NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Policy on Cooperative Education



Cooperative Education

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	Draft Namibia National Work-Integrated Learning Policy Framework (2024)	*Namibia University of Science and Technology Act (Act No. 7 of 2015)*
	Namibia Qualifications Authority Act (Act No. 9 of 1996)	*Internship Guidelines, Framework and relevant WIL guides*
	Higher Education Act (Act No. 26 of 2003)	*NUST Curriculum Framework*
	Namibia Affirmative Action (Employment Act, 1998)	*NUST Quality Assurance Policy*
	NCHE Quality Assurance standards	*NUST Quality Management Framework*
	National Human Resources Plan 2010 – 2025	*NUST Teaching and Learning and Assessment Policy/Framework*
	Internship Policy 2018 (Public Service Commission)	*NUST Employability Policy*
	Vocational Education and Training Act (Act No.1 of 2008)	*NUST Employability Procedures/Guidelines*
		NUST eLearning Policy
		Draft Policy on Policy Development and Review
		Policy on the Delivery of Industry Credentialed Courses and Qualifications
		NUST Programme Development and Review Policy

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AUTHENTICATION

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Abbreviation	Meaning
ADS-CE	Academic Development and Support - Cooperative Education
EIP	Employability Improvement Programme
HEI	Higher Education Institution
PBL	Problem-based Learning
PJBL	Project-based Learning
SA-CHE	South African – Council of Higher Education
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning

Acronym	Meaning
NUST	Namibia University of Science and Technology
SASCE	Southern African Society for Co-operative Education
WACE	World Association for Cooperative Education
WIL	Work Integrated Learning

DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Authentic workplace	A workstation where students perform tasks in line with their disciplines and are attached to a mentor. This may include private and public organisations as well as community-based projects.
Cooperative Education	An educational approach that combines theoretical classroom knowledge with practical work experience to enhanced by cooperation between the university, industry, and the public sector.
Employability Improvement Programme	An employability soft skills training course aimed at preparing students for the workplace.
ePre-WIL Work Readiness	A work readiness course meant to prepare students for the industry before their Work Integrated Learning placements.
Problem-based Learning (PBL)	A dynamic teaching approach in which students explore real-world problems and challenges used as a vehicle to promote student learning and develop skills such as, critical thinking, problem-solving and communication.
Project-based Learning (PJBL)	A WIL modality where students apply their theoretical knowledge in real workplace projects under the supervision of a university lecturer and workplace supervisor or mentor. A dynamic teaching approach in which students explore real-world problems and challenges used as a vehicle to promote student learning and develop skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving and communication.
Service Learning	A credit-bearing learning/educational approach, in which students participate in structured and organised service activities aimed at addressing identified service needs in a community. Students reflect on service experience to gain an understanding of their discipline and achieve career goals.
Work Integrated	An intentional, organised, supervised, and assessed educational

Learning (WIL)	activity that integrates theoretical learning with its applications in the professional/industry workplace.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	The process of evaluating the knowledge, skills or wider competences which an individual has previously acquired.

1. PREAMBLE

This policy aims to promote Work Integrated Learning (WIL) at Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) in its cooperative education model, as part undergraduate curriculum. It fosters a collaborative environment were faculty, students, industry and the community work together to ensure the integration of academic theory and knowledge with relevant work practice.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles that guide cooperative education activities at NUST and the integration of WIL in all undergraduate programmes at the institution. The implementation of cooperative education will be in line with the NUST strategic objectives of being a responsive university of choice for the development of students' soft skills needed by industry.

1.2 Background

WIL has been incorporated in all undergraduate programmes at NUST. Since its inception, successes have been recorded in terms of graduates' work readiness and an increase in employability skills in NUST graduates. However, challenges such as a lack of placement opportunities in the workplace, limited understanding of WIL by stakeholders (academics, students, industry, and community), and WIL administration and assessment have been and are being observed. This policy, through CE, aims to address the challenges above and increase the scope of application of WIL activities at NUST as well as provide support and guidance to all stakeholders.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

1.3.1 Ensure the integration of formal, credit-bearing Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) components into curricula in accordance with the NUST curriculum model to facilitate the attainment of graduate attributes and enhance work readiness.

1.3.2 Promote student employability, career development, entrepreneurship, and professional preparedness through Pre-WIL programmes and exposure to authentic work environments.

1.3.3 Facilitate directed work-based learning experiences, including industry placements, apprenticeships, practicum, fieldwork, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET),

and other workplace-based opportunities that enable students to acquire practical skills and professional competence.

1.3.4 Encourage innovative and diverse WIL approaches, including virtual and simulated work environments, service learning, community engagement, and project- and problem-based learning initiatives that address real industry and societal needs.

1.3.5 Strengthen partnerships with industry and other stakeholders through collaboration, mentorship development, and systematic feedback mechanisms to ensure the relevance and responsiveness of curricula to labour market requirements.

1.3.6 Ensure the quality assurance, assessment, and continuous improvement of WIL practices, including authentic learning experiences, workplace mentorship, recognition of prior learning (RPL), and the awarding of appropriate credit or status for prior work and life experience.

2. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This policy applies to all undergraduate Bachelor programmes at NUST, all Faculties, industry partners, professional and community organisations and communities involved in WIL. The policy does not apply to optional work opportunities undertaken by students (for example but not limited to summer placement, part-time employment and company internships) which are not a part of the course requirements.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy has been developed to provide directives for WIL engagement in line with the strategic objectives of NUSA. The policy provides the framework to ensure regulated and quality-assured WIL practices and standards embracing technology at NUST. and in industry.

