

Prof Sarah Gravett was appointed as the Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) at the beginning of 2007.

Her initial postdoctoral research included transformative learning, dialogic teaching and the design of learning environments in higher education. In recent years her research focus has shifted to teacher education. She is the author and co-author of several books and articles on teaching and learning and related themes. In 2009-2011 she led a research project on "Learning to become a teacher: Novice teachers entering the teaching profession", commissioned by the Gauteng Department of Education. She also led a research project on the establishing of teaching schools in South Africa, commissioned by the Department of Higher Education and Training (with a European Union Grant) – the work is still ongoing. Currently, She also leads a project related to training of mentor teachers – the teachers who oversee student teachers' placement in schools for practicum.

She views her involvement in establishing a school at UJ's Soweto campus as the most gratifying achievement of her academic career. The school was established to serve the education needs of young children in close proximity to the UJ Soweto campus, to serve as a learning site for the education of teachers and as an education laboratory. Research emanating from this initiative includes innovative work in developing a teacher education model, incorporating a "teaching school".

She has recently secured a major grant from the DHET to establish a Centre for African Languages Teaching at the UJ Soweto Campus.

Apart from her role as researcher and dean she also serves education more broadly in South Africa. She is representing teacher education institutions at the National Teacher Education and Development Committee. She also chaired the Education Deans' Forum in South Africa for several years. In 2013-2017 she was appointed by the Minister of Basic Education Ms AM Motshekga, as Chairperson of the Education Sector Committee of the South African National Commission for UNESCO (SANATCOM). This role entailed providing the necessary leadership to enable the Education Sector Committee (Edcom) to carry out its advisory, facilitative, liaison and coordination role between UNESCO and the South African Government and Civil Society.

Another major project that she led aimed at serving education more broadly was done in Siyabuswa, a rural area in the Mpumalanga Province. Under her stewardship a new foundation phase (elementary school) teacher education programme was established at the Siyabuswa campus of the University of Mpumalanga. After the first cohort of students graduated, the programme was taken over by the University of Mpumalanga. She is still overseeing a school development project in Siyabuswa and work related to development of Seswati and isiNdebele as languages of teaching and learning in the foundation phase. These two projects conclude in July 2018.