NWU TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY 2021-2025

Reference number	8Pr
Accountable executive manager	Deputy Vice Chancellor: Teaching and Learning
Policy Owner	Deputy Vice Chancellor: Teaching and Learning
Responsible division	Deputy Vice Chancellor: Teaching and Learning
Status	Approved
Approved by	Council
Date of approval	16 November 2023
Date of amendments	
Review date	2026

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NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY (2021-2025)

Office of the DVC Teaching and Learning

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Approved by NWU Senate on 21 October 2020, NWU Council on 19 November 2020

Revised version approved by NWU Senate on 19 October 2023, NWU Council on 16 November 2023.

1   Introduction[1]

The North-West University (NWU) Teaching and Learning Strategy (2016-2020) was approved by Council on 23 June 2016 after three years of reflection, discussion and consultation during a time of University restructuring. The NWU has since established its eight faculty multi-campus unitary management model. Teaching and learning (TL) leadership within faculties and within TL support units has been established, and the revised Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TL&A) Policy and Rules have been approved by Council in 2019. During a Senate meeting on 27 February 2019, the process of consultation to review the TL Strategy (2016-2020) with a view to implement the revised Strategy in January 2021, was approved.

The revision was informed by national higher education policy directives, national and international developments in higher education, the goals and directions that are formulated in the NWU Strategy (2015-2025), relevant NWU regulatory documents, and the NWU T&L HyFlex Model. Furthermore, the eight NWU faculties have since 2018 each developed a Faculty Integrated Teaching and Learning Plan (FITLP) to explicate and guide strategic goals for TL development and transformation, inclusive but not limited to, the Curriculum Project[2]. Together these eight FITLPs constitute the NWU's medium term TL and curriculum plan, guided by the longer term NWU Strategic intent and the TL Strategy. The FITLPs elucidate faculty missions, goals, transformation and development initiatives and targets, staff and student capacities, roles and responsibilities, and other matters related to teaching, learning, and assessment within the unique context of each.

Ultimately, the TL Strategy is the way in which we describe for ourselves what features within the teaching, learning and curriculum project we would like to see at which levels of complexity (years of study), and to what purposes (outcomes, skills, competencies, knowledge-sets or combinations thereof) across all FITLPs. The TL Strategy is thus a "compass" for the "maps" that are the Plans: The Strategy provides direction, the Plans map the terrain to be covered, and the journey is the curriculum's origin, course, and destinations. The T&L HyFlex Model defines the playing field within which the T&L Strategy and FITLPs, as well as the means through which the academic offerings can be operationalised.

Over the past five years, much has been done regarding transformation of the curriculum, the TL environment, professionalising of university teaching, and alignment of academic standards, student support and the student learning experience, all inextricably linked in striving towards:

- quality, coherence, sustainability and cross-campus alignment of the academic offering,
- social justice, multilingualism and cultural inclusivity,
- responsiveness to environmental, economic and political changes,
- being relevant to the current and future needs of the communities we serve,
- quality of the student learning experience on each of the NWU campuses, and in distance education, and
- excellence in teaching-learning, supportive of research and community engagement.

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[1] All concepts in need of clarification are defined in the NWU Glossary of Teaching-Learning related acronyms, concepts and designations that needs to be read in conjunction with this Strategy document

[2] The NWU Curriculum Project encompasses a PQM review over the next 3 year period to ensure a responsive and financially viable academic offering, and that the size and shape of the academic offering are aligned with a) the mandate of a traditional university, b) the NWU Strategic foci and market direction, c) NWU transformation goals, and c) the DHET requirement of less proliferation of qualifications at the undergraduate level, with specialisation rather at a later stage in the student academic life cycle. Also see par. 6.2 and 6.6

A key aspect of realising strategy is the development of medium to long term operational plans. The FITLPs, Faculty Language Plans, the NWU Curriculum Framework, the TL Technology Plan, and related operational budgets are some of the vehicles through which transformation, alignment and achievement of the TL Strategy aspirations are manifested.

The TL Strategy document elucidates relevant elements of the NWU context and underpinning principles that guided Strategy formulation. Thereafter the purpose, vision, mission and strategic goals of the TL Strategy are explained, followed by the strategic drivers, and the envisaged NWU graduate attributes. The TL Strategy frames the University's endeavours to achieve its strategic agenda of excellence in innovative quality teaching and learning to the benefit of its stakeholders, specifically its students, and the communities it serves.

2   The NWU Context

The NWU is a traditional university, with a focus on teaching and learning, supportive of research and community engagement. As such, undergraduate teaching and learning is a main focus, and teaching staff have the academic freedom to create teaching and learning opportunities designed to induct undergraduate and postgraduate students into the nature of academic knowledge, and how it is constructed within their disciplines. Research in teaching and learning characteristic of a traditional university entails a particular focus on how knowledge is constructed, transmitted and disseminated from first year onwards. Academic staff have the opportunity to evidence this in the use of authentic discipline specific texts and learning materials.

In its commitment to academic freedom, NWU equally acknowledges that disciplines 'know' in different ways, and this is reflected in the way that knowledge and knowing is communicated. This means academic staff, in exercising academic freedom, have the responsibility to develop learning materials in a manner that supports the learning needs of all students within disciplinary contexts. In this way, students are supported in relation to what they need to learn within their disciplinary areas through responsive, internal curriculum based initiatives.

It is the intention of the NWU to prepare its students for life and the world of work, creating a culture of innovation to solve real world problems so that they may participate constructively in public life, and lead fulfilling professional and private lives. To achieve this goal, the University will be responsive to at least three acknowledged paradigms concerning the role of the university:

- The pedagogical paradigm[3] is concerned with the university's responsibility to educate students not only in disciplines, but also in terms of the skills associated with collaborative, cooperative and self-directed learning that leads to the manifestation of our graduate attributes. Linking to the oldest idea or tradition of the university, it emphasises the lecturer's role in supporting and guiding a student, and leading the student towards self-direction, actualisation and autonomy as a responsible intellectual and citizen. An important focal point of this paradigm, as for example articulated by the German idea of "Bildung" ("Moaho" in Sesotho), which can be complimented with an African philosophy episteme of intellectual reflection, called "onuma", is that the student should reach a point where he/she can be viewed as a well-rounded, broadly orientated, intellectual with the critical capacity to embark on a life-long, values-oriented path of interaction with knowledge and views about reality, and their application to various contexts.
- The cognitive paradigm points to the university's role in broadening knowledge. In contrast to the former paradigm, this paradigm does not aim in the first place to form people but to facilitate knowledge acquisition. The idea is to make students familiar with the context, content, intellectual skills and instruments to become autonomous learners, researchers and professionals.
- The pragmatic or instrumentalist paradigm emphasises the practical role that the university should play in preparing students to become "useful" members of society. By emphasising the university's links and interaction with its social environment, this model counters the perception of the university as an ivory tower.

Whereas the first two paradigms emphasise responsiveness to the internal and central aim of a university (i.e. academic knowledge) the instrumentalist paradigm sees the university as also responsive to external goals (e.g. the economy, the environment, social and cultural diversity and justice, technological development, the various professions etc.). The influence of these paradigms varies according to the nature

and level of qualifications and major fields of study, and specifically whether they have a general-formative, professional, or vocational and technical nature. Nevertheless, they should all be taken into account in the

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[3] Kivunja, C. 2014 Do you want your students to be job-ready with 21st century skills? Change pedagogies. International Journal of Higher Education, Vol 2(3): 81-91. No further references are specifically indicated as these paradigms are discipline specific in its application. The definitions given here, are specific to the NWU context. Also see the NWU Glossary

design of teaching and learning experiences that prepare students for life and the world of work in twenty-first century society.

