TO: Council

Title of Report	Revised Curriculum Policy
Portfolio Manager	Prof Veronica McKay
Persons/Bodies Consulted	Senate
Date	19 March 2021
Purpose	To update and revise the Curriculum Policy aiming to reflect Unisa strategies and imperatives in qualification and module development
Background	The vision of Unisa is "Towards *the* African university shaping futures in the service of humanity". We take this vision as the guiding principle informing the university's curriculum policy in its module and programme offerings. Our assumption is that Unisa aspires, firstly, to be an Afrikan university and not a university in Afrika – because Unisa believes in the existence of Afrikan values that can inform such a university. Secondly, we believe that Unisa is in service of humanity, which means that its curriculum should centre the graduate in that all other spheres of existence are there to privilege human existence. In other words, Unisa guards against the marketisation and commodification of education and knowledge. Thirdly, we believe that shaping futures means that Afrikan values will shape the new world that we are rethinking and reimagining, hence our curriculum must be responsive to Afrikan - values, epistemology, ontology, culture, language and thought leadership. This is from where we draw our sense of purpose in revising the curriculum policy. All our effort is directed at ensuring that Unisa realises its mission and vision. To us, this is important because this aspiration talks directly to our realities where, as Afrikans, our existence has been peripheralised through the legacy of myth and emptiness. The curriculum, as we have it, is a result of colonialisation that destroyed existing knowledge and imposed the one that was responding to the needs of the colonizers. This is the historical account in which curriculum was/is responding to, an account embedded in past atrocities. Responding to colonisation means to decolonise, in the context of Unisa, to decolonise means to Re-Afrikanise because colonialism in Africa was to westernize Afrikan knowledge, decolonisation means Re-Afrikanisation. This is important to articulate because curriculum transformation not just about responding to the current conditions, but is also about redressing the atrocities of the past. We believe that the failure to do this, risks the repetition of past atrocities.

Since 2012, when the curriculum policy was last revised, there have been major changes in the higher education landscape. These changes demand that Unisa should do introspection and reflection to respond to and address these changes in a seamless way. One such change that requires Unisa's attention is curriculum responsiveness. The revision of the existing curriculum policy therefore is aimed at purposively addressing the curriculum and the granular points of transformation are achieved by specifically and conscientiously eliciting and making central Afrikan epistemologies as an equal body of knowledges for teaching, learning and research in the predominantly colonial epistemological culture. Such transformation shall be realised through indigenisation and decolonization of the curriculum so that Unisa is able to keep pace and stay abreast of current trends and best practices, and adhere to regulations, implement policies, and stimulate discourses and debates – both at programme level and module level.

Curriculum transformation is not new to Unisa. Since 2007, there has been a concerted drive at Unisa to *revisit* epistemology as foundational to transformation; *promote* Afrikan thought and Afrikan thought leadership, Afrikan philosophies and interests to counter the legacy and centrality of Western intellectual hegemony; *highlight* the importance of student-centredness as a change agent; *practice* critical scholarship focused on Afrikan perspectives towards society and knowledge production; *foreground* an awareness of our strengths and opportunities in the market; and *ensure* quality and the importance of research and its centrality in steering Unisa towards transformation, including a focus on community engagement towards a sustainable future in shaping lives. On 17 January 2007, Unisa became a signatory to the United Nations Global Impact (UNGC) and hence the university has made a concerted effort to ensure that the 10 UNGC principles premised on human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption are integrated in its curriculum offerings.

To support, strengthen and enforce curriculum change and to attain epistemic justice and Afrikan knowledge centralisation, Unisa has put in place, Unisa has put in place a number of measures, guidelines, policies and frameworks to ensure that curriculum processes are aligned to its strategy, operations, culture, research, teaching, learning, resources and community engagement. Examples of such measures, policies and guidelines are: Guidelines on Estimating and Calculating Notional Hours, Minimum Standards for Blended Learning and Online Learning; Guidelines for the Implementation of Active Learning; the revised Framework for a Team Approach to Curriculum Design and Development; the revised Assessment Policy; the revised Unisa Business Model; the revised Tuition Policy; and the Prescribed Books Policy. In 2017, all seven colleges were requested to develop a curriculum transformation framework, which was

implemented in 2018. One of the roles of the Curriculum Transformation Unit was to establish a baseline for the implementation of curriculum transformation frameworks in all the colleges and then to analyse the progress of this implementation on a quarterly basis and report to the Senate Teaching, Learning and Community Engagement Committee (STLCEC).

The revised Curriculum Policy was tabled for Senate approval on the 28 October 2020. The then chairperson of Senate referred the draft to STLCEC requesting re-circulation to stakeholders for further inputs. Further inputs were received from the College of Education, College of Human Sciences and the Department of Transformation and Leadership. In the first draft, inputs were received from the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, College of Economic and Management Sciences and the Directorate: Institutional Student Support.
The revised Curriculum Policy was subsequently tabled and approved at the Senate held on the 18 March 2021.

1.   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / DISCUSSION / CONTENTS

The current Curriculum Policy has been approved in 2010 and revised in 2012.

Since 2012 Unisa has formulated new strategies and focus areas to ensure a fully functional ODeL institution with an impact in a modern South African and global society.

The purpose of the submission is to seek approval of the 2021 revision of the Curriculum Policy. The proposed revised policy was approved by senate on 18 March 2021 after an extensive consultation process.

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Council is therefore requested to approve the revised Curriculum Policy.

2. STRATEGIC INTENT

The revised Curriculum Policy is aligned with Strategic Focus Area 1:

Accelerating the shift towards becoming a leading ODeL, comprehensive African university in teaching and learning, research, innovation and community engagement based on scholarship.

3. BUDGET / FINANCIAL IMPACT

The implementation of the revised policy will be managed and funded through the current budget allocations to Colleges and the Department of Tuition Support and Facilitation of Learning.

4. HR IMPACT

No HR impact. Existing staff will be inducted and trained in the implementation of policy through existing training channels.

5. POLICY IMPLICATION

Policy implication: revision of the Curriculum Policy to align with Unisa strategies.

6. SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

The proposal will increase the sustainability of Unisa programs and qualifications as it aligns teaching and learning with institutional aspirations and values.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

No risks have been identified.

9. ATTACHMENTS

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10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Council is requested to approved the revised Curriculum Policy.

11. APPROVAL BY PORTFOLIO MANAGER

YES	x
NO	

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Signature: Portfolio Manager

12. APPROVAL BY PRINCIPAL AND VICE CHANCELLOR

Specifically indicate whether the proposal/recommendation is supported by the Principal and Vice Chancellor

YES	
NO	

....
Signature: Principal and Vice Chancellor

...........................//**end**
(if there are no attachments)
<mark>OR</mark>
.............................//**attachments**