

# ADMISSION POLICY

## 1. PREAMBLE

UNISA is a comprehensive open distance learning university offering vocational, professional and general formative qualifications nationally, regionally and internationally.

## 2. AIM

2.1 The aim of this Policy is to set the minimum criteria for admission (including re-admission criteria) for UNISA to all formal qualifications offered by the University.

2.2 In achieving the stated aim, this Policy recognises the prescriptions of the Higher Education Act, 1997 and acknowledges the vision and mission of UNISA.

2.3 The Policy further:

- reiterates the values identified in the UNISA 2015 Strategic Plan;
- reinforces the commitment to be responsible for open admission within the parameters prescribed by UNISA's Enrolment Plan;
- recognises, as far as is reasonably possible, the national and African regional imperatives of transformation through the implementation of equity-driven enrolment targets and will strive to ensure that the student population represents the demographic profile of the country and addresses historic inequalities and past discriminations that constrained access to higher education;
- confirms that applications for admission to all qualifications shall be considered without inappropriate distinction. However, mature students (those who will be 23 years or older at the time they start an undergraduate qualification) and students who have suffered educational hardship or disruption (including students with disabilities) may receive special consideration;
- emphasises UNISA's commitment to making higher education available to and inclusive of all, at both a national and African regional level; and
- promotes the full potential of every student after admitting him/her to studies.

## CHAPTER 1

### DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Admission Policy	is a statement of minimum standards governing admission to register for a qualification at the University approved by Council;
DCCAD	means the Directorate for Counselling, Career and Academic Development;
Comprehensive university	means an institution that offers short learning programmes and all qualifications provided for on the Higher Education Qualifications Framework;
Council	means the Council of the UNISA;
Enrolment Plan	refers to a planning document detailing year-to-year strategic projections of the growth in student numbers in respect of particular qualifications with the purpose of enabling provision and preparation for future student enrolments aligned to expressed goals and objectives;
FET College	means a Further Education and Training College;
HESA	means Higher Education South Africa a body representing all public higher education institutions;
New student	is a student enrolling for a Higher Certificate, Diploma or Bachelor's Degree at an institution of higher education for the first time;
Recognition of prior learning	is the assessment and accreditation of previous learning and experience acquired by a student in the workplace or from life experience, measured against the specified learning outcomes of a module or qualification;
Short learning programme	describe all courses which are: 1) less than 120 credits; and 2) focussed on a part of a qualification but will not lead to the achievement of a qualification. It includes all non-subsidised short courses, courses, advanced short courses, advanced courses, programmes, advanced programme, workshops and seminars offered by UNISA. These short learning

	programmes are also referred to as non-formal offerings; <sup>1</sup>
Statutory admission requirements	are admission requirements of institutions of higher learning that are promulgated by law and are applicable to all universities in South Africa;
University	means the University of South Africa. UNISA has the same meaning.

## CHAPTER 2

### GENERAL ADMISSION CRITERIA

1. Council determines the admission requirements to the University<sup>2</sup> in line with the policies and regulations promulgated by the Department of Higher Education and Training. This includes:
  - 1.1 determining the entrance requirements in respect of all qualifications<sup>3</sup>;
  - 1.2 determining the numbers of students to be admitted for a particular qualification and the manner of their selection<sup>4</sup>;
  - 1.3 determining the minimum requirements for re-admission to study<sup>5</sup>; and
  - 1.4 determining the standards and conditions under which students may be refused re-admission to the University<sup>6</sup>.
2. A student's admission shall be subject to the student's acceptance of the rules and academic regulations of the University. Acceptance of a place at the University shall be taken to constitute acceptance of all published regulations that may pertain to qualifications and all lawful instructions of the University and its agents.
3. All applications for admission to a formal qualification must be made directly to the University on the prescribed form and lodged in the manner prescribed by the University.

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to the Policy: Short Learning Programmes (Non-formal tuition)

<sup>2</sup> Section 37(1) of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 (HEA), Paragraph 7(2)(j) of the Institutional Statute

<sup>3</sup> Section 37(4)(a) of the HEA. The Registrar will be responsible for maintaining the database reflecting the statutory minimum admission requirements for the various qualifications offered at the University

<sup>4</sup> Section 37(4)(b) of the HEA

<sup>5</sup> Section 37(4)(c) of the HEA

<sup>6</sup> Section 37(4)(d) of the HEA

## CHAPTER 3

### HIGHER CERTIFICATE / DIPLOMA / BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAMMES

#### A. UNIVERSITY ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS: NEW STUDENTS

1. All new students must meet the statutory minimum admission requirements as prescribed by the Department of Higher Education and Training<sup>7</sup> and the University<sup>8</sup>.
2. Senate, with the approval of Council, has the prerogative to set additional and/or alternative entry requirements to the statutory minimum admission requirements<sup>9</sup>.
3. In respect of foreign students applying for admission to an undergraduate qualification, a 'certificate of exemption from the matriculation examination' issued by the Matriculation Board for HESA is the prerequisite for admission to undergraduate studies.

#### B. ADMISSION TO STUDENTS IN TERMS OF A MATURE AGE EXEMPTION<sup>10</sup>

4. Admission to an undergraduate degree programme may be granted to prospective students who have reached the age of 23 years and hold a senior certificate without matriculation exemption in accordance with the rules prescribed by HESA.
5. Prospective students who have reached the age of 23 years, have passed Grade 10 or four 'O' levels and have at least three years of relevant work experience may be admitted into a diploma programme.
6. Prospective students who have reached the age of 45 years qualify for open admission or mature age exemption without any schooling qualification. The student must, however, still obtain a Certificate of Conditional Exemption from the Matriculation Board.
7. All other rules relevant to admission to University studies will apply.

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<sup>7</sup> Minimum admission requirements for Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree Programmes requiring a National Senior Certificate published in the Government Gazette Vol. 482, No. 27961 (18 August 2005)

<sup>8</sup> There is a Responsible Open Admission Plan/Policy (MOAP) proposed for UNISA. When the Plan/Policy is approved, it will be either cross-referenced or explained (depending on the status of the Plan) in this Admission Policy. It is proposed that Chapter 3 section A will then be amended and paragraph 2 will be inserted – the sense of which will be as follows:

2. *In addition, all students registering for the first time at a South African university must take the University pre-registration diagnostic test prior to their period of enrolment.*

In addition, a further section D may be added that will outline the implementation of the pre-registration diagnostic assessments that will be applied at UNISA. This will have to be taken from the MOAP .

<sup>9</sup> Section 37(4)(a) of the HEA

<sup>10</sup> UNISA will need to investigate admission requirements (and if these need to be introduced in addition to the HESA regulations) for students between 23 and 45 years who have no formal schooling qualification. The matter will be canvassed with all stakeholders and, if necessary, an amendment to the Policy will be brought to the Senate for approval during 2008.

### **C. ADMISSION TO STUDENTS WITH A CONDITIONAL MATRICULATION EXEMPTION**

8. Under the provisions of the Higher Education Act, 1997 students with an ordinary conditional matriculation exemption may be admitted to a formal University qualification.
9. All rules relevant to admission to University studies will apply.
10. Admission to the University in terms of paragraph 8 above is limited to a study period of twelve consecutive months.
11. If the student fails to comply with the condition prescribed in the conditional exemption certificate within the twelve month period, the student will not be re-admitted to the University until he/she has completed the condition and been conferred with a full matriculation exemption.

### **D. QUALIFICATION**

12. A student can register for a maximum of 60 NQF credits per semester (consequently 120 NQF credits for the year).
13. In calculating the 60 NQF credits, the following will apply:
  - 13.1 modules which were being repeated will be included in the 60 credit calculation;
  - 13.2 modules for which a student has a supplementary examination will be excluded from the 60 credit calculation;
  - 13.3 registration for NDP modules will be included in the 60 credit calculation.
14. If a student completes a qualification in semester one of a given year and registers for another qualification in semester two of the same year, then that student will be allowed to take 60 credits towards the new qualification, irrespective of the module count during the first semester.

### **E. STUDENTS IN THE FINAL SEMESTER OF STUDY**

15. Students in the final semester of study may be permitted to register for 84 NQF credits to enable the student to complete the qualification.
16. The permission for the additional modules will be at the discretion of the Registrar based on the following:

The student must:

  - 16.1 be in a position to complete the qualification by taking the additional 24 credits, and
  - 16.2 have a minimum average of 55% in the modules already completed.

## 17. Exception

Qualifications which are of three year duration but have more than 360 total NQF credits will be identified and programmed to permit the registration for 84 NQF credits per semester or 144 NQF credits per year. (in any semester/year of study).

## CHAPTER 4

### **POSTGRADUATE QUALIFICATIONS<sup>11</sup>**

1. The admission requirement(s) for postgraduate studies will be in accordance with the admission criteria as outlined for the particular qualification as approved by Senate.
2. International applicants are subject to the same entry requirements as South African applicants, except where an exception is approved by Senate.
3. Re-admission to postgraduate studies will be according to the following set of criteria:
  - 3.1 During the first and every subsequent year of study the student must demonstrate academic activity to the satisfaction of the University.
  - 3.2 In the event of the student failing to meet this requirement in the first year of study, she/he will be admitted to another year of study.
  - 3.3 In the instance of students registered for the Research Proposal module, if the student in the second year continues not to demonstrate academic activity to the satisfaction of the University, the student will not be admitted to a further year of study at the University.
  - 3.4 In all other instances, if the student, after the first year of not demonstrating academic activity, continues not to demonstrate academic activity to the satisfaction of the University, the student will not be admitted to a further year of study at the University, except with the express approval of the Executive Dean of the College in which the student is registered.
  - 3.5 A student registered for a 120 credit Honours or Postgraduate Diploma qualification must complete the study programme within three years.
  - 3.6 A student registered for a 180 credit structured Coursework or research master's degree must complete the study programme within three years. A student may make application for one additional year of study to the Registrar. The Registrar will consult with the Executive Dean of the College in which the student is registered.

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<sup>11</sup> Postgraduate qualifications refer to Honours, Masters, Doctorate and Postgraduate Diploma qualifications

- 3.7 A student registered for a research doctoral programme must complete the study programme within six years. A student may make application for one additional year of study to the Registrar who will only consider the application if it is recommended by the Executive Dean of the College in which the student is registered.
4. Deferment of studies
- 4.1 A student wishing to defer his/her academic studies must apply to the Registrar for permission and must include all relevant supporting documentation with the application. In making a decision, the Registrar will consult with the Executive Dean of the College in which the student is registered.
- 4.2 A student will be permitted to defer his/her studies for a maximum period of two years, except in exceptional circumstances determined by the Executive Dean of the College or the Registrar.
- 4.3 Periods during which a student was permitted by the University to defer his/her studies will not be taken into account when calculating a student's period of registration.

## CHAPTER 5

### **ADMISSION TO STUDENTS BASED ON RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)**

1. In addition to UNISA's formal admission pathways, the University also recognises prior learning which may provide opportunities for admission into UNISA.
2. Prospective students may apply to be admitted to UNISA using the Senate approved processes for recognition of prior learning. In dealing with such application for admission to the University, the RPL Policy will apply.
3. Students admitted to the University through the RPL route annually will not exceed 10% of the total number of students admitted to a particular qualification.

## CHAPTER 6

### **UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES: EXCLUSION ON GROUNDS OF POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND RE-ADMISSION<sup>12</sup>**

1. Except for students registered for postgraduate studies (for whom Chapter 4 above will be apposite), a student admitted to a formal qualification at UNISA will be required to complete the qualification as set out below:

<b>MINIMUM SET CREDITS FOR QUALIFICATION</b>	<b>MAXIMUM PERIOD IN WHICH QUALIFICATION MUST BE COMPLETED</b>
120 credits	3 years
360 credits	8 years
480 credits	10 years

2. Senate may reduce the maximum period in which a qualification must be completed (as set out in paragraph 1 above) upon application by a College.
3. A student who does not comply with the requirement of paragraph 1 above or any amendment approved by Senate will be excluded from further admission to the University, provided that the Executive Dean of the College in which the student is registered may, at his/her discretion, grant the student permission to re-register for a further period of study.
4. Subject to paragraphs 1 and 2 above, a student must, after the first year<sup>13</sup> of study complete at least 36 credits in the qualification for which he/she is registered. A student who does not comply with this requirement will not be re-admitted to further study at an undergraduate level. For purposes of compliance with this rule, the results of all aegrotat, supplementary or special examinations will be taken into account.
5. Subject to paragraphs 1 and 2 above, a student in the second and subsequent years of study must complete, at least, 48 credits annually<sup>14</sup> towards the qualification for which he/she is registered. A student who does not comply with this requirement will not be re-admitted to any further studies at undergraduate level. For purposes of compliance with this rule, the results of all aegrotat, supplementary or special examinations will be taken into account.

