



## POLICY ON ACADEMIC CERTIFICATION AND RELATED MATTERS

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### Related documents

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>UJ documents</b> (e.g. Policies, Regulations, Guidelines, Contracts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of Assessment Results Policy;</li> <li>• Academic Regulations</li> <li>• UJ Vision; Mission and Values;</li> <li>• Policy on Retention of Documents;</li> <li>• Access to information Policy;</li> <li>• Graduation Ceremonies Policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other</li> <li>• (e.g. Legislation, DoE and HEQC directives and guidelines)</li> <li>• CHE: Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) Criteria for Institutional Audits: November, 2004;</li> <li>• King IV Report.</li> <li>• Protection of Personal Information Act</li> <li>• Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997);</li> <li>• Statute of the University of Johannesburg 2019</li> <li>• National Qualifications Framework Act (Act 67 of 2008);</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Education: National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa: February 2001;</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stakeholders affected by this document (units and divisions who should be familiar with it):</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Deans;</li> <li>• Heads: Academic Departments;</li> <li>• Heads; Faculty Administration;</li> <li>• Faculty Officers;</li> <li>• Senior Director: Central Academic Administration;</li> <li>• Heads/line managers: Central Academic Administration Departments;</li> <li>• Heads/line managers: Corporate Governance</li> <li>• Heads: Client Services</li> </ul> <p>.....</p>
<p><b>Website address of this document:</b></p>	<p><b><a href="http://www.intranet.uj.ac.za">www.intranet.uj.ac.za</a></b></p>

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## POLICY ON CERTIFICATION

### 1. RATIONALE

Integral to the University of Johannesburg's commitment to excellence is the provision of a process for the management of certification that is compliant with the principles of sound corporate governance.

### 2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 Establishing a policy for the issuing, and re-issuing of certificates for the successful completion of formal (subsidised) and non-formal (Continuing Education Programmes, i.e. CEP's).
- 2.2 Stipulating uniform processes to be followed before final certification can take place.
- 2.3 Determining the authorized decision-making powers in respect of certification.
- 2.4 Establishing a policy on quality issues affecting the certification of qualifications.
- 2.5 Providing policy directives regarding security issues affecting certification.
- 2.6 Stipulating a policy on the issuing of certificates that are not received during a graduation ceremony.
- 2.7 Determining a policy on the verification of certificates and qualifications.

### 3. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

#### 3.1 Definitions

In this document, unless the context indicates otherwise:

**“Certificate”** means a document that is issued to a person as evidence that the person concerned has obtained a subsidised qualification, whole continuing education programme qualification or has successfully completed a continuing education or short learning programme.

**“Certification”** (of qualifications) implies that a certificate, as defined above, certifies that the person whose name appears on the certificate complies with the requirements laid down for the qualification or programme specified on the certificate. Certification is confirmed by the signatures of two senior officials of the University who are authorised to do so (see also 5.1.4 and 5.3.3.3).

**“Qualification”** means the formal recognition and certification of learning outcomes by an accredited provider as reflected in the degrees that the provider confers, and the diplomas and certificates it awards, in respect of subsidised or non-subsidised academic programmes.

**“Programme”** means a purposeful and structured set of learning experiences leading to a qualification comprising a set of credit-bearing, level-

pegged modules set at particular NQF levels. In an outcomes-based system, programmes are designed to enable students to achieve predetermined exit-level outcomes.

**“Continuing Education Programme”** (CEP) means an institution-approved short learning programme or institution-approved whole programme (the latter accredited by HEQC and registered by SAQA). These programmes receive no state funding and upon successful completion, will lead to the award of a qualification in the case of a whole programme or a UJ certificate in the case of an SLP.

**“Whole programme”** or a whole continuing education diploma or degree means an institution-approved, HEQC accredited and SAQA registered continuing education programme generating 120 NQF credits or more and extending over a period of one year or more.

### 3.2 Abbreviations

ITS	Integrated Tertiary Systems
UJ	University of Johannesburg
MEC	Management Executive Committee
ID	Identity Document
NQF	National Qualifications Framework

## 4. POINT OF DEPARTURE

This policy is compiled taking into account the provisions laid down in the University’s Policy on Policy Development.

## 5. CERTIFICATES

([See also 6](#))

### 5.1 Preparation of certificates:

5.1.1 Certificates are prepared in the Central Academic Administration division from information on the Student Administration System based on moderated computerised assessments that are captured by authorised faculty staff in respect of students who have complied with the qualification requirements (see [Annexure A](#)). The Registrar appoints a senior staff member in the division to assume overall responsibility for certificates (see [Annexure A](#)) in respect of procedures for the preparation and safekeeping of related information and documents).

