

# Social Sciences @ Unisa

A complete guide to preparing  
yourself for career opportunities



Define tomorrow.

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# How will this brochure help me?

- To understand what the social sciences are
- To learn more about career and study opportunities related to the social sciences
- To explore where you see yourself fitting into the world of work
- To learn more about the skills and qualities needed for a career related to the social sciences

## What are social sciences?

Social sciences use research to try to understand various aspects of human thought and behaviour (Saylor Academy, 2012). Researchers in the social sciences use various methods to collect and analyse quantitative and qualitative data to make recommendations to governments and organisations to improve the circumstances of people. Core subjects in the field of social sciences include anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, linguistics, politics, psychology and sociology.

### Further reading

- <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-sociology/chapter/the-sociological-perspective/>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_science](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_science)

# Study fields in social sciences

## Anthropology

To a certain extent, we are all anthropologists if we are interested in how other people live. Anthropology provides a systematic and exciting way of examining the social lives and cultures, customs, values and modes of thought of societies that are different from our own. You will record and try to comprehend such things as myths, rituals, economic systems, family patterns and forms of political organisation of a given group or society. Anthropology has distinct but related subfields which have developed further specialisations over the past century.

- **Physical Anthropology:** This has close connections to natural sciences like biology and genetics. This concerns an understanding of how humans have evolved from their ancestors over the last few million years as well as the extent to which we share genetic characteristics with other primates such as the great apes, gorillas and chimpanzees. Paleo anthropologists examine the fossil remains of extinct primates.
- **Anthropological Linguistics:** Language provides a rich subject for study. Without an understanding of the language spoken by particular people, not much can be learnt about their myths, beliefs, political situation and so on.
- **Social and Cultural Anthropology:** This involves the study of the culture and social organisations of living peoples.

Anthropologists spend time in an office, the library as well as in the “field”. They study the relevant literature, observe and interview people, write research reports, work with other researchers, teach, and offer professional knowledge to persons trying to solve problems between people with different backgrounds. In collecting information about the society, anthropologists may have to learn a language and spend some time undertaking fieldwork in remote areas.

Applied anthropologists may work in areas such as social policy and planning, social impact assessments, conservation, advocacy, community development and land claims.

Understanding how other people live also has applications in business contexts such as information technology and design, for example, when designing digital products.

### Why study anthropology?

- To develop insight into and analysis of the problems people experience in their daily lives.
- To become sensitive towards people with different lifestyles, circumstances and problems.
- To acquire knowledge about the values and lifestyles of people in different contexts.
- To promote sensitivity about your cultural ethnocentricities and prejudices.
- To enable you to keep up with changes in your world.
- To develop communication, interpretation, problem-solving and reporting skills.

## Archaeology

You will study relics (man-made objects) from the past as well as technological, social, spiritual and other cultural activities to determine how societies lived and developed through the ages. There are unwritten prehistories of countries and peoples. To understand the relics, you would need regular use of other disciplines such as zoology, palaeontology, botany, geology, sedimentology, chemistry and physics. Your tasks would include excavation, recording and processing and a great deal of painstaking research.

There are three aspects to the work of an archaeologist, namely:

- **Fieldwork:** Early people left signs of their existence that still exist today. The methods used to prove this fact involve excavations of archaeological sites, caves and shelters, as well as the occasional chance discoveries of new and exciting facts.
- **Laboratory work:** Artefacts of any nature are studied and scientifically analysed to establish as much information as possible about the people who made them and the reasons why they made them as well as how they used them.
- **Publication:** When you are sure of the facts of your findings, you publish your interpretation of these facts in scientific journals or books. You could give lectures on your findings to special interest groups or the public and be prepared to argue your findings.

### Why study archaeology?

- To discover your roots and appreciate the long and cultural heritage of the people of South Africa and the world at large.

- To complement your studies of anthropology, art history, geography, botany, zoology and various other disciplines.
- To get outdoors, see interesting places, learn more about the cultural and natural landscape, and make important discoveries about humanity's past.

## Sociology

Sociologists study human society and social behaviour by examining the groups that people form. These groups include families, tribes, communities and governments, as well as social, religious, political and business institutions. Sociologists study the behaviour and interactions of these groups, trace their origin and growth or analyse the influence of group activities on individual members.

All sociologists are interested in the experiences of individuals and how those experiences are shaped by interactions with social groups and society as a whole. To a sociologist, the personal decisions an individual makes do not exist in a vacuum. Cultural patterns and social forces put pressure on people to select one choice over another. Sociologists try to identify these general patterns by examining the behaviour of large groups of people living in the same society and experiencing the same societal pressures<sup>1</sup>.

Sociologists can specialise in a wide range of areas, for example, social groupings, social stratification and mobility, racial and ethnic relationships, social psychology, as well as political, economic and applied sociology. Other directions include research, demographics, gerontology and clinical sociology.

