



Quality Enhancement Project Phase 2: The Curriculum Institutional Submission

1. Introduction

1.1. General Introduction

The University of Mpumalanga (UMP) was established in 2013¹ as one of three new post-apartheid universities in South Africa and embodies all the ideals and aspirations of an inclusive, non-racial, non-sexist, transformed and democratic society. In terms of its establishment charter, UMP is a Comprehensive University and will develop a Programme Qualification Mix that balances general formative and professionally oriented education normally associated with traditional universities, with career and technologically oriented teaching and learning programmes normally associated with universities of technology. In addition the scholarship and research activities at UMP will include discipline based basic research as well as multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary applied research and technological innovation.

The University was established both as a new university, as well as through the incorporation of the former Lowveld College of Agriculture (LCA) and by including the former Ndebele Teacher Education College. UMP thus comprises the peri-urban main campus of the former LCA and its associated teaching farm in Mbombela, and the rural campus of the former Ndebele College of Education located in the settlement of Siyabuswa. As part of the incorporation of the LCA, UMP continues to offer the Diploma in Agriculture in Plant Production that was previously offered by the LCA, and UMP assumed full responsibility for the academic programmes and other activities at the Siyabuswa Campus in January 2017.

1.2. Development of the founding Strategic Plan for UMP

In 2015 the University Council approved the Founding Strategic Plan (UMP 2022²). This document guides and directs all university activities and sets clear targets and goals in all areas of university function.

¹ Government Notice (No 36772) of 22 August 2013

² UMP 2022: A Seven-Year Strategic Plan for the University of Mpumalanga

The Strategic Plan includes our Vision³ and Mission⁴, our values and graduate attributes, and our educational philosophy.

UMP 2022 incorporates eight strategic areas including: Teaching and Learning where the strategic priority is:

To establish a set of high quality, relevant and responsive academic programmes which deliver the University's graduate attributes.

And the strategic indicator is that:

In 2022, UMP will offer a context relevant PQM that includes undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications from diploma through to doctoral degrees, presented using diverse modes of delivery. Many qualifications include experiential learning and exposure to trans-disciplinary thinking. A well-resourced Academic Development Unit, and a comprehensive suite of support programmes support academic staff who teach in world-class facilities using modern and appropriate pedagogies. Students are supported by a comprehensive mentorship programme that facilitates the move from school to university and supports student access with success. Teaching and learning is embedded in all that we do and students thrive in a rich living and learning environment. Student success, by all measures, is above the national average and benchmarks.

A second strategic area is Quality Student Experience where the strategic priority is:

To provide a student centred support system for the holistic development of students.

And the strategic indicator is that:

Students of the University of Mpumalanga will, by 2022, have access to services that are centred on the holistic development of each and every student. By 2022, UMP alumni will be independent and socially relevant graduates that contribute meaningfully to society in their respective spaces.

These two strategic areas are selected and mentioned here since they relate directly to the holistic development of our students and therefore to the matter of the curriculum in its broadest sense.

³ The Vision of UMP is to be: An African University leading in creating opportunities for sustainable development through innovation.

⁴ The Mission is: To offer high quality educational and training opportunities that foster the holistic development of students through teaching and learning, research and scholarship, and engagement, in collaboration with strategic partners.

1.3. Development of the founding academic programmes at UMP

To fully appreciate the journey that the University has embarked upon in relation to the development of the curriculum and quality enhancement, it is necessary to briefly review the implementation of our first three qualifications. In 2014, UMP enrolled its first students into a Bachelor of Education in Foundation Phase Teaching at Siyabuswa; into a Diploma in Hospitality Management at the Mpumalanga Regional Training Trust (MRTT) facility at KaNyamazane, and a Bachelor of Agriculture in Agricultural Extension and Rural Resource Management on the Mbombela Campus. The curriculum of the Bachelor of Education at the Siyabuswa Campus was shared with the University of Johannesburg (UJ); was taught by academic staff employed by UJ; and the quality assurance procedures that were used, were those of UJ. The Diploma in Hospitality Management was developed in collaboration with UJ but was taught by staff appointed and employed by UMP. Quality assurance including the external moderation of all assessment was provided by UJ. The Bachelor of Agriculture in Agricultural Extension and Rural Resource Management was developed in collaboration with the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). In 2014, the first academic year of this degree included a combination of modules from the Diploma in Agriculture, taught by academic staff employed by the LCA, and new modules in agricultural extension taught by a staff member employed by UMP under the guidance of staff from UKZN. Quality assurance was provided by the LCA, UMP and UKZN.

