

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

1. Why does Absa offer a Fellowship Programme?

As a purpose-led organisation, Absa Group recognises the link between our sustainability and that of the communities in which we operate. To scale and deepen our social impact and do what's best for the people and planet, our Group Strategy has identified "playing a shaping role in Africa's growth and sustainability" as a key enabler. The growth that we want to achieve is inextricably linked to our firm commitment to be an active force for good.

This framework is a bold social aspiration to enable change within our company and the communities in which we operate – through our brand, innovation and operations.

We continuously test all our decisions against this bold aspiration and this includes how and what we fund – and the role that we play in promoting intergenerational sustainability and building wider supporting community frameworks. Our commitment to leave our communities better than we found them is the lifeblood of the way in which we are doing business – now and in the future.

At Absa Group, we also believe in possibility, and our priority is to play our role in putting the basic building blocks in place to ensure that young African leaders have the opportunity to reimagine their futures and turn their possibility into action.

2. What does the Absa Fellowship Programme offer?

Our continent's young people face a rapidly changing world and it's with this in mind that we have made a very clear strategic commitment to our continent and the development of its youth.

Young people need more than education, they also require critical work, life, business and thinking skills to help them adapt in this rapidly changing world. Our education and skills development initiatives are therefore focused on preparing young people for the workplace of the future. This is done with a demand-led approach, and our initiatives support the development of their technical, vocational, social and digital skills in line with the requirements of Africa's key growth sectors.

Additional focus is placed on institutional development, supporting 4IR education linked to leadership development and enhanced access to quality tertiary education.

We have shifted our focus from awarding broad-based scholarships that support multiple disciplines to offering a curated Fellowship Programme focused on developing a cadre of authentic, accountable and ethical future leaders with the potential to play a shaping role in their respective communities on the African continent.

Rapid advances in artificial intelligence (AI), robotics and other emerging technologies are happening in ever-shorter cycles, changing the very nature of the jobs that need to be done and the skills needed to do them. The Absa Fellowship Programme therefore focuses on supporting students studying towards an undergraduate degree in the following fields: science, technology, engineering, creative arts, humanities, mathematics and digital design/data (STEAHM_D) – all considered critical skills for the growth of a digital economy.

The Fellowship offers a full merit scholarship, recognising the unique leadership capabilities and competencies exhibited by the successful candidates. In addition to financial support towards their academic studies, Fellowship recipients furthermore benefit from exposure to a specially curated Leadership Development Programme as well as being mentored by Absa leadership and other industry experts.

3. What are the objectives of the new Absa Fellowship Programme?

The aim of the Absa Fellowship Programme is to develop and equip the Fellowship recipient with the critical competency skillsets that future leaders will require to achieve institutional and transformational impact, both in business, communities, countries and the African continent.

The overall Leadership Development Programme will ensure that, on completion, the scholarship recipient will not only have an academic degree, but also a pivotal network of peers. They will have built an understanding of their authentic selves, developed a deep sense of community citizenship and a deep sense of their own creativity, as well as the capacity to effect the changes that they desire, with an understanding of the African context and the possibilities therein.

Our programme is thus curated to develop the following skillset over the duration of their studies:

- Innovation, systems thinking, change and adaptability.
- An afro-centric global mindset.
- A project and digital mindset.
- Multi-sectoral communication and a collaborative orientation.
- Commercial acumen.
- Personal mastery, future-focus and people development skills.
- An environmental consciousness.

4. What is the minimum criteria for the Absa Fellowship Scholarship programme?

- The applicant must be between the age of 18 and 25 years
- The applicant must have attained a minimum average of 65% in Grade 12 (or equivalent qualifications from TVET college).
- Provisional or final acceptance from one of the **following universities:**
 - **University of Johannesburg**
 - **University of the Witwatersrand**
 - **University of Pretoria**
 - **University of Kwa-ZuluNatal**
 - **University of Cape Town**
 - **University of Stellenbosch.**
- The applicant must be studying towards one of the following undergraduate degrees, pre-selected by Absa (see list in TABLE A).
- A fully completed application form supported by all the required documents as proof.
- Completed online psychometric assessments facilitated by our external service provider.
- Participation in an online panel interview with Absa Senior Management that will be evaluated and scored accordingly.

Additional information that will be required:

- Confirmation of combined household income.
- Confirmation of citizenship.
- Disability, if applicable, supported by the appropriate medical proof/certificate.
- Race.
- Gender.
- ID document to confirm age (applicant needs to be between the age of 18 to 25 years).

