TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

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Vaal University of Technology Teaching and Learning Policy

Draft Document for Internal Discussion Purposes Only

Acronyms and Key Terms

Acronyms

CAD	Centre for Academic Development
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
T&L	Teaching and Learning
VUT	Vaal University of Technology
WIL	Work-Integrated Learning

Key Terms

Blended Learning	Learning which involves a combination of traditional face-to-face instruction and e-learning, including gaming, virtual reality, text messaging, and social networking sites. Online technology is not used to just supplement, but to transform and improve the learning process. It usually includes some element of student control over time, place, path, or pace.
E-Learning	E-Learning refers to structured learning opportunities mediated through the use of digital resources (usually combinations of text, audio and visual/video files) and software applications. E-learning may be offered on-line and synchronously (e.g. real-time conference), on-line and asynchronously (e.g. text-based discussion forum) or off-line (e.g. interactive CV/DVD/flash drive). E-learning can be employed in both contact and distance programmes.
Formative Assessment	Methods used to gather feedback on student academic progress and learning needs during the learning process in order to inform and modify in-process teaching and learning activities to improve student learning.
Graduateness	A 'state of being' as a result of achieving a combination of transferable skills, knowledge, and attitudes that might be expected of any university graduate. It includes field-specific achievement (possessing knowledge and qualities relevant to a particular field of study), as well as shared and generic achievement (possessing general attributes common to graduates) and knowledge that imbues graduates with 'fitness for purpose' when they enter the working world.
Moderation	A quality assurance process that ensures that assessments conducted meet the specified outcomes and standards, and that judgements of students' performance are consistent, fair, accurate and reliable.
Resource-Based Learning	Resource-based learning is student-centred, fostering the development of individual students by accommodating their diverse interests, learning styles, experiences, needs and ability levels. It involves a move away from the traditional notion of using the 'talking teacher' to communicate curriculum, to include the use of different media (such as text, videos, simulations and animations), as appropriate. The face-to-face contact that does take place typically involves various forms of student support, for example, academic debate, tutorials, peer group discussion, or practical work. Students are actively involved and more accountable for their own learning. Students who use a wide range of resources in various mediums for learning have the opportunity to approach a theme, issue or topic of study in ways which allow for a range of learning styles and access to the theme or topic via cognitive or affective appeals.
Scaffolded Learning	A learning process whereby a teacher uses a variety of instructional techniques with students in order to enhance learning and aid in the mastery of tasks. This is done by systematically building on students' experiences and knowledge as they are learning new skills. These supports are gradually

	removed as students develop autonomous learning strategies, thus promoting their own cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning skills and knowledge.
Summative Assessment	The evaluation of student learning by comparing it against intended learning outcomes to quantify achievement, usually at the end of a learning programme.
Work-Integrated Learning	Work integrated learning (WIL) is an educational approach that aligns academic and workplace practices for the mutual benefit of students and workplaces. It is an intentional experiential learning process which combines academic studies with professional work experience to integrate theoretical, conceptual knowledge with practice in the workplace through directed or supported educational activities. According to the *Council on Higher Education Work-Integrated Learning: Good Practice Guide* (CHE, 2011), The integration of theory and practice in student learning can occur through a range of WIL approaches, apart from formal or informal work placements. Examples include: action-learning, apprenticeships, cooperative education, experiential learning, inquiry learning, inter-professional learning, practicum placements, problem-based learning, project-based learning, scenario learning, service-learning, team-based learning, virtual or simulated WIL learning, work-based learning, work experience, workplace learning, and so on. The term WIL, then, specifically describes an approach to career-focussed education that includes classroom-based and workplace-based forms of learning that are appropriate for the professional qualification.

Vaal University of Technology Teaching and Learning Policy

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Vaal University of Technology originated as a College of Advanced Technical Education (1966-1979) and was later known as Vaal Triangle Technikon (1979-2003). It was established in 2004 as the Vaal University of Technology (VUT). Based in southern Gauteng, it draws students from all regions of the country, as well as 25 other countries. It is one of the largest universities of technology in South Africa, with an annual enrolment of about 21,000 students.

VUT has four faculties:
• Faculty of Applied and Computer Sciences;
• Faculty of Engineering and Technology;
• Faculty of Human Sciences;
• Faculty of Management Sciences.

VUT has four campuses. The Vanderbijlpark Campus is situated on 4.6 hectares of land with a state-of-the-art Library, lecture halls, laboratories, auditoriums and offices. Three satellite campuses extend the academic business of the university into Secunda (in Mpumalanga) and Kempton Park (in Gauteng) and Upington (in the Northern Cape). An extension to the main campus is located in Educity, Sebokeng, which is being developed into a Science and Technology Park and the seat of the southern Gauteng regional Innovation Hub. VUT is located in a highly industrialized area alongside major petro-chemical, steel, engineering, telecommunications, and manufacturing companies. It is also surrounded by communities with poor economic backgrounds.

The vision of VUT is as follows:
> *VUT is the university that leads in innovative knowledge and quality technology education.*

Its mission is:
> *To produce top quality, employable and entrepreneurial graduates who can impact society through:*
> * *Adopting cutting-edge technology and teaching methods*
> * *Producing a scholarly environment conducive to learning and innovation*
> * *Developing a Programmes and Qualifications Mix (PQM) that meets the needs of society in Africa and beyond.*

1.2 Key Drivers for Teaching and Learning Development at VUT

VUT is operating within a broader higher education and social context that shapes its teaching and learning policy. In, summary, the following key drivers for teaching and learning development have been identified:

1) The core student population at the university is drawn from historically disadvantaged communities, which means that a typical VUT student can be expected to come from a poor economic background, may well be a first-generation university student (i.e. the first generation

in their family to attend a university), and is likely to be under significant pressure to generate income, both to support themselves and possibly their extended families. In addition, many are likely to have received primary and secondary schooling that has not adequately prepared them to meet the demands of tertiary studies.

2) As societies grapple with the connected challenges of increasing globalization and proliferation of information and communication technologies (ICT), this is having a significant effect on the World of Work, with many forms of employment rapidly becoming redundant as work is automated and other jobs transforming radically (and often repeatedly) in terms of what people are expected to do in the workplace. While this problem initially only affected blue-collar workers, it is increasingly eroding or altering job opportunities for many white collar workers as well. This places pressure on universities (and particularly universities of technology) to be able to undertake more regular, ongoing curriculum transformation to keep their programmes relevant to the World of Work and to incorporate more generic skills and attributes of 'graduateness' in order to enable students to be able to continue learning after their studies are completed.

3) South African society – in common with many other developing societies – is facing serious social challenges caused by increasing unemployment rates amongst its youth, with young people from VUT's target demographic being especially negatively affected by this trend. Increasingly, the requirement amongst employers is for skilled employees with problem-solving skills, ICT literacy (even in jobs that were previously considered manual), and the ability to learn on the job. Likewise, as formal employment opportunities decline, many young people are required to become increasingly entrepreneurial in order to generate a livelihood for themselves and their families.

4) All South African universities, as with their global counterparts, are simultaneously under pressure to increase enrolments to accommodate burgeoning social demand for higher education opportunities. This is placing pressure on physical facilities, human resource capacity, and university budgets, which are struggling to accommodate this growing demand while maintaining high levels of quality in teaching and learning, especially for those programmes and modules that still depend heavily on face-to-face models of education.

5) As a consequence of growing connectedness and the proliferation of Web 2.0 technologies, there has been an explosion in collective sharing and generation of knowledge. Collective intelligence and mass participation of amateurs in previously specialized disciplinary areas are extending the boundaries of scholarship, while dynamic knowledge creation and social computing tools and processes are becoming more widespread and accepted. Universities, even in relatively resource-scarce contexts, are increasingly viewing investment in ICT – for management and administration, marketing, research, and teaching and learning purposes – as necessary to establish their competitive advantage. This is because it is attractive to students and is deemed essential by governments, parents, employers, and other key funders of higher education. In many countries, however, including South Africa, a paucity of technology, outdated technology, and/or maintenance problems remain challenges, as does access to personal devices for both teaching staff and students.

6) Harnessing ICT for educational purposes to create blended learning, including gaming, virtual reality, text messaging, and social networking sites, requires continued investment in supporting academics to create these new learning 'venues'. This will have significant financial implications for institutions. In addition, technological churn is bringing new kinds of support challenges. Each new technology introduced brings its own requirements for support, while the support needs of established technologies remain. Introduction of new technologies can also create backlash from those expected to change how they work. The emergence of these and related technological innovations has serious potential to accentuate the digital divide within education, conferring

benefit on those with access to ICT and further marginalizing those without such access. Factors that require consideration include access to hardware and affordable/reliable Internet connections, information literacy, extent of integration of ICT into the social fabric of everyday life, provision of technical and training support, and access to compelling applications and content. Most importantly, unless there is a concerted effort to ensure that steps are taken to integrate marginalized students into ICT-enriched higher education environments, widening of the digital divide and deepening of social inequities, both within and between countries, is assured.

7) In addition to the above pressures, universities in the modern world (including VUT) are typically facing growing pressures on the time of their academic and administrative staff to complete a wide, and growing, array of administrative tasks in order to comply with relevant legislation, regulatory environments, and quality assurance systems in higher education nationally. In addition, most universities have developed internal systems that have proliferated the burden of academic administration. While most of these interventions – taken on their own – typically has merit, their combined effect has been to erode significantly, the time available for academics to discharge their core functions of teaching and learning and research.

1.3 Linked Policies

Noting this unique context, VUT has developed a new teaching and learning policy, which is presented below. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following VUT policies:
• Academic and Staff Development Policy;
• Academic Promotions Policy;
• Admissions Policy;
• Disability Policy;
• Employee Development Policy;
• Intellectual Property Policy (still to be developed);
• Language Policy;
• Policy on Assessment and Accreditation of Recognition of Prior Learning;
• Policy on Commercial Promotions by External Agents;
• Plagiarism Policy;
• Quality Assurance Policy;
• Rectorate's Award for Teaching Excellence Policy;
• Research Policy;
• Reward for Academic Qualification Policy;
• Skills Development Policy;
• Short Courses Policy;
• Teaching and Module Evaluation Policy.

2 Purpose of the Teaching and Learning Policy

This Teaching and Learning Policy seeks to advance the overall vision and mission of VUT as an institution. In particular, it is focused on two overarching objectives, these being to:

1) Entrench and deepen a culture of learning on all VUT campuses; and

2) Focus on the academic needs of VUT students, recognizing the challenging demographic and educational background of the core student population of the institution.

In particular, VUT emphasizes, in its Teaching and Learning Policy, that, rather than perceiving delivery of higher education opportunities to students from disadvantaged backgrounds as a challenge, it sees this as a unique opportunity to make an essential social contribution to the development of South African and African societies. Consequently, this Teaching and Learning Policy is designed to cater to the unique learning needs of students from such backgrounds, thereby seeking to ensure that a higher education at VUT provides a meaningful opportunity for a better life for its students and contributes demonstrably to achieving goals of social equity in South Africa.

3 The VUT Approach to Teaching and Learning

3.1 Teaching and Learning

Engagement with Faculties and Departments at VUT reveals that there is a growing diversity of teaching and learning (T&L) approaches and methods in operation in university programmes. Part of this reflects the varying educational requirements of different disciplines, but it also demonstrates the increasingly diverse approaches to teaching and learning that have become possible through the introduction of new technologies. Many Departments are either embracing, or are keen to embrace, a 'blended learning' approach, in which there is a combination of face-to-face learning methods (such as lectures, practicals, and tutorials), independent study methods, harnessing ICT as appropriate (either delivered through the institutional Learning Management System or LMS, using social media platforms, or through access to other websites), and, in some cases, use of work-integrated learning opportunities (WIL). This growing diversity of approaches to teaching and learning reflects the responsiveness of Departments and Faculties to grappling with the key drivers for change outlined above.

Consequently, it is not viable to adopt a one-size-fits-all approach to pedagogy or support systems at VUT. There will be a requirement for a wide range of T&L approaches and strategies, including but not limited to: lectures, practicals, practical experiments/games, tutorials, textbooks (including e-books) and other independent study materials, debates, syndicate groups, demonstration kits, and case studies. There is also a need to enable WIL, using guidelines set by the University's Cooperative Education Department and the Work-Integrated Learning Good Practice Guide prepared by the Council on Higher Education (CHE), as well as incorporating company excursions, community engagement projects, and educational tours where appropriate.

Given this, the following key policy positions are noted:

3.1.1   VUT supports a flexible approach to learning and teaching provision. Such an approach promotes flexibility in admissions criteria, curriculum design, learning and teaching modes, and assessment, with appropriate support systems and services.

3.1.2   In line with this flexible approach, VUT is committed to supporting a wide range of teaching and learning methods, to accommodate the divergent requirements of teaching different disciplines, as well as varying characteristics of students enrolled across different programmes. Consequently, no preference is accorded in this policy to one specific learning philosophy or theory, as it is recognized that different philosophies and theories have application in different learning contexts, while students also have different learning preferences.

3.1.3   Responsibility for finalizing the range of teaching and learning strategies and methods to be used in programmes will reside with academic Departments (within the framework of the

University's normal decision-making structures and processes), including Departmental representatives based at satellite campuses. This is expected to take into account both the financial and human resource implications of these choices, in order to ensure that selected pedagogical approaches within programmes are both implementable and affordable (both to the university and to students).

3.1.4 Noting the requirement to select fit-for-purpose teaching and learning strategies for programmes, it is expected that design of teaching and learning strategies at the programme and module level will:

3.1.4.1 Encourage student responsibility and activity rather than teacher control and content delivery;

3.1.4.2 Require continual learning throughout the semester through more frequent formative and continuous assessment activities, rather than enabling student 'cramming' at the end of the semester;

3.1.4.3 Ensure that educational experiences for VUT students effectively combine theory with practical experience and engagement (including WIL opportunities), as appropriate to the discipline;

3.1.4.4 Develop learning and assessment activities that require students to construct knowledge by engaging with authentic problems based on 'real world' experiences;

3.1.4.5 Use feedback and formal assessment to implement improvements to teaching and learning approaches;

3.1.4.6 Ensure a scaffolded learning design and, where appropriate, integrated assessments across the duration of a programme to ensure retention of core knowledge and competences from one year to the next, as is proposed in the nested approach to learning design.

3.1.5 In development and implementation of academic programmes, all Faculties and Departments are expected to demonstrate meaningful partnerships and interaction as appropriate with industry and employers. This might include:

3.1.5.1 Formal input of industry representatives during curriculum design and review processes;

3.1.5.2 WIL opportunities for students, offered in partnership with industry;

3.1.5.3 Company excursions and community engagement projects integrated into course curricula, as appropriate.

3.1.6 All Departments are encouraged to make greater use of blended learning in their programmes, both to diversify the range of teaching and learning methods available to students and to reduce pressure on physical facilities by replacing some aspects of face-to-face sessions with students (particularly those sessions that focus primarily on simple transmission of content from lecturer to student) with judicious use of resource-based learning and independent study.

3.1.7 VUT is committed to ensuring that students are provided affordable access to the resources (harnessing all media as appropriate) and learning opportunities necessary to meet the

requirements of their programmes successfully. This includes access to all necessary teaching and learning materials and appropriate ICT to fulfil the requirements of studies.

