



UNIVERSITY  
OF  
JOHANNESBURG



# Teaching and Learning Plan for 2022



## 1. Background

The University of Johannesburg embarked on a bold and visionary strategic plan for the period 2014-2025. Among several of its notable features, a key feature of the Plan is a commitment to excellence in teaching and learning. The University is committed to growing SET enrolments and to attracting outstanding students from diverse backgrounds, both locally and internationally. UJ's curricula will be cutting edge, inter-and multi-disciplinary, technology driven and address the needs of the Fourth Industrial Revolution while retaining its Pan-African focus.

UJ programmes will equip students for active global citizenship and the world of work. Work Integrated Learning (WIL), internships, service learning, and links with industry will ensure employable and work ready students. The University's Plan clearly articulates a continued focus on quality, student success, retention, throughput, and developing teaching as a scholarly activity. Across the University, targets are set and outcomes measured so that, with each succeeding year, the University achieves and in many instances exceeds the targets and outcomes set for that year.

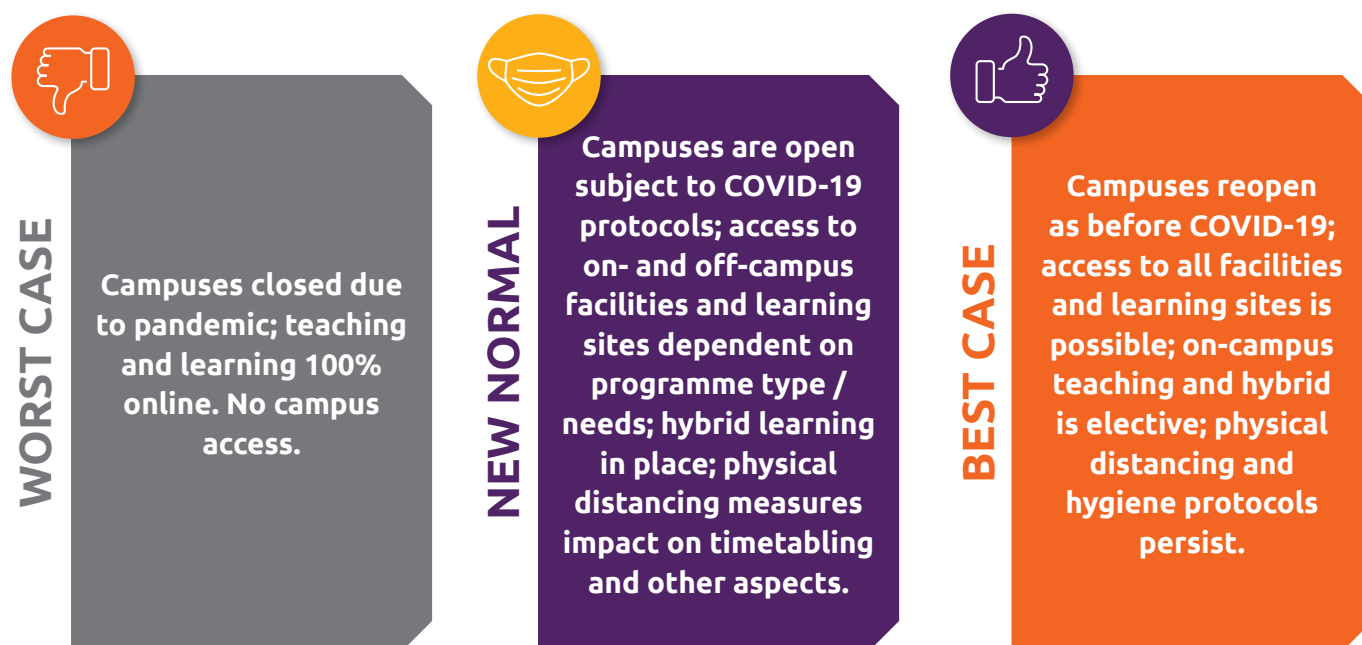
The disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted especially on face-to-face teaching, the central feature of most undergraduate programmes. The pandemic necessitated a decisive shift to allow teaching and learning to continue and the University adopted emergency remote teaching (ERT) in 2020. UJ was at the forefront of practical and proactive steps to rescue the academic year, and UJ was able to do so while minimising the risks to programmes and to students.

