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¹ S22: 2009-12-01 Item 8.18 Annex 8.18 (whole policy review)

² S28:2011-11-22 Item 8.8 (whole policy review)

³ S36 2014-08-12 Item 8.15 (whole policy review)

⁴ Policy was edited, renumbered and Glossary and Roles added.

⁵ S48:2018-07-05 item 7.2.5

⁶ S51: 2019-07-11 Item 7.2.7 (whole policy review)

⁷ S60: 2022-07-14 item 8.2.5

⁸ Inserted S64 2023-11-13 Item 8.4, Glossary and Roles updated, Section 5(4) updated and editorial changes made to IIE022 version 8.

⁹ S68:2025-04-16 Item 10.2.3 (Full review of the IIE 022 Teaching and Learning Strategy)

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TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY 2030

1 INTRODUCTION

- (1) The Independent Institute of Education (Pty) Ltd (“The IIE”) Teaching and Learning Strategy is approved after a robust process of research, discussion and debate. The higher education landscape and the country have undergone substantial changes since the current Teaching and Learning (T&L) Strategy was approved, necessitating a review of its continued relevance and effectiveness. The revision and consequent enhancement of the T&L Strategy is informed by this ever-changing environment, the national policy directives, best practice and the needs of our students.
- (2) In recent years, The IIE has re-envisioned the strategic intent and graduate attributes of the institution, signalling our commitment to transformation and academic excellence. Our Teaching and Learning Strategy ultimately provides us with direction on how to achieve this. It outlines our vision for teaching and learning in higher education and describes our unique identity as the leading private higher education provider in the country. The IIE adopts a principle-led approach to teaching and learning with a keen appreciation that disciplines “know” and “do” in different ways. The intention is therefore not to prescribe, but to provide guidance and direction through our underpinning principles. While the strategy frames the key imperatives of teaching and learning, it is up to the responsible academics and relevant stakeholders to contextualise and operationalise many of these imperatives.
- (3) This document explices our philosophy and articulates The IIE’s vision for teaching and learning. The strategy underlines the key strategic goals and priorities for the institution and describes how these can be implemented.

2 PURPOSE OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY

- (1) The purpose of the Teaching and Learning Strategy is to articulate the strategic vision for teaching and learning excellence at The IIE. This strategy defines what constitutes quality teaching and learning within our institutional context.

3 OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

- (1) Our teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the belief that learning is an active process of changing existing knowledge and skills and developing new ways of thinking and acting. This definition is aligned with a constructivist approach and relies on a lecturer and student’s active engagement in the process. Students’ level of engagement depends on their level of interest. Curriculum developers and instructional designers should aim to stimulate student interest through the elements of curriculum design. Consequently, academics, who direct student learning, are also responsible for stimulating interest in the disciplines that they teach.

- (2) Deep learning is a core component of our philosophy. Deep learning is a result of continuously building and amending previous beliefs and cognitive structures as new experiences, actions and knowledge are processed. These experiences, actions, and knowledge can be assimilated into current cognitive structures, i.e., existing cognitive structures that can be adapted to include the new information and skills. However, there are times when cognitive structures must undergo significant change to process this new information. Thus, The IIE acknowledges that learning is often difficult for individuals because there may be conflict or a large difference between existing cognitive structures and the new forms of thinking and being that are being developed. Recognising these inherent challenges in the learning process, The IIE's teaching and learning philosophy is committed to supporting students in navigating these complexities and fostering environments conducive to deep and transformative learning experiences.
- (3) The IIE understands that technology has an important role to play in contemporary higher education. As a progressive institution that strives to leverage the opportunities provided by technological advancements, we will continue to adapt and integrate technology that promotes learning and enhances the experiences of students. We also acknowledge that such integration should be evidence-based, taking into consideration the complex mix of social, personal and professional factors that may impact the successful integration of technology. We prioritise research and best practice, ensuring technology integration is driven by our educational goals, not technological determinism. We aim to take advantage of the potential benefits that technology brings whilst promoting human agency and access.
- (4) The IIE seeks to meet the diverse educational needs of all students and to promote the development of cross-cultural perspectives and respect for different values. The development of transferable skills is essential for students to live and work in an internationalised world characterised by diversity. Private higher education institutions, like The IIE, have an integral part to play in contributing to the human capital of this country and the continent at large. The IIE is committed to producing graduates with the necessary attributes, skills and competencies to make a meaningful contribution to economic development. To achieve this, we endeavour to continuously pursue quality in all related teaching and learning activities. We will continue to stay abreast of local and international trends and best practices to ensure we are producing graduates needed by the market, who can tackle the societal ills that plague the continent, and who are solution-driven to promote meaningful development.

