



**POLICY: CURRICULUM DESIGN AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT RESOURCES**

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| <b>Related documents</b>  |                      |  |                  |
| <b>Da Vinci documents</b><br>(eg. Policies, Regulations, Guidelines, Contracts) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy: Assessment</li> <li>• Policy: Teaching and Learning</li> <li>• SOP for Moderation Practices</li> <li>• Policy: Management of Experiential and Work-based Learning</li> </ul> |                      | <b>Other</b><br>(eg Legislation, DoE and HEQC directives and guidelines) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitution of the Republic of South Africa: 1996</li> <li>• Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997)</li> <li>• CHE: Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) Criteria for Programme Accreditation: November, 2004</li> <li>• Labour Relations Act (Act 66 of 1995) as amended</li> <li>• CHE: Distance Higher Education Programmes in a Digital Era: Good Practice Guide</li> <li>• SAQA: National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications and Part Qualifications and Professional Designations in South Africa</li> </ul> |                  |
| <b>Website address of this document:</b>  |                      | <b><a href="http://www.davinci.ac.za">www.davinci.ac.za</a></b>  |                  |

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## 1 Preamble

This policy forms part of the set of quality management policies of The Da Vinci Institute for Technology Management.

Da Vinci offers outcomes based, distance education opportunities. This policy details the principles and processes that will ensure that learning programme offerings are aligned to the principles of a Mode 2 higher education institution, whilst adhering to the required academic standards and empowering students with the knowledge, skills and values to contribute to their communities, society and economy of the future.

## 2 Scope

The policy applies to the design of curricula and the development of learning and assessment resources for all accredited qualifications of The Da Vinci Institute as well as short learning programmes.

Design includes the revision of current material and the design and development of new material, as well as considerations regarding the linkages between learning outcomes and assessment activities.

Development refers to the actual writing of learning and assessment resources.

The core components of curriculum design are the following:

- 🌀 Programme frameworks
- 🌀 Design of specific modules
- 🌀 Study guides
- 🌀 Handouts, tools, articles, worksheets and other learning resources
- 🌀 Formative, summative and integrated programme assessments – lecturer plans and supporting resources, e.g. learning activities, slides, DVD clips and games
- 🌀 Online self-paced individual learning resources to facilitate distance learning
- 🌀 A programme structure including the sequence and duration of modules and associated assessment strategy.

## 3 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that design and development practices contribute to compliance with regulatory and other requirements, including guidelines offered in *The Council on Higher Education's Distance Higher Education Programmes in a Digital Era: Good Practice Guide* (CHE, 2014).

## 4 Objectives

The objectives of the policy include the following:

- 🌀 Standardising design and development practices at the Institute
- 🌀 Establishing a shared understanding amongst all role-players of the process and responsibilities
- 🌀 Communicating the principles to prospective material developers and lecturing staff

- ☞ Ensuring continuous improvement of curricula and supporting material.