By the end of 2020, ERT had settled into a stable blended-learning approach, with academic staff using UJ's existing capabilities to continue with online teaching and learning, primarily on Blackboard. Through the provision of devices and data, students and staff were able to work together to complete the academic year and a potential disaster was averted. Moving into 2021, faculties refined their blended approaches, and staff turned their attention to refining the mix of online modalities used for teaching and learning to continue. In line with the national requirements, the University brought students and staff back onto campus, providing for limited contact time as required.

UJ will continue to be responsive and forward looking, keeping to the strategic intentions and aspirations of the 2014-2025 Plan. **Planning for teaching and learning in 2022** accounts for these uncertainties, and UJ can confidently activate multiple modalities and supports mechanisms as needed, moving between contact, blended and online learning. The University is therefore committed to offering its full range of academic programmes, with optimal quality teaching and learning and has in place plans to address a variety of 2020 scenarios.

Every faculty<sup>1</sup> at UJ has closely planned how teaching and learning will continue in 2022, in line with the National Disaster Management protocols<sup>2</sup> and in response to which scenario arises. The academic year in 2022 will provide consistent, quality teaching and learning through lectures, tutorials, assessments, practicals, and student support. Furthermore, UJ has in place sound and effective processes to provide first-year students with additional support, to facilitate their integration into university life and new ways of learning.

Three broad scenarios are possible in 2022. The worst-case scenario is that campuses are closed, and all teaching and learning takes place online. The best-case scenario is for campuses to reopen as before COVID-19; with access to all facilities and learning sites possible. The extent of blended learning is elective, although physical distancing and hygiene protocols persist. In reality, the third option – the ‘new normal’ is the most likely. In this scenario, campuses open subject to COVID-19 protocols although access to on- and off-campus facilities and learning sites remains on programme type and needs. Hybrid learning is in place as physical distancing measures impact on timetabling and other aspects.



## 2. Learning and Teaching General Principles

The following principles guide UJ and ensure the integrity and quality of teaching and learning process is assured irrespective of further developments in the pandemic. in this regard:

- 2.1. In line with UJ policy, teaching and learning is responsive to the needs of students from diverse backgrounds, wider society, and the discipline, including the requirements of different qualification and knowledge types.
- 2.2. Regardless of mode, teaching and learning is premised on the alignment between programme/module purpose, learning outcomes, assessment criteria, learning materials, and pedagogical approaches.

<sup>1</sup> Reference to faculty includes the Johannesburg Business School (JBS) and College of Business & Economics.

<sup>2</sup> The university's position is to encourage vaccination of students.

- 2.3. A blended/hybrid approach in line with the University's strategic commitment to embrace the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). For first-year students, an 80% (contact) and 20% (online) overarching ratio; for more senior students, 50% (contact) and 50% (online). These ratios are guidelines, and the requirements of the module or programme/s will determine the relative weighting of time spent in contact and online modes. The approach to postgraduate studies is at the discretion of the Department with Faculty approval, contingent on disciplinary requirements.
- 2.4. Support is provided to enable academics, support units, and students to be ready to transition to different modes as needed.
- 2.5. Given the complexity of teaching and learning arrangements, unambiguous, timely and ongoing communication is in place.
- 2.6. A stable and continuously improving online learning environment is in place to enable hybrid learning.
- 2.7. Mechanisms and approaches to ensure the integrity of assessment regardless of mode are continuously developed. Where necessary for reliability and integrity, assessments may be conducted on campus.
- 2.8. The needs of programmes with curricula that require students' in-person placements, whether in-service training, WIL, clinical, or other practical learning activities are addressed timeously and consistently.
- 2.9. There is ongoing monitoring and quality assurance of all academic activities (through e.g., teaching evaluations, surveys, reviews, etc).
- 2.10. Opportunities for ongoing training and development of staff and students for and in the blended environments will be provided.
- 2.11. There is ongoing enhancement of student engagement and participation whether in-person or virtually.