The TL Strategy sets an ambitious agenda, which requires the ability to attract, retain, recognise and reward high quality staff, an enabling teaching and learning environment and appropriate systems for student access, retention and success, real-time access to learning and learner data and substantial continuing investment in physical, information and technological resources[4]. It is a well-known fact that South Africa's low student success rates are systemic in nature, rooted in the schooling system. Yet while universities cannot control all the causes of poor performance, they have to implement initiatives to reduce the articulation gap[5]. The TL Strategy does not gloss over these deep challenges. Instead it acknowledges and embraces them, within an overarching commitment to create and sustain the conditions that will allow and encourage all students at NWU to succeed.

The rest of this section elaborates on international and national developments that shape the NWU's understanding of the context to which its TL Strategy should be responsive. Some of these factors stem from contextual challenges and opportunities facing the South African higher education system, while others relate to the rapidly changing environment in which higher education systems operate nationally and internationally.

2.1 Educational Approach to the challenges of twenty-first century

The NWU strives to prepare its students to take full advantage of a rapidly changing world in which technology expands the borders of individuals and organisations, shapes human, social, cultural and organisational interaction on a national and global scale, and influences both the nature of work and the definition of employment. Of particular importance is preparing NWU students for sustainable engagement in meaningful and productive work and for entrepreneurial activities. NWU is committed to educating knowledgeable, skilled and values-driven graduates who are able to engage with 21st Century challenges in an authentic, innovative and critical manner, and thereby to contribute constructively to communities, society and the professions.

The NWU commits to providing its students with an educational experience that will prepare them to face relevant twenty-first century employment, societal, cultural, economic, ecological and political challenges in an authentic manner, and to become responsible citizens. This will require an outcomes-oriented, student-centred educational approach, focused on inquiry-based, active, participatory, collaborative, cooperative and self-directed learning within a supportive, responsive, and enabling teaching and learning environment. This environment should be based on meaningful teaching and learning designs, and enhanced by appropriate technologies and resources.

During all years of study, teaching and learning are viewed as dynamic, interactive processes for which NWU staff and students have a shared responsibility, depending on the level of study and the nature and requirements of the discipline. The University strives to equip its students with the competencies to discover knowledge and create coherent understanding through the critical analysis, evaluation, organisation and synthesis of information in a variety of contexts in order to prepare them to become productive members of their social, academic and professional communities.

Recognising that NWU students have diverse social, cultural, and educational backgrounds, learning needs and expectations, the University acknowledges its responsibility to provide students with a responsive, accessible and supportive learning experience which will empower them to progressively assume greater responsibility for their own learning. Student support is key to student success. The learning experiences are designed to enable students to provide a reasoned account for their own beliefs, practices and attitudes and to challenge embedded social-cultural constructs and beliefs. The NWU approach aligns with the National Qualification Framework's demand for a progressive increase in student learning autonomy and self-accountability at different qualification levels, and from the first to the final year of study.

Academics fulfil various roles in developing programme architecture, and the design and delivery of learning experiences that provide their students with optimal opportunities to develop the capabilities to discover knowledge, and create understanding. These include the roles of curriculum designer and developer, learning facilitator or learning mediator, learning materials developer, assessor, life-long learner and researcher and subject matter expert. In the execution of these roles, members of academic staff will work with, and be supported by, professional support staff. They will also create opportunities to engage with students about the design of the curriculum, teaching and assessment approaches, their learning needs and the support provided to them. Engagement with the curriculum means that as disciplinary experts, members of academic staff welcome critical discussion with students about the construction and validation of knowledge, and the selection

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[4] Within the context of increasing budgetary constraints.

[5] The under preparedness of students entering into the higher education system ultimately needs a stronger focus on structural changes to the core business of teaching and learning and a curriculum that is more flexible to accommodate diversity and to actively engage all students, irrespective of level of preparedness, during teaching. A move towards assessments that promotes learning and not only testing of learning must become more prevalent.

of knowledge within the curriculum. In this manner, academic staff will follow a participatory approach, collaborating with members of professional support staff with expertise in curriculum, teaching and learning, learning technologies and instructional design, to create learning experiences that support the achievement of qualification and programme outcomes and associated graduate attributes.

2.1.1 Sustainable development goals[6]

The NWU also strives to educate its students to be acutely aware of and to make a contribution to the sustainable development of South African society, the African continent and the wider global community. On 25 September 2015 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to transform our world by addressing major global challenges that threaten the long-term sustainability of global society. This wide-ranging agenda addresses seventeen goals relating to the economic, social and environmental conditions that will improve the quality of life of all people. As stakeholder and global collaborative partner in the UN Global Compact, the NWU is committed, through its curriculum project, to address relevant sustainability goals to ensure, amongst others, that its graduates are of the mind set to actively seek collaboration opportunities to contribute towards the alleviation of poverty and unemployment, promotion of sustainable economic growth and consumption patterns, securing of our planet, promoting peaceful and inclusive societies and achieving equality and empowerment of all people whom they come into contact with. These important foci must permeate throughout the curriculum in various formats and with tangible outcomes, depending on the nature and focus of the formal and non-formal academic offering. Preparing students for the world of work cannot exclude preparation for life in a society in need of people able and willing to be stewards for these essential causes, and to participate meaningfully in intercultural dialogue with respect for socio-cultural diversity as it finds expression in different languages, religions, worldviews, and ways of life, traditions and patterns of social organisation.

2.1.2 Twenty-first Century skills

Foundational Literacies How students apply core skills to everyday tasks	Transferable skills How students approach complex challenges	Character traits How students approach their changing environment
Literacy	Critical thinking, complex problem solving and decision making	Curiosity
Numeracy	Negotiation skills	Initiative
Scientific literacy	Creativity	Persistency/ grit
e-Learning (Technology, ICT, digital) literacy (also taking into account 4IR and its implications for curriculum design and outcomes)[7]	Communication skills	Social, environmental, gender and cultural mindfulness
Financial literacy	Entrepreneurial thinking	Leadership
Visual literacy	Collaboration and team work	Adaptability
Information literacy	Lifelong learning	Emotional intelligence
Cultural and civic literacy	Team management	Integrity

Success in the 21st century requires knowing how to learn and how to manage and adapt to change. It is essential that students develop robust critical thinking, problem solving, as well as inter and intrapersonal communication skills in order to be successful in an increasingly fluid, interconnected, and complex world. The

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[6] The United Nations. 2015. Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1). Visit https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/

[7] Also based on the experience of disruptions caused by political and/or natural perturbations, e.g. the Covid-19 pandemic, 2020

NWU will use the opportunities afforded by technology to re-imagine 21st century teaching and the skills set needed by the 21st century lecturer, focusing on preparing students to be lifelong learners.

2.2 Creating a more responsive higher education system

A second force that shapes this TL Strategy is the contextual opportunities and challenges facing the South African higher education system. In terms of teaching and learning, it is particularly important to address challenges relating to the overall participation rate, with continued inequalities in terms of race and social class, high attrition and low completion rates, the need for curriculum reform, and poor articulation with other components of the post-secondary system. Key governmental initiatives to strengthen the contribution that HE makes to national development and societal transformation goals, include the following:

- An increase in total student numbers for the public university sector, from 973 000 students in 2011 to about 1.6 million enrolments in 2030[8];
- Review/analysis and improvement on the utilisation of the opportunities provided by distance education to expand the higher education system[9];
- Further improvement of student throughput and retention rates, by enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, and further strengthening the teaching competence of academic staff[10].

In answer to the above goals, the University endeavours to offer high quality teaching and learning that will be reflected in student success rates, the outcomes of external peer reviews, graduate employer feedback, student satisfaction, the employability of graduates and their entrepreneurial skills. Furthermore, in terms of sustainability, and cognisant of the NWU internal success model, responsiveness implies careful academic planning in terms of the most appropriate proportion of undergraduate/ postgraduate national and international students, major fields of study and academic programme niches, suitable modes of provision for different qualifications and student profiles, and retention of a competitive edge while remaining financially viable and market responsive[11].