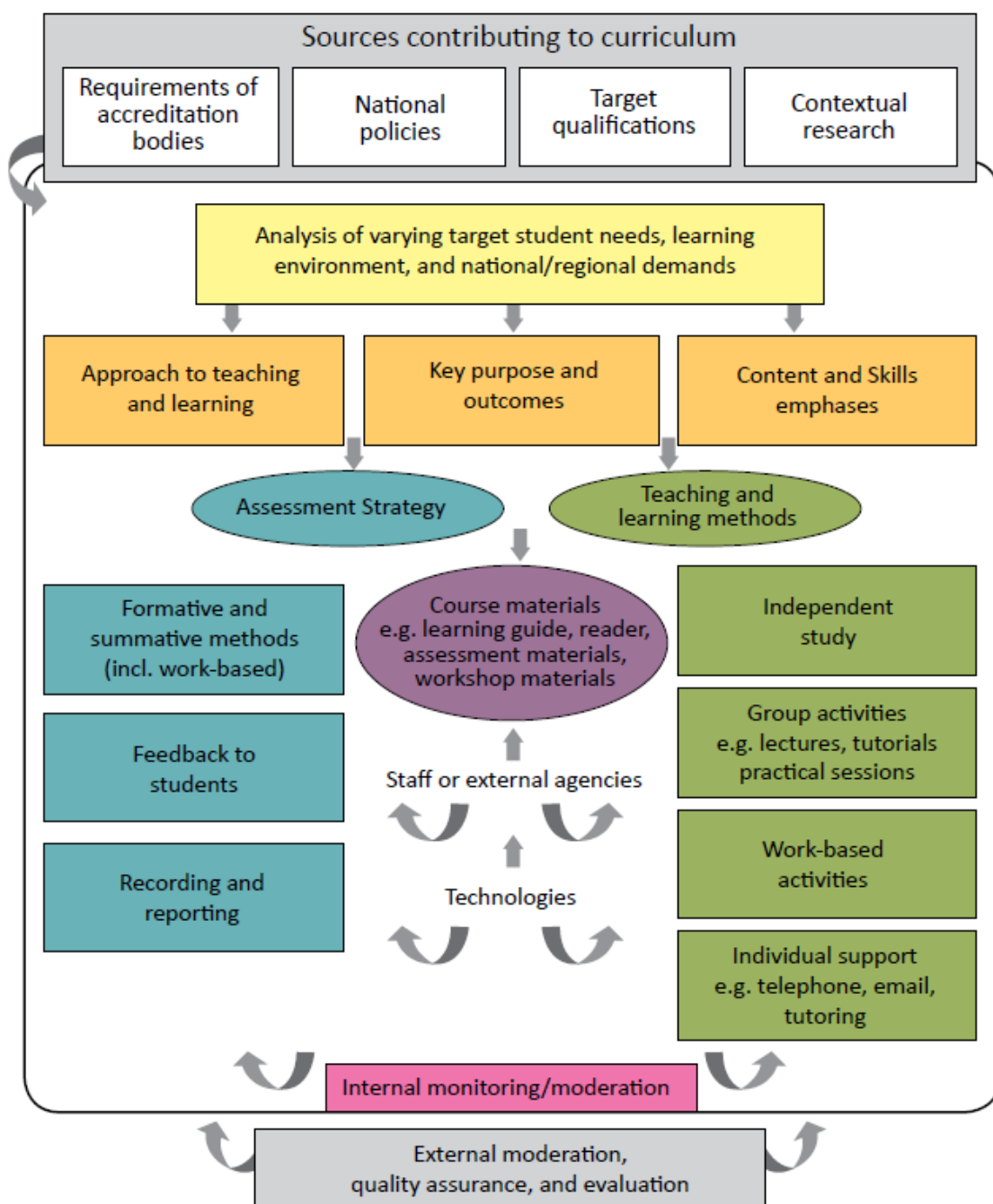
## 5 High Level Processes

The Institute's design and development processes are informed by the following:

- ☞ The Da Vinci Institute's guiding principles as set out in the Institutional Preamble, including the following:
  - The Institute's vision and mission, principles and brand promise
  - Mode 2 knowledge production
  - Learning Styles and Experiential Learning
  - The Business Leadership framework
  - Adult Learning Principles
  - Distance Education Principles
  - The Institute's Value Propositions

- ☞ The learning and assessment principles described in section 6 of this policy

The macro design framework for the curriculum design for distance education programmes as set out in *The Council on Higher Education's Distance Higher Education Programmes in a Digital Era: Good Practice Guide* (CHE, 2014:17) – see Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Curriculum design for distance education programmes**

In the context of a Mode 2 distance learning institution, the model has been interpreted to provide guidance to developers in the form of a curriculum design process and a resource development process.

Discussions on elective streams are initiated by considering the needs of target markets, learning environments, and national/regional demands. Regulatory requirements (e.g. CHE and DHET) and national skills needs as identified in the National Development Plan and the National Skills Development list of scarce skills, are taken into account.

