POLICY ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

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A: POLICY STATEMENT

1. Purpose statement

This policy aims to enhance the quality of learning and teaching practices and promote effective student learning in the University

The policy represents the University's approach to teaching and learning and gives further expression to the strategic goal to be excellent in teaching and learning.

As a research-led university, an evidence-based approach to teaching and learning underpins this policy. Teaching and learning is seen as fostering research and contributing to the development of students as researchers. The University community as a whole have a responsibility to create a learning environment that will promote success and excellence.

There are ten fundamental principles constituting the policy and for each a set of procedures and guidelines for implementation which gives more detailed structure to the principles.

2. Introduction and background

The policy supports the strategic goal of the University "*To promote excellence in teaching and learning through creative and innovative curriculum design and development, pedagogical strategies, and assessment practices in accordance with the highest quality management principles*." The strategies set out in the amended University Strategic Plan (2007-2016) with respect to this goal indicates that the University will:

- Provide excellent teaching and learning programmes in a comprehensive range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes;
- Ensure that curricula are rooted in African scholarship and meet the needs of society;
- Review and revise our teaching modes and assessment practices in accordance with student learning needs, scholarship and the highest quality management principles;
- Encourage and reward excellence, innovation, creativity and scholarship in teaching and learning; and
- Provide a supportive educational environment that promotes a strong work ethic and a culture of deep learning among students.

This policy builds on and expands the strategic goal related to teaching and learning by elaborating a set of principles and associated procedures and guidelines for implementation.

The review of the original Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy drew on a survey of Higher Education Teaching and Learning Policies nationally and internationally; and on institutional research and expertise.

3. Definition of terms

The new vocabulary in higher education with notions of skill, vocationalism, transferability, competence, outcomes, experiential learning capability and enterprise, when taken together, are indications that traditional definitions are inadequate for the system-wide challenges faced by contemporary society. The new terminology urges higher education to extend the term "knowledge" to embrace knowledge-through-action, particular outcomes of a learning transaction, and trans-disciplinarity. For example:

- Learning: is the lifelong process of transforming information and experience into knowledge, skills, behaviours, values and attitudes and takes place through the active behaviour and engagement of the student:- the focus is on what the student does and learns rather than what the teacher does;
- Learning Environment: has become widely used as an umbrella term to describe the place and setting where learning occurs; it is not limited to a physical classroom and includes the characteristics of the setting; and all the different modes and variables involved in the physical, social and psychological context of learning; and including experiential learning.
- Learning Outcomes: describe what a student is expected to know, understand or be able to demonstrate at the end of a module in order to obtain a passing grade; and are often described in terms of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, which can refer to both individual modules and entire degree programmes.
- Teaching: is the process of designing, developing and facilitating activities, which evidence has shown to be effective in promoting student learning and the acquisition of generic and discipline-specific knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. Teaching includes research supervision.

4. Scope

The policy is applicable to all modules in the University.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the
- Policy on Assessment;
- Talent Management Policy, Procedures and Guidelines (Professional Development Programmes);
- University Teaching Workload Framework;
- University Language Policy and Plan;
- Policy on Quality Promotion and Assurance and associate Principles, Procedures and Guidelines;
- Academic Promotions Policy, Procedures and Guidelines (Teaching Portfolio Procedures and Guidelines);
- General Academic Rules;
- Goal 4: Excellence in Teaching and Learning in the amended University Strategic Plan (2007-2016) and related indicators;
- UKZN Transformation Charter and
- UKZN Pact.

5. The Policy

The teaching and learning policy is set out in terms of ten principles, and which give direction for their achievement in the University.

Principle 1

Teaching and learning will support and give expression to the University's commitment to becoming the premier university of African scholarship by:

- Integrating African scholarship into the full range of UKZN curricula;
- Entering global debates on the basis of knowledge generated in the African context;
- Facilitating a better understanding of the range of Indigenous African Knowledge Systems; and
- Exploring teaching methodologies which may be especially appropriate to teaching and learning in African contexts.

