



**University of Venda**  
*Creating Future Leaders*

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA  
CONVOCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ALUMNI CHAPTERS / ASSOCIATIONS**

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### **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Chapters usually consist of members who share a common interest and may be organised as a province, region, city, town, area and faculty / school, as well as special interest. Chapters aligned to a faculty / school or a special interest group shall use the designation of “Association”. Unless the context otherwise determines, a reference to “Chapter” in this document shall be deemed to be a reference to an “Association”.
- 1.2 It has become evident, from a benchmark in the sector, that the trend in South African public universities is to establish profession-based alumni chapters/associations and group networks, in addition to the traditional alumni chapters.
- 1.3. Alumni members play a pivotal role in reflecting the vision and ethos of the University beyond the University walls, essentially playing an ambassadorial role. It is therefore critical that the University should keep in constant touch with its alumni, to ensure that alumni are kept abreast with developments within the University relating to the academic agenda, student support, curricula changes and research initiatives, and to draw from the practical experience, financial and other support of the alumni in this regard.

1.4 Alumni Chapters function under and report to the Executive Committee of Convocation, and are assisted by the central Alumni Relations Office and the Registrar's Office. Chapters also function in terms of the specific rules governing their establishment, composition, activities, privileges, fundraising, etc.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

2.1 In accordance with the overarching aims of the Convocation, Alumni Chapters should support and promote the University's vision, mission and strategic objectives and foster a sense of belonging and commitment among the alumni towards their alma mater.

2.2 An Alumni Chapter is deemed to be a substructure of the Executive Committee of Convocation and exists to support the said Committee in carrying out its responsibilities on behalf of the Convocation. Accordingly, an Alumni Chapter shall report to the Convocation on a regular basis through the Chairperson of the Alumni Chapter's Executive Committee.

2.3 The University expects from Alumni that they act in the best interests of the University and that they help to grow the stature and status of the University.

2.4 Alumni Chapters must act as the official forum for all their members and promote interaction between Alumni among themselves as well as between Alumni, the University and students.

## **3. ESTABLISHMENT AND FUNCTIONING OF ALUMNI CHAPTERS**

3.1 The establishment of Alumni Chapters seeks to promote the strategic objective of garnering support amongst Alumni for the University and its activities.

3.2 The establishment of Alumni Chapters, which include Regions/Branches (both national and international), Profession-based Alumni Associations, must take place in line with the Constitution of the Convocation and at a formally-constituted and duly-quorate meeting convened by the University Registrar, with no less than a hundred (100) members in attendance.

- 3.3 It is recognised that members of an Alumni Chapter form part of the Convocation of the University and must therefore be verified from the Convocation Roll. A member thus verified is eligible to participate and vote at a duly-constituted meeting of the Alumni Chapter.
- 3.4 An Alumni Chapter may develop its own constitution that more specifically addresses its needs. Such a constitution must not be at variance with the University's Institutional Statute, the Convocation Constitution and these terms of reference and shall come into force only after approval by the Executive Committee of Convocation. An Alumni Chapter may request the assistance of the Office of the University Registrar in the drafting of such a specialised constitution.
- 3.5 An Alumni Chapter may offer benefits to its members, such as facilitating networking amongst members and between members and the University, assisting with social events such as reunions, Alumni breakfasts, etc. and providing administrative and marketing support.
- 3.6 An Alumni Chapter shall annually submit its programme of action and activities to the Executive Committee of Convocation for noting and confirmation of alignment with the overall University strategy.
- 3.7 Every Alumni Chapter shall submit a report to every extended meeting of the Convocation Executive Committee.
- 3.8 Alumni Chapters may require their members to make financial contributions for causes that advance the best interests of the University and the Alumni concerned. Such financial contributions shall be paid into a designated University bank account and cost centre and will be subject to annual audit. The University's Alumni Relations Office shall assist chapters in the identification and conditions of use of the relevant University Bank account.
- 3.9 As a substructure of the Executive Committee of the Convocation, an Alumni Chapter does not have separate legal personality and must thus align with the University's rules applicable to the Convocation.
- 3.10 An Alumni Chapter may only raise funds on behalf of the University through the Alumni

Relations Office after obtaining the necessary prior approval from the University. Where approval is granted, financial reporting must be done in accordance with the relevant UNIVEN policies.

