Enrolment, Admissions and Selections Department Policy

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MANCOSA
Member of HONORIS UNITED UNIVERSITIES

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1. Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to regulate and provide clear, consistent, and transparent guidelines for the enrolment, admission and selection, and placement of prospective students at MANCOSA, in accordance with higher education legislation, statutory regulations, recognised best practices, and institutional requirements. The policy applies to both national and international applicants and supports the strategic objectives of MANCOSA.

The policy supports MANCOSA's mission of *Impacting Lives Through Innovative Education* and aligns with our vision of *Education for a Better World for All* by providing a fair, inclusive, and streamlined access to higher education. It is designed to facilitate a streamlined, timely, compliant, and academically sound admissions process that upholds the integrity and quality of the institution's qualifications and student support systems.

The policy governs the full lifecycle of the student application process, including enrolment, application, admission, selection, placement, registration and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) considerations, ensuring alignment with institutional strategic goals and regulatory obligations. It further promotes operational efficiency, consistency, accountability, and compliance with applicable data protection and privacy legislation, while reinforcing MANCOSA's institutional values of respect, integrity, service, and excellence.

This policy applies to all accredited programmes offered by MANCOSA that lead to the conferment of a qualification and is binding on all departments, staff members, committees, agents, representatives, and stakeholders involved in the enrolment, admissions, and selection processes. The policy also makes provision for applicants with special admission requirements, including mature age exemption, recognition of prior learning and other alternative

access pathways, in accordance with applicable legislative and institutional frameworks.

2. Policy Background

This policy is developed within the context of the South African Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (2013); Higher Education Act 1997 (2021); National Qualifications Framework (NQF), South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2013), and other relevant national legislation and regulatory frameworks governing admissions and access to higher education.

As a distance education institution operating within a diverse and dynamic higher education environment, MANCOSA recognises the need for admissions and selections processes that are fair, transparent, efficient, student-centred, and academically sound. The institution further acknowledges the importance of balancing widening access with the responsibility to ensure student preparedness, progression, retention, and success.

This policy has been developed in consultation with relevant institutional stakeholders involved in enrolment, admissions, academic administration, compliance, student support, and quality assurance functions. Consideration was also given to operational trends, student access needs, institutional data, regulatory expectations, and best practices within the higher education sector to ensure that the policy remains responsive, inclusive, and aligned to institutional strategic priorities.

MANCOSA's commitment to widening access, ensuring academic quality, and promoting equitable participation in higher education, it subscribes to the following Code of Practice:

- The implementation of equitable, fair, transparent, and consistent enrolment, selection, and admission procedures.
- The efficient processing of all applications in accordance with MANCOSA's standards, regulations, and approved timelines as outlined in the Enrolment, Admissions and Selections Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).
- Enrolment and admission of students who can benefit from MANCOSA's academic offerings, regardless of race, gender, sex, marital status, ethnic or social origin, culture, language, age, disability, political or religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or socio-economic background.
- A commitment to promoting equity of opportunity and success across different fields and levels of study through quality teaching, appropriate learning resources, effective student support services, and accessible systems appropriate to a distance education environment.
- A commitment to ensuring that each enrolled student has access to the academic guidance, support services, and institutional resources necessary for student success. This includes the provision of accurate programme information, guidance on appropriate academic pathways, and alternative study options where applicants do not initially meet programme-specific entry requirements.
- Student Advisors play a significant role in supporting informed decision-making and guiding applicants through the admissions process.
- Recognition that meaningful access to higher education extends beyond physical admission and includes epistemological or substantive access to knowledge, learning opportunities, and academic success.
- Recognition of the institution's responsibility to provide quality higher education opportunities to students across South Africa and internationally through flexible and innovative modes of delivery.
- The enrolment and admission of international students to enhance diversity and enrich the intellectual, cultural, social, and educational environment of the institution.

Through this policy, MANCOSA seeks to ensure that admissions and selections practices remain aligned with institutional values, national transformation imperatives, and the broader objective of expanding access to quality higher education while maintaining academic integrity and institutional excellence.

3. Definitions

- **Access**: the opportunity to pursue education and training, including relevant qualifications and part-qualifications; professional designations, opportunities in the workplace, and career progression.
- **Admission:** The formal process by which an institution evaluates an applicant's eligibility, based on the minimum entry requirements and grants them provisional place in a specific programme of study.
- **Alternative Access:** Non-traditional entry pathways (such as recognition of prior learning (RPL) or Mature Age Exemption) provided for individuals who possess the potential to succeed in higher education but lack the standard entry requirements.
- **Applicant:** An individual who has submitted a formal application for a programme of study but has not yet been granted admission or enrolled.
- **Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT):** The combination of credit accumulation and credit transfer mechanisms that allow a student to earn credits for learning achieved and to have those credits recognized toward a qualification, whether from a previous programme at the same institution or a different one.
- **Diagonal Articulation:** The process of connecting qualifications that exist at different NQF levels and/or across different sub-frameworks of the NQF.
- **Horizontal Articulation:** Focuses on aligning learning pathways at the same level of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) or similar framework

