

RULES FOR TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT AT THE NWU

(Approved by the NWU Senate on 1 March 2023)

Preamble

WHEREAS the Senate is responsible for the regulation of all teaching, learning and research functions, as well as for the academic support functions of the university and for the determination of policy and rules concerning all academic matters; and

AFTER consultation with the relevant academic and support structures of the university regarding the appropriate manner in which teaching, learning and assessment and related matters should be regulated; and

TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION the provisions of the Higher Education Act (101 of 1997), the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) (CHE; 2014), and the Statute of the North-West University (NWU);

SENATE MAKES THESE RULES for the effective and orderly execution of the teaching, learning and assessment procedures and processes of the university.

Following approval by Senate at its meeting of 1 March 2023, these rules become effective.

These Rules must be read in conjunction with the *NWU Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy*.

The *Glossary of Teaching-Learning Related Acronyms, Concepts and Designations* which forms part of the General Academic Rules, serves as a Directory to inform the Teaching Learning and Assessment (T-LA) Rules.

1 Rules governing student academic access, development, retention, and success

1.1 Student Academic Access, Retention, Attainment and Success (ARAS) require a heightened responsiveness:

- 1.1.1 in provisions for social justice and equal opportunity, inclusive of but not limited to admission requirements, academic content, assessment approaches and methods, modes of provision, student academic development and support opportunities, and non-academic support to students.
- 1.1.2 in curriculum and cultural terms, requiring curriculum change in response to social imperatives and a view of curriculum that capitalises on students' diverse cultural and social backgrounds.
- 1.1.3 to increase cooperation and partnerships among all stakeholders and role-players in order to establish functional interdependence.
- 1.1.4 towards competency-based pedagogical practices that emphasise the promotion of flexible learning and thinking, self-directed and lifelong learning, local and global knowledge, diverse learning opportunities and assessment criteria to promote academic success of a diverse student body.

1.2 Academic access is enabled through:

- 1.2.1 a university environment that pursues social justice and the advancement of access; that promotes the objectives of the Higher Education Act (101/1997) and that is consistent with

national directives in regard of the enhancement of access to higher education and optimal opportunities for learning.

- 1.2.2 opportunities supported by strategically planned systematic developmental academic interventions and scaffolded support as needed by specific individuals and/or groups of students, including students with disabilities.
- 1.2.3 collaboration of teaching and learning (T-L) support departments with Faculties in foundation and extended programme provision and appropriate Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) practices and procedures.
- 1.2.4 working in partnership with the higher education sector, communities, and industry to extend the range of qualification types, modes of provision, and other learning opportunities offered by the university, yet within the capacity available to the university to maintain the quality of teaching and of student support.
- 1.2.5 embedding flexible learning, blended learning, and appropriate online provision in specific academic offerings.

1.3 Retention is enabled through the following actions:

- 1.3.1 building whole-institutional commitment to, and shared responsibility for, student retention, inclusion, and students' sense of belonging through an ethic of care.
- 1.3.2 ensuring early and timely collaboration among different groups/ departments responsible for the welcoming and induction programme for first year students.
- 1.3.3 embedding equality and diversity within academic development and support services to increase student participation and enhance opportunities for retention, with a required commitment from the students themselves to work towards academic success and to ask for assistance and support as needed.
- 1.3.4 providing comprehensive peer-assisted and professional support systems (individual, group, communities, academic and non-academic) for students to nurture a sense of belonging, promote engagement, and enhance academic success.
- 1.3.5 developmental educational opportunities and support that draw on the plurality of students' life experiences, their interests and backgrounds to fully engage students in the learning process towards enhancing the transfer of learning across real-world contexts.
- 1.3.6 implementing a range of practices to support retention within all disciplines, inclusive of supportive learning environments where students are allowed to challenge attitudes or practices that undermine participation and negatively influence retention.

1.4 Attainment is enabled through an appropriate mix of the following actions:

- 1.4.1 systematic capturing, analysing and sharing of credible and reliable retention and attainment data across the university and implementing academic and support interventions as necessary, in a timely and accessible manner at programme, School, and Faculty level.
- 1.4.2 an evidence- and data-led approach to student progress and academic success that is used to improve teaching, student success, the student experience, differential success rates, etc.
- 1.4.3 using the outcomes of the appropriately sampled Student Teaching and Learning Experience Survey (STLES) to review the composition of academic programmes, the content and presentation of modules, the appropriateness of the teaching and learning environment, epistemic access, improvement of pedagogy, and the quality and variety of opportunities of support available to students to promote academic success.
- 1.4.4 having and facilitating high expectations of all students, and engendering students' high expectations of themselves.
- 1.4.5 fostering a sense of belonging in students so that their exposure to learning and teaching across all sites and modes of provision, is experienced as positive and enabling of their success.

