

Quality Enhancement Project Institutional Report: Phase 2

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ACRONYMS USED IN THIS REPORT

ACCA:	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
IAEA:	International Atomic Energy Agency
APS:	Average Point Score
CAR:	Co-ordination, alignment, rationalisation of academic programmes
CDP:	Curriculum Development Plan
CHE:	Council for Higher Education
CIMA:	Chartered Institute for Management Accountants
CST:	Core Steering Team
CSR:	Corporate Social Responsibility
CTL:	Centre for Teaching and Learning
DoE:	Department of Education
DVC (TL):	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)
ECSA:	Engineering Council of South Africa
EPE:	External Programme Evaluation
ESC:	Engineering Student Council
ESKOM:	South African Electricity Supply Commission
FMC:	Faculty Management Committee
FSB:	Financial Services Board
HE:	Higher Education
HEQSF:	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
HPCSA:	Health Professions Council of South Africa
HRSC:	Human Sciences Research Council
ICAS:	Institutional Committee for Academic Standards
IM:	Institutional Management
IPE:	Internal Programme Evaluation
ITEA:	Institutional Teaching Excellence Award
ITRISA:	International Trade Institute of South Africa
MC:	Mafikeng Campus
NECSA:	South African Nuclear Energy Corporation
NGO:	Non-government organisation
NNR:	National Nuclear Regulator
NRF:	National Research Foundation
NQF:	National Qualifications Framework
OBE:	Outcomes-based Education

ODL:	Open Distance Learning
PBL:	Problem-based Learning
PC:	Potchefstroom Campus
PQM:	Programme and Qualification Mix
Q&APP:	Qualification and Academic Programme Planning
QEP:	Quality Enhancement Project
SABS:	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SAIPA:	South African Institute of Professional Accountants
SAQA:	South African Qualifications Authority
SASAS:	South African Society for Animal Science
SAVC:	South African Veterinary Council
SETA:	Sector Education and Training Authority
SDL:	Self-Directed Learning
<i>TransfTL:</i>	Transformation of Teaching and Learning project
SI:	Supplemental Instruction
SoTL:	Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
STARS:	Student Academic Readiness Survey
TEA:	Teaching Excellence Award
VTC:	Vaal Triangle Campus
WIL:	Work-integrated learning

THE NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT PHASE 2 REPORT

1 INTRODUCTION

In March 2017, the CHE finalised the framework for Phase 2 of the QEP project (QEP 2). The revised framework focuses only on the Curriculum, with the following four themes:

- Curriculum renewal and transformation (initiatives to promote curriculum renewal and transformation; approaches to knowledge that informs the design and delivery of the curriculum);
- Diversity and inclusivity (provision for students with diverse academic needs, promotion of inclusivity for all students in the curriculum);
- Curriculum development capacity and quality (support to academics for curriculum design and development and measures to ensure the quality of curriculum design and development);
- Participation in curriculum design and development (participation by students and diverse external stakeholders in curriculum design and development).

Ultimately, the outcomes of the QEP 2 should have a significant influence on the University's planning for further curriculum renewal, not only in terms of structure and processes, but also in terms of content with a view to better utilise substantial learning opportunities to prepare our graduates for today's diverse and demanding workplaces. Student success, defined by the CHE (2017) as "enhanced student learning with a view to increasing the number of graduates with attributes that are personally, professionally and socially valuable", lies at the heart of the QEP endeavour. The NWU also values student success as the focus of its core business and thus as an integral part of the NWU's strategic intent for teaching and learning as encapsulated in the NWU Strategy (2015-2025).

1.1 Process followed in the development of the Institutional Report

For each of the abovementioned QEP 2 themes, the University was required to respond to a set of questions by means of a narrative report that included two to four exemplars per theme of successful initiatives, with a full report of between twenty and forty pages. The University deemed the QEP project a key opportunity to participate in a disciplined process of engagement with the challenge of curriculum transformation, which is one of the priorities of the NWU Strategy (2015 to 2025), and also one of the strategic drivers of the NWU Teaching and Learning Strategy (2016 to 2020). The QEP 2 identified three important facets of the curriculum, namely curriculum structure, content and implementation as important constructs that shape the curriculum, and invited institutions to reflect on these constructs as part of their narrative reports on the four mentioned themes.

The DVC: Teaching and Learning (TL) and the Acting Chief Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) met with the faculty deans on 8 March 2017 to discuss the process for the development of the institutional report. At that meeting, it was agreed that the executive deans would each nominate faculty representatives to constitute a working group for the development of the QEP report. The names and affiliations of these representatives are provided in this report. The working

group held its first meeting on 2 May 2017, and determined the timeframe for its activities at that meeting.

The following time schedule for actions were determined:

Action	Date
Meeting with faculty representatives	2 May 2017
Workshops with the representatives of the eight NWU faculties on the three NWU campuses and curriculum support departments	15 May to 15 June 2017
Initial faculty and support department submissions to Acting Chief Director of CTL	30 June 2017
Integration of submissions into a first draft report	14 July 2017
Round robin of draft report to faculty executive deans for inputs	17 to 24 July 2017
Integration of further inputs and finalisation of draft report	15 August 2017
Submission of draft report to Committee for TL for inputs	12 September 2017
Integration of inputs from members of Committee for TL	2 October 2017
Round robin of final draft report to Acting director Q&APP, Director Quality Office and DVC TL for final contributions and finalisation of report	20 October 2017
Submission of QEP 2 report to NWU Senate	1 November 2017
Final revisions after Faculty, Quality Office and Senate inputs	14 November 2017
Submission of final report to CHE	27 November 2017

The workshops served to facilitate academic discourse regarding conceptual and theoretical considerations with regard to approaches and initiatives to curriculum development, renewal and transformation in NWU academic programme offerings to ensure a sustainable and viable programme and qualification mix (PQM). Faculties and support departments were informed of the details required from them for completion of the QEP 2 report.

After the consultation and information sessions with faculty management structures, teaching and learning committees, programme committees, and support departments concerned, all stakeholders were requested to formulate and submit the required responses to the acting Chief Director of CTL by 30 June 2017. A last meeting of the Deans' Forum followed in October with instructions from the DVC (TL) for more substantive data in places, and then final round-robin email consultations served to refine and finalise the report.

The CHE (2014a) made it clear that "quality enhancement" signalled their intention to "help institutions to advance to increasing levels of quality", thus looking forward toward improvements rather than looking back on what had been done. This report offers explicit information on NWU curriculum renewal and transformation over the past 12 years, and how the rapidly changing higher education (HE) environment, new regulatory requirements, and internal University structural and managerial transformation influenced the restructuring of academic programme curricula, curriculum outcomes, content and assessment plans, and the quality monitoring, renewal and implementation of curricula within NWU teaching and learning spaces.

1.2 Composition of Steering Committee and contributors towards preparation of the report

During 2017, the QEP Steering Committee consisted of the following members:

Prof Martin Oosthuizen (Chair; DVC: TL until end of July 2017)

Prof Dawid Gericke (Chair; Acting Chief Director CTL from 1 June 2017)

The other contributors towards the QEP 2 report consisted of NWU faculty leadership, academic and CTL support staff members from all three NWU campuses (MC: Mafikeng Campus; PC: Potchefstroom campus; VTC: Vaal Triangle Campus), and the Acting Director of the Qualification and Academic Programme Planning (Q&APP) Department. These staff members participated in interactive workshops by means of written contributions, and/or the submission of valuable evidence or data to complete the required responses. These contributors consisted of the following groups:

1.2.1 Faculty executive or acting deans and their selected team members

Faculty of Health Sciences – Prof Awie Kotzè

Faculty of Humanities – Prof Marilyn Setlalentoa and Deputy Dean Prof Susan Coetzee-van Rooy

Faculty of Economic Management and Sciences – Prof Sonia Swanepoel

Faculty of Education – Prof Elza Mentz

Faculty of Engineering – Prof Liezl van Dyk

Faculty of Law – Prof Stephen de la Harpe

Faculty of Theology – Prof Rantoa Letšosa

Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Sciences – Deputy Dean TL Prof Helen Drummond

1.2.2 Qualification and Academic Programme Planning Department

Dr Franciska Bothma – Acting Director Q&APP

1.2.3 Chairpersons of faculty Teaching and Learning Committees

Prof Surika van Rooyen – Faculty Economic and Management Sciences

Dr Mark Rathbone and Mr Duane Aslett – School of Accounting Sciences

Dr Roelof Burger – School of Geo and Spatial Sciences

Dr Mpho Chaka – School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences

Dr Mpho Chaka – School of Human Sciences

Ms Mokgadi Molohe – School of Demography

Prof Liqhwa Siziba – Faculty of Humanities

Prof Flip Schutte – Faculty of Law

Prof Grieta Hanekom – Faculty of Health Sciences

1.2.4 Additional contributors

Ms Anneke Butler – School of Languages

Ms Naomi du Plessis – School of Communication

Dr Elsabe Diedericks – School of Industrial Psychology and Human Resource Management

Prof Natasha De Klerk – School of Economic Sciences

Prof Jaco Fouché – School of Accounting Sciences

Mr Piet Ntema – School of Information Technology

Prof Elmien du Plessis and Mr Michael Laubscher – Faculty of Law

Profs Clever Ndebele and Kobus Mentz and Dr Magda Kloppers – Faculty of Education

Prof Marco le Roux and Dr Corneels Schabort – Faculty of Engineering

Prof Gerda Reitsma – Faculty of Health Sciences Centre for Teaching and Learning

Dr Marieta Jansen van Vuuren – Centre for Teaching and Learning VTC

The members of the Transformation Oversight Committee

1.3 NWU organisational change since the submission of the QEP 1 report

As background to the report, it is of importance to note that, since the submission of the QEP 1 report, the NWU has been undergoing extensive structural, organisational and managerial changes, ultimately leading to a more integrated HE institution with eight cross-campus unified faculties instead of the former fifteen freestanding faculties. Support and administrative departments have also undergone total restructuring to ensure a more uniform approach to service delivery and administration across our three campuses. This process has, however, taken its toll in terms of time and efforts of institutional and faculty management, academics and support staff, and the restructuring process is only now taking form and nearing conclusion. A number of key positions and committees (e.g. deputy deans for TL, new faculty boards, new chairs for faculty TL committees, etc.) have not yet been filled or established, resulting in key processes such as policy reviews and amendments, and the integration of faculties under a new management model, having lagged behind over the past 6 months. These will be addressed from January 2018 onwards, and the University will be moving forward into a new era with better social cohesion, a greater focus on inclusivity and diversity, and with the will to make even greater strides towards a dynamic, socially responsive and sustainable qualification and academic programme offering.

One of the results of the NWU restructuring over the past 18 months has been the establishment of a unified Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) in the office of the DVC (TL). CTL has been structured in such a manner that it now has a specific focus area dealing with curriculum design and development on meso and micro levels. In addition, a second new department has been established, namely the Qualification and Academic Programme Planning Department (Q&APP). This department will have the specific mandate of managing qualification and academic programme planning and development at the macro and the meso levels, working in close collaboration with CTL, with a focus on external and internal regulatory compliance and the management of the sustainability and viability of the NWU PQM. Although these two new departments are experiencing capacity constraints to ensuring effective and efficient curriculum planning, and development and transformation support to all eight faculties across the three NWU campuses, the University has identified capacity building as a strategic priority that will hopefully be addressed within the following six months.

Where, in the past, curriculum planning and development often occurred in silos in subject groups or faculties, the new NWU management model, the establishment of the eight faculty structures, and the qualification, academic programme, and curriculum support departments will facilitate more

collaborative, consultative, and more efficient efforts in terms of curriculum planning, development, renewal and transformation.

2 CURRICULUM RENEWAL AND TRANSFORMATION AT INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

2.1 Introduction

The NWU QEP 1 report noted the University Transformation of Teaching and Learning project (*TransfTL* project) that started in February 2015 and its significance as source for the self-evaluation done for the first phase of the QEP. This project was also utilised for the restructuring of the support departments related to the portfolio of the DVC (TL). One of the focus areas of the *TransfTL* project, namely *innovative qualification and programme development, management and review*, included the alignment of all NWU qualifications and programme curricula to the requirements of the HEQSF, as well as the development of a University-specific curriculum planning and development model.

The outcomes of the HEQSF-alignment project, managed by the office of the DVC (TL) from 2011 to 2016, and thereafter by the Q&APP department, have had a considerable impact on curriculum transformation and alignment to external regulatory requirements as will be discussed later in this report. A special electronic curriculum mapping system and an outcomes builder application were also developed to manage and facilitate the alignment and the quality of outcomes of programme curricula during this project. The project thus had a significant influence on curricula structures and content. Yet the scope thereof did not always allow for an in-depth look at issues related to true transformation and renewal. Academic discourse centred on broadening of access, ensuring quality provision across campuses, and interrogating target markets to better serve NWU communities. Issues such as the decolonisation and Africanisation of the curriculum, epistemological transformation, and the knowledge and productive processes to be valued in curriculum planning and implementation were not, at the time, key contributors to the curriculum narrative. These issues have now come to the fore, and will be interrogated and more clearly defined in order to influence further curriculum renewal and transformation at content and implementation levels.

The NWU curriculum model – currently in the final stages of development by the CTL and the Q&APP department – will in future be a significant tool for ensuring continuous in-depth and structured curriculum planning, and renewal and transformation from macro to micro level. This model will act as a guideline for academic programme teams to plan for and develop new qualifications, renew and transform existing academic programme curricula, and develop appropriate and functional materials and teaching-learning spaces to ensure that students are able to master curriculum outcomes that are appropriate and relevant in terms of the social, ethical, political and technical knowledge and skills required, irrespective of the nature of a programme or its mode of delivery.

What follows are key institutional issues, processes and highlights regarding structural and content-related curriculum planning, renewal and transformation – prior to, and since the NWU restructuring process began.

2.1.1 NWU's approach to curriculum renewal and alignment prior to 2015

2.1.1.1 Curriculum alignment and renewal 2004-2009

On 1 January 2004 the new North-West University (NWU) came into being through the merger of the former Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and the former University of North West, and, later, the incorporation of the staff and students of the Sebokeng Campus of the Vista University – by a Notice of Merger and a Notice of Incorporation issued by the Minister of Education in terms of Sections 23(1) and 24 of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No 101 Of 1997), as amended.

In 2003 the Councils of the merging universities and the Interim Council Elect agreed that, in order to achieve the gazetted objectives for this merger, it would be critical to ensure a smooth transition during 2004. A stable environment was critical for the new University to be able to continue with its core business of teaching-learning, research and the implementation of expertise.

Following the appointment of the senior management towards the end of 2004, an inclusive process of establishing a vision, values and mission commenced, resulting in the adoption of a statement to this effect in the first quarter of 2005. For the remainder of 2005, the NWU engaged at different levels to arrive at a framework for, and later the details of the draft Institutional Plan.

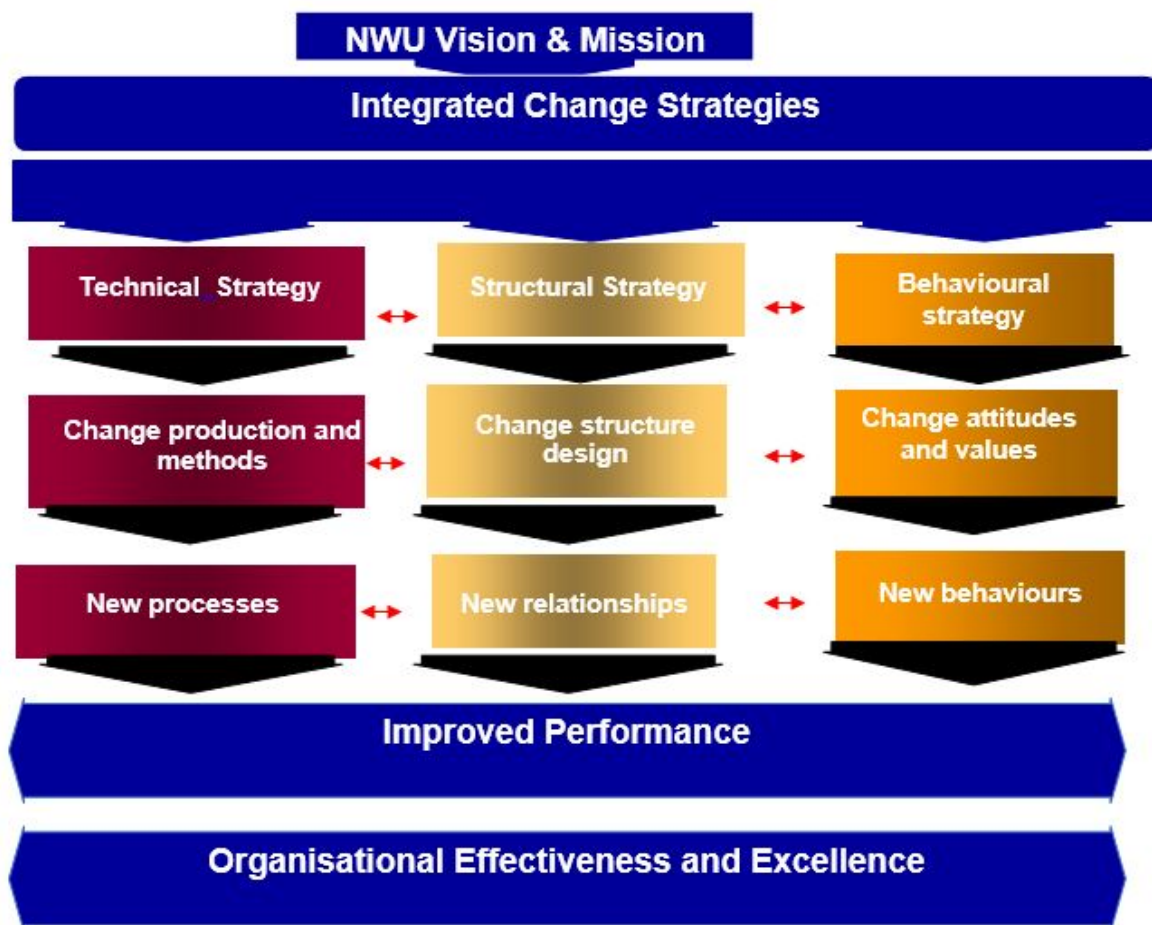
In keeping with the assertion that “the overall well-being of nations is vitally dependent on the contribution of higher education to the social, cultural, political and economic development of its citizens”, every care was taken to ensure that the NWU’s transformational framework and implementation plan, as well as institutional vision and ethos were consistent with the core elements of the Policy Framework as set out in the National Plan (2001) viz.:

- promote equity of access and fair chances of success to all who are seeking to realise their potential through higher education, while eradicating all forms of unfair discrimination and advancing redress for past inequalities;
- meet, through well-planned and co-ordinated academic and research programmes, national development and high-skilled employment needs;
- support a democratic ethos and a culture of human rights through programmes and practices conducive to critical discourse and creative thinking, cultural tolerance, and a common commitment to a humane, non-racist and non-sexist social order.

