



NON-QUALIFICATION PROGRAMME POLICY

Policy Code: A13
Version: 1
Approved by: Senate
Approval Date: 29/08/2024
Decision No.: SEN185/2024

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Da Vinci Institute is an accredited private higher distance education provider 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 a range of undergraduate, postgraduate and non-qualification programmes. Conditions of enrolment and admission criteria to the programmes of The Institute reflect the requirements of The Institute and the programmes offered. They also reflect the need 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. Screening of the applications of the students within the scope allowed by the CHE, as per the *A Good Practice Guide for the Quality Management of Short Courses offered outside of the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework* (CHE, 2016), therefore plays a major role in the placing of students onto the programmes offered, in pursuit of the above.

1.1. Academic background

Applicants must have attained the relevant academic qualifications, accredited by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), which will ensure that they will manage with the theoretical material, and the cognitive demand required for success in the programme. Applicants with foreign accredited qualifications must apply to SAQA for a certificate of evaluation. The provision of NQPs at The Institute is guided by published regulatory requirements for this particular type of programmes in the HE sector.

1.2. Academic potential

Many potential candidates have not had the benefit of any formal academic development, but have demonstrated, over the years in their careers, that they have the potential to successfully benefit from a formal academic programme. The Da Vinci Institute takes due cognisance of this fact and offers non-qualification programme offerings, as an alternative academic learning option to registering for a full academic programme.

1.3. Guidance and support from The Institute

Placing of applicants in appropriate programmes is essential to ensure progress and success, to the advantage of both the applicant and the sponsor, where applicable. The Da Vinci Institute delivers practice-based action learning programmes, with an emphasis on outcomes-based education, to the extent that student assessment is based on a mix of theory and practice. In keeping with the Mode 2 philosophy and discourse, students must display the ability to apply theoretical material to the world of work and are required to solve authentic, relevant and real-life practice-based problems that will benefit industry, society or the economy.

As The Institute is flexible in its learning delivery, it strives to continuously identify and address the needs of individual students during the education process and where necessary, plan workable solutions around the student's challenges. The online

learning platform, Moodle, encourages students to engage with their facilitators for assistance with the course material and with Learning Coordinators and Student Support Specialists for possible catch-up or recovery plans scheduled during the course of their studies.

2. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Admission requirements	A statement of minimum standards governing admission to register for a NQP approved by The Institution.
Certification	Although similar to the Certification process for the completion of formal qualifications registered on the NQF, Certification in terms of NQPs constitutes the documenting of learning outcomes achieved, by means of attendance and the satisfactory completion of prescribed assessments.
Learning Programme	A purposeful and structured set of learning experiences which may lead to a qualification comprising an ordered group of credit-bearing modules set at particular NQF levels. In an outcomes-based system, learning programmes are designed to enable students to achieve predetermined exit-level outcomes.
Non-Qualification Programme (NQP)	A learning programme, the duration of which is less than 12 months, approved by the Institute's internal governance structures, that aligns to the Institute's vision, mission and programme focus area, and which does not lead to Certification for a full qualification registered on the NQF. May serve as a bridging programme, or to supplement learning already achieved.
Programme	A purposeful, coherent and structured set of learning experiences that leads to a qualification. Programmes may be disciplined-based, professional, career-focused, inter- or multi-disciplinary in nature. A programme has recognised entry and exit points. All higher education programmes should have core and elective elements.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Is the assessment and accreditation of previous learning and experience acquired by a student in the workplace or from life experience, measured against the specified learning outcomes of a module or qualification.

3. 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, processes and standard operational procedures are developed, implemented and maintained.

A. Relevant Legislation

- I. A Good Practice Guide for the Quality Management of Short Courses offered outside of the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework, September 2016.
- II. CHE Communique 01/2017/02 Assigning NQF levels and allocating credits to short courses offered outside of the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-framework (HEQSF), 14 February 2017.

B. Relevant Da Vinci documents

- I. D19 - Assessment and Moderation Policy
- II. D20 - RPL, CAT and Articulation Policy
- III. E6 - Student Support Policy

4. SCOPE

The policy is applicable to:

- a) Prospective students
- b) Students
- c) Registry Office
- d) Admissions Office
- e) Accounts Department
- f) Heads of Programmes
- g) Learning Coordinators
- h) Academic Staff.