Sociologists work closely with many other professionals, for example:

- with psychologists. Psychologists attempt to understand human behaviour, while sociologists try to discover the basic truths about groups. When these two disciplines are combined, the focus then is on the study of persons as members of groups and how individual behaviour affects group behaviour.
- with cultural anthropologists to understand, for example, attitudes towards and practices in marriage and child-rearing, ways in which members of the community earn their living or obtain food to eat and clothing to wear, religious beliefs and practices.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology/chapter/chapter1-an-introduction-to-sociology/>



- with economists to understand how people buy and sell, contribute their services in return for recompense, or barter and trade to add to our understanding of how groups behave.
- with political scientists. The systems of government under which men live may be determined by the nature of the group or community. The study of the state is one of the special areas of sociology.

### Why study sociology?

- To contribute to our understanding of human society and social behaviour.
- To understand the influence of group activities on individuals.
- To explore how parts of society fit together and change and the consequences of such social change.
- To develop your social insight, interpretive skills and research skills.
- To consider the ever-changing world we live in, respond accordingly and make a difference in the world.

## History

History is the study of human experiences over time noting prominent figures and events that changed the way we think about the world and our role within it. It is the study of events of the past and develops informed citizenship, critical thinking, and heightened awareness. The study of history helps us to make sense of why individuals had certain beliefs and took certain actions. We are therefore able to understand events of the past (society, beliefs, politics and cultures), the influence they had on the world and how it shapes events of today. You study patterns of human history to understand where things went wrong, comment on this and attempt to avoid it from happening again. It is essential to our understanding of individuals and society and offers topics that challenge our moral compass. For example, you may study prominent leaders from Julius Caesar to Hitler and understand how they shaped the way we understand the world today.

Understanding events of the past, prominent figures, wars and revolutions, and who invaded lands helps us formulate a sense of identity as individuals and societies. When you choose to study history at the university level, you cannot expect to read one book and understand the foundation of thinking. To understand a historical topic, you need to be willing and able to question the author's thoughts, argue their conclusion and evaluate their reasoning.

### Why study history?

- To analyse the impact of historical events, trends and artefacts.



- To understand how Revolutions and civil wars shape the government of a country.
- To develop new interpretations of events of the past that shape our understanding of the world today.
- To increase your level of cultural awareness.
- To develop your critical thinking skills and become an independent thinker.

## Politics

Human beings, by nature, disagree about how resources should be distributed, how power is divided, who should get what, and how matters are resolved. Politics can be seen as a social activity that concerns the state, as a non-violent method of conflict resolution, and as a public activity and exercise of power. It is always a dialogue taking place between individuals or parties. It primarily relates to the rules under which we are governed. One can be involved in political activities on various levels at the same time. For example, you can vote during elections and at the same time be involved in protests related to a specific issue.

### Why study politics?

- To understand and engage in a living subject – the political landscape is ever-changing and you can take a look around you and cite live examples of this today.
- To understand and know your rights.
- To deepen your knowledge and understanding of government.
- To develop and enhance your analytical thinking capabilities.
- To be concerned with human rights, equality, and/or welfare.
- To develop transferable skills (analyse data, identify patterns and implications, ability to conduct original research, excellent written and verbal communication).

## Geography

Geography is the study of land, earth, inhabitants and planets. The primary focus is on the relationship between human beings and their environment including how resources are used and how space is occupied. It is concerned with physical reality and how environments and physical space change over time. It offers insight into issues such as climate change, globalisation, social change and land invasion.

Geography involves recording information about the parts of the earth using maps, hence the link to cartography i.e., the science of drawing maps. Maps were a debated topic as demarcated areas had to have a boundary to indicate claimed territory. Longitude and

latitude were used to spatially represent areas on a map. Measurements for navigating longitude and latitude were refined and impacted navigators and explorers.

Not only is there a link between geography and exploration and geography and land invasion, but geography can also be linked with subjects such as history, economics and politics. The link between geography and other subjects is interesting and creates room for unique career opportunities.

### Why study geography?

- To understand physical systems such as land and water to predict and lessen the impact of future disasters.
- To learn the location of countries and places and the cultural and physical characteristics of these places.
- To apply geographic approaches to complex issues, for example, environmental or sustainability issues and develop effective ways to manage these within their unique contexts.
- To engage with current environment and sustainability policy debates.
- To make logical judgements around the relationship between humans and society, given the cultural, political and economic environments.

# Career options related to social sciences

## Anthropology

Anthropologists can work in a variety of contexts and occupations. These include:

- universities and other educational institutions
- museums
- reconstruction and development programs
- personnel (human resources)
- tourism
- law enforcement

- social work
- advertising
- marketing
- IT (e.g. user experience research and design)
- communication (journalism, television and marketing)
- legal practice
- business and industry (labour relations and marketing)
- socio-cultural impact assessment
- health care services
- conflict management
- community development

Opportunities for self-employment exist in the form of consulting.

## Archaeology

Archaeologists are employed in a variety of settings. They work for academic or research institutions such as universities or museums. They can also be employed as consultants by the National Heritage Council and the National Parks of South Africa to promote and supervise heritage conservation, or they pursue careers in journalism or tourism.

Archaeologists are often contracted by state departments or private companies to assess how industrial developments will influence the cultural landscape. They also find themselves working in museums and universities. Self-employment opportunities do exist, but you will need to think creatively and generate your opportunities. Possibilities include specialist tours for tourists and contract work for developers to do surveys of archaeological sites for environmental impact assessment.

