A Guide to the UCDP

Background:
At the 2nd Higher Education Summit in October 2015, the Department of Higher Education & Training presented a paper that looked at data to assess whether progress was being made with systemic structural transformation in the key areas of student success, staffing and research capacity.

The following successes were noted:

- Access
- Undergraduate and postgraduate student success
- The ability to generate research

The following were noted as key systemic issues to address:

- Improvement in undergraduate drop-out and throughput rates that still reflect apartheid race patterns
- Growth in enrolment and graduate share of Black South African Masters and Doctoral students
- Improve student: staff ratios
- Decrease reliance on the use of temporary and foreign staff
- Increase the representation of South African African and Coloured professional instructional staff to resemble the national demographics
- Increase the number of academic staff with doctoral degrees from 43%
- Improve equitable participation in research production

The overarching concern was about who is gaining access, who is succeeding and in what; who is employed and who is producing research?

The University Capacity Development ProgrammeTransferring teaching, learning, researching and leading towards enhanced quality, success and equity in universities, is underpinned by principles of transformation that “aims to disrupt and transform apartheid era student and staff participation and success patterns at universities” (DHET, 2017). It is intended that the programme will be rolled out and resourced through the University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG), to steer the system in the direction of good practice and ongoing capacity development.

The Principles underpinning the UCDP are as follows:

1. Transformative:
   - It aims to disrupt and transform apartheid era student and staff participation and success patterns at universities
   - It aims to contribute to the development of universities that reflect and nurture South African and African identities and diversity in a global context
   - It operates at the nexus of quality, equity and success as non-competing imperatives
2. People-focused: To develop capacity of students, academics, managers and leaders
3. A focus on Access and Success: Access with high chances of success for undergraduates and postgraduates
4. Research development and teaching development are non-competing imperatives and both must be promoted.
5. Curriculum transformation must be inclusive, driven by social justice imperatives and allow graduates to participate meaningfully in society.
6. National and institutional development priorities are to be addressed.
7. It takes an integrated approach to capacity development – work across student, staff and programme/curriculum development.

Nature and Purpose of the University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG)
- The grant combines the teaching and research development grants to build on previous gains and address the overlap between the two.
- It is catalytic – it provides resources in the form of funds to innovate, take risks, pilot, test, seed different activities, which if successful, should be funded through block grants.
- It is transformational – to support initiatives where rapid and large scale change is needed.

What are the transformation imperatives of the UCDP and UCDG?
- High levels of success for undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- Create an academic development pipeline to recruit new academics in ways that transform the academic workforce and that provides for quality research development and teaching development opportunities for all academics from recruitment to retirement.
- Development opportunities for professional staff, including management and professionals who manage earmarked grants.
- Development of new academic programmes that are national priorities and of strategic importance.
- The review and renewal of curricula to enable responsiveness to transformation imperatives in higher education.

Sub programmes of the UCDP

Student development
- The DHET wants to see strong data analytic capacity in place to enable universities to analyse, plan and predict from quantitative and qualitative data on student progress.
- The types of data that can be analysed ranges from before students enter the system, participation in, and exit from the system; to their participation in society and the economy.
- Effective data analytics (e.g. development of early warning systems) and strong advising systems will allow universities to set up an integrated package of support activities that address diverse development needs and enhance chances of success.
- Examples of activities that universities can introduce or continue to develop students include: teaching and learning support, providing life skills and psycho-social support to undergraduate and postgraduate students to address life/logistic challenges, tutoring, mentoring, developing early warning systems.
Staff development
This sub programme is focused on the development of academic and professional staff in teaching, researching, leading, managing and administration. Activities are implemented as part of the Staffing South Africa’s University Framework. The framework is developed to:

- Recruit, support and retain black academic staff to address their underrepresentation in the sector, particularly South African Africans and Coloured people, with women given priority
- To develop teaching expertise and research skills
- To provide development opportunities and recruitment of supplementary staff to enhance and strengthen teaching and research

