means. Firstly, it means that you take ownership of your learning and the responsibility that comes with this (including financial responsibilities). You are expected to meet required deadlines, communicate timeously with relevant departments when you run into challenges, and take responsibility for the outcome of your studies. Secondly, it means that you actively participate in your learning. When you are unsure of something, the responsibility is yours to ask, reach out, and pursue the knowledge that you seek. Finally, being an independent learner also means that you monitor and evaluate your learning and the progress that you make. It is important that you identify your strengths and weaknesses and evaluate what works and does not work for you. That way you can make adjustments where needed, and make the necessary changes to continuously improve as you progress.

9.4 Find a Suitable Environment

Everyone is different and we thrive in different environments and circumstances. To ensure that you can concentrate and deliver the best quality work, you need to establish the environment that best promotes learning for you. This includes deciding on a space that has the least distraction for you. You should also consider whether you are more productive in silence or where there is some activity. Do you need music to encourage you? Also, consider whether you are comfortable in a more organised space or if a disorganised workspace is more appropriate for you. All of these factors are important for you to consider to determine and find the most suitable environment that will yield the best results. Remember this is different for everyone and you need to do what works best for you. If you are unsure about which environment is most suitable for you, test a few different environments and see which yields the best results. It is also possible that you might need different environments at different times.

9.5 Set Goals

Apart from the ultimate goal of gaining your qualification, you want to set goals along the way. It can sometimes get discouraging when the workload mounts up and you're not quite performing as you had hoped. It is therefore important that you set smaller measurable goals as you progress. These could include goals such as submitting an assignment before the deadline, starting an assignment sooner than you normally would, or improving a grade by a targeted percentage.

Smaller, realistic goals will keep you motivated. These goals however do not need to be limited to your academics. Setting manageable life goals is also important to keep you inspired and encouraged and to help you focus on maintaining a healthy balance.

9.6 Build a Network of Support

You may or may not already have a strong network of support. Your journey through tertiary studies will be an opportunity to build new networks and strengthen the ones you already have. Many students find that they have made lifelong friendships along the way, which has made the journey easier. There is no doubt that you will most likely encounter some challenges, academically or personally, and it is important that you have a support system during these times. Be intentional about connecting with your peers, attending student events, and expanding your network. You might need someone, or they might need you. The key point is that you do not need to go through this journey alone.

9.7 Reach Out

As you embark on this journey and even along the way, life will happen and circumstances beyond our control will occur. There may be moments when you are in doubt and times when you will be unsure if you should continue. In addition, you will most likely face common student concerns about your study skills, your academic performance, your health and other issues. It is in these moments that it is crucial for you to reach out. This could be to a family member, a friend, or Student Development and Support. Don't walk this journey alone, Student Development and Support is an email away (sds@cornerstone.ac.za).

10. IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The following information is related to policies that govern academic and institutional activities. For the full scope of these policies and additional student-related policies, you can view the Policies and Procedures Manual.

10.1 Communication

Students are expected to use their Cornerstone email as their primary email while studying at the institution. You are encouraged to communicate timeously with your lecturers. Note that lecturers have a 48-hour turnaround response time.

10.2 Compliance

Students are expected to comply with all written and oral basic instructions and communication from the Cornerstone community.

10.3 Academic Policies

Students are required to adhere to all academic policies relating to academic integrity, assessments, attendance, and examinations. These policies can be viewed in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

10.4 Classroom Behaviour

Cornerstone is a community that vigorously embraces diversity and encourages students to be mindful and respectful of others regardless of gender, racial, ethnic, religious or political perspectives. Students are expected to follow class rules set out by the lecturer and not disrupt the classroom environment. Disciplinary measures will be taken should a student display or be accused of any unacceptable behaviour in the classroom.

10.5 Discipline

Cornerstone staff may deem it necessary to discipline a student due to actions that are contrary to the values and policies held by Cornerstone, and which adversely affect the student body and life of the institution. In circumstances such as those mentioned above, discipline will be administered through the procedures outlined in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

10.6 Assignment Extensions

Minor extension (up to two business days)

Your lecturer can give you two business days' extension to submit an assessment, for valid reasons such as illness or excessive academic workload. No special form is needed, but you must make the request in writing (e.g. via email or Funda) before the original assessment due date. The lecturer must approve in writing, and you must keep a record of such approval until you have successfully completed the module.

Major extension (more than two business days)

To apply for more than two business days' extension due to exceptional circumstances, request the **Assessment Extension Request form** at facultyadmin@cornerstone.ac.za and submit it with the evidence required to facultyadmin@cornerstone.ac.za at least **one week before the original due date** (unless the circumstances preventing you from completing the assessment also prevent you from applying for extension). You will receive a written response within five business days.

10.7 Late Assignment Submission

Students should complete and submit all the assignments for each module in order to learn, develop and derive maximum benefit from the various learning activities. A late penalty of 3% per day of the possible marks will be deducted from late assignments, for a maximum of 21% (i.e. 7 days late). Work that is more than one (1) week late or after the end of examination week in a given term will not be marked. Lecturers are under no obligation to accept work after the end of exam week. As a result of Cornerstone's Assessment Policy, no one assignment will be weighted as more than 40% of the module's final score. Students must achieve a minimum cumulative average of 50%.

10.8 Academic Integrity

Students are expected to demonstrate academic integrity in all their assessments. Academic integrity requires that one gives proper credit to one's sources and never represent someone else's work as one's own. Violation of academic integrity can take several forms, the primary ones being plagiarism and cheating, both of which will be treated with appropriate penalties.

10.9 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is taking another person's thoughts, words, judgments, ideas, etc., and presenting them as your own. Plagiarism is not only cheating, but is also theft, and thus a serious academic offence. Plagiarism is committed when a person represents someone else's work as their own, whether unintentionally or deliberately.

Cornerstone Institute makes use of Turnitin, which is an automatic text-recognition system that efficiently and reliably detects plagiarism. Turnitin is built into the assessment submission tabs on the online Learning Platform, Funda. For any further information on Turnitin, please follow the link [to](#) the

tutorial https://training.cornerstone.ac.za/Student%20TII%20Training_Nov%202024/content/index.html#/

10.10 The Academic Guidelines

The Academic Guidelines booklet is a resource that provides you with all the information you need on how to adhere to Cornerstone’s academic standards, including how to reference appropriately. It is also important to follow the format and examples in the Academic Guidelines to ensure proper formatting. Students are reminded that *all work they submit as part of the requirements for a module at CI must be expressed in their own words unless it is a properly referenced and allowed quotation*. Students should take care when using their own work. Credit can only be given once for an assessment. Submitting the same piece of work (or a significant part thereof) twice for an assessment will be regarded as cheating.

11. STUDENT EVENTS

Several exciting events take place in the Cornerstone community throughout the year which students are encouraged to attend if interested. Events which are likely to take place include but are not limited to:

Valentine’s Day Celebration	Women’s Day
Academic Writing Workshops	Student Leaders Campaign & Voting
Career Development	Heritage Day
Human Rights Day	Circle of Control Workshop
Freedom Day	Nurtured Mind Video Series
Youth Day	Graduation Awards Nominations & Voting
Mandela Day Initiatives	Preventing Burnout Workshop
Academic Development Workshop	Graduation Ceremony

12. STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Student Representative Council (SRC)

12.1 Overview

The Student Leadership team exists to serve the student body by promoting the interests and wellness of students. They do this by coordinating student activities with societies and providing leadership and support. Student Leaders promote the integration of diverse cultures amongst the student body. They represent students on joint faculty/student committees and plan various online or social events. The student body elects the council each year. Furthermore, the Student Leaders work closely with the Student Development and Support team in serving the student community.

