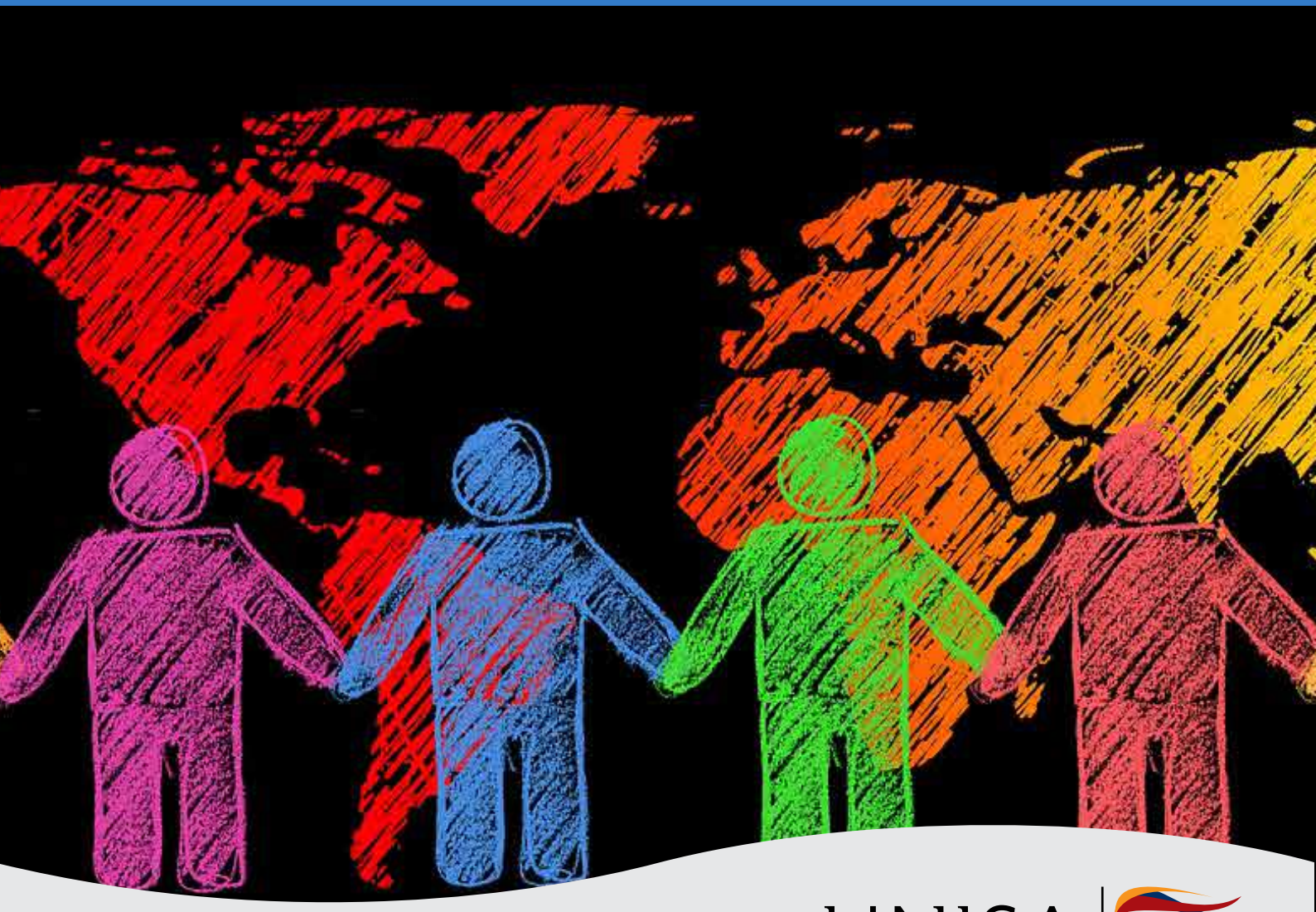
Community development and Social Work @ Unisa

A complete guide to preparing yourself for career opportunities



Define tomorrow.

UNISA university of south africa

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*The information in this publication is correct as of 12 October 2018. Visit the Unisa Counselling and Career Development downloads page (**http://bit.ly/2ux94B5**) to check for updates.*

How will this brochure help me?

