UCT KNOWLEDGE CO-OP

CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

FOR ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP
WITH EXTERNAL (NON-ACADEMIC) CONSTITUENCIES

CONTENTS

CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP WITH EXTERNAL (NON-ACADEMIC) CONSTITUENCIES

This document is based on contributions from J Favish, A/Prof L Artz, A/Prof A Pope, Dr A Rother, Dr T Winkler, and Ms B Schmid.

Background

In July 2008 a new Vice Chancellor assumed office at the University of Cape Town. At the beginning of 2009 he initiated a strategic planning process which culminated in the adoption of a new Mission and Strategic Goals at the end of 2009 (UCT, 2009).

UCT's Mission expresses a commitment to producing graduates who are lifelong learners capable of critical, creative and flexible thinking, committed to social justice, able to work in different parts of the world and who are job-ready and research-prepared. In order to achieve these goals the university seeks to provide opportunities for students to get involved in community-based education projects as part of their curriculum and problem-based research projects and for postgraduate students to be able to choose topics for dissertations which would involve research on real-life issues identified by external constituencies.

The Strategic Goals reflect the VC's commitment to adjusting UCT's core activities, where necessary, to better address the pressing social, economic and developmental problems facing South Africa and to enhancing the impact of its research through making the research outputs more visible and accessible to external communities. One of the strategic goals therefore specifically refers to strengthening and expanding social responsiveness (SR) at the university.

The term 'social responsiveness' is used as an umbrella term to refer to all forms of engagement with external non-academic constituencies. Engaged Scholarship is defined as a form of SR that refers to the utilisation of an academic's scholarly expertise, with an intentional public purpose or benefit (which) demonstrates engagement with external (non-academic) constituencies.

Role of UCT Knowledge Co-op

As a (further) means of addressing these two concerns the VC decided to establish a new entity which would act as a bridge between society and the University and would help broker new partnerships.   The 'Knowledge Partnership' Project was launched in August 2010. The main objective of the project, now called 'UCT Knowledge Co-op', is to enable external constituencies to access the knowledge, skills, resources and professional expertise within the university around problems they experience.   The Project is managed by a Steering Committee, jointly chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellors responsible for research and social responsiveness. It is located in the Institutional Planning Department.

EMERGING ISSUES FROM RESEARCH ON THE PILOT PROJECTS ESTABLISHED BY THE KNOWLEDGE CO-OP IN 2011

UCT obtained funding from the National Research Foundation for a 3-year research project from 2011 – 2013 to evaluate the role of the Knowledge Co-op, as a brokering unit, and the processes of building knowledge partnerships with community partners as part of strengthening and expanding social responsiveness.

The research conducted the by NRF study team in 2011 illuminated a number of challenges.

1. Clarifying roles and responsibilities and expectations of the various participants.

2. Tensions between meeting the university's expectations in relation to academic requirements for certain kinds of outputs such as dissertations or project reports and the community's desire for immediately useful outputs.

3. Difficulties experienced by students in negotiating partnerships with community organisations.

4. Providing opportunities for students to reflect on what they are learning through community engagement as citizens in a country characterised by huge disparities in wealth and inequalities in living conditions.

5. Dealing with problems associated with the quality of products produced by students, where the products form part of the formal assessment of students (see illustrative case studies contained in Appendix One).

UCT's Social Responsiveness Committee, in reflecting on lessons learned from projects associated with the UCT Knowledge Co-op, has identified

a need to develop a Code of Good Practice for negotiating partnerships with external (non-academic) constituencies which would need to be customised to reflect different disciplinary and other contexts. The Code should be read before engaging with external constituencies.

