

Public Administration and Management @ Unisa



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The information in this publication is correct as of 15 November 2018. Visit the Unisa Counselling and Career Development downloads page (<http://bit.ly/2ux94B5>) to check for updates.

How will this brochure help me?

- It will provide you with some insight into what studying public administration and management involves.
- It will help you to explore the career opportunities and work environments linked to public administration and management.
- It will help you gain more information about the skills needed in the field of public administration and management.
- It will assist you with finding relevant qualifications offered by Unisa.

What is public management?

Public Administration and Management is the study of activities in the public sector. It includes topics such health, protection, education, housing and the environment. The Unisa syllabus is new and relevant to the challenges facing South Africa at national, provincial and local government sphere, while due cognisance is also taken of international developments and how these may influence government and related issues. The modules are designed to equip the student with knowledge as well as practical and academic skills¹.

¹ Unisa Department of Public Administration and Management.
<https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Colleges/Economic-and-Management->

What skills do I need in this field?

- Organisation skills
- Data gathering
- Communication skills
- Critical thinking and analysing
- Listening
- Budgeting and finance
- Time management
- Project management

Job opportunities and work environments related to public administration

Opportunities in the public sector are broad and depends on the level of government as well as the government department. The subjects you combine with public administration would shape your job opportunities in this field, to some extent.

[Sciences/Schools.-departments.-bureau.-centres-&-institutes/School-of-Public-and-Operations-Management/Department-of-Public-Administration-and-Management/About-us](#)

For example, the Bachelor of Administration (BAdmin) degree enables you to combine public administration with subject such as decision sciences, economics, accounting, business management (human resource management, marketing, strategic management, purchasing management), industrial and organisational psychology, and transport economics and logistics, preparing you for opportunities related to the application of these fields of study in the public sector.

The Bachelor of Arts degree enables you to combine public administration with Human Science related subjects such as politics, social sciences (psychology, sociology, and anthropology), languages, and communication science, preparing you for opportunities related to the application of these fields of study in the public sector.

Generic job titles related to public administration and management include:

Activist	Marketing Specialist	Public Opinion Analyst
Admin officer	Media Correspondent	Public Policy Analyst
Business Administrator	Non-profit Administrator	Public Policy Historian
Community Worker	Planning specialist	Public Policy Researcher
Executive Assistant	Policy Advisor	Public Relations Consultant
Fundraiser	Policy Researcher	Public Speaking Consultant
Government Administrator	Political Advisor Politician	Purchasing Agent/Buyer
Government Relations Manager	Population Studies Analyst	Researcher Speech Writer
Human Resource Specialist	Academic positions (e.g. Lecturer)	Translator
Management Consultant	Public Affairs Consultant	

Furthermore, government departments also employ professionals such as psychologists, lawyers and IT specialists.

It would be important for you to consider the contribution you wish to make to strengthen the public service and related activities. The next section about *Preparing for opportunities and planning your career* will help you to reflect on this.

You can do further research about positions in the government sector on the Government Vacancies website at <https://www.gov.za/about-government/government-vacancies>.

Preparing for opportunities and planning your career

“Don’t ask kids what they want to be when they grow up but what problems do they want to solve. This changes the conversation from who do I want to work for, to what do I need to learn to be able to do that.”

Jaime Casap, Google Global Education Evangelist

One interesting way of preparing for opportunities and planning your career is to think about the type of problems you would want to be able to solve. This will help you to focus on what you wish to contribute, and not necessarily, who you want to “become”. Once you have identified some of the problems you would want to focus on, you can then explore how individuals from different academic and professional backgrounds are addressing these problems. Then, you could start thinking about how you would want to contribute and what you will need to do in order to prepare for this.

Activity

Think about your environment (family, community, South Africa, Africa, international) and what problems or challenges you know about. Perhaps you have even thought of possible solutions to these challenges. Write down some of the problems or challenges you would want to address.

Problems/ Challenges

Next, think about how you would want to contribute to addressing some of these problems/ challenges. What would your role be? Also, think about how you would need to start preparing for the roles you identified (think about education, work/ volunteer experience).