- 3.11 An Alumni Chapter may only use the University's trademarks and branding after obtaining permission from the Directorate of Marketing, Branding and Communication (MBC), which shall determine the conditions for the use of such trademarks and branding.
- 3.12 The Executive Committee of the Convocation has the authority to disband any structure or group contemplated in this document if, in its sole discretion, any such structure or group is not compliant with the principles applicable to the Convocation and its structures, for example, where the operations of such structure or group are in breach of law or otherwise brings the name of the University into disrepute. Where the Executive Committee of Convocation takes such a decision, the structure concerned shall be afforded an opportunity to show cause why it should not be disbanded. The Executive Committee of Convocation's decision upon consideration of the reasons submitted by the structure concerned shall be final.
- 3.13 When a structure or group has been disbanded, any funds raised by such structure or group accrue to the University and will be utilised for a cause that advances the best interests of the University, in conjunction with the Executive Committee of the Convocation.
- 3.14 Members of Alumni Chapters shall be eligible to nominate qualifying Convocation members forming part of such Alumni Chapters, for election to serve on the Executive Committee of the Alumni Chapter concerned, as set out in clause 5 of these Terms of Reference.

#### **4. SUPPORT BY ALUMNI RELATIONS OFFICE**

- 4.1 Support for the programmes and activities will be provided by the Alumni Relations Office in conjunction with the Office of the Registrar.
- 4.2 The various Alumni Chapters will be responsible for developing and managing their own Alumni programmes with the guidance of the Executive Committee of Convocation. The Alumni Relations Office will coordinate the annual funds administered by the Alumni Chapters and facilitate financial reporting in accordance with the relevant UNIVEN policies.

## **5. PROCEDURE FOR THE NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE ALUMNI CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

5.1. Alumni Chapters shall elect an Executive Committee which shall be responsible for the management of the affairs of the Alumni Chapter, comprised of the following officials:

5.1.1 Chairperson;

5.1.2 Deputy Chairperson;

5.1.3 Secretary;

5.1.4 Deputy Secretary;

5.1.5 Treasurer;

5.1.6 Up to four additional members to be assigned particular roles ("Portfolio Heads") as and when required, as determined by the Executive Committee (e.g. fundraising, education desk, professional development and mentoring, etc.).

5.2 The Director MBC or his designated representative shall be a resource person for the committee, to facilitate the liaison between the Alumni Chapter and the Alumni Office.

5.3 The Executive Committee may co-opt up to two other members from relevant sectors to provide and/or enhance the skills required by the Committee.

5.4 The nomination and election processes for members of the Alumni Chapter Executive Committees will be managed by the Office of the University Registrar, as the University Registrar is the Electoral Officer for the Convocation, with the support of the Alumni Relations Office.

5.5 The University Registrar, as the Electoral Officer of the Convocation, shall be responsible for the management of the appointment processes of the Executive Committee of the Alumni Chapters, which shall entail the following steps:

### **5.5.1 Notice of election and call for nominations**

(a) Whenever there is a need to appoint any of the members of the Executive Committee of an Alumni Chapter contemplated in clauses 5.1.1 – 5.1.5, the Registrar issues a formal notice making a call for written nominations from eligible members of the Convocation forming part of a particular Alumni Chapter, for the election of suitable candidates as members of the

Executive Committee of the said Chapter, for a period of three (3) years, using such process as the Executive Committee of Convocation shall deem appropriate.

- (b) The call for nominations shall be publicised as widely as possible amongst the relevant Alumni structures or groups.