- 1.4.6 recognising that students learn in different ways and that teaching (whether online, in-class, with a hy-flex or blended approach, or at a distance) and teaching-learning support that responds to a range of student preferences, can improve attainment.
- 1.4.7 adherence to the principles of quality in the design of appropriate learning experiences.
- 1.4.8 promoting peer-assisted learning to help build students' expectations and confidence.
- 1.4.9 offering awareness and developmental opportunities for staff and students to identify and address unconscious and conscious bias and to develop equality and diversity competence.
- 1.5 Student retention will promote academic success by affording students the opportunities to:**
 - 1.5.1 progressively integrate academically and socially into the university environment.
 - 1.5.2 successfully meet their academic goals.
 - 1.5.3 effectively deal with academic and non-academic challenges in order to persist with their academic endeavours from initial enrolment to graduation.
 - 1.5.4 match their motivation and academic ability.
 - 1.5.5 enhance their knowledge and competence and thereby their employability and their ability to contribute to the creation of employment opportunities.

2 Qualification and Academic Programme Planning, Development, Management and Review

2.1 New qualification and academic programme planning and development

- 2.1.1 The NWU qualification and academic programme offering remains viable, sustainable and relevant.
- 2.1.2 Qualification and academic programme planning and development is the joint responsibility of a multi-disciplinary team consisting of academic leadership, Faculty academics, advisory boards, and teaching and learning support staff.
- 2.1.3 Effective qualification planning requires an in-depth situation analysis to determine viability and relevance of a new offering that will result in a Faculty-approved internal qualification standard.
- 2.1.4 An academic programme leading to a qualification complies with the approved internal qualification standard concerned.
- 2.1.5 An academic programme consists of appropriately designed fundamental and core compulsory and/or elective learning components (modules) that comprise the programme curriculum.
- 2.1.6 A programme curriculum is planned, designed and developed according to the principles of constructive alignment as contained in the NWU curriculum framework.
- 2.1.7 A Faculty Board-approved new qualification application and/or a new academic programme curriculum is considered and approved by the Senate Committee for Academic Standards (SCAS).
- 2.1.8 The online SCAS system supports the application and internal approval process.
- 2.1.9 The Qualification and Academic Programme Planning unit (Q&APP) assisted by the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CT-L) support Faculties in the planning and development of new qualifications and academic programmes as per Faculty Integrated T-L Plans (FITLPs).
- 2.1.10 The Q&APP is mandated to ensure external compliance of the NWU qualification and academic programme offering and acts as curator of the NWU PQM.
- 2.1.11 The Faculty Board is responsible for effective record keeping of its qualification and academic programme-related data.

2.1.12 Faculty programme advisory boards are responsible for guiding the overarching direction of curriculum development with respect to industry needs and scientific state of practice in the respective fields.

2.2 Internal consideration and approval of amendments to existing academic programmes

2.2.1 The continued integrity, responsiveness, and quality of the NWU academic programme offering shape all decisions regarding the review, amendment, and approval of existing programmes and modules through the appropriate internal processes and structures.

2.2.2 The review and amendment of an existing programme curriculum is a collaborative effort that can include cross-campus, cross-Faculty and T-L support key role players.

2.2.3 The review and amendment of an existing programme curriculum comprise a chain of academic oversight concluding with SCAS approval.

2.2.4 The online SCAS system supports the application and SCAS approval of existing programme and module amendments.

2.2.5 Academic programmes are discontinued in such a way as to maintain a positive student experience and manage risk to the university's reputation and achievement of its strategic objectives.

2.3 External consideration and approval of a qualification and academic programme

2.3.1 Qualifications and academic programmes that are part of the NWU PQM comply with relevant external higher education policy, professional body requirements if relevant, and HEMIS funding requirements.

2.3.2 The DHET approves qualifications for PQM clearance and funding purposes.

2.3.3 The CHE accredits academic programmes on advice from the HEQC.

2.3.4 An accredited academic programme is registered on the NQF by SAQA and receives a Learning Programme ID before it can be marketed or offered by the university.

