UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

Policy: Teaching and Learning

Document number	
Custodian/Responsible executive	DVC: Academic
Responsible division	Academic Development and Support
Status	Approved
Approved by	Senate
Date of approval	15 September 2016
Amendments	
Dates of amendments	
Review date	

Related documents

UJ documents (e.g. Policies, Regulations, Guidelines, Contracts)	**Other** (e.g. Legislation, DoE and HEQC directives and guidelines)
• **Academic Programme Policy;** • **Assessment Policy;** • **Policy on Higher Degrees and Postgraduate Studies;** • **Policy on Work-integrated Learning and Service Learning;** • **Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning;** • **Policy on People with Disabilities;** • **Language Policy;** • **Enrolment Management Plan;** • **UJ Programme Review Manual;** • **UJ Online Policy Framework.**	• **South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act (Act 58 of 1995);** • **Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997);** • **Ministry of Education: National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa: February 2001;** • **Higher Education Policy Framework (HEQF): Government Gazette Vol. 481, July 2005);** • **Ministry of Education: Higher Education Qualification Framework: August 2006;** • **Minimum Admission Requirements: Government Gazette, No. 27961 August 2005;** • **CHE: Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) Criteria for Programme Accreditation (2004);**

	• **Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (2013)**
Stakeholders affected by this document (units and divisions who should be familiar with it):	• **Executive Deans;** • **Heads: Academic Departments;** • **Lecturers (Full-time and Part-time);** • **Heads: Academic Support Units.**
Website address of this document:	**Intranet:** https://www.intranet.uj.ac.za

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PART A: POLICY: TEACHING AND LEARNING

1.   FOREWORD

This Policy sets out the University's policy on teaching and learning.

It reflects and underpins the University's strong commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, as implicit in its vision and mission statements: "An international university of choice, anchored in Africa, dynamically shaping the future" and: "Inspiring its community to transform and serve humanity through innovation and the collaborative pursuit of knowledge". Under the overall strategic goal of global excellence and stature, Strategic Objective Two details the University's commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, to which the Policy responds.

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

1.1   The academic, professional and vocational knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable employability and participation as responsible world citizens in the societies of the complex 21st century;

1.2   The practices of the knowledge domain in the field of study concerned – enabled through institutional commitment to the 'learning to be' teaching philosophy;

1.3   An understanding of knowledge as a process and instrument of inquiry to solve problems; and the ability to participate in such processes;

1.4   Skills in innovation and critical intellectual inquiry;

1.5   The competencies and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning – including the ability to select from and convert rapidly proliferating information to knowledge.

2.   PURPOSES OF THE POLICY

2.1   To map out the institution's commitment to teaching and learning, and to inform strategic decision making regarding activities in this domain;

2.2   To define expectations and responsibilities placed on the various governance bodies, staff and students

2.3   To provide a framework against which activities and outcomes in teaching and learning, as well as Policy implementation, can be monitored and evaluated.

3.   SCOPE

This Policy has institution-wide application.

4.   DEFINITIONS

4.1   **"Learning to be":** a view of higher education that conceptualises learning as becoming a practitioner of a knowledge and professional domain. Learning to be presupposes learning the practices of the knowledge domain (discipline or profession), which include principles, dispositions, attributes, competencies, activities, skills, procedures and values. It also requires learning how to best utilise the conceptual frameworks and/or theories of the domain, as well as the practices of inquiry, to identify and solve problems or interpret and address everyday issues.

4.2   **Epistemological access**: access to the knowledge available in and distributed by universities, as opposed to merely physical access to the university. Epistemological access presupposes teaching, which makes academic practices and underlying knowledge systems and values explicit, as well as the linguistic discourse used to represent those values.

4.3   **Diversity:** defined for the institution as including inter alia race, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, culture, ethnicity, socio-economic status, geographic location and nationality.

4.4   **Learning analytics**: measuring, collecting, analysing and reporting data about learners and their contexts, in order to understand and optimise learning and associated learning environments.

5.   PRINCIPLES AND VALUES UNDERPINNING THE POLICY

The following principles inform practices in the domain of learning and teaching:

5.1   UJ is committed to excellence in all aspects of teaching and learning, and to this end will constantly work to enhance curricula, staff qualifications and expertise, teaching practice and assessment, and learning environments. This commitment to excellence fully acknowledges UJ's diverse qualifications, and the demands of different knowledge types and learning orientations.

5.2   UJ graduates and diplomates will be educated as world citizens for life, work and leadership in the dynamic and complex world of the 21st century, and as knowledge practitioners in professional domains. Graduates and diplomats will be independent learners who are ambitious, innovative, confident, and adaptable, socially reflective and have enquiring and critical minds.

5.3   Teaching is conceptualized as a core professional and scholarly activity requiring staff to engage reflectively in their own practices, and is supported by a coherent and systematic programme of staff professional development and appropriate acknowledgement. An educational philosophy that will be promoted is that of

'learning to be': learning as becoming a practitioner of a knowledge and professional domain.