In summary our founding academic programmes were developed in conjunction with other established universities and to a greater or lesser extent UMP relied on the support of those universities for teaching and learning, and quality assurance.

1.4. The Teaching and Learning Policy framework at UMP

At its inception, the University was provided with a library of policies and process documents by the Interim Management Committee. However this library did not include policies for teaching and learning and hence a priority for 2015 and 2016 was for the University to develop and implement its own policies, procedures and processes.

From 2015 to date, the University has developed and implemented a range of policies in Teaching & Learning and these are listed below:

Teaching & Learning Policy Framework at UMP;

Teaching & Learning Policy;

Assessment and Moderation of Student Learning Policy;

Policy on the Evaluation of Teaching and the Evaluation of Modules;

Policy for E-Learning;

Policy on Programme Advisory Boards;
Admissions Policy;
Policy on the Promotion of Academic Integrity;
Work Integrated Learning Policy;
Policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT);
Guidelines for the Management of Academic Workloads at the University of Mpumalanga;
Policy for the Development of New Academic Programmes;
Policy for the Review of Academic Programmes.

1.5. The Research Framework at UMP

In addition, the University has developed a set of research policies and these are included here since the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning is a focus area for development at UMP, and the University places high priority on integrating teaching and learning with research and engagement:

Master's and Doctoral Degrees Policy;
Code of Conduct for Researchers;
Policy on Research Ethics;
Policy on Research Sabbatical;
Policy on Postdoctoral Fellowships;
UMP Research Support Policy;
Policy on Conference Attendance.

1.6. University General Rules and Regulations

During 2015, the University developed its General Rules and Regulations⁵ which together with the policies provide the required institutional and governance framework that underpins quality in the academic project and curriculum development and review at UMP.

2. Curriculum Renewal and Transformation

Includes advancing the purpose of higher education spelt out in policy documents, addressing transformation imperatives, ensuring local relevance and

⁵ UMP Almanac and General Rules.

*global awareness and developing graduates with attributes that are personally, professionally and socially valuable.*⁶

2.1. The Curriculum at UMP

The University accepts the three facets of the curriculum as identified by the Council on Higher Education⁷, being curriculum structure, curriculum content and curriculum implementation, and expands the understanding of curriculum content to include all of the co-curricular activities that contribute to the holistic development of a student.

2.2. Curriculum Renewal, Transformation and Development at UMP

The brief history of the founding academic programmes (section 1.3) is important in terms of understanding the University focus on curriculum renewal and transformation. The curricula of the founding programmes and, to a lesser extent, the curricula of programmes that UMP has launched in 2015 and 2016, were either taken from the partner institution, or adapted slightly from that of the partner institution, and as such, the curricula were not informed by the Strategic Plan (UMP 2022). In addition, the curriculum of the Diploma in Agriculture is unchanged from that offered at the LCA. For this, and other reasons, there is a need for the University to now focus on curriculum renewal and transformation, and this forms an important part of the University Capacity Development Plan (UCDP). However, in addition to renewal and transformation, as a new university that is introducing new qualifications each year the focus must equally be on ensuring that the curricula of new qualifications are developed with a structure that is flexible; with content that is relevant, decolonised and in which the values and graduate attributes are embedded, and which prepare graduates for the work place; and that is delivered using modes of implementation that promote access with success. It is for this reason that we add the word Development to the title provided by the CHE for this section (Curriculum Renewal, Transformation and Development at UMP).

In the sections that follow the three facets of the curriculum are briefly discussed.

2.3. The Academic Curriculum Structure

Includes the components of the curriculum with credits values, time frames, rules and regulations, and how these may serve as barriers to, or may promote completion and success. It also includes the notion of the flexible curriculum.

⁶ Quality Enhancement Project Phase 2 Focus Area and Institutional Submission Specifications. CHE February 2017.

