



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

POLICY ON SHORT COURSES

1. POLICY PARTICULARS

DATE OF APPROVAL BY RELEVANT COMMITTEE STRUCTURE:
Institutional Planning Committee 15 February 2010

DATE OF APPROVAL BY SENATE: 2 December 2005; 26 March 2010

DATE OF APPROVAL BY COUNCIL: 15 December 2005; 13 May 2010

COMMENCEMENT

DATE: 1 January 2001

REVISION HISTORY: 1st revision 28 March 2002, 2nd revision 1 January 2005,
3rd revision 1 January 2006, 4th revision 1 January 2009,
5th revision May 2010

REVIEW DATE: Every three years or as necessary

POLICY LEVEL: All staff and students

RESPONSIBILITY [Person/Division/Committee accountable for]:

- IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING:

Institutional Planning Unit, Registrar's Division, Finance Division, Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching, and Learning

- REVIEW AND REVISION:

Institutional Planning Committee

REPORTING STRUCTURE: Director, Institutional Planning → Vice-Chancellor →
Institutional Planning Committee → Senate → Council

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 POLICY DECLARATION:

A significant number of short courses bearing the Rhodes University name are offered by departments, divisions and institutes and the external demand for short learning programmes is clearly growing. It is critical for the University to have a record of what courses are being offered as well as to protect its reputation and ensure that quality assurance measures are in place, and unnecessary overlap/duplication of courses is avoided, amongst other issues. Added to this is the impact of the Skills Development Levies Act as well as the SAQA Act, which indicate that skills development discretionary funds can only be accessed from the SETAs (Skills Education Training Authorities) for learning programmes offered by accredited providers with satisfactory quality management systems.

2.2 POLICY OBJECTIVES:

The policy aims to

- protect the University's reputation and brand by approving, monitoring and evaluating the courses offered in the University's name;
- acknowledge and certificate learning which has taken place outside of the 'whole qualification' framework;
- align short course activities with other University obligations and thereby ensure that the University's core business of teaching and research is not compromised;
- provide participants, employers, funders and other stakeholders with appropriate information and assurance that a quality management system is in place;
- provide clarity and oversight on University relationships with external partners
- provide a framework for responding to specific labour market and skills development needs.

2.3 DEFINITIONS:

Short course: Any learning programme of less than 120 credits which results in a certificate bearing the Rhodes University name, shield or crest and which is not listed as a qualification in the University calendar. This term incorporates all other related terms such as 'skills development programme' and 'short learning programme'.

External partner: Any registered organisation/entity involved in the offering of a Rhodes University short course. This excludes external individuals who may be teaching on RU short courses.

3. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 APPROVAL PROCESS

- 3.1.1 All applications to offer short courses bearing the Rhodes University name or logo require the approval of:

- The Head of the relevant academic department;
 - The Dean of the Faculty in the case of courses offered by academic departments;
 - The Head of Division in the case of courses offered by institutes or support service divisions.
- 3.1.2 All short course applications must be submitted for final approval to the Chair of the Institutional Planning Committee, in a standardised format (available from the Institutional Planning Unit as well as on the Rhodes website).
- 3.1.3 Course Coordinators will be notified in writing as soon as approval has been granted. Should approval not be recommended, the proposal will be considered at the next meeting of the Institutional Planning Committee. **Proposers should allow for a minimum of two weeks and a maximum of three months from submission to decision. Reasonable planning on the part of the applicant will eliminate delays.**
- 3.1.4 Permission to offer a short course must be renewed annually i.e. a fresh application must be submitted each year. It should be noted that the evaluation outcome of the previous course is considered when making a judgement on an application for renewal.

3.2 ACCREDITATION OF SHORT COURSES

- 3.2.1 The University is recognised by The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DoHET) as a registered provider of higher education and has been delegated authority by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) to accredit its own short courses. Employers are therefore able to include Rhodes-accredited short courses when claiming a refund of their Skills Development Levy.
- 3.2.2 It should be noted that short courses which are credit-bearing and/or based on unit standards are most in demand and staff are encouraged to align their short course offerings with registered unit standards (see <http://www.saqa.org.za> for further details). Assistance in assigning credit points and/or developing unit standards is available from the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning.
- 3.2.3 Departments are encouraged to align their short courses to existing academic modules where appropriate. Where students register for a whole qualification and have completed one or more modules as short courses at Rhodes during the previous 3 years, exemption/credit may be given by the Registrar and the Dean of the relevant Faculty, provided the short course certificate is returned in exchange for the whole qualification certificate.
- 3.2.4 The higher education band of the National Qualification Framework encompasses levels 5 – 10. While there is no national clarity as yet on whether higher education institutions can offer short courses below level 5, the DoHET discourages institutions from doing so. Where an application is made at Rhodes to offer a short course below level 5, a full

motivation for doing so must be provided, such as community engagement or internal capacity development/skills training.

