

A graphic of two hands, one above the other, rendered in a light blue color against a dark blue background. The hands are stylized with rounded fingers and palms, appearing to be reaching towards each other or holding something. The top hand is positioned higher and slightly to the right, while the bottom hand is lower and slightly to the left, creating a sense of interaction or support.

# UNISA AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Learn without limits.

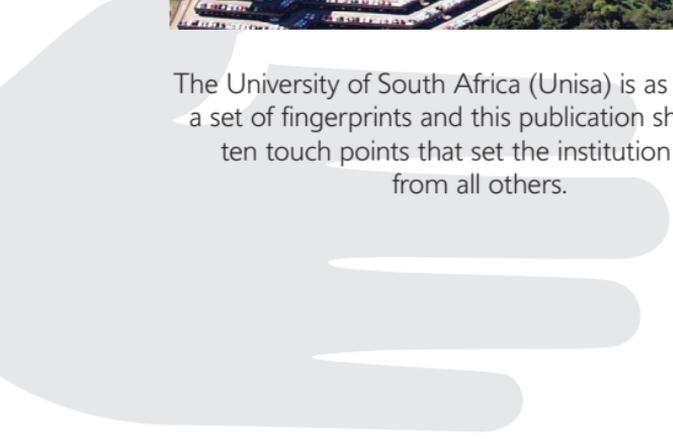
UNISA |  university  
of south africa



# UNISA AT YOUR FINGERTIPS



The University of South Africa (Unisa) is as unique as a set of fingerprints and this publication shares the ten touch points that set the institution apart from all others.





## **NATIONAL TREASURE with global reach**

The University of South Africa, the only higher education institution to carry the name of the country, is the people's university in every sense of the word. Throughout its **history, spanning more than 140 years**, Unisa has been responsive to the developments brought about by changing times, the needs of a developing country and society at large, and an ever-evolving higher education environment. Its journey has been one of **continuous growth and transformation**, aimed at **shaping futures through education**.

Unisa's roots (and, indeed, that of higher education in South Africa) date back to 1873 when the University of Good Hope was founded, initially functioning as an examining body. In 1916, the university changed its name to the University of South Africa and in 1946 it became one of the first public universities in the world to teach exclusively by means of distance education. Today Unisa is widely recognised as a leading open distance education university. With over 400 000 students it is the **largest university in South Africa and on the African continent**, and one of the world's mega-universities.

With offices across South Africa and students from 130 countries, Unisa has an **extensive geographical footprint and global reach**.



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## Proudly AFRICAN

Located at the southern tip of Africa, Unisa takes pride in its identity and has the interests of the continent at heart.

Through its academic programmes, relevant research and innovation, and community engagement initiatives, the university acknowledges its **African roots** and acts on the needs of South Africa and the continent.



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## Here, there and EVERYWHERE

Unisa's scenic main campus is located in Tshwane. It is supplemented by a student campus (also in the city), a Science Campus in Johannesburg, five regional offices, an Ethiopian office and 28 learning centres countrywide.

However, as an open distance learning (ODL) institution Unisa's presence is not restricted to buildings and campuses. Unisa is literally **at the fingertips of everyone** with a suitable device and internet access.





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## Innovative in TEACHING AND LEARNING

As a **comprehensive university**, Unisa offers both vocational and academic programmes from the level of short courses, and under- and postgraduate certificates and diplomas to degrees, including master's and doctoral qualifications.

As an **open distance learning** pioneer, Unisa is known for delivering well-designed, interactive study material and integrated student support. Students have access to a menu of support services ranging from face-to-face tutorials to video conferences, satellite broadcasts and e-tutors.

Students can enrol for learning programmes in a wide spectrum of disciplines.



Unisa has **eight colleges**, comprising the following:

### **College of Accounting Sciences**

Unisa's new College of Accounting Sciences is geared to establish itself as a leader in the field of formal education in accounting sciences on the African continent. Currently it enrolls, on average, 40% of all accounting students in South Africa and produces 20% of accounting graduates.

#### **Schools**

- School of Accountancy
- School of Applied Accountancy

### **College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences**

The College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences offers a rich range of programmes from the 'green sciences' that promote sustainable environmental management to animal health, agricultural management, horticulture, geography, life sciences and consumer sciences, which focus on food, nutrition and hospitality.

#### **Schools**

- School of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- School of Environmental Sciences

### **College of Economic and Management Sciences**

The programmes offered by the College of Economic and Management Sciences take full account of the needs of the marketplace, and the college constantly conducts intensive research in the private and public sectors to establish the relevance and usefulness of its degrees and courses.

### *Schools*

- School of Economic Sciences
- School of Management Sciences
- Graduate School of Business Leadership (SBL). This is an autonomous academic department within the college and its flagship programme is the Master of Business Leadership course.

### **College of Education**

The College of Education is responsible for the professional education and training of close to 50% of all teachers in South Africa.

### *Schools*

- School of Educational Studies
- School of Teacher Education

### **College of Human Sciences**

The College of Human Sciences offers high-quality general academic and career-focused programmes in the arts and humanities, social sciences, education, religion and theology.

