

# Law @ Unisa

A complete guide to preparing  
yourself for career opportunities



# Contents

<b>Contents</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>How will this brochure help me?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>What is law?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Your career planning</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Skills and personal characteristics needed in the legal profession</b>	<b>6</b>
Skills	6
Personal characteristics	7
<b>Careers in law</b>	<b>8</b>
What are lawyers, attorneys and advocates?	8
Possible job titles related to law	9
Find out more about legal careers	10
Alternative options for law graduates	11
<b>Qualifying as an attorney</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Qualifying as an advocate</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Experienced vs inexperienced law student</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Professional bodies</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Identify opportunities with career research</b>	<b>18</b>
Further ways to do career research	19
1 Online search	19
2 Occupational information websites	20
3 Job-search portals	21

4 LinkedIn	21
5 Talk to others (informational interviewing)	23
6 Attend a careers fair event	25
7 Experience studying topics related to your field of interest	25
<b>Qualifications offered by Unisa</b>	<b>26</b>
Undergraduate	26
Master's degrees	27
Doctoral degrees	28
Short Learning Programmes (SLPs)	28
<b>Frequently asked questions</b>	<b>29</b>
What is the difference between the BCom Law and LLB?	29
Should I choose a degree, diploma or higher certificate?	29
What if I want to do the LLB but I do not qualify?	32
Where do I complete my clerkship/ articles/ pupillage for becoming an attorney or advocate?	33
Can I practice law if I have a criminal record?	33
Can I practice law in South Africa if I completed my training in another country?	34
<b>Counselling and career development services at Unisa</b>	<b>35</b>

*The information in this publication is correct as of 8 June 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 an overview of law and the skills and personal characteristics needed to be a legal practitioner.
- It will provide you with information about the different career opportunities related to law.
- It will provide you with information about the different career paths in the law field.
- It will assist you in finding law-related qualifications offered by Unisa.

## What is law?

*Law is a system of rules that are created and enforced through social or governmental institutions to regulate behaviour. Law is a system that regulates and ensures that individuals or a community adhere to the will of the state. State-enforced laws can be made by a collective legislature or by a single legislator, resulting in statutes, by the executive through decrees and regulations, or established by judges through precedent, normally in common law jurisdictions. Private individuals can create legally binding contracts, including arbitration agreements that may elect to accept alternative arbitration to the normal court process. The formation of laws themselves may be influenced by a constitution, written or tacit, and the rights encoded therein. The law shapes politics,*

*economics, history and society in various ways and serves as a mediator of relations between people* (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law>).

If you are interested in the following, then a career in law may be for you:

- legal matters
- persuading people
- social justice
- solving difficult situations
- influencing people
- applying rules and regulations
- working with those who have lost direction
- protecting others?

## Your career planning

The following questions will help you to think about important aspects regarding planning your career in law. Your honesty when completing the questions will help you to have a realistic picture of what you could still possibly do to make effective career decisions.

Statement	Yes	No
1. I am sure that I want to major in this field		
2. I want a career that is related to law		
3. I am familiar with the types of jobs that law graduates can apply for		
4. I am aware of the skills that are expected of me		
5. I know about the different fields in law		

Statement	Yes	No
6. I know which field in law I am interested in		
7. I have a clear understanding of the kinds of work done by individuals in the legal field		
8. I know where to look for information about a career in law		
9. I have spoken to at least one person who works in the legal field about a legal career		
10. I know what steps I will have to take to accomplish my career goals in the legal field		
11. I know what type of qualification I need for the legal specialisation I am interested in		
12. I understand the curriculum requirements for my intended qualification		
13. I know about other study options after completing my first degree		
14. I know what the admission requirements are for postgraduate studies in law		
15. I enjoy reading about law related topics		
16. I am aware of the experience that employers expect		

**You answered “yes” to:**

12-16 statements: It seems as if you thought about and completed research about your career in the Law field. Pay attention to those items you answered “no” to

8-11 statements: It seems as if you still have some thinking and further research to do before you decide to continue in this field. Pay careful attention to those items you answered “no” to

0-7 statements: Consider carefully whether you are ready to make a decision about your career. If you still have an interest in law, think about what you still need to do to prepare yourself for opportunities in the legal field. We recommend that you pay careful attention to the items you answered “no” to and to see a counsellor if you feel unsure of how to proceed. Contact details are on the last page of this book.

