




QUALITY MANAGEMENT POLICY

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1 Introduction

The Da Vinci Institute is an accredited private higher education provider offering qualifications on NQF levels five to ten in the distance mode, which are registered on the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF). This policy forms part of the institutional Integrated Quality Management System and details the principles for ensuring that programme offerings adhere to academic standards and empower students to contribute to the transformation of their communities, society and the economy of the future. This approach is underpinned by the Business-driven Action Learning discourse resulting in the co-creation and distribution of applied and relevant knowledge.

2 Definitions

Term	Definition
Accreditation	The principles and processes whereby programmes leading to qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) are evaluated by the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC), a permanent committee of the Council on Higher Education (CHE), for quality in terms of national criteria and are approved for delivery by institutions registered by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) that are confirmed to have the capacity to offer the programme.
Assessment	The process used to identify, gather and interpret information and evidence against the required competencies in a qualification, part-qualification, or professional designation in order to make a judgement about a learner's achievement. Assessment can be formal, non-formal or informal; assessment can be of learning already done, or towards learning to inform and shape teaching and learning still to be done (SAQA, 2014).
Audit	An audit or institutional audit is an improvement-oriented evaluation of the effectiveness of institutional arrangements for quality and quality assurance in teaching and learning, research and community engagement, based on a self-evaluation conducted by the institution. The external evaluation is conducted by a panel of peers and experts on the basis of the HEQC's criteria and other quality requirements set by the institution itself. The audit panel's findings form the basis of the HEQC's report to the audited institution, with commendations on good practice and recommendations for improvement (CHE, 2004).
Distance Education	Distance education is concerned with a set of teaching and learning strategies (or educational methods) that can be used

Term	Definition
	to overcome spatial and/or temporal separation between educators and students. It is a collection of methods for the provision of structured learning. It avoids the need for students to discover the curriculum by attending classes frequently and for long periods. Rather, it aims to create a quality learning environment using an appropriate combination of different media, tutorial support, peer group discussion, and practical sessions (CHE, 2014).
Minimum standards	Requirements for a specific level of provision that a programme has to meet in order to be accredited by the HEQC (CHE, 2004).
Monitoring	Determining the status, progress or quality of a person, process, activity or system over a period of time through checking, supervising or critically observing it.
Provider	Provider means a registered institution that offers learning programmes culminating in NQF standards and/or qualifications, and that manages the assessment thereof (CHE, 2014) as well as the certification thereof.
Programme	A structured and purposeful set of learning experiences that leads to a qualification.
Programme evaluation	The external quality assurance processes that are undertaken in order to make an independent assessment of a programme's development, management and outcomes, through the validation of the findings of an internal programme self-evaluation (CHE, 2004).
Qualification	A registered national qualification consisting of a planned combination of learning outcomes which has a defined purpose, intended to provide qualifying students with applied competence and a basis for further learning and which has been assessed in terms of exit level outcomes, registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and certified and awarded by a recognised institution.
Quality	Quality, in the context of the South African education system, refers to the interrelated demonstration of fitness of and for purpose, value for money, and contribution to social transformation in line with the intent and values of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) (CHE, 2014). It can also refer to the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics of an object fulfils requirements.
Quality Assurance	Processes of ensuring that institutional arrangements for meeting specified quality standards or requirements of education provision are effective (CHE, 2004). It is the process of providing the evidence needed to establish confidence among

Term	Definition
	all concerned that the quality-related activities are being performed effectively (NWU, 2016), and providing assurance that quality requirements will be fulfilled (ISO 9000:2015).
Quality Evaluation	The systematic determination of merit, worth and significance of the quality of a service, process or learning programme or related activity.
Quality Management	Entails several elements of institutional planning and action to address issues of quality. These include institutional arrangements for quality assurance, support, development and monitoring. (CHE, 2014) and involves developing systems to ensure products or services are designed and produced to meet or exceed stakeholder requirements (NWU, 2016). Quality management include, inter alia, establishing quality policies and objectives as well as putting processes in place to achieve these objectives through quality planning, assurance, control and improvement (ISO 9000:2015).
Quality Management System (QMS)	A Quality Management System is a set of interrelated or interacting elements of an institution to establish policies, processes and procedures necessary to improve and control the various processes that will ultimately lead to improved business performance (NWU, 2016).
Quality Improvement	Quality improvement is an ongoing process of intensifying or improving activities to achieve excellence and remarkability.
Re-accreditation	Accreditation of an existing programme after its previous accreditation by the DHET or SAQA or the HEQC (CHE, 2004).
Registration	Registration of approved programmes by the HEQC.

