

PREPARE for opportunities



Define tomorrow.

UNISA



university
of south africa



PREPARE FOR OPPORTUNITIES

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01

graduateness

Are you prepared?

Unisa Counselling and Career Development encourages you to plan and enact your future today by thinking differently about how you will overcome challenges and find, create or use resources to create your own community of practice in order to think and act like the professional you want to be.

The Institute for the Future has identified a number of disruptors (drivers for change) that affect our work, such as needing to work past 65 to ensure resources; the rise of smart technology; the internet; and organisations functioning outside traditional organisational boundaries, enabled by social technologies.

As you are preparing yourself for opportunities, you need to keep in mind uncertainty is everywhere and changes do and will happen. You will be presented with opportunities as well as challenges.

Are you ready to:

- find and maintain employment continuously?
- learn a broad range of skills?
- believe in yourself and what you can contribute?
- reflect on what you are doing, as well as how you are doing it?

Graduateness

The University of South Africa (Unisa) defines graduateness as the following:

Unisa graduates have, as a result of their successful completion of their studies in an ODL context, unique qualities.

Unisa graduates

- (i) are independent, resilient, responsible and caring citizens who are able to fulfil and serve in multiple roles in their immediate and future local, national and global communities
- (ii) have a critical understanding of their location on the African continent with its histories, challenges and potential in relation to globally diverse contexts
- (iii) are able to critically analyse and evaluate the credibility and usefulness of information and data from multiple sources in a globalised world with its ever increasing information and data flows and competing worldviews
- (iv) know how to apply their discipline-specific knowledges competently, ethically and creatively to solve real-life problems and
- (v) are critically aware of their own learning and developmental needs and future potential.

To what extent do you identify with these graduate qualities? What do you still need to pay attention to?

3 secrets of highly successful graduates

Reid Hoffman is an entrepreneur and co-founder of LinkedIn. His book, The Startup of You, that he wrote with Ben Casnocha, contains views on how one could approach career choices in a fast-changing environment. He also published a presentation, 3 secrets of highly successful graduates where he summarises what sets successful graduates apart from their peers:

Competition: you set yourself apart through your aspirations (where you want to be in future), your assets (what you have now in terms of skills and resources) and market realities (what people will pay you for).

Networks: understand that people control resources, assets and opportunities. Think about how you could meet more people through the people you already know and hang out with people who you want to be (on- and offline).

Risk: making mistakes is part of learning. Actions (intelligent risks) help you to think about where you want to go and how to get there.

Understanding the needs of others: Ask others “How can I help” to identify needs of others.



How can you prepare yourself?

We see graduateness as starting with self-awareness as this plays a vital role in the success of a person: self-awareness builds self-confidence.

We want you to make career decisions that contribute to your graduateness, and to this end we have developed a number of activities that you could implement as you are studying to support you in terms of preparing yourself for opportunities. Your enthusiasm for yourself and your career will determine how much you do.

As a student, you will think about and reflect on your career and how you link your qualification with your career - what kind of opportunities you hope your qualification is preparing you for.

First year of study

EXPLORE

My vision
Identify opportunities
Plan for opportunities
Self-confidence

Each year of study from
second year onwards

CONNECT

Revisit my vision
Plan for opportunities
Reflect on my studies
Identify opportunities

Final year of study

FOCUS

Reconnect with my vision
Reflect on my development
Plan for opportunities

02

your vision

Are you prepared?

Your first step to gradueness starts with a career vision that is displayed in a practical and tangible manner.

Creating your career vision is a continuous process – it changes as you have experiences that shape your interests, skills and values. It is important that your career vision has personal meaning to you since your vision will motivate you to take action in a direction that makes sense in terms of who you are and how you do things.

Example

Emmanuel is a first year BCom Logistics student who loves running and enters the Two Oceans marathon every year. As he runs with a club he has the opportunity to brainstorm ideas with others. He asked the club whether their training could be combined with delivering basics to

home-bound pensioners. With the help of Emmanuel, the runners combine their knowledge of the needs of pensioners with their fitness schedule in order to set up new distributions points in their community. As a result of his involvement with this project, Emmanuel realises that his original vision of working in the logistics field is still valid. However, he now sees himself applying his logistics knowledge within the non-profit sector where he could assist organisations to get aid to those in need.

