UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
Department for Education Innovation

POLICY ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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CONTENTS

1.   PREAMBLE

The *Strategic Plan 2025* vision is for the University of Pretoria to be

> *Africa's leading research-intensive university, recognised internationally for its quality, relevance and impact, developing people, creating knowledge and making a difference locally and globally.*

The section of the *Strategic Plan 2025* (S 4616/12) on community engagement is quoted below (2011: 10):

> *Engagement with society and communities flows from the University's teaching and research functions. In this light, support will be leant primarily to curricular and research-related forms of community engagement and to developing desirable attributes in students.*

> *In essence, community engagement is about civic responsibility and citizenship, and linking the best of the research and teaching skills of the staff and students to the*

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specific needs of this diverse community, thus giving effect to the 'public good' of universities. In turn, student life and the attributes developed while students are at university are enriched through their service and engagement.

2.   PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Policy on Community Engagement* is to provide principles and a governance framework for integrated community engagement at the University of Pretoria that is aligned to the strategic priorities of the University; promotes quality assurance, risk management and financial sustainability; creates new knowledge; ensures ethical conduct, and can serve as a basis for more operational procedures and decisions to be made.

3.   ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

This policy applies to all faculties, departments (including support service departments), units, staff and students involved in all forms of community engagement and development (curricular, research and extra-curricular) with the external community, across all campuses of the University of Pretoria.

4.   POLICY STATEMENT

The university will strive to provide human, financial and infrastructural resources to develop and sustain opportunities for students to cross social, cultural and other divides in the broader community in which they will function as graduates, through equitable partnerships with selected communities (including, among others, the three spheres of government, non-governmental organisations and corporations, as well as a variety of communities), which partnerships should be mutually beneficial and aimed at community development and empowerment. Implementation of community engagement is mainly in the designated communities of Mamelodi, Eersterust, Pretoria Inner City, Pretoria North and Pretoria West (including Booysens, Claremont and Danville) as well as the precincts around the five UP campuses.

5.   DEFINITIONS/ABBREVIATIONS

This section is aimed at providing definitions for terms that have particular meaning or have a need for some interpretation related to the particular policy It should be used sparingly and it is not necessary to define common terms (such as "University") or to list terms where the meaning is self-evident.

| Community | Community (individuals, group members locally, regionally, provincially, or nationally) in a higher education institution's context (HEQC, 2006a)[1] refers to specific, collective interest groups that participate, or could |

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[1]HEQC/ JET Education Services South Africa. (2006). *Service-Learning in the curriculum: a resource for higher education institutions*. Pretoria, South Africa: Council on Higher Education.

S 5102/19

	potentially participate, in the University's community engagement activities.
Community engagement (CE)	Community engagement at the University of Pretoria is defined as the planned, purposeful application of resources and expertise in teaching, learning and research in the university's interaction with the external community to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes in ways that are consistent with the institution's vision and mission.
Community Service	Community service refers to '*All those activities in which staff and students commit their time, effort, expertise and skills to the benefit of the community'.*
Curricular Community Engagement	Curricular Community Engagement is a programme-based approach to the integration of community-based and/ or work-based engagement in the curriculum of a formal academic programme.
Scholarship of Application	Community-engaged research conducted by postgraduate students and academics is a particular research methodology in which the external community and social partners collaborate with academic researchers to produce disciplinary or trans-disciplinary knowledge that is used for the benefit of the community as well as the researcher.
Social innovation and social value	Community-based social innovation focuses on discovering new strategies, concepts, ideas and innovations that meet social needs while being in consonance with the renewed emphasis by Government on social-economic development in South Africa (compare with HESA, 2009)[2] to make significant contributions to the social, economic and scientific development or advancement of their societies as well as internationally.
University social responsibility (USR)	University social responsibility is wider than just community engagement. It involves contributing to the betterment of society through the integration of social responsibility into institutional management, teaching, research, services and public activities. USR extends the traditional mission of universities in an endeavour to develop solutions for economic, social, and environmental problems in society so as to make our world more just, inclusive, peaceful and sustainable (adapted from http://www.usrnetwork.org/).