2.4 Continuous curriculum transformation and renewal of existing academic programme offerings

2.4.1 Curriculum transformation and renewal is a continuous process that reflects thorough higher education and target market research, and responsiveness to changing internal and external stakeholder needs and expectations (e.g. University Declaration on the Decolonisation of University Education; NWU OER declaration; NWU Micro-credentials framework).

2.4.2 Curriculum renewal and transformation processes ensure that the overall curriculum remains aligned with the institution's mission, vision and goals and its particular context, and is responsive to changes in knowledge, in particular, local contexts and the expectations of relevant stakeholders.

2.4.3 A transformed curriculum reflects a contextual balance between local, national and global societal, economic and development concerns.

2.4.4 Responsiveness in terms of the disciplinary context and requirements, industry and socio-economic needs, learning needs of student target markets and graduate employers, are key elements that inform curriculum transformation and renewal.

2.4.5 Changing how something is taught or learnt is as much a part of transforming curriculum as what is taught.

2.4.6 Curriculum structures are appropriate and flexible to enhance opportunities for academic success of diverse student populations with diverse needs.

2.4.7 Programme advisory boards enable and inform the assessment, evaluation and transformation of the curriculum, to be in line with current and future industry needs in terms of both global relevance and fostering industry leadership in scientific rigour and practice.

- 2.4.8 Curriculum renewal implies a logical coherence and continuous constructive alignment of:
 - 2.4.8.1 the programme purpose,
 - 2.4.8.2 the programme outcomes and associated assessment criteria,
 - 2.4.8.3 the chosen learning components (core, fundamental and elective modules) of the curriculum,
 - 2.4.8.4 the learning outcomes and selected content of each module,
 - 2.4.8.5 effective teaching and learning strategies,
 - 2.4.8.6 appropriate teaching and learning activities, and
 - 2.4.8.7 available and appropriate teaching and learning resources to support student attainment.
- 2.4.9 Each module must have a study guide with logically organised study units, learning outcomes, assessment criteria and learning activities. In cases where the study guide has been integrated into a module eFundi site, the minimum requirement in regard of an available study guide, is the Module Overview Document (MOD).

2.5 Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT)

In accordance with the 2021 revised National Policy and Criteria for CAT:

- 2.5.1 CAT is recognised to be based on strict principles, elaborated below, which must guide the CAT-related work of all Schools and Faculties:
 - 2.5.1.1 Transparency: Rules, regulations and any register of precedents which inform, influence or govern decisions taken in respect to CAT must be valid, fair, reliable and transparent as well as publicly available and made known to applicants prior to enrolment.
 - 2.5.1.2 Articulation by design: Possibilities for articulation pathways, including within and between the NQF Sub-Frameworks, and between the NQF Sub-Frameworks and the world of work, must be included in the design and purposes of new qualifications.
 - 2.5.1.3 Access to credit accumulation, the recognition of credit, and credit transfer: the recognition of credit in a CAT process may only be considered for credits previously awarded towards a formal qualification or part-qualification registered on the NQF and offered by a recognised provider in South Africa, and the maximum percentage of credits that will be recognised and transferred towards a qualification or part-qualification is provided for in the General Academic Rules 1.7, 2.2, 3.2, 4.5 van 5.5
- 2.5.2 In the CAT recognition evaluation process:
 - 2.5.2.1 the comparison mapping must indicate a minimum of 80% overlap between the original content and outcomes of the module/subject for which credits have already been awarded, and the NWU module for which CAT is being sought, or
 - 2.5.2.2 the subject/module content and outcomes concerned must have been recognised through a pre-existing inter-departmental/inter-institutional/inter-entity agreement that provides for where the necessary content and outcomes will be taught and learned regardless of the percentage of content, or
 - 2.5.2.3 where the comparison mapping indicates less than an 80% overlap and where CAT is still considered, the School responsible for the qualification into which credit is being transferred must provide a formal document stating how the gaps in knowledge and skills for the module will be addressed, where the document is signed by a School Director and the student involved.
- 2.5.3 **Quality comparisons based on credible methods must:**
 - 2.5.3.1 enable adequate comparison mapping and are dependent on the availability of the necessary information on the accumulated credits – transcripts alone are insufficient;

