



ACADEMIC PROGRAMME POLICY

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1. PREAMBLE

The University of Johannesburg offers a wide range of academic programmes, from vocational, career-focused, and professional programmes to general formative qualifications and postgraduate degrees, all of which address national and regional imperatives, support transformation of the higher education (HE) system and advance the values of freedom, democracy, equality, and human dignity.

Central to the University's mission of "inspiring its community to transform and serve humanity through innovation and the collaborative pursuit of knowledge" is the quality of its programmes and a commitment to offering academic programmes that have international standing and a high national reputation based on their rigour, relevance, and academic quality. The intention of this policy is to ensure that programmes are developed and approved on the basis of sound curriculum principles, good design and appropriate structure, and in compliance with internal quality provisions and external regulatory requirements. Further, it aims to ensure consistently high quality in the delivery and monitoring of programmes and learning activities across all faculties / College and campuses.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- 2.1 Establish a clear framework of regulations, guidelines and procedures within which programmes are designed and managed by faculties / college so that these are consistent with national requirements and disciplinary demands.
- 2.2 Provide guidelines for the planning, development, design, and implementation of academic programmes to ensure quality in the management of these programmes taking into account Higher Education Qualification Sub-Framework (HEQSF) (CHE, 2013) requirements, national standards, and / or professional bodies' requirements.
- 2.3 Ensure that all applications for new academic programmes, or amendments to existing academic programmes, are consistent with the provisions of the HEQSF.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all learning programmes leading to a qualification on the NQF offered by the University, leading to a certificate awarded and/or a certificate issued by the University.

4. DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Definitions and acronyms are attached as Appendix 1 of this document.

5. ACADEMIC PROGRAMME PLANNING AND DESIGN

- 5.1 The planning, development and design of all higher education programmes and qualifications must conform to the requirements of the HEQSF and the Minimum Admission Requirements for Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree Programmes requiring a National Senior Certificate (NSC) (2008) as well as the nationally recognised guidelines including the

HEQC Criteria for Programme Accreditation (2004), and with the developed national programme standards, where relevant.¹

- 5.2 Where applicable, the planning, development, and design of HE programmes and qualifications as well as HE admission policies, should comply with the requirements of the relevant statutory and / or non-statutory professional bodies.
- 5.3 As required by the HEQC Accreditation Criteria, academic programmes should align to the vision, mission, values, and strategic objectives of the University.
- 5.4 Academic programmes should align with faculty/College strategic plans and be based on established and contemporary research.
- 5.5 Programmes must be coherently designed to ensure constructive alignment of the curriculum in terms of the purpose of the programme, exit-level outcomes, assessment criteria, the learning content of modules, module learning outcomes, and teaching, learning and assessment opportunities and strategies. A learning guide, per module is required and must comply with the UJ Teaching and Learning Policy and the Policy on Learning Support Materials.
- 5.6 As a public higher education institution, the University is restricted to NQF levels 5 to 10 in accordance with the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997.

6. PREREQUISITES FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAMME DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Naming of qualifications

The HEQSF provides eleven higher education qualification types mapped onto the six levels (5 to 10) of the NQF. Some qualification types have specific variants. The framework comprises the following qualification types:

Qualification	NQF	Credits	
Undergraduate			
Higher Certificate	5	120	
Advanced Certificate	6	120	
Diploma		240	360
Advanced Diploma	7	120	
Bachelor's Degree		360	480
Bachelor's Degree	8	480	
Postgraduate			
Postgraduate Diploma	8	120	
Bachelor Honours Degree			
Master's Degree	9	180	
Professional Master's Degree			
Doctoral Degree	10	360	
Professional Doctorate			

¹ All relevant documents, guidelines and templates for the design, approval and submission of new programmes / qualifications are available on the UJ Intranet.