### **5.5.2 Nominations**

- (a) Only members of the Convocation of the University of Venda who meet the requirements of the Alumni Chapter concerned (for example, in the case of a faculty- based chapter, graduates of such a faculty) may participate in the nomination and election process for the appointment of members of the Executive Committee of the Chapter concerned.
- (b) All nominations must be in writing and lodged with the Registrar at least seven (7) days before the commencement of voting on the published election date. With the approval of the Executive Committee of the Convocation, the approval period can be extended to up to twenty-one (21) days before the election date.
- (c) The closing date for the submission of nominations is 17h00 on the designated date.
- (d) Each nomination form must be duly signed by the proposer (i.e. the person making the nomination), two persons who second the nomination and the nominated candidate, all of whom must be eligible members of the Alumni Chapter concerned. The proposer must also include a brief motivation in the nomination form as to why he or she believes the nominee is the right candidate for nomination to the role concerned.
- (e) No person may sign more than one nomination form, whether as a proposer or as a seconder.
- (f) The nominations must be in writing and accompanied by an abridged CV and Profile of the nominee, his/her written acceptance of the nomination, as well as written consent that his/her information may be published on the UNIVEN and/or Alumni website and otherwise processed in line with the requirements of the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA). Full personal details of the nominee and the person nominating the candidate must be provided, and these include the student number and identification number for membership authentication.

- (g) The abridged CV and Profile of the candidate must indicate the degree/s obtained and the date/s upon which such a qualification/s were obtained, as well as an indication of the current position (work) the candidate holds.
- (h) To be eligible for election, a candidate must have five (5) years of verifiable continual post-qualification work experience, provided that in the case of a faculty or school-based Alumni Chapter, such experience must be in the area of the qualification or a closely related area.
- (i) Upon receipt of duly-completed nominations, the Registrar shall ensure that the information on the duly-nominated candidates, together with the candidates' abridged CVs and Profiles, are circulated to the eligible members of the Convocation, using the following platforms:
  - (i) UNIVEN website/Alumni website
  - (ii) Email to all Convocation members
  - (iii) Social media channels.

## **5.6. Voting**

- 5.6.1 The members of the Convocation will vote on the eligibility of the nominees for appointment to the Executive Committee of the Alumni Chapters, based on their experience and expertise.
- 5.6.2 Voting will take place by means of an electronic voting system supplemented by a paper-based system (if required) as set out below:
- 5.6.3 The Registrar shall act as the Electoral Officer and shall be assisted by staff from his office and the Alumni Relations Office of the University. The Registrar shall appoint such number of scrutineers as he shall deem fit for purposes of ensuring the integrity of a physical election process.
- 5.6.4 The Registrar shall prepare a Voter's Roll consisting of all members of the Convocation who are eligible to participate in the election. The identity of all eligible voters shall be determined using this Voter's Roll, upon presentation of a valid South African identity document or driver's license, to be presented to the verifying officer/s at the entrance of the election venue. A determined method of identification (e.g. the use of name tags) may

be used to identify eligible voters in the election venue.

5.6.5 The names of the nominees shall be clearly indicated in a chronological format on the ballot paper.

5.6.6 Voting may take place by means of an electronic voting system or a paper-based system. The decision whether to have an electronic voting process, a paper-based process, or a hybrid process will be made by the Executive Committee of Convocation, taking into consideration the technical requirements, logistical issues and costs.

5.6.7 The format of voting on the election date shall be determined by the Registrar and communicated to members of the Alumni Chapter present at the voting site.

5.6.8 No person may vote more than once via the processes made available, whether electronic or paper-based.

5.6.9 The Registrar shall ensure that only eligible voters participate in the election. No proxy voting will be allowed.

5.6.10 Voting shall commence and close at the time determined and announced by the Registrar.

5.6.11 In the case of a hybrid voting process, the results of the web-based and paper-based voting processes will be tallied.

5.6.12 In cases where duplication is identified (a voter voting twice), affected ballots will not be taken into account at all.

5.6.13 After voting has closed, the various voting totals will be finalised and verified in a manner deemed appropriate by the Registrar. The Registrar may secure the services of the University's internal auditors or legal services office to assist in this process.

5.6.14 The outcomes of the election/appointment process are made public by the Registrar at the election venue as soon as the outcomes have been verified as aforementioned.

## **6. CONFIDENTIALITY OF VOTING**

(a) Access to all the personal information obtained via the voting process is restricted to a limited number of staff members and the UNIVEN internal auditors and / or legal services office staff, for administrative and verification purposes.

(b) The staff members referred to in (a) above undertake to maintain strict confidentiality of the nominations and election process at all times.

## **7. REVIEW OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

These terms of reference shall be reviewed every three (3) years or as and when it is necessary to do so.