Curriculum design (in support of the core curriculum), starts with an identification of the integrated authentic assessment products and assessment criteria for each module. The level descriptors are used to ensure that assessment is pitched at the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

### 5.1 Curriculum design

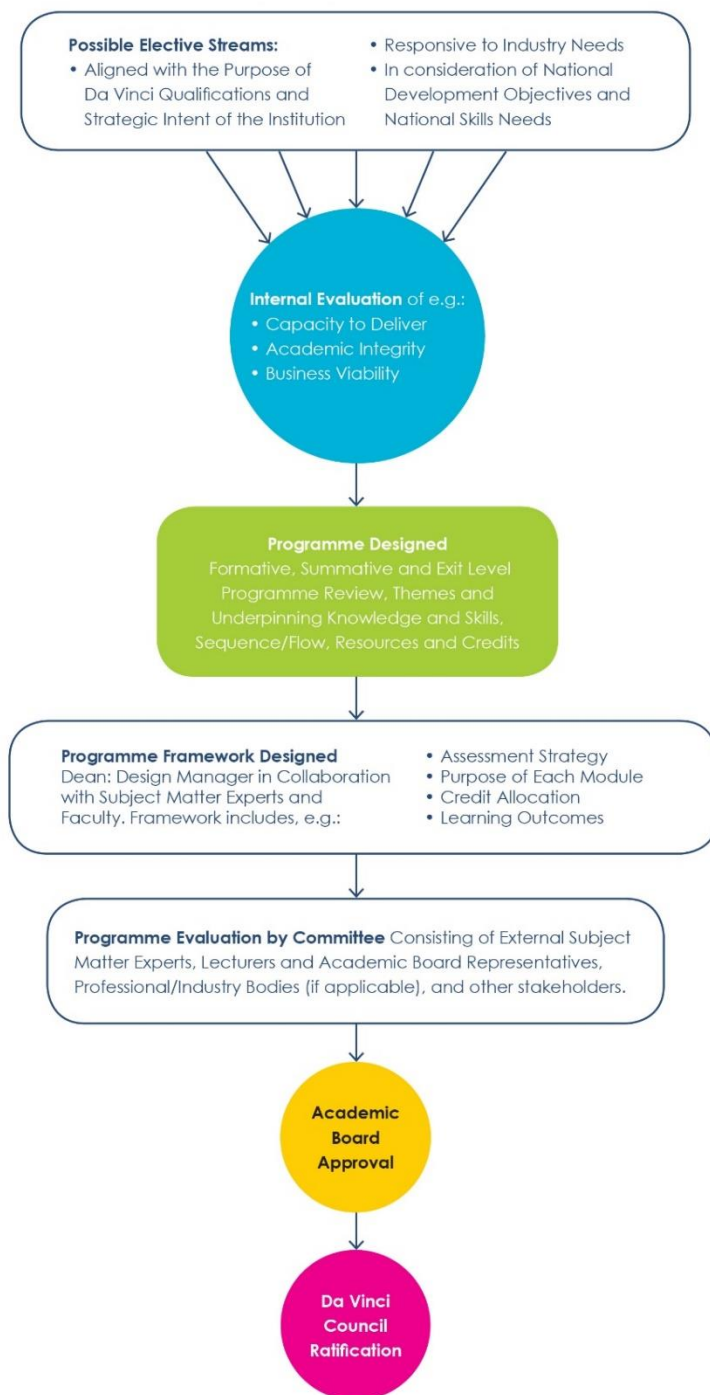
The following process guides the design of all curricula at Da Vinci:

- Determine the purpose, rationale of a proposed programme
- Deduce the programme outcomes and associated assessment criteria
- From the programme outcomes deduce modules and module outcomes
- From the associated assessment criteria deduce the assessment events
- From the assessment events develop suitable assessment tools to measure programme and module outcomes (e.g. Preparatory Activities, Reports, Oral Examination, Integrated Assessment)
- Benchmark all of the above dimensions in curriculum design against national and international academic best practice, the relevant National Qualification Framework (NQF) levels, and consult the relevant Subject Matter Expert (Lecturer)
- Identify underpinning knowledge, skills and attitudes/values required to master the competence
- Document the above in the:
  - Programme framework
  - Integrated curriculum design for a programme
  - Detailed curriculum design per module
  - Assessment rubrics.