6.2 Programme Structure

An academic programme comprises a defined number of modules: it must have a core component and may have fundamental and/or elective components) each providing their own learning outcomes, and assessment criteria aligned to the purpose and exit-level outcomes of the programme. The modules comprising a programme must be placed on an appropriate NQF level and allocated credit values related to the complexity and demands of that NQF level, as well as the outcomes and content of the module.

6.2.1 NQF levels of programmes and modules

NQF level descriptors provide statements of the expected learning at each successive level. NQF levels provide for learning pathways and articulation into other programmes.

6.2.2 Credit Values

- (a) The HEQSF recognises credits as a measure of the volume of learning required for a qualification, quantified as the number of notional hours (NH) required for achieving the learning outcomes specified for the qualification. The credit value of a qualification derives from the HEQSF and does so irrespective of the mode of delivery. The achievement of the expected learning outcomes is demonstrated through meeting the appropriate assessment criteria. Note also: credits at the same NQF level indicate learning of a particular cognitive demand, however modules and credits are not necessarily directly interchangeable within a particular level, as they serve the purpose of a particular qualification and its outcomes. Thus, for example, credits /modules in a Higher Certificate at NQF Level 5 are not necessarily interchangeable with NQF Level 5 credits in the first year of study in a degree programme.
- (b) The volume of learning required for a qualification is specified in the HEQSF in terms of the total minimum number of credits required, and the minimum credits required at the exit level. In general, the number of credits required at the exit level of a qualification is 120. For example, 120 credits at NQF level 5 are required for a Higher Certificate; 120 credits at NQF level 7 are required for a degree.
- (c) NQF levels are indicators of complexity and intellectual demand: a qualification that requires 120 credits at NQF Level 7 means that students are to complete 1200 hours of work at NQF Level 7.
- (d) In undergraduate programmes, the accepted average workload for students is 40 hours per week. An academic year equates to 120 credit points, or the equivalent of 1200 NH. (Certain programmes may exceed this allocation, for example, in the clinical fields.)

6.2.3 Credit allocation

- (a) Credit values are allocated in accordance with HEQSF guidelines per qualification type. Additional requirements may be set by statutory bodies and / or the University.
- (b) All UJ modules are one academic semester or a year in duration. Modules may stretch over the full semester and carry half the credit value of a full semester module.
- (c) As far as possible, modules at the same level and of the same duration within a programme should carry equal credit values across programmes, faculties and campuses. The faculty / College responsible for the module determines its credit value.
- (d) In three-year programmes, the minimum total credits required is 360, and the total credit value should not exceed 400 unless specified by professional body regulations, or where the programme requires three major specialisations. (These are the only exceptions.)

- (e) In four-year programmes, the minimum credits required is 480, and the total credit value should not exceed 530 unless this is specified by professional body regulations. (This is the only exception.)

6.2.4 Duration of subsidised programmes

- (a) The minimum and maximum period of study for a subsidised formal programme is expressed in years.
- (b) Minimum and maximum stipulations for completion of an academic programme as approved by Senate are contained in the Policy on Higher Degrees and Postgraduate Studies, the Academic Regulations and in Faculty Rules and Regulations.

6.2.5 Contact time

Contact time is in accordance with the University's Teaching and Learning Policy, the Academic Calendar as approved by Senate and the Lecturing Timetable as approved by the University Timetable Committee. Online programmes are governed by the UJ Online Policy Framework and Distance Education Policy.

6.2.6 Modes of teaching and learning

The University of Johannesburg is committed to providing quality programmes regardless of the mode of delivery. As such, UJ policies focus specifically on best practices and strategies for online/distance learning. All other UJ teaching and learning policies apply to all programmes, irrespective of mode of delivery. UJ is committed to quality standards and guidelines for programme design, instruction, associated support services, evaluation and assessment, the use and distribution of learning resources, the rights and responsibilities of parties and all related matters associated with online/distance learning.

