

When creating a piece of design work for our university there are visual elements that form the foundation of our layout system. The system is based on the idea that our university is multi-faceted with many layers across different subjects, research areas, sectors and geographies. It utilises flexibility that mixes images with typography and colour within a grid that allows us to represent our shared identity through multiple layers.

Visual language

Section 6

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- Colour application

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- Colour application

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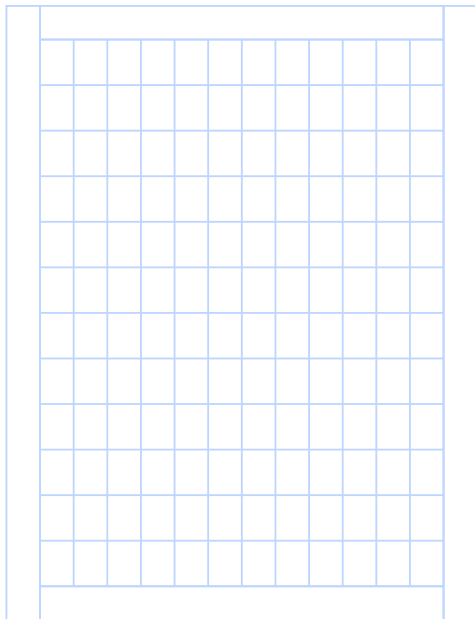
6.4.1 Photography principles

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Visual language system

Our visual language system is a collection of design elements and layout principles that communicate our brand positioning. These elements and principles are used to create a cohesive user experience across multiple platforms. It is a functional system that showcases and enhances the image of Stellenbosch University, an African institution with gravitas and world-class standing.

12x12 grid system



S-graphic



Forward Together Pattern



Our core visual elements

There are three main elements that make up the visual language system for Stellenbosch University:

1. A 12 X 12 grid system
2. The S-graphic
3. The Forward Together Pattern

Our brand graphics may be used in isolation or combined to suit our audience needs and the kind of message conveyed.

Grid system principles

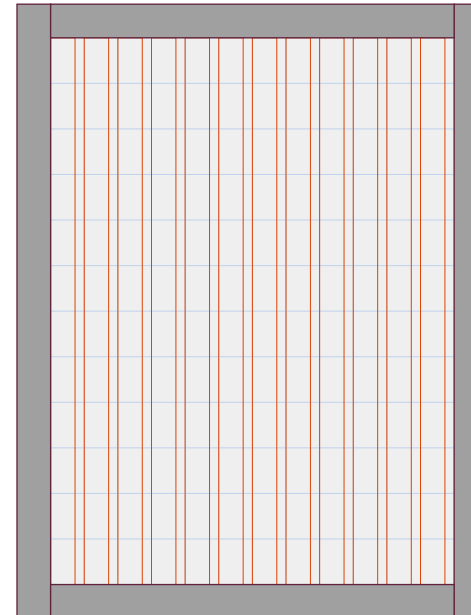
A 12 x 12 grid is the foundation on which all our university brand visuals are built and can be applied to any four sided format. The crossing of horizontal and vertical lines, creates a structure on which elements such as text, image and shape can be placed. The grid encourages designers to build layers of information and messages that engage our audiences.



The grid system assists with the alignment and positioning of various elements.



Columns in the grid system assist with positioning copy and headlines.



The safe zone is the margin or outer line of the grid (marked here in grey).

12x12 grid system

Graphic elements must align to the vertical and horizontal lines of the grid to ensure that the overall structure of the grid is maintained. The landmark must not sit outside of the safe zone which is marked as the outer line of the entire 12 x 12 grid. Each layout and format is different and requires designers to know how to adapt the grid to get the best results.

Our grid system comprises of these main components:

- A 12x12 grid**
- Columns**
- Margin (safe zone)**
- Gutters**

12x12 grid

The 12x12 grid is the basis for all layouts. Fractions of this can be used for fine layout control and alignment.

Columns

There are 12 columns that may be combined to create 3x4, 4x3, and 2x6 columns of text. These should be used to position text only.

