

Department of Higher Education and Training, South Africa

Accreditation of Creative Outputs

Annual National Scholarly Editors' Forum (NSEF) Meeting

**Hosted by: the Academy of Science of South Africa's Scholarly
Publishing Programme (SPP)**

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The Policy

- *The Policy on the Evaluation of Creative Outputs and Innovations Produced by South African Public Higher Education Institutions, 2017*, addresses the need for the recognition and subsidisation of all scholarly forms of research outputs from the universities in South Africa, other than scholarly publications.
- The creative outputs recognised by the policy, therefore, by the Department for purposes of subsidy are in the following subfields:
 - ✓ Fine and Visual Arts.
 - ✓ Music.
 - ✓ Theatre, Performance and Dance.
 - ✓ Design.
 - ✓ Film and Television.
 - ✓ Literary Arts.
 - ✓ On Innovations, the policy recognises patents and plant breeder's rights.
- The Department works with the National Intellectual Property Management Office (NIPMO) to evaluate submissions on innovations.

The Policy (2)

- The policy places emphases, which are evaluated, on the:
 - **Originality:** whether the output contributes to fresh understanding and/or stylistic, thematic or conceptual innovation in the discipline;
 - **Relevance:** whether the work demonstrates an intellectually and creatively informed response to the subject; and
 - **Newness:** should be understood to indicate a given work that has never been accredited for subsidy before.
- The DHET evaluation process will be final, and there will be no recourse for appeals, should the academics/creators not be satisfied with the outcome. This owes to the fact that the policy allows for a three-year (n-3) submission cycle, i.e. from the time the work first appeared in the public domain to submission for subsidy.
- Each output must be accompanied by a annotation (written commentary) by the artist to contextualise or elucidate the work. Such contextualisation which, among others must demonstrate relevance and newness, should not be over elaborate (500 to 700 words) or be seen as a replacement of the output itself, but information to provide background that may not be ascertained from an examination of the creative output alone.
- The annotation must articulate concepts and seek to make tacit information/knowledge clear.

The Policy (3)

- Each creative output is required to be peer-evaluated before submitting to the DHET, and the policy stipulates that ‘Institutions must choose peer reviewers who have appropriate academic qualifications and/or experience to assess submissions by creative practitioners working in a scholarly framework’.
- The policy provides a general procedure for submission which is further elaborated in the *Implementation Guidelines*.
- The *Implementation Guidelines* are mainly used by the *Creative Outputs Evaluation Panel* and are made available to peer-reviews to enable them to understand the criteria and what the panel expects to see from the reviews.
- Over and above the *Implementation Guidelines*, peer-reviewers are provided with the *Reviewer’s Template* largely meant for consistency and quality reviews. The template was also developed by the DHET in consultation with the sector.

The Implementation Period Reviewed (1)

- In the past three years of the implementation of the policy there have been several improvements, spurred by our encounters with some challenges. The most significant were:
 - Improvement of the Peer reviewer template
 - Revision of the Implementation Guidelines (2021)
 - Introduction of unit fraction 0.5 (2021)
 - Submissions for innovations received on ROSS (2020)
 - Sourcing of third peer reviewer to strengthen application
 - Providing clarity and expansion on the Terms of Reference for the Advisory Panel and Sub-field panels.
 - Two sector reports (third on the way).
- There is not enough pool of peer-reviewers and some fields have more strain than others in this regard.
- Identification and avoidance of conflict of interest, from institutional level (e.g. not appointing peer-reviewers who may have had some association with the outputs or are from the same department) and, similarly, at the evaluation stage at national level (e.g. sub-panel members do not have access to submissions from their institutions and are required to declare and recuse themselves where they have had any association or involvement in a creation or production).
- Increasing number of interdisciplinary submissions and do not fit neatly into the established sub-fields.

Way Forward

- Ethics
- Concept of practice-led research and its implication on how the policy is understood and interpreted by universities. Generally, there is a need to engage on the subject for a better understanding over and above policy.
- Improvement of the policy in the 2023/24 financial year.

THANK YOU