## Sociology

Those who wish to turn sociology into their occupation require post-graduate qualifications. Those with post-graduate training in sociology may be employed as academic sociologists attached to universities as lecturers, research sociologists attached to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), at research institutes, universities and other organisations; and administrative and planning sociologists (persons employed in large organisations and industries in which a sound knowledge of human relations is essential, for example, liaison officers and personnel managers and persons concerned with planning and development).

The demand for sociologists is limited. However, for students with postgraduate qualifications in industrial sociology, especially with the knowledge of labour relations, there is a demand in larger firms and companies. They can work as social research consultants. Graduates may be employed by universities, large municipalities, commerce and industry, in some government departments and semi-government organisations such as the Human Science Research Council (HSRC).

### Related occupations

Sociologists understand social processes and institutions. This kind of expertise is required also of anthropologists, economists, geographers, historians, political scientists, psychologists, urban and regional planners, reporters and correspondents and social workers. Persons interested in sociology sometimes find suitable careers in advertising, market research, public relations, or recreation.

## History

Possible job titles related to history include academic researcher, archivist, heritage manager, historic buildings inspector/conservation officer, museum education officer, museum/gallery curator, museum/gallery exhibitions officer, teacher (with further teaching qualification), and genealogist.

Download the [CATHSSETA Career Guide](#) for more information about possible opportunities.

## Politics

Possible job titles related to politics include diplomat, journalist, lecturer (university), monitoring and evaluation practitioner, political analyst, politician, project manager, programme manager, public policy researcher, social investment practitioner, and social researcher. Visit the [Unisa website](#) for more information about possible opportunities.

## Geography

- Cartographer
- Climatologist
- Conservation officer
- Consultant
- Demographer

- Economic development officer
- GIS specialist
- Hydrographer
- Researcher
- Urban planner
- Remote-sensing analyst
- Teacher
- Lecturer/ senior lecturer/ professor/associate professor
- Transportation manager
- Water resources specialist
- Geomorphology
- Environmental consultant

You can also explore sub-specialisations, including economic geography, cultural geography, political geography, historical geography, tourism geography; regional geography; medical geography; glaciology or biogeography. Career opportunities will also be determined by your second major subject (if you have one). For example, you may have a Bachelor of Arts that combines geography with sociology, anthropology, sociology, or philosophy.

## What skills do I need?

Social scientists are researchers who are interested in the past (history and archaeology), present (sociology, economics, law, linguistics, psychology, politics) and future (geography and impact of climate change) of human activities. They want to know and understand why human settlement, government structures, and interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships develop in a specific way and how that impact the environment (geography). Apart from

knowledge about your field, it is recommended that social scientists have a high level of digital literacy (the ability to write code for example) and an aptitude for data science (the ability to use statistics and interpret results in a meaningful manner). The ability to acquire languages easily will also enhance your career possibilities.

- Interpretive skills
- Research skills
- Observational skills
- Reading and writing
- Communication skills
- The ability to explore complex issues and identify practical solutions
- Construct logical arguments
- Self-awareness
- Teamwork
- Critical analyses
- Respond to feedback
- Independent learner
- Computing skills including data science and data literacy
- Knowledge of society
- Promote social change
- Appreciation of social justice, equality, diversity and social inclusion
- Critical thinking
- Problem-solving
- Argumentation skills
- Report writing
- Digital skills and ability to disseminate information in multiple formats
- Interpersonal skills
- Cross-cultural skills

For archaeology graduates additional skills are required:

- Fieldwork and laboratory techniques
- Interpret spatial data
- Apply mathematical and statistical techniques
- Attention to detail
- Accuracy
- Time management

- GIS (Geographic information system)
- GPS (navigational system)
- Data recovery
- Technical reports

# Identify opportunities with career research

## How do you identify opportunities?

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 economics. You could start with using keywords such as “careers in sociology” and then to further contextualise your findings, you could search keywords such as “careers in sociology Africa” and “careers in sociology South Africa”. Scan the brief descriptions of the first ten results and decide which website you would want to explore first. Skim-read through 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.

### Activity

Use Google to find specific job titles related to, e.g. anthropology as a major. The following are some search terms you could consider: “job titles anthropology”; and “job titles anthropology graduates South Africa”.

Job title	Website
<b>Example:</b>	



Job title	Website
<b>Blogger</b>	Indeed.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/2TO2KoR">http://bit.ly/2TO2KoR</a>	This website provides more information about opportunities related to qualifications at Unisa.
National Career Advice Portal (NCAP) <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.

Website	Description
Prospects <a href="http://www.prospects.ac.uk/">http://www.prospects.ac.uk/</a>	Explore different job titles related to job sectors, as well as what you could do with your major subject.

### Activity

Go to any of the above occupational information websites and search for the job titles you identified during the Google search activity.

Use the tables to explore your top three occupational interests.

*Example table:*

Job title	Website	Related job titles?	Pros	Cons
<b>User researcher/ UX designer</b>	Graduate Prospects	User research	Interesting application of anthropology in this field	I will need to do further studies related to user research

Job title #1	Website	Related job titles?	Pros	Cons

Job title #2	Website	Related job titles?	Pros	Cons

Job title #3	Website	Related job titles?	Pros	Cons

### 3 Job-search portals

Job search portals are useful in terms of researching specific job titles linked to different career fields and industries. Finding job 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 that can be applied to your career planning. For example, you are interested in anthropology, but you are not sure which specific job titles are linked to this field, or you want to know what kind of qualifications and skills are needed to be an insights analyst.

