Community Engagement Policy

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(Will need to be translated into Afrikaans)

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 (S4616/12) 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 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.*

The goals, strategies and performance indicators are included in the document along with key targets. Three goals might be relevant to community engagement although it is only mentioned specifically in the first listed here: strengthening the university's impact of SA's social and economic development, pursuing excellence in teaching and learning and increasing access, throughput and diversity.

The table for strengthening the university's impact on SA's social and economic development is quoted below:

Goals	Strategies	Performance indicators
To strengthen the university's impact of SA's social and economic development	1. *Align enrolment growth, particularly in professional fields, to high-level scarce skills needs and the Human Resource Development Strategy (HRDS)* 2. *Increase number of active partnerships with industry and government*	• *Number of graduates in scarce skills areas* • *Number of active partnerships with industry* • *Number of active partnerships and projects with local communities* • *Graduate attributes aligned with changing*

	3. Seek optimal impact partnerships with local communities, including municipalities	workplace and needs of SA as a developing economy and democracy

The 2025 Strategic Plan is supported by a comprehensive Academic Plan (S 4617/12). The relevant section on community engagement is quoted below:

> *2.6 Community and Societal Engagement*
>
> *As conceptualised in the University of Pretoria, the identity and purpose of the University is firmly located within its research and teaching nexus; community engagement and support services flow from this. Therefore, community engagement must relate to teaching and research. It should also take into account the changing role of higher education in South African society, the need for producing graduates who can lead the country in addressing development challenges, and the imperative of reconciling community engagement with social innovation and the 'public good' properties of universities.*
>
> *In this light, support will be lent primarily to curricular and research-related community engagement, i.e. the focus will be on supporting the University's internal community in integrating community engagement into curricula, teaching and learning practices, and the University's research agenda. Furthermore, preference will be given to community engagement partnerships and projects so as to emphasise the two-directional nature of these activities. Such partnerships will ensure appropriate benefits for external communities through the University's academic programmes, and suitable learning and research opportunities for the University's members.*
>
> *In essence, community engagement is about institutional citizenship, and linking the University's role in knowledge production to one of the dimensions of its public accountability. It therefore encompasses a wide range of individuals, groups, organisations and institutions in both the local and broader communities. The key to community engagement is linking the research and teaching skills of staff and students to the specific needs of this diverse community. In turn, student life and the graduate attributes developed while students are at university will be enriched through their community service and engagement.*

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Community Engagement Policy 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.

2. 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.

3.   Policy statement

It is important for students to have the opportunity to cross social, cultural and other divides in the broader community in which they will function as graduates. In this way they develop the graduate attribute of social responsibility. It is also important for them to have opportunities to gain workplace experience to enable them to become leaders in their professions. The community engagement landscape acknowledges a range of activities in which students can engage to achieve learning outcomes. It also covers purely voluntary, service activities related to the university's knowledge bases that can be supported by staff or students outside the curriculum. It is preferable that voluntary service at the University of Pretoria aligns with credit-bearing work on the same platforms and reflect the same standard as curricular community engagement to ensure sustainability of the projects.

The University will strive to provide human, financial and infrastructural resources to develop and sustain equitable partnerships with selected communities (including, among others, the three spheres of government, non-governmental organisations and corporations), which partnerships should be mutually beneficial and aimed at community development and empowerment.

The University will develop a funding model for community engagement modules.

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

3.1   <u>In general</u>
- o Manage community engagement activities based on good governance principles (King III) and UP policies;
- o Include sustainable and relevant community engagement in their strategic and operational plans and take responsibility for implementation, risk management and quality assurance;
- o Implement community engagement activities in their areas of proven competency only, subject to the identified needs of the communities concerned;
- o Report on their community engagement activities to governance structures at the University, particularly the Senate Committee for Community Engagement;
- o Give preference to implementing activities on platforms based in the communities identified by the University on a multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinary basis to maximize their potential impact;
- o Support and appropriately acknowledge staff and student involvement and excellence in all forms of community engagement;
- o Register all community engagement activities on the Community Engagement Management System (CEMS) administered by the Manager: Community Engagement;
- o Conform to the provisions of relevant national legislation (e.g. *The Children's Act*).

3.2   <u>In terms of teaching and learning</u>
- o Develop a sustainable community engagement plan per programme 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;
- o 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;
- o Consult, where possible, with the community in curriculum planning;

- o Align the community engagement activity to the stated outcomes of the module of which it forms part;
- o Develop appropriate study guides for community engagement modules;
- o Orientate students appropriately before embarking on learning experiences in the community;
- o Orientate the community about its own role in the initiatives and avoid creating undue expectations from the planned activities;
- o Create adequate opportunities for structured reflection on experiences in the community to ensure that student learning outcomes are met;
- o 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;
- o Consider the most suitable approach for the integration of community engagement into the curriculum in relation to specific disciplines and the community sector involved;
- o 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;
- o 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.

3.3   In terms of research

- o Integrate, where appropriate, community engagement into research programmes;
- o Support research into community engagement (scholarship of engagement), financially and otherwise;
- o Conform to the applicable provisions of the University's research policies (in terms of approval, ethical clearance and registration on the relevant database);
- o Involve community partners in the formulation of research questions and in the process of discovery, while researchers must extend their involvement to the application of the knowledge gained in addressing the identified problem (i.e. moving from theorizing and reflection to action);
- o Provide feedback on research to communities to ensure mutual benefit.

