Implementation of Online Qualifications

In 2014, as part of the over-arching university strategy, UJ began planning for the introduction of wholly online programmes. While some UJ modules and programmes are offered in a 'blended' mode, the provision of high-quality, resource-rich wholly-online programmes has required a new approach to programme development, assessment, academic support, and academic staff development. An Online Policy Framework was approved by Senate in 2016 (attached).

Programme design
Instructional Designers in the UJ Centre for Academic Technologies (CAT) have partnered with academic programme co-ordinators to develop online programmes that make optimal use of the online management system for teaching and learning and online education resources. CAT's high-end *Online Design and Development template* ensures alignment with approved critical assessment criteria and outcomes for modules adhering to specifications and requirements for online programme delivery. This ensures that 'on campus' programmes are not simply augmented for online or blended delivery, but that this mode of delivery transforms the approach to learning and teaching. The creation of greater inclusivity and flexible pacing results in the development and enhancement of students' complex problem-solving, critical thinking and creativity processes.

Academic Quality
Online programmes are located in their pertinent academic departments, and not in a separate 'distance education' unit, to ensure that existing quality assurance procedures in faculties pertain equally to 'on campus' and online programmes. All academic decision-making is vested in the departments and faculties, and professorial staff will be involved in teaching and assessment.

Student support
The UJ online model is based on a ratio of 1 online tutor to 30 online students. Tutors and senior tutors will be registered preferably for Master's degrees or at least for an Honours degree, and will be trained within CAT and the Unit for Professional Staff Development

(PASD). Tutors will receive detailed ongoing instruction from module co-ordinator, and will report to module co-ordinators on a weekly basis. The function of the tutors and senior tutors will be to support their cohort of 30 students, to respond to their queries within a day, organize online seminars and discussions, and to assist with tasks, assignments, tests and examinations. The module co-ordinator is the moderator of assessments, and the departmental and faculty procedures and rules with regard to quality of assessment will apply. UJ internal moderation and external examination policies are applicable as per the UJ Policy on Assessment. There is no deviation from processes followed for contact programmes. The tutors will report back to PASD every semester. Students will receive online seminars, personal online consultation with the tutor or lecturer, participation in group projects, with regular contact from the tutor to encourage and support.

Student Access to Online resources
Currently, all UJ students have access to a range of online student development and support modules. These include the First Year Experience guide (including modules on choosing careers, essential student skills and support services), the Senior Student Experience guide (including modules on project management, developing problem-solving skills, developing innovative, creative and critical thinking, and effective planning), the Learn How to Learn self-enrolment programme on Blackboard, the UJ Success 101 for first-year students, MS Office self-training (MS Office, MS Word and Powerpoint), the computer skills development module, Blackboard Learn videos, the Learning to Cope guide (containing a range of psycho-social resilience modules), and a module on Workplace Readiness. UJ's library has become predominantly digital, and online students will have online access to primary and secondary learning materials specific to each online module. Students also have online access to their assessment results, examination results and financial statements. Additional online student support materials will be developed during 2017 and in the years ahead synchronized with each qualification and customized accordingly.

Assessment
While online programmes require a new approach to teaching and learning, the general principles that guide good assessment practices in higher education apply. Online assessment, like 'on campus' assessment, must adhere to principles of curriculum alignment to ensure that assessment meets the programme purpose and that pedagogy and assessment tasks are aligned. The exact form that assessments will take, their frequency and their composition will therefore depend on the needs of the discipline. All programmes will use a combination of formative and summative assessment. With regard to formative assessment, students will receive constructive feedback timeously as per the UJ assessment policy. Assessment tasks for learning will promote authentic learning, encourage group work, reflection and the development of real-world knowledge and skills. For example, peer and self-assessment provides opportunities to deepen student understanding of the discipline. Learning analytics will be used to monitor student learning and identify at-risk students.

In order to ensure the integrity of online assessment an online proctoring system will be used. Online proctoring refers to the monitoring of an assessment over the internet and the authenticating of the student as the person completing the assessment. The proctoring system is integrated with the university's learning management system which is Blackboard at UJ. This may involve:

- Students answering verification questions; showing IDs, facial recognition with a webcam.

- Surrounding checks and ongoing monitoring via internet (video and audio) either in real time or recorded for later viewing.
- Locked browser during assessment.
- Key stroke analysis done to verify identity of student.

Widely used systems are: Respondus, ProctorU and Examity.

