

QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

D.15

TITLE: DIGITAL LEARNING POLICY

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Date: November 2023	Date: 22 February 2024
	
Signatures	

Revision Record Sheet

			Date
Rev No	I	Date of last review	November 2023
Draft		Issued for comment	
New Rev No		Approved for issue	22 February 2024

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DIGITAL LEARNING POLICY

DEFINITIONS/ABBREVIATIONS

AQP	Assessment Quality Partner
CIPC	Companies and Intellectual Property Commission
DQP	Development Quality Partner
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DoE	Department of Education
ETDPSETA	Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Council
HWSETA	Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLRD	National Learner/student Record Database
NQF	National Qualification Framework
POE	Portfolio of Evidence
QALA	Quality Assurance of learner/student Achievement
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
QMS	Quality Management System
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualification Authority
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SDP	Skills Development Provider
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIPC	Companies and Intellectual Property Commission
ID	Identity document
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
SDA	Skills development Act
SDL	Skills development levies (Act)
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SMS	Seta Management System

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Accreditation	Means the certification, usually for a particular period of time, of a person, a body or an institution as having the capacity to fulfil a particular function within the quality assurance system set up by SAQA. The accreditation for Higher Education programmes functions under the auspices of the HEQC and is related to specific DoE and SAQA functions and activities: The DoE approves the programme and qualification mixes (PQMs) of public higher education institutions. It registers all private higher education institutions before they are allowed to operate. SAQA registers each learning programme offered by an institution of higher education that leads to a qualification on the NQF. The HEQC accredits institutions of higher education to offer programmes leading to particular NQF-registered qualifications.
Accreditation scope	Means the list of qualifications and or skills programmes for which a skills development provider is accredited. It also refers to programme and qualification mixes (PQMs) offered by the Education and Training Institution.
Academic Committee	The Academic Committee is a committee of the Hugonote Kollege with the responsibility to plan and manage the academic offering of the College on behalf of the College Management.
Accreditation site visit	Means a visit that is conducted by the CHE/SETA to verify claims made by a training provider in the letter of intent and the accreditation application file which enables the CHE/SETA to gather evidence for accreditation.
Achievement	Means the recognition granted to a learner/student when all required learning outcomes have been successfully demonstrated.
Appeal	Means a process of seeking a review of a decision already made from higher authority.
Applicant skills development provider	Means a skills development provider who is in the process of applying for accreditation or programme approval with the CHE/SETA.
Assessment	Means the process by which evidence is gathered and evaluated against agreed criteria in order to make a judgment of competence for developmental and/or recognition purposes.
Assessor or constituent Assessor	Means a person who is registered by the relevant ETQA body to measure the achievement of specified National Qualifications Framework standards or qualifications. (SAQA definition)

Audit	Means the process undertaken to measure the quality of services that have already been delivered. (SAQA definition)
Code of Conduct	Means a set of conventional principles and expectations considered binding on any person/s or organisation/s registered, approved and/or accredited by the CHE/SETA/CHURCH OR PROFESSIONAL BODY.
Education and Training Quality Assurance	Means a body accredited in terms of section 5 (1)(a)(ii) of the SAQA Act, responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of national standards or qualifications, and to which specific functions relating to the monitoring and auditing of national standards or qualifications have been assigned in terms of section 5 (1)(b)(i) of the Act (SAQA definition)
Examiner	Refers to the examiner of assignments, Portfolios of Evidence, presentations, tests and examinations.
Extension of scope	Means the addition of qualification(s), skills programmes and/or unit standard(s) after approval of the initial application.
Facilitator	Means an individual who facilitates learning processes and activities and manages and administers assessment: educator, teacher, trainer, mentor etc. (SAQA definition)
Fraud	Means a deliberate criminal deception, trickery or cheating intended to gain an advantage.
Full cycle of training	Means the process whereby the skills development provider has recruited, registered, trained learners/students, assessed, moderated and verified learner/students' achievements through CHE/SETA verification processes which led to degrees/certificates and/or statements of results being issued. The cycle of learning for a Social Work Degree is four year levels that need to be completed.
Learning programmes	Means a combination of courses, modules or units of learning by which learner/students/can achieve learning outcomes.
Lecturer	A person who facilitate learning by giving lectures, a member of the faculty of a college or university having qualified status and a Master's or Doctor's degree.
Moderation	Means the process which ensures that assessment of the outcomes described in the NQF standards and qualifications is fair, reliable and valid. (SAQA definition)
Internal Moderation	Moderation done by full-time employees of the College.

