# Policy on Curriculum Development and Review

| Policy Volume | |
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| Policy Chapter | |
| Responsible Committee/Unit/Division/Faculty | Teaching and Learning Committee |
| Responsible Chairperson/Director/Manager | DVC Academic and Student Affairs: Dr Chrissie Boughey |
| Dates of First and Subsequent Council Approvals | 1998 |
| Revision History: Approved Reviews | |
| Review Cycle (e.g. every 2/5/7 years etc) | 5 years |
| Next Review Date | 2021 |

## POLICY PARTICULARS

| Policy Title | Policy on Curriculum Development and Review |
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| **Policy Statement**<br>(State in a single paragraph the policy mandate and how this relates to the University Mission and Vision) | The mandate of this policy is to ensure that all Rhodes University curricula advance the academic project by taking into account the multiple purposes of higher education as well as achieving its vision and mission. In pursuing these aims, curricula at all levels need to shape critical, capable, knowledgeable, skilled graduates who are able to contribute to the social and economic advancement of the Eastern Cape, South Africa, Africa and beyond. |
| **Reason for Policy**<br>(What this policy aims to achieve) | This policy aims to contribute to the assurance and enhancement of the quality of curricula at Rhodes University. This includes ensuring that curricula are responsive to the needs of students, the discipline and the socio-cultural context within which they operate. Without compromising academic autonomy, curricula need to be accountable to the students, government, parents, industry and the wider society. Another purpose of the policy is to ensure that there are plans in place for regular curriculum review so that curricula are responsive to changing disciplinary, educational and social circumstances. In addition, the development and review of curricula should take into account national higher education policies and frameworks. |
| **People affected by this Policy**<br>(e.g. All units of the University) | All departments, institutes and centres which offer academic qualifications |
| **Who should read this Policy**<br>(People who need to heed this policy to fulfil their duties) | All lecturers, course coordinators, heads of departments, Deans |
| **Website address/link for this Policy** | |

## RELATED DOCUMENTS FORMS AND TOOLS

(University Policies, Protocols and Documents (such as rules/policies/protocols/guidelines related to this policy)

| **Relevant Legislation** (Legislation/Regulatory requirements/Organisational Reports – name these) |
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| Higher Education Act (1997)<br>Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (2013)<br>South African Qualifications Authority Level descriptors (2012) |
| **Related Policies** |
| Assessment of student learning<br>Evaluation of teaching and courses<br>Plagiarism<br>External examining |
| **Related Protocols** |

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| **Forms and Tools** (documents to be completed in support of this policy implementation) | |
| E.g. Policy template for the policy itself. Documents pertaining to procedures for implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation of the policy. Module curriculum template | |

## POLICY DEFINITIONS

(Technical or Conceptual terms used in the policy)

| TERM | DEFINITION |
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| **Curriculum** | The term 'curriculum' refers to the major elements of teaching and learning. It includes <br><br> ● disciplinary knowledge, i.e. the list of subjects, topics and the texts included in a course of study <br> ● disciplinary ways of knowing, skills and practices <br> ● teaching methodologies <br> ● assessment practices. <br><br> All curricula are informed by the nature of the discipline/field, the philosophical beliefs of the teacher, who the students are and the broader context in which the curriculum is enacted. <br><br> Curriculum is both the planned process, the actual implementation of the teaching and the students' 'experiences' of the learning process. |
| **Curriculum alignment** | Curriculum alignment refers to coherence between different levels of curriculum as well as between elements within a curriculum. At the macro level, this means vertical coherence between the purpose of a qualification, qualification exit level outcomes and outcomes for courses and modules. At the meso level, this means horizontal coherence between courses and between modules that make up a course. At a micro level, curriculum alignment refers to internal coherence between course/module elements, that is: purpose of course/module, learning outcomes, teaching methodologies and assessment methods. |
| **Learning outcome** | A learning outcome describes what students should be able to do by the time they have completed a module, course or programme leading to a qualification. Outcomes are complex and embody knowledge, skills, practices and values/attitudes. |
| **Higher Education Qualifications Sub Framework (HEQSF)** | https://www.ru.ac.za/media/rhodesuniversity/content/chertl/documents/HEQSF%202013.pdf |
| **South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) level descriptors** | http://www.saqa.org.za/docs/misc/2012/level_descriptors.pdf |

## PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THIS POLICY

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| **OVERVIEW** |

## 2  Policy on Curriculum Development and Review

| Rhodes University strives to carry out the following, as far as is reasonably practicable: |
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1. Design of curricula at all levels that are **responsive** to the discipline / field, to the students' learning needs, and to the social context, taking into account our position as a university in Africa. Curricula should be relevant, up-to-date, and demonstrate awareness of colonial influences on the disciplinary canon and teaching and assessment approaches in the discipline.