- 2.5.3.2 are based on credible methods that determine the extent to which the curriculum content and outcomes match, as guided by the NQF Level Descriptors in conjunction with the quality standards developed and published by the CHE;
- 2.5.3.3 consider the degree of similarity between the content and outcomes for which credits have already been awarded, and those in the qualification towards which credits is being sought, to ensure that students have the necessary knowledge and backgrounds to be successful in further learning; and
- 2.5.3.4 build on good practices that exist in appropriate communities of practice in Faculties.
- 2.5.4 Where the CAT comparison process finds overlaps of less than 80% between the content and outcomes for which credits have already been awarded, and the modules for which CAT is sought, the School concerned:
 - 2.5.4.1 may choose to not recognise any credit accumulated, and must provide advice and guidance on other learning pathway possibilities for the candidate, or
 - 2.5.4.2 may conduct a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process to assess the informal and non-formal knowledge and skills of the applicant that may address the gap, and
 - 2.5.4.3 may require the student to do supplementary work before credits are recognised. If the latter is relevant, the School concerned must design supplementary work for the candidate to do in order for the recognition of the credits sought; and describe the supplementary work in a formal document for the sake of consistency and transparency.
- 2.5.5 Credit within the context of the NQF must measure the volume and level of learning required within the context of a qualification. Credit must be quantified as the number of notional study hours required for achieving the learning outcomes of a qualification at a specific NQF level as described in the NQF Level Descriptors. One credit must equal ten (10) notional hours of learning.
- 2.5.6 Short courses and other studies for non-formal purposes may not be used in CAT processes but may well lead to evidence that could form part of an RPL process conducted in line with SAQA's policy for implementing RPL, when addressing the gap(s) identified in the CAT process.

2.6 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

In accordance with the 2019 amended National Policy and Criteria for the Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning:

- 2.6.1 RPL refers to the principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated and rigorously assessed and moderated for the purposes of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development.
- 2.6.2 RPL must be conducted in a valid, reliable, transparent and equitable way.
- 2.6.3 RPL decisions must be cognisant of statutory requirements and standard selection criteria in the case of professional qualifications.
- 2.6.4 RPL may be used to grant access to a qualification, or for purposes of advanced standing or exempting a candidate from a module(s) of a particular academic programme on the grounds of the outcomes of the module(s) having been attained as evident from the RPL portfolio submitted by the candidate and evaluated by the panel of academic experts in the Faculty concerned.
- 2.6.5 Where advanced standing or exemption from modules is awarded, it must be based on the assessed evidence of the knowledge and skills acquired through informal and non-formal learning.
- 2.6.6 Full qualifications on the HEQSF cannot be awarded solely on the basis of RPL. Similarly, exemption based on RPL should be limited to not more than 50% of the module credits of the academic programme in question. This means that no student should be exempted from

more than 50% of the module credits required for any particular higher education qualification.

- 2.6.7 A student who, on the basis of RPL, is granted exemption from doing some modules in a programme, may complete the qualification with a total number of credits that is less than the normally required number of credits for the qualification in question. This will not be indicated on the qualification certificate of the student as the student has at the time of graduating been deemed competent in all the required outcomes of the qualification in question.
- 2.6.8 In certain academic programmes (e.g., in the health professions), prior learning acquired only during five years preceding the application, will be taken into account. Such a rule will be specified in a Faculty yearbook and the information on the academic programme concerned.
- 2.6.9 Not more than 10% of a cohort of students in an academic programme can be admitted through an RPL process.
- 2.6.10 The Faculty must ensure that quality assurance processes that address the specificities of the RPL process (including careful recording of applications, RPL criteria and assessment, reporting and management systems, etc.) are implemented; and that administrative and support systems, both prior and subsequent to RPL assessment, are in place.