3.1.8   Diversification and improvement of teaching and learning strategies and methods as envisaged above will require ongoing mobilization of funds and human capacity to invest in curriculum design, programme and course development and review processes, development of teaching and learning materials of different kinds, and judicious use of ICT and e-learning as mapped out below. VUT will reflect its commitment to mobilizing this funding in its overall Institutional Strategy and in its budgeting priorities. The Centre for Academic Development (CAD) will also work closely with Faculties and Departments to mobilize special purpose funds for these activities, both through appropriate funding mechanisms of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and through third-stream income.

3.1.9   All teaching and learning activities at VUT are governed by the institution's Language Policy, which should be read in conjunction with this policy. As that policy notes:

    3.1.9.1   English is the main language used for tuition. All courses will be offered in English, but tutoring and learning materials will be available in Sesotho and Afrikaans as well. The long-term aim is to develop Sesotho and Afrikaans as languages of teaching and learning at the VUT.

    3.1.9.2   English is used for assessment which includes, among other things, compiling examination and test question papers, memorandums, instructions for assignments and students' answer sheets, as well as for conducting oral assessment and presentations. Multilingual assessment will be possible once Sesotho and Afrikaans have been established as languages of teaching and learning.

    3.1.9.3   English will be used for all study and learner guides, readers, book lists, project instructions, directives, and supplemental and other class notes or study material. Study materials will also be available in Sesotho and Afrikaans for tutoring purposes. The long-term aim is to develop all study materials in in Sesotho and Afrikaans as part of the development of these languages as languages of teaching and learning at the VUT.

3.2   Use of ICT and e-learning at VUT

As part of a systematic shift to blended learning, VUT is committed to making the most effective use possible of ICT to support teaching and learning, within the context of Departmental and Faculty teaching and learning strategies. In order to facilitate this, the following policy commitments are noted:

3.2.1   Data projectors and screens will be provided in as many teaching and learning venues as finances and corresponding security arrangements can permit. Likewise, audio/microphone systems will be provided in selected venues where required to facilitate effective teaching and learning. To facilitate an effective process of rolling these out, a regular needs assessment will be conducted to prioritize the sequence in which teaching and learning venues should receive this infrastructure.

3.2.2   VUT affirms the centrality of its institutional LMS to its strategy of rolling out blended learning. Given this, the university is committed to ensuring that the LMS is operational in a stable hosting environment at all times and that there is effective Internet access across all campuses

in order to facilitate uninterrupted access to the LMS by staff and students at all times. Efforts will also be made to ensure that the LMS is designed to be as user-friendly as possible, to facilitate its uptake and use by students, many of whom will have had limited exposure to ICT prior to their studies at VUT.

3.2.3   Individual Departments and Faculties will take their own decisions about most effective educational uses for the LMS as part of their overall annual academic plans.

3.2.4   Although the University acknowledges that there is widespread use of social media technologies by academics and students, both for communication purposes and to share files, VUT requires that all formal module communication and file-sharing be undertaken through the LMS, both to ensure security and student privacy and to protect the intellectual property of the University, academics, and students from unauthorized re-distribution.

3.2.5   VUT will establish an online database of past examinations, to be made available – via password-protected access – to all enrolled students.

3.2.6   VUT will adopt a structured approach to testing innovation in the implementation of new technologies, to be coordinated by the CAD. Priorities for exploring potential ICT and e-learning innovations will be driven by key strategic priorities defined at Faculty and Departmental level (with these being specified through suitable processes of Faculty-level consultation and documented in annual academic plans). This approach will be underpinned by clearly defined metrics for testing and evaluative methodologies for assessing the effectiveness of the identified innovation.

3.2.7   Staff and students will be educated about online safety issues and demonstrate increasing levels of responsibility in using this knowledge to protect themselves from illicit or undesirable content, unethical practices, identity theft, and criminal or life-threatening activities. This education will be underpinned by a VUT ICT Acceptable Use Agreement, to which all staff and students will be expected to adhere.

3.3   The Concept of 'Graduateness'

'Graduateness' is a term in growing use in higher education globally, in recognition of the changing context in which students are learning and the World of Work into which they will enter. It can be understood as a 'state of being' arising as a result of achieving a combination of transferable skills, knowledge, and attitudes that might be expected of any university graduate. It includes field-specific achievement (possessing knowledge and qualities relevant to a particular field of study), as well as shared and generic achievement (possessing general attributes common to graduates) and knowledge that imbues graduates with 'fitness for purpose' when they enter the working world.

More diverse teaching and learning strategies of the kinds outlined above will create richer opportunities for building self-awareness, deeper learning, development of skills of critical understanding and problem-solving, and interaction of different kinds, all of which are attributes that are increasingly required for success in life after graduation in the 21st Century. There is also a growing expectation that university graduates should be ICT literate, which is driven by changing expectations in the workplace.

Given the growing importance of this concept, the following policy commitments are noted:

3.3.1   VUT will develop and keep current a comprehensive definition of the concept of 'graduateness' and the skills, competences, attributes, and attitudes it encompasses, to be

appended to this policy and updated from time to time. This will be in line with definitions prepared by the South African Technology Network (SATN).

3.3.2 As part of normal curriculum review processes (see section on Curriculum Development and Quality Assurance' below), academic departments will be expected to demonstrate how they have sought to integrate the development of 'graduateness' amongst VUT students into the teaching of modules and programmes.

3.3.3 The development of 'graduateness' will be integrated into all academic support activities as appropriate (see Section 3.4 below).

3.4   Providing Academic Support

VUT recognizes that effective academic support is particularly important in providing its students a meaningful opportunity of success in their studies, especially because many of its students come from schooling backgrounds that have not adequately prepared them for the rigours of study at a tertiary level. This requirement spans a broad range of skills and competences, including literacy and numeracy, writing skills, information literacy, ICT proficiency, study and research skills, time management, and life skills of various kinds. Given this, it is essential that academic support is well planned, effectively coordinated, and made available to all students as an integral part of the overall academic experience. Although this is especially important in the first year of study, as students manage the transition from schooling to higher education, it will most likely remain important throughout their academic careers at VUT. Given this, the following policy commitments are noted.

3.4.1 All support departments involved in the provision of support of different kinds to students will work together closely with Faculties and Departments to ensure that there is a coherent coordinated programme of support on offer to all students on all campuses and that this support is integrated into the delivery of modules and programmes. This process will be coordinated by the CAD, with the involvement of all relevant support Departments and incorporating the Maths Centre, the tutor development programme, the learning communities programme, the Preferred Student Experience Unit, and the First-Year Experience Unit. As part of this process:

3.4.1.1 The first-year orientation process, managed by the First-Year Experience Unit within CAD, will be overhauled to emphasize VUT's culture of learning and the requirements of students to succeed academically, in an effort to set a clear tone at the commencement of a student's academic career regarding the need for class attendance, ongoing studying throughout the semester, and assessment completion obligations, and the range of available support services;

3.4.1.2 Research methodology will be introduced at first-year level in all programmes on all campuses;

3.4.1.3 The University will prioritize investment in supplementary academic materials, supplementary practical activities, and wide-ranging support processes for all students, with strongest emphasis on first-year students who are struggling;

3.4.1.4 Efforts will be made to ensure sufficient qualified, experienced counsellors and facilitators on all campuses to help students with anything from study to personal problems;

3.4.1.5   Student training on the use of the University's e-learning systems will be provided on all campuses by the Educational Technology and Media Unit within the CAD;

3.4.1.6   A system of mentors and/or tutors for first-year students will be implemented across all campuses, in line with the provisions of the VUT Tutor Policy (which is appended to this policy as Appendix Three);

3.4.1.7   The University will harness learning analytics within its LMS and student record-keeping system to create an early warning system for struggling students.

4   Assessment of Students

It is important to ensure that assessment practices at VUT are aligned to the national higher education legislative and policy environment and that assessment is an integrated process within the learning experience. From this perspective, assessment practices at VUT can fulfil various functions:
- Improve the quality of students' learning experiences by focusing on significant knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values, and providing motivation to engage with course materials through tasks and feedback.
- Provide accurate estimates of current competence or potential in relation to desired outcomes to enable academics to make appropriate decisions (placement, diagnostic, etc.).
- Make high stakes judgements related to competence and progression or qualification, providing an accountable basis for credit and eventual certification of students in relation to outcomes of particular qualifications
- Provide a means of learning about students' misunderstandings so that teaching can be modified accordingly.

In addition to these purposes, a recent directive from the Department of Education requires proof of 'active learning' as a criterion for receiving subsidy for students. Submission of assignments and other learning activities are ways of proving that a student is active.

Based on the above imperatives and the principles of assessment outlined in Appendix One, the following policy positions are noted regarding assessment practices at VUT. An Assessment Unit within the CAD will take responsibility for working with Faculties and Departments to ensure adherence to these policy positions and to provide necessary capacity development support to academic staff in conducting effective assessment.

4.1   Assessment Planning

4.1.1   An assessment plan should be drawn up for each module that demonstrates continuity and progression in assessment activities. Summative assessment tasks should be developed by lecturers employed by the university in line with university policies and procedures, as outlined in Appendix Two of this policy. Assessment tasks should be based, as appropriate, on level descriptors to ensure that assessment is pitched at the appropriate level.

4.1.2   VUT respects the autonomy and professional judgement of its academic staff. The individual academic, in collaboration with the programme assessment coordinator or Head of Department (HOD), should plan his/her own assessment strategy in accordance with the module outcomes in the form of an assessment plan for the module. Advisory committees could also provide guidance in this regard. The following are possible strategies that could be used to suit different modules in different faculties, and also not to impede the academic autonomy of the educators:

4.1.2.1 A system of *full continuous assessment*. Final *integrated summative assessment* will then be done on the portfolio of the student, including a final assignment that is integrated in nature, or an integrated demonstration of outcomes.

4.1.2.2 A system of *continuous assessment, including a final summative assessment* event (examination). The final assessment event, in which the integration of learning is assessed, should not be the heavier weighted portion of the final mark, e.g. 75% of the final mark is obtained through continuous assessment and the remaining 25% of the final mark will be gained through a final summative assessment event that is *integrated in nature, covering the total curriculum.*

Educators can select these depending on the purpose of assessment and depending on the specific learning area. An assessment plan can include any valid assessment method. The plan must address all the assessment components and adhere to the principles of assessment as outlined in the rest of the policy.

4.1.3 The assessment system will be criterion-referenced. Assessment criteria will be provided with all assessment tasks and state the quality of the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be evidenced in relation to the levels of achievement. Agreement must be reached on what counts as competence and what counts as excellence.

4.1.3.1 Marking rubrics will be used as good practice to ensure inter-marker reliability when subjectivity might affect reliability. A rubric is a cross-referenced grid giving performance criteria and levels of achievement/ standards for each criterion. It makes expectations clear to students and assessors.

4.1.3.2 Memorandums will be used for tasks that are more objective. A student will be judged competent if he or she can provide evidence that he or she meets pre-determined criteria.

4.1.4 Academics will use a range of assessment techniques to ensure that assessment is educationally sound, appropriate to the discipline or field of study, all outcomes are assessed, and the criteria of validity, reliability, authenticity and feasibility are met. It is necessary to use a set of assessment methods to achieve consistent and fair results. The total assessment package for a module/ learning programme should be carefully designed to cover all learning outcomes. The assessment type(s) used will also be suited to the underlying teaching/ learning principles of the university, as outlined in this policy.

4.1.5 The choice of an assessment method will take the level of the students and the qualifications framework level of the learning into consideration. This will include judicious use of computer -based assessment where appropriate, to be implemented with support from the Educational Technology and Multimedia Unit within CAD.

4.1.6 In submissions of new modules or learning programmes, the lecturer/department/Faculty concerned will indicate to Senate how integrated assessment will be carried out. The purpose of such an assessment is to integrate deliberately the learning that has taken place throughout the module to assess if all the learning outcomes have been achieved. It can take the form of a project, a portfolio, or a written examination.

4.2 Transparency in Assessment Practices

4.2.1 Learning outcomes and their associated assessment criteria will be available to students and other stakeholders so the learning and assessment system will be transparent, reliable, and accountable. Students will know what is expected of them and employers will know what a person who holds a particular qualification has achieved. The criteria by which a student's level of achievement will be judged and an indication of who will make the judgment for that piece of assessment should also be provided to students well in advance of the submission date for an assessment task, preferably in the study/learning guide. Lecturers will give students information on why a particular assessment task or type has been chosen in relation to how it will help them to achieve the learning outcomes of the module in the study/learning guide if this is not self-evident.

4.2.2 VUT students will be involved in formative assessment that will add value to their learning, while also providing them with effective cognitive skills (foundational and reflexive), practical skills, and learning attitudes and values that they will need for further study or in a workplace situation or for any other goals after certification.

4.2.3 Instructional feedback is fundamental to the learning process. Lecturers will provide timely feedback that identifies where misunderstandings have occurred and the ways in which the student can improve, on both marked and self-assessed assessments. Feedback should be individualized to the specific student's attempts whenever possible and practicable. Generic feedback should also be given in answers/guidelines to self-assessed tasks in study materials and academic-marked assessments. Feedback on assessment or in tutorial letters must reach students before they write summative assessments.

4.3 Implementing Assessment

4.3.1 Formative assessment at all levels will contribute towards the student's final mark in combination with the assessment mark, according to guidelines developed by academic departments and approved by Senate. Formative assessment (e.g. assignments) submissions might also be used to determine final assessment entrance. Most importantly, though, formative assessment is assessment *for* learning, so will be used to provide timely feedback to students to enable them to learn from their assessment activities.

4.3.2 Summative assessment will measure, record and report on the achievement of module outcomes and exit level outcomes. It may take a form other than an assessment, such as the submission of a portfolio of evidence or reports from workplace mentors.

4.3.3 In some instances, as approved by Senate, diagnostic testing for placement purposes will be allowed.

4.3.4 Where used appropriately, online assessments will be allowed for both formative and summative assessment purposes.

4.3.5 When applicable, outcomes and assessment criteria for work integrated learning will be planned as for any other delivery mode or site. Assessment will conform to the principles and practices laid down in this policy.

4.3.6 The University is committed to ensuring fair treatment for all its students. The Assessment Office will collaborate with the academic departments to make arrangements for students with special needs resulting from disabilities including aspects such as venues, time for

completion of assessment and mode of the assessment (taped, oral, Braille, etc). This will be implemented in line with the provisions of the University's Disability Policy.

4.3.7   VUT in principle accepts legislation of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), which mandates the use of moderators for teaching and assessment practices. The procedural rules, functions and application of moderation will form part of the Assessment Rules and Regulations, which is appended to this Policy as Appendix Two.

4.3.8   The assessment strategy must allow for one 'second opportunity' for re-assessment. There are different cases for reassessment, which will be dealt with according to the Assessment Rules and Regulations of VUT (see Appendix Two of this Policy).

4.3.9   Rules governing minimum class attendance for students – applicable primarily to full-time students – are attached as Appendix Four to this Policy.