Problems/ Challenges	My role	How do I need to prepare

The following are some ideas of challenges/ problems experienced across the world, including South Africa.

Access to digital technologies	Disabilities	Mechanisation
Access to education	Disaster management	Nutrition
Access to employment	Discrimination	Peace
Access to mental health services	Economic growth	Poverty
Access to primary health care	Economic inequality	Quality education
Affordable energy	Ethical institutions	Rapid urbanisation
Ageing world population	Fitness	Refugees
Child labour	Food security	Responsible consumption
Clean air, energy and water	Gender inequality	Responsible production
Climate change	Gender-based violence	Rural development
Climate change	Health and well-being	Safety at work
Corruption	HIV/AIDS	Skills development
Crime	Human rights	Skills gap
Data security	Human trafficking	Small enterprises
Deforestation	Illegal drugs	Social cohesion
Digital disruption	Income inequality	Social inequality
Digital economy	Justice	Sustainable agriculture
	Lifelong learning	Sustainable communities
	Literacy	
	Malnutrition	

Sustainable economic
development

Urban development

Youth unemployment

Violence

Unemployment

Water security

As an example, you may want to support small enterprises in order to provide for economic growth and development. Think about the different professionals who may be involved in solving this problem, e.g. public administrators and managers, accountants, and business developers. In the field of small business development, a public manager may focus on creating an enabling environment for small businesses to develop through, for example, by reviewing and implementing policies, connecting investors and business owners. An accountant may provide financial management skills related to small businesses, and a business developer may support the small business owners to be able to grow their business.

Identify opportunities with career research

How do you identify opportunities?

Your career research will connect you to others who will help you to answer questions you have with relation to your career choice; expand your understanding of the opportunities related to your career vision; identify “hidden” career paths that you did not think of previously; and think about how you could plan to pursue specific opportunities.

Prepare

Think about what you still need to find out: what questions do you have? You will use these questions as a starting point to structure your research. Examples of questions include “What can I do with a major in public administration”, or “How much do public servants earn?”

Keep track of information

Keep track of your research by making notes about what you learn and what you still need to find out. Use online services or apps such as Google Keep (<http://keep.google.com>), Evernote (<http://www.evernote.com>) or Diigo (<http://www.diigo.com>) to keep track of your research online.

Evaluate

Evaluate the information that you are finding: Who wrote the information (person/organisation)? Which country does the information relate to? When was the information last updated? Read more about evaluating online information in the Unisa Library libguide: <http://libguides.unisa.ac.za/c.php?g=355522&p=2400635>.

After you have visited a number of websites, you could compare your notes about the information you found – what are the similarities and differences? What else do you need to find out?

Further ways to do career research

1 Online search

Use a search engine such as Google to search for information related to your questions. For example, you need to find out about career opportunities related to public administration and management. You could start with using keywords such as “careers in public administration management” and then to further contextualise your findings, you could search keywords such as “careers in public administration management Africa” and “careers in public administration management South Africa”. Scan the brief descriptions of the first ten results and decide which website you would want to explore first. Skim-read through the information on the website

(start with the headings) to get an understanding of the content of the page and to find information related to your question. Also, check whether there are links to other websites that you could further explore. As you are reading, make a summary of the information. You could use the information you find to make lists of job titles related to your field of study, organisations that employ individuals in these fields and professional organisations.

Activity

Use Google to find specific job titles related to public administration and management. The following are some search terms you could consider: “job titles public administration management”; or “job titles public administration management graduates south africa”.

Job title	Website
Example:	
Public manager	Quintcareers.com

2 Occupational information websites

The following websites will help you to learn more about specific job titles:

Website	Description
Unisa Counselling & Career Development http://bit.ly/2fE0Xd0	This website provides more information about opportunities related to qualifications at Unisa.
Kheta (from SAQA) http://ncap.careerhelp.org.za/occupations	Search for information about specific job titles.
Career Planet http://www.careerplanet.co.za/	Learn more about career areas such as IT, tourism, engineering and more. The website also contains information about learnerships and student finance
O*Net http://www.onetonline.org/	Explore job titles related to different categories such as your interests, skills, values, typical work activities, and more. You could also browse through groups of occupations related to specific industries or economic sectors.
Prospects http://www.prospects.ac.uk/	Explore different job titles related to job sectors, as well as what you could do with your major subject.