Your vision

Right now your career vision could range from very clear to not clear at all. You can start thinking about or refine your vision by completing the My vision activities on the next page.



Your vision

Your vision will consist of statements about who you are and what you stand for, as well as what you imagine for yourself in the future (Where are you? Who is with you? What are you doing?).

Two ways to think about your vision are:

- 1) Reflecting on your experiences and
- 2) Reflecting on where you see yourself in the future

Reflecting on your experiences (work, studies, volunteer work, community and church activities and other extracurricular activities) will help you understand your interests, values and skills and how these relate to your career.

Questions to help you reflect on your experiences

- What happened? (make brief notes of what happened; what did you do?)
- Why? Why did I do specific things?
- How do you feel about what

happened? (What was your emotional response to what happened?)

- What did you learn from this? (Make notes about what you learned from these activities)
- Goal setting: Make notes about what you will do next - what are the things you wish to change and how will you do so?

Once you have a number of reflections about your experiences, you need to read through these reflections and identify aspects that stand out for you. What experiences are important to me and help me to grow? What are the things I am most interested in? What kind of people do I most like interacting with?

Your career vision is important since it acts as your guide in terms of making decisions about your career. Your career vision will help you to select study-, volunteer- and work experiences to prepare you for a broad range of opportunities related to what you want.

03

your planning

Planning for opportunities (living your career vision)

How are you making your career vision a reality? What are the small, practical steps you are taking to move closer to your vision? You are preparing yourself for opportunities that you do not yet know about. You need to be curious about your environment in order to identify opportunities and to be aware of what is out there and how you could participate.

Curiosity helps you to recognise and activate your external and internal resources (for example, asking others for help; finances; your belief in yourself) and builds a tolerance for failure since you are aware of other opportunities to pursue.

In addition to curiosity, you also need to prepare yourself for the unknown.

If you are thinking about preparing yourself for opportunities, you will:

- be pro-active in developing opportunities;
- do reality checks to manage disappointments more effectively; and
- take control of how you respond to things - how to land on your feet.

Prepare for the unknown

Take small steps to develop and build confidence: small steps help you to develop mastery in order to distinguish yourself from other graduates and to be confident that you can deal with the unknown.



Planning for opportunities

Answer the following questions:

What do I want?

Who am I selling my product (me) to?

How do I want to help others?

What do I need to do to get what I want?

How will I see that I am ready for opportunities?

What must I do to prepare myself for a broad range of opportunities?

How much risk am I willing to take to get to where I want to be?

How should I present myself to others?

How do I recognise and appreciate the value of opportunities presented to me?

04

identify opportunities

How do you identify opportunities?

Making effective career decisions includes having enough relevant and reliable information available, combined with your ability to integrate the information with what you know about yourself, your career vision and goals. Your career research will connect you to others who will help you to:

- answer questions you have regarding your career planning;
- 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.

Preparation

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...”, “How much do accountants earn?” or “What must I study to be ..?”

Keep track of information

Keep track of your research by making notes about what you learn and what you still need to find out.

Evaluation

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? 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?

1 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 IT. You could start with using keywords such as “careers in IT”, and then to further contextualise your findings, you could search keywords such as “careers in IT Africa” and “careers in IT 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. Remember to bookmark pages that you would want to return to and make notes about what you find and what you would still like to find out about.



Use Google to find specific job titles related to your field of study. The following are some search terms you could consider: “job titles (insert your field of study) graduates”; or “job titles (insert your field of study) graduates south africa”. Note the job titles below.

2 Career information websites

Once you have a list of opportunities and job titles related to your career vision, you could use specific websites to focus on reading more about what people in these fields do, the requirements (academic, personal and professional, further training), possible employers and related job titles and career fields.