- It will provide you with some insight into what is involved in studying Community Development and/or Social Work.
- It will help you gain more information about the skills needed in Community Development and/or Social Work.
- It will help you identify possible career fields in Community Development and/or Social Work.
- It will assist you in finding Community Development and/or Social Work related qualifications offered by Unisa.

What is community development?

Often when we think of community, we think in geographic terms (e.g. the city or town we live in). Communities can also be defined by common cultural heritage, language, and beliefs or shared interests. Most of us belong to more than one

community, whether we're aware of it or not. For example, you may be part of a community in your neighbourhood, a sporting community, or an online community.[1]

Community development is a way of strengthening civil society by prioritising the actions of communities, and their perspectives on the development of social, economic and environmental policy. It seeks the empowerment of local communities. Community development should help people to recognise and develop their ability and potential and organise themselves to respond to problems and needs which they share. It supports the establishment of strong communities that control and use assets to promote social justice and help improve the quality of community life. Community development ranges from small initiatives within a small group to large initiatives that involve the broader community.[2]

What is a community development worker?

Community development workers help communities to help themselves. This profession is all about working alongside members of troubled communities, inspiring them, supporting them, and offering them guidance and opportunities for initiating social change and making improvements to their own community. Community development workers act as a bridge between marginalised communities and government authorities at local, regional and national levels. They also provide vital assistance in the distribution of funding, the implementation of community projects and monitoring the progress of the communities in their jurisdiction.[3]

[1] http://www.peernetbc.com/what-is-community-development
[2] http://www.scdc.org.uk/who/what-is-community-development/
[3] https://www.allaboutcareers.com/careers/job-profile/community-development-worker

Community development workers can come from a range of backgrounds and disciplines, for example, development studies, social work, psychology, theology, life sciences, agriculture, and business.

What is an NGO?

A non-governmental organization (NGO) is a non-profit organisation that is independent of governments and international governmental organisations. They are usually funded by donations but some avoid formal funding altogether and are run primarily by volunteers. NGOs are highly diverse groups of organisations engaged in a wide range of activities, and take different forms in different parts of the world.[4] In South Africa, non-profit organisations (NPOs) may be non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), or Faith-based organisations (FBOs).

The Department of Social Development (http://www.dsd.gov.za/npo/) is responsible for maintaining the register of non-profit organisations (http://www.npo.gov.za/) in South Africa. The South African National Non-Governmental Organisation Coalition (SANGOCO) (https://sangocoonline.wordpress.com/) is the largest umbrella organisation body of NGOs in the Southern African region.

[4] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-governmental_organization

What is social work?

Social work is an academic and practice-based professional discipline that seeks to facilitate the welfare of communities, individuals, families, and groups. Underpinned by theories of social science and guided by principles of social justice, rights, collective responsibility, and respect for diversity, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance well-being. Social work endeavours to promote social change and grassroots empowerment of people and aids in socioeconomic development, social cohesion, and liberation from abuse and oppression.[5]

Welfare services in South Africa

According to the Department of Social Development, the purpose of welfare services is to create and provide social protection to the most vulnerable of society through the delivery of social welfare services, delivered via provincial government and NPO structures. Functions include:

- Develop policy and legislation that promote the rights of older persons
- Develop and strengthen programmes, Care, Support and development of older persons
- Develop and implement strategies to protect and promote the rights of older persons

For more information, visit their official website at http://www.dsd.gov.za/.

[5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_work

Skills needed in social work

Social work requires a diverse and demanding range of professional, emotional, and cognitive skills. Many of these skills will be developed because of formal educational training, while some will require you to develop yourself as a person. Some of the skills that are most relevant and useful for social work include: organisational skills, understanding of human, knowledge of human developmental stages, knowledge of interventions applicable to one's area of specialisation, empathy, professional boundary setting, ability to facilitate co-operation both among individuals and groups, active listening skills, critical thinking skills, verbal and written communication skills, patience, a caring nature, resilience to stress, and good time management.[6]

What do social workers do?