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

#### Activity

- Use one of the websites above to search for the job title you are interested in, e.g. “insights analyst”. Read at least three advertisements and note the information in the tables below.

Job title #1	
Salary	
Organisation	
Responsibilities/ duties/ tasks	
Requirements (qualifications)	

**Job title #1****Requirements  
(experience)****Requirements  
(skills)****Job title #2****Salary****Organisation****Responsibilities/  
duties/ tasks****Requirements  
(qualifications)****Requirements  
(experience)****Requirements  
(skills)****Job title #3****Salary****Organisation****Responsibilities/  
duties/ tasks****Requirements  
(qualifications)**

### Job title #3

**Requirements  
(experience)**

**Requirements  
(skills)**

## 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. Research companies and employees to help you identify opportunities. To learn more about using LinkedIn effectively, go to <http://bit.ly/2JSxa3b>.

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 “Alumni” link.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn profile of the University of South Africa. The header includes the UNISA logo and the text "University of South Africa/Universiteit van Suid-Afrika" with "Pretoria, Gauteng · 250,442+ alumni · 347,572 followers". Below this is the slogan "We Define Tomorrow" and a "Visit website" button. A navigation menu on the left lists "Home", "About", "Jobs", and "Alumni" (which is highlighted). The main content area shows "250,442 alumni" and a search bar. Below the search bar are two horizontal bar charts: "Where they live" and "Where they work".

Where they live	Where they work
220,682   South Africa	1,927
124,186   Johannesburg Area, South Africa	1,888

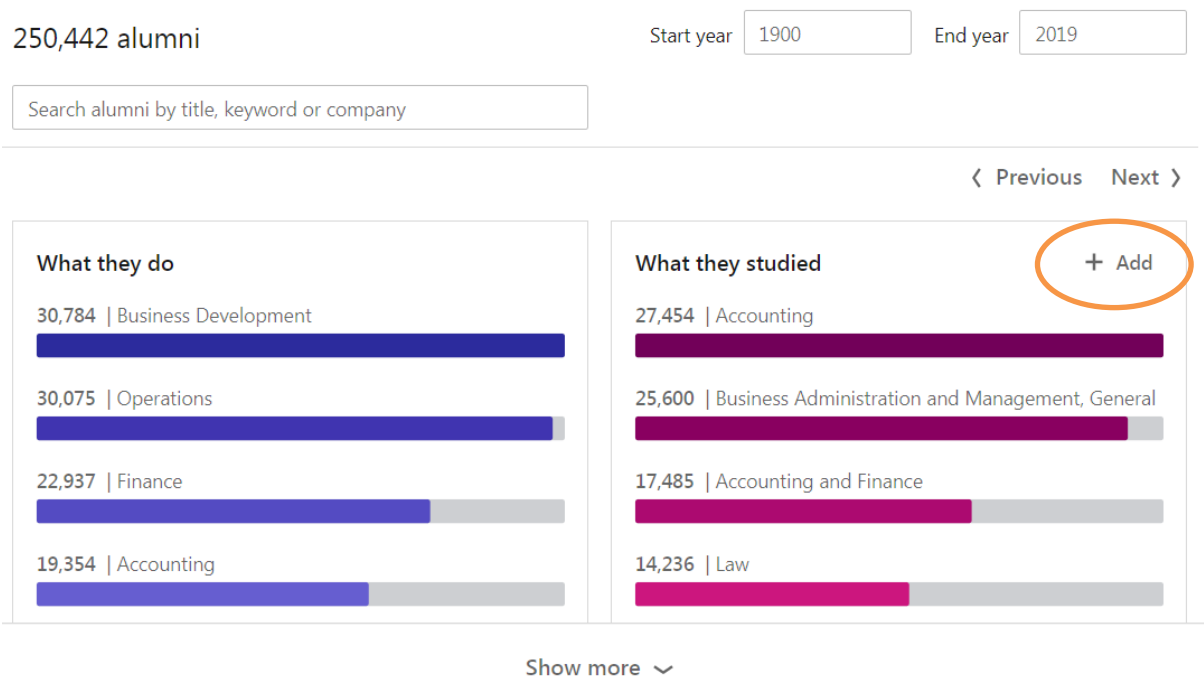
5. Click on the “Next >” link to go to the next set of headings (“What they do” and “What they studied”).

This screenshot shows the same LinkedIn page but with filters applied. The "Start year" is set to 1900 and the "End year" is set to 2019. The search bar is present. At the top right, there are navigation links for "< Previous" and "Next >". The "Next >" link is circled in orange. Below the navigation are two columns of horizontal bar charts: "Where they live" and "Where they work".

Where they live	Where they work
220,682   South Africa	1,927   Standard Bank Group
124,186   Johannesburg Area, South Africa	1,888   University of South Africa/Universiteit van Suid-Afri...
26,471   Cape Town Area, South Africa	1,787   Nedbank
21,651   Durban Area, South Africa	1,783   Absa Group

At the bottom of the charts, there is a "Show more" link with a downward arrow.

6. Click on “+Add” next to the heading “What they studied”



7. Type in the name of your subject (e.g. sociology) in the Search box.
8. You will notice that the graphs for the different headings adjust. You have now filtered the information to contain information about Unisa graduates who studied sociology.
9. You can now see how many graduates in sociology are on LinkedIn, where they live, where they work, what they do, what they're skilled at, and how you are connected. For example, in May 2021, most Unisa alumni who studied sociology worked in the higher education sector (e.g. at universities) and financial institutions (e.g. banks and insurance companies).
10. 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 sociology, and work at World Vision.
11. As you filter the results, you will get an indication of the filters you have selected (e.g. sociology). You can clear these filters by clicking on the x next to the filter or clicking



on “Clear all”.

**2,019 alumni**

sociology Start year 1900 End year 2021

Sociology X Clear all

12. Make some notes about the interesting things you find below.

Your notes about what you find on LinkedIn

## 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 that you are interested in. The goal of these conversations is to explore your career options, expand your network, build confidence, access information, and identify your strengths and areas of development. For example, you read an article titled, “Covid, cohesion, connection, care: thoughts on Connected Lives”, and you feel curious about a particular concept presented in the article. You could contact one of the authors of the article to ask if they would be willing to share their views about this field and how it applies to the South African context. Before you interview someone, research 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 further identify potential people. For more information on how to go about this and suggestions for questions that you might want to ask, go to <http://bit.ly/2LX7qp3>. 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? And 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 allows you 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, and 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 during the year 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 social sciences are by watching and listening to online lectures and reading free open textbooks. These resources will enhance your understanding of the various fields in social sciences and the various opportunities related to these fields.

Search for free social science-related courses and open textbooks on these sites:

- Coursera.org (<http://www.coursera.org/>)
- Udemy (<http://www.udemy.com/>)
- Saylor Academy (<http://www.saylor.org/books/>)
- Open University (<http://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses>)
- MITOpenCourseware (<http://ocw.mit.edu/index.htm>)

- iTunes University (<http://www.apple.com/education/itunes-u/>)
- OpenLearn (<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses>)
- YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com>)
- FreeVideoLectures (<http://freevidelectures.com/>)

# Prepare for opportunities and plan your career

“Don’t ask kids what they want to be when they grow up but what problems do they want to solve. This changes the conversation from whom do I want to work for, to what do I need to learn to be able to do that.”

*Jaime Casap, Google Global Education Evangelist*

One interesting way of preparing for opportunities and planning your career is to think about the type of problems you would want to be able to solve. This will help you to focus on what you wish to contribute, and not necessarily, whom you want to “become”. Once you have identified some of the problems you would want to focus on, you can then explore how individuals from different academic and professional backgrounds are addressing these problems. Then, you could start thinking about how you would want to contribute and what you will need to do to prepare for this.

## **Activity**

Think about your environment (family, community, South Africa, Africa, international) and what problems or challenges you know about. Perhaps you have even thought of possible solutions to these challenges. Write down some of the problems or challenges you would want to address.

Problems/ Challenges

Next, think about how you would want to contribute to addressing some of these problems/challenges. What would your role be? Also, think about how you would need to start preparing for the roles you identified (think about education, work/ volunteer experience).

Problems/ Challenges	My role	How do I need to prepare

The following are some ideas of challenges/ problems experienced across the world, including South Africa.

- |                                  |                       |                         |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Access to education              | Gender inequality     |                         |
| Access to employment             | Gender-based violence | Refugees                |
| Access to mental health services | Health and well-being | Responsible consumption |
| Access to primary health care    | Human rights          | Responsible production  |
| Affordable energy                | Human trafficking     | Retirement              |
|                                  | Hunger                | Rural development       |
|                                  | Illegal drugs         | Safety at work          |

Clean air	Income inequality	Skills development
Clean energy	Justice	Skills gap
Clean water	Knowledge transfer	Small enterprises
Climate change	Lifelong learning	Social cohesion
Corruption	Literacy	Social inequality
Crime	Meaningful employment	Substance addiction
Data security	Mechanisation	Sustainable agriculture
Deforestation	Nutrition	Sustainable economic development
Digital disruption	Peace	Unemployment
Digital economy	Poverty	Urban development
Disabilities	Rapid urbanisation	Violence
Disaster management		Water security
Discrimination		
Economic growth		
Economic inequality		
Ethical institutions		
Fitness		
Food security		

As an example, you may want to address the problem of unemployment and the challenges related to this. Think about the different individuals that may be able to contribute to the solving of this problem: educators, and career counsellors. An educator can develop programmes to support learners to prepare for future opportunities and career counsellors would support others in terms of their career development. As a social scientist, your contribution could be to research the best way of supporting others to create more job opportunities and therefore contribute to a lower unemployment rate.

One interesting way of preparing for opportunities and planning your career is to think about social sciences fields and gaps in the market. This will help you to focus on what you wish to contribute, and not necessarily, on whom you want to “become”. Once you have identified some of the gaps you want to focus on, you can then explore how individuals or organisations are addressing these gaps. Then, you could start thinking about how you would want to contribute and what you will need to do to prepare for this.