⁷ Quality Enhancement Project Phase 2 Focus Area and Institutional Submission Specifications. CHE February 2017.

2.3.1. Articulation

An important aspect of curriculum structure is the extent to which it allows for articulation between qualifications and supports student success. The UMP policy on RPL and CAT addresses this issue and speaks of promoting articulation through credit accumulation and transfer by design. This requires that when new qualifications are designed and developed, or existing qualifications are renewed, articulation is taken into account. For example the first year of qualifications in cognate disciplines such as hospitality and tourism, or animal and plant production share modules in common so that articulation from one diploma to the other is facilitated. Similarly, the first year of cognate degrees such as the BSc, BSc (Agriculture) and BSc (Environmental Sciences) are designed and developed with common or shared modules so as to support articulation.

The University General Rules and policies are aligned and are seen as being central to curriculum structure. As at most other universities, the General Rules and Regulations include those that apply to admission, evaluation and importantly, progression from one academic year to the next. Together, the UMP General Rules, the Policy on RPL and CAT, and the Admissions Policy establish a governance framework to support articulation and student access with success.

2.3.2. Flexible curricula

In December 2014 the CHE released a report⁸ in which it recommended that the Department of Higher Education and Training adopts the proposal for a flexible and extended curriculum and that such curriculum reform should apply to all public and private HEIs. The report concludes as follows:

The introduction of a flexible and extended curriculum structure to narrow the articulation gap is both educationally sound and affordable. It is a necessary condition for maximising the benefits that complementary interventions, such as improving the quality of teaching and learning, improving the schooling system, increasing financial aid and utilising more weeks in the academic year might bring.

At UMP, a proposal on a flexible undergraduate curriculum was accepted in 2017, and this will be further developed and implemented, where appropriate, in the next three years. The value of the flexible curriculum is seen in its capacity to support students by extending the first academic year over two years and thereby increasing the likelihood of successful

⁸ (Advice to the Minister of Higher Education and Training on the Reform of the Undergraduate Curriculum in Higher Education. CHE December 2014)

completion in the minimum time + one year rather than the possibility or likelihood of not completing at all.

Extended programmes are often discussed as one aspect of the flexible curriculum. At present the University does not have extended programmes however, we will introduce such programmes in the future. The probable approach of the University will be to introduce extended programmes that will serve a suite of first degrees and, for example, an extended BSc would serve the BSc (Agriculture), the BSc (general) and the BSc (Environmental Science).

2.4. The Academic Curriculum Content

In its narrowest sense, this refers to what is explicitly and implicitly included in the curriculum. However, in the broader understanding of the curriculum, where co-curricular activities are important in the holistic development of a student, attention must be paid not just to the module curriculum, but also to the provision of the social, cultural, sporting and leadership opportunities. (The co-curricular opportunities are dealt with in section 2.6.)

For the academic programmes, the necessary policy framework is in place (section 1.4) and the policies are being implemented.

The processes of curriculum design and development, review and renewal will consider the following points.

2.4.1. The curriculum and the University Strategic Plan.

A focus for curriculum content is on ensuring that our curricula reflect the University vision and mission, values and graduate attributes. To this end, the first workshop for academic staff was held in 2017 and further workshops on how to embed the key elements of UMP 2022 in the curriculum will be held in 2018 and 2019.

In the Strategic Plan (UMP 2022), the University identifies eight values being:

- Excellence;
- Integrity;
- Diversity;
- Collaboration;
- Adaptability;
- Relevance;
- Inspiration.

And six sets of graduate attributes. Our graduates will be (or have):

Resourceful, responsive and responsible;
Sound discipline knowledge;
Innovative and entrepreneurial;
Confident and effective communicators;
Ethically and socially aware change agents;
Adaptable.

These values and graduate attributes, together with the vision and mission statements, must find expression in our academic curricula and the co-curricular opportunities, and hence this is one focus area for the renewal, transformation and development of our curricula.

The vision of UMP is to be an African University and this will be reflected in what we teach and how we teach it, in whose knowledge is given priority, and from where our examples are taken, and in other ways. The current drive to decolonise the curriculum will not be discussed further, but as long as the University seeks to align its curricula with the vision, then a process of decolonisation will occur.