2.7 Planning for and designing of Work-Integrated Learning

- 2.7.1 The NWU recognises Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) as purposeful, organised, supervised and assessed educational activities and experiences that integrate theoretical learning with its application in a real or simulated workplace context.
- 2.7.2 WIL can be a compulsory component of specific academic programmes, usually where a statutory body sets such a requirement.
- 2.7.3 The uniqueness of each field of study and differentiated WIL requirements from professional designations where applicable within each Faculty, necessitate that a Faculty adopts WIL approaches and practices appropriate to its context.
- 2.7.4 WIL activities must align academic and workplace practices for the mutual benefit of students and workplaces.
- 2.7.5 WIL is integrated into selected modules designated for such a purpose and must be credit-bearing, supervised and assessed. This is also a system requirement to ensure compatibility and alignment to the Work Integrated Service Learning (WISL) system during the integration of WIL activities on the system.
- 2.7.6 WIL has as aim to enhance: a) excellence and practicability of the student learning experience, b) the civic responsibility of students, and c) the vocational skills and thereby the workplace readiness and employability of graduates.
- 2.7.7 Faculties must utilise the centralised WISL system to manage their student placements. Although the system is managed through a central office located in the CTL, WIL modules and the concomitant activities required to register students and placement data in the WISL, remain with Faculties.
- 2.7.8 The utilisation of the WISL system aims to facilitate the expansion and formalising of WIL and SL within the NWU, offering improved and more efficient data management and reporting.
- 2.7.9 The curricula, delivery, and assessment of WIL and SL are primarily a Faculty concern and operationalised within the respective Schools. The coordination of placements remain a Faculty responsibility.
- 2.7.10 Institution-wide coordination of the WISL system, WISL utilisation training, system support, system design and maintenance are functions that are managed through the centralised WISL office in collaboration with IT.
- 2.7.11 WIL modules and outcomes, as well as placements conditions, must where applicable, align with the relevant statutory / professional body requirements.

2.8 Planning for and designing of Service Learning.

- 2.8.1 Although voluntary in nature, Service Learning (SL) is a key experiential teaching and learning method aimed at advancing social change while preparing students for future citizenship through real life learning experiences in communities.
- 2.8.2 SL as a teaching and learning method is a collaborative process that links Faculty, students and community partners in organised, supervised, sustainable and mutually beneficial learning experiences that result in addressing identified and agreed upon community needs.
- 2.8.3 Where substantial overlap between the outcomes of service learning (SL) activities and formal modules of an academic programme is identified, Faculties are required to formalise SL activities in an integrated fashion into the outcomes of the module(s) concerned. Faculties should do so in the most appropriate manner as conducive to their varying contexts.
- 2.8.4 In a case where SL is formalised, SL opportunities should be integrated into selected modules designated for such a purpose, whereas module credits are always linked to the demonstration of knowledge, skill and/ or competence gained through rendering meaningful service to the community, and not for the performance of the service alone.
- 2.8.5 SL includes critical reflection on the service activity in order to gain a deeper understanding of module content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of social responsibility towards society as a whole. Service learning is thus aimed at enhancing the civic responsibility of students within the context of the curriculum.
- 2.8.6 Service-Learning activities are supported by the Sustainability and Community Impact Office but the ownership and academic oversight thereof remains with Faculties.

3 Professional development of university teaching

3.1 Professional development of university teaching

- 3.1.1 The NWU is committed to the ongoing investment in and continuous professional development of teaching competence of its academics consistent with the mission and strategic directions of the university, and the unique developmental needs of staff at the different stages within the staff life cycle.
- 3.1.2 While affirming the principle of academic freedom, academics are expected to contribute to ongoing transformation of the university by taking a scholarly approach to university teaching that offers opportunities for effective student learning.
- 3.1.3 The NWU acknowledges that quality teaching requires strong pedagogy (prioritising development of pedagogical content knowledge as necessary) grounded in a deep understanding of a discipline. Therefore, professional development of university teaching, inclusive of mentorship for early career academics, is an integrated and collaborative endeavour between Faculty and support departments, and a shared responsibility to meet developmental objectives.
- 3.1.4 Developmental activities for staff are planned with line managers as part of the annual personal development plan (PDP) and the effectiveness of the skills that are acquired through these initiatives is assessed as part of the staff annual performance plan.
- 3.1.5 The university aims to ensure that all academic employees have access to appropriate and equal continuing professional learning opportunities in accordance with the university's equal opportunities policy.

3.2 Induction of academic staff

- 3.2.1 The induction phase is the initial stage of professional development. An academic induction programme is an activity aimed at enhancing the competence of academics as university teachers as part of their professional development and staff retention.
- 3.2.2 The induction programme is offered in partnership with Faculties, CTL and other stakeholders.

- 3.2.3 The structure of an induction programme accommodates different entry levels for newly-appointed lecturers and takes into account the previous experience of a lecturer.
- 3.2.4 Newly-appointed academic staff complete the induction programme within the minimum probation period.
- 3.2.5 An induction programme is competency-based.
- 3.2.6 The academic induction programme models the blended teaching and learning approach of the NWU as set out in the T&L Strategy.