The NWU also aligned itself with the principles articulated in the CHE report (2000), referring to the enhancement of democracy to lay the basis for greater participation in economic and social life and striving towards “higher levels of employment and work that contribute to political and social stability and the capacity of citizens to exercise and enforce democratic rights and participate effectively in decision-making”. Therefore the renewal and transformation of NWU academic programme curricula and the transformation framework formed the bases of the NWU Institutional Plan approved by Senate for the period 2006-2008.

The transformation framework with its timelines, milestones, and clear costing was developed to remove uncertainty and to demonstrate the levels of commitment of all role-players. The framework had to break down barriers between structures and contribute to trust building. Shared decision-

making among stakeholders and the NWU community implied by this plan was enhanced by the transparency that the framework promoted. The framework was illustrated as follows, with curriculum renewal and transformation positioned as part of the technical strategic pillar.



This model guided the implementation of the Institutional Plan. The technical strategic pillar required work within two interrelated components, namely a structural (design process) component and a behavioural (attitudinal change) component.

In terms of this report, the change in the structural design process is significant. At that time, curriculum transformation and renewal had a technical focus, and then, specifically, to ensure the alignment of academic programme offerings, curriculum composition, and the quality thereof across the three NWU campuses. The alignment of the academic programmes across campuses, and transformation of curricula to reflect social change and removal of bias, had to be carried out in a comprehensive manner since it was recognised that this process would lay the foundation for the NWU's core business of teaching and learning for years to come. The University, therefore, established what was referred to as *CARs* and *sub-CARs*, programme committees or structures and subject group sub-committees that were established across the three University campuses as alignment mechanisms to Co-ordinate, Align and Rationalise academic programme offerings with a view to ultimately reconfiguring the academic programme offering at that time and, hence, better plan for a more appropriate, viable and sustainable NWU PQM.

This was an organisational and operational mechanism to facilitate cross-campus and cross-faculty consultation in an effort to re-think the NWU's strategic intent in terms of its academic offering in light of its different target markets, its available expertise, and resources. At that time, the following academic programme alignment clusters or *CARs* were identified, in line with national focus area priorities as identified by the then DoE, to act as forerunners in the process of aligning academic offerings and quality assurance mechanisms across the three campuses: Economic and Management Sciences; Educational Sciences; Humanities; and Science, Engineering and Technology.

While these were the four broad *CARs* established for the purpose of facilitating the programme alignment process, several *sub-CARs* consisting of staff working within specific subject groups or learning areas were also formed to facilitate discussions on alignment and renewal at the curricular level across the three campuses, and across the different programmes offered by the then 15 faculties.

The first task of members of the main *CARs* was to determine the number and nature of *Sub-CARs*, as well as the specific programmes to be linked to every *Sub-CAR*. This was deemed essential for appropriate and effective academic programme alignment discussions. Furthermore, the members of the *CARs* had the mandate to determine which academic programmes should remain unchanged, which should be amended or renewed, and how, and which were redundant and should be phased out with the necessary motivation.

The terms of reference for the use of the *CARs* and *Sub-CARs* were:

- a) To interrogate the institutional guidelines for the process to be followed to align academic programmes as provided for in the NWU Academic Programme Alignment Manual of 10 May 2006 (as approved by Senate).
- b) To complete the relevant NWU Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS) programme alignment forms containing all the detailed information of those programmes to be a) aligned and how, b) continued without amendments, or c) rationalised due to their obsolete status; their lack of critical mass of enrolments; their lack of cost effectiveness in terms of staff allocation/capacity (student-staff ratio); weak earning capacity in terms of subsidy; or lack of contribution towards equity targets, or other such motivations.
- c) To submit the completed programme alignment forms to ICAS for consideration and approval before the end of June 2008.

The whole process of alignment was overseen by a core steering team (CST) mandated by the NWU Institutional Management. All school directors, heads of departments, programme managers, and subject group leaders were required to complete a training programme related to the academic programme alignment process. The programme had the following intended outcomes for all concerned:

- understanding of the contextualisation of the academic alignment process in terms of the vision and mission of the NWU and that participants would be able to interpret transformation matters related to the academic programme alignment process in the context of the merger.
- ability to understand, interpret and complete the relevant ICAS forms.
- acquiring knowledge and understanding of the principles of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) in HE context in South Africa.
- ability to develop appropriate outcomes (for programmes and modules) and assessment criteria as well as assessment methods for academic programmes.
- ability to implement the conventions that govern curriculum processes for a programme and within an OBE-oriented HE context. More specifically, attendees were required to demonstrate that they would be able to implement the conventions stipulated in the level descriptors for HE and the conventions related to a credit-based higher education system where 1 credit equals 10 notional hours of learning;
- ability to develop study guides and supportive materials (text books, etc.) that comply with the level of study and different possible curriculum structures related to the adoption of the specific weighting system decided on by the NWU (12 credits per module at first-year level, with increments of 4 as required for modules in subsequent study years).

After the members of the CARs had done their work, ICAS forms for all newly aligned academic programmes had to be completed and submitted for ICAS consideration and approval or deferral for further deliberation. The following scenarios were considered by ICAS:

- for all academic programmes that were earmarked to be phased out for whatever reason decided on by the CARs, faculties were required to submit a complete list to ICAS for consideration and subsequent removal of programmes from the NWU PQM.
- academic programmes that were offered only on one specific campus (thus, no cross-campus alignment necessary) but with module amendments to better reflect renewal and sustainability and the newly approved credit structures to remain part of the NWU PQM.
- academic programmes that were similar in purpose and nature, offered across 2 or 3 campuses, thus in need of alignment. The amendments to ensure alignment and transformation had to be included in the form, as well as alignment with the newly approved NWU credit structures.

Because the NWU student body enrolled at all faculties across all three campuses originated from across Africa, and thus reflected diverse academic, social, economic and cultural backgrounds, decisions on sustainability and alignment were largely dependent on the target markets for the academic programmes offered on or across the three campuses. Internal faculty inputs, student needs, and available resources played a critical role in decisions regarding curriculum transformation; but external inputs and requirements from national regulatory bodies, professional bodies, industry engagement or community advisory committees were deemed of greater importance. The University increasingly recognised the importance of market expectations in determining curriculum renewal and transformation, but later also came to realise the value of

student contributions, peer reviews, benchmarking reports with other institutions, and advice from curriculum experts in different fields of specialisation in taking the curriculum transformation agenda forward.

The greatest challenge experienced during this time was to convince academics who had been working in isolation over many years to start conversations with colleagues on other campuses in order to share expertise and to collaborate in order to improve the quality of modules and programmes across the board, irrespective of the target market and the mode of delivery of a programme. It was thus essential to facilitate constant academic discourse on alignment and to monitor compliance and proactive buy-in into the general direction associated with the overall NWU strategy. The allocation of resources received special attention to better balance the opportunities for continuous curriculum alignment and renewal on all three campuses. Still, it was evident that the curriculum transformation and alignment outcomes were more structural and technical in nature and that a more in-depth look at programme curricula would have had to follow to ensure significant renewal and transformation at a functional and content level.

2.1.1.2 Curriculum alignment and renewal 2010-2015

Utilising the extensive national Higher Education Qualifications Framework alignment project (HEQF-alignment project, later the HEQSF project) as a vehicle, the NWU ascertained the reality of qualification and academic programme alignment and renewal at a more functional level, and used the opportunity to further the goals of the Institutional Plan by ensuring consistency in terms of standards, coherence, and equity of provision in the qualifications that Faculties and Schools offered within specific fields of study or disciplines across NWU's three campuses.

This project, which had an envisaged completion date of end of 2013, is still ongoing. Nationally, universities are only now dealing with the real implementation of changes to programme curricula of qualifications that were submitted to the external bodies in 2012/2013. The Minister of Education released a memo to all institutions in 2016 to indicate December 2019 as the final date for student registrations into non-HEQSF-aligned academic programmes. The NWU's qualification and programme offering will be fully HEQSF-aligned by January 2019.

The first phase of the HEQF-project required that all higher education institutions complete and submit a template providing details of their existing programmes and the classification of the programmes in terms of their alignment with the then HEQF and of the envisaged changes to the programmes in order to meet the requirements of the HEQF.

The second phase of the alignment consisted of the phased submission of redesigned programmes (Category A and B programmes) to the HEQC as well as the phasing out of programmes that could not be aligned with the HEQF (Category C programmes). The HEQF alignment process required that the NWU ensured that all its formal qualifications and programmes adhered to the requirements of the HEQF in terms of qualification naming, their NQF level, their credit-ratings, minimum admission requirements, progression and articulation possibilities, the use of designators and qualifiers to name qualifications, and inserting a research component into or increasing the research

component of a qualification where necessary. One of the most important aspects that needed addressing during the project was the alignment of qualifications and linked programmes to the appropriate exit levels of the NQF. NQF levels 5-10 were allocated to the Higher Education and Training Band and for each level of the NQF there was a level descriptor to describe the learning achievement (knowledge, skills and attitudes – referred to as “applied competence”) appropriate to a qualification or learning component at that level.

Furthermore, for each of the 10 qualification types, there were specifications in terms of minimum admission requirements, minimum total credits, NQF levels, prescribed credit values at various NQF levels, its purpose and characteristics, and progression and articulation possibilities. These also needed to be taken into account during the re-thinking of every qualification offered by the University at that time. The work done for this project from 2011 to 2013 was extensive, with the goals of programme alignment focused on ensuring equivalence of academic standards and programme outcomes across campuses and delivery modes. The work of HEQF alignment was carried out by clusters of academic staff members who were responsible for specific programmes within various main disciplinary areas according to the first and second-order CESM categories – effectively, the subject chairs or programme owners. The Management Information Office contributed to the identification of the programme clusters by grouping all programmes into second-order CESM categories according to fields of study. Programme clusters from across NWU’s three campuses then collaborated in an effort to align programmes that fall within specific subject areas.

During this time, the University started planning and implementing strategies to establish a more optimal future scenario for a viable and sustainable qualification and academic programme offering for a variety of target markets in both contact and distance modes of delivery. The following offers a summary of the focus areas that were attended to in terms of curriculum transformation and renewal during this period:

- The University identified ten transformation goals, which were judged the most relevant to pursue, monitor and achieve during that period, namely: Diversity, Access, Alignment, Redress, Equity, Resource Allocation, Increased Unity, Student Experience, Success, and Quality. To refine the transformation dashboard as a measuring tool to monitor the progress made with the implementation of the ten elements of transformation, the NWU context confirmed that transformation was inextricably linked with issues of justice, culture, performance indicators, communal wellbeing, excellence, relevance, etc., as well as with the wider concept of being responsive to environmental and political changes, and being relevant to the current needs of the communities we serve. Progress in achieving the aforementioned was dependent upon the existence of clear, measurable and well-communicated strategies, plans and projects; and a focused, fundamental, purposeful, resolute, collective and dedicated effort – including structures and systems – by the entire NWU community. Dialogue, communication, negotiation and collegiality were imperative if the NWU values were to shape the institutional culture and climate in a meaningful way that would be sustainable into the future. Therefore, the ongoing management and monitoring of the transformation agenda in line with the University’s Code of

Ethics remains an ongoing process today and continues to evolve by means of constructive discourse and continuous consultation with different stakeholders – students included.

- To ensure that the NWU grew systematically as a multi-campus university that effectively utilised its diversity in terms of demographics, socio-economic background, and sociocultural viewpoints, had not been an easy task. In particular, the University strived to promote multiculturalism and the open exchange of diverse views in an environment that allowed for the harmonious co-existence of different traditions, beliefs and viewpoints, thereby creating an enriched dynamic and unitary community. During this time, the University also established specific university-wide staff and student development and support programmes to foster the building of a diversified NWU community.
- The creation of possibilities for transformation dialogue and debate in order to demystify and “normalise” the process, to establish an inclusive institutional culture based on the value system of the NWU. It was deemed important to continue to establish a vibrant academic and social culture at all three NWU campuses in order to establish an optimal staff and student experience.
- A focus on the establishment of an enabling environment for our students – one that encouraged their development as future leaders as well as exposing them to a well-balanced academic, cultural, social and sporting environment across all three campuses. The University has experienced many success stories in this regard, but we are very much aware of the fact that there is more to be done to ensure an optimal student experience for all our students.
- Engaging in an ongoing process of curriculum transformation and promotion of the development of well-designed academic programmes that contain an appropriate balance of theoretical and practical knowledge, that inculcate in students the ability to engage with the philosophical foundations of their fields of study, to understand and evaluate the influence of different knowledge traditions in the validation of knowledge, and to develop the principles of good citizenship. Also of importance was the continuous monitoring of the presentation of modules designed for achieving Critical Cross-Field Outcomes on all campuses so as to determine equitable outcomes (e.g. Academic Literacy and Understanding the World modules).
- Development, education and empowerment, through innovative and high-quality teaching-learning, of well-rounded graduates who are able to think laterally and critically in their service to the country and its people, the continent, and the world. Development and maintenance of effective programme management processes that ensure consistency of academic standards across NWU's campuses through effective programme coordination and alignment processes.
- Optimization of student participation in work-integrated learning as well as service learning in accordance with the WIL Policy, actions plans and performance targets.
- Within the overarching scope and framework of innovative learning, implementation of the open distance learning model by means of an appropriate delivery mode (i.e. either a dual mode and/or multimodal delivery model) and continue with investigations into the optimal use of ICTs (information and communication technologies) in all NWU teaching and learning environments.

Ultimately, the NWU recognises its responsibility as a custodian of inter alia South African public funds for the education, training and shaping of those members of the populace who study and work at the NWU; as such, we have to be accountable, transparent and inclusive. We believe that our institutional policies, processes and procedures must benefit the NWU's transformation goals as part of its core business underpinned by its core values. As part of the NWU restructuring processes, all policies, rules, processes and procedures have been reviewed and are at different stages of renewal for Senate approval. The University is furthermore committed to continuous transformation and renewal of our programme curricula to ensure a viable and sustainable programme offering to the benefit of our graduates and society as a whole. In our new dispensation, transformational leadership requires that we have the courage to act, decide and make choices in the best interest of attaining NWU's transformation goals in order to give substance to our public claims. This includes the implementation of relevant, inclusive, and practicable academic programme designs for current workplaces, and effective approval processes for renewal and transformation in order to ensure compliance with the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF), but also to address philosophical and ideological approaches to curriculum content and transformation. The University recognises that this is the only way to ensure a continuously responsive and relevant PQM via the optimisation and streamlining of the academic programme approval processes as managed by ICAS.

2.1.2 Theorising about the value, purposes, and assumptions about knowledge to inform curriculum transformation and renewal

Academic discourse and theorising about the value, purposes and assumptions about knowledge that should inform curriculum transformation are not themes that most academics are comfortable with. Such theorising is often the playing field of philosophers, theologians, humanists and educationists, while academics from engineering, the natural and health sciences, and economic and management sciences, are not eager to offer their perspectives on such matters.

Despite this reality, the NWU has been encouraging such discourse via workshops and smaller group discussions to ignite awareness regarding the importance of these matters if the University is truly to transform its programme offerings to reflect the need for a workforce that is able to function in the diverse societies that we educate and train them for.

Ultimately, the University and its staff members are committed to providing its students with an educational experience that will prepare them to face relevant twenty-first century employment, societal, economic, ecological and political challenges in an authentic manner. This will require academics in all faculties to buy in and utilise an outcomes-oriented, student-centred educational approach focused on inquiry-based, active, participative, and meaningful learning within a supportive, responsive, and enabling learning environment, based on appropriate teaching and learning designs that include but are not limited to blended learning, and enhanced by appropriate technologies and multimedia resources.

Teaching and learning are viewed as dynamic, interactive processes for which NWU staff and students have a shared responsibility. The University strives to equip its students with the

competencies to discover knowledge and create coherent understanding through the analysis, evaluation, organisation and synthesis of information in a variety of contexts in order to prepare them to become productive members of their social, academic and professional communities.