## Activity

Think about social sciences in your context, look around you and see if you can identify any gaps in the market. What aspects are working well and are sustainable? Write down your thoughts below:

### Gaps in the categories of the social sciences



Next, think about how you would want to contribute to the economy of the country. What would your role be? Also, think about how you would need to start preparing for the roles you identified (think about education, skills/ volunteer experience).

Gap in market	My role	How do I need to prepare

## Prepare for career opportunities

Many people believe that a degree will lead directly to a career specifically related to the major(s)/ specialisations for that degree. The fact is that degrees do lead to careers, but that the relationship between the major(s)/ specialisation you choose and the career you build for yourself is complex. Many graduates follow careers that are seemingly not related to their chosen major(s)/ specialisations. Various career management techniques will assist you in managing your career in economics:

1. Develop and reflect on your transferable skills
2. Start with a career portfolio
3. Volunteer work
4. Enhance your employability

## Develop your skills

### Develop and reflect on your transferable skills

Your degree will equip you with subject-specific knowledge and several work-related skills (transferable skills), for example, the ability to learn fast in new situations, to work independently, and to analyse, evaluate and interpret data. You should be able to identify and articulate the skills that you feel you are gaining through your studies. While you are busy with your studies, you need to reflect continuously on how you could apply the skills that you are learning to contribute to your professional development and who will be able to benefit from what you already know.

## Skills reflection

Module passed in the last semester	Skills developed	How can I use the skills to add value to an organisation, or help them solve specific problems?



Module passed in the last semester	Skills developed	How can I use the skills to add value to an organisation, or help them solve specific problems?

## Start with a career portfolio

Your career management portfolio could help you keep track of the information that you need to gather to manage your career. It could include information about yourself, job opportunities, occupational information, and the different social sciences. Learn more about compiling a career portfolio here: <http://bit.ly/2WaPes7>.

### Work experience for social science students

Gaining experience is an important part of helping you develop transferable skills and specific career-related skills.

### Volunteer work

As a volunteer, your studies will be enriched and you will be in a position to build up an important network of people who could comment on your professional abilities. You may be wondering how volunteering is related to your studies and your career. We would encourage responsible volunteering where the organisation and community that you are supporting benefit. You also have the opportunity to apply and further develop your skills and knowledge as a student to support the community. Your volunteer work links to your career vision and planning: before you volunteer, think about where you would want to invest your effort.

Volunteering will help you to:

- figure out whether a specific field of work is for you or not;
- find out information about a specific field;
- connect with others and maintain relationships;

- network with others in your field of interest.

Some questions to think about:

- Which organisations or communities would benefit from my skills and knowledge?
- How would this organisation or community contribute to my career vision?
- What conduct is expected of a professional in this organisation and my future career?
- What are you hoping to gain from your volunteer activities?

Your volunteer work could lead to other opportunities, so it is important to treat it professionally: keep to your commitment, communicate when you cannot volunteer, and update your portfolio with examples of what you have learnt and achieved. As a volunteer, you are already working as a professional – you need to conduct yourself as you would conduct yourself in a work environment. As you are volunteering, you are building your reputation (your “brand”): you would not want to build a reputation as an exploiter or as an unreliable worker.

Your volunteer environment will help you to develop what is valued in professional environments. This includes punctuality, problem-solving, and effective communication. In this sense, volunteering contributes to your development as a unique graduate: one who has subject-specific knowledge and an understanding of professional workplace behaviour. The one thing to remember about volunteering is that your conduct needs to be accountable and ethical. Consider that you are contributing to the community and at the same time you are building your skill sets for the workplace – you need to balance self-interest with that which may benefit others. Your work within the community must be done with the utmost respect.

Identify volunteer opportunities in your area through conversations with members of your community. Search online to help you identify volunteer opportunities in your community that are related to your interests. Make a list of the organisations that you would want to contact about exploring volunteer opportunities.

## Activity

Identify a volunteer work opportunity.

Make a list of the organisations that you would want to contact about exploring volunteer opportunities.

What are you hoping to gain from your volunteer experience?

What can you contribute to an organisation?

## Enhance your employability

Your employability refers to your ability to gain initial employment, maintain employment, and obtain new employment if required. In simple terms, employability is about being capable of getting and keeping fulfilling work. There are many aspects related to maximising your employability, including managing your personal brand, job-searching skills, networking, writing a CV, writing a cover letter, including networking, CV-writing, cover letter writing, and how to manage job interviews.

### *Why is your employability important?*

Today's careers are not what they used to be: Lifetime employment is a thing of the past: It is not unusual for an individual to hold about six different occupations during their careers, each with several jobs. The reasons for this are technological advances, globalisation, economic shifts, and changing social norms. Careers are boundaryless: your career can cut across different industries and companies. Instead of seeing your career as a ladder, you can view it as a web. Career success is defined in many different ways: The big house and fancy car are not the only measures of success. Some people choose to follow a more balanced lifestyle with more time to spend with their family. Where, when, and for whom you work are not necessarily fixed: Flexible work hours, working from home, part-time, temporary and contract work are all part of today's world of work.