3.3 Rewards and acknowledgement for academic staff in teaching

- 3.3.1 Rewards and acknowledgement for academic staff in teaching endeavours recognise excellence and innovation in teaching and learning.
- 3.3.2 As an integral part of promotion decisions, rewards and acknowledgement motivate academics to continue to develop and promote scholarship in the field of teaching and learning.
- 3.3.3 Rewards and acknowledgment are incentives for lecturers to continue good teaching practice, motivate peers to improve their teaching, show appreciation to lecturers for their commitment and dedication to student success.
- 3.3.4 Teaching fellowship opportunities are available and contribute towards career progression and promotion, and enhancement of the prestige of academics as university teachers.

3.4 Student feedback on the teaching and learning experience

- 3.4.1 Relevant, systematic, reliable and constructive student feedback is obtained at the NWU concerning the quality of teaching and learning in all modules of academic programmes, and in accordance with arrangements made by executive Deans in the Faculties.
- 3.4.2 Faculty management can obtain advice and support from the Centre for Teaching and Learning in order to effectively address problem areas related to the quality of teaching and learning that arise from student feedback.

4 Assessment and moderation

4.1 The purposes of assessment at the NWU are to:

- 4.1.1 Provide assessment opportunities for the realisation of academic programme outcomes and NWU graduate attributes.
- 4.1.2 Provide evidence of learning success, progress and accountability for certification of a programme
- 4.1.3 Guide the student throughout the process of learning; this is referred to as *Assessment for Learning* (AfL) and includes formative and continuous forms of assessment supported by constructive feedback to students.
- 4.1.4 Determine the extent of learning that has occurred; this is referred to as *Assessment of Learning* (AoL) and includes forms of continuous and summative assessment.
- 4.1.5 Provide the student with opportunities to reflect on their own learning, to determine own learning progress and to understand how best to master content and skills. This is referred to as *Assessment as Learning* (Aa) and includes student reflection on their own learning.

4.2 The NWU is committed to adhering to the following assessment principles:

- 4.2.1 Fairness which implies unbiased opportunities for all students to demonstrate their learning; inclusive is the context of social justice and equality which implies assessment practices that do not hinder or unfairly advantage specific students or groups of students
- 4.2.2 Transparency which implies that it will be clear to students how they will be assessed, and based on what criteria. The rules and regulations for assessment practices, including purpose of assessments, method of assessment, and calculation of marks, will thus be evident.

- 4.2.3 Validity which implies the extent to which assessment accurately measures what it is intended to measure. It is achieved when the assessment is aligned with exit level/ module/ learning outcomes and related assessment criteria;
- 4.2.4 Reliability which refers to the extent to which an assessment method or instrument is a consistent measuring tool under similar assessment conditions. Assessments should produce comparable results if consistent standards are implemented over time and between different student groups and examiners;
- 4.2.5 Flexibility which implies consideration of the various needs of the students involved in the assessment process, as well as a variety of assessment methods employed throughout the learning process;
- 4.2.6 Integrity which implies honesty in all academic work and especially in assessment contexts, being fair towards others, lecturers taking responsibility for the quality of teaching, and students for their commitment to learning, and all stakeholders acting in an ethical manner irrespective of their roles in the assessment process;
- 4.2.7 Meaningfulness which implies the promotion and implanting of lifelong competencies for 21st century life and work, and that the assessment task has a clear purpose other than discipline-specific knowledge acquisition only.
- 4.2.8 Sustainability which implies the development of contextualised higher order skills through scaffolding of suitable knowledge and competencies, creating opportunities for the application, transfer, understanding and demonstration of knowledge, values, attitudes and skills across authentic and real-world contexts.
- 4.2.9 Sensitivity to language which implies that care is taken to use appropriate language(s) for assessments so that language does not prove to be a barrier for some and an advantage for others;
- 4.2.10 Assessment feedback and appeal procedures are clear, accurate, consistent and accessible to staff, students and external examiners/moderators.
- 4.2.11 Alignment of assessments of modules that are offered across NWU campuses, and in distance education as relevant.