2.3 Multi-modal education and e-Learning[12]

The traditional campus-based model of higher education can only partially address the challenges of increased access to quality learning opportunities within the South African HE system. The available funding from public and other sources will not be able to support the growth in university campuses at a scale that is commensurate with an expanding student population. Furthermore, students may choose to study by means of distance learning for financial, career or other reasons. Therefore, while continuing to enhance the educational experience of students on NWU campuses, the University needs also to build on its substantial experience in delivering academic programmes via the distance mode of provision, and increasingly via e-Learning capabilities where appropriate.

2.3.1 Leadership in multi-modal education

At present the NWU is recognised as one of the leaders in multimodal provision nationally[13]. The NWU continues to support studies through formal contact and distance modes of provision in the light of changing

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[8] Social Inclusion in the Post-School Education and Training System (2016), the draft NQF Articulation Policy, the National Development Plan 2030 (2012), the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2013), the Policy for the Provision of Distance Education in South African Universities in the Context of an Integrated Post-School System (2014); the Policy Framework on Differentiation in the South African Post-School System (2014) the Policy framework for the realisation of (2016), and the Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System (2018).

[9] Capacity constraints for additional distance offerings need always to be considered. The NWU may need to invest in pure online offering of a greater number of distance qualifications, especially at the postgraduate level for working individuals. Investment in a real time online digital face-to-face engagement (one-to-many) platform is essential in this context.

[10] Even competent lecturers will struggle if student-staff ratios are not managed in a realistic manner. Growth of student numbers without concomitant growth in the number of lecturers will negatively affect student success rates and throughput.

[11] Reference documents that were consulted: Inclusion in the Post-School Education and Training System (2016), the draft NQF Articulation Policy, various planning and policy documents, including the National Development Plan 2030 (2012), the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2013), the Policy for the Provision of Distance Education in South African Universities in the Context of an Integrated Post-School System (2014); the Policy Framework on Differentiation in the South African Post-School System (2014) the Policy framework for the realisation of (2016), and the Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System (2018).

[12] e-Learning is clearly defined in the Glossary of TL-related concepts.

[13] NWU student numbers stood at 61 212 in 2017; 43 418 students enrolled for contact mode of provision, 17 794 students enrolled for distance mode of provision. Nationally NWU is still the 2nd largest public higher education provider in distance mode of provision and

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worldwide trends in education, and in order to contribute to the need for increased access and greater opportunities for lifelong learning. This may include supporting students through fully online and blended learning opportunities as the need arises and opportunities present themselves. The NWU continues to provide its students with flexible opportunities for learning within a context of growing resource constraints, unpredictable environments, as well as changing patterns in student demand. The pedagogical approaches and forms of student support will have to take the profile and specific needs of students who are studying through each mode of delivery into account, and will be guided by the realities of spatial and, to a lesser extent, temporal separation in each mode of provision.

In line with FITLPs, the University acknowledges that the demands of distance learning will differ across disciplines, and that it may not be appropriate or feasible to engage in this mode of provision in certain disciplines with a strong practical, laboratory-based or clinical component. Therefore, the considerations that will guide the provision of qualifications by means of distance education are the ability to support effective learning, appropriate online academic and administrative support structures, mentorship for distance students where the distance programme has an explicit online presence, the student profile, and the possibility of achieving economies of scale.

The nature of the teaching and learning design, teaching methodologies, use of appropriate technologies and student support mechanisms and opportunities, remain important irrespective of the mode of provision, in order to ensure a quality learning experience for NWU students. The NWU commits to equivalent academic standards irrespective of the mode or site of provision of a qualification, and parity of esteem for qualifications, academic programmes and learning opportunities and experiences.

2.3.2 Developing e-Learning capabilities for innovative teaching and learning designs

There is an urgency concerning the expanded use of e-Learning in formal and non-formal offerings. The NWU approach to technology integration includes planning for mitigation of exclusion and better support for students and staff in terms of teaching, learning and assessment.

Careful decision making regarding the use of e-Learning for diverse student profiles and contexts are thus essential to ensure that NWU students have equal chances to succeed in their studies, irrespective of mode of provision. Developing e-Learning competencies of staff and students, as well as the development of the teaching and learning environment to advance e-Learning integration and online learning, fall within the mandate of the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL).

Recent and ongoing developments in e-Learning technologies and the hype surrounding the 4IR[14] present NWU with significant opportunities to engage in a process of digital and pedagogical innovation. Drawing on these developments, the University is in the process of developing greater capacity to engage in blended learning, online learning, virtual learning and other teaching and learning designs. Benefits to these different kinds of teaching and learning designs include greater flexibility, increased accessibility and participation, adaptive learning and enhanced student support opportunities.

In the design of curricula and innovative teaching and learning, the focus will never be primarily on the use and capabilities of technology, but rather on how the technology can support and enhance the student learning experience and transformative pedagogical practices, improving effectiveness and ensuring efficient support for staff and students.

2.4 Designing meaningful learning experiences

The context in which people learn is changing constantly. Students live in an unpredictable world, where many of the careers that they will pursue do not yet exist. The challenge for educators is to design meaningful learning experiences that engage students in opportunities to acquire the critical, evaluative and research skills to be able to form coherent understanding in a variety of contexts, and to develop into lifelong learners who will flourish in a fast growing and often uncertain world.

In the achievement of this goal, the University seeks to support and develop staff from a funding and a resourcing perspective. The University also endeavours to engage students in more inclusive and personalised learning experiences that address their diverse learning needs and digital skills, and that consist of a wider range of learning activities. Personalised learning experiences should be informed by learning and learner analytics, generated from appropriate teaching and learning data.

4th largest public higher education provider in contact mode of provision (Statistics on Post-School Education and Training in South Africa, DHET, 2018)

[14] 4IR implies a TL environment in which disruptive technologies and trends such as the Internet of things, robotics, artificial intelligence and virtual reality change the way our students learn and our academics teach. The NWU takes seriously the importance of making students aware of the implications of 4IR, and exposing them to disruptive technologies and trends as often as possible, and is in the process of developing its first Digital Business Strategy. The University has a ways to go before we can embrace 4IR in teaching, learning, and assessment.

Learning experiences will, where appropriate and beneficial, afford student engagement with both communities and the world of work by means of work-integrated learning and community engaged service learning opportunities. Such engagement will be integrated into teaching and learning designs and must at all times be sustainable, mutually beneficial, and aligned to community needs. It is the NWU's intent to use such engagement opportunities to better prepare students for the world of work, and to develop a culture of responsible and active participation in civil society, citizenship and environmental stewardship.

The development and finalisation of a NWU TL Digital Transformation Plan is an urgent matter that is receiving attention. This Plan will encompass the blended learning strategy, the multimodal strategy, matters relating to technology access, development of digital offline capacity with some online components, and closing the digital divide[15]. Principles for resource design and development, inclusive of learning resource development and development of the physical and virtual teaching and learning environment will also be foci in the Plan.

The following design priorities and trends in the field of learning design have been identified for application and implementation over the next five years:

- The principles of a Universal Design for Learning (UDL)[16] approach are adhered to and address the notions of personalised/ adaptive/ transformative/ student centred learning;
- Educational approaches appropriate to disciplinary context and knowledge types;
- A blended learning approach for increased accessibility and flexibility of learning;
- A focus in learning design on internalising graduate attributes to enhance work readiness and employability of graduates;
- Ensuring that curricula of academic programmes enable students to connect/ engage with communities outside of the University to encourage authenticity and real world challenges;
- Ensuring that curriculum renewal is future oriented, with engagement with various external role-players in order to design curricula that will address societal and environmental challenges (also taking into account a multi-, inter- and intra-disciplinary learning and application of learning;
- Ensuring that curriculum design and renewal are data informed; and
- Making sure that learning is designed for active engagement with a wide variety of media and opportunities for independent, self-directed and collaborative learning.

Recognising that curriculum design and renewal is a continuous reflective, cyclic, analytic process, qualification standards are the axis that will guide (a student-centred) curriculum development (to deliver stimulating and intellectually challenging programmes).

