

## **Professionals leap to management level with a PGD**

A postgraduate diploma in business administration (PGD) helps professionals to make the leap from operating as a professional with specific skills, to becoming an excellent manager, says Dr Renosi Mokate, the Unisa Graduate School of Business Leadership (SBL) Executive Director and CEO. The PGD holds its own as an honours qualification to cap a Bachelors degree, opening up roles in management. It further paves the path to a Masters of Business Leadership or Masters of Business Administration qualification.

“Often, professionals such as engineers or geologists, have limited economic or management background. As their careers progress, they are called on to have managerial and leadership skills that these degrees simply do not equip you with,” says Mokate. “The PGD has been designed to address this skills and knowledge gap. It equips students with the business skills they need to progress in a corporate career path, or to take an entrepreneurial route.”

The distance learning programme, which includes study schools, takes place over a year and is based on a combination of theoretical and applied content. “In the age of advanced communications technology, distance learning allows professionals to continue working while they study and improves access to the programme,” says Dr. Mokate. “We have students from all over Africa. It allows for efficient communication and is of course an environmentally friendly system.”

Importantly, the PGD provides an NQF Level 8 or Honours level qualification, a necessary entry requirement for all MBA and MBL degrees from 2017. These degrees are being rerated as NQF Level 9 and changing from three year to two year programmes. At the SBL, certain PGD credits can be taken towards the MBA.

“It makes a considerable amount of sense to complete the PGD before moving on to the revised two year MBA or MBL degrees, particularly for those who do not already possess a finance or economics related undergraduate or honours qualification,” says Dr. Mokate. “The PGD provides an excellent foundation to move to higher NQF levels of study in business, regardless of the field of your undergraduate background.”

“We welcome students from all fields to our PGD and we are always pleased by the diversity of backgrounds, which certainly provides interesting perspectives in the study schools,” says Dr. Mokate.

During the year, these students will develop the ability to apply managerial competencies in a workplace situation. “We focus on application that relates to decision-making, resolving problems and interacting in a leadership style by unlocking talents and establishing vital managerial competencies in others.”

The SBL programme includes modules such as economics, accounting and IT for managers. Value chain management, Leadership and organisational behaviour as well as stakeholder management modules

provide key people skills. Modules relevant to how business operates today include the global business environment, decision support systems for managers and integrated management practice.

“The careful selection of modules for the Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration makes it an interdisciplinary programme that better prepares students to function efficiently as managers of businesses,” says Dr. Mokate. “Once they’ve completed our programmes, graduates emerge with the knowledge of functional, managerial and business issues as well as new conceptual skills, ready to meet the demands that are set by an increasingly competitive business environment.”