5. What does the new Absa Fellowship Programme cover?

The programme provides funding to students to study on a full-time basis at the previously mentioned selected public universities in South Africa (see point 4 – What is the minimum criteria for the Absa Fellowship Programme?).

The scholarship covers the academic and leadership programme cost. The academic cost will include full tuition, meals, university/university-approved accommodation, laptop, books, education equipment and monthly stipend. The leadership programme cost will include all related travel, accommodation, meals, learner modules and guides, online assessments, access to emotional wellness check-in sessions, academic tutoring as well as mentoring by Absa leadership and industry experts.

Once awarded:

- The monthly stipend will be paid into an Absa transactional account (by Student Village on behalf of Absa).
- Payment will be made to the supplier (bookstore) for text books on approval of the submitted quote and receipt of the invoice.
- A voucher for a laptop will be issued.
- Payment will be made to the supplier of education equipment on approval of the submitted quote and receipt of the invoice.
- The university tuition fee, meals and accommodation money will be paid directly to the institution.
- In the case of private (university-approved) accommodation, the landlord will be paid directly, on submission of the contract and invoice from the landlord.
- Where meals are not included in the contract with the landlord, for university accommodation or for students staying with their parents, a monthly meal allowance will be paid into the Absa transactional account together with the stipend.

6. Does the Absa Fellowship Programme provide funding for degrees from academic institutions other than accredited universities?

The programme only covers pre-selected undergraduate degrees at NQF Level 7 from the six public universities in South Africa chosen by Absa (listed under point 4) in the study fields of science, technology, engineering, art (creative and fine arts), maths, humanities and digital design/data.

Studies towards any other undergraduate degrees from other public universities, private higher education institutions (universities) as well as TVET colleges are excluded from this programme.

7. Apart from funding, does the Fellowship offer any additional support to students?

Yes, recipients who are awarded a scholarship will also have to participate in the compulsory leadership development and support programmes implemented as part of the programme.

What the student can expect from this programme, which aims at developing future African leaders to co-sense and co-create an emerging future filled with possibilities:

- A defined personal leadership vision and the proactive ability to create value for themselves and others.
- A deep sense of how to be of service to the communities in which they live and work.
- A broader insight and new perspective of the African context.
- An optimistic ability to be future-focused and think more creatively about solutions to African challenges through responsiveness and the ability to predict African challenges and the possibilities that they pose.
- The capacity to develop and contribute to a network of high-performing, young individuals.
- Developing a multi-level view of how communities are an interconnected system.
- Understanding at a global, regional and country level where we come from, our current context and how this informs our future views.
- Learning and developing a critical mind- and skillset that is future-focused and drives intellectual, institutional, and social transformation.
- Becoming aspirant and inspirational and evoking a feeling of prestige catalysed by authentic ambassadorship.
- Being equipped to drive exponential impact for individuals, communities, countries and ultimately the continent.

In addition, the fellow will have access to emotional wellness check-in sessions, academic tutoring and mentoring by Absa leadership and industry experts.

Academic Tutoring

In peer academic tutoring, individuals from similar academic field networks assist each other in their learning from another with a greater knowledge, ability and skill in a particular subject, or transferring their greater knowledge, ability and skill in a particular subject to another.

This method will assist in meeting both multifaceted social and study needs and aims to prevent potential academic struggles and increase overall academic performance by laying a solid foundation towards your studies.

Academic tutoring will be supported by workshops with a specific focus on time management, exam preparation and understanding how you memorise information. The workshops will be followed up with revision sessions to ensure that you have grasped the concepts and to engage with your peers by sharing best practices.

Wellness peer-to-peer mentoring

The wellness support mentoring sessions will give you access to someone who can give you some insight into what they experienced when they first got to campus, and they can assist and guide you through the initial phases of settling into life as a student.

The wellness support will also aim at enhancing self-esteem and self-efficacy as well as improving life skills, coping strategies and your problem-solving skills.

Absa and industry mentoring

Mentoring builds capabilities and enhances individual listening skills, empathy, contextual understanding, collaboration and problem-solving skills.

For the duration of the fellow's undergraduate studies, they will be linked to an Absa Mentor as well as an Industry Expert Mentor.

The Absa Mentor will introduce and engage you in the world of work and the Industry Expert Mentor (in the same sector as the undergraduate degree field that the fellow will be studying towards) will give you insight and engage you in the world of the sector into which you will enter on graduation.

