Policy:
Teaching and Learning

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**Related documents**

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<td>• Programme Policy;</td>
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<th>Other (e.g. Legislation, DoE and HEQC directives and guidelines)</th>
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<td>• South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act (Act 58 of 1995);</td>
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<td>• Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997);</td>
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<td>• Ministry of Education: National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa: February 2001;</td>
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<td>• Higher Education Policy Framework (HEQF): Government Gazette Vol. 481, July 2005);</td>
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<td>• Ministry of Education: Higher Education Qualification Framework: August 2006;</td>
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<td>• Minimum Admission Requirements: Government Gazette,</td>
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1. **PREAMBLE**

1.1 The University of Johannesburg offers a wide range of programmes from the formative general and professional to the vocational (career focused), addressing the national imperatives.

1.2 The University’s commitment to excellence in teaching and learning is encapsulated in its vision, mission and values statement. The vision states the scope and character of programmes offered at the University as “a mix of vocational and academic programmes that advances freedom, democracy, equality and human dignity”.

1.3 The commitments in the mission statement that have particular relevance for this policy are:

   (a) supporting access to a wide spectrum of academic and technological learning, teaching and research;
   (b) leading, challenging, creating and exploring knowledge.

1.4 Against the background of these commitments, the University strives to guide and support students in acquiring:

   (a) a sound knowledge base in the field of study concerned;
   (b) scholarly and/or professional and/or technological dispositions, attributes and competencies appropriate to the field of study and/or future careers;
   (c) academic, professional and employability knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable participation in society as high-level human resources with a view to promoting growth and prosperity;
   (d) competencies and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning.

2. **PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

2.1 This policy articulates the University’s commitment to creating appropriate, meaningful learning opportunities and experiences for a diverse student body, in relation to programme type and National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level of programmes.

2.2 The policy also sets out a framework for coordinated decision making regarding learning and teaching activities across the University by broadly describing the principles, aspirations and practices that relate to learning and teaching at the University. It also applies to subsidised and non-subsidised academic programmes.

2.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with the:

   (a) Programme Policy;
   (b) Assessment Policy;
3. CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

3.1 Learning facilitator

The term learning facilitator refers to an appropriately qualified individual who guides, assists, helps, advances and enables learning, for example Lecturers, Tutors, Mentors and Demonstrators.

3.2 Contact time

Contact time refers to purposeful, scheduled, face-to-face interaction between students and learning facilitators. This includes on-campus contact or contact during experiential learning.

3.3 Learning guide

The learning guide is a module-specific learning facilitation tool serving as a "map" for the students. It contains organisational as well as learning facilitation components.

4. PRINCIPLES AND ASPIRATIONS

4.1 Focus on student learning

4.1.1 Teaching is not an end in itself, as the purpose of teaching is to bring about learning. Consequently, teaching at the University is broadly conceptualised as the creation of meaningful learning opportunities for students. Therefore, the role of lecturers and other learning facilitators entails the guiding, promoting, enabling and supporting of deep and meaningful student learning that will enable lifelong learning.

4.1.2 Deep and meaningful learning is promoted through learning opportunities, and learning and teaching environments in which:

(a) learning activities are designed to challenge students to make connections between facts, ideas and skills, to identify and solve problems, and to apply their learning in integrated ways in multiple contexts;
(b) students are afforded the opportunity to engage in authentic learning activities via, for example, experiential learning and simulations;

(c) learning activities afford students the opportunity to engage in varying ways with the learning content to accommodate a diversity of student needs;

(d) learning facilitators make learning content meaningful and relevant to students by attending to their perceived learning needs and by contextualising learning content;

(e) assessment is used continually to provide students with explicit and constructive feedback regarding their progress;

(f) assessment focuses on the understanding and application of information rather than on merely expounding it;

(g) teaching and assessment are aligned to support the attainment of envisaged outcomes;

(h) there are positive relationships and interactions between students and lecturers, and in which students and lecturers are respected and appreciated;

(i) students are assisted to:

   (i) grasp the inherent meaning or significance of learning tasks,

   (ii) personalise learning tasks by linking them to their own experience or life-worlds,

   (iii) place the focus on the “big picture” by consciously trying to link the different components of the learning experience,

   (iv) develop innovative and critical thinking skills.

