



ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION POLICY

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Da Vinci Institute is an accredited private higher distance education provider (Registration No. 2004/HE07/003) offering qualifications on NQF levels five to ten, 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 required 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- and Community-based Action Learning discourse on the co-creation and distribution of relevant knowledge. Da Vinci offers outcomes-based distance education with an emphasis on the Mode 2 discourse on knowledge production.

This policy details the principles and processes for academic administration to ensure that learning programme offerings are aligned to the principles that underpin The Institute's offerings, 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.

This Institute continually strives to improve student administration and service to students. The Academic Administration Policy serves to ensure that The Institute effectively delivers educational programmes and all related services complying with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

2 ACRONYMS

CHE	Council on Higher Education
DHET	Department on Higher Education and Training
eLMS	Electronic Learner Management System
LMS	Learning Management System
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database
SAQA	South African Qualification Authority

3 DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions apply:

TERM	DEFINITION
Academic year of The Institute	The Academic year runs from 01 January to 31 December
Academic year for students	Academic year refers to the commencement of admission of students in any course of study in the institution up to the completion of academic requirements for that particular year
Admitted student	A candidate who has met the regulatory and institutional requirements and therefore been granted access to The Institute
Applicant	A person making a formal application to The Da Vinci Institute for registration on an accredited qualification or for a programme for non-qualification purposes
Enrolled student	A registered student that forms part of a cohort for a particular programme
Learner Management System (eLMS)	A software application used to enrol students into programmes and manage student data
Learning Management System (LMS)	A Learning Management System (LMS) is a software application for the online delivery of learning material, submitting assessments and providing feedback on these assessments online, as well as tracking, reporting on and administering student engagement
Maximum period of study	The maximum period prescribed by the regulator to complete a specific programme from the date of registration
Minimum period of study	The minimum period prescribed by the regulator to complete a specific programme from the date of registration
Programme	A purposeful and structured set of learning activities designed to enable students to meet the outcomes necessary for the award of a qualification
Programmes for non-qualification purposes	A purposeful and structured set of learning activities designed to enable students to meet the outcomes necessary for the award of a completion certificate
Qualification	An accredited programme which is assessed in terms of exit level outcomes, as accredited by the CHE and recorded on the SAQA database and listed on The Institute's DHET Certificate
Recruitment	To canvas for applicants who wish to register for accredited programmes offered by The Da Vinci Institute

Registered student	A qualifying student who has successfully completed the registration process and the status of the student on The Institute's eLMS reads 'Registered' against a valid student number
Termination of studies	A student whose studies have been cancelled and therefore is no longer a student of The Institute

4 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This policy is benchmarked against and should be read in the context of the relevant legislation underpinning the principles against which institutional policies and operational procedures are developed, implemented and maintained. These include:

A. Regulatory Legislation

- I. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (No 108 of 1996)
- II. Criteria for Programme Accreditation (CHE, 2004)
- III. Distance Higher Education Programmes in a Digital Era: Good Practice Guide (CHE)
- IV. Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997)
- V. National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications and Part Qualifications and Professional Designations in South Africa (SAQA, 2017)
- VI. National Qualification Framework Act, (No. 67 of 2008)

B. Applicable Da Vinci documents

- i. Prospectus
- ii. Student Contract
- iii. All relevant Da Vinci policies including:
 - D2 – Application, Admission and Registration Policy
 - D7 – Programme Management
 - E1 – Code of Conduct
 - E6 – Student Support.

5 SCOPE

This policy applies to the delivery of administrative and academic support services to students, ranging from recruitment to graduation, and adhering to statutory and regulatory requirements.

6 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to present a Da Vinci structure and framework, which provide guidelines for the effective delivery of programmes and efficient student administration. Furthermore, it sets out to support an organisational culture that

encourages continual improvement of academic administration and service to students.

7 PRINCIPLES OF ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION

- a. The Institute ensures compliance with statutory regulations and requirements and to meet the regulatory criteria for quality delivery of distance education in South Africa
- b. The Institute strives to ensure the integrity of academic records.

