

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
ORIENTATION POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to enhance the planning and co-ordination of orientation; and ultimately improve the student experience of Orientation at UCT. The policy is applicable, in the first instance, to persons responsible for planning and running orientation events; and is a policy of the Orientation Co-ordinating Committee.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

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| CDP: | Career Development Programme |
| CMD: | Communication and Marketing Department |
| CPS: | Campus Protection Services |
| DISCHO: | Discrimination and Harassment Office |
| DSA: | Department of Student Affairs |
| DVC: | Deputy Vice-Chancellor |
| ED: | Executive Director |
| HAICU: | HIV AIDS Co-ordination- UCT |
| IAPO: | International Academic Programmes Office |
| OCC: | Orientation Co-ordinating Committee |
| PASS: | Professional, Administrative and Support Staff |
| RCS: | Rules on Conduct for Students |
| SOA: | Student Orientation and Advocacy |
| SRC: | Students' Representative Council |
| UCT: | University of Cape Town |
| USAC: | University Student Affairs Committee |
| VC: | Vice-Chancellor |

1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1. "Orientation" refers to the purposive, formal process and academic and social programmes to welcome new students; and ensure that they are equipped with the necessary information, skills and attitudes to adjust positively to the university environment.
- 1.2. "Student" is a person currently registered at the University for a programme of study leading to a degree, diploma or certificate, or as an occasional student.
- 1.3. "Undergraduate Student" means a person registered for an undergraduate qualification as defined by the faculty.
- 1.4. "Postgraduate Student" means a person registered for a postgraduate qualification as defined by the faculty.
- 1.5. "First Time Entering Student" refers to a student who registers, or is in the process of registration for the first time as an undergraduate or postgraduate student.

- 1.6. "Orientation period" is the formal period of orientation activities in the university calendar, and as determined by Senate from time to time.
- 1.7. "Recognised student structure" is a student-run structure, recognised as such in terms of the SRC Constitution and the relevant university committees. Such structures include: SRC, Student Assembly, residence House Committees, societies, sports clubs, undergraduate and postgraduate faculty councils, development agencies and day houses.
- 1.8. "Social programme" is an event or series of events which includes entertainment, or parties, or cultural activities or similar activities.
- 1.10 "Academic-related Orientation Programme" refers to the academic-related activities, such as course and curriculum details, study methods, tests, numeracy and literacy sessions, that prepare students for academic life.

2. SANCTION ON INITIATION/ HAZING PRACTICES

- 2.1. Initiation or hazing includes voluntary, nominally-voluntary, or compulsory and/or coercive and/or subtle and/or unauthorized activities that target first-year students to undertake demeaning tasks or that involve rituals for membership of and/or affiliation to a student activity or residence. Extreme examples of initiation practices include compulsory head-shaving where those invited to volunteer are the initiates to the group, and "bush-diving".
- 2.2. Initiation or hazing practices are not permitted and will result in disciplinary action, as indicated in RCS 6.16 and RCS 8.14 of the General Rules and Policies, Handbook No 3.
- 2.3. Orientation programmes may not contain any element of initiation.

3. OBJECTIVES OF ORIENTATION

- 3.1. To welcome new undergraduate and postgraduate students to the university.
- 3.2. To provide new students with information about registration, curriculum, academic support services, student support services, student-run activities, residence life, and university rules, policies and procedures.
- 3.3. To welcome parents and provide them with information about the university.
- 3.4. To provide new students with basic tools and skills necessary to navigate the university environment so as to assist in their adjustment to the university; promote academic success and encourage participation in social, cultural and sports activities.
- 3.5. To contribute to students' academic success and throughput by laying a foundation for academic work, and ensuring new students access to support mechanisms.
- 3.6. To ensure appropriate balance between academic and social activities in the overall orientation programme.
- 3.7. To promote the values of the university, as outlined in the UCT mission statement.
- 3.8. To promote on-going/ long-term orientation and support for new students.
- 3.9. To ensure that orientation processes are regularly monitored, evaluated and reviewed.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ORIENTATION

Orientation Co-ordinating Committee (OCC)

- 4.1. The OCC is a committee of the University Student Affairs Committee, which is a committee of the University Council.
- 4.2. The OCC is responsible for ensuring co-ordination of the orientation activities, scheduling events and approving student-run programmes as set out in its terms of reference.
- 4.3. The membership and meeting frequency are as set out in its terms of reference.
- 4.4. The OCC must meet to schedule activities and approve programmes for the following year.
- 4.5. The OCC must receive reports on and evaluate orientation at its first meeting annually, and submit a final report to the USAC.

Student Orientation and Advocacy Division (Department of Student Affairs)

- 4.6. The Student Orientation and Advocacy (SOA) division is responsible for day-to-day co-ordination of orientation activities and for providing support to orientation partners, particularly in the design and planning phase of Orientation.
- 4.7. The SOA ensures the timely delivery of required orientation materials to faculties and relevant PASS departments.
- 4.8. The SOA division ensures support for the recruitment and training of student orientation leaders.
- 4.9. The SOA division is responsible for organising a First Year social activity. Usually this is the First Year Braai, in partnership with SRC and UCT Radio.
- 4.10. The SOA Division is responsible for servicing the Orientation Co-ordinating Committee; and for compiling final reports on orientation.
- 4.11. The SOA must ensure that it provides orientation partners with templates and tools to evaluate and monitor orientation activities.

