

## QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES

### 1. Preamble

UCT obtains accreditation for its qualifications through the Higher Education Quality Committee of the Council on Higher Education (HEQC of the CHE), as the Education and Training Quality Assurance body (ETQA) with the primary responsibility for quality assurance for the whole higher education sector, as recognised by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (see the Higher Education Bill 2001, section 7 (1A)).

All UCT's currently approved qualifications are incorporated in a Programme Qualification Mix approved by the Department of Education. These are also recorded on the NQF. Any applications for new qualifications have to be submitted firstly to the DoE for approval, secondly to the HEQC for accreditation and thirdly to SAQA for registration on the NQF.

SAQA stopped recording short courses in November 2001. Since then SAQA's policy is that all short course providers are required to initiate the accreditation process with their ETQA. SAQA has specifically requested the HEQC to develop criteria for the quality and standards of short learning programmes, and to include short learning programmes in the institutional audit system for the higher education sector. The HEQC intends to delegate the responsibility for the accreditation of short learning programmes to higher education institutions themselves, provided that they have adequate systems in place to assure the quality of their short learning programmes. The HEQC's criteria for institutional audits include a criterion related to short courses. Institutions are expected to provide evidence of how their quality management systems are geared to dealing with short courses. Institutions which successfully meet and exceed the minimum standards and which provide evidence of their capacity to maintain effective internal quality management systems will be granted self-accreditation status by the HEQC. The HEQC will assess the QMS of institutions during their institutional audits. If the minimum standards are not met, institutions will not get self-accreditation status for short courses.

### 2. Definition and Scope

There is a long tradition within higher education institutions throughout the world of provision of a wide range of 'outreach' courses, projects and programmes which fall outside of provision of formal qualifications. Various terms have been used to describe these activities, including 'university extension', 'extra mural studies', 'adult education', 'non-formal education' 'lifelong learning' 'open learning' and 'continuing education' (Samuels 1992; Osborne et al 2004). The term used most frequently is 'continuing education' which includes a wide range of courses and services such as occupationally orientated professional development courses, access courses, community education, and specialised training. In line with international trends the overarching term 'continuing education (CE)' will be used in this policy. This policy will cover all CE courses which are less than 120 credits or 1200 hours.

For the purposes of this policy four categories of courses are covered:

- 2.1 Courses which are taken for personal enrichment for which a certificate of attendance may or may not be required and which are not credit bearing e.g. summer school courses offered by the Department of Extra-mural Studies.
- 2.2 Courses which are taken to meet the requirements for continued professional registration, or continuing professional development, but which are not credit bearing
- 2.3 Courses which are designed to enable learners to obtain credits towards whole qualifications, or which would enable learners to get exemption from parts of a programme included in UCT's Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM).<sup>1</sup>
- 2.4 Courses which are based on unit standards registered on the NQF within the higher education band, but not aligned with any programme in UCT's PQM

### 3. Academic Accountability

- 3.1 The Dean is accountable for assuring the academic quality of **all** continuing education courses offered by the faculty or departments in the faculty.
- 3.2 The Dean is accountable for providing annual reports to the Institutional Planning Department on all courses that fall within the scope of this policy (See 1.1 – 1.4)
- 3.3 The Dean is accountable for ensuring that academic staff who teach continuing education short courses over and above their normal teaching duties fulfil their responsibilities that form part of their approved work load, or for determining whether teaching on such courses should be treated as part of the normal workload of the particular staff member.

### 4. Criteria for the approval by the university of applications for granting credits for continuing education courses

- (a) Courses that carry credits are subject to the same approval criteria and guidelines approved by Senate.
- (b) The proposed outcomes of the course for which credit is sought must be clearly aligned with a qualification accredited in UCT's PQM.
- (c) The course must have a formal scheme of assessment which is open to external scrutiny and is aligned with forms of assessment used in the full-time course.
- (d) The award of credits for courses linked to unit standards registered on the NQF, but not part of UCT's PQM, can only be given if the requisite evidence of attainment of the standards is provided based on approved assessment criteria.
- (e) The application must provide evidence of the quality management systems in place to assure the quality of provision. The systems should cover arrangements for quality assurance, quality support, quality development and improvement, and quality monitoring and evaluation.
- (f) The application should indicate how the provision of the course is in alignment with UCT's mission and strategic imperatives.

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<sup>1</sup> This will only be allowed where the full programme is designed in a way that makes this possible. Credit bearing courses offered by UCT must fall within the higher education band.