- **International Applicant:** A person who is not a citizen or permanent resident of South Africa and who requires a valid passport, visa or permit to reside within the country, in accordance with the Immigration Act.
- **Mature Age Exemption:** A form of admission granted to candidates who do not meet standard matriculation requirements but qualify for entry based on age, work experience, and prior learning, in accordance with Universities South Africa (USAf) guidelines.
- **National Learners' Records Database (NLRD):** an electronic management information system for the NQF. It serves as the central national repository for storing and verifying details of all legitimate qualifications across the country.
- **National Qualifications Framework (NQF)**: a comprehensive system approved by the Minister of Higher Education and Training for the classification, co-ordination, registration, and publication of articulated and quality-assured national qualifications and part-qualifications.
- **Programme**: a structured and purposeful set of learning experience comprising of modules/subjects and other learning activities, which together contributes towards the achievement of specified learning outcomes.
- **Prospective Student:** An individual who is inquiring about or expressing interest in enrolling at the institution, prior to the submission of a formal application.
- **Qualification:** a planned combination of learning outcomes which has a defined purpose intended to provide qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning and which has been assessed in terms of exit level outcomes. Qualifications are registered on the NQF and certified and awarded by a Quality Council (QC) or provider accredited by a Quality Council for this purpose.
- **Reasonable Accommodation:** The provision of necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments, without imposing a disproportionate or undue burden to ensure that individuals with

disabilities or specific learning needs can participate in the educational process on an equal basis with others.

- **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** refers to the principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated and assessed for the purposes of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development.
- **Registration:** The final administrative process by which an applicant is officially enrolled as a student for a specific academic period, thereby assuming the rights and obligations associated with student status.
- **Selection:** The process of choosing candidates from the pool of eligible applicants based on predetermined academic and institutional criteria to ensure the cohort meets programme requirements and capacity constraints.
- **Vertical Articulation:** Focuses on ensuring a smooth and logical progression of skills and knowledge of learning pathways at the level above the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) or similar framework.

4. Policy Principles

This policy establishes the principles, responsibilities, and procedures governing enrolment, admissions, and selections at MANCOSA. It affirms the institution's commitment to maintaining fair, transparent, equitable, and consistent admissions practices that are aligned with applicable higher education legislation, regulatory requirements, institutional standards, and best practices within an online distance education environment. The policy further recognises the unique operational and academic considerations associated with distance and online learning provision and seeks to ensure that admissions and selections processes appropriately support student access, placement, readiness, progression, and success within this context.

This policy is intended to provide all staff members and stakeholders involved in enrolment, admissions, selection, and enrolment activities with clear guidance regarding their responsibilities and obligations to ensure that admissions decisions are applied consistently, ethically, and in accordance with approved institutional and regulatory requirements.

The following principles underpin this policy:

- Admissions and selections processes must be fair, transparent, equitable, consistent, and free from unfair discrimination.
- The applicant must meet the minimum admission requirements for the qualification, aligned with the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF), programme accreditation requirements, institutional policies, and applicable legislative and regulatory frameworks and as approved by the Council of Higher Education (CHE) for inclusion in MANCOSA's Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM).
- Programme-specific criteria - The applicant must satisfy any programme-specific requirements as outlined in the programme rules, including threshold academic skills, prior learning, or work experience where applicable.
- Admission requirements must be applied consistently across all programmes while ensuring that applicants are appropriately placed according to their academic preparedness, prior learning, and potential for success.
- Enrolment and admissions practices must support widening access to higher education while maintaining academic quality, integrity, and institutional standards.
- Admissions processes must support inclusivity and provide reasonable accommodation and alternative access pathways permitted by legislation and institutional policy, including mature age exemption and RPL processes.

- Information provided to prospective students must be accurate, accessible, transparent, and sufficient to support informed decision-making regarding programme selection and career pathways.
- Whilst MANCOSA must provide accurate information, guidance, and support to facilitate informed decision-making, students are ultimately responsible for selecting and registering for the correct qualification and for familiarising themselves with the applicable academic, administrative, and regulatory requirements. The Institution does not make decisions on behalf of students regarding programme selection or academic progression.
- The institution must ensure that admissions and enrolment processes are efficient, student-centered, and supported through appropriate systems, qualified staff, and approved operational procedures.
- Student data and applicant information must be managed responsibly and confidentially in accordance with applicable Protection of Personal Information Act.
- Decisions must be supported by appropriate record keeping, auditability, accountability, and quality assurance mechanisms.
- MANCOSA shall continuously monitor and review admissions practices to ensure ongoing compliance with regulatory requirements, institutional effectiveness, and alignment with transformation and access objectives.
- Additional attributes, where relevant, the applicant may be required to demonstrate personal, social, or professional competencies essential for success in the programme, assessed through structured and documented processes.
- Document Verification Requirements for National and International Applicants - All supporting documentation must be valid, authentic, and certified by a Commissioner of Oaths (or equivalent for international applicants) within six (6) months of the date of submission, unless otherwise specified.