4.3 Directives for Faculty Assessment Plans

In accordance with the NWU General Academic Rules and the above assessment principles, Faculty Assessment Plans should take into account the following:

- 4.3.1 Assessment should be outcomes-based, should support learning and achievement, and embrace pragmatic and realistic approaches to ensure the quality of assessment in all modes of provision.
- 4.3.2 Assessment design should constructively align outcomes, assessment criteria, teaching strategies, learning activities, and assessment methods to enable student success.
- 4.3.3 Faculty assessment plan and module assessment plans should make provision for an appropriate mix of assessment methods, instruments and tools suitable to the academic discipline and the nature of the learning outcomes being assessed, and apt for the mode of provision of the modules of the programme.
- 4.3.4 Faculty assessment plans should be transparent in regard of assessment practices, and include a strategy to communicate the assessment schedule (submission opportunities, due dates, second opportunities etc.) and criteria to students, weighting of assessments, marking rubrics, marks allocation and feedback that will enable student learning.
- 4.3.5 Faculty plans should outline procedures for marking according to memoranda, taking into account alignment of marks for modules offered and assessed on different campuses, digital marking, inter-marker reliability, viewing of scripts as relevant, etc.

- 4.3.6 In accordance with the Policy on Academic Integrity and the Policy on Student Discipline, Faculty plans must be clear on the consequences of academic dishonesty, and applied in a consistent and coherent manner.
- 4.3.7 Faculty assessment plans should outline procedures, mechanisms and support systems available to students and staff (for example, continuous professional development opportunities for lecturers on e-Assessment, and the eFundi helpdesk for students with queries), to ensure that assessment takes place in an enabling environment.
- 4.3.8 Faculty plans should require that all types of assessment include the provision of timely and constructive feedback to and from students as this core academic process provides an important basis to inform learning and teaching development.
- 4.3.9 Where appropriate, feedback on assessments should take the form of inclusive opportunities with student participation in either a contact or online setting.
- 4.3.10 Faculty assessment plans should include internal and external moderation procedure for both continuous assessment and final-exam assessment aligned with the General Academic Rules and the Assessment Principles as per section 4.4.2 of these Rules.
- 4.3.11 Faculty moderation approaches and procedures, for both internal and external moderation, must align with the General Academic Rules and the Assessment Principles as per section 4.4.2 of these Rules.
- 4.3.12 4.3.13 Faculties must ensure procedures for credibility the security of assessments in all modes of delivery, in accordance with the General Academic Rules.

4.4 Quality Management of Assessment

- 4.4.1 The quality of assessment is an integral part of the quality assurance and quality enhancement processes at NWU.
- 4.4.2 Quality of assessment is ensured through various regulatory documents and processes at the NWU, inclusive of but not limited to:
- 4.4.3 The NWU T-LA Policy, T-LA Rules and the General Academic Rules;
- 4.4.4 The annual development and implementation of Faculty assessment plans that are aligned with these Rules and with national policy imperatives and contextual requirements;
- 4.4.5 Employment of rigorous internal and external moderation procedures and practices;
- 4.4.6 Consistent implementation of procedures for designing, approving, monitoring and reviewing of assessment strategies;
- 4.4.7 Compliance with rules and processes of the Senate Committee for Academic Standards (SCAS) pertaining to assessment;
- 4.4.8 Internal and external programme evaluations as mechanisms to confirm quality of assessments in the modules of academic programmes.
- 4.4.9 Ongoing capacity development opportunities to enhance lecturers' assessment competence.
- 4.4.10 Ongoing training of students in regard of ethical academic conduct in respect of assessment to promote academic integrity.
- 4.4.11 Continuous review and improvement of assessment practices and design principles of assessments.
- 4.4.12 Effective and secure data and record management systems to retain, maintain and update assessment evidence, incident reports, and security procedures on all assessment practices.
- 4.4.13 A process to ensure safe record-keeping of all assessments (formative, continuous and summative assessments in all formats) for a period of at least 3 years following the year of assessment.

5 Enabling teaching and learning environments

5.1 Overarching principles

- 5.1.1 An enabling teaching and learning environment (TLE) refer to both physical and digital spaces, platforms and solutions.
- 5.1.2 An enabling TLE is established through holistic and long-term strategic planning.
- 5.1.3 An enabling TLE assumes that digital access barriers have been addressed on the side of lecturers and students alike.
- 5.1.4 An enabling TLE enhances access through equitable and appropriate blended T-L solutions and in all modes of provision.
- 5.1.5 The TLE is conducive to the facilitation of transformative learning and critical thinking.
- 5.1.6 TLEs are enriched through the integration and utilisation of credible, quality, teaching and learning resources.
- 5.1.7 The progressive, integrated design and development of enabling, responsive and sustainable TLE, including spaces, are driven by a collaborative institution-wide commitment and supported by coordinated effort among process owners and associated stakeholders.
- 5.1.8 The design and development of an enabling TLE is informed by research and evidence-based educational and discipline-specific practices.
- 5.1.9 The TLE influences and is responsive to the unique learning needs of individuals, to groups of students, and collaboration required for effective teaching and learning.