## 5. Internal Approval procedures

### 5.1 *Courses taken for personal enrichment which are not credit bearing e.g. summer school courses*

A proposal must be submitted to the Director of Extra-mural Studies, the Director of the Centre for Open Learning (COL), or the Dean in case of courses run in the faculties. The proposal must include a brief written rationale for the course or event, reference to the mission and strategies of UCT, potential clientele, and assessment of the quality of the lecturers, evidence of likely demand and outside support, timing, and break even and target participant numbers, and proposed venue. Where the course is being taught during term time approval of the staff member's Head of Department must be submitted with the proposal.

### 5.2 *Courses which are taken to meet the requirements for continued professional registration*

The proposal form must be completed. (See Appendix) and should bear the signatures of approval of the relevant Head of Department prior to its submission to the Dean. The proposal form must contain details of how the course is aligned with UCT's mission and strategies. Additional information should be provided about how relevant professional expertise will be utilised and how the professional body will participate in the design and evaluation of the course. Proposals for such courses require the approval of the Dean (advised by faculty academic planning committees and representatives of professional councils). Evidence of support for the course and the course outline should be provided by relevant professional, employer or community groups. Information about these courses must be provided to the Faculty Board for noting.

### 5.3 *Courses which are designed to enable learners to obtain credits linked to full qualifications that are part of UCT's PQM.*

The primary decision about whether it would be possible for short courses to enable learners to accumulate credits towards a full qualification must be based on whether the design of the full qualification enables this to happen. The normal faculty approval procedures for processing applications for new courses must be followed. Information about these courses must be provided to the Faculty Board and the Senate Executive Committee for consideration and approval.

### 5.4 *Courses which are designed to lead to credits for unit standards registered on the NQF*

In the case of short courses designed on the basis of unit standards registered on the NQF, the proposal form must be completed. (See Appendix) and should bear the signatures of approval of the relevant Head of Department prior to its submission to the Dean. Information about these courses must be provided to the Faculty Board for approval.

## 6. Admissions

- 6.1 Students who successfully complete any credit bearing short courses will not be entitled to automatic access into the full-time programmes. Admissions decisions about such learners will be handled in accordance with policies governing admission.
- 6.2 Students who wish to attain credits from appropriately designed courses must register as bona fide students. The faculty office must ensure that the normal admission requirements are met, including the completion of any AARP tests that may be required, or that proper RPL assessments have been done in line with the RPL policy, before any student is registered for a potentially credit bearing course. The students would register either as occasional students or as students on a programme not approved by the minister for funding.
- 6.3 Subsidy would be claimed if the students have matriculated or admitted through senate discretion on the basis of the RPL policy.

## 7. Registration

- 7.1 Once a potentially credit bearing course has been approved by the Faculty Academic Planning Committee and noted by the Senate Executive Committee it must be listed on the Register of CE Courses in the Office of Registrar and allocated a course code.
- 7.2 Students who wish to enrol for a continuing education course which could result in UCT credits must register for the course on the central computer system using the allocated continuing education course code and a fees model approved by the faculty.

## 8. Record Keeping

- 8.1 Records of credit bearing courses will be maintained through the student record system
- 8.2 Records for **all non-credit bearing** continuing education courses, of biographical details and numbers of participants, must be kept by the relevant faculty office or the Centre for Open Learning. This is to enable UCT to provide certification and for annual institutional reporting purposes to the Institutional Planning Department. Biographical details required are full names, ID number, and prior educational qualifications. These records will distinguish between **registration, attendance** and completing the course.
- 8.3 The continuing education course register will be distinct from the **student record**.

## 9. Assessment

Where courses carry credits towards qualifications, the whole assessment regime applicable to all undergraduate courses applies; this includes external examination and the submission of results to faculty examination requirements.

## 10. Certification

- 10.1 Only students who have fully met the requirements of the short course may be issued with the relevant certificate. Faculty Officers are responsible for processing the certificates for persons who have successfully completed the continuing education courses.
- 10.2 The standard transcript will be issued for courses that carry credit.

- 10.3** Certificates for non-credit bearing courses will follow a standardised format and must reflect attendance or attendance and competency, as advised by the Course Coordinator.

## **11. Monitoring and evaluation**

### **11.1 *Monitoring and evaluation of non credit bearing continuing education courses***

The course convenor or event organiser must produce a brief written report at the conclusion of the event, summarising the evaluation forms and any direct feedback from the participants. The brief report should include recommended action points associated with the particular event or for colleagues who might be organising similar activities. The report should be submitted to the Dean or Director of the COL.