Below are some highlights of what you can expect from mentoring sessions:

- Identifying development areas and establishing **SMART goals**:
 - Discuss how to develop SMART goals in the mentor-mentee relationship
 - Practice using the goal-setting and action-planning tools.
- Guidance on how feedback can provide you with opportunities for learning and growth.
- Learning to use journaling for planning, reflection, personal growth and development.
- Learning about the different types of reflection and how to use each effectively.
- Learning how to make the most of being mentored.

8. How is the Fellowship governed/managed?

The Absa Fellowship Committee provides guidance, oversight and governance of the Fellowship programme through the dedicated Education Delivery team. The Fellowship Committee to be formed will be a cross-functional committee made up of between seven and nine Absa Management Representatives and representatives of external education specialist service providers. This helps to ensure that the execution of Absa's Africa Foundation Strategy for the Fellowship Programme and related decisions made by the committee are fair, transparent and unbiased.

The Education Delivery team and Fellowship Committee are responsible for:

- Development of the Fellowship application process up to the contracting stage.
- Oversight of the Fellowship criteria.
- Oversight of the adjudication/selection process and its governing principles.
- Final recipient selection in line with the adjudication/selection process.
- General oversight of the Fellowship Programme and relevant governing decisions, such as decisions related to the termination or continuation of the Fellowship in line with progress reports submitted for each successful recipient at the end of every semester, decisions around appeals and any changes to the fellowship criteria.
- Development of the Fellowship Leadership Programme and management of the implementation thereof.
- Acquiring service providers required to assist in delivering the Fellowship Programme

9. How are the Fellowships awarded?

Fellowship recipients will be recruited based on academic merit, choice of university and field of study, assessed skills and competency and not on personal bias or prejudice. Our Fellowship recipients will be given a fair chance to contribute and achieve their potential over the duration of their undergraduate studies.

The successful candidates for the scholarship will be selected from a shortlist compiled using the minimum criteria required, including the final score from online assessments and panel interviews as guidelines.

Once the online applications are closed, applicants meeting the minimum criteria (phase 1) are invited to participate in online assessments (phase 2) provided by the psychometric assessment service provider.

Students will be shortlisted (phase 3) according to the minimum criteria and leadership psychometric assessment score and submitted to the Scholarship Committee for candidate shortlisting to proceed to an online panel interview with a panel consisting of Senior Managers in Absa (phase 4).

The list of candidates invited to the online interview will be updated with the online panel interview score (phase 5) and re-submitted to the Scholarship Committee for the final selection of provisionally qualified recipients (phase 6). These recipients will undergo a social media background check (phase 7) before a provisional offer letter for acceptance or decline will be forwarded (phase 8).

On receipt of the provisional offer, the student will be required to provide the following, to enable moving to contracting and subsequent disbursement of funds (phase 9, the final phase):

- Final proof of acceptance/registration for the relevant degree at the university indicated on the provisional offer letter.
- Final matric results with a minimum of 65%.
- Quotes from the institution for tuition and accommodation (or a copy of the rental agreement with the landlord).

Once the scholarship has been awarded, the Committee reserves the right to adjust or withdraw any scholarship amount that may be awarded if there is a breach of the agreement entered into with the scholarship recipient, or material changes in the recipient's circumstances and eligibility. Material changes include but are not limited to changes in financial-need circumstances and institution of study and academic qualifications, among others.

10. What will the online leadership psychometric assessment entail?

As the Fellowship Programme is aimed at developing future leaders, the applicants will be assessed to determine their leadership aptitude and competencies. The assessments will be divided into four categories, namely potential, leadership, values and logic.

Potential – The degree to which **possibilities can be found** and the **potential for change** in situations presented to the benefit of society and those around an individual.

- **Leadership** – Individual ability to **respond to change and challenges** as well as leadership potential.
- **Values** – Individual's **core values, personality type** and outlook on the world.
- **Logic** – Individual's **mental ability**.

The assessments are done via the contracted service provider, Yenza. Applicants will be required to register (providing personal information for registration purposes) on the Yenza platform to enable them access to the assessments. Only the results from the assessments will be provided to Absa for use in the shortlisting process, taking into account the abovementioned leadership aptitude and competencies.

Applicants can access their assessment reports for own personal use from the Yenza Platform and will be able to further understand how Yenza uses their personal information by visiting the Yenza Privacy Policy and Terms of Use, by clicking on the **following links**:

<https://app.yenza.me/terms>

<https://app.yenza.me/privacy>

Any engagement between the applicant and Yenza, after the completion of the assessments for the Fellowship application process, will not form part of any agreement that Absa has with Yenza and Absa will have no involvement at any point.

