



## POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW POLICY

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The Da Vinci Institute is a registered private higher distance education provider (Registration No. 2004/HE07/003) offering accredited 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 the required academic regulatory 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.

Policies reflect an official position statement of The Institute and establish the key principles and provisions that govern decision-making processes. Policies are required to include details of The Institute's expectations and how it will behave. While some policies can stand alone, others will be accompanied by associated procedures and/or guidelines to explain how the policy is to be implemented across The Institute.

All policies and procedures must comply with the following requirements:

- a. Academic policies must be approved by Senate
- b. Operational policies must be approved by EXCO
- c. Must be developed using The Institute's policy or procedure templates
- d. Must be stored and accessed via the Policy Register on the Da Vinci shared drive
- e. Must be applied consistently across The Institute
- f. Policies must have an associated procedure document, if required
- g. Procedure documents must be approved by EXCO
- h. Policies must be reviewed and updated triennially, or when required
- i. Amendments to a policy may be necessary for a specific purpose and may need to be approved within a specific timeframe. Amendments to a policy for a specific reason would not negate the need for a formal policy review and should not influence the date of the policy review
- j. Policies and Procedures will continue in force until such time as they are replaced.

This approach will assist The Institute to:

- a. Comply with relevant legislation and national standards
- b. Comply with Senate requirements
- c. Establish The Institute's position across a range of matters
- d. Support The Institute's mission and vision
- e. Achieve The Institute's strategic goals
- f. Promote operational efficiencies and reduce risks
- g. Meet community expectations.

All stakeholders must understand their responsibilities and comply with policies and procedures that are applicable to them.

## 2 DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Benchmarking	A process of evaluating similar policies or procedures at other institutions to compare sector standards and identify good practice. Benchmarking should act as a reference point.
Compliance	Conforming to a rule, such as specified in the policies, standards, regulations, or law. Regulatory compliance describes the goal that the institution aspires to achieve in their efforts, to ensure that personnel are aware of, and take steps to comply with the relevant laws and regulations.
EXCO	Executive Committee
Governance	The way in which The Institute is managed at the highest level, and the systems and processes utilised for doing so.
Policy	A statement of management, philosophy, and direction, established to provide guidance and assistance to The Institute's community in the conduct of its affairs
Principles	Ideas or propositions that serve as the foundation for a system of beliefs and behaviour that is used to govern The Institute
Senate	The Institute's highest academic governing body
Stakeholder	Individuals and groups considered to have a genuine interest in Da Vinci. This may include staff, students, former staff, alumni, suppliers, contractors, the community, the media, education departments, other higher education institutions, local and central government agencies and business interests.

## 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 and operational procedures are developed, implemented, and maintained. These include:

### A. Relevant legislation:

- I. Companies Act (No.71 of 2008)
- II. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996
- III. Higher Education Act (No.101 of 1997) as amended Act (No.39 of 2008)
- IV. Higher Education Policy Framework (HEQF) Government Gazette Vol. 481, July 2005
- V. Higher Education and Training Act – as amended by the Higher Education Amendment Act (No. 39 of 2008)
- VI. National Education Policy Act (No.27 of 1996) as amended 2007
- VII. National Education Policy Act (No.27 of 1996)
- VIII. National Qualifications Framework Act (No.67 of 2008)

- B. Applicable Institutional documents:
- i. All Da Vinci policies and procedures as contained in The Institute's Quality Management System.

## **4 SCOPE**

The *Policy Development and Review Policy* applies to all staff and other stakeholders involved in the policy development and review processes at The Institute.

## **5 PURPOSE**

The academic and operational governance of The Institute is based on Government Acts and Regulations, relevant binding legal decisions, policies, procedures, institutional guidelines, and protocols.

The *Policy Development and Review Policy* establishes a framework for defining, developing, benchmarking, maintaining, and reviewing The Institute's policies and associated documents to ensure compliance, consistency and quality.

## **6 PRINCIPLES**

The Institute has adopted a devolved policy development model whereby responsibility for the development, amendment, and review of policies and procedures is undertaken by relative heads of department within the faculties and departments of The Institute.

The Institute is committed to:

- a. Adhering to a central framework for policy development and review
- b. Providing the necessary document-based tools and resources to support the policy drafting undertaken by the Policy Custodian
- c. Maintaining the Policy Register
- d. Monitoring policy implementation and compliance.

## **7 CATEGORIES AND STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT**

Any Da Vinci policy is owned and managed by a Policy Custodian; the employee who has overarching responsibility for the policy and for ensuring it is implemented and reviewed and updated as required.

### **7.1 Categories**

The development or review of a policy may fall into one of the following categories:

- New Policy
- Minor Amendment
- Major Amendment

### **7.1.1 New Policy**

A new policy should be developed when a requirement for standardising practice in a particular area, not covered by an existing policy, arises.

### **7.1.2 Minor Amendment**

A minor amendment is a change to a current policy that is not of a substantial nature, and will not alter the application, meaning or intent of the policy. Minor amendments may involve a consequential change to a single provision as a result of legislative amendments or amendments to a related policy. Minor amendments may also include changes to responsibilities or operational aspects of a process or editorial changes, title changes, typographical errors, and amendments to references and hyperlinks.

### **7.1.3 Major Amendment**

A major amendment is a change to a current policy that is likely to impact the intent of the policy and/or other related policies, stakeholders, aligned procedures, systems, rules or codes of practice or conduct.

## **7.2 Stages of Policy Development**

The stages of policy development can be divided into the following:

- Needs Analysis
- Research
- Drafting of the policy
- Consultation
- Approval
- Implementation and Communication
- Review.