In order to do so, NWU is committed to designing curricula in such a manner that a student will have every opportunity to develop the metacognitive ability to understand how scientific knowledge is formed and validated within different disciplinary and professional contexts. Within an understanding of teaching and learning as inquiry-based, is an assumption that in universities, fields of knowledge or knowledge domains are constructed over time within particular methodological frameworks and world views. Inasmuch as the purpose, characteristics and methodologies of inquiry differ within various academic disciplines and fields, the NWU recognises that the core focus of learning is the student, and the purpose of its teaching is both to induct the student into particular fields, and at the same time to develop an appreciation of the differences between approaches to teaching and learning, depending on the field of study. The varieties of and differences between fields of study entail that the design and delivery of academic programmes make use of diverse educational approaches that are sensitive to the diversity of students and academics themselves.

Recognising that NWU students have diverse social and educational backgrounds, learning styles and expectations, the University acknowledges its responsibility to provide students with a responsive and supportive learning experience that is sensitive to their learning needs, and which will empower them to progressively assume greater responsibility for their own learning. The learning experiences are designed to enable students to provide a reasoned account for their own beliefs, practices and attitudes. The NWU approach echoes and advocates the National Qualification Framework's demand for a progressive increase in student learning autonomy and self-accountability at different qualification levels, and from the first to the final year of study.

Members of academic staff fulfil various roles in the design and delivery of learning experiences that must provide their students with optimal opportunities to develop the capabilities to discover knowledge and create understanding. One aspect that has not yet been adequately addressed is the fact that academic staff must create regular opportunities to engage with students about the design of the curriculum, teaching and assessment approaches, their learning needs, and the support provided to them. Engagement about the curriculum means that, as disciplinary experts, members of academic staff should welcome critical discussion with students about the construction and validation of knowledge, and the selection of knowledge within the curriculum. In this manner, academic staff will follow a participative approach, collaborating with members of professional support staff with expertise in curriculum theory and design, teaching and learning, educational media, instructional technologies and design, to create and implement learning experiences that support the achievement of qualification and programme outcomes, and expected graduate attributes.

Furthermore, teaching and learning innovation, a non-negotiable in HE, must encourage active, self-directed learning through the considered adoption of appropriate approaches to teaching, learning

and assessment, the careful selection of teaching and learning resources and technologies, as well as their effective implementation, as evidenced by the range, nature and scope of the learning activities in which students engage. The NWU will commit to provide its students with a responsive and personalised learning experience, based upon:

- An optimal mix of teaching, learning and assessment methods and activities, which will involve blended learning within disciplines and programmes where such an approach is appropriate.
- Opportunities for staff to enhance their capacity to design relevant learning material that provides an interactive learning experience, and directs students to a range of accessible resources that supports their individual learning needs.
- Training and support for staff and students to make effective use of teaching and learning technology.
- Encouraging members of academic staff to reflect on their teaching and learning approaches and practices on a regular basis. Such reflection may take various forms, including individual reflection, involvement in projects on the scholarship of teaching and learning, and participation in dynamic communities of inquiry, in which members of academic staff play a leading role in engaging with professional support staff and students to review and enhance the quality of the learning experience provided to students.

2.1.3 NWU approach to curriculum renewal and transformation after 2015

The period from 2015 to 2016 was earmarked by Faculties as a period wherein renewal or transformation of programmes occurred due to expectations within the HE environment as particularly reflected within documentation of, for example, the National Development Plan, changes in external regulatory requirements (HEQSF), and changes in professional body requirements. Apart from these, faculties relied on inputs / contributions made by alumni, academic discourse outcomes within faculties and between peers of different institutions, literature studies within their fields of expertise, conference proceedings and so forth.

During this period the NWU also embarked on a road towards development and integration of new learning technologies. An increasing shift was *inter alia* made towards e-learning, blended learning, reality-based learning and the use of i-guides (examples follow in par. 2.2). The bottom line for the University is that an increasing number of students may enter HE with digital capabilities that are far beyond those of their teachers. They may have been immersed in an environment which has taught them to expect that their information needs will be met promptly through uninterrupted electronic engagement, and access to digitally enriched, fast, dynamic and enticing media. While learning in such an environment may be more personalised, relevant to immediate interests and enjoyable, it frequently consists of a collection of smaller sets of information. Having become accustomed to bite-sized information, many students do not necessarily possess the literacy and learning skills to assimilate information into a larger, integrated whole.

The challenge for educators is to engage with students at a level and within a context familiar to them and to design learning experiences that make educationally sound use of the opportunities

provided by the technologies and digital resources that they prefer while broadening their informational horizons. The NWU will present students with opportunities to acquire the critical, evaluative and research skills to be able to form coherent understanding in a variety of contexts, and to develop into lifelong learners who will flourish in an uncertain world.

In the achievement of this goal, the University will have to involve its students in more inclusive learning experiences that address their diverse learning styles, and that consist of a wider range of learning activities, in this manner providing a learning experience that, as far as possible, is more personalised. These learning experiences will include student engagement with practice by means of work-integrated learning and community-engaged service learning opportunities. Such engagement will be integrated into teaching and learning designs and must at all times be sustainable, mutually beneficial, and aligned to community needs. It is the NWU's intent to use such engagement opportunities to better prepare students for the world of work, and to develop a culture of responsible and active participation in civil society, citizenship and environmental stewardship.

From January 2016 the HEQSF-alignment project took on a different dimension – whereas the first phases of the project necessitated scrutiny of qualifications and compliance to HEQSF requirements (thus, mostly at the level of curriculum structure and in part at the level of curriculum content), the third phase required of academics to plan and implement module changes to NWU programme curricula to align with the approved and accredited qualifications standards (thus, mostly at the level of curriculum content and in part looking at curriculum implementation).

The NWU Senate approved a phased approach whereby Faculties had the opportunity to align each of the existing teaching and research modules of programme curricula linked to Category A qualifications from March to August 2016, while teaching and research modules of programme curricula linked to Category B qualifications were amended and renewed from February to August 2017. After each module and programme mapping phase, an ICAS process followed for Senate approval of the requested amendments with a view to incorporating programme changes in the yearbooks concerned. A special curriculum mapping system was developed for utilisation by academics to consult on and submit amendments to ICAS, and a module outcomes builder was developed and made available, with guidelines to ensure utilisation of the required level descriptors at the exit levels of modules and programme curricula.

Of the 555 programmes linked to the HEQSF-aligned Category A qualifications, only 52 were not submitted and verified by faculties concerned by the end date of August 2016. The curriculum mapping of the modules of the 52 outstanding programmes thus stood over to be dealt with during the curriculum mapping of the modules of programmes linked to Category B qualifications. Of the 536 programme curricula linked to the HEQSF-aligned Category B qualifications, only 71 were not submitted and verified by faculties concerned by the end date of August 2017.

At present, there are only 24 qualifications with 53 linked programmes that have not been re-curriculated and HEQSF-aligned. These programmes will be redesigned and submitted for ICAS approval in 2018 with a view to be included in the 2019 yearbooks.

While the HEQSF-alignment and programme curriculum mapping were excellent vehicles for faculties, schools and programme teams to reconsider the viability, relevance, structures, content and assessment plans of their respective curricula, the University is still very much aware of the work to be done. The scope of this project was of such a broad nature that there was not enough time or capacity to have an in-depth look at every curriculum to ensure that inclusivity, diversity, and the importance of the student voice in curriculum design were addressed in a satisfactory manner. The Q&APP department, together with the Quality Office and the CTL curriculum focus area, is in the process of developing a further strategic plan to identify lacunae and backlogs in terms of these aspects to ensure continuous curriculum transformation and renewal over a three-year period.

To our benefit, a new Teaching and Learning Strategy for the NWU was Senate-approved in 2016. This Strategy laid the foundation for curriculum renewal and transformation over following years. It outlined the manner in which the NWU will define and differentiate itself in the higher education environment in terms of its strategic intent for excellent and innovative teaching and learning, the qualities of its graduates, its educational approach, and the principles and strategic drivers that will guide and support teaching and learning. In this manner, the strategy intends to develop a shared understanding of the way in which NWU will engage with the opportunities and challenges of the South African higher education environment, the realities and opportunities presented by the changing global environment, and the goals and objectives of its own strategic agenda.

2.1.4 Participants in curriculum renewal and transformation and the effect thereof on various stakeholders

Programme curriculum renewal and transformation is the joint responsibility of a multi-disciplinary team consisting of academic leadership, faculty academics and support departments. Furthermore, programme curricula must comply with relevant external higher education policy, requirements as set by other relevant professional bodies, University alumni and employer expectations, societal, economic, and student body expectations and needs. Planning for and transforming curricula is no small matter and the collaborative efforts required to do it right, takes time and much effort.

Over the past 5 years with the HEQSF-alignment project, the transformation of TL project, the NWU total restructuring, continuous internal and external programme evaluations (IPEs and EPEs), and continuous requirements for curriculum amendments by professional bodies, it is safe to say that University staff suffer from change fatigue. All of these projects and the outcomes of all evaluation reports require continuous re-thinking, internal and external consultation and a great amount of time and effort of academics and curriculum support departments to stay abreast of all stakeholder requirements. Student protests and demands do not make this task any easier.

The University community is intensely aware that all of these inputs are of the essence for ensuring a relevant, viable and sustainable academic programme offering, and staff will continue in their efforts to comply and transform as and when needed. External stakeholders should, however, take into account that capacity and funding constraints make this task more difficult.

Where changes are made in respect of academic programmes, in-depth reflection regarding a number of aspects is required, e.g. the strategic agenda of excellence in innovative quality academic programmes to the benefit of its stakeholders and society at large, relevance and viability of programmes (market needs, career opportunities, student interests, etc.), compliance of programme structure, its constructive contribution to the development and preservation of South African and global society in general, its affordability and ease of access, its influence on the transformation of South African workplaces, and so forth.

To determine the influence, quality and effectiveness of academic programmes, the NWU Career Centre and Faculties require constructive feedback from students, employers and professional bodies via surveys, questionnaires and market responses. In general, the University can report that we do receive constructive feedback from our stakeholders, especially in flagship programmes offered via contact and/or distance modes of delivery (e.g. Postgraduate Diploma in Energy Policy; Postgraduate Diploma in Nuclear Science and Technology; Bachelor of Engineering in 5 different areas of specialisation – Computer and Electronics Engineering, Electro-Mechanical Engineering, and Industrial Engineering, amongst others; Master of Laws (LLM research or coursework) with 10 different programme specialisations; Bachelor of Education Honours in Computer Applications Technology; Diploma in Grade R Teaching; Advanced Diploma in Education, Special Needs Education; Master of Commerce in Banking and Financial Risk Management; Master of Commerce in Applied Risk Management; Bachelor of Commerce Honours in International Trade; Postgraduate Diploma in Agricultural Economics; Bachelor of Commerce in Economic Sciences with four different programmes – Economics and International Trade, and Agricultural Economics and Risk Management, Bachelor of Commerce degrees in Forensic Accountancy, Chartered Accountancy, Management Accountancy and Financial Accountancy, amongst others; Master of Arts in Medical Sociology; Master of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Master of Social Sciences in Population Studies and Sustainable Development, Postgraduate Diploma in Cosmetic Product Formulation, Postgraduate Diploma in Pharmacological Principles of Drug Therapy, Bachelor of Health Sciences in Occupational Hygiene, Bachelor of Pharmacy, Master of Science in Astrophysics and Space Science, Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Science Honours in Actuarial Science and Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Science Honours in Business Analytics). Successes are also evident in the throughput rates of our students. During 2016 the contact student success rate was between 84-85%, and the graduation rate in virtually all the qualification types exceeded the initial targets.

In the last place, the University uses benchmarking exercises with notable institutions to determine the necessity to amend or transform programme curricula. An example of this is demonstrated in the School of Economics, which interacts with staff from the International Trade Institute of SA (ITRISA) to ensure the relevance and quality of programmes related to the trading industry. ITRISA courseware also forms part of the study materials of qualifications in the field of International Trade. Another example is that of qualifications in Psychosocial Health. Regular benchmarking visits are organised with three other SA universities to ensure that the curricula of related qualifications are up to standard and relevant for the workplace. Professional programmes in all related fields (e.g. Health

Sciences, Engineering, and Accounting Sciences receive cyclical visits from their professional boards to evaluate the quality of programme offerings and to benchmark NWU academic programme curricula against similar national and international qualifications.

2.1.5 The NWU Teaching and Learning Strategy and future efforts related to curriculum renewal and transformation 2016-2020

It is essential to note the strategic intent of this Strategy for purposes of curriculum transformation and renewal for years to come. The NWU is not there yet, but we do aspire, ultimately, to fully prepare our students for life and the world of work, so that they may participate constructively in public life, and lead fulfilling professional and private lives. To achieve this goal and ambitious agenda, the University will be responsive to at least three acknowledged paradigms regarding the role of the university:

- The pedagogical paradigm is concerned with the university's responsibility to educate students by providing them with a broad foundation. Linking to the oldest idea or tradition of the university, it emphasises the lecturer's role in giving guidance to a student, and leading him or her into the world of the intelligentsia. An important focal point of this paradigm is that the student should reach a point where he/she can be seen as a well-rounded, broadly orientated intellectual with the critical capacity to embark on a life-long, values-oriented path of interaction with knowledge and views about reality, and their application to various contexts.
- The cognitive paradigm points to the university's role in broadening knowledge according to the scientific method. In contrast to the former paradigm, this paradigm does not aim in the first place to form people but to acquire knowledge. The idea is to familiarise students with the background, intellectual skills and instruments to become autonomous researchers.
- The pragmatic or instrumentalist paradigm emphasises the practical role that the university should play in preparing students to become valuable and useful members of society. By emphasising the university's links and interaction with its social environment, this model counters the perception of the university as an ivory tower. Whereas the first two paradigms emphasise responsiveness to the internal and central aim of a university (i.e. academic knowledge) the instrumentalist paradigm also sees the university as responsive to external goals (e.g. the economy, social and cultural diversity and justice, inclusivity, technological development, the various professions, etc.).

The influence of these paradigms will, of course, vary according to the nature and level of specific qualifications and programmes, specifically in terms of a general-formative, professional, or vocational and technical nature. Nevertheless, they should all be taken into account in the design of teaching and learning experiences that prepare students for life and the world of work in twenty-first century society. Drawing on these paradigms, the NWU's understanding of responsiveness is relevant at two levels:

- External responsiveness entails that NWU delivers a range of programmes that equip graduates to lead fulfilling and productive professional, public and personal lives. Their educational

experience should prepare them to engage successfully in the world of work, in local and international contexts, with the willingness and ability to contribute to the creation of meaningful and sustainable work opportunities for self and others for their own benefit, but also for the common good. They also will be enabled to contribute constructively to public life, and to lead personal lives that are underpinned by the critical capacity, purposefulness and moral orientation that guides them in all spheres of life.

- Internal responsiveness points to the design of curricula that provide students with a solid grounding and access to cutting-edge developments in their discipline of choice, but within a framework that respects their socio-cultural diversity and is sensitive to varying levels of educational preparedness. By encouraging active and self-directed learning as appropriate for different disciplinary contexts and types of knowledge, NWU curricula and pedagogical approaches must enable students to develop the knowledge, skills and personal qualities that will prepare them for the current and future world of work, as well as for life in twenty-first century society, providing them with effective support so that they may benefit fully from the opportunities before them, and contribute to shaping the curriculum of the future.

In the NWU Teaching and Learning Strategy, the University commits itself to high-quality teaching and learning supported by the following strategic drivers: coherent governance arrangements; effective systems for programme development, management and review; high expectations for students' academic achievement, supported by well-designed systems that support the student lifecycle; effective strategies and systems for staff recruitment, development and recognition; systematic curriculum renewal; and a conducive learning environment.

For purposes of this report, it is important to note the University's intent to engage in a systematic process of curriculum transformation and renewal in order to equip its graduates to address the challenges of twenty-first century society. To ensure that learning programmes are coherently designed, intellectually credible, and relevant, the following strategies will be pursued by the new faculty and curriculum support structures over the next three years:

- The University's qualification and programme offering will be scrutinised to provide for an appropriate balance between professional and general-formative programmes to meet national development needs.
- Students will receive an in-depth orientation to their fields of study, as well as a broader understanding of contemporary societal challenges.
- Curricula will provide an orientation to various paradigms of thought and explanatory systems including, where appropriate, indigenous knowledge systems, so that NWU students and graduates are introduced to different intellectual traditions, and are able to substantiate their worldview and the principles that inform their conduct.
- The design of programme curricula will support the learning styles and needs of a diverse student body by involving students in a range of individual and collaborative learning and assessment

activities, so that they can engage as learners who progressively assume responsibility for their own learning.

- In keeping with NWU's graduate attributes, curricula will be reassessed and, where necessary, redesigned to help students develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills that will enable them to lead purposeful lives in the service of the science collegiate, their profession, and civil society.
- Programme curricula will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they stay relevant and up to date with the latest scientific developments – this is underpinned by appropriate disciplinary benchmarks, as well as feedback from students, employers, alumni, and professional and statutory bodies (as appropriate).
- In its focus on curriculum transformation and renewal, NWU is dependent on an effective system for programme planning, development, management and review, which is characterised by effective systems for academic programme planning. Such systems have already been developed for purposes of the HEQSF-alignment project but will be further developed with additional functionalities to, for example, offer mapping tools to determine whether transformational matters such as the decolonisation of curricula, inclusivity, and removal of cultural and political bias have indeed been implemented in programme curricula. The module outcomes builder application will be used to great benefit to ensure that NWU graduate attributes and level descriptors feature in module and programme curriculum outcomes.
- Institutional and academic leadership must provide oversight for programme planning, development, management, and internal and external review processes; programme planning, development, and approval, which includes clearly articulated accountabilities, well-defined and efficient processes and procedures, and reliable academic programme information systems to ensure the quality and standards of qualifications and programmes, and the accuracy of all published information relating to academic programmes;
- Programme coordination, to ensure systematic planning and monitoring of programme and module provision in accordance with the qualification standards to which they are related. This includes study guides and materials, teaching, learning and assessment approaches, and methods, moderation, student support and programme administrative services.
- Programme review, to ensure that the quality and standards of academic programmes are reviewed within appropriate timeframes, that adequate improvement plans are compiled, and that their implementation is monitored. A particular concern of the review process is that curricula should be relevant, current, and effective in supporting students to meet the programme and module learning outcomes.
- Feedback from students, graduates and employers, to regularly obtain inputs on the quality and relevance of academic programmes with a view to improving them.