11. How will the group panel interview work?

The group panel interview will be virtual via Microsoft Teams and in the format of presentations done by the individual candidates. The shortlisted candidates will be grouped together and each candidate will receive a topic that they will present to the panel members and other candidates.

The time allocated per presentation and the maximum number of PowerPoint slides will be communicated to the candidate, together with their topic, when the interview is scheduled by Student Village on behalf of the Absa panel. The candidate will have two days before the scheduled date of interview to do their research and prepare their presentation.

The candidate will share their presentation to the group on Teams while presenting on the topic. Time will be allocated for a maximum of two questions from the panel/other candidates.

12. What is the reason for Absa's values and social media screening?

As a corporate citizen both in SA and on the continent, Absa is required to conduct business in an ethical and responsible manner. Acting in an ethical and responsible manner also requires the Group to be vigilant and guarded when dealing with groups or individuals (clients, regulators, governments, business partners, service providers, employees, competitors, communities) as their actions, behaviour or ways of doing business can do harm or carry risk for our Brand. Absa's Values and Behaviours represent the set of standards that governs the actions of every individual that works for the organisation in our dealings with external parties.

We act fairly, ethically, openly and abide by higher standards than those set by the laws and regulations that apply to our business.

We:

- Act with integrity, ethically, with due skill, care and diligence.
- Are open and co-operative with regulators.
- **Treat customers and clients fairly:**
 - We ensure that we respect and protect all personal information that we hold and abide by privacy laws and regulations that set out requirements for handling personal information.
- **Observe proper standards of market conduct:**
 - Committed to addressing our environmental impacts and comply with all applicable environmental legislation in the countries in which we operate and adhere to environmental management standard and operating procedures.
- **Respect one another professionally and each other's diversity:**
 - Treat colleagues and clients as they would expect to be treated themselves, and to respect, understand and benefit from others' views and opinions.
 - Work in an environment that encourages dignity and respect, and which is free from any form of favouritism, victimisation, harassment, bullying and discrimination.
- **Keep our communities in mind in day-to-day business:**
 - Absa recognises that we have clear responsibilities to support governments and civil society organisations in respecting and upholding human rights principles wherever we operate.

As part of the Absa Fellowship application process, Absa will be performing candidate screening and background checks, and such screening may include social media screening (where your settings on such social media are set to public) and screening relating to any information about you we may obtain from publically available sources such as search engine results.

13. Continuation of the Fellowship:

Continuation of the Fellowship for a subsequent year will be considered based on a review of academic performance and conduct at the end of the current academic year, in line with eligibility requirements as well as a minimum participation of 85% attendance/participation to the leadership programme workshops and interventions.

Individuals who fail a year will not be able to receive any further funding from the scholarship programme for the subsequent year of study. Students who have less than 85% attendance of the leadership programme workshop and interventions will also not be allowed to remain in the Fellowship Programme.

Recipients of the Fellowship are entitled to receive funding for one undergraduate degree. Individuals who change their course of study or fail any academic year or subject that will cause the student to not complete their degree in the standard required time will forfeit/lose any further/subsequent funding from the Fellowship Programme.

Where there are medical or other personal reasons, such as the death of a parent or sibling that causes the student to exit their studies during the academic year, it must be referred to the Education Committee for a decision.

14. Will the funding under the Fellowship need to be paid back?

No, the funding under the Fellowship does not need to be paid back once the recipient has successfully completed their studies, provided that there are no breaches of contract.

15. Who can apply for the Fellowship?

Only permanent citizens from the following countries who will study towards an undergraduate degree listed under **Table A** at one of the South African universities listed under the **Minimum criteria for the Absa Fellowship Programme** can apply for the Fellowship:

- Seychelles
- South Africa
- Mozambique
- Tanzania
- Botswana
- Kenya
- Zambia
- Uganda
- Mauritius
- Ghana

16. What is combined household income and what documents do I require to prove it?

Household income [income of both (if applicable) parents/guardians] will be defined as gross monthly salary, excluding other benefits such as medical and pension fund.

The income/salary will be proven using **PROOF OF EARNING DOCUMENT(S)**, i.e. (salary slip or affidavit or grant document from SASSA) and/or death certificates to prove this. All of these documents must be certified later than December 2020 to be valid.

If your parent/guardian is **SINGLE and is the main breadwinner**, please submit a **proof of earning document as shared above**.

If your parents/guardians are **MARRIED** and you live with both of them, **please submit two proof of income documents** – either recent certified payslips and/or affidavits/grant letters.

If your parents/guardians are **DIVORCED**, please submit **one parent's payslip and an affidavit** stating the monthly maintenance amount.