As Banks from one of the Beacons for Public Engagement in the United Kingdom says: *"What is distinctive about cooperative projects or partnerships is the openness, fluidity and unpredictability of the process. It [the process] is often complicated by multi-layered partnerships based on the negotiation of power relations between diverse groups (with specific histories, politics, cultures and personalities), whilst also being constrained by rigid structures of research governance …[hence the need to establish particular codes of engagement]"*. Co-enquiry Action Research Group , 2011)
http://www.beaconnortheast.org.uk/_assets/media/library-file/11.pdf

RATIONALE FOR DEVELOPING A UCT CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR NEGOTIATING PARTNERSHIPS

The Code of Good Practice (referred to furthermore as "The Code"), which complements University Research Frameworks and ethical codes is intended to:

- Set consistent and appropriate standards for developing and managing partnerships
- Provide information to academics on negotiating roles and responsibilities and expectations of all parties involved in a community-university partnership
- Encourage deliberation about ethical issues that can arise when university academics and students collaborate or partner with community-based organisations
- Minimise conflict and disappointment by either partner

Who should use this Code?
- Faculty Ethics Committees
- Lecturers/researchers engaging in community partnerships
- Supervisors

A separate Code of Good Practice has been prepared for students. However, students may wish to refer to this Code as well.

Principles underpinning the Code
The University's social responsiveness policy framework articulates the university's commitment to strive to engage with external constituencies on the basis of a number of principles, including the following:
- mutual respect and recognition for the different contributions that parties from various constituencies make to the partnership

- recognition that knowledge is transferred in more than one direction from more than one source
- recognition that social contexts have a significant effect on the manner in which people engage with development challenges and on professional practices
- a commitment to social justice and engagement with unequal power relations

CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

The Code of Good Practice should be used by academics involved in engaged scholarship themselves, or in supervising students. The Knowledge Co-op can provide support where needed.

The unit can be contacted at: know-op@uct.ac.za or barbara.schmid@uct.ac.za Workshops and seminars will also be organised by the Social Responsiveness Unit in the Institutional Planning Department and HAESDU staff in CHED.

- **Clarify roles and responsibilities and expectations of partners:**
  - Expectations about desired projects should be the subject of negotiation
  - At the outset to see if there is an appropriate fit expectations about the nature of any proposed outputs associated with the initiative and the roles of the various partners in relation to the outputs should be made explicit. The time frames should also be set out. Setting out expectations at the beginning of a collaboration can also help to avoid raising false expectations of what the project can and cannot achieve
  - Where possible the university should consider how to modify its own methods of assessment to accommodate community views and needs,

or should be explicit at the outset about which requirements would take precedence in the partnership. There should also be explicit discussion at the beginning about what students can/can't deliver given their stage of development. Academic supervisors should ensure that students are adequately prepared for community engagement. Students should be equipped by supervisors to negotiate issues of power and ownership of knowledge, respect, and expertise.

- **Sensitivity to context and the capacities and strengths of different partners:**
    - Students need to be sensitised to the need to set boundaries and how to negotiate relationships with external constituencies.
    - The broker or the supervisor need to ensure that community partners recognise that students are learning through practice, and whilst they have some specialist knowledge and skills, they are not yet experts in their fields. The outcomes and outputs of the process should be specified at the outset.
    - The University partners need to be sensitised to the fact that proposed solutions to problems are not the monopoly of the university partner alone. Knowledge resides in the community and solutions should be collectively formulated with community partners through respectful processes of 'mutual-learning'.
    (Winkler, 2012)

- **Share decision making:**
  Members of both the University and Community should participate in the planning, review, and evaluation of the project and there should be periodic reflection on the relationship and whether it is working.

- **Mutual respect and understanding:**
    - There should be respect for different perspectives, beliefs, norms, customs, and socioeconomic realities *(Winkler, 2012)* agreeing how to communicate e.g. how often and when and learning how

modes of communication are influenced by different social contexts. To promote understanding, UCT may need to provide translators where necessary.

- Relationships should be built and maintained in a manner that enables the full participation of all partners.

- **Critical reflection:**
  Opportunities for students to reflect on what they learn from the activity or project should be provided by the supervisor. These discussions should be facilitated by the Supervisor or Course convener with support from the UCT Knowledge Co-op.

- **Fitness for purpose of projects:**
  - Where supervisors agree to supervise projects that involve collaborative activities or partnerships, the supervisors need to ensure that it is possible to supervise the project in a manner that accommodates the goals and purposes desired by all the partners.
  - Any possible limitations on the quality of the research or outputs should be explicitly articulated at the outset so that all partners to the relationship are aware of the limitations or risks and can determine whether the project should proceed or not. This includes any possible limitations regarding the form of the final product.