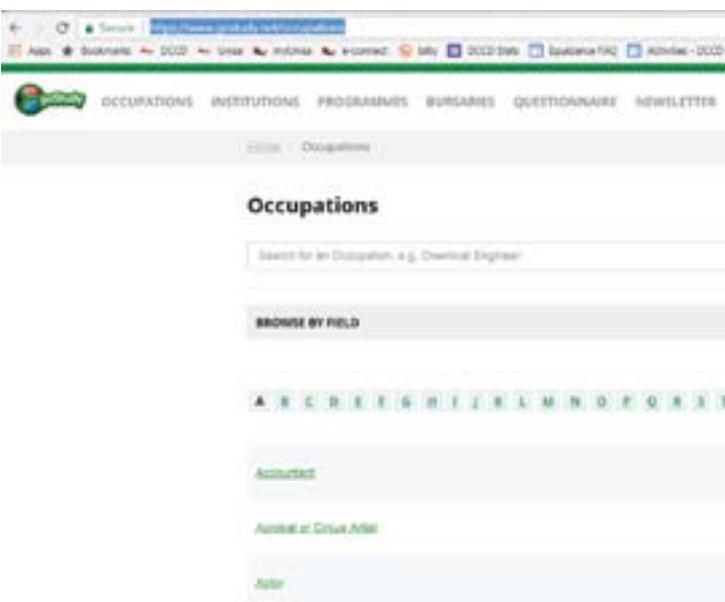
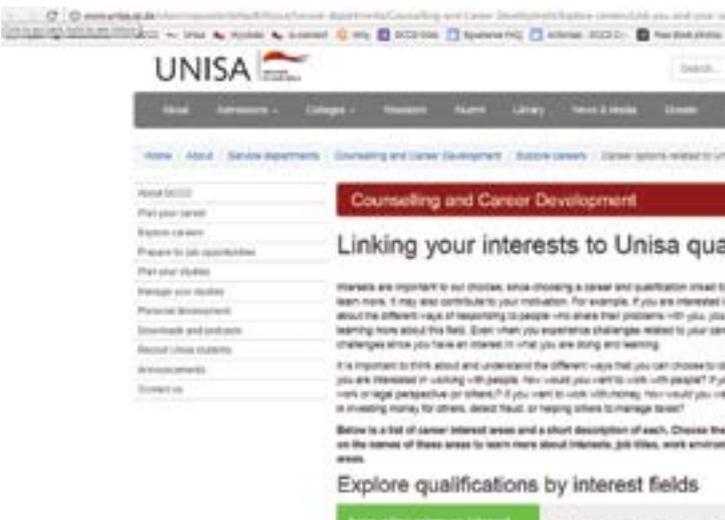
Unisa DCCD website

The Counselling and Career Development website (<http://bit.ly/2gGjtWn>) contains a number of career resources for specific fields of study, for example Environmental Careers, Information Technology, Communication Sciences and Psychology.

For example, you are studying a degree in environmental management and you are curious to find out more about careers in this field. Since this field is under the College of Agriculture and Environmental Science, you will explore the various career fields listed and then click on Environmental Management to access more information about this field. On this page, you will notice possible job titles, a career information book you could download and how to do further research. If you download the book, you will be able to read more about careers in environmental management.

GoStudy

(<https://www.gostudy.net/occupations>) enables you to explore descriptions for a number of job titles. You have the option to search for a career, or careers by alphabetical index. Each of the pages for the different job titles also indicates some satisfying aspects of the career, demanding aspects of the career, requirements, related school subjects and trainer needed. There are also further contact or research links provided for each job title to do further research.



Kheta

On the Kheta website (<http://ncap.careerhelp.org.za/>), you could search for occupations, or browse occupations. Each of the pages for these job titles will list the descriptions and tasks for the website, occupational regulations, learning pathway descriptions and alternate occupation names.