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External Moderation	Moderation done by moderators of other academic institutions or qualification authorities to ensure that academic training and assessments done are of an acceptable standard and in line with agreed practices so that the results are fair, reliable and valid. External moderators are expected to comment on the validity of the assessment instruments, the quality of student performance and the standard of student attainment, the reliability of the marking process, and any concerns or irregularities with respect to the observation of institutional/professional regulations.”
External Moderator	External moderators are recommended by the examining academic department, are independent experts in their fields, have qualifications at least on the same level as the qualification being examined, are changed regularly, are not appointed as part of reciprocal arrangements (where possible), and are approved by and responsible to Senate/equivalent body.
Resident Moderator	The resident moderator is a full-time employee of the College and is responsible for pre-, during and post- assessment moderation.
Monitoring	Means a systematic continuous observation process and recording of activities to ensure quality compliance to set criteria and agreed developmental areas for improvement purposes.
Mentor	Means a professional who is charged with the task of helping to train, advise, and share practical experience with the new person in an organisation. In the case of SAW and BSW this must be a Social Worker registered with the SACSSP.
National learner/student record database	Means an electronic information system that assists the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) to manage the National Qualifications Framework.
Non-governmental organisation	Means an organisation set up by ordinary citizens, (primarily run by volunteers or funded by governments, foundations or businesses) that is not part of a government or established for profit-making purposes.
Organisations	Means legally established entities in line with CIPC requirements and in good standing (which may include but not be limited to national and provincial government departments and agencies, institutions, NGOs, companies, centres and consultancies).
Policy	Means a statement of intent implemented as a set procedure or protocol.
Programme approval	Means a secondary accreditation of an SDP through an MOU signed between the ETQAs.
Quality assurance	Means the process of ensuring that the specified degree of excellence is achieved.

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Quality management system	Means the combination of policies and processes used to ensure that the specified degree of excellence is achieved.
Recognition of prior learning	Means the comparison of the previous learning and experience of a learner/student, howsoever obtained, against the learning outcomes required for a specified qualification, and the acceptance for purposes of qualification of that which meets the requirements, (SAQA definition)
Registered qualifications	Means qualifications registered by SAQA on the National Qualifications Framework.
Registered unit standards	Means unit standards registered by SAQA on the National Qualifications Framework.
Scope of accreditation	Means the list of qualification/s and/or skills programme/s for which a skills development provider is accredited.
Scope of registration	Means the list of qualification/s, skills programme/s and/or unit standard/s for which an assessor or moderator is registered.
Skills programme	Means the bundling of unit standards from the same qualification that addresses an identified need and allows for progression/completion of a full qualification.
Skills development provider	Means an organisation that is accredited or approved to deliver learning programmes.
Statutory body	Means a company or organisation created by law, or statute, in order to regulate or carry out a public function.
Training site	Means a venue specifically designed and equipped for theoretical and practical learning delivery.

1. INTRODUCTION

Hugenote Kollege is committed to providing accessible, high-quality education using information and communication technology (ICT) in training. This policy outlines the principles, governing the delivery of online/distance and blended/hybrid education at the institution and must be read in conjunction with the standard operating procedures (and forms).