- (a) Modes of teaching and learning, including Work-integrated Learning (WIL), should be appropriate to the module outcomes and aligned to the purpose of the programme, in accordance with the provisions of the Teaching and Learning Policy.
- (b) Where approved by the DHET and the HEQC, WIL is a structured part of the programme in which the volume of learning is appropriate to the purpose of the qualification. When WIL is a formal part of the qualification, the purpose, outcomes, and assessment strategy must be clearly outlined. WIL credit allocations are determined by the qualification type and the discipline.
- (c) Credit-bearing service learning may be introduced into any programme.

6.2.7 Assessment strategies

Assessment strategies should align to the assessment criteria set for the programme. Assessment must be in accordance with the provisions of the UJ Assessment Policy.

6.3 Accumulation of credits towards a qualification (CAT)

Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) is the process whereby a student's achievements are recognised and may contribute to further learning. The following rules apply to CAT:

6.3.1 Accumulation of credits towards a qualification that has not been completed by the candidate.

In accordance with the HEQSF and subject to the provisions of the UJ Academic Regulations, all of the credits completed towards an incomplete qualification obtained at another institution may be considered by UJ as meeting part of the requirements for a UJ qualification, noting the requirement that 50% of the qualification must be completed at UJ.

6.3.2 Accumulation of credits towards a new qualification

Subject to the UJ Academic Regulations, any or all of the credits obtained from an incomplete qualification at this, or another university may be recognised as meeting part of the requirements for a qualification offered by UJ. Up to a maximum of 50% of the credits obtained from a previously completed qualification at this or another university may be awarded by UJ, provided also that not more than 50% of the credits for the other qualification have been used towards that qualification.

6.3.3 HEMIS requirements (fail principle)

A student wishing to transfer credits obtained towards a qualification for which he/she is currently registered, in accordance with stipulations under 6.3.2, may not exit from the programme without deregistering from that programme and transferring / registering for the new qualification, in accordance with University requirements.

6.4 Qualification Enrolment Compliance

Registration for modules of a particular qualification must be in accordance with the following and subject to the Academic Regulations, as published:

- (a) The legal principle with reference to the 50% principle according to which a student must complete and pass 50% of the modules of the qualification concerned.
- (b) DHET and HEMIS rules regarding student registration.

7. APPROVAL OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

7.1 All academic qualifications must be submitted for approval by Senate.

7.2 Qualifications and programmes are submitted for PQM clearance to the DHET if these programmes are part of the DHET approved Enrolment Plan.

7.3 All academic qualifications must be submitted for accreditation to the CHE. Once accredited, all qualifications must be registered on the NQF by SAQA.

7.4 It is incumbent on the Deans to ensure that the required professional body approvals are secured as and when required.

8. MANAGEMENT OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

8.1 Faculty / College management

The quality-related structures and mechanisms for the effective coordination and management of programmes reside within the faculty / college offering the programmes. The faculty / college structure must ensure that there are mechanisms to monitor quality and report to Senate via the STLC (see also par.10.1 and 10.2).

8.2 Programme coordination across faculties/college and departments

In order to facilitate the attainment of the intended purpose, outcomes and credits, the coordination of programmes is the joint responsibility of the home faculty/College and the faculty/College within which programmes are offered. The academic assigned to coordinate programmes is responsible for the approval process, management, and sustainability of the programmes.

8.3 Management of students

8.3.1 Current students

Students registered in currently accredited programmes are managed in accordance with the relevant faculty / college rules and regulations as determined by the Faculty / College Board, approved by Senate, and contained in the faculty / College Rules and Regulations, and the Academic Regulations.

8.3.2 Pipeline students

This policy makes provision for pipeline students to be managed as outlined in the University's Academic Regulations.

8.4 Role of professional bodies

Programmes that lead to professional registration awarded by statutory professional bodies are managed in accordance with the professional requirements, agreements, and memoranda of understanding, as applicable.

9. MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES – THE INTERNAL APPROVAL PROCESS

The institutional review and programme accreditation requirements, as stipulated by the HEQC to assure the quality of academic programmes, with a view to continuous improvement, include management of the quality of the planning, development, design, and implementation of these programmes.

The management of the quality of programmes, the planning, development, and design, in accordance with the HEQC criteria, requirements and procedures, is the responsibility of Programme Coordinators, Heads of Departments and Executive Deans of faculties / college. Faculties / college ensure that there are quality structures and mechanisms in place to monitor and review on a continuous basis.

9.1 The relevant faculty / college programme teams are responsible for the development and design of programmes in accordance with the requirements, the implementation thereof, and the monitoring of processes and practices.

9.2 Faculty / college Quality Committees or their equivalents are responsible for ensuring the appropriateness and readiness of proposals.

9.3 Within faculties, Faculty/ College Boards are responsible for the approval of proposals to offer new programmes. Faculty / College approval should be based on the Faculty's / College's academic and strategic plan, strategic resources required for the successful delivery of the programme and the adequacy of the documentation.

- 9.4 Support is offered to the Faculty / College prior to submission to by the Programme Working Group (PWG) which quality assures adherence to regulatory and policy requirements.
- 9.5 Senate gives final approval for the offering of new programmes.
- 9.6 Faculty / College Board/s are responsible for submissions to Professional Boards if required.

10. ACADEMIC PROGRAMME REVIEW AND MONITORING

- 10.1 Regular formal reviews of all programmes (including Continuing Education Programmes, i.e., non-subsidised whole and short learning programmes) are conducted in terms of the UJ Quality Promotion Policy (March 2019) as required by the UJ Strategic Plan 2025.
- 10.2 Programme reviews serve the following purposes: the identification of areas of excellence and areas in need of improvement and/or accreditation/re-accreditation by a professional/statutory body.
- 10.3 Formal programme reviews consist of a self-evaluation phase, followed by a review by an external panel of experts resulting in a review report.
- 10.4 Programme reviews are reported to the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee twice a year.
- 10.5 Formal programme reviews are supported and facilitated by the Centre for Academic Planning and Quality Promotion (CAPQP).

11. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

The policy review will be conducted in accordance with the approved University Policy on Policy Development and will take place in consultation with the relevant quality promotion structures at faculty/college and institutional level under the auspices of the official custodian of this policy, namely the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic.

APPENDIX 1

1. DEFINITIONS, TERMINOLOGY AND ACRONYMS

For the purpose of this policy, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply.

TERM	DEFINITION
Programme / learning programme	A programme / learning programme is a purposeful and structured set of learning experiences (i.e., the teaching, learning and assessment activities) that lead to a qualification (degree, diploma, or certificate). (e.g., BA is the qualification, but BA graduates will have differing learning programmes depending on the subjects chosen).
Blended learning	Blended learning is contact learning with some distance- based online support. For example, face-to-face teaching methods are used with technologically mediated materials and learning activities, educational software and print materials.
Certificate	The degree, diploma or certificate programme awarded by the University to a student who has met all the requirements for the completion of a programme of study.
Credit	A measure of the volume of learning required for a module or programme, quantified as the number of notional study hours required for the average student to master the relevant learning outcomes. One credit is 10 Notional Hours (NH).
Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT)	The process set out in the HEQSF whereby a student's achievements are recognised and contribute to further learning, whether the student has achieved the qualification or not. CAT provides for the recognition of credits obtained at the same or another institution as meeting part of the requirements for a qualification. Credits for an incomplete qualification may be recognised as meeting part of the requirements for a different qualification and subject to limits, credits for a completed qualification may be recognised as meeting part of the requirements of another qualification (HEQSF 2013:11).
Notional hours	Notional hours indicate all the learning activities (including teaching time, assessment time, self-directed study time, etc.) that is needed to achieve the learning outcomes. Typically, 1200 hours per year or 120 credits is required per year of study. One credit equates to ten notional hours.
Continuing Education Programmes	A UJ-approved learning programme not funded by the DHET. Note: All learning programmes which lead to a qualification on the HEQSF must be accredited by the CHE and registered on the NQF by SAQA.
Distance Education	A set of teaching and learning strategies (or educational methods) used to overcome spatial and/or temporal separation between educators and students. Distance education may be online or via correspondence.
National Qualifications Framework	A structure within which all qualifications are registered at national level.
Practical's	Teaching and learning credit-bearing strategies that constitute a formal part of the teaching and learning plan of an academic programme (e.g. laboratory work, tutorials, research assignments, simulations), which makes provision for the application of theory, techniques and skills and frequently takes place on campus, but is not regarded as Work-Integrated Learning or Service Learning.