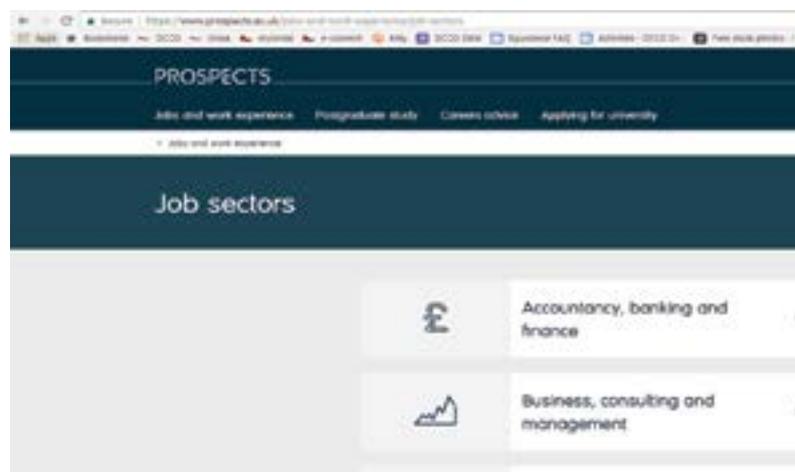
O*Net

The O*Net website (<http://www.onetonline.org/>) allows you to search for occupations based on keywords or to browse for specific job titles. The pages for each job title provide you with information about the tasks for this job, tools and technology used, education needed, work values, wages and employment, job openings and additional information. The search function on this website also allows you to explore job titles related to specific skills and values.



Prospects

The "Sectors" section on the Prospects website (<http://prospects.ac.uk/sectors.htm>) provides you with more information about opportunities in specific job sectors. The information you will find may be US or UK based, but you could then do further research about the South African equivalents. For example, which organisations (private and government) operate in South Africa.

