

12th Annual Academic
Development Symposium
Cape Town

Invitation

Unisa Western Cape Region in partnership with the
Academic Development Open Virtual Hub (ADOVH)



12th Annual Academic Development Symposium

Higher Education as Catalysts for Future-Ready Learning in a Rapidly Evolving Technological Landscape: Building AI-Responsive Collaborative Ecosystems for Teaching, Student Support, Employability and Research.

Date: 17-18 September 2026

Preamble

Higher education is increasingly called upon not only to respond to a rapidly evolving technological landscape, but to actively shape it through knowledge production, innovation, and collaborative research. Advances in artificial intelligence and related technologies are transforming how knowledge is created, accessed, and applied, opening new possibilities for teaching, learning, student support, and employability.

In this context, there is a growing imperative for higher education institutions to move beyond isolated practices towards the development of collaborative, AI-responsive research ecosystems. These ecosystems create opportunities for institutions, particularly within regional contexts, to leverage their unique strengths, partnerships, and areas of specialisation to contribute meaningfully to both local and global knowledge economies.

The 12th Academic Development Symposium therefore marks an important shift, positioning the symposium as a catalyst for the development of regional research hubs. These hubs are envisioned as dynamic spaces where academics, professional and support staff, emerging researchers, and practitioners can engage in practice-informed inquiry, share research on the use of AI and technology in education, and collaboratively explore innovative approaches to teaching, learning, and student support.

The symposium invites contributions that reflect both research and practice, with a particular focus on how artificial intelligence and technological advances can be harnessed to support knowledge building, enhance student success, and strengthen pathways to employability. It further seeks to explore how these developments can enable the formation of sustainable, collaborative research networks across universities, TVET colleges, industry, and community stakeholders.

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In doing so, the symposium aims to lay the foundation for regional campuses to evolve into knowledge and research hubs, contributing to a broader, interconnected ecosystem of innovation, scholarship, and societal impact.

The symposium invites research-informed contributions and practice-based reflections across the following thematic areas:

1) Building Pathways for Future-Ready Graduates and Careers

- Research and practice on employability, graduate attributes, and career readiness in a technological landscape.

2) AI, Technological Change and the Future of Work

- Implications for employability, skills, human capability, and curriculum innovation

3) Student Support and Success in AI-Responsive Learning Environments

- Innovations, practices, and research on supporting students in evolving digital ecosystems

4) Building Local Knowledge and Research Hubs through Collaborative Ecosystems

- Leveraging regional strengths, partnerships, and niche areas for research, innovation, and impact

5) Teaching and Learning Innovation in Technology-Enhanced and AI-Responsive Contexts

- Pedagogical practices, curriculum transformation, and Knowledge-Building approaches

6) Building Collaborative Research Ecosystems

- Partnerships between universities, TVET colleges, industry, and communities to support knowledge production and innovation

We invite academic and support staff, student affairs professionals, curriculum designers, and higher education practitioners to contribute to this year's conversation in the context of a rapidly evolving technological environment.

For more information, contact cntut@unisa.ac.za

Programme



Provisional Programme

Dr L Marumolwa, Acting Executive Director

Institutional Research and Business Intelligence (Unisa)

Day 01: Thursday, 17 September 2026

Time	Topic / Item	Presenter / Facilitator
08h00-08h30	Arrival and Registration	
08h30-08h45	Welcome	Mr M Nkgoang Regional Director Unisa Western Cape
08h45-09h00	Opening Address	Prof M Sepota, Registrar Unisa
09h00-09h45	Keynote Address 1	Ms L Joubert Acting Chief Financial Officer Student Administration and Systems Integration Unisa
09h45-10h30	Keynote Address 2	Professor O Olugbara Executive Dean of the Faculty of Accounting and Informatics at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) in South Africa.
10h30-11h00	Plenary discussion	
10h45 - 11h00	Tea	

