



UNISA

At your fingertips

Define tomorrow.

UNISA | 
university
of south africa



CONTENTS

- 05 > Introduction
- 06 > National treasure with global reach
- 07 > Proudly African
- 08 > Here, there and everywhere
- 09 > Innovative in teaching and learning
- 12 > Research that matters
- 14 > Students by the numbers
- 16 > Engaging with our community
- 19 > Accelerating development
- 21 > Alumni, our ambassadors
- 22 > Our philosophy

04

**WHAT
YOU DO
TODAY
WILL
DEFINE
TOMORROW**

Introduction

*The University of South Africa (Unisa) is as unique as a set of fingerprints. This publication shares **ten** key points that define Unisa and captures the spirit of the university that **defines tomorrow.***



06

National treasure with a global reach



The University of South Africa (Unisa), the only higher education institution to carry the name of the country, is the people's university in every sense of the word. Throughout its history, spanning more than 14 decades, Unisa has responded to the developments brought about by changing times, the needs of a developing country and society at large, and an ever-evolving higher education environment. This was achieved through ongoing and dynamic transitioning. Unisa's journey has been one of continuous growth and transformation, aimed at shaping tomorrow through education.

Unisa's roots (and indeed that of higher education in South Africa) date back to 1873 when the University of the Cape of Good Hope was founded, initially functioning as an examining body for higher education. In 1916, the university changed its name to the University of South Africa and in 1918 it relocated to Pretoria. In 1946 it became one of the first public universities in the world to teach exclusively by means of distance education. Today Unisa is widely recognised as a leading open distance education university. The university has more than 350 000 students and is the largest university in South Africa and on the African continent, and one of the world's mega-universities.

With offices across South Africa and students from 130 countries, Unisa has an extensive geographical footprint and global reach.



Proudly African

Located at the southern tip of Africa, Unisa takes pride in its identity and has the interests of the continent at heart. Through its teaching and learning, relevant research and innovation, and community engagement initiatives, the university acknowledges its African roots and acts on the needs of South Africa and the continent. Curricular change in the interests of asserting Africa-centred knowledge systems and research reforms are but some of the initiatives aimed at advancing transformation and the decolonisation of scholarship.

Unisa supports Africa's socio-economic transformation and development goals in various ways. The university has collaboration agreements with the African Union Commission and the Africa Forum, an association of former heads of state and leaders on the African continent, among others. It also collaborates with various government departments to advance our national development goals. Furthermore, Unisa houses several Africa-focused chairs, centres and programmes, all of which have the advancement and interest of the continent at heart.





Unisa's scenic main campus is located in Tshwane. It is supplemented by a student campus (also in the city), a Science Campus in Johannesburg, five regional hubs, a Unisa Ethiopia Akaki Centre, and 28 learning centres countrywide. However, as an open distance and e-learning (ODeL) institution Unisa's presence is not restricted to buildings and campuses. Unisa is literally at the fingertips of everyone with a suitable device and internet access.



Innovative in teaching and learning



As a comprehensive university, Unisa offers both vocational and academic programmes from the level of under- and post-graduate certificates and diplomas to degrees, and also post-graduate diplomas, master's and doctoral qualifications. Unisa also offers short learning programmes targeting specific needs of industry and civil society. As an open distance learning pioneer, Unisa is known for delivering well-designed, interactive study material. A wide-ranging menu of support services cater for the needs of its diverse student population and includes tutorials, peer-group support, video conferences and satellite broadcasts to a virtual learning environment, Unisa's "classroom" known as myUnisa, which allows students to engage with their lecturers and e-tutors and to participate in discussion forums and wikis, among others.

Students can enrol for learning programmes in a wide spectrum of disciplines.

10

Unisa has nine colleges, comprising of the following:

College of Accounting Sciences

Unisa's College of Accounting Sciences is geared to establish itself as a leader in the field of formal education in accounting sciences on the African continent. Currently it enrolls, on average, 40% of all accounting students in South Africa and produces 20% of accounting graduates.

