

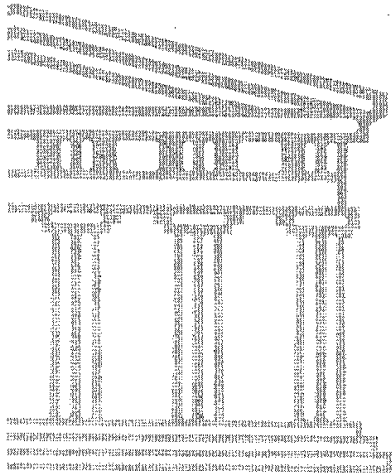
**UNIVERSITY OF WEST INDIES**

**POLICY**

**UWC**

**Adopted by Senate in October 2003  
Approved by Council: C2007/2**

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Approved by Council: C2007/2*



# UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN CAPE (UWC)

## POLICY FOR THE QUALITY ASSURANCE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION AT UWC

DATE OF LAST APPROVAL: C2007/2

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UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

A place of quality, a place to grow, from hope to action through knowledge

*As agreed at SEC on 13/03/07*

## **POLICY FOR THE QUALITY ASSURANCE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION AT UWC**

### **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

Continuing Education (CE) represents a small but growing component of the programmes and services offered by UWC in response to the knowledge and development needs of individuals, communities and organisations in the region. Continuing Education is an integral part of the lifelong learning mission of the university that finds its expression amongst others, in a range of credit and non-credit bearing courses offered through different faculties, schools and centres.

In October 2003 the Senate adopted a Policy on the Registration of CE courses<sup>1</sup> of eight hours duration or longer. In this document we focus on matters of quality, and specifically on the principles, procedures and practices that support the review, planning and improvement of CE courses offered at UWC.

### **PRINCIPLES**

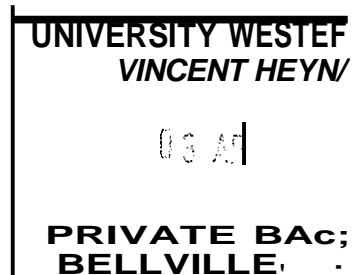
There are two overarching principles evident in the literature on quality systems and we have added one more to ensure that there is coherence between this policy and the existing 'Policy for Programme Reviews at UWC' which was adopted in May 2005.

#### **Continuous Improvement**

The principle of continuous improvement invokes a commitment to excellence, innovation and development which is grounded in reflective practice and sustained through formal and informal cycles of research, planning, implementation, evaluation. To be effective these processes must motivate the participation of the stakeholders involved, they must engage with all elements of course planning and implementation, and they must offer appropriate recommendations for improvement and development.

#### **Accountability**

This principle establishes the basis for decision making and reporting on all CE Courses offered at the University. It is manifest in the policies, procedures and systems that facilitate the flow of information and decision making between different stakeholders and structures involved in CE provision at the University and in its relations with other statutory and professional bodies.



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<sup>1</sup> Policy for the Registration of Continuing Education Courses adopted by Senate in October 2003.

## **Integration and Efficiency**

This principle locates the quality assurance of CE provision as an integral part of the policies and practices of the University as a whole. In principle, this refers to the 'Policy for Programme Reviews at UWC' adopted by Senate in May 2005. In practice it means that faculties and departments are encouraged *to* synchronise the review of CE courses with those of their core degree and postgraduate programmes. However, it is in the nature of CE Courses that they tend to have a much shorter shelf life than programmes that lead to whole qualifications. This calls for more efficient systems for their registration<sup>2</sup> and review. Courses are registered for a period of three years and so it makes sense that they be formally reviewed at least once every three years and not five as in the case of mainstream programmes. However, CE courses where it is possible and relevant, should be incorporated with other course programmes or departmental reviews.

## **ELEMENTS FOR REVIEW OF CE COURSES**

The review of CE courses is informed by a number of features which distinguish it from conventional undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered by the University. These include the following:

- CE courses have their roots in academic curricula and research but often need to be tailored for particular contexts and purposes. The challenge is how to do this without sacrificing academic integrity or quality.
- In most cases but not all, participants on CE courses are adult or mature learners. This requires the application of adult learning principles in the design and delivery of these courses - this in addition to meeting the particular pedagogical requirements of the field.
- Many CE courses are subject to demands for portable credits and certification. This places significant pressure on the provision for systems and procedures to facilitate the necessary accreditation and articulation agreements with professional bodies, SETAs and SAQA.
- CE provision is increasingly exposed to competitive markets which may have negative effects on the quality and integrity of courses if contracts, costs and marketing practices are not carefully monitored.
- CE courses can have positive or negative effects on the time and quality of work of the academic staff involved. It may serve as an incentive for academics to meet their main throughput and research targets or to neglect these in favour of the higher revenue producing opportunities offered on CE Courses.

With reference to the above, and the 'Policy for Programme Reviews at UWC' (May 2005) the following elements are indicated for the review of Continuing Education Courses. Each element is described in terms of its generic quality indicators and the evidence that might be useful in a review process.

