# EVALUATION OF TEACHING AND COURSES POLICY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE: Evaluation of Teaching and Courses Policy</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy no</td>
<td>TLC 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date approved</td>
<td>Minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Date</td>
<td>No of pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date revised</td>
<td>Minute</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Refer enquiries to: The Director, Teaching and Learning Centre
1. Preamble

The vision and mission of the University of Fort Hare (UFH) include a commitment to excellence in teaching. This commitment should be pursued deliberately by all academics, as professional educators, to take control of their teaching practice and seek to reflect on this, research and improve it.

The best way to improve teaching is to inquire into the effects of one’s teaching on student learning … Good teaching is open to change; it involves constantly trying to find out what the effects of instruction are on learning, and modifying that instruction in the light of evidence collected.

Evaluation thus needs to serve the needs of academic staff as individuals in their pursuit of teaching excellence. Academic staff are invited to use evaluation in a developmental manner to review and research their teaching practice using appropriate research methods, and to document the scholarship of their teaching in a teaching or professional portfolio.

In an increasingly competitive market the University has a strong interest in the improvement of teaching and courses. Quality teaching and courses with an excellent reputation are draw cards for the University’s customers, its students. Increasingly the University is being held accountable to its learners, Government, parents, industry and the wider community to produce graduates who not only know the content, but who also have the capability to provide human capital to satisfy the needs of the country. The evaluation of teaching and of courses is essential as a foundation for continuing professional and educational development at the University and as a base for the assurance of quality required by national policy.

At the level of national policy, the Higher Education Act of 1997 assigns responsibility for quality assurance in higher education in South Africa to the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE). The HEQC’s mandate includes promotion of quality, institutional audits and programme accreditation. It is clear that the institutional quality assurance systems have assumed major significance.

The University policy on Evaluation needs to balance the different purposes of evaluation, namely for professional growth of individuals, for quality assurance in the institution, and for meeting national policy requirements.
The practical implementation of the University policy on Evaluation of Teaching and Courses is described in the TLC Brief Guide to the Evaluation of Teaching and Courses.

2. Legislative Framework

The HEQC is a permanent committee of the CHE and the nature, purpose and scope of the HEQC’s works relates to the following policy documents and legislation:
- Higher Education Quality Committee (2001);
- South African Qualifications Authority Act No.58, 1995;
- Higher Education Amendment Act No. 39, 2008;

3. Related Policies

This Evaluation of Teaching and Courses Policy should be read in conjunction with the under-mentioned institutional policies:
- Assessment and Moderation of Student Learning Policy) TLC 001 (10.10.2004)
- Undergraduate Academic Admissions Policy ADM 006 (30.03.2006)
- Policy on Continuing Education

4. Policy Principles

Recognising the strategic importance of evaluation at individual, institutional and national levels, the University seeks to affirm key principles and to establish a policy which will guide its evaluation practices and services.

4.1 The primary responsibility for evaluation lies with the academic staff responsible for a course, normally the lecturer who is teaching the course, in consultation with the Head of Department, while the University has overall responsibility for the quality of programmes, courses and teaching.

4.2 Teaching and courses should be evaluated on a regular basis to inform the individual lecturer him/herself, the University, and its external community about the quality of teaching.

4.3 The evaluation of teaching and courses forms part of sound reflective practice. It enhances teaching practice by reference to educational theory and literature.

4.4 The role of evaluation should primarily be one of professional development and improvement through the provision of constructive feedback, indicative of a supportive, non-punitive and transparent academic environment. At the same time, the formative, developmental nature of evaluation needs to be balanced with the need for accountability.

4.5 The involvement of an impartial party in the process of evaluation increases its credibility.

4.6 Any use of evaluation data or results requires the agreement of the person who was evaluated.

4.7 Academic staff whose practice is evaluated must be supported through opportunities for continuous professional development.
5. Purpose of Teaching and Course Evaluation

Information gathered by systematic evaluation of and reflection on teaching practice can be used to:

5.1 improve the quality of courses and teaching;
5.2 monitor innovations in teaching;
5.3 diagnose strengths and weaknesses;
5.4 engage students more actively in the teaching/learning process;
5.5 investigate student difficulties;
5.6 check students’ expectations of teaching;
5.7 document teaching excellence for probation and promotion;
5.8 provide evidence for institutional quality audits; and
5.9 promote professional development.

6. Forms of Teaching and Course Evaluation

Evaluation is a complex function requiring information to be drawn from several sources, each of which has been selected as the most reliable source for providing data on the activity to be evaluated. An appropriate combination of evaluations may include the following:

6.1 self-evaluation;
6.2 student perception surveys;
6.3 peer review;
6.4 internal moderators, external examiners/moderators;
6.5 alumni/advisory board feedback;
6.6 module, course or programme audits;
6.7 professional bodies.

7. Implementation Strategy

Evaluation can be conducted for either formative, developmental purposes, or for summative purposes to ensure the maintenance of high quality in programmes.

7.1 Formative Evaluation for Professional Development

7.1.1 Individual academic staff members are required to evaluate their teaching and courses on a regular basis. Each lecturer must undergo at least one form of evaluation of his/her teaching and courses every year. The lecturer may stipulate within certain parameters the scope and form of his/her own evaluation, provided that, within a three year period, evaluation is triangulated by using a range of methods where appropriate (see Point 6 above).