2.4.2. The curriculum as a tool for transformation

Here the focus is on content and methods of implementation that are transformative. For example, the incorporation of engagement into teaching and learning is discussed below (2.4.4) and is one approach the University will use to promote transformation. We summarise below some of the strategies we will use and some of which we have already been using to deploy curriculum as a tool for transformation:

Democratisation of the classroom where students are given a greater voice in the curriculum;
Ensuring that students experience and develop democratic citizenship through curriculum negotiation;
Curriculum integration;
Critical pedagogy;
The Method of “*Currere*” which focuses on educational experiences.

2.4.3. The curriculum and employability

The University is committed to producing graduates who are employable, through the knowledge they have acquired, the skills they have developed, the values they uphold and the attitudes they embrace. As such, an important focus of curriculum development, review and renewal is to embed these values and attitudes into our contents and methods of teaching to ensure that they collectively increase the chances of employability for our

graduates. UMP's commitment to inculcate an entrepreneurial spirit in its students is borne out by the incorporation of management modules in the form of an introductory programme wherever the opportunity for entrepreneurship is evident. Our students have to understand that as graduates who have had the rare opportunity of participating in higher education, they need to plough back the gains of their education into the communities which supported them, and one way of doing this is to create employment opportunities for others.

2.4.4. The Curriculum and engagement

At UMP, engagement is understood as a scholarly activity in which the knowledge and skills of staff and students is used to support one or more communities which may include, but are not limited to, professional communities, learned societies and rural communities. The University follows the asset approach rather than the deficit approach to engagement and believes that engagement activities must recognise the principle of mutual respect between the parties (university and the community) involved and that knowledge must flow in both directions. In the context of the academic curriculum, incorporation of engagement will be systemic and principled, and will ensure constructive alignment between curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment. We believe this will lead to immediate benefits through increased relevance of our programmes, and also support the development of the values we espouse and the graduate attributes we seek to inculcate in our students.

Whilst experiential learning through work-integrated learning (WIL) is one institutionalised approach or version of engagement, engagement extends further than just WIL, and involves a systemic and well-thought through plan for working with communities to educate but also learn from them and with them with a view to improving the quality of life. This is achieved through projects, tasks and short assignments which sometimes involve group work for *all* students in our programmes whether or not they have a WIL component, and this will happen throughout the year as a critical element in all our learning, teaching and assessment activities, all of which are informed by curriculum.

2.4.5. The curriculum and research

Research, whether it is initially only secondary research and in later undergraduate years, primary research, is a particularly powerful pedagogical tool for the development of exit level outcomes and indeed cross cutting skills and knowledge. Curriculum review, renewal and development will seek ways in which research can be included into the undergraduate curriculum.

2.4.6. The curriculum as an integrated whole

In the preceding sections on transformation, employability, engagement and research these focus areas have been dealt with separately for the sake of clarity. However, the goal will always be to integrate them so that from the outset, students see the interrelationships between teaching and learning, engagement and research and how these can be transformative and how these activities and the knowledge and skills acquired can increase employability. For example, an engagement activity with a rural community that is linked to and supports module content should also be the basis for research. Such engaged teaching and learning, and engaged research is transformative for both the students and the community with which the work is done. University values of collaboration and relevance and several of the graduate attributes are brought to life in these kinds of interaction.

2.4.7. Staff development for curriculum renewal

A crucial element of curriculum renewal, transformation and development is staff development. This is undertaken so that our academic staff understand the need for renewal and transformation, and are able to undertake the related activities. The University is not yet in a position where curriculum development, review and renewal can be given to a support division, as at some more established universities, and even when this time has come, the said division's role will, in the main, be an oversight role, as at UMP we believe curriculum is everybody's business. To this end, the Academic Support Division will continue to provide training and support to academic staff. We see the curriculum renewal and transformation initiative as a learning opportunity for all at UMP, which will fit seamlessly with other staff development plans and activities of the institution. It is for this reason that staff development will continue to be a focus in 2018 and 2019, and curriculum renewal and transformation will be a permanent feature in the agenda of workshops, seminars and communities of practice planned for this period, amongst many other issues which will be discussed and debated.