If your parents/guardians are both **DECEASED**, please attach two documents – **either death certificate(s) and/or affidavits** proving household income.

17. General application checklist:

- Applicants need to apply online.
- Applicants need to ensure that the application form is filled out correctly, in full and in English.
- ALL necessary documents are to be uploaded. You will not be able to complete the application process if mandatory documents are not uploaded.

Applications with **INCOMPLETE** information and **MISSING** documents will **NOT** be considered and will be **DISQUALIFIED** from the application process.

Minimum documents required to complete the application:

For matriculants:

- Identity document
- Provisional/Final acceptance from the university for undergraduate degree studies
- Results for grade 12/NCV Level 4
- Disability certificate (if any)
- Household income.

For current tertiary students:

- Identity document
- Provisional/Final acceptance for new course registration
- Exam results of preceding semester
- Disability certificate (if any)
- Household income.

Minimum documents required to complete contracting for successful matriculant and/or current tertiary student applicants:

- Signed acceptance of the written offer made by Absa
- Identity document
- Final acceptance from university for undergraduate degree studies/course change
- Final results for grade 12/NCV Level 4 indicating a minimum mark of 65%
- Disability certificate (if any)
- Household income
- Proof of registration
- Confirmation of tuition fee
- Confirmation of accommodation costs.

*Please note that the terms and conditions published and consented to during the application process will subsist over the tenure of the Absa Fellowship Programme and your participation therein.

Table A

Guidelines for study fields in social science (humanities), science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics and design (STEAMD): Academic year 2021

Social sciences (Humanities)	Science	Technology	Engineering	Arts	Mathematics	Design
<p>Any BA Degree. Examples includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing Arts • Music • Drama • Social Work • Law • Languages • Political Sciences • Arts and Visual Arts • Philosophy • Politics • Education • Theatre and Performance • Languages • Social Dynamics • Audiology • Speech Language 	<p>Any B.Sc. Degree. Examples includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied Bioinformatics • Agriculture • Biochemistry • Biology • Genetics • Astronomy and Astrophysics • Chemistry • Physics with Chemical Engineering • Applied Chemistry • Oceanography • Astrophysics • Marine Biology • Astrophysics • Genetics • Marine Biology • Ocean and Atmosphere Science • Molecular Biology • Chemical Biology • Earth Sciences • Food Science • Biochemistry and Cell Biology • Genetics and Developmental Biology • Astronomy and Astrophysics • Applied Physics and Engineering Mathematics • Geoinformatics • Meteorology • Molecular Biology and Biotechnology • Chemistry and Polymer Science • Chemistry and Chemical Technology • Applied Chemistry • Applied Physics • Astronomy • Hydrology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer Science • Information Technology • Computer Science and Informatics • Business Computing • Informatics • Information Systems • Computer Engineering • Information Engineering • Information Systems and Computer Science • Information and Knowledge Systems • Information Systems Management • Computer Science and Statistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuclear Science and Engineering • Aeronautical • Chemical • Civil • Electrical • Mechanical • Metallurgy and Materials • Mining • Chemical • Extraction Metallurgy • Mechatronic • Water and Environmental Engineering • Construction • Energy • Robotics • Sound Engineering • Physical Metallurgy • Industrial • Electronic • Metallurgical • Civil Engineering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Structural - Engineering and Civil Engineering • Informatics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water and Environmental Engineering - Construction - Engineering and Management • Electrical and Electronic Engineering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informatics - Energy - Robotics - Telecommunication • Electronic • Agricultural • Bioresources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Arts • Film and Television • Fine Arts • Media Studies • Theatre and Performance • Digital Arts • Visual Art • Drama • Theatre and Performance • Drama and Performance • Visual Arts • Digital Arts • Film and Media • Production • Fine Arts • Visual Studies • Drama and Film Studies • Drama and Theatre Studies • Fine Arts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actuarial Science • Computational and Applied Mathematics • Mathematical Sciences • Mathematics of Finance • Econometrics • Mathematics • Applied Mathematics • Pure Mathematics • Statistics • Applied Mathematics • Applied Statistics • Mathematical Statistics • Statistics and Data Science • Actuarial and Financial Mathematics • Mathematical Statistics` 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Architecture • Urban, Regional and Development Planning • Architecture • Graphic Design • Multimedia (Digital) Design • Industrial Design • Architecture • City and Regional • Urban Design • Media and Writing • Digital Media • Game design • Interior Architecture • Multi Media • Information Design • Visual Communication • Integrated Art and Design