



POLICY ON SHORT LEARNING PROGRAMMES

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¹ Amendment approval must be by the same structure that approved the initial Policy.

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1 PREAMBLE

The University of Johannesburg (UJ) provides a wide range of non-subsidised whole programmes and short learning programmes (SLPs), which range from the general formative and professional to the vocational (career focused) and technological. SLPs, also commonly known as micro-credentials and nano-credentials, depending on duration and complexity, address national, regional and local imperatives, support access and the transformation of the higher education system, thereby advancing the vision of the University of Johannesburg (UJ) to be an *international university of choice, anchored in Africa, dynamically shaping the future*.

The provision of SLPs is particularly responsive to the mission of the University, which is to *inspire its community to transform and serve humanity through innovation and the collaborative pursuit of knowledge* as stated in its mission statement. This requires quality and a commitment to offering SLPs that have national legitimacy, credibility and well understood academic, professional and career orientated outcomes. The provision of SLPs at UJ is aligned to regulatory requirements for these types of programmes in the HE sector, as set out below.

According to the Council on Higher Education (CHE) Communique,² institutions take full responsibility for the quality management of SLPs, over which the CHE exercises oversight. The CHE expects institutions to exercise their responsibility in accordance with the guidelines that the CHE has developed and disseminated. The guideline document clarifies that National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels and credits are not to be assigned and allocated to learning programmes/SLPs that do not lead to qualifications on the Higher Education Qualification Sub-Framework (HEQSF).

The Policy is designed to meet the CHE's requirements, set out in the *Guidelines for Good Practice*³ for SLPs, for:

1. An institutional policy framework;
2. Effective SLP coordination and governance structures;
3. Processes and procedures for SLP design and development;
4. Systems for SLP approval and registration;
5. Rules and regulations pertaining to SLP marketing, recruitment and registration of participants;
6. Adequate teaching and learning resources, and appropriate processes;
7. Assessment strategy and procedures;
8. Certification arrangements;
9. A system of records management;
10. A system for monitoring and review as a basis for continuous improvement.

2 PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

This *SLP Policy* must be read in conjunction with the *UJ Policy on the regulation of secondary income generating activities supplementing employees' income*, which addresses the rules and regulations pertaining to the financial aspects of delivery, as well as with the *Policy on Intellectual Property*. The intention of this policy is to:

² CHE Communique 01/2017/02 Assigning NQF levels and allocating credits to short learning programmes offered outside of the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-framework (HEQSF), 14 February 2017.

³ CHE Guidelines for Good Practice for Learning that does not lead to a Qualification or Part Qualification (LNQ)

- i Ensure the quality of learning which takes place outside of the HEQSF. In other words, learning which is constituted either as a non-credit bearing SLP or as a credit bearing SLP;
- ii Ensure the quality of learning of credit bearing SLPs, offered in direct correlation with module/s that form part of an accredited programme and/or qualification, and from which content is drawn.
- iii Align the quality management of SLPs (including their design, delivery and certification), to other offerings of the University to ensure that the core business of teaching and learning and research is not compromised.
- iv Provide students, participants, employers, funders and other stakeholders with appropriate information and assurance that a quality management system is in place to manage the delivery and quality of all SLPs, whether credit- or non-credit bearing.
- v Provide a framework for responding to specific labour market and skills development needs of the public and private sector in the provision of SLPs.
- vi Provide a clear framework of regulations, guidelines and procedures within which faculties are to operate in respect of SLPs.
- vii Ensure that all SLPs are developed and approved on the basis of sound curriculum principles, good design and appropriate structure, and in compliance with the rules and regulations of the University.
- viii Ensure consistently high quality in the delivery and monitoring of programmes and learning activities across all faculties and campuses
- ix Ensure that all applications for new SLPs or amendments to existing SLPs are consistent with UJ policies, and rules and regulations pertaining to SLPs and formal UJ qualifications, in line with the HEQSF (CHE, 2013), as relevant.
- x Support access to formal programmes offered by UJ through the successful completion of SLPs, in line with the approved policies on admission and access.