Margins

These provide a safe space around the entire 12x12 grid. The landmark must not sit beyond the safe zone

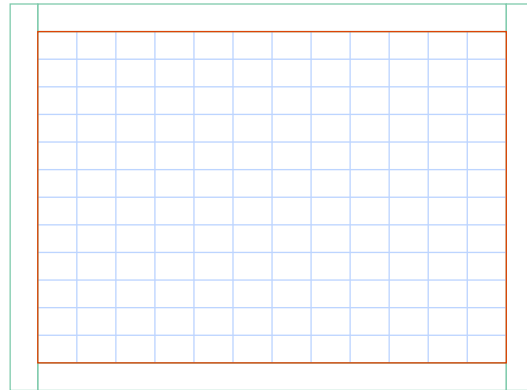
Gutters

The spaces between the paragraphs of text are called gutters. It is a fixed width measurement based on the size of the layout format.

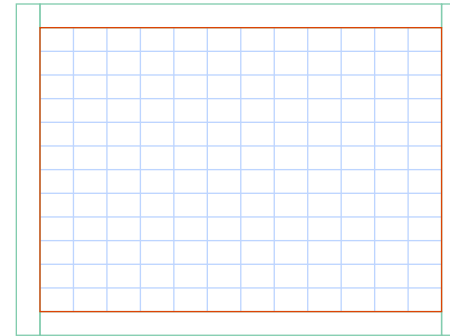
Grid system components



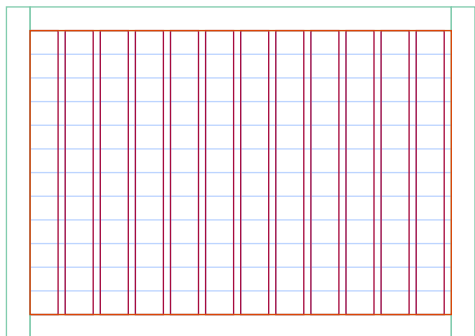
12x12 grid placed over the layout area



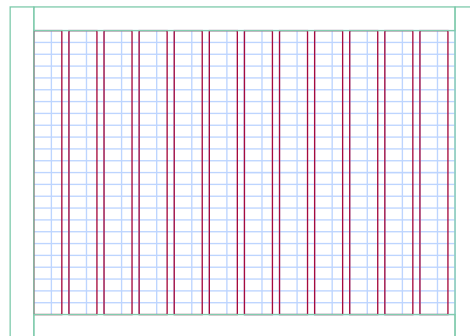
12x12 grid with margin



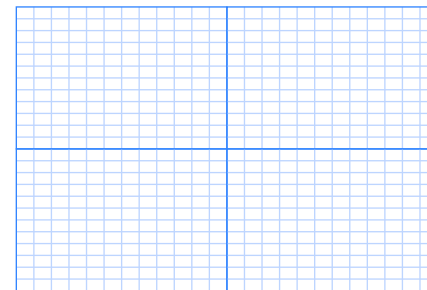
12x12 grid adjusted to the layout size



12-column design with gutters which creates columns for text boxes to sit in.



Multiple grids of 12x12. The grid allows for text boxes to sit equally across two, three, four and six columns at one time.



Four grids of 12x12

This grid system offers versatility. It allows for a 12x12 column structure overlay, giving you the freedom to use the columns as required.

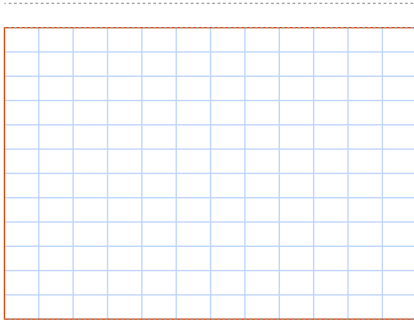
All graphic elements must align to the vertical and horizontal lines of the grid to ensure that the overall structure is maintained.

It is important to follow this structure as closely as possible. However, there will be instances where one must break the grid in order to achieve an optically correct layout.

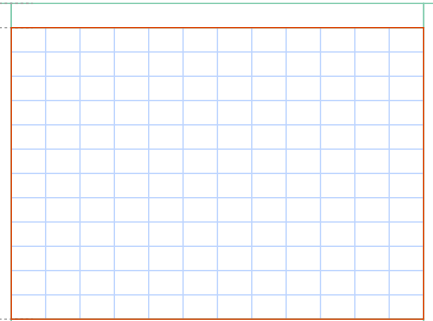
These dimensions and proportions are intended purely as a guide for checking accuracy. Do not attempt to produce any artwork from these examples.