4.4   Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a practice that undermines the academic and research goals of any institution of higher learning. At the same time, if students, academics, and researchers follow proper academic and research procedures, this can serve to eliminate plagiarism. With this in mind, VUT has developed a detailed policy on plagiarism, which is pre-emptive and preventative, in the sense that it raises awareness about plagiarism and outlines remedial and corrective measures to be taken by university authorities in cases where it has been proven beyond reasonable doubt that acts of plagiarism have been committed.

4.4.1   The VUT Plagiarism Policy is considered an integral part of this Teaching and Learning Policy, and should be read in conjunction with this Policy to give clarity on rules and regulations governing plagiarism.

4.5   Continuation of Studies

Historically, there has not been consistent application of rules pertaining to continuation of studies at VUT. Consequently, the following policy provisions are stipulated, to be adhered to by all staff and students without exceptions.

4.5.1   First-year student (level 1): unsuccessful during first semester/year

4.5.1.1   If a first-year student (level 1, new student) has passed 50% or fewer of the enrolled subjects/modules of a semester year, the student may not continue with subjects prescribed in the next semester/year (i.e. may not enrol for new subjects/modules). First-year students who fail the first year must apply for admission as a first-year student. Such a student will be referred to the Department of Student Counselling for assessment and placement into the necessary academic support programme.

4.5.1.2   This student will have only one opportunity to repeat or re-write the outstanding subjects/modules on level 1 during the next semester/year. All outstanding subjects/modules must be passed.

4.5.1.3   If the students fails to pass during the second opportunity, admission to the programme on a full-time basis will be denied.

4.5.1.4   If the student successfully completes all outstanding subjects/modules during this semester/year, the student will be admitted to the next level.

4.5.2   First-year student (level 1): promoted to next level of study

4.5.2.1   If a first-year student (level 1, new student) passes more than 50% of the enrolled subjects for a semester/year, the student may register for the outstanding subjects/modules (i.e. those not successfully completed) and the subjects/modules prescribed for the next level, provided that prerequisites are adhered to and subject/module combinations can be accommodated on the class and examination timetables.

4.5.3   Senior student: Unsuccessful

4.5.3.1   A senior student who, after two consecutive semesters/years, has not passed the relevant course units of the degree or diploma for which s/he has registered shall not be admitted to the same programme on a full-time basis.

4.5.4   Senior student: Promoted to next level of study

4.5.4.1   If a senior student has passed more than 50% of the enrolled subjects for a semester/year, the student may register for the outstanding subjects/modules (i.e. subjects/modules completed unsuccessfully) and the subjects prescribed for the next level provided that prerequisites are adhered to and subject/module combinations can be accommodated on the class and examination timetables.

4.5.5   Period of study

4.5.5.1   The maximum permissible periods for existing qualifications are as follows:

National Diplomas and Diplomas	=	6 Consecutive Years
National Higher Diploma (3 + 1)	=	2 Consecutive Years
B-Tech Degree (0 + 4)	=	8 Consecutive Years
Advanced Diplomas	=	2 Consecutive Years
Postgraduate Diplomas	=	2 Consecutive Years
B-Tech Degree (3 + 1)	=	2 Consecutive Years
All Master's Degrees	=	4 Consecutive Years
All Doctorate Degrees	=	6 Consecutive Years

4.5.5.2   If a student fails to complete their studies within the maximum permissible period, such a student will not be allowed to continue his/her studies.

4.5.5.3   A candidate will be refused admission to continue with studies and residential accommodation if fees are overdue.

4.5.5.4   Continuation of studies may be pending on enforcement of the University code of conduct for any student who fails to abide by the norms and codes of the institution.

4.5.5.5   Admission and continuation of studies is subject to the requirements prescribed in the prospectuses of departments in the Faculties. This includes:

- An acceptable academic record as per the stipulations outlined above;

- Certificate of good conduct acceptable to the institution;

- Recognition of prior learning (RPL), where applicable (as governed by the VUT Policy on Assessment and Accreditation of Recognition of Prior Learning);

- No outstanding debts at other institutions;

- Approval by the Head of Department;

- Availability of space for the student at the VUT.

5   Curriculum Development and Quality Assurance

The following core principles underpin curriculum development at VUT: curriculum development and maintenance is primarily the responsibility of each head of department (academic); curriculum development is a continuous process; and quality improvement and maintenance of curricula is directly linked to inputs from industry and commerce through advisory committees.

With this in mind, the following policy commitments are noted regarding quality assurance for curriculum development. These should be read in conjunction with the VUT Quality Assurance Policy.

5.1.1   The notion of continuous improvement of the core business is central to the VUT's quality assurance processes.

5.1.2   Quality of modules, programmes, assessment activities, and all educational materials used within VUT remains primarily the responsibility of the Department responsible for module or programme delivery, through departmental Quality Improvement Teams (QITs) and a Quality Promotion Committee (QPC). The functions of these structures are outlined in the Quality Assurance Policy.

5.1.3   The Programme Accreditation and Curriculum Development Unit focuses on providing support to Departments and Faculties when completing curriculum reviews and designing curricula for new programmes.

5.1.4   The Quality Promotion Unit supports this process facilitating ongoing review processes of programmes and departments, with a strong emphasis on self-evaluation using evidence-led exercises followed by external validation exercises involving peers from other institutions.

5.1.5   Complete reviews of programme curricula will be undertaken at least once every five years, but may be completed more frequently if required by the DHET or professional bodies, or if this is deemed necessary by the Faculty in order to update the programme.

5.1.6   The various Units of the CAD will provide support to Departments in developing and reviewing curricula, in areas such as integration of academic support, use of e-learning and blended learning strategies, and design of appropriate assessment methods.

5.1.7   The Programme Accreditation and Curriculum Development Unit will maintain a set of up-to-date tools and templates to guide Faculties and Departments in conducting curriculum reviews as required. These tools and templates will, amongst other functions, seek to ensure that all curriculum reviews conform to the requirements of South African legislation, as well as regulations set out in the Higher Education Qualification Standards Framework (HEQSF), by the CHE, and by professional bodies where applicable.

5.1.8   Faculty Advisory Boards and Faculty Boards will participate in all programme curriculum reviews and in design of new programmes.

5.1.9   When a Faculty Board has approved a new programme or a revised programme curriculum, it will be submitted for review to the institutional Quality Promotion Unit. When the Quality Promotion Unit is satisfied with the quality of documents, they will then be submitted to the Curriculum Committee of Senate for review before being formally submitted to Senate for final approval.

5.1.10 VUT is committed to ensuring that the Programme Accreditation and Curriculum Development Unit and Quality Promotion Unit are sufficiently well capacitated to be able to discharge their mandates effectively.

6   Academic Planning

6.1   Faculty-Level Planning

6.1.1   To give practical expression to the above policy commitments, each Faculty will be required to prepare an annual Faculty Academic and Strategic Enrolment Plan, which sets out its key teaching and learning targets, priorities, and approaches. This academic plan will map out:

6.1.1.1   Annual enrolment targets, on a rolling three-year basis;

6.1.1.2   High-level overview of proposed teaching and learning approaches (encapsulating the plans of the Faculty to respond to the above policy imperatives), broken down by Department as needed;

6.1.1.3   Identification of key strategic priorities for the coming academic year;

6.1.1.4   Human resource, equipment, and financing requirements for implementation;

6.1.1.5   Proposed testing of any new innovations to be undertaken in partnership with CAD, with a suitable timed implementation schedule to enabling meaningful evaluation of innovations before they are scaled.

6.1.2   Faculty Academic and Strategic Enrolment Plans will draw as appropriate on detailed programme planning undertaken at the Departmental level (in consultation with Advisory Committees at the disciplinary level, as appropriate, to draw in external perspectives during planning).

6.1.3   Faculty Academic Planning processes will incorporate structured consultation with Faculty Boards and Advisory Boards before finalization.

6.1.4   To facilitate the above, a Teaching and Learning Facilitator will be appointed within the Dean's Office of each Faculty. This new position will include the following responsibilities:

6.1.4.1   Coordinate all academic planning across the Faculty, including departmental curriculum/programme design and review processes;

6.1.4.2   Ensure the effective integration of academic support of different kinds into all programmes, in line with the provisions of section 3.4 above.

6.1.4.3   Work with the CAD to ensure implementation of effective, fit-for-purpose professional development plans for staff in the Faculty;

6.1.4.4   Facilitation of processes of engagement within industry across the Faculty.

6.2   Satellite Campus Planning

Satellite campuses are seen as an integral component of the delivery of educational programme at VUT. They enable the University to extend access to education to a wider diversity of students in different geographical locations, while retaining a consistent standard of quality. Given this, the following is noted regarding the integration of satellite campuses into annual academic planning processes:

6.2.1   Academic representatives from all satellite campuses will participate in all annual Departmental and Faculty academic planning processes as outlined above, through a combination of participation in face-to-face meetings and via video-conferencing and tele-conferencing as appropriate. This will, as appropriate, incorporate inputs from part-time staff.

6.2.2   Appointment of part-time staff at satellite campuses will be guided by Faculty annual enrolment plans and academic plans, based on the teaching and learning need. All appointments at satellite campuses will be made with the direct participation of the Department of which that staff member will form part.

6.2.3   When annual Faculty Academic Plans are completed, all campus managers will be expected to review their rolling three-year Campus Master Plan in order to ensure that Campus plans are aligned with overall institutional academic plans.

6.3   Institutional Planning

6.3.1   Faculty Academic and Strategic Enrolment Plans will form the basis of all academic planning at the institutional level. These Faculty Plans are expected to feed into and inform:

6.3.1.1   Annual Campus Master Plans;

6.3.1.2   Annual Support Department Plans;

6.3.1.3   The Institutional Academic Plan;

6.3.1.4   The Institutional Strategic Plan;

6.3.1.5   The Annual Performance Plan;

6.3.1.6   The Resource Allocation Model;

6.3.1.7   The Vice Chancellor's Performance Contract.

This can be represented diagrammatically as follows:

Institutional Five-Year Strategic Plan

STEP THREE: Annual Targets

Vice Chancellor's Performance Contract, with targets derived from Institutional Academic and Strategic Enrolment Plan

Annual Performance Plan, with targets derived from Institutional Academic and Strategic Enrolment Plan

Resources Allocation Models, with targets derived from Institutional Academic and Strategic Enrolment Plan

Institutional Academic and Strategic Enrolment Plan, with targets derived from Faculty Academic and Strategic Enrolment Plans

STEP TWO: Institutional Planning

Support Department Plans, with targets derived from Faculty Academic and Strategic Enrolment Plans

Campus Master Plans, with targets derived from Faculty Academic and Strategic Enrolment Plans

Faculty Academic and Strategic Enrolment Plan

STEP ONE: Faculty Planning

Faculty Board

Faculty Advisory Board

Initial planning completed at Departmental Level, with involvement of disciplinary Advisory Committees

Process coordinated by T&L Coordinator in Dean's Office

7   Administrative Support Requirements for Effective Teaching and Learning

VUT recognizes that effective teaching and learning depends heavily on a physical environment conducive to education and streamlined, integrated administrative support systems and structures that make the task of education easier for both academics and students alike. With this in mind, the following specific policy commitments are noted.

7.1   Physical Facilities

7.1.1   VUT is committed to restoring a purposeful culture of teaching and learning by ensuring that the university campuses, and especially those areas around and nearby teaching and learning venues, are focused exclusively on the task of higher education during normal working hours. Consequently, the following is noted:

7.1.1.1   No social activities or marketing/promotional activities will be allowed on any campus during normal teaching hours (8am to 5pm during weekdays and 8am to 2pm on Saturdays).

7.1.1.2   In light of the pressure on physical facilities at VUT, all teaching and learning venues will be reserved exclusively for educational use during normal teaching hours, and hiring out or use of these facilities for other purposes will be prohibited.

The above commitments will be reflected in the VUT Policy on Commercial Promotions by External Agents.

7.1.2 All teaching and learning venues, including the library and self-study areas, will be kept in a good state of maintenance, conducive to effective education. This will include ensuring the following:

7.1.2.1 All facilities will be kept in a state of good repair, properly furnished for their intended purpose, with working electrical outlets and air-conditioning systems, and with functional wi-fi hotspots for staff and students. In addition, all venues will be equipped with lighting and temperature control facilities, the former to enable darkening of the room for presentations.

7.1.2.2 Appropriate security facilities will be in place in all teaching and learning venues to protect both the venue and installed equipment.

7.1.2.3 All teaching and learning venues will be regularly cleaned.

7.1.2.4 A selection of identified venues will be equipped as necessary with appropriate technology, including permanently installed data projectors, sound/microphone systems, and smartboards.

7.1.2.5 Wi-fi hotspots will be made available throughout all student hostels.

7.1.3 To facilitate different teaching and learning methods, the University is committed to establishing more dedicated venues that can accommodate small learning groups (10-25 students) and additional self-study workspaces outside the library for students to study in between classes. These self-study workspaces will be equipped with necessary furniture, technology charging points, and (for outside facilities) appropriate shading.

7.1.4 Areas for student socialization will be moved away from places where teaching and learning takes place in order to create an environment conducive to higher education.

7.1.5 Physical safety and security of staff and students is of paramount importance to enable effective education. Consequently, the University is committed to ensuring that:

7.1.5.1 Appropriate biometric systems are in place to control access to university campuses and to different facilities on campus;

7.1.5.2 There is working lighting around all campuses to facilitate safe movement at all times;

7.1.5.3 A security policy is in place that sets out procedures to protect staff and students while they are on campus, as well as to enable their safe passage on and off campus.

7.2 Admissions and Registration

7.2.1 VUT recognizes that, given its core constituency, it is essential to ensure that all students are provided every possible opportunity to succeed in their studies. This includes ensuring that there is a full cycle of academic studies each semester, with the maximum number of weeks available between commencement of the semester and the commencement of examinations.

7.2.2   Given this, VUT is committed to providing efficient admission and registration processes that guarantee the ability of the university to commence studies at the scheduled start of the semester. This process will take into account the provisions and requirements of continuation of studies, as outlined above, to make sure that the registration system accommodates these requirements in time for the start of the academic year. It will also take into account the provisions of the institution's Admissions Policy.

7.2.3   Linked to the above, the University will ensure that class lists and timetables are finalized before the first week of the semester. This will include providing all academics and students up-front information each semester regarding test and examination dates for all modules, to facilitate academic planning and preparations.

7.3   ICT

To facilitate implementation of the above policy commitments, CAD commits to the following key policy positions.

7.3.1   The institutional LMS will be kept live and fully operational at all times (with planned outages being scheduled well in advance and outside of key teaching and learning times and with effective communication in place to alert staff and students to any unplanned outages and the corresponding progress in resolving these).

7.3.2   Hosting of the LMS and any other online systems will comprise a combination of hosting at institutional headquarters, hosting at external service providers, and hosting in the cloud. Decisions about the spread of hosting solutions will be based on cost and quality of service. Regardless of the hosting environment, all institutional systems will be protected as per the terms and procedures laid out in the University's ICT Disaster Recovery Policy.

7.3.3   Effective Internet access will be available across all campuses (including all teaching and learning venues and student hostels), at all time, delivered through a combination of cabling solutions and wi-fi hotspots.