The SSAUF contains the following categories against which projects can be developed:

**Nurturing Emerging Scholars Programme (NESP)**
- Identify students who demonstrate academic ability at senior undergraduate or early postgraduate levels who show some interest in an academic career
- Actively recruit these students for tutors, mentors, supplemental instructors and student-focused development activities
- Provide exposure to academic career opportunities through teaching and research development activities

**Existing Academic Staff Capacity Enhancement Programme (EASCEP)**
- Support for staff to complete masters, doctoral and postdoctoral studies in their disciplinary areas
- Development of the following capacities: Teaching, curriculum development, material development, research, leadership and management through formal and informal courses and programmes
- Updating and retraining of academics in understandings of student learning and the uses of teaching and learning-related technologies and modalities. Equipment for piloting these activities may be purchased.
- Recognising excellence in teaching and learning and research (awards)
- Nurturing a scholarship of teaching and learning
- Academic exchange and mobility programmes
- Seed research grants for individuals to initiate and/or support progression
- Topping up of NRF developmental grants (Thuthuka and Y-Rated awards)
- Contribution to the costs of participation of existing staff on a post-doctoral programme

**Supplementary Staff Employment Programme (SSEP)**
This is a cross-cutting support programme for universities to recruit specific skills, on needs and temporary bases to support development initiatives. The following activities could be funded through this category:
- Provide leadership for a new programme
- Recruit local or international expertise to catalyse and stimulate development in an area
- Draw on expertise that may reside in industry
- Provide mentoring capacity and co-supervision
- Provide release time for staff to complete formal qualifications
There are also nationally managed categories as follows:

- **New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP)** - New academics are recruited against carefully balance equity considerations in the light of the disciplinary areas of greatest need and from promising current and past high performing postgraduates who want to pursue careers in academia
- **Higher Education Leadership and Management Programme (HELMP)** – for the development of staff in leadership and management positions who want to pursue careers in university leadership and management. This includes leadership in teaching and learning, research management, student support, institutional research, student counselling, etc. and also a student leadership component
- **SSAUF Development programme (SSAUF-DP)** – for development needs in other programmes

**Curriculum Transformation and Programme Development**

**Curriculum Transformation**
- Extends beyond the content of the curriculum to pedagogy and assessment
- These include calls for decolonizing the curriculum, advancing epistemological diversity and advancing a post-apartheid knowledge agenda, developing responsive and relevant curricula, curriculum contextualisation, course design for student success, etc.

**Programme Development**
- The UCDG will be used as a resources to initiate the development of new programmes in areas that are regional and/or national priorities
- Activities will be led as *collaborative national projects* that will be part-funded through the collaborative component of the UCDP
- The UCDP contribution will be focused on aspects aligned to its goals.
- The projects will also seek to draw on the contribution of a range of stakeholders who will benefit from the establishment of the programme

The UCDG funding allocation model:
UCT has been allocated R12,477 million for 2018. This total allocation, is distributed according to the allocation model below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University-managed activities</th>
<th>Allocation range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Development</td>
<td>20% - 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Development</td>
<td>20% - 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurturing Emerging Scholars Programme (NESP)</td>
<td>≤ 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Academic Staff Capacity Enhancement Programme (EASCEP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Teaching Development</td>
<td>20% - 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Research Development</td>
<td>20% - 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary Staff Employment Programme (SSEP)</td>
<td>≤ 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Transformation &amp; Programme Development</td>
<td>≤ 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of the UCDG/P, including M&amp;E</td>
<td>≤ 5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nationally managed activities will be distributed as follows. The allocations below do not form part of UCT’s allocation of 12,477 million indicated above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationally coordinated programmes</th>
<th>% Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP)</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education Leadership and Management Programme (HELMP)</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative development activities</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Criteria for the Development of Institution’s UCDP Plans
Plans will be developed for consultation with the DHET at a workshop to be held on 28th July 2017. The final Plan will be submitted on 31st August 2017.