- **Publication and dissemination:**
  - Agreement should be reached on who will write/prepare materials for dissemination and how the process will work; how to acknowledge contributions, authorship and co-authorship; using appropriate mechanisms and/or outlets to reach desired audiences.
  - Agreement should be reached on processes for reviewing and commenting on drafts of any research participant information sheets and data collection forms prior to their use.

- **Handling personal information:**
  - Agreeing on how issues of disclosures, referrals, storage, recording,

anonymity, confidentiality; additional requirements regarding safeguarding children and vulnerable adults will be handled.

- The agreements between partners must be submitted to UCT ethics committees and the university partners need to abide by the rules of these committees.

- **Memorandum of Understanding:**
  - It is recommended that as part of the development and implementation of any project, Community and University partners sign a Memorandum of Understanding / partnership agreement before any work is done, that specifies the agreed understanding and discloses any known or anticipated risks and benefits to the individual/institutional partners.
  - All partners – including the Contracts office at UCT – should have an opportunity to comment on the MoU before it is finalised and signed.
  - This Memorandum of Understanding needs to be read in conjunction with any Memorandum of Understanding signed between the academic supervisor and the student(s). Copies should be provided to all partners and Faculty Ethics Committees where applicable.

We have provided examples of different kinds of agreements, which may assist in compiling project specific ones.
- An outline for a Project Charter (Appendix Two)
- A Draft Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix Three)
- A Draft Partnership Agreement (Appendix Four)

In addition to the suggested standards above which pertain to community engagement, standard faculty /discipline procedures for ethics review and/or deliberation need to be followed.

APPENDIX ONE

The case studies have been provided to illustrate possible issues that may arise when university staff or students enter into collaborative relationships with community partners. They indicate how the Code addresses these potential problems.

Illustrative Case Study One

Community x in a disadvantaged area wants a particular product to solve a particular problem. A fourth year student takes on the project as the basis for complying with the dissertation requirement for the Honour's year. The academic requirement is to produce a thesis, but the community would like a concrete design for a product.

The different expectations about the nature of the product that will emanate from the collaborative work can result in conflict if there is not an explicit discussion about outputs at the outset, and what can and cannot be delivered through projects, in order to avoid disappointment or conflict later on.

Illustrative Case Study Two

Students are requested to assist with conducting research on a particular problem with a view to generating possible solutions to the problem. The research is commissioned by a particular organisation. When the students start the research they discover tensions between the organisation and the people they are interviewing. They also discover that the people they are interviewing have had many people interview them and are therefore very skeptical about the research process. They raise lots of questions about the reasons for the research, and the role of the interviewees in shaping the research and its outcomes.

Often tensions arise in the course of projects because all relevant players have not participated in discussions about projects. Students need to be equipped by supervisors to be sensitive to power dynamics between different players and how to manage these.

Illustrative Case Study Three

Students are requested to assist with conducting research on a particular problem with a view to generating possible solutions to the problem. The students get exposed to things that they had never been exposed to before because of the circumstances of the people they are interviewing and struggle to make sense of the data.

Students may find themselves working in communities that are very different from those they are familiar with. Hence they require preparation before entering such contexts and opportunities to critically reflect on how different social contexts impact on the needs and lives of communities.

Illustrative Case Study Four

Student x was part of a team project, and became quite traumatized during a community based research project. Once or twice she had to withdraw and tried to find someone else to go to research related meetings in her place because the project was too traumatizing and she couldn't cope with going every week. This student felt that students needed to be better prepared and made more aware of what could potentially happen in the community. She also felt that greater clarity was needed on the role of supervisors in helping students engage with issues as they arise.

Students may find themselves working in settings that are very different from those they are familiar with. Hence they need to be provided with opportunities to critically reflect on how different social contexts impact on the needs and lives of communities.

Illustrative Case Study Five

Students are requested to assist with the production of plans/technical solution/product to address a particular need for a community organisation. In the course of the process the supervisor becomes concerned about the quality and the inappropriateness of the design/product/solution for the context but feels they can't intervene because the project forms part of the assessment of the student. As a result the community organisation gets a product that is inappropriate for the particular context and is of poor quality.

The different expectations about the nature of the product that will emanate from the collaborative work can result in conflict if there is not an explicit discussion about outputs at the outset, and what can and cannot be delivered through projects, in order to avoid disappointment or conflict later on.