The Dean of the faculty must undertake a review of the faculty's short course activities annually. As a matter of course, participants in each short course or event must be asked to complete an evaluation form at the conclusion of each event. These evaluations should be kept for the Dean to refer to. Notwithstanding the use of evaluation forms, participants should be encouraged to raise directly with tutors or lecturers any aspects of the course which they believe could be improved

### **11.2 *Monitoring and evaluation of credit bearing continuing education courses in***

Reviews of short courses offered by any department for the purposes of credit or continuing professional education must be included in the ambit of any formal academic reviews of the department.

Departments may find it valuable to conduct a follow-up review of its vocationally-orientated courses that are offered on a regular basis, to assess the impact of the course. A similar follow up review with participants' employers or the relevant SETA should also be considered, where the department provides a programme in collaboration with a company or SETA.

### **11.3 *Institutional monitoring and evaluation***

The Deans are responsible for monitoring policy implementation and impact. They will submit annual reports to the IPD who will prepare a consolidated report for the Quality Assurance Working Group, who plays an oversight role. QAWG will conduct a review of the policy every three years.

## **12. Staff Development**

Each faculty should ensure that staff have access to training opportunities to develop the skills to design courses that are appropriate for adult learners, for continuing professional development and where appropriate to design courses to meet unit standards

## **13. Access to University facilities**

Delegates registered for continuing education courses have access to library and computer facilities for the duration of their enrolment. Access to other facilities would need to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

## **PROPOSAL TO OFFER CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES<sup>2</sup>**

The proposal should provide the following information. Before filling in this form, indicate the following: Is this course:

- (a) Course taken for personal enrichment
- (b) Course taken to meet the requirements for continued professional registration, or continuing professional development, but which are not credit bearing
- (c) Course designed to enable learners to obtain credits towards whole qualifications, included in UCT's Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM).
- (d) Course based on unit standards registered on the NQF within the higher education band, but not aligned with any programme in UCT's PQM

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<sup>2</sup> Approval will be for 3 years

**FORM**

**1. Title of Course:**

**2. Target Audience**



**3. Previous approval** (*indicate if this course has been offered before and when approval for its offering was granted.*)

**4. Course Code and Year of origin** (*to be filled in after relevant approval*):

**5. Department and Faculty :**

**6. Accreditation status** (If applicable, indicate link with a qualification in UCT's PQM or with unit standard registered on the NQF) and provide details

**7. Course Co-ordinator:**

**8. Duration of course in hours:**  
Envisaged mode of delivery .....

**9. NQF Level of course (only if this is a unit standard course):** (If course is below NQF level 5 provide motivation why UCT should be offering such a course)  
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.....  
**Number of SAQA Credits (if applicable):**

**10. Entry Requirements if any and/or assessment procedure for determining admission:**

**11. Rationale and Situation Analysis** (Justification for course. This should include alignment with the university mission and strategic initiatives):

**12. Assessment:** Will there be formal end-of-course assessment.

If yes, what form will this take?

**13. Learning Outcomes** *(if more space is needed, create your own table using this format and attach it to the form):*

<b>Exit Level Outcomes</b>	<b>Specific outcomes</b>	<b>*Assessment criteria</b>	<b>*Assessment methodology</b>

*\*Only to be filled in if learners are assessed*

**14. Internal and External Moderation:**

**15. List letter/s of support and attach details where course is done on the basis of a partnership or in conjunction with a professional body/SETA/Community Organisation/government:**

**16. Budget & sustainability:** (Include information on fees to be charged and how any surplus will be allocated and provide a detailed budget)

**17. State whether the course would be taught by UCT staff member or external person**

**18. Qualifications and Experience of Teaching Staff** (where external staff are used provide copies of CVs including information on qualifications and relevant experience)

**19. Certification**

Please indicate whether certification is proposed

Yes/No

If yes, will this be –

- a. for attendance only; or
- b. for those who only attend, for attendance only
- c. or those who pass the assessment, for competency as well

<b>20. Recommendation / Approval for a 3 year period</b>			
<b>Recommended by:</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>SIGNATURE</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Date</b></span>
a. Head of Department			
b. Faculty Academic Planning Committee			
<b>Approved by:</b>			
Dean			
SEC			VC:
<b>Registration</b> (if credit bearing)			
Entry onto CE Register by Faculty Officer			