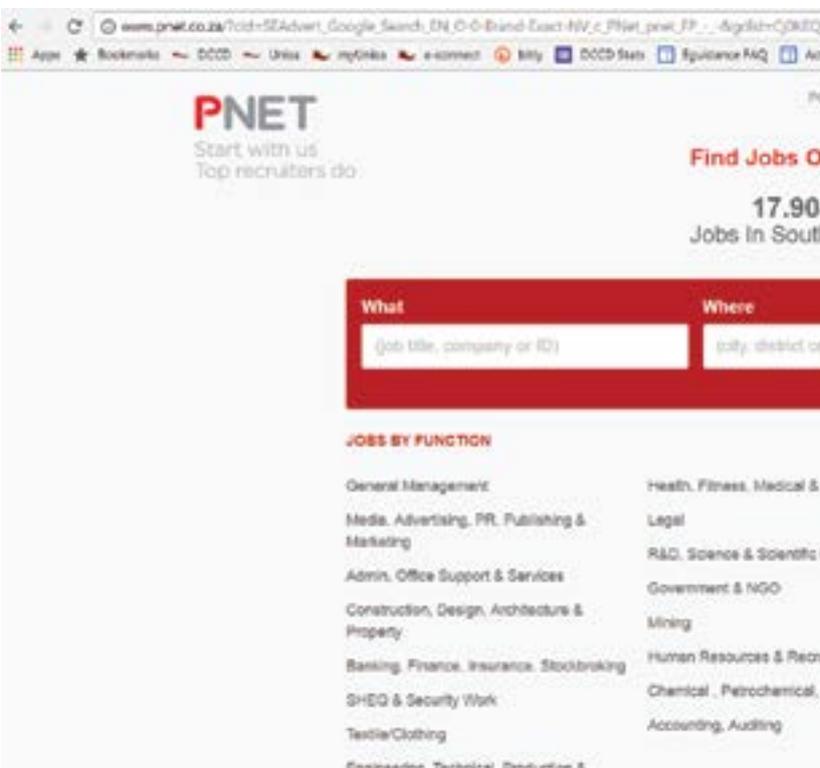


3 Job search portals

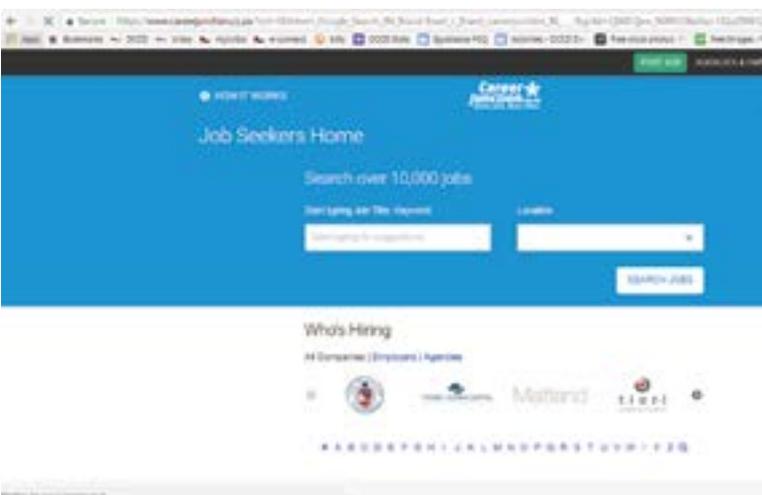
Job search portals may be used to research specific job titles linked to different industries.

For example, you are interested in finance, but you are not sure which specific job titles are linked to this field; or you want to know what kind of qualifications are needed to be a business analyst. One way to do research about this is to search on a job portal for jobs related to this field and then note the different job titles mentioned. Other information that you would also be able to find include salary information, which organisations/ recruiting agencies recruit in this field, what kind of qualifications and/or experience are needed and typical tasks related to a specific job.

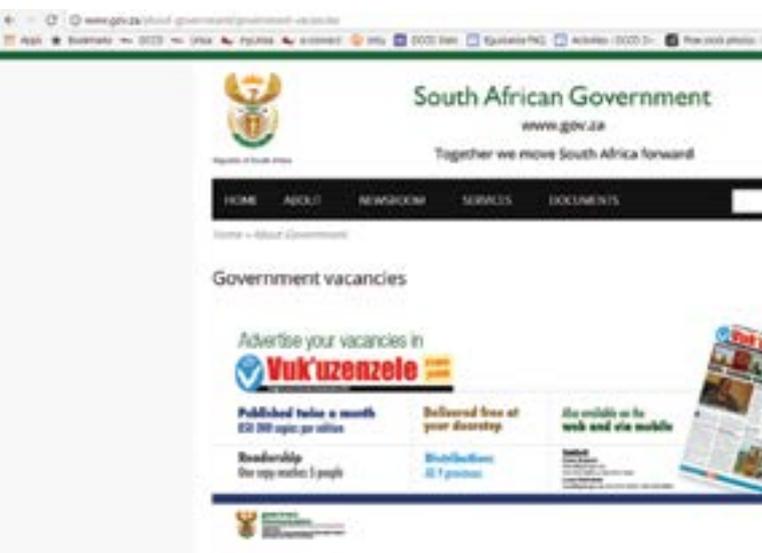
The following are examples of how different job search portals may be used to find information:



PNet. Go to <http://www.pnet.co.za/> and type in your keywords (for example, “environmental”) in the search box. You will now be presented with a number of vacancies that are linked to the keyword. You could use this list to identify the job titles. You could now click on one of the job advertisements to read more about the requirements and job specifications. You could use the recruiter links to identify other positions advertised by that specific organisation or recruiter. As you are looking at the advert, you could also identify related positions to your field and different positions one could occupy related to your field of study.



Careerjunction. Go to <http://www.careerjunction.co.za/> and search for your keyword (for example, “environmental”) in the search box to get a list of advertisements for this field. If you get no results, think about adapting your keyword to be broader and check your keywords for spelling. When you have the results page of your search, you could use the filters on the right-hand side of the screen to see when the jobs were posted, the location, industry, job level and job type - you could use these links to identify specific jobs related to your interests. Clicking on a particular advert, you could view information about the company or organisation advertising the position, requirements and how to apply. Some positions would list the salary scale, while others would indicate “market related”. You could use the “results for similar jobs” section to identify other positions being advertised related to the field.



