

College of Education Research focus areas for 2026

**RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES, AVAILABLE SUPERVISION CAPACITY AND
SELECTION CRITERIA, ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION PER
SCHOOL AND DEPARTMENT IN CEDU**

**DEPARTMENT OF ADULT, COMMUNITY AND CONTINUING EDUCATION (former
ABET)**

Research focus areas of the Department (2026)

- Youth development and human rights
- Community education for development
- Management of adult education centres
- Community colleges in Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET)
- Professional development of adult educators
- Professional development of adults
- Adult education in correctional centres
- Entrepreneurship for youth and adults
- Adult vocational education and training
- Open distance education/e-learning
- Gender studies within adult and community education and training (ACET)
- Psychology of adult education
- Environmental and health studies in adult education
- Teaching adults/the adult learner
- Teaching practice in adult education
- Adult education and indigenous knowledge systems
- Social action research in an adult education environment

Research projects that postgraduate students can participate in

Name of project	Brief description of the project	Project leader	No of available positions for MEd students for 2024	No of available positions for PhD students for 2024
Parental involvement in developing a learning culture in Hlanganani	Involvement of parents in the development of learning for adult learners in Hlanganani, Limpopo.	Dr AN Ngozwana	2	2
Promotion of correctional education discourse through research-based methods and personal development	Women in Research (WiR) project operating in three provinces: KwaZulu-Natal, North West and Gauteng, working in partnership with the Department of Correctional Services with correctional officials and offenders (primarily women) in MD studies with Unisa.	Prof LR Johnson	1	2

Focused M & D programmes

Name of programme	Qualification code	Curriculum
MEd in Adult Education (course work)	98430	Four course work modules, research proposal, mini-dissertation
PhD in Education* (Stream: Adult Education – ADE)	90019	Research proposal and thesis (full research)

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

When applying for a PhD in Education, students should clearly explain in their research outline that they intend to focus on Adult Education. Students should keep the Department's focus areas in mind when proposing a research topic for their dissertation or thesis.

Details of individual supervisors and their research interests or fields of expertise

Name of supervisor	Research interest/field of expertise	No of positions for master's students still available for 2026	No of positions for doctoral students still available for 2026
Prof A Arko-Achemfuor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurship research for youth and adults • Community education for adult and youth development • Adult education and indigenous knowledge systems 	2	2
Prof MM Dichaba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development • Adult education and community education • Youth development 	2	2
Prof GP Baloyi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology in ABET and youth development • Open distance learning (ODL) 	1	2
Prof LR Johnson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correctional adult education • Open Distance e-Learning (ODEL) • Indigenous knowledge system (IKS) • Adult and community education and training <p>Adult literacy</p>	2	2
Prof FM Teane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy and community development • Psychology of adult education • Curriculum issues 	2	2
Prof II Setlhodi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership, management and mentorship • Women leadership empowerment and gender studies within ACET • Youth development, human rights and civic education • Quality assurance management and enhancement 	2	2
Prof RB Monyai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology and open distance learning 	1	2
Dr GK Gomba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult and community education 	2	1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management in adult education • Performance management • Professional development 		
Dr X Tawana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender studies within adult and Community Education and training ACET. • Youth development and Human rights • Adult education and Indigenous knowledge systems. 	2	1
Prof JN Mampane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexuality and LGBTIQ+ issues in education • Gender equality and mainstreaming in education • The impact of HIV/AIDS in the education sector • Health, Nutrition and Wellness programmes in the education sector 	2	2
Dr AM Rivombo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity and change management in adult education • Community education in ACET 	3	1
Dr A van der Nest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development of adults • Formative assessment 	2	1
Mr P Phuluwa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development 	2	0
Dr TM Molema	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community colleges in ACET • Community Education for development • Gender Studies within adult and community education and training (ACET) • Adult education and indigenous knowledge systems 	2	1
Dr RV Mabuza	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult community education and training (ACET) • Youth development and human rights 	2	1
Dr B Magadlela	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurship for youth and adults • Community education for development 	2	1
Dr VG Luxomo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy imperatives of AQEE – access, quality, equity and equality of opportunity 	2	1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaningful access – access (training and employment) and success • Vocational education for work (with and for production) as well as the skills debate • Alternative or disruptive innovations that bring about new opportunities 		
Dr DE Mkhabela	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Education • Management in Adult Education 	2	1
Dr DM Chuene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community colleges in Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET) • Adult vocational education and training • Professional development of adults • Management of adult education centres 	2	0
Dr AM Machobane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community education • Student support in ODL • Adult education 	2	1
Dr TS Ngubane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of Community Learning Centres (CLCs). • Adult teaching and learning. • Indigenous knowledge in adult education. 	2	1
Dr AM Lephalletse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and learning • Youth Development 	2	1
Dr AN Ngozwana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Education • Lifelong Learning • Community/Civic education 	2	2
Dr TA Chauke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Development. • Community Education 	2	2
Dr SM Cele	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social justice education • Community education 	1	1
Dr K Mbatha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Education • Community Development 	2	1