Activity

Go to any of the above occupational information websites and search for the job titles you identified during the Google search activity.

Use the tables below to explore your top three occupational interests.

Example table:

Job title	Website	Related job titles?	Pros	Cons
Public manager	NCAP	Administrative manager	The tasks for this person seem related to my interests and values	Seems to be a lot of paper work involved (writing reports; answering e-mails, etc.)

Job title #1	Website	Related job titles?	Pros	Cons

Job title #2	Website	Related job titles?	Pros	Cons

Job title #3	Website	Related job titles?	Pros	Cons

3 Job-search portals

Job search portals are useful in terms of researching specific job titles linked to different career fields and industries. Finding jobs advertisements that interest you is a worthwhile activity, even if you are not currently applying for jobs. You may not yet be eligible to apply for your dream job, but you can still gain a lot of information that can be applied to your career planning. For example, you are interested in public administration and management, but you are not sure which specific job titles are linked to this field; or you want to know what kind of qualifications and skills are needed to be a public manager in a local government context.

You can use this information to make career goals, and think strategically about how you can develop experiences that will help you meet more of the selection criteria in the future.

Job search sites include

- PNet (<http://www.pnet.co.za>)
- Careerjunction (<http://www.careerjunction.co.za>)
- Careers24 (<http://www.careers24.com/>)
- Indeed (<http://www.indeed.co.za>)
- Government positions (<http://www.gov.za/aboutgovt/vacancies.htm>)

Activity

Use one of the websites above to search for “public manager”. Read at least three advertisements and note the information in the tables below.

Job title #1	
Salary	
Organisation	
Responsibilities/ duties/ tasks	
Requirements (qualifications)	
Requirements (experience)	
Requirements (skills)	

Job title #2	
Salary	
Organisation	
Responsibilities/ duties/ tasks	
Requirements (qualifications)	

Job title #2

Requirements (experience)	
Requirements (skills)	

Job title #3

Salary	
Organisation	
Responsibilities/ duties/ tasks	
Requirements (qualifications)	
Requirements (experience)	
Requirements (skills)	

4 LinkedIn

If you have not done so already, start building your network on LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com>) today!

Register for a free account and start connecting with your network online. Join groups relevant to your career field so that you could participate in discussions, ask questions and provide answers about specific topics and search for people, organisations and jobs in your field of interest. Do research about companies and

employees to help you identify opportunities. To learn more about using LinkedIn effectively, go to <http://bit.ly/2gyOAzS>.

Activity

1. Go to www.linkedin.com and sign in to your LinkedIn account. If you do not have an account yet, then create one.
2. Make sure that you have captured your current or previous studies at Unisa on your LinkedIn profile.
3. Once you are signed in, hover over “My network” and then click on “Find alumni”.
4. You will now be presented with a page with Headings and graphs beneath the headings (e.g., Where they live, Where they work, What they do). Click on the arrow to the right and then on the search icon next to the What they studied heading.
5. Type in “public administration” or “public management”.
6. You will notice that the graphs adjust. You have now filtered the information to contain information about Unisa graduates who work in the field you searched for.
7. You can now see how many graduates in these fields are on LinkedIn, where they work, what they’re skilled at, etc.
8. Make some notes about the interesting things you find below.

Your notes about what you find on LinkedIn

5 Talk to others (informational interviewing)

Once you have done some research about specific options, your next step is to talk to individuals in the type of job/ industry that you are interested in. The goal of these conversations is to explore your career options, to expand your network, to build confidence, to access information and to identify your own strengths and areas of development. For example, you read an article about *Nature and Scope Public Administration* and you feel curious about how the authors explored this topic. You could contact one of the authors of the article to ask if they would be willing to share how they went about gaining access to the information they needed.