5.1.2 Prior to the printing of the particulars of the student and the qualification on the highly secure certificate paper, each blank certificate is allocated a unique number by an external printer.

5.1.3 The Registrar designates a special computer and printer for the printing of certificates, which may not be used for any other purpose. The printer is housed in the Central Academic Administration division in a room that provides high levels of security for confidential items. No other printer in any department, faculty or

other division of the University, nor any external printer, may be used for the printing of certificates, except the printer on campus allocated and approved by the Registrar for this purpose.

- 5.1.4 The following procedures must be followed for signing of certificates:
- (a) Certificates for doctoral degrees are signed personally by the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar (or as determined by the Management Executive Committee (MEC) from time to time).
  - (b) The signatures of the two said members of the Executive Management are entered electronically onto the remainder of the certificates and their signatures are provided to the staff responsible for the printing of certificates for this purpose. The authorised staff member must sign an undertaking that the signatures will not be used for any other purpose.
  - (c) In the case of whole continuing education diplomas or degrees, the signature of the relevant Executive Dean as well as that of the Registrar are entered electronically by computer on the certificate.
  - (d) In the case of all other non-subsidised continuous education programmes, the signatures of the Executive Dean or relevant head of department (or as determined by the Registrar) are entered electronically by computer on the certificate
- 5.1.5 Strict control must be exercised over each certificate used and a register must be kept in respect thereof. The register must be stored electronically and backed up on at least one other electronic platform.
- 5.1.6 An internal audit is conducted annually by the University auditors to account for issued as well as blank and spoilt certificates (see 5.1.2).
- 5.2 Issuing of certificates
- 5.2.1 Certificates that are prepared must be signed off by the authorised staff member of a faculty at the relevant office in the Central Academic Administration division, and must be stored in a fire- and water-resistant safe in each faculty until the relevant day of graduation.
  - 5.2.2 Certificates are handed to persons who have complied with the requirements of the qualification at a graduation ceremony.
  - 5.2.3 Certificates of persons on whom qualifications are conferred *in absentia* must be stored in a fire- and water-resistant safe in the relevant faculty for one month. Such persons must collect the certificate from the faculty office and produce an identity document (ID), and sign a University form to acknowledge receipt of the certificate.
  - 5.2.4 After the above-mentioned one-month period, unclaimed certificates must be returned to the certification office in the Central Academic Administration division to be stored in a secure place (a register to this effect will be completed). Persons must collect the certificate from the certification office, produce an ID document and sign a University form to acknowledge receipt of the certificate. Unclaimed certificates will be kept for five years at the certification office.

5.2.5 If students have complied with the requirements, but are unable to collect their certificate personally because of circumstances beyond their control (for example illness or residence abroad), they may grant written authorisation to a person of choice to collect the certificate from the University after the date of the graduation ceremony. The authorised person must provide evidence of authorisation to the University. Such an authorised person must also produce a personal ID document and sign a University form acknowledging receipt of the certificate.

5.2.6 If a student who complied with the requirements of a qualification passes away before the qualification is conferred, the family of the deceased may, after satisfactory identification, receive the certificate. In such a case, the certificate indicates that the certificate has been issued posthumously.

5.2.7 If a Faculty wants to issue certificates for attendance or Bridging Courses, it must be loaded on the Student Administration System with the marks and result (if applicable). A student list must be attached with a memo indicating the approval by the HOD and the Executive Dean of the Faculty.

### 5.3 Duplicate certificates

#### 5.3.1 Applications:

Applications for a duplicate certificate must comply with the following conditions:

5.3.1.1 Applicants must submit an electronic application to the certification office for this purpose via the secure digital certificate system. The application must indicate the reasons for the duplicate certificate.-

5.3.1.2 Payment of the prescribed fees for a duplicate certificate must be made electronically or at the University Student Finances division and the receipt must be submitted together with the application.

#### 5.3.2 Controls:

The following controls must be carried out by the issuer of the duplicate certificate before the duplicate is printed and made available:

5.3.2.1 Confirmation of conferment of the qualification on the applicant is obtained from the programme of the specific graduation ceremony at which the certificate was issued and the Student Administration System.

#### 5.3.3 Preparation and issuing:

5.3.3.1 After all the controls regarding the correctness of the information have been performed, a duplicate certificate is prepared in the same manner as other certificates.

5.3.3.2 The date of issue of the original certificate appears on the duplicate certificate, namely the date of the ceremony during which the qualification was officially awarded.

5.3.3.3 The following words appear at the bottom of the duplicate certificate: "DUPLICATE – issued on ... (date of issue of the duplicate certificate)". The latter wording also legitimises the signatures on

the duplicate certificate, which may differ from the signatures on the original certificate.

5.3.3.4 The receiver of the duplicate certificate signs a University form in acknowledgment of receipt thereof (if collected in person).