The University is currently facilitating awareness and in-depth academic discourse on aspects such as Africanisation, decolonisation and content transformation of NWU curricula. Perspectives on curriculum reform (particularly on philosophical-theoretical, and sometimes ideological level) vary within the University community and amongst academics from different faculties. Ultimately, the

NWU must arrive at acceptable definitions for these concepts and appropriate vehicles to ensure that these concepts are not only talked about, but are implemented on curriculum level.

An aspect that has already been addressed, even if only at the introductory level, is the inclusion of African perspectives in the curriculum to broaden the world view and perceptions of tolerance, removal of bias and more flexibility in terms of cultural differences in all our students. Examples of such efforts can be offered in the Faculty of Humanities, School of Philosophy, School of Public Governance, and the School of Communication, where a variety of different perspectives on Africanisation, decolonisation and intercultural communication are included in modules of the programme curricula. Much research on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is also underway and in the Faculty of Law, the field of Indigenous Law will from 2018 be incorporated into different modules offered in the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. The purpose of this is to ensure that Indigenous Law is not relegated to a stand-alone module, but that it is taught as an integral part of our legal system.

From within the Faculty of Health Sciences, a compulsory module for all undergraduate students, namely "Know and Understand the World of Health", also exposes students to different worldviews and encourages critical discourse and understanding amongst different cultures and how these perspectives impact on health-related issues in the world of work and within different communities. This module also focuses on primary health care and illnesses relevant to the African context and the effects on our economy and social welfare.

A major development that also flowed from the NWU restructuring process is the establishment of a Unit for Continuing Education that will focus on the growth of a substantial portfolio of short learning programmes with a focus on skills development and continuing professional development in different specialised areas of study. This Unit will strive to focus on education and training for scarce skills much needed for the growth of our country.

2.1.6 Unresolved challenges that need further focused attention

Some of the challenges NWU is confronted with and which impact on curriculum renewal and transformation are:

- Students who do not have access to or struggle with the use of technology, e.g. internet access, different e-learning platforms, i-guides, etc.
- Differing perspectives on what curriculum renewal and transformation entail amongst academics from different faculties and campuses.
- Lack of capacity of curriculum experts to assist faculty programme teams in the development or re-curriculation of academic programmes.
- Students that are unprepared or underprepared for University study and life away from home.
- Feeble student writing, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, often associated with the fact that the language of teaching and learning is not necessarily the mother tongue of students.

- The differentiated needs of a diverse student body from introductory to advanced level and their different levels of preparedness for university study due to their differing backgrounds and schooling opportunities.
- Staff capacity problems, i.e., ratio of staff to students (very high student numbers in classes).
- The “how” of presenting module content to ensure that a diverse student body with diverse learning styles and needs benefit to the same extent.
- Transformation of the HE experience, which includes aspects such as decolonisation of the curriculum, inclusion of African perspectives and so forth to facilitate tolerance, integration and removal of all biases, but also to ensure that graduates are employable within different societies and contexts that have not necessarily integrated such perspectives into the world of work.
- An unnecessary emphasis on coaching of students to pass examinations in some modules or programmes.
- Slow systemic and bureaucratic processes as experienced within the University and especially from external regulatory processes for qualification and academic programme submissions and approvals.
- Collaborative challenges between NWU, CHE and other government departments, e.g., the Departments of Health, Social Development, etc.
- Professional bodies that focus more on establishing urban training platforms while neglecting rural areas where scenarios and situations are totally different and rather more complex; thus causing a disconnect between the call for transformation and decolonisation of the curriculum, and workplace expectations.
- Insufficient resource allocations: fiscal, human and physical.

Against this background, NWU faculties embarked upon an effort to offer examples of renewal or transformation of programme curricula – in its structure, its content, or its implementation – that have been applied over the past 3 to 5 years.

2.2 Examples of Faculty initiatives to facilitate curriculum renewal and transformation over the past 3 to 5 years

2.2.1 Introduction

As correctly noted by the CHE (2017), while transformation of the HE system is not negotiable, curriculum transformation has not happened as quickly as was originally envisaged. Many reasons can be offered for this phenomenon, but – ultimately – one of the main issues is the fact that universities do not have a serious focus on capacity building in the area of curriculum expertise to assist academics with curriculum reform and vigorous academic discourse on all issues related to curriculum transformation and renewal at content and implementation levels. As reflected in the report thus far, the NWU is now in the process of building such capacity and hopes to be in a better position to offer even more examples of transformation and renewal, diversity and inclusivity, curriculum capacity and quality, and the student voice in curriculum redesign over the next two years.

Recent and ongoing developments in information and communication technology have presented NWU with significant opportunities to engage in a process of pedagogical innovation, especially for offering academic programmes at a distance, and thereby widening access to many who would otherwise not be able to study. Drawing on developments relating to educational technologies, smart computing, learning analytics and open educational resources, the University has systematically been developing the capacity to engage in blended learning and other teaching and learning designs, including the dynamic use of instructional activities based solely on face-to-face interaction, full online learning, and self-paced, autonomous learning, to deliver a programme or module in different modes of educational delivery.

NWU defines the concept of blended learning in the following manner:

“Blended learning is an innovative teaching and learning design that combines face-to-face and online teaching and learning approaches. It integrates thoughtfully selected, complementary teaching and learning methodologies and technologies, based on educational merit as determined by factors such as the pedagogical context, the nature of the discipline and the learning material, and the profile of the students, so that the strengths of each are blended into a unique learning experience. It is a fundamental redesign that transforms the structure of, and approach to, teaching and learning embedded in a range of delivery modalities”.

All NWU faculties noted that internal compliance mechanisms such as policy reviews and ICAS requirements oblige academics to continuously monitor and review curricula to ensure up-to-date, sustainable and relevant programme offerings. Furthermore, all faculty representatives indicated the importance of academic reading, study and research in their respective fields of expertise to stay abreast of new knowledge and perspectives in their fields, and to incorporate these into curriculum content and implementation strategies. The NWU electronic learning management system (eFundi) is noted as exceptionally useful in that new scholarly resources and relevant electronic links can be added to a module platform at any stage for students to read and study. Electronic assessments via eFundi are also on the increase and students are increasingly making use of blogs and other electronic platforms to voice their issues or commendations through the eFundi platform.

The following are specific faculty examples of renewal or transformation in curriculum structure, content, or implementation:

2.2.2 Faculty of Engineering

The School of Mechanical and Nuclear Engineering hosted the South African Network for Nuclear Education, Science and Technology (SAN – NEST) workshop on “Future Nuclear” research and knowledge creation, also known as “Green Frontiers”, on 3 July 2017. The workshop aimed to bring together stakeholders in the nuclear energy sector, and particularly in the field of nuclear research, to discuss the prospect of fostering an international, university-centred research collaboration. This will contribute to research opportunities for bright young researchers to engage in innovation and to reinvigorate nuclear research.

Attending the workshop was Ms Mmamoloko Kubayi, the Minister of Energy, who welcomed everybody present. They were members and researchers from the Department of Science and Technology, Department of Energy, NECSA, iThemba Labs, the South African Young Nuclear Professionals Society, the NWU, WITS University, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, the University of Pretoria, and the University of Johannesburg. Ms Kubayi expressed her excitement about the nuclear programme and its initiatives that the NWU is running under the guidance of Dr Anthonie Cilliers.

Ms Kubayi also said that the stigma of nuclear energy in South Africa needs to be addressed, as well as the issues of localisation, ownership and sustainability. She said that nuclear energy has a very critical role to play in our society and that a nuclear programme is worth pursuing. “As government we need to find a mechanism to communicate information on nuclear to the public in a better way, and we have to be transparent and open in the process of building the nuclear sector in the country.” Ms Kubayi congratulated the NWU on the continuous work done in terms of postgraduate programmes in nuclear energy, in particular the master’s degree in a programme in nuclear technology management, for which the NWU became the third university in the world to be recommended for endorsement by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Mr Kubayi concluded: “We need to get more role players such as graduates involved in the nuclear sector, because of the different career and business opportunities it has to offer and what it can contribute to a country such as South Africa.”

2.2.3 Faculty of Education

i. Transitioning to blended learning interfaces

The faculty started the transition from pure face-to-face teaching to a more blended design from July 2015, incorporating digitised lectures, electronic study guides (e.g. the lessons platform on eFund), and e-assessment opportunities for students. The transition has been experienced by academic staff and students as highly successful and offers new opportunities for learning at own pace and in own time. For open distance students, interactive whiteboard sessions are presented and broadcasted from the University to centres countrywide. Students benefit from these opportunities as a face can be put to the name of a lecturer who is in charge of a module. Students also have direct access to these lecturers via email or telephone.

ii. Implementation of strategies for self-directed learning in classrooms

Furthermore, the faculty has successfully facilitated the implementation of self-directed teaching and learning strategies in contact classrooms and in online environments. These strategies include problem and project-based learning projects, metacognitive exercises, case-base pedagogies, assessment to support self-directed learning (SDL), blended learning opportunities and cooperative learning opportunities. The faculty has found the following benefits for their students:

- students take responsibility for their own learning and, ultimately, realise the value of lifelong learning skills;

- students can better adjust to new situations and can take responsibility for their own learning;
- staff and students are continuously proposing and testing strategies for diverse contexts in order to contribute to the development of SDL skills;
- opportunities are available for research on strategies and contexts that contribute to SDL skills;
- students and staff are motivated to share their knowledge of the benefits and the “how” of SDL to the wider university sector.

The student voice is important to the faculty, and students often have the opportunity to convey their perceptions of these SDL teaching strategies and to make recommendations on the quality, effectiveness and improvement thereof. The students’ voices and contributions are often incorporated into published journal articles and books on SDL and thus also benefit other students of academics who read these publications.

iii. Curriculum development and renewal

Due to the HEQSF-alignment project, the faculty was obligated to phase out many of their qualifications, and thus to develop many new qualifications within a short time period. This gave the faculty the opportunity to engage and reflect on curriculum content and implementation as their target markets require offerings in the contact and distance modes. The Faculty developed a Curriculum Development Plan: 2013-2019 in which it articulated its vision in terms of curriculum renewal (the phasing out of existing programmes and phasing in of new education programmes to adhere to DHET and DoE requirements, and national needs); curriculum transformation that entails addressing and embedding diversity, self-directed learning, decolonising of the curriculum, and blended learning designs) into the curriculum; an emphasis on the scholarship of teaching and learning (informing the curricula with research); as well as financial resource planning. This document will be revisited in the new faculty structure.

The implementation of such a plan was made concrete by means of a short practical manual, entitled “Guidelines for Lecturers for embedding Diversity, Transformative Curriculum-making and Blended Learning into a Self-directed Learning Environment” (available on request). This manual attempts to provide lecturers with guidelines on how to facilitate SCL in the classroom, address diversity and inclusivity, and incorporate blended-learning designs into the curriculum (and by implication in their teaching and learning platforms, including study guides). The Faculty’s curriculum development work is supported by the Faculty’s Research Focus Area: SDL and the Research Unit: Education and Human Rights in Diversity. A link to a YouTube video clip on the Faculty of Education’s curriculum transformation vision is available at <https://youtu.be/P-A8cUbYC84>.

2.2.4 Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

2.2.4.1 School of Information Technology

The IT Britehouse Competition is a notable example of curriculum excellence. This year saw current final-year BSc IT students taking part in the GeeXpo competition. The IT Britehouse Competition saw Britehouse, an African-based company that provides industry-leading digital solutions to African and global companies, put final-year students through their paces by means of project brief detailing

their need for an innovative IT solution for a real-time task. An NWU student won the competition and walked away with a brand new laptop and an IT Honours bursary for next year.

2.2.4.2 The School of Geo and Spatial Sciences

The school recognises teaching and learning as a core function of the university. It further believes that other core functions, like research, especially externally-funded research, play an important role in renewing and transforming curricula as this informs focus in workplaces and practice, and thus ensures curriculum relevance. With regards to the issue of decolonising the curriculum, the school believes it requires incorporating local and global foci into the curricula; recognising and encouraging student contributions into curriculum renewal; the changing role of the lecturer as facilitator of learning and hearer of the student voice; and taking into account the diverse backgrounds, and social and cultural differences of students with a view to incorporating these into curriculum content and implementation.

Many different initiatives are currently being tested or implemented in the school. The following lists only a fraction of these to illustrate different approaches to curriculum renewal and transformation in the school.

i) Transitioning to blended-learning interfaces

Many of the modules in the school have traditionally used online resources to assist students to achieve their outcomes. One example is a third-year module, Geographic Information Systems. A partnership with a major software provider was negotiated and students now complete a number of short courses that are hosted, assessed and certified by the provider as part of the module. This builds practical skills and experience in tools that have industry relevance. This approach was therefore adopted by other modules in the school. Other online communities with locally relevant content were identified and incorporated into these modules. At least 30% of the content of these courses are currently delivered through an online platform.

ii) Implementation of SDL strategies in classrooms.

The importance of SDL for implementation in the classroom is embraced by the school. This principle has been slowly introduced from the first year of the undergraduate programmes in 2016. At honours level, most of the modules make extensive use of SDL strategies to ensure that students learn to think in a critical manner and to solve problems in practice, especially during field excursions. Where students develop and learn due to the implementation of SDL strategies, their experiences are recorded and used to further develop curricula. An example of this is the module Introduction to Earth Observation. This module introduces students to the field of earth observation in the context of environmental sciences. Instead of prescribing the content, the module takes the approach of outlining a set number of topics and requiring of each student to determine the area of application as well as the type of technology to use to master the outcomes of the module. The student can therefore build knowledge and skills closely related to his own particular field of interest. Assessment focuses on the process and the application of the field principles in the field chosen by the student.

Other modules show similar strategies and the overall emphasis on SDL is evident in the change from the traditional to non-traditional summative assessment methods in the school.

iii) Curriculum development and renewal

The impact of a strong research focus on the quality of the curricula was illustrated when a B-rated researcher was appointed in the subject group Geography in 2012. The need for quality students and locally relevant programme curricula becomes apparent when researchers at the university expects quality graduates as candidates for postgraduate degrees. Subsequent to the appointment of the internationally recognised researcher, the need to renew and modify the undergraduate curriculum along with a general assessment of the subject group's research focus arises. This resulted in a complete assessment of the curricula from 1st to 3rd year of Geography, as well as at the honours level, where certain modules were re-curriculated and two new modules were developed. These modules were renewed with the following principles in mind:

- Review curricula content in leading local and international geography departments;
- Make sure all material in curricula reflects locally relevant topics as well as representing the state of the science, societal needs and the needs of the target market;
- Make sure lecturers present up-to-date content in an effective manner, taking into account the diversity of the student population;
- Fund extra lecturers through externally funded research projects to expand capacity in the subject group; and
- Engage with NWU curriculum support departments to ensure internal and external compliance and true curriculum transformation, not only at the surface level.

2.2.4.3 School of Agriculture

A North-West University (NWU) PhD student has been awarded a prize worth R20 000 for the best-researched journal in scientific innovation at the Provincial Youth in Agriculture Awards for his master's research on cultivating oyster mushrooms in the arid climate of Mahikeng. The awards ceremony was hosted by the North-West Department of Rural, Environment and Agricultural Development (READ) as part of the second Provincial Youth in Agricultural Awards (YAA). The awards are aimed at encouraging and acknowledging excellence in agriculture among the youth. The Premier said the youth should remain fearless in pursuit of what they want to achieve and congratulated the department, READ, on the exceptional work they perform.

The PhD winner had this to say about his award for the best-researched journal:

“Literature proved that it would be impossible to produce mushrooms in the North-West Province due to the harsh climatic conditions in the area and further substantiated that this can only be done using high-cost technology methods. I am proud and overwhelmed that my research brought the production of mushrooms using a low-cost technology which I invented. It is of importance that as postgraduate students we undertake research that will make an impact and address current issues affecting our communities. I encourage postgraduates to produce journals that are of great value and relevance, and not only journals that will remain in the library and internet with no use for future

reference. The mushrooms project addressed various issues, including malnutrition, food security and climate change.”

2.2.5 Faculty of Health Sciences

i) Curriculum content renewal

In the field of Consumer Sciences the faculty embarked on a project to procure feedback on the quality of their academic offering from students, alumni and NWU graduate employers via questionnaires (during Career Centre exhibitions). These responses used to judge and review the relevance and quality of programme curricula, and to make adjustments or develop new qualifications and to broaden access for different target markets. An example is the total restructuring and redesign of all undergraduate qualifications in the field of Consumer Sciences. From a three year bachelor's degree with an option to specialise only in the third year, to the development of three new qualifications to better serve their target markets, their profession, and the community as a whole: a four-year Bachelor of Consumer Sciences in Food Production Management, a four-year Bachelor of Consumer Sciences in Fashion Retail Management, and a three-year Bachelor of Consumer Studies for students interested to move into the field of Education after their undergraduate years.

In the School of Nursing, academics from all three campuses collaborated to develop a new Bachelor of Nursing in alignment with the South African Nursing Council's (SANC) newly published requirements. This was no small feat, as it took great effort to ensure that all perspectives and preferences of all the different role-players were taken into account in the alignment of curriculum structure, outcomes, content and assessment plans. The workload of the students was reduced, but the quality of the programme and the training will definitely be enhanced by this effort. Students will also be offered a curriculum with an even higher relevance to the needs of the health sector.

