

27 October 2025

Two years after the failed attempt to place it under administration, Unisa continues to perform beyond expectations

Today, Monday, 27 October 2025, marks exactly two years and 23 days since the decision of the North Gauteng High Court in Pretoria, which interdicted the then Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation from placing the University of South Africa (Unisa) under administration. The Council and Management of Unisa had approached the court to seek the interdict as it believed that the Minister's decision was premature.

The Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Puleng LenkaBula and all progressive Unisa Management and epistemic communities have always maintained that the "Report of the Independent Assessor into the Affairs of the University of South Africa", on which the Minister's decision was premised, is fundamentally flawed, and its recommendations totally misplaced. For that reason, the university has taken the Report on legal review to be set aside.

The university pursued this route not out of malice, but because it sought to ensure that its constitutional rights and those of affected officials are not infringed upon. It also believes that placing it under administration is not necessary and may only serve to harm the university.

The university believed at the time, as it does now, that its governance and academic programmes are not in jeopardy and remain intact; and its finances are healthy.

The record will show that since 2021, the performance of the university has continued to surpass expectations. The latest performance indicators (2025) show the following, amongst others :

- The most recent University Impact Rankings for 2025, released by Times Higher Education, show that Unisa's performance on the UN Sustainable Development Goals rose to 66,3 as compared to 65,3 in 2024. On the three SDGs in which it provided evidence (Decent Work and Economic Growth, Quality Education and Gender Equality), Unisa scored in the top quartile worldwide. It was also ranked Number 7 amongst the 13 South African universities included in the rankings.
- Furthermore, in The Times Higher Education rankings, Unisa has risen from 13.8 to 17.8 for its research environment, from 48.1 to 51.0 for research quality, and went up from 8 to 6 between 2022 and 2023 in relation to its publication output units.
- According to the 2025 Shanghai Ranking's Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), published on 15 August 2025, Unisa remains among the eight best universities in the country and the top 1000 universities globally.
- Unisa continues to play a vital role in producing quality graduates for the economy and the corporate market, with an average of 50 000 students graduating with Unisa



every year, constituting a third of all graduates produced by the university system in South Africa. In 2025 alone, approximately 65 000 students graduated through Unisa, including 512 PhD and 922 Master's graduates.

- Unisa attained unqualified audit opinions consecutively since 2018, thereby affirming that it continues to maintain the highest standard of financial prudence, transparency and governance.

The university community remains thankful to its various stakeholders, who stood by it under trying circumstances and ensured that academic freedom is protected and that it stayed focused on the mission to remain Unisa a shining beacon of performance excellence.

We recognise in particular the support, encouragement and leadership of the Unisa Council and management, especially the leadership of the erstwhile Chairperson of Council, Mr James Maboja, the incumbent Chairperson of Council, Dr Dan Mosia and the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Prof Puleng LenkaBula.

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