Staff Development

It is crucial that academic staff are properly prepared, in order to develop and implement teaching, learning and assessment in an online environment. Learning and teaching are complex and context-bound, involving students' prior knowledge, staff and student expectations, disciplinary knowledge, rules and resources that guide the teaching and learning process as well as technology which is rapidly changing. Thus, professional academic development must be carefully structured to include the complex and dynamic nature of the learning context. The model for staff development adopted at UJ is adapted from that of Koehler, Mishra, Akcaoglu and Rosenberg (2013) and involves the dynamic interplay of technological, pedagogical and content knowledge within a specific context which includes student needs and disciplinary/programme requirement (see Figure 1).
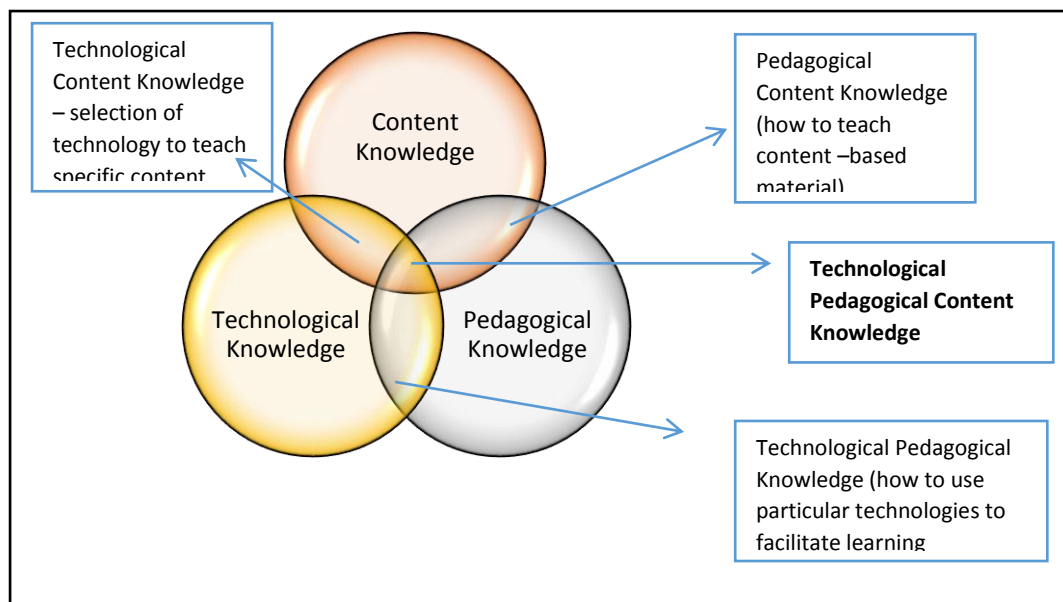
Technological Content Knowledge – selection of technology to teach specific content

Content Knowledge

Pedagogical Content Knowledge (how to teach content –based material)

Technological Knowledge

Pedagogical Knowledge

Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (how to use particular technologies to facilitate learning

Figure 1. Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (Koehler et al, 2013)

Staff development endeavours that aim to develop academic staff in the 21st century and equip staff to design fully online modules and programmes have to pay attention to all three components depicted in Figure 1:

- Technological knowledge involves an understanding of the use of, as well as the ability to adapt to and learn, new technologies.
- Content knowledge refers to the knowledge and understanding of the nature of the discipline.
- Pedagogical knowledge is the knowledge and skills that academic staff must develop to manage and organise teaching and learning activities in order to meet intended learning outcomes (Koehler et al, 2013)

In line with this, over the past two years, academic staff have received training in the multiple ways in which the UJ Learning Management System, Blackboard, can be used to enhance

teaching and learning. Approximately 90% of all UJ modules currently make use of Blackboard, and all online modules and their academic staff will use the Blackboard platform. In addition, UJ has purchased Blackboard Predict, for tracking of overall student performance in real time. Academic staff have also received training in assessment for online learning, the use of OERs, online curriculum development.

Initial Budget

Instructional design, curriculum development, staff training and tutor training will all be resourced by means of existing staff and budgets. In the first, and possibly second year, of delivery, online programmes may not generate sufficient income to meet academic expenditure needs, and thus an initial online programme development fund of R5, 000,000 has been established. This will ensure that resources for online tutors and academic support will be available for online programmes. The university has contracted Academic Partnerships (with headquarters in Dallas, USA, and with a branch being established in Johannesburg) to undertake marketing of the online degrees and to guide applicants in their preparation for applications to the university.