### 5.2 Programme Approval Process

The curriculum framework is evaluated by the Programme Evaluation committee, consisting of external Subject Matter Experts, Lecturers, a representative of the Academic Board and/or professional/industry bodies, if applicable, which makes recommendations to the Academic Board, and is ratified at the Da Vinci Council (for more detail see Figure 2).

## Policy: Curriculum Design and the Development of Learning and Assessment Resources

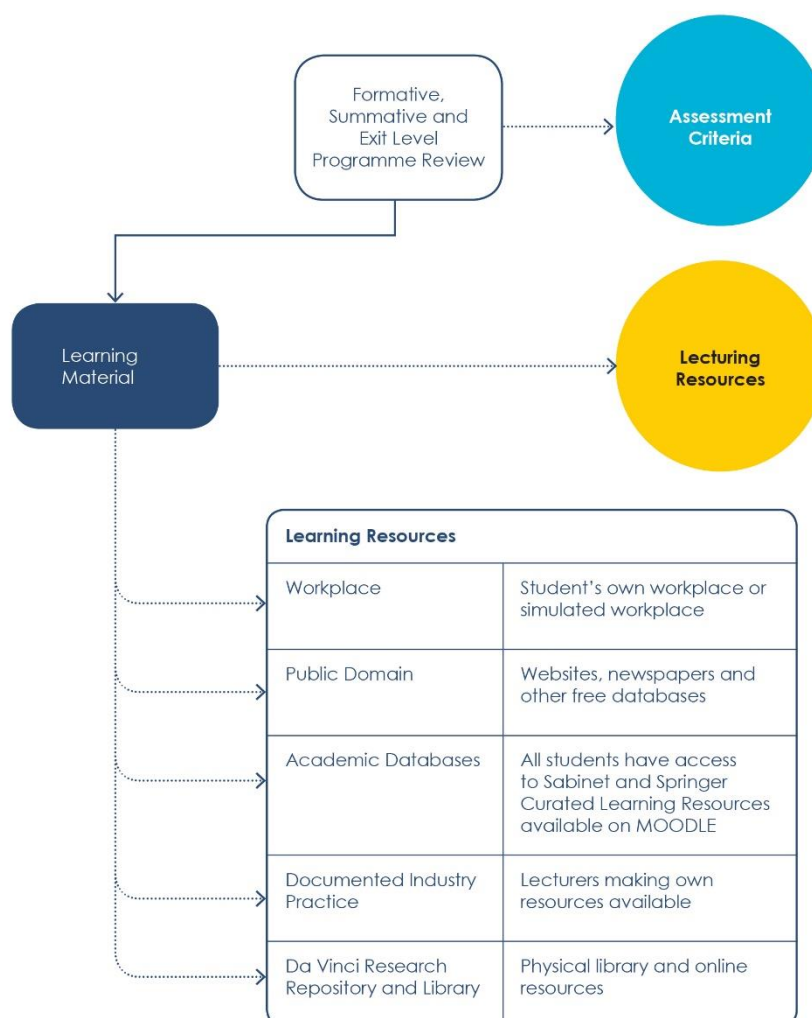


**Figure 2: Programme Approval Process**

### 5.3 Development of Learning, Lecturing and Assessment Resources

Figure 3 illustrates the application of distance learning principles using the learning resource as the core learning and assessment tool. The resource guides the student on his/her journey, ensuring the discovery process invites the student to investigate current learning resources from a variety of sources (CHE, 2014).

Learning resource development is based on the assessment products and criteria, drawing on a range of resources, e.g. the Da Vinci library and learning resource centre, including text books as appropriate, documented industry practice, academic databases, material which is in the public domain, and the student's own workplace practice, where possible.