4 GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

(1) The graduate attributes of The IIE help define what we consider to be a quality teaching and learning offering and help us frame our purpose. In articulating these graduate attributes, we understand that these go beyond disciplinary expertise and reflect the desired qualities we would like to develop in our graduates. The development of these attributes is a critical part of our teaching and learning strategy and needs to be embedded in all core areas of programme and curriculum design, assessment and pedagogical activities. These attributes need to be developed in a meaningful way and used to reinforce quality teaching and learning practices. At a faculty and/or disciplinary level, it is important that these attributes are an integral part of programme design and review, that informs approaches to teaching and learning activities and that we provide students with the opportunities to develop and demonstrate such attributes.

4.1 What Makes an IIE Graduate

(1) The following are some of the key characteristics of an IIE graduate:

- a) **Innovative Co-creators** who seek ethical and meaningful solutions and promote transformative knowledge that addresses challenges faced by individuals and society.
- b) **Holistic Thinkers** who adopt eco-systemic perspectives on global issues and local contexts and view challenges and solutions critically and comprehensively.
- c) **Change Advocates** who skilfully and mindfully challenge the status quo and champion meaningful solutions through principled leadership.
- d) **Engaged Citizens** who promote social cohesion, diversity, equity, and inclusion, leading with purpose, influence, and integrity within their respective spheres of influence.
- e) **Resilient Navigators** who approach learning, transformational and personal challenges with unwavering perseverance and a willingness to adapt.
- f) **Empowered Individuals** who are self-directed, life-long learners who seek opportunities for growth and continually expand their knowledge and skills in pursuit of personal and professional success.
- g) **Intellectually Curious Individuals** who are self-reflective with a tolerance for ambiguity and the intellectual curiosity to explore new ways of thinking, knowing, being and understanding.
- h) **Versatile Communicators** who can both collaborate effectively within a team and work independently, with well-developed negotiation and networking skills.

5 VISION 2030

- (1) Teaching and learning is a dynamic and transformative space where academics and students have shared responsibilities. The institution is responsible for providing a teaching and learning environment that is innovative, supportive and geared towards student success. Additionally, students are also required to take responsibility for their own learning and academic success. Our key strategic priorities are an important step towards creating this environment and empowering our students to succeed in their spheres of influence.
- (2) Vision 2030 describes the key strategic teaching and learning priorities for the institution. By establishing these focus areas for a five-year period, we hope to promote continuity in our teaching and learning landscape and ensure that we have adequate opportunity to plan, implement and review our initiatives to address these priorities.

5.1 Key Strategic Priorities 2030

5.1.1 Constructive alignment

- (1) Constructive alignment is not just a pedagogical technique; it is a strategic priority that can significantly enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Constructive alignment emphasises the deliberate alignment of learning outcomes (what we want students to learn), teaching activities (how we mediate their learning), and assessment tasks (how we measure their learning) to create a cohesive and effective learning experience for our students. The strategic priority of constructive alignment is based on the principle that students construct their own meaning through active engagement with the learning material. Therefore, the teaching activities should provide opportunities for students to actively engage with content, practice the skills and develop the understanding outlined in the learning outcomes. The assessments should then directly measure how well the students have achieved those outcomes.
- (2) Prioritising constructive alignment offers the institution several strategic advantages. It maximises the chances of students achieving the learning outcomes as it moves beyond “covering content” to ensuring that students actually “learn” it. When students understand the connection between what they are learning, the activities they are doing, and how they will be assessed, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated. This clarity fosters a sense of purpose and ownership. Constructive alignment focuses on aligning teaching activities to learning outcomes, leading to more purposeful and impactful teaching. Constructive alignment provides a framework for designing coherent and integrated curricula. It ensures that modules contribute to the overall learning goals of the qualification. By tracking student performance on aligned assessments, institutions can gather valuable data to inform curriculum review and improvement efforts. This allows for the continuous refinement of the teaching and learning process.