# Skills and personal characteristics needed in the legal profession

## Skills

- Good communication skills: oral (presentation) and written. You need to have very good listening skills.
- Judgment: You need to be able to draw logical conclusions from, sometimes, limited information.
- Persuasiveness: You need to be able to convince others of your argument.
- Analytical and critical thinking skills: The study and practice of law involves absorbing large quantities of information and then having to summarise this to be manageable and logical, and to make a coherent argument. You need to conduct careful analysis of complex legal agreements/ arguments and make decisions based on this.
- Research skills: You need to be able to find information quickly.
- Managing challenges with creative problem solving: You need to be able to identify and solve problems creatively.

- Commercial awareness/ financial literacy: Even if you do not necessarily plan to work in the corporate or business context, business acumen will benefit your career development.
- Computer skills: At least proficiency in MSOffice. Some positions may require more advanced computer skills.
- Collaboration, relationship management and teamwork skills: You need to maintain effective relationships with colleagues, other legal practitioners, support team member, clients, and partners
- Organisational and time management skills: You can plan and prioritise tasks and projects with demanding deadlines.
- Academic ability: Good academic performance at undergraduate level will enable you to pursue postgraduate opportunities. Bigger law firms may also recruit based on academic performance.

## **Personal characteristics**

- Adaptability: you need to be comfortable to work in a dynamic environment and handle frequent changes in workload and priorities
- Integrity: you need to be credible to colleagues and clients
- High ethical standards
- Willingness to learn: you need to be able to demonstrate that you have a strong interest and desire to learn new things and improve your competencies
- Flexibility: you need to be able to adapt and change to different contexts and circumstances
- Assertiveness
- Self-confidence
- Disciplined
- Self-motivated

# Careers in law

Careers in law focus on the application of principles and procedures as determined by legislation. The legal field is diverse and may include specialisation in various areas such as mercantile law, criminal law and private law. There are many different sub-specialisations in each of these fields, for example, intellectual property law, electronic commerce law, family law and environmental law. Additional requirements exist for admission to practice as an advocate and attorney.

## What are lawyers, attorneys and advocates?

According to the General Council of the Bar of South Africa, all legal practitioners are called lawyers, including judges, magistrates, advocates, attorneys, and university lecturers. There are two main branches of legal practitioners: attorneys, who do legal work of all kinds, and advocates, who are specialists.

- Attorneys interact with clients and provide general advice in legal matters. Learn more about becoming an attorney from the Law Society of South Africa here: <http://www.lssa.org.za/about-us/about-the-attorneys-profession/becoming-an-attorney> and here: [http://www.lssa.org.za/upload/documents/Career\\_Guide\\_to\\_the\\_Legal\\_profession.pdf](http://www.lssa.org.za/upload/documents/Career_Guide_to_the_Legal_profession.pdf)
- Advocates have no direct contact with clients – a client is referred to an advocate from an attorney when a specialist skill is needed in a court case or in research into the law. Advocates are individual practitioners and never form partnerships. Advocates may become members of the Bar. The Bar is the name traditionally used for Societies of Advocates. There are ten Bars affiliated to the General Council of the Bar of South Africa. Each Bar is an independent association governed by an elected Bar Council. Learn more

about the advocate profession on the General Council of the Bar website at <http://www.sabar.co.za/legal-career.html>.

*The Legal Practice Act 28 of 2014 (LPA) will affect the structuring of the legal profession from a regulatory perspective. Visit the LSSA website (<http://www.lssa.org.za/legal-practitioners/advisories/misc/legal-practice-act-28-of-2014/misc/legal-practice-act>) for updates on the implementation of the Act and its implications for legal practice in South Africa.*

## **Possible job titles related to law**

- Advocate
- Attorney
- Case manager
- Compliance specialist
- Court clerk/ deputy court clerk
- Court operations director
- Court specialist
- Courtroom clerk
- Criminologist and forensic criminologist (offender profiling and Victim Support)
- Family advocate
- Judge
- Law clerk
- Legal administrative officer
- Legal advisor
- Legal assistant
- Legal researcher
- Legal secretary
- Legislator