Social workers typically assess the social needs of individuals, families and groups, assists and empower people to develop and use the skills and resources needed to resolve social and other problems, and furthers human well-being and human rights, social justice and social development.[7]

Some of the tasks performed by a social worker include:

- interviewing clients individually, in families, or in groups, to assess their situation and problems and determine the types of services required;
- analysing the client's situation and presenting alternative approaches to resolving problems;
- compiling case records or reports for courts and other legal proceedings;
- providing counselling, therapy and mediation services and facilitating group sessions to assist clients to develop skills and insights needed to deal with and resolve their social and personal problems;

[6] https://socialwork.simmons.edu/skills-required-social-worker/
[7] http://ncap.careerhelp.org.za/occupation/a2c47f37-fc48-42eb-95ee-738423ea22f4

- planning and implementing programs of assistance for clients including crisis intervention and referral to agencies that provide financial assistance, legal aid, housing, medical treatment and other services;
- investigating cases of abuse or neglect and taking action to protect children and other at-risk persons; and
- maintaining contact with other social service agencies, educational institutions and health care providers involved with clients to provide information and obtain feedback on clients' overall situation and progress.[8]

Download the Social work scope of practice document published by the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) to learn more about the role of social workers.

Where do social workers work?

Social workers may be found in government departments, community centres, schools, hospitals, hospices, adoption agencies, mental health clinics, correctional services, student development centres, in private practice, higher education institutions, and retirement or old age homes.

Social workers may choose to specialise in a variety of areas, including:

- child and youth care social worker,
- school social worker
- community social worker
- hospice and palliative care social worker
- medical and health social worker
- mental health social worker
- substance abuse social worker

The South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) offers specialisation registration for adoption work, occupational social work, and probation

[8] http://ncap.careerhelp.org.za/occupation/a2c47f37-fc48-42eb-95ee-738423ea22f4

officers.[9] Further studies in social work can prepare you for clinical social work and play therapy opportunities.

Alternative careers for social workers

Your training as a social worker provides you with the skills needed for a variety of work contexts. These include education, human resources, employee assistance programmes, public health administration, labour relations, advocacy organisations, and legal settings.

How do I become a social worker?

A social worker has completed an accredited 4-year Bachelor's degree in Social Work.

Social Work at Unisa

Unisa offers the following qualifications related to social work.

- Higher Certificate in Social Auxiliary Work *
- Bachelor of Social Work *

[9] https://www.sacssp.co.za/education/Specializations

It is important to note that admission to these qualifications is based on a selection process, during which your suitability for this profession will be assessed. Read more about the requirements on the web pages linked to above.

More information about the content and practical requirements for the above qualifications are available here:

- Bachelor of Social Work: https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Register-to-study-through-Unisa/Undergraduate-&-honours-qualifications/Find-your-qualification-&-choose-your-modules/All-qualifications/Bachelor-of-Social-Work-(90088)
- Higher Certificate in Social Auxiliary Work: https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Register-to-study-through-Unisa/Undergraduate-&-honours-qualifications/Find-your-qualification-&-choose-your-modules/All-qualifications/Higher-Certificate-in-Social-Auxiliary-Work-(90011)

Although Unisa tuition is offered through open and distance e-learning (ODeL), the practical hours' requirements for the Bachelor of Social Work need to be considered before you make the decision to apply for this degree. Please see more information about the practical hours' requirements on the above webpage.

The South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP)

The South African Council for Social Service Professions is a statutory body that has the primary focus of developing as well as protecting the integrity of the social service professions as well as the interest of the public at large. The Council guides and regulates social workers, social auxiliary workers, child and youth care workers, and auxiliary child and youth care workers in terms of registration, education and training, professional conduct and ethical behaviour, ensuring continuing professional development, and fostering compliance with healthcare standards.

The council has two professional boards under its auspices:

- The Professional Board for Social Workers
- The Professional Board for Child and Youth Care

The SACSSP creates and maintains registers of all social service practitioners for whom a Professional Board has been established. Available registers include:

- Student social workers;
- Social workers;
- Student Social Auxiliary Workers;
- Social Auxiliary Workers;
- Child & Youth Care Workers;

- Child & Youth Care Workers at an auxiliary level;
- Student Child and Youth Care Workers for professional and for auxiliary levels.

Detailed information about the different registration categories is available on the SACSSP website at https://www.sacssp.co.za/Professionals/Education.

Identify opportunities with career research

How do you identify opportunities?

Your career research will connect you to others who will help you to answer questions you have with relation to your career choice; expand your understanding of the opportunities related to your career vision; identify "hidden" career paths that you did not think of previously; and think about how you could plan to pursue specific opportunities.

Prepare

Think about what you still need to find out: what questions do you have? You will use these questions as a starting point to structure your research. Examples of questions include "What can I do with a major in community development", "How much do social workers earn?" or "What must I study to be an auxiliary social worker?"