5.1.2 Assessment as learning

- (1) Assessment as learning as a key strategic priority shifts the focus of assessment from simply measuring learning outcomes to actively fostering learning during the assessment process. Assessment as learning recognises that assessment is not something “done” to students but rather a powerful learning opportunity. It underlines the use of formative assessment strategies that provide students with ongoing feedback and information about their progress. This feedback is then used by students to identify their strengths and weaknesses, adjust their learning strategies, and improve their understanding. It is a cyclical process of learning, feedback and adjustment.
- (2) Assessment as learning is a powerful strategy for enhancing student learning and promoting self-regulated learning, student agency, and metacognitive skills, which are essential for effective learning and problem-solving. By prioritising assessment as learning, our institution can create a more engaging, effective and empowering learning environment where all students are provided with the opportunity to reach their full potential. It is a strategic investment in student success and the development of lifelong learners.

5.1.3 Educational technology

- (1) Educational technology encompasses the purposeful integration of technology to enhance teaching, learning and institutional effectiveness. Educational technology centres on leveraging the power of digital tools and resources to create more engaging, personalised, accessible and effective learning experiences for students. While holding true to fundamental teaching and learning principles, it is not about merely using technology “in” education, but about using technology to “transform” education.
- (2) Educational technology is strategically important for the institution because it facilitates increased collaboration between students and educators, fostering a sense of community and shared learning. Integrating technology into education helps students to develop the digital literacy skills they need in the 21st-century workforce. Educational technology provides valuable data on student learning and institutional effectiveness, which can be used to inform instructional decisions, curriculum development and strategic planning.

5.1.4 Work-integrated learning

- (1) Work-integrated learning (WIL) recognises the critical importance of bridging the gap between theoretical learning and practical application in the workplace. WIL centres on strategically integrating meaningful work experiences into the curriculum to enhance student learning, develop essential professional skills, and improve graduate employability. It is a structured and intentional approach to connecting academic knowledge with real-world practice. It is essential that WIL opportunities protect the rights and safety of students, provide quality feedback from real-world contexts to students, and are effectively assessed by the institution.

(2) WIL provides students with the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge in a practical setting, deepening their understanding and reinforcing their learning. It makes learning more relevant and meaningful. It provides students with opportunities to showcase their learning to future employers. WIL fosters stronger relationships between educational institutions and industry partners, leading to collaborative research opportunities, curriculum development and talent pipelines. WIL is not just a valuable addition to a student's education; it is a strategic priority that can transform the learning experience and improve graduate outcomes. Our institution can create a more relevant, engaging, and effective system that prepares students for success in the 21st-century workforce and contributes to economic growth and development. It is an investment in the future of both students and the community.

5.1.5 Professional Development

(1) The professional development of our educators recognises that high-quality teaching is the cornerstone of effective education. It focuses on the ongoing growth and development of our educators' knowledge and skills to ensure that they are equipped to meet the evolving needs of students and create dynamic and engaging learning environments. It is an investment in the present and future of education, acknowledging that educators are lifelong learners themselves.

(2) Ongoing professional development leads to more effective instruction and improved student outcomes. Investing in professional growth demonstrates value and support, which can lead to increased job satisfaction and retention. It also helps to attract and retain top talent. Professional development can cultivate leadership skills among educators, preparing them for leadership roles in the institution. A commitment to professional development fosters a culture of continuous improvement within the institution, where educators are always striving to improve their practice.

6 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY

(1) This strategy should be viewed as a guiding document to help faculties and departments prioritise key strategic imperatives, establish appropriate Teaching and Learning projects and ensure that adequate resources are available to implement these plans. The aim is that the principles and the strategic priorities outlined in this strategy will increase the effectiveness of various interventions by ensuring that there is appropriate alignment and coherence across the institution.

(2) All faculties are required to carefully consider Teaching and Learning plans developed in consultation with the Communities of Practice (CoPs). These plans should be geared towards the strategic priorities of the institution and the unique requirements of the various disciplines. These plans and/or activities should be iterative and reviewed regularly and ordinarily should be planned over a 5-year period. The faculties are also to determine the most appropriate means for monitoring these activities and how data will need to be collected to establish the success of these initiatives. The Teaching and Learning committees will play an oversight and supportive role to aid in the implementation and review of these plans.