- MANCOSA reserves the right to request updated, recertified, original, or additional supporting documentation where reasonably necessary to verify the authenticity, validity, or integrity of any document submitted.
- MANCOSA reserves the right to decline an application where the prescribed admission requirements, documentary requirements, or applicable regulatory requirements have not been satisfied.
- Admission recommendations are valid for that particular intake only and cannot be transferrable to another intake.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents and frameworks:

- MANCOSA Programme Handbooks
- The Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) and legislation governing higher education in South Africa
- Relevant MANCOSA policies and Admissions and Selections Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)
- Institutional quality assurance and governance frameworks where applicable.

4.1 Articulation Pathways

In accordance with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act (Act 67 of 2008) and the SAQA Policy and Criteria for Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT), the institution supports vertical, horizontal, and diagonal articulation. Where such pathways apply, the Admissions and Selections department may exercise discretion in the application of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) mechanisms. Such discretion is contingent upon a formal assessment of comparability and the applicant meeting the specific admission requirements for the programme in question.

4.2 Students with International Qualifications

To be considered for admission onto a programme at MANCOSA, an international applicant should have:

- An appropriate educational qualification deemed by MANCOSA and the relevant local/South African statutory bodies, such as SAQA, to be equivalent to the National Senior Certificate and meets the minimum requirements for degree study.
- Applicants from countries or schools where English is not an official/first educational language, or where English was not a subject in their High School certificate or NQF level 4 qualification, should provide evidence of passing a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or an equivalent examination.
- Where applicable, qualifications that are not awarded by a South African University are required to be evaluated by SAQA for an equivalent NQF rating and a SAQA Certificate of Evaluation (SCoE) must be submitted with all international Student Applications. Applications will be evaluated for admission thereafter.
- When assessing a foreign application for undergraduate programmes, the admissions and selections committee is guided by the Universities South Africa (USAf) guidelines. In certain instances, a certificate of exemption from USAf may be requested.
- Language Requirement: Documents not in English require sworn translations.
- MANCOSA reserves the right to request updated or additional documentation where the submitted documentation is expired, due to expire before the anticipated completion of the programme, pending renewal, or otherwise insufficient to verify continued lawful status.

4.3 Special Admissions -Applicants with Disabilities

MANCOSA is committed to a non-discriminatory basis of Enrolment, Admissions and Selections process, including disability. The institution endeavours, as far as reasonably possible and within available resources, to accommodate applicants' specific needs to enable equitable access to learning opportunities.

The Institution creates an institutional climate in which disclosure of disability would be both advantageous and safe. Disclosure of disability is necessary where an Applicant requests additional support. The institution further commits itself to developing Admission and Selection practices and policies for applicants with disabilities which will enhance their participation in higher education at MANCOSA.

4.4 Alternative Entry: Mature Age Exemption

In accordance with the *Higher Education Act 101 of 1997* and the *Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF)*, the institution provides for the admission of students via Mature Age Exemption. This pathway is intended to facilitate access for candidates who do not meet the standard admission requirements, but who possess the requisite maturity and experience to succeed in higher education. The administration of Mature Age Exemption for undergraduate degree programmes is governed by the *DHET Regulations on Mature Age Exemption* and the specific guidelines issued by *Universities South Africa (USAf)*.

Mature Age Exemption applies to candidates:

i. Who do not have a relevant Bachelors pass in matric to articulate onto degree programmes or possess any other accredited (120 credits) post matric qualification at age 23 and above; and

ii. Do not possess a any NQF level 4/matric qualification but wishes to apply for a higher certificate or undergraduate degree programme at age 45 or above.

4.4.1 To be admitted via Mature Age Exemption for entry into undergraduate degree programmes with matric, the Applicant should:

- Be at least 23 years of age
- Be in possession of a National Senior certificate with a Higher Certificate or Diploma pass
- Applicants with a Senior Certificate must have:
    - Four Senior Certificate subjects passed with symbol E or better (Please Note that the Higher-Grade Symbol F can be converted to a Standard Grade Symbol E)
    - One Subject must be passed on Higher Grade
    - Three Subjects must be passed in the same exam sitting.
- Applicants with an FET qualification must have:
    - Three N4 Subjects
    - One N5, Higher Grade Equivalent Subject
- Applicants with a Senior Certificate and FET qualification must have:
    - One Higher Grade subject with symbol E or better
    - Three N4 subjects
- Applicants must sign a disclaimer stating that they understand Mature Age Exemption.