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[2]Higher Education South Africa. (2009). *Pathways to a diverse and effective South African Higher Education System. Strategic Framework 2009-2019.* Executive summary available online at: http://www.usaf.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/HESA-Insight-No-1_October-20091.pdf.

S 5102/19

6. GOVERNANCE

6.1 The Senate Committee for Teaching and Learning and the Senate Committee for Research and Postgraduate Education take responsibility within their respective spheres for strategic decisions on community engagement in undergraduate and postgraduate studies respectively and for research activities by staff members in the case of the latter committee;

6.2 The Community Engagement Forum is a broad stakeholder committee chaired by the Director: Department for Education Innovation or a person nominated by the Vice Principal: Academic;

6.3 Each Faculty has its own Community Engagement Committee or a standing item on community engagement on the agendas of teaching and learning and/ or research committees;

6.4 The Residences have a committee for community engagement;

6.5 Each student society, the SRC and RAG have committees that plan, implement and monitor voluntary student engagement across a wide range of engagements;

6.6 The Community Engagement Office is in the Department for Education Innovation. It comprises a manager, a facilitator and an education consultant as well as an administrative assistant. The office is responsible for training and liaising with faculties and other UP parties and communities to integrate community engagement in order to optimise academic outcomes and the developmental impact on communities and to sustain and maintain community partners for community engagement purposes. It is responsible for the development and maintenance of an effective Community Engagement Management System (CEMS). The office also interacts with the national body, the South African Higher Education Community Engagement Forum (SAHECEF), on behalf of the University. It engages with the Talloires Network, the University Social Responsibility Network (USRN) and international partner universities.

7. OPERATIONALISATION

Faculties, departments, student structures and other stakeholders under whose auspices community engagement activities take place, will strive to

7.1 In general

- Manage community engagement activities based on good governance principles (King IV and subsequent reports) and UP policies;
- Include sustainable and relevant community engagement in their strategic and operational plans and take responsibility for implementation, risk management and quality assurance;
- Implement community engagement activities in their areas of proven competency only, subject to the self-identified problems of the communities concerned;
- Report on their community engagement activities to governance structures at the university, particularly the Senate Committee for Teaching and Learning;
- Give preference to implementing activities on platforms based in the communities identified by the university on a multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinary basis to maximise their potential impact;
- Support and appropriately acknowledge staff and student involvement and excellence in all forms of community engagement;

S 5102/19

- Register all community engagement activities on the Community Engagement Management System (CEMS) administered by the Manager: Community Engagement;
- Conform to the provisions of relevant national legislation (e.g. The Children's Act).

7.2 In terms of teaching and learning

- Develop a sustainable community engagement plan at programme level as part of curriculum development to ensure that every student has one community engagement experience during the course of his/ her degree that will develop a sense of social responsibility for the student and contribute towards community development;
- Identify a suitable model for rolling out the community engagement module, be it community-based learning, academic service learning, community engagement embedded in to practical work or work-integrated learning (WIL);
- Indicate in year books that the module comprises or includes community engagement so that no student will have so many modules with community engagement components that the workload becomes onerous;
- Consult with the community in curriculum planning;
- Theorise the community engagement process and embed participatory impact assessment in the process;
- Monitor, assess and report on the impact of curricular community engagement initiatives and include the outcome in student reflection reports;
- Align the community engagement activity to the stated outcomes of the module of which it forms part;
- Develop appropriate study guides for community engagement modules;
- Facilitate learning experiences in the community that expose students to South Africa-specific diversity.
- Orientate students appropriately before they embark on learning experiences in the community;
- Orientate the community about its own role in the initiatives and avoid creating undue expectations from the planned activities;
- Create adequate opportunities for structured reflection on experiences in the community to ensure that student learning outcomes are met;
- Assess students in community engagement modules against stated learning outcomes and ensure that the credits for modules with community engagement align with the input requirements/ work intensity of the module;
- Consider the most suitable approach for the integration of community engagement into the curriculum in relation to specific disciplines and the community sector involved;
- Ensure that community engagement activities in the external community apply the knowledge gained in the classroom and from other resources and are relevant for the future career of the student and to the local, national and international context;
- Monitor, measure and evaluate the outputs and impact of community engagement activities on an annual basis, eliciting input from communities as well as student feedback.

