NWU®

POLICY ON CONTINUING EDUCATION

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POLICY ON CONTINUING EDUCATION

Against the background of the dream to be an internationally recognised university in Africa, distinguished for engaged scholarship, social responsiveness and an ethic of care, the council of the North-West University (NWU) has adopted this policy on 22 November 2018 to regulate the provision of all continuing education activities of the university

1 Interpretation and application

This policy must be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with the –

1.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996;

1.2 Higher Education Act 101 of 1997;

1.3 Skills Development Act 97 of 1998;

1.4 National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008;

1.5 Statute of the North-West University (2017) ('the Statute"), and with

1.6 all related policies of the NWU.

2 Definitions

In this policy –

"continuing education (CE)" means any teaching and learning intervention not listed on the NWU Programme Qualification Mix (PQM) as a formal academic programme regardless of whether a fee or any other form of compensation is levied by the university or whether a NWU certificate or other form of recognition bearing the emblem of the NWU is issued to participants;

"CEQM" means the Continuing Education Quality Manual;

"CESOP" means the Continuing Education Standard Operating Procedures;

"DVC:TL" means the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning;

"SCAS" means the senate's committee for academic standards, and

"UCE" means the Unit for Continuing Education;

3 Policy Statement

It is the policy of the NWU that –

3.1 life-long learning as enabler to disadvantaged individuals to become active role players in the economy and society at large must be supported;

3.2 professional services to the community must be provided and sustained whilst seeking and supporting opportunities to create third stream income for the university;

3.3 a proper framework and documented key processes for good governance and management of CE must be established and maintained;

3.4 employees may not develop, present or participate in any CE activities without obtaining prior consent in compliance with the CESOP;

3.5 the university's portfolio of continuing professional development courses for the professions for which it is mandated to offer formal qualifications must be extended.

4 Purpose and objectives

4.1 The purpose of this policy is to regulate the functioning of the UCE and outline the function of SCAS regarding CE.

4.2 This policy has the following objectives:

4.2.1 to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and regulations;

4.2.2 to define mechanisms for ensuring that quality and integrity are maintained throughout the CE value chain, from the design to the delivery, and beyond, to the satisfaction of beneficiaries, sponsors and other stakeholders;

4.2.3 to manage financial risk by defining requirements for financial viability requirements of CE courses offered by the university;

4.2.4 to manage the university's integrity, reputational and legal risk by establishing rules for agreements with external parties, including sponsors, beneficiaries and external parties who offer CE courses with or on behalf of the university, and

4.2.5 to ensure that measures are taken against, and sanctions to be imposed on, those who may be found to be responsible for running unapproved and unregistered short courses.

5 Continuing Education Advisory Committee

The Continuing Education Advisory Committee, composed of the executive deans of all faculties, advises the DVC TL on the alignment of CE across faculties, campuses and delivery sites.

6 The UCE

6.1 The UCE is the central structure responsible, under the supervision of the DVC:TL, for the management and coordination of CE courses.

6.2 UCE is entrusted with the responsibility to:

6.2.1 act as custodian of this policy through compliance monitoring and recommendation of disciplinary action in the event of non-compliance by an employee of the university;

6.2.2 develop and implement systems, processes and procedures for all activities in the CE value chain;

6.2.3 develop, implement and maintain a participant registration, administration and records management system for CE;

6.2.4 maintain a procedure for CE course participants to provide feedback, and to forward the feedback to the course leader and the executive dean concerned;

6.2.5 provide coordination services to external stake holders, including but not limited to sponsors, regulators and participants.

6.2.6 liaise with the external environment in close collaboration with the faculties to get a needs analysis;

6.2.7 drive the development of an innovative and responsive product portfolio in close collaboration with the faculties;

6.2.8 provide support to employees who are responsible for developing and delivering CE courses;

6.2.9 ensure financial sustainability of UCE and CE related activities;

6.2.10 report regularly on all aspects of CE;

6.2.11 develop and implement systems for managing reputational and legal risk of the university related to CE;

6.2.12 develop and implement a quality management system, and

6.2.13 recommend the assignment of the management of selected CE courses contemplated in paragraph 7 to a suitable delivery point within the university, taking into consideration the expertise available at the delivery point concerned.