**Figure 3: Resource Development Process**



## Policy: Curriculum Design and the Development of Learning and Assessment Resources

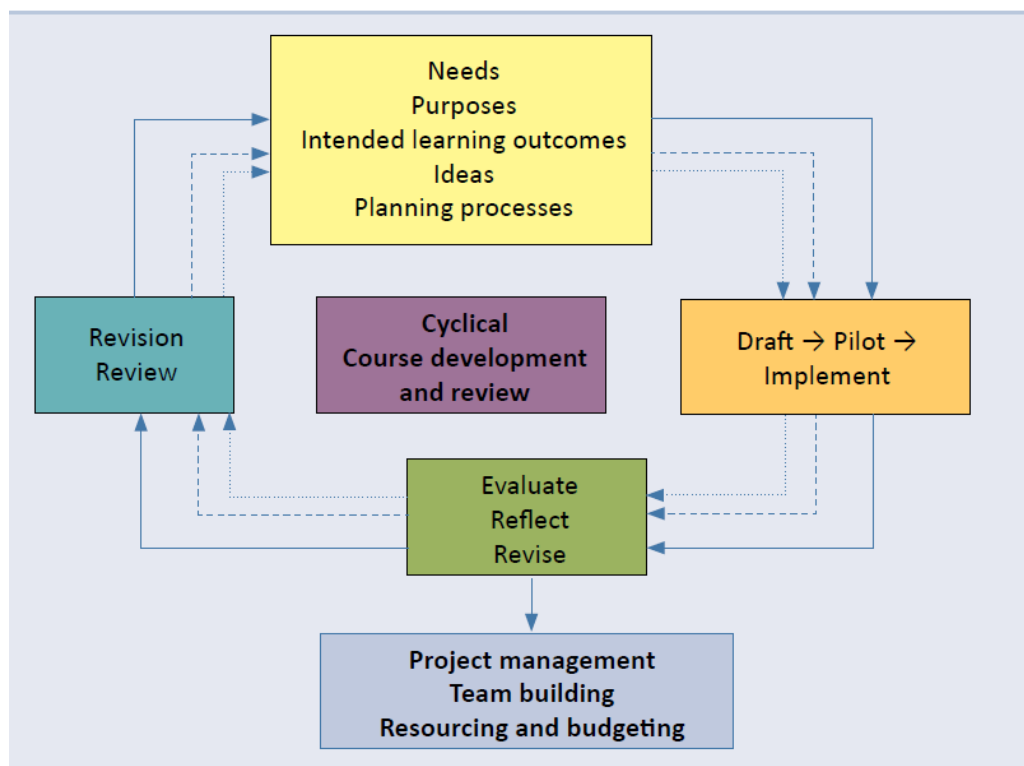
The development of learning and assessment resources is a collaborative effort between the following role-players:

- 🌀 Dean: Design
- 🌀 Instructional Developer
- 🌀 Lecturer
- 🌀 Industry and specialist Subject Matter Experts

To ensure best quality, all final draft learning and assessment resources are sent to a:

- 🌀 Language editor
- 🌀 Graphic designer

The Institute subscribes to the continuous improvement of learning and assessment resources. The framework in Figure 4 illustrates the iterative nature of learning and assessment resource development (CHE, 2014:20).



**Figure 4: The iterative nature of learning resource development**

In addition, The Institute's Assessment Process is informed by moderators' feedback and trends analysis of marks that serve at Marks Committee meetings. These measures form an integral part of the design of assessment instruments, as well as the use and review thereof.