5.3.4 Safekeeping of documents:

5.3.4.1 The applicant's signed acknowledgment of the duplicate certificate (if not couriered to the applicant) must be captured on the University's electronic filing system.

5.3.4.2 Signed documents are placed on file and retained for one year or until the annual Audit has been conducted.

5.3.5 Translation of documents:

Should a certificate be required in another language of instruction, the original certificate or a valid duplicate must be made available to Central Academic Administration. A translated certificate will then be issued.

5.3.6 Name Changes:

An original certificate will not be re-issued on grounds of a request for a name change (e.g. name change after graduation). An exception is made for any error contained on an original certificate for which a certificate that has been rectified will be issued (See also Annexure, point1).

## **6. CERTIFICATES FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMMES**

6.1. Certification and certificates in respect of Continuing Education Programs that are captured on the Student Administration System, are handled in the same manner as subsidised programmes (see 5 above).

6.2. All continuing education programmes should be provided for on the Student Administration System. In those cases where good reasons exist for not being provided for on Student Administration System, the following will be applicable:

(a) The department or faculty concerned provides the authorised person in the Central Academic Administration division with the name and ID numbers of the persons who have successfully completed a specific programme (in an MS Word document).

(b) The wording of the certificate, as approved and signed by the Executive Dean concerned, is also given to the authorised person in the Central Academic Administration division, providing an indication of the length of the programme and total number of hours of the offerings, and, if applicable, the NQF level and credits, which must be printed on the certificate. Should a certificate be issued merely to confirm a person's attendance of a course, the wording on the certificate must reflect this.



- (c) After the authorised senior staff member in the Central Academic Administration division has printed the certificates, the certificates are stored and made available in the same manner as other certificates (see 5.2).
- (d) Faculty signed control lists for graduation ceremonies in a hard as well as an electronic copy of every graduation programme must be submitted to the Central Academic Administration division by the department or faculty concerned for storage for future verification.

## **7. QUALITY ASSURANCE**

- 7.1. Certification matters fall mainly under the jurisdiction of the Registrar who pays attention to aspects affecting quality assurance on a continual basis.
- 7.2. Quality assurance occurs by means of the precise application of the Policy on Certification as contained herein.
- 7.3. The senior staff member responsible for certification in the Central Academic Administration division coordinates and controls the respective applicable activities under the supervision of the Registrar and the Senior Director: Central Academic Administration, and conducts regular discussions with the latter as well as the Executive Deans (in the case of continuing education programmes), departmental heads and heads of faculty administration in order to ensure effective quality assurance on a continual basis.
- 7.4. Certification matters are audited annually (or more often if deemed necessary) by the University's external auditors.

## **8. SECURITY**

- 8.1 Security in respect of certification and certificates occurs in accordance with other relevant points indicated in this policy.
- 8.2 Security is promoted by means of short lines of responsibility (certification falls mainly under the control of the Registrar who appoints one senior staff member in the Central Academic Administration division to accept responsibility for certification matters and whose activities are audited regularly).

## **9. VERIFICATION OF CERTIFICATES AND QUALIFICATIONS**

- 9.1 The verification of certificates is managed by the record holders via the digital certificate system to ensure confidentiality and protection of the personal details of students. Graduates use the secure online digital certificate system to authorize the verification of their qualifications

electronically. The Corporate Governance division handles the verification requests of UJ qualifications for third parties and verification agencies.

- 9.2 Verification matters, as mentioned above, are handled centrally for all faculties and campuses only by an appointed senior staff member in the Registrar's division, with the help of other relevant administrative staff, as may be required.

## **10. WITHDRAWAL AND REVOCATION OF DEGREE, DIPLOMA, CERTIFICATE OR OTHER QUALIFICATIONS**

- 10.1 Subject to the provisions of AR 19.2 to 19.4, the Council of the University may, in consultation with the Senate, withdraw and revoke any degree, diploma, certificate or other qualification that was awarded,
- a) on the basis of a material error on the part of the University, provided that such withdrawal and revocation may only take place within a period not exceeding two years after the conferment concerned; or
  - b) As a result of a fraudulent or dishonest act in connection with the obtaining of such degree, diploma, certificate or other qualification.
- 10.2 The withdrawal and revocation of a qualification on the grounds listed in AR 19.1 is initiated by an ad hoc subcommittee of the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee in the case of undergraduate qualifications and of the Senate Higher Degrees Committee in the case of a postgraduate qualification.
- 10.3 Prior to the ad hoc subcommittee formulating a recommendation to Senate and Council regarding the withdrawal and revocation of the qualification concerned, the Registrar or an official delegated by the Registrar to do so, must on behalf of Council:
- a) notify the recipient of the qualification concerned that a revocation and withdrawal is being considered;
  - b) provide the recipient with relevant information justifying the intended action; and
  - c) provide the recipient with an opportunity to obtain legal or other assistance and to present his or her case in writing and orally to the ad hoc subcommittee.
- 10.4 The ad hoc subcommittee, in formulating its recommendations to Senate, must record in sufficient detail the written and oral submissions and representations of the recipient. Senate in formulating its recommendations to Council must consider the submissions and representations of the recipient. Council in deciding on whether or not to withdraw and revoke the conferment of the qualification, must consider the submissions and representations of the recipient.