7 Course management

7.1 Course development

Faculties are responsible for the design and development of CE courses which must be developed to benefit broader society, participants and the university by –

7.1.1 providing a valuable linkage for academic employees with the world of work, thereby contributing to meaningful and relevant academic programme development;

7.1.2 supporting the NWU innovation strategy by affording an opportunity for rapid dissemination of new knowledge to the broader scientific community, the world of work and other interested parties;

7.1.3 contributing to the corporate social responsibility and community engagement activities of the university;

7.1.4 making a meaningful contribution to the economic development strategy of South Africa by:
   - providing lifelong learning opportunities designed to align with national skills development priorities;
   - creating an opportunity for service to individuals who would not otherwise be in a position to benefit from the services and academic programmes of the NWU,
   - and thereby constitutes an important aspect of the NWU transformation strategy;

7.1.5 designing and developing courses to meet the needs and expectations of participants, employers, sponsors and professional associations, where applicable, and

7.1.6 contributing to the creation of a sustainable future for the NWU in which the university will be adequately resourced to maintain its institutional autonomy and academic freedom.

7.2 Course approval and registration

7.2.1 CE course development must be documented by the course leader, submitted to the relevant faculty approval processes and recommended to SCAS by the faculty.

7.2.2 All CE courses must be submitted for approval to SCAS in accordance with the CESOP and registration must be entered and maintained on a central database of CE courses.

7.2.3 After approval by SCAS, a unique course number is assigned and a letter of approval is issued by SCAS, indicating the period of validity.

7.3 Quality assurance and course reviews

All non-formal learning offered by the NWU or under the emblem of the NWU must be –

7.3.1 in a field or discipline and at a level which is aligned with the NWU mandate to offer formal programmes and qualifications;

7.3.2 overseen and quality assured by an executive dean or by a senior NWU academic to whom the executive dean of the faculty where the course originated has delegated the responsibility;

7.3.3 taught and assessed by appropriately qualified facilitators; and

7.3.4 presented through the UCE, except where written permission is granted by the DVC: TL.

8 Teaching and Learning resource management

8.1 Course presentation

8.1.1 The faculty concerned must provide adequate teaching and learning resources for CE.

8.1.2 CE courses may be presented by employees as "internal" presenters, lecturers or facilitators or by external presenters, lecturers or facilitators.

8.1.3 An employee may only present CE courses or participate in CE activities with the consent of the executive dean of the faculty concerned.

8.1.4 Appointment and remuneration of employees acting as facilitators of CE courses must be done in accordance with to the relevant teaching-learning resource management procedures.

8.2 Facilities

8.2.1 CE courses must be offered in appropriate facilities in order to allow for an optimal participant learning experience.

8.2.2 Where there is compelling academic reason to provide access to library services or laboratories, this must be approved by SCAS, where cost recovery decisions must be made in consultation with the relevant faculty process owners and internal service providers.

9 Assessment

9.1 The faculty concerned must assume responsibility for the assessment quality and integrity of a CE course and must ensure that the assessment criteria are appropriate for the particular level at which the course is offered.

9.2 UCE must administer assessment results on a secure records management system.

10 Certification

Certification of CE courses by the registrar must be executed in accordance with the applicable policies and procedures.

11 Marketing

11.1 Materials marketing a CE course and certificates and other forms of recognition may not refer to NQF or HEQSF levels or create the impression that credits may be earned by doing such a course.

11.2 Clear and accurate course information must be provided to prospective, current and former participants, as well as sponsors, the public and all other interested parties according to the prescribed procedures.

11.3 Communication with prospective participants must be ethical and honest, including communications through social media, the internet, websites, advertising, and promotional materials.

11.4 Marketing materials may not state or imply that certification, employment or occupational advancement are guaranteed.

12 Status of participants in CE courses

Participants in CE courses –

12.1 are not enrolled students of the NWU, and may not be lead to believe that they are;

12.2 may not be referred to as "students";

12.3 may not participate in student activities, including participation in NWU sports teams;

12.4 who complete a CE course successfully are not registered on the National Learners Database, and

12.5 may, when required by a SETA, be registered on a SETA database.

13 Financial Management

13.1   The Executive Director: Finance and the DVC:TL must, in coordination with faculties and the UCE develop and implement a financial model for CE in order to achieve the financial viability of CE while providing incentives for faculties to ensure academically excellent CE course content, presentation and assessment.

13.2   An annual financial plan, approved by the UMC must be implemented and reported on by the UCE.

14 Risk Management and Auditing

Compliance with this policy must be audited annually by Internal Audit and by external auditors.

15 Quality Management

15.1   A system for monitoring and review must be developed and implemented by the UCE as a basis for continuous improvement of all CE activities.

15.2   The UCE must drive the quality management system and must be supported therein by the faculties.