Schools

- School of Accountancy
- School of Applied Accountancy

College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences

The College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences offers a rich range of programmes from the 'green sciences' that promote sustainable environmental management to animal health, agricultural management, horticulture, geography, life sciences and consumer sciences, which focus on food, nutrition and hospitality.

Schools

- School of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- School of Environmental Sciences

College of Economic and Management Sciences

The College of Economic and Management Sciences is the largest provider of business education in Africa and one of the largest in the world. One out of every four BCom degrees awarded by South African universities goes to a Unisa graduate. On a postgraduate level Unisa has delivered half of the honours degrees and 30% of the master's and doctoral degrees over the past five years. The college constantly conducts intensive research in the private and public sectors to establish the relevance and usefulness of its degrees and courses.

Schools

- School of Economic and Financial Sciences
- School of Management Sciences
- School of Public and Operations Management

Unisa Graduate School of Business Leadership

Previously an autonomous academic department within the College of Economic and Management Sciences, the Graduate School of Business Leadership now enjoys college status. It has flagship programmes i.e. the Master of Business Leadership and the Doctor of Business Leadership.

College of Education

The College of Education is responsible for the professional education and training of close to 50% of all teachers in South Africa.

Schools

- School of Educational Management
- School of Teacher Education

College of Human Sciences

The College of Human Sciences offers high-quality general academic and career-focused programmes in the arts and humanities, social sciences, education, religion and theology.

Schools

- School of Arts
- School of Humanities
- School of Social Sciences

College of Law

The college confers professional qualifications that provide access to the legal profession, as well as various career-based qualifications in subjects such as police practice. The college has well qualified and experienced academics in a variety of disciplines and with more than 40 000 students it is the largest faculty of law in Southern Africa, and in Africa.

Schools

- School of Law
- School of Criminal Justice

College of Science, Engineering and Technology

Offering learning programmes in a range of science, engineering and technology disciplines, the college opens the door to a variety of exciting careers in industry, education, and basic or applied research.

Schools

- School of Computing
- School of Engineering
- School of Science

College of Graduate Studies

The College of Graduate Studies forms part of Unisa's Research and Innovation Portfolio and differs from the other colleges in that it doesn't offer graduate programmes. Instead, it provides a range of research training programmes, enrichment activities and support mechanisms to assist postgraduate students and contribute to the development of researchers. The college provides a virtual research platform for postgraduate students in all colleges, thus promoting both interdisciplinary and research excellence.

Schools

- School of Transdisciplinary Research Institutes
- School of Interdisciplinary Research and Graduate Studies

12

Research that matters

Unisa has a vibrant and dynamic research culture, and its strong transformative agenda encourages a creative approach to new ways of knowing. Here academics and postgraduate students are committed to finding research and innovative solutions that will address important national and global questions, and contribute to the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of South Africa and the African continent.



At Unisa every effort is made to create and nurture an environment where researchers can live their passion, whether they prefer to explore new worlds or apply new ideas to real-world problems. To this end it supports basic, strategic and applied research as well as innovation and commercialisation projects, invests in postgraduate studies and explores brave new frontiers in a number of key disciplines.

The university has a pool of talented researchers of whom more than 231 have received National Research Foundation (NRF) ratings. Annually, the university's researchers contribute more than 1 000 articles to accredited journals. Unisa also boasts close to 10 000 master's and doctoral students.

*At the **Unisa Science Campus** the focus is on growing research capacity and supporting research activities in the fields of science, engineering and technology, as well as agriculture and environmental sciences. With leading-edge laboratories (facilities not generally associated with open and distance e-learning institutions) the Science Campus is the place where scientists get to do what they love to do – putting theory into practice.*

*At the heart of the university and offering exceptional support to researchers, the **Unisa Library** is the largest academic library in our continent, and one of the best-endowed in terms of information resources and information technology. It is, moreover, one of the largest dedicated distance and open education libraries in the world.*

*The university also houses the **Thabo Mbeki Presidential Library (TMPL)**. Containing an exhaustive repository of the documents, papers and*

artefacts of former President Thabo Mbeki and other African leaders, TMPL is a living library and important African centre of learning, research and discourse for the transformation of Africa.

