

CALL FOR RESEARCH ON CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION

Universities South Africa (USAf), through its Teaching and Learning Strategy Group (TLSG), and the Council on Higher Education (CHE), through its RELATE project (and as part of its growing work and mandate on higher education transformation monitoring and oversight), wish to collaborate on a research project that will explore factors related to conceptions of curriculum transformation. The research is intended to create a baseline of the current status and understanding of curriculum transformation in public universities, drawing from information and data (both quantitative and qualitative) that has been collected through the process of South African Higher Education institutional audits that are currently underway.

This research aims to employ inductive qualitative approaches, using existing data from the Self-Evaluation Reports (SERs) received from the 26 public universities during the 2021-2023 institutional audits cycle conducted by the CHE. The purpose of the research is to mine the institutional SERs to seek answers to the research questions listed below. The SER data mining may be followed by interviews with institutions to enable a deeper understanding of the current state of curriculum transformation in the public HE sector in South Africa, and some of the issues that institutions encounter.

Specific questions to be explored may include:

- What concepts and terms are related to curriculum transformation in the institutional reflections on learning and teaching? How are they utilised, interpreted and understood?
- What do institutions understand by the concept 'curriculum transformation' and related concepts that either directly or circuitously align to the concept?
- What are the trends helping shape curriculum transformation at Universities? Why? What are the shifts and changes evident? Why?
- Is decoloniality synonymous with curriculum transformation? What are the synergies/divergences? What may be their respective strengths and weaknesses for the academic and transformation project? Why should these questions matter to HE institutions?
- What are the elements of curriculum transformation aligned to the future of the university and its citizens (e.g. current trends, applications and relevance for the business of HE)?
- How are current processes, such as programme design, development and review used to drive curriculum transformation?
- What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats/challenges institutions are encountering in driving curriculum transformation?
- What are the stumbling blocks that impede curriculum transformation at universities (including interventions in respect of the 'hidden curriculum')?
- What good practice (and concrete examples) are currently self-reported by institutions on curriculum transformation?
- What recommendations can this baseline report make to a substantive concept note on curriculum transformation and how can this inform the activities of the USAf TLSG and of the CHE as it takes the transformation monitoring and oversight mandate forward?

The Council on Higher Education is the Quality Council for Higher Education in South Africa

Members: Ms Vuyo Memani-Sedile (Chairperson), Prof Lesley Le Grange, Prof Angina Parekh, Prof Yusef Waghid, Adv. Nomazotsho Memani, Dr Nita Lawton-Misra, Prof Daniel van der Nest, Ms Koketjo Rebecca Magongoa, Dr Tholsie Naidoo, Adv. Matefo Majodina, Mr Mphedziseni Muluvhahotho, Dr Bheka Zulu, Dr Grant Son and Ms Dorina Ionescu

Ex-officio members: Mr Sagren Govender (Department of Labour), Mr Vijayen Naidoo (CEO: QCTO), Dr Marcia Socikwa (DDG: DHET), Dr Mafu Rakometsi (CEO: Umalusi), Ms Nadia Starr (CEO: SAQA), Dr Fulufhelo V. Nelwamondo (CEO: NRF); Dr M Simelane (DBE), Mr Imraan Patel (DSI) and Dr W Green (CEO: CHE)

Specifications

Interested researchers should submit a research proposal, no more than five pages, that succinctly describes the research topic, background, problem statement, research questions, methodology, duration of the study, timelines, plans, and budget (not exceeding R150 000) succinctly. A proposed template is attached.

If approved, the study should be conducted in no more than 5 months.

Once a research proposal has been approved, a meeting will be held between the research team and the CHE/USAf team to ensure that the focus and alignment of the research is clear for all parties. The research tools should be available at such a meeting.

The research proposal should be submitted to Mr Matimu Collins Baloyi (email Baloyi.M@che.ac.za) by 30 June 2023.

Questions regarding this call may be directed to Dr Britta Zawada (Zawada.B@che.ac.za).



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