3   Principles that guided strategy formulation

North-West University is committed to providing discipline-specific, theory informed and responsive pedagogy, with a focus on assessment for, of, and as learning, and integrating disciplinary literacies, academic development and support for the enhancement of qualities, skills and understandings necessary for employment, global citizenry, and the demands of the twenty first century. The following principles underpin the formulation of the NWU TL Strategy:

- Promotion of the scholarship of teaching and learning in order to support communities of inquiry in which members of academic staff, in collaboration with and assisted by suitably qualified professional support staff, conduct ethically sound and responsive research into the curriculum, the teaching and learning environment, teaching, student learning and development, and assessment.
- Systematic pursuit of excellence in all aspects of teaching and learning by cultivating inquiry-led, self-directed and adaptable students to provide a consistently high quality learning experience to all NWU students, irrespective of mode of provision.
- A commitment to promote multilingualism in university classrooms to the benefit of student learning and academic success, providing appropriate opportunities for students to relate their learning to practical contexts, including opportunities for work-integrated and service learning (WIL and SL), and creating platforms for students to exchange discipline specific knowledge and competencies across campuses.
- Acknowledgement that while academic staff have the primary responsibility for setting high standards of academic performance for NWU students, this is matched by accessible and appropriate student support that strives towards more inclusive processes to solicit student input on teaching quality and quality enhancement.

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[15] The TL Technology Plan should also address strategies for student academic development and support, remedial support, and learning and learning analytics.

[16] Visit http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/The-7-Principles/

- Requiring that academic staff should be inquiry-driven so that they consistently develop their competence as professional university teachers, supported by opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills within an appropriate incentivised recognition system.
- A commitment to collaborate and share innovation and best practice in teaching and learning within the institution, nationally and globally, through collaborative networks and partnerships as well as capacity development programmes.
- Recognition of the centrality of teaching and learning to NWU's mission, necessitating the adoption of an integrated approach to ensure that strategies and goals for teaching and learning are correlated with other key institutional strategies, plans and policies in areas such as transformation, academic planning, research and innovation, community engagement, student development and support services, information services and e-Learning, finance and facilities.
- Establishing valuable partnerships with alumni and industry partners for promoting access to and opportunities for industry, WIL and SL.

4 The Purpose of the TL Strategy

The NWU TL Strategy provides an overarching and integrated strategy to inform and direct planning, decision making, and actions across the University regarding all matters related to teaching and learning. In defining the purpose of the TL Strategy, it is necessary to first define the purpose of higher education (HE) in its broader context. The NWU views HE as a vehicle that offers:

- a personally transformative experience focused on the individual as part of a community of learning. That learning enables intellectual growth towards creating and enhancing the community and workplace, leading, following, and engendering civic responsibilities and rights. It concerns growing in learning that adds value to science for the community, the nation, and the world;
- an academically transformative experience: it should lead to the development of understanding of knowledge, and to the construction of new knowledge. It should create an awareness of the deep links between knowledge, community, society and the environment, such that it develops critical thinking, sophisticated conceptual and practical skills;
- a socially transformative experience: it contributes to the common good of communities, it focusses on sustainability, community and workplace leadership, work creation, a concern with social issues, poverty, inequality. A cherishing of values that support the dignity of the person, the solidarity of people, and a deep commitment to care for the environment.

Within this context and aiming towards these transformative experiences, the TL Strategy intends to develop a shared understanding of:

- the creation of viable HE access pathways with concomitant foundational support to enhance student success;
- the NWU curriculum project (inclusive of reconceptualisation of the first and the final year experience, expanding the nature and enhancing the quality of continuing education (short course) offerings, critical cross field outcomes across years of study, WIL and SL opportunities in preparation of community life and the world of work, and independent research development as the crown of an academic pathway);
- the strategic teaching, learning and assessment project (inclusive of fit-for-purpose technology in professionalisation of higher education teaching; and integration into TL and assessment environments (virtual, physical and social);
- professionalisation of higher education teaching; and
- excellent student academic support and development strategies to enhance student retention and success.

The TL Strategy takes its cue from the strategic intent of the North-West University Strategy 2015 to 2025, "to transform and position the NWU as a unitary institution of superior academic excellence, with a commitment to social justice"[17]. In accordance with the University's values, the TL Strategy is imbedded in an organisational culture evidenced by behaviours congruent with a transformational focus. These include: the decolonisation imperative; the valuing of diversity and inclusiveness; ethical conduct and care; a values-based collective identity that promotes integration, participation, and collaboration; innovation and dedication to the University's core business; joint and individual accountability; robust engagement and academic integrity; and a comprehensive integrated quality assurance system for teaching-learning related matters which incorporates continued curriculum relevance and responsiveness, self- and student reflection on teaching practices.

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[17] See NWU Strategy (2015-2025)

5   Vision and Mission, and Strategic Goals for teaching and learning at the NWU

In response to the NWU Strategy 2015-2025, this section describes the vision, mission and strategic goals that will direct the University's approach to teaching and learning[18].

5.1   Vision

Promote excellent learning and teaching and reposition the NWU to attain the size and shape required by the market direction decisions.

5.2   Mission

NWU will be a leading South African provider of multimodal education[19], by striving for continuous transformation of its curriculum, supported through the use of suitable technologies to provide a high quality and seamless lecturer-student engagement, so that students emerge as socially responsive and educated graduates. The NWU endeavours to support its students so that they can progressively become self-directed and lifelong learners who make responsible, ethical, and distinctive contributions to society and the world of work.

5.3   Strategic Goals[20]

In the pursuit of its teaching and learning vision and mission, the NWU will strive to realise the following strategic goals:

- Good governance of teaching and learning that ensures external and internal compliance, sustainability and financial viability, supports adequate resourcing towards realisation of strategic intent, prioritises recruiting, developing and retaining excellent staff and students
- Quality, sustainability and responsiveness of the formal and non-formal academic offering through both systematic and principled curriculum transformation and continuous improvement of new and existing offerings.
- High quality teaching characterised by an approach that is responsive to students' learning needs, sufficient development opportunities to professionalise university teaching, and the cultivation of intellectual inquiry. This will be fostered by means of vibrant and caring communities of practice, enhancing the scholarship of teaching and learning, and research of a multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary nature.
- Improved access, retention and student success so that as an institution the NWU responds effectively to the challenges facing South African higher education as a system characterised by low participation and high attrition rates.
- Development of highly-educated graduates who are uniquely prepared to be responsible and engaged members of society, employees or future employers
- The creation and maintenance of a well-resourced and enabling teaching and learning environment, in terms of facilities and infrastructure, on a sustainable basis.

The strategic drivers that are discussed in section 6 of the Strategy provide a further elaboration of these goals, while the Faculty Integrated Teaching and Learning Plans support the Strategy and indicate how these goals will be achieved.

6   Key Strategic Drivers

High-quality teaching and learning necessitate an enabling teaching and learning environment on all sites of delivery of the NWU and across Faculties, irrespective of mode of provision, supported by the strategic drivers elaborated on in this section.

6.1   Governance arrangements for teaching and learning

High quality teaching and learning is embedded in an effective and appropriate framework for the governance of teaching and learning, which includes the following:

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[18] The operational plan to drive, resource and fund the implementation of the vision, mission and strategic goals within faculties across campuses finds application in the Faculty Integrated Teaching and Learning Plans.

[19] At this time, multimodal education encompasses two recognised modes of provision: contact and distance education.

[20] The TL Strategic goals to be supplemented with a clear implementation plan to make provision for necessary funding, staff capacity and other related resources

- A clear understanding and delineation of the roles and responsibilities for teaching and learning activities, as well as the appropriate allocation of accountabilities for teaching and learning that are communicated, managed and monitored effectively.
- Effective policies, rules, processes and procedures at the appropriate levels to provide oversight for the quality and standards of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Appropriate structures for the management of teaching and learning activities, at faculty level and across all sites of delivery and modes of provision.
- Innovative and responsive academic planning, inclusive of planning for the rightful place and recognition of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).

6.2 Qualification and Academic Programme Planning, Design and Development

- The responsiveness and viability of NWU's PQM, the integrity of academic standards and consistency of the student learning experience, are dependent upon an effective system for qualification and academic programme planning, development, implementation, management and review, which will be characterised by effective systems for:
- Academic and TL support leadership to provide oversight to processes for programme planning, development, management and review;
- Programme planning, development and approval, which includes clearly articulated accountabilities, well- defined and efficient processes and procedures, and reliable academic programme information systems, to ensure the quality and standards of qualifications and programmes and the accuracy of all published information relating to academic programmes;
- Programme coordination, to ensure systematic planning and monitoring of programme and module provision in accordance with the qualification standards to which they are related. This includes study guides and materials, teaching, learning and assessment approaches and methods, moderation, student support and programme administrative services.
- Programme review, to ensure that the quality and standards of academic programmes are reviewed within appropriate timeframes, that adequate improvement plans are compiled, and that their implementation is monitored. A particular concern of the review process is that curricula should be relevant, responsive to societal and environmental challenges and effective in supporting students to meet the programme and module learning outcomes.
- Feedback from students, graduates and employers, to regularly obtain inputs on the quality and standards of academic programmes[21].

6.3 Teaching and Learning Innovation

Teaching and learning innovation encourages active, self-directed learning through the considered adoption of appropriate approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, the careful selection of teaching and learning resources and technologies, as well as their effective implementation, as evidenced by the range, nature and scope of the learning activities in which students engage. NWU will provide its staff and students with a responsive teaching and learning experience, based upon:

- An optimal mix of teaching, learning and assessment methods and activities, with appropriate technologies if relevant.
- Opportunities for staff to enhance their capacity to participate in the design of learning environments that provide interactive learning experiences, and direct students to a range of accessible resources that support their individual learning needs[22].
- Capacity development and support for staff and students to effectively engage with the use of teaching and learning technology.
- Access to specialised advice and support in the design and development of infrastructure, and develop capacity for the design of, and assistance with, the development and use of printed and digital study materials.
- Encouragement of members of academic staff to regularly reflect on their teaching and learning approaches and practices.
- Formal support in the pursuit of strategic innovations in teaching and learning (e.g. adaptive learning, augmented reality, virtual reality, novel LMS platforms, etc.)

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[21] Outside of the context of internal and external programme evaluations and national directives, the NWU is still to devise a sufficient means to obtain students' inputs into the revision and development of the curriculum.

[22] Within the framework of financial constraints and a focus on addressing staff capacity within scarce skills areas.

6.4   Recruitment, development and retention of talented staff

High-quality teaching and learning is to a large extent dependent upon sufficient continuing professional development opportunities for academic staff, through establishing and maintaining structures and resources to support academics to enhance their teaching practices across the career continuum from emerging academics to established teaching professionals. The internal success model as part of the North-West University Strategy 2015 to 2025, indicates that the University strives to attract, support and develop academic staff with an open mind-set, critical in thinking, respectful of the right to freedom of expression, committed to and respect for the full scope of diversity, with a focus on scholarship, commitment to students, active citizenry, a good work-ethic and high-performance. The internal success model defines similar qualities for support staff.

The NWU uses the following strategies to contribute to the development of these qualities in its academic and professional support staff:

- Recruitment and selection strategies[23], as well as conditions of service and a university culture that attract a talented and diverse staff complement[24], to ensure that students receive an excellent student learning experience in which they are exposed to a diversity of expertise, ideas and approaches.
- Induction and continued mentorship programmes that help staff to understand their roles and responsibilities in the area of teaching and learning, and to develop their capacity in designing and sustaining meaningful teaching and learning experiences.
- Accessible and relevant opportunities for capacity development that:
  - Provide academic and professional support staff members with a sound educational underpinning,
  - Allow them progressively to deepen their knowledge and competence in specific aspects of teaching and learning, and
  - Help them to design and provide learning experiences that develop students' capacity to engage with disciplinary content as well as broader societal challenges.
- Effective developmental and performance management systems within academic schools and faculties, and relevant professional support units, which allow staff to define and monitor the achievement of their personal development goals, and to identify their capacity development needs.
- Appropriate reward and recognition systems for academics with a focus on various aspects of teaching and learning, teaching excellence, innovation, national and international team teaching, faculty teaching awards and fellowships.
- Incentives for professionalising university teaching include financial incentives, time-release fellowship programmes, teaching sabbaticals and teaching exchange scholarships.
- Creation of a culture of excellence in teaching and learning, through the promotion of scholarly work on teaching and learning in order to capture and foster reflective practice and innovation that shapes responsive curriculum design and delivery, and meaningful outcomes-appropriate learning experiences.

6.5   Student access, retention and success

In order to address the realities of the South African higher education system, the NWU strives to recruit a student body which is heterogeneous in terms of age, gender, social class, disability status, ethnic profile, nationality, educational background, and mode of study. It will use a coordinated strategy for access, retention and success, which recognises the impact of educational disadvantage on students' academic and social acculturation, to ensure that all students can benefit from the opportunities provided by its academic programmes. The following strategies will be used to support access, retention and success in all forms of educational provision:

- Well researched marketing and recruitment strategies and materials that provide students with accurate and useful information on study options, financial aid, adjustment to university life, and career choices. This includes strategies aimed at enhancing access, retention and success of students historically excluded from higher education, such as students with disabilities.
- Programmes and projects that broaden access to those learners with the potential to benefit from NWU programmes and which are designed to assist in improving entry level students' knowledge, understanding and skills in various fields of study such as mathematics, science and languages. These initiatives include foundation (extended) and preparatory programmes and collaborative projects, some in partnership with schools.
- Effective orientation programmes, at an institutional and faculty level, that familiarise students with the demands of their learning programmes, the academic environment at the university, and the range of available support services.

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[23] Link with People and Culture mandate is unmistakable here. Remuneration is often not sufficient to attract talented and diverse staff.

[24] A diverse staff complement requires a balance between academics with a focus on excellent teaching and learning, and on research.

- Interventions that assist students to successfully manage their transition to university study by means of: i) effective systems for testing their levels of academic and e-Learning literacy; ii) the provision of guidance on placement within academic programmes; and iii) programmes and facilities for the development of academic literacy, including competencies in reading, writing, mathematical & numeracy skills, critical thinking skills and an ability to engage with appropriate information technology[25].
- Continuous and interactive formative assessments that allow students to measure their progress towards successful completion of modules throughout their years of study, and the timeous implementation of remedial measures where necessary to assist students who struggle.
- Timely and helpful feedback on assessment tasks that clarifies what good performance is, and allows students to assess their progress in mastering the learning outcomes of programmes and modules.
- Aligned recognition and incentive systems, such as dean's merit lists and top achiever awards (which include financial incentives), that recognise the high performing students, and serve as a motivation to excel academically.
- The effective use of systems, including student and learning data analysis, to track students and their learning achievements in order to: i) identify at-risk students in a timely manner; ii) monitor student learning and progress on a regular basis; and iii) develop an evidence base for programme planning and student support strategies.
- Provision of effective support to students during their years of study, including but not limited to tutorials, mentoring and supplemental instruction programmes.
- Provision of an integrated, flexible and accessible student support network (academic and non-academic) of high quality to enable students to achieve to their full potential by addressing their diverse learning needs.
- Provide students with opportunities to engage in extracurricular activities to teach them skills required in their employment, business and professional environment in order to be well-rounded graduates who can compete and excel in their business, employment or professional lives.
- Dynamic careers services that help students to enhance their employability and entrepreneurial skills through engagement with employers, corporations, businesses and alumni, access to relevant careers information, and support in the job application process.
- Use of distance and contact modes of provision and innovative teaching and learning designs so that students are provided with flexible opportunities for learning.