Principle 2

Teaching and learning must respond to national imperatives of redress and success by:

- Ensuring equity of student access and success;
- Promoting alternative access for students from disadvantaged educational contexts to address lack of equity in specific programmes or disciplines; and
- Developing curricula, teaching methodologies and assessment methods which are responsive to the educational needs of our diverse intake of students.

Principle 3

Teaching and learning must enable staff and students to engage in international contexts and debates by:

- Entering global discourses on the basis of knowledge generated in African countries and which relates to their varied issues and interests;
- Enabling students to build knowledge, expertise and confidence to participate in international contexts; and
- Fostering intellectual curiosity which values and respects a range of cultural experiences and perspectives.

Principle 4

Teaching and learning must meet the diverse educational needs of students by:

- Developing an educational context which is conducive to understanding and respecting a wide range of educational experiences and needs; and
- Providing opportunities to learn in both English and isiZulu as per the University Language Policy and Plan.

Principle 5

Teaching and learning must promote a culture of inquiry-led scholarship, evidence-based teaching and deep learning in students by:

- Developing a teaching and learning environment that encourages active learning to improve understanding and retention of knowledge and skills;
- Cultivating curiosity and critical thinking in students in relation to all aspects of their activities, including research;
- Enabling students to integrate theory and practice; and
- Contributing to the development of socially responsible citizens who are life-long students.

Principle 6

Teaching and learning must reflect a strong educational rationale informed by relevant current research, theory and evidence-based practice, which:

- Encourages staff to be actively engaged in scholarship of all aspects of teaching and learning;
- Fosters and supports sharing and peer reviewing of theoretically informed professional practice;
- Promotes reflective practice in regularly updated teaching portfolios;
- Advances research and theory-based practice in teaching and learning; and
- Develops an educational and inquiry driven environment by involving students in the process of the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Principle 7

Teaching and learning must optimise student employability and encourage responsible citizenship by:

- Developing key appropriate graduate attributes, generic competences, disciplinary competences; leadership; and professionalism;
- Incorporating these key competences into all programmes of learning in a way which embeds them, meaningfully, into the purpose, outcomes, and assessment criteria of those programmes;
- Providing opportunities outside the lecture room to develop these key generic and disciplinary competences.

Principle 8

Teaching and learning must demand quality learning environments and facilities by:

- Creating a learning context conducive to the holistic development of all students; and
- Supporting multiple modes of teaching and learning, including experiential and on-line/e-learning.

Principle 9

Teaching and leaching must be supported by staff development which builds capacity for continuing improvement in the theory and practice of teaching and learning relevant to disciplines by:

- Recruiting, retaining, motivating and rewarding staff skilled in facilitating the development of independent, creative, reflective students;
- Fostering a culture of continuing professional development through the required participation in the University Education Induction Programme (and other relevant Higher Education programmes) and the development of teaching portfolios.

Principle 10

An integral part of the teaching/learning cycle must include assessments which:

- Enhances engagement with the learning task;
- Enhances the understanding of student progress, strengths and limitations;
- Enhances the quality of planning, diagnostic, and progression decisions of academics;
- Ensures coherence between curriculum purpose, teaching approaches, assessment criteria and methods, and learning outcomes; and
- Articulates with the Policy on Assessment.

B: PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Senate, Colleges, Schools and, most importantly, individual academics have collective responsibility* for the implementation of this policy and for translating it into specific procedures appropriate to each College context.

Policy implementation will be monitored by Deans: College Teaching and Learning, Academic Leaders: School Teaching & Learning and the School Committees responsible for Teaching and Learning, on an annual basis.

For each principle in the policy, implementation procedures and guidelines, which include specific actions, are listed together with responsibility for these allocated to appropriate persons or structures.

Appropriate reports on the progress and status of implementation of the policy will be tabled at School Teaching and Learning Committees/School Boards, Teaching and Learning/Research Strategy Groups, the respective College Academic Affairs Boards and Senate annually.

