

# STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

## POLICY FOR PLACEMENT IN RESIDENCES, AND IN LISTENING, LEARNING AND LIVING HOUSES, AS WELL AS ALLOCATION TO PSO WARDS AND CLUSTERS

### LEEFHUISE, ASOOK INDELING BY PSO-WYKE EN KLUSTERS

Reference number of document	Koshuis_PSO_LLL-huise_plasingsbeleid_weergawe 10 vir Raad 29 April 2013 (final)
Aim of the policy	The metapurpose of this policy is the optimisation of the whole university experience of our students as an important contributory factor to student success. Furthermore, the aim is to manage the placement and allocation in an accountable way and in line with the mission, vision and objectives of the University.
Approval date	29 April 2013
Implementation date	1 June 2013 for the 2014 intake group
Revision schedule	At least every five years, or as necessary
Owner of policy	Vice-Rector (Learning and Teaching)
Policy curator	Senior Director: Student and Academic Support
Approved by	Council

### CONTENTS

1. Introduction	p. 1
2. Aim and scope of the policy	p. 2
3. Objectives of the policy	p. 2
4. Policy principles	p. 2
5. Policy provisions	p. 3
6. Conflict resolution	p. 6
7. Control of policy	p. 7
8. Reporting and publicising	p. 7
9. Action in case of non-compliance	p. 7
10. Definitions	p. 7
11. Supporting document	p. 10

### 1 Introduction

As a 21<sup>st</sup>-century university, it is essential that Stellenbosch University continuously adapt to changing realities and manage its accommodation assets in a way that will best serve the vision, mission and objectives of the University. In addition to this, the total University experience of a student contributes towards, or has an impact on, the eventual success (or otherwise) of that student. This is why the University has a responsibility to utilise and organise the students' university experience optimally, and hence also to carry out placement in undergraduate residences, senior residences, allocation to PSO wards and clusters, and placement in Listening, Learning and Living houses (LLL houses) in such a way that it will contribute to the success of all our students (see point 10 for definitions of each of these different types of accommodation). This policy is also

linked to the way that the University is organised with respect to transformation, creating a welcoming and friendly campus in conjunction with the mobility plan (transport on, to and from the campus and links with clusters). In the light of the relatively limited number of residence places, however, it is also clear that accommodation in a residence is a privilege (and not a right) and that that privilege must be conferred in a responsible and meaningful way.

## **2 Aim and scope of the policy**

The metapurpose of this placement policy is the optimisation of the whole university experience of our students as an important contributory factor to student success. Furthermore, it assumes the optimisation of the out-of-class experience of the students, which in practice means that an attempt is also made outside of the formal curriculum to define everything that has an impact on students' optimal development in such a way that it will make a positive contribution towards student success. In addition, the policy must be an instrument in the hands of management to achieve the strategic objectives of the University, which would include, among others: student success, promotion and celebration of diversity, creating a welcoming campus culture, fair and orderly arrangements regarding the placement of students in University accommodation, and the allocation and organisation of other kinds of accommodation options.

The University's strategic decision on size and shape includes, amongst others, the most desired spread of diversity of students that is managed with enrolment planning. The result of targeted recruitment and the students who apply for residence accommodation then determine the placement possibilities.

## **3 Objectives of the policy**

Important objectives are that students should be placed and allocated in such a way that it will contribute positively to the formation of sound, diverse communities that will in turn contribute to optimal growth and development in the out-of-class context and to eventual success (academically and otherwise). Another objective is striving as far as possible to allocate a place in a residence to the most vulnerable students, whose chances of success will improve if they are in a residence. In this regard new first-year students will be firstly considered but also, for example, EDP (Extended Degree Programme) students, students requiring financial support bursaries as determined with the aid of a means test and students with special learning needs (disabilities) for whom residence accommodation is essential. The policy also offers management an instrument to help ensure that diversity objectives with respect to Black, Coloured and Indian (BCI) students at undergraduate level can be achieved.

