

Approved

Approvals by Senate:

30 October 2018
27 May 2020
26 May 2021
29 April 2022
26 May 2022
24 May 2023
28 February 2024

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Senate Committee for Academic Standards (SCAS)

1 Establishment

The Senate Committee for Academic Standards (SCAS) is a standing committee of the NWU Senate established in terms of paragraph 19(1) of the Statute of the North-West University.

The general function of Senate is to regulate all learning, teaching, research and academic support functions (paragraph 14(1)(a)) of the NWU Statute of the North-West University.

2 Purpose of the committee

SCAS is established for the purpose of considering matters related to the compliance, quality, relevance and responsiveness of the NWU formal academic offering and continuing education courses, and to make recommendations to Senate in this regard.

3 Responsibilities of the committee

The Committee considers matters related to the following:

3.1 Strategic matters impacting the formal and non-formal academic offering, including, but not limited to

- Alignment of qualifications, academic programmes and continuing education offerings with external and internal compliance requirements;
- Ensuring that the NWU PQM and CEd portfolio remain relevant, responsive to internal and external needs, and aligned to the NWU strategic intent and required market direction;
- Monitoring the implementation of regulatory requirements in all matters related to the formal and non-formal academic offering;
- Identifying and mitigating risks related to non-compliance of any matter related to the formal and non-formal academic offering of the NWU.

3.2 Matters related to the quality assurance of the formal and non-formal academic offering, including, but not limited to

Considering and recommending:

- amendments to existing formal academic offerings and continuing education courses within the scope of the internal and external regulatory framework;
- a viability/sustainability submission for a new qualification or academic programme or as required;
- a new qualification submission within the scope of the internal and external regulatory framework;

- a new academic programme submission within the scope of the internal and external regulatory framework;
- new modes of provision of an existing formal academic offering;
- the offering of an existing formal academic offering to another campus of the NWU;
- either the renewal of a continuing education offering, or a new continuing education offering.

3.3 Matters related to the timeous annual finalisation of yearbooks

Any and all ad hoc items deemed to be of importance for the quality assurance of the formal and non-formal academic offering of the NWU.

4 Authority

The SCAS, as a standing committee of the Senate, considers all matters related to the compliance, quality, relevance and responsiveness of the NWU formal and non-formal academic offering and recommends its decisions to Senate for approval.

5 Membership

5.1 Composition

SCAS comprises of the following *ex officio* members:

	Chairperson
1.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning
	Standing members <i>ex officio</i> (part of approval workflow in SCAS system)
2.	Relevant School Directors or Deputy School Directors or a Representative responsible for a SCAS submission (varies from meeting to meeting), as well as the Director: Continuing Education
3.	Deputy Deans Teaching and Learning and, where applicable, Deputy Deans Research and Innovation and Chairs of Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees
4.	Centre for Teaching and Learning - Director: Faculty TL Support and, where applicable, Special Projects and Research or a delegated functionary
5.	Director: Qualification and Academic Programme Planning or Manager External Regulation
6.	Manager: Student Administrative Systems or a delegated functionary
7.	Manager: Strategic Intelligence or a delegated functionary
8.	Director: Quality Enhancement or a delegated functionary
9.	Director: Unit for Distance Learning or a delegated functionary
	In Attendance at SCAS meetings
10.	Yearbook Specialist: Office of the Registrar
11.	Chief Director: Library and Information Services or a delegated functionary
12.	Director: Information Technology or a delegated functionary
13.	Director: Financial Planning or a delegated functionary
14.	Director: Facilities or a delegated functionary
15.	Director: Student recruitment and marketing or a delegated functionary
16.	Senior Faculty Administrator(s) (Student Academic Lifecycle Administration)
17.	Quality and Academic Programme Planning (Q&APP) specialists
18.	Continuing Education Officer or a delegated functionary
19.	Executive Advisory: Academic Planning and Special Projects
20.	Timetable Section (within SALA)

5.2 Appointment of Chairperson and acting Chairperson

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning is the Chairperson of the SCAS.

In the absence of the Chair, the Chairperson will appoint an acting chairperson.

5.3 Voting rights of members

All standing members have voting rights. Members in attendance, observers and visitors at SCAS meetings will not have voting rights.

5.4 Secretariat

Secretariat services are provided by the Corporate and Information Governance Services.