## 6 Principles

### 6.1 Pedagogical and curricular modalities for experiential and work-based learning

A combination of pedagogical and curricular modalities (CHE, 2014: 34) is employed to meet the needs of the target group and achieve the purpose of the qualification, i.e.:

- ☞ Work-directed theoretical learning, i.e. ensuring that theory relates to work situations (CHE, 2011)
- ☞ Problem-based learning, i.e. the 'structured exploration of a research or practice-based problem' (Savin-Baden and Major, 2004 in CHE, 2011)
- ☞ Project-based learning, i.e. 'intellectual enquiry, real-world problems, and student engagement' (CHE, 2011)
- ☞ Workplace learning, i.e. as a 'learning resource and as a benchmark of practice'
- ☞ Work-based learning, i.e. 'learning for, at, or through work' (Brennan and Little, 1996 in CHE, 2011).

Learning opportunities and assessment instruments are selected to optimise the student's learning journey and apply the learning and assessment principles described in this policy. These modalities are particularly important in the application of theory in the workplace or in authentic real-life contexts. The integration of all of these modalities find expression in the formative, summative and integrated assessments.

The above modalities ensure an appropriate mix of theory and practice to achieve the purpose of each qualification. Learning and assessment opportunities and resources are designed to promote the application of theory within the workplace or in authentic real-life contexts.

### 6.2 Distance Education

The design and development of all curricula and supporting material is aimed at placing students at the centre of the learning experience through the ongoing construction of knowledge (CHE, 2014: 44). A wide range of learning opportunities and assessment instruments encourage students to engage with the content.

Learning opportunities include activities which build comprehension, critical thinking, competencies (CHE, 2014: 49-50).

The design of the learning resources use mechanisms that encourage ongoing dialogue with the distance education student through the following:

- ☞ Learning outcomes in the beginning of the guide
- ☞ Stakeholder engagement (where appropriate)
- ☞ Work related projects and assignments (where appropriate)
- ☞ Activities at various levels of difficulty in regard to mastery of skills and competencies as expressed through the criteria and descriptors of the associated NQF level. These progress in complexity from one level to the next

- 🌀 Pedagogical and curricular modalities that facilitate engagement of the students
- 🌀 The reflective processes that support the personalising and internalisation of learning.

### **6.3 Online Learning Platform**

An Online Learning Platform is used to ensure the availability of resources and the capacity to deliver in the distance mode of delivery.

The following functionalities of this online learning platform are employed:

- 🌀 Distribution of learning and assessment resources
- 🌀 Access to research and information resources
- 🌀 Availability of resources related to student support, e.g. the On-boarding Manual and Quick Reference Guide: Harvard method
- 🌀 Submission of assessments
- 🌀 Plagiarism evaluation
- 🌀 Facilitate the development of communities of learning
- 🌀 Interactive communication between stakeholders

The continuous enhancement and optimisation of the student's Online Learning Platform experience is a priority.

### **6.4 Articulation and Coherence**

The NQF level descriptors are integral to the design of all curricula and modules to ensure horizontal and vertical coherence within and between modules and programmes. This facilitates (1) internal articulation between the suite of programmes offered by The Institute; and (2) articulation with programmes offered by other higher education institutions, enabling Credit Accumulation and Transfer.

In terms of (1), modules and programmes are not designed and material is not developed in isolation. The integrated design of fields of specialisation, e.g. in the Business Leadership modules, inform the revision of existing curricula and material as well as the design of new programmes.

Design and development in collaboration with lecturers and subject matter experts, ensure that both academic integrity and current best practice is reflected in a coherent manner over the course of the learning and assessment journey of the student.

## **7 Supporting the Da Vinci Way**

The theoretical framework described in the Preamble to the Da Vinci Institute offers detailed information on the theoretical frameworks that underpin the Da Vinci Way. In this section of the policy the application of these frameworks in the context of curriculum design and resource development is illustrated.

## **7.1 Mode 2**

True to the Mode 2 principles, the Institute aims to present knowledge as open and as constructed in different contexts to offer students opportunities to interrogate what they learn. Their prior knowledge and experience is recognised through e.g. formative assessments and where applicable, the application of knowledge and skills within the workplace (CHE, 2014: 31).

## **7.2 Learning Styles and Experiential Learning**

A variety of learning methods are included in all learning resources. This ensures that every student's learning preferences are accommodated and developed. Experiential learning methods are employed in support of the adult learning principles and the Mode 2 philosophy.