Models of supervision

The individual and co-supervision models are used. Co-supervision is mostly done for mentoring purposes and multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinary (MIT) research. Some supervisors in the College supervise across departments. Students are therefore advised

to study the lecturer profiles of other departments in the College when trying to identify a suitable supervisor.

Opportunities regarding external supervision

External supervisors may be considered if a suitable supervisor is not available in the Department. However, this will depend on the financial viability of the Department.

Contact details of the department

Dr RV Mabuza: Sunnyside Campus, Building 10: 01-35; tel: 012 481 2945; e-mail: emabuzr@unisa.ac.za (M&D Coordinator)

Dr GKB Gomba: Sunnyside Campus, Building 10: 001-04; tel: 012 481 2971; e-mail: gombagk@unisa.ac.za (Acting CoD)

Admission requirements, documents required, selection criteria and selection information relevant for prospective master's and doctoral students

Minimum admission requirements for master's and doctoral studies in the College of Education

Master's of Education

An appropriate Honours Degree in Education, or a postgraduate diploma, or a 480 credit Bachelor of Education Degree with a minimum of 96 credits at NQF level 8. The average mark obtained for the degree shall be 60%. All students should have completed a module in research methods and methodologies as part of their previous level 8 qualification. Students who do not meet these requirements may follow an alternative pathway (e.g. RPL, submitting a portfolio, or working through a prescribed reading list – refer to Possible alternative pathways). The application should accord with the various research focus areas/areas of specialisation of the Department, the Department's capacity to provide expert supervision and the requisite qualifications listed above.

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Education

An appropriate Master's of Education Degree is required. The average mark obtained for the degree shall be 60%. Students who do not meet this requirement may follow an alternative pathway (e.g. RPL or submit a portfolio – refer to Possible alternative pathways). The application should accord with the various research focus areas/areas of specialisation of the Department, the Department's capacity to provide expert supervision and the requisite qualification listed above.

Supporting documentation to be submitted with application

For Master's of Education (qualification code – 98430):

All relevant documentation as specified by the Department for Master's and Doctoral Administration Support.

Students should submit a short research outline of 600 to 750 words which sketches the intended research project, research approach, problem statement, a short literature review and a working title. In addition, a list of five scholarly articles and two books that have been consulted to compile the research outline should be provided. These sources should be predominantly recent, with the exception of (classical) theories which can only be found in old sources. The Harvard referencing method should be used. Students should provide a declaration that they have consulted the relevant department's website prior to submitting their application and should propose the name of his/her preferred supervisor. Any form of plagiarism in the research outline is unacceptable.

For a Philosophy (PhD) in Education Doctorate:

All relevant documentation as specified by the Department for Master's and Doctoral Administration Support.