6. Meeting arrangements

6.1 The Chairperson convenes the meetings and determines the business thereof.

6.2 The administration of SCAS meetings is dealt with in the following way:

Frequency	SCAS meets at least four times annually, meetings are scheduled to report to Senate meetings where academic processes allow for it.
Extraordinary meetings	An extraordinary meeting may be called when deemed to be necessary by the Chairperson, indicating the reason and purpose for the extraordinary, which must be indicated in the notice of the meeting.
Quorum	The quorum of the meeting will be half (50%) plus one of all the voting (standing) members, excluding vacant positions.
Electronic appointments	All the meetings are electronically scheduled at the end of a year for the following year (members including their personal assistants).
Notice	<p>At least 21 days before the meeting date, the Secretariat electronically notifies of the time and place where the meeting is to be held.</p> <p>The matters arising will be enclosed with the notice, and members are requested to provide feedback by the closing date of the agenda.</p> <p>The notice will also include the closing date of the addendum.</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting will be enclosed and members are requested to provide the Secretariat with input by the closing date for the agenda. Should no response be received by this time, it will be assumed that the members agree with the record.</p> <p>At least 2 days before an extraordinary meeting, the Secretariat electronically notifies, provides the reason for an extraordinary meeting, as well as the time and venue where the extraordinary meeting is to be held.</p>
Agenda	<p>At least 7 days prior to the meeting, the Secretariat provides the complete agenda pack electronically to all members.</p> <p>At least three days prior to the meeting, the Secretariat provides the complete addendum pack electronically to all members.</p>
Attendance register	<p>An attendance register will be circulated by the Secretariat at the beginning of each meeting if the meeting is an in-person meeting.</p> <p>In the event of a hybrid meeting, an attendance register is kept by the Secretariat.</p> <p>Every member present must sign the attendance register. The attendance register is proof of attendance for purposes of minuting and payment of honorariums if applicable.</p>
Confirmation of Minutes	<p>An ordinary meeting, after being constituted and opened, commences with reading and confirmation (by means of the chairperson signing) of the minutes of the previous meeting(s).</p> <p>Any objection to the minutes is raised and disposed of before the minutes are confirmed. The minutes may be regarded as read if a copy of the draft minutes was provided to members prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Minutes will be a true reflection of the previous meeting, and will contain all views expressed under the heading "noted". Decisions made by the committee will reflect under the heading "resolved".</p>
Decision-making process	<p>Matters are decided by means of general consensus. The Chairperson might however decide when a decision should be taken by means of a voting procedure.</p> <p>The number of votes in favour of or against any proposal is not recorded in the minutes, unless the Chairperson so decides.</p> <p>The Chairperson has an ordinary vote, but must in addition exercise a casting vote in the event of an equality of votes on any matter.</p> <p>The Chairperson may decide that voting must be by secret ballot, provided that voting for persons must always be by secret ballot.</p>
Revoking of a resolution	The revoking of any resolution entails a formal process by means of which a member of the SCAS is to table a formal written request for a rescission, motivating

	the reason for the review of the resolution in question, as well as providing a suggestion for a resolution.
Conflict of Interest	<p>A member of the SCAS may not take part in the discussion of or vote on any matter in which the member has a direct financial or other interest, unless a member with a possible conflicting situation put the matter to the members of the SCAS for discussion and advice on the manner in which the situation is to be managed in accordance with the Policy and Rules on Conflict of Interest and of Declarations of Interest and of Gifts (“the Policy and Rules”).</p> <p>In accordance with the Policy and Rules, where the value of a gift or other benefit received from an external source exceeds the amount of R500, receipt thereof must be declared and captured in a register kept by the relevant line manager or secretariat of the structure concerned.</p>
Point of Order	<p>A point or order, clarification or information may be raised against any member, in which instance the Chairperson is obliged to consider the point of order and in which regard the ruling of the Chairperson is considered to be binding and cannot be challenged.</p> <p>Should the above point of order, clarification or information be immediately challenged by a member, the ruling is put to the meeting for determination – without it being discussed, and the decision of the meeting is final.</p>
Disrespectful / Disorderly conduct	<p>Anyone attending a meeting who, after having been requested to refrain from disrespectful or disorderly conduct, continues to disobey a ruling from the Chairperson, must be requested to leave the meeting.</p> <p>If that person does not leave the meeting immediately, such a person could be removed from the meeting with the assistance of Protection Services.</p>
Apology	<p>An apology will be noted when a member electronically submits it to the Secretariat and/or the Chairperson, at least one day prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Members absent from the meeting without above mentioned apology are noted as “without apology”.</p> <p>The views of a member who is unable to attend a meeting may be submitted in writing but may not count as a vote of such member.</p> <p>A SCAS member who is not in a position to attend a SCAS meeting, must obtain the leave of the Chairperson to delegate a functionary within the relevant portfolio to attend the meeting on behalf of the said SCAS member and must inform the registrar and the secretariat in writing of (i) the permission obtained from the Chairperson and (ii) the nature of delegation provided to the person attending the meeting on behalf of such a SCAS member.</p>
Recording of meeting	<p>The meetings of this committee are recorded for minute purpose.</p> <p>The audio file is regarded as a resource tool for the secretariat and is saved for minuting/archival/historical purposes but does not constitute the record of the meeting once the minutes have been signed.</p>
Round-Robin Process	<p>The Chairperson must provide permission for any matters regarded as urgent and that would need to be considered between scheduled meetings. The relevant SCAS member must motivate the urgency of such matters to the Chairperson and upon permission for the administering of a round-robin process, the Secretariat will administer the process. At least two thirds of the members have to electronically confirm their involvement in the process by giving feedback, approval or non-approval.</p> <p>When a majority of members reaches agreement it is taken as a resolution. The secretariat shall continue submitting the request for round-robin until response had been received from at least two-thirds of the members.</p> <p>Such resolution is equivalent to a resolution of the SCAS and must be recorded in the minutes of the following meeting.</p>
Matters arising	<p>Within five days after the meeting a schedule of matters is electronically provided to members.</p>
Resources and Budget	<p>Members are responsible for their own travelling cost and accommodation.</p> <p>A central budget regarding the matters of this committee is managed within the Qualifications and Academic Programme Planning Unit.</p>