3 SCOPE

- 3.1. This policy applies to all SLPs offered at or by UJ, whether credit bearing or non-credit bearing, regardless of whether they are conceptualised as SLPs, or micro- or nano-credentials. The Policy is applicable to:⁴
 - 3.1.1. All future and existing credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing SLPs / micro- and nano-credentials at UJ;
 - 3.1.2. All faculties across all campuses;
 - 3.1.3. All SLPs / micro- or nano-credentials that lead to a certificate awarded and/or issued by the University;
 - 3.1.4. All permanent or contract staff members involved in the offering of SLPs.
- 3.2. This policy must be read in conjunction with the UJ Policy on the Regulation of Secondary Income Generating Activities Supplementing Employees' Income.
- 3.3. Only UJ Central Academic administration in the Registrar's office may issue certification for any short learning programme provided by any domain in the University. No faculty, department, school, college, or any other university entity may issue certification.

⁴ All stakeholders are advised that participants who are not South African citizens or permanent residents and who wish to register for an unsubsidised programme of study at UJ are required to comply with the *Immigration Act 13 of 2002* (as amended) and with the visa regulations, before taking up their places on the programme to which they are admitted.

4 DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Certification	<p>In the context of an SLP, 'certification' refers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the case of a credit-bearing SLP, a document stating that a student has successfully completed the SLP indicating the number of credits obtained on a specific NQF level, or • In the case of a non-credit bearing SLP, a document stating that the student has attended or completed an SLP and has met the attendance or other requirements as set.
Consultation	<p>Consultation in the SLP domain can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about the application of acquired knowledge; • by employees or students of the University on behalf of the University; • about utilising the resources of the University; • in furtherance of the commercial interests of one or more external parties • for the financial benefit of the University and such employees and students; • on the basis of a contract between the University and such external party or parties.
Continuing Education Programmes (CEPs)	<p>The name previously given to unsubsidised whole programmes - i.e. registered on the HEQSF; and to SLPs offered by the University - for which no state funding is received. The successful completion of an unsubsidised whole programme lead to a qualification accredited by the CHE. The successful completion of an SLP leads to UJ certification only.</p>
Database	<p>A database on the UJ ITS System</p>
Learning programme	<p>A purposeful and structured set of learning experiences leading to a qualification comprising an ordered group of credit-bearing modules set at particular NQF levels. In an outcomes-based system, learning programmes are designed to enable students to achieve predetermined exit-level outcomes.</p>
Qualification	<p>The formal recognition and certification of learning outcomes by an accredited provider as reflected in the degrees that the provider confers and the diplomas and certificates it awards, in respect of formal programmes and CEP whole formal programmes.</p>
Short learning programme (SLP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May also be referred to as a micro- or nano-credential. Institutionally approved learning programmes responding to a range of social, economic and educational needs, aligned with UJ's PQM, and either credit- or non-credit bearing. • An SLP does not lead to a qualification registered on the NQF but may be presented as evidence for access to a qualification, or for credits towards a qualification. • If a short learning programme carries credits, it must be fewer than 120. • The duration of an SLP must be less than one year. • An SLP may be presented for a specific purpose, for example, as a bridging programme, for CPD points, or for enrichment purposes only.