4.4.2 To be admitted via Mature Age Exemption for entry into undergraduate degree programmes without matric , the Applicant should:

- Be at least 45 years of age
- Not be in possession of an accredited national senior certificate OR (120 credits) post-matric qualification

Exceptions for Mature Age Exemption

- If a prospective applicant is turning 23 or 45 years of age within the intake that they are applying for, the applicant may be accepted into the programme.
- Mature Age Exemption applies to those without an accredited national senior certificate or (120 credits) post-matric qualification.

4.5 Recognition of Prior Learning

MANCOSA recognises the important role that the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) plays in ensuring equitable access and participation in Higher Education. In this process, non-formal and/or informal learning are measured, evaluated and checked for equivalence or parity with the formal programme entry requirements. The RPL assessment process will focus on ways of evaluating a person's knowledge and skills acquired through lifelong learning experiences against a set of pre-determined criteria. The RPL process focuses on establishing whether the student has acquired competence in basic theoretical knowledge; practical competence; reflective competence and applied competence. A small number of applicants (10% per programme, per intake) who do not meet the minimum entry requirements will be considered for acceptance via RPL.

There must be reasonable evidence, based on objective indicators (e.g., academic transcripts, recognised prior learning assessments, work portfolios, or entrance assessments), that the applicant is likely to benefit from and succeed in the programme. Each application is subject to review by the RPL Committee which makes the final decision regarding the application. The final decision, for each application, rests at the sole discretion of the RPL Committee. All RPL applications are individually assessed and decided on by a case-by-case basis. Admission via RPL is valid for that particular intake and cannot be transferrable to another intake.

4.6 RPL for Access

MANCOSA applies a structured and academically rigorous process to determine whether a candidate's prior learning and experience meet the entry requirements for admission through RPL.

All RPL applications are subjected to a formal review process, where each application is assigned to centralised RPL Committee, comprising Admissions and Selections Academics. The committee deliberates collectively, considering the extent to which the applicant has demonstrated basic theoretical knowledge, practical competence, reflective capacity, and applied competence. Where necessary, and in the case of Masters Students, additional assessment methods such as interviews may be used to further validate the applicant's suitability for selection purposes. The Committee assesses the applicant's prior learning, both formal and non-formal for alignment with the intended programme of study. This includes determining the relevance, depth, and currency of the applicant's knowledge and skills in relation to the programme outcomes. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) may not be utilised to circumvent minimum admission requirements or to bypass consecutive NQF levels, and a student may not be granted RPL for the purpose of skipping NQF levels. Application for credit for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) should be made by the applicant at the point of application and in accordance with the academic regulations as reflected in the RPL Policy.

4.7 RPL for Exemption

While RPL provides an important pathway for access, the awarding of academic credit based solely on work experience or short, non-accredited courses is an extremely limited in practice. MANCOSA's programmes are developed through rigorous accreditation processes with the CHE and the DHET, ensuring that each module meets clearly defined learning outcomes, assessment standards, and levels of theoretical depth.

Workplace experience, although valuable, is often context-specific and primarily demonstrates applied competence within a particular role or environment. Similarly, short or non-accredited courses may focus on skills development without sufficiently addressing the breadth, depth, and integration of knowledge required at a formal academic level. As such, it is extremely difficult to establish direct equivalence between these forms of learning and the structured, scaffolded curriculum of an accredited qualification.

Provisional Eligibility: Prospective applicants turning the qualifying age (23 or 30) within the intake of registration may be considered for provisional admission, subject to institutional capacity and programme-specific requirements.

4.8 Guidelines for Supporting Documents

Applicants must submit authentic supporting documentation in accordance with institutional requirements as highlighted above. Specific document requirements and formats are outlined in detail in the Admission and Selection SOP.

4.9 Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT)

MANCOSA is committed to facilitating learner mobility and lifelong learning through the robust application of Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT). In accordance with the *SAQA Policy and Criteria for Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT)* and the *Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF)*, the institution supports the transfer of credits for both completed and incomplete qualifications. The Admissions and Selection's CAT policy and Enrolment, Admissions and Selection's SOP provide more comprehensive information and guidance in this regard.

All CAT processes at MANCOSA are governed by the following principles:

- **Regulatory Alignment:** CAT practices are conducted in strict adherence to the *SAQA Policy and Criteria for CAT* and the quality assurance guidelines prescribed by the Council on Higher Education (CHE).
- **Academic Integrity:** To maintain the standards of institutional awards, the Admissions and Selections department ensures that all credit transfers are subject to a rigorous evaluation of module comparability, learning outcomes, and NQF level alignment.
- **Fairness and Transparency:** Processes are designed to be equitable and transparent, providing applicants with a clear pathway to progress between qualifications or part-qualifications while ensuring that the integrity of the target programme is upheld.
- **Institutional Discretion:** Final approval for CAT remains subject to the assessment of the relevant Faculty and the Admissions and Selections department, ensuring that the student is academically positioned to succeed in their chosen programme.