2. Design curricula in which all elements are **aligned** at macro, meso and micro levels.

3. Develop **learning outcomes**, which include knowledge and understanding of a discipline/ field as well as cognitive, general and professional practices and skills for each course or programme. These should be in line with the HEQSF requirements and SAQA level descriptors.

4. **Consult with key stakeholders** in the curriculum design and review process. Stakeholders should include current and past students, academics, and professional bodies and, where appropriate, employers in both the private and public sector.

5. **Reviewing processes** should be part of a curriculum plan in order to accommodate new ideas and knowledge in disciplines / fields. Such changes should also be informed by the legitimate learning needs of particular cohorts of students and take into account the affordances of digital technologies for enhancing learning and teaching.

6. **Equity and redress** are issues that need to be accommodated in the curriculum. Curricula need to be designed in such a way that they can meet the educational needs of all the students admitted to the University. Ways in which the articulation gap between school and university can be bridged need to be clearly stated.

7. **Diversity** of the student body and academics calls for curricula which are sensitive to the different backgrounds and outlooks of those engaged in the teaching and learning processes.

## DIRECTIVES FOR IMPLEMENTING THIS POLICY

(Actions and processes by which the objectives of the policy will be achieved.)

**Directive 1**

In all curriculum design processes the principles described above should be considered.

**Directive 2**

In the development of curricula departments / schools should clearly formulate their purposes as well as learning outcomes. This will facilitate the identification of specific outcomes for various courses and modules. Such planned outcomes need to be explicitly communicated to students in course/module guides and should appear in the University calendar and other relevant documents.

**Directive 3**

Regular critical review of curricula should be standard practice in every department. Given the rapid pace of change, it is suggested that curricula should be reviewed every three years and that at six-year intervals a more comprehensive overhaul be undertaken.

**Directive 4**

Student and peer feedback data should be elicited regularly to feed into curriculum review decisions.

**Directive 5**

In developing and reviewing curricula wide consultation should take place with students, key players, potential employers and academics from other institutions. Interdisciplinary curriculum planning should be encouraged.

**Directive 6**

In planning curricula, departments should accommodate the diverse educational, linguistic and cultural

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| backgrounds of students. Infused in all curricula should be strategies for inducting students into the literacies, discourses and practices of specific disciplines/fields. | |
| **Directive 7**<br><br>Heads of Departments / Course coordinators will be required to report via the Teaching and Learning Committee to Senate on a regular basis in respect of their development and review of curricula. | |

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(Roles and responsibilities of Key personnel/Divisions/Faculties/Departments)

| ROLE | RESPONSIBILITY |
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| **ROLE 1**<br>Academics | Design curricula for modules/courses in accordance with the principles in this policy.<br>Regular evaluation and review of curricula (using feedback data). |
| **ROLE 2**<br>Course coordinators | Coordinate curriculum design and review processes in departments<br>Work in collaboration with teams of academics to design and review modules, courses and programmes. |
| **ROLE 3**<br>Heads of departments | Offer leadership to academic staff in relation to disciplinary curriculum decisions and processes.<br>Ensure that course coordinators and academics are designing and reviewing curricula in line with the policy principles and directives.<br>Initiate six yearly comprehensive review of curricula in departments. |
| **ROLE 4**<br>Deans | Offer high level leadership and facilitate deliberations on issues affecting curriculum decisions and processes in their faculty.<br>Establish quality assurance processes across departments (at programme level) in their faculty to ensure that the policy principles and directives are met. |
| **ROLE 5**<br>Centre for Higher Higher Education Research and Development | Offer a range of academic staff development courses and programmes with a focus on curriculum design and review processes.<br>Offer consultations with individual academics or departments on curriculum issues.<br>Collaborate with academics and/or departments on curriculum research projects. |
| DVC: Academic and student affairs | Offer high-level strategic leadership on matters pertaining to teaching and learning, taking into account the national context and developments within it as well as a broad understanding of the institutional context and particularly the challenges within it. |

**CONTACTS** (Please see Appendix A)

Direct any questions about the policy to the relevant Office-bearers, designations and contact details are listed in Appendix A.

HoD CHERTL

DVC Academic and Student Affairs

## POLICY REVIEW PROCEDURE

(Actions and processes by which the policy will be reviewed)

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4    **Policy on Curriculum Development and Review**

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| **Communication of the review process** |

### LIST OF APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

### CONTACTS

(Direct any questions about the policy to the relevant Office-bearers; designations and contact details are listed below)

| Area of Concern | Division/Faculty/Department | Telephone | Email |
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