Creating the grid

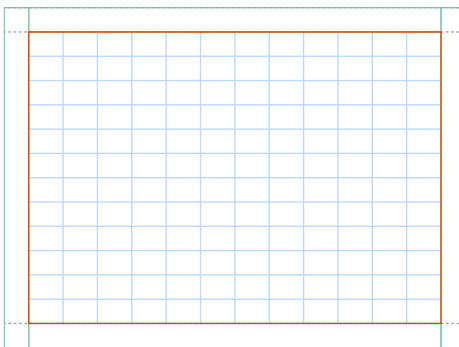
Step 1



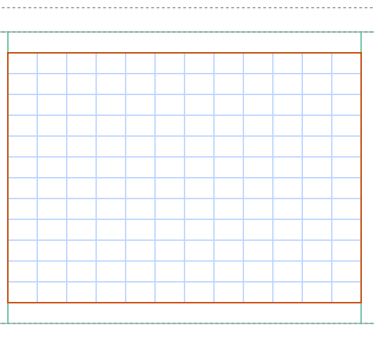
Step 2



Step 3



Step 4



The grid system is easily adaptable to any four sided format and can be created by following this eight step guide.

- 1** Determine the size of the layout and measurement system (e.g. mm or pixels). Divide the area into a 12x12 grid.
- 2** The height of one of the 12x12 blocks will become your width for the margin that goes all the way around the layout. This is known as the safe zone or clear space to keep your work from going too close to the edges.

The safe zone must be established using the height or width, whichever works best for the layout. Avoid excessive use of space and remember to exercise restraint so that your layout can breathe.

Half the height of one of the 12x12 blocks is the minimum amount of safe space allowed. Once the safe space is created around the document you will see that it now falls outside the area of the actual layout.

- 3** Once a measurement on the top, bottom, and sides is established, do not change the distance, as it must be equal around all the sides. Do not stretch the grid. Move your entire grid and margin measurement down to align with the top left corner of the layout.

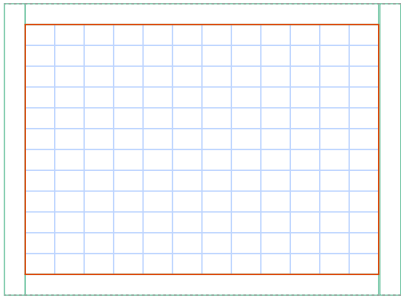
Move your margins to the left, right, bottom and top so that you create a boundary around your layout.

Now, stretch the grid to the left and right only. Do not stretch it up and down otherwise you will change the size of the margin relative to the grid size.

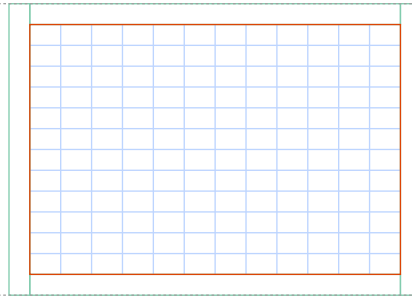
- 4** Select all and scale everything so that it fits perfectly on top and bottom.

Creating the grid

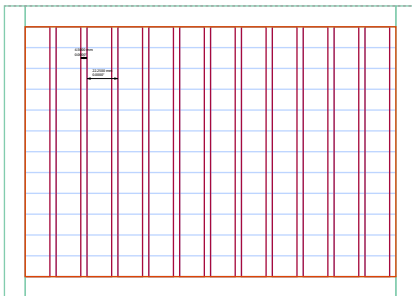
Step 5



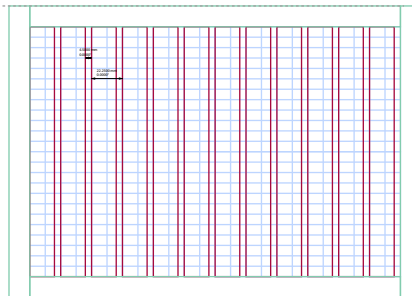
Step 6



Step 7



Step 8



5 Move your right margin to line up with the layout's boundary.

6 Stretch the rest of the grid and margins to the right so that everything aligns.

There should now be a 12x12 grid inside an equally-measured safe space around the grid.

7 To add columns, use the width of one of the 12x12 blocks to calculate the measurement for the gutter (space between the columns).

