



# Teaching and Learning Policy

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## Related documents

| <b>UJ documents</b><br>(e.g., Policies, Regulations, Guidelines, Contracts)   | <b>Other</b><br>(e.g. Legislation, DoE and HEQC directives and guidelines)  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Academic Programme Policy;</b></li> <li>• <b>Assessment Policy;</b></li> <li>• <b>Policy on Higher Degrees and Postgraduate Studies;</b></li> <li>• <b>Policy on Work-integrated Learning and Service Learning;</b></li> <li>• <b>Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning;</b></li> <li>• <b>Policy on People with Disabilities;</b></li> <li>• <b>Language Policy;</b></li> <li>• <b>Enrolment Management Plan;</b></li> <li>• <b>UJ Programme Review Manual;</b></li> <li>• <b>UJ Online Policy Framework.</b></li> <li>• <b>Quality Promotion Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>Short Learning Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>Framework for the Professional development of Academic as Teachers</b></li> <li>• <b>Peer Evaluation Framework</b></li> <li>• <b>Teaching and Module Evaluation Policy</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act (Act 58 of 1995);</b></li> <li>• <b>Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997);</b></li> <li>• <b>Ministry of Education: National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa: February 2001;</b></li> <li>• <b>Higher Education Policy Framework (HEQF): Government Gazette Vol. 481, July 2005);</b></li> <li>• <b>CHE: Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework: August 2013;</b></li> <li>• <b>Minimum Admission Requirements: Government Gazette, No. 27961 August 2005;</b></li> <li>• <b>CHE: Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) Criteria for Programme Accreditation (2004);</b></li> </ul> |

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (2013)</b></li> </ul>   |
| <b>Stakeholders affected by this document (units and divisions who should be familiar with it):</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Executive Deans;</b></li> <li>• <b>Heads: Academic Departments;</b></li> <li>• <b>Lecturers (Full-time and Part-time);</b></li> <li>• <b>Heads: Academic Support Units.</b></li> </ul> |
| <b>Website address of this document:</b>  | <b>Intranet:</b> <a href="https://www.intranet.uj.ac.za">https://www.intranet.uj.ac.za</a>   |

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## 1. FOREWARD

This Policy gives effect to the University's strategic objective to foster *Excellence in Teaching and Learning* through "offering intellectually rigorous curricula which respond innovatively to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, promoting outstanding achievements by the full range of our highly diverse student body, and establishing pre-eminence and stature as a teaching-focused institution". The University's vision underpins the commitment to excellence in teaching and learning and mission as an African university "dynamically shaping the future and "inspiring its community to transform and serve humanity through innovation and the collaborative pursuit of knowledge".

## 2. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of the Policy is to inform the development and implementation of all teaching and learning activities and initiatives to enable the achievement of the University's commitment to excellence in teaching and learning.

## 3. SCOPE

This Policy has an institution-wide application.

## 4. OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

- 4.1. To facilitate and inform decision-making on teaching and learning in line with and to enable the achievement of the University's vision, mission, and strategic objectives.
- 4.2. To enhance institutional capacity to address teaching and learning challenges, including monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning outcomes.
- 4.3 To contribute to the development of contextually relevant, flexible curricula in response to the local, regional, and global challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- 4.4 To promote the continuous professional development of academics as teachers and to encourage the development of the scholarship of teaching and learning.
- 4.5 To enhance student success, retention, and throughput rates as a critical part of the overall student learning experience.
- 4.6 To clarify the dynamic roles and responsibilities of all participants in teaching and learning

## 5. DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 "*Learning to be*": a view of higher education that conceptualises learning as becoming a practitioner of a knowledge and professional domain. Learning to presuppose 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 and the practices of inquiry to identify and solve problems or interpret and address everyday issues.
- 5.2 *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 and the linguistic discourse used to represent those values.
- 5.3 *Diversity*: defined for the institution as including inter alia race, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, culture, ethnicity, socio-economic status, geographic location, and nationality.

5.4 *Learning analytics*: involves measuring, collecting, analysing, and reporting on student data and their contexts in order to understand and optimise learning and associated learning environments within the relevant regulatory parameters.

## **6. POLICY PRINCIPLES**

The principles outlined below inform the University's commitment to fostering excellence in teaching and learning and apply equally to all teaching and learning activities. The principles of the Policy apply to all programmes, undergraduate and postgraduate, and subsidised and non-subsidised, in all faculties/colleges.