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<sup>12</sup> The equivalent provision in respect of postgraduate programmes is set out in Chapter 4 above

<sup>13</sup> Refers to a calendar year

<sup>14</sup> Refers to a calendar year.



6. In applying paragraphs 1 to 5 above, the following rules will apply:
  - 6.1 Each year in which the student was registered at UNISA is included in the calculation of the period of registration – and not just the years in which the student was registered for a particular qualification.
  - 6.2 In the case of a student who has completed a degree or university diploma and is registered for a second or further qualification, only those years of registration after the completion of the degree or diploma will be taken into account for purposes of calculating the study period in respect of the second or further qualification.
  - 6.3 Modules from which a student has been exempted will not be taken into consideration for purposes of determining whether he/she should be re-admitted to the University. Similarly, a student's previous academic performance at another university will not be taken into consideration.
7. A student wishing to be re-admitted to the University after being excluded on the basis of poor performance (as defined in paragraphs 1, 2, 4 and 5 above) in a qualification may only do so after providing proof of successful study - at NQF Level 4, 5 or higher:
  - 7.1 at another training institution; or
  - 7.2 in a UNISA short learning programme.

In order to satisfy the requirements of this rule, the student must have completed, at least 48 credits before an application for re-admission will be considered by the University.
8. A student applying for re-admission under paragraph 7 above must make application for re-admission to the Registrar.

## CHAPTER 7

### **ADMISSION OF STUDENTS FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS WHO HAVE BEEN EXCLUDED OR SUSPENDED ON GROUNDS OF POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

1. Persons who are currently excluded or suspended from another higher education institution on grounds of poor academic performance will not be prevented from being admitted to a qualification if the exclusion is:
  - 1.1 more than 3 years old; or
  - 1.2 more than 1 year old and was in a field of study different from that for which application is made.

## CHAPTER 8

### **ADMISSION OF STUDENTS FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS WHO HAVE BEEN EXCLUDED OR SUSPENDED ON FINANCIAL GROUNDS**

1. Persons who are currently excluded or suspended by another institution of higher learning on financial grounds will not be admitted to any qualification at this University.

## CHAPTER 9

### **ADMISSION OF STUDENTS FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS WHO ARE NOT ABLE TO PROVIDE A CERTIFICATE OF SATISFACTORY CONDUCT**

1. A student from another higher education institution who applies to register at UNISA may be admitted as a student upon submitting a certificate of satisfactory conduct from that other institution.
2. Should a student be unable to submit a certificate of satisfactory conduct from that other higher education institution the student may be admitted to register at UNISA if Senate or the Chairperson of Senate (or delegated authority) is satisfied that the student has by way of affidavit provided an adequate explanation for the absence of such a certificate.

## CHAPTER 10

### **CONCURRENT ADMISSION**

1. No student will be admitted to a formal qualification if he/she is registered for any formal qualification at another higher education institution, except that such students may register at UNISA for non-degree purposes, provided that permission for such concurrent registration is granted by the other University.
2. Students registering for non-degree purposes will be subject to the rules contained under the rules set out in Chapter 3, paragraphs 12 to 14.

## CHAPTER 11

### **DUAL ENROLMENT**

1. A student may not be admitted simultaneously to more than one formal qualification at UNISA save where one of the qualifications is registered for non-degree purposes and then only with the express approval of the Executive Dean(s) of the College(s) offering the qualifications for which admission is sought.
2. A student may, however, be admitted simultaneously to both a formal qualification and a short learning programme offered at UNISA.

## CHAPTER 12

### **APPLICATION OF THE POLICY**

1. This amended Policy will come in to force and effect as soon as it is approved by Council, subject to all internal and external processes and regulations being in place.
2. The amended Policy will not have retrospective effect.