## **4 Policy principles**

*Enhancing excellence through diversity* is a guiding policy principle and both these dimensions are consistently taken into account along with all the other provisions. Diversity is regarded as an extremely important factor in developing excellence among students. Opportunities to learn from people who are different from you are greater than they would be in a homogenous group. Furthermore, coping with diversity offers an excellent preparation for dealing with South African and international realities. This is why the University wants to create opportunities that are rich in diversity within its student communities. This also acknowledges the fact that students are diverse

in many respects (not only as far as ethnicity is concerned) and that diversity needs to be reflected in the composition of student communities.

Another important principle that also serves as an objective is that the most vulnerable students and those who would benefit most from being accommodated in residences should preferably be allocated a place in a residence in order to enhance their chances of success.

## **5 Policy provisions**

The amendment of specific placement categories' numbers, percentages and other details with respect to the application and implementation of the policy (as may be necessary from time to time) is the responsibility of the University manager within whose area of responsibility this falls, namely the Vice-Rector (Learning and Teaching). The particulars as implemented in any specific year should take into consideration the diversity profile of qualifying applicants and are contained in a supporting document (i.e. management provisions and implementation measures), which also appear in the Calendar. Only the University Council may change substantial policy provisions.

- 5.1 The primary provision applied on the Stellenbosch campus in order to place first-year students in residences is to make the placements on the basis of academic merit in the first round.
- 5.2 Once the initial placements have been completed and the placed students' diversity profiles have been taken into consideration, additional provisions, still taking into account academic merit, are applied to achieve the diversity profile as set by management as target. The five diversity factors taken into account in this regard are: (1) South African citizen or international student; (2) language preference (Afrikaans, English or Other); (3) ethnicity (Coloured, Black, Indian or White); (4) first- or non-first-generation student; and (5) economic class (for students who need financial support in the form of bursaries and who qualify for such support on the basis of a means test).
- 5.3 A further provision is to place the most vulnerable students (including new first-years, EDP students, students requiring financial support bursaries as determined with the aid of a means test and students with special learning needs (disabilities)) in residences.
- 5.4 In the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences all recruitment bursary students, who were selected on the basis of academic merit, are already allocated places in a residence on the Tygerberg campus in the first round. Recruitment bursary candidates on the Stellenbosch campus are considered in the second round of placement because those accepting the offers are only known at a later stage.
- 5.5 For students at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences who spent their first year in a residence on the Stellenbosch campus and who then have to move to the Tygerberg campus, the allocation of a place in a residence on the Tygerberg campus will depend on the availability of places after the placement of first-year students in Tygerberg residences.
- 5.6 In addition, a specified Grade 12 average, as determined by the University management, will be adopted as cut-off point for new first-years to be placed in a residence (in other words, applicants with a Grade 12 average lower than that set as a requirement by the University

will be placed in a residence only in exceptional cases and with a sound motivation – such as being an EDP applicant).

