

INSTITUTE FOR OPEN DISTANCE LEARNING

1. NAME OF INSTITUTE

The Institute is called the Institute for Open and Distance Learning.

2. ESTABLISHMENT

2.1 The Institute is established to:

2.1.1 Serve a university-wide need on open, distance and e-learning,

2.1.2 Work in collaboration with all the Colleges and Research Institutes of the University, and

2.1.3 Link appropriately with other local and international institutions and organisations in respect of the theory, principles and practice of open, distance and e-learning

3. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Head means the Head of the IODL;

College Colleges of the University

Executive Committee means the committee responsible for the management of the Institute referred to in paragraph 7.4;

University means the University of South Africa;

CGS refers to the College of Graduate Studies

IODL refers to the Institute for Open Distance Learning;

ODL means Open and Distance Learning;

ODeL means Open, Distance and elearning

SRIPCC refers to the Senate Research, Innovation, Postgraduate Degrees and Commercialisation Committee

RPIC means Research, Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialisation

4. STATUS

The Institute for Open and Distance Learning is an integral part of the University of South Africa and has the status of an academic department. It is housed in the School of Transdisciplinary Research Institutes (STRI) in the College of Graduate Studies.

4.1 VISION: To be the leading institute in Open Distance and eLearning scholarship in Africa

4.2 MISSION: The Institute for Open Distance Learning strives:

- To advance ODeL research that is responsive to the development agenda of the country and globally relevant.
- To lead and influence strategies and practice through ODeL research, leadership and engagement with institutions, nationally and globally.
- To provide and support continuous ODeL research capacity development

5. OBJECTIVE

The Institute will:

- 5.1 Be a reputable open and distance learning research institute which attracts international recognition;
- 5.2 Engage in the scholarship of teaching of learning through research in the field of distance, online, open, flexible and/or technology enhanced learning
- 5.3 Promote collaborative research in the niche and focus areas of the Research, Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialisation Portfolio through engagement in the interdisciplinary and inter-College research activities,
- 5.4 Facilitate and support research capacity development programmes in ODeL research
- 5.5 Supervise and co-supervise ODeL postgraduate students.

6. RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

All programmes offered by the Institute will be in accordance with the applicable policies of the University.

7. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

7.1 The activities of the Institute are supervised by the Executive Dean of the College of Graduate Studies in the Research and Innovation Portfolio who advises the Head of the Institute.

7.2 ADVISORY BOARD

7.2.1 **Composition**

- a) Vice Principal: Research, Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialisation
- b) Vice Principal: –Teaching, Learning, Community Engagement and Student Support
- c) Executive Dean of the College of Graduate Studies
- d) Executive Deans of colleges
- e) Executive Director, Research Administration
- f) Executive Director, Tuition and Facilitation of Learning
- g) Head of the Institute
- h) Two or three senior academic employees of the Institute for Open Distance Learning
- i) Chief Financial Officer or his/her representative
- j) Not more than three external persons knowledgeable in ODL, nominated by the Advisory Board who should serve for a term of four years renewable for one further term of four years.

7.2.2 **Meetings**

- a) The Vice Principal: Research, Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialisation or his/her nominee is the chairperson of the Board
- b) The secretary, a senior administrative member of the Institute, records the minutes and proceedings of all meetings.
- c) The Board meets at least once a year.
- d) The quorum at a meeting is half plus one of the members of the Board.
- e) Notice of meetings will be given at least one month prior to the Annual General Meeting and at least two weeks prior to extraordinary meetings. The notice will include the time, date, location and agenda of the meeting.

7.2.3 **Decision making mechanisms**

The Academic Management Board will encourage consensus in all its decisions and recommendations. If there is no consensus, the matter will be decided by voting and a majority vote (of 50% plus one) will be applied.

7.2.4 **Functions of Board**

The Board:

- a) Advises and, when required, reviews the activities of the IODL and makes recommendations regarding its activities
- b) Considers and approves the annual report to the College of Graduate Studies, Senate and the Management Committee of the University;

- c) Evaluates reports on the activities of the Institute by the Head of the Institute;
- d) Considers and recommends the annual budget and annual financial statements of the IODL to the relevant University structures in accordance with the prescribed procedures;
- e) Provides policy direction and guidance
- f) Appoints other committees, when necessary, and determines their membership and functions; and
- g) Considers and recommends the strategic plans of the Institute
- h) Acts as a champion for the Institute within and outside the University
- i) Recommends the co-option of senior members of the Institute and representatives of a College relevant to the Institute's work onto the Board to assist the Board in respect of a particular matter pertaining to the Institute.
- j) Recommends the establishment of programmes, project committees, partnerships, subcommittees and other relevant structures

7.3 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE INSTITUTE

7.3.1 Composition

For administrative efficiency, the Head of the Institute will constitute an executive committee of the Institute, including:

- a) A person responsible for finance.
- b) Three senior members of staff.