Before you interview someone, do research about what you would want to discuss with them – you could ask this person to “fill in the gaps” for you. Start with people you already know: friends, family, neighbours, colleagues, lecturers, tutors and fellow students. Use online social networks such as LinkedIn to further identify potential people.

For more information on how to go about this and suggestions for questions that you might want to ask, go to <http://bit.ly/2riGpQg>. Also, watch this video to learn more: The Dos and Don'ts of Informational Interviews: <http://youtu.be/ixbhtm8l0sl>.

Remember to keep track of the information you have gathered and how you make sense of this. Also, track the questions you still have and how you think you would be able to get answers to these questions.

Activity

Note the names of people you know who may work in the fields you are interested in. For instance, do any of your parents' friends work in any of the fields you are considering? In addition, write down the names of other people who you think could give you information about any careers you are considering.

People who work in my preferred career	People who can give me information about potential career choices
Brother's friend	University tutor

You may have identified a lot more people than you thought! Imagine how much information you can gather about the career you are interested in just by talking to these people. Each person will give you fresh insights opinions and valuable information about the careers you are considering, whether they are currently working in that field or are only remotely related to or associated with it.

6 Attend a careers fair event

Attending a careers fair event gives you the opportunity to speak to people from different industries. You may be studying a qualification that does not seem to have a direct link to the exhibitors or the presenters, but they have one thing in common: they employ people, who work in organisations, who do business with all kinds of suppliers and services. Somewhere in this value chain, your qualification will find a place to fit – either as a customer or as an employer or employee.

The annual Unisa Careers Fair usually takes place in July and August at various venues. Go to <http://www.unisa.ac.za/counselling> for more information.

7 Experience studying topics related to your field of interest

Explore what public administration and management is by watching and listening to on-line lectures and reading free open textbooks. These resources will enhance your understanding of public administration and management and the various opportunities related to this field.

Search for public administration and management related courses and open textbooks on these sites:

- Coursera.org (<http://www.coursera.org/>)
- Udemy (<http://www.udemy.com/>)
- Saylor Academy (<http://www.saylor.org/books/>)
- Open Textbook Library (<http://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/>)
- College Open Textbooks (<http://www.collegeopentextbooks.org/textbook-listings/textbooks-by-subject/>)
- Open University (<http://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses>)
- MITOpenCourseware (<http://ocw.mit.edu/index.htm>)
- Open Culture (<http://www.openculture.com/freeonlinecourses>)
- iTunes university (<http://www.apple.com/education/itunes-u/>)
- YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com>)
- FreeVideoLectures (<http://freevidelectures.com/>)

8 Volunteer

As a volunteer, your studies in public administration and management will come alive and you will be enriched and in a position to build up an important network of people who could comment on your professional abilities. You may be wondering how volunteering is related to your studies and your career. We would encourage responsible volunteering where the organisation and community that you are

supporting benefit. You also have the opportunity to apply and further develop your skills and knowledge as a student to support the community. Your volunteer work links to your career vision and planning: before you volunteer, think about where you would want to invest your effort.

Volunteering will help you to:

- figure out whether a specific field of work is for you or not;
- find out information about a specific field;
- connect with others and maintaining relationships;
- network with others in your field of interest.

Some questions to think about:

- Which organisations or community would benefit from my skills and knowledge?
- How would this organisation or community contribute to my career vision?
- What conduct is expected of a professional in this organisation and in my future career?
- What are you hoping to gain from your volunteer activities?

Your volunteer work could lead to other opportunities, so it is important to treat it professionally: keep to your commitment, communicate when you cannot volunteer and update your portfolio with examples of what you have learnt and achieved. As a volunteer, you are already working as a professional – you need to conduct yourself as you would conduct yourself in a work environment. As you are volunteering, you are building your reputation (your “brand”): you would not want to build a reputation as an exploiter or as an unreliable worker.