Plans must be:

- Aligned to institutional strategic plans
- Have clear targets to be achieved over 3 years, aligned to institutional and national targets
- Be evidence-based, and data-informed
- Coherent: activities must work together towards achieving targets
- Cost-effective, efficient and supported by a detailed, activity-based, itemised budget
- Indicate the extent to which appropriate structures (staff, physical resources, systems, processes) are in place, or will be put in place at the university to enable successful implementation of the Plan
Accountability framework:
The DHET has developed 19 system level indicators to be tracked over the next three cycles of implementation to 2026.

The indicators show achievement gaps that exist across the range of groups that are profiled. UCDP plans and projects must include institutional targets for the 19 indicators.

Projected targets for 2023 for most indicators are based on what was achieved from 2005 to 2015.

UCT has added four indicated related to postgraduate student completion and d

- Indicator 1: Overall participation rate/gross enrolment ratio in higher education (%)
- Indicator 2: First-time enrolment share in undergraduate programmes (%)
- Indicator 3: Participation rates in masters programmes (%)
- Indicator 4: Participation rates in doctoral programmes (%)
- Indicator 5: Undergraduate student success rate (%)
- Indicator 6: First year dropout rate in 3 year contact undergraduate diplomas (%)
- Indicator 7: First year dropout rate in 3 year contact undergraduate degrees (%)
- Indicator 9: First year dropout rate in undergraduate degrees of 4 or more years duration (%)
- Indicator 10: Throughput rate for 3 year contact undergraduate diplomas
- Indicator 11: Throughput rate for 3 year contact undergraduate degrees (%)
- Indicator 13: Throughput rate for contact undergraduate degrees of 4 or more years duration (%)
- Indicator 15: Graduate share in masters programmes (%)
- Indicator 16: Graduate share in doctoral programmes (%)
- Indicator 17: Permanent instructional/research staff demographic (%)
- Indicator 18: University instructional and research staff doctorate (%)
- Indicator 19: Per capita research output
- Indicator 20: Postgraduate student success rate (%) at Masters and PhD level
- Indicator 21: Dropout rates at Masters and PhD level
- Indicator 22: Completion time for Masters degrees
- Indicator 23: Completion time for PhD degrees

UCT will implement an M&E system based on our learnings from the Teaching Development Grants, to track the extent to which interventions contribute to meeting the targets and enable decisions about the efficacy of interventions and continued implementation.

Exclusions:
The UCDG cannot be used to fund:

- Normal costs of programme and course design and delivery.
- General infrastructure and equipment.
- Appointment of regular teaching, administration and technical staff, except in the case of contract staff8 to support teaching, learning and research development activities, and in the case of appointment of tutors and mentors. Plans should be put in place to employ people contracted in this way permanently on the university establishment, using university funds as these become available.
- General research projects.
- Payment for researchers employed/paid to do research to boost the research profile of the university.
- Any activities that should be funded as part of the university’s core business costs.
- Monetary incentives to students and staff for participation in the projects.

**Tri-Annual Symposium**

A national student and staff success symposium will be held once in every 3 year UCDG cycle to help inform best practices within and across institutions.

- The symposium should involve participation from every university that benefits from the UCDG.
- The overall purpose of the tri-annual Student and Staff Success Symposia will be to provide a platform for sharing promising practice with respect to student, staff and programme/curriculum development.
- Participation at the symposium could be funded through interest earned on UCDG funds at the university.
- The Student and Staff Success Symposium will take place at the end of a three year UCDG cycle, to enable reflection on activities undertaken in that cycle, so as to inform choices made for the next cycle.

Reference: [Ministerial Statement on the Implementation of the University Capacity Development Programme through Effective Management and Utilisation of the University Capacity Development Grant 2018 – 2020](#)