8 COMPLIANCE

The following dimensions are considered when admission requirements for individual qualifications are formulated:

8.1 Regulatory requirements

Admission to The Institute's accredited programmes is based strictly on regulatory admission requirements as set out by the DHET, CHE and SAQA.

8.2 Institutional requirements

The Institute may prescribe additional admission requirements as reflected in the *D2 - Application, Admission and Registration Policy*.

8.3 Special requirements

In addition to the regulatory and institutional requirements, a sponsor may require that their students meet specific recruitment criteria and undergo a selection process. Where this is the case, the sponsor must pre-screen the students for eligibility in terms of the specific recruitment criteria, and The Institute will be responsible for ensuring that students meet all the admission requirements. The special admission requirements must be detailed in the Service Level Agreement.

9 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

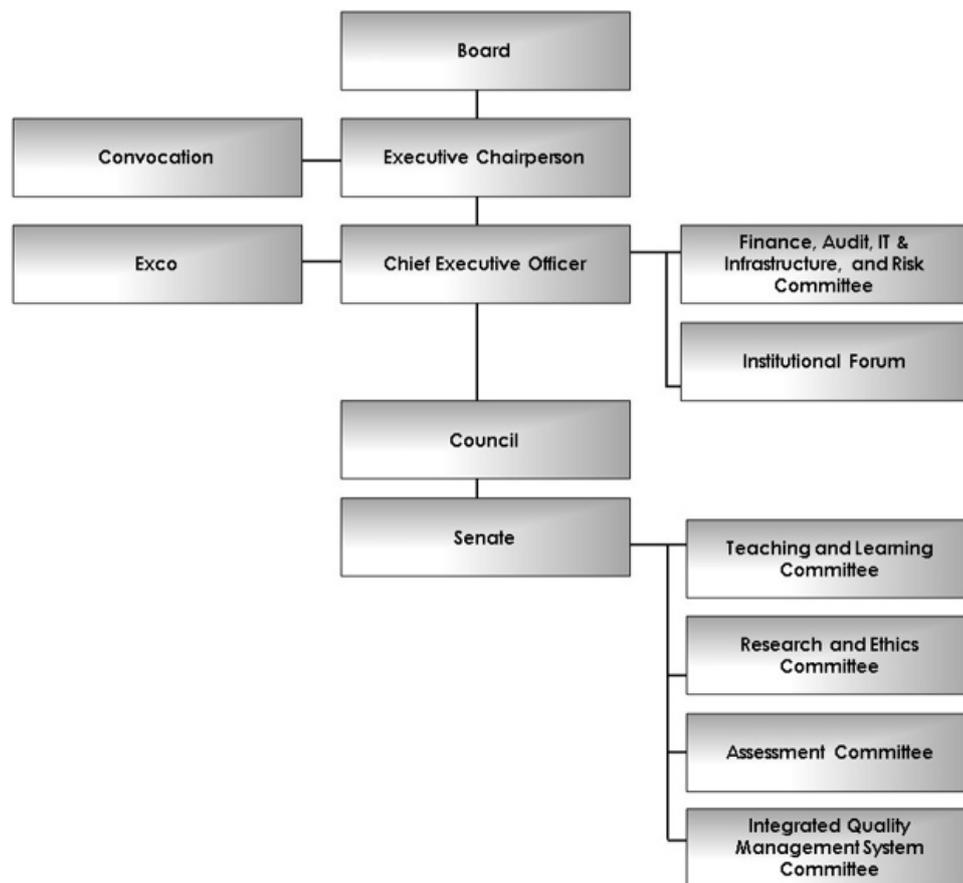
9.1 Technical Infrastructure and Student Administration Systems

- a. The Institute will provide technical infrastructure to ensure effective administration
- b. The Institute will provide functional and efficient support of online systems
- c. The Institute will provide an efficient LMS and eLMS that are regularly updated to meet The Institute's administration requirements
- d. The eLMS provides accurate, detailed and clear student records that meet the reporting requirements of:
 - I. SAQA
 - II. NLRD
 - III. DHET
 - IV. CHE

- V. Corporate clients and
 - VI. All other relevant ETQAs.
- e. Access to the LMS and eLMS is controlled, and student confidentiality ensured
 - f. The eLMS records student performance which allows the tracking of student performance
 - g. The technical infrastructure ensures that data integrity is protected.