7.3.2 Meetings

The Head of the Institute is the chairperson of the Committee. In his/her absence, the chairperson nominates a senior academic employee of the Institute to act on his/her behalf. The Committee meets quarterly. A secretary records the minutes and proceedings of all meetings. The quorum at a meeting is half of the members of the Committee plus one.

7.3.3 Functions of Committee

The Committee:

- a) Considers research programmes,
- b) Reviews research projects,
- c) Directs the ODeL research projects in the university,
- d) Advises the Head on his/her day-to-day management of the Institute,
- e) Considers matters raised by the Advisory Board

- f) Recommends all academic matters that are requiring approval to CGS Executive Committee.

7.4 STRUCTURE OF THE INSTITUTE

- 7.4.1 The Institute may have permanent, fixed-term or independent contract employees as well as temporary workers
- 7.4.2 The Institute consists of academic, administrative and support employees. The Head is responsible for the strategic guidance, management and administration of the IODL. The Head is accountable to the Advisory Board and reports to the Director of STRI.
- 7.4.3 All employees of the Institute are directly responsible and answerable to the Head of the IODL.
- 7.4.4 The Head of the Institute must:
- a. Be a proven researcher
 - b. Be internationally recognised as being of high research standing
 - c. Have exceeded the minimum research outputs as stated in the UNISA Research and Innovation Policy for at least three years prior to the appointment as Head
 - d. Adhere to and enforce the Constitution of the Institute,
 - e. Act as the official representative of the Institute,
 - f. Ensure that all resolutions passed at meetings are implemented,
 - g. Authorize expenditure within the Institute's budget
 - h. Establishes relevant committees, if and when needed, to assist him/her in the management, leadership and growth of the Institute.
 - i. Ensure that the institute reports on its research activities to the College Research and Innovation Committee on a quarterly basis. The College Research and Innovation Committee, in turn, reports to SRIHDC on the activities of the research institute on a quarterly basis.
 - j. Ensure that the institute tables annual financial statements for approval by its Advisory Board.
 - k. Ensure that the institute's annual report is submitted via the College Executive Committee to the Relevant College Board for noting.

7.5 EMPLOYEES

- 7.5.1 The Institute may have permanent or fixed-term contract employees.
- 7.5.2 Permanent or fixed-term contract employees of the Institute may be administrative, professional and academic employees.
- 7.5.3 Academic employees in the Institute which has one of its main purpose research-related community engagements may hold the following positions:

- Junior Researcher
- Researcher
- Senior Researcher
- Associate Professor¹ (with focus on research)
- Professor (with focus on research)

7.5.4 The title of Associate Professor or Professor may be conferred on a Chief Researcher or Head respectively in accordance with the human resources policies of the university.

8. BUDGET AND FINANCING

8.1 The income of the Institute will be derived from:

8.1.1 Unisa operational budget and other allocations from the University

8.1.2 Donations and sponsorships to the Institute

8.1.3 Research grants from the University's research fund

8.1.4 Fees and revenue earned by it from its various activities and operations, and

8.1.5 Contract research and presentations to external bodies.

8.2 The annual operational budget, including the community centred research and community engagement activities, is tabled at an Academic Management Board meeting for review and thereafter submitted the budget to the relevant University structures in accordance with the prescribed University procedures.

8.3 The Institute compiles annual financial statements of the Institute for recommendation by the Academic Management Board.

8.4 The books and accounts of the Institute will be audited annually as prescribed by the University and by an auditor approved by the University.

8.5 Funds are administered in accordance with the approved policies and procedures of UNISA

9. AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution of the Institute will be amended in the following manner:

9.1 The Advisory Board approves, by a resolution of two thirds of the members of the Board present at a meeting, any amendment of this Constitution before being submitted to the Legal Services Department to ensure legal compliance and consistency. Every constitution must be accompanied by a completed certificate of compliance.

10. DISSOLUTION

¹ Refer to decision of Man Com meeting held on 11 May 2010 item 4.1.12

- 10.1 The dissolution of an Institute could result from the review based on proven substantial evidence that the Institute is not operationally or financially sustainable
- 10.2 The Executive Dean of the College submits the review panel report and recommendation to SRIPCC for consideration
- 10.3 If approved by SRIPCC, the Executive Dean of the College submits the review panel report and recommendation to Senate for consideration
- 10.4 Council makes a decision based on the recommendation by Senate
- 10.5 If council supports the dissolution of an Institute, any reserve funds or other assets will be transferred to the College in which it resided. Such funds can only be used for research purposes.
- 10.6 The assets of the Institute belong to the University and will be distributed in accordance with University policies if the Institute is dissolved.

11 GENERAL

This Constitution becomes effective immediately upon approval and supersedes any Constitution previously in effect.