- 5.7 As a rule students on the Stellenbosch campus may stay in undergraduate residences for the maximum of the normal duration of the undergraduate programme for which they had initially registered (this period is cumulative regardless of whether the student has changed residence), unless they are a part of the residence leadership structures, namely head student (primarius/primaria), house committee member, cluster convenor or mentor.
- 5.8 In exceptional cases and with thorough motivation, from the Residence Head to the Director of the Centre for Student Communities (CSC), a few additional senior students may remain in the residence longer than the normal duration of the undergraduate programme for which they had initially registered on the basis of an exceptional contribution being made, e.g. in the field of culture or sport.
- 5.9 The Residence Head may in exceptional cases and with thorough motivation to the Director of the Centre for Student Communities (CSC) make written recommendations during the first round of placements for the placement of specific new first-year students who qualify in terms of academic merit, according to predetermined requirements.
- 5.10 Special placements are part of the total number of placements per year and are not an additional group for whom there are additional places. For this group the two key provisions still apply, namely academic merit and a sound distribution of diversity categories. The following special placements apply at present and may be amended by the University Management from time to time:
- 5.10.1 *Bloemhof Trust placement as agreed with the University:* The Bloemhof Trust must submit the names of prospective students whom they wish to place in residence to the residence placement officials by 1 September at the latest and the Trust cannot select the residences itself. The Bloemhof Trust is requested to strive to allocate a significant number of their agreed number of places to BCI students.
- 5.10.2 *EDP placement:* The placement officials allocate residence places to a certain number of EDP students every year.
- 5.10.3 *Sport placements:* A certain number of places are allocated to Maties Sport. Apart from taking excellence in sport and academic work into account, Maties Sport must also strive to place a significant number BCI students in their allocated places. The names of the students must reach the placement officials by 1 September of each year.
- 5.10.4 *Military students:* Placement officials place male and female military students who are studying on the Stellenbosch campus in a suitable University house.
- 5.11 The provisions for allocation to PSO wards and clusters also strive as far as possible to take into account the two key provisions, namely academic merit and diversity. In the light of this, the following apply for the allocation of PSO students to wards (or PSO houses) and hence also to clusters:

- 5.11.1 PSO students are allocated randomly to wards. Random allocation leads to an equal distribution of academic merit and diversity;
- 5.11.2 New postgraduate and international students are allocated to clusters in the same way as new first-year students and the University strives to achieve their optimal integration into the rest of the student community.
- 5.12 Students who move from residences to PSO wards are automatically included in the (men's/women's) PSO ward(s) of the cluster of the residence that they are leaving.
- 5.13 Students must be reregistered in a new cluster if they move from private accommodation to a residence in a different cluster from the PSO ward in which they were.
- 5.14 Placement in senior residences on the Stellenbosch campus is also done in accordance with the two key provisions, namely academic merit and the diversity profile for each particular residence with respect to gender, ethnicity, language preference, national or international student and economic class (whether first-generation student or not is not relevant here). The particulars are as follows:
- 5.14.1 The senior residences accommodate mainly students who have already been living in another undergraduate residence.
- 5.14.2 Students who are already 23 years and older when they come to study at the University for the first time are preferably placed in a senior residence.
- 5.14.3 The maximum age for placement of students in senior residences is determined annually by management.
- 5.14.4 Placement of senior students is also considered in terms of categories related to the number of years since they completed matric. The category within which a student falls also determines the kind of residence accommodation for which a student will be considered. Certain senior residences are reserved for students of each of the following three categories or combinations of the three categories: Matric + 4 to + 6 years; Matric + 6 to + 8 years; Matric + 8 years and more.
- 5.14.5 Students may stay in senior residences for a maximum of three years (this period is cumulative regardless of whether the student changes residence), regardless of whether the student had already been living in an undergraduate residence (and they may also remain in the senior residences for a longer period if they are part of the leadership structures).
- 5.14.6 With regard to undergraduate and postgraduate students in senior residences:
- a) For older undergraduate students in the category who are studying at Stellenbosch University for the first time (thus 23 years or older), a percentage of the capacity, as determined by the management, is reserved in the senior residences. In this case too students are placed taking into account the two key provisions, namely academic merit and the respective diversity categories.

- b) Postgraduate students and students who studied at undergraduate level at the University are weighed up against one another on the basis of their weighted averages per credit and those with a higher weighted average per credit get preference over students with a lower weighted average per credit. The weighted average per credit is calculated for undergraduate performance.
- c) The weighted average per credit of students who form part of the leadership structures, namely SRC, cluster convenors, house committee members and mentors, is increased by a percentage, as determined by management. A certain maximum number of students, also as determined by management, can benefit from such an increase of the weighted average per credit.
- d) Students who are employed full time and earn a fixed annual income may not be placed in a University residence.
- e) People who are registered at the University for subjects or modules which do not lead to obtaining a qualification at Stellenbosch University do not qualify for a place in a residence.

