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| **Department** | | Business Management | |
| **Discipline** | | Strategic Management | |
| **Research Focus Area** | | **Strategy-as-Practice** | |
| **Total capacity for 2025** | | **9 (8 Masters and 1 PhD)** | |
|  | | | |
| **Supervision Team details:** | **Academic Profile** | | **Capacity** |
| **Prof Annemarie Davis**  **[[1]](#footnote-1)(Contact person for this focus area)**  012 429 8357  Email: [Davisa@unisa.ac.za](mailto:Davisa@unisa.ac.za)  ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2137-2597> | Annemarie Davis is an Associate Professor in Strategic Management and conducted her doctoral research within the strategy-as-practice perspective. She has supervised several postgraduate research projects and favours qualitative studies. | | **Capacity**  2 Master’s students |
| **Dr Charmaine Williamson**  ORCID : <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5828-0541> | **Academic Profile**  Dr Charmaine Williamson is an Alumnus of UNISA, a current supervisor and also academic advisor to universities around Higher Degrees (PhD and M) candidates in the fields of academic argument and writing, theory and qualitative methodologies including facilitating ATLAS.ti support. She is an Academic Associate at UNISA and also works in practitioner fields around research grant funding. She also lectures on International Management and Strategy as an international business school. | | **Capacity**  No new admissions for 2025 |
| **Name:**  **Dr Karen Stander**  012 429 2933  Email: [standk@unisa.ac.za](mailto:standk@unisa.ac.za)  ORCID : <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9247-286X> | **Academic Profile**  Karen Stander is a Senior Lecturer within the Department of Business Management. She obtained her master’s degree with distinction from the University of Pretoria in 2012 and was awarded the Dean List award and full academic honorary colours as a result. She also received the Dr WA de Villiers achievement prize for achievement in International Business in 2011 and obtained a Diploma in Events Management with distinction from The Institute of Commercial Management in London in 2009. Dr Stander has a doctoral degree and her research interests include the practice of strategy in an interconnected world; shared value and competitive advantage. | | **Capacity**  No new admissions for 2025 |
| **Name:**  **Dr Nadine De Metz**  012 429 4935  Email: [dmetzn@unis.ac.za](mailto:dmetzn@unis.ac.za)  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6338-2929> | **Academic Profile**  Nadine is a senior lecturer in department of Business Management at UNISA. She completed her PhD by focusing on organisational legitimacy and identity during a strategic change process. Nadine is particularly interested in understanding people's behaviours and actions, and her research interest lies in focusing on the micro-study of strategising and activities that make up strategy within an institutional context. Nadine has supervised postgraduate research projects and favours qualitative studies. | | **Capacity**  2 Master’s students |
| **Dr Nthabiseng Violet Moraka**  Email: [moraknv@unisa.ac.za](mailto:moraknv@unisa.ac.za)  ORCID : <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1490-089X> | Dr. Moraka, Director of the School of Management Sciences at Unisa’s College of Economic and Management Sciences (CEMS), holds a PhD completed in 2018, focusing on corporate governance and gender issues on management research and leadership. She is a strategy lecturer by training, researcher, and a Master’s and Doctoral students’ supervisor. She was recently appointed to the Board of Directors of Mathare Transformers, a Kenyan non-profit organization. She also contributed to the drafting of Unisa’s 2030 strategic plan.  Dr Moraka has produced a number of research outputs, is a member of the Academy of Management and has research interests on women on boards, corporate governance, turnaround strategies and strategy as practice. | | **Capacity**  1 PhD student (co-supervision)  1 Master’s student |
| **Dr Tapiwa Muzata**  +27 12 429 4296  [tmuzatt@unisa.ac.za](mailto:tmuzatt@unisa.ac.za)  **ORCID:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7341-9927> | Tapiwa Muzata is a PhD holder in Corporate Governance and Finance with substantial experience in postgraduate research supervision and examination in the fields of Business Management (e.g., Strategic Management, Sustainability Disclosures, Corporate Governance, Entrepreneurship Governance and Ecosystems). He favours mixed methods studies. | | **Capacity:**  1 PhD  1 Masters |
