

MEDIA STATEMENT

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Unisa's increased SDG impact confirmed by authoritative international ranking

The [Times Higher Education Impact Rankings](#) have been released and the University of South Africa, Unisa, has been placed in the 401 to 600 category. These authoritative rankings are the only global performance tables that assess universities against the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Unisa was previously in the 601+ category, and the new placement represents the strides that the university has taken in improving its rankings and performance since the rankings in 2020.

These rankings use carefully calibrated indicators to provide comprehensive and balanced comparison across four broad areas: research, stewardship, outreach and teaching. In the 2022 ranking, Unisa achieved an overall score of 68 out of 100 and, as mentioned above, was ranked in the 401-600 band out of 1 406 ranked universities worldwide.

This performance should be considered against the background that despite an almost doubling of the number of ranked universities, from 768 in 2020 to 1 406 in 2022, Unisa improved in ranking from the 601+ band and, more importantly, also from a score in the range of 9,5 to 46,6 in the 2020 pilot.

Says Professor Thenjiwe Meyiwa, Vice-Principal: Research, Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialisation, who is currently acting in the role of Professor Puleng LenkaBula, Unisa Principal and Vice-Chancellor: 'In the past two years Unisa has been steadily improving its standing in various international university rankings. This ranking is of special importance to the institution since it speaks to performance in terms of SDGs, a key aspect in Unisa's journey towards being *the African university in the service of humanity*. It is, moreover, testimony to the hard and dedicated work of Unisa's academics, and the fact that the university's investments into our research are paying off. All these efforts reflect Professor LenkaBula's leadership in shaping the trajectory of a successful, impactful, empathetic, caring and resultful university.'

The rankings indicate that Unisa performed well in the five SDGs that the university officially participated in. These are SDG 4 (Quality education), SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy) and the compulsory SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals). Unisa's scores for Quality education (67,7) and Gender equality (66,4) were in the top quartile worldwide.

The 2022 Impact Rankings is the fourth edition in the series. Overall, this year's rankings are led by Sydney University in Australia, Arizona State University in the United States and Western University in Canada.

No one country dominates the top 10, with universities from the UK, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Japan also featuring. The top institutions from an emerging economy are King Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia and Universiti Sains Malaysia, in joint fourth place.



Unisa is one of eight South African universities participating in the 2022 rankings and is joined by the Nelson Mandela University and the University of the Western Cape in the 401-600 band. The University of Johannesburg is placed at 69, while the University of Cape Town, the University of Pretoria and the University of the Witwatersrand are in the 101-200 band. The Durban University of Technology slots into the 601-800 category.

'The Impact Rankings are inherently dynamic: they are growing rapidly each year as many more universities seek to demonstrate their commitment to delivering the SDGs by joining our database; and they allow institutions to demonstrate rapid improvement year-on-year, by introducing clear new policies, for example, or by providing clearer and more open evidence of their progress,' say the organisers. 'Therefore, we expect and welcome regular change in the ranked order of institutions (and we discourage year-on-year comparisons) as universities continue to drive this urgent agenda.'

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