



**WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY
STUDENT EXCELLENCE AWARDS
POLICY**




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1. POLICY AIM

1.1 This draft policy is on awards for top students at various levels for different qualifications from different Faculties within Walter Sisulu University.

1.2 The awards reflect the comprehensive nature of the University and recognize top students and excellent achievement from diploma (NQF level 6 i.e. National Diploma) to Phd (NQF Level 10).

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to articulate WSU's stance on student awards and prizes made in recognition of academic excellence. This Policy establishes the criteria, decision-making processes, and the operating procedures for awards and prizes. The purpose of the actual awards is to acknowledge outstanding and excellent achievement of students who have completed qualifications at various levels within the Faculties within the current year.

3. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Academic excellence	High achievement in an individual course or across a specified range of courses.
Eligible student	A person who meets the eligibility criteria for the relevant student award or prize.
Originator	The Faculty, Unit or Campus proposing a University prize.
Sponsor	A person or entity providing a prize to the University.
Student	A person registered for a course at the University.
Course	In determining eligibility for Top Student Recognition, a course includes every instance of a course offered in a calendar year.
Diploma	Diploma refers to a national 3 year diploma (NQF level 6 according to the new HEQF), excluding an advanced diploma and a postgraduate diploma
Distinction	Distinction means that the modules of the qualification were completed with an aggregate of 75% or higher
Degree	Degree refers to an undergraduate degree (NQF level 6-10 according to the new HEQF), including Honours and Master's degrees.
Final year	Final level modules of the curriculum of a

	qualification as given in the prospectus.
Qualifying student	A student who completed a qualification within the year under consideration
Top student	Top student is the student with the highest aggregate marks in all the modules of a qualification

4. Application & Scope - Exclusions or Special Conditions

This policy applies to all WSU students and regulates the following types WSU prizes and awards and contents thereof:

Types of awards

4.1 Department awