MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY

Policy Administrator: Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs)

Policy Implementation:

i. Overall: Academic Registrar
ii. Assistance: Principals, Deans, HODs
iii. Quality Assurance: Director, Quality Assurance

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Learning and Teaching Policy is to provide guidance to all staff of Makerere University on the implementation of the learning and teaching processes that lie at the centre of the University's Vision and Mission. The broader context in which this Policy will be implemented is the changing environment in which Makerere University graduates will live, work and contribute to society. The world is being dramatically reshaped by scientific and technological innovations, regional interdependence and globalisation, cross-cultural encounters and changes in economic, political and social dynamics. This requires the University to provide relevant academic programmes of high quality that are based on innovative pedagogical processes and the application of modern and appropriate technologies. The Learning and Teaching Policy therefore commits the University to the implementation of its strategic priority of providing relevant and high quality academic programmes at the graduate and undergraduate levels, based on the University's strategy of learner-centred pedagogy.

2. GUIDING POLICY STATEMENT, PHILOSOPHY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING, AND PRINCIPLES OF PEDAGOGY

2.1. Guiding Policy Statement

The Learning and Teaching Policy is grounded on the requirement to prepare students effectively for life, work, and citizenship so that they will be able to contribute to economic and social development, adapt to change and provide leadership.

2.2. Philosophy of Learning and Teaching

The guiding policy statement is supported by a learning and teaching philosophy that is based on the principle of “intentional learning”, which puts an emphasis on pedagogical strategies that encourage active learning, the achievement of learning
outcomes and the development of self-directed, independent learners who have learned how to learn. This is in contrast to content-oriented teaching strategies that focus primarily on “covering the material” and passive learning. Intentional learning entails an over-riding focus on learning and teaching strategies that enable students to ascend through levels of study in diverse academic programmes to achieve their learning outcomes. It also requires the University herself to be highly intentional about the kind of learning her students need, by creating a positive learning environment and by delivering effective educational practices that help students learn to integrate and apply their learning, become lifelong learners and acquire appropriate graduate attributes for living, working and managing change.

2.3 Educational Principles

The philosophy translates into the following educational principles, which reinforce the University’s Core Values:

- **Innovation**

Approaches to learning should be creative, diverse and flexible and should benefit from the application of modern and appropriate technologies

- **Learner-centredness**

Learning and teaching processes should adapt existing methods and techniques, adopt new ones and adjust to the learners’ styles and pace of learning, and focus on the achievement of learner outcomes. This will specifically require timeliness, detail and quality of feedback in assessing students

- **Lifelong learning**

Learning and teaching should empower learners to become active and independent and to acquire skills and attitudes which will equip them as capable lifelong learners

- **Internationalisation**

Learners should acquire cross-cultural perspectives and respect for different values and possess transferable skills in order to enable them to live and work in a global environment

- **Equity and diversity**

Learning and teaching should promote equal opportunity and non-discrimination on the basis of personal, ethnic, religious, gender or other social characteristics

- **Academic freedom**

Learning and teaching should be committed to promoting free and critical thinking including reasoned dialogue and debate while accepting a diversity of beliefs and ideologies
• Collaboration

Collaboration should be encouraged through lecturer and student interaction to create a holistic environment which ensures that learning is the central focus

• Academic progression

Programmes should be coherent and cohesive, within a credit framework, enabling students to make informed choices and decisions, and providing clear progression pathways

• Quality assurance

The quality of learning and teaching should be enhanced through scholarship, research, continuing professional development and the sharing of good practices

3. GOALS OF THE LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY

The goals of the Learning and Teaching Policy are designed to fulfil the University’s Vision, Mission and Core Values and will provide the basis for:

• Ensuring the relevance of learning and teaching so that students are prepared for life, work and citizenship
• Making the learning experience a positive, rewarding and satisfying one for students
• Managing educational change
• Evaluating and continually improving the quality of learning and teaching
• Directing and supporting the enhancement of learning and teaching excellence
• Promoting the scholarship of learning and teaching
• Rewarding academic staff for excellence in teaching
• Consolidating the national and international reputation as an institution offering a range of high quality and relevant programmes
• Demonstrating that excellence in learning and teaching makes a significant contribution to the achievement of the University’s Vision, Mission, Core Values and strategic priorities

4. GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

The University’s academic programmes will encompass the following graduate attributes to be achieved by all students:

• Information and communication technology knowledge and skills
• Self-directed, lifelong learning skills
• Critical and creative thinking skills
• Problem-solving skills
• Communication skills
• Entrepreneurship and employability skills
• Organisational and teamwork skills
• Research skills and information literacy
- Social responsibility and leadership skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Cross-cultural fluency
- Accountability and ethical standards

All academic programmes will be required to demonstrate how these graduate attributes will be integrated into curriculum design and assessment.