4.10 The National Learners' Records Database (NLRD)

In the event that an institution ceases operations or is closed down, an applicant is required to obtain their academic transcripts or an extract from the NLRD. The extract is a concise, printed record of qualifications under the applicant's name on the national database. It provides a summary of the applicant's accredited qualifications instead of a detailed breakdown of academic results.

4.11 Extension Letters

To maintain the integrity of the admissions process, extension letters are strictly limited to specified instances. An extension letter will only be issued in respect of a lost identity document or matric certificate, recently matriculated applicants, and applicants awaiting graduation. The Enrolment, Admissions and Selections SOP sets out the detailed requirements and circumstances governing the issuance of extension letters. The onus remains on the applicant

to ensure that all outstanding documentation specified in the extension letter is submitted to the relevant stakeholders and to MANCOSA within the prescribed timeframes. The issuance of an extension letter does not constitute a waiver of the admission requirements, and MANCOSA accepts no responsibility for any adverse consequences arising from an applicant's failure to submit the required documentation within the prescribed period.

4.12 Concurrent Registration

Concurrent registration rules will be in accordance with MANCOSA's institutional rules:

4.12.1 No student may be registered simultaneously for more than one qualification offered by MANCOSA.

4.12.2 Notwithstanding clause 4.12.1, a student may be permitted to register concurrently for a module offered for non-degree purposes (NDP) while registered for a MANCOSA qualification, provided that the student meets the applicable admission requirements and any other conditions prescribed by MANCOSA.

4.12.3 A student may be registered concurrently at MANCOSA and another recognised higher education institution. In such cases, the student is solely responsible for ensuring that they are able to meet all academic and administrative requirements of both institutions. MANCOSA shall not be responsible for any timetable clashes, assessment conflicts, progression implications, or other challenges arising from such concurrent registration.

4.12.4 Students who are concurrently registered at another higher education institution may be required to disclose such registration to MANCOSA upon request.

4.13 Asylum Seeker

MANCOSA recognises the rights of asylum seekers and refugees to access higher education as provided for in the Constitution of South Africa. However, all admissions are subject to strict compliance with the Immigration Act (Act 13 of 2002) and the Refugees Act (Act 130 of 1998), which mandate that foreign nationals must possess valid legal status to study within the Republic and in alignment with 4.2 above.

- **Legal Compliance:** Admission and registration are strictly contingent upon the presentation of valid, current documentation issued by the Department of Home Affairs. In accordance with the *Immigration Act*, MANCOSA cannot assist or register individuals whose permits are expired, invalid, or do not grant the legal authority to pursue studies.
- **Maintenance of Status:** It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their legal status in the country remains valid throughout the duration of their studies. Failure to maintain legal status may result in the suspension of registration or the inability to graduate, as the institution cannot certify the completion of a qualification for a student who lacks lawful authority to reside or study in South Africa.
- **Foreign Qualifications:** Applicants presenting foreign qualifications must adhere to all requirements set by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). Where standard documentation is unavailable due to the applicant's status as a refugee or asylum seeker, MANCOSA may consider alternative evidence of qualifications on a case-by-case basis, provided such evidence is authenticated through available SAQA verification mechanisms.
- **Institutional Discretion:** MANCOSA reserves the right to verify the authenticity of all documents with the relevant authorities. The institution retains the right to refuse or defer admission where an applicant fails to demonstrate valid legal status or fails to meet the requisite qualification equivalency standards as required by the *Refugees Act* and *Higher Education* regulations.

Whilst SAQA may provide mechanisms for the evaluation of foreign qualifications where supporting documentation is incomplete, MANCOSA reserves the right to require satisfactory evidence of the applicant's lawful immigration status authorising study in South Africa. Where such documentation is expired, pending renewal, or otherwise insufficient to verify lawful status, MANCOSA may defer or decline admission until satisfactory documentation has been provided.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The effective implementation of this policy requires coordinated participation, accountability, and collaboration across multiple departments and stakeholders involved in the registration, admissions, selection, and enrolment processes. All staff members are required to perform their responsibilities in accordance with institutional policies, approved procedures, regulatory requirements, and principles of fairness, consistency, confidentiality, and professionalism.

- **The Registrar:** Provides executive oversight for the integrity of the registration and admissions process. The Registrar ensures that institutional policies align with national legislative requirements, manages the final approval of credit transfers (CAT) and exemptions, and serves as the ultimate authority on student records governance.
- **The Marketing Manager** is responsible for planning and overseeing institutional marketing and student enrolment campaigns across approved media platforms. This includes ensuring that all promotional information is accurate, compliant, aligned with institutional objectives, and supports equitable access to MANCOSA's programmes.
- **The Student Enrolment Manager** is responsible for overseeing the effective implementation of enrolment and admissions support processes within the Student Enrolment Department. This includes ensuring compliance with

institutional procedures, providing operational guidance to Student Advisors, and supporting collaboration between relevant departments involved in the admissions process.