Research niche areas

Unisa has five broad research niche areas:

- Knowledge production and capacity building in response to the needs of South Africa and the African continent
- The promotion of democracy, human rights and responsible citizenship
- Innovation in science and technology
- Economic and environmental sustainability
- Open distance learning

To provide impetus to research in these focus areas, Unisa has a number of dedicated institutes and bureaux, including the following:

- **The Institute for African Renaissance Studies**, which undertakes studies utilising multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary paradigms
- **The Institute for Science and Technology Education**, which focuses on the development, provision and advancement of mathematics, science and technology education
- **The Institute for Social and Health Studies**, which is devoted to fostering safety, peace, equality, generative identities and health within communities
- **The Institute for Open and Distance Learning**, which undertakes ODL research in Africa and internationally
- **The Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute**, which conducts the bulk of its work on the continent's future and invests in the training of tomorrow's leaders

- **The Archie Mafeje Institute** for Applied Social Policy Research, which conducts applied research into the discourses of the family and family life, and the impact of poverty in South Africa and beyond
- **The Bureau of Market Research**, which comprises of four divisions, Income and Expenditure Research, Behavioural and Communication Research, Economic Research and Demographic Research, and undertakes socioeconomic research in South Africa
- **The Institute for Corporate Citizenship**, which builds individual and institutional capacity for sustainable business and social unity.

Research chairs

Unisa hosts numerous research chairs, including the following:

- UNESCO-Unisa Africa Chair in Nanosciences and Nanotechnology
- UNESCO Chair in Early Childhood Education, Care and Development (co-chair)
- UNITWIN/UNESCO Chair in Open Distance Learning (ODL)
- The DST/NRF SARCHI Chair in Social Policy
- The DST/NRF SARCHI Research Chair in ICT for Development
- The DST/NRF SARCHI Research Chair for Law, Society and Technology
- The Exxaro Chair in Business and Climate Change

Unisa-funded chairs were established to bolster the research capacity in the following niche areas: high performance scientific computing, ecotoxicology, macroeconomic policy analysis and topology.

14

Students by the numbers



381 000

students have chosen Unisa to further their studies. As an open distance and e-learning university Unisa offers its students flexibility and they choose when, where and how they study. Courtesy of evolving technology and with access to internet facilities, the campus is just a click away for most Unisa students who can register, download study material and submit assignments online. myUnisa, the university's online campus, provides students with electronic access to administrative and academic services, and the opportunity to engage with their lecturers and peers.

50 000

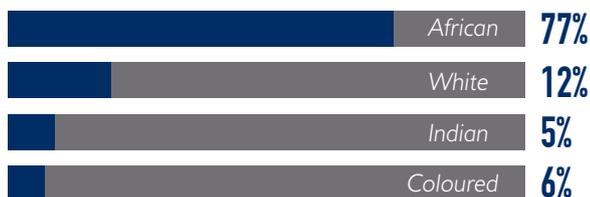
students obtain **certificates, diplomas, degrees and postgraduate qualifications** annually. Thus, every year Unisa delivers more than 50 000 skilled and competent graduates to bolster the country's labour market. The majority of Unisa students are undergraduates, but more than **44 000** are enrolled for **postgraduate qualifications**. Of these, over **10 000** are **master's and doctoral students**.