7.1.2 There is a distinction between ‘on-going’ evaluation intended to identify problems and difficulties while something can still be done about them and ‘final’ evaluation intended to get an overview of the course/teaching as a whole. Academic members of staff are expected to conduct both ‘on-going’ and ‘final’ evaluations to develop courses and enhance teaching over time.

7.1.3 Evaluation is a complex process requiring teaching and courses to be evaluated from several different perspectives. No one evaluation method, e.g. students’ opinions of teaching and courses, or peer evaluations, should be used in isolation, because to do so would invite subjectivity. The adoption of multiple sources should therefore mitigate against any potential bias. The evidence from evaluations should be applied to the
development and enhancement teaching and courses. There is no point in evaluating if the information gained from evaluations is not used.

7.1.4 It is important that academic staff plan the collection of data concerning the quality of their teaching and courses, and hold these data in a teaching portfolio. The portfolio should reflect a balanced gathering of evidence with respect to the range of stakeholders, the various dimensions of teaching and courses, and the physical and organisational environment. The portfolio is required for academic staff on probation, or applying for promotion, and must include, as a minimum, a questionnaire of student perceptions and a peer review.

7.2 Evaluation for Accountability

7.2.1 Formal summative teaching evaluations of each staff member engaged in teaching should be carried out at least once every three years; the results of such evaluations should be monitored by the Head of Department and reported to the Executive Dean. The relevant Head of Department or Executive Dean may request an evaluation of a particular course or lecturer to be conducted, in which cases the teaching staff involved must be notified beforehand of such evaluation.

7.2.2 Students may request the Head of Department or the Executive Dean to have a course or lecturer evaluated in accordance with 7.2.1.

7.2.3 Heads of Department need to ensure that procedures for conducting evaluations of teaching and courses are in place, and that the formal summative teaching evaluations which are developed address circumstances particular to the context of their disciplines, the students, and the standards commonly agreed to in their teaching situation. These procedures should ensure regular but not excessive evaluation. Such evaluation should be undertaken with the knowledge of those being evaluated, and their input into the construction of the survey. Individuals should also be given opportunity to comment in writing on the final report and to sign it.

7.2.4 Heads of Department will be expected to report annually to the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee on the evaluation procedures, the number of modules and teaching evaluations conducted in their Departments.

7.2.5 The Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) is responsible for assisting Departments and Faculties to develop teaching evaluation procedures and provides advice, support and professional development aimed at enhancing the quality of teaching across the University. The TLC also assists academic staff to develop teaching evaluation questionnaires for which it analyses the feedback and produces a report.

8. Confidentiality

The University needs to balance the requirements for transparency and accountability for teaching and courses with the rights of the individual staff and students to confidentiality of personal information.

Evaluation information on teaching and courses obtained from student questionnaires will be disclosed only to the person who has been evaluated. The confidentiality of students’ participation in evaluations will be guaranteed by their right to anonymity: original forms will not be returned to the lecturer(s) concerned.
The University, however, expects that formal summative teaching evaluations of each staff member will be available to Heads of Departments, Executive Deans, the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) and the Vice Chancellor.

9. Security and backup of evaluations carried out in consultation with the TLC

The TLC processes and stores data from evaluations securely. When such information is held electronically, it is protected by two levels of passwords or other similar constraints on access. The TLC will not store data relating to an individual beyond two years. Every member of the TLC staff involved in processing such data is under an obligation of confidentiality and shall not discuss information obtained from the data with anyone other than the lecturer involved unless the consent of the lecturer has been obtained.

10. Reporting

Outside of the guarantee of confidentiality provided to student participants in evaluations carried out in consultation with the TLC, academic staff members affected by any process of evaluation of teaching and courses are entitled to copies of the information produced. At any time an academic staff member is entitled to know what information of this type relating to him/herself is held by the University.

11. Offices Accountable for Implementation

The responsibility for teaching quality is shared by individual staff members, teaching teams, Heads of Departments, Executive Deans of Faculties, the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) and the Vice Chancellor. The University’s responsibility is exercised through the Institutional Teaching and Learning Committee reporting quarterly to Senate.

Support for the implementation of this policy is provided by the Teaching and Learning Centre. Information about the different methods of evaluating teaching and courses and developing teaching portfolios is available on the TLC website at http://intranet.ufh/orientation/Portfolio%20Development/
References:


Appendix A:

Acronyms and Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHE</td>
<td>Council on Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEQC</td>
<td>Higher Education Quality Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NQF</td>
<td>National Qualifications Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAQA</td>
<td>South African Qualifications Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLC</td>
<td>Teaching and Learning Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UFH</td>
<td>University of Fort Hare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Definitions

**Portfolio**: A personal narrative text, documenting an individual academic staff member’s beliefs about ‘good practice’ with regard to teaching and learning at a specific time and in his/her specific context, and providing evidence in support of claims made. A *teaching portfolio* is compiled where a staff member’s main functions concern teaching; a *professional portfolio* is compiled where the staff member’s functions are mainly or exclusively supervisory and/or administrative, as in the case of Directors of Schools and Executive Deans.
Appendix B:

Implementation of Evaluation of Teaching and Courses

FORMATIVE EVALUATION
(Professional Development)

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION
(Accountability)

Student Perceptions
Peer-Review
Self-Evaluation
Literature

To develop Teaching
and Courses

 Academic Staff
Member

Support

TLC

Senate

Institutional Teaching
& Learning Committee

Executive
Dean

DVC
(Academic)

HOD

VC

Senate

FORMATIVE EVALUATION
(PORTFOLIO)

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION
(Accountability)

Probation
Promotion
Distinguished
Teaching Awards