

College of Education Institute for Open and Distance Learning Research focus areas for 2025

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES, AVAILABLE SUPERVISION CAPACITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA, ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION PER SCHOOL AND DEPARTMENT IN CEDU

Research focus areas of the Institute (2025)

- Open Education Practices/ Resources
- Capacity Development in ODeL
- Technology-enhanced learning
- Mobile Learning
- Policy issues in ODeL
- Leadership and Management in ODeL
- ODeL methodologies
- Self-Directed Learning and Metacognition
- Analysis of ODL Research
- Online Learning in developing countries
- Open Distance Learning
- Curriculum Design in ODeL
- Student Success and retention in ODeL
- Open distance learning and pedagogies
- Accessibility in ODL
- Knowledge and methods in ODL research
- Research and/or student support in ODL

Research projects that postgraduate students can participate in

Name of project	Brief description of the project	Project leader	No of available positions for MEd students for 2025	No of available positions for PhD students for 2026
Exploring Students' e-readiness to use Open Educational resources and engage in online assessments	This topic focuses on evaluating how prepared students are—both technically and psychologically—to effectively use Open Educational Resources (OERs) and participate in online assessments.	Prof RSS Mphahlele	2	3
Articulation Policy into and within higher Education	The structured guidelines and agreements that facilitate smooth student progression between different levels and types of education—such as from TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) or colleges into universities, or between higher education institution	Prof JN Zongozzi	1	2
Examining Research Support Programmes for Academic Staff at a South African Open Distance Learning Institution	Evaluating the programmes and initiatives designed to support academic staff in conducting research at an Open Distance Learning (ODL) institution in South Africa.	Prof JN Zongozzi	0	1

Focused M & D programmes

Name of programme	Qualification code	Curriculum
Hons in Open Distance Learning in Higher Education	HED4811	The purpose of this module is to provide students with a deep understanding of Open Distance and eLearning (ODEL) teaching and learning practice as aligned to theory and best practice. Students will be introduced to the theoretical groundings of ODeL as well as the various contextually relevant ODeL practices aligned to this mode of education facilitation. Students will be required to demonstrate the skills necessary to address research problems related to the dynamic ODeL context by conducting a short research project.

Details of individual supervisors and their research interests or fields of expertise

Name of supervisor	Research interest/field of expertise	No of positions for master's students still available for 2026	No of positions for doctoral students still available for 2026
Kelly Young	- Bullying and cyberbullying in schools - Student success and retention in distance education - Quantitative research methodologies	2	1
Mphahlele Shila	- Technology-enhanced cognitive justice - Open Educational Resources - Mathematics, Science and Technology teaching - Technology enhanced student support	0	0
Hugo van der Walt	- Psychosocial Well-being in the Distance Education space - Psychology of Work - Staff Development and Retention in Higher Open Distance Learning - Higher Education Policy Evaluation and Programme Design - Methodological Innovation in ODeL Research	2	1
Nathi Zongozzi	- Higher Education Policy - Knowledge and methods in Distance Education - Access for Students with Disabilities - Research Support in ODL - Programme/Policy Evaluation	0	2
Sharonrose Sefora	- Career development in basic education - Career development in higher education - Student success and retention in distance education - Psychological Resilience for students with disabilities and incarcerated students	2	0
Sindile Ngubane	- Digital inclusion - Inclusion of marginalised students /learners - Access for marginalised students and communities	0	2

	• Digital accessibility for employees with disabilities		
Dr Bongani Nkambule	• Open distance e-learning (ODeL) • Educational management • Curriculum Design in ODeL • Student Success and retention in ODeL • Open distance learning and pedagogies • Accessibility in ODL	1	2