7.3.4   All academic and support staff will be provided ICT equipment (hardware and software) appropriate to the nature of the work they are expected to do. Details of the basis for determining hardware and software requirements will be clearly defined in the University's ICT Strategy, which will in turn be informed by the institution's Academic Plan.

7.3.5   All university ICT equipment (both in academics' offices and in teaching and learning venues) will be kept in good order, subjected to routine servicing as appropriate to the technology, and replaced regularly in line with institutional policies on equipment depreciation.

7.3.6   A dedicated team of ICT personnel located within CAD will be on call to respond to ICT problems and to support use of ICT in teaching and learning venues as required. In addition, a Help desk will be established in the Education Technology and Multimedia Unit within CAD to support the teaching and learning of academic lecturers.

7.3.7   Emphasis will be placed on expanding the number of computer laboratories and computer terminals available to students, with controlled access provided to ensure fairness of use and that terminals are used exclusively by students.

7.3.8   Dedicated broadband links will be established between campuses to enable seamless uninterrupted use of video-conferencing, both for teaching purposes and for regular academic meetings of different kinds.

7.3.9   Controlled access will be introduced for all printing and photocopying facilities per Department in order to prevent unauthorized use of printing budgets across Departments. To alleviate printing costs, all staff will be encouraged to supply material in digital form to students through the institutional LMS.

7.3.10 Budget allocations and investments in ICT hardware and software will be made annually in terms of a rolling three-year Technology Plan, outlining purchasing priorities and replacement requirements. Amongst others, this plan will need to take account of:

   7.3.10.1   Growing requirements for connectivity and wireless Internet access at all campuses;

   7.3.10.2   Staff access to personal computers (desktops and laptops);

   7.3.10.3   Access to peripherals such as printers and scanners;

   7.3.10.4   Student ICT access needs at all campuses;

   7.3.10.5   Access to Office productivity tools;

   7.3.10.6   Maintenance of institutional software agreements and necessary software upgrades;

   7.3.10.7   Hardware replacement as per identified life cycles of different kinds of equipment;

   7.3.10.8   Potential requirements for specialized hardware and software for content development, research, knowledge management, communication, and administration, as identified in Faculty Annual Academic Plans;

   7.3.10.9   International trends in educational technology.

7.3.11 The Technology Plan will prioritize ICT spending according to institutional goals, choosing projects that can be adequately funded on an ongoing basis by allocated funds. It will also include a detailed risk register to help to mitigate risks associated with implementation of this policy.

7.4 Professional Development of Staff

Successful implementation of this Teaching and Learning Policy requires strong emphasis on providing effective support and capacity building of various kinds to all academic staff. This support process is coordinated by CAD. Given this imperative, the following policy commitments are noted.

7.4.1   It is noted that:

   7.4.1.1   VUT staff need to be provided with or have access to the necessary resources (harnessing all media as appropriate), tools, and information for teaching to create effective learning opportunities for students successfully to meet the requirements of programme curricula.

7.4.1.2 VUT staff need to enhance their skills for both curriculum delivery and research. Many need to strengthen their subject knowledge base, pedagogical content knowledge, teaching skills, and specific ICT and information literacy skills.

7.4.1.3 Non-core teaching responsibilities of academic staff need to be reduced and their workload needs to be streamlined to enable them to discharge their core function as educational professionals.

7.4.1.4 Effective communities of practice need to be created amongst staff and sustained to enable them to benefit from exposure to quality teaching and learning methodologies, professional dialogue with peers, and ongoing sharing of information, ideas, and resources.

7.4.1.5 Staff need to be encouraged to participate actively in global knowledge networks as part of their research work, and to explore the use of new research publications opportunities available through the Internet and other forms of technology.

7.4.1.6 All new staff joining VUT will be required to attend an orientation session and complete a three-month 'licence-to-teach' professional development course. These activities will be provided by the CAD.

7.4.2 In order to give practical expression to the above, a coordinated rolling, three-year institutional strategy for ongoing support and professional development of full-time and part-time academic staff on all campuses in effective teaching and learning, including use of ICT, will be developed, accepted, and implemented. The strategy, which will be reviewed annually, will provide a framework and curriculum for high quality, effective educational professional development programmes, which are ongoing. The process of developing and reviewing this strategy, will be consultative, but will be coordinated by CAD.

7.4.3 For academics, support and professional development opportunities will:

7.4.3.1 Be part of an ongoing strategy for lifelong learning, incorporated into overall performance management systems and professional development plans;

7.4.3.2 Help them to integrate appropriate new educational methods, effective assessment approaches, and judicious use of technologies into their teaching and research activities as effectively as possible;

7.4.3.3 Include communication and collaboration with colleagues (both within and beyond the university) in teams or pairs using mentors, facilitators or peer coaching to provide support and share best practice;

7.4.3.4 Include short (2-3 hour) sessions and use of self-study resources and support materials as appropriate to enable more effective integration of professional development activities into the daily schedules of academic staff;

7.4.3.5 Encourage and incentivize research into teaching and learning practices at VUT;

7.4.3.6 Promote skills for preventative maintenance and troubleshooting of technology.

7.4.4 All professional development will actively seek to accommodate people with special educational needs, in line with the Disability Policy of the University.

7.4.5 The timing of professional development interventions will be appropriately planned and allow for continuous improvement along a continuum of professional development. Professional development coordinated by CAD will be implemented as an ongoing process, not a once-off event.

7.4.6 Participation in professional development programmes will be recognized by VUT in a number of ways. This might include:

7.4.6.1 Support for studies (as per the Reward for Academic Qualifications Policy and the Skills Development Policy);

7.4.6.2 Accreditation (or credits towards a further qualification);

7.4.6.3 Professional development credits towards salary increments;

7.4.6.4 Release time for attendance; and/or

7.4.6.5 Recognition for promotion.

7.4.7 As part of the above, all academic staff will be required to complete a three-month 'licence-to-teach' professional development course. They will also be required to attend at least two professional development workshops organized by the CAD annually.

7.4.8 All teaching and learning offered by academics at VUT will be reviewed through student evaluations to be completed each semester, the results of which will inform, as appropriate, curriculum review processes, professional development strategies, and staff performance reviews. The processes for this are documented in the Teaching and Module Evaluation Policy, which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

7.4.9 VUT notes its intention to recognize and reward teaching excellence amongst academic staff. With this in mind, it has developed a comprehensive policy on Rectorate Awards for Teaching Excellence (RATE), which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

7.4.10 The parameters of this will be documented in the University's Academic and Staff Development Policy/Employee Development Policy.

7.5 General Administrative Support

VUT prides itself on ensuring that its core academic functions –teaching and learning, research, and community engagement – drive its institutional systems and operations. With this in mind, the following policy commitments are noted with respect to general administrative support for teaching and learning.

7.5.1 An annual Calendar of Events, indicating all key institutional Senate, Committee, and other meetings and important institutional activities, will be published before the commencement of the academic year. In order to ensure there is no disruption to teaching and learning activities, these dates will not be moved once they have been published.

7.5.2 VUT commits itself to ensuring that all university stakeholders adhere to all aspects of this and related policies, and to following procedures agreed in those policies in the event of non-compliance, recognizing that a common set of rules, procedures, corporate values, and ethics is essential to fostering effective teaching and learning.

7.5.3 To support this and create transparency, all policies of the University will be made openly accessible online via the public VUT website.

7.5.4 Given the centrality of accurate mark capturing to the VUT academic enterprise, the University is committed to establishing and maintaining a single, centralized Student Record-Keeping System that is:

    7.5.4.1 Effectively integrated with the institution's applications, registration, and timetabling processes and systems, so that class lists are readily accessible for mark capturing purposes;

    7.5.4.2 Set up with appropriate access and permissioning capability to enable capturing of marks once at their source by Departments, rather than requiring manual migration of marks from one system to another;

    7.5.4.3 Designed in such a way that all academics can gain access to the student records they require for their work and that all students are able to access a full overview of their academic record (unless such access is denied in the event of non-payment of fees).

7.5.5 All administrative support departments will undertake regular reviews of their operational processes and human capacity to ensure that they are well placed to provide the necessary administrative support to implement the statements of this policy and to reduce unnecessary academic administration tasks for the academic staff. In particular, human resource and procurement processes will be streamlined to the greatest extent possible, while ensuring both good corporate governance and adhere to the legislative environment governing public higher education in South Africa, in order to support effective implementation of the institution's educational mandate.

8 Policy Oversight

VUT is accountable to students and the society at large for the validity and reliability of its T&L practices and assessment procedures. It is responsible for ensuring ethical treatment of all students, with regard to fairness in T&L and assessment practices, privacy and confidentiality issues, and transparency around dispute mechanisms and procedures.

The Senate Curriculum Committee will oversee and monitor the implementation of the *Teaching and Learning Policy*.

This policy will be reviewed every third year by Senate and revised every six years unless circumstances, such as a change in higher education policy, dictate an earlier revision.

Faculty Boards, with the extended mandate that includes Teaching and Learning, will periodically review criteria in particular subjects, giving immediate attention to new subjects and 'problem' subjects.

Professionally-oriented Departments will have their standards reviewed by the relevant professional bodies.

Appendix One: Assessment Practices at VUT

1   Key Assessment Principles

VUT continually seeks to understand why we need to assess in certain ways to be effective as educators. This appendix explains some well-established general principles of assessment, as well as principles that relate to the outcomes-based education system currently favoured by national education policy.

1.1   Validity

Assessment must be valid or fit for purpose; that is, it must measure predetermined outcomes, using appropriate assessment methods. Three important aspects of validity are:
- ***Face validity****:* This means that the assessment should be perceived to be *fair*, giving students a reasonable opportunity to show what they know and what they have mastered. For example, any suggestion of bias that may be to the detriment of some would reduce face validity for students (e.g., gender or ethnic bias). It should not advantage or disadvantage any student. Tuition and assessment are equitable when they take into account the instructional context and the special background of students (e.g. prior knowledge, cultural experience, language proficiency, cognitive style and interests).
- ***Content validity:*** Assessment should be appropriate for the stated outcomes of the module/subject and should cover the knowledge (ideas and skills) adequately. Assessment should focus on testing mastery of important knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, and not on peripheral details.
- ***Construct validity:*** This refers to the extent to which assessment succeeds in measuring and evaluating the abilities (theoretical or practical 'constructs') that it intends to assess.

1.2   Reliability

Assessment should be reliable or consistent; that is, it should produce the same results when:
- Particular students are assessed across time for the same knowledge, skills, attitudes and values using a variety of methods.
- Different markers assess the same piece of work.

The amount of work assessed should be sufficient in proportion to the comprehensiveness of the study package. Value judgements (such as passing or failing marks) should be as objective as possible. There should be academic and administrative quality control before, during and after the assessment. If a student's marks differ significantly depending on who marks the assignment/ assessment, assessment is not reliable. Guidance for marking must also be transparent and defensible.

1.3   Manageability

Assessment should be manageable – that is, not too difficult or expensive to implement – and it should be time efficient. Good assessment practice should be cost effective; that is, assessment should not be carried out by expensive means if adequate information about student performance could be

obtained by equally valid, alternative, less-expensive means. Quantity and type of assessment should also allow lecturers to achieve reliable results in a reasonable period of time. This also relates to timely feedback to students in order to improve their learning at the next step in the learning process.

1.4 Outcomes-based education

In outcomes-based education (OBE), each module or qualification states outcomes (general/ cross-field and specific) and associated assessment criteria clearly so that students understand in advance what they have to do to achieve these outcomes and assessors can use the criteria to assess the outcomes with reasonable objectivity/ reliability. The outcomes and assessment criteria thus have to specify explicitly and transparently the level of complexity of the learning, how well students have to perform in order to be judged competent, what knowledge or skill or applied competence must be demonstrated and under what conditions, and the range of evidence to be submitted. Outcomes, not content, must be assessed, including the critical cross- field outcomes.

Formative assessment

Formative assessment refers to assessment that takes place during the teaching and learning process. It is thus designed to support the teaching and learning process and is developmental in nature. It is sometimes referred to as 'continuous assessment'. Formative assessment:
- Is a 'learning opportunity', not just a test of student performance;
- Assists in planning future learning;
- Diagnoses the student's strengths and weaknesses; and
- Provides feedback to the student on his/ her progress.

Summative assessment

Summative assessment refers to assessment that is used for making a judgement about the achievement of outcomes in order to certify that a student may progress in his/her studies or may graduate. Such assessment is carried out at the end of a section of work or at the end of a module/ learning programme/ qualification. It determines whether the student is competent or not yet competent in respect of predetermined outcomes. There should be continuity between formative and summative assessment so that students are adequately prepared for summative assessment.

Integrated assessment of applied competence

Integrated assessment refers to:
- Assessing a number of outcomes together;
- Assessing a number of modules together;
- Using a combination of assessment methods and instruments for an outcome/outcomes;
- Collecting naturally occurring evidence (such as in a workplace setting);
- Acquiring evidence from other sources such as supervisors' reports, testimonials, portfolios of work previously done, logbooks, journals, etc.

The use of different types and combinations of integrated assessment will be dependent on the nature of specific disciplines.

Applied competence refers to the foundational, practical and reflexive aspects of learning. In other words, students must demonstrate their understanding of the knowledge, skills and attitudes associated with a particular discipline or field of study (foundational knowledge), be able to apply this knowledge in given contexts and be able to reflect on the knowledge and application in a critical way.

1.5   Criterion-referenced assessment

Outcomes-based education is associated with criterion-referenced assessment, particularly in terms of the assessment of the individual and his/her achievements. The lecturer makes judgements about students by measuring each student's work against pre-determined outcomes and related assessment criteria.

These criteria state the quality of the performance of students at different levels of competence. The relationship between assessment and learning outcomes, the definition of standards, the performance expectations held of students and feedback on performance can all be more easily and explicitly expressed when criterion-referenced assessment is used.

1.6   Authenticity

The university must be satisfied that the work being assessed is attributable to the person being assessed.

Appendix Two: Assessment Rules and Regulations

1   Types of Assessment

1.1   Summative assessment at the end of a module

1.1.1   Main assessment events are those events that occur at the completion of a module/s.

1.1.2   The method of assessment will be determined by the assessment criteria and can include a variety of assessment methods as described in the learning guide for the particular module.

Re-assessment opportunities

1.1.3   Re-writes (under the previous assessment system) shall be allowed until modularisation and the continuous assessment (CASS) policy, are fully implemented on all HEQF levels.

1.1.4   A **second opportunity** is an additional assessment that supplements the preceding main assessment. Second opportunities will be scheduled soon after the relevant main assessment during the same term as the main assessment as was approved by Senate on 17 November 2006.

1.1.5   A **re-assessment** opportunity (in line with the CASS policy), is a final opportunity to be assessed on outcomes not achieved yet and will be implemented in accordance with the CASS policy. The assessment strategy outlined in the learning guide will describe the re-assessment opportunities per module.

2   Appointment and Duties of Assessors and Moderators

2.1   Appointment of assessors

2.1.1   Assessors are appointed by Senex on recommendation of the Dean concerned and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic and these appointees are considered to be the assessors for specific modules. Appointments are valid for one year only.

2.1.2   Replacement of assessors are made by the Dean concerned and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic and submitted to Senex for approval.

