




University of Venda
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

VERSION NUMBER	DATE	AUTHOR	DESCRIPTION	Reviewed and Approved By	Approval Date
Original	11.2010	XG. Mbhenyane VO. Netshandama J. Francis V. Sankaran T. Mashamba C. Hagenmeier B. Dube S. Kaheru R. Mukhodobwane T. Nethengwe	Original Policy	Council	16 Sep 2011
		N. Nemadodzi L. Ramabulana			

Section: Community Engagement Directorate
Policy Reference number:
Date approved by Council: 16 September 2011


Mr N H Mugwedi
Deputy Registrar

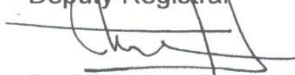

Prof P M Mbatl
Vice-Chancellor and Principal

TABLE OF CONTENTS**PAGE**

PRE AMBLE	2
1. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY	2
2. BASIC POLICY PRINCIPLES	3
3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	3
3.1. Roles of Community Engagement Directorate	3
3.2. Roles of Departments, Centres and Schools	4
4. DEFINITION OF TERMS	4
4.1. Communities	4
4.2. Work Integrated Learning	4
4.3. Experiential Learning	4
4.4. Service Learning	5
4.5. Community Based Education(CBE)	5
4.6. Community Based Teaching (CBT)	5
4.7. Practical or Clinical attachment	5
4.8. Community-Engaged Research (CER)	5
4.9. Volunteerism	5
4.10. Community outreach	6
4.11. Humanitarian programme	6
4.12. Non-academic community service	6
4.13. Community Partnership	6
4.13.1. Formal Partnership	6
4.13.2. Informal Partnership	6
5. CE QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS	6
6. NATIONAL LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK	7
7. RELATED UNIVEN POLICIES	7
8. REVIEW DATE	7

PREAMBLE

The University of Venda espouses the view that the task of a University is threefold, namely a) Teaching and Learning b) Research and c) Community Engagement (CE).

The University strives to ensure that the various strands of the core business of the university remain interlinked. In support of its mission and within its strategic focus the community engagement programme aims to address community needs on a local, regional and national level.

The University commits itself to the process of “integrating community engagement into teaching, learning and research” through integrating the broadening of knowledge (learning) and the discovery of knowledge (research) with community realities (application), culminating in a coordinated approach towards its strategic direction.

The policy covers the four pillars of community engagement namely:

- a) Community Engagement in Teaching and Learning [Work Integrated Learning including all forms of experiential learning];
- b) Community Engaged Research;
- c) Public/Social responsibility, Humanitarian programmes [also referred to as Community service and, or Volunteerism]; and
- d) Community partnership.

1. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to

- Align community engagement with the strategic priorities of the University of Venda;
- Provide a coherent institutional framework for community engagement as an integral part of teaching, learning and research of the university and into “university life” (extra-curricular community engagement);
- Pursue a “scholarship of engagement”, i.e. the discovery, knowledge, integration, application and teaching that result from engagement with the community;
- Create an enabling environment for a vibrant community engagement at UNIVEN through providing a framework for establishing and maintaining reciprocal relationships between the university and the communities;
- Enhance quality management in community engagement planning, design, development, resourcing, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review, to ensure consistency;
- Ensure ethical conduct in community engagement;
- Enrich student engagement and learning (through participation) and research relevance (by focusing on local needs) and through extra-curricular activities;
- Facilitate the monitoring, measurement and evaluation of the outputs and impact of the University’s community engagement activities;
- Acknowledge involvement and excellence in community engagement on the part of staff and students;
- Educate about the risks associated with community engagement;
- Review community engagement activities regularly; and
- govern involvement of personnel in community work and as such underpin individual performance agreements.

2. BASIC POLICY PRINCIPLES

Adherence to high quality community engagement standards will be ensured. UNIVEN-Community partnerships shall strive to perform to the highest standard and will continue to benchmark against good practices in other institutions of higher learning. Existing partnership will subject itself to evaluation by peers and community members where appropriate.

The University acknowledges the voluntary engagement (volunteerism) with the community by staff and students as part of initiatives by their departments and sections. The continuation and autonomy of such activities are supported, but remain subject to the organised framework created by this policy in terms of the public/social responsibility and humanitarian category of community engagement.

The code of ethics for community engagement is grounded on the ethical values of the various professions and their practitioners¹. In view of the value system of the University, a code of conduct for community activities is endorsed as a part of the community engagement guidelines and procedure².