- Magistrate
- Maintenance officer
- Master of the High Court
- Paralegal
- Public prosecutor
- Registrar
- State Attorney

Legal graduates work in a wide range of areas:

- Financial institutions
- Legal firms
- Legal departments of banking institutions, insurance companies, government institutions and estate agents
- Magistrates' offices
- Department of Justice and Constitutional Development
- Public and private companies
- Other government departments (national, provincial, and local)
- Research organisations
- Self-employed (attorneys and advocates)
- Courts (e.g. Constitutional Court, Supreme Court of Appeal, High Court, Labour Courts, Divorce Courts, Land Claims Court, Maintenance Courts)
- Higher Education Institutions
- State-owned enterprises

### Find out more about legal careers

- [Law Society of South Africa Career Guide to the legal profession](#)
- [Department of Justice Legal and Other Related Careers in the Justice System](#)
- [Survivor Kit for Law Students](#)
- Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr [publications for law students](#) (e.g. Student Passport)

## Alternative options for law graduates

There are a number of occupations where legal knowledge is required; these can be options than can be explored by those who do not want to follow the training path to becoming an attorney or advocate. These include:

- human resource management (including labour relations).
- public sector management
- insurance companies
- compliance
- contracts management and procurement
- journalism
- international aid organisations
- community-based organisations

# Qualifying as an attorney

Professional training as an attorney consists of the following:

- **Academic requirement.** Obtain a Bachelor of Laws degree (LLB) (minimum duration: 4 years) from a recognised South African law school.
- **Service under Articles of Clerkship or Service Contract.** There are various methods to meet the practical requirements before being admitted as an attorney, e.g. completing a contract of articles for two years once you have graduated with an LLB degree, or a contract of articles for one year on completion of your LLB and attend a full-time School for Legal Practice for about 6 months, etc. Read about these options on the LSSA website at <http://www.lssa.org.za/about-us/about-the-attorneys-profession/becoming-an-attorney>.

- **Personal fitness.** A law society and the High Court must regard you as a fit and proper person before being admitted as an attorney. This refers mainly to integrity, characteristics, and honesty.
- **Practical legal training.** You must attend a practical legal training course recognised by a law society in South Africa.
- **Attorneys' Admission Examination.** This examination must be passed before being admitted as an attorney. Check the LSSA website for more information about when this examination can be written:  
<http://www.lssa.org.za/about-us/about-the-attorneys-profession/becoming-an-attorney>.

Attorneys may additionally qualify as Notaries and Conveyancers, via the Conveyancing and Notarial Practice Examinations; those with technical or scientific training may further qualify as patent attorneys. Although not formally required for practice, further training, e.g. in tax, is usually via specialised postgraduate diplomas, masters' and doctoral programmes.

There are currently just under 26000 practising attorneys in South Africa. Read more about statistics for the attorney's profession here: <http://www.lssa.org.za/about-us/about-the-attorneys--profession/statistics-for-the-attorneys--profession>. The Law Society of South Africa and LexisNexis conducted a Review of the Attorneys' Profession in 2016. Download the report here: <http://www.lssa.org.za/about-us/about-the-attorneys--profession/lssa-lexisnexis-review-of-the-attorneys--profession-2016>.

## Qualifying as an advocate

- Complete an LLB degree.
- Complete a pupillage (a learning experience where you are paired with an experienced advocate).

- Be admitted to the Roll of Advocates, a statutory register kept by the official of the High Court. You must apply to the High Court, on affidavit, stating that you are honest, have not committed any criminal offences, have an LLB degree and are “fit and proper” to be an advocate. You must appear before the High Court to promise to uphold the Constitution, after which you may call yourself an advocate.

# Experienced vs inexperienced law student

When you first apply to study with Unisa, you may enter the University with work experience and realistic expectations of the career you wish to pursue. You may also enter the University without any work experience and without any understanding of what you may face as a distance learner wanting to complete a professional qualification. The table below outlines two possible scenarios: the first scenario describes an experienced student with work experience in the field he or she wishes to study. The second scenario describes a student who does not have experience in the field he or she wishes to study. The information in the third column is related to the impact of this on your decision to study law. The fourth column indicates how you can prepare yourself to become a successful law student.