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Parallel Sessions		
Venue: B01	Venue: B02	Venue: B1-41
11h15 - 11h45	11h50 - 12h20	12h25 - 12h55
Theme: Teaching and Learning Innovation in Technology-Enhanced and AI-Responsive Contexts	Theme: Building Collaborative Research Ecosystem	Theme: Teaching and Learning Innovation in Technology-Enhanced and AI-Responsive Contexts
<i>Curriculum Transformation in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Preparing Graduates for Employability in an AI-Driven Economy</i>	<i>The “Social Glue” of Disruption: Navigating AI in Higher Education through Shared Adversity and Hierarchies of Actualisation</i>	<i>Advancing Students’ Academic Writing Through Critical Dialectical Thinking in a Generative AI and Translanguaging Era</i>
Dr C Edson-Ashley Independent Higher Education Consultation	Dr MS Pourbehi (CPUT)	Dr P Sefalane-Nkohla (CPUT)
Theme: AI, Technological Change and the Future of Work	Theme: Student Support and Success in AI-Responsive Learning Environments	Theme: Building Collaborative Research Ecosystems
<i>Fostering Future-Ready Human Capability: An IOP Framework for AI-Driven Technological Change, Employability, and Curriculum Innovation</i>	<i>Human-Centred Student Support in AI-Responsive Learning Environments: An Industrial and Organisational Psychology Perspective</i>	<i>AI, Financial Wellbeing, and Sustainability in Life Skills taught at TVET</i>
Mr Ongeziwe Gift Nodipha (Unisa)	Ms Charmaine Murabi Mrs. Bronwyn Wright (Unisa)	Ms Jennifer Malgas-Esau

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Theme: Building Pathways for Future-Ready Graduates and Careers	Theme: Building Pathways for Future-Ready Graduates and Careers	Theme: Student Support and Success in AI-Responsive Learning Environments
<i>Reframing employability for the AI era: Career theory, skills gaps and the role of Industrial Psychology</i> Ms Mmapitsi Mokwele Ms Lebogang Langa Ms Busiswe Mahlangu (Unisa)	<i>Building Pathways for Future-Ready Graduates: An Industrial Psychology Case Study on Graduate Employability</i> Ms Mmehela Kumbi Ms Noluthando Ntshona (Unisa)	<i>Building Pathways for Future-Ready Graduates: An Industrial Psychology Case Study on Graduate Employability</i> Prof Dumisani Mabunda (Unisa)
Theme: Teaching and Learning Innovation in Technology-Enhanced and AI-Responsive Contexts	Theme: Teaching and Learning Innovation in Technology-Enhanced and AI-Responsive Contexts	
<i>Academic professional development in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI)</i> Mr George Makubalo (Sol Plaatje University)	<i>Reimagining Student Evaluation of Teaching as a Student-Centred Mechanism for Pedagogical and Curriculum Enhancement in Higher Education</i> Dr Severino Machingambi (Sol Plaatje University)	
13h00-13h30	Plenary, closing, and words of thanks	
13h30-14h30	Lunch and Networking	

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Dr L Marumolwa, Acting Executive Director

Institutional Research and Business Intelligence (Unisa)

Day 02: Friday, 18 September 2026

Time	Topic / Item	Presenter / Facilitator
08h00-08h30	Arrival and Registration	
08h30-08h45	Welcome	Mr M Nkgoang Regional Director Unisa Western Cape
08h45-09h00	Address from the Deputy Registrar	Prof Oupa Mashile Acting Deputy Registrar Student Administration and Systems Integration (to be confirmed)
09h00-09h45	Keynote Address 1 ETDP SETA	Mr. Mabu Raphotle Chief Operations Officer Education, Training and Development Practices SETA
09h45-10h30	Keynote Address 2	Mr. Lungisa Mbulawa Chief Executive Officer and Principal West Coast College
10h30-11h00	Plenary discussion	
10h45 - 11h00	Tea	
11:00 – 13:00	Roundtable discussion	Chair and Facilitator:
11:05–11:20 :	Scene-setting case study: Developments at NWU. moving from AI discourse	Prof Anné Verhoef Professor in Philosophy & Director of the NWU AI Hub

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	towards institutional implementation. lessons, challenges and emerging priorities	North- West University
11:20–11:50	National panelists perspectives Panellists respond from their different institutional contexts: - What resonates? - What are they doing differently? - What can institutions learn from one another?	Prof Muhammad Nakhooda Teaching and Learning Coordinator, Faculty of Applied Sciences, (CPUT) Mr Fundile Nkunge Mr Faried Ahmed Mr Khaalid Khan Centre for Innovative Education and Communication Technologies (CIECT), UWC Dr Greig Krull Dr Ncediwe Mdlulwa Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT), UCT
11:50–12:15	Facilitated roundtable discussion	The chair draws on pre-submitted questions and explores implementation, teaching and learning, student support, research, employability and collaboration
12:15–12:40	Bringing Student Voices into the Conversation	Student leaders/ representatives from Western Cape: HEIs reflect on their lived experiences of learning alongside AI and technological change
12:40–13:00	Open dialogue and closing reflections	Students, panelists and delegates engage together; spontaneous questions; possible concluding call to action

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13:00-13:30	Closing Remarks and Word of Thanks	Ms M Frauendorf Deputy Director Student Administration and Finance Unisa Western Cape
13h30-14h30	Lunch and Networking	