3. Regulatory Framework

The Quality Management Policy is benchmarked against and should be read in the context of the relevant legislation underpinning the principles against which institutional policies, processes and standard operational procedures are developed, implemented and maintained. These include:

- I. Basic Conditions of Employment Act
- I. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa: 1996
- II. Copyright Act, No. 98 of 1978
- III. Council on Higher Education: A new Academic Policy for Programmes and Qualifications in Higher Education January, 2002.
- IV. Council on Higher Education (CHE): Improving Teaching and Learning Resource No. 1 and 2, 2004

- V. Council on Higher Education: Qualification sub-framework 2013
- VI. Council on Higher Education: National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development: April, 2007
- VII. Council on Higher Education: Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) Criteria for Programme Accreditation: November, 2004
- VIII. Council on Higher Education: Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), Criteria for Institutional Audits: November, 2004
- IX. Council on Higher Education: Distance Higher Education Programmes in a Digital Era: Good Practice Guide, 2014
- X. Employment Equity Act
- XI. ETQA Regulations
- XII. HET Act Number 39 of 2008 as amended
- XIII. Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 as amended Act No. 39 of 2008
- XIV. Higher Education Policy Framework (HEQF) Government Gazette Vol. 481, July 2005
- XV. Labour Relations Act (Act 66 of 1995) as amended
- XVI. Ministry of Education: National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa: February 2001.
- XVII. National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996 as amended 2007
- XVIII. National Qualifications Framework Act No. 67 of 2008.
- XIX. Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHSA)
- XX. SAQA Act – as amended by the National Qualifications Framework Act (Act no. 67 of 2008)
- XXI. SAQA: National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications and Part Qualifications and Professional Designations in South Africa, 2017
- XXII. Skills Development Act – as amended by the Skills Development Amendment Act (Act no. 37 of 2008)

3 Scope

This policy applies to all:

- 3.1. The procedures applicable to all The Institute's teaching and learning programmes
- 3.2. Relevant academic and administrative staff involved in implementing and governing teaching and learning practices at the institution
- 3.3. Students in all years of study
- 3.4. Staff governing and responsible for student support
- 3.5. Supervisors and examiners of theses and dissertations.

4 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). The Policy on Quality Management aims to respond to South Africa's need for high quality education, teaching and learning, research and community engagement.

This policy is the foundation for The Institute's academic quality management initiatives, which is informed by The Institute's dream, captured in its vision statement and the purpose, brought to life in its mission statement, principles and brand promise.

The Vision and Mission are expressed in terms of the following philosophies:

- The Institute offers outcomes-based, distance education opportunities through a Business-driven Action Learning methodology, whilst adhering to the required academic standards, thus empowering students with the knowledge and skills to contribute to the society and economy of the future. (refer to the Explanatory notes on the Da Vinci Conceptual Frameworks available on the Da Vinci website – www.davinci.ac.za)

The purpose of this policy is to establish and guide ongoing development and the implementation of The Institute's quality management system to regulate the procedures applied in the quality assurance, monitoring and enhancement of quality processes at Da Vinci. These quality processes include external quality reviews, accreditation of programmes and sites of delivery and institutional quality-related research. This policy also provides guidance to Da Vinci staff on quality-related matters that align with the institutional mission and in the achievement of the strategic plan. The Policy on Quality Management has been developed to align with policy guidelines as set out in the HEQC as well as all existing policies at Da Vinci.

The policy on Quality Management serves to describe the strategic approach to institutional academic quality management and the continual improvement of service delivery to students.

5 Policy Principles

The quality management processes must ensure that The Institute fulfils its responsibilities in terms of its vision, mission and strategic goals in its pursuit of excellence in education:

- 5.1 Internal quality management systems are in place to ensure that the quality of provision meets or exceeds regulatory standards
- 5.2 Quality reviews are conducted on faculties, programmes and the support sectors on a cyclical basis annually to ensure ongoing improvement
- 5.3 Ensure compliance, accreditation, approval and registration with the HEQC, DHET, SAQA and other statutory bodies
- 5.4 Ensure regular evaluation of modules by students, lecturers, examiners and moderators
- 5.5 Institutional research is conducted as a means of providing feedback and improving the quality of provision at The Institute and benchmarking against best practice
- 5.6 Development of a set of institutional criteria based on national and international norms against which the quality of provision is measured
- 5.7 The quality management policy is underpinned The Institute's Strategic Intent that informs the direction of The Institute as a niche provider in private higher education.
- 5.8 Policy review will be done triennially or as and when necessary
- 5.9 Criteria for the measurement of Teaching and Learning:
 - 5.9.1 Respond to national imperatives that ensure equity of student access and success
 - 5.9.2 Meet the needs of a diverse student body
 - 5.9.3 Develop students' ability to integrate theory and practice
 - 5.9.4 Optimise graduate employability and develop responsible citizens
 - 5.9.5 Align assessment practices with the Assessment and Moderation Policy
 - 5.9.6 Be informed by current research, theory and evidence-based practice
 - 5.9.7 Supported by staff development (including contracted research supervisors and examiners) that builds the capacity for continuous improvement in theory and practice of teaching and learning that is relevant to all disciplines
 - 5.9.8 Underpinned by quality learning environments and infrastructure that will contribute to the holistic development of all students and support multiple modes of teaching and learning
 - 5.9.9 Commit to a transformative curriculum that prepares and empowers graduates to work in a diverse range of environments
 - 5.9.10 Assist and support students for preparedness in the 21st century world of work.

6 Quality Assurance

The Institute has developed its policy on Quality Management to ensure:

- 6.1 The alignment of activities and resources to The Institute's Dream and Purpose.

- 6.2 The alignment of institutional planning, quality and risk management systems, and their integration into all operations
- 6.3 An institutional approach to governance that draws on a well-defined organisational structure with aligned responsibilities and accountabilities
- 6.4 To instil a culture of continuous improvement across all departments.

The Institute acknowledges that quality is multi-faceted and contextual. This then requires The Institute to evaluate quality in the context of the South African education system and includes evaluating 'fitness of purpose', value for money and contribution to social transformation in line with the intent and values of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) (CHE, 2014). The Institute acknowledges the need for more accountability in higher education and its responsibility to develop a cadre of graduates who will benefit from the academic rigour of the programmes and who will be able to use their newly acquired skills in the workplace, to benefit themselves, their employers and the economic well-being of South Africa.

Quality assurance is seen, by The Institute, as a continuous, active and responsive process in which all staff and students participate. The Institute further supports the work of the CHE/HEQC and chooses to participate in Institutional audits and related national quality enhancement processes in higher education in South Africa.

7 Quality Management System

The Institute has designed its Quality Management System (QMS) to assure and continuously improve the core functions of The Institute, namely teaching and learning, and research. The QMS thus comprises:

- 7.1 Policies and procedures to guide all institutional academic, administrative and research functions
- 7.2 Academic governance structures to regulate and manage the implementation of policies and procedures
- 7.3 Monitoring the status, progress or quality of processes, activities or systems to determine the status of our quality management system,
- 7.4 Critical reflection on and continuous improvement of processes, policies and procedures.

Quality Management is therefore regarded as an ongoing process.

8 The Quality Assurance Cycle

Da Vinci subscribes to a standard *Plan-Implement-Review-Improve (PIRI)* model for quality assurance. This model strengthens The Institute's focus on continual

improvement and innovation. This positions quality assurance as a cyclical system for ongoing review and outlines the organisational characteristics that are essential to achieve quality sustained success.



Figure 1: PIRI Model for Quality Assurance

8.1 Plan

This includes all planning within the institution related to performance goals. Goals and targets are developed to align with the institution's Vision and Mission. These may include:

- 8.1.1 Specific quality improvements related to service delivery
- 8.1.2 Institutional growth targets
- 8.1.3 Engagement with relevant stakeholders to understand their needs and expectations and ensure a student-centred approach to continuously improve the student experience
- 8.1.4 Improving institution-wide adoption of a quality improvement methodology mentality
- 8.1.5 Developing a set of indicators for monitoring quality enhancement.

8.2 Implement

The Institutional infrastructure, resources, systems and processes are developed, deployed and coordinated in order to support the achievement of the institutional QMS goals and targets. These may include:

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- 8.2.1 The appropriate distribution and utilisation of The Institute's resources and infrastructure
 - 8.2.2 The proactive management of The Institute's systems and processes to ensure they are effective and efficient
 - 8.2.3 A strong culture and commitment to service excellence to ensure consistency and quality of service standards and efforts
 - 8.2.4 The analysis of risks and subsequent implementation of interventions to mitigate the impact of identified risks and areas identified for quality improvement.