<b>Experienced law student (currently working in the field)</b>	<b>Inexperienced law student (no work experience in the field)</b>	<b>How does this impact on your decision to study law</b>	<b>How can you prepare yourself to become a successful law student</b>
Has work experience in the	Has no experience in	When you have experience in the	Spend time conducting

Experienced law student (currently working in the field)	Inexperienced law student (no work experience in the field)	How does this impact on your decision to study law	How can you prepare yourself to become a successful law student
field or related field and knows which specialisation in the field of law to pursue	the field of law and is uncertain about which specialisation in the field of law to pursue	field you have a realistic perception of what your future career will entail and whether there is a good fit between you and the chosen specialisation. If there is a good fit between yourself and the field of work you will be successful in meeting the demands of the job	informational interviews with individuals who work in the field you wish to work in. This will assist you to gain a realistic understanding of what the job will demand of you. You will gain a better understanding of whether there is a good fit between you and the field you wish to work in. You can find details on how to go about this process in the Career research part of this brochure

Experienced law student (currently working in the field)	Inexperienced law student (no work experience in the field)	How does this impact on your decision to study law	How can you prepare yourself to become a successful law student
Aware of the practical requirements	Unaware of the practical requirements	If you are aware of the practical requirements (e.g. articles or pupillage) you are able to make arrangements	You must investigate and consider the practical requirements of becoming a lawyer, and how you will manage to complete these
You are aware of how your skills and values match those to become successful in the field of law	You are unaware of how your skills and values match those to become successful in the field of law	When you have a good understanding of your skills and values you are able to make informed career decisions which will result in greater job satisfaction	Spend time exploring what your skills and values are by visiting <a href="http://bit.ly/2gmt8nv">http://bit.ly/2gmt8nv</a> . Compare how these match the skills for a specific law discipline

Experienced law student (currently working in the field)	Inexperienced law student (no work experience in the field)	How does this impact on your decision to study law	How can you prepare yourself to become a successful law student
You have a realistic understanding of the demands that training in the field of law will place on you	You have a vague understanding of the demands that training in the field of law will place on you	When you have a realistic understanding of the demands that will be placed on you, you are more inclined to achieve academic success	Spend time job shadowing or conducting some informational interviews with individuals who works in the field you wish to work in. This will assist you to gain a realistic understanding of what the job will demand of you

# Professional bodies

Depending on your qualification, you may need to register with a certain professional body. In other words, some professional bodies have a mandatory requirement that all individual working in a certain profession must have a valid registration with that professional body.

<b>Profession</b>	<b>Unisa qualification</b>	<b>Professional body</b>
Attorneys	Bachelor of Law (LLB)	Law Society of South Africa (LSSA)
Legal Advisor	Bachelor of Law (LLB)	Corporate Lawyers Association of South Africa (CLASA)
Corporate Counsel	Bachelor of Law (LLB)	Corporate Counsel Association of South Africa (CCASA)
Advocate	Bachelor of Law (LLB)	General Council of the Bar (SA Bar)
Compliance practitioner and professional	The preferred qualification for a Compliance Officer is an accounting (Bachelor of Accounting Sciences) or legal (LLB) degree	Compliance Institute of South Africa

# 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 an LLB degree? How much do attorneys earn? or What must I study to be an advocate?*

## Keep track of information

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

## 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? After you have visited a number of websites, you could compare your notes with 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 law. You could start with using keywords such as “law careers” and then to further contextualise your findings, you could search keywords such as “law careers Africa” and “law careers South Africa”. Scan the brief descriptions of the first ten results and decide which website you would want to explore first. Skim read 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 online services or apps such as Evernote (<http://www.evernote.com>), Diigo (<http://www.diigo.com>) or Google Bookmarks (<http://www.google.com/bookmarks/>) to keep track of your research online.

### Activity

Use Google to find specific job titles related to law. The following are some search terms you could consider: “job titles law” “law graduate jobs south africa”.