Government job advertisements. Vacancies in government departments can be accessed here: <http://www.gov.za/aboutgovt/vacancies.htm>. When you open the page, you get a list of departments that are advertising. Screen the list to check for departments related to your field. For example, if you want to check the opportunities related to working for the environment, you can click on the environmental affairs link to access that department’s website. Check on the page what links are available and then click on “Careers” to open information about jobs at Environmental Affairs. Carefully check the procedures to ensure that you follow all the procedures when applying since failure to comply with these procedures will lead to your application not being considered. Click on an advert to get information about the salary, where the position will be, requirements, duties, who to contact for enquiries and the closing date.

Linked



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>.



Follow the steps below to use LinkedIn to search for information about your field of study and related jobs

- Go to <https://www.linkedin.com/edu/alumni> and sign in to your LinkedIn account. If you do not have an account yet, then create one. Make sure that you have captured your current or previous studies at Unisa on your LinkedIn profile.
- 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).
- Type in “computer science” or “information systems” or “IT” in the Search box.
- You will notice that the graphs adjust. You have now filtered the information to contain information about Unisa graduates.
- You can now see how many graduates are on LinkedIn, where they work, what they’re skilled at, etc.
- Make some notes about the interesting things you find.



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 a new programme for addiction treatment and you feel curious about how the researchers went about evaluating the programme. 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 for their evaluation. 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, visit <http://bit.ly/2riGpOq>.

Also, watch this video to learn more: The Dos and Don'ts of Informational Interviews: <http://youtu.be/ixbhtm8i0sl>.

Keep track of:

- information you have gathered,
- how you make sense of the information,
- questions you still have, and
- ways you think you will be able to get answers to these questions.



6 Attend a Careers Fair

Attending a careers fair 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.

Preparation

- Think about what you will wear.
- Practice your handshake and introduction - how will you introduce yourself to recruiters?
- Update your CV and prepare to answer questions about yourself, your career and your studies.
- Do research about the participating organisations (start with the organisation's website).

- Prepare questions that you would want to ask recruiters - use your research about an organisation to inform your questions (for example, what kind of person are you seeking for the(se) position(s)?; What particular skills do you value most?).

During

- Make an effort to speak to all the exhibitors and presenters and keep a note of who they are and what their companies do - remember to introduce yourself. Speak clearly and confidently – it may be noisy, so remember to speak up if necessary.
- Be ready to take notes: Carry a notebook and pen with you, or do it on your cellphone/ tablet.
- Network with other students at the Careers Fair (but not at the expense of talking to employers!)
- Don't ask about: Information you could have easily learned on the employer's website or salary and benefits.

After

- Make notes about the various people you spoke to and the information you would want to follow up.
- Connect with company representatives that you met on-line (for example, through LinkedIn)
- Reflect on your experience: How did you use this opportunity? Could you link your skills and qualification to what was offered at the Fair?
- Update your career portfolio with what you learnt at the Careers Fair.

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

How would you prepare for a careers fair?

Note questions that you would want to ask recruiters at a careers fair



7 Volunteer

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 is done with the utmost respect.

Identify volunteer opportunities in your area through conversations with members of your community. The GreaterGoodSA website at <http://www.mygggsa.co.za/> will further help you to identify volunteer opportunities in your community that are related to your interests.

Make a list of the organisations that you would want to contact with regards to exploring volunteer opportunities:

What are you hoping to gain from your volunteer experience?



8 Join a professional organisation

Many professional bodies offer student registration categories to enable those who are still studying towards a qualification in the field, to join and receive specific benefits such as training, development and networking opportunities. The professional bodies websites are also valuable sources of information should you wish to do research related to specific occupations. Many professional websites also list practitioners or organisations in the field and allows you to identify individuals who you could contact for further conversations about your career. Search for recognised Professional Bodies and Professional Designations here: <http://pbdesig.saqa.org.za/>.

05

self-confidence

Do you believe that you can do this?

Your self-confidence is mostly shaped by your personal experiences (for example, your relationships with your parents and siblings; how you related to peers and how you compare yourself to others). Low self-confidence as a result of challenges in this area impact on other areas in your life, mainly your career and your studies.

How much you believe or do not believe in yourself impacts on your career and

study success.