Orientation Partners

- 4.12. The Vice-Chancellor, ED: DSA, Deans, SRC and Faculty Councils' formally welcome students in each faculty and IAPO. The formal welcome is co-ordinated by the Student Orientation and Advocacy division.
- 4.13. Each faculty and IAPO have orientation co-ordinators and/or programme convenors who are responsible for recruitment of orientation leaders, and designing and implementing faculty-based and IAPO orientation programmes. In general, academic programme convenors contribute to the orientation programme planning so that they are aware of what the students have been exposed to before lectures begin.
- 4.14. The Residence staff and House Committees are responsible for designing and implementing residence orientation programmes.
- 4.15. DISCHO, HAICU, Disability Services, CPS, and CDP deliver sessions in all programmes.

- 4.16. The Communication and Marketing Department (CMD) is responsible for the design and co-ordination and delivery of the Parents' Orientation programme.
- 4.17. The SRC provides the "Freshers' Guide", co-ordinates transport for new students on arrival at Cape Town Bus and Train Station; and co-ordinates student organisations on the plaza.
- 4.18. Faculty councils, development agencies, societies, sport clubs and day houses provide approved social events and activities.

5. PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR ORIENTATION PROGRAMMES

GENERAL

- 5.1. All programmes must be submitted to the Orientation Co-ordinating Committee to ensure co-ordination and alignment to the objectives of orientation.
- 5.2. All orientation activities must aim to promote positive and realistic messages to welcome students and reduce anxiety to facilitate adjustment.
- 5.3. Registration and orientation activities coincide during the orientation period; and the timing for these activities are set annually in the preceding year(s) and as approved by the Senate.
- 5.4. Generic activities and sessions for all programmes are:
 - 5.4.1. Formal Welcome by Vice-Chancellor, Deans, SRC and Faculty Councils
 - 5.4.2. Registration
 - 5.4.3. Faculty, curriculum and course information and activities
 - 5.4.4. HIV/ AIDS anti-stigma and prevention
 - 5.4.5. Social Justice policies, including sexual offences and sexual harassment, racial harassment; and relevant policies approved from time to time
 - 5.4.6. Health, Safety and Security
 - 5.4.7. Social diversity (e.g. race, gender, disability, anti-xenophobia and homophobia)
 - 5.4.8. Career Development session
 - 5.4.9. Schedule for first day of classes (normally the Friday preceding the first week of lectures)
- 5.5. Targeted/ specific programmes for which dedicated time must be provided in the overall programme
 - 5.5.1. Parent's Orientation
 - 5.5.2. International Students' programme co-ordinated by IAPO
 - 5.5.3. SRC plaza activities
 - 5.5.4. Residences Welcome and orientation programmes
- 5.6. Information in Orientation Packs
 - 5.6.1. Faculty, course and curriculum information and handbooks
 - 5.6.2. University handbooks
 - 5.6.3. Orientation programme
 - 5.6.4. Teaching and Learning Charter

5.6.5. SRC Fresher's Guide

5.6.6. Residence-specific information in each residence information pack

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT-RUN EVENTS AND PROGRAMMES DURING ORIENTATION

- 5.7. Entities (companies, student groups) which are not recognised student structures are not permitted to organise, advertise and run orientation events. Student organisations will be held accountable for assisting and/or supporting the activities run by entities not permitted to do so.
- 5.8. Events and programmes organised by student structures must be approved by the OCC, subject to the requirements of relevant university policies. Relevant university policies include policy on events where alcohol is served or sold, risk management, residence rules and general student rules.
- 5.9. Events which include the serving and selling of alcohol on and off campus are not permitted during orientation, with the following exceptions:
- 5.9.1. Approved events in the final week of orientation, between 6pm- 10pm on weekdays.
- 5.9.2. Approved events on the weekend at the end of the final week of orientation, and preceding the first week of term.
- 5.10. Student organisations that do not comply with the provisions in this policy, may face disciplinary action as outlined the General Rules and Policies, in RCS 13.2 "The office-bearers of any recognised University student body shall be personally liable for any breach of any University rule committed by members of that body in the name of that body, unless such office-bearers establish that they took all reasonable steps to prevent the breach of such rule(s)"

6. POLICY ALIGNMENT AND APPLICABILITY

- 6.1. This policy is aligned to UCT's mission and to relevant policies framed by the university from time to time.
- 6.2. This policy must ensure alignment to registration processes.
- 6.3. This policy is applicable to the community of the University of Cape Town.

7. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

- 7.1. The OCC is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Orientation Policy.
- 7.2. The Student Orientation and Advocacy division will ensure operational co-ordination of the implementation of this policy; and initiate regular reviews with orientation partners as required.
- 7.3. Amendments to this policy are via the OCC to USAC for Council approval.

Considered and Recommended by the OCC in November 2008 and March 2009.....

Recommended by USAC on 7 May 2009.....

Approved by Council on.....3 June 2009.....