2.2   Duties of assessors when setting a question paper

2.2.1   The assessor drafts the question paper and marking guide lines/memorandum for the various modules, to the satisfaction of the moderator.

2.2.2   The assessor shall set all question papers to an acceptable standard according to the prescribed syllabus/outcomes and learning guides.

2.2.3   The assessor in collaboration with the assessment centre, shall have the module question paper and memorandum/marking guidelines moderated to the satisfaction of the Deputy

Registrar examinations. Each moderated question paper shall be signed by both the assessor and the moderator. These signatures will indicate that the question paper has been approved for use for that particular assessment event.

2.2.4   The assessor shall hand in the question papers for terminating modules at the assessment office, from where it will be distributed to the relevant external moderators.

2.2.5   The assessor shall use the prescribed standard front page when drawing up memoranda.

2.2.6   The assessor and moderator shall ensure strict confidentiality at all times.

2.2.7   The assessor shall ensure that all question papers and memoranda clearly indicate the marks to be awarded per question and per sub-section as well as the total number of marks for the question paper. If question papers are divided into sub-sections, the number of questions that candidates should answer in each sub-section shall be indicated just below the heading of the sub-section.

2.2.8   In the case of CASS re-assessment events and for re-assessment events, the sub-sections should be clearly distinguishable to afford the candidate the opportunity of completing only those sub-sections for which the outcomes have not yet been reached.

2.2.9   The assessor shall set all question papers (excluding language question papers) in English only, except for satellite campuses, where papers may be set in (or translated by the Satellite campuses into) a language as prescribed by the language policy of the satellite campus in question.

2.2.10   The assessor shall carefully consider the time factor involved in answering a question paper.

2.2.11   The assessor shall ensure that the following information appears on the front page of each question paper

   2.2.11.1   Name and level of module (e.g. Physics II)

   2.2.11.2   Internal code of the subject or module (e.g. APFSA2B)

   2.2.11.3   Instructional programme into which the module falls (e.g. N.D. Chemical Engineering)

2.2.12   The assessor shall ensure that a list of all material which is permissible for the answering of the question paper is indicated on the question paper, e.g. pocket calculators are allowed (type of calculator shall be specified); graph paper: (type shall be specified); drawing tables, etc. Should the syllabus prescribe the development of programmes for use in the assessment event, or the use of standard programmes in the assessment, the use of a fully programmable calculator should be clearly indicated in the list of requirements. Should students be required to supply certain items themselves, this information shall be conveyed to the students at least two weeks before the date of the assessment.

2.2.13   The assessor shall ensure that instructions are clearly stated to prevent any misinterpretation, e.g. "answer any six questions", or "answer all the questions".

2.2.14   The assessor shall ensure that appendices or supplements to a question paper e.g. tables, sketches, answer sheets are indicated at the beginning of each question paper with clear reference to which questions they apply.

2.3   Duties of assessors when marking scripts

2.3.1   The assessor receives the scripts together with the necessary memoranda from the assessment office and checks the number of scripts received and the assessment numbers. The assessor is responsible for the allotment of answer scripts to the various co-assessors for marking.

2.3.2   The assessors shall timeously hold discussions and issue instructions to co-assessors regarding the interpretation and awarding of marks according to the memorandum. The discussions should take place as soon as the co-assessors receive the allotted question papers and memoranda.

2.3.3   The assessor shall ensure that marks are awarded according to the marking guide lines/memorandum. As far as possible, marking guidelines/memoranda should make provision for a variety of different answers.

2.3.4   The assessor shall ensure that the marking by co-assessors is of the same standard as those scripts marked by the assessors. To achieve this, the assessor shall check at least 10% (ten percent) of the scripts which have been marked by the co-assessor.

2.3.5   The assessor shall award marks for every section of the question. These marks shall be indicated in the right-hand margin of the answer script.

2.3.6   The total marks for the question shall be recorded and encircled next to the question number. The total marks for each question shall be recorded on the space provided on the back cover of the answer script.

2.3.7   Should an assessor not award any marks for a specific question or part thereof, he/she shall indicate that by means of a 0 and also record it on the space provided on the back cover of the answer script.

2.3.8   Should a question not have been answered at all, the assessor shall record a X next to the question number on the back cover of the answer script.

2.3.9   After marking, the total mark shall be calculated and recorded on the back cover of the answer script. This mark should now be converted, on the back cover, to the appropriate exam mark.

2.3.10   The assessor shall use a red pen.

2.3.11   The assessor shall mark all the questions that have been answered. If a candidate has answered more than the required number of questions, the assessor shall mark the requisite number of questions as originally indicated on the question paper, the choice of which at the discretion of the assessor.

2.3.12   The assessor shall complete and sign the required report and mark/invigilator's list, which shall be handed in together with the answer scripts at the assessment office.

2.4   Appointment and duties of co-assessors

2.4.1   Full-time and part-time lecturers of a module, with the exception of the moderator of the module, may be appointed as co-assessors.

2.4.2   The assessor shall, in all cases, cross check the answer scripts as marked by each co-assessor as per 2.3.1above. Cross checking should be done in a colour other than green or red.

2.4.3   The duties of the co-assessors are the same as those of the assessor as detailed in 2.3.

2.5   Appointment of moderators

2.5.1   Moderators are appointed by Senex on recommendation of the Dean and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic. Appointments are valid for one year.

2.5.2   Replacements of moderators are made by the Dean concerned and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic and submitted to Senex for approval.

2.5.3   Moderators for terminating modules should be competent subject experts who are not members of staff. Should no suitable person be available, Senex may appoint a member of staff as moderator on the recommendation of the relevant Dean. However, if the examiner is a subject expert, who is not a member of staff, the moderator can be a staff member.

2.5.4   Moderators for non-terminating modules may be full-time or part-time lecturers and/or other competent persons.

2.5.5   For second opportunities of terminating modules, the examination paper will be externally moderated but the scripts should be internally moderated.

2.6   Duties of a moderator when moderating question papers and memoranda

2.6.1   The moderator shall be satisfied that the assessor has strictly abided by the prescribed rules. (See 2.2). The moderator is ultimately responsible for the following:

   2.6.1.1   that the standard of the questions is acceptable;

   2.6.1.2   that questions cover the entire syllabus;

   2.6.1.3   that the awarding of marks is fair and acceptable;

   2.6.1.4   that the time factor has been carefully considered;

   2.6.1.5   that there is no gross repetition from previous assessment and test question papers; and

   2.6.1.6   that the use and standard of language is correct.

2.6.2   The moderator shall sign both the cover pages of the question paper and the memorandum/marking guidelines which will indicate that they are suitable for use.

2.7   Duties of moderator when moderating an answer script

2.7.1   The moderator shall check those answer scripts which have been submitted to him/her and shall ensure that:

2.7.1.1   all regulations regarding the marking of the question paper have been adhered to;

2.7.1.2   the awarding of marks has been fair and that a consistent standard has been maintained throughout;

2.7.1.3   no addition or calculation errors have been made;

2.7.1.4   borderline cases have been carefully re-considered;

2.7.1.5   all the moderated scripts are signed.

2.7.2   Should a moderator recommend a mark adjustment, it should be clearly specified and motivated, e.g. increase/decrease all candidates' assessment marks by X, etc. The adjustment should be approved by the Assessment Committee.

2.7.3   The moderator is responsible for the re-mark of an answer script after a candidate's application for a re-mark has been approved by the Assessment Office.

2.7.4   The moderator shall use a green pen to moderate.

2.7.5   The moderator shall complete the prescribed moderator's report and hand it in at the assessment office together with the moderated answer scripts.

2.8   Amendments by the moderator

2.8.1   Should a moderator not be satisfied with the question paper or the marking guide/memorandum, amendments shall be discussed with the assessor and after consensus has been reached, changes can be made.

2.8.2   Should consensus not be reached, the matter shall be taken up with the Head of the Department and the Dean for settlement. If settlement is still not reached, it shall be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic.

2.9   Selecting of answer scripts for moderation:

2.9.1   The Assessment Office will select ten percent (10%) of all marked scripts per module, including those marked by co-assessors, for moderation.

2.9.2   Should 20 or fewer candidates have written the particular module, all the scripts are submitted for moderation.

3   ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

3.1   Faculty Assessment Committees

3.1.1   Each faculty should set up a faculty assessment committee the composition of which should be decided by the faculty board.

3.1.2   Faculty Assessment Committees shall deal with all matters relating to assessment, such as:

3.1.2.1   control of question papers, memoranda and assessment timetable

3.1.2.2   admission to assessment (where applicable)

3.1.2.3   irregularities and disciplinary measures

3.1.2.4   monitoring and adjustment of results

3.1.2.5   approval of results

3.1.2.6   release and publication of results

3.1.2.7   all other matters which are referred to the assessment committee

3.1.2.8   Medical certificates

3.1.2.9   Continuation of Studies Policy

3.1.3   Each faculty assessment committee will report on/make recommendation regarding the issues listed above to the central assessment committee as discussed in 3.2 below.

3.1.4   Faculty Assessment Committee:

- *Chairperson*   Executive Dean

- *Secretary*   Administrator of the Faculty

- *Members*   Faculty Academic officers of the Faculty

-                  Heads of Department in the faculty

3.1.5   The Faculty Assessment Committee is a standing committee. All border cases will be considered by this committee.

3.2 Central Assessment Committee

3.2.1   A Central Assessment Committee is a subcommittee of Senate dealing with all assessment matters.

Minutes

3.2.2   Minutes of all decisions of the committee shall be kept by the Deputy Registrar: Assessment.

Operation

3.2.3   The Assessment Committee shall meet at least once at the conclusion of each main assessment session in order to deal with matters which have been referred to them.

3.2.4   During assessment sessions, day-to-day matters are handled by the management committee, on the understanding that all decisions taken by the management committee will be presented to the Assessment Committee for authorisation and that such decisions are added to the minutes of the Assessment Committee as appendices.

3.2.5   Assessment Committee is selected by Senate.

3.2.6   The Assessment Committee:

- *Chairperson*   Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic
- *Secretary*   Secretary : Assessment Department
- *Members*   Registrar: Academic
-                      Deans of Faculties
-                      Directors of Satellite Campuses
-                      Deputy Registrar: Assessment

3.2.7   Executive Assessment Committee:

3.2.7.1   *Chairperson*   Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic

3.2.7.2   Secretary   Deputy registrar: Assessment

3.2.7.3   Member   Relevant – Dean

3.3 Assessment Disciplinary Committees

3.3.1   The following Assessment Disciplinary Committees shall be included in the Code of Conduct for Students:

3.3.1.1   Main Campus: Assessment Disciplinary Committee:

- Chairperson/Presiding officer: Registrar: Academic
- Member one: Relevant Academic HOD
- Member two: One SRC member: Faculty representative
- Member three: University's Legal Expert
- Complainant: Deputy Registrar: Assessment
- Secretary/scribe: Provided by the Assessment Department

3.3.1.2   Satellite Campuses: Assessment Disciplinary Committee:

- Chairperson/Presiding officer: Faculty co-ordinator / Head Academic
- Member one: Relevant Academic HOD/subject head
- Member two: One SRC member: Faculty/academic representative
- Complainant: Head : Administration
- Secretary/scribe: Provided by the Assessment Department

3.3.1.3   Main Campus: Assessment Appeal Committee:

- Chairperson/Presiding officer: Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic

- Member one: Relevant Academic Dean

- Member two: One SRC member: Academic Co-ordinator from main campus

- Member three: University's Legal Expert

- Secretary/scribe: Provided by the Assessment Department

3.3.2   Satellite Campus: Assessment Appeal Committee:

- Chairperson: Campus Director

- Member one: Relevant Head of Department

- Member two: One SRC member who did not serve on the DC Hearing

- Member three: University's Legal Expert

- Secretary/scribe: Provided by the Assessment Department

3.3.3   Management Committee

- Chairperson/Presiding officer: Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic

- Member one: Deputy registrar: Assessment

- Member two: Relevant Dean

4   OBTAINING A QUALIFICATION

4.1.1   A candidate obtains a qualification as soon as he/she has met all the requirements, as stipulated in HEQF. Where a work integrated learning component is prescribed, this should have been successfully completed.

4.1.2   A final year student, who only requires one module to obtain a qualification, will automatically qualify for a second opportunity, **PROVIDED** that a second opportunity is scheduled for the module.

4.2   Pass with distinction:

4.2.1   N Diploma and B Tech qualifications may be awarded *Cum Laude* if the candidate obtains an average of 75% in all the subjects of the qualification including the final level subjects at the first attempt.

4.2.2   M Tech may be awarded *Cum Laude* to the candidate in respect of:

4.2.2.1   *Subject and dissertation option*: passes all the subjects with an average of 75% and passes the dissertation with 75%.

4.2.2.2   *Dissertation only*: obtains a mark of 75% or more.

4.2.3   D-Tech is not awarded *Cum Laude*. It is only indicated that the candidate passed or failed.

5   RECOGNITIONS AND EXEMPTIONS (REFER to RPL policy)

5.1   Completed qualification

5.1.1   Not more than 50% of the completed qualification's modules can be exempted in respect of another incomplete qualification.

5.2   Incomplete qualifications

5.2.1   No restriction is placed on the number of module exemptions/recognitions in respect of another qualification provided that at least 50% of the subjects, are passed at the VUT.

6   ASSESSMENT OF THESES/DISSERTATIONS AS FULL OR PARTIAL COMPLETION OF MASTER'S and DOCTORAL DEGREES

6.1   Initiation of the examination process

6.1.1   The supervisor must sign a declaration that the thesis is ready for examination. Attached to this declaration by the supervisor, must be a completed mark sheet with a proposed/expected mark plus additional comments on the thesis, just as an examiner would.

6.1.2   In the event of a significant discrepancy in marks between the supervisor and examiners, the EXCO of the Faculty Board should use its discretion in allocating a mark or initiating re-examination.

6.1.3   The purpose of this is to ensure that there is due quality control on a thesis <u>before</u> it is subjected to external examination, and to give experience in thesis examination to our staff.

6.1.4   In the event of the absence of the supervisor or of a dispute between the student and the supervisor, a student can approach the Head of Department and/or Faculty Dean with the request that the thesis/dissertation be examined. Final approval for examination in these cases, shall reside with the Exco of the Faculty Board.

6.2   Number of examiners

6.2.1   Assessment of full and partial Master's Degree dissertations shall be done by two examiners of which at least one must be external. The supervisor cannot be an Examiner

6.2.2   Assessment of a Doctoral thesis shall be done by three examiners of which at least two must be external. One of the external examiners should preferably be from a reputable academic institution outside South Africa. The promoter cannot be an examiner.

6.3 Identification of, approval of, and correspondence with examiners

6.3.1 The proposed examiners for each thesis/dissertation shall be identified by the relevant academic Head of Department in consultation with the supervisor/promoter where feasible, for approval by the Exco of the Faculty Board (and Senex).

6.3.2 All correspondence with the examiners shall be done through the office of the academic Head of Department.

6.4 Qualifications of supervisors/promoters and assessors

6.4.1 Supervisors/promoters and assessors should be in possession of a qualification at least equivalent to or preferably higher than that of the candidate. Should a supervisor/promoter or assessor not possess an equivalent or higher qualification, it should be established that such a person possesses the necessary specialised knowledge and experience in the field of study concerned.