Records management	All records of the SCAS meetings are kept by the Secretariat in accordance with the NWU Records, Archives and Museums Management Policy. SCAS records are archived in the Archives of the NWU in soft copy. Records are saved according to the NWU File plan with reference number 2.2.2
Access to records of the committee	Committee members have automatic access to all records of the SCAS. All other interested parties must complete a request form in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, which will be assessed in terms of the prescriptions contained in the Act. SCAS records are regarded as confidential.

7. Reporting

The SCAS reports to the Senate.

8. Guiding documents

The following documents guide the operations of this Committee and any subsequently approved national policy or communique as published in the Government Gazette or NWU policies as approved by Senate or the University Management Committee and ratified by Council:

National regulatory framework	Authority
Articulation Policy for the Post-School Education and Training System of South Africa	Department of Higher Education and Training (Government Gazette 40545, 13 January 2017)
Criteria for Programme Accreditation	Council on Higher Education, Higher Education Quality Committee, Sept 2004, revised June 2012
Department of Higher Education and Training's Position on online programme and course offerings	Department of Higher Education and Training, 22 March 2017
Distance Higher Education Programmes in a Digital Era: Good Practice Guide	Council on Higher Education, 2014
Higher Education Act (101/1997) and subsequent Amendments to the Act	Department of Higher Education and Training (Government Gazette 18515, 19 December 1997)
Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework	Department of Higher Education and Training (Government Gazette 38116, 17 October 2014)
Learning to Teach in Higher Education in South Africa	Council on Higher Education, Higher Education Monitor 14, 2017
Level Descriptors for the South African national Qualifications Framework	South African Qualifications Authority (Government Gazette 35548, 27 July 2012)
Minimum Admission Requirements for Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree Programmes requiring a NSC/V	Department of Higher Education and Training (Government Gazette 32743, November 2013)
National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications and Part-Qualifications and Professional Designations in South Africa	South African Qualifications Authority (Government Gazette 38246, 28 November 2014)
National Qualifications Framework Act (67 of 2008)	Department of Higher Education and Training (Government Gazette 32233, 22 May 2009)
Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part Qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework	South African Qualifications Authority, March 2013
Policy for the provision of distance education in South African universities	Department of Higher Education and Training (Government Gazette 37811, 7 July 2014)
Policies on the Recognition of Prior Learning, Credit Accumulation and Transfer, and Assessment in higher education	Council on Higher Education, August 2016

National regulatory framework	Authority
Revised Policy on the minimum requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications	Department of Higher Education and Training (Government Gazette 38487, February 2015)
Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System	Department of Higher Education and Training, March 2018
White Paper for Post-School Education and Training	Department of Higher Education and Training, 16 January 2014
Work-integrated Learning Good Practice Guide	Council on Higher Education, 2011
Classification of Educational Subject Matter	Department of Basic Education, 1982

Institutional regulatory framework	Status	Authority	Date
General Academic Rules	Approved	Council	21 September 2017 with revisions in March 2020 and 16 November 2023
Language Policy	Approved	Council	23 June 2022
Library and Information Services Policy	Approved	Council	28 March 2018
Policy on Academic Integrity	Approved	Council	27 September 2018, reviewed on 17 June 2021
Policy on the Management of Intellectual Property at the NWU	Approved	Council	9 September 2021
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy	Approved	Council	16 March 2023
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Rules	Approved	Senate	1 March 2023
Quality Policy	Approved	Council	9 September 2021
Policy on Continuing Education	Approved	Council	22 November 2018

The terms of reference were approved by Senate on 30 October 2018 and 27 May 2020.

The revised terms of reference were approved by Senate on 26 May 2021.

The revised terms of reference were submitted to SCAS on 29 April 2022.

The revised terms of reference were approved by Senate on 26 May 2022.

The revised terms of reference were approved by Senate on 24 May 2023.

The revised terms of reference were approved by Senate on 28 February 2024.