10.5 In the event that the withdrawal and revocation relates to circumstances contemplated in AR 19.1(b), the University must report the matter for criminal investigation.

10.6 In the event that any degree, diploma, certificate or other qualification that was awarded, is withdrawn or revoked, the relevant Quality Council responsible for the qualification or part-qualification and SAQA must be informed by the University so as to amend the National Learner Record Database, if necessary.

## **11. DEVIATION FROM THIS POLICY**

No Deviation from this policy will be permitted unless approved by the Registrar

## **12. REVIEW**

Regular review of the policy is conducted in accordance with the approved University Policy on Policy Development. This takes place in consultation with the relevant quality assurance structures at management and institutional level under the auspices of the official custodian of this policy namely the Registrar to ensure that the policy remains valid and current in the light of changing circumstances. Unless circumstances dictate otherwise, the policy will be formally reviewed within the five-year University review cycle.

**PREPARATION AND STORAGE PROCEDURES IN RESPECT OF ACADEMIC CERTIFICATION**

1. Faculty Executive Deans and designated faculty staff authorise qualifications to students who have complied with the requirements. The Executive Dean is responsible for the signing off of the qualifications, after which senior faculty staff are authorised by the abovementioned to capture the particulars of the awards electronically on the student administration system.
2. Each Head: Faculty Administration provides the relevant electronic control list of the qualification awarded as captured on the student administration system to the authorised faculty officer.
3. After confirmation per lists signed by faculties that the relevant particulars of all the students who have complied with the qualification requirements are captured correctly on the student administration system, the programme certificates of such students are prepared by the Central Academic Administration division, namely by a senior person in the division who has been designated for this purpose by the Registrar, or an alternative person authorised to do so by the Registrar.
4. The relevant particulars for certificates are extracted from the student administration system and stored in the digital certificate system. Only the staff member who is duly authorised by the Registrar has access to such information. Three passwords are required to gain access to the information. The passwords are stored in a fire- and water-resistant safe in the Central Academic Administration division to which only the Registrar and authorised staff member have access.
5. Certificate particulars are reworked programmatically for the relevant size of the certificate (A4 for subsidised qualifications and continuing education programmes).
6. After all certificates have been captured electronically, they are printed on a special printer in the Central Academic Administration division, which seals every certificate with a silicon layer making falsification more difficult. Certificates are stored in a fire- and water-resistant safe in the Central Academic Administration division until collected and signed off by an authorised person appointed by each faculty.
7. Blank certificate paper as well as the printing and issuing of certificates are controlled by the staff member in the Central Academic Administration division appointed to do so. No blank certificate is allocated to any other office or division of the University, nor to any external person or body.

8. Every Head: Faculty Administration designates a member of faculty staff to collect the printed certificates from the authorised member of the Central Academic Administration division and to sign for them. The graduation ceremony programme, compiled in terms of the student administration system particulars, is used to sign off the certificates per candidate who qualifies for a certificate.
9. Signed control lists whereby the authorised staff member of a faculty acknowledges receipt of the certificates (including certificates in respect of continuing education programmes) are into the universities electronic document management system for a period of fifty (50) years, or for a period decided by the Executive Management of the University.
10. Should a mistake (for example the incorrect spelling of a name) be identified on a certificate after conferment on a student, the latter must submit it to the Executive Dean's office of the faculty concerned, after which it is submitted to the authorised person in the Central Academic Administration division with full control of all the particulars. The student concerned must produce an ID document/passport to the authorised person in the Central Academic Administration division before the corrected certificate is issued by the latter, and the student must sign for the receipt thereof. The ID document/passport should be submitted to the Biographical division for rectification of the relevant incorrect particulars in the University records.
11. Incorrect certificates for which corrected certificates are issued are saved for auditing purposes. If the auditors are satisfied with their audit on such certificates, the incorrect certificates are destroyed and signed off by the authorised senior staff member in the Central Academic Administration division.
12. Electronic copies of all programmes of ceremonies during which certificates are handed to successful students are stored by the Central Academic Administration division in the universities electronic document management system. A full set is also filed in the University library.

Senate approved:14 November 2019.