6.5 Pass and Failure

6.5.1 A candidate passes when all members of the assessment panel award a mark of 50% or more for a Master's Degree calculating the average of all the marks awarded by the members of the assessment panel. A '*pass*' is required in case of a Doctoral Degree.

6.5.2 Should one of the members of the panel fail the dissertation/thesis, an additional external assessor shall be appointed to remark the dissertation/thesis. This assessor shall be identified by the academic Head of Department and approved by Exco of the Faculty Board. Should this assessor award a pass mark, the candidate shall pass but should a fail be given, the candidate shall fail.

6.5.3 A candidate's final mark is calculated as follows:

6.5.3.1 Masters Degree: For a pass the arithmetical average of the allocated marks is calculated. For a failure no final mark is calculated, it is only indicated that the candidate has failed.

6.5.3.2 Doctoral Degree: No final mark is calculated. It is only indicated that the candidate passed or failed.

6.5.4 Should two or more members of the assessment panel fail the candidate, the candidate fails, and no final mark is calculated, it is only indicated that the candidate has failed.

6.5.5 The final examination marks shall be submitted to Exco of the Faculty Board for final approval and Senex for and ratification.

7 SPECIAL ASSESSMENT

7.1.1 Under exceptional circumstances, a student may be admitted to a special assessment provided that a written request, supported by the necessary documentation, shall be submitted to the assessment office within seven (7) days after the original date of the main assessment.

7.1.2 In the case of illness, a valid medical certificate shall accompany the student's request provided that the Assessment Office reserves the right to obtain further information to authenticate such illness.

7.1.3 All special assessment shall be written during the time slots scheduled for supplemental events.

7.1.4 No special assessment shall be granted in lieu of re-assessment events.

7.1.5 Acceptable reasons for admission to a special assessment:

7.1.6 Serious illness or injury during the official assessment sessions.

7.1.7 Death of a first level blood relation member of the family. First level refers to vertical and

7.1.8 horizontal relation e.g. father, mother, child, brother/sister. Valid documentation should be submitted.

7.1.9 Problems that may occur due to the University authorities postponing the official assessment sessions as a result of unforeseen circumstances.

7.1.10 Exceptional cases will be considered on merit.

7.1.11 Reasons that are **unacceptable** for admission to a special assessment:

    7.1.11.1 Overseas visits/tours

    7.1.11.2 Sports appointments/engagements except where the candidate will represent South Africa

    7.1.11.3 Attendance of meetings, symposiums or any other gatherings

    7.1.11.4 Special holiday arrangements

    7.1.11.5 Misinterpretation of the assessment time-table.

8 EXTENDING THE NORMAL TIME ALLOWED FOR THE ANSWERING OF A QUESTION PAPER

8.1.1 Extension of time may be considered on the grounds of temporary or permanent disability.

8.1.2 When granting additional time the following procedures shall be followed:

    8.1.2.1 Candidates shall apply in writing to the relevant faculty at least three weeks in advance.

    8.1.2.2 The Faculty shall return the application, together with their recommendation, to the Director of the Bureau for Student Counselling.

    8.1.2.3 The Bureau for Student Counselling should undertake the necessary investigation, make its recommendation and send all the documentation to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic for the attention of the Assessment Committee.

8.1.2.4   The Assessment Committee, or its delegate, decides on the length of the extension and sends all the documentation to the assessment office.

8.1.2.5   The assessment office notifies the candidate and the relevant Faculty.

8.1.2.6   Additional time is allowed at the end of the assessment session.

8.1.2.7   In exceptional cases a candidate may be permitted to take an oral assessment.

9   IRREGULARITIES DURING ASSESSMENT AND CLASS TESTS

9.1   Irregularities

9.1.1   Any student who takes into the venue, or has in his/her possession or has on his/her person after the question paper has been handed out, any book, memorandum, note, sketch, map, film, programmable calculator, non-permissible material or any other document other than his/her admission pass, unless authorised by the assessment rules or specified by a requirement in a particular question paper.

9.1.2   Any student who assists or attempts to assist another candidate, obtains or attempts to obtain help, or communicates or attempts to communicate with another person other than the invigilator while in the assessment room.

9.1.3   Any student who falsely represents him/herself as being a specific candidate for an assessment.

9.1.4   Any student who creates a disturbance in the assessment room or behaves in an improper or an unseemly manner and refuses to stop such disturbance or improper unseemly behaviour after he/she has been warned by the invigilator.

9.1.5   Any student who disregards the instructions of the invigilator concerned and, after he/she has been warned by the invigilator, continues to disregard such instructions.

10 PROCEDURES FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT IRREGULARITIES

10.1 Steps to be taken by the invigilator following an assessment irregularity:

10.1.1 The invigilator confiscates the relevant answer script(s) and all other unauthorized material.

10.1.2 The invigilator endorses the confiscated answer script on the outside of the cover with the words "answer script confiscated at …(time)."

10.1.3 The invigilator supplies the candidate with a new answer script and endorses it on the outside of the cover with the words "new answer script issued at …. (time)."

10.1.4 The invigilator contacts the Assessment Officer immediately after an assessment irregularity occurred.

10.1.5 The invigilator ensures the student who committed the alleged irregularity, does not leave the assessment venue until the assessment session comes to an end.

10.1.6   The invigilator ensures that the student who committed the alleged irregularity reports to the Assessment Officer.

10.1.7   The invigilator submits a report and relevant evidence on the irregularity to the Assessment Officer.

10.1.8   The invigilator confiscates the answer script of a candidate who, after due warning, continues causing a disturbance or persists in contravening any other assessment regulation.

10.1.9   The invigilator expels a candidate from the assessment room who, after due warning, continues causing a disturbance or persists in contravening any assessment regulation and see that student reports to the assessment department.

10.2 Duties of the Assessment Officer following an assessment irregularity

10.2.1   The date for disciplinary hearings should be set at the end of the assessment session.

10.2.2   The Assessment officer should attend to an assessment irregularity as soon as possible after the irregularity has occurred.

10.2.3   The Assessment officer shall ascertain that the correct procedure has been followed in the handling of the irregularity.

10.2.4   The Assessment officer/Head of Administration at Satellite Campuses acts as the complainant in the disciplinary hearings regarding assessment irregularities. The complainant shall ensure that the following tasks are executed:

10.2.5   The student who reports to the Assessment Officer in terms of 9.1.6 may freely and voluntarily give a statement to the Assessment Officer regarding the alleged misconduct. The student shall be warned in writing that such a statement may be used as evidence against him/her and the student shall sign such a warning if willing to make a statement.

10.2.6   The student shall be informed of the charge and the student shall acknowledge receipt of the notification of the charge.

10.2.7   The student shall be informed of his/her rights.

10.2.8   The student shall be informed of the day, time and venue of a disciplinary hearing to be held and the student shall acknowledge receipt of the notification thereof.

10.2.9   The student shall be informed that absence from a scheduled disciplinary hearing does not prevent a disciplinary hearing from taking place.

10.2.10 The student shall be informed that he/she may sit for further assessment in the present assessment session but, if found guilty on the charge of committing an irregularity, these further assessments will be declared null and void.

10.2.11 The Assessment Officer shall inform the disciplinary committee of the day, time and venue of a disciplinary hearing.

10.2.12 The Assessment Officer shall arrange for a venue.

10.2.13 The Assessment Officer shall arrange for a minutes clerk/secretary to record the proceedings of the hearing.

10.2.14 The Assessment Officer shall report all irregularities to the Assessment Committee.

10.3 Penalties for irregularities during summative events

10.3.1 If found guilty, the student will be suspended from the University for a minimum period of 12 months as from the day of the irregularity. He/she may not register for any module, or write any other assessment for the entire duration of his/her suspension.

10.3.2 The assessment in the relevant subject and remaining subjects in the assessment period after occurrence of the irregularity will be considered null and void. The student retains all subject credits accrued up to the date when the irregularity occurred.

10.3.3 An assessment irregularity code will be included on the student's statement of results.

10.3.4 The University retains the right to provide information on suspension to outside parties.

10.4 Irregularities during formative events/class tests

10.4.1 The procedure pertaining to irregularities during formative events/class tests is the same as stated in the procedure for irregularities during assessment.

10.4.2 In the case of an irregularity during a class test the penalties will be:

10.4.2.1 The studies in the relevant subject/module will be suspended for the study period concerned.

10.4.2.2 The year mark in the relevant subject will be declared null and void.

10.4.2.3 The student will only be allowed to enrol/register for the subject/module in the following semester/year to attain a new year /semester mark.

11 INVIGILATION

11.1.1 Invigilators shall carry identification cards.

11.1.2 One (1) invigilator is appointed for every 40 candidates.

11.1.3 The invigilator shall collect the following from the assessment office, ensuring that sufficient time has been allowed to carry out all the instructions.

11.1.3.1 The sealed envelope containing the question papers for each session for each particular venue. On collecting the sealed envelope, the invigilator should be satisfied that the envelope has not been opened or tampered with. Should any irregularity be suspected, it shall immediately be brought to the attention of the Assessment Officer. The Assessment Officer in conjunction with the Assessment Committee will decide on a plan of action.

11.1.3.2   The correct number and type of assessment answer scripts and other material required for each assessment.

11.1.3.3   The invigilator's lists and other control material required.

11.1.4   Invigilators shall be in the assessment room at least 30 minutes before the beginning of an assessment session.

11.1.5   Before candidates are permitted to enter the assessment room, the invigilator shall ensure that all cell phones, figures, envelopes, drawings, notes and other material that could possibly be relevant to the particular module, have been removed from the assessment room. He/she shall also ensure that no such materials, books or papers are in or on the tables in the assessment room.

11.1.6   When admitting candidates to an assessment room, invigilators shall ensure that candidates are seated far enough away from each other so that it is not possible for one candidate to copy the work of another, or in any way communicate with another candidate. The invigilator shall be able to see each candidate. As far as practically possible, candidates should be seated at least one (1) meter from each other. In cases where more than one module are being written in the same room the groups shall be dispersed so that two candidates writing the same module are not placed next to one another.

11.1.7   Candidates shall be seated 15 (fifteen) minutes before an assessment commences, and may not leave the assessment room within one (1) hour of the commencement of the assessment and also not during the last 15 minutes of the session. Should a candidate be compelled to temporarily leave the assessment room for any personal reason, he/she could only do so under supervision.

11.1.8   A candidate may be permitted to enter an assessment room after commencement of the assessment session under the following conditions:

11.1.8.1   Only during the first hour of the relevant assessment session.

11.1.8.2   The candidate will only be permitted to utilise the remaining time of that particular session to answer questions.

11.1.9   In order to be admitted to the assessment, each candidate shall present his/her proof of admission to that particular assessment as well as proof of identity to the satisfaction of the invigilator. Proof of identity should preferably be an identity document or a student card. A driver's license or passport is also acceptable. Should a candidate not have any of the above-mentioned documents, that person will only be admitted to the assessment on the recommendation of the Assessment Officer, who will ensure that the candidate is identified.

11.1.10 Only candidates registered for a particular assessment, the invigilator concerned, the Assessment Officer or persons authorised by the Assessment Office may be present in an assessment room during an assessment. The Assessor and Moderator who are conducting an oral assessment or the reader of a speed test may also be present for the time it takes to perform their duties.

11.1.11 Additions may be indicated on the invigilator's list by the invigilator.

11.1.12 All unauthorised persons shall leave the assessment room before the envelope is opened. After candidates have been seated the invigilator shall make the following announcements:

11.1.12.1 The modules which are to be examined.

11.1.12.2 Request candidates not writing those particular modules to leave the room.

11.1.12.3 No candidate may have unauthorised material or notes in their possession.

11.1.12.4 No candidate may leave the assessment room within one (1) hour of the commencement of the assessment and also not during the last 15 minutes of the session.

11.1.12.5 No assessment answer scripts, used or unused, may be removed from the assessment room.

11.1.12.6 Candidates may, in no way whatsoever, communicate with one another.

11.1.12.7 Answers should be written with a blue or black ink pen or in any medium as specified in a particular question paper e.g. pencil for sketches or drawings, etc. Should an assessor not allow questions to be answered in pencil, this rule shall clearly be stated in the instructions on the question paper.

11.1.12.8 All information should be correctly filled in as instructed on the cover of the answer scripts or file.

11.1.12.9 Should more than one answer script be used, the cover of the final and any additional answering books should be correctly and completely filled in and the additional answer script should be placed inside the back cover of the first answer script.

11.1.12.10 Any request to communicate with the invigilator should be indicated by raising a hand.

11.1.12.11 Any errata and changes to question papers as instructed by the Assessment Officer.

11.1.13 Sealed envelopes containing question papers shall be opened in the presence of candidates, after all candidates have been seated and supplied with the necessary assessment material. Question papers are then handed out with the cover uppermost. Candidates are instructed not to begin until all candidates have received their question papers, at which time all question papers shall be opened simultaneously.

11.1.14 Invigilators may give no explanations of assessment questions.

11.1.15 Invigilators shall ensure that no disruptions are caused and that no candidate attempts to get assistance from another candidate or attempts to communicate with another candidate or any other person with the exception of the invigilator/s.

11.1.16 Unless otherwise stated for a particular assessment, invigilators shall check that no candidate has in his/her possession, and for the duration of the assessment, any books, memoranda, notes, charts, maps, figures, photos, documents or papers (including blank paper) of any kind, or any aids relevant to the module being examined except aids which have been supplied and proof of admission to the assessment. Pocket calculators and other specified aids may be used unless an instruction forbidding their use appears on the question paper. Papers are to specify clearly which aids to be used.

11.1.17 If instructions are not followed or if a candidate commits an act which is considered to afford an unfair advantage, that candidate is guilty of an offence. (See 8).

11.1.18 All assessment aids and answer scripts which have been handed out shall be collected before a candidate may leave the assessment room.

11.2 Duties during assessment sessions:

11.2.1 During an assessment the invigilator shall devote his/her entire attention to supervision and he/she shall particularly ensure that the candidates comply with the assessment regulations.

11.2.2 He/she shall not spend his/her time sitting or standing in one place or alongside any one candidate, but shall move about continually in the assessment room without disturbing the candidates.

11.2.3 It is important that candidates should not be given the impression that there are opportunities for contravening the regulations as a result of a lack of vigilance on the part of invigilator.

11.2.4 Where there is only one invigilator, he/she may leave the assessment room only in exceptional circumstances, and then only when his/her place has been taken by another invigilator. An invigilator may not leave the assessment room during assessment in order to take refreshments unless he/she has been relieved by another invigilator.

11.2.5 Additional answer scripts and other stationery may be supplied to a candidate, but the invigilator shall first ascertain that the additional material is necessary and shall make a note on the invigilator's report against the assessment number of the candidate to whom more than one answering book has been given in order to ensure that the candidate has handed in all the answer scripts that were issued.

11.2.6 In the case of a confirmed fire or bomb scare that specific exam session is immediately cancelled and the University evacuation procedure would be followed.