*Source: Greenberg, J. & Baron, A. Behaviour in Organisations. 8th edition. Pearson Education Inc: New Jersey.*

### *How can you develop your employability skills?*

- Work through the information and activities on the *Prepare for job opportunities* section of the Directorate: Counselling and Career Development website (<http://bit.ly/2ufeSA6>).
- *The Muse* career website (<https://www.themuse.com/advice>) provides career advice related to your career questions.
- LiveCareer has an extensive library of resources related to enhancing your employability. Go to <https://www.livecareer.com/> for more information.
- The Monster website (<http://www.monster.co.uk/>) provides several articles related to employability issues. Click on "Career Resources" and "Browse Career Advice" (at top of the page) to access career-related information.

## **Self-confidence**

Your personal experiences (for example, your relationships with your parents and siblings; how you related to peers, and how you compare yourself to others) shape your self-confidence. Low self-confidence in all areas of your life, mainly how you negotiate relationships, your career, and your studies.

How much you believe in yourself or you do not believe in yourself affects your success in your career and studies. Low self-confidence affects your career and your studies in several ways:

- Your confidence determines the effort and determination towards your studies and your career. For example, if you do not believe that you can pass a module, you also do not spend time studying, since when you start studying you feel like “what is the use – I will fail in any case”.
- If you keep on telling yourself that, you are not capable of completing your qualification because you have low self-confidence, challenges in your studies act as confirmation that you are a failure. You will then also not go out and get help since you do not think that it will make a difference – you are not hopeful that this could change how you perform.
- Even when you experience challenges that are normal for all students to experience, you tell yourself it is a confirmation that you cannot make it.
- You spend disproportional amounts of time and energy gathering evidence or reinforcing your belief that you cannot make it so that it becomes a reality.
- When you do things well or when you get positive results you deny them. You find it hard to accept that positive things can happen in your life and you find external factors that have contributed to the results or success.
- You will make statements such as “Maybe I was just lucky this time – the other candidates did not accept the offer due to a low salary offer” or “Maybe the lecturer felt sorry for me.”
- When you are presented with an opportunity, you will not use it since you are concerned about failing.
- You project a negative attitude towards yourself and others. You find it hard to appreciate the strengths of others and you are critical of others.
- You will not take a risk to advance in your career because you think you will not make it. For example, you will not apply for an internship because you decide that you will not be selected even though you meet all the requirements.

- You are always concerned about how other people negatively think about you- you will not go and talk to the lecturer or ask other people because you think they will think you are stupid.

On the other hand, when you have a healthy self-image:

- You accept yourself for who you are and you acknowledge that there are things you do well and things you do not do well.
- You use your strengths in one area to build your self-confidence in other areas.
- You acknowledge things people appreciate about you since you use these as a re-affirmation to develop areas where you feel you have room for growth.
- You believe you can achieve your desired career goals and you put your energy and resources toward your vision. This affects your studies in that you can talk to others about your study-related challenges and you are proactive in terms of managing your studies since you know why you are studying.
- You can recognise and make use of presenting opportunities since you believe that you can contribute.
- You can help others understand your potential and appreciate how others could contribute to your development.
- You are more able to deal effectively with feedback on your performance since you can integrate the feedback with your self-knowledge.

### ***How do I build healthy self-confidence?***

- Building self-confidence is a process – it is like building a house: Building your confidence starts with small, practical actions. As you get feedback about your actions, you take some positive things out of it about yourself and appreciate the things you can do well and those you have to develop.
- Spend some time each day writing down things you did yesterday that you can be proud of and things you would want to do differently.
- Give yourself time to develop – a house cannot be built in a day.
- Most importantly, it must not be about thinking about things, but about doing things. This will not always be easy, but you need to take risks and test what you can do and see the results of your actions. For example, if you want information about your career, take a risk, and send an e-mail to your lecturer with questions to see what the

response is. As you take the risk, you need to change your attitude about how you view challenges and yourself. You will start thinking differently about challenges: that they are not meant to prove you as a failure, but rather to learn and discover new things about yourself.

- You need to be able to embrace failure as part of the process to succeed. Your failures do not define you as a person: Even when you fail, you do not internalise the experience that you are a failure. You learn from the experience and you try again.
- We want you to keep in mind your three circles (career, studies, and personal life) and make sure that you use one of the circles where you have more positive experiences to influence the other areas. For example, in your studies, you are getting good results. However, you feel demotivated every time you think about your family situation.
- Think about how the fact that you are succeeding with your studies could affect your career. Could it make you hopeful that you will be able to find a good job and then change your family's situation in the future? Thinking more about the things you can control (for example, your studies and how this will impact your career), enables you to minimise the sense of helplessness in terms of your family situation. When you focus on the things you can control, you create a positive outlook on yourself, your life, and others.

## My career learning plan

Your career learning plan will help you to stay focused on what you still need to do to find out more about your career development. The career learning plan focuses on the following questions: What is the information you still need? How will you get this information and by when?

Further information needed	Steps to get this information	When?
<i>Where do social scientists work in SA?</i>	Start with Google search	14 April
	Talk to the lecturer about referring me to someone who works in this field	15 April

# Professional bodies

Many professional bodies offer student registration categories to enable those who are still studying towards a qualification in the field, to join and receive specific benefits such as training, development and networking opportunities. The professional bodies' websites are also valuable sources of information should you wish to do research related to specific occupations. Many professional websites also list practitioners or organisations in the field and allow you to identify individuals whom you could contact for further conversations about your career.