### *Schools*

- School of Arts
- School of Humanities
- School of Social Sciences

### **College of Law**

The college confers professional qualifications that provide access to the legal profession, as well as various career-based qualifications in subjects such as police practice. With 250 experienced and well-qualified teaching staff and close to 37 000 students, the college is the largest faculty of law in Southern Africa, and in Africa.

### *Schools*

- School of Law
- School of Criminal Justice

### **College of Science, Engineering and Technology**

Offering learning programmes in a range of science, engineering and technology disciplines, the college opens the door to a variety of exciting careers in industry, education, and basic or applied research.

### *Schools*

- School of Computing
- School of Engineering
- School of Science

### **College of Graduate Studies**

The College of Graduate Studies forms part of Unisa's Research and Innovation Portfolio and differs from the other colleges in that it doesn't offer graduate programmes. Instead, it provides a range of research training programmes, enrichment activities and support mechanisms to assist postgraduate students and contribute to the development of researchers. The college provides a virtual research platform for postgraduate students in all colleges, thus promoting both interdisciplinary and research excellence.

### *Schools*

- School of Transdisciplinary Research Institutes
- School of Interdisciplinary Research and Graduate Studies



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## RESEARCH that matters

Unisa has a vibrant and dynamic **research culture**, and it encourages innovative thinking. Here academics and postgraduate students are committed to find **research and innovative solutions** that will address important national and global questions, and contribute to the economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing of South Africa and the African continent.

At Unisa every effort is made to create and nurture an environment where researchers can live their passion, whether they prefer to explore new worlds or apply new ideas to real-world problems. To this end it supports basic, strategic and applied research as well as innovation and commercialisation projects, invests in postgraduate studies and explores brave new frontiers in a number of key disciplines.

The university has a pool of talented researchers, 145 of whom have received National Research Foundation (NRF) ratings. Unisa also boasts more than 10 000 master's and doctoral students.

At the **Unisa Science Campus** the focus is on growing research capacity and supporting research activities in the fields of science, engineering and technology, as well as agriculture and environmental sciences. With leading-edge laboratories (facilities not generally associated with open and distance e-learning institutions) the Science Campus is *the* place where scientists get to do what they love – putting theory into practice. At the heart of the university and offering exceptional support to researchers, the **Unisa Library** is the largest academic library in Africa and one of the best-endowed in terms of information resources and information technology.

It is, moreover, one of the largest dedicated distance and open education libraries in the world.

The university also houses the **Thabo Mbeki Presidential Library** (TMPL). Containing an exhaustive repository of the documents, papers and artefacts of former President Thabo Mbeki and other African leaders, TMPL is a living library and important African centre of learning, research and discourse for the transformation of Africa.

## Research niche areas

Unisa has five broad research niche areas:

- Knowledge production and capacity building in response to the needs of South Africa and the African continent
- The promotion of democracy, human rights and responsible citizenship
- Innovation in science and technology
- Economic and environmental sustainability
- Open distance learning

To provide impetus to research in these focus areas, Unisa has a number of dedicated institutes and bureaux, including the following:

- The **Institute for African Renaissance Studies**, which undertakes studies utilising multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary paradigms
- The **Institute for Science and Technology Education**, which focuses on the development, provision and advancement of mathematics, science and technology education
- The **Institute for Social and Health Studies**, which is devoted to fostering safety, peace, equality, generative identities and health within communities
- The **Institute for Open and Distance Learning**, which undertakes ODL research in Africa and internationally

- The **Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute**, which encourages debate on the continent's future and invests in the training of tomorrow's leaders
- The **Archie Mafeje Institute for Applied Social Policy Research**, which conducts applied research into the discourses of the family and family life, and the impact of poverty in South Africa and beyond
- The **Bureau of Market Research**, which comprises four divisions: Income and Expenditure Research, Behavioural and Communication Research, Economic Research and Demographic Research, and undertakes socioeconomic research in South Africa
- The **Institute for Corporate Citizenship**, which builds individual and institutional capacity for sustainable business and social unity

## Research chairs

Unisa hosts numerous research chairs, including the following:

- The DST/NRF South African Research Chair Initiative (SARChI) Research Chair in Development Education
- The UNESCO-UNISA Africa Chair in Nanosciences and Nanotechnology
- The DST/NRF SARChI Chair in Social Policy
- The WIPHOLD-Brigalia Bam Chair in Electoral Democracy in Africa
- The Exxaro Chair in Business and Climate Change

Recently five new chairs were established to bolster the research capacity in the following niche areas: high-performance scientific computing, ecotoxicology, macroeconomic policy analysis, superconductivity energy technology, and topology.





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## STUDENTS by the numbers

# 400 000

**400 000** students have chosen Unisa to further their studies. As an open distance university Unisa offers its students flexibility and they choose when, where and how they study. Courtesy of evolving technology and with access to internet facilities, the campus is just a click away for most Unisa students and they can register, download study material and submit assignments online. myUnisa, the university's online campus, provides students with electronic access to administrative and academic services, and the opportunity to engage with their lecturers and peers.