Whole programme	A whole programme is one that leads to the award of a qualification registered on the National Qualifications Framework, and which adheres to the requirements of the Higher Education Qualification Sub-framework. These programmes comprise a set number of minimum credits as set out in the HEQSF, offered over the specified minimum period.
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5 TYPES OF SHORT LEARNING PROGRAMMES

There are two types of SLPs:

5.1 Non-credit bearing SLPs

- 5.1.1 A non-credit bearing SLP may not indicate, and may not provide, any credits at all, regardless of whether or not levels and / or credits have been used to determine entry requirements and / or the cognitive or academic demand of the SLP.⁵
- 5.1.2 A non-credit-bearing SLP may have admission requirements to establish academic or other readiness for the learning in the SLP, and to indicate to potential students / participants its relevance to them. Admission requirements may include work experience, prior qualifications, language level, numeracy, etc.
- 5.1.3 Admission requirements for these SLPs are focused on determining the applicants' ability to successfully complete the SLP.
- 5.1.4 NQF levels/credits may not be assigned to non-credit-bearing SLPs, and under no circumstances may these SLPs be marketed using this information.

5.2 Credit bearing SLPs

- 5.2.1 A credit-bearing SLP awards credits, in direct correlation with the credits on an accredited learning programme and/or qualification from which its content is drawn.
- 5.2.2 Credit-bearing SLPs are required:
- 5.2.2.1 To apply identical admission requirements to the qualification from which they derive;
- 5.2.2.2 To assess student learning in exactly the same manner as assessment on the accredited qualification from which they derive;
- 5.2.2.3 To be internally and externally moderated in line with the qualification from which they derive.
- 5.2.3 Certification for credit-bearing SLPs may state the credits and the NQF level of the SLP, or constituent modules in the SLP.
- 5.2.4 Credits allocated to SLPs may be considered for recognition:
- 5.2.4.1 Subject to 5.2.1 to 5.2.3 above, within the University in as far as the SLP provides articulation into an existing UJ qualification, or can be seen as substantially similar to a module in a qualification for which a student wishes to register or for which a student is registered;
- 5.2.4.2 By an external provider that negotiated an allocation of points or notional credits for its own purposes, such as for continuous professional development.

6 PLANNING AND DESIGN

The planning, development and design of SLPs must conform to the requirements of the relevant UJ policies and guidelines. The purpose of SLPs is to convey or up-date, just-in-time and just enough new knowledge, skills and competencies to provide for professional and/or personal development. An SLP may

⁵ For example, an SLP may be similar to a level 8 postgraduate diploma in that it may require the participants to be graduates in a particular area. Likewise, it may be similar to a certain value of credits in respect of the time taken to complete. However, credits and NQF level may **under no circumstances** be advertised or referenced in any way in respect of a non-credit bearing SLP.

be used for a specified period and / or purpose to provide specific knowledge, skills and competencies needed, for example, in a bridging context, as determined by Faculty / College. Regardless of purpose, the following should be considered in the planning and design of SLPs:

6.1. The quality and level of education and training of SLPs must be in line with the vision and mission and objectives of the University, faculty, college, school or department.

6.2 Where applicable, the planning, development and design of SLPs must comply with the regulatory requirements of the relevant professional bodies.

6.3 Outcomes-based principles apply to the development of SLPs offered by UJ.

6.4 SLPs are to be coherently designed to ensure constructive curriculum alignment in terms of the purpose, outcomes, learning content, assessment opportunities and strategies.

6.5 As a rule, SLPs offered by UJ are to be pitched on NQF level 5 and above as set out in the UJ Academic regulation 17.1.2. Exceptions to this provision may be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Registrar, and where sufficient justification is put forward as part of the approval process.