E.g. 4.5mm: $22.25\text{mm} - 4.5\text{mm} = 17.75\text{mm}$

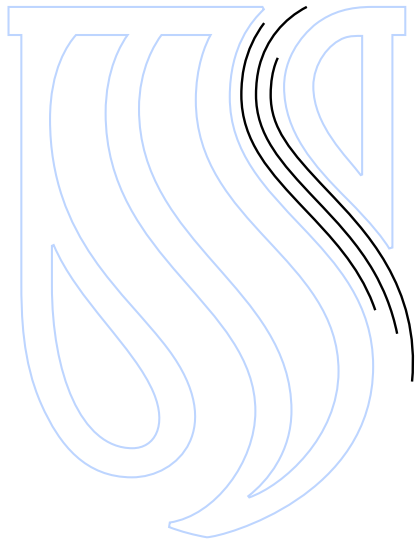
The size of one column will therefore be 17.75mm.

Now, add the rest of the columns to the layout.

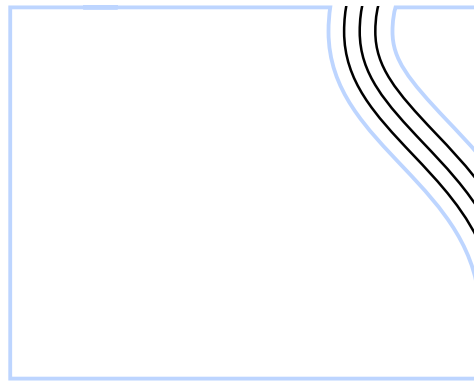
8 For more accurate control over the layout and placement of graphics and other elements, double the grid.

S-graphic

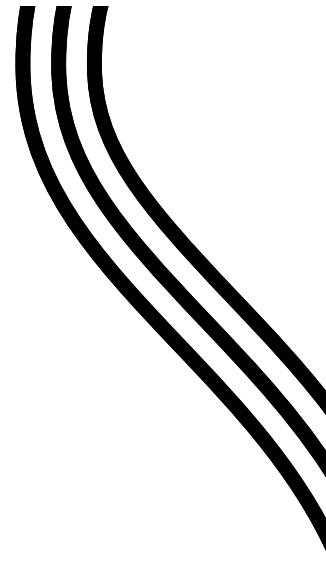
Since the launch of the new brand, the Supergraphic device has been simplified and refined into the S-graphic which consists of three curving lines or combined into a single line version as shown on the right below. It represents our forward movement together and echoes the rhythm of the lines in our primary landmark.



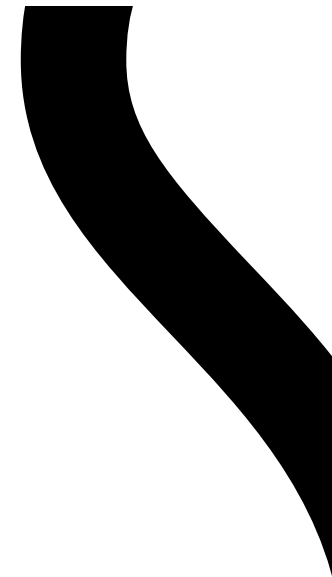
Origin and construction



Supergraphic evolution



S-graphic



S-graphic: single line version

Applying the S-graphic

These examples show how the S-graphic can be used in a subtle or bold way to create focus or layered depth.



Examples

The three 'S'-shaped lines that make up the S-graphic can be used to create accents in layouts, to activate space or call attention to content or other visual messages. The creative layering of graphics gives our brand its unique character and style.

The S-graphic adds colour to our layouts and expresses the vibrancy of our campus community. Consideration should be given to how many colours should be used together at any one time and achieving visual coherence. In the following pages, examples will show how colours can be used.

Using our S-graphic and unique shape

The S-graphic can be used on its own or paired with a single rounded corner shape (our unique shape). The rounded corner always features on the bottom right to align with the S-graphic.



S-graphic with single rounded corner shape (unique shape)