- **The Student Advisors** are responsible for guiding applicants throughout the admissions process by communicating accurate programme information, admissions and selections requirements, and application procedures. They are also responsible for obtaining supporting documentation, maintaining communication with applicants regarding application status and outstanding requirements, and recommending alternative programme options where applicable.
- **The Admissions and Selections Committee/Staff** academically review and process applications in accordance with programme-specific, institutional, and regulatory admissions requirements. This includes evaluating supporting documentation, ensuring compliance with admissions criteria, maintaining accurate records, and escalating complex or exceptional cases where necessary.
- **The Admissions and Selections Manager** is responsible for providing leadership, oversight, and quality assurance for admissions and selections processes. This includes supporting the admissions team, ensuring consistent application of policy and procedures, managing escalated cases, and chairing Admissions and Selections Committee meetings.
- **Subject Matter Experts** from the relevant schools provide academic guidance and specialist input on programme-related admissions matters. This includes supporting decisions relating to programme suitability, Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT), Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), and other complex academic admissions cases.
- **IT Systems and Data Management Unit:** Responsible for maintaining the integrity and security of the student information system (SIS). This unit ensures that the digital infrastructure supports the accurate processing of applications, secure storage of student records, and automated flagging of students with outstanding obligations.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):** Responsible for auditing the admissions and selection processes to ensure quality assurance and policy compliance. M&E provides reporting on enrollment trends, policy efficacy, and identifies areas for continuous improvement in alignment with the institution's strategic objectives.

All departments involved in enrolment, admissions, selections, and student support are collectively responsible for ensuring efficient, compliant, and student-centred admissions processes. Collaboration between departments is essential to maintain academic integrity, support informed decision-making, and promote continuous improvement in admissions practices.

5.1 Ethical and Professional Practices

MANCOSA is committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct, professionalism, fairness, and integrity throughout the enrolment, admissions, and selections process. All staff involved in these functions are required to act in accordance with institutional policies, regulatory requirements, and professional standards to ensure that applicants are treated fairly, respectfully, and consistently.

- The Enrolment Department must communicate clearly, accurately, and transparently with prospective students regarding programme requirements, admissions criteria, registration processes, deadlines, and any potential barriers to admission. All communication must be honest, professional, and free from misleading or unrealistic commitments.
- Staff within the Enrolment, Admissions, and Selections Departments must remain informed and up to date on institutional policies, programme requirements, admissions procedures, and relevant regulatory frameworks to ensure accurate and informed guidance is provided to applicants.

- All employees are accountable for their actions and are responsible for ensuring that errors, omissions, or procedural irregularities are identified and addressed promptly and appropriately.
- Student Advisors must ensure that all advice and recommendations provided to applicants are ethical, accurate, aligned with institutional policies, and in the best interests of the applicant and the institution.
- Enrolment, Admissions and Selections staff must disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest and recuse themselves from admissions decisions where appropriate.
- Admissions and Selections staff must ensure that all applications are reviewed, assessed, accepted, declined, or recommended for alternative programmes in accordance with approved policies, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), institutional requirements, and applicable regulatory frameworks.
- Once an application has been reviewed and finalised by the Admissions and Selections Department, Student Advisors may not amend or alter the application or admissions outcome unless the application is formally referred back to Admissions and Selections for reconsideration or further review.
- All admissions-related decisions and interactions must uphold the principles of confidentiality, accountability, transparency, consistency, and academic integrity.
- Staff must protect applicant information and maintain confidentiality in accordance with POPIA and institutional information governance requirements.

6. Compliance and Enforcement

MANCOSA is committed to ensuring that all enrolment, admissions, and selections processes are conducted in accordance with institutional policies, the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), applicable higher

education legislation, regulatory requirements, and approved operational procedures. Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all employees, departments, and stakeholders involved in the admissions lifecycle. The institution complies with all regulations governing the collection, use, and security of personal information in line with the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (POPIA), ensuring privacy, confidentiality, and secure data management. A designated departmental Privacy Champion oversees data compliance.

The institution shall implement appropriate monitoring, quality assurance, reporting, and governance mechanisms to ensure the integrity, consistency, confidentiality, and accountability of all admissions-related processes.

6.1 Data Subjects and Information Processing

The Enrolment, Admissions, and Selections Departments process personal information provided by prospective students for the sole purpose of registration, admissions, selections, enrolment, and related institutional processes, in compliance with DHET requirements and POPIA.

Personal information processed may include identification documents, academic records, supporting documentation, contact details, and other information required to assess eligibility for admission. All employees involved in processing applications are required to maintain the confidentiality, integrity, and security of such information and must process personal information only for authorised institutional purposes.

Any personal information collected for operational purposes, including travel-related documentation where applicable, must be managed responsibly and deleted where no longer required.

6.2 Information Storage and Access Control

The Enrolment, Admissions, and Selections Departments utilise secure institutional systems and technologies to safeguard personal information and admissions records.