Low self-confidence impacts on your career and your studies in several ways:

- Your confidence determines the effort and determination towards your studies and your career. For example, if you don't believe that you can pass a particular module, you also do not spend time studying, since when you start studying you feel like "what is the use – I will fail in any case".
- If you keep on telling yourself that you are not capable of completing your qualification because you have low self-confidence, challenges in your studies act as confirmation that you are a failure.





Your self-confidence

- Even when you experience challenges that are normal for all students to experience, you tell yourself it's a confirmation that you cannot make it.
- You spend disproportional amounts of time and energy gathering evidence or reinforcing your belief that you cannot make it so that it becomes a reality.
- When you do things well or when you get positive results you deny them. You find it hard to accept that positive things can happen in your life and you find external factors that have contributed to the results or success. You will make statements such as "Maybe I was just lucky this time – the other candidates did not accept the offer due to a low salary offer."
- When you are presented with an opportunity, you will not make use of it since you are concerned about failing.
- You project a negative attitude towards yourself and others. You find it hard to appreciate the strengths of others and you are critical about others.
- You will not take risk to advance in

your career because you think you will not make it. For example, you will not apply for an internship because you decide that you will not be selected even though you meet all the requirements.

- You are always concerned about how other people think about you in a negative way- you will not go and talk to the lecturer or ask other people because you think they will think you are stupid.

On the other hand when you have a healthy self-image:

- you accept yourself for who you are and you acknowledge that there are things you do well and things you do not do well.
- you use your strengths in one area to build your self-confidence in other areas.
- you acknowledge things people appreciate about you since you use these as a re-affirmation to develop areas where

- you feel you have room for growth.
- you believe you can achieve your desired career goals and you put your energy and resources towards your vision. This impacts on your studies in that you can talk to others about your study-related challenges and you are pro-active in terms of managing your studies since you know why you are studying.
- you are able to recognise and make use of presenting opportunities since you believe that you can make a contribution. You are able to help others understand your potential and you appreciate how others could contribute to your development.

How do I build a healthy self-confidence?

- Building self-confidence is a process – it is like building a house: Building your confidence starts with small, practical actions. As you get feedback about your actions, you take some positive things out of it about yourself and appreciate the things you can do well and those you have to develop. Spend some time each day writing down things you did yesterday that you can be proud of and also things you would want to do differently.
- Most importantly, it must not be about thinking about things, but about doing things. This will not always be easy, but you need to take risk and test what you can do and also to see the results of your actions. For example, if you really want information about your career, take risk and send an e-mail to your lecturer with questions and see what the response is.
- As you take risk, you will notice a

change in your attitude about how you view challenges and yourself. You will start thinking differently about challenges: that they are not meant to prove you as a failure, but rather to learn and discover new things about yourself.

- You need to be able to embrace failure as part of the process in order to succeed. Your failures do not define you as a person: Even when you fail, you do not internalise the experience that you are a failure. You learn from the experience and you try again.

We want you to keep in mind your three circles (career, studies and personal life) and make sure that you use one of the circles where you have more positive experiences to influence the others.

For example, in your studies you are getting good results and you are capable. However, you feel demotivated every time you think about your family situation. Think about how the fact that you are succeeding with your studies could impact on your career – could it make you hopeful that you will be able to find a good job and could then change your family's situation in the future?

Thinking more about the things you can control (for example, your studies and how this will impact positively on your career), enables you to minimise the sense of helplessness in terms of your family situation. When you focus on the things you can control, you create a positive outlook about yourself, your life and others.

06

what next?

Have you identified what else you need?

Make notes of the aspects that you still need to pay attention to develop yourself as a unique graduate:

The Counselling and Career Development website (<http://www.unisa.ac.za/counselling>) contains a number of further resources related to developing yourself as a unique graduate.

For e-mail discussions with a counsellor, send an e-mail to counselling@unisa.ac.za. Contact the Unisa centre closest to you for information about counselling services available at the centre.

We appreciate your feedback about this brochure to help us make changes that will benefit all students.

Send your feedback to deyzel@unisa.ac.za.