- 6.1 Teaching and learning is not limited to the transmission and acquisition of knowledge but involves the practices of knowledge and how knowledge is produced and used.
- 6.2. Teaching and learning should be based on the recognition of the pluriversality or multiplicity of knowledge(s) and the inclusion of all knowledge types in the curriculum.
- 6.3 Teaching and learning should be student-centered and facilitate access to knowledge and ways of knowing by building on the students' prior knowledge and learning experiences.
- 6.4 Teaching and learning should be "fit for purpose", that is, it should take into account the context in which it takes place.
- 6.5 Teaching and learning should be responsive to the needs of students from diverse backgrounds, society, and the discipline, including the requirements of the different qualification and knowledge types.
- 6.6 Teaching and learning should be based on an alignment between programme purpose, learning outcomes, assessment criteria, learning materials, and pedagogical approaches.
- 6.7. Teaching and learning promotes and is enhanced by the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL).
- 6.8. Teaching and learning is underpinned by reflexive practice and research, which contributes to the professionalisation of academics as teachers.
- 6.9 Teaching and learning is enabled by appropriate resources provided by the university and faculties, including physical and virtual learning environments, technologies and infrastructure .
- 6.10 Teaching and learning comprises a continuum of modes of delivery from fully face-to-face to fully online.
- 6.11 Teaching and learning involves the appropriate use of technology to enhance the student learning experience

## **7. POLICY FRAMEWORK**

### **7.1 The Student Learning Experience**

7.1.1 Teaching and learning is a social process and activity and involves reciprocal relationships between different participants in the teaching and learning process and between students themselves. In this sense, excellence in teaching and learning, irrespective of the mode of delivery, is characterised by, among other elements, the following:

- It is interactive and participative and involves active engagement through the provision of information, feedback, guidance, and support. Teaching and learning involve interaction between students through discussion and debate on issues and/or collaboration on projects and other tasks.
- It is engaging and cognitively challenging and enhances the abilities, skills, and knowledge of all participants.
- It involves “doing” and practice, that is, applying what has been learned to find solutions to real-world problems.
- It has clearly specified learning outcomes, that is, the abilities, skills, and knowledge that students will develop and gain and should be able to demonstrate at the end of the course/programme.
- It promotes student agency and autonomy through encouraging the role of students as co-creators of knowledge by providing opportunities for autonomous and collaborative learning and independent study to the extent that this is possible, thus promoting and equipping students for life-long learning.

7.1.2 Teaching and learning is not limited to the transmission and acquisition of knowledge but involves the practice of knowledge, that is, how knowledge is produced and used. This is encapsulated in the notion of “learning to be”, which involves learning the practices of the knowledge domain (discipline or profession), and includes principles, dispositions, attributes, competencies, activities, skills, procedures and values. Learning to be requires learning how best to utilise the conceptual frameworks and/or theories of a domain/s, as well as the practices of inquiry, to identify and solve problems or to interpret and address issues to the benefit of society.

7.1.3 Teaching and learning should be “fit for purpose”, that is, its underlying premise is be informed by the University’s commitment to “teaching the students we have”. This requires developing curricula and pedagogy which take into account prior learning, accommodates the full diversity of students’ social, economic, educational and cultural backgrounds.

7.1.4 “Teaching the students we have” requires the provision of appropriate and responsive teaching and learning support, integrated into the course/programme as required.

- 7.1.4.1 All teaching and learning aligns to the University’s language policy.
- 7.1.4.2 The University recognises excellence in student performance and provides enriching learning opportunities as appropriate.

7.1.5 Assessment is integral to teaching and learning and is guided by the UJ Assessment Policy. The alignment of learning outcomes with assessment criteria, together with feedback to students on the outcomes of assessment, facilitates learning.

## **7.2 Curriculum**

7.2.1 As a comprehensive university UJ offers a wide range of programmes - general formative, vocational and professional - and qualifications - undergraduate diplomas, degrees and postgraduate diplomas and degrees. The different programmes and qualifications have different purposes and learning orientations and require different curricula and pedagogical approaches.

