



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY  
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA  
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT  
INSTITUTIONAL OFFICE

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## Academic Programme Management Policy

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## Academic Programme Management Policy

### 1 Preamble

As a pre-eminent University in Africa, driven by its pursuit of knowledge and innovation, with a unique Institutional culture based upon the values the University espouses, the North-West University has adopted this Policy for Academic Programme Management on 20 June 2008.

In line with the Statute of the North-West University (NWU) and requirements of the Council on Higher Education (CHE), via the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), the Department of Higher Education and Training (DoHET) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), an institutional academic programme management process is established at the NWU. This process is a prerequisite to establish orderly arrangements that precede communication by the Institutional Registrar about institutional academic programme management decisions made by the NWU to appropriate national bodies. The institutional academic programme management policy of the NWU describes this process. This is done in order to ensure the quality of a dynamic and responsive Programme and Qualifications Mix (PQM).

### 2 Policy statement

Deans of faculties are responsible for academic programme management in their faculties and are advised by Faculty Boards. All amendments (changes) to existing academic programmes, including the proposal for the offering of new academic programmes, should be supervised by Deans. The proposed amendments to academic programmes are tabled at campus senate committees that send recommendations to the Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS) for institutional approval. The Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS) is a standing committee of the Institutional Senate, chaired by the Executive Director: Teaching and Learning and Vice-Principal. The Chairperson of ICAS reports decisions about academic programme management to the institutional senate for ratification. The chairperson of the Institutional Senate reports academic programme management decisions to Council.

### 3 Definition

**Academic Programme Management** Refers to activities executed by academics in faculties to regularly review and improve the quality of academic programmes at the NWU, including the development of new academic programmes to be considered by the DoHET, the HEQC and SAQA to become part of the NWU approved Programme Qualification Mix (PQM), the list of accredited programmes by the HEQC and the list of qualifications registered by SAQA.

### 4 Rules and Procedures

Rules and procedures for academic programme management (e.g. for the work of ICAS) are compiled by the Executive Director: Teaching and Learning and Vice-Principal and approved by appropriate institutional bodies. These rules and procedures are revised from time to time to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

# Procedures and Rules in support of the Policy for Academic Programme Management

## 1 Procedures

The institutional senate established the ICAS as a standing committee of the institutional senate with the specific terms of reference to oversee the academic programme management process at the NWU. The processes and procedures for academic programme management at the NWU are determined by the ICAS in consultation with campus senate committees, and are reviewed regularly for their effectiveness by the both structures. An ICAS Advisory Board is established to assist deans with the preparation of ICAS applications. The chairperson of the ICAS Advisory Board is the institutional Director ADS.

### 1.1 Process map

A diagrammatic version of the process is also available on request from the Institutional ADS office.

#### **Campus process (faculty and campus senate committee level)**

- a. An academic member of staff needs to make an amendment / change to an existing academic programme, or wants to propose a new academic programme.
- b. Campus Academic Development and Support (ADS) unit supports the academic for compliance with the ICAS processes before application is submitted to the school director and / or dean.
- c. Relevant completed ICAS form is submitted to school director and/or dean.

#### **Institutional administrative / support process for deans on campuses**

- d. If the dean is satisfied with the academic merit of the application, the dean sends supported applications to the ICAS secretariat, that is the institutional Academic Development and Support office.
- e. The ICAS secretariat reviews applications and a pre-scheduled ICAS Advisory Board meeting with representatives of relevant institutional and campus administrative officials takes place to prepare advice for the consideration of deans on all applications. The minutes of the ICAS Advisory Board meeting are sent to deans for their consideration and appropriate action. Where necessary deans ensure the adjustment of applications. This takes care of the entire process of the administrative substrate of an application.

