Walter Sisulu University (WSU) is a new comprehensive university, formed by the 2005 merge of the University of Transkei, Eastern Cape Technikon and Border Technikon. Strategically located within the Eastern Cape Province, WSU straddles the urban and rural divide of this region. The Faculty of Health Sciences is regarded as the flagship of the university, with a focus on rural health. The Faculty has programmes in Medicine, Nursing, Health Promotion, Clinical Associates and Social Work, all with a strong emphasis on Problem-Based Learning and Community-Based Education. With Community-Based Education, we focus on the health needs of the people we serve, especially the disadvantaged. There is a strong partnership between the Faculty, the community and the Eastern Cape Department of Health. We have gained global recognition as a leader in Socially Accountable Health Professions Education. The Faculty of Health Sciences is headquartered at Mthatha Campus, with an Academic Health Service Complex spread throughout the Eastern Cape Province. This includes Mthatha Hospital Complex, East London Hospital Complex, Port Elizabeth Hospital Complex, 15 District Hospitals and 7 Community Health Centres. The teaching Platform is further enhanced by the establishment of Health Resource Centres at Mthatha, East London, Port Elizabeth and Queenstown.

A Faculty of Firsts

- The first and only Faculty of Health Sciences in South Africa to introduce an undergraduate degree in Health Promotion.
- The first Faculty of Health Sciences in South Africa to introduce Problem-Based Learning and Community-Based Education in Medical Education.
- One of the two Faculties of Health Sciences in South Africa to first introduce an integrated 5-year MB ChB curriculum.
- The first Faculty of Health Sciences in South Africa to introduce placement of all its medical students at district hospitals for a continuous period of 20 weeks during the 5th year of study in the 6-year medical curriculum.
- The first and the only Faculty of Health Sciences in Africa who became the Training for Health Equity Network (THEnet) member globally.
- The first to offer Clinical Associate Programme in South Africa. All graduates are working in District Hospitals within the rural community.

The WSU health professions curriculum is based on the primary health care approach and guided by health and social needs.

The curriculum includes:
- Early clinical exposure
- Significant learning in the community
  1. Students are exposed to community diagnosis that is followed by intervention projects, based on feasible and prioritized community needs.
  2. A family attachment scheme enables students to observe patients in their homes over a period of time.
  3. Range from District Hospitals to Community Health Centres, Clinics and patient homes. More than 90% of the curriculum for the Clinical Associate Programme is taught in District Learning Complexes, which is where the graduates of this programme will practice after completion.
- Problem-based learning as a vehicle for community-based education and service; PBL is the main learning strategy from the first through the final year. WSU is the only university in South Africa that offers small group PBL tutorials in clinical years.
- Integration of basic sciences, clinical medicine and population medicine throughout the curriculum.
- Self-directed learning and student-centered teaching strategies.
Key Tenets
- Building partnerships between university, community and service providers that guide teaching and learning, research and community engagement throughout the Faculty.
- Employing an appropriate recruitment and selection process that enables the Faculty to recruit from communities with greatest need. Community members actively participate as members of the selection panels.
- Supporting students through multiple levels of mentorship
  o Peer-to-peer
  o Staff mentors for individual students
  o Community mentorship of all students
- Active recruitment and development of teaching staff with a passion for community engagement.
- Provision of financial assistance to students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- District hospital and community health centre visits by academic staff to teach students, build capacity of peripheral staff, and serve the community.
- Providing tangible, sustainable, integrated and comprehensive primary care services that are based on relevance, equity, quality and cost effectiveness.

Graduates
The School of Medicine has since graduated 935 doctors:

Albertina Sisulu Centre for Global Health and Research
The Faculty of Health Sciences established the Centre for Global Health & Research in 2012. It serves as an overarching umbrella centre of the Faculty where research and service activities are housed in support of national, regional and global efforts. It provides a consolidated platform for research advancement and research training within the faculty. The Centre champions global health and advances the implementation of socially accountable educational and health care systems.

VISION
The Faculty of Health Sciences will be the leader in Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Community-Based Education (CBE) and Community Partnerships in Africa, in order to improve the quality of life of all the people served.

MISSION
The Faculty of Health Sciences is committed to excellence in Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Community-Based Education (CBE) and social responsiveness through the integration of community service into its learning programmes that involve innovative teaching and research, with special emphasis on Primary Health Care (PHC), and sustainable rural development in partnership with communities and service providers.