APPENDIX TWO

DRAFT PROJECT CHARTER

Table of Contents

APPENDIX THREE

DRAFT MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

Between: University of Cape Town through UCT Knowledge Co-op
(UCT)

And: ABC.... (Not a legal entity)
(ABC)

(Hereinafter collectively referred to as the "Parties" and individually as the "Party")

1. NATURE OF THE PARTNERSHIP

The use of the term "Partner" in this agreement is not intended in a way that implies the creation of a legal partnership, joint venture or any other kind of legal entity between UCT and TWC in order to implement the proposed Project. It is rather used to express a partnership in which both members have equal status.

The parties are entering into this MOU on the basis that we are equal partners who bring different and yet complementary strengths to the tasks of:
• Collaborating in the study ....

The two organisations commit themselves to the common goal of jointly delivering to the highest level of quality. Their relationship in implementing this project, will be underpinned by principles of transparency, mutual respect, shared decision making and trust.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTNERS FOR THE PROJECT

Within this project, both partners will work within the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) established for the project.

With the support of ABC, XX under the academic supervision of YY will conduct research to use in her/his thesis, to submit as part of accreditation for a .... (degree). The broad aim of the study is to ....

As part of this she/he will:
- .....
- .....

A part of this study ABC will:
- .....
- .....

UCT will introduce the two parties to each other and mediate the process and agreement between them.

3. DURATION:

The project will start in ..... and end by ......

4. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

Neither party nor their respective employees, consultants or agents shall disclose, use or make public, any information or material acquired or produced in connection with, or by the performance of, this MOU, other than in the performance of their respective obligations under this MOU, or as required by law, without the prior written approval of the other party, which must not be unreasonably withheld.

The parties intend that the provisions of this clause shall be binding on them and shall survive the termination or expiration of this MOU.

The Parties agree that any person interviewed during the course of the Project will be advised of the nature and consequences of the Project and

will thereafter complete and sign the informed consent form before any interviews commence.

The Parties agree that any products of this process will be made available to the public on the UCT website.

5. DISPUTE RESOLUTION/ARBITRATION
Any dispute, arising from, or in connection with this agreement shall first be resolved by the parties through the process of negotiation or mediation and if the dispute cannot be resolved, then the dispute shall be referred to the Arbitration Foundation of South Africa to be resolved.

THUS DONE AND SIGNED AT _____ ON THIS _____ DAY OF _____ 2012.

As witnesses:
1.
2.
For and on behalf of the University of Cape Town

THUS DONE AND SIGNED AT _____ ON THIS _____ DAY OF _____ 2012.

As witnesses:
1.
2.
For and on behalf of ABC

Read and acknowledged:
1._____
                    Student
2._____
          Academic supervisor

APPENDIX FOUR

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

……………
&
(PHD CANDIDATE/Researcher UCT member)

1.   PROJECT TITLE:

2.   INTRODUCTION:

2.1   The proposed project is a joint effort by…………………. This partnership agreement guides the basic principles of the project as well as the relationship between…………………...

2.2   This agreement is not a formal employment or research contract, but an agreement by both parties to deliver certain aspects of the project in the spirit of collaborative research. It sets out the terms of reference for the relationship and for the management, use and publication of information collected during the research period.

2.3   The study will be collaborative, with ………….. as the principal researcher of the project. ………. will act as the assisting investigator of the project.

3.   OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH:
       The research will focus on …………….

4.   RESEARCH/PROJECT DESIGN

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBLITIES OF THE PROJECT PARTNERS

6. EXPECTATIONS IN RESPECT OF OUTPUTS/OUTCOMES

7. ONGOING COMMUNICATION

8. TIME FRAMES

9. EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT

10. MANAGEMENT, USE AND PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION

The intellectual property of the research publications shall vest with ………
and ……….

The intellectual property of subsequent academic publications shall vest
with (and the …………….. if relevant).

………..shall hold copyright of the research publication (drafted sepa-
rately by ……..for……….) and may use and disseminate the publication as
………..deems fit.

…………….shall have the right to publish any additional academic work or
publications on the basis of her dissertation.

Where ………..data or information (i.e. the intake forms) is used, ………….
must ensure that ………….sees a copy of the article prior to publication.

Any additional publications by ………….should acknowledge the assis-
tance of …………….

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