Control measures include:

- Password-protected devices and systems for all authorised employees.
- Compliance with institutional Information Technology (IT) and password management policies.
- Secure storage and processing through approved institutional systems, including the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and Student Information System (SIS).
- Access restrictions to ensure that only authorised personnel may access applicant information.
- Quality assurance checks conducted during application processing by Student Advisors, Admissions and Selections staff, and Academic personnel where applicable.

Access to applicant information is granted only by authorised Managers or Directors and is limited to employees whose roles require such access.

6.3 Information Retention and Deletion

MANCOSA retains and manages personal information in accordance with POPIA, institutional record management requirements, and operational needs.

- Information stored temporarily on employee devices must be deleted immediately after secure processing onto approved institutional systems.
- Information stored within approved institutional systems may be retained for operational, communication, regulatory, or student engagement purposes were permitted by law.

- Prospective students may opt out of non-essential communication and marketing activities through approved institutional processes.

6.4 Risk Mitigation and POPIA Breach Management

The Enrolment, Admissions, and Selections Departments implement risk mitigation measures to minimise the risk of unauthorised access, misuse, loss, or disclosure of personal information.

These measures include:

- Staff training and awareness on POPIA and data protection obligations.
- Access control and user permission management.
- Monitoring of information processing activities.
- Appointment of designated managers and Privacy Champions responsible for privacy and compliance oversight.

In the event of a POPIA breach or suspected data privacy incident, the following process shall apply:

1. The breach must be immediately reported and escalated to the relevant Manager and members of the Privacy Committee.
2. The breach must be recorded in the institutional POPIA Breach Register.
3. The Privacy Custodian shall maintain and manage all breach records.
4. Appropriate corrective, containment, and mitigation actions must be implemented in accordance with institutional privacy and risk management procedures.

6.5 Incident Reporting and Monitoring

Any deviation from approved admissions, enrolment, or selection processes constitutes an incident and must be formally reported and investigated.

The relevant Manager is responsible for completing an Incident Report detailing:

- The nature and findings of the incident.
- The root cause analysis.
- The institutional or operational impact.
  Corrective and preventative actions implemented, together with any additional actions required.

Incident reports must be submitted to the Admissions and Selections Committee and Privacy Committee for review and oversight. Where required, matters may be escalated to the relevant governance structures or institutional committees for further investigation, decision-making, or disciplinary action.

The institution shall monitor trends, recurring issues, and corrective actions to ensure continuous improvement, regulatory compliance, and operational effectiveness.

6.6 Documentation and Record-Keeping

All admissions-related decisions, incidents, corrective actions, committee findings, and supporting documentation must be accurately documented and retained in accordance with institutional record-keeping, audit, and data management requirements.

Documentation must be maintained in a manner that supports transparency, accountability, auditability, and compliance with regulatory obligations.

6.7 Non-Compliance and Enforcement

Failure to comply with this policy, institutional procedures, regulatory requirements, or data protection obligations may result in corrective action, disciplinary measures, restricted system access, or escalation to the

appropriate institutional governance structures in accordance with applicable institutional policies and procedures.

Any conduct that compromises the integrity, fairness, confidentiality, or legality of the admissions process will be treated seriously and addressed through the institution's established governance and disciplinary frameworks.

6.8 Appeals

Applicants who wish to appeal an admissions or selections decision must follow the appeals process outlined in the Enrolment, Admissions and Selections Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

Appeals must be submitted within the prescribed timelines and supported by relevant documentation or additional information for reconsideration. Appeals will be reviewed fairly, consistently, and independently in accordance with institutional policies and applicable admissions criteria. Appeals shall not be considered where they merely reflect dissatisfaction with an admission decision unless supported by new evidence or evidence of procedural error.

7. Policy Review and Revision

This policy shall be reviewed every three years, or earlier where required by legislative, regulatory, institutional or operational changes. All amendments shall follow the approved institutional governance, approval process and tracked changes and version control will be recorded.

8. Communication and Training

MANCOSA is committed to ensuring that this policy is effectively communicated, understood, implemented, and consistently applied across all departments involved in enrolment, admissions, and selections processes. Appropriate communication, training, and awareness initiatives shall be

implemented to support policy compliance, operational consistency, and continuous improvement.

8.1 Communication and Accessibility

- This policy shall be made accessible to all relevant employees and stakeholders through approved institutional communication channels and document management systems.
- Relevant departments must ensure that staff members are informed of updates, amendments, procedural changes, and regulatory developments affecting admissions and selection practices.
- Communication with prospective students and applicants must be clear, accurate, transparent, and accessible to support informed decision-making and equitable access to institutional processes.
- MANCOSA shall take reasonable measures to minimise language, technological, or accessibility barriers that may impact applicants' ability to engage with admissions and enrolment processes within a distance education environment.

