University of Peradeniya

Policy name:	Policy on Teaching and Learning
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Approving Authority:	The Council, University of Peradeniya
Administrative Responsibility:	Vice-Chancellor, Senate, ADPC, Directors of PGIs, Deans of Faculties, Directors of Centers and Units, Heads of Departments, Heads of Faculty Units and Divisions
Monitoring responsibility:	The Council, University of Peradeniya

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Overview

Teaching and learning is a process through which not only knowledge and skills are acquired, but also particular values, motivations, attitudes and dispositions that are deemed necessary for continuous, reflecting, and autonomous learning are to be nurtured. Hence teaching and learning is a process of imparting knowledge and skills required to master a subject area and is about constructing knowledge and developing skills, stimulating, directing, guiding the learner or student and evaluating the learning outcomes of the process (Fomunyam, 2016). Further, teaching and learning is also about creating a culture that builds and supports student relationships in the spirit of a community that inspires learning within the classroom using the tools, strategies, and processes you employ to teach (Fomunyam, 2017). Accordingly, teaching is increasingly viewed as a facilitation of learning (Harden and Laidlaw 2017).

Scope and Application

In alignment with the national and relevant international guidelines on Higher Education standards, the objectives of the teaching and learning policy are to provide academic direction to enhance the quality of teaching and learning at the University of Peradeniya.

The teaching and learning process of the University of Peradeniya is set and carried out under such guidance that would facilitate the development of graduates/postgraduates with;

a. In-depth knowledge and competent in performing core skills
b. Generic skills:
- Critical thinking and problem-solving;
- Effective Communication (oral and written);
- Information technology/ digital literacy;
- Emotional intelligence
- Adaptability and flexibility
- Teamwork and leadership
c. Spirit of enquiry (Research capability)

d. Innovativeness
e. Cultural competence
f. Interdisciplinary effectiveness / Interdisciplinarity
g. An integrated professional, ethical and personal identity
h. Attributes/Features of a lifelong learner
i. Ability to the dissemination of knowledge

All the faculties, centres, institutions, and relevant units of the University of Peradeniya should ensure that they align with these policy requirements during the planning, implementation and maintenance of teaching and learning practices pertaining to the academic programmes conducted by the said entities.

Key Policy Principles

Study programmes and curricula in the University of Peradeniya are developed according to the Curriculum development policy of the University. The Policy on Teaching and Learning ensures/envisages effective development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes among students that follow such programmes with a special focus on Outcome Based Education (OBE) and learner-centred approach.

1. Pedagogy

The teaching and learning process of all study programs at the University of Peradeniya should permit;

a. continual adaptation of innovative teaching-learning methods to improve the effectiveness in the learning process with intellectual student engagement
b. the use of a combination of educational approaches and instructional delivery methods such as,
    i. Didactic teaching
    ii. Blended learning (BL)
    iii. Experiential learning (EXL)
    iv. Technology-enhanced learning (TEL)
    v. Self-directed learning (SDL)
    vi. Collaborative learning (CL)
    vii. Observational learning (OL)

c. the use of a range of teaching practices and methodologies to meet the diverse needs of students with varying levels of abilities and competencies (i.e. differently-abled, gender, language, ethnic and religious). Differently-abled students would be identified with the student registration in order to make prior preparations.
d. the development of all three learning domains (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor)
e. the quality assurance through an effective institutional system in place
f. a high level of active student engagement in the learning process as individuals or teams enabling the development of higher-order thinking skills
g. a system in place to provide continual feedback to students on their performance

h. strong support for the transition from secondary to tertiary education
i. the preparation for a real working environment/world of work through
    i. career guidance
    ii. provision of increased opportunities to work in the real world of work
    iii. opportunities for community work/assignments/industrial training
    iv. mentoring of students by professionals in the relevant fields

Online teaching option is recognized as an effective teaching strategy by the University of Peradeniya. Each Faculty would decide the percentage of a course that would be delivered online. However, provision for increasing this percentage of online delivery would be granted in a needy situation.

2. Conducive learning environment

Students' success is built on their whole-of-University experience. Hence, it is the responsibility of all staff of the University to contribute to a positive student experience.

Student diversity is recognized and welcomed; opportunities will be offered to all students to succeed through engagement, reflection and commitment to learning by providing a conducive learning environment that includes the following;

a. Infrastructure and facilities
b. Qualified and competent teaching and support staff
c. A mechanism for internal coordination of the planned programmes
d. Student counselling, mentoring and wellbeing
e. Ensuring equality
f. Ensuring open communication between and among staff and students
g. An atmosphere free of harassment
h. Outreach activities

3. Teaching Excellence (enhancing teaching skills)

Approaches to teaching are diverse and need to be adaptive to new demands in learning. Hence will require effective use of appropriate technologies and innovations.

The University of Peradeniya recognizes teacher appraisal and selecting teachers with excellence through awards elaborated in the University Policy on Assessments and Awards.

Teaching excellence should be encouraged through:

a. Establishing a system of incentives -appreciations and awards for effective teachers
b. Providing support for establishing/maintaining innovative and inclusive learning and teaching practices
c. Supportive and sustained professional/educational development/fellowships
d. Critical inquiry and research into aspects of higher education teaching, education and
e. training, which links teaching practice with research and publications.

4. Student appraisal and rewarding

The University of Peradeniya recognizes outstanding student performers through awards which are elaborated in the University Policy on Assessments and Awards.

Definitions:

Didactic teaching: A manner of instruction in which information is presented directly from the teacher to the student, in which the teacher selects the topic of instruction, control instructional stimuli, obligates response from the student, evaluates learner responses and provide reinforcement.

Blended learning (BL): An approach to education that combines online material and opportunities for interaction online along with traditional place-based classroom methods. It requires the physical presence of both teacher and student with some elements of student control over time, place/path and pace.

Experiential learning (EXL): The process of learning through experiences and is more specifically defined as "learning through reflection on doing ". Hands-on learning can be a form of experiential learning but does not necessarily involve students reflecting on their product. Key features of EXL are experience and reflection on experience and learning through that exercise.

Technology-enhanced learning (TEL): The application of technology to teaching and learning. TEL is any technology that enhances the learning experience (Accordingly, the use of multimedia, videos, simulations, CDs, skills labs all qualify for TEL).

Self-directed learning (SDL): A process by which individuals take the initiative, with or without the assistance of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes.

Collaborative learning (CL): A simple definition is group learning. Real collaboration involves social interaction where participants share their ideas and solve a problem or complete a task.

Observational learning (OL): Describes the process of learning by watching others, retaining the information, and then later replicating the observed behaviours.

Related policies, if any

- Curriculum Planning, Development and Revision Policy
- Student Assessment and Awards Policy

Related Acts, Rules, Regulations, Key Circulars:

- Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF) September 2015

References

a. Fomunyam, K. G. (2013). Student Teachers Experiences of Teachers' Professional Identity Within the Context of Curriculum Change in a University in KwaZulu-Natal. Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal.

b. Fomunyam, K. G. (2017) 'Decolonising Teaching and Learning in Engineering Education in a South African university', *International Journal of Applied Engineering Research*, 12(23), pp. 13349–13358.

c. Harden, R.M., & Laidlaw, J.M. (Ed.). (2017). *Essential skills for a medical teacher-An introduction to teaching and learning in medicine* (2ndEd.). London, England: Elsevier.

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