Principle 1: "becoming the premier university of African scholarship"	Responsibility* (see list of acronyms below table)
1.1. Engage Schools in transformative curriculum development which explicitly relates to African scholarship and includes current debates around African IKS.	DCTL, ALSTL, DIAKS
1.2. Equip teaching and support staff to explicitly acknowledge and value the diversity and life experiences of all students, by means of targeted initiatives.	DCTL, LPDO, HETD
1.3. Implement staff professional development that encourages and supports the review and modification of current curricula and modules.	HETD, QPA DCTL, ALSTL
1.4 Set up College-based and/or university-wide seminars, debates and/or fora for the on-going discussion of all facets of African scholarship in its interface with teaching, learning and assessment (see Policy on Assessment).	DCTL, UTLO
1.5 Review curricula for the integration of all facets of African scholarship in all programme and school reviews.	DCTL, STLC, QPA, CAAB
Principle 2: "respond to national imperatives of redress and success"	
2.1 Familiarise teaching staff with the full range of educational contexts from which students enter UKZN 2.1.1 Organise targeted visits to township and rural schools.	DCTL, DHOS, ALTL UTLO, STLC
2.1.2 Organise annual meetings between teachers and university staff to discuss issues of relevance issues of relevance	DCTL, AL, ALSTL
2.2 Ensure appropriate articulation and progression between secondary school and first year of university, in view of the introduction of the National Senior Certificate, in terms of curriculum and social context. 2.2.1 Familiarise staff with the curricula, outcomes and	ALTL

assessment of the various subjects in the National Senior Certificate.	
2.3 Alert staff to the need for learning materials, teaching and assessment methodologies, which respond to the needs of a diverse student intake.	UTLO DCTL
2.4 Develop flexible articulation within the post-secondary phase (between FET Colleges and tertiary institutions). 2.5 Ensure the continual relevance of alternative access programmes, in terms of teaching and support staff, teaching materials, facilities, and resource base, by means of annual self-reflective reviews. 2.5.1 Undertake evaluations and reviews of alternative access programmes in terms of policy shifts and developments country-wide.	DCTL, DHOS, ALSTL, QPA
2.6 Review teaching, learning and assessment for its response to access and success imperatives in all programme and school reviews.	DCTL, ALSTL, STLC

Principle 3: "engage in international contexts and debates"	
3.1 Implement student-centred pedagogies which encourage open and critical debate in the classroom.	A
3.2 Make explicit and on-going connections between local experience and global debate.	A, ALSTL
3.2.1 Implement School/College report-backs by staff on teaching and learning approaches experienced in other universities.	AL, ALSTL, DCTL, STLC
3.3 Facilitate international staff and student exchanges. 3.3.1 Introduce special leave for teaching at another institution.	DHOS
3.4 Forge concrete relationships between UKZN/College and a range of international universities. 3.4.1 Ensure sabbatical teaching replacement funding, to enable staff to take sabbatical leave regularly.	DVCHC, DHOS
3.5 Review teaching, learning and assessment in terms of its ability to equip students for international contexts and debates, in all programme and school reviews.	DCTL, ALSTL, QPA

Principle 4: "meet the diverse educational needs of all students"	
4.1 Develop appropriate social contexts in which relationships between students and staff; and among students can be built.	DHOS, ALSTL DPS
4.2 Develop opportunities for student engagement on teaching, learning and curriculum issues.	A, AL, ALSTL
4.3 Implement teaching and assessment methods which allow for on-going interaction between all participants and which value the range of knowledges and perspectives brought into the classroom.	A, AL, ALSTL, STLC

4.4 Work out concrete methods of ascertaining learning needs through assessment of levels of preparedness, and of student response to the learning and teaching environment.
    4.4.1 Implement and evaluate diagnostic testing at the start of first year, and the start of postgraduate studies.
    4.4.2 Implement two-yearly surveys of student opinion.
	QPA