S-graphic single line version with our unique shape



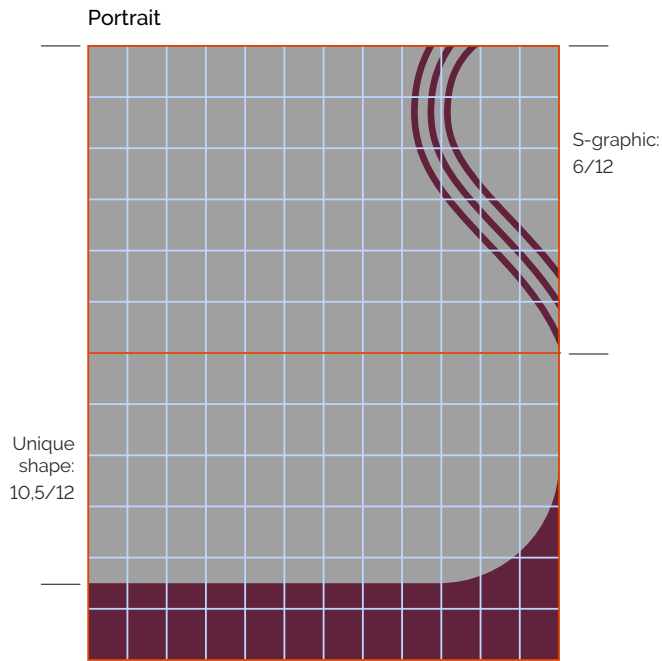
Image applied in our unique shape with full bleed S-graphic

Using our unique shape

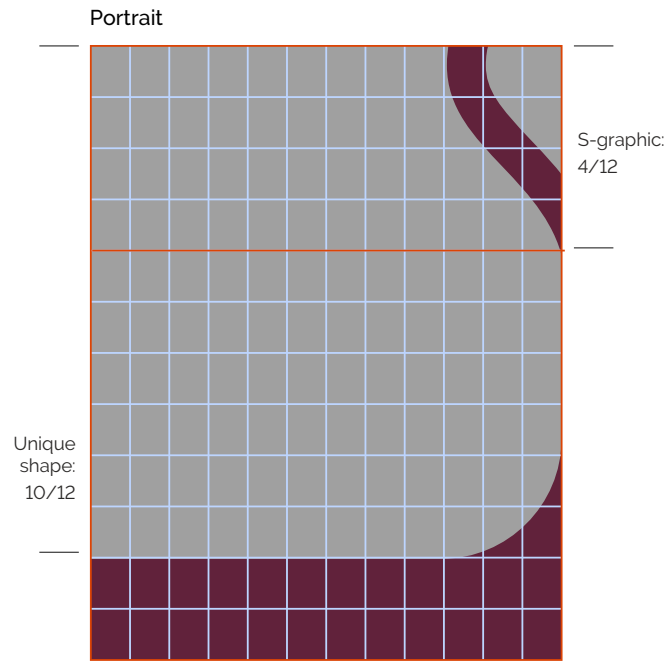
This shape can be used as a holding shape for photos, the Forward Together pattern or background colour. The space below the shape can be used to include information in a banner style on the layout format.

Only use official artwork and do not try to recreate the S-graphic and unique shape from what you see here.

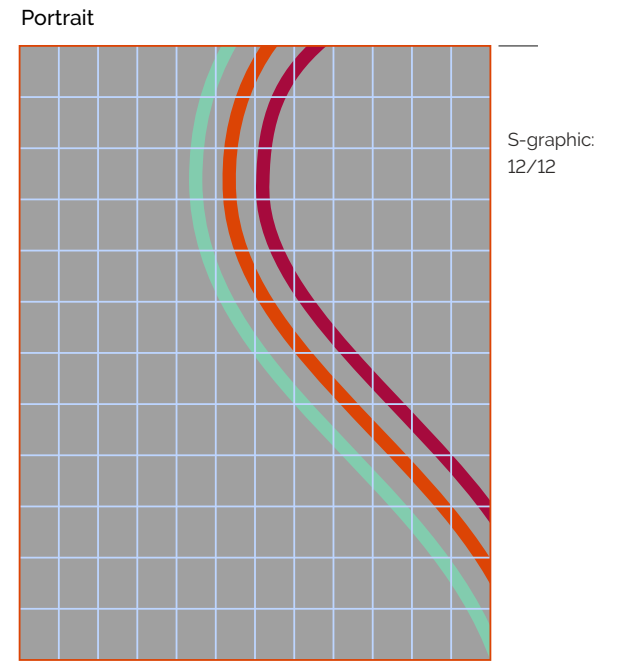
Applying the S-graphic and unique shape to the grid



