

Presented and accepted at the Committee for Learning and Teaching (CLT) on 1/06/2022

**REGULATIONS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF  
THE FUND FOR INNOVATION AND RESEARCH IN LEARNING AND TEACHING  
(Finlo previously known as FIRLT/)**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Stellenbosch University's [Vision 2040](#) states as its aim to “be Africa’s leading research-intensive university” (p.14) recognised for excellence, inclusivity and innovation to “advance knowledge in the service of society” (ibid). The [Strategic-Framework 2019-2024](#) states networked and collaborative learning and teaching that “encourages intellectual inquisitiveness” and “research for impact”. The framework further calls for “optimising the scientific, economic, social, scholarly and cultural impact of our research” as core strategic themes. It also promotes the continuous renewal of academic programmes that includes the integration of learning technologies.

The [Teaching and Learning Policy 2018-2022](#) aims to promote an enabling institutional environment where quality teaching, learning and assessment can flourish across the student body, the academic staff cohort, support services divisions and management bodies. This policy is premised on the principle that quality teaching, learning and assessment should be informed by scholarship. The **Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)**<sup>1</sup> and the body of knowledge underpinning it, should inform both the professionalisation of academics in their teaching role, and the scholarship of their teaching and assessment practice. **Scholarly university teachers** are distinguished from reflective practitioners by actively engaging in SoTL with a view to researching and subsequently publishing on teaching and assessment practice.

In line with these SU Strategic documents and Policies, the Fund for Innovation and Research in Learning and Teaching (Finlo) aims to enhance learning, teaching and assessment for lecturers and students through funding teaching, learning and assessment projects which are either innovative or research- focused. Continuous support from the institution is key to the sustainability of the fund (Finlo) which is overseen by the Finlo committee.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGULATION**

The regulation will be implemented and managed by the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) with annual reports to the Committee for

---

<sup>1</sup> SoTL refers to a broad body of knowledge originally arising from seminal work by Boyer (1990), which draws on the notion of scholarship to bridge the false dichotomy between teaching and research.

Learning and Teaching (CLT).

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Scholarship** is considered as linking practice to theory, and theory to practice, encapsulated by the dimensions of discovery, integration, application and teaching (SU T&L Policy 2018-2022).

**Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)** refers to a broad body of knowledge originally arising from seminal work by Boyer (1990), which draws on the notion of scholarship to bridge the false dichotomy between teaching and research (SU T&L Policy 2018-2022).

**Innovation** is considered as the introduction of a new teaching strategy, approach, idea, method, or device with the aim to enhance and “produce quantifiable gain” for student teaching, learning and assessment. Evaluation of the proposed innovation is essential to indicate whether the idea, method or device did enhance teaching, learning and assessment.

## **PURPOSE OF THE REGULATION**

The regulation document serves as a guiding and supporting document for managing the Finlo application and awards processes at SU.

Finlo supports the institutional goals to encourage and create an environment which is conducive to teaching, learning and assessment innovation with an evaluation component. It also supports these goals with regard to the scholarship of teaching and learning.

The purpose of the Finlo is to provide financial support to lecturers, departments or programmes in order to:

- demonstrate the value of teaching to the institution;
- encourage a research-based approach towards teaching, learning and assessment;
- support academics to enhance and/or change their teaching and assessment;
- support SoTL@SU; and
- assist academics to effectively innovate or research their teaching and assessment.

## **AIMS OF THE REGULATION**

The aim of the regulation is to set out the purpose for the Finlo, the management of the fund and identify sustainable funding sources.

## **REGULATION PRINCIPLES**

These regulations make provision for measures to enhance teaching, learning and assessment research and innovation through the provision of financial support for:

- i) Longitudinal research projects and
- ii) Short term research/innovation projects.

Funding will be commensurate with the kind/nature of project proposals.

The Finlo committee has the obligation and the responsibility to decide on the funding amount depending on the available funds. The committee decisions are made in accordance with the Finlo guidelines and the feasibility of each application.

## **REGULATION PROVISIONS**

New Finlo committee will be nominated by the current Finlo committee. It will comprise members of the Division Learning and Teaching Enhancement (DLTE) and faculty members. New committee members will then be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching as the chairperson of the CLT.

The Finlo committee will report to the Committee for Learning and Teaching on an annual basis.

### **Implementation of the Finlo**

The call for proposals goes out twice a year two months prior to the closing dates in May and November. A letter inviting proposals from the Finlo committee via the Finlo administrative office ([finlo@sun.ac.za](mailto:finlo@sun.ac.za)) will inform all faculties via the deans.

The CTL will, where possible, provide support for proposal writing in the form of consultations, identification of experts and writing retreats as well as support for the dissemination of findings.