Keep track of information

Keep track of your research by making notes about what you learn and what you still need to find out. Use online services or apps such as Evernote

(http://www.evernote.com) or Diigo (http://www.diigo.com) to keep track of your research online.

Evaluate

Evaluate the information that you are finding: Who wrote the information (person/ organisation)? Which country does the information relate to? When was the information last updated? After you have visited a number of websites, you could compare your notes about the information you found – what are the similarities and differences? What else do you need to find out?

Further ways to do career research

1 Online search

Use a search engine such as Google to search for information related to your questions. For example, you need to find out about career opportunities related to community development and social work. You could start with using keywords such as “careers in community development” or “careers in social work” and then to further contextualise your findings, you could search keywords such as “careers in community development Africa” and “careers in community development South Africa”. Scan the brief descriptions of the first ten results and decide which website you would want to explore first. Skim-read through the information on the website (start with the headings) to get an understanding of the content of the page and to find information related to your question. Also, check whether there are links to other websites that you could further explore. As you are reading, make a summary of the information. You could use the information you find to make lists of job titles related to your field of study, organisations that employ individuals in these fields and professional organisations.

Activity

Use Google to find specific job titles related to community development and/or social work. The following are some search terms you could consider: “job titles community development”; or “job titles social work graduates south africa”.

Job title	Website
Example: **Social worker**	Quintcareers.com

2 Occupational information websites

The following websites will help you to learn more about specific job titles:

Website	Description
Unisa Counselling & Career Development http://bit.ly/2fE0Xd0	This website provides more information about opportunities related to qualifications at Unisa.
Kheta (from SAQA) http://ncap.careerhelp.org.za/occupations	Search for information about specific job titles.
Career Planet http://www.careerplanet.co.za/	Learn more about career areas such as IT, tourism, engineering and more.

Website	Description
	The website also contains information about learnerships and student finance
O*Net http://www.onetonline.org/	Explore job titles related to different categories such as your interests, skills, values, typical work activities, and more. You could also browse through groups of occupations related to specific industries or economic sectors.
Prospects http://www.prospects.ac.uk/	Explore different job titles related to job sectors, as well as what you could do with your major subject.

Activity

Go to any of the above occupational information websites and search for the job titles you identified during the Google search activity.

Use the tables below to explore your top three occupational interests.

Example table:

Job title	Website	Related job titles?	Pros	Cons
Career counsellor	O*Net	School psychologist Social worker Marriage therapist	The tasks for this person seem related to my interests and values	Seems to be a lot of paperwork involved (writing reports; answering e-mails, etc.)

Job title #1	Website	Related job titles?	Pros	Cons

Job title #2	Website	Related job titles?	Pros	Cons

Job title #3	Website	Related job titles?	Pros	Cons

3 Job-search portals

Job search portals are useful in terms of researching specific job titles linked to different career fields and industries. Finding jobs advertisements that interest you is a worthwhile activity, even if you are not currently applying for jobs. You may not yet be eligible to apply for your dream job, but you can still gain a lot of information that can be applied to your career planning. For example, you are interested in community development, but you are not sure which specific job titles are linked to this field, or you want to know what kind of qualifications and skills are needed to be a social worker in a mining context.

You can use this information to make career goals and think strategically about how you can develop experiences that will help you meet more of the selection criteria in the future.

Job search sites include

- PNet (http://www.pnet.co.za)
- Careerjunction (http://www.careerjunction.co.za)
- Careers24 (http://www.careers24.com/)
- Indeed (http://www.indeed.co.za)
- Government positions (http://www.gov.za/aboutgovt/vacancies.htm)

Activity

Use one of the websites above to search for “community development” and/or “social work”. Read at least three advertisements and note the information in the tables below.

Example (used indeed.co.za)

Job title	Report writer
Salary	R10000 per month
Organisation	For a social worker; working hours 8:00-16:00 on Mondays-Thursdays; Johannesburg
Responsibilities/ duties/ tasks	Writing reports
Requirements (qualifications)	Completed social work degree. Registered with SACSSP.
Requirements (experience)	Did not state
Requirements (skills)	Writing Skills: Willingness to adapt to the report template and the use of professional language, learn and become familiar with psychological and medical terms; Excellent reading and writing skills; Self-Editing Skills; Ability to meet deadlines; Willing to take and follow instructions, to work in a disciplined and focused way, balance with the ability to work independently when needed; Ability to think and integrate information from multiple records and documents, identify discrepancies; Willingness to take and work with feedback, ask for help when required; willing to work and grow from mistakes; Communicates well; Good computer skills