After a professional board visit and with the assistance of market research results, the School of Pharmacy was required to reconsider the needs of clinical practice and the graduate attributes of their undergraduate programme. They now have integrated training for students in different sectors, including rural clinics, hospitals, and communities other than retail pharmacies, medicine development and production clinics. They have moved to a more practice and patient-centred approach to training with less focus on the chemistry of pharmaceuticals in their undergraduate offering. This change was also motivated by the changing role of the pharmacist, who previously had to do some basic manufacturing in the pharmacy, and now only do prescriptions as medication is pre-produced and delivered to the pharmacy. In the fourth year, pharmacy students work in the different sectors on a rotation basis, where they have to complete specific tasks under supervision. Once back on campus, these students then have to reflect and share their experiences of patient care and pharmacy practice as part of their assessment outcomes. The students are also encouraged to work in other sectors apart from the retail and manufacturing sectors during their holiday practical work experiences.

ii) Curriculum implementation transitions

To expose students to the e-environment, the Faculty of Health Sciences is in the process of changing module materials from paper-based to interactive electronic study guides through a structured and phased process. A two-year time frame has been established to support and guide the lecturers and the students through the transition. Lecturers receive support from co-lecturers who have successfully moved to blended and online learning, as well as from CTL staff. Furthermore, in certain master's programmes (e.g. the Master of Health Sciences in Clinical Psychology) Polycom technology and Adobe Connect sessions are used effectively to share lectures and thus share capacity and expertise between the NWU campuses.

2.2.6 Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

Some recent examples of changes and renewals to our curricula's content and implementation in the faculty include:

- The Business School, which hosted African scholars at collaboration workshops in April this year, where students were exposed to cutting-edge research collaboration in their fields of study. Leading scholars from Ghana, Nigeria and Zimbabwe visited the NWU in Mafikeng and further collaboration is planned between the NWU-SBG in Mahikeng and the Central University of Ghana. The immediate focus will be on contextualising African research for PhDs in Business Management, looking into the decolonisation of teaching materials and compiling African business case studies for inclusion in the MBA programme.
- Incorporating an academic/philosophical component (different worldviews) to our ethics module, as well as a greater focus on general business ethics as opposed to professional ethics (in the module WVET 211). This module also includes critical issues and contemporary phenomena in the accountancy environment such as corporate social responsibility, continual change, human rights, inequality, transformation, HIV/Aids, overregulation, abuse of power, corruption, financial fraud, earnings management, tax evasion, sustainable development, and similar issues.
- Eliminating duplication of outcomes relating to the Companies Act in various modules to ensure better alignment and functionality within our programmes.
- In the School of Accounting Sciences academics have embarked on serious research relating to the effective teaching of accountancy (SoTL projects). These include research on areas such as TL games, appropriate IT integration into TL practices, and how to incorporate student exposure to soft skills as needed for Accounting practice.
- Redesigning our Strategy, Risk and Governance module to expose students to important aspects of the King Report on Corporate Governance.
- Migration to the implantation of mainly electronic study guides as opposed to manual guides.
- Two programmes in the School of Accounting Sciences are fairly similar in regards of curriculum design, namely Financial Accountancy (accredited with SAIPA and the ACCA) and Management Accountancy (accredited with CIMA). The undergraduate curriculum for both of these programmes are based on the SAICA Competency Framework, whereas the honours curriculum is more specific to the particular professional bodies who accredit these qualifications.

- The continuing improvement in the pass rate for graduates in the SAICA qualifying examinations (professional entrance exams) as well as feedback from employers (who are surveyed on an annual basis) signal that the approach to curriculum renewal is of a satisfactory nature. The decision to add a philosophical component to the Ethics module was partly motivated by a desire to equip students with further critical thinking skills, which was partly informed through discussions with peers at a selection of other institutions (including at an international institution in the UK).
- Curriculum changes and enhancements are continually considered to specifically improve students' chances to succeed in obtaining the qualification and to be better prepared for their chosen careers. The ideas on how and what to renew or transform the curriculum are generated by staff during programme meetings. The programme leader initiates and drives the process of such renewals while the subject chairs and a selection of other academics participate in the drafting of revised outcomes. These are then reviewed by the programme leaders, submitted to faculty boards for approval, and then for considered by ICAS for final approval and uptake into the yearbook of the following year.

3 DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY

3.1 Introduction

The NWU is the embodiment of diversity with a focus on quality education and inclusivity. It has three campuses, situated across two provinces, namely North West and Gauteng:



According to the 2015 figures published by the Department of Higher Education in 2017, the NWU was favourably rated and benchmarked against the other higher education institutions in South Africa in terms of composition, academic offerings and modes of delivery, and student success at different levels. Some corroborating evidence is:

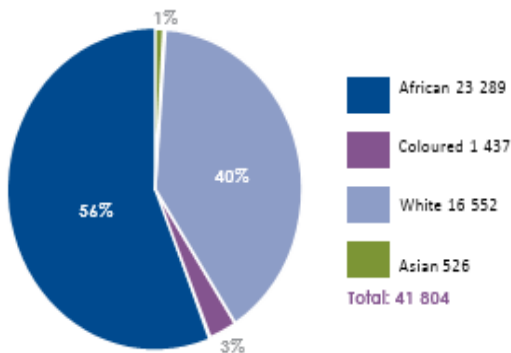
- NWU undergraduate pass rate for contact students in 2015: 86% (the national average for 2015 was 83%).
- NWU undergraduate pass rate for distance students in 2015: 83% (the national average for 2015 was 68%).
- NWU graduation rate in 2015: 24,2% (the national average for 2015 was 22,6%).
- In 2015, the NWU was the second largest university in South Africa based on the total head count. Of the 64 070 students enrolled here in 2015, a total of 26 127 were distance students. For the total number of degrees and diplomas awarded in 2015, namely 15 597, the NWU rated second in the sector after the University of South Africa.
- Student statistics as at 31 July 2017:

Total student enrolments	2015	2016	*2017
First-time entering undergraduates	9 407	11 342	12 160
Undergraduate diplomas	21 273	19 291	20 258
Undergraduate degrees	29 187	31 134	35 880
Total undergraduate	50 460	50 425	56 138
Postgraduate diplomas	1 776	1 563	1 753
Honours	7 168	7 504	9 578
Master's	3 023	2 912	3 075
Doctors	1 448	1 560	1 528
Total postgraduate	13 415	13 539	15 934
Occasional students	195	229	241
TOTAL ENROLMENT	64 070	64 193	72 313

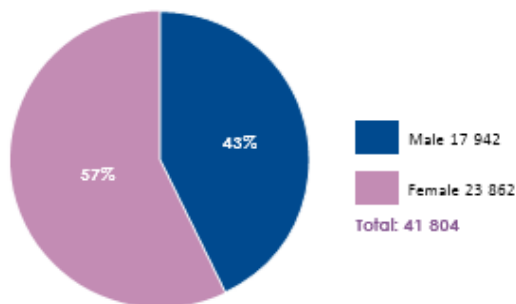
By qualification type: Contact			
First-time entering undergraduates	8 361	9 641	9 738
Undergraduate diplomas	1 081	1 075	1 027
Undergraduate degrees	28 575	30 320	32 173
Total undergraduates	29 656	31 395	33 200
Postgraduate diplomas	1 766	1 542	1 717
Honours	1 915	1 980	2 116
Master's	3 006	2 891	3 060
Doctors	1 407	1 514	1 481
Total postgraduates	8 094	7 927	8 371
Occasional students	193	225	233
TOTAL ENROLMENT	37 943	39 547	41 804

* 2017 figures are not final

- Racial composition of contact students as at 31 July 2017*



- Gender composition of contact students as at 31 July 2017*



* 2017 figures are not final

- Qualifications awarded in 2016

Undergraduate diplomas	6 526
Undergraduate degrees	6 233
Total undergraduate	12 759
Postgraduate diplomas	1 016
Honours	2 453
Master's	720
Doctors	235
Total postgraduate	4 424
TOTAL	17 183

- Qualifications by major field of study in 2016

	2014		2015		2016	
Science, Engineering and Technology	3 174	20,81%	3 526	22,61%	2 767	16,1%
Business/Management	2 720	17,83%	2 894	18,56%	2 954	17,2%
Education	6 559	43%	5 689	36,47%	9 028	52,5%
Other humanities	2 801	18,36%	3 488	22,36%	2 362	13,7%

At the NWU, the focus of curriculum design is to offer students a solid grounding and access to cutting-edge developments in their discipline of choice, but within a framework that respects their socio-cultural diversity and is sensitive to varying levels of educational preparedness and inclusivity. By encouraging active and self-directed learning as appropriate for different disciplinary contexts and types of knowledge, NWU curricula and pedagogical approaches are diversified to enable students to develop the knowledge, skills and personal qualities that will prepare them for the current and future world of work as well as for life in twenty-first century society. The University also tries to provide them with effective support so that they may benefit fully from the opportunities offered to them, and to offer them opportunities to contribute to shaping especially the post-graduate curricula foci. Furthermore, the University is aware that decolonising the curricula – to include diverse theoretical underpinnings and differentiating ways of how knowledge came about – is an effective manner to address social justice. These are aspects that will require not only further discourse, but definitive action.

It is important to note that, as stakeholder and global collaborative partner in the UN Global Compact, the NWU is committed to the promotion of the seventeen sustainable development goals of this agenda. The University, therefore, strives to provide its students with an educational experience that equips them to contribute to the development of equitable social, economic, legal, political, educational, healthcare and environmental systems, and to participate meaningfully in intercultural and interreligious dialogue with respect for socio-cultural diversity and inclusivity as it finds expression in different languages, religions, worldviews, ways of life, traditions and patterns of social organisation.

Ultimately, the NWU graduate attributes describe the personal qualities, and academic, professional and practical knowledge and skills that the NWU values. They are grounded in the University's dream

to be an internationally recognised university in Africa, distinguished for social responsiveness and engaged scholarship, which fosters engaged and caring staff and students, characterised by the foundational values of ethics in all endeavours, academic integrity, freedom of intellectual inquiry, responsibility, accountability, fairness and transparency, and embracing diversity and inclusivity. As such, they define the characteristics that should form an integral part of the curriculum of programmes and modules in terms of the specification of learning outcomes, the selection of teaching and learning strategies and methods, and the criteria, strategies and methods for assessment.

3.2 Curriculum reforms addressing diverse student needs, abilities and preferences over the past 3 to 5 years

Actions undertaken by the university to address diverse student needs, abilities, preferences, and life or study circumstances are inter alia the following:

- Compliance with the requirements of the SA Constitution in terms of which equality should prevail. This resulted in a much more equitable system for student access, selection, admission and support, particularly with regard to race, culture, language preferences and students with particular disabilities.
- Amendment and improvement of faculty curriculum development plans and more specific guidelines for embedding strategic foci regarding access, transformation and enhanced quality.
- Establishing research units (e.g. Education and Human Rights in the Faculty of Education, Unit for Language and Literature in the South African Context of the Faculty of Humanities and the Research Unit for Law, Justice and Sustainability of the Faculty of Law) that focus on research in human rights, such as the right to education, diversity, sustainable work opportunities, human justice, equality and language of choice. Such research results are then used to feed back into curriculum renewal. Students are often involved in this type of research as participants and thus have a hand in the generation of knowledge for curriculum renewal. Student voices and contributions are also incorporated in journal articles and other academic materials.
- The research focus area TELIT-SA focusses on the theory and practical implementation of learning technologies across many areas in HE.
- Postgraduate students are encouraged to research diverse topics within their respective disciplines and have ample opportunity to select their own research focus. Research designs and methodology are guided, but students are also encouraged to do in-depth reading regarding research designs and to select the approach that will best serve their research objectives.
- Programme alignment to such an extent that NWU students can migrate between any of the three campuses where particular cross-campus academic programmes are offered, without losing credits.
- Enhancement of student support to enable student development and success, e.g. simultaneous interpreting services in classes to address diverse language needs; parallel language medium classes; offering academic and computer literacy modules; offering writing centre and reading lab support; rendering of supplemental instruction (SI) in at-risk modules in all faculties.

Furthermore, the Institute for Psychology and Wellbeing (IPW) offers counselling services at a very affordable rate for students experiencing personal or learning challenges.

- The NWU Career Centre adds value by offering continuous support in producing quality graduates. This is done by closing the gap between students and other role-players as well as opening doors in various professional industries. Apart from making unusual investments in relevant, rich curricula, the centre also has amazing support structures in place to help students develop an understanding of the workplace and the kind of qualities employers are looking for in graduates. It is at the heart of the Centre's efforts to produce graduates who understand the nuances of the South African environment and are equipped to add critical value in addressing the broad social, economic, environmental and ethical challenges faced by society. The Career Consultant assists any student with CV-writing and preparation for job interviews, as well as presentation of relevant, informative and helpful workshops. The Centre also hosts career fairs where all students are provided with opportunities to understand more about the range of careers in their fields of study, to network with interested employers, and the motivation to engage actively in the process of securing employment.
- The Career Centre furthermore arranges a Work Readiness Seminar for each NWU campus. The presentations cover topics such as graduate preparedness; talent development in scarce and critical skills; opportunities for students; values and attributes of professionals; the psycho-social milieu for preparing students for the world of work; effective job search processes; requirements for future employees; getting started, and opportunities for graduates. Seminars such as these really give great insight into the world of work and encourages the student to think about a career not just as a series of jobs, but rather as a continuous process of lifelong learning, growth and development that adds experience to the student's toolbox of life.
- A few comments from previous Career Fairs indicate that our students are polite, ask intelligent, insightful questions, are knowledgeable and well-versed in their fields of specialisation, are community-minded, well-rounded, passionate and enthusiastic. These attributes get noticed by future employers and make these opportunities most valuable to students.
- Great efforts are made to assist disabled learners with services such as specifically designed computers to address student needs, braille translations, wheel chair enabled entrances to buildings and classrooms, etc.
- Faculties are continuously working harder at catering for the diverse learning styles of students, and generate data for interventions from feedback received through facilitators of Supplemental Instruction (SI) and tutoring support, and information generated from the Student Academic Readiness Survey questionnaire (STARS).
- Strengthening, expanding and refining of WIL and Service Learning components and industry exposure for students within practice-related modules of curricula, especially those with a professional components such as Nursing, Dietetics, Agriculture, Animal Health, Biokinetics, Pharmacy, and many more.

- The planning, development, transformation and effective maintenance of efficient physical and virtual teaching, learning and social spaces inside and outside university classrooms to support teaching and learning activities, not only within faculties like the Faculties of Engineering and Economic and Management Sciences, but also within campus libraries. This also includes the provision of well-equipped learning support centres to support students who study by means of open distance learning.
- Integration of criteria of the University's Institutional Teaching Excellence Award (ITEA) process into TL practices in all teaching and learning spaces with more effective implementation of practice-based learning opportunities such as case studies, problem-based learning (PBL), simulations, debates, group work, etc. in university classrooms and for assessment purposes. The Marketing subject group in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences is a great example of such curriculum implementation and the projects done by teams of students in this field of study are meaningful and often of exceptional quality.
- Exposing students to multicultural examples and contexts in the teaching of curriculum content and offering assessment opportunities to accommodate diverse demonstration of competence. Programmes offered in the field of Tourism are good examples of academic offerings that embrace and celebrate cultural uniqueness and diversity, especially since these students are educated and trained for the world of work in diverse local and global communities in the travel market.
- Developing and delivering extended programmes to address issues of access and redress. An opportunity is created for admission to students who do not meet normal subject requirements or the required APS for access to certain programmes. The NWU has a multitude of extended programmes, especially in the faculty of Economic and Management Sciences and the Faculty of Natural Sciences.
- Module study materials offered in both Afrikaans and English, use of local and international academic materials as necessary and relevant to expose students to diverse theoretical perspectives.
- Study field specific initiatives that contribute to success in engineering curricula renewal, e.g. the Xcel Programme that assists students in obtaining higher scores in Grade 12 Mathematics and / or Natural Sciences, so as to acquire access to SET-related fields of study.
- Setting of equity targets for student enrolment, e.g. to increase African student enrolments in Law programmes from 21.8% (2015 data) to 30% in 2020. Enrolment of white students will thus have to decrease from 71.7% (2015) to 61% in 2020. Adjustments to enrolment targets in all faculties are made on an annual basis.
- Amendments to the language policy is currently a matter of discussion as the language of teaching and learning has in certain cases become a factor contributing to instances of bias and alienation in the University community. The Language Policy of NWU provides that Afrikaans and English are used as primary languages of tuition (executed differently on the various campuses, depending on the demographics). The status quo is continuously monitored, allowing

for flexibility to adapt so as to meet the particular needs of a campus or student cohort. It is maintained that a choice can be exercised by the student as to the language of tuition.

- Tuition at MC is provided in English. At PC study material is provided in Afrikaans and English (or only in English if there is no Afrikaans equivalent), contact sessions are in Afrikaans with simultaneous interpreting to English, as needed, or via parallel medium classes in certain modules. The VTC operates a parallel medium system where all modules are offered in English and in cases (especially at the first-year level) where possible, modules are also offered in Afrikaans.

