

JOB DESCRIPTION

REFERENCE NUMBER: AP1171

JOB TITLE: Vice Principal: Research, Innovation, Post-Graduate Studies and Commercialisation (P2)

LOCATION: Pretoria, Unisa Main Campus

BACKGROUND TO POSITION: To provide leadership and strategic direction in research, innovation and commercialization, research dissemination, and library and information services, championing and embedding increased interdisciplinary across the University in accordance with relevant legislation and in alignment with the Institution's Comprehensive Open Distance and e-Learning (CODeL) and 2016-2030 strategy.

KEY DUTIES/ RESPONSIBILITIES:

Key Performance Area 1 (20%): Strategy Direction and Planning

- Building institutional capacity
- Lead the success of the Catalytic Niche Areas as a strategic imperative and promote these areas of competitive edge
- Recruitment of research funds
- Providing strategic direction and monitor the achievement of the Portfolio's strategy aligned to the overall CODEL 2016-2030 strategy.
- Identify and pursue new research opportunities, emerging technologies, and cutting-edge areas of innovation, advancing new research frontiers and building capacity in areas where South Africa currently has limited expertise and capability.

Key Performance Area 2 (40%): Operational Leadership and Process Management

- **Provide strategic leadership** for the Portfolio's operations, including Research, Innovation and Commercialisation; Library and Information Services; the College of Postgraduate Studies; and Unisa Press (Research Dissemination).
- Embed financial sustainability by promoting a green, institution-wide culture and ensuring the effective use of resources.
- Develop and implement strategies and policies to recruit and retain excellent researchers while fostering an active research culture that promotes originality, innovation, excellence, and an enriched student learning experience.

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- Strengthen research information, funding, and income generation by capturing research activities, identifying funding and knowledge-transfer opportunities, and collaborating with the Offices of Graduate Studies and Research within the Colleges.
- Promote research collaboration and engagement across the University and with external organisations at regional, national, and international levels, including multidisciplinary research and knowledge-transfer activities.
- Maximise research commercialisation opportunities by ensuring appropriate systems and strategies are in place to support innovation, commercialisation, and the transfer of research knowledge.
- Enhance the quality and impact of research through internal peer-review mechanisms and by nurturing interdisciplinary research environments that encourage collaboration across different disciplines.
- Strengthen the University's research reputation and strategic influence by responding to relevant internal and external consultations and establishing and maintaining recognition as a national and international centre of excellence in research and knowledge transfer.

Key Performance Area 3 (10%): Forecasting, Budgeting and Financial Management

- Formulating strategy forecast costs, which are factored into the Institutional budgeting processes.
- Coordinating and driving preparation of the Portfolio's budget for Institutional approval (including funding budgets and Initiative budgets).
- Directing and overseeing the funding of the Portfolio operations and budgeted activities.
- Overseeing and monitoring the portfolio expenditure within budgeted parameters and reporting on variances periodically.
- Providing leadership regarding the compilation and management of the budget for the Portfolio.

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Key Performance Area 4 (10%): People Management

- Leading, mentoring and empowering employees and change within the Portfolio to promote performance, optimal working environment and cost effective operations.
- Guiding and influencing strategic leadership in embedding the values and desired culture of the Institution in line with the Transformation Charter and CODEL 2016-2030 Strategy.
- Embedding sustainability through a green Institution-wide culture.
- Driving a high performance culture by taking accountability for an effective and well-articulated performance management process.
- Ensuring the resourcing of the Portfolio through recruitment and filling of positions to meet the operational requirements of the institution.
- Promoting the positive employee relations and climate through employee engagement within the Portfolio.
- Fostering an organisational culture and climate that is ethics and value driven.
- Providing strategic guidance in the implementation of the human resources policies, procedures and practices.