4.2 The fostering of independent and lifelong learning

4.2.1 Programmes and modules on the consecutive NQF levels should be carefully planned in terms of the fostering of independent and lifelong learning.

4.2.2 This implies that self-study, as an integral part of all modules, should be explicated in the learning guide, taking into consideration that the level of the supervision and guidance will progressively decrease from first-year to postgraduate studies.

4.3 A high premium on the development of teaching competence

4.3.1 Because good teaching is never static, a high premium is placed on the continual development of teaching competence at the University.
This includes development opportunities for staff offered by the Academic Staff Development Unit, as well as faculty-based development addressing programme-specific or discipline-related needs. The regular evaluation of teaching for development purposes is encouraged.

4.3.2 The development of teaching at the University also entails the scholarship of teaching. This implies Lecturers investigating the most favourable circumstances to promote and support learning in specific fields of study with a view to developing not only their own teaching competence, but also teaching and learning in general in order to promote and share best practice. Faculties are encouraged to establish forums for exploring effective teaching and learning.

4.4 An outcomes-based approach in academic programmes

4.4.1 Learning and teaching at the University are organised in programmes that are generically defined as a series of learning and teaching activities that lead to the attainment of a qualification.

4.4.2 The programmes follow an outcomes-based approach, implying that learning, teaching and assessment are guided and shaped by learning outcomes. Learning outcomes, which are derived from the knowledge base of the field/discipline, the demands of the field/discipline and the needs of the profession or occupation concerned, are described in terms of higher-order knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.

4.5 A flexible approach to learning and teaching

4.5.1 The University strives to provide for the academic, professional and career-related learning needs of a diverse student body through the creation of learning opportunities using different modes of access and delivery (presentation).

4.5.2 These modes include face-to-face contact between learning facilitators and students, information and communication technology, and experiential learning. The different modes are used complementary to one another and in a way that is appropriate to the student and module/programme profile, as well as module/programme outcomes.

4.5.3 All programmes at the University include a contact component between the Lecturer, other learning facilitators (if applicable) and students. The contact component of programmes makes provision for a variety of learning opportunities such as lectures, block meetings, workshops, seminars, group and individual tutorials, small-group discussions and laboratory explorations. The following applies to contact time:

(a) The contact time is determined as a percentage of the number of notional hours per programme/module in accordance with Faculty rules.
(b) The percentage of the contact time is adapted according to the student and module/programme profiles, e.g. more contact time for first-year students or for laboratory work.

4.6 Information and communication technologies (ICT)

4.6.1 The University encourages the use of ICT as a means to facilitate student access to and engagement in meaningful learning experiences.

4.6.2 ICT could be utilised in one or more of the following ways:

(a) as a communication tool with and among students;

(b) to supplement face-to-face teaching by, for example, making complementary materials and learning activities available via the learning management system endorsed by the University (currently Edulink);

(c) as a means to facilitate learning through the integration of face-to-face teaching and ICT. This implies that some components of the learning process are facilitated via ICT, and other components are facilitated in the classroom. Lecturers, in collaboration with the Centre for Technology-Assisted Learning at the University, develop modules/programmes that employ such an approach;

(d) for assessment of learning.

4.7 Experiential learning

Experiential learning (i.e. service learning, work-based learning, etc.) forms an integral part of some professional and career-focused programmes in the University, and is done in accordance with professional regulatory requirements, where applicable. It involves different sites of learning such as community, industrial, commercial and clinical settings.

4.8 A high premium on improvement of student retention, throughput and graduation rates

4.8.1 While maintaining and improving academic standards, the University strives towards the improvement of student retention, throughput and graduation rates through the creation of an environment that enhances the likelihood that students are successful in their studies and are able to graduate.