### **Selection of proposals**

Requirements for proposals to be considered by the Finlo committee:

- It must be submitted via the application system as indicated in the Call for Proposals;
- It must be endorsed by means of a letter from the Head of Department/Dean/Director and a letter from the Vice-Dean Teaching and Learning (the approver may not be a co-applicant);
- It must indicate the intended outcome(s), activities, timelines, budget, names and roles of all parties involved;
- It must demonstrate the value of the project for the TLA of the relevant module, programme, faculty or the university, as well as the possible value for other lecturers, modules or programmes at the university;
- It must indicate how the results would be disseminated within SU and/or at regional and/or international workshops or conferences;

- If marked as *Innovation*, it must demonstrate how the project will be evaluated and sustained (should the project be found to be successful);
- If marked as *Research*, it must offer aims, a theoretical framework, research design; and
- It must demonstrate a logical relationship and alignment between the need or problem, the proposed activities, budget and intended outcome(s).

Applicants are responsible for obtaining the necessary ethical clearance before beginning the project.

New proposals from previous applicants will only be considered if reports from previous projects have been timeously submitted.

The committee will attempt to select proposals from a range of disciplines, faculties and types of innovation/research, but will not specify in advance the overall number of proposals to be selected or the number of proposals per faculty.

### **Types of activities supported by the Finlo**

Activities designed by Faculties, Departments, Programmes or collaborating and individual lecturers can be supported by the Finlo. These activities must aim to investigate an aspect of teaching, learning and assessment, or to devise an innovation to enhance an aspect of teaching, learning and assessment.

The innovation or investigation could target an entire or a component of module.

The following are illustrative examples of aspects of teaching, learning and assessment that could be the focus of a proposal:

- Teaching, learning and assessment methods in large or small classes;
- Use of text base resources or multimedia;
- New methods of assessment;
- Multilingual teaching, learning and assessment strategies;
- Team teaching;
- Integrating graduate attributes into content specific courses/module/programmes;
- Reflective teaching methods;
- Peer learning and teaching;
- Investigations into challenges existing in specific programmes or courses;
- New methods to support learning in student residences and or student communities.

### **Funds may be used for:**

- contracting in of teaching, learning or assessment expertise;
- paying a replacement lecturer so that the PI can undertake the innovation and/or research;
- transcription costs;

- purchase of equipment or software if proven to be integral to the successful implementation of the project; requests for equipment must be motivated and include quotations; the fund will cover such requests, to an amount decided by the Finlo committee, only if demonstrated that these are central to the success of the proposed project; for sustainability, assets and equipment must be acquired, registered and managed according to standard procedure in the PI's environment; after completion of the project, assets should be made available for wider use in the faculty; if the resultant operations of the project become business-as-usual the equipment should be funded from faculty funding;
- tutors/student assistants;
- translation services which are demonstrated as central to enhancing the students' learning and assessment experiences;
- other feasible expenses required for the success of the project;
- editing costs of Finlo-funded research papers (permitting availability of Finlo funding and only up to an agreed amount); and
- journal page fees for Finlo-funded papers (permitting availability of Finlo funding and only up to an agreed amount).

#### **Funds may not be used for:**

- cost of travel to, registration and attendance of conferences/workshops;
- translation services deemed business-as-usual;
- master's and doctoral studies;
- proposals for the implementation and/or design of short courses which generate third-stream income;
- payment to the applicant or co-applicants for research work undertaken (full-time SU staff);
- payment to the applicant or co-applicant for work undertaken (contract staff for their normal working hours);
- payment of a primary investigator involved in more than one application at the same time;
- back-dated payment of work already done.

#### **Commencement of approved projects and taking up of fund:**

Where approved projects have not commenced or allocated funds have not been taken up prior to the following Call for proposals, the allocated funds will be added to and paid out from the budget of the latest call, if funding is available. Further details are set out in the Call for proposals.

#### **CONFLICT SETTLEMENT**

Conflict within these regulations should be resolved within the structures of the university.

#### **REGULATION CONTROL**

In the event of non-compliance i.e. no proof of ethical clearance, project remains incomplete for 6 months after proposed date of finalisation, misuse of funds, failure to submit progress and final reports or reneging on the commitments to any of the stipulated criteria – the Finlo committee reserves the right to retract the full or part of the amount initially granted.

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

Item No	Name of Document	Status (e.g. identified, in process, approved, etc.)
	Proposal for the Management and Funding of the Funds for Research and Innovation in Learning and Teaching (FIRLT)	Approved 2022
	Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019 - 2024	Approved 2018
	Teaching and Learning Policy 2018 - 2022	Approved 2018
	Guidelines on Teaching and Learning Materials	Approved 2016
	Boyer, E. 1990. <i>Scholarship Reconsidered – Priorities of the Professoriate</i> . Princeton University Press, 3175 Princeton Pike, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648	