3.3 Examples of curriculum initiatives that promote inclusivity and recognition of diversity in curricula

3.3.1 Faculty of Health Sciences

- Increasing student-centred teaching strategies. A good example comes from the Bachelor of Social Work where students requested a practice-related module where the traditional teaching approach is complemented by presentations from external guest lecturers or practitioners, as well as the opportunity for students to present their practical final-year projects at selected conferences.
- Great attempts have been implemented by the Academic Student Associations in the School of Psychosocial Health to also accommodate diversity outside of the lecture hall, but still within the academic environment. Lecturers (acting as guardians for these associations) assist students to plan and implement activities (academic, social) which are inclusive and nurture diversity, for example: when planning the annual oath-taking ceremony of second-year social work students, the opening of the event offers multi-religious devotional opportunities to include and ensure a comfortable environment for groups of Muslims, Christians and alternative African religions. Food for such events are also planned to make provision for Halaal / Kosher requirements and other dietary needs.
- The social work undergraduate curriculum also implemented a personal and professional development module, making provision for the development of multicultural competences and awareness (BSWI 121). Students are introduced to diversity in small, lab-style group sessions (6-8 students). A number of films (e.g. Crash, Babel) are included as part of the module study themes in which topics such as racism, stereotyping, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, privilege, discrimination, acceptance and prejudice are discussed in depth and from differing perspectives. Some of the lecturers have implemented practices such as sharing a cultural meal / exploring the meaning of students' names / learning phrases in Setswana / Afrikaans / English related to specific social work concepts.

3.3.2 Faculty of Education

- Another successful approach in accommodating diversity and inclusivity is the provision of technology-enabled teaching and learning in the Faculty of Education. All academics are required to undergo compulsory training in the use of appropriate teaching and learning tools for the phasing in process of the modules of the new Bachelor of Education programme and the

development of study guides on the "Lessons" platform of the University's learning management system, eFundi. The focus is on the redesign for blended learning spaces to foster student learning through effective teaching and a social and cognitive lecturer presence online.

- An ICT-champions group, comprising of two lecturers from each subject group in the Faculty of Education, were convened in 2016 and their work continues to accelerate ICT integration in teaching and learning in all modules (contact and distance learning). The evaluation and implementation of best practices in TL and information communications technology (ICT) applications are a main focus. Apart from evaluating the apps, group members support other staff members in mastering and applying these technologies. An e-learning administrative assistant is in the process of being appointed. Furthermore, lesson capturing technology was made available in faculty and these lectures are uploaded for students to view and review in their own time. Within the open distance learning environment, constant TL innovation is tested to support distance students (whiteboards, Moodle, smart guides, etc.).
- Micro curriculum transformation, thus at the study guide and classroom level, happens in a two to three-year cycle, depending on the nature of the academic programme. New foci are researched and implemented to ensure continual relevance.
- The Faculty is also in the process of finalising its curriculum development plan (CDP), together with lecturer guidelines on embedding strategic transformation foci into curricula. The work of a task team established to do research on embracing diversity and including elements thereof in the curriculum, led by an external convenor, will promote inclusivity and cater for different student perspectives on knowledge and how knowledge is constructed. The outcomes that the task team is striving for is that such diversity and inclusivity foci will a) underwrite the NWU's values (such as human dignity, equality, freedom, integrity, tolerance, respect, commitment to excellence, scholarly engagement, academic freedom and justice); b) enable our students by encouraging their development as future leaders – both in the workplace and in society while exposing them to a well-balanced academic, cultural and social environment; c) provide epistemological access; d) create possibilities for transformation and diversity dialogue and debate in order to demystify and “normalise” the process; and e) become increasingly unified as an institution with diverse staff members and students, whilst providing for the educational needs of South Africa.
- Recently, a special task team for addressing decolonisation of programme curricula was established with a mandate to propose further strategies to the Faculty Board in terms of Africanising the curriculum to ensure relevance and appropriate implementation for a diverse student body with diverse knowledge systems and cultural backgrounds. This workgroup includes staff that specialise in curriculum studies and indigenous knowledge systems.

3.3.3 Faculty of Theology

- The Faculty of Theology, previously predisposed to offering training only in the tradition of the Reformed Church of South-Africa. The Faculty has since developed new postgraduate qualifications with different programmes related to other traditions such as Church Planting, Missiology, diverse Church Dogma and more Charismatic traditions etc. Study guides that were

formerly paradigmatically limiting have also been developed to expose students to a diversity of religious views. These changes and new developments occurred after intensive student-faculty engagement and consideration of student views on exclusion and bias. While these efforts have been successful, attempts to modify the curriculum to include more African philosophies have yet to be addressed and will also necessitate CESM applications to come to fruition.

3.3.4 Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

- Within the faculty it is an accepted assumption that programme curricula content must provide students with an orientation to various paradigms of thought and knowledge systems, e.g. undergraduate and postgraduate academic programmes with a focus on indigenous knowledge systems.
- The faculty deems it of importance to introduce students to different educational approaches – whereas the traditional train of thought and nature of teaching was that of the behaviouristic tradition, many of the subject groups have since realised that a more constructivist-related approach, where students are allowed to make meaning of their own learning and knowledge systems, are of essence to be able to substantiate their worldviews and the principles that inform their decisions and conduct.
- In many of the traditional natural sciences subjects, postgraduate students are appointed as facilitators of practical undergraduate modules to enhance student understanding and to ensure that the undergraduate student's voice is heard. Debriefing sessions between these postgraduate students and the lecturers offer different perspectives on what students need to improve throughput, but also to understand student needs.

3.4 Role of student voice in developing or modifying approaches to diversity and inclusivity

3.4.1 Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences: School of Geo and Spatial Sciences

Diversity and inclusivity in the school is fundamental to teaching in South Africa. As of yet the diversity of the student population is not always reflected in the lecturing staff compliment. The school has implemented the following strategies to address some of these challenges.

(i) Externally funded projects

Externally funded projects have been used as a vehicle to employ additional lecturers in order to expand capacity as well as transform the staff compliment while permanent posts have not been available. Two lecturers in Geography were employed between 2013 and 2016 on third income stream funds to ensure that students were offered quality teaching and better support as and when needed. As lack of human capacity often leads to lack of transformation capacity, this is a big step towards moving forward with the renewal of our curricula.

(ii) Using students in teaching environment

Externally funded projects have been used to attract top students from a diverse background for postgraduate studies in the school. These students are then used as teaching assistants to improve the general communication in class (since students often rather talk to fellow students about

problems and issues not understood), as well as facilitation sessions for struggling students. An example of this is a specific student who finished her undergraduate studies at the MC, and then transferred to the PC in 2015 to do her honours in Geography and Environmental Management on a scholarship through externally funded projects. Based on her performance, she was awarded a NWU Grow Our Own Timber bursary over the past two years. This excellent student has been putting in much efforts to assist struggling geography students, as well as those wanting extra facilitation. She coordinates her assistance to these students through social media platforms, meet after class to discuss progress, and have regular facilitation sessions with them. Around 30 to 40 students of a class of 220 regularly attended these sessions. She also helps graduating students to find jobs by posting available job adverts. She presented an oral paper about her innovative approaches at the Teaching and Learning Conference in 2017, hosted by the NWU.

(iii) Building capacity

The school recognises the importance of continually building capacity in young scientists. A number of them have been sent to leading international research groups to gain experience in teaching and learning, as well as build research relationships with top international scientists. Funds for these efforts have been contributed from the Research Unit, the subject group budgets, and even the research funds of more senior members of the subject groups.

3.4.2 Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

While the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences do not involve undergraduate students in curriculum design and amendment initiatives, they do utilise student input through lecturer evaluation feedback for reflection and amending of curriculum content, study materials and teaching approaches.

During all External Programme Evaluations (EPEs) members of panels meet undergraduate students to give feedback regarding the quality of the programmes and teaching. Current students and alumni participate in discussions and feedback on a focused Facebook group. Many of the alumni actively participate in corporate and governmental structures and projects (where they are now gainfully employed) and the faculty communicates with them on all levels. The fact that about half of the delegates serving on the Provincial Transport forum are products of this programme in Transport Economics demonstrates that respondents are active in the industry. Some of the very successful alumni are profoundly loyal to the programme and are employing and empowering graduates. For instance, the Executive Director of Aganang Consulting Engineers, a graduate of the Programme, annually employs at least 2 of our graduates, as well as some interns. This show of faith and commitment serves as confirmation of the faculty's efforts.

3.4.3 Faculty of Health Sciences

The Faculty of Health Sciences also utilises student input through lecturer evaluation feedback for reflection and amending of curriculum content, study materials and teaching approaches. Furthermore, results from SoTL projects are used to develop or modify teaching approaches in certain modules (e.g. large group teaching in simulation labs (FPKG 411), peer teaching in Pharmacy

Communication (FPGK 211) and Medicine Logistics (FPKG 111) and team-based learning in Pharmacy Management module.

3.4.4 Faculty of Engineering

The chairperson of the ESC (Engineering Student Council) has a full seat on the Faculty Education Committee and the Faculty Management Committee. The student body has thus a vote on all executive and teaching-learning decisions of the Faculty. Students use these bodies to voice their concerns and provide inputs regarding, inter alia, curriculum changes.

Mentoring systems are also in place where staff members interact with students to address concerns or problems, particularly regarding grievances. It was during such a process that students within the Faculty of Engineering voiced their disapproval of the content of Biotechnology presented in Chemical Engineering (non-applicable content for Engineering). It subsequently led to module changes and replacement of the module to the School of Chemical and Minerals Engineering.

3.4.5 Faculty of Education

During programme quality evaluations, representatives of current students, alumni, and graduate employers are involved to reflect on programme curricula and graduate attributes. They indicate shortcomings and make recommendations on what aspects need improvement. The faculty takes these comments seriously and uses them to enhance curriculum quality and relevance.

Because of the integration of SDL teaching strategies in the faculty's learning environments, student feedback and recommendations are captured in the questionnaires and interviews regarding the effectiveness of the strategies. As with the SDL research, the research of Edu-HRight culminates and feeds back to the curriculum in the general education modules. Students have the opportunity to convey their perceptions regarding diversity and inclusivity when research is done with them as participants. The student's voices and contributions are incorporated in the published journal articles and books and bear direct benefit to the students.

Students from the Student Teachers Council have representation on the faculty board and have a direct link to the faculty's management structure in this way. In the Faculty of Education an invitation was directed to staff and students in education to initiate and become involved in campus discussions and in an intercampus special task team on the decolonisation of teacher education. This task team's work commenced recently and will be continued in 2018.

3.5 Institutional endeavours to promote inclusivity of students through thematic curriculum choices

During the recent autumn graduation ceremony on the VTC, the then acting campus rector stated: "A university degree is an investment that keeps on giving. Whether it be its value in increasing employability and earnings in the job market, improving personal wealth outcomes, or building social capital in communities, a university degree benefits its graduates and opens the door to endless opportunities." In her closing remarks, she noted that the unemployment rate amongst graduates of the NWU is less than 8% and that a qualification from the University ensures that graduates enjoy a

strong advantage when starting their respective careers. She stated unequivocally that “as graduates you add value to your immediate communities as role models, mentors and ambassadors of your alma mater.” The NWU strives to sustain an academic programme offering that is inclusive and relevant to the communities served by our graduates.

3.5.1 Faculty of Education

In 2013 the faculty developed a curriculum development plan (CDP) (2013-2019) to articulate the faculty’s vision in terms of curriculum renewal (the phasing in and out of programmes), curriculum transformation (embedding a meta-curriculum on self-directed learning, blended learning and diversity, with theoretical underpinnings), a focus on the scholarship of teaching and learning, as well as initial financial and staff resources planning that created a foundation for annual budgeting and planning on school level. School of Psychosocial Health include specific tuition supplies in the annual budget to support lecturers’ teaching initiatives. Staff can bring their requests for such items to the director for inclusion in the budget

The CDP was informed by the work of researchers, academics, task teams and faculty management. The recommendations of a task team on embracing diversity in study material were incorporated into the CDP and guidelines that followed. The task team comprised of faculty academics, as well as an expert in the philosophy of education from another university. (The curriculum development plan was compiled to align with the NWU’s mission element that outlined the mission for teaching and learning (NWU Teaching and Learning Framework: 2009:2) at the time: Develop, educate, and empower through innovative and high quality teaching-learning, well-rounded graduates who are able to think laterally and critically in their service to the country and its people, the continents, and the world. The plan was also aligned to the national education policy (for example, the Integrated Strategic Framework for Teacher Education, 2011) and when guidelines for the implementation of the curriculum development plan was compiled, the NWU’s Teaching and Learning Strategy (2016-2020) was in the process of development, and were aligned where possible.

A set of guidelines entitled “Guidelines for lecturers on embedding diversity, transformative curriculum making and blended learning into a self-directed Learning environment” (Nov 2014) was written to drive strategic foci in order to transform the curriculum.

In order to meet the professional and academic needs of the education profession and students, the programme qualifications mix (PQM) is constantly revised by phasing out existing programmes and developing and phasing in new programmes, as required. Examples include the development of a Diploma in Grade R Teaching and the redevelopment of a new BEd (Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase and Senior and FET phase). This BEd is offered via the contact mode of delivery, but where the availability of infrastructure and capacity allows, programmes are also offered via open-distance learning (ODL) to broaden student access. A new BEd in Early Childcare Education is also planned by the Faculty of Education as this has been identified as a market need.

3.5.2 Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

At the NWU there is a dedicated focus on the practice of technology-enhanced learning in the newly established TELIT-SA research focus area. TELIT-SA, acronym for Technology-Enhanced Learning and Innovative Education and Training in South Africa, does research on the theory and practice of learning technologies across an array of disciplines in higher education.

Heading up this dynamic entity is Prof Seugnet Blignaut, a seasoned and highly regarded expert in educational technology. "Theory of practice assists in bridging the divide between basic disciplines and theoretical underpinnings of the pedagogical use of technology-enhanced learning," says Prof Seugnet, and continues to explain that TELIT-SA will assist in creating a specific formal technology-enhanced learning knowledge base that, in turn, will act as a legitimate, valid and crucial resource and change agent across academic disciplines.

TELIT-SA supports three sub-programmes (SP):

- Designing and developing higher education and training technological artefacts, mindful of educational theory and practice and human-computer interaction principles. These artefacts are in support of university modules for higher education and health care training programmes.
- Using and reflecting on technology for innovative discipline-based higher education and training.
- An institutional perspective on using and evaluating technology for learning in higher education and training, as well as industry.

3.5.3 Faculty of Engineering

The faculty is proud of its inclusive leadership core which includes academic and supporting staff as well as student representatives. It is a typical compilation of all committees within the Faculty, from the most junior up to the FMC (Faculty Management Committee). Student participation in the ESC (Engineering Student Council) is voluntary, and promotes active student involvement in decision-making processes. This includes votes on programme transformation through the FEC.

It is envisaged that student involvement will remain the minimum norm within the Faculty, with possibilities to extend student participation in programme development. Including students in programme content development and transformation remains a challenge due to a lack of experience and knowledge of the requirements of different engineering disciplines. However, students are often best suited to give advice on module deployment and presentation. The Faculty will therefore always strive to have an open communication channel with its students in order to evolve the curriculum and establish a mutually beneficial relationship between students and the Faculty.

3.5.4 Faculty of Humanities

The VTC awarded a PhD in English to an academic developer at the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) during the recent Autumn Graduation. In her thesis: An evaluation of a franchised supplementary programme in English as a second language in South Africa: a case study, the student developed a framework and used it to evaluate the language programme, Active English. This programme for teaching and learning English as a second language was developed in the Vaal Triangle and complements the learning of English as an additional language in public schools.

Shadow education has a long history in Asia where a culture of continuous self-improvement is prevalent. The student's study is the first study of shadow education in South Africa. The study used qualitative research methods in the form of an ethnographic case study. Data were collected from lesson observations; a classroom environment survey; interviews with participating parents, children and the franchisor; as well as document analyses of Active English and the South African Department of Basic Education.

One of the main findings from the study was that an enterprise such as Active English holds the potential to enrich the teaching of English in the public school system, if efforts are made by policy makers in government and entrepreneurs in the private sector to broaden access to these programmes for school learners. The examiners added that the candidate has "significantly contributed to the national and international literature" with regard to the topic, and that "the candidate added new knowledge to the field by providing a framework which can be used to evaluate other franchised language programmes. Such a framework would be very valuable both in the academic arena as well as commercially".

The work done by the NWU interpreting services in classes must be mentioned as a hugely successful approach that can be commended to promote inclusion. As required, lectures are interpreted from Afrikaans into English or from English into Afrikaans.

3.6 Institutional approaches to identify bias or alienation related to the curriculum

The NWU has a Student Oversight Committee with the mandate to oversee and advise the NWU Council on all aspects related to student matters at the University. This Committee oversees:

- the inculcation of a unified and integrated institutional culture across NWU campuses in which optimal integration of student activities takes place towards embracing multiculturalism and diversity.
- the development and implementation of an appropriate Reception & Orientation Programme that would see to a welcoming culture on all three campuses driven by means of a single formal orientation programme sanctioned by the IM, and implemented across the NWU.
- an effective programme according to which a ban on all initiation rituals and demeaning practices is implemented, and in which a zero-tolerance approach to any form of demeaning practice and infringement of any form of human rights violations would be employed and monitored.
- appropriate monitoring mechanisms and educational programmes, amongst others a compulsory training in Human Rights education during and after R&O programmes, to continue to create awareness of the importance to protect human dignity and to foster respect towards enhancing an institutional Human Rights culture at the NWU.
- an effective and aligned marketing, communications and student support systems programme aimed at eliminating any perceived exclusivity, without losing crucially important niche markets that add to the sustainability of NWU campuses.

- a continued benchmarking programme according to which national and international best-practice approaches towards student matters are identified and fed back into the guiding principles and policy framework according to which student affairs at the NWU are managed.

3.6.1 Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

As far as bias and alienation are concerned, the faculty has a diverse culture comprising students from many backgrounds and cultures. The faculty's perspective is that it cannot change the past but it can try to make a valuable contribution to the future of its students, and not repeat damaging mistakes from the past. The diversity of human nature is thus at the centre of student support and curriculum renewal.