Your volunteer environment will help you to develop what is valued in professional environments. This includes punctuality, problem-solving and effective communication. In this sense, volunteering contributes to your development as a unique graduate: one who has subject-specific knowledge and an understanding of professional workplace behaviour. The one thing to remember about volunteering is

that your conduct needs to be accountable and ethical. Consider that you are contributing to the community and at the same time you are building your skill sets for the workplace – you need to balance self-interest with that which may benefit others. It is important that your work within the community be done with the utmost respect.

Check which volunteer organisations are active in the area where you live. The Department of Social Development has a complete list of non-profit organisations in each province available on their website at <http://www.dsd.gov.za/npo>. Investigate volunteer opportunities in your area and field of interest on the GreaterGoodSA website at <http://www.myggsa.co.za/>.

Activity

Make a list of the organisations that you would want to contact about exploring volunteer opportunities.

--

What are you hoping to gain from your volunteer experience?

--

What can you contribute to an organisation?

--

9 Join a professional organisation

Depending on your qualification, you may wish to register with a professional body. Students studying in the field of public administration whether part-time or full-time can register with the South African Association of Public Administration and Management. Read more about the organisation and how to join on their website at <http://saapam.co.za/>.

The mission of this organisation is *to encourage and promote good governance and effective services delivery through the advancement of professionalism, scholarship and practice in public administration and management* (<http://saapam.co.za/>).

Qualifications offered by Unisa

Visit the Unisa website at <http://www.unisa.ac.za/qualifications> for more information about these qualifications.c

Undergraduate

College of Economic and Management Sciences

- Diploma in Public Administration and Management (98203)
- Bachelor of Administration Administration (98315 - BAD)
- Bachelor of Administration in Human Settlements Management Human Settlements Management (90016 - HSM)
- Bachelor of Business Administration Business Administration (98316 - BBA)
- Bachelor of Commerce (Generic) (Generic) (98314 - GEN)

College of Human Sciences

- Bachelor of Arts (99311)

- Bachelor of Arts (Human and Social Studies) Public Administration and Communication Facilitation (02291 - PAF)
- Bachelor of Arts in Government, Administration and Development (99301)

Postgraduate Diploma

- Postgraduate Diploma in Public Administration (98208)

Honours

- Bachelor of Administration Honours in Public Administration (98449)

Master's degrees

- Master of Administration in Public Administration (98581)
- Master of Business Administration (90070)
- Master of Business Leadership (90086)
- Master of Public Administration (coursework) (98651)

Doctoral degrees

- Doctor of Philosophy in Public Administration (90024)

The research focus areas for the Master's and Doctoral degrees can be found here:

https://www.unisa.ac.za/static/corporate_web/Content/Apply%20for%20admission/M/D/Documents/CEMS-research-focus-areas-2019.docx.

Short Learning Programmes (SLPs)

Unisa offers a number of SLPs that offer people a way to meet a specific learning need. It is important to remember that an SLP is not a formal qualification and will not allow you to qualify for a formal qualification.

The Unisa Centre for Public Administration and Management offers a wide range of SLPs related to disaster management, local government management, and public administration and management. Read more about their offerings on the following webpage: <https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Colleges/Economic-and-Management-Sciences/Schools,-departments,-bureau,-centres-&->

Frequently-asked questions

I did not complete mathematics at matric level – can I study a qualification that requires mathematics at grade 12 level at Unisa?

If you are concerned about being admitted to a degree in the College of Economic and Management Sciences, you are encouraged to apply for a lower level qualification (e.g. Higher Certificate) offered in the College of Economic and Management Sciences in addition to the qualification you wish to do. If you are admitted to the Higher Certificate and you complete it, it will enable you to meet the requirements for a degree. You need to apply for admission to the degree during your last semester of study for the Higher Certificate.

The list of Higher Certificates offered in the College of Economic and Management Sciences is available here: https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Undergraduate-qualifications/Qualifications/All-qualifications?cw_college=ECONOMIC%20AND%20MANAGEMENT%20SCIENCE S.