Job title	Website
Example:	

Job title	Website
Attorney	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 <a href="http://bit.ly/2fE0Xd0">http://bit.ly/2fE0Xd0</a>	This website provides more information about opportunities related to qualifications at Unisa.
Kheta (from SAQA) <a href="http://ncap.careerhelp.org.za/occupations">http://ncap.careerhelp.org.za/occupations</a>	Search for information about specific job titles.
Career Planet <a href="http://www.careerplanet.co.za/">http://www.careerplanet.co.za/</a>	Learn more about career areas such as IT, tourism, engineering and more. The website also contains information about learnerships and student finance
O*Net <a href="http://www.onetonline.org/">http://www.onetonline.org/</a>	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.

### 3 Job-search portals

Another type of website that is useful in terms of researching specific job titles linked to different industries is job search portals. 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 for your career planning.

For example, you are interested in law, but you are not sure which specific job titles are linked to this field.

You can use this information to make career goals and to 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>)

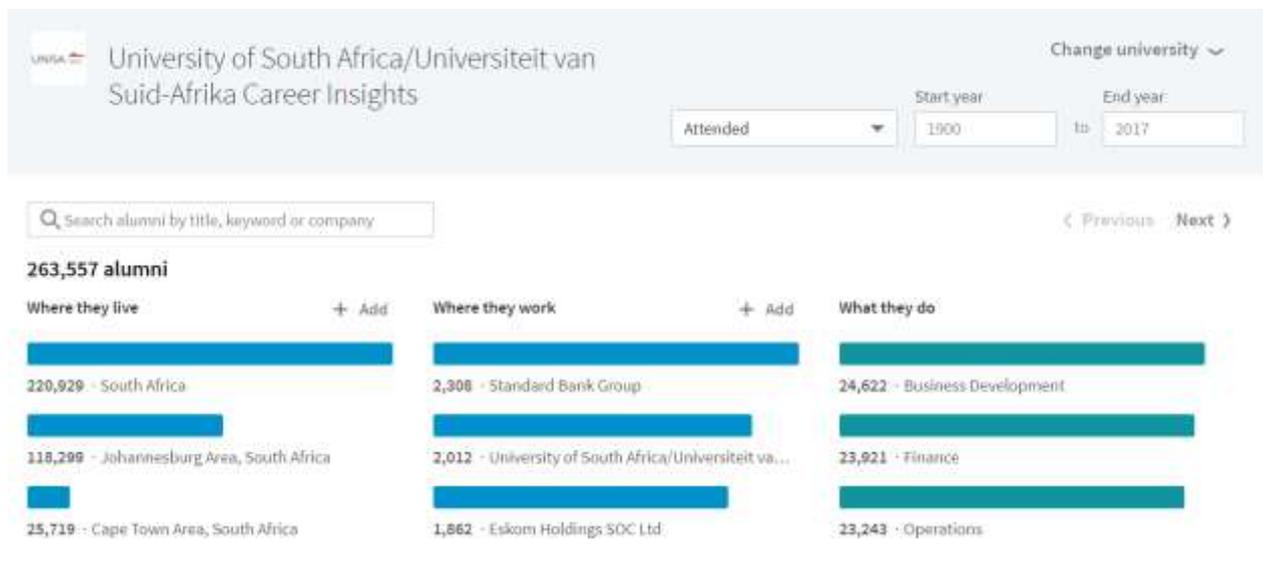
### 4 LinkedIn

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

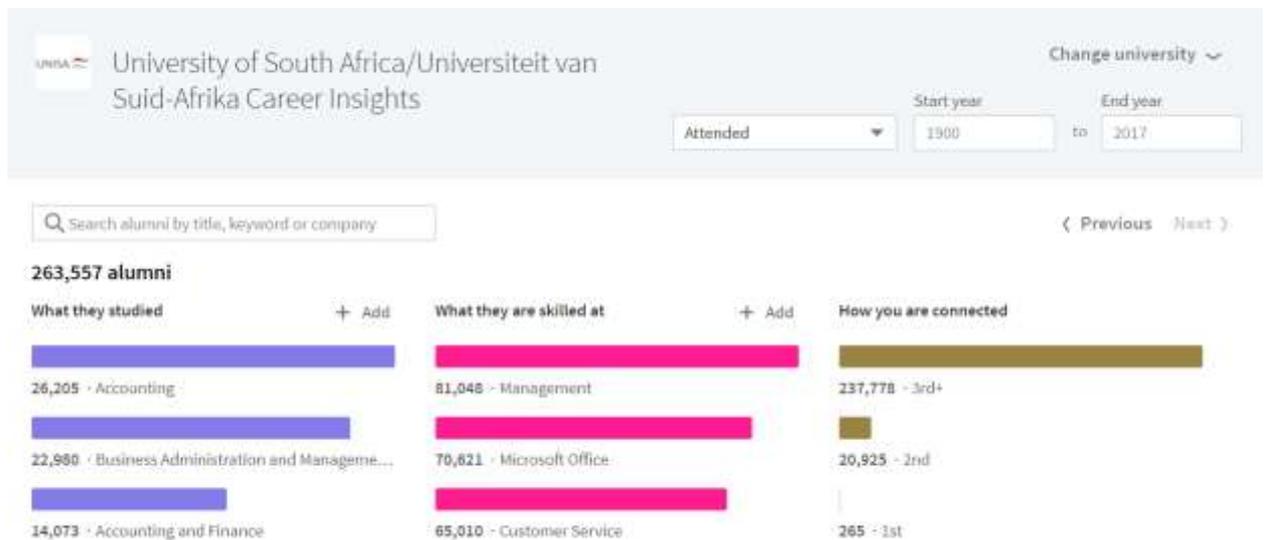
Register for a free account and start connecting with your network online. Join groups relevant to your career field so that you could participate in discussions, ask questions, provide answers about specific topics, and search for people, organisations and jobs in your field of interest. Do research 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](http://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, go to the University of South Africa page at <https://www.linkedin.com/school/12049/>.
4. Click on the “See alumni” button.
5. 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 “Next >” link to go to the next set of headings (What they studied, What they are skilled at, and How you are connected).



- Click on “+Add” next to the heading “What they studied”
- Start to type “law” in the search box.
- Choose one of the options that you would want to explore.
- You will notice that the graphs for the different headings adjust. You have now filtered the information to contain information about Unisa graduates who work in the field you searched for.
- You can now see how many graduates in these fields are on LinkedIn, where they work, what they do, what they’re skilled at, etc.