The Faculty embraces the principles of support, tolerance and, above all, respect. No forms of racism or bias are tolerated amongst staff, students or within curricula. The faculty is very much aware that equity in staffing is still an issue, mostly because there are very few qualified individuals in EMS professions that seek employment in academia, as industry pays significantly more. The faculty is serious about "growing our own timber" but often, as soon as junior colleagues get to master's and PhD levels, the industry poaches them from our academic ranks. NWU tries to incentivise working here by sourcing large amounts of external funding, enabling all staff members to pursue traveling abroad and participating in any worthwhile academic activity that would benefit the faculty and our students.

3.6.2 Faculty of Education

Open invitation "Speak Out" seminars are arranged by the Edu-HRight research unit of the Faculty, and in the past have included discourse on topics such as "The politics of representation in future conceptualisations of universities: generational in/exclusion?", "Homosexuality in Academia" and "Student Protest at Higher Institutions".

3.6.3 Faculty of Engineering

The faculty relies on several communication chains to ensure that messages of bias and alienation reach line management and are addressed according to needs and escalated as necessary. For the students, there is a set communication and complaint line that requires that students first address the problem directly with staff members or fellow students before official complaints are registered via the ESC. In a similar way, staff members are encouraged to take up any problems directly with line management.

This said, as part of the drive for inclusivity and tolerance for differing perspectives, measurements are put in place to ensure that all staff members and students feel welcome in the Faculty. The aim is to ensure that no stakeholder of the faculty is ever alienated or subjected to bias due to race, culture, gender, religion, language or sexual orientation. All meetings are held in a language which is understandable to all members of the meeting, and for larger gatherings like strategic sessions and yearly faculty meetings, interpreting services are used.

The same interpreting services are available for all modules presented in any programme within Engineering. This includes interpreting of contact sessions for international lecturers from English to

Afrikaans. Even where international lecturers speak English with a difficult accent, their presentations are interpreted into “South African” English. All class notes, tests, examinations, practicals, PowerPoint slides, eFundi pages, etc., must be available in a language that is understood by every student enrolled for a module.

3.6.4 Faculty of Theology

During academic discourse and an eventual bilateral agreement with the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), concerns were raised about the curriculum content rhetoric that could potentially alienate this constituency. As a result, module content was expanded to include divergent theological views. A research chair in Pentecostal studies was created. Facilitators were appointed to assess the exam scripts of subscribers to Pentecostal theology and they are being trained to operate within that context.

3.6.5 Faculty of Law

While English is the primary medium of instruction at the VTC, students requested a choice in the completion of their assessment tasks in either English or Afrikaans. This was implemented from 2016.

During the recent national LLB audit, the provisional report stressed that the group of African English-speaking students interviewed at the PC indicated that they felt disconnected and alienated in the classroom, mainly due to the implementation of the language policy on campus (i.e. the primary language of instruction being Afrikaans with interpretation into English and the experience that White Afrikaans students exercise their language rights at the expense of other fundamental rights of Black students, including their right to dignity). It must be noted that the language plan cannot address experiences of marginalisation or alienation of minority groups in its own but must be part of a more comprehensive and holistic approach to ensure inclusivity of all students. Measures regarding diversity awareness and promotion of increased integration of groups of students are dealt with in the LLB improvement plan. Furthermore, the implementation of the language policy at the PC has in recent years been better aligned with the institutional language policy of functional multilingualism – meaning that the primary language of instruction may be Afrikaans, English or Setswana with or without educational interpreting services, and/or parallel medium, if practically possible.

In terms of language demography and preference in the LLB programme, the majority of students currently still prefer Afrikaans, although this is changing in accordance with the institutional (equity) enrolment targets set for the Faculty of Law. Due to the progress made with the transformation of student demographics in the Faculty, the language preferences of the students are changing and the Faculty has been anticipating the need for a managed change in the current language practices in the programme, but has thus far been unsuccessful in its efforts to secure additional venues or an accommodating timetable.

After consultation with the Faculty Board (at a special meeting held on 31 May 2017) and the leaders of representative student bodies (the SLCP and BLA) it became clear that, currently, a preference exists for a model which allows the retention of Afrikaans as medium of instruction in LLB on the

Potchefstroom Campus (PC) but with the introduction of English tuition alongside it. This language plan was accepted by the NWU Senate at a meeting held on 27th June 2017. In such a “parallel medium” model of the functionally multilingual language policy, certain modules would be offered in English only (e.g. where the lecturer is not proficient in Afrikaans) and in such cases interpretation will, where applicable, be available into Afrikaans. In some modules (e.g. Moot Court and Law and Language Skills) the modules will be offered in English without any translation for didactic reasons as is currently the case. In the medium term (once the current cohort of LLB students have been phased out) the planning is to offer the final year of the LLB programme in English only (from 2021).

3.7 Unresolved challenges in respect of inclusivity and diversity

Faculties will be facing quite a number of challenges. Many of these matters are already at various stages of being addressed, but will remain on the NWU risk register for further attention and development. They include, inter alia:

- Promotion of diversity and inclusivity in all NWU programme curriculum offerings.
- Communication with students via Faculty Student Councils on matters of bias and alienation, and successfully addressing all such issues in a peaceful and appropriate manner.
- Organizing VC / DVC Imbizos during which such matters are considered and adequately addressed.
- Renewal of certain programme curricula to address true transformation on issues such as cross-cultural perspectives, Africanisation where relevant, decolonising certain modules to address possible bias, etc.
- Use of diverse cross-cultural and contextualised examples to explain module content during contact sessions and in assessment tasks to cater for a diverse student body.
- Better support and catering for the needs of physically handicapped students, particularly in professional programmes and programmes with practical components in laboratories.
- An even more equitable representation in recruitment of students for all programmes.

4 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY AND QUALITY

4.1 NWU approaches to ensure capacity building of skilled and knowledgeable curriculum planners and developers

At present, the NWU does not have sufficient capacity when it comes to the number of skilled curriculum planners and designers to effectively support all development from the macro to the micro level. During the restructuring process of the University, a plan was put in place that should build such capacity over the next two years. Currently, there are only three curriculum design specialists and only four instructional designers who have to support the entire university in this important endeavour of curriculum design, renewal and transformation.

It is thus a strategic focus of the NWU to develop staff capacity for the focus area responsible for curriculum planning, design, development, transformation and implementation.

Strategies / approaches that have already been implemented:

- Sustainable improvement of quality through the monitoring activities of the Teaching Quality Committee (TQC) of faculty boards. With the support of school directors and subject chairs, lecturers are encouraged to implement strategic priorities such as embedding diversity of theoretical perspectives, transformative curriculum design, blended learning approaches, and self-directed learning environments into teaching and learning practices.
- Programme leaders and academics in faculties liaise with curriculum specialists in the Q&APP department and the CTL for planning, development and renewal purposes.
- New lecturers are guided on curriculum planning and development via workshops offered by the CTL.
- The quality office, Q&APP department and CTL assist faculties to integrate action plans received after external programme evaluations and/or ICAS deferrals to improve programme curricula.
- The induction programme for new lecturers offer introduction to topics such as assessment in HE, HE innovative teaching strategies for contact and distance modes, curriculum development, electronic learning environments, mentoring, etc. This induction programme introduces new lecturers to the expectations of the University, and, by extension, their respective faculties.
- Revision of all TL-related policies with guidelines, rules and faculty procedures for related focus areas is in process.
- Professional development of staff through the CTL to both newly appointed and experienced lecturers on different topics. This service is not necessarily offered at the faculty level, yet it plays a crucial role in supporting lecturers to develop their professional skills in the TL environment.
- The CTL also manages the process for awarding of the Institutional Teaching Excellence Awards (ITEA) to lecturers who excel in their teaching. This serves as an incentive that encourages lecturers to strive for the best teaching and learning practices.
- Encouraging participation in SoTL projects that motivates lecturers to reflect on their teaching practices in a scholarly manner. Lecturers are supported and encouraged to execute research that reflects creative and innovative ways to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Lecturers are also encouraged to use their own classrooms as research sites to address pertinent research questions and other TL-related issues. Not only does integrating teaching and learning into research yield greater efficiency in teaching and learning, but it also creates opportunities for lecturers to publish in SoTL journals.
- Reviewing, amending and approving curriculum changes through a Senate-approved quality process managed through the ICAS.
- The Q&APP department acts as driver to achieve the following goals:
 - To give effect to the NWU strategy as this pertains to the development and maintenance of a high quality, nationally responsive and globally competitive programme and qualification offering. The PQM (Programme and Qualification Mix) as approved by the DHET and accredited by the CHE is the basis for all NWU's teaching and learning activities, and it is essential that it is managed in a professional manner, so that up-to-date records of all qualification and programme approvals are maintained.

- To ensure alignment and compliance to national directives - on detailed level - in regard of the development and maintenance of the PQM.
- To provide the necessary advisory and support services in the development of applications for new qualifications and programmes to the DHET, CHE and SAQA, as well as in the regular updating of programmes and modules through internal institutional approval processes.
- To provide the working department that acts as custodian of the Institutional Committee of Academic Standards (ICAS) - a standing committee of the NWU Senate.

4.2 Faculty initiatives toward ensuring the quality of curriculum design, renewal and ongoing development

Faculties do not have a dedicated curriculum specialist to assist with curriculum planning, renewal, or development from within their own ranks. The University does acknowledge that this would be an ideal situation if such capacity were available, and if such specialists could work with the CTL and the Q&APP department to ensure continual relevance and sustainability of the NWU academic programme offering.

In the Faculty of Health Sciences, staff members do attend workshops offered by the different professions that are housed within the faculty, e.g. Pharmacy, Nursing, Biokinetics and Dietetics. Furthermore, some Faculties are investing in the training of individual staff in curriculum development, e.g. the Faculty of Health Sciences that supports staff members enrolled for Health Sciences Education degrees at Free State University. The Faculty has also recently developed a Master of Health Sciences in Health Professions Education degree that will be offered from 2018.

Mostly, faculties are dependent on the services provided by the Q&APP department and CTL staff, and then specifically the staff from the Functional Area (FA): Curriculum Design and Development. Even this FA has insufficient staff capacity to train all NWU lecturers in the principles of curriculum planning, design and development.

Faculties do implement strategies / approaches to assist those staff members responsible for curriculum design, development, and implementation, through:

- Detailed internal programme reviews instigated and managed by programme leaders and/or school directors.
- Programme Committee meetings and feedback, Faculty Board inputs, ICAS inputs, DHET, CHE and SAQA inputs and deferral.
- Internal and external professional board evaluations for quality assurance and sustainable relevance of offerings.
- Most faculties encourage their academic staff to undergo training through CTL workshops in curriculum planning, design and development.
- In all academic programmes related to professional fields, lecturers are in constant contact with the industry by means of projects, research initiatives and conferences, locally and abroad, and the outcomes of such initiatives are used to renew and transform programme curricula. This

ensures that locally and globally acceptable theories, practices, and approaches are considered when updating curriculum content; with awareness of its application to the African context and working environment. Furthermore, faculty programme teams and faculty teaching and learning committees across campuses meet at least three times annually to discuss and consider alignment and curriculum renewal issues.

- Staff from the Q&APP department and CTL are trained to check and ensure that module and programme outcomes take cognisance of relevant level descriptors and that assessment criteria for the different modules are appropriate and that assessment plans are relevant and take student diversity into account.

4.3 Processes in place to ensure quality curriculum design, development, renewal and implementation

NWU Senate is accountable for the quality, responsiveness, relevance and sustainability of its academic programme offering. For this purpose Senate has established the Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS) to ensure:

- Continuous monitoring, consideration and approval of new qualification and ensuing academic programme offerings, and amendments to existing programme curricula.
- Continuous improvement of the quality and relevance of existing modules, curricula and programme foci to ensure that the NWU academic offering is sustainable, in line with the NWU transformation agenda, and offered in an efficient and resourceful manner.
- A planned and scheduled process for more comprehensive changes to modules, curriculum renewal and programme transformation that also involves approval and accreditation by regulatory bodies like the then DHET, CHE (HEQC) and SAQA.

Ultimately, the continued integrity and quality of the NWU academic programme offering shape all decisions regarding the review, renewal, transformation, and approval of existing and new academic programme offerings through the appropriate processes and structures.

Furthermore, faculties are in constant contact with their respective industries/business environments/workplaces by means of integrated projects, research initiatives, and conferences – locally and abroad. The feedback from employers are crucial for curriculum renewal and content relevance.

In most cases, a lecturer's research field and field of expertise are linked to the module that he/she teaches, which allows lecturers to use research outcomes to update module content and the latest research foci in content and outcomes.

As an example, the Centre for Applied Radiation Science and Technology is in constant contact with experts in NECSA, iThemba labs and NNR, as well as IAEA, because the nuclear industry is heavily regulated and the NWU is a leader in this field. Another example is in the subject "Introduction to Risk Management" that develops and changes to reflect the changes in industry policies and requirements, e.g. the introduction of the King reports that place greater emphasis on corporate governance and its importance for industries and for society as a whole. The success of this initiative

lies in the fact that students are exposed to the ethical issues they will face in business, and in equipping them to recognise where moral considerations in business might impact on societal issues such as inequality, favouritism and corruption.

5 PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Student involvement

The NWU acknowledges that there is much work to be done to better ensure student involvement and participation in curriculum design and development through more appropriate platforms and vehicles. There are no formal structures / entities or policy guidelines to regulate the participation of undergraduate students in curriculum planning or design. It is done in a rather non-structured way via informal discussions within the different faculties. In some cases via mentor visits to faculty members (e.g. Faculty of Engineering) or participation via Academic Student Associations, student forum meetings and via student representation on Faculty Boards. Unfortunately it is often the case that – even when students do have the chance to speak out – their contributions are limited and their voices silent. The University should, however, encourage more participation and not accept that a silent voice is a voice not worth listening to.

Meaningful attempts have been made to guide postgraduate students to undertaking research and studies in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning or in curriculum matters related to their specific fields of study. The School of Human Resource Sciences, for example, has two master's students who are focusing on evaluating learning content of postgraduate programmes. The outcome of the research will be integrated in relevant curricula and thus lead to renewal and development of programmes. In the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, one postgraduate student in the field of Industrial Psychology undertook a study to determine skills graduates require to be successful in their workplaces. The outcomes of this study led to the inclusion of themes on career development, conflict, and health-related issues in particular related programmes and modules (e.g. IOPS 618, 615, 616).

Comments / contributions received from student forum meetings that deal with programmes and study issues are used to the benefit of student cohorts where students do speak out. Furthermore, the data gleaned from students' annual lecturer evaluations of teaching, learning and assessment practices, as well as the appropriateness of study materials, feed back into module redesign and development.

5.2 Involvement and perspectives from external stakeholders

5.2.1 External consulting

Faculties consult external bodies in proposing amendments or their programme curricula, e.g. the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA); for qualifications related to finance and accounting: South African Institute for Chartered Accountants (SAICA), South African Institute for Professional Accountants (SAIPA), Association of Certified Chartered Accountants (ACCA), the Financial Services Board (FSB) and the Chartered Institute for Management Accountants (CIMA) (in the case

of Economic and Management Sciences). In the School of Agriculture, Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, South African Veterinary Council (SAVC) and South African Society for Animal Science (SASAS) are consulted. These professional bodies established compliance frameworks which some faculties should adhere to. Inputs / recommendations of such bodies have been integrated with those made by faculty members and the integrated programme proposals / recommendations were eventually submitted to ICAS and other stakeholders.

5.2.2 External programme and career field compliance

Another example of consultation leading to changes/modification is that of the Faculty of Theology. The undergraduate training needs of the historic stakeholder, namely the Reformed Church of South Africa (RCSA) remained until 2015 the primary stimulus for curriculum modification. When the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa (AFM) selected the NWU to train their ministers, their particular professional and paradigmatic requirements resulted in further modification and amendments of different programme curricula. The predominant approach for the different programme offered by the faculty may thus be described as *training-needs-based*. Programme curricula are designed to equip students from different denominations to perform the function as ministers/pastors within various communities nationally but also outside of South African borders.

Some faculties (Engineering, Economic and Management Sciences, Health Sciences, Natural and Agricultural Sciences) have to comply with requirements noted after visits from professional bodies. In the case of the CA programme, NWU's Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences had to comply with what is known as the Competency Framework of SAICA. The framework is rooted in practice and also informed by research done by academics within the faculty. SAICA pays monitoring visits to the faculty (and to faculties of other universities where the programme is offered) to determine compliance with the Framework and with international standards. SAICA committees benchmarked with other providers and do peer comparisons of the programme. The same approach applies to Financial Accountancy where framework requirements of SAIPA, ACCA and CIMA (i.e. in the case of undergraduate programmes), and professional body requirements (in the case of honours programmes) must at all times be met. Academics in the School of Accounting Sciences also serve on various SAICA committees (competency framework, accreditation panels), thereby informing best practice in curriculum content and programme delivery.

In the case of the Faculty of Engineering, programmes have to comply with the outcomes on the ECSA document, PE-02. ECSA verifies complaints and determines whether concerns / deficiencies that were identified during site visits, have been appropriately addressed. The faculty has Advisory Committees that consists of an equal number of members from industry and the academe to advise on curriculum transformation and renewal issues. This body evaluates programmes and modules, analyses content and its applicability to industry needs and (where needed) requires alignment of programmes to academic, industry and professional body requirements.