The next step is then to apply for admission. Information about applying is available on the Unisa website at <http://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Undergraduate-qualifications>. Before you apply, take some time to read through the information about studying through open distance learning, making an effective career choice, the requirements for your qualification(s) and the application process.

Once you have applied, your application will be processed and you will receive feedback as to the outcome of your application. Based on the new selection process, you will not be automatically accepted to study through Unisa, even if you meet the general academic admission requirements for a qualification. Unisa will assess your application using a points score system. You may then be offered a place based on your points score and the number of places available for the qualification(s) you have chosen. You are welcome to let us know should you need to have a further discussion about your career and study planning before you apply.

For the College of Human Sciences, there is no mathematics requirement. You can apply directly for the degree provided you meet all other admission requirements (i.e. the academic points score and statutory requirement). If there is any doubt about whether you meet the admission requirement, apply for the degree as well as a higher certificate for which you meet admission requirements. A list of available higher certificates is available here:

[https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Undergraduate-qualifications/Qualifications/All-](https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Undergraduate-qualifications/Qualifications/All-qualifications?cw_category=HIGHER%20CERTIFICATES)

[qualifications?cw_category=HIGHER%20CERTIFICATES](https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Undergraduate-qualifications/Qualifications/All-qualifications?cw_category=HIGHER%20CERTIFICATES). Completing the Higher Certificate will enable you to meet the requirements for a Bachelor's degree. You need to apply for admission to the degree during your last semester of study for the Higher Certificate.

What if I start with one qualification and wish to change to a different qualification that includes public administration as a major subject?

It is possible to change from one formal qualification to another provided that you meet the admission requirements for the qualification you want to register for and if you apply to change the qualification during the relevant application period before registration. Before you decide to change, it might be helpful for you to think about how this change will affect your career plans and how this is related to your longer-term career vision. Visit the Counselling and Career Development website at <http://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/About/Service->

[departments/Counselling-and-Career-Development/Plan-your-studies/Change-a-qualification](#) to help you with this process.

Once you have identified the new qualification you wish to change to, you will need to apply during the next application period to do so. For more information visit the Unisa website at <http://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission>. Before you apply, take some time to read through the information about studying through open distance learning, making an effective career choice, the requirements for your qualification(s) and the application process.

If you are admitted and you register for the new qualification, relevant modules that you have passed will be transferred to the new qualification. You can compare the curricula for the two qualifications by using the information on the registration website at <http://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Register-to-study-through-Unisa/Undergraduate-&-honours-qualifications/Find-your-qualification-&-choose-your-modules>.

Should I complete a public administration degree offered in the College of Economic and Management Sciences or in the College of Human Sciences?

Your qualification choice would depend on the career opportunities you are hoping to prepare for. For example, if you wish to prepare for finance-related opportunities in the public sector, then a degree offered in the College of Economic and Management Sciences (e.g. BAdmin or BCom) will help you to prepare for these opportunities more effectively. See the [Career opportunities](#) section of this document for more information.

Counselling and career development services at Unisa

The Unisa Directorate for Counselling and Career Development offers career-, academic- and personal counselling services to Unisa students and the broader community. You can talk to a counsellor about:

- **Career decisions.** I am not sure which career path to follow; I don't know which qualification would be best; I want to change my career direction...
- **Career information.** How can I find out more about a career in ...
- **Employability.** How do I market myself to employers? How can I look for work? How can I compile an effective CV? How do I go about networking with others? How do I put together my career portfolio? How can I meet potential employers? How can I improve my interview skills?)
- **My studies at Unisa.** How can I get started with my studies? How do I plan my studies? How can I study more effectively? I don't feel motivated to continue with my studies... I feel worried about preparing for/ writing the exams. I failed my exams – what now? I need to improve my reading/ writing/ numeracy skills
- **Personal issues.** How can I have better relationships with others? How can I cope more effectively with issues that impact on my studies?

Visit our website at <http://www.unisa.ac.za/counselling> to access many self-help resources, or talk to a counsellor by e-mail to counselling@unisa.ac.za.