- You are also able to view the profiles of alumni who meet the criteria you searched for. For example, you can filter your search results to those alumni who indicated that they studied law, and work at a specific financial institution.

## 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 in which you are

interested. 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 the provision of legal advice to community members. 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 identify potential people. Go to <http://bit.ly/2riGpQg> for more information on how to go about this and suggestions for questions that you might want to ask. 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**

Write a list of any people you know who might 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? Then write a list of those people who could give you information about any careers you are considering.

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 March, 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 law is by watching and listening to online lectures and reading free open textbooks. These resources will enhance your understanding of the various fields in engineering and the various opportunities related to these fields.

Search for engineering related courses and open textbooks on these sites:

- Khan Academy (<https://www.khanacademy.org/>)
- 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/>)
- MITOpenCourseware (<http://ocw.mit.edu/index.htm>)
- Open Culture (<http://www.openculture.com/freeonlinecourses>)

- iTunes university (<http://www.apple.com/education/itunes-u/>)
- YouTube education (<http://www.youtube.com/education?b=400>)
- FreeVideoLectures (<http://freevideolectures.com/>)

# Qualifications offered by Unisa

More information about these qualifications will be available on the Unisa website at [http://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Undergraduate-qualifications/Qualifications/All-qualifications?cw\\_college=LAW](http://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Undergraduate-qualifications/Qualifications/All-qualifications?cw_college=LAW) (from end July 2018).

## **Undergraduate**

### **Higher Certificates**

- Higher Certificate in Law (98751)

### **Diplomas**

- Diploma in Law (98750)

### **Bachelor Degrees**

- Bachelor of Commerce in Law Law (98309 - LAW)
- Bachelor of Laws (98680)

More information about these qualifications are available on the Unisa website at [http://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Master%27s-&-doctoral-degrees/Qualifications/All-qualifications?cw\\_college=LAW](http://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Master%27s-&-doctoral-degrees/Qualifications/All-qualifications?cw_college=LAW).