3.3 *RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COURSE COORDINATOR*

- 3.3.1 The Course Coordinator, who takes final responsibility for the collection of fees, the quality assurance of the course (see 3.8) and the issuing of certificates, must be a staff member of Rhodes University.
- 3.3.2 It is the responsibility of the Course Coordinator to ensure fees are collected. Whilst it is no longer a requirement to have fees paid in full before the commencement of a course, the Course Coordinator will not be paid until all the short course income has been received by the Finance Division.
- 3.3.3 Persons teaching on short courses who are not Rhodes University staff members are not subject to University disciplinary procedures. However, the University reserves the right to withdraw approval for teaching on Rhodes short courses from any person who brings the University into disrepute.
- 3.3.4 Potential students must be informed that the course will not be offered if the agreed minimum number of students is not reached. Should the course be cancelled for this reason, students will be refunded in full.
- 3.4.5 All persons taking Rhodes University courses must be recorded by the Registrar's Division. A list of students registered for a particular course, including identity numbers and addresses, must be provided to the Registrar as soon as possible after commencement of the course, and must be revised once the course has been completed.

3.5 *CERTIFICATION*

- 3.5.1 The University will issue certificates of competence and only in justifiable circumstances, letters of attendance.
- 3.5.2 Certificates issued will normally be based on a standardised format and may only reflect competency. Where approval is granted for recognition of attendance rather than competence, a LETTER of attendance will be provided by the Registrar's Division.
- 3.5.3 Short courses will not be reflected on 'whole qualification' academic transcripts.

3.6 *SHORT COURSE PARTICIPANTS*

- 3.6.1 Participants registered for short courses will not automatically be entitled to use University facilities such as computer laboratories, sports facilities and the Library. Permission to use such facilities must be specifically negotiated as part of the original application.

- 3.6.2 Short course participants are not subject to the University's student disciplinary code. However, the University reserves the right to deregister (deny attendance at RU short courses) any short course participant who brings the University into disrepute.

3.7 FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

- 3.7.1 A 10% fee based on gross income will normally be levied by the University on completion of the course as a contribution to administrative and infrastructural costs and in recognition of the University's national and international reputation. The levy will not normally be applied to short courses offered in the University's interests by Rhodes staff to Rhodes staff and/or students where staff are not paid and/or participants are not charged fees.
- 3.7.2 Income from short courses should be deposited into a special department, division or institute account and payments from this account approved by the Course Coordinator according to the original application. Once approval has been granted, any changes to the original application must be approved by the Institutional Planning Unit.
- 3.7.3 The Finance Division will allocate an account number and also produce a final statement of income and expenditure and distribution of profit within a reasonable time upon completion (normally within two months of completion of the course).
- 3.7.4 As short courses do not qualify for Government subsidy, there is no automatic staff/partner/dependent discount as is the case with full qualifications. Any discounts on course fees will be at the discretion of the Course Coordinator. Rhodes Support Staff wishing to take a short course (whether or not it is offered by Rhodes) should note that application for financial assistance may be made to the Ad Hoc Training fund administered by the Human Resources Division. Academic Staff wishing to take short courses should apply to the Centre for Higher Education, Research, Teaching and Learning if the course is related to teaching, and to the Director of the Research Office if the course is research-related.

3.8 ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF SHORT COURSES

- 3.8.1 Where a certificate of competence is to be awarded, Course Coordinators must ensure that assessment tasks are aligned to the outcomes they are intended to assess. Assistance with ensuring valid assessment is available from the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning.
- 3.8.2 The Course Coordinator is required to ensure that an evaluation of the student experience of the course is carried out, and a summary of the evaluation - as well as proposed improvement plans should the course be offered again - must be provided to the Institutional Planning Unit within one month of the completion of the course. Assistance in designing evaluations is available from the the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning.

3.9 EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

- 3.9.1 Rhodes University does not engage in ‘franchising’ – lending or selling its name and reputation to external organizations where this is done to provide credibility or increase profits for the external partner. However, the University does recognize that mutual benefits can accrue in certain circumstances - as long as aims and responsibilities are clearly defined and QA processes are carefully managed. Partnership arrangements will only be considered where they contribute to the University’s intellectual environment, community engagement efforts, reputation, and/or competitiveness.
- 3.9.2 Where a Rhodes University short course offering involves an external partner, details of the proposed arrangements, including a motivation for entering into an external partnership, must accompany the short course application (see Section D of the short course application).
- 3.9.3 The intellectual property rights for short course curricula offered in the University’s name will reside with the University, except in the case of SAQA-registered Unit Standards, which are considered to be public property.
- 3.9.4 The use of the University’s logo, name and brand may only be authorized by the Rhodes University Course-Coordinator and/or Registrar as appropriate, and may not be used by any external partner without prior permission.

3.10 COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

The Short Course policy, procedures and application form will be distributed to all Heads of Departments at the beginning of each year. A message will be sent to Toplist to this effect and the documents will also be available on the University website.

4. REVIEW PROCEDURE:

- 4.1 The Institutional Planning Committee reconsiders the effectiveness of the Short Course Policy every three years, or as necessary.
- 4.2 The Committee’s recommendation is submitted (via the IPC Minutes) to Senate and Council for consideration
- 4.3 If revisions are recommended and approved, a copy of the revised policy is widely distributed to all Heads of Departments by the Committee Secretariat, and the web version is replaced by the new policy.