Each year, near the end of the academic year, students elect a new council to represent them the following year. The election process occurs in the 3rd Term as follows:

1. Nominations
2. Qualifying Candidates
3. Speeches
4. Voting

In the Fourth Term, the newly elected Student Leaders are announced, and attend a leadership camp, where they receive training on their respective portfolios and leadership in general.

The Student Leaders oversee several other functions as can be seen by their portfolios below. They welcome initiatives for societies that offer spaces for various talents and interests.

12.1 Student Leadership Portfolios

12.2.1 President

The President shall:

- Be the chief officer of the Student Leadership team.
- Have the ultimate responsibility for the coordination, implementation and monitoring of student led programs and activities.
- Be the spokesperson of the Student Leadership team.
- Represent the students in all applicable official Institutional functions when these functions pertain to student matters.

- Represent the interest of students in Senate.
- Be the student representatives in the institution leadership forums when these forums address student-related matters.
- Convene and chair all Student Leadership team meetings.
- Be an ex-officio member of all student committees' affiliates.
- Submit a termly report to the Secretary.

12.2.2 Deputy-President

The Deputy-President shall:

- Be the deputy chief executive officer of the Student Leadership team.
- Deputise the President when she/he is unavailable or unable to perform his/ her functions.
- Ensure that the Student Leadership policies are formulated and revised and give input in the formulation of institutional policy.
- Organise training workshops and capacity building activities for the Student Leadership team.
- Submit quarterly reports to the Secretary.

12.2.3 Secretary

The Secretary shall:

- Be the chief administrative officer of the Student Leadership team.
- Be the main custodian of Student Leadership records, documents and assets.
- Be responsible for the overall administration, management and internal communication within the Student Leadership team.
- Be responsible for keeping minutes in all Student Leadership team meetings and ensure that the minutes are circulated.
- Prepare and present termly reports for the Student Leadership team.

12.2.4 Treasurer

The Treasurer shall:

- Be the chief financial officer of the Student Leadership team.

- Oversee all financial administration of the Student Leadership team.
- Be responsible for the budgeting of funds allocated to the Student Leadership team.
- Ensure that the financial policies of the Student Leadership team are adhered to
- Lead fundraising initiatives
- Provide financial reports on behalf of the Student Leadership annually
- Submit a quarterly report to the Secretary

12.2.5 Student Welfare Officer

The Student Welfare Officer shall:

- Be responsible for the needs of all students with disabilities, international students and refugees.
- Liaise with Student Development and Support to ensure and also contribute to the satisfaction of the basic needs of students.
- Submit quarterly reports to the Secretary.

12.2.6 Academic Affairs Officer

The Academic Affairs Officer shall:

- Ensure that the academic needs of all students are addressed.
- Liaise with the Student Development and Support department to ensure and contribute to the provision of effective student support and development programs.
- Attend to all matters relating to the academics of students.
- Represent students through the functions of a class rep in Senate.
- Submit a quarterly report to the Secretary.

12.2.7 Community Wellness Officer

The Community Wellness Officer shall:

- Be responsible for the needs of all students with disabilities,
- Liaise with student services to ensure and also contribute to the satisfaction of the basic needs of students;

- Work to uphold Cornerstone’s ethos;
- Be part of student committees and societies;
- Promote a community-centered approach in all Student Leadership team activities.
- Be responsible for the promotion of cultural diversity within the student body;
- Be responsible for the social, cultural and recreational events and activities of the Student Leadership team;
- Submit a quarterly report to the secretary.

12.2.8 Communication and Public Relations Officer

The Communication and Public Relations Officer shall:

- Be the chief communication officer.
- Manage the production of all Student Leadership team publications, notices and other communication.
- Ensure that students are continuously and fully informed of the activities of the Student Leadership team.
- Obtain feedback from student concerning the services provided by the Student Leadership team and on the desirability and feasibility of the new Student Leadership initiatives.
- Submit a quarterly report to the Secretary.

Lookout for our next Student Leadership team elections. Be the leader of the change you want to see. To engage with the Student Leadership team, email src@cornerstone.ac.za

REFERENCE LIST

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