6.6   Curriculum Transformation and Renewal

North-West University continuously engages in a systematic process of curriculum transformation and renewal in order to equip its graduates to address contextualised challenges of twenty-first century society, inclusive of calls to decolonise and Africanise the curriculum. Renewal of the curriculum occurs in relation to understanding not only programme architecture (the ways in which modules relate to, and build upon each other towards realisation of programme outcomes), but also to an analysis of the University PQM in terms of its mandate as a traditional institution[26].

At the NWU the architecture of programmes, and design of modules from the first to the final year of study must be distinctive and functional in nature. The first year of post-school studies is a special year characterised by difficult transitions from school to university, and by inductions into university life and the NWU culture. The curriculum associated with this year should cohere horizontally as well as vertically, and focus strongly on literacy- enhancement, calibrated to students' different needs/ capacities across the curriculum. The first and second years are formation years: over-specialization, too early on, should be avoided, with rather a stronger focus on general formation and appropriately designed assessments. The third and fourth year are summative years, and should cohere horizontally as well as vertically, giving expression to self-direction and authentic assessments using project and problem-based learning, portfolios, capstone seminars, etc. Study at the honours and postgraduate diploma levels is where specialisation should be expanded and articulation routes to the masters and doctoral degrees clarified.

NWU further commits to designing curricula in such a manner that a student will have every opportunity to develop metacognitive abilities to understand how knowledge is formed and validated within different disciplinary and professional contexts. Within an understanding of teaching and learning as inquiry-based, is an assumption that in universities, fields of knowledge are constructed over time within particular methodological frameworks and world views. Inasmuch as the purpose, characteristics and methodologies of inquiry differ within various academic disciplines and fields, the NWU recognises that the core focus of learning

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[25] Strategies to ensure this kind of student information and development opportunities for distance students need further engagement.

[26] Avoidance of premature specialisation during the undergraduate years of study is one of the matters receiving its due attention over the next three years.

is the student, and the purpose of its teaching is both to induct the student into particular fields, and at the same time to develop an appreciation of the differences between approaches to teaching and learning depending on the field of study. The varieties of, and differences between fields of study, entail that the architecture, design and delivery of academic programmes will use varied educational approaches, that are sensitive to the diversity of students and academics. Entailed in the curriculum experience, are adequate and integrated opportunities for WIL and SL as appropriate to a particular qualification.

To ensure that academic programmes are coherently designed, intellectually credible, and consistently relevant, the following strategies are pursued:

- NWU's programme and qualification mix (PQM) is continually under scrutiny to provide for an appropriate balance between professional and general-formative programmes to meet national development needs, aligned to the mandate of a traditional university[27].
- Students receive an in-depth orientation to their fields of study, as well as a broader understanding of contemporary societal challenges, in the form also of appropriate WIL and SL opportunities, to foster an ethic of care and social responsibility.
- Curricula provide an orientation to various paradigms of thought and explanatory systems including, where appropriate, indigenous knowledge systems, so that NWU students and graduates are introduced to different intellectual traditions, and are able to substantiate their worldview and the principles that inform their professional conduct.
- The design of programmes support the learning needs of a diverse student body, by involving students in a range of individual and collaborative learning and assessment activities, so that they can engage as learners who progressively assume responsibility for their own learning.
- In keeping with NWU's graduate attributes, curricula are designed to help students develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills that will enable them to lead purposeful lives in the service of the science collegiate, their profession and civil society as responsible citizens.
- Programmes are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they remain relevant and where necessary, meet the requirements concerning WIL and SL as underpinned by the appropriate disciplinary or statutory benchmarks, as well as feedback from students, employers, and alumni (as relevant).

6.7   An enabling teaching and learning environment

The NWU strives to create an enabling teaching and learning environment for its staff and students on all its campuses[28] and in all modes of provision through:

- The establishment of a vibrant and inclusive social context that supports and values a diversity of ideas, robust and critical exchange.
- Creation of an information rich teaching and learning environment, which may include technology rich resource centres and maker spaces in which members of academic staff support students to engage with appropriate information and learning resources to solve problems creatively. This environment includes the provision of appropriate high-quality resources to support mastery of module outcomes and interactive learning during which students develop their capacity for self-directed learning.
- Provide inclusive teaching and learning through the development of accessible and appropriate assistive e- Learning technologies and resources to support and enable students and staff with disabilities.
- Systematic renewal of all digital teaching and learning environments to provide effective spaces, facilities, library services and resources to support individual and collaborative learning and research, and a culture of reading amongst students, and to support the diverse learning needs of students at all levels of study.
- Student and staff access to adequate and appropriate teaching and learning technology resources to ensure effective engagement with technology-enabled teaching and learning.
- Innovative development and deployment of sustainable digital infrastructure, systems and applications to support teaching and learning activities in all modes of provision.
- Participation in the open educational resources initiative, through the use and development of open educational resources and open source systems to enhance access for staff and students to an extensive range of high quality and affordable learning resources.

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[27] Avoidance of premature specialisation during the undergraduate years of study is one of the matters receiving its due attention over the next three years.

[28] Alignment of resources and capacity across campuses is still a necessity to be addressed for this driver to be effective.

- The development, planning and maintenance of inclusive and accessible physical and virtual, formal and informal teaching and learning spaces, and learning support centres, to encourage students to participate in meaningful teaching and learning activities.
- Effective administrative and logistical coordination of support and services provided to students who study by means of both modes of provision.
- Promote the development of an enabling digital teaching and learning environment that supports innovative curriculum design, inclusive of student-centred, media rich, active and collaborative learning experiences appropriate to the educational approach of the NWU.
- A comprehensive TL Digital Transformation Plan that articulates with the Digital Business Strategy and is appropriately funded, staffed and supported by the relevant strategic technology partnerships (within and beyond NWU)

7 Graduate Attributes

The CHE[29] defines graduate attributes as "the extent to which the blend of learning domains (knowledge, skill and applied competence) reflect the purpose of the qualification type, and the extent to which the blend is reflected in the competence of the graduate". These attributes thus describe the character traits, and academic, professional and practical knowledge and skills that the NWU values in its graduates. They are grounded in the University's dream to be distinguished for social responsiveness and engaged scholarship, which fosters engaged and caring staff and students, characterised by the foundational values of ethics in all endeavours, academic integrity, freedom of intellectual inquiry, responsibility, accountability, academic freedom, fairness and transparency, and embracing diversity. As such, they define the characteristics that should form an integral part of the NWU curriculum project for both undergraduates and the postgraduates. It is recognised that the graduate attributes will be developed in various ways and to a different extent, according to the level, nature, purpose and disciplinary context of an academic programme. Furthermore, statutory bodies have specific requirements in regard of graduate attributes, and in such cases the NWU graduate attributes form a broader context for the development of the specific qualities, knowledge and skills that are prescribed by these bodies.

The University will support its students so that they are able to develop its desired graduate attributes in a progressive manner throughout their studies by means of the formal curriculum as well as their total learning experience. Furthermore, it will ensure that its policies, rules and processes for academic programme development, management and review, as well as curriculum transformation and renewal, support the embedding of its graduate attributes in the curriculum, and that these attributes are clearly communicated to staff and students[30].

Through the development of the graduate attributes, NWU strives to prepare its students to lead fulfilling and productive professional, public and personal lives, in order to give them a strategic edge in the world of work and to enhance their leadership capacities in public life and the communities where they will live and work. The University aims to educate graduates who will become lifelong learners and independent thinkers, able to manage knowledge creatively and effectively, exercise sound ethical judgement, and appreciate and value diversity in all its forms, respecting the diverse socio-economic and cultural contexts, natural environments, and workplaces.

To prepare NWU graduates for the demands of the twenty-first century, the University defines desired attributes in relation to the following four domains:

7.1 Work readiness

7.1.1 Knowledgeable, highly-educated individuals and professionals

7.1.1.1 The capacity to discover knowledge and create coherent understanding through the retrieval, analysis, evaluation, organisation, synthesis and dissemination of information.

