Code of Good Practice: University Teaching

APPROVAL:

Academic Board, 16 July 1993, AB 93/100

AMENDMENTS:

- Registrar - August 1998
- Registrar - March 2001
- Academic Board – September 2016

REFERENCE AUTHORITY: Pro Vice Chancellor (Access and Learning Support)

CROSS-REFERENCE:

- Academic Promotion
- Assessment Policy and Procedures Manual (APPM)
  http://w3.unisa.edu.au/policies/manual/default.asp
- Code of Good Practice: Relationships between staff and students
- Code of Good Practice: Student Behaviour
- Quality Assurance and Improvement: Programs, Courses and Teaching Arrangements (A-35A)
- Quality Teaching Framework for Teaching Excellence at UniSA
- Scholarship Guidelines for Teaching Academics
- Peer Review of Teaching
- Teaching Academic: Standards of Performance

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1.   Purpose

This code of good practice for university teaching is designed to promote the features of, and responsibilities for delivering high quality teaching. This document outlines a framework within which the University can facilitate and support high quality teaching and learning practice.

2.   High quality teaching

The University of South Australia is committed to teaching and learning excellence. In all aspects of teaching and learning, UniSA seeks to actively support the development of an engaging education environment that allows our students to make the most of their learning experience. This commitment is premised on teaching practices that demonstrate disciplinary skill and knowledge, scholarship in higher education teaching and learning, industry relevance and innovative approaches to facilitate and support student learning. In essence, such high quality teaching:

1.   inspires, challenges and stimulates students' learning and maximises each student's personal learning development;

2.   establishes clear academic expectations and maintains high standards;

3.   draws on industry-informed experience so each student appreciates and understands the application of disciplinary knowledge in professional settings;

4.   exhibits disciplinary expertise and a command of the field expressed through curriculum initiatives, learning resources, and digital technologies which reflect current scholarship;

5.   incorporates assessment and feedback as key components that shape student learning;

6.   adopts effective learning design tailored to the disciplinary and education context;

7.   engages in continuous development, innovation and improvement of teaching, through evaluative and reflective practices that are underpinned by the scholarship of teaching and learning; and

8. is underpinned by an institutional culture which recognises, values and rewards teaching excellence and fosters communities of practice that support and advance scholarly teaching.

2.1 Foundations for high quality teaching

UniSA's courses are designed to engage students through a practice-based and industry-informed curriculum reflecting a whole of program design. To achieve this, the University fosters an environment based on the following broad domains:

a. teaching for active learning;

b. assessment for learning;

c. designing curriculum for active learning;

d. engaging in professional learning – actively engage in the scholarship of teaching;

e. quality assurance and continuous improvement of courses and programs.

2.1.1 Teaching for Active Learning

High quality teaching engages students through well-supported and active learning processes. The provision of high quality education requires that all teachers:

- are passionate about their practice and inspire students in order to extend their understanding in a supportive and scaffolded learning context;

- regularly employ a deep engagement with the scholarship of teaching to develop a strong understanding of effective student learning processes;

- are actively engaged in the disciplines' scholarship/research/ or industry activity to ensure the course and program curriculum are current and well-aligned with industry standards (i.e. externally-referenced learning outcomes);

- demonstrate the disciplinary and professional skills, attributes and knowledge that students will require for their future academic and professional careers;

- are guided by programmatic outcomes in the development of course curriculum, including development of learning skills, competencies, capabilities and assessment practices;

- are inclusive and cater for student diversity through design and delivery of curriculum that gives all individuals equal opportunities to learn[1].

- promote the provision of numerous and timely instructional feedback loops to guide student learning and ensure students are appropriately challenged and supported in their learning endeavours;

- utilise a wide range of teaching strategies to personalise and optimise student learning;

- provide a positive role model for students;

- share innovations and ideas to motivate peers to collaborate on teaching improvements; and

- exert an inspirational influence on teaching and student learning.

High quality teaching practice involves:

- innovative learning and teaching that leads to reflection on, and improvement in teaching;

- scholarship which results in teaching leadership;

- engagement which leads to an outstanding student experience;

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[1] Disability Action Plan: http://w3.unisa.edu.au/hrm/equity/disability/action.asp

- transparency and reflection through peer review of teaching, student evaluation and quality assurance of programs; and

- industry relevant knowledge and skills for 21st Century careers.

2.1.2 Assessing for learning

Assessment serves multiple purposes for teaching and learning. It is valued as a teaching strategy to motivate and support student learning, as well as providing a mechanism for measurement and assurance of student achievement of intended learning outcomes.

High quality assessment practices:

- involve the design of assessment tasks that are clearly aligned to course and program learning outcomes;

- incorporate a diversity of assessment techniques to stimulate a deep-approach to learning;

- promote the application of skills and knowledge in new situations; and challenges and changes a student's way of thinking and doing;

- ensure students receive adequate, timely, supportive and detailed instructional feedback to aid their learning process;

- understand how assessment tasks and outcomes are scaffolded and coordinated across courses and within programs;

- employ of a range of learning analytics data and student assessment tasks to personalise and enhance student performance; and

- are supported and developed through peer review, moderation and reflection.

2.1.3 Designing for learning Environments

Student learning is enhanced by the effective design of learning environments, including the use of available teaching staff and the provision of physical and digital resources. High quality teaching requires a significant level of organisational and leadership capability.

High quality design:

- fosters and maintains professional relationships with internal and external peers and colleagues, to enable effective course and program teams;

- engages with the practical requirements of teaching (preparing materials and resources) to ensure the delivery of teaching activities;

- develops a learning environment that integrates physical and digital resources to meet the diversity of student, discipline, industry and content needs; and

- makes effective use of UniSA teaching and learning systems to engage students in active learning models.

2.1.4 Professional Development for High Quality Teaching

Teaching staff are regularly encouraged to reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement. The development of high quality teaching necessitates long term and systematic engagement in professional learning activities including:

- completion of induction programs offered on a University-wide basis;

- participation in discipline education and learning and teaching conferences and other fora;

- use of self-evaluation and student and peer feedback to enhance teaching practice;

- demonstration of leadership for supporting and mentoring colleagues;

- contribution to professional learning within and beyond the University;

- leadership in initiating and actively participating in professional dialogue with peers regarding teaching and learning approaches that engage learners; and

- development and maintenance of a system for keeping a portfolio of scholarly teaching activities and reflections.

UniSA rewards and recognises high quality teaching through promotion and grants and awards activities.

2.1.5 Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement for High Quality Teaching

The University's policy on the evaluation of programs, courses, teaching and student experience specifies the use of evaluation tools to inform continuous improvement of learning and teaching and the overall student experience. Quality assurance and continuous improvement involves:

- reflecting on current teaching performance through regular use of the University-endorsed evaluation tools in conjunction with other data sources such as learning analytics, assessment profiles, retention and peer review;

- undertaking an analysis of data and critical reflection on the impact of current teaching approaches to achieve desired student learning outcomes;

- developing innovative actions to respond to feedback and to enhance the course outcomes and student experience;

- regularly evaluating assessment approaches to ensure the items accurately assess the stated learning outcomes of the course, meet the learning needs of students, and are defensible in terms of Australian academic standards;

- benchmarking teaching, course and program performance against best practice among peers and more broadly within the higher education sector.