And, will refer to student:

- a) Application
- b) Admission
- c) Registration
- d) Deferral
- e) De-registration
- f) Re-registration.

The scope of documentation required by a prospective student is as follows:

- a) Completed online application form
- b) Copy of Identification Document
- c) Copy of Matric Certificate or equivalent
- d) Copy of post matric Higher Education Qualifications, if applicable
- e) Referee reports, if applicable

- f) Proof of payment of the application fee (in the case of sponsors, a Service Level Agreement will apply instead). The application fee is only valid for twelve months.
- g) Completed online Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and CAT request form, if applicable (Refer to *D20- RPL, CAT and Articulation Policy*).

5. PURPOSE

The purpose of the NQP Policy must be read in conjunction with relevant policies of the Institute, which addresses the rules and regulations pertaining to all aspects for the provision of learning services, as well as financial aspects related to admission and delivery. The intention of this policy is to:

- a) Ensure the quality of learning and teaching of NQPs which fall outside of the HEQSF.
- b) Ensure that the Institute's QMS is extended to the design, delivery and certification processes for the offering of NQPs.
- c) Ensure that NQPs are developed and approved according to the prescribed governance processes that are in place, adhering to curriculum-development practices that are of superior standards, resulting in NQPs that are compliant with the Institute's expectations.
- d) Ensure students, sponsors and employers are furnished with accurate and relevant information related to the NQP, as well as information pertaining to the Institute's policies, processes procedures.
- e) Ensure all criteria as set out by the employer/client is accurately documented and learning expectations are recorded and met by providing an appropriately aligned NQP.
- f) Ensure that Learning Coordinators and Faculty have a clear understanding of guidelines and procedures related to the administering of NQPs.
- g) Ensure a consistent standard of high quality in the facilitation and monitoring of NQPs and associated learning activities.
- h) Ensure appropriate guidance on further learning opportunities and/or career progression, is provided based on student or employer needs.

6. PRINCIPLES

As a result of South Africa's historical imbalances, there are disparities in income and occupations, which many sponsors and stakeholders seek to redress.

Student numbers are informed by requests from the workplace, with a strong equity focus, to eliminate unfair discrimination in seeking to achieve a diverse and broadly representative workforce.

In so doing, Da Vinci seeks to promote the constitutional right of equality and to promote economic advancement through its contribution as an educational steward of transformation.

The admission requirements of The Institute are in line with the policies and regulations promulgated by the regulatory bodies.

The Da Vinci Institute offers the following entry routes:

- a) Access based on satisfying minimum entry requirements
- b) Access towards a qualification via RPL
- c) CAT for modules successfully completed through other registered and accredited Institutions of Higher Education

7. OVERVIEW AND PRINCIPLES OF PROCESSES

7.1. Application

Da Vinci provides for online applications for study available on the Da Vinci website. Only applications with all the required supporting documentation will be considered. The online platform allows for requests for RPL for Access, RPL for Exemption and Credit Transfer. The Admissions Office will verify the documentation submitted and Registry will screen the application granting the prospective student either:

- a) Full acceptance
- b) Provisional acceptance; or
- c) suggest alternative study options if the prospective student fails to meet the entry requirements for a particular programme

Applications for Credit Transfer and RPL for exemption are restricted to the application phase of the registration process.

7.2. Admission

Once the documentation of a prospective student has been screened and approved, the online platform will prompt the candidate to pay their admission fee. Upon receipt of the admission fee, the qualifying candidate is granted admission to The Institute. Such successful students will be provided with an admission letter, as evidence of admission. Admitted candidates will be allocated to a dedicated Learning Coordinators who will communicate with the student in terms of the programme schedule and start of the first module.

7.3. Registration

Following admission, The Institute will issue the candidate with a registration form and payment contract to conclude the registration process. On receipt of the completed registration form and payment contract, The Institute will invoice the student the registration fee. On receipt of the registration payment according to the confirmed payment contract, the candidate will receive an acceptance letter confirming their registration.

The dedicated Learning Coordinator will manage the student's programme and progress through to graduation.