7.1.1.2 Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of their chosen field of study in accordance with the level of the qualification achieved.

7.1.1.3 The development of multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary perspectives that lead to an integrated understanding of specific issues and concepts.

7.1.1.4 Flexibility and adaptability to apply their specialised knowledge and professional skills to theoretical and evolving practical contexts, including the work environment and public life.

7.1.1.5 The ability and the knowledge to competently perform required technical skills (related to mechanical, information technology, software proficiency, technical writing, project management, data analysis,

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[29] See Framework for Qualification Standards in Higher Education, 2013

[30] The Q&APP & the CTL are deliberating on interventions to measure how these attributes are developed in students, and how the University can assess that the attributes have been attained.

mathematical or scientific tasks) relevant to their chosen field of study in accordance with the level of the qualification achieved.

7.1.1.6   Graduates meet the requirements of national regulatory, statutory and non-statutory bodies as relevant.

7.1.2   Entrepreneurs

7.1.2.1   The ability to strategize and to effectively communicate and sell strategic objectives to stakeholders.

7.1.2.2   An open mind-set coupled with sufficient confidence and determination to not allow the fear of failure to determine the success of a task or a new business idea.

7.1.2.3   The ability to think and to function independently with a clear end goal in mind irrespective of challenges and struggles.

7.1.2.4   The capacity for self-reflection and self-discovery that supports continuing personal and professional development, based on a clear understanding of their personal strengths and weaknesses.

7.1.2.5   The capacity to motivate others to work towards achievement of a collective goal.

7.1.2.6   A passion for networking to promote continuous interest in a business, a product or an idea.

7.1.2.7   Self-directed and lifelong learners, who are able to work independently, utilise resources effectively, and exercise initiative.

7.2   Essential transferable skills

7.2.1   Innovative, critical thinkers

7.2.1.1   The ability to independently solve complex and unfamiliar problems through the discovery and creation of new knowledge and understanding.

7.2.1.2   The ability to place their knowledge and understanding within the context of broader societal trends and developments.

7.2.1.3   Appreciation for the limitations of their own knowledge, and intellectual curiosity to explore new ideas and approaches that question established ways of understanding.

7.2.1.4   The capacity to engage in informed argument and reasoning, based on a principled defence of their own values, beliefs and practices as well as the critical analysis of alternative approaches.

7.2.2   Principled leaders

7.2.2.1   The ability to articulate a clear vision and goals with a sound values orientation, and to motivate others to achieve them.

7.2.2.2   Leaders who are emotionally intelligent, socially aware, financially astute to lead and direct change for the greater good of society based on ethical efficacy and spirit of Ubuntu.

7.2.2.3   Accountable to promote diversity and security and to allow others to grow, develop and thrive.

7.2.2.4   Consistency and transparency in all engagements and decision-making directed at collective goals.

7.2.2.5   Tolerance for ambiguity and the courage and confidence to act in uncertain situations.

7.2.3   Effective communicators

7.2.3.1   The ability to formulate, present and communicate ideas, concepts and arguments clearly, coherently and persuasively, in a variety of formats (oral, written, visual and digital[31]) to diverse audiences and for various purposes.

7.2.3.2   The ability to use appropriate communication technologies.

7.2.3.3   Commitment to the development of multilingual skills in order to promote respect and understanding within the social, cultural and linguistic diversity of South African and global society, and to empower speakers of different languages.

7.2.3.4   Understanding of communication conventions that are appropriate within diverse cultural contexts as well as those conventions required by particular disciplines.

7.2.4   Skilled collaborators and team members

7.2.4.1   The ability to interact and collaborate effectively with others, and to work as part of a team to solve work-related and broader societal problems, in diverse social, cultural and linguistic contexts.

7.2.4.2   Well-developed networking, negotiating and conflict management skills.

7.3　Responsible and engaged members of society

- Willingness to take responsibility for the consequences of their judgements, decisions and actions based on a strong value system, and an awareness and understanding of moral, ethical, social, cultural and environmental issues.
- Understanding of their social, civic and environmental responsibilities (both individually and collectively) within the context of their chosen careers, and commitment to social justice, democracy, human rights and the integrity of the environment, manifested in conduct that respects and upholds the rights of individuals, groups, and communities.
- The understanding of social responsibility by ensuring accessibility to voluntary community service opportunities and other forms of engaged scholarship.
- The ability to take informed action that contributes to sustainable development by means of critical engagement with contemporary societal challenges within a local, national and global context.
- The capacity to live and work constructively in an inclusive society. This must be facilitated through awareness and appreciation of social, cultural and linguistic diversity, linked to an appropriate understanding within their fields of study of the historical contexts (including colonisation of the African continent), intellectual traditions and societal conditions that have shaped diverse local, national and global political, economic, legal, scientific, educational, healthcare, social, cultural, environmental and religious systems.
- A commitment to the value system undergirding the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

8　The NWU HyFlex TL Model

To put the TL Strategy into effect, the NWU has adopted the Hybrid-Flexible TL Model (HyFlex) as an approach to effective teaching and learning, simultaneously addressing the aims and underpinning strategic drivers of the NWU TL Strategy.

The Higher Education Sector has over the past decade faced several challenges at international, national, and local levels. Key megatrends that relate to learner engagement, pervasive access and customisation of learning became more pronounced. The trends had different manifestations, among other, a shift from blended to hybrid learning; a strategic emphasis on student success; the drive toward 'any student, anywhere, anyhow, anytime'; the affordances of expanded use of complex technology, architecture, and data; consideration of new forms of assessment, the aligning of learning design and digital study materials with student profiles; and notions aligned with student control and choice.

Significant TL practices evolved over time, including the introduction of alternative policies, integration of alternative learning infrastructures, adoption of hybrid learning models, HyFlex learning module designs and delivery platforms, the progressive use of learner/learning analytics, student-resourced and affordances of learnable text in lecturer authored digital content, alternative dispensations in digital skills development and support, and several other adaptations in collaborative student engagement. The shifting landscape leaves the NWU with the prerogative to embrace the challenges and consider the potential broad-based transformation of TL within the defines of the approved TL Strategy.

The HyFlex TL Model paves the way for a broad-based transformation inclusive of all levels, from TL to institutional.

The HyFlex TL Model speaks to the purpose of the TL Strategy, in terms of its contribution to a total transformative experience (personal, academically, and socially). More specific, the model is referenced against the institutional strategic drivers and the prerogative to govern teaching and learning, the flexibility to employ new policies across the board, create HE access pathways, the transformation and innovation of its programme and qualification mix through programme re-design and development, curriculum transformation, and creation of enabling teaching and learning environments in pursuit of flexible delivery modes, and innovation and technology enhancement of its teaching, learning, and assessment environments (digital, physical and social). The HyFlex Model assumes support through continuous professional development to equip its academic staff with a sound educational underpinning, on the one hand, and render optimal student academic support and development, on the other hand, to successfully embrace the potential of HyFlex spectrum of delivery modes.

The model holds implications for all stakeholders in the academic project as well as for the primary modalities of the NWU: contact education and distance education. It furthermore serves as a critical success factor and key vehicle for change to be embedded in the NWU TL Transformation Plan. The TL model catapults the HyFlex concept from a narrowed module level to a broad-based institutional level and introduces a more

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[31] A strategy to enhance digital literacy of staff and students, and infrastructure such as computer labs, needs to be in place and implemented across campuses to realise this attribute. NWU also needs to look into the sustainability and security surrounding the issuing of devices.

holistic perspective on the transformation of TL at the NWU and the prerogative to align all NWU strategic partners to best serve the NWU HyFlex Model in pursuing the ideals of a future-oriented HEI.

The HyFlex TL Model places the student at the centre and promotes a holistic and integrated institutional response to student learning needs. The model elevates the current interpretations of HyFlex to an institutional level, rather than to restrict it to TL design and student choice only.

