

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **Council on Higher Education (CHE) commends Unisa for good practice and significant growth**

#### **Approved for Public Release**

**Date:** Monday, 10 July 2023

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) conducted a full institutional audit at the University of South Africa (Unisa) in April 2022 and submitted its findings to the University last month (June 2023). In its audit report, the Council has found that the University's plans and contributions have recorded a significant growth in its core functions and overall good practices as an Open Distance e-Learning (ODEL) Institution

#### **On Unisa's contributions towards higher education landscape**

The Council's audit report found that Unisa has played a significant role in widening access to higher education to South Africans who, for reasons of racial exclusion, unaffordability, unavailability of seat space in local contact institutions would not have been able to obtain higher level academic qualifications. The university has continued recording inexorable growth in many focus areas. In its research activities, Unisa supports eight research chairs and ten research institutes. Furthermore, there are 231 NRF-rated academic staff. As with all its areas of institutional operation, the university has made good progress with the gender and race transformation of academics involved in research activities. In 2019, the university graduated 737 masters and 304 doctoral students.

#### **On Governance and institutional quality management systems**

Unisa has positioned itself as a university whose vision, mission and strategic goals align with national priorities such as creating a skilled labour force, developing scarce skills areas and a critical citizenry, and contributing to the fulfilment of national objectives as informed by the National Development Plan (NDP) including sectoral, regional, continental, and global imperatives such as Africa Vision 2063 or the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Council further reported that Unisa's vision, mission and strategic goals align well with national priorities. A range of institutional planning and academic departments showed evidence of good and thorough engagement with important strategic priority documents such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the South African NDP, and Agenda 2063.



To support its core academic function, Unisa collaborates with municipalities and higher education institutions near their regional centres for shared library facilities offered to students. CHE commends Unisa for the quality of its library resources and services offered to students, and further commends the institution for developing collaborative agreements with other higher education institutions in providing shared library services to students at its regional centres.

### **On Student success**

CHE commends Unisa for its disruptive innovations and applaud Unisa for its inventions to sustain its teaching and assessment activities despite the Covid-19 restrictions. The commitment of students and staff to ensuring the functionality of the process is acclaimed.

The CHE audit panel noted that Unisa has not lost sight of its long tradition of providing opportunities for higher education studies to people, young and old, who do not have the resources such as time, money access for full-time contact study. Without the access opportunities that the university provides, people with the will to learn further would be structurally excluded from higher education study opportunities.

*"The audit report indicates that the academic project at Unisa is still on track and that the university has a significant role in providing access to those who would not ordinarily find opportunities in conventional universities. The Council acknowledges Unisa an institution of first choice for adult learners, professionals, and first-time entering students in higher education"* said Professor Puleng LenkaBula, Unisa Principal and Vice Chancellor.

### **ISSUED BY UNISA MEDIA AFFAIRS**

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