3.4   In terms of extra-curricular community engagement

- o Obtain the necessary approval from the relevant authority under whose auspices the extra-curricular community engagement activities are being conducted;
- o Define the outcomes of each project in terms of gains to the student and to the community;
- o Register extra-curricular community engagement activities on CEMS;
- o Fund extra-curricular community engagement from external ('third-stream') sources;
- o Monitor and assess the impact of, and report on, extra-curricular community engagement initiatives.

4.   Governance

4.1   The Senate Committee for Community Engagement is a strategic committee chaired by the Vice Principal: Teaching and Learning. The Committee has its own membership, as laid down in the Institutional Statute, and terms of reference as approved by the Committee;

4.2   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: Teaching and Learning;

4.3   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;

4.4   The Residences have a committee for community engagement;

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

4.6   The Community Engagement Office is in the Department for Education Innovation. It comprises a Manager, a Facilitator and an Education Consultant: Community Engagement as well as a part-time 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 optimize 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.

5.   Community engagement related concepts

5.1   Community (C)
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 potentially participate, in the University's community engagement activities. They are regarded as partners who have an active voice and role in the identification of developmental challenges, developmental needs, goals and assets. They participate in defining the community engagement activities, academic service and development outcomes; evaluate the impact of community engagement; and contribute substantially to the mutual search for sustainable solutions to their own challenges and developmental needs. With regard to the latter, they may play a role in the creation of knowledge. Such communities would be those most suitable to contribute to reaching the required academic outcomes and that would, at the same time, benefit most from the community engagement activities. In the South African context, the members of such communities are generally, though not solely, the disadvantaged, materially poor residents of under-serviced urban, peri-urban or rural areas. In many instances, these communities may be accessed most efficiently through public sector and community organisations (HEQC, 2006a)[2].

5.2   Community engagement (CEn)
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.

5.3   Community Service (CS)
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*'. The provision of such a service

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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.
[2] Ibid.

establishes the credibility of the University as participating in efforts to address some of the needs/ challenges confronted by society.

5.4 Curricular Community Engagement (CCEn)

Curricular Community Engagement (CCEn) refers to the integration of community engagement in the curriculum, teaching, learning and scholarship, through which academic staff and students engage with the service sectors (public and private) and various communities in mutually beneficial and respectful partnerships. Such interaction addresses community-identified goals and needs, deepens students' civic and academic learning by aligning theory and real-life situations (practice), and enriches the scholarship of the institution. CCEn is a programme-based approach to the integration of community-based and/ or work-based engagement in the curriculum of a formal academic programme. The curriculum design and development strategy used is holistic and outcomes-based. Contextualization and integration are achieved by using appropriate educational approaches with relevant and meaningful learning activities that take place outside a classroom setting (i.e. in a community or in a workplace),such as community-based learning, work-integrated learning (WIL) and academic service learning.

5.5 Approaches in community engagement

In curricular community engagement various experiential learning approaches can thus be followed involving curriculum-based, credit-bearing learning activities in which students
- participate in contextualized, well-structured and organized academic activities aimed at addressing identified service needs and assets in a community, and
- through guided and structured reflection, examine and analyse their experiences critically in order to gain a deeper understanding of the linkage between curriculum content and service (i.e. whether they have attained the learning outcomes), as well as achieve personal growth and a sense of civic and social responsibility.

In other words, a teaching and learning strategy is followed that integrates meaningful and relevant community services with the curriculum (contents) to enrich the learning experience, teach civic and social responsibility and strengthen communities.

5.6 Scholarship

Community-engaged research (CER) conducted by post-graduate 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. In contrast to the earlier, traditional research practices in which community members were simply 'human subjects' and passive recipients of information, community-engaged research places value on the local community's perspectives and on active engagement in each phase of the research process. CER integrates the types of scholarship defined by Boyer[3], namely discovery, teaching, application and integration, in the research process, outcomes and outputs. It is essential that all researchers give feedback to the communities and provide a developmental opportunity for them.

The scholarship of engagement also involves the investigation of community engagement as a specific approach in a discipline. Academics or community engagement practitioners might want to investigate community engagement with a view to developing knowledge about community engagement as a teaching and learning methodology (pedagogy). This would include a systematic, scholarly enquiry into the curriculum, learning outcomes, student learning, assessment, impact on students and the community that would advance the theory and practice of community engagement.

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[3] Boyer, E. L. 1997. *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

5.7   <u>Social innovation and social value</u>
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)[4]. It is the expectation that the institutions of higher learning, through their academics and graduates, should make significant contributions to the social, economic and scientific development or advancement of their societies as well as internationally, by providing an excellent education to students and generating competitive research outputs.

6.   Associated documents

Framework for teaching and learning, S 4657/10 (incorporating revisions to Principles of UP's Education Model, S 6144/06)
Guidelines for Teaching and Learning, S 4492/09

7.   Appendices

8.   Responsibility for implementation

Vice Principal: Teaching and Learning and Vice Principal: Research

9.   Policy life cycle

Three years after the date of Senate approval, the policy should be revised.

9.   Document metadata:

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[4] Higher Education South Africa. (2009). Pathways to a diverse and effective South African Higher Education System. Strategic Framework 2010-2020. Available online at: http://www.hesa.ac.za/.

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