Job title	Report writer
	(Microsoft Word); Passionate about psychology and personal development; Ability to work in a team

Job title #1	Report writer
Salary	
Organisation	
Responsibilities/ duties/ tasks	
Requirements (qualifications)	
Requirements (experience)	
Requirements (skills)	

Job title #2	Report writer
Salary	
Organisation	
Responsibilities/ duties/ tasks	
Requirements (qualifications)	
Requirements (experience)	
Requirements (skills)	

Job title #3	Report writer
Salary	
Organisation	
Responsibilities/ duties/ tasks	
Requirements (qualifications)	
Requirements (experience)	
Requirements (skills)	

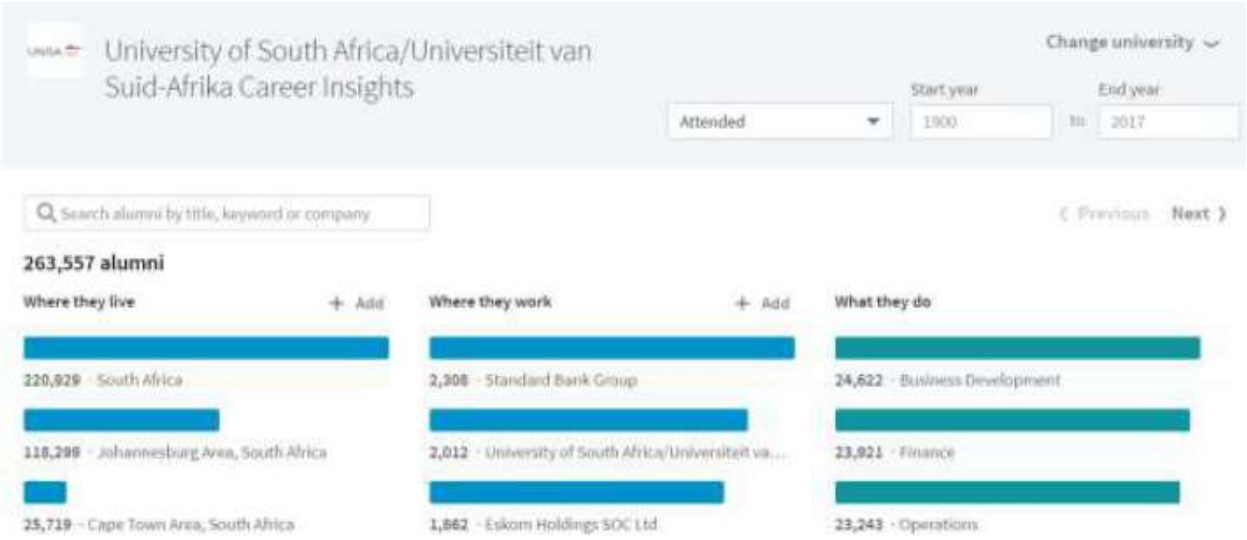
4 LinkedIn

If you have not done so already, start building your network on LinkedIn (http://www.linkedin.com) today!

Register for a free account and start connecting with your network online. Join groups relevant to your career field so that you could participate in discussions, ask questions and provide answers about specific topics and search for people, organisations and jobs in your field of interest. Do research about companies and employees to help you identify opportunities. To learn more about using LinkedIn effectively, go to http://bit.ly/2gyOAzS.

Activity

1. Go to www.linkedin.com and sign in to your LinkedIn account. If you do not have an account yet, then create one.
2. Make sure that you have captured your current or previous studies at Unisa on your LinkedIn profile.
3. Once you are signed in, go to the University of South Africa page at https://www.linkedin.com/school/12049/
4. Click on the “See alumni” button.
5. You will now be presented with a page with headings and graphs beneath the headings (eg. Where they live, Where they work, What they do).



6. Click on the “Next>” link to go to the next set of headings (What they studied, What they are skilled at and How you are connected)

7. Click on “+Add” next to the heading “What they studied”
8. Start to type “community development” and/or “social work” in the search box. You will notice that you are provided with suggestions for study fields (e.g. social work)
9. Choose one of those options that you would want to explore.

10. You will notice that the graphs for the different headings adjust. You have now filtered the information to contain information about Unisa graduates who work in the field you searched for.

