

MEDIA STATEMENT

Unisa appoints Professor Mpho Ngoepe as Vice-Principal: Teaching, Learning, Community Engagement and Student Support

Approved for public release

Date: Tuesday, 01 September 2026

The University of South Africa (Unisa) is pleased to announce the appointment of C2 NRF-rated Professor Mpho Ngoepe as Vice-Principal: Teaching, Learning, Community Engagement and Student Support, effective 1 October 2026.

The appointment was confirmed and approved by the University Council following consideration of the reports and recommendations of the Selection Committee, and advice from the Executive Committees of the Senate and the Institutional Forum.

Professor Ngoepe brings to the portfolio more than 28 years of academic, professional and leadership experience spanning library and information services, higher education, research, archives and records management, corporate governance and community engagement in South Africa, Africa and internationally.

He joined Unisa on 1 August 2012 and has served the University in a number of senior academic and leadership roles, including Director of the School of Arts, Acting Deputy Executive Dean, Head of the Department of Information Science and Head of the Centre for Applied Information and Communication. He currently serves as Acting Vice-Principal: Research, Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialisation.

His appointment to the Teaching, Learning, Community Engagement and Student Support portfolio brings together a wealth of experience in academic leadership, research, postgraduate supervision, professional development and the advancement of knowledge for societal impact.

A scholar whose work has shaped the profession beyond South Africa

Professor Ngoepe is an accomplished scholar and academic leader whose work has contributed significantly to the development of the library and information science profession in Africa. His scholarship has focused on archives and records management, digital records, corporate governance, indigenous knowledge and languages, literacy and freedom of information.

His international standing was affirmed in 2023 when he was recognised among the top 2% of scientists worldwide for career impact, in a ranking announced by Elsevier and Stanford University based on authors published in Scopus-indexed journals.

Between 2013 and 2018, he served as Director of Team Africa for the International Project on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems (InterPARES) Trust, coordinated by the University of British Columbia in Canada. Under his leadership, the Africa team undertook research on digital records and archival education, including the development of a directory of



higher education institutions offering archival studies in 38 African countries and research that informed archival curriculum development across the continent.

In 2016, the International Council on Archives designated Professor Ngoepe to convene a meeting of archival educators from across Africa, contributing to the implementation of the Council's strategy for the continent, particularly in education.

His scholarly contribution includes more than 100 journal articles, seven conference proceedings, 11 book chapters and three academic books published by Routledge and AOSIS. His work has reached international audiences, with two of his accredited articles translated into Spanish and Portuguese.

A leader committed to developing people and communities

Professor Ngoepe's contribution extends beyond scholarly publication. He has supervised 28 master's and 34 doctoral students to completion, playing an important role in developing the next generation of scholars and professionals.

His commitment to African languages and literature is equally notable. He has published two award-winning anthologies of Northern Sotho short stories, which were recommended for Grade 8 learners by the Limpopo Department of Education, and authored the biography of 2012 Comrades Marathon champion Ludwick Mamabolo.

He has also made a significant contribution to the professional development of the LIS and archival sectors through leadership roles in national, continental and international bodies. These include the South African Society of Archivists, the Eastern and Southern African Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives, the National Archives Advisory Council, the Gauteng Provincial Archives Advisory Council and the Archival Education Research Institute.

He has served on the Advisory Board of the Information Studies Department at Queens College, City University of New York, and on editorial boards of leading international journals, including *Information Development*, *Education for Information* and *Archival Science*.

His professional leadership has been recognised through several awards, including the IVAISLIP/SABINET Information Officer of the Year Award (2004), recognition from the South African Human Rights Commission and Open Democracy Advice Centre in 2007 for his work in implementing the Promotion of Access to Information Act, the Unisa Chancellor's Prize for Excellence in Research (2020) and the South African Society of Archivists Lifetime Achiever Award (2022).

Commenting on the appointment, Professor Puleng LenkaBula, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Unisa, said: "Unisa wishes Professor Ngoepe every success in this important new role, which carries the significant responsibility of accelerating the pace of cultivating the Catalytic Niche Areas. His extensive academic leadership, scholarship and professional experience, coupled with his commitment to students, communities and knowledge development, will be invaluable as we advance Unisa's strategic priorities."

Professor Ngoepe assumes his new role at an important juncture in Unisa's development, where excellence in teaching and learning, meaningful community engagement and responsive student support remain central to the University's mission.

His appointment strengthens Unisa's leadership capacity and positions the University to draw on his extensive experience to advance an inclusive, student-centred and impact-driven approach to teaching, learning and community engagement.



Unisa congratulates Professor Ngoepe on his appointment and wishes him every success as he takes on this important leadership responsibility.

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