POLICY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHING STAFF

FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

Introduction

New faculty members and existing members reveal and change university culture, especially Students – centred learning. The policy on the development of teaching staff is based on the position that the best quality staff are employed at every level. New faculty members are to be chosen for their interest and capacity in teaching as well as in research. Hiring practices in the university will recognise the ways candidates demonstrate their teaching expertise, especially on what students will do to learn rather than on what instructors will do to teach. New faculty members may also have the opportunity to share teaching practices that they learned elsewhere and experiment with teaching methods especially student-centred learning. Policy on the development of teaching staff covers:

- o The core discipline
- o Teaching skills
- o Hybrid teaching especially digital skills
- o Administrative skills.

The required teaching environment.

There are nine key dimensions crucial to any comprehensive teacher policy: teacher recruitment and retention, teacher education (initial and continuing), deployment, career structure, teacher employment and working conditions, teacher reward and remuneration, teacher standards, teacher accountability, and university governance. The focus here is the second dimension: teacher education. The teaching staff development policy will provide an inspirational and best quality environment by:

• ensuring the self-esteem and aspirations of all lecturers are raised through mutual support and commitment,

• ensuring that recruited and developed quality teaching staff are retained and that they achieve their highest qualification,

• providing them excellent progression opportunities,

• promoting a culture of academic challenge, scholarly outcomes and research informed teaching,

• ensuring diversity, inclusive and equality of opportunity,

• promoting best practice that ensures sustainability, especially as concerns resource efficiency, energy efficiency, use of renewable energy, and welfare,

• ensuring that the University Strategic plan is achieved, and

• recognising and celebrating award winning staff,

The University will provide:

- Induction for all staff to deliver teaching and learning.
- A clean, tidy and well-maintained environment.
- A safe environment following excellent health and safety procedures.
- Access to resources that enable effective teaching, and appropriate learning outcomes to be achieved.

- A welcoming environment promoting equal opportunities.
- Access and promotion of digital technology.
- Flexible curriculum delivery that encourages excellent and multidisciplinary research and learning.
- Opportunities for best practice and techniques to be shared.
- Appropriate Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for teaching staff will be provided.

Core Discipline: The lecturers' teaching motivation primarily comes from a passion for their specific discipline. For most lecturers, there is a desire to share this knowledge and to ensure that their students' understanding is accurate and meaningful.Since the discipline knowledge and desire to share that knowledge are common values within departments, placing resources within the departments to promote student – centred learning will be effective. The subject expertise of staff will be facilitated, leading to excellent teaching that will encourage the achievement of the vision and mission of the University.The University recruits the best in required discipline, and encourages them to earn their PhDs. Post-doctoral work is also encouraged to enhance international exposure. It is expected that lecturers will become mentors to new faculty members in core discipline, when they have established credibility and stature as a successful instructor within the unit or discipline. The mentors should be willing to demonstrate community leadership.

Professional certification and recertification in the core discipline is also encouraged, as this will improve the quality of teaching. Apart from improving the production of industry – ready graduates, certified lecturers will have the opportunity for continuous industry interaction.

Teaching Skills: New faculty members often have limited formal training as teachers, and learn how to teach through "learn by doing" approach. The policy of the University is for lecturers to be trained in teaching and learning processes as they undertake their teaching responsibilities. It is appropriate that policies and organizational provisions should supportnew faculty members by helping them to understand both the learning community and the learning process, and how they can contribute. The pedagogic content knowledge of staff will be facilitated, leading to excellent teaching and student centred learning.

The policy of the University is to provide instructional support dedicated to new faculty members.The first type of support is the opportunity to participate in a Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education programme hosted by The Institute of Education of the University of Benin. This allows enhanced teacher quality, discipline and professionalism. The objectives of the programme include providing pedagogical training for those who are already engaged in teaching in tertiary institutions; and produce lecturers who can diagnose tertiary students' learning needs, aspirations and potentials using appropriate teaching methods and skills. A major component is the **Current Developments and Reforms in Higher Education** covering SDGs and MDGs in Education; concept of Education For All (EFA), New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), HIV / Aids and COVD 19 in Education, Public-Private Partnership Initiative in Education.