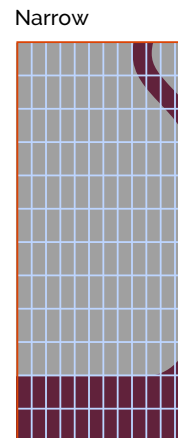
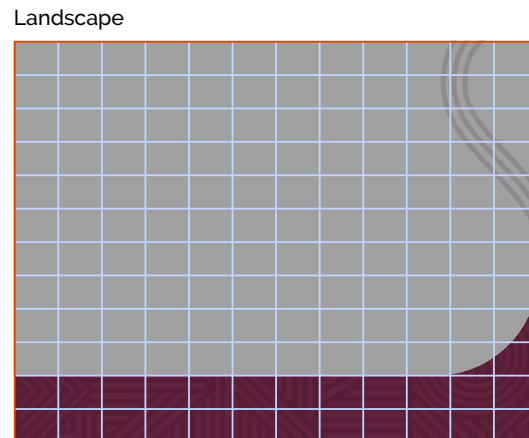
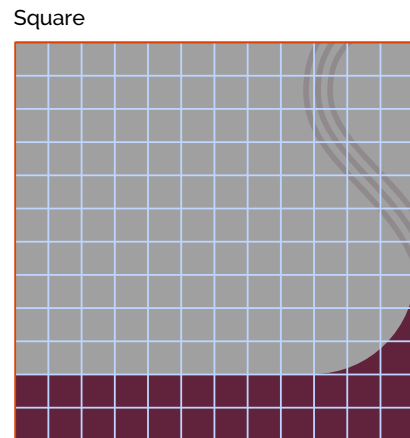
S-graphic scaled to 6/12 of the format's height. The minimum size of the unique shape should be at least 10,5/12 of the format height.



The single line version of the S-graphic scaled to 4/12 of the layout height. Our unique shape is scaled to 10/12 of the format height.



The S-graphic scaled to the full height of the layout format, bleeding off the edges of the format.



REMEMBER:

These dimensions and proportions are intended purely as a guide for checking accuracy. Don't attempt to produce any artwork from what you see here. Only use official artwork.



[Download our identity toolkit](#)

S-graphic and unique shape colour application

Here you can see examples of how the S-graphic and bottom banner created by the rounded corner shape are applied in accents of colour, enabling key information to stand out and keep our outputs looking fresh, relevant and interesting.



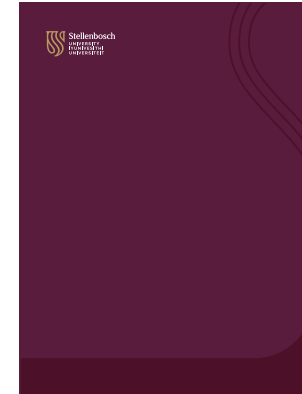
Image applied in our unique shape with the S-graphic overlaid in white. The bottom banner functions as a holding device for our brand signature



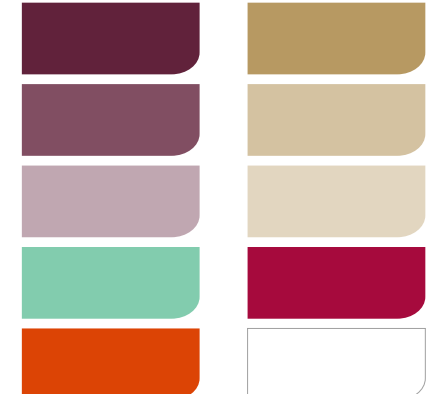
S-graphic integrated with image and applied in tints of Brilliant Gold, opacity set at 5-10%



S-graphic integrated with image and applied in tints of Confident Maroon, opacity set at 59%



S-graphic and banner use Confident Maroon with 55% opacity applied. Our unique shape is applied in 100% Confident Maroon



The S-graphic and banner can be applied in our primary and secondary colours and tints thereof



S-graphic applied in our secondary colours on the left and in tints of Confident Maroon on the right



Image applied in unique shape with full bleed S-graphic applied in our secondary colours



The S-graphic and bottom banner function as devices to incorporate our faculty colours in design work



S-graphic and banner applied in faculty colour. Confident Maroon is used for the unique shape



Use the faculty and secondary colour ratio guidelines as explained on [page 37](#) when applying the S-graphic and unique shape in a faculty or secondary colour

Forward Together pattern

The Forward Together pattern is used to represent the coming together of different cultures at our university. It echoes the rhythm of the linework in the logo and adds texture and movement to our visual language.

The pattern can be used in conjunction with the S-graphic and unique shape, depending on the format and purpose of the design.

The pattern should be used sparingly within a layout. It should never be applied behind a body of small text, for example.