5.4 Planning for new programmes, the ongoing development of curricula and decisions around teaching and learning practice will be based on qualitative and quantitative evidence, and will be informed by comprehensive learning analytics and output from Scholarship of Teaching and Learning research.

5.5 Curricula and teaching and learning practices will capitalise on UJ's advantageous location in the Johannesburg metropolitan area, and promote engagement with a wide range of stakeholders and communities in programme-appropriate ways. Curricula and pedagogies will also capitalise on UJ's growing stature as a research-focused institution.

5.6 All UJ students are expected to maintain high standards of achievement. On the one hand, UJ's strategic commitment to access and success for students from disadvantaged communities will be matched by a commitment to epistemological access, to enable student success. This commitment will also require the institution to address areas in which it may still be underprepared for the learning needs of many first-generation students. On the other hand, any student who demonstrates high achievement will immediately receive further opportunities for academic stretch and intellectual challenge. All UJ students will be made welcome as members of our academic community.

5.7 Diversity on campus is recognised as an important element of the richness of the learning experience at University and as vital to the growth and development of individuals, both staff and students. The diversity of our academic community requires multiple, varied and innovative teaching, pedagogical and assessment strategies, to forge dynamic learning communities based on active student engagement; and for this reason, it is all the more important that we know our students well.

5.8 Appropriate physical and virtual learning environments will support teaching innovation and social learning, both within and outside of class rooms, into the future. In particular, UJ will capitalise on the potential of new technologies to support collaborative and authentic learning, and the social integration of the academic community.

The above principles will apply equally to undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, to subsidised and to non-subsidised learning programmes in all faculties and on all campuses.

6. BRIEF EXPOSITION OF THE POLICY

6.1 *Focus on student learning*

6.1.1 The Policy is informed by an understanding of learning as social and interactive, participative, situated and requiring active engagement, and as taking place both in and outside of scheduled classes.

6.1.2 Student engagement, resulting in deep learning, is fostered through challenging

learning tasks. Student learning is understood as a holistic process, situated within development of the full person.

6.1.3   Pedagogies are selected with the purpose of nurturing in students a desire for knowledge and the ability to learn independently, thereby equipping them for life-long learning.

6.2   *Teaching for learning*

6.2.1   UJ, as a comprehensive university, offers a wide diversity of qualifications ranging from general formative through vocational to professional programmes. These types of programmes assume different types of programme purpose and learning orientation, and will hence be likely to necessitate different types of curricula and pedagogy.

6.2.2   Teaching is understood as the facilitation of learning and hence involves primarily the creation of opportunities for authentic learning.

6.2.3   Teaching can be assumed to be successful only when students are able to demonstrate learning in meaningful and appropriate ways.

6.2.4   Staff are encouraged to explore and apply the educational philosophy of 'learning to be' within their discipline.

6.2.5   The University places a high premium on the ongoing development of teaching competence, and seeks to incentivise excellent teaching.

6.3   *Assessment for learning*

6.3.1   Assessment and feedback are core components in the facilitation of learning.

6.3.2   Staff are encouraged to utilise diverse assessment methods, and to ensure appropriate alignment with learning outcomes.

6.3.3   Staff must use assessment strategies and pedagogical methods that are appropriately aligned with learning outcomes.

6.3.4   Students are provided with explicit, constructive and prompt feedback regarding their learning and knowledge development progress.

6.3.5   Assessment strategies focus on the demonstration and application of information rather than on simply expounding it.

6.4   *Student and staff responsibilities*

6.4.1   The responsibility for achieving quality learning is shared between staff and students.

6.4.2   Staff have the obligation to develop well-prepared programmes and to present these in ways that accommodate the diversity of student needs and learning

approaches.

6.4.3 Students have the responsibility to attend all classes, complete all assignments timeously and to devote the necessary study time and purposeful effort to achieve the learning outcomes.

6.5 *Catering for diversity*

6.5.1 The University has a commitment to 'teaching the students we have'. This implies catering for the full diversity of students in each cohort and accommodating different learning styles and varying language ability.

6.5.2 Staff make themselves aware of the diversity in the student body, of the characteristics and needs of particular cohorts of students, and of the need to accommodate these in curriculum and pedagogy.

6.5.3 In view of the University's commitment to access, students who are likely to need additional support are identified as early as possible in the semester, to allow time for interventions. Specialised support, particularly with regard to under-prepared students, is made available by the Division of Academic Development and Support.

6.5.4 Excellent performance is acknowledged, and additional learning opportunities must be made available to top performing students.

6.6 *A flexible and encompassing approach to learning and teaching*

6.6 1 The University of Johannesburg is committed to providing quality programmes regardless of the delivery format. As such, the UJ Online Policy Framework focuses specifically on the best practices and strategies for online/distance learning and course delivery. All other teaching and learning policies within the University are adhered to, irrespective of the mode of delivery. Within this context, UJ is committed to the quality standards/guidelines for programme design, instruction, associated support services, evaluation and assessment, use and distribution of learning materials, the rights and responsibilities of parties and all related matters associated with online/distance learning.