#### **Campus process (faculty and campus senate committee level)**

- f. Dean tables summary of advice from the ICAS Advisory Board meeting at the Faculty Board meeting and dean and Faculty Board decide which consultation process (across faculties and across campuses) is appropriate for the application based on campus procedures. Dean conducts consultation process across faculties and campuses.
- g. Dean receives feedback from consultation process, amends application if necessary and presents application to campus senate committee for discussion and recommendation.
- h. Recommended applications by campus senate committees are sent to ICAS by campus registrars for approval.

#### **Institutional process (ICAS, institutional senate and council level)**

- i. Applications recommended by campus senate committees are tabled at the Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS) that discusses and approves applications.

- j. A register of decisions from the ICAS is sent to the institutional senate by the chairperson of ICAS and ratified at the institutional senate.
- k. The chairperson of the institutional senate reports to Council about academic programme decisions recommended by the campus senate committee, approved by the ICAS and ratified by the institutional senate as part of the senate report to Council.
- l. The secretariat of the Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS) ensures that relevant communication about academic programme management decisions taken by ICAS and ratified by the institutional senate are communicated to (i) the institutional registrar for communication to relevant national bodies deans and applicants; (ii) deans and applicants. Other institutional officials use the ICAS minutes to maintain the PQM and administrative system of the NWU.

## **1.2 Bodies in academic programme management process**

The composition of Faculty Boards, Campus Senate Committees and the Institutional Senate is described in the statute of the NWU. The bodies that are not described in the statute that are proposed in this policy are the Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS) and the ICAS Advisory Board. These bodies could be formed in terms of section 11(3) and the rules described in section 17 of the statute.

It is argued in this policy that the nature of the management structure of the NWU requires an institutional body where campus decisions could be reflected on at an institutional level to ensure co-ordination between campuses on academic programme management matters. It is argued that ICAS and the ICAS Advisory Board could fulfil this task at the NWU.

### **1.2.1 Rules for the establishment of the Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS)**

It is proposed that ICAS be formed as follows:

#### **1.2.1.1 Composition of ICAS**

##### **Permanent members**

- Vice-Principal (chairperson)
- Institutional Registrar
- Campus Registrars
- Campus Rectors
- Vice-Rectors: Academic
- Vice-Rectors: Quality and Planning
- Deans
- Director: Academic Development and Support (Institutional Office)
- Director: Quality Management (Institutional Office)
- Director: Management Information (Institutional Office)
- Director: Academic Administration Systems (Institutional Office)
- Director: Research Support (Institutional Office)

##### **Members in attendance**

- Representatives of faculties that will assist the dean in the presentation of applications.
- Academic Development and Support Advisors (institutional and campus) if requested by dean to attend the meeting to assist with explanations about the application.
- External evaluators (if need be).

- Any other individual who will be contributing to any of the presentation/s or submissions discussed at an ICAS meeting that day.
- Secretariat

### **1.2.1.2 Terms of reference of ICAS**

The terms of reference of the ICAS are to:

- 1.2.1.2.1 evaluate all new and revised academic programme proposals submitted by deans, approved by faculty boards and recommended by campus senate committees for institutional approval.
- 1.2.1.2.2 inform institutional senate regularly by presenting a register of approved ICAS decisions to the institutional senate for ratification.
- 1.2.1.2.3 formulate, regularly revise and regularly review the effectiveness of the institutional academic programme management policy, processes and procedures.
- 1.2.1.2.4 together with relevant officials (campus and institutional) oversee that proper approval and communication processes are observed by the NWU to secure approval from relevant national authorities (Department of Higher Education and Training, Higher Education Quality Committee, South African Qualifications Authority) for changes to existing academic programmes and proposed new academic programmes.

### **1.2.2 Rules for the establishment of the Executive Committee of ICAS**

To ensure effective and efficient decision-making processes on ICAS matters, an executive committee is formed. ICAS may refer matters for consideration by the executive committee. Minutes of executive committee meetings have to be approved by ICAS.