### **7.2.1 The Business Leadership Framework**

During every module students are encouraged to apply and integrate module content with the Business Leadership Framework.

### **7.2.2 Adult Learning Principles**

Curriculum design takes into account the best practice in respect of adult learning.

## **7.3 Assessment**

Each of the modules have a number of formative assessment events followed by a summative assessment event and on completion of the programme an integrated assessment, which honours both the principles of authentic learning and assessment, reflecting foundational, practical and reflexive competence (SAQA, 2005).



Refer to the Policy: Management of Assessment and Moderation.

### **7.3.1 Assessment as Learning**

The formulation of assessment instruments prior to the development of learning and assessment resources, ensures that assessment opportunities are maximised as learning opportunities.

### **7.3.2 Formative and Summative Assessment**

Formative assessment includes the following:

-  Preparatory work is aimed at giving recognition to the student's prior learning experiences. This contributes to the total marks allocated to the final achievement of the module
-  Learning activities incorporated within the study guide encourage self-assessment of knowledge and skills acquired [e.g. assessment checklists (given or self-designed)], and obtaining feedback from a variety of stakeholders (e.g. client, management or team members)

- Formative assessments will include individual activities, with self-assessment and feedback from the lecturer.

Care is taken to ensure that summative assessment events (examination; research report; oral defence) provide evidence of student achievement that corresponds to the purpose, exit-level outcomes and NQF level of the programme being assessed. This will ensure the integrity and validity of the education provided in distance mode of delivery (CHE, 2014: 57).

Summative assessment adheres to the following:

### 7.3.3 Holistic Assessment Design

Starting the curriculum design process with the design of the assessments as authentic assessment product, contributes to the design of a holistic assessment strategy. In view of, assessment for, and as learning, each learning and assessment activity and resource is selected, designed and developed as an integrated whole.

### 7.3.4 Authentic Assessment

Formative, Summative and Integrated Assessments are designed to ensure theory is applied in the context of real-life situations and where applicable within the student's own workplace.

### 7.3.5 Examination

Students are required to undertake an exam at two levels at the Institution:

- Modular level – on completion of each module students are required to undertake an exam to demonstrate their knowledge and skill as reflected by the required module learning outcomes
- Programme level – on completion of all module exams students are required to undertake an exam to demonstrate their knowledge and skill as reflected by the required programme exit level outcomes.

### 7.3.6 Assessment Rubrics

Assessment rubrics are provided to students prior to the learning and is used to ensure the following:

- Assessment and feedback to students is more objective, transparent and consistent
- Students and lecturers develop a shared understanding of the assessment criteria
- Learning, conducting assessment as learning, assessing assignments and providing feedback on student performance is guided by assessment criteria in the rubric.

Assessment rubrics are used for online marking of all assignments. This ensures specific feedback to students. It also provides specific information for the review of programmes.

### 7.3.7 Moderation of Assessments (prior to use)

Formative, Summative and Integrated assessment instruments are moderated prior to use. The following role-players are involved in the moderation process:

- ☞ Dean: Design
- ☞ Executive Dean
- ☞ Lecturers (internal and external)
- ☞ Subject Matter Experts (external stakeholder).

Assessments are moderated prior to use to ensure compliance with principles described in this policy.

## 7.4 Programme review

A formal and comprehensive programme review is conducted after the full programme has been offered. The minimum period is determined by the prescribed duration of a programme.

The Institute's programme review schedule is published and updated on a continuous basis to ensure existing and new programmes are submitted to structured and formal review on a regular basis. Programme reviews are conducted by external evaluators, utilising the *Evaluation of Learning, Facilitation and Assessment Resources* review and reporting format.

Evidence of all programme reviews are kept on record.

## 8 Responsibilities

In this section, the roles and responsibilities of the main role-players are described. Specific deliverables and contributions may be agreed with the role-players, documented in their annual Key Performance Indicators and/or informally agreed in terms of specific projects.