A database is maintained in which all community interaction activities are uniformly documented and updated for managing, monitoring and coordinating purposes. All community engagement projects or programmes are registered on the central project system of the university. Projects overlapping with teaching and research are registered as one project but indicating the community engagement policy component.

All community engagement projects or programmes, whether internally or externally funded, are managed in compliance with the financial policy of the University.

Any staff member and individual student or group may initiate a partnership, provided that it is done in such a way that it recognises the University and has a potential value add to the community, students and or the University.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic oversees the overall management and promotion of community engagement at the University of Venda. He or she discharges this responsibility through the Director of Community Engagement, Deans and the Community Engagement Committee, which is a Committee of Senate. The Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic is also the Chairperson of the Community Engagement Committee. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor may delegate this responsibility to one of the Directors or Deans. The terms of reference for the CE Committee include amongst others ensuring that communications, activities and mandates of CE filters through to Schools and departments.

3.1 Roles of the Community Engagement (CE) Directorate

The CE Directorate shall:

- 1) Provide strategic direction and advice to ensure compliance with the institutional mandate and principles of community engagement;
- 2) Discharge policy implementation through the Community Engagement Committee;

¹The ethical code is entailed in the CE business plan

²The policy should be read in conjunction with policy guidelines and procedure

- 3) Assess the impact of CE using relevant instruments and tools/techniques and;
- 4) Provide guidance and support to departments, schools and individual staff on CE activities.

3.2 Roles of Departments, Centres and Schools

- 1) Each staff member may initiate and establish a relevant CE project;
- 2) Establish and maintain a School Community Engagement Committee in which students, staff and relevant community shall be represented; or
- 3) Establish and maintain a Department CE sub-committee

4. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

4.1. "Communities"

Communities in UNIVEN refer to rural, local and regional communities; targeted and interest groups of people in the community.

The HEQC broadly defines community engagement as “initiatives and processes through which the expertise of the higher education institution in the areas of teaching and learning are applied to address issues relevant to its community. Key features that we seek to include as part of constructing community engagement experience in UNIVEN include:

a) Intent and focus b) Context c) Mutual benefits d) Value add e) Improvement of the quality of life and f) Scholarship of engagement.

4.2. Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)

Work-Integrated Learning refers to the component of a learning programme that focuses on the application of theory in an authentic, work based context. It addresses specific competencies (theoretical, practical and reflexive) identified for the acquisition of a qualification, which relate to the development of skills that will make the student employable and will assist in developing personal skills. Employer and professional bodies are involved in the assessment of WIL, together with lecturers (HEQC, 2004 a & c)³. Work-based learning refers to a formal higher education learning that is based wholly or predominantly in a work setting. HEQC (2004, p. 29)⁴ defines work-based learning in a broad way that is closer to work-related learning⁵.

4.2.1. Experiential learning

The term **experiential learning** is used in the document but should be read to encompass clinical practice, fieldwork, practice learning, externships and/or service learning occurring in a range of sites from University managed clinics to facilities (health, educational, welfare etc.), both public and private, on and off campus. Experiential learning should further be read to encompass all aspects of learning that occurs outside of the class room and/or skills laboratory. Such experiential learning is acknowledged as a distinct element of UNIVEN degree structures in most disciplines, and ‘fieldwork’ or ‘clinical practice’ has to account for a defined number of actual hours within the degree structure for graduation in a number of disciplines (Statutory registration body requirement).

³HEQC (2004). Criteria for Institutional Audits. Pretoria: Council on Higher Education.

⁴(HEQC. (2004). Framework for programme accreditation. Pretoria: Council on Higher Education.

⁵In line with the HEQC’s proposal, UNIVEN uses the concept of WIL to embrace Engaged Teaching and Learning.

4.2.2. Service-Learning

Service learning is a type of experiential education which forms the basis for the teaching and learning whereby students learn and develop through active participation

- in thoughtfully organised service that is integrated into and enhances academic curricular learning;
- which is conducted to meet the needs of the community (as identified by the community by means of a needs assessment);
- which include structured time and guidelines for students to reflect in written and oral format on the service experience and gain a deeper understanding of the module content.

Service Learning is a pedagogical model; it is first and foremost a teaching methodology, more than a values model. Second, there is an intentional effort made to utilize the community-based learning on behalf of academic learning and to utilize academic learning to inform community service.

4.2.3. Community-Based Education (CBE)

CBE refers to learning that takes place in a setting external to the higher education institution.

4.2.4. Community-Based Teaching (CBT) – This is a form of instruction where trainees learn professional competencies in a community setting focusing on population groups and also individuals and their everyday problems. The amount of time students spend in the community and organizational settings may vary. For example, in the case of health and nursing, instruction may take place in clinics, community health centre or a rural hospital, etc. Community-based education is similar to work-based education.