- South African Sociological Association <https://www.sociology.africa/>
- Economic Society of South Africa <https://www.essa.org.za/>
- The Association for South African Professional Archaeologists <https://asapa.co.za/>
- Anthropological Associations  
<https://libguides.unisa.ac.za/c.php?g=355596&p=2399693>

# Qualifications offered by Unisa

## Undergraduate qualifications

- Bachelor of Administration
- Bachelor of Business Administration
- Bachelor of Arts
- Bachelor of Science General
- Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Management
- Bachelor of Commerce Generic
- Bachelor of Commerce in Economics



- Bachelor of Arts in Political Leadership and Citizenship
- Bachelor of Arts in Politics, Philosophy and Economics

Suppose you do not meet all the admission requirements for a diploma or degree in the College of Economic and Management Sciences. In that case, you are encouraged to apply for a lower level qualification (e.g. Higher Certificate) offered in the College of Economic and Management Sciences in addition to the qualification you wish to do. If you are admitted to the Higher Certificate and you complete it, it will enable you to meet the requirements for a degree. You need to apply for admission to the degree during your last semester of study for the Higher Certificate.

The list of Higher Certificates offered in the College of Economic and Management Sciences is available here: [https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Undergraduate-qualifications/Qualifications/All-qualifications?cw\\_college=ECONOMIC%20AND%20MANAGEMENT%20SCIENCES](https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Undergraduate-qualifications/Qualifications/All-qualifications?cw_college=ECONOMIC%20AND%20MANAGEMENT%20SCIENCES). You can also consider the Higher Certificate in Accounting Sciences.

The next step is then to apply for admission. Information about applying is available on the Unisa website at <http://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Undergraduate-qualifications>. Before you apply, take some time to read through the information about studying through open distance learning, making an effective career choice, the requirements for your qualification(s) and the application process.

Once you have applied, your application will be processed, and you will receive feedback as to the outcome of your application. Based on the new selection process, you will not be automatically accepted to study through Unisa, even if you meet the general academic admission requirements for a qualification. Unisa will assess your application using a points score system (APS). You may then be offered a place based on your points score and the number of places available for the qualification(s) you have chosen.

## Postgraduate diploma and Honours qualifications

- Postgraduate Diploma in Social and Behavioural Studies (HIV/AIDS)
- Bachelor of Arts Honours in Environmental Management
- Bachelor of Sciences Honours in Geography
- Bachelor of Arts Honours in Psychology
- Bachelor of Arts Honours in Sociology
- Bachelor of Arts Honours in Anthropology
- Bachelor of Arts Honours in Archaeology

- Bachelor of Arts Honours in History
- Bachelor of Arts Honours in Politics/International Politics/African Politics
- Bachelor of Arts Honours in Gender Studies

## Master's and Doctoral qualifications

Your choice of a Masters' programme will depend on the selection of major in undergraduate degree and the completed Honours or Postgraduate Diploma. Social scientists can apply their skills within a variety of contexts. You, therefore, need to think about the types of careers that your qualification could link to – read more when you visit

<https://beyondprof.com/what-can-i-do-with-my-social-sciences-phd/>

- Master of Science in Environmental Management
- Master of Science in Geography
- Master of Commerce in Economics
- Master of Arts in African Politics
- Master of Arts in Politics
- Master of Arts in International Politics
- Master of Arts in Anthropology
- Master of Arts in Archaeology
- Master of Arts in Sociology
- Master of Arts in History
- Master of Arts in Social and Behavioural Studies (HIV/AIDS)
- Master of Philosophy in Gender Studies
- Doctor of Philosophy in Environmental Management
- Doctor of Philosophy in Geography
- Doctor of Philosophy in Economics
- Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology (Consulting Psychology)
- Doctor of Philosophy in Arts
- Doctor of Philosophy in History
- Doctor of Philosophy in Political Sciences (Politics/African Politics/International Politics)
- Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology
- Doctor of Psychology

## Short learning Programmes (SLPs)

Unisa offers several SLPs that people could look at completing. It is important to remember that an SLP is not a formal qualification and will not allow you to qualify for a formal qualification. Read more about the range of short learning programmes offered at Unisa here: <https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Short-Learning-Programmes/View-the-SLPs>.

### How do I choose a qualification?

When you consider a qualification, you should reflect on how many majors the qualification includes. A major subject links to possible career opportunities. Major subjects also link to further study opportunities at the Postgraduate level for example the option to apply for admission to a Postgraduate Diploma or Honours Degree.

Title of qualification	Number of major subjects
<b>Bachelor of Administration</b>	Two major subjects: one in public administration the other in economics
<b>Bachelor of Business Administration</b>	Two major subjects: one in business management and one in, for example, archaeology
<b>Bachelor of Arts</b>	Two major subjects: select from the curriculum provided (all majors linked to College of Human Sciences)
<b>Bachelor of Science General</b>	One major in the sciences and the other in psychology

Research and reflect on the types of careers that link to your degree and major subject and a second possible major subject.

# Counselling and career development services at Unisa

The Unisa Directorate: 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 affect 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).