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY

5.1 Policy Areas

The Learning and Teaching Policy is guided by four policy areas:

i. Learning

The University aims to support students to:

- Become active learners, meeting their academic aims and developing their skills for life, work and citizenship
- Become independent learners and acquire the skills for lifelong learning, including information literacy
- Be challenging and enquiring in their learning through exposure to flexible, technology-enhanced, innovative learning and teaching strategies that create a highly engaging and relevant learning experience
- Meet their needs and aspirations in transition from secondary school through appropriate support initiatives, including for those with special needs
- Improve their effective written and oral communication skills
- Learn how to apply knowledge to the solution of real-world problems
- Acquire international skills, cross-cultural perspectives, respect for different values and other skills useful in a diverse global environment
- Use information and communication technologies that allow flexible access to learning resources, lecturers and other students, and to actively participate in evaluating and improving the University
- Develop entrepreneurship and employability skills
- Participate in living and learning communities that encourage and support reflective learning and the development of life-skills
- Benefit from a learner-centred approach and engage in reflective and critical thinking supported by on-going scholarship and learning
- Develop strong ethical values
- Have an active sense of citizenship and social responsibility and a commitment to the economic, social and cultural development of the diverse communities of Uganda and the Region

ii. Teaching

The University seeks to:

- Value, encourage and reward effective, responsive and innovative teaching
- Ensure learning and teaching support is inclusive and does not discriminate or marginalise students, allowing everyone the same opportunity to succeed
- Enable choice for academic staff to design appropriate modes of educational delivery and assessment strategies within institutional guidelines
- Ensure relevance in curriculum design and delivery
- Encourage and support research-led teaching that incorporates up-to-date research perspectives, processes and findings into the curriculum
- Support the sharing and learning from best practices across the University, as well as from national and international networks and forums, in order to improve performance in learning and teaching
- Foster a community that encourages and supports reflective and critical learning for students, staff and the University
- Promote and encourage teaching in ways that support students entering higher education and which develops the academic and autonomous learning capabilities of students on higher level courses
- Recognise excellence in teaching in processes of staff recruitment, promotion and reward
- Implement strategies, processes and approaches that encourage and facilitate academic staff to integrate the application of appropriate technologies into the teaching and learning process
- Evaluate the quality of teaching performance through a process involving learner evaluation, peer-evaluation, self-evaluation and evaluation by the Head of Department

iii. Assessment

The University endeavours to:
- Demonstrate the vital role of feedback and assessment as an integral part of the learning process and encourage self and peer review
- Provide students with timely, detailed and quality feedback on their work in ways that promote learning and facilitate improvement and growth
- Streamline assessment to support the learning experience and avoid over assessment
- Assess students in formative and summative ways that are appropriate, fair, transparent and equitable, using a wide range of assessment modes in order to allow all students the opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of learning outcomes
- Ensure that academic standards set in the University meet appropriate national, regional and international benchmarks
- Offer opportunities for students to be assessed for the recognition of prior learning, experience and achievement

iv. Professional development

The University aims to:
- Ensure training and development opportunities for staff in order to further improve academic performance in the area of learning and teaching.
- Maintain quality assurance teams at Departmental, School and College levels, under the leadership of senior academics, to assist in the development of programmes and to explore ways of implementing appropriate learning and
teaching strategies to achieve the University’s Vision, Mission and Core Values

- Offer a postgraduate qualification in higher education that focuses on continuing professional development, empowering and preparing individuals to be better tertiary educators, leaders and managers
- Implement an appointment, promotion and review procedure that takes into account and recognises contributions to learning and teaching
- Implement procedures within the Performance Management System for the continuous improvement of academic performance

5.2 Alignment with other policies and strategies

The Department of the Academic Registrar is responsible for monitoring alignment of this Policy with University policies and strategies. Actions and strategies that are implemented in accordance with this Policy should not conflict with or contradict the goals of other University policies or strategies. Where a conflict or contradiction occurs with another University policy or strategy, the Department of the Academic Registrar is responsible for initiating measures to resolve the conflict and to ensure alignment between this Policy and the policy or strategy concerned.

5.3 Implementation Responsibility

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) shall oversee the implementation of this Policy. The implementation of this Policy shall be the responsibility of the Department of the Academic Registrar, Principals, Deans, Heads of Departments, and the Institute for Adult and Continuing Education and academic staff. Guided by this Policy, every College, School and Department will be expected to develop their own learning and teaching strategies. Support departments and units shall ensure appropriate and timely implementation of actions to support academic staff in realising their learning and teaching goals. Adequate and appropriate resources, such as classrooms, staff offices, Library facilities, IT facilities, laboratories and teaching equipment shall be in place to achieve the desired Policy goals. The provision of adequate resources for the realisation of the goals of this Policy will be achieved through the University’s budget process and resource allocation model.

Learning and Teaching Policy approved by Senate on __________________________

Next review of policy due _______________________________________________