# 30 000

Every academic year, some **30 000** students obtain **degrees and diplomas**. Over a four-year period Unisa delivers more than 100 000 skilled and competent graduates to strengthen the labour market.

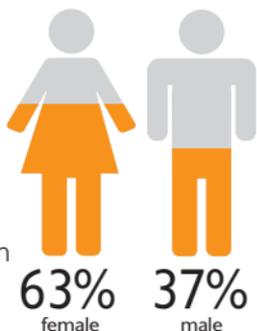
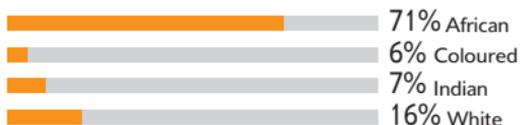
# 40 000

While the majority of students are undergraduates – around **40 000** are enrolled for **postgraduate qualifications** – of these, close to **10 000** are **master's and doctoral students**.

**9%** of enrolments are students from **beyond South Africa's borders** with the majority from other SADC and African countries.

Reflecting the demographics of South Africa, more than **71% of Unisa students are African**, 16% white, 7% Indian and 5% coloured.

**71%**



**63%**

The number of **female students** has shown a year-on-year growth and currently females account for 63% of the student population.



**90%**

More than 90% of Unisa students **study part-time**.

**25-39**

Being an open distance university affording people the opportunity to study while pursuing their careers, Unisa has a more mature student population than residential universities, with 60% of students being between **25 and 39 years** of age.





## Engaging with OUR COMMUNITY

At Unisa community engagement is a **scholarly endeavour**, and therefore, closely integrated with teaching and learning, and research. Mindful that the university is operating in a national and global context, community engagement initiatives are also aligned with the Millennium Development Goals and the National Development Plan.

Leveraging its expertise, knowledge and skills in various disciplines, Unisa engages with many communities to solve problems collectively and make a positive difference right down to grassroots level. Through its close to **200 community engagement and outreach projects** Unisa is empowering many individuals and supporting communities across the country.

Community engagement projects are rolled out in a vast range of fields ranging from securing food security and conserving resources to improving school performance, providing legal services and supporting entrepreneurs through the enterprise development hub.

The **impact** of a community initiative such as the Chance 2 Advance (C2A) programme is immense. What started out as a summer school concept has grown into a mega-community learning programme comprising 50 learning initiatives, 400 workshops, 100 communities, and 50 000 participants. The programme involves the development of learning opportunities that are relevant, practical and geared for public consumption. Each programme is tailor-made in dialogue with local communities to cater for specific community needs.



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### Reaching BEYOND BORDERS

Unisa's strategic initiatives at national, international and inter-institutional level enable the institution to contribute to the education landscape on a global level. Amongst these initiatives are the following:

- **Management of Democratic Elections in Africa**, a strategic partnership project between Unisa and the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa, is a capacity-building programme aimed at training commissioners and elections officials from the African continent on managing democratic elections.
- **The United Nations Global Compact**. Unisa was the first South African university to become a signatory to the Compact and has integrated its principles of human rights, labour, anti-corruption and environment into its curriculum and research focus areas.
- **The African Council for Distance Education**, comprising African universities and other institutions of higher learning, pursues the objective of promoting research and innovation, and ensuring quality open distance education in Africa.



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## ALUMNI, our ambassadors

Every Unisa graduate is remarkable. To be successful in open distance education requires self-discipline and commitment, and the university takes pride in the more than 600 000 alumni who have joined its list of remarkable graduates.

Having afforded study opportunities to former activists and struggle heroes incarcerated on Robben Island, Unisa salutes alumni such as **Nelson Mandela** (Nobel laureate and former President of the Republic of South Africa), **Ahmed Kathrada** (politician) and Justice **Dikgang Moseneke** (Deputy Chief Judge of the Constitutional Court of South Africa) for their role in changing the course of South Africa's history.

As thought leaders, businesspeople, legal experts and acclaimed entertainers, Unisa alumni are actively shaping our society. The likes of **Sizwe Nxasana** (Chief Executive Officer of FirstRand Limited), Justice **Dhaya Pillay** (Judge of the High Court), **Gill Marcus** (Governor of the South African Reserve Bank), **Yvonne 'Chaka-Chaka' Mhinga** (singer, businesswoman and philanthropist) and **Terence Nombembe** (Chief Executive Officer of the South African Institute for Chartered Accountants) are making their mark in diverse fields and capacities.



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## Our PHILOSOPHY



UNISA

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Unisa community is inspired by its **vision** to become *the African university in the service of humanity.*

We are clear on our **mission** to be a comprehensive, open distance learning institution that produces excellent scholarship and research, provides quality tuition and fosters active community engagement. We are guided by the principles of lifelong learning, student-centredness, innovation and creativity. Through our efforts we contribute to the knowledge and information society, advance development, nurture a critical citizenry and ensure global sustainability.

We subscribe to the values of **social justice and fairness** and **excellence with integrity.**

 [www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)