9.2 Organisational Governance Structure

At a governance level, the diagram below depicts the relationship and interaction between the various constituencies related to the levels of decision-making that collectively provides leadership to and oversight of the academic activities (teaching, learning and scholarship, research and community engagement):



9.3 Academic year

Students can apply for registration throughout the year and will be allocated to an intake group which forms part of that year's cohort. The academic year for a specific intake group starts from the date of registration.

9.4 Period of Study

- a. The period of study will be in accordance with programme stipulations within prescribed minimum and maximum completion times as indicated in the Prospectus
- b. On non-completion of a qualification, following the expiry of the maximum period of registration, the student will be de-registered and will be required to re-apply for the programme should they choose to resume their studies. In specific circumstances, a period of re-registration may apply (refer to the *D2 – Application, Admission and Registration Policy*).

9.5 Progression

- a. A result of 50% or higher must be achieved to pass a module with a subminimum of 50% for the summative assessment
- b. Rules for progression from one module to the next, or from one year of study to the next, will be indicated in the programme framework document for a particular programme and indicated in the Prospectus
- c. In order to graduate, the student is required to successfully complete all modules prescribed by the curriculum and within the maximum registration period of the qualification. This will include any extensions and re-submissions.
- d. The only exceptions to (c) above, is the case of deferrals which may be granted to a maximum of one year based on approved written motivation in accordance with *D2 – Application, Admission and Registration Policy*.

9.6 Cancellation of studies

- a. Upon registration, the payment contract between the student and The Institute becomes a legally binding agreement which is irrevocable and not subject to cancellation, other than a court ruling provided by law
- b. In terms of section 14 of the Consumer Protection Act, The Da Vinci Institute may charge a reasonable cancellation fee should the student wish to cancel the agreement
- c. The Institute may choose to either enforce the cancellation fee, or waive it – the option is at the discretion of The Institute
- d. If a student needs to cancel a registered programme (for whatever reason), they must do so in writing to The Institute
- e. Should the cancellation be requested more than thirty (30) days prior to the start of the said programme, the student will be liable for 2.5% of the full fee
- f. Should the cancellation be requested within the thirty (30) days prior to the start of the said programme, the student will be liable for 12.5% of the full fee
- g. If a cancellation is received after a registered programme has commenced, the student will be liable for the full fee for the quarter that they are currently registered for
- h. Where refunds are applicable, The Institute will reimburse the student not more than sixty (60) days after receipt of the cancellation notice

- i. For client-sponsored students, the cancellation fees are negotiated as per the contract
- j. In the event that any invoice becomes outstanding by more than 30 days, a student's studies will be put on hold and access to the LMS will be withheld until all outstanding fees have been paid in full
- k. Students who do not pay their accounts timeously and diligently may be required to pay upfront for future year(s) of study
- l. A student will not receive final results, a certificate of qualification or allowed to graduate until all outstanding fees and other dues to The Institute have been paid in full
- m. The Information Officer must provide confirmation that a student has no outstanding library books as the return of all books is a condition for graduation
- n. In the event that the sponsor's information is inaccurate and/or the sponsor fails to make payment, the student remains liable for late or non-payment.

9.7 Information to students

Upon registration students are provided with the necessary programme materials and will be directed to all relevant administrative and academic rules and regulations, which are published on The Institute's website – www.davinci.ac.za.

9.8 Student counselling and support

All aspects related to student counselling and support are contained in the *E6 – Student Support Policy*. All support interventions and initiatives are documented for tracking and reporting purposes.

9.9 Security

The Institute must implement records management processes that take into account related objectives such as orderly classification of records, retention and disposal, accessibility, security and confidentiality, and quality management of records as stipulated in the POPI Act (also refer to *A12 – Records Management Policy*).

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.