4.2.5. Practical or Clinical attachment

Clinical practice and practical teaching is defined as a task-oriented process that focuses on the acquisition of relevant competencies (knowledge, skills and dispositions) required to produce quality practitioners (e.g. students in Nursing, Allied Health Professions, Social Work and Education). A clinical learning experience takes place in a dynamic interaction between the learner/student and the external conditions in the teaching and learning environment.

4.2.6. Community-Engaged Research (CER) is a particular research methodology in which the external community and social partners collaborate with academic researchers to produce knowledge that is used for the benefit of the community. 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 functions of scholarship, namely discovery, integration, application and engagement, in the research project, research outcomes and outputs. CER must embrace:

- Joint needs assessment, problem definition and participatory decision making with the community involved and must be,
- Interdisciplinary

4.3. Volunteerism

Volunteerism is the engagement of students and staff in activities where the primary beneficiary is the recipient community and the primary goal is to provide a service. Volunteer programmes are essentially altruistic by nature. Although students may learn from these programmes, they

are generally not related to, or integrated into curricular. Activities often take place during vacation or outside tuition time.

4.4. Community Outreach

Community outreach programmes involve more structure and commitment from students resulting in some student learning. Generally these programmes are initiated from a Department or School, or as an institution-wide initiative. A good community outreach is able to develop into either an academic credit bearing module or research. *As the student begins to engage in formal intellectual discourse about service issues, the programme is likely to be integrated to become more like service-learning. In addition, research questions do come out of the activities from time to time.*

4.5. Humanitarian Programmes

UNIVEN understands that charitable activities are part of its public responsibility and supports such as part of its humanitarian programmes. Humanitarian programmes might be long term or short term. Humanitarian programmes of UNIVEN shall include disaster response. Students who assist with disaster relief activities may apply to be credited for such activities as Work Integrated Learning according to the principles Recognition of Prior Learning as entrenched in the relevant policies.

4.6. Non-Academic Community Service

Non-Academic Community Service refers to services which are rendered for the benefit of communities which are not having an academic or training benefit to the provider (student or staff member) attached. Examples would include basic computer literacy training and teaching communities on democracy, government processes, and participation in debates on specific issues.

4.7. Community Partnership

Community partnerships refer to any form of working relationship entered into between UNIVEN and a specific community. The partnerships shall relate to partnerships for Work-Integrated Learning (WIL), Community Engaged Research (CER), and Public Responsibility. The partnership may either be formal or informal.

4.8. Formal partnership

A formal relationship means a working arrangement in which the roles, responsibilities and obligations of each party are clearly articulated in a signed memorandum of understanding (MoU), memorandum of agreement (MoA) or service level agreement (SLA).

4.9. Informal partnership

Informal partnership refers to an unwritten working arrangement which is not cemented by the signing of MoU, MoA or SLA.

5. CE QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Quality arrangements of a CE project revolve around the following four departments and structures:

- a) The CE Committee of SENATE reviews and makes recommendations for quality improvement of all registered projects.
- b) The Schools CE committees review all CE projects at school level before forwarding same to CE committee of SENATE.
- c) Learning materials for WIL are reviewed by Quality Assurance Department of the IPQA.

- d) The Ethics Committee of the RPC reviews all ethical matters pertaining to the project.
- e) Where necessary, the Community Advisory Board is asked to review and/or give recommendations for quality improvement on CE project particularly those that have a CE dimension.

6. NATIONAL LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The policy draws from the following South African Higher Education legal context:

- The national imperatives as contained in the National Commission on Higher Education Report A;
- Framework for Transformation (1996); the Education White Paper: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (1997); The Higher Education Act, No. 101 of 1997;
- A New Academic Policy for Programmes and Qualifications in Higher Education, RSA, CHE (2002);
- The Criteria for Institutional Audits, Higher Education Quality Committee, CHE (June 2004);
- A Good Practice Guide and Self-evaluation Instruments for Managing the Quality of Service Learning, HEQC (June 2006);
- CHE, 2010:Kagisano No.6;
- The vision and mission of the University of Venda; and
- The Institutional Strategic Plan, 2009-2013 of the UNIVEN.

7. RELATED UNIVEN POLICIES

Other UNIVEN policies relevant to CE are:

- a) Teaching and Learning Policy
- b) Research Policy
- c) Policy on Private Work

8. REVIEW DATE

This policy will be reviewed regularly.