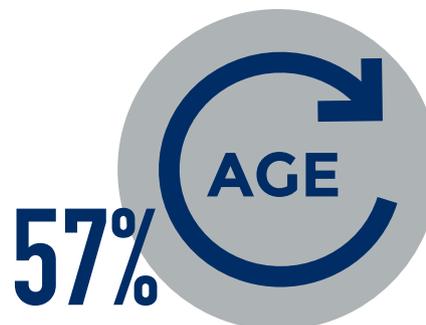
The number of **female students** has shown a year-on-year growth and currently females account for 66% of the student population.



6% of enrolments are students from **beyond South Africa's borders** with the majority from other SADC and African countries.



More than 95% of Unisa students **study on a part-time basis**.



Being an open distance and e-learning university affording people the opportunity to study while pursuing their careers, Unisa has a higher percentage of **mature student population** than residential universities with 57% of students being between 25-39 years of age.

Reflecting the demographics of South Africa, more than 77% of Unisa students are African, 12% white, 5% Indian and 6% coloured.

Engaging with our community

The mission of a socially responsive higher education sector is critically urgent and requires decisive action. At Unisa, community engagement (CE) is at the cutting-edge of our contribution to nation building. As an engaged university, Unisa is using the intellectual resources at its disposal to undertake a journey with communities from vulnerability to empowerment.

Community engagement is a scholarly endeavour that enhances teaching, learning and research, while concurrently pursuing the socio-economic development imperatives of South Africa and the African continent. CE projects are designed to respond to the development needs highlighted in the National Development Plan, the White Paper on Post-School Education and Training, the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063. The projects are extensive in influence, impact and range, with over a 100 transformative projects operating across the country and abroad.





18



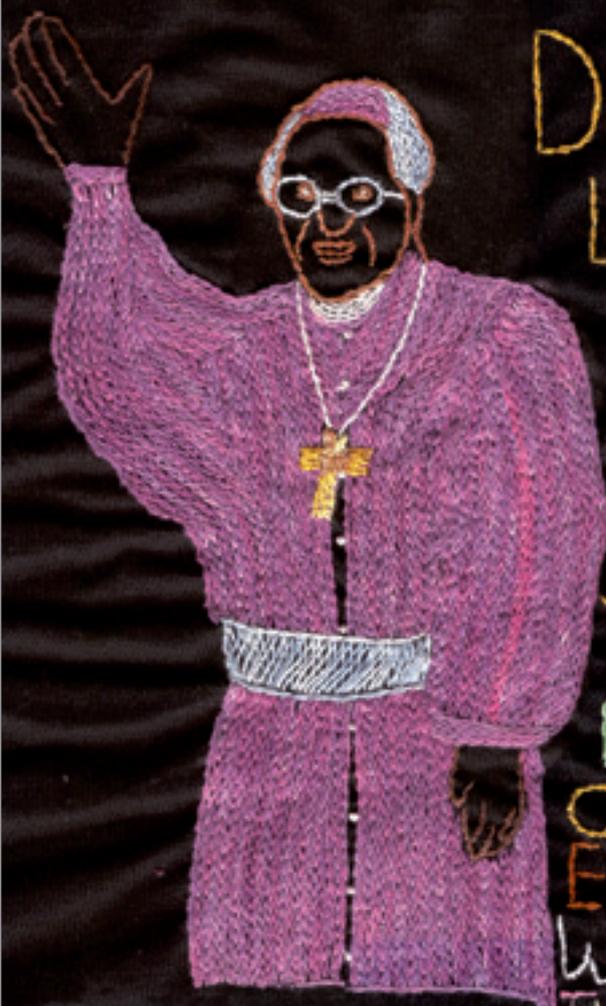
Accelerating development

Unisa's strategic initiatives at national, international and inter-institutional level enable the university to contribute to the education landscape and accelerate development on a global level. Amongst these initiatives are the following:

- **Young African Leadership Initiative (YALI).** Following the announcement by United States President Barack Obama of the establishment of YALI regional leadership centres in Africa in 2014, Unisa was appointed one of the leaders of this education alliance and tasked with running the South African centre which is thriving and supports the Mozambique leg of the programmes.
- **Agreement between the African Union Commission (AUC) and Unisa.** The signing of the global development alliance cooperative agreement between the African Union Commission (AUC) and Unisa reaffirms the stature and leadership excellence of Unisa and the significant role that the institution will be playing in the economic, social and political reshaping of the African continent.
- **Management of Democratic Elections in Africa,** a strategic partnership project between Unisa and the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa, is a capacity-building programme aimed at training commissioners and elections officials from the African continent on managing democratic elections. Since its inception, no fewer than 35 African countries have benefited from training in the MDEA programme. This is a programme that is funded by the USAID.
- **The United Nations Global Compact.** Unisa was the first South African university to become a signatory to the compact and has integrated its principles of human rights, labour, anti-corruption and environment into its curriculum and research focus areas.
- **The African Council for Distance Education,** comprising African universities and other institutions of higher learning, pursues the objective of promoting research and innovation, and ensuring quality open distance education in Africa.



TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION



DID TUTU EVER
LOOSE FAITH? HE SAID
NO. NO THERE WERE
OCCASIONS WHEN ONE
GOT UPSET WITH GOD.
YES. ONE WAS DEVAST-
ATED BY THE EVIDENCE
OF OUR CAPACITY FOR GREAT
EVIL. AND YET REMARKABLY
WHAT ONE TOOK AWAY FROM
THE TRC PROCESS WAS

CYNTHIA

EXTRAORDINARY
THE REALISATION
FUNDAMENTALLY

EXHILARATION FROM
THAT PEOPLE WERE
GOOD

Alumni, our ambassadors

*Every Unisa graduate is remarkable. To be successful in open distance and e-learning institution requires self-discipline and commitment, and the university takes pride in the close to **800 000** alumni who have joined its list of remarkable graduates.*

*Having afforded study opportunities to former activists and struggle heroes incarcerated on Robben Island, Unisa salutes alumni such as the late President **Nelson Mandela** (Nobel laureate and former President of the Republic of South Africa), Archbishop Emeritus **Desmond Tutu** (South African social rights activist and retired Anglican bishop), the late Mr **Ahmed Kathrada** (politician) and Justice **Dikgang Moseneke** (retired Deputy Chief Judge of the Constitutional Court of South) for their role in changing the course of South Africa's history.*



*As thought leaders, businesspeople, legal experts and acclaimed entertainers, Unisa alumni are actively shaping our society. The likes of Mr **Sizwe Nxasana** (former Chief Executive Officer of FirstRand Limited), Justice **Dhaya Pillay** (Judge of the High Court), Mr **Lesetja Kganyago** (Governor of the South African Reserve Bank), Mr **Saki Macozoma** (prominent businessman and a leader in civil society), Mr **Pakamile Pongwana** (Chief Executive Officer of the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa), Mrs **Yvonne 'Chaka-Chaka' Mhinga** (singer, businesswoman and philanthropist), Mr **Terence Nombembe** (Chief Executive Officer of the South African Institute for Chartered Accountants) and Dr **Thulani Dlamini** (Chief Executive Officer the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research) are making their mark in diverse fields and capacities.*

22

Our philosophy

*The Unisa community is inspired by its **vision** to become the African university shaping futures in the service of humanity.*

*We are clear on our **mission** to be a comprehensive, open distance learning institution that produces excellent scholarship and research, provides quality tuition and fosters active community engagement. We are guided by the principles of life-long learning, student-centredness, innovation and creativity. Through our efforts we contribute to the knowledge and information society, advance development, nurture a critical citizenry and ensure global sustainability.*

*We subscribe to the **values** of ethical and collective responsibility; integrity; innovation and excellence; responsive student-centredness; and dignity in diversity.*





UNISA

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Contact us

Visit: www.unisa.ac.za/

E-mail: infoservices@unisa.ac.za

Define tomorrow.

UNISA | 
university
of south africa