TERM	DEFINITION
Programme-based approach	An approach in which a structured set of learning outcomes and related assessment criteria are coherently developed to achieve the purpose of a particular field of learning which leads to a qualification.
Programme coordinator	The academic responsible for the academic coordination of a specific learning programme / qualification, who operates within the framework of an agreed-upon mandate and defined procedures and responsibilities.
Programme team	The team responsible for the development of academic programme proposals, culminating in the preparation of applications in the correct format to provide the basis for discussion in the approval process.
Programme vs qualification	A qualification is an award registered on the NQF (for example, a Bachelor's degree). A learning programme is the combination of modules leading to the award of the degree and may vary depending on electives and majors selected.
Qualification	The formal recognition and certification of a learning achievement registered on the NQF and awarded by an accredited institution.
Qualification descriptor	Specifies the exit-level of the qualification type, its credit-rating, purpose, and characteristics. E.g.,
Qualification designator	Describes a generic field of study, discipline or profession and is stated in the qualification nomenclature, e.g., Bachelor of Science (BSc). Has application to degrees only.
Qualification qualifier	Reflects the specifications related to a specialised learning field, e.g., a degree in Information Technology will reflect the qualifier as follows: BSc in Information Technology.
Qualification type	The national classification of qualifications on the HEQSF.
Service Learning	Experiential learning opportunities which provide students with the opportunity to reflect and apply on knowledge acquired in the classroom in a community / practice.
Subsidised programme (formal programme)	A programme of learning funded by the DHET and reflected on the University's Programme Qualification Mix (PQM). The programme is accredited by the CHE and registered on the NQF by SAQA.
University	University of Johannesburg
Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)	The component of a learning programme that focuses on the application of learning in an authentic learning work-based context under the supervision and/or mentorship of a person/s representing the workplace. It addresses specific competencies identified for the acquisition of a qualification that make the student employable and assist in the development of related personal attributes.

ACRONYMS

CHE	Council on Higher Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
HEMIS	Higher Education Information Management System
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PQM	Programme Qualification Mix
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
UJ	University of Johannesburg

HEQSF ARTICULATION FRAMEWORK

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK		
LEVEL	SUB-FRAMEWORK AND QUALIFICATION TYPES	
10	Doctoral degree Doctoral degree (professional)	*
9	Master's Master's (professional)	*
8	Bachelor honours degree Postgraduate Diploma Bachelor's degree	*
7	Bachelor's degree Advanced Diploma	*
6	Diploma Advanced Certificate	Occupational certificate (level 6)
5	Higher Certificate	Occupational certificate (Level 5)
4	National Certificate	Occupational certificate (Level 4)
3	Intermediate Certificate	Occupational certificate (Level 3)
2	Elementary Certificate	Occupational certificate (Level 2)
1	General Certificate	Occupational certificate (Level 1)

KEY TO SUB-FRAMEWORKS		
HEQSF Higher Education Qualifications Sub- Framework	GENFETQSF General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub Framework	OQF Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework

HEQSF, 2013: 6

* Qualification types beyond level 6 on the OQSF have not been determined.