It takes as point of departure interplaying drivers that effect learning, each superimposed on the drivers that determine the institutional response to such learning needs. These drivers serve as proxies for several variables in each driver set. Three learning drivers that affect learning and ultimately influence student success, include Learning requirements (the type of learning envisaged), the setting within which learning takes place, and the learning infrastructure required to engage in learning. Drivers that determine the institutional response include a conducive learning setting within which to facilitate learning, the immediacy of TL delivery (time & place), and the impact of technology integration on the enhancement of TL practices.
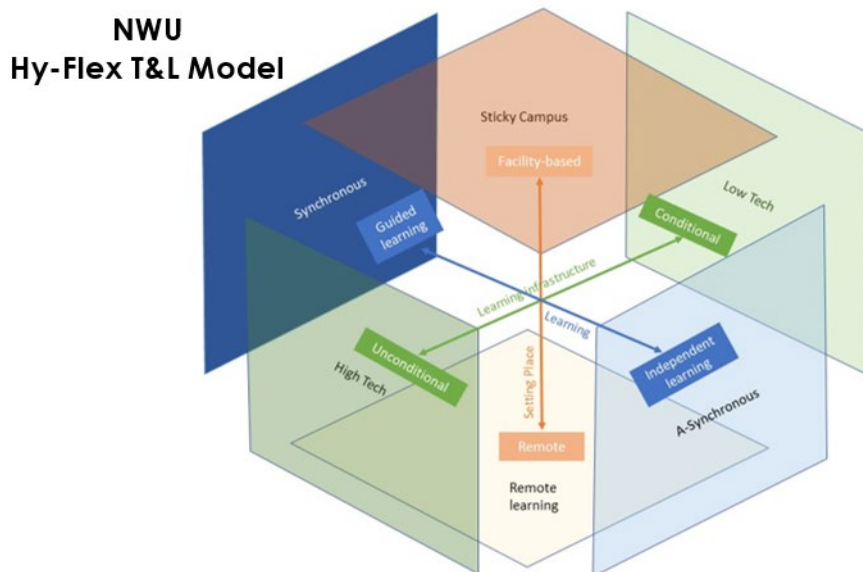
The inclusive nature of the model affords the identification of a proverbial 'sweet spot' for a faculty, for each of its programmes, for each of its modules, or by individual lecturers and should be interpreted as a space defined by the extremes of each driver. This space affords the NWU, Faculties, and lecturers to identify themselves in terms of the dimensions of the model without prescribing a one-size-fits all approach to technology integration in relation to the DE and CE modalities used by the University.
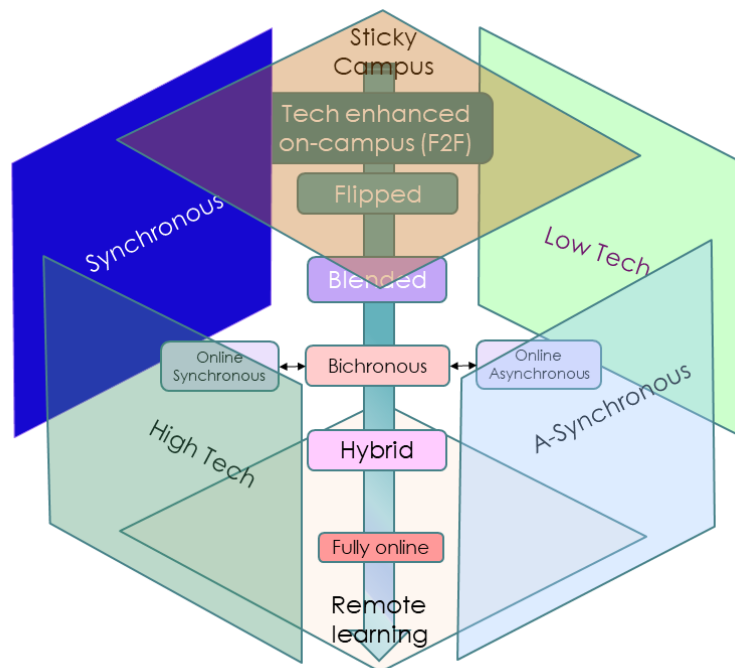
The drivers cannot be interpreted in isolation, as they simultaneously interact with each other, effectively creating different contexts that require alternative responses. The interplay between these drivers defines a point or space where all the variables that constitute that point (or area) are in equilibrium and represents the sum-total of interactions between these drivers. The model maps out an inclusive space that can accommodate a wide range of possibilities.

Although the HyFlex TL model does not promote or enforce a specific pedagogy, or educational approach, its impact lies in the significant diagonal embedded in its centre. The model explains the current views on blended learning (the Bates-continuum), and embraces the post-pandemic insights (Martin & Xie, 2022[32]) as captured by the 'significant diagonal' within the NWU HyFlex TL Model.

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32 Florence Martin and Kui Xie (2022) Digital Transformation in **Higher Education: 7 Areas for Enhancing Digital Learning.** Digital Transformation (Dx) . Accessed on 12 January 2023 at: https://er.educause.edu/articles/2022/9/digital-transformation-in-higher-education-7-areas-for-enhancing-digital-learning?utm_source=Selligent&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=er_content_alert_newsletter&utm_content=1-11-23&utm_term=_&m_i=tQdvyVaJYegRzAS4O5nglidstfyUwLhuzVC5vb5IWgYziyFsYEkGvFpD4i%2BjmZC_BAReWwvKaiCPW1DE%2BEs7N%2BtI25Dkrkttte&M_BT=33284967322

The Significant Diagonal

The 'significant diagonal' adds directionality to anticipated broad-based transformation of TL within the parameters determined by NWU's size and shape. Reference to remote learning is inclusive of the DE modality, with the understanding that remote may refer to learning that occurs at a NWU learning hub, or a remote location where the learner is situated, or a room or classroom on a campus, depending on how technology is used in support of the pedagogy and educational approach of the lecturer. It renders a clear interpretation of the NWU's prerogative with regards to transformation of TL. The diagonal captures key instructional modalities (Martin & Xie, 2022[33]) significant for the NWU pathway of TL transformation. All these modalities have eminent digital teaching and learning elements, varying from minimal, to leaning heavily on digital teaching and learning technology integration. As already stated, each modality holds implications for the transformation at the levels of governance, programme re-design, enabling T,L & A environments, and demands comprehensive academic and student support relevant to such instructional modalities. The upper-end of the diagonal would be characteristic of predominantly contact/F2F delivery modes, whilst the lower-end of the diagonal approaches remote learning which may be also fully online and is more akin to the distant learning mandate of the NWU. The central part of the diagonal reflects delivery modes characteristic of the convergence of the two worlds currently differentiated by F2F/contact and distance education.

9 Conclusion

The Teaching-Learning Strategy provides the impetus for a curriculum framework in which is nestled Faculty Integrated Teaching-Learning Plans as well as support plans to create the basis for an experience of teaching and learning that is innovative, inclusive and attendant to students as well as staff development needs. The curriculum architecture, with its underlying principles, directs the design of programmes at under- as well as post- graduate levels to enable consistency at modular level that in turn promotes coherence between vertical as well as horizontal articulation or progression pathways. This enables the University to consider holistically the quality of teaching-learning in relation to standards, professional requirements, as well as student and academic staff experience thereof.

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[33] Florence Martin and Kui Xie (2022) Digital Transformation in **Higher Education: 7 Areas for Enhancing Digital Learning.** Digital Transformation (Dx) . Accessed on 12 January 2023 at: https://er.educause.edu/articles/2022/9/digital-transformation-in-higher-education-7-areas-for-enhancing-digital-learning?utm_source=Selligent&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=er_content_alert_newsletter&utm_content=1-11-23&utm_term=_&m_i=tQdvyVaJYegRzAS4O5nglidstfyUwLhuzVC5vb5IWgYziyFsYEkGvFpD4i%2BjmZC_BAReWwvKaiCPW1DE%2BEs7N%2BtI25Dkrkttte&M_BT=33284967322