#### **1.2.2.1 Composition of the Executive Committee of ICAS**

The constitution of the executive committee of ICAS includes:

##### **Permanent members**

- Vice-Principal (chairperson)
- Institutional Registrar
- Campus Registrars
- Campus Rectors
- Vice-Rectors: Academic
- Vice-Rectors: Quality and Planning
- Director: Academic Development & Support (institutional)
- Director: Quality Management (institutional)
- Director: Information Management (institutional)
- Director: Academic Administration (institutional)
- Director: Research Support (Institutional Office)

##### **Members in attendance**

- Deans/representatives of faculties that will present their applications<sup>1</sup>.
- Academic Development and Support Advisors (institutional and campus) if requested by dean to attend the meeting to assist with explanations about the application.

<sup>1</sup> The idea is not to exclude deans from the Executive ICAS, but to only invite deans in cases where a matter from their faculties serves on an ICAS executive committee meeting. This recommendation is made on request of deans.

- External evaluators (if need be).
- Any other individual who will be contributing to any of the presentation/s or submissions discussed at an Executive ICAS meeting that day.
- Secretariat.

### **1.2.2.2 Terms of reference of the Executive Committee of ICAS**

The terms of reference of the Executive Committee of ICAS are to:

- 1.2.2.2.1 Address any matter referred to it by ICAS.
- 1.2.2.2.2 Send minutes of the Executive Committee of ICAS meeting to ICAS for approval at the next ICAS meeting.

### **1.2.3 Rules for the establishment of the ICAS Advisory Board**

It is proposed that the ICAS Advisory Board be formed as follows:

#### **1.2.3.1 Composition of the ICAS Advisory Board**

##### **Permanent members**

- Director: Academic Development & Support (Institutional Office) - chairperson
- Director: Quality Management (Institutional Office)
- Director: Information Management (Institutional Office)
- Director: Academic Administration (Institutional Office)
- Director: Research Support (Institutional Office)
- Campus Registrars
- Campus Library Directors
- Campus ADS Directors and ADS Officers
- Campus Quality Co-ordinators
- Director Facilities (Institutional and Campus)
- Time-table planners (Institutional and Campus)

##### **Members in attendance**

- Deans/representatives of faculties that will present their applications<sup>2</sup>.
- External evaluators (if need be).
- Any other individual who will be contributing to any of the presentation/s or submissions discussed at an Executive ICAS meeting that day.
- Secretariat

#### **1.2.3.2 Terms of reference of the ICAS Advisory Board**

The ICAS Advisory Board replaces the “signatures” that formed part of former ICAS applications in the form of the “approval form”. The terms of reference of the ICAS Advisory Board are to:

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<sup>2</sup> The idea is not to exclude deans from the Executive ICAS, but to only invite deans in cases where a matter from their faculties serves on an ICAS executive committee meeting. This recommendation is made on request of deans.

- 1.2.3.2.1 review and evaluate all proposed ICAS applications by faculties;
- 1.2.3.2.2 consider all possible implications of the proposed ICAS application by faculties on academic planning in its broadest sense<sup>3</sup>; and to
- 1.2.3.2.3 prepare advice to deans on all proposed ICAS applications.

### **1.3 Roles and responsibilities**

The roles and responsibilities of the main structures and officials that participate in the academic programme management process are described briefly in this section.

#### **1.3.1 Programme and module owners**

Academics are programme and module owners and they have the main responsibility to oversee the continuous improvement of the quality of academic programmes at the NWU. Information gathered from quality assurance processes [e.g. the internal programme evaluation (IPE) and external programme evaluation (EPE) processes; reviews by professional bodies, reviews by other national bodies like the HEQC, international audits arranged by the faculty etc] should be used to develop quality improvement plans that should be implemented by the academics. Deans and Vice-Rectors: Academic are responsible to monitor the implementation of quality improvement plans for academic programmes. Results from quality assurance processes form the main impetus for amendments and further development of academic programmes. To capture these changes in an orderly and responsible manner, complying with the requirements of relevant national bodies, the NWU established an academic programme management process to assist faculties.