| **Dr Iréze van Wyk**  012 429 2085  Email: [vanwyki@unisa.ac.za](mailto:vanwyki@unisa.ac.za)  **ORCID :**  [https://orcid.org/](https://orcid.org/my-orcid?orcid=0000-0002-4237-062X)  [0000-0002-4237-062X](https://orcid.org/my-orcid?orcid=0000-0002-4237-062X) | Iréze van Wyk is a lecturer in department of Business Management at UNISA. She obtained her master’s degree with distinction from UNISA in 2014 and was awarded the college research award in 2015 for obtaining this degree. She completed her doctoral degree in 2022 which focused on effective ethical strategic decision making by focusing on small and medium entities (SMEs) and identified a strategic decision-making process. Dr van Wyk has published a few articles in national peer reviewed journals with colleagues, presented papers at national peer reviewed conferences and contributed to book chapters. She has also supervised postgraduate research projects. Her research interests include strategic decision-making, integration of ethics in strategy and favours SMEs and qualitative research designs. | | **Capacity**  1 Master’s student (co-supervision) |
| **Mr Amkela Ngwenya**  **Office:** 012 429 4195  **E-mail:** [ngwena2@unisa.ac.za](mailto:ngwena2@unisa.ac.za)  **ORCID:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6006-6755> | Amkela Ngwenya holds a Master of Commerce degree (cum laude) from the University of South Africa in which he explored the dynamic and nuanced interplay between strategy theory and strategy practice. Mr Ngwenya is a doctoral candidate at the University of Warwick, UK. As a pragmatist, in his master’s research, Mr. Ngwenya adopted a mixed methods research approach that integrated quantitative and qualitative methods and techniques. That is, he can work with both quant and quall oriented students. He is currently ‘The Management of Organisational Change and Renewal’ lecturer at the Department of Business Management. Mr. Ngwenya is passionate about strategy in its various manifestations, especially open strategy and digital technology use in strategising. | | **Capacity**  1 Master’s student |
| **Ms Lungile Xaba**  E-mail: [xabalm@unisa.ac.za](mailto:xabalm@unisa.ac.za)  ORCID :  [https://orcid.org/**0000-0002-9143-1003**](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9143-1003) | Academic Profile  Lungi is currently a lecturer in the Department of Business Management. She holds a Master of Commerce degree in Business Management from the University of South Africa. In her research, she explored the strategising of middle managers through sensemaking and sensegiving within the employee benefits environment. She is currently a doctoral candidate. Lungi prefers qualitative research within the strategy-as-practice perspective at the micro-level with a focus on the strategising of middle managers. | | **Capacity**  No capacity |
| **Mrs Elsabe Scholtz**  012 429 2695  Email: schole@unisa.ac.za  **ORCID :**  [https://orcid.org/**0000-0001-7849-7967**](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7849-7967) | Elsabe Scholtz holds a Master of Commerce degree from the University of South Africa in which she explored the impact of time management on sectors high in time demand. Mrs Scholtz is a doctoral candidate at the same University. Although more comfortable with quantitative research, she has some experience in qualitative data collection methods. Mrs Scholtz is passionate about all sectors of strategy, but especially how being cognisant of risk and forecasting assists organisations in obtaining organisational resilience and remain successful. | | **Capacity:**  1 Master’s student |
| **Model of supervision** | We are interested in well-articulated expressions that demonstrate a clear research focus, and your insight and interest into the topic. If you get accepted to this focus area, you will be allocated a supervisor or two who will guide you on your topic and assist you to develop it into a research proposal and later, a dissertation. In accordance with the requirements of higher degrees you will be expected to work independently. | | |
| **Selection criteria: Master’s/Doctorate** | In addition to the admission criteria contained in the myChoice brochure, potential students are required to prepare a **5-page** Expression of interest (EOI) essay according to these guidelines:   1. Front Cover (Your name and contact details, your student number and the topic’s title) 2. Topic (½ page) 3. Short literature review (2 pages) 4. Potential contribution of the study which includes **a clear problem/gap** (½ page) 5. Potential unit of analysis and potential research approach (1 page) 6. Access to the research context (½ page) 7. Personal motivation to pursue studies in this topic (½ page) 8. List of references (use Harvard referencing method)   The page limit excludes the cover page and list of references.  We are interested in well-articulated expressions that demonstrate a clear research focus and your insight, experience and interest in the topic. If you get accepted to this focus area, you will be able to further discuss this topic with your supervisor and to develop it into a research proposal.  Direct clarification questions about the focus area to any one of the researchers within this focus area via email. Please note that no EOI will be read before the closing date for applications.  Applicants may be invited to interviews to present their expressions of interest. | | |