6.6. Design structure:

<p>Title of the SLP</p> <p>The title of the SLP must reflect the purpose and content of the programme and should be as short as possible, preferably not more than 42 characters. The names of formal qualifications (e.g. 'certificate' or 'diploma') may not be used in, or as the title of, an SLP.</p>
<p>The structure</p> <p>An SLP comprises one or more units or topics. The learning outcomes and assessment criteria are aligned with the purpose of the SLP as a whole, and reflect the content of the units/topics.</p>
<p>NQF levels</p> <p>1. Credit bearing SLP</p> <p>NQF levels and credits must be indicated on the SLP application form if the SLP links directly to an accredited qualification registered on the NQF (e.g. a module or modules from an accredited qualification offered as an SLP).</p> <p>2. Non-credit bearing SLP</p> <p>The NQF level applied in the planning is required on the SLP application form to ensure that quality and integrity are maintained in the development and design of the programme in terms of cognitive complexity and academic and other entry requirements. The NQF levels may not be used for marketing or certification purposes. (See also <i>Marketing</i> below.)</p>
<p>Mode(s) of delivery</p> <p>A flexible approach is supported by UJ and modes of delivery (or presentation of the SLP) as encapsulated in the University policies relating to Teaching and Learning in general, and Distance Learning in particular, apply to all SLPs whether credit or non-credit-bearing:</p> <p>a) Contact</p> <p>Face to face interaction between the educators and students</p> <p>b) Distance learning</p> <p>A set of teaching and learning strategies (or educational methods) that can be used to overcome spatial and/or temporal separation between educators and students.</p> <p>c) Blended learning</p> <p>A blend of contact and distance learning may also be used as appropriate to the SLP.</p>

<p>Facilities and other requirements</p> <p>Developers of SLPs are to consider all aspects of the requirements for the delivery of SLPs, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The calculation of feasibility and sustainability with the relevant financial partner • The required expertise and / or qualifications of presenters; • The infrastructure required and available (e.g. laboratories); • Equipment / material costs, etc.
<p>Duration</p> <p>The period of study for SLPs constitutes a period of less than one year. For ITS purposes it is necessary to indicate whether the SLP will be presented in one semester or across a specific year.</p>
<p>Assessment</p> <p>Some form of assessment is recommended for all SLPs.</p> <p>A credit-bearing SLP must be assessed in line with the assessment used in the accredited qualification it relates to and must be subject to internal and external moderation as per the assessment policy.</p>
<p>Marketing</p> <p>NQF levels/credits may not be assigned to non-credit-bearing SLPs, and under no circumstances may these SLPs be marketed using this information.</p>
<p>Academic records and databases</p> <p>All SLPs are captured on the ITS of the University.</p> <p>SLP students are managed in accordance with the UJ and relevant Faculty / College rules and regulations as approved by Senate.</p>
<p>Certification</p> <p>Certification is in accordance with the Policy: Academic Certification and Related Matters.</p>

7 PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW SLPs

The staff member assigned to coordinate SLPs in a faculty, college, school or department is responsible for the approval process, management and sustainability of the programmes as set out in the UJ Academic regulation 17.2.1 and 17.2.2.

7.1 Consultation phase

The consultation phase encompasses the initial planning, consultation, development of a draft proposal for permission from the HOD / Dean to continue with the development of the SLP. Support for the process is offered by the CAPQP.

7.2 Development phase

The development phase involves the design of the SLP, including coordination of SLPs across faculties, colleges, schools and departments. To facilitate the attainment of the intended purpose and outcomes of the SLP, the coordination of these programmes is the joint responsibility of the home department and the faculty /college within which the programmes resides. Support for the process is offered by the CAPQP.

7.3 Approval phase⁶

The SLP application must be submitted for internal UJ approval. The internal approval processes are conducted in accordance with the due dates as indicated in the Annual Year Programme of the University. The relevant Faculty / College approval processes are required to be followed, as well as:

- 7.3.1 Approval by the Faculty / College Board, either before or after presentation to the PWG (dates permitting), as per 7.3.2 below.
- 7.3.2 Recommendation by the Programme Working Group (PWG) to SENEX and Senate. Support for the process is offered by the CAPQP;
- 7.3.3 All SLP's must be captured on the academic structure on ITS, once approved.
- 7.3.4 Credit-bearing SLPs are approved by SENEX and Senate.
- 7.3.5 Non-credit bearing short learning programmes are approved by SENEX and noted by Senate and may be offered as soon as SENEX approval is obtained.

8 THE MANAGEMENT OF SLPS

8.1 Marketing

The marketing of all SLPs offered by the University in all faculties / colleges must comply with the requirements set out in section 5 and 6 above.