11.2.7 An invigilator may not:

11.2.7.1 Reply to any question by a candidate that may lead to an explanation of the assessment question.

11.2.7.2 Effect an amendment to a question paper without the prior consent of the Assessment Officer.

11.2.7.3 Act in such a manner that he/she disturbs the candidates.

11.2.7.4 Give a copy of any assessment question paper to anyone except a candidate before that particular assessment has been concluded.

12 SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT AT THE END OF A MODULE

12.1 Admission to Assessment

12.1.1 Registration for all assessment takes place automatically when a student registers for a module.

12.2 Year/semester marks

12.2.1 The final mark shall be calculated as prescribed in the syllabus of a module (e.g. 50% or 60%) by the assessor before commencement of the main exam.

12.2.2 Only candidates registered for modules at the Vaal University of Technology for that particular year or semester will be granted admission to write main assessment.

12.2.3 A candidate can write the main exam on condition that the candidate first meets the admission requirements of at least 50% in the year/semester mark.

12.3 Main assessment

12.3.1 Only candidates registered for modules at the Vaal University of Technology for that particular year or semester will be granted admission to write main assessment.

12.4 Conducting of Assessment

12.4.1 Functions of Assessment Office (see assessment standard operating procedures)

12.4.2 The schedule for all summative events should reach the assessment office within one month after commencement of classes. The finalisation of schedules and administration of the assessment function will be conducted by the examination office.

12.5 Preparation of assessment question papers

12.5.1 The assessment office hands the marked assessment answer scripts, together with the necessary documentation to the moderator, made up according to the applicable schedule. Internal moderators, i.e. moderators employed by the University, collect the assessment answer scripts at the assessment office and sign for them. Assessment answer scripts are sent to external moderators by registered post/courier services with a cover letter detailing the number of answer scripts and the name of instructional offerings.

12.5.2 Moderators then perform their duties as prescribed in 2.5.

12.5.3 On completion of marking, moderators deliver assessment answer scripts together with the necessary documentation, or dispatch them via registered post, to the assessment office of the Vaal University of Technology.

12.6 Pass/Fail

12.6.1 Pass

    12.6.1.1 A module is passed when a candidate obtains at least 50% or more in the final mark, on condition that the candidate firstly meets the admission requirements of at least 50% in the year/semester mark, and finally meets the sub-minimum requirement of at least 40% in each paper in the module concerned.

12.6.2 Fail

12.6.2.1 A module is failed if a candidate obtains less than 50% in the final mark and does not qualify to pass according to 17.1

12.6.2.2 Should a candidate obtain 50% or more as a final mark but fails to meet the sub minimum requirements of 40% in the assessment or question papers for the module concerned, the candidate fails, and the final mark is published as e.g. "51 FM" where FM indicates that the candidate has failed to obtain the sub-minimum in the module concerned.

12.6.3 Second opportunities (See Section 14).

12.7 Publication of Results

12.7.1 After approval of the results by the Assessment Committee, schedules of results are prepared, checked and published. Candidates are notified in writing of their results, with notification of the date on which second opportunities will be held as well as the date of registration for second opportunities where applicable.

12.8 Re-Mark/Checking of Assessment Answer Scripts

12.8.1 Applications for a re-mark/checking of assessment answer scripts shall be made on the prescribed form, and handed in, together with the required fee, at the assessment office. Applications for a re-mark shall be made within one (1) month in the case of November assessment and fourteen (14) days in the case of June assessment after the publication of results.

13 SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT AT THE END OF A LEARNING UNIT

13.1 Conducting Of Assessment

13.1.1 Functions of Assessment Office (see assessment standard operating procedures)

13.1.2 The schedule for all summative events should reach the assessment office within one month after commencement of classes. The finalisation of schedules and administration of the assessment function will be conducted by the assessment office.

13.1.3 A maximum of three **summative** events per module can be administered by the assessment office.

13.1.4 Where a syllabus prescribes for **full** continuous assessment in a module, summative events are scheduled at the completion of learning units. A candidate should obtain a minimum mark of 50% for a summative event to pass that module.

13.1.5 The assessment office at the site of delivery will be responsible for entering the results on ITS. Results from satellite campuses will be moderated, returned to the satellite and results entered by their assessment office.

13.1.6   If a candidate cannot write on a specific date, due to a religious principle, written notification should be submitted to the Department Assessment within 5 days after receiving the schedule. The Department Assessment will refer this to the assessor.

13.2 Preparation of assessment question papers

13.2.1   The assessment office hands the marked assessment answer scripts, together with the necessary documentation to the moderator, made up according to the applicable schedule (5.9.1). Internal moderators, i.e. moderators employed by the University, collect the assessment answer scripts at the assessment office and sign for them. Assessment answer scripts are sent to external moderators by registered post with a cover letter detailing the number of answer scripts and the name of instructional offerings.

13.2.2   Moderators then perform their duties as prescribed in 5.8.

13.2.3   On completion of marking, moderators deliver assessment answer scripts together with the necessary documentation, or dispatch them via registered post, to the assessment office of the Vaal University of Technology.

14 SECOND OPPORTUNITIES

14.1.1   Second opportunities can be offered during the main assessment or be integrated into the module. It should be conducted in the semester of enrolment. No second opportunity is permissible thereafter.

14.1.2   For a theory module, second opportunities could be conducted at the end of the module. Students should be assessed on outcomes not achieved yet. Sections should be clearly indicated on the question paper, as SECTION A, SECTION B or SECTION C. The assessment officer should receive a list indicating which part should be completed by a student. These lists should be handed to the examination office by the lecturer.

14.1.3   All students will start writing at the start of the session.

14.1.4   The same regulations for invigilation apply as under Section 11.

14.1.5   The results of the second opportunity will replace the result of the learning unit on which the student is re-assessed.

14.1.6   In the case of a special assessment the actual mark obtained by the candidate will be the final mark

14.2 Pass/Fail

14.2.1   The lecturer/s that is offering a module will be granted access permission to CALC their own results on ITS.

14.2.2   Pass:

14.2.2.1   A module is passed when a candidate obtains at least 50% in all summative events and an average of at least 50% for the final mark that may be compiled from formative and summative events.

14.2.2.2   Should a candidate obtain 49% as a final mark it is published as 50% provided the candidate meets the sub-minimum requirements and the candidate is regarded as having passed the module concerned.

14.2.3   Fail:

14.2.3.1   A module is failed if a candidate obtains less than 50% in any summative event or does not obtain a final average of 50%.

14.2.3.2   Should a candidate obtain 50% or more as a final mark but fails to meet the sub minimum requirements of 50% for all summative events, the candidate fails, and the final mark is published as e.g. "51 FM" where FM indicates that the candidate has failed to obtain the sub-minimum in the module concerned.

14.2.3.3   Should a candidate fail any unit after re-assessment, the student must re-register for the module during the next semester

14.3 Publication of results

14.3.1   After moderation, the results will be published by the assessment office.

14.3.2   The students will ONLY be notified in writing at the end of the module after approval of the results by the Assessment Committee.

14.4 Record keeping

14.4.1   Based on the assessor's discretion and depending on the type of assessment method, the assessor may decide whether summative assessment scripts/assignments/reports be discussed or shown to students in class. They should however be taken in for record keeping afterwards. (**Refer to faculty procedure)**

14.4.2   If assessment scripts/assignments/reports were revealed, no re-marking will be allowed to take place.

14.4.3   Scripts need to be kept at the assessment office for a period of three years.

14.4.4   Unseen scripts may be subjected to a re-mark

15 RE-MARK/CHECKING OF ASSESSMENT ANSWER SCRIPTS

15.1.1   Applications for a re-mark/checking of assessment answer scripts shall be made on the prescribed form, and handed in, together with the required fee, at the assessment office. Applications for a re-mark shall be made within fourteen (14) days after the publication of results.

16 ORAL EXAM

16.1.1   Names of students that qualify for an oral exam, shall be submitted to head of the Department

16.1.2   The date and time of the oral exam will be scheduled by the head of Department.

Appendix Three: Tutor Policy

1 Preamble

This Policy has been developed in the context of the VUT Teaching and Learning Strategy, which represents VUT's commitment to excellence in teaching and learning.

The Teaching and Learning Strategy adopted at VUT identifies the importance of tutorials as the key means of facilitating student learning. Tutoring allows for collaborative interaction in a relatively safe learning environment, and facilitates the reflection on and application of core academic practices and concepts within academic disciplines being studied. In particular, tutorials offer scope for the learning tasks prioritized by the **Social Constructivism** teaching-learning theory, which contributes to transforming information into usable knowledge.

2 Purpose and Scope of the Policy

The purpose of developing this Policy is to initiate the formulation of a framework which will facilitate a coherent institutional approach to the existing tutorial program. The development and implementation of this Policy will assist Faculties in utilizing similar standardized guidelines in appointment of tutors and peer assistants.

3 Interpretation and Definitions

For the purpose of this Policy, unless otherwise stated, the following shall apply:

1) *Tutorial*: A tutorial is defined as an intensive small group learning activity led by a tutor. Depending on the context a tutorial can take one of many forms, ranging from a set of instructions to complete a task to an interactive problem solving session. The aim is to promote an enabling learning environment which facilitates the development of discipline-specific skills and enhances the academic success of students.

2) *Tutor*: A tutor should be a senior student who completed a minimum qualification of a B Tech or Honours degree or has completed the first degree and relevant industry experience (minimum of 1 year.) The relevant academic department will assess the appropriateness of the experience through an RPL process. Good academic performance, competency and knowledge are important as well as skills and values which will enable him/her to assist and guide students in their academic studies. The tutor should be a subject matter expert, knowing the content knowledge of the subject and assist the student to understand the concept and develop new perspective, in the wider context of the discipline. It is accepted that members of the lecturing staff may on occasion take on the role of tutor provided that it does not interfere with their normal work schedule. Remuneration will be the same as any other tutor. When the University does not have appropriate students to perform the duties of a tutor it can appoint persons not currently affiliated with VUT. This Policy focuses on the sound management of senior students who are appointed as tutors.

3) *Peer/lab* assistant: A peer/lab assistant is a student in his/her final year of undergraduate studies who is appointed primarily to assist fellow students in their theoretical and/or laboratory practical work. A peer/lab assistant always works in the presence of the lecturer or with very clear guidance and lesson plans (see attached Guidelines) and does not provide answers to difficult encounters

or show students how to do a specific activity, but instead works with the student to model problem solving strategies and explain specific concepts i.e. facilitating the development of better understanding and mastering relevant skills.

Please note the term 'tutor' henceforth includes peer and lab assistants unless otherwise stated.

4   Policy Goal and Objectives

The goal of the Tutor Policy is to have clear guidelines that govern the tutor programme, ensuring a positive impact on the pass and success rates of our students. This will be achieved by compulsory tutorials for all at risk and prerequisite modules as well as first year modules. The objectives include:
•   A centralized system for the management of the tutorial budget;
•   A comprehensive training programme throughout the year;
•   Observation via class visits and report writing by the tutors;
•   A feedback and evaluation system.

4.1   Policy Background

This Policy is essential and follows from the teaching and learning module of Vaal University of Technology and the need identify by the predetermined objectives as well as the drop in pass and success rates of our students.

There are several internationally accepted definitions of tutoring. Ngengebele Molatlhegi, Tshaka, and Mamadisa (2007) describe tutoring and the role of the tutor as a recognized form of learner support. The tutoring practice is a continuous process where the tutor observes the student performance, share knowledge and expertise by continuously encouraging and support the student to reach the highest level of academic performance/level.

Lorenza et al. (2013) define tutoring as a practice by which an expert or tutor assists a novice in the learning process. It is an on-going support strategy that assists students in achieving academic excellence. Hampson in (Davis, 2014) articulated that tutoring in a small group increases learning as compared to large classes. In this period the tutor should make sure that the learning outcomes are clearly defined and engaging students actively to develop their skills to improve performance. Empowering students by developing their individual strength and allow them to participate critically in the process of learning (Department of Education 2001) will lead to improved performance.

The Quality enhancement project (2015) highlighted that faculties play a pivotal role in engaging students actively in their learning. However, facilitating active engagement is often overlooked. Students have different learning needs based on their past experience or social backgrounds. Students need to engage with content in order to construct new knowledge and integrate with existing knowledge; the theory comes from Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism. Vygotsky in Mcleod (2013) see a more knowledgeable person assisting the student by guiding and encouragement to reach the Zone of Proximal Development which is from the known to the unknown. The tutor should introduce the concepts from the known to the unknown continuum to guide the student to master the skill and to work independently. It is of paramount importance that students take responsibility for their own learning.

The widening of access in Higher Education led to a greater need to understand the diverse backgrounds of our students. This diversity includes gender, sexual orientation, prior school experience, liability status and attendance mode (Lawrence, 2005). Therefore, students should not be

viewed as underprepared, rather the focus should be on what teaching approached can be used to address diversity. The goal of wider access for redress is connected with the process of democratization and reconstruction after *apartheid*, as much as with social and economic objectives (Warren 1999). That means a shift from equipping students to participate in an industrial economy to find and create work in a knowledge society in a global age.

According to McGuire, there should be a focus on higher-level thinking skills: analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Formally introducing students to these different levels of learning is crucial to develop their understanding of these distinctions. This is best done through collaborative learning activities and providing a learning environment that increases motivation and engage in learning. Content knowledge, classroom participation, flexibility, subject mastery, inclusive tutorial teaching methods, personal attributes and values are essential ingredients for effective, inclusive tutoring.

To engage students in an **inclusive** and **transformative** learning and teaching environment the tutor needs to think and plan about how the tutorial session can be accessible for all the students. When planning activities, learning objectives should represent what the students would gain from the lesson. Students with different learning styles need to meet these learning objectives. The identification of skills students need to develop should be a centre of the learning process. The tutors need to make tutorial teaching methods more flexible and adapt to students' needs and always be aware of other support services that can be recommended. (International Baccalaureate Organization 2013).

We should acknowledge that learning involves the understanding and the meaning of what others communicate concerning values, ideals, feelings, moral discussions and such concepts as freedom, justice, love, labour, autonomy, commitment, responsibility and democracy. Our expectations, framed within cultural assumptions and presuppositions, directly influence the meaning we derive from our learning experiences. (Taylor, E, The theory and practice of transformative learning: a critical review).

The tutorial teaching systems at universities play a key role in developing students, to master course content, and skills, attitude and values required to academic excellence. The effective tutorial teaching begins prior to the student tutor entering the classroom. Student tutors have to formulate their goals and think about how they will achieve them before facing the classroom. The tutor's understanding of teaching and learning will guide the tutor on how to engage with students in the classroom.

The tutor needs to create a tutorial teaching and learning environment where students are free to participate in a non-threatening environment. Diversity and respect should always be maintained in the learning environment. The tutorial teaching approach should address the different learning styles of the students; this will provide an effective way to improve the quality for all students. The tutor needs to understand the environmental factors that will impact negatively in the learning environment and control them.

In this context of change, increased student diversity and the current unequal and inadequate learner support is necessary. Universities should replace their existing remedial and exclusive provision and adopt inclusive policies and practices. It is important that those offerings should be discipline specific and integrated in the subject curriculum.