2.5. Academic Curriculum Implementation

Here, the focus is on the way in which the students are exposed to, or interact with the curriculum content. It is not limited to pedagogy but includes assessment, provision of resources, the environment in which teaching occurs (in the classroom, laboratory, and the field), and includes workplace-based learning.⁹

⁹ Quality Enhancement Project Phase 2 Focus Area and Institutional Submission Specifications. CHE February 2017.

As with curriculum content, staff development and ongoing professional development is a key component for the successful renewal and transformation of curriculum implementation. In this regard, communities of practice, where new ideas and approaches to teaching & learning are discussed have been established on both campuses and meet regularly. The Academic Staff Development Division offers workshops and seminars in which staff are able to discuss curriculum implementation. The University has identified a set of core academic staff development modules including teaching and learning in higher education, curriculum development, assessment and moderation, and E-Learning and all staff are required to demonstrate their competence in these modules. In the UCDP, the University has set aside funds to develop a digital, smart classroom where new technologies can be piloted.

Workplace-based experiential learning is an important component of our Diploma level qualifications and is included to a lesser extent in some of our Degrees. It is seen as an important contributor to the employability of our graduates, and an approach to teaching and learning that requires particular attention. The teaching and learning that takes place during workplace-based experiential learning occurs outside the normal confines of the university lecture venue or laboratory, and often at some distance from the University. It is for these reasons that particular attention must be paid to ensuring the quality of the students' learning experiences and that the expected learning outcomes are achieved. The University has held workshops and seminars on the use of workplace-based experiential learning and will continue to offer these to our academic staff. In addition, the University is developing a module for students to better prepare them for WIL, and an online module for the workplace-based mentors, to prepare them for their roles.

2.6. Co-Curricular Activities

In line with the broad interpretation of the curriculum, and the central role that co-curricular activities can and should play in the holistic education of the students, the University is incrementally building the range of cultural, sporting, academic and leadership societies, clubs and activities. These include, but are not limited to the following:

Cultural: including choirs and drama groups at each campus;

Sports: five active sports codes on each campus;

Academic: including debating society, Enactus and Public lectures;

Leadership: student leaders and all recipients of the Vice-Chancellor's Scholarship participate in leadership training.

In the educational philosophy the University states that:

*Our academic staff will be reflective and reflexive practitioners who use information communication technologies to improve learning, **which will occur in a diverse range of formal and informal settings.** Development programmes for academic staff and student support programmes will support a broadening of access, with increased levels of student success.*

This point is made explicitly to the students during orientation week and throughout the First Year Experience when students are encouraged to look beyond the classroom and laboratory and to participate in the full range of learning and development opportunities that the University offers. Co-curricular activities are by their nature voluntary and the University will continue to increase the range of activities and encourage students to participate.

The First Year Experience (FYE), which is presently under development, will become an important part of the co-curricular activities and the University will see the incremental introduction of the FYE in 2018 and 2019. The FYE will be compulsory for all first time entering students and will combine aspects of academic skills, psycho-social support, health and wellbeing, and personal development workshops.

2.7. Curriculum renewal, transformation and development: 2018 onwards

Going forwards, UMP has the following plans as part of the UCDP for the renewal and transformation of the curriculum.

2.7.1. Curriculum renewal and transformation

In line with the Policy on Programme Review, Faculties and Schools will develop a schedule of review for each module and for each programme. Priority will be given to those qualifications where the first cohort has completed. This review will be carefully structured to concentrate on the key areas of curriculum structure, curriculum content and curriculum implementation, and the issues discussed in 2.4 and 2.5. The review process will include a self-evaluation report and allow space for the student voice to be heard. Where an Advisory Board is in place, that body will also provide input.

The University has an annual student review of teaching and module content for every module and this information will form part of the self-evaluation report. This information will form the benchmark against which the impact of curriculum renewal can be measured. The University believes strongly in the value of evaluation and in this case, it will be used to establish if an intervention has had the desired effect.