Students should submit a short research outline of 800 to 900 words which sketches the intended research project, problem statement, research approach, a short literature review and a working title for the project. In addition, a list of ten scholarly articles and four books that have been consulted to compile the research outline should be provided. These sources should be predominantly recent, with the exception of (classical) theories which can only be found in old sources. The Harvard referencing method should be used. Students should provide a declaration that they have consulted the relevant department's website prior to submitting their application and should propose the name of his/her preferred supervisor. Please note that any form of plagiarism in the research outline is unacceptable.

PLEASE NOTE: Students should clearly indicate in their research outline that they intend to focus on Adult Education in their PhD studies. It is therefore imperative that the first heading of the research outline should read *PhD in Education focusing on Adult Education*.

Selection procedures followed in the selection of candidates for postgraduate studies

All applications will be considered simultaneously by the Departmental Higher Degrees Committee, the chair of the Department, the director of the School and the head of the Office of Graduate Studies and Research in the College for purposes of fairness and transparency. Only candidates who meet the minimum eligibility criteria will be considered.

The Department's internal supervision capacity and availability of external supervisors will be the first and most important selection criterion. No applicant will be admitted without a supervisor being allocated to the student. If a student requests to be supervised by a particular supervisor, but the supervisor is not available because of his/her existing supervision load, it is the Department's prerogative to allocate an alternative supervisor (internal or external). Further selection will be done based on the following selection criteria (the weight attached to each criteria is indicated between brackets as a percentage of the overall evaluation): the student's academic record and experience in research (30%); understanding of research methods as displayed in the research outline (30%);

academic writing skills (30%); and addressing of past inequalities by taking race, gender and disability status into consideration (10%).

The Department will keep record of all the applications and reasons will be provided for unsuccessful applications.

Possible alternative pathways

The following alternative pathways exist for applicants who do not meet the admission requirements:

- Applicants with degrees that have different structures from normal South African honours or master's degrees, applicants whose degrees do not clearly correspond to the Department's admission 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 the admission requirements, but who possess applicable experience in research or working experience relevant to the field of interest that may qualify them for admission to a master's or doctoral degree will be required to apply for recognition of prior learning (RPL). Prior academic and research activities 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 chair of the Department. 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 admission process.
- Applicants who apply for a master's degree on the strength of a postgraduate diploma or a 480 credit bachelor's degree with a minimum of 96 credits at level 8 and who have not completed a module in research methodology, will be required to obtain knowledge about research methods and methodology by working through a prescribed reading list which will be forwarded to them by the chair of the Departmental Higher Degrees Committee upon request from the student. The student will have to complete and pass a number of assignments related to research methodology. The student may reapply in subsequent years.
- Applicants who do not meet the minimum requirement of 60% may apply for an alternative pathway by submitting a portfolio containing a motivation letter indicating reasons for wanting to do the qualification and for selecting the specific area he/she is applying for, a curriculum vitae (CV) highlighting experience relevant to the field of interest and evidence of engagement with research which could include one or more of the following: a written report of a scholarly nature, a literature survey, a paper presented at a conference, a published article.

The following alternative pathways exist for applicants whose applications were unsuccessful:

- Students who have been refused admission because of limited capacity within the Department or because their topic was not viable may reapply in subsequent years.

It should be clearly indicated that it is a reapplication. The normal selection process will apply in case of reapplications.

- Students who were unsuccessful because of an inadequate research outline may revise their research outline and may reapply in subsequent years.
- A student whose application was unsuccessful because of inadequate academic writing skills may reapply in subsequent years provided that he/she can provide proof of measures put in place to improve his/her academic writing skills (e.g. enrolled for and passed a course in academic writing skills).

Application procedures and when to apply

The Department of Adult Basic Education and Youth Development will not make use of differentiated registration dates. Applications for admission and registration will take place in accordance with the dates set by the Department for Master's and Doctoral Administration Support, College of Graduate Studies, for bulk applications and registrations.

Students should

- apply for a student number, following the steps outlined in <https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Master%27s-&-doctoral-degrees/Apply-for-a-student-number-and-apply-for-admission>
- apply for a space in one of the departmental focus areas using the online application process

Once acceptance in the research focus area and the allocation of a supervisor have been confirmed, they may register for the research proposal module.