8.2 Quality Monitoring

- 8.2.1 Reviews of all SLPs are conducted on a regular basis. Review reports serve at the relevant faculty quality committee and, if there is a professional body requirement, at Senate Teaching and Learning Committee (STLC).
- 8.2.2 The management of the quality of SLPs (planning, development and design) takes place in accordance with the requirements and procedures for formal academic programmes at UJ. The management of the quality of an SLP is the responsibility of Programme Coordinators, Heads of Departments, Directors of Schools and Executive Deans of the Faculty / College. Quality-related structures and mechanisms for the effective coordination and management of SLPs reside within the faculty, college, school or department offering the SLP. The faculty /college is to ensure that the mechanisms to monitor quality are in place in accordance with the relevant UJ policies.
- 8.2.3 Quality reviews of SLPs must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the diverse nature of these programmes, including those that derive from consultation, or other industry engagements. SLPs linked to an accredited programme are to be conducted as part of the review of the programme. A separate review of an SLP could be undertaken to feed into a programme review if necessary.
- 8.2.4 Student evaluation should be done in accordance with the relevant UJ policy.
- 8.2.5 The relevant faculty / college structures are responsible for SLP reviews, similar to the requirement for formal programmes offered by UJ.
- 8.2.7 Subject to 8.2.5., approved SLPs may be updated to ensure that the content remains relevant.
- 8.2.8 Substantive amendments to existing SLPs (i.e. where the purpose is substantially altered; changes to entrance requirements are made) are to be submitted using the university amendment procedure (i.e., to CAPQP and SENEX). Cases involving minor changes and / or where Faculty / College is unsure of the approval process, may be referred to the Registrar who will advise.

9 REGISTRATION

- 9.1 Registration is in accordance with faculty-specific procedures and may occur throughout the academic calendar.

⁶ In exceptional cases, the Registrar may approve an accelerated approval process by SENEX and Senate

- 9.2 Registration fees for SLPs are programme-specific and are determined in consultation with the Finance Division and relevant faculties and role players.
- 9.3 Students registered for a credit-bearing SLP (i.e. that is derived from an accredited qualification) are permitted to register for additional credit- and non-credit bearing SLPs, subject to approval by the Vice-Deans of the relevant faculties.
- 9.4 Cancellation of short learning programme registrations and the relevant refund procedures are as determined by student finances.

10 RECORDKEEPING

- 10.1 All SLP students must apply and register on the ITS system. A student number is assigned to SLP candidates on ITS to ensure that:
- 10.1.1 the data is sufficiently secure;
 - 10.1.2 there is a full audit trail of all student fees received;
 - 10.1.3 there is a full audit trail of all marks recorded and certificates issued; and
 - 10.1.4 there is central management, to avoid duplication with departmental records.
- 10.2 Records on attendance and the performance of participants must be kept in a limited access database.
- 10.3 SLP presenters are required to maintain files containing copies of all teaching, learning and assessment and marketing material, attendance lists, evaluation questionnaires, and participants' feedback.

11 CERTIFICATION

- 11.1 Certification is an institutional function. Central Academic Administration (CAA) in the Registrar's Division is responsible for the issuing of certificates for SLPs. Approved SLPs are referred to CAA with the following information: SLP code, title, credits, duration and NQF level (if applicable).
- 11.2 Certification and certificates in respect of SLPs are captured on the ITS, are handled in the same manner as subsidised programmes.
- 11.3 Certification for all SLPs is in accordance with the Policy: Academic Certification and Related Matters

12 REVIEW OF POLICY

The review of this policy will be conducted in accordance with the approved University Policy on Policy 06Development and will take place in consultation with the relevant quality assurance structures at faculty and institutional level under the auspices of the official custodian of this policy, namely the DVC Academic.

Approval History Table	
Name of Approval Body (Committee)	Date that the policy/review was approved
Senate	06 June 2019
Senate	14 March 2024