2.7.2. Curriculum development

The development of new curricula, both for modules and for programmes is now fully in the hands of the UMP academic staff. The process, as determined by the University Policy, requires an initial approval of a proposal that is similar to the application to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) for PQM clearance. Once this approval is granted by Senate, a full proposal, with business plan, is developed. This full proposal includes all of the information that is required in the Application to the CHE for programme accreditation. A special focus is placed on the curriculum, and curriculum structure, curriculum content and curriculum implementation are considered. Further, steps are in place to ensure that there is proper alignment between outcomes and level descriptors, and between outcomes and assessment criteria and assessment methods. The full proposal is considered by Senate and if approved, submissions to DHET and the CHE will occur.

2.7.3. Staff development

As indicated in 2.4.7, staff development and capacitation so that academic staff can fully engage with and undertake curriculum review and development is essential and will be ongoing. The Academic Staff Development Division is developing a set of core Academic Staff Development Modules which all staff will have to complete, or demonstrate competence in, within two years of appointment. Communities of Practice will focus on issues of curriculum transformation and curriculum development, including alignment of outcomes with NQF level descriptors, the development of competences and outcomes, and the alignment of outcomes with content and assessment criteria.

2.7.4. A Common Module for UMP.

In 2018, the University will introduce a common module which will be taken by all undergraduate students in their first year. This module, entitled Identity, Heritage and History: Rediscovering Ourselves, will introduce students to some of the formative elements of Mphahlele's Humanist pedagogy¹⁰. The first term draws on Mphahlele's central concept of rediscovery of self, to initiate the process of coming to know ourselves, our identities and our common humanity, as seen through the lens of African knowledge, philosophy and wisdom. The second and third terms examine what global scientific knowledge can tell us about our origins, and uses the province of Mpumalanga as a focus. The final term explores our responsibilities as citizens and deals with issues of human rights and ethics. The common module will serve as a working laboratory in which the University will offer a truly African

¹⁰ Es'kia Mphahlele, 2001. Afrika My Music.

curriculum content that is implemented using the flipped classroom and enhanced learning through technology (ELT).

2.8. Exemplars of successful curriculum renewal and transformation initiatives

As a new university, we look forward to being able to provide numerous examples of successful curriculum renewal and transformation in the future. In the co-curricular arena, the University does have a success story. In 2015, the University appointed an academic staff member who had played a leading role in Enactus at his previous university. In 2016 the University started an Enactus society and launched two small projects. That year the University was not ready to enter the annual competition but the academic staff member took a small group of students to experience the competition. In 2017, we submitted two projects and won multiple awards. Significantly, the students in their personal reflections on what their participation in Enactus had meant to them, spoke of the project based knowledge and skills, and the skills in communication that they had developed; their improved professionalism, and the increased levels of self-confidence and self-worth. For the University this is an excellent example of the value of co-curricular activities and how these sorts of opportunities, in conjunction with the formal academic curriculum, will provide the holistic education that is the University's goal.

3. Diversity and Inclusivity

Includes catering for students with diverse academic needs and abilities and life circumstances, ensuring inclusivity of all students regardless of demographic characteristics, countering bias towards and alienation of, sections of the student population.¹¹

The student body at UMP is relatively homogeneous in terms of demography and in 2017, of 1770 students, 99.5% are African and 98% are South African; 87% are from Mpumalanga and 56% are female. Going forwards, the University expects to see increased demographic diversity amongst the students but this is not the current reality.

In spite of the lack of demographic diversity, there is without doubt diversity in terms of needs and ability, quality of schooling, lived experiences and physical ability, and as a result students bring different knowledge and skills to the lecture hall.

¹¹ Quality Enhancement Project Phase 2 Focus Area and Institutional Submission Specifications. CHE February 2017.

3.1. Supporting diversity in academic needs

It is generally accepted that the lack of support is an influential factor in student's decisions to withdraw from university courses, and conversely the existence of support for students has contributed to their successful completion of degree programmes. Heightened interest and emphasis on student support is an acknowledgement of the fact that there is more to the effective undergraduate experience than instruction, and that this other dimension will not happen without institutional intervention. It is against this backdrop that UMP employs a battery of strategies to address the complex and dynamic nature of student support.