5.2 Digital transformation of the TLE, technology-enhanced learning and technology adoption

- 5.2.1 Digital Transformation of TLE is based on a transformation strategy and supported by an implementation plan, resources and capacity.
- 5.2.2 Digital T-L transformation aims to realise the broader intent of blended learning as stated in the T-L Strategy.
- 5.2.3 The TLE and its associated T-L systems, technology and practices adhere to prescribed quality measures, standards and guidelines.
- 5.2.4 The TLE explores the synergy between technologies (tools) and the cognitive processes associated with learning.
- 5.2.5 The TLE is sustained through design and development needs-driven capacity building programmes and related ICT support.
- 5.2.6 Virtual and Physical TLEs respond to innovative curriculum designs appropriate to different disciplinary contexts.
- 5.2.7 The flexible design of the TLE:
 - 5.2.7.1 is informed by sound educational (pedagogic) principles, innovative technology adoption, technology enhanced teaching and learning, and best practices, with due consideration of infrastructural and IT requirements.
 - 5.2.7.2 extends over a range of design alternatives conducive to quality teaching and learning,
 - 5.2.7.3 ensures comparable quality learning experiences regardless of mode of delivery,
 - 5.2.7.4 addresses the challenges of spatial and temporal separation,
 - 5.2.7.5 provides access to preferred and supported technologies,
 - 5.2.7.6 provides access to information rich and interactive TLEs and resources,
 - 5.2.7.7 incorporates enabling support systems that organise conditions within which lecturers teach effectively and students learn best, and
 - 5.2.7.8 contributes to meaningful, responsive, engaging teaching and learning experiences and unfettered communication and collaboration.

5.3 Planning, design and development of teaching and learning resources and activities

- 5.3.1 T-L resources and activities should comply with universal design principles (Inclusive)
- 5.3.2 T-L resources and activities comply with internal and external quality norms, standards and practices related to the mode of provision and the delivery platforms used.
- 5.3.3 T-L resources and activities support quality teaching and learning experiences in all modes of provision.
- 5.3.4 T-L resources and activities are designed and developed to optimise publication, storage, distribution, and delivery thereof (full integration).
- 5.3.5 Prescribed and recommended T-L resources reflect a balance between quality and quantity.
- 5.3.6 T-L resources and activities support both formal and independent learning experiences.
- 5.3.7 The design and development of T-L resources and activities provide for reuse and repurposing.
- 5.3.8 T-L resources, plans and designs are handed over between lecturers in a prudent manner when lecturer mobility occurs.
- 5.3.9 T-L resources and activities are reviewed on a pre-determined review cycle.
- 5.3.10 All T-L activities must adhere to the specified notional hours.

6 Role players responsible for implementation of the Rules

6.1 Role players within the student body

The student

Student peer mentors

Supplemental instruction facilitators

Student Representative Council

6.2 Role players within the academic environment

The lecturer

The programme leader & coordinator

The subject leader & deputy subject leader

The School/Research Director and deputy School Directors

Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees

The Executive Dean or Deputy Dean Teaching and Learning / Deputy Dean Research and Innovation, whichever is relevant

External examiners/ moderators

Faculty Examination Committees

Faculty Boards

Programme Advisory Committees

6.3 Role players within the support environment

The Centre for Teaching and Learning

The Qualifications and Academic Programme Planning Unit

Programme administrators

Student Counselling Services

Student Finances and Financial Related Systems

Residence and Catering Services

Community Engagement Office
Quality Enhancement Office
Library and Information Services
Unit for Students with Disabilities
The Career Centre
Facilities Department
Information Technology

6.4 Role players within the management environment

The Senate Committee for Academic Standards
The Senate Committee for Teaching and Learning
Senate

6.5 Applicable role players from industry and the professions

Dependent on the academic offering
Statutory and non-statutory bodies, as relevant
Advisory Committees for professional qualifications, as relevant

7 Implementation, monitoring and review of the Rules

Responsibility for the Rules lie with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning.

Monitoring of the implementation of the Rules lies with each Faculty Board, chaired by the executive Dean of a Faculty.

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Rules must be reviewed every two years.

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