11. You can now see how many graduates in these fields are on LinkedIn, where they work, what they do, what they're skilled at, etc.

You are also able to view the profiles of alumni who meet the criteria you searched. For example, you can filter your search results to those alumni who indicated that they studied accounting, and work at a specific financial institution.

Your notes about what you find on LinkedIn

5 Talk to others (informational interviewing)

Once you have done some research about specific options, your next step is to talk to individuals in the type of job/ industry that you are interested in. The goal of these conversations is to explore your career options, to expand your network, to build confidence, to access information and to identify your own strengths and areas of development. For example, you read an article about profits and loss. You could contact one of the authors of the article to ask if they would be willing to share how

they went about gaining access to the information they needed for their evaluation. Before you interview someone, do research about what you would want to discuss with them – you could ask this person to "fill in the gaps" for you. Start with people you already know: friends, family, neighbours, colleagues, lecturers, tutors and fellow students. Use online social networks such as LinkedIn to further identify potential people. For more information about informational interviews, go to http://bit.ly/2riGpQq. Also, watch these videos to learn more: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixbhtm8l0sI and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6Pa4ZB4mvQ.

Remember to keep track of the information you have gathered and how you make sense of this. Also, track the questions you still have and how you think you would be able to get answers to these questions.

Activity

Note the names of people you know who may work in the fields you are interested in. For instance, do any of your parents' friends work in any of the fields you are considering? In addition, write down the names of other people whom you think could give you information about any careers you are considering.

People who work in my preferred career	People who can give me information about potential career choices
Brother's friend	University tutor

People who work in my preferred career	People who can give me information about potential career choices

You may have identified a lot more people than you thought! Imagine how much information you can gather about the career you are interested in just by talking to these people. Each person will give you fresh insights opinions and valuable information about the careers you are considering, whether they are currently working in that field or are only remotely related to or associated with it.

6 Attend a careers fair event

Attending a careers fair event gives you the opportunity to speak to people from different industries. You may be studying a qualification that does not seem to have a direct link to the exhibitors or the presenters, but they have one thing in common: they employ people, who work in organisations, who do business with all kinds of suppliers and services. Somewhere in this value chain, your qualification will find a place to fit – either as a customer or as an employer or employee.

The annual Unisa Careers Fair usually takes place in July and August at various venues. Go to http://www.unisa.ac.za/counselling for more information.

7 Experience studying topics related to your field of interest

Explore what community development and/or social work is by watching and listening to online lectures and reading free open textbooks. These resources will enhance your understanding of criminology and the various opportunities related to this field.

Search for related courses and open textbooks on these sites:

- Coursera.org (http://www.coursera.org/)
- Udemy (http://www.udemy.com/)
- Saylor Academy (http://www.saylor.org/books/)
- Open Textbook Library (http://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/)
- College Open Textbooks (http://www.collegeopentextbooks.org/textbooks/)
- MITOpenCourseware (http://ocw.mit.edu/index.htm)
- Open Culture (http://www.openculture.com/freeonlinecourses)
- iTunes University (http://www.apple.com/education/itunes-u/)
- YouTube (http://www.youtube.com/)
- FreeVideoLectures (http://freevideolectures.com/)

8 Volunteer

As a volunteer, your studies in community development and social work will come alive and you will be enriched and in a position to build up an important network of people who could comment on your professional abilities. You may be wondering how volunteering is related to your studies and your career. We would encourage responsible volunteering where the organisation and community that you are supporting benefit. You also have the opportunity to apply and further develop your skills and knowledge as a student to support the community. Your volunteer work links to your career vision and planning: before you volunteer, think about where you would want to invest your effort.

Volunteering will help you to:

- figure out whether a specific field of work is for you or not;
- find out information about a specific field;
- connect with others and maintaining relationships;
- network with others in your field of interest.

Some questions to think about:

- Which organisations or community would benefit from my skills and knowledge?
- How would this organisation or community contribute to my career vision?
- What conduct is expected of a professional in this organisation and in my future career?
- What are you hoping to gain from your volunteer activities?

Your volunteer work could lead to other opportunities, so it is important to treat it professionally: keep to your commitment, communicate when you cannot volunteer and update your portfolio with examples of what you have learnt and achieved. As a volunteer, you are already working as a professional – you need to conduct yourself as you would conduct yourself in a work environment. As you are volunteering, you are building your reputation (your "brand"): you would not want to build a reputation as an exploiter or as an unreliable worker.