8.3 Review

The Institute monitors its performance and progress across functionalities in order to determine whether the established goals and targets have been met. These may include:

- 8.3.1 Ongoing analysis and reporting of data and information to measure and evaluate The Institute's performance and progress in achieving the established goals and targets
- 8.3.2 Undertaking benchmarking activities in order to identify and analyse best practice, both internally and externally, in order to improve The Institute's performance
- 8.3.3 Regular internal audit and compliance measurement activities, undertaken during an academic year, to monitor and review The Institute's performance as well as its compliance with relevant regulatory prescriptions
- 8.3.4 The evaluation of risks and the effectiveness of existing interventions in mitigating both strategic and operational risks.

8.4 Improve

The Institute identifies opportunities and areas for improvement, which drives its commitment to excellence, continual improvement and innovation. These may include:

- 8.4.1 Ongoing improvement and innovation, which are necessary for sustained success and can be applied across all functionalities of The Institute, through changes in technology, teaching and learning methodologies, assessment practices, student support initiatives, administrative services, peripheral academic activities and processes
- 8.4.2 Ensuring that learning and development are embedded across all institutional functionalities
- 8.4.3 Using the outcomes of the review stage, such as analysis and reporting of data, to ensure decision-making is evidence-based
- 8.4.4 Effective risk minimisation through existing and future initiatives to ensure the impacts are minimised or reduced as far as practically possible.

9 Quality Assurance Mechanisms

The mechanisms used for the gathering of information pertaining to student experiences across all institutional functions include but are not limited to the following:

- 9.1 Assessment and moderation reports
- 9.2 Student participation records
- 9.3 Online Learning Management System (LMS) records
- 9.4 Electronic Learner Management System (eLMS) records
- 9.5 Direct communication from students
- 9.6 Various internal quality assurance mechanisms:
 - 9.6.1 Internal audits
 - 9.6.2 Throughput and performance reports
 - 9.6.3 Student feedback questionnaires
 - 9.6.4 Lecturer feedback questionnaires
 - 9.6.5 Student Representative Council reports
 - 9.6.6 Customer Service Index surveys
 - 9.6.7 Staff Satisfaction Index surveys
 - 9.6.8 Performance appraisals
 - 9.6.9 Classroom visits
 - 9.6.10 Peer reviews of learning material
 - 9.6.11 Self-evaluation.
- 9.7. Various external quality assurance mechanisms:
 - 9.7.1 Work-streams and sub-committees
 - 9.7.2 Human Resources Audit
 - 9.7.3 Targeted external audits
 - 9.7.4 Regulatory audits
 - 9.7.5 Benchmarking exercises
 - 9.7.6 Student tracking.

Any evaluation or finding that recommends improvement will be referred to the relevant governance committee and will be followed up at a determined interval.

The above mechanisms inform an evidence-based approach, promoting critical reflection and a culture of continuous improvement as both the means and the outcome of QMS.

9.1 Responsibility for Quality Assurance

The Institute considers quality assurance as part of the responsibilities and activity of all academic and support staff. While the Registrar is responsible for reporting externally on quality assurances and regulatory matters, the Academic Governance

structures, discussed below, assume specific responsibilities within the quality assurance process.

9.2 Academic Governance Structures

The academic governance structures consist of the following bodies (refer to the relevant Terms of Reference available on the Da Vinci website at www.davinci.ac.za).

9.2.1 Council

The function of The Council is to provide input regarding education as a business and direction to The Da Vinci Institute in meeting its business objectives.

9.2.2 Senate

The Senate functions with delegated authority from The Da Vinci Board to promote the integrity of the academic project, by ensuring productive engagements from The Institute with society at a micro, meso, exo and macro level.

9.2.3 Finance Audit and Risk Committee

The function of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee is to provide input regarding the strategic direction of The Institute in meeting its academic objectives as determined by the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act 101, of 1997).

9.2.4 Research and Ethics Committee

The Research and Ethics Committee in all its endeavours will ensure that it continuously improves the guidance and quality of engagement between students, staff and relevant stakeholders aligned to all policies and procedures as stipulated by the CHE and programme accreditation in supporting and strengthening the Research agenda of The Institute.

9.2.5 Institutional Forum

The Institutional Forum advises and reports to Council on matters related to institutional culture and staff wellness, candidates for executive management positions, code of conduct, mediation and dispute resolution and related policies.

9.2.6 Assessment Committee

The Assessment Committee is accountable to the Senate and matters related to student performance and programme performance and the related policies and

procedures.

9.2.7 General

The following committees are constituted on an ad hoc basis, when required:

- Programme Review
- Marks Meetings
- Curriculum design
- Appeals
- Plagiarism
- Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Accumulation and Transfer

10 Review of This Policy

Regular review and amendment of this policy will be done in line with the approved institutional policies and regulatory requirements. This will take place in consultation with the relevant quality assurance structures at departmental and institutional level, under the auspices of the official custodian of this policy, namely the Executive Dean: Academic.