4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The policy is guided by the following legislation:

4.1 Namibia University of Science and Technology Act (Act No. 7 of 2015)

4.2 Draft Namibia National Work-Integrated Learning Policy Framework (2024)

4.3 Higher Education Act (Act No. 26 of 2003: https://www.lac.org.na/laws/annoSTAT/Higher%20Education%20Act%2026%20of%202003.pdf

4.4 Namibia Affirmative Action (Employment Act, 1998: https://bing.com/search?q=Namibia+Affirmative+Action+Employment+Act+1998)

4.5 Namibia Qualifications Authority Act (Act No. 9 of 1996: https://namiblii.org/akn/na/act/2003/26/eng%402008-06-02)

4.6 NCHE Quality Assurance Standards (https://namiblii.org/akn/na/act/2003/26/eng%402008-06-02)

4.7 National Human Resources Plan 2010 – 2025 (https://www.npc.gov.na/publicpolicy/higher-education-act-2003)

4.8 Internship Policy 2018 (Public Service Commission: https://aspyee.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/Apprenticeship%20Tools-2nd%20webinar-Summary%20of%20the%20Namibia%20paper-EN.pdf)

5. PRINCIPLES GUIDING PRACTICES AT NUST

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) at NUST shall be guided by the following principles:

5.1 WIL shall align with the University's strategic goals of preparing students for professional practice through collaborative engagement with industry, government, communities, and other external stakeholders.

5.2 All undergraduate programmes shall incorporate one or more structured, credit-bearing WIL components as an integral part of the curriculum, which shall be assessed and moderated in accordance with NUST quality assurance requirements.

5.3 NUST shall endeavour to create, secure, and promote suitable WIL placement opportunities for students through strategic partnerships, stakeholder engagement, corporate branding initiatives, and collaboration with industry and other relevant organisations.

5.4 WIL learning activities shall be supported by programme-specific guidelines developed by Faculties and Departments in collaboration with Cooperative Education, and students shall be required to maintain and submit appropriate portfolios of evidence through approved platforms.

5.5 Assessment, monitoring, evaluation, moderation, and workplace visits shall be conducted through face-to-face and/or virtual modalities in accordance with NUST quality assurance standards to ensure the integrity and quality of the learning experience.

5.6 NUST shall provide appropriate support and capacity development for academic staff, workplace mentors, and other stakeholders involved in WIL through training, resource materials, guidelines, and the sharing of good practices.

5.7 NUST shall promote equitable participation in WIL by recognising prior learning in accordance with institutional rules, facilitating opportunities for international students in compliance with applicable legislation, and ensuring students are protected under the University's insurance arrangements during approved WIL activities.

5.8 NUST shall continuously enhance the quality and relevance of WIL through benchmarking, professional networking, membership of recognised cooperative education bodies, and the adoption of national and international best practices.

6. POLICY CONTEXT

The policy provides a framework for WIL as an integral part of the NUST curricula to enhance the graduate employability. NUST maintains a close link with industry, government and the community for continuous interaction, engagement and reciprocal knowledge transfer. The institution also developed and continues to review its curricula with close cooperation with industry to enhance students' employability. The inclusion of WIL in all undergraduate programmes at NUST strengthens this link. The university recognises WIL as a purposeful, organised, supervised and assessed educational activity which integrates theoretical learning with its applications in the workplace. NUST, therefore, established ADS-CE to provide support to the Faculties regarding the inclusion of WIL in programmes as well as form partnerships with industry to enable students' WIL placements. This policy, therefore, aims to provide guidance in achieving high-quality standardised WIL practice and procedures by establishing the rules and guidelines for its adoption.

7. STRUCTURES GOVERNING THE POLICY

The office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching, Learning, and Technology will oversee the development, implementation, and review of the Cooperative Education Policy.

8. IMPLEMENTATION

8.1 Roles and Responsibilities

8.1.1 Council: The NUST Council is responsible for final approval of this policy.

8.1.2 Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching, Learning and Technology (DVC-TLT) is the coordinating SENEX member of the Cooperative Education Policy.

8.1.3 ADS-CE is responsible for overseeing the implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and review of the policy in collaboration with faculty and all stakeholders, as described in further detail in the Cooperative Education Procedures and Guidelines.

8.2 Support and Advice

ADS-CE is the primary contact point for support and advice related to the policy.

8.3 Communication

Once the policy is approved by the Council, the Office of the Registrar and the Deputy Vice Chancellor: Teaching, Learning and Technology will issue a joint circular to inform the NUST community about its approval and publication on the NUST policy portal on the staff intranet. This circular will serve to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the policy's existence and its implications for cooperative education practices at the university.

To further promote understanding and ownership of the policy, the Department of Academic Development and Support will conduct awareness-raising workshops with stakeholders. These workshops will focus on enhancing the understanding of the policy, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder, and fostering a culture of collaboration and commitment to the objectives of cooperative education.

9. COMMENTS

NUST faculties and stakeholders may submit any comments or suggestions of improvement to the Director ADS-CE.

10. REVIEW

This Policy is reviewed at least every five years from its effective date, with the review commencing in the fourth year of implementation so that a revised version can be approved by the fifth year. The Policy may be reviewed earlier if a need is identified.



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