## Master's degrees

- Master of Laws (Full Dissertation) Constitutional and International Law (98604 - CIL)
- Master of Laws (Full Dissertation) Jurisprudence (98604 - JUR)
- Master of Laws (Full Dissertation) Mercantile Law (98604 - MCL)
- Master of Laws in Banking Law (coursework) Curriculum 2017 (90052 - N17)
- Master of Laws in Corporate Law (coursework) Curriculum 2017 (90046 - N17)
- Master of Laws in Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure (Full Dissertation) (90057)
- Master of Laws in Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure Law (coursework) (90087)
- Master of Laws in Family Law (coursework) Curriculum 2017 (90047 - N17)
- Master of Laws in Human Rights Law (coursework) (98621)
- Master of Laws in Insurance Law (coursework) Curriculum 2017 (90048 - N17)
- Master of Laws in Intellectual Property Law (coursework) (98622)
- Master of Laws in International Economic Law (coursework) (98623)
- Master of Laws in Labour Law (coursework) Curriculum 2017 (90054 - N17)
- Master of Laws in Private Law (Full Dissertation) (90056)

- Master of Laws in Property Law (coursework) Curriculum 2017 (90055 - N17)
- Master of Laws in Tax Law (coursework) (98624)

## **Doctoral degrees**

- Doctor of Laws Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure (98602 - CRI)
- Doctor of Laws Jurisprudence (98602 - JUR)
- Doctor of Laws Mercantile Law (98602 - MCL)
- Doctor of Laws Private Law (98602 - PRL)
- Doctor of Laws Public Constitutional and International Law (98602 - CIL)
- Doctor of Philosophy in Law (90023)

## **Short Learning Programmes (SLPs)**

Unisa offers various short learning programmes (SLPs) related to law. It is important to remember that a SLP is not a formal qualification and will not allow you to qualify for a formal qualification. For more information about these programmes, visit

[http://brochure.unisa.ac.za/slp/showlist.aspx?d=c\\_1](http://brochure.unisa.ac.za/slp/showlist.aspx?d=c_1).

# Frequently asked questions

## What is the difference between the BCom Law and LLB?

LLB	BCom in Law
The LLB degree is a structured law degree that consists of mainly legal modules. It is the minimum requirement for most legal professions (including advocate and attorney)	The BCom in Law consists of a combination of legal modules (such as Law of Persons, Law of Contract) together with finance and commerce modules (such as Auditing and Taxation). Individuals who are interested in applying legal principles in a business context usually complete this degree. Should you wish to qualify as an attorney or advocate, you will also need to complete an LLB

## Should I choose a degree, diploma or higher certificate?

Unisa offers the Bachelor of Laws (LLB), Diploma in Law and Higher Certificate in Law. The following table provides an overview of the qualification duration, NQF level and number of credits. We also provide the purpose of each qualification below the table.

	<b>LLB</b>	<b>Diploma in Law</b>	<b>Higher Certificate in Law</b>
Minimum duration	4 years	3 year	1 year
NQF exit level	8	6	5
Total credits	480	360	120

### Purpose of the Higher Certificate in Law

The purpose of this qualification is to prepare students, who do not comply with the minimum institutional admission requirements, for access to diploma or degree studies in the College of Law. The qualification is intended to introduce students to some of the foundational legal principles and legal practice by imparting systematic knowledge, skills, and theoretical competence within the field to prepare them for more specialised training at an advanced level. It is furthermore the intention of the higher certificate programme to deliver graduates who have sound knowledge and the confidence to apply their skills in contemporary society and to enable further study in the College of Law, or even in other colleges who do not set specific subject requirements, like Mathematics. In this respect, the specific purpose is to:

- prepare candidates for studies in the world of law;
- improve candidates' basic proficiency in the English language in order to study in the fields of law;
- improve candidates' general computer skills, especially for business purposes; and
- prepare candidates for higher education in an open and distance learning environment.

## Purpose of the Diploma in Law

The purpose of this qualification is for students to gain knowledge, skills and experience in general areas of the law and the application and social context of the law so as to enable the student to provide primary legal services to the public and support to legal professionals. A student acquiring this qualification will have skills, knowledge and experience to:

- Apply advanced paralegal knowledge and understanding of law to a specific problem within the South African legal context.
- Conduct and evaluate legal research and make recommendations based on the findings of the research.
- Communicate, in writing or orally with internal and external clients in a paralegal or legal workplace.
- Advise, counsel and represent clients in a variety of settings.
- Draft legal documents in a paralegal context.
- Solve problems in a paralegal context by working in a team and individually.
- Manage administration, including financial administration, and provide organisational support in an office environment.
- Exercise ethical conduct, values and professionalism when dealing with clients.