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- To enable students to access educational content in a variety of ways.
- To ensure equitable access to education to students, regardless of geographical location, who wish to register for courses offered by the College in distance mode. The term 'distance/online education' refers to provision in which students spend 30% or less of the stated Notional Learning hours in undergraduate courses at NQF Levels 5 and 6, and 25% or less in courses at NQF Level 7 and initial post-graduate courses at NQF Level 8, in staff-led, face-to-face, campus-based structured learning activities.¹
- To maintain the academic integrity and standards of Hugenote Kollege's digital learning programs.
- To protect the privacy and data security of all individuals involved in online/distance or blended/hybrid education.
- To foster a supportive distance/online and blended/hybrid learning environment that promotes engagement and collaboration.

3. SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all registered students and staff employed by Hugenote Kollege. In the midst of the fourth industrial revolution, the College considers it essential to prepare all its graduates for meaningful participation in a digital world. To this end, the College may use a blended learning mode, also known as hybrid learning or a distance learning mode. *Blended or hybrid learning* is an educational approach that combines traditional in-person classroom instruction with online or digital learning activities. It is a flexible and dynamic model that integrates the strengths of both face-to-face and online learning to create a more comprehensive and effective educational experience. *Distance/online education* refers to a mode of education that allows students to pursue their studies and acquire qualifications without the need to attend traditional, physical classrooms. The offering of distance/online education as a particular mode of education of the College is part of a strategic decision with appropriate planning and resourcing and not a process of pedagogical drifting or due to external pressures.

¹ Policy for the Provision of Distance Education in South African Universities. Government Gazette, 7 July 2014, p 9.

4. REFERENCES

Policy for the Provision of Distance Education in South African Universities in the context of an integrated post-school system. Government Gazette, 7 July 2014.

5. PRINCIPLES

5.1 Blended/Hybrid Learning

Blended learning is an educational method that combines in-person classroom teaching with online resources, activities, and assessments. It aims to leverage the benefits of traditional instruction and digital technology to enhance the learning experience, offering students greater flexibility, personalization, and engagement in their education.

Key characteristics of blended learning include:

In-Person Instruction: Blended learning incorporates traditional classroom teaching, where students attend physical classes, interact with instructors, and engage in on-site discussions and activities.

Online Learning: It also incorporates online components, such as virtual lectures, discussion forums, digital resources, and assessments that can be accessed through a learning management system (LMS) or other online platforms.

Flexibility: Blended learning allows for flexibility regarding when, where, and how students access the learning materials. They may have opportunities for self-paced learning online and in-person collaborative activities.

Personalization: It offers the potential for individualized learning experiences, as students can progress at their own pace, receive immediate feedback from online assessments, and access a variety of digital resources tailored to their needs.

Enhanced Engagement: Blended learning capitalizes on the interactive and multimedia elements of online resources to engage students in different ways, promoting active learning and participation.

Varied Instructional Strategies: Instructors can use a mix of teaching methods, incorporating traditional lectures, group discussions, project-based activities, and technology-driven tools to address diverse learning styles.

The specific blend of in-person and online components may vary depending on the course and pedagogical goals. Blended learning aims to leverage the strengths of both face-to-face and digital learning to optimize the educational experience and improve learning outcomes.

5.2 Distance/Online Learning

Distance education is a mode of provision based primarily on a set of teaching and learning strategies (or educational methods) used to overcome spatial and/or transactional distance between educators and students. It avoids the need for students to discover the curriculum by attending classes frequently at a set venue and for long periods. It aims to create a quality learning environment using an appropriate combination of different media, tutorial support, peer group discussion, and practical sessions.

Key characteristics of distance/online learning include:

Remote Learning: Distance education relies on various communication technologies and instructional materials to deliver education to students who are geographically separated from the educational institution. This can include online learning, printed materials, video lectures, and other multimedia resources.

Flexibility: Distance education programs are designed to provide flexibility in terms of when and where students can access educational content. This accommodates individuals who may have work or family commitments that prevent them from attending in-person classes.

Structured Curriculum: Distance education programs have a well-structured curriculum, including assignments, assessments, and deadlines, to ensure that students' progress through their studies in a systematic and organized manner.

Support Services: The College endeavours to provide support services such as online tutoring, academic advisors, and administrative assistance to help students succeed in their studies.

Assessment and Accreditation: Distance education programs at the College are subject to the same quality assurance and accreditation processes as residential education programs to ensure that the qualifications obtained are recognized and valued by employers and other educational institutions.

Examination Centres: The College may require online/distance learning students to sit for exams or assessments at designated examination centres to ensure the integrity of the evaluation process.

Access to Resources: The College endeavours to provide students in distance education programs with access to a range of learning resources, including digital libraries, online databases, and study materials, to support their learning.

5.3 Course Development and Delivery

- Once online and/or hybrid courses are approved by the College management, provision will be made for development, programme design and establishment cost specifically for distance/hybrid provision.
- All blended/hybrid and online courses will be developed and delivered in accordance with Huguenote Kollege's academic quality standards.
- Faculty members responsible for blended/hybrid and online course development will receive training in effective online pedagogy.
- Online courses will incorporate interactive and engaging content, regular communication, and assessment methods to promote student learning.
- The need, assessment and quality assurance for experiential training need to be clearly stipulated when applicable to a specific learning course of programme. The implementation thereof must be carefully articulated to ensure that students are not only able to qualify, but that suitable learning occurs at the appropriate depth and level.
- High-quality learning resources are integral to high-quality distance and/or hybrid education which necessitates a growing reliance on resource-based learning.

5.4 Data Privacy and Security

- Huguenote Kollege will comply with South African data protection laws and regulations.
- Personal and academic data of students and faculty will be stored and transmitted securely.
- Students' and faculty members' privacy rights will be respected, and data will be used only for legitimate educational purposes.

5.5 Student Rights and Responsibilities

- Students will have access to course materials, instructors, and support services necessary for successful online and/or hybrid learning.
- Students will have the right to decentralized assessment strategies with a strong emphasis on formative feedback to encourage active engagement and retention.
- Students are responsible for participating actively in online and/or hybrid courses, adhering to course policies, and submitting assignments as required.
- Students have the right to provide feedback on the quality of online and/or hybrid courses and the support they receive.

5.6 Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

- Faculty members will have access to professional development opportunities to enhance their online and/or hybrid teaching skills.
- Faculty members are responsible for providing timely feedback to students, maintaining course quality, and adhering to the institution's policies.

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5.7 Assessment and Evaluation

- Online courses will be assessed regularly by the Academic Committee to ensure they meet academic standards.
- Student performance will be evaluated through various methods, including exams, assignments, and participation.

5.8 Technical Requirements and Support

- Hugenote Kollege will provide students with a list of hard- and software technical requirements and assist them as far as possible and reasonable to have access to appropriate resources.
- Technical support will be available to students and faculty to address technical issues that may arise with Kollege equipment.
- Distance education is an appealing and flexible option particularly for mature and mid-career students, and not least for students with disabilities which make access to contact education difficult or impossible. To ensure these students a reasonable chance of success, there must be adequate investment in appropriate levels and kinds of student support.

5.9 Copyright and Intellectual Property

- All parties involved in online and/or blended education must respect copyright and intellectual property rights.
- The institution will provide guidance on the use of copyrighted materials in online and/or hybrid courses.

6. REVISION AND UPDATES

This policy will be reviewed and updated periodically to align with evolving best practices and changes in legislation.

7. COMPLIANCE AND MAINTENANCE

The implementation and management of the Assessment Policy will be the responsibility of the Management of Hugenote Kollege and any concerns or violations related to this policy should be reported to them.

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8. RELATED POLICIES

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- Hugenote Kollege Assessment Policy
- Hugenote Kollege RPL Policy
- Hugenote Kollege Appeals Policy
- Hugenote Kollege Language Policy
- Hugenote Kollege Certification Policy
- Hugenote Kollege Admission Policy
- Hugenote Kollege Re-Assessment Policy
- Hugenote Kollege Irregularities Policy