4.5 Review teaching, learning and assessment in terms of its	DCTL, ALSTL,

ability to meet the diverse educational needs of all students in all programme and school reviews.	STLC	
4.6 Increase the number of modules offered in isiZulu; offer tutorials in isiZulu or in learning environments that allow students to code-switch	DCTL, LPDO	
Principle 5: "promote a culture of inquiry-led scholarship, evidence-based teaching and deep learning"		
5.1 Identify, develop and support a range of opportunities which will promote active/deep learning.	A, AL, ALSTL	
5.1.1 Implement professional development which equips staff to support active and inquiry based learning, and research-led teaching.	HETD, DHOS	
5.2 Develop systems and strategies for review, feedback, reflection and action in relation to teaching, learning and assessment.	QPA, TLSG	
5.3 Review curriculum design to ensure coherence and synergy between teaching, learning and assessment processes which encourage engagement and creativity.	A, AL, ALSTL, STLC	
5.4 Develop an institutional culture in which all participants are interested, challenged and engaged intellectually, socially and culturally.	QPA, HETD, DCTL	
5.4.1 Review teaching, learning and assessment in terms of its ability to promote a culture of inquiry-led scholarship, evidence-based teaching and deep learning in students, in all programme and school reviews.		
Principle 6: "reflect a strong educational rationale informed by research"		
6.1 Equip and assist staff to research educational aspects of their teaching and learning practice and environment.	HETD	
6.2 Create a university ethos supportive of scholarship into teaching through mechanisms such as mentoring, internships, and incentives.	UTLO, DCTL	
6.3 Facilitate a range of activities (collaboration, University short papers, presentations etc.) focused on promoting and disseminating the scholarship of teaching and learning.	UTLO	
Principle 7: "optimise student employability and responsible citizenship"		
7.1 Develop appropriate graduate attributes, generic and disciplinary competences appropriate to all levels.	TLSG, STLC, AL, A	
7.2 Advocate the importance of these competences in university curricula; and the need for these competences in the design of the purpose and outcomes all curricula.	TLSG, STLC	
7.3 Establish curricula which promote the development of generic and disciplinary competences in all new programmes of learning.	STLC, CAAB	
7.4 Identify and develop a range of out-of-class opportunities which promote responsible citizenship and entrepreneurial service.	A, AL, STLC	
7.5 Review curricula for the inclusion of generic and disciplinary competences in all programme and school reviews.	QPA, ALSTL, STLC	

Principle 8: "demand quality learning environments and facilities"		
8.1 Identify and strive towards benchmarked best practices for learning facilities and environments.	TLSG, PPO	
8.2 Advocate and ensure continuous provision of on-line/e-learning facilities and resources to stay abreast of best practices in technology for University teaching and learning.	TLSG, ICS	
8.3 Create, monitor and evaluate learning environments in terms of their efficacy. 8.3.1 Implement annual user surveys and act appropriately on findings.	QPA	
Principle 9: "support staff development for continuing improvement"		
9.1 Develop policies in the areas of recruitment, retention, and rewards for staff who promote the facilitation of independent and deep learning.	DVCTL, TLSG	
9.2 Implement the approved University Education Induction Programme for professional development of academic staff at UKZN, including development of teaching portfolios.	HETD	
9.3 Create a broad range of formal and informal opportunities for initial and continuing professional development.	DCTL, ALSTL, HETD	
9.4 Ensure that newly appointed staff undergo initial professional development for teaching, learning and assessment (as appropriate to their capacity).	AL, DHOS	
Principle 10: "assessments an integral part of the teaching/learning cycle" See Policy on Assessment		

LIST OF ACRONYMS*

A	Academics
AL	Academic Leaders
ALSTL	Academic Leaders: School Teaching & Learning
CAAB	College Academic Affairs Board
DCTL	Deans: College Teaching & Learning
DHOS	Dean & Head of School
DIAKS	Director: Indigenous African Knowledge Systems
DPS	Director: Professional Service
DVCHC	Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Head of College
DVCTL	Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching & Learning
HETD	Higher Education Training and Development
LPDO	Language Planning and Development Office
PPO	Physical Planning and Operations
QPA	Quality Promotions and Assurance
SM	School Managers
STLC	School Teaching & Learning Committees
TLSG	Teaching and Learning Strategy Group
UTLO	University Teaching and Learning Office