The second support option provided is a formal instructional workshop in which new faculty members would explore teaching and learning issues. The workshop is to provide foundational information to help new faculty prepare to teach; topics include deep learning, aligning learning assessments with course goals, and classroom management.

A third option is the assignment of professional development mentors. As faculty members begin to undertake teaching responsibilities, they should be assigned to experienced professors who can help them prepare for and plan their professional development as teachers.Related interactions may be through online chats, one-on-one discussions, or group interactions, including teaching tutorials, to sit-in-assistants.Lesson observation will be adopted by mentors.The lesson observation process is fundamental to enhancing and improving the learning experience and supporting staff in the development of their teaching and management of learning. It is the responsibility of individual members of staff to be familiar with and maintain the standards of performance expected of them and to see the Teacher's code as minimum standard. Heads of departments are crucial in communicating expectations and set standards, and ensuring attendance and punctuality. Discipline issues will be dealt with promptly with the appropriate reporting procedures followed.

Hybrid teaching skills: Apart from the classroom teaching skills, competence for teaching and assessment on various virtual platforms have become important. The policy is to provide the training support and delivery module for all lecturers. The University ICT/CRPU and external agencies will be arranged to provide continuous exposure and training as well as access to required facilities.Online modules will be reviewed for quality with particular focus on the range of content, quality of content, student participation and student learning experience.Online reviews will be coded in line with on-site observations and subject to actions plans and support.

Administrative experience: Course advisersand assistants, examination officers and other responsibilities up to heads of department are provided as training milestones for administrative experience. The role of a department head presupposes the abilities that will foster excellence in teaching. Department Heads have responsibility for a range of teaching related mandates that include academic leadership,implementing academic programme, and carrying out annual performance evaluation of faculty members. HODs may be excellent instructors but lack managerial-level skills. The position of HOD is a crucial element in achieving student centred learning. A set of institutional practices to assist department Heads in their provision of instructional support and leadership are adopted. The fora for implementing this support include training as Assistant Heads and in other capacities before being made HOD, while seminars and workshops will be regularly organised.

To perform the evaluation function, Heads should receive uniform guidance on how to interpret evaluation scores and individual student comments in the context of evidential principles. This means balancing fresh approach to teaching with overreacting to outlier scores. Furthermore, Heads should be acquainted with the range or map of options for instructional assistance.

Establish a Community of Faculty Leaders Focused SCL: Most instructors do not have formal education on learning in higher education and tend to rely on "intuitive" strategiesto guide their teaching practice. These teaching methods may not be adequate for students with great expectations.To achieve a high level of cultural change, it is insufficient to provide initial training for new instructors without supporting their on-going development. Universities are challenged to improve the depth, effectiveness, and efficiency of student learning through its faculty members' teaching.

Improving Internal and External Communications about Effective Innovative Teaching: Uptake of new instructional methods is more likely to happen when instructors have access to focused and filtered resources. With abundant sites and resources about teaching and learning in higher education, the challenge is to understand how this wealth of information relates. A vetted, centralized resource to disseminate materials and opportunities adaptable to the university context would assist instructors. The University's recent insistence on online training allows for easy sharing. Various Departmental ICT liaisons could facilitate the practice of sharing online course elements.

Instructors' engagement in a University-wide Teaching Event: Teaching conferences and workshops are highly visible, cost-effective, and efficient method of bringing together lecturers for the purpose of sharing evidence-based practices that promote deep learning. The conferencesshould focus on sharing effective pedagogical practices as well as scholarship about teaching and learning to broaden the inclusivity of the community. The University will provide both the resources needed to hold regular teaching conferences and for lecturers to participate.