5.14.7 At the Tygerberg campus separate arrangements are made with regard to placement in senior residences.

5.15 Placement in LLL houses takes place as follows:

5.15.1 The diversity profile for each LLL house plays a decisive role. Applicants are thus placed according to the diversity needs of each particular LLL house. The diversity profile includes the following categories: gender, ethnicity, language preference, faculty, national or international student, and economic class (first-generation student or not is not applicable here).

5.15.2 Students make an application for placement in LLL houses and the applications are considered by selection panels appointed by the CSC. In exceptional cases where the panel finds it difficult to distinguish between applicants, the panel may conduct interviews with the applicants.

5.16 If applications for admission to residence places change (e.g. decline), or where new uses for University accommodation are envisaged (such as the development of more LLL houses), University management can adapt any of the placement categories' percentages and numbers with concomitant reporting about the strategic impact thereof to the University Council.

## **6 Conflict resolution**

Any such cases are referred to the Director: Centre for Student Communities for guidance and decisions.

## **7 Control of policy**

7.1 *Control structure within which the policy resides:* The policy is determined by the University Council. The Rector is responsible for the execution of the policy and he delegates the overall responsibility to the appropriate environments that report to a member of the Rector's Management Team, namely the Vice-Rector (Learning and Teaching).

7.2 *Ownership:* The Vice-Rector (Learning and Teaching) has been appointed by the Rector as line manager and owner of this policy.

7.3 *Roles and responsibilities:* The University establishes the following roles and responsibilities, among others, with a view to implementing and managing this policy:

7.3.1 The statutory head is the Rector and Vice-Chancellor.

7.3.2 A member of the Rector's Management Team, namely the Vice-Rector (Learning and Teaching), to whom the relevant environments responsible for the implementation and application of the policy report, acts as the owner of the policy and annually establishes the different percentages and numbers (as set out in the supporting document that also appear in the Calendar). The supporting document in the Calendar will reflect the most recent information about percentages and numbers of the placement of first-year cohorts in residences.

7.3.3 Student and Academic Support is the appropriate division to execute this policy and where recommendations for the revision of the policy are from time to time handed in. This division head is also responsible for keeping the Vice-Rector (Learning and Teaching) up to date regarding actions that need to be taken in accordance with the policy (with specific reference to the revision of numbers and percentages as contained in the supporting document).

## **8 Reporting and publicising**

Reporting and publicising are embedded in normal management practices and the necessary communication takes place through the University's normal communication channels. Reporting to the University Council takes place after the completion of the placement process each year.

## **9 Action in cases of non-compliance**

Any complaints stemming from alleged non-compliance with the policy are dealt with in terms of the University's existing complaints management processes and systems.

## **10 Definitions**

The following specific terms are used in this policy and concise definitions of the terms are as follows:

**Academic merit** – in the context of the placement of new first-year students, this refers to academic achievement at school, and for senior students it refers to academic achievement at University

**BCI students** – Black, Coloured and Indian students

**Cluster** – a cluster is a group of residences that are grouped together primarily on a geographical basis and to which a PSO ward (in the case of an integrated men's and women's ward) or two PSO wards (in the case of separate men's and women's wards) are allocated to form a student community (currently about 2 500 to 3 000 students)

**Cluster convenor** – this is a student leader who assists the ResEd Coordinator with all the activities in a cluster

**Diversity** – in the context of this policy, reference is made primarily to five diversity categories, namely (1) South African citizen or international student; (2) language preference (Afrikaans, English or Other); (3) ethnicity (White, Coloured, Black or Indian); (4) first- or non-first-generation student; and (5) economic class (for students needing financial assistance in the form of bursaries and who qualify for such support on the basis of a means test)

**Ethnicity** – in the context of this policy the definition of the *Verklarende Afrikaanse Woordeboek* is used, namely *behoort tot 'n spesifieke rasse- of taalgroep (belonging to a specific race or language group)*

**Extended Degree Programmes (EDPs)** – these are formal degree programmes in which students may extend their degree in a programmed way in advance, over a longer period of time