Taking the aforementioned arguments into account we need a transformation tutorial model with the following characteristics:
1) Acknowledge that all students can learn.
2) Acknowledge that learning take place through a process of making meaning of one's own experiences
3) All students need academic support.

4) Accepting and respecting that all students are different and have different needs.
5) Using tutorial teaching methods to meet the needs of all students.
6) Respecting the difference in students whether age, gender, language, ethnicity, disability or HIV status.
7) Maximizing the participation of all students in the tutorial session to better understand the habit of the minds of students and their particular points of view
8) Empowering students by developing their individual strength and allow them to participate critically in the process of learning.
9) Ensure that tutorials are a continuous process, offered in small groups with clearly defined learning outcomes.
10) Faculty involvement is vital and tutorials should be integrated in the curriculum.
11) Transformative learning approach should be adopted: Move from the known to the unknown in teaching and understand the different mind sets and learning styles of the students.
12) Assessment should form part of the tutorials to ensure self-reflection and feedback to the lecturer.

Some students may require more specialized form of support to be able to develop their full potential. Tutors should identify them and inform lectures for referral and further support.

5   Principles, Values, and Philosophy

This Policy is informed by the following principles:

1) The tutorial programme must be integrally related to the other modes of teaching and learning used in the module.

2) Tutorials should be an extension and not a repetition of formal lectures.

3) Preferably a tutor group should not exceed 30 students.

4) Provision should be made in the timetable to ensure that the tutor programme is integrated in the curriculum and that venues are available.

5) A tutorial system provides an interactive environment which enhances the academic engagement of students and facilitates co-operative learning.

6) Tutorials offer opportunities for students to understand that knowledge is a mutually constructed and dynamic process, which should develop and explicitly reflect on their own learning process. The tutor's facilitative role is central.

7) The tutor should be a subject matter expert. Peer assistants and lab assistants should have basic knowledge of the subject. Using the knowledge of the content of the subject and assist the student to understand the concept and develop new perspective in the wider context of the discipline is the main aim of tutorials. Therefore, the academic qualification should be higher than the course tutored. An effective tutor's academic qualification is higher than the course tutored, they possess the ability to communicate effectively with the student, and encourage the students to verbalise their own knowledge so that other students can learn from the interaction.

6 Tutor Model

Tutoring at VUT is based on the Supplemental Instruction (SI) model. It is an academic assistance program that utilizes tutor-based study sessions. SI sessions are regularly scheduled, informal review sessions in which students compare notes, discuss readings, develop organizational tools, and predict test items. Students learn how to integrate course content and study skills while working together. At VUT these sessions are facilitated by tutors.

The purpose is to:

1) Increase retention within targeted historically difficult courses;

2) Improve student grades in targeted historically difficult courses;

3) Increase the graduation rates of students.

The main difference between a pure SI model and tutoring at VUT is that tutoring is compulsory.

7 Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities for the implementation of tutoring should be shared by Faculties, Department, tutors, students and the Preferred Student Support department, which is located in the Centre for Academic Development.

7.1 Faculties

1) The academic staff member responsible for the module in which the tutorial is offered is responsible for the recruitment of tutors and the management of the tutorials and will advise the Head of department regarding the appointment of the tutor(s). The Centre for Academic Development will provide guidelines for the selection of tutors.

2) Lecturers book for the training in advance and the Tutor development unit will inform you if the tutor did not attend the session.

3) The responsible Lecturer should do class visits to support the Tutor development unit.

4) Lecturers must have a proper mentoring and monitoring system in place to ensure that tutors undertake the tutorials specified, to the requisite standard. Any observation notes are confidential and should be used for developmental action.

5) If a tutor does not attend three sessions or more, the lecturer is obligated to terminate the contract.

6) Assessments should be part of the tutorial sessions and should contribute 10% of the year mark.

7) The lecturer will give clear guidance on setting the assessment for the tutorials and the tutor will be responsible for marking these assessments.

8) VUT should appoint Tutors in full time positions, especially in scare skills modules.

9) Both generic and subject-specific training for tutors are requirement for employment and Departments must make plans to supplement the generic training with subject-specific training, as appropriate

10) Subject specific training will be the responsibility of the lecturer.

7.2 HR department

1) Appointment processes must comply with the due dates specified by HR. Late payment of tutors, due to late submission, is not acceptable. This has a negative impact on availability of tutors for scheduled training dates.

2) Lab assistants and peer assistants work for nine hours a week.

3) Tutors work 10 hours a week, divided between preparation and contact. Tutors that are not affiliated with VUT may work 20 hours a week.

7.3 Centre for Academic Development

1) The Centre for Academic Development will take responsibility for the generic training. The coordinator: Tutor Development will take responsibility for the training.

2) The two-day tutor development training offered by the Tutor Development Unit is compulsory for all appointed tutors and peer assistants, as are the subsequent feed-back sessions organized once per term by the Tutor Development unit. Departments must make plans to supplement this with subject-specific training, as appropriate. Tutors must be made aware that training is not remunerated, but is rather to be seen as fundamental requirement that will equip them with general professional skills and allow for future employment.

3) Tutors who did not complete the training will not receive payment.

4) There should be good communication between the lecturer, tutor and the tutor development unit.

5) Punctuality should be emphasised for both tutors and students.

6) It is advisable that there should be clear guidelines for the tutors regarding their duties. Find attached with the Guidelines a contract that must be signed between the lecturer and student.

7) The payment of tutors will be done by a pay-by-claim system, which is monitored by the responsible lecturer and approved by the Centre for Academic Development.

8) Rewards for attendance must be clearly spelled out. For example, the Maths department uses the attendance of the Maths centre to allow students another opportunity to qualify for writing the exam.

9) On-going quality assurance, which includes evaluation and feedback, is essential to maintain a high-quality tutoring program. The Centre for Academic Development will develop a feedback system and quality assurance will be done in collaboration with the Quality Promotion Unit.

10) Tutors will receive certificates after having fulfilled all the tutor development training requirements for the year at an end of year ceremony

11) The implementation, monitoring and reporting of the Policy will be co-ordinated by the department: Preferred Student Experience.

12) The Learner Support senate sub-committee will be the platform for discussions regarding this policy.

13) Implications: Provision should be made in the budget for the expansion and development of the tutorial programme. Should the TDG funding formula and guidelines change, VUT should take full responsibility for the financial needs of the programme. To ensure the implementation of the programme 2 more facilitators is needed as well as an administrative person to oversee the budget monitoring and appointment of tutors. More space should be made available, including formal and informal learning spaces. To ensure integration in the curriculum, tutoring should be included in the curriculum design process, activities should be reflected in a tutorial letter of the learner guides and is should appear on the time table

7.4 Tutors' responsibilities

1) Attendance of students at scheduled tutorials is compulsory; attendance registers should be kept and will inform the claim process. If, for any reason, tutors are unable to conduct a tutorial, they are required to give prior notification.

2) The preparation of the tutorial material is done by the tutor with clear guidance and instruction from the responsible lecturer. This information should accompany the tutor claim forms as well as the attendance registers.

3) It is highly recommended that tutors attend lectures. Tutors must be informed of typical problems in classes; they can help with discipline in large classes, and get to know students (and vice versa) better.

4) Tutors are not responsible for marking any other assessments.

5) Tutors may set and mark informal assessment for tutorials with clear guidance from the lecturers

7.5 Students' responsibilities

6) Should maintain regular contact with the tutor throughout the duration of the tutorial programme.

7) Must attend all scheduled tutorial sessions with tutors or inform the tutors in advance if they are unable to do so and help make alternative arrangements

8) Should inform tutors of any circumstances which might affect their studies

9) Should prepare for the tutorials and be willing to act upon tutor advice including referrals to other support structures within the university

8 Operational Guidelines

8.1 Appointment of tutors

Positions should be advertised on the notice boards of departments. Students apply by submitting shortened CV's to the lecturer responsible for the module. Candidates get invited to attend face-to-face interviews to discuss their study careers, communication and interpersonal skills and availability for the position.

8.2 Characteristics of a Tutor

Overall, the ideal Tutor is someone who:
• Has at least a M + 4 qualification and\or industry experience
• A peer assistant is enrolled for a B Tech
• Treats fellow students fairly without bias
• Exhibits good communication skills
• Relates teaching and laboratory/practical work to own knowledge and practice
• Develops and demonstrates effective laboratory/practical skills and techniques
• Is supportive and reassuring towards students
• Is helpful but also constructively critical
• Is approachable and human.
• Remembers that s/he was once a first year student.

8.3 Planning for a tutorial

Basic weekly planning for a tutorial session includes:
• Advance meetings with the course lecturer and all tutors, peer assistants and mentors involved in the tutorials, lab work and or learning communities
• Informing the tutor what the learning outcomes for the students are and where they fit with the rest of their theoretical work

The lecturer should help the tutor to:
• Perform and become familiar with the content/exercises/experiment in advance and identify possible areas of student difficulty. Checking the equipment!
• Shaping the tutor's teaching/instruction around his/her knowledge of the experiment e.g. getting to know exactly which questions to ask and when, "what would happen if" etc.
• Provide content for the tutor to read up on the theory upon which the tutorial is built.
• Plan how to structure the session. As with all of the above, this will become much easier after a few sessions but the conscientious approach to planning must remain the same.
• Prepare a formative assessment event to be conducted at the end of a tutorial session. Planning will bring its own rewards: remember the old saying: "Fail to prepare, prepare to fail!"

To have students conduct tutorials has advantages, but it also creates challenges. It requires careful planning on the part of the lecturer. Inexperienced tutors require more guidance on how to manage tutorials, design assessment tasks and mark scripts. The Department of Learner Support conducts training for tutors, but in the end the lecturer remains the content expert.

In planning a tutorial session, lecturers should consider **problem-based** learning activities. A good tutorial session will have the advantage of involving students in the active process of constructing their own understanding.

The primary task of a tutor is to help students to integrate and use information, and secondly to help students interact effectively in groups. Groups should comprise 10 – 15 students and they should meet with the tutor at least 2 hours a week.

Will this mean more work?

Initially to meet with tutors, to prepare tutorial exercises and to generate formative assessment questions and exercises, may seem like more work, but in the long run it will reduce the workload of staff. The work package also makes provision for the monitoring of the tutors. A tutor can be responsible for marking formative assessments and contact time with students will be reduced.

Some useful ideas:

Lecturers can assist the tutor to prepare multiple choice questions where the answers are based on exercises/results obtained during the tutorial. This will serve the following purpose:
• Support continuous assessment
• Force students to attend tutorials
• Indicate what was learned during the tutorial/identify problem areas
It is advised that lecturers attend a tutorial session of their tutor to evaluate the process. Lecturers could also contact the Department of Learner Support to perform a tutor evaluation. Remember we are here to assist you.

8.4 Tutorial report and contract

To ensure quality tutorials we provide lecturers with a template of tutorial planning (next page). This will ensure that they do proper planning and consider the teaching method, the outcomes they hope to reach, the assessment strategy and the resources used. This can be an effective tool for lecturers to assist tutors in planning the tutor sessions. CAD will also require feedback to be used for the TDG feedback. In addition tutors will submit monthly reports that will be accompanied with the attendance registers of the tutorial sessions

8.5 Weekly facilitation plan

Module: …………………………………………………………………………………

Date: ...………………………………………………………………………………

Specific Topic: ………………………………………………………………………………

Instructional goal

(*Outcome that students should be able to demonstrate upon completion of the entire unit*)

Performance objectives

(*Use an action verb in a description of a measurable outcome of this tutorial*)

Rationale

(*Brief justification --- why the tutor feels students need to learn this topic and how it fits into the course structure*)

Tutorial content

(*What is to be taught/explained/demonstrated/or repeated from previous session*)

Instructional procedures

- Focusing event (something to get the students' attention)
- Teaching procedures (methods you will use)
- Student participation (how you will get the students to participate)
- Formative assessment (progress checks throughout or at the end of the tutorial)
- Closure (how you will end the lesson)

Formative assessment

(*How you will measure outcomes to determine if the material has been learned*)

Materials and aids

(*What you will need in order to teach this lesson*)

Duration of session: …………………………………………………..

Tutor …………………………………………………..

Lecturer …………………………………………………..

1.1. Lecturer/Tutor Contract

Name of Tutor: _____

Student Number: _____

Tutorial module: _____

Time spend per module per week: _____

Tutorial Duration: _____ per Semester

Duties of the Tutor as per this agreement (indicate the percentage of time spend on whichever function)

- Tutoring _____
- Preparation_____
- Marking _____ (not more than 20% and only for assessments done during tutorials)
- Practicals _____
- Other(specify)

_____
_____

Appendix Four: Rules governing minimum class attendance for students

1) All VUT students are expected to attend lectures/classes and complete all assessments and prescribed reading.

2) Regular class attendance is the responsibility of each student, and all VUT students must attend classes for all their registered subjects. Any student who fails to attend 80% of the scheduled classes may be refused examination admission for the subject concerned.

3) 100% compulsory attendance is required for other contact sessions such as tutorials, practical classes and group work.

4) 20% of non-attendance may be allowed due to illness or circumstances over which students don't have control. Such exceptions will be accommodated provided that the student submits supporting documents (medical/death certificates) within 7 days of being absent. Failure to submit supporting documentation within the prescribed time will mean that such non-attendance will be considered as absence without a valid reason.

5) Absence with a valid reason is limited to absence related to medical conditions, family emergencies, and official University activities. In all these cases, a written apology must be tendered with supporting documents. (In the case of official University activities, the Student Support Services will provide supporting documentation prior to the event).

6) A student who fails to obtain examination admission as a result of non-compliance with class attendance requirements as set out in this document (in terms of clause 2 above), will still be liable for full tuition fees and as a consequence will attain the FA (Fail: No Admission to Examination) outcome for the subject concerned.

7) It remains the responsibility of each student to be informed of and to comply with the class attendance requirements for each and every subject he or she is registered for.

8) Absence, with or without a valid reason, does not exempt a student from subject requirements.

9) In the event of illness or injuries resulting in absence of more than two consecutive days, a valid medical certificate may be required. However, VUT reserves the right to demand a valid medical certificate at any time.

10) A student who violates class attendance requirements as set out in this document, will receive a written notice from the head of the academic department (HoD) informing him or her of such violation and of the penalty. A student who is affected by this administrative action has a right to appeal the action (request a review of the action) through the Executive Dean of the Faculty, in accordance with relevant legislation.

11) Students who register after classes have commenced may not claim any concession regarding lectures presented, tests written or projects and practicals conducted before they registered, except with the written permission of the Executive Dean of the Faculty.

12) Consistent class attendance or consistent absenteeism will be taken into consideration in borderline cases where decisions need to be made with regard to pass/fail or pass with distinction.

13) Absence of more than 30% of class (contact) hours will constitutes excessive absenteeism, which may constitute an irregularity to be dealt with in accordance with the Student Disciplinary Code of the University.

14) Time table clashes will not be accepted as a valid reason for absence. It is the students' responsibility to ensure at registration that no time table clashes will occur, as per the Academic Rules and the Registration Regulations of the University.

15) Class tests, oral assessments, writing short reports, etc. may take place without prior warning during class times, and students who are absent without valid reason will forfeit the marks or opportunity of acquiring the marks for the missed assessments.