Your volunteer environment will help you to develop what is valued in professional environments. This includes punctuality, problem-solving and effective communication. In this sense, volunteering contributes to your development as a unique graduate: one who has subject-specific knowledge and an understanding of professional workplace behaviour. The one thing to remember about volunteering is that your conduct needs to be accountable and ethical. Consider that you are contributing to the community and at the same time you are building your skill sets for the workplace – you need to balance self-interest with that which may benefit others. It is important that your work within the community be done with the utmost respect.

Check which volunteer organisations are active in the area where you live. The Department of Social Development has a complete list of non-profit organisations in each province available on their website at http://www.dsd.gov.za/npo. Investigate volunteer opportunities in your area and field of interest on the GreaterGoodSA website at www.myggsa.co.za/.

Activity

Make a list of the organisations that you would want to contact about exploring volunteer opportunities.
What are you hoping to gain from your volunteer experience?
What can you contribute to an organisation?

Qualifications offered by Unisa

Visit the Unisa website at http://www.unisa.ac.za/qualifications for more information about these qualifications.

Community development

Undergraduate

- Bachelor of Arts (General) – choose Development Studies as one of your major subjects
- Bachelor of Arts in Community Development
- Bachelor of Arts in Development Studies
- Bachelor of Arts (Health Sciences and Social Services) Applied Psychology for Professional Contexts
- Bachelor of Arts (Health Sciences and Social Services) Community and Health Psychology
- Bachelor of Arts (Health Sciences and Social Services) Psychological Counselling
- Bachelor of Arts in Government, Administration and Development
- Bachelor of Administration
- Bachelor of Administration in Human Settlements Management

Postgraduate Diploma

- Postgraduate Diploma in Social and Behavioural Studies (HIV-AIDS)

Honours

- Bachelor of Arts Honours in Development Studies
- Bachelor of Arts Honours in Psychology Community and Health Psychology
- Bachelor of Arts Honours in Psychology Psychological Counselling
- Bachelor of Arts Honours in Psychology Applied Psychology for Professional Contexts
- Honours Bachelor of Arts in Social and Behavioural Studies (HIV/AIDS)

Master's degrees

- Master of Arts in Development Studies
- Master of Arts in Psychology
- Master of Arts in Social and Behavioural Studies (HIV/AIDS)

Doctoral degrees

- Doctor of Philosophy (Development Studies)
- Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology (PhD)

Social work

Undergraduate

- Higher Certificate in Social Auxiliary Work *
- Bachelor of Social Work *

* Note: Applicants should note that this is a selection qualification, in which they will be assessed to ascertain suitability to the profession. There is also an earlier closing date for application to these qualifications. Read more about the requirements on the links provided.

Master's degree

- Master of Social Work (Full Dissertation)

Doctoral degree

- Doctor of Social Work

The research focus areas for the Master's and Doctoral degrees can be found here: http://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Master%27s-&-doctoral-degrees/Research-focus-areas/College-of-Human-Sciences.

Short Learning Programmes (SLPs)

The Unisa Tirisano Centre offers short learning programmes related to community development. Visit the Short Learning Programme website at https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Short-Learning-Programmes/View-the-SLPs/College-of-Human-Sciences for more information.

Counselling and career development services at Unisa

The Unisa Directorate: Counselling and Career Development offers career-, academic- and personal counselling services to Unisa students and the broader community. You can talk to a counsellor about:

- **Career decisions.** I am not sure which career path to follow; I don't know which qualification would be best; I want to change my career direction…
- **Career information.** How can I find out more about a career in …
- **Employability.** How do I market myself to employers? How can I look for work? How can I compile an effective CV? How do I go about networking with others? How do I put together my career portfolio? How can I meet potential employers? How can I improve my interview skills?)
- **My studies at Unisa.** How can I get started with my studies? How do I plan my studies? How can I study more effectively? I don't feel motivated to continue with my studies… I feel worried about preparing for/ writing the exams. I failed my exams – what now? I need to improve my reading/ writing/ numeracy skills
- **Personal issues.** How can I have better relationships with others? How can I cope more effectively with issues that impact on my studies?

Visit our website at http://www.unisa.ac.za/counselling to access many self-help resources, or talk to a counsellor by e-mail to counselling@unisa.ac.za.