4.8.2 Different retention mechanisms are developed and implemented to assist students with various types of issues that inhibit their ability to succeed and graduate. Such measures include:

(a) good induction strategies into the faculty, department and programme;
(b) early identification of under-performing students and students who are at risk;

(c) monitoring and follow-up of poor attendance with appropriate interventions where applicable;

(d) early diagnosis of student learning requirements for basic skills and additional learning support and the provision of such support (e.g. study skills, counselling, tutoring support and mentoring schemes etc.);

(e) recognition and understanding of different learning styles, coupled with a sensitiveness and openness to presenting information in different ways to accommodate different learning styles;

(f) a variety of measures to maintain and improve student motivation (peer support, prizes and ceremonies, target setting aligned with formative assessment and feedback etc.).

5. **LEARNING GUIDES**

5.1 Learning guides are available for all modules. Guidance is more explicit and detailed in undergraduate programmes. The learning guide should be available as a hard copy.

5.2 The learning guide should contain at least the following:

(a) details of the lecturers and other learning facilitators involved in the specific module and their availability;

(b) grievance procedures and routes available to students;

(c) attendance requirements (if applicable);

(d) module outcomes and assessment criteria;

(e) assessment information;

(f) prescribed texts and additional reading lists or sources;

(g) self-study requirements.

5.3 The learning facilitation component of the guide is organised into learning units which could include the following: unit outcomes, a reference to learning content to be studied, activities for students, self-assessment or review questions and assessment information related to the learning unit.

6. **ASSESSMENT**

Assessment of students’ knowledge, skills, values and attitudes forms an integral part of learning and teaching. The principle of
continuous and integrated formative and summative assessment applies.

7. ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

7.1 Academic development implies interventions and strategies geared towards the development and enrichment of unprepared and under-prepared students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels as a response to the need for widening access and improving retention and throughput.

7.2 Consequently, academic development strategies and interventions should form an integral part of all accredited programmes and modules. In particular, the University encourages and supports the use of tutors and mentors in undergraduate programmes for student support and academic development purposes.

8. LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

The language of learning, teaching and assessment and academic administration is determined by the University’s Language Policy as approved by Senate and Council.

9. QUALITY ASSURANCE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

9.1 The quality assurance (QA) of learning and teaching is the responsibility of Heads of Departments and Executive Deans of faculties.

9.2 The relevant faculty quality assurance structures for learning and teaching are responsible for the development of a faculty policy and its implementation, as well as the monitoring of practices.

9.3 Executive Deans report to the Senate Academic Planning and Quality Committee (APQC) on quality assurance of learning and teaching. The same requirements apply to divisions outside faculties that offer non-subsidised academic programmes.

9.4 The relevant faculty structures are also responsible for programme reviews as required by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC).

9.5 Senate is the highest decision-making body in the University overseeing matters of learning and teaching.

10. FACULTY POLICIES ON LEARNING AND TEACHING

A faculty must ensure that the faculty’s learning and teaching practices are in accordance with this policy.

11. DISSEMINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

11.1 On Senate approval of this policy, the policy will be submitted to the Office for Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) for quality assurance
purposes. The Registrar delegates the responsibility to the Central Administration Division for inclusion of the policy in the University policy databases, and makes it available on the University intranet. The OIE, in cooperation with the appropriate Senate Committee and/or policy custodian coordinates and aligns the development of academic Faculty policies.

11.2 On Senate approval of the Faculty Teaching and Learning Policy, the Faculty is responsible for the communication of the policy to its students and staff members.

11.3 Supporting information related to learning and teaching at the University is available on the Intranet.

12. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

Regular review of the policy will be done in line with the approved University Policy on Policy Development. This will take place in consultation with the relevant quality assurance structures at faculty and institutional level (i.e. the APQC), and under the auspices of the official custodian of this policy, namely the Registrar: Academic.

Approved by Senate: 25 October 2006

Amendments approved by Senate: 31 May 2010