Faculty of Health Sciences programme renewal and transformation is informed by the inputs / requirements as laid down by the Health Professions Council of SA (HPCSA) and its different

professional bodies for the different health professions. During this period, work-integrated learning (WIL) was integrated into the Nursing and Pharmacy Programmes. University and Nursing College qualifications were also aligned in the sense that 4-year diploma and degree qualifications were adjusted to distinguish between the 2 qualifications. The vast array of qualification options in Nursing were also reduced. Upon request of the CHE and the Department of Health the faculty moved to authentic training and implemented internships in Psychology. WIL is also continuously applicable to students in the BSW programme where they start with practical work from the first year onwards as required by the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP)

The Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences follows guidelines and requirements of SAVC for the BSc and Diploma in Agriculture in Animal Health. These include minimum skills (Day One Skills) that diplomates and graduates must have, WIL and practical requirements.

5.2.3 External regulative compliance

Once curriculum renewal / transformation proposals have been submitted to ICAS, documentation is prepared by Faculties (with the assistance of CTL and Q&APP staff) for submission to ICAS internally, and to external regulatory bodies when necessary. These documents are prepared in such a way that they meet regulative requirements as determined by the University, and also by the three external regulatory bodies (DHET, CHE and SAQA). Other external regulatory compliance issues or requirements that are taken into account are for professional qualifications where students have to register with a statutory body, professional board or associations after graduating (e.g. Nursing, Pharmacy, Dietetics, certain Social Sciences programmes, Psychology, Animal Health, Accounting, and so forth). It is also essential that interfaculty and subject-group deliberations on curriculum planning, design and development comply with institutional policies such as the General Academic Rules, policies on all TL-related aspects, Faculty rules for particular qualifications and so forth. It is thus obvious that a number of external stakeholders play an important role in, and participate indirectly via their regulative requirements in curriculum design and development of all NWU qualifications and programmes.

The University also try as much as possible to involve communities and businesses via work-integrated learning and service learning projects, and request of the organisations concerned to offer feedback on student's performance, but also to offer students the opportunity to relate to the practice of their study fields and to determine their work readiness. Feedback from these environments, whether via questionnaires or interviews or any other means of communication, are often used to upgrade curricula to become more relevant to the workplace.

Especially in the health professions, education, retail business qualifications and qualifications related to government departments like the Departments of Social Development or Public Services, work-integrated learning is of essence to ensure graduate readiness for the workplace. Another example is those students who study for a career in the field of animal health where students receive regular opportunities to visit communities and farms where they vaccinate and minister treatments

to a wide range of production animals. This is a symbiotic relationship, as there is no other way than via practical experience that these students would be able to learn the skill to perform the number of procedures required by SAVC.

Faculties also often rely on inputs / comments from internal or external programme review panels for curriculum re-design and transformation. While the panel perspectives are carefully reviewed and integrated into curricula, there is still a gap in hearing and implementing the student voice into modules of programmes to ensure inclusivity. This is an aspect that faculties have to better address in a formalised manner. The University is aware that sustainable and relevant curriculum planning, design and development is not possible without wide consultation.

A final, but more informal, external stakeholder that does contribute towards curriculum development is the module external examiner. All modules on NQF level 7 and 8, or that addresses a level 3 ELO (exit level outcome) must be subjected to external examination. Sometimes the external examiner comments on content in such a way that a lecturer can implement direct changes to the module.

Not many external stakeholders inform curriculum development at the Faculty of Education. Voices of diverse external stakeholders are limited. The Work-Integrated Learning and mentorship training office has developed a strategic plan (from 2017 - 2020) to address the quality of practicum schools by establishing a network of professional practice schools throughout South Africa and Namibia to service NWU education students.

Furthermore, a range of short courses on Indigenous Knowledge Systems were developed for Mathematics, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences and Technology, and are available to be presented to in-service teachers nationwide. The main purpose of these courses is to better contextualise the curriculum through the integration of the living world of learners during learning opportunities. Thus, it focuses on how Indigenous Knowledge can be used to contextualise the school curriculum.

A DHET-funded research project on the re-curriculation of the BEd foundation phase programme in terms of academic depth and rigour in language education, was also completed. The project aimed to draft knowledge and practice standards for Literacy in the Foundation Phase.

This project lead to a newly joint European Union and DHET-funded research project focusing on a revised curriculum for WIL that addresses the learning-from-practice and learning-in-practice aspects related to theory and practice for initial teacher preparation. Voices of diverse external stakeholders are imperfect but not powerless. The faculty has a bi-annual convocation called Pantheol where all external stakeholders have representation. At this event there is opportunity for curriculum-related input. In the past, concerns raised here stimulated curriculum modification.

5.3 Successful examples of curriculum initiatives incorporating the voices of a range of stakeholders

5.3.1 Faculty of Engineering

An example of external stakeholders playing a big role in curriculum development and transformation is in the Faculty of Engineering. The Faculty is subject to external assessment by its professional

body (ECSA) in a five-year cycle. These assessments serve to determine whether all engineering graduates have mastered the eleven ECSA Exit Level Outcomes (ELO). During each visit, aspects regarding all programmes requiring revision and transformation to stay relevant to the different specialisations, are highlighted. Amendments have to be implemented by the Faculty for ECSA approval in order to obtain further accreditation to offer the different engineering qualifications. Failure to do so will obviously result in loss of accreditation for qualifications concerned, and a subsequent decrease in much needed student numbers, ultimately to the point of closure of the Faculty. To prevent this from happening, all programme specialisations presented by the Faculty of Engineering are assessed on an annual basis by an external advisory board. The Faculty finds the feedback from these boards extremely valuable to ensure that all programmes remain relevant to industry needs.

The Internal Programme Evaluation (IPE) of the NWU is utilised as a precursor to the ECSA accreditation visit. Its greatest value lies in the feedback regarding the assessment of outcomes according to the requirements of the level descriptors, and the standard of exam paper content, level and structures. It is in these aspects of the qualifications that educational concepts are addressed and where qualified curriculum developers play an important role to help ensure high quality offerings.

5.3.2 Faculty of Law

Information gathered from quality assurance processes is used to develop quality improvement plans for curriculum content and structure to be implemented by academics. Executive Deans and School Directors are responsible for monitoring the implementation of quality improvement plans for all academic programmes. Results from quality assurance processes form the main impetus for amendments and further development of academic programme curricula. The Faculties at MC and PC have undergone internal programme evaluations, compiled, and implemented improvement plans with a view to enhancing the quality of its academic programmes. The LLB programme was internally reviewed in 2012 with the main purpose to ensure a new better aligned curriculum across the two campuses. Feedback by legal practitioners and alumni as well as inputs by students were taken into account during this process.

5.3.2.1 The CHE LLB Curriculum Research Report 2010

In view of growing complaints from legal academics and legal practitioners on many different aspects of legal education in South Africa, the quality of many LLB graduates and their preparedness for the practice of law, the LLB Curriculum Project was undertaken, with a view to a) assess the extent and commonality of views about how effective the curriculum is in preparing graduates for the various career paths they follow, and the obstacles to their success; and b) make suggestions for improvements. In 2013 Law@ NWU embarked upon the restructuring of the LLB curriculum. This was largely based on the 2010 LLB Curriculum Project Report, which addressed the issues of challenges in legal practice.

5.3.2.2 The Ipsos Markinor Research Report

In 2009 PC Law Faculty instructed Ipsos Markinor to undertake a comprehensive loyalty and customer satisfaction survey amongst key stakeholders of the Faculty – these being staff, students, alumni and employers. The aim of the research was to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme and the impact of the programme on the employability of students. The research was also intended to put PC Law Faculty in a position to better understand the perceptions of these key stakeholder segments and was structured according to stakeholders' ratings of faculty administration, quality of the academic offering, quality of skills gained by students after each year of study, calibre of recent graduates, and other key attitudes (graduate attributes). The research put the Faculty in a position to better understand the perceptions of the key stakeholder, to evaluate its programmes, and to develop improvement plans. The findings were utilised to improve the LLB curriculum for presentation from 2013.

Some of the findings of the report were:

- Improve the student-lecturer ratio.
- Increase practical elements in modules, providing practical experience before entering the job market. This should change the existing negative perceptions regarding the preparation of students for the world of work and equip them with the necessary skills.
- Re-evaluate the four-year programme. Time may be too short to prepare students for the job market.
- Heighten open staff communication via proper forums in order to manage faculty capacity and develop a unified staff compliment.
- Continue using staff that are student-centred, professional, efficient and offering assistance.
- Emphasise education, personal skills advancement, career advancement, and quality of working life in order to communicate to students the advantages of the programme for job preparation, increasing confidence and relevance.
- Communicate and heighten students' awareness of the value of self-study, preparing for class, and attending class regularly.

The Law Faculty attended to these findings and could later report that most of the concerns had been addressed.

5.3.2.3 The IBIS Research Report

In order to review the effectiveness of its LLB programme and to benchmark it against equivalent qualities of other law faculties in the country with a view to improving the programme, PC Law Faculty instructed a company called IBIS, who specialises in competitive intelligence, to execute a research project regarding the Faculties of Law at other universities regarded as competitors. Ultimately, the aim was to adjust the Faculty's strategy to become a leading Faculty of Law in South Africa by gaining a better insight into its competitors, its markets (students, employers, etc.), its challenges, and its image. The research focused on the following elements:

- List of qualifications offered by the Faculty, and the relevance of each to the market;
- Student enrolment per qualification;

- Lecturer capacity per qualification over the past five years (lecturer-to-student ratio)
- Graduate pass rate or success rate over the past five years (i.e. the number of module passes in relation to the number of enrolments for a particular module – per module where possible or, alternatively, per year level);
- Throughput, i.e. the cumulative number of students calculated from a baseline cohort that a qualification (e.g. LLB) receives within a specific timeframe, e.g., 4 years;
- Dropout rates among first-year students i.e. the cumulative number of students that register for the first year and then fail to register for the next year of study;
- Time frame for completion of the qualification over the past five years (average);
- Graduation ratio/number over the past five years (the number of degrees obtained in relation to the total number of enrolments for the qualification);
- Number of degrees awarded over the past five years;
- Unique characteristics of the different programme curricula that provide a competitive advantage over others;
- Unique characteristics of the teaching methods that provide a competitive advantage over others;
- Re-curriculating and transforming of programme curricula at regular intervals;
- The most important amendments made to programme curricula and to teaching methods, and its effect of student throughput, over the past five years;
- The role of technology or the degree to which technology is used appropriately and effectively in the offering of the different programme curricula and modules; and
- The Faculty's approach towards training students for effective practice-related skills.

The research project resulted in some strategic pointers that again led to the transformation of certain aspects of programme curricula, and the improvement of the position of the programme offering to the job market.

5.3.2.4 Panel of experts and external review of proposed new curriculum

After the Law programme curriculum was planned and re-designed, but before it was implemented, the review committee felt the need to put the newly-developed programme curriculum to the test. For this purpose, an expert panel consisting of colleagues from other law faculties were invited to offer their views on the proposed new programme. All of these colleagues, working at different universities all over the country, are experts in their respective fields, each with his/her own unique culture and approach to legal education.

Naturally, a programme curriculum does not only speak to the learning components (modules) that are grouped and offered on the different year levels. An effective and relevant programme curriculum entails more than that. It must also take into consideration:

- the content and relevance of the different modules;
- the NQF-level and thus the outcomes of each module;
- the inter-relationship among the different modules;

- the scope in relation to the credits allocated to a module;
- the total credits for the curriculum;
- teaching methodology appropriate to effectively present each module;
- information technology to enhance the presentation of the module, etc.

The panel members were therefore asked to evaluate the new programme curriculum – not in isolation, but against the background of all relevant aspects of the undergraduate programme offering and the Faculty's resources. Although the evaluation was not meant to be a formal external evaluation of the quality of our programmes, the panel was nevertheless requested to comment on any aspect negatively impacting on the quality of our programmes or the presentation thereof in order to contribute to the optimal development and transformation of the new programme curricula. Prof Jannie Otto, a former Dean at the Faculty of Law at the University of Johannesburg, was tasked with acting as convener of the panel. Many of the recommendations contained in his report were taken into account when the new LLB curriculum was planned and developed.

5.3.2.5 The 2017 CHE LLB Review Report

Following a country-wide audit, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) on 30 March 2017 approved the findings of the National Reviews Committee (NRC) with regard to the LLB programme at the NWU. They highlighted in their report the inequality of the offering between the faculties at Potchefstroom and Mafikeng campuses, the alienation experienced by some of the students, and the low admission requirements without offering adequate student support to ensure throughput of under-prepared students.

The Faculty acknowledges these issues and are attending and addressing these problems as a matter of urgency. We have already engaged with the CHE in a constructive manner on many of the CHE review findings. A comprehensive improvement plan and strategy have already been submitted to the CHE. The improvement plan also complies with the new NWU strategy, as adopted by the NWU Council in November 2015: "To transform and to position the NWU as a unitary institution of superior academic excellence, with a commitment to social justice."

5.3.3 Faculty of Education

The Faculty must mention the work-integrated learning (WIL) and mentorship training programme and the Faculty strategic plan for curriculum renewal and teaching and learning transformation (2017- 2020). One of the aspects addressed in this plan is the quality of training during WIL weeks that students participate in teaching activities in participating schools. The Faculty has established a network of professional practice schools throughout South Africa and Namibia to service NWU education students for their required practical training. This network includes 2800 schools in 700 different towns. All students who do teacher training at these schools, train under the supervision of a mentor.

The Faculty is also in the process of investing in a system for free continuous professional development of practicing teachers by offering short courses and sufficient student support via the NWU LMS and other media formats to support and re-train practicing teachers in their daily activities

at school. In the process these teachers will be able to accumulate micro credits that can ultimately lead to individual and school rewards for the top performers. The option of converting the micro-credits to SACE CPTD points will be negotiated after the system has been completed, tested and launched. The aim is to train 41000 teacher mentors over a period of time, to link these teachers mentors to an education student of the NWU residing in or close to the particular town of the mentor, so that these teachers can mentor the NWU students throughout their studies and to continuously assess the students' from their first year of study on lesson planning, presentation, learner assessment and other classroom practices. Mpumalanga and Northern Cape are currently being used as the pilot provinces where distance student registrations are the most prevalent.

Lastly, short courses on Indigenous Knowledge Systems have already been developed in education fields such as Mathematics, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences and Technology and are thus available and presented to in-service teachers nationwide in an effort to contribute to the transformation and decolonisation of the academic offering. The main purpose of these courses is to contextualise the curriculum better through the integration of the real world and particular contexts of students during learning opportunities. Thus, it focuses on how Indigenous Knowledge is used to contextualise the school curriculum for the learners that will be taught by NWU teacher graduates. A short documentary titled "*Tshimologo!*" *A new season in Maths and Science Education*, is also available to in-service teachers as an open resource on the internet on YouTube at the following link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrA3_MpsA2Q&feature=youtu.be

6 Concluding remarks

The University acknowledges that the need for globally equivalent graduate skills raises the debate about curriculum relevance and thus curriculum renewal. Productivity and competitiveness within any economy depend on the ability to produce highly skilled and adaptive knowledge workers who can manage and manipulate knowledge and information and adjust to volatile and unpredictable global markets. Such knowledge workers need to have well-developed problem-solving skills and be able to continually adjust their repertoire of knowledge and skills to changing environments. In such a context, the role of higher education shifts from an induction into the specialised knowledge of specific disciplines to the development of broad, generic and transferable skills. In essence, the NWU and all other higher education institutions must become more responsive to the needs of the knowledge economy.

As the NWU attempts to meet pressing national needs, curriculum responsiveness has of course become central to policy, and the University is wrestling with this as it rethinks the curriculum. Pertinent to this debate is how higher education curricula should respond to the new knowledge economy and how curriculum responsiveness should be conceptualised. The NWU has not yet come to a conclusive decision on the way forward, but is slowly moving towards a solution that will benefit our stakeholders, of which our students are most important.

The development of the QEP 2 report and the activities of the working group during 2017 has provided the University with a firm foundation to continue with work around curriculum transformation and renewal, with respect to the following matters:

- curriculum responsiveness as behavioural and not only structural change and adaptation, with a focus on the goals of long term economic, cultural and social development and sustainability.
- ensuring that curricula are designed and delivered in a manner that is pedagogically sensitive to students from diverse educational and cultural backgrounds, although this often presents complex and demanding challenges for the Universities. Responsiveness in this sense entails approaches to the design of curricula, instructional strategies, methods of assessment, and approaches to student support that take the characteristics, learning styles and context of target student groups seriously;
- a NWU curriculum development model which provides guidance to programme development teams in the planning and development of new programmes or the redesign of existing programmes that enable students to acquire knowledge and skills in a meaningful manner that enables them to understand the inner logic of the academic practices and ways of understanding that they are trying to master;
- a NWU framework for curriculum transformation and renewal to meet the learning needs and aspirations of a diverse student population through the development of their intellectual abilities, critical skills and aptitudes for specific contexts in the workplace;
- the enhancement of diversity and inclusivity in curriculum renewal / transformation to ensure that the University better addresses the developmental needs of society with graduates that are prepared for the labour market in a knowledge-driven and knowledge-dependent society, endowed with competencies and expertise necessary for the growth and prosperity of a modern economy; and
- the building of curriculum development and design capacity and the enhancement of quality and University-wide participation in much needed transformation of practices and curriculum outcomes and content where necessary.

As stated by Ogude, Nel and Oosthuizen in 2005, but still just as relevant today:

“No independent nation in the modern age can maintain a civilised way of life unless it is well served by its universities; and no 21st century university can succeed in its double aim of higher education and the pursuit of knowledge without the goodwill and support of government and other societal stakeholders. Governments are therefore bound to give universities the assistance they need to perform their proper functions; but in turn universities are bound to be vigilant to see that they give the services to the community that are required by the necessities of the age.”

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