6.6.2 All programmes at the University include a contact component between the lecturer, other learning facilitators (if applicable) and students, generally providing for a variety of learning opportunities, such as lectures, workshop, seminars, tutorials, practicals, etc. Such face-to-face facilitation of learning is complemented by other modes of learning, often by means of technology.

6.6.3 Contact time allocation is premised on the needs of students and requirements for learning.

6.6.4 Opportunities are provided for both autonomous and collaborative learning, and independent study is an integral part of all modules.

6.6.5 Learning takes place during classes, in classrooms and in science, language and computer laboratories, but also outside of formal learning venues, both on and off

campus.

6.6.6   Formal on-campus classes may be complemented by excursions and site visits, to allow for engagement with stakeholders and communities.

6.6.7   Work-integrated Learning and Service Learning in most cases involve sites of learning, such as community, industrial, commercial and clinical settings.

6.7   *Large class teaching*

6.7.1   Given the size of UJ's student body, much teaching of necessity takes place to large groups of students; however, the size of what is termed 'large classes' varies considerably across faculties.

6.7.2   Large classes are complemented with tutorials delivered by trained tutors, with the goal of ensuring that every student has some experience of small group learning.

6.7.3   Lecturers are encouraged to teach large classes in innovative ways, and to supplement information delivery with opportunities for active learning.

6.8   *Information and Communication Technologies, and learning with technology*

6.8.1   During the past decade, ICTs have largely been used to optimally deliver facts and skills (a learning from technology approach). However, to support the development of a 21st century skilled community, technology should support creative active learning that makes use of a range of different pedagogies and includes complex activities and collaborative learning (a learning with technology approach).

6.8.2   Use of ICTs in teaching and learning should be integrated with authentic learning, thereby supporting the use of technology in the formal classroom and extending flexible learning opportunities into the wider community.

6.8.3   UJ will prioritise the use of open access, open content and open source philosophies and practices in teaching and learning.

6.8.4   Ubiquitous access to learning with technology on all campuses (as increasingly being implemented) allows for full use of the numerous possible uses of ICTs in teaching and learning: as information stream; as enabler of communication, collaboration and transformation of information; and as professionalisation tool.

6.8.5   Focused staff development will increasingly equip teaching staff to maximise the possibilities of learning with technology.

6.8.6   ICTs are also used administratively to support student management and assessment opportunities.

6.9   *Learning resources*

6.9.1   A wide variety of learning resources (including textbooks, ebooks, research publications, multimedia, educational games, and other electronic resources)

support student learning.

6.9.2   A learning guide, made available in soft copy, provides essential information for each module.

6.10   *Language of teaching and learning*

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

6.10.2   All undergraduate curricula include a focus on English language development.

6.10.3   The use of additional languages in tutorials and practicals is encouraged.

6.10.4   Some professional and vocational curricula may include modules in relevant African languages, as required in the specific profession or vocation.

6.11   *A key role for learning analytics*

6.11.1   Data models and tools to analyse and predict student progress and performance are available to students, tutors, lecturers and administrators.

6.11.2   Decisions about teaching and learning are evidence-based, and underpinned by quantitative and qualitative data of various types.

6.11.3   Ready availability of data on student performance allows for the early identification of underperforming students and of top achievers.

6.12   *Academic staff development*

6.12.1   A high premium is placed on the continual development of teaching competence.

6.12.2   The Academic Development Centre offers developmental workshops and seminars, and also partners with faculty staff in exploring the implications of the 'learning to be' teaching philosophy for curriculum and pedagogies.

6.12.3   Faculty-based development may address programme-specific or discipline-related needs.

6.12.4   Student and peer evaluation of teaching and modules supports reflection on curriculum and teaching strategies.

6.12.5   Faculties are encouraged to support forums for exploring effective teaching and learning practice.

6.12.6   Teaching staff are strongly encouraged to engage in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, and to make their research findings broadly available to the university community.

6.13   *Quality enhancement of learning and teaching*

6.13.1 There is a conscious focus on the continuous improvement of the academic programme offerings with respect to their depth, relevance, stature and quality, and on the further development of academic staff.

6.13.2 Regular quality reviews address the quality enhancement of teaching and learning. These include self-evaluation and external peer reviews focusing on different units of analysis, such as programmes and modules by means of sets of UJ criteria (based on customised HEQC criteria and the UJ Strategic Objectives).

7.   FACULTY POLICIES ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

Faculties must ensure that their learning and teaching practices are in accordance with this Policy.

8.   DISSEMINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

8.1   On Senate approval of this Policy, the Policy will be included in the University policy database, and will be made available on the University intranet.

8.2   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.

8.3   Supporting information related to learning and teaching at the University is available on the intranet.

9.   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 and under the auspices of the official custodian of this Policy, namely the DVC: Academic.