## Purpose of the Bachelor of Laws (LLB)

The purpose of this generic LLB qualification is to assist employers, professional associations, curriculum developers and learning-programme providers, education and training bodies, accrediting bodies and moderators, and students and their families, to understand factors determining the level and nature of the LLB qualification. The term 'generic' is not synonymous with 'general'. The term generic means that the essential minimum-required outcomes and their assessment criteria have been identified in an abstract way, and are not linked to a preconceived curriculum (content). The qualification, therefore, sets a minimum standard of outcomes with which all LLB qualifications of at least 480 credits within the 'career-

focused track' of the NQF would have to comply for accreditation. This qualification does not seek to make all LLB degrees identical but rather to provide a framework within which providers can be innovative and stakeholder-driven in a liberated way. Further aims of the qualification are:

- To produce law graduates who have a systematic and coherent body of knowledge and an understanding of relevant concepts and principles; a high level of cognitive and other generic skills including problem-solving and the practical application of principles; written and spoken communication, numeracy and computer literacy; and competence in applying knowledge through basic research methods and practice.
- To provide law graduates with sufficient depth of knowledge and skills for continued and lifelong personal intellectual growth, including postgraduate study.
- To provide suitably qualified law graduates having initiative, responsibility, and the requisite ethical standards to participate in promoting the administration of justice and the development of legal institutions in South African society.
- To provide the South African community with lawyers who are empowered to accept their responsibility towards the realisation of a just society based on a constitutional democracy and the rule of law within an international legal order.

### **What if I want to do the LLB but I do not qualify?**

You have the option to apply for a lower level qualification (i.e. a Diploma in Law or Higher Certificate in Law). Completing one of these will enable you to meet all the requirements for degree admission. You may need to apply for admission to the LLB degree during your last semester of study for the Diploma or Higher Certificate.

## **Where do I complete my clerkship/ articles/ pupillage for becoming an attorney or advocate?**

Start researching options when you start with your degree. The General Council of the Bar or the Law Society of South Africa provides more information on their websites about the requirements. Contact legal practitioners in your area to start enquiring about the possibility of vacation work while you are studying. In addition, subscribe to job alerts for these types of positions on job search websites such as Indeed and Adzuna. Students who have completed their LLB can apply to the Unisa Clinic as candidate attorneys in order to complete their clerkships there. Many companies and organisations recruit for their candidate attorney's programmes two to three years in advance. Search for "candidate attorney programme" on Google to identify possible organisations that offer a candidate attorney programme. Also identify organisations that offer vacation work or programmes to help you build your experience and professional network in the field while you are studying.

## **Can I practice law if I have a criminal record?**

A law society and the Higher Court determine whether you are a fit and proper person to become or remain an attorney. The onus would be on you to show that you are a fit and proper person, focusing on integrity, honesty and trustworthiness. You will need to provide a full explanation of any conviction of a crime and satisfy the relevant law society and court that despite these facts, you are still a fit and proper person to be admitted to the profession.

The LSSA states that "a senior member of the Law Society will conduct a personal interview with a prospective candidate attorney before registration of a service contract or contract of articles by the Law Society, in order to determine whether a person can be regarded as a fit and proper person for entering the profession. Specific attention will be given to previous convictions" (<http://www.lssa.org.za/about-us/about-the-attorneys-profession/becoming-an-attorney>).

### **Further resource:**

- Slabbert, M, & Boome, DJ. (2014). Reformation from criminal to lawyer: Is such redemption possible?. PER: Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad, 17(4), 1498-1515. Retrieved June 07, 2018, from [http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S1727-37812014000400010&lng=en&tlng=en](http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1727-37812014000400010&lng=en&tlng=en).

### **Can I practice law in South Africa if I completed my training in another country?**

In terms of current legislation, foreign lawyers need to qualify as attorneys in South Africa in order to practise as attorneys. Read more about practicing law in South Africa here:

<http://www.lssa.org.za/about-us/about-the-attorneys-profession/foreign-lawyers>.

# 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](mailto:counselling@unisa.ac.za).