

**POLICY ON NAMING AND RENAMING**  
**BUILDINGS, FACILITIES AND ACADEMIC UNITS**  
**AND STRUCTURES**

**1. POLICY PARTICULARS**

DATE OF APPROVAL BY RELEVANT COMMITTEE STRUCTURE: Naming Committee  
12 August 2009

DATE OF APPROVAL BY SENATE: 28 August 2009

DATE OF APPROVAL BY COUNCIL: 3 September 2009

COMMENCEMENT

DATE: 1 January 2010

REVISION HISTORY: First version

REVIEW DATE: Every 3 years, first revision due in 2013

POLICY LEVEL: All University staff and students

RESPONSIBILITY:

- IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING: Registrar's Division
- REVIEW AND REVISION: Naming Committee

REPORTING STRUCTURE: Naming Committee → Senate/Institutional Forum → Council

**2. POLICY STATEMENT**

**2.1 POLICY DECLARATION:**

Rhodes University is committed to naming processes that are in accordance with the University's vision and mission in support of human rights and the rejection of all forms of unfair discrimination, and are compatible with the values of human dignity, non-racialism and non-sexism enshrined in the South African Constitution. Wherever possible, names should promote the redress of past imbalances and a celebration of the cultural identity and geographical location of the University within Africa, South Africa and the Eastern Cape. With regard to existing names the University commits itself to review existing

names, keeping open the possibility of names being changed in accordance with the principles outlined above.

## **2.2 POLICY OBJECTIVES:**

### **2.2.1 with regard to NAMING:**

This policy aims to ensure that:

- 2.2.1.1 All new names are in fundamental accord with the Vision and Mission of Rhodes University, in terms of the University's commitment to the development of shared values embracing basic human and civil rights, acknowledgement of and sensitivity to the problems created by apartheid, rejection of unfair discrimination and support for appropriate corrective measures to redress past imbalances.
- 2.2.1.2 All new names are compatible with the founding values of the South African Constitution, including human dignity, the advancement of equality, human rights and freedoms, non-racialism, non-sexism, accountability, responsiveness and openness.
- 2.2.1.3 Effort is made to choose names emphasising the University's African identity and reflecting its particular location in the Eastern Cape, including the use of names from local and indigenous languages other than English.
- 2.2.1.4 Caution is exercised with regard to the use of the names of living persons.
- 2.2.1.5 Social responsibility and reputation, in accordance with the Vision and Mission and constitutional values, are criteria for consideration with regard to the use of names of donors.
- 2.2.1.6 Names that might be regarded as an advertisement for a particular commercial product or service are generally avoided.
- 2.2.1.7 Effort is made to choose names which are likely to inspire the occupants, users or members of the particular entity to be named. Such names might be those of inspirational renowned historical figures, with due caution to be exercised in these cases, or words denoting significant values associated with human rights or social or cultural upliftment.
- 2.2.1.8 No categories of names are excluded, provided they comply with the principles listed above. For instance, the names of indigenous flora or local geographical landmarks might be used.
- 2.2.1.9 Care is taken to avoid names likely to cause offence or sow division.

2.2.1.10 Members of a new residence are given the option of naming the residence which should not be named until the students concerned have been living in the residence for at least one semester.

## **2.2.2 with regard to RENAMING:**

This policy aims to ensure that:

2.2.2.1 Existing names, particularly of residences and halls, are subject to a process of internal reflection and review, in the light of the objectives concerning naming listed in 2.2.1 above.

2.2.2.2 Renaming processes are determined in the first instance by the primary occupants or users of the entities to be renamed, and not centrally prescribed.

2.2.2.3 Renaming processes are undertaken with sensitivity to the views of different constituencies, particularly those sectors of the University most directly associated with the names in question.

2.2.2.4 Consideration is given to possible renaming in the case of the following categories of names within the residence system:

- i) names that are empty of any obvious meaning or historical or cultural significance;
- ii) duplicated names in cases where names are shared by houses and halls;
- iii) contentious names, especially those associated with colonialism, segregation and apartheid.

## **3. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

### **3.1 THE ACTIONS AND PROCESSES BY WHICH THE OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY WILL BE ACHIEVED:**

The Naming Committee, constituted as a joint committee of Senate and Council, with representation from all sectors of the University community, is tasked with policy implementation.

#### **3.1.1 Initiating a proposal**

Proposals to name or rename buildings, facilities, units or structures within the University should emanate from bodies within the University (such as Senate, Council, the SRC, NTESU, NEHAWU, the Old Rhodian Union, the Board of Residences, residence committees, faculties or departments). The Naming Committee will not normally consider a proposal from an individual which has not gone through any of these bodies.

The body initiating a proposal should normally have a close connection with the entity that is to be named or renamed, although other bodies are not precluded from making proposals. For instance, the appropriate body to initiate a proposal for a residence would be the house committee of that residence, which would in turn pass the proposal to the Board of Residences. In the case of departmental chairs, units, academic buildings, lecture theatres, or seminar rooms, the proposal should go from the department concerned to the appropriate faculty.

When proposals arise directly from a donation or benefaction the most appropriate body to initiate the process would be either the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, or the Communications and Development Division.

The intention to name / rename should be circulated via Toplist at least two weeks prior to a Naming Committee meeting. Those proposing the name / renaming would be responsible for ensuring that the application was distributed as broadly as possible ensuring a wider consultation process.

### 3.1.2 Functioning of the Naming Committee

The main responsibilities of the Naming Committee are as follows:

- 3.1.2.1 To initiate necessary processes for the naming of new buildings, facilities, academic units and structures and the renaming of existing buildings, facilities, academic units and structures.
- 3.1.2.2 To receive and consider proposals for the naming or renaming of buildings, facilities, academic units and structures; if necessary, to refer proposals back to the proposer for reconsideration; and to make recommendations to the Institutional Forum, Senate and Council.
- 3.1.2.3 To strive for consensus among its members in making recommendations, with sensitivity to opinion within the broader University community.
- 3.1.2.4 To maintain a reference list of potential names that accord with the principles of the Naming Policy and to invite people to suggest such names to the Committee.

### 3.2 **REVIEW PROCEDURE:**

- 3.2.1 The Naming Committee shall review the policy every three years.
- 3.2.2 Any proposed changes to the policy shall be referred to Senate and Council for approval.