It can be rotated and scaled to be positioned either vertically or horizontally. It should never be used as a dominating feature, but rather as a subtle background element.

Download Forward Together pattern



The full artwork of the Forward Together pattern



The pattern applied in the unique shape together with the S-graphic in Confident Maroon



Here it is used as a subtle background pattern on white



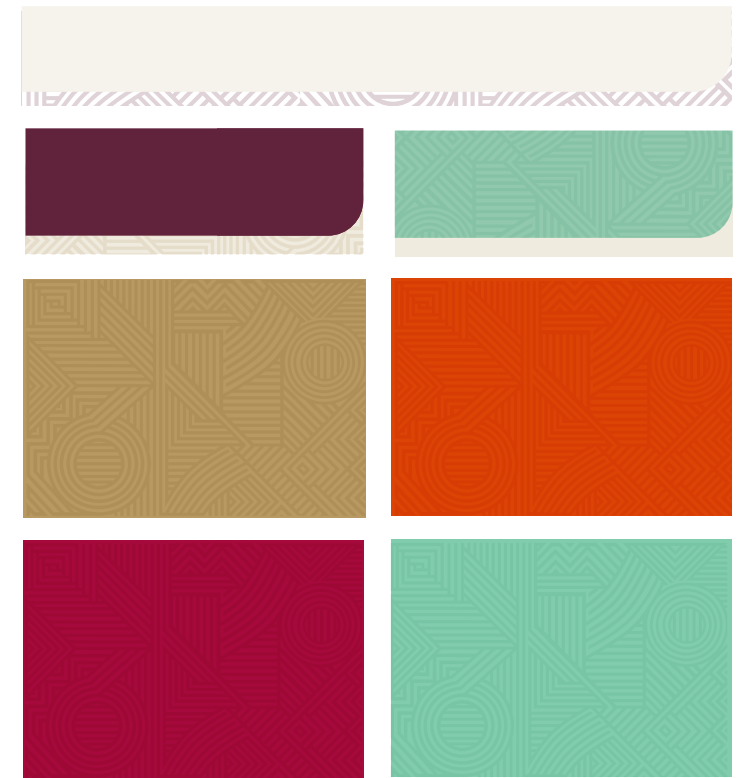
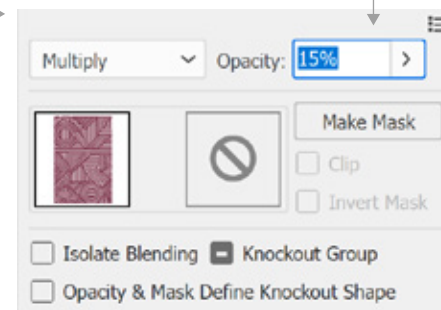
The pattern used as an overlay, "Multiply" set at 15% opacity and applied in the same colour as the background

Forward Together pattern and colour use

All the primary, secondary and faculty colours can be used and the rules for colour usage set out on **page 34** apply. Consideration should be given to how many colours should be used together at any one time and if visual balance is achieved.



The pattern is used in the same colour as the background colour with 15% "Multiply" opacity



The same specifications apply when the secondary and faculty colours are used



Iconography

Graphic symbols are universal visual expressions that simplify communication and bridge language gaps.

The icons on this page reflect our single-line iconographic style. The iconography feels open and light, in line with our new brand tone.

Google Material Icons are used as part of our design system due to their versatility, clean lines, and extensive library.

Use the **outlined design set** to allow for more white space and colour play.

Google Fonts, Material Symbols

A library of thousands of searchable Material Icons can be found here. SVG and PNG files are available for download.



HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR ICONOGRAPHY

The icons seen here should inform your choices when searching for icon packs in stock image libraries. Always choose icon packs that were created by the same artist to avoid inconsistent drawing styles and promote a balanced design across your layout or artwork. Be sure to apply the prescribed Stellenbosch University colour palette when editing your icons.

Infographics

Infographics are graphic representations of information and data, and are intended to convey meaning quickly, simply and clearly. Made up of iconography and text, or bar charts and diagrams, infographics can be a more effective way to communicate across language and cultural barriers.

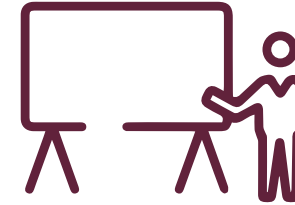
HOW TO USE INFOGRAPHICS

Use infographics to communicate facts or statistics about our university. Stick to two colours when adding infographics. On full-colour images where colour combinations may clash or the background is too distracting, use all white icons to ensure legibility. When applying infographics, you can either use all white iconography and text, or white and an additional colour that contrasts enough with the background colour.