Key Performance Area 5 (20%): Governance and Reporting

- Reporting on progress against strategic initiatives.
- Participating in Institutional governance structures.
- Managing the strategic relationships and networks with internal and external stakeholders.
- Overseeing, monitoring, evaluating operations and reporting to internal and external stakeholders.
- Overseeing and reporting on legislative and statutory compliance as defined by government and relevant professional bodies.
- Promoting a context-relevant environmental, social and governance sustainability awareness and culture.

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INHERENT CRITERIA

Minimum Qualification(s)

Doctoral Degree

Minimum Experience

- A minimum of 12 years' relevant experience in Higher Education, including at least 5 years' experience in an executive management role.
- Must hold the academic rank of a Full Professor.
- An National Research Foundation (NRF) rating will be highly advantageous.
- Must demonstrate international standing and recognition in the field of research.

Behavioural Competencies

- Change Leadership/ Management
- Leading and Supervising
- Strategic thinking
- Stakeholder Management
- Communicating (oral and written)
- Collaboration and Teamwork
- Achievement Focused
- Innovation and creativity
- Rule orientation
- Problem Solving
- Analysis
- Resilience / perseverance / stress management
- Conflict Management

Technical Competencies

- General management
- Research management
- Innovation management
- Postgraduate study programmes
- Knowledge transfer and commercialisation
- Library and information services
- Development of proposals
- Project sponsorship
- Corporate Governance
- Budgeting and Financial Management, Policies and Procedures
- Change Management
- Performance Management
- Stakeholder Relationship Management

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- Knowledge of Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) regulations and other relevant regulations applicable to higher education institutions.

Job Scope (where applicable): Identify confounding factors for your job e.g. (Other major indicators of the scope and complexity of your job.

Control of the following:

This position is responsible for three distinctive disciplines - it is leading the Research and Innovation, Library services and College of Post-Graduate Studies

- **Categorisation:**
The function provides Primary Academic Support to the whole institution
- **Operating Expenses**
Its total operating expenses is estimated at R466 million (2016 stats)

Organisation Impact/Liaison: Indicate within and outside the University.

Internal Interaction:

- Principal and Vice Chancellor
- Vice Principals
- Chief Financial Officer
- Chief Information Officer
- Extended Management Committee
- Chief Audit Executive
- Professional and Support Departments
- Executive Deans and Deputy Executive Deans of Colleges
- Members of management committees and operational committees
- Members of Senate and its committees

External Interaction:

- Council and its Committees and members
- Department of Higher Education and Training
- Other universities and Further Education and Training Colleges/ Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges
- Public/ private external organisations
- Government Agencies
- Professional bodies
- Bodies where UNISA has Institutional membership

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Supervisory Responsibilities: List the number, if any, and type (full-time, part-time, contract) of your direct reports; indicate the extent of your involvement in supervision including hiring, conducting performance reviews, and terminations as well as team leadership, coordination of work assignments and other indirect supervision. Please attach a copy of your current organization chart.

- Executive Director: Research, Innovation and Commercialisation
- Executive Director: Library and Information Services
- Executive Dean: College of Postgraduate Studies
- Personal Assistant

Working Conditions: Describe the risk of exposure to hazards in performing your job, and the types of hazards you face.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

- A detailed cover letter indicating your suitability for the position.
- A comprehensive CV
- An abridged CV
- A completed Unisa Job Application Form which can be downloaded on this link:
<https://www.executivetalenting.co.za/wp-content/uploads/Unisa-Application-Form.pdf>
- Names and full contact details for at least 3 referees, one which must be from your present employer. Should you not be currently employed, a contactable reference from your previous employer must be provided.
- Certified copies of matric and degree certificates and Identity Document. Proof of SAQA verification of foreign qualifications, where relevant.

To apply please forward your application quoting reference number **AP1171** to Genevieve Michel c/o shireen1171@talenting.co.za

The closing date for applications is 4 October 2026.

- **Late, incomplete and incorrect applications will not be considered.**
- **Appointments will be made in accordance with Unisa's Employment Equity Plan and other applicable legislation.**

We welcome applications from Persons with Disabilities



Incomplete applications will not be considered!