| **Selection Procedure** | The following criteria will be applied to assess the expression of interest essay:   1. Academic merit: Quality in terms of originality, significance and rigour and impacts in terms of their reach and significance. 2. Evidence of higher order thinking: The candidate’s skills and abilities in analysing, synthesizing, applying, and evaluating information. 3. Academic writing skills: The extent to which the essay convey coherent and well-developed arguments that are supported with relevant, detailed and convincing evidence; the logically sequence of paragraphs with content-based transitions; the use of appropriate diction and tone and constructively vary sentence structures, and the use of correct grammar, punctuation, spelling and syntax. 4. Academic and professional experience: Strengths and relevance relative to the candidate’s opportunities (impact). | | |
| **Possible Alternative Opportunities for Unsuccessful Candidates** | The names of unsuccessful candidates and the reasons for their rejection will be submitted to the College Executive Committee for validation. Applicants have the right to appeal to the College Executive Management if admission is refused. Reasons for such refusal must be furnished to the applicant.  The following possible alternative opportunities exist for applicants who do not meet the generic admission requirements for CEMS:   1. Applicants with degrees that have different structures from normal South African honours degrees, applicant’s whose degrees do not clearly correspond to generic CEMS admissions requirements (e.g. no mark awarded for previous dissertations, no clear evidence of having completed a research-related module as part of the previous qualification, etc.), or applicants who do not meet generic admissions requirements but who possess applicable experience in research that may qualify them for admissions to a master’s degree will be required to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Prior academic and research activity by the applicant will be evaluated in accordance with formal Unisa RPL procedures and the outcome of the RPL process will be submitted to and approved by the College Executive Committee. If the approved outcome of the RPL process is positive, the applicant will be allowed to proceed with an application for admission, subject to all terms and conditions governing the admissions process. 2. Students who have been refused admission because of limited capacity within the academic department where the application was made may reapply in subsequent years. 3. In instances where a student does not have an average of 60% or more a submission may be made to the Department to allow such a student admission. Students must provide a written motivation of not more three pages requesting admission to the department. The department will consider the application, taking into account:  * The relevant experience, work or otherwise, of the student, * Alternative options for access into the programme * Any other factor deemed necessary by the department | | |
| **Technical requirements for EOI** | * Arial font size 12 * Justified lines * Page numbers * Standard margins | | |
| **Documents to Support Application** | One-page abbreviated CV, including:   * Academic qualifications: Academic record and copies of degrees * Work experience * Contact details * Expression of interest (see selection criteria) | | |
| **Unisa LibGuide** | The LibGuide offers you additional information on the strategy-as-practice research focus area. It also gives access to recently completed master’s and doctoral studies that used the strategy-as-practice perspective.  <https://libguides.unisa.ac.za/strategyaspractice> | | |
| **Research Agenda** | Strategy-as-practice research is interested in the detailed micro activities that constitute strategising and the link between these activities and wider social organisational and social contexts, also referred to as macro contexts. Strategy-as-practice research draws upon, inter alia, sociological approaches (e.g. Bourdieu, 1990; Giddens, 1984; Schatzki, 2005) that attempt to overcome the micro–macro dualisms that characterise orthodox organisational research. In addition, theoretical pluralism is encouraged with the recognition of the potential contributions from a wide range of sociological and organisation theories, such as practice-based, institutional, discourse, sense-making, routines, and cognition. One integrative framework developed within the strategy-as-practice literature defines its broad research parameters as studying: practitioners (those people who do the work of strategy); practices (the social, symbolic and material tools through which strategy work is done); and praxis (the flow of activity in which strategy is accomplished) (Jarzabkowski, 2005; Jarzabkowski, Balogun & Seidl, 2007; Johnson, Langley, Melin & Whittington, 2007; Whittington, 2006). These three elements represent an entry into the study of strategising activity that differs from existing “top-down” approaches that work with reified notions of “the firm” and “strategy”.  