#### **1.3.2 Faculty boards**

One of the main functions of faculty boards is to oversee the quality of the academic programmes offered by that faculty. Faculty boards should advise deans about the continuous management and development of academic programmes to ensure the enhancement of the quality of academic programmes offered by the faculty.

#### **1.3.3 Campus senate committee**

One of the main functions of campus senate committees is to oversee the quality of the academic programmes in all faculties on that campus. Campus senate committees should recommend changes to existing academic programmes and proposals for the offering of new academic programmes to the ICAS and the institutional senate. The recommendations by campus senate committees should be made in the spirit of the continuous management and development of academic programmes to ensure the enhancement of the quality of academic programmes offered by the faculties on that campus.

#### **1.3.4 Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS) and its related bodies**

The institutional committee for academic standards (ICAS) should consider and approve the recommendations made by campus senate committees in terms of academic programme management to ensure that these decisions are implemented in a co-ordinated manner across campuses, communicated to internal and external bodies in a co-ordinated manner, as well as captured on the relevant institutional systems to ensure accurate management information and administration systems for academic programmes at the NWU.

The Executive Committee of ICAS and the ICAS Advisory Board are established to support the effective management of the ICAS process.

#### **1.3.5 Institutional Senate**

One of the functions of the institutional senate is to oversee the work conducted by its standing committees (e.g. campus senate committees and the ICAS). The institutional senate should take note and ratify decisions taken about (among other academic matters) academic planning and quality management and the continuous management and development of academic programmes to ensure the enhancement of the quality of academic programmes offered by faculties on all campuses of the NWU. In this manner, the institution is fulfilling its function (as described in the Statute) to regulate all teaching, learning, research, community engagement and academic support functions at the NWU.

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<sup>3</sup> Academic planning refers to matters such as implications for subsidy and HEMIS reporting, for the student administrative system of the NWU, for library provision, for provision of buildings (e.g. laboratories) etc.

## 1.4 Documentation / Forms

The institutional ADS office administrates the ICAS process and develops relevant forms and documentation to administer the process. These forms and documents are revised from time to time and approved at ICAS meetings. The following ICAS forms are used:

- ICAS form 0: Application for a new programme to the Department of Higher Education and Training<sup>4</sup>
- ICAS form 1: Application to the South African Qualifications Authority for the registration of a qualification
- ICAS form 2: Application to the Higher Education Quality Committee for the accreditation of a new programme
- ICAS form 3: Application to the institutional committee for academic standards for minor amendments and changes to an existing programme
- ICAS form 5: Application to the institutional committee for academic standards for the approval of a reconfigured and aligned programme at the NWU

## 1.5 Schedule

The meetings of the ICAS Advisory Board, Faculty Boards, Campus Senate Committees, ICAS and Executive Committee of ICAS meetings and the meetings of the Institutional Senate are co-ordinated and scheduled on the annual calendar of the NWU.

## 2 References

Council on Higher Education. 2004. Criteria for Institutional Audits. Pretoria: CHE.

Higher Education Quality Committee. 2004. Criteria for Programme Accreditation. Pretoria: CHE.

Department of Higher Education and Training. 2005. Statute of the North-West University, Government Notice nr 27872. Pretoria: Department of Higher Education and Training.

Original details: Jacoline Jansen van Vuuren(10225676) C:\Documents and Settings\Administrator\Desktop\8P-8.1-programme management\_e.doc  
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<sup>4</sup> Note to colleagues who know the ICAS process well: (i) take note that the approval pages with signatures are now removed from the process. Deans will ensure that all relevant role-players are consulted; (ii) note that the numbering of the former ICAS forms is now corrected so that ICAS form 1 replaces ICAS form 0 etc to do away with a form 0 that was not logical in the former ICAS process.