1 800+

graduate
placements
each year



years of
academic
excellence



performers
in chemistry
and science
research



Welcoming
students from
80+ countries

Building your infographic

This example will guide you on how a meaningful and impactful infographic that captures the essence of your content can be created.

REMEMBER

Make the narrative come alive in an exciting infographic by extracting key information, simplifying the text using a less-is-more approach (short phrases and captions), and applying our style to your design. Be sure to apply the University colour palette when editing your infographic. The rules for colour usage set out on **page 34** apply.

From a paragraph of text...

In line with Stellenbosch University's Vision 2040 and the National Development Plan, the Faculty of Science is committed to positioning the University as a research-focused academic institution of excellence and a respected knowledge partner. By means of quality research outputs, the Faculty contributes toward building the scientific, technological and intellectual capacity of Africa, and is playing an active role in South Africa's development. The Faculty endeavours to make a substantial contribution to the National Development Plan's vision to increase the number of PhD graduates from the current 28 to 100 per million per year by 2030.

To a simple graphic representation



← Key information extracted to make a powerful title

Annual national target for PhD graduates

2030 National Development Plan

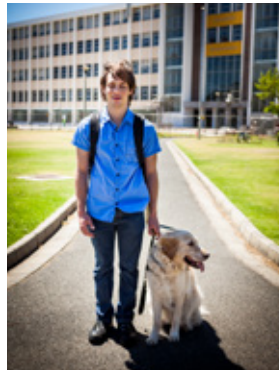
← Credit

Photography

During stakeholder engagement for our rebrand, we learned that our vibrancy lives in our people and inspires our brand personality. See **Section 2:** "Our brand positioning" of our brand manual for more on how we define our personality.

The photographs we choose to represent Stellenbosch University must clearly convey our personality traits.

Our photography should capture the diversity of our university and the vibrant character of our people.



Photography: Stefan Els and Go Trolley

Photography principles

Our photography is an essential part of our visual communication. Images of the University should convey a tone that is consistent with our brand essence: Pursue. Discover. Together.

Our choice of imagery must be underpinned by our values and showcase our commitment to excellence, inclusivity and innovation.

Our brand positioning

View our brand positioning and learn more about our brand narrative, essence and personality.



Photography: Stefan Els and Go Trolley

STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY

When using stock photography, ensure that the selected images are consistent with our brand personality and values. Look for unique, appropriate and relevant images that capture the rhythm of our university.

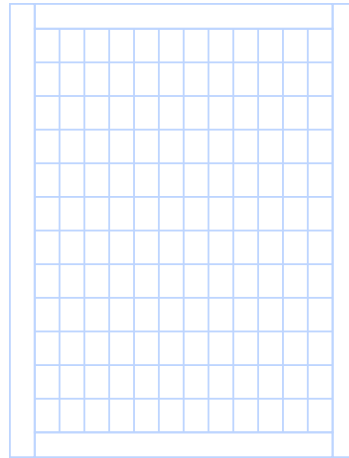
Identity toolkit

Plan your layout. Consider the most important message to communicate. Our visual language system has many useful elements. Think of each one as a lever. When you push one lever forward, the others move back. If you pick one or two strong elements, your layouts will look clean and uncluttered, and will have greater impact.

When creating a piece of design work for Stellenbosch University there are essentially eight elements that will be needed. Not all of these will apply for every piece of collateral. However, this is the basic toolkit that forms the foundation of our visual brand expression.

1. Your format divided into the 12 x 12 grid
2. Brand-led content
 - headline/body copy/infographic
3. Our brandmark
4. Photography
5. S-graphic
6. Forward Together Pattern
7. Unique shape
8. Additional information – slogan/website

1



2

Content



Annual national target
for PhD graduates
*2030 National
Development Plan*

3



Stellenbosch
UNIVERSITY
IYUNIVESITHI
UNIVERSITEIT

4



5



6



7



8

forward together · sonke siya phambili · saam vorentoe

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If you require additional
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simply have questions
about applying our brand,
please contact:

branding@sun.ac.za

For third-party requests
or questions about the use
of Stellenbosch University's
name or trade marks,
please contact:

trademark@sun.ac.za