3.1.1. Peer mentors/ Peer Support

A number of studies highlight the importance of peer support networks and student mentors, as opposed to staff mentors. The assumption is that the use of student mentors lowers the affective filter and helps break the barriers which would typically characterize the student staff interface. At UMP, all first time entering students will be allocated a mentor and the mentors will be allocated a staff member who will serve as a guide and mentor to them.

3.1.2. Psycho-social support

Although psycho-social support is not strictly academic support, the link between psycho-social wellbeing and academic performance is well established. The University has a health suite and two qualified counsellors who are available to assist all students on a needs basis. In addition the counselling staff will offer a range of general workshops and other activities in support of student health and wellness.

3.1.3. Academic support

Content-based academic support will be available from the academic staff on a structured as well as on a needs basis. In addition, the University uses a system of tutors who are able to provide additional content based support. For non-content based support including computer and numerical literacy, and academic literacy and English language support, the university has appointed staff (computing 3 staff, numerical literacy 2 staff and academic literacy, 2 staff) who provide this support.

3.1.4. Student progress

The University places great emphasis on access with success and a key aspect in improving success rates is the monitoring of student progress. Although monitoring student success is the responsibility of all academic staff, the university has a Programme Leader in place for

each programme and this person is responsible for coordinating and reporting on student success. At UMP, monitoring of student progress occurs formally and informally, over different time scales. Informal monitoring occurs on a daily basis based on lecture (or other activity) attendance, interest and participation. On a weekly basis monitoring includes attendance at the tutorials and use of consultation times. Formal monitoring is based on formative and summative assessments which provide an opportunity to monitor student performance. All marks are recorded on the information management system (ITS) to which the PL has viewing rights and with this can readily monitor student performance. Where a student is identified as being at risk, additional support is provided as necessary.

3.1.5. Enhanced Learning through Technology (ELT)

Diversity in learning needs and approach to learning can be supported through careful use of technology. The University has adopted Moodle as its Learning Management System and this is supported by training for both staff and students. Moodle, which is one facet of ELT, provides a range of benefits in that it enriches learning by providing ready access to a wide range of resources, and also supports students who learn in different ways and at different paces.

3.1.6. Supporting diversity in physical needs

As a new University, with mostly new buildings, Universal Access is good, although there are a few of the older buildings from the LCA where access beyond the ground floor is not possible for students who use a wheelchair. All of the new residences include rooms on the ground floor for students who require this. As far as possible the University does not allow physical disability to prevent a student from following a particular programme and in 2017 there are two students with limited mobility, one who uses a wheelchair, taking the Diploma in Agriculture. This has required modification to the farm based practicals and will require careful selection of a suitable place for the WIL. This demonstrates the University's commitment to supporting equal access.

3.1.7. The development of a culture that values diversity

In the Strategic Plan of the University, we state that

*The African life ethos of **Ubuntu**, referring to our orientation to and expressions of humanity to others, forms the broad and overarching framework for our values.*

The University includes diversity as one its values and defines diversity as follows:

Diversity is valued and celebrated in unlocking a range of interactions, and enhancing exposure to a wide variety of diverse cultures, backgrounds, views and opinions.

As a new University, which is drawing staff from other higher education institutions and other employers throughout South Africa, there is the need to pay attention to ensure the development of a University culture that reflects the vision, mission and values of UMP. In relation to this section of the report on diversity and inclusivity, the focus is on ensuring that the University culture is one that values diversity.

4. Curriculum Development Capacity and Quality

Includes capacity development and support in curriculum design, development and implementation and processes to assure quality of curriculum content and implementation (including teaching).¹²

4.1. Capacity development and support for curriculum design, development and implementation

This has been discussed in the previous sections and a summary will be provided here. The particular history of the University has brought together academic staff with very different understanding of and approaches to curriculum design, development and implementation and it is for this reason that a special focus of the UCDP is on capacity development. The University plans a suite of academic development activities including the following.

Staff members have been supported to undertake postgraduate qualifications in higher education and for example in 2017, 10 staff are registered for a PGDHE and 3 staff are registered for a Higher Certificate through Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) and the Haaga-Helia University in Finland. The University will continue to make a number of such opportunities available to academic staff each year. On completing these qualifications, the staff members serve as mentors to less experienced academic staff and contribute to the Communities of Practice.