**First-generation student** – a student whose parents or grandparents did not study at a university

**First round of placements** – this is the primary or first round of placements that only focuses on academic merit (the second round of placements follows this one and focuses more on the five diversity categories while still considering academic merit)

**HC** – house committee member

**Head Student (Primarius/Primaria)** – the head student in a men's or women's residence or PSO house

**In-class experience** – mainstream academic offering that is presented predominantly in the context of lecture halls (sometimes this is also referred to as the curriculum or main curriculum)

**Listening, Learning and Living house (LLL house)** – official University house (property of the University) in which smaller groups of students are accommodated around themes and taking diversity into account

**Means test** – this is an instrument, based on the income of a family, with which it is determined whether the student in the family qualifies for financial support, as well as the extent of the support

**Mobility plan** – the University's overarching master plan to organise transport on, to and from campus

**Normal duration of a degree programme** – it is the minimum duration of a degree programme, e.g., a BSc degree's normal duration is three years and a BEng degree four years

**Out-of-class experience** – the student's experience of the University outside of the formal lecture context or formal academic offering (sometimes also referred to as the co-curriculum)



**PSO students** – private students organisation (students who do not live in official University accommodation)

**PSO ward** – also called a PSO house or private ward; this is a grouping of PSO students who are grouped together for organisational and community-formation purposes. Such houses are grouped together along with residences into clusters and they also have a student leadership structure (including mentors for new first-year students)

**ResEd Coordinator** – staff member who acts as coordinator of a cluster (usually this person is also a Residence Head of a residence within the particular cluster)

**Residence** – official University building accommodating larger groups of students

**Residence Head** – person appointed to act as head of a residence and this person usually lives in or next to the residence concerned

**Residence leadership structures** – in the context of this policy it includes the following: Head Students (Primarius/primaria), house committee members, cluster convenors and mentors

**Responsibility centre (RC)** – this entails the total portfolio of, e.g., a vice-rector and it encompasses all the divisions that form part of the vice-rector's responsibilities

**Senior residences** – residences or living units in which no (or very few) new first-year students are accommodated and whose inhabitants are predominantly more advanced students (in contrast, the other residences have significant numbers of new first-year students). The following residence/living units are regarded as senior residences: **Mixed senior residences/living units:** Botmashoogte, Concordia, Huis De Villiers, Huis MacDonald and Lobelia – two new senior residences are being built in 2013, one on the Stellenbosch campus and one on the Tygerberg campus

**SRC** – Students Representative Council

**Undergraduate residences** – these are the majority of the residences where primarily undergraduate students are accommodated and where higher numbers of new first-year students are placed than in senior residences. The following residences are regarded as undergraduate residences: **Men:** Dagbreek, Eendrag, Helderberg, Helshoogte, Huis Marais, Huis Visser, Majuba, Simonsberg and Wilgenhof. **Women:** Erica, Harmonie, Heemstede, Huis Ten Bosch, Irene, Lydia, Minerva, Monica, Nemesia, Nerina, Serruria and Sonop. **Mixed residences:** Gold Fields and Metanoia. **Tygerberg: Women:** Huis Francie van Zyl. **Mixed residences:** Kerkenberg, Hippokrates and Meerhoff

**University management** – in the context of this policy the following is meant with University management: the Rector's Management Team (RMT)

**University house** – a house belonging to, or rented by, the University and that is made available to students to live in

**Visiting Head** – person appointed to act as head of a PSO ward (or PSO house), but the person does not necessarily live near the environment where the students live

**Vulnerable students** – in the context of this policy this includes the following groups: new first-year students, students in extended degree programmes (EDP students), students requiring financial support bursaries as determined with the aid of a means test and students with special learning needs (disabilities)

## **11 Supporting document**

This policy must be read in conjunction with the management provisions and implementation measures contained in the supporting document, which also appear in the Calendar along with the policy, and are adapted annually.

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