### **7.2.1 Stage One: Needs Analysis**

- a. The Policy Custodian should identify all issues that could result in a policy review or the development of a new policy. Triggers for a policy review include:
  - I. The review date for the policy is upcoming
  - II. Policy gaps identified via a committee process, by faculties, through consultation with students or other stakeholders, or changes in the environment within or external to The Institute
  - III. Legislative changes.
- b. In identifying policy issues a decision will need to be made by the Policy Custodian or delegate about the urgency of the issues and whether to:
  - I. Schedule for a later review or development
  - II. Address the problem through mechanisms other than the policy process
  - III. Proceed with a review or new policy development.

### **7.2.2 Stage Two: Research**

- a. The Policy Custodian will analyse any relevant information that could inform the policy development or review. This may include, inter alia, data analysis, a literature review, and benchmarking against best practice.
- b. The implications of the policy development or review should be determined by considering the systemic impact thereof on, inter alia, other policies, stakeholders, administration, and systems development.
- c. Identification of stakeholders that should be consulted for the drafting of the policy and for further consultation and input after the policy has been drafted.

### **7.2.3 Stage Three: Drafting**

- a. In consultation with stakeholders, the Policy Custodian will recommend changes to amend the existing policy
- b. Depending upon the extent of change, urgency and timing of the policy change, stakeholders will be consulted and have the opportunity to comment on the draft policy. Changes that emerge from this consultation process may require further consultation and drafting of the policy.
- c. The Policy Custodian, in consultation with key stakeholders or a working group, will inform the drafting stage of the policy.

### **7.2.4 Stage Four: Consultation**

For academic policies, the finalised draft policy will be submitted by the Registrar to the *Integrated Quality Management System Committee* for review and approval. Operational draft policies may be sent back to the relevant stakeholders for further input.

### **7.2.5 Stage Five: Approval**

- a. Once the new or amended draft policy has been approved by the relevant stakeholders or committee, the document is submitted for final approval to the highest delegated authority which is Senate for academic policies and EXCO for operational policies
- b. The policy may require revision depending on feedback received by the highest delegated authority
- c. Once the policy has been accepted by the highest delegated authority, the policy is then considered 'approved'
- d. The policy will then be updated on the Policy Register by the Registrar.

### **7.2.6 Stage Six: Implementation and Communication**

- a. The Policy Custodian is responsible for the implementation of the policy and overseeing compliance to the policy
- b. The Policy Custodian, in consultation with the stakeholders, will ensure that any associated policies are modified or superseded, as required
- c. The Registrar will communicate the adoption of new policies and procedures or amendments to existing policies and procedures to the relevant stakeholders.

### **7.2.7 Stage seven: Review**

- a. The Policy Register is maintained by the Registrar throughout the use of the policy
- b. The Policy Register reflects the Senate or EXCO decision number and the review date of the policy
- c. The Policy Register is used to inform further reviews of the policy.

## **7.3 Roles and Responsibilities**

### **7.3.1 Responsibility of the Policy Custodian**

It is the responsibility of the Policy Custodian to:

- a. Use the templates provided by the Registrar
- b. Develop and review the policy
- c. Consult with stakeholders
- d. Review and update the policy to comply with relevant legislation
- e. Submit the policy and/or procedure for approval as per process
- f. Ensure consistency between the policy and any related policies, procedures, systems, codes of practice or conduct, standards, guidelines, and rules
- g. Develop and maintain a complete and accurate record of the policy.

### **7.3.2 Responsibility of the Registrar**

It is the responsibility of Registrar to:

- a. Oversee the policy development framework
- b. Provide policy and procedure templates to Policy Custodians
- c. Submit new and amended academic policies to the *Integrated Quality Management System Committee* for review and approval
- d. Submit academic policies approved by the *Integrated Quality Management System Committee* to Senate for review and approval
- e. Submit operational policies to EXCO for approval
- f. Submit procedures to EXCO for approval
- g. Maintain the Policy Register
- h. Communicate new policies and amendments to existing policies and procedures to the relevant stakeholders
- i. Monitor the scheduled review date for policies and liaise with the relevant custodian as necessary
- j. Upload the relevant new policies and amended policies on the Da Vinci website for access by students and other stakeholders.

### **7.3.3 Responsibility of Senate**

It is the responsibility of Senate to review and approve new academic policies or amendments to existing academic policies and ensure consistency between the policy and any related policies, procedures, systems, codes of practice or conduct, standards, guidelines, rules and relevant legislation.

#### **7.3.4 Responsibility of EXCO**

It is the responsibility of EXCO to review and approve the new policy or procedure or amended policy or procedure and ensure consistency between the policy and/or procedure and any related policies, procedures, systems, codes of practice or conduct, standards, guidelines, rules, and relevant legislation.

### **8 RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

- a. Policies and procedures are accessible by staff on the Da Vinci shared drive under the Policy Register
- b. Policies and Codes accessible on the Policy Register and the Da Vinci website are considered the authoritative source for staff and students.

### **9 GOVERNING AUTHORITY**

- a. Senate approves all new and amended academic policies, and the rescission of the relevant policies. In the case of approving amendments, only major amendments as defined in this policy, need to be approved.
- b. EXCO approves operational policies and all procedures, and the rescission of the relevant policies and procedures. In the case of approving amendments, only major amendments as defined in this policy, need to be approved.

### **10 REVIEW OF POLICY**

Regular review and amendments of this policy will be done in line with the approved institutional policies. This will take place in consultation with the relevant quality assurance structures at departmental and institutional level, under the auspices of the official custodians of this policy, namely the Registrar.