7.4. Deferral of studies

Registry may grant a registered student a deferral of his/ her studies on request via an application process. A deferral allows the student the opportunity to put his or her studies on hold for a period of time, with the understanding that the student has to complete the programme within the maximum completion period of the qualification in order to graduate.

- a) Students may only defer their studies if their account is up to date at the start of the deferral period
- b) A student who wants to defer his/her studies is required to book a session with Student Support Services who will then make a recommendation to the relevant Head of Programme, before the deferral will be approved.

Once Registry approves the deferral application, the student will be sent a formal letter communicating the deferral period. Students returning after a deferral are required to book a session with Student Support Services to discuss their study plan.

7.5. De-registration

De-registration may occur under the following circumstances:

- a) The maximum study period of a student has lapsed and he/she did not re-register. In the case of a NQP the maximum period is 12-months.
- b) In cases of non-performance or non-progression – refer to D19 - Assessment and Moderation Policy
- c) In cases of gross misconduct
- d) In cases where the student withdrew from the programme.

7.6. Re-registration

On non-completion of a programme following the expiry of the registration period, a student may apply for re-registration or re-application for the relevant programme for which she or he was previously registered.

- a) In re-registering for a programme, a re-registration fee is applicable and the programme must be completed within the required timeframe communicated to the student
- b) In re-applying for a programme, an application fee is applicable. The student may be granted CAT for the modules previously completed and will be liable to pay current fees for the incomplete modules.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1. Business Development Team

2.1.1 Admissions

To receive and verify online application forms and supporting documentation

- a) Screen applicant documents to confirm entry requirements are met for admission
- b) Student and Payment Contract finalised
- c) Handed over to Registry

8.2. Registry Office

The Registry office is responsible for the following:

8.2.1. Applications

To receive online application forms and supporting documentation

- a) Sign admission letters
- b) Sign acceptance letters
- c) Manage the online registration platform

8.2.2. Deferral

- a) To receive and evaluate student applications for deferral from Learning Coordinator
- b) To notify the accounts department of the same
- c) To issue and sign a deferral letter if the application is approved

8.2.3. Re-registration

- a) To receive a student request for re-registration from the Learning Coordinator
- b) To verify the student's registration period
- c) To prepare and send the registration form and payment contract to the student
- d) To send signed documentation from the student to the accounts department for invoicing
- e) To inform the Learning Coordinator once the student is re-registered.

8.2.4. De-registration

- a) To approve de-registrations received from the Learning Coordinators
- b) To send the de-registration letter to the student
- c) To notify the Accounts Department and other affected departments
- d) To record the student's de-registration status on the De-registration Register and on the Learner Management System (LMS).

8.3. Accounts Department

The Accounts Department is responsible for the following:

8.3.1. Applications

- a) To generate quotes where necessary
- b) To generate tax invoices for the student or sponsor

- c) To confirm receipt of student and/or sponsor payments and inform the Admissions Office accordingly.

8.3.2. Deferral

- a) To receive a student's deferral application and motivation letter from the Registry Office
- b) To record the deferral status on the student's account and invoice if necessary.

8.3.3. Re-registration

- a) To generate a tax invoice for the student or sponsor
- b) To confirm the receipt of a student and/or client payment and inform the Admissions Office accordingly.

8.3.4. De-registration

- a) To receive de-registration notifications from Registry
- b) To reflect a de-registered status on the student's account and update the student's account if needed.

8.4. Learning Coordinators

The Learning Coordinators are responsible for the following:

8.4.1. Registration

- a) To receive the list of registered students from the Admissions Office
- b) Communicate with the student and manage the student's programme, and related administration through to graduation.

8.4.2. Deferral

- a) Provide the Registry Office with student deferral application forms
- b) Notify students of the deferral letter received from Registry, if approved.

8.4.3. Re-registration

- a) Provide Admissions Office with the re-registration application form if a student wishes to re-register
- b) To receive confirmation from the Admissions Office once the student is re-registered.

8.4.4. De-registration

- a) Communicate timeously with the student regarding possible de-registration
- b) Approve de-registrations with the Registry Office
- c) Record a de-registered student on the academic report.

9. 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 Registrar.

10. Revision History

Version History	Amendment Details	Approval Date	Approving Committee
V1	Initial approval	29/8/2024	Senate