The University has offered and will continue to offer and refine short learning programmes (SLP) in curriculum development and assessment. Staff members will be required to demonstrate competence in the material either by completing the SLP, or through a process of RPL if a similar programme has been completed elsewhere.

Communities of Practice have been established on both campuses and these serve as a vehicle for discussion and debate over issues of the curriculum.

¹² Quality Enhancement Project Phase 2 Focus Area and Institutional Submission Specifications. CHE February 2017.

In terms of curriculum implementation, The University is in the enviable position of starting *de novo* and, in the words of the strategic plan (UMP 2022):

The newness of the University in many ways provides space and opportunity for us to define ourselves as a distinct African University which does 'different things differently'.

There is the opportunity to design and shape almost everything de novo - from symbols and buildings, to qualifications and culture. In short an opportunity to learn from the past and shape a new African University for the future.

This opportunity is not as readily available at an established university where historic patterns of curriculum implementation are hard to change, and it is very important that at UMP the space and support is provided for staff to use new methods of implementation.

4.2. Processes to ensure quality of curriculum content and implementation (including teaching).

The University has a range of quality assurance processes in place and is finalising a Quality Policy and a Quality Assurance Framework. The QA Framework will put in place QA steps at a range of timescales, from the monthly meetings between Class Representatives and Programme Leaders, to biannual reviews of student performance, annual reviews of each programme, and three to five year full programme reviews. Many of these processes are already in place, and the QA Framework will formalise them, provide templates for reporting and to which committee reports are provided.

Quality of implementation is assessed in a number of ways, including the Class Representative system and an annual student evaluation of teaching and module content. In addition, the University uses the Teaching Portfolio as a tool for assessing staff members' contributions to teaching and learning. One component of the Teaching Portfolio is a section of reflection on teaching and learning, where multiple views, including those of a peer, are interrogated. The Teaching Portfolio will be provided as evidence by all academic staff in the annual performance review and in this way, we will quickly become an understood and accepted part of monitoring and evaluation. The University Promotions Policy also requires staff members to present a Teaching Portfolio in support of their claims about the quality of their teaching.

5. Participation In Curriculum Design and Development

*Including involvement of various stakeholders in the initial design, ongoing development, renewal and transformation of curriculum.*¹³

As indicated in the first section, the curriculum of the first programmes launched by UMP were those of our partner institutions and it is only recently that our own academic staff have started to contribute to curriculum design, renewal and development.

5.1. Initial design.

The initial design process is guided by the UMP policy and is undertaken by a team of academics and support staff from UMP with outside input from other universities and industry or employers where appropriate. Currently, this process does not include a space for student input and this will be addressed in future.

5.2. Ongoing development.

The ongoing development or refinement of our curricula is a continual process and occurs at several scales. At the micro-scale, academic staff refine their modules in response to student feedback and also to accommodate new knowledge in the discipline. At a broader scale, academic staff are encouraged to question if the curriculum of a programme, which may have been borrowed from another university, in a different context, is appropriate for UMP. Very often the answer to this is no and hence a process of ongoing development is occurring in a number of programmes. The need for such ongoing development is considered at the programme and School levels and discussion includes all academic staff and may include the voice of the students. The process, which is described in the policy, requires the approval of the Teaching and Learning Committee of Senate, the Executive of Senate and Senate and is reported to Council.

5.3. Renewal and transformation

The ongoing development of the curriculum discussed above includes curriculum renewal and transformation and the same players are involved.

6. Any other comments.

The University accepts the centrality of the curriculum to the academic project, as expressed in CHE (2017). In the past three years (2015-2017) the focus of the University has been on six processes which have run simultaneously. Firstly, to manage the curriculum in the

¹³ CHE (2017)

founding academic programmes, secondly, to develop new programmes, thirdly, to develop and implement the necessary rule and regulations, and policies, fourthly to provide academic development opportunities to our staff and fifthly to develop support structures, processes and procedures for our students, and finally, to develop co-curricular activities and opportunities. A great deal of work has been completed and a great deal remains to be done. The next three years will see our activities directed by the University Capacity Development Plan which focuses on the curriculum, on staff development for teaching and learning and research, and on student development.