### 8.1 Executive Dean: Economic and Management Sciences

The role of the Executive Dean: Economic and Management Sciences is to provide strategic leadership on matters related to the design of Academic programmes that will promote excellence in Business Management and Business Leadership within a developing socio-economic context.

The Executive Dean: Economic and Management Sciences is responsible for the following:

- ☞ The establishment of inter-institutional arrangements with national and international institutions of higher learning
- ☞ The provision of resources (means and abilities) to enhance the existing design function within the Institute

- 🌀 The co-ordination of a responsive and responsible engagement with industry stakeholders (subject matter experts)

## 8.2 Dean: Teaching and Learning

The role of the Dean: Teaching and Learning is accountable for the overall governance and quality assurance of all teaching and learning activities, processes and procedures. Maintaining academic integrity is a core focus area of the teaching and learning office and needs to be informed by each staff member to ensure the highest academic standards are maintained.

The Dean: Teaching and Learning is responsible for the following:

- 🌀 Providing guidance and expert input during all curriculum design opportunities;
- 🌀 Continuous improvement of teaching and learning requirements as expressed by faculty through regular engagements with the Dean: Design
- 🌀 Involving faculty members in all design and development activities.
- 🌀 Liaison with the Dean: Design

## 8.3 Dean: Design

The role of the Dean: Design is the overall governance and quality assurance of all design activities, processes and products delivered.

The Dean is responsible for the following:

- 🌀 Ensuring alignment with the institution's strategic intent and short and long term goals
- 🌀 Liaison with the Dean: Teaching and Learning
- 🌀 Liaison with the Dean: Research
- 🌀 Liaison with Lecturers and Subject Matter Experts
- 🌀 Collaborating with developers
- 🌀 Building development capacity, e.g. language editors and graphic designers
- 🌀 Standardising layout, formatting and look-and-feel in adherence with the Da Vinci Corporate Identity guidelines by creating templates and ensuring the correct use thereof
- 🌀 Reporting on progress and deliverables related to development
- 🌀 Continuous improvement of learning and assessment resources
- 🌀 Staying up to date with learning and assessment approaches and methodologies that support online distance education
- 🌀 Providing feedback related to the improvement of templates, methods, process and collaboration practices
- 🌀 Developing learning and assessment resources aligned with the overall design
- 🌀 Delivering material within the agreed time frames, adhering to all quality standards

## 8.4 Programme Co-ordinators

The Programme Co-ordinators of The Institute are responsible for the following:

- 🌀 Providing feedback to the Design: Design regarding the student's experience in engaging with the learning resources

- Providing feedback to the Dean: Design regarding assessment results, moderator's feedback and general trends related to assessment results
- Articulating the needs of the students in relation to enhancing their learning journey
- Providing suggestions for improving the overall learning and assessment experience.

## 8.5 Registrar

Every qualification and module designed is documented in a programme framework. Recordkeeping related to programme frameworks is the responsibility of the Registrar. The Registrar is responsible for the following:

- Ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements
- Keeping accurate records of programme frameworks
- Ensuring application, admission and registration requirements for all frameworks are adhered to.

## 9 References

Council on Higher Education. 2011. Work-Integrated Learning: Good Practice Guide. HE Monitor No 12.

Council on Higher Education. 2014. Distance Higher Education Programmes in a Digital Era: Good Practice Guide. CHE, Pretoria.

South African Qualifications Authority, 2005. Guidelines for integrated assessment. SAQA, Pretoria.

## 10 Version Control

| Author                              | Revision   |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Academic Head: Ms Jean Grundling    | 2015/01/29 |
| Registrar: Ms Carin Stoltz-Urban    | 2015/05/04 |
| Design Manager: Ms Hendrien Van Zyl | 2017/05/25 |
| Dean: Design: Dr Mario Landman      | 2017/12/15 |
| Dean: Design: Dr Mario Landman      | 2018/07/06 |