Annexure A

1. Policies

1	A1	Quality Management
2	A5	Memoranda of Agreement
3	A6	Management of Agreements
4	A7	Communications
5	F1	Financial Management
6	B1	Retirement
7	B2	Smoking
8	B3	Talent Management
9	B4	Incentive to Increase Client Base
10	B7	Student Benefits
11	B8	Reward and Remuneration
12	B9	Health and Wellness
13	B10	Staff Security
14	B11	HIV and AIDS
15	B14	Disability
16	B17	Human Resources
17	B18	Public Political Office
18	B19	Payroll Deduction Authorisation
19	B20	Drug-Free Workplace
20	B21	COVID-19 Workplace Plan
21	B22	COVID-19 Return to Work
22	C9	Backup
23	C10	Information and Communication Technology
24	D2	Application, Admission and Registration
25	D4	Teaching and Learning
26	D5	Curriculum Design and the Development of Learning and Assessment Resources

27	D6	Appointment, Management and Development of Faculty
28	D7	Programme Management
29	D9	Da Vinci Research Policy Framework
30	D10	Appointment of Research Supervisors
31	D11	Nomination and Appointment of Examiners
32	D12	Students-Supervisor Relationships
33	D13	Examination of Dissertations and Theses
34	D14	Library and Learning Resource Centre
35	D15	Conducting Ethical Research
36	D16	Management of Experiential and Work-based Learning
37	D18	Invigilated Examination
38	D19	Assessment and Moderation
39	D20	RPL, CAT and Articulation
40	D21	Certification
41	D27	Academic Publishing
42	D28	General Administration
43	E1	Code of Conduct
44	E2	Plagiarism
45	E4	Student Representatives, Membership and Termination
46	E5	Assessment Appeals
47	E6	Student Support

2. Procedures

1	A5-P1	Memorandum of Agreement
2	A6-P1	Approval of Industry Faculty
3	A6-P2	Service Level Agreement
4	A17-P1	Regulatory Meetings
5	F1-P1	Financial Management
6	F1-P2	Loaning Equipment

7	B3-P1	Talent Management
8	B4-P1	Incentive to Increase Client Base
9	B7-P1	Application for Study Benefits
10	B8-P1	Reward and Recognition
11	B17-P1	Application for Leave
12	B17-P2	Grievance
13	B17-P3	Performance Management
14	B17-P4	Receiving Gifts
15	B17-P5	Termination of Staff
16	B17-P6	Recruitment, Selection and Appointment of Staff
17	B17-P7	Disciplinary
18	C9-P1	Back-up
19	C10-P1	User Setup
20	D2-P1	Application
21	D2-P2	Admission
22	D2-P3	Registration
23	D2-P4	De-registration
24	D2-P5	Re-registration
25	D2-P6	Registration for subsequent years
26	D2-P7	Deferral
27	D4-P1	Teaching and Learning
28	D5-P1	Courseware Delivery
29	D5-P2	Design and Development of Courseware
30	D5-P3	Design Assessment
31	D5-P4	Development of Programme Framework
32	D5-P5	Quality assurance of courseware
33	D5-P6	Notice of discontinuation of Programme Framework
34	D6-P1	Appointment of Faculty
35	D6-P2	Development of Faculty
36	D6-P3	Management of Faculty

37	D7-P1	Programme Management
38	D9-P1	Research Proposal Approval
39	D10-P1	Appointment of Research Supervisors
40	D11-P1	Appointment of Examiners
41	D12-P1	Supervisor-Student Feedback
42	D13-P2	Internal Quality Assurance
43	D13-P3	Postgraduate Examination
44	D14-P1	Lending of Library Books
45	D14-P2	Purchasing of Library Books
46	D15-P1	Ethical Application
47	D16-P1	Management of Experiential Work-based Learning
48	D18-P1	Conducting Examinations
49	D18-P2	Examination Preparation
50	D18-P3	Examination Secure Printing Process
51	D18-P4	Management of completed examination books
52	D19-P1	Assessment
53	D19-P2	Integrity of Assessment
54	D19-P3	Moderation
55	D21-P1	Approval of Certification
56	D21-P2	Certification
57	D21-P3	Issuing of Academic Transcripts
58	D21-P4	Re-issuing Certification
59	E1-P1	Code of Conduct
60	E1-P2	Complaints
61	E4-P1	Membership of Student Representative
62	E4-P2	Termination of Student Representative
63	E5-P1	Assessment Appeals