## Principles Related to Internationalisation

Recognising that the needs of international students are influenced by a range of factors peculiar to their experiences and concerns, and other factors determined by collaborations and partnerships with other institutions, the following principles will guide the University's approach in relation to international students:

- 2.12. The hybrid mode will be adapted to different national contexts in response to national environments and policy frameworks, and applicable jurisdictional prescripts.
- 2.13. Academic partnerships and collaborations are developed and maintained online as far as is practicable and legally enforceable in terms of agreements, or sustainable in terms of arrangements that are not contractually binding.
- 2.14. A hybrid model will be used for in-person mobility programmes.
- 2.15. Continuing education programmes (CEPs) or short-learning programmes (SLPs) are adapted to new modes, and new programmes will be developed in cooperation with international partners. Benchmarking and assessment tools for online programmes will be explored.
- 2.16. International recruitment for full programmes continues.

## 3. Critical Considerations for 2022

In 2021, the Teaching and Learning Plan was built around models of blended/hybrid teaching and learning. Where there were departments or modules for which the preferred mode was contact, and where practical, clinical, and / or workplace-based learning was needed, the was able to flexible.

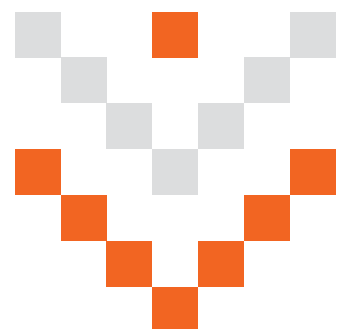
A wide range of solutions was applied in 2020 and 2021 to deliver learning to students, from online modalities to the physical delivery of material. For 2022, UJ recognises the ongoing challenges posed by access to data, devices, and other external factors. Based on these experiences, faculties will take the following into account for 2022:

- 3.1. Focused attention for first-time entering and new students with comprehensive orientation programmes to equip students as needed to meet the technical demands of online delivery.
- 3.2. Practices to maintain the integrity of assessment online mode.
- 3.3. Initiatives to enhance student engagement.
- 3.4. Ongoing training on the teaching and learning platforms and applications for academic staff, assistant lecturers, senior tutors, and tutors.
- 3.5. Technologies to enhance the breadth of possibilities for teaching and learning.
- 3.6. Availability and access to fit for purpose devices for staff and students.
- 3.7. Extended peer-mentoring programme.
- 3.8. Enhanced use of MS Teams.
- 3.9. Provision for 'block release' sessions for practical, in-person, and clinical work, as required in specific courses<sup>3</sup>.

Scenario planning in every faculty considered the three scenarios and determined the approach for each, taking into account specific disciplinary and other demands. In common to all, however, is the shared commitment to the health and safety of all persons. Clear protocols for the management of a COVID-19 safe environment remain in place and continue to be implemented across all University sites and facilities. Monitoring and controlling access to teaching and learning facilities for the safety of all. Access to campus facilities in accordance with COVID-19 regulations.

Each faculty will, through its constituent departments, manage the impact of the pandemic on the workload of its staff. To meet academic needs, additional mentors, assistant lecturers, and tutors may be allocated and large classes taught in rotation. Plans will account as far as practicable for the limitations on students' ability to travel and find accommodation. In addition, each domain across the University has in place plans to ensure uninterrupted teaching and learning, and its administration and support.

The University acknowledges the fatigue and stress caused by the pandemic, whether among staff or students. Teaching learning will most likely continue to be impacted by data, access to connectivity and devices, and electricity supply. It will continue to communicate clearly with staff and students on all changes and plans in place.



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<sup>3</sup> Particularly catering for the postgraduate level (NQF level 8).