7.2.2 The University is committed to ensuring that curricula are relevant across the different programmes and qualifications offered and are regularly renewed and updated, in line with the rapidly changing social and economic contexts of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Curricula take into account globalisation and the advances in information and communications technology, including Artificial Intelligence and the emergence of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution. Contemporary access to information has shifted the focus to the application of knowledge through the development of broad skills and competencies. Curricula encompass knowing, knowing how to, the ability to manage and mine the ever-

increasing knowledge base, as well as graduate attributes which require curricula reflect the following three inter-related components:

- Knowledge - what students know and understand in terms of the concepts, methods, procedures and analytical tools of the disciplines, including understanding the connections between disciplines.
- Skills and competencies – how students use or apply what they know to solve real-world problems, which requires skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, communication, and collaboration or teamwork.
- Values, aptitudes and attributes – how students engage and behave in the world, which require qualities such as ethics, integrity, honesty, courage, resilience, responsibility and leadership.

7.2.3 The design and development of curricula to reflect these changes should ensure that:

- It meets and is sensitive to the learning needs of students from diverse backgrounds, as well as the requirements of different qualification and knowledge types.
- It recognises the pluriversality or multiplicity of knowledge(s) and addresses the historical imbalance in which knowledge and ways of knowing is dominated by the western canon developed in the global North. This requires the decolonisation of knowledge to include all knowledge, in particular, knowledge and ways of knowing from the global South with a specific focus on Africa.
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- It promotes breadth and depth in undergraduate programmes and inter-disciplinarity in both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. This is in line with a growing trend in higher education based on the view that it is a necessary pre-condition for addressing and finding solutions to societal grand challenges, both national and global.

### **7.3 Teaching and learning modes of delivery**

7.3.1 The University recognises that teaching and learning on campus needs to be reconceptualised to encompass a continuum of modalities of delivery.

7.3.2 A variety of teaching and learning modalities is used to enhance student learning through enabling students to engage in learning activities outside of the lecture room.

7.3.3 A variety of teaching and learning technologies and practices is used to give effect to the University's commitment to "teaching the students we have" by facilitating the diverse learning needs of the student body.

7.3.4 The University is committed to ensuring equivalence of provision, in quality and standard across all teaching and learning modalities and programmes as spelt out in the Academic Programme Policy and Short Learning Policy.

### **7.4 Professionalisation of Academics as Teachers**

Professionalising academic as teachers in higher education is crucial to improving teaching and learning and this is spelt out the in the UJ Framework for the Professional Development of Academic as Teachers:

7.4.1 The achievement of the University's strategic objective to foster excellence in teaching and learning requires recognising the dual role of academics – as disciplinary experts generating new knowledge and as teachers mediating effective student learning in the transmission of knowledge. This dual role in addition involves research and discipline knowledge which is complemented by the development of academics' pedagogical skills and competencies.

7.4.2 The University is committed to facilitating the professionalisation of teaching through the provision of professional development programmes and opportunities, both formal and informal, that enable academics to acquire, enhance or refresh the skills needed for effective teaching and learning at different stages in the academic career path. The Centre for Academic Staff Development (CASD) is responsible for the provision of these programmes.

7.4.3 In addition, the importance attached to fostering excellence in teaching and learning is reflected in the range of activities and incentives provided by the University to achieve this objective, including the UJ Teaching Innovation Fund, the Vice-Chancellor's Teaching Excellence Award, and promotion criteria that are flexible in terms of the weighting allocated to teaching, research and community engagement and leadership.

7.4.4 The University also encourages and supports academics to engage in SOTL to facilitate their professional development as teachers and to inform their teaching practice.

## **7.5 Learning Analytics**

The University recognises the role of research and data analysis in facilitating understanding of learning and associated learning environments through measuring, collecting, analysing and reporting data about students and their contexts. In this regard, the University is committed to ensuring that:

- Data models and tools to analyse and predict student progress and performance are available to students, tutors, academics, and administrators. This is especially important in enabling the early identification of and providing supporting interventions for underperforming students.
- Decisions about teaching and learning are evidence-based and underpinned by quantitative and qualitative data of various types.

## **7.6. Roles and Responsibilities in Teaching and Learning**

7.6.1 Academics develop "fit for purpose" courses and programmes in line with academic quality requirements.

7.6.2 Academics are knowledge experts who stay abreast of developments in their discipline/s; developments in teaching and learning in higher education.

7.6.3 Students are responsible for their own learning and for making use of the learning opportunities provided.

## **8. FACULTY/COLLEGE POLICIES ON TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Faculties/college must ensure that their learning and teaching practices are in aligned with Policy.

## **9. DISSEMINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

9.1 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.

9.2 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.

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

## **10. 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 the faculty/College and institutional level and under the auspices of the official custodian of this Policy, namely the DVC: Academic.