Research focus areas / niches:

The following are the Department of Social Work at Unisa’s current research focus / niche areas:

- Vulnerable, marginalised groups or populations at risk: (e.g. children, youth, women, older persons; gays, lesbians, bisexual, transgendered, persons with disabilities, people living with and affected by HIV & AIDS; foreigners, asylum seekers, migrants, children working and living on the streets; the unemployed and men-on-the-side-of-the-road; car guards).
- Social issues/problems (e.g. unemployment, poverty and poverty alleviation, chemical abuse and addiction disorders, HIV and AIDS, gender and diversity issues; polygamy, child headed households, home-based care; dating and domestic violence, sexual trauma, sexual abuse, sex trafficking and child sex trafficking, sex offenders and rehabilitation; depression, self-death; teenage pregnancy; child-on-child sexual abuse, rape, bullying; children in conflict with the law).
- Social development (e.g. women empowerment, cooperatives, rural development).
- The Social Work profession (e.g. ethics and professional conduct in social work practice; CPD; safety in Social Work; research related service professionals’ perceptions around the SACSSP; social workers’ experiences about supervision in the Department of Social Development; models and modes for social service professional collaborations).
- Social Work education and training in the ODL-context (e.g. the students’ social and personal contacts; views on service delivery within the ODL context; Social Work supervision/field instruction within the ODL context – supervisors’/field instructors’ and supervisees’ experiences; assessment of practica in the ODL-context; life-skills amongst tertiary students; career guidance; the employability of Social Work graduates).
- Specific / specialised methods of Social Work intervention: (e.g. marriage guidance and counselling, divorce guidance, person centred individual counselling; family therapy (systems theory); social group work; community development; laughter therapy; play, music, art and storytelling as tools for Social Work intervention; trauma management and debriefing; foster care; adoption; child centred play therapy; effective parenting (filial therapy); family reunification services).
- Specialised fields of Social Work: (e.g. employee health and wellness; occupational Social Work; Social Work management; Social Work in health care; mental health; probation work; school Social Work; rural Social Work, cross-cultural social work).
- Research approaches and specialised research methods: (e.g. Social Work research methods; qualitative and quantitative research; intervention design and development research; programme evaluation; social indicator studies – development of methodology and systems of indicators; Impact studies, assessment, monitoring and evaluation of Social Work service delivery).