8.2 Training and Capacity Building

- All Enrolment, Admissions, and Selections staff members are required to participate in continuous professional development and ongoing institutional training relevant to their roles and responsibilities.
- Training initiatives must include, where applicable, admissions and selection criteria, programme requirements, regulatory updates, institutional policies, customer service standards, ethical conduct, data protection obligations, CAT processes, and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) procedures.
- The Admissions and Selections Department shall conduct institutional training sessions at the conclusion of every intake cycle to ensure that relevant staff remain informed on programme requirements, admissions

processes, CAT, RPL, and any identified operational challenges or policy updates.

- Managers and relevant governance structures are responsible for ensuring that staff members are adequately trained and competent to perform admissions-related functions effectively and compliantly.

8.3 Reinforcement and Monitoring of Policy Adherence

- Compliance with this policy shall be reinforced through ongoing monitoring, quality assurance processes, operational reviews, and committee oversight.
- Departments must encourage a culture of accountability, professionalism, ethical conduct, and continuous improvement in all admissions-related activities.
- Any identified gaps, inconsistencies, or non-compliance issues must be addressed through corrective actions, additional training, process reviews, or other institutional interventions where necessary.
- Feedback from staff, applicants, audits, and governance structures may be used to inform improvements to admissions processes, training initiatives, and policy implementation practices.

9. Implementation Timeline

This policy shall become effective on the approved implementation date. Relevant departments shall ensure that supporting procedures, training and operational documentation are aligned before implementation

10. Approval and Authorization

The Policy is approved by the relevant governance structures such as the Admissions and Selections Committee (ASC). Thereafter the document is ratified at Teaching and Learning (TnL) committee. Thereafter noted at EXCO and then the Registrar's office for documenting.

11. Appendices

The MANCOSA Admissions and Selections Policy is aligned to, and supplemented by, the following existing policies as developed by the DHET, SAQA, the CHE and other Quality Councils

- National Qualifications Framework Act (NQF Act No. 67 of 2008, as amended)
- Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF, 2013)
- White Paper for Post School Education and Training (2013)
- Higher Education Act (Act No. 101 of 1997, as amended, 2021)
- Level Descriptors for the South African National Qualifications Framework (SAQA, 2012) (and any subsequent amendments);
- National Qualifications Framework Act (as amended in 2018) (and any subsequent amendments);
- Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part-Qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework (SAQA, 2013) (and any subsequent amendments);
- National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications and Part-Qualifications and Professional Designations in South Africa (SAQA, 2014) (and any subsequent amendments)
- Minimum Admission requirements for Higher certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's degree for programmes requiring a National Senior Certificate (Higher Education Act No. 101 of 1997)
- Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (Government Gazette,2011)

12. Governance Activities

MANCOSA shall ensure that the implementation and oversight of this policy are supported through effective governance, strategic alignment, continuous monitoring, and institutional accountability mechanisms. Governance

activities relating to this policy shall align with institutional planning, quality assurance, risk management, and monitoring frameworks to ensure the integrity, effectiveness, and continuous improvement of admissions and selection practices. This policy forms part of MANCOSA's broader institutional governance and quality assurance framework and aligns with the institution's strategic objectives, operational plans, and regulatory obligations.

The policy is aligned to:

- MANCOSA's Vision, Mission, Values, and Strategic Objectives.
- The Strategic Planning and Quality Monitoring Framework.
- Institutional quality assurance, governance, and monitoring structures.
- National higher education legislation, policies, and regulatory requirements.
- Institutional transformation, access, student success, and innovation objectives.

Oversight of this policy shall reside with the relevant institutional governance structures, including the Admissions and Selections Committee and other delegated committees or management structures where applicable. The implementation of this policy shall be monitored through institutional quality assurance and monitoring processes. Departments responsible for enrolment, admissions, and selections must maintain accurate records and provide relevant reports, data, and evidence to support institutional monitoring, accountability, and continuous improvement processes.

Any exception to standard admissions and selection requirements must be considered in accordance with approved institutional policies, regulatory frameworks, and delegated authority structures.

Policy exceptions may include, but are not limited to:

- Mature age exemption applications.

- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) applications.
- Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) considerations
- Special admissions cases requiring academic or committee review.
- Regulatory or exceptional operational circumstances.

All exceptions must:

- Be appropriately motivated and documented.
- Be reviewed through the relevant approval and governance processes.
- Be aligned with institutional policy, academic integrity principles, and regulatory requirements.
- Maintain fairness, consistency, transparency, and accountability in decision-making.

Records of all approved exceptions and special considerations must be maintained for quality assurance, audit, and governance purposes.

MANCOSA may, during periods of significant social or environmental disruption, adjust requirements relating to the submission of documents and associated deadlines, provided that such adjustments remain compliant with applicable legislation and regulatory guidelines. The institution further reserves the right to withdraw any offer of admission if it is established that the applicant does not meet the minimum admission requirements for the relevant qualification. In such instances, any registration fees paid towards that qualification will be refunded.