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<sup>2</sup> For example: the procedures for registering CE courses (i.e. short courses) at UWC are approved by faculty heads and the DLL Director through the SLLC and do not have to go through the full range of faculty and senate academic boards.

<b>Element for Review</b>	<b>Quality Indicators</b>	<b>Useful Evidence</b>
Purpose	Course aligned to faculty mission, plans and budgets.	Course descriptor and/or planning documents and reports. Marketing plans, prices and products
Marketing>	Course promotion aligned to mission, plans, & academic integrity.	Course proposals, flyers, brochures, web based materials,
Course Design	Content and methods relevant to learner needs and specified outcomes. Course content and design meets criteria for academic and professional integrity.	Course registration docs specify learner profiles and outcomes. Course materials
Course Delivery	Delivery modes, materials and methods are appropriate to purpose, content, context and learner profiles. Application of adult learning principles and appropriate assessment strategies <sup>4</sup> . Satisfactory levels of service and support: venue, facilities, advising, administration etc	Participation rates and student records Course materials and files Assessment and moderation reports (where appropriate)
Attainment of Outcomes	Learner participation and results reflect agreed targets. Gap analysis informs correction strategies. Impact analysis reflects relevance and value add.	Course results. Moderators reports where appropriate, Analytical reports from beneficiaries, lecturers and coordinators.
Evaluation	Stakeholder feedback confirms critical strengths and weaknesses Key stakeholders include: coordinators, learners, lecturers, administrators, moderators, clients and professional associates as appropriate.	Course evaluation records and review reports
Innovation and Development	Course design reflects appropriate levels of research, innovation and development in the field.	Course design and planning reports approved by academic and professional partners

<sup>3</sup> Some courses on contract to private clients may require no public marketing at all. In these cases the **negotiations and related proposals or contracts should take the quality indicators into account.**

<sup>4</sup> **Assessment strategies for credit bearing courses based on unit standards must meet the criteria specified by SAQA and the relevant ETQA**

Course and Information Management and Budgets	Effective IT and admin systems. Reliable data capture and analysis. Management reports and structures enhance culture, quality and sustainable delivery of CE courses.	Course records, results and financial statements. Analytical reports for strategic planning. Management reports.
Contracts and Staff Development	Staff contracts complementary to teaching and research commitments, and consistent with HR Policies and regulations. Staff appointments meet qualification requirements for the course. Staff comfortable with required (adult) learning principles and methods. Partnership and client contracts facilitate professional relations and effective delivery.	Staff policy and contracts. Staff reviews. Staff training reports. Partnership contracts and review reports.

## PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

CE Courses should be reviewed at least once every three years and these should be timed so as to tie in with other relevant programme review schedules. So for example, if a CE course is based on a mainstream module which is due for review, then the CE course should be reviewed at the same time.

Course reviews are initiated by the SLLC in consultation with the Faculty or other relevant unit and any other external partners or authorities that may be contractually involved. At the end of every course, the course coordinator or facilitator should distribute an evaluation questionnaire to all participants to invite comments on the quality of the course outcomes, content and delivery.

Course reviews should involve three key procedures:

- A review panel with stakeholder representatives<sup>6</sup> agrees on the purpose, criteria and methods for the CE course review. This must result in a detailed plan for the review which is approved by the review panel. In the case where CE courses do not coincide with full programme reviews, the review panel may be replaced with an individual reviewer.
- The review plan is implemented according to the plan and recommendations for improvement are discussed by the review panel at a meeting to be convened for this purpose. Where an individual will act as reviewer, he or she

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<sup>1</sup> Evidence used in this regard must be corroborated with the HR Department to ensure that the programme is operating within the university's HR policies.

<sup>6</sup> The principles of efficiency and integration suggest that where a full programme review is being undertaken in a faculty or department at the same time as a CE course review, then it follows that the same panel would preside over the process unless there are valid reasons for doing otherwise.

should study the course coordinator's report and decide whether to focus on all or any specific aspects of the report for review.

- The recommendations are then carried in a formal report to the Dean of the Faculty for further decision making and action.

## **OUTCOMES OF A REVIEW**

In the case of CE courses the outcomes of the review should be structured in a report that is standardised according to the following:

### **A. Findings of the CE Course review**

- Purpose, marketing and impact of the course/s
- Course design and delivery
- Attainment of outcomes
- Stakeholder evaluation
- Management, systems, staff, and resources
- Partnerships (where applicable)

### **B. Improvement Plans**

Plans and targets for improvement with reference to:

- Marketing<sup>7</sup> and recruitment strategies
- Course design, methods and modes of delivery
- Partnerships and course accreditation (where applicable)
- Staff allocations, contracts and training
- Management systems and administration
- Budgets and resource allocation

Adapted after Senate Lifelong Learning Committee meeting on 14 February 2007.

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<sup>7</sup> See footnote 3