Strategy-as-practice research is moreover open to a variety of research methodologies and methods to the study of strategic practices, inviting scholars from various disciplinary backgrounds to contribute to our understanding of the actions and routines that constitute strategising.  Source: <http://www.sap-in.org/research-agenda>  Strategy as Practice research has evolved from its first positioning and integrative framework by Whittington, in 1996 and 2007, respectively, as well as attendant theorising by scholars following SAP, towards incorporating the debates of Strategy as Process in relation to Strategy as Practice. The debates coalesced in a Special Issue, [“Strategy Processes and Practices: Dialogues and Intersections” (Strategic Management Journal, March 2018) which led with the view that “it is both possible and desirable” to combine… [process and practice] into a joint research stream called “Strategy as Process and Practice” (SAPP)” (Burgelman, Floyd, Laamanen, Mantere, Vaara, Whittngton, 2018: 1). Attendant to this research stream, Open Strategy (Chesbrough and Appelyard, 2006) suggests that there are fruitful areas for consideration of SAP and SAPP as complementary to Open Strategy. Open Strategy as argued by Chesbrough and Appelyard, in 2007, provided the lens of strategy as an ecosystem which was open to innovation as well as co-ordination through a range of competencies and value additions, specifically those which technology convenes (Appelyard and Chesbrough, 2016). Open Strategy has evolved into both a content (Appelyard and Chesbrough, 2007) and process branches (Whittington et al, 2011). Appelyard and Chesbrough (2016: 310) indicate that the ‘“content” branch that examines the ability of organizations to sustain themselves economically with an open approach to innovation (Chesbrough and Appleyard, 2007); and a “process” branch that explores the systems that can enhance strategy formulation by furthering participation of both internal and external actors and improving transparency inside and outside of the ﬁrm (Whittington et al., 2011)’. Following on from this line of sight, Hautz, Seidl & Whittington, (2017: 299) state in relation to Open Strategy that “the concept connects directly with the emerging ‘macro’ agenda in Strategy-asPractice research, an agenda focused on strategy practices with societal reach and significance (Suddaby, et al., 2013; Seidl and Whittington, 2014). Strategy-as-Practice research has always recognized the value of local accounts of strategizing activities in specific episodes (Hendry and Seidl, 2003), but has grappled less with strategy practices that have the capacity, as Open Strategy does, of transforming organizational relationships and responsibilities more widely in society.”](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/10970266/2018/39/3)  This research agenda therefore invites prospective Higher Degrees’ candidates to consider scholarship in what may be termed ‘distinctive’ areas of SAP, SAPP and Open Strategy, while also acknowledging that there are intersections and complementarities between these exciting fields within the grander theories of strategy. | | |
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Strategy-as-practice: taking social practices seriously. *The Academy of Management Annals*. <https://journals.aom.org/doi/10.5465/19416520.2012.672039> * van Wyk, I., 2023. Strategic decision-making in small and medium enterprises in South Africa. *The Southern African Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management*, *15*(1), p.684. <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-sajesbm_v15_n1_a684> * Whittington, R., Vaara, E. & Rabetino, R. Making connections: Harnessing the diversity of strategy-as-practice research. *International Journal of Management Reviews*. 2021;1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12274> * Williamson, C., 2016. ‘Views from the nano edge’: women on doctoral preparation programmes in selected African contexts. *Studies in Higher Education*, *41*(5), pp.859-873. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2016.1147728> * Williamson, C. and Venter, P., 2018. 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Strategic Organization, 17(1).  “Open Strategy: Transparency and Inclusion in Strategy Processes” Editors Whittington, R., Hautz, J., &  Seidl, D. June, 2017 *You are not restricted to these sources, we recommend conducting your own literature search.* | | |
| **Additional resources on the web** | **SAP Webinar (Paula Jarzabkowski): What is strategy-as-practice as an approach to strategy research?** <https://youtu.be/WuBvpEeo4qY> **SAP Vlog: Richard Whittington on "Completing the Practice Turn in Strategy Research"** <https://youtu.be/IXg3ojigiSI> | | |

1. Please note that consulting the research focus area leader is no assurance that your application will be approved. If, however, your application is approved, it is also not a guarantee that he/she will be allocated as your supervisor. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)