7.3 In terms of research

- Integrate, where appropriate, community engagement into research programmes;
- Support research into community engagement (scholarship of application), financially and otherwise;
- Involve community partners in the formulation of research questions and in the process of discovery;
- Ensure ethical conduct of research projects in communities;

S 5102/19

- Provide feedback on research to communities to ensure mutual benefit;
- Move from theorising and reflection to action as researchers apply the knowledge gained in addressing the identified problem;
- Examine community development and community engagement determinants both in terms of factors based in the community as well as institutional factors that may influence sustainable community development;
- Follow an approach that acknowledges the unique characteristics of dependent variables, such as crime or other risk factors;
- Explore further within or across faculties the effects of community engagement as a practice on university students, community members and other role players such as lecturers, taking into consideration that all these groups exist with stable and unstable membership;
- Conduct research to address embedded inequalities and diversity;
- Conform to the applicable provisions of the university's research policies (in terms of approval, ethics clearance and registration on the relevant database);
- In line with the vision of the Strategic Plan 2025, operationalise a longitudinal study to observe and define the impact of community engagement on sustainable community development, to be led by the Community Engagement office in the Department for Education Innovation.

7.4   In terms of extra-curricular community engagement

- Obtain the necessary approval from the relevant authority under whose auspices the extra-curricular community engagement activities are being conducted;
- Address embedded inequalities that result as a by-product owing to other long-term factors;
- Define the outcomes of each project in terms of gains to the student and to the community;
- Register extra-curricular community engagement activities on CEMS;
- Fund extra-curricular community engagement from internal sources provided by student societies, residences, etc. to a limit, and then through external ('third-stream') sources and sponsorships, usually sourced by the students themselves.

7.5   In terms of impact

- Action the university's long-term strategy, UP2025, which positions positive impact on national social and economic development as one of five priority goals;
- Determine annually and express quantitatively the improved impact on communities and the value added of the contribution of student engagement to the local economies in implementing projects and activities as well as support and sponsorship from the business sector and redundant assets made available for CE purposes by UP;
- Implement a Participatory Impact Assessment Model whereby communities work together with the university to evaluate the impact of an activity on the beneficiaries;
- Research the impact made in communities on a larger and broader scale and include quantitative and qualitative measures as part of a longitudinal study, funded through external ('third-stream') sources if available, but otherwise as part of normal operations.

S 5102/19

8.   ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

UP Policies:
- Policy on Curriculum Design and Delivery and addenda
- Policy on Teaching and Learning
- Policy on Assessment
- Reimagining Curricula for a Just University in a Vibrant Democracy

National Legislation:
- *The Children's Act,* Act 38 of 2005 (and any subsequent amendments)

CHE:
- Kagisano Issue 6. (2010). Community Engagement in South African Higher Education. http://www.che.ac.za/media_and_publications/kagisano-series/kagisano-issue-number-6-community-engagement-south-african.
- Higher Education Monitor 13. (2011). Work-integrated Learning: Good Practice Guide. http://www.che.ac.za/media_and_publications/higher-education-monitor/higher-education-monitor-12-work-integrated-learning.

9.   APPENDICES

Supporting processes/forms, etc

10.   RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Vice Principal: Academic and Vice Principal: Research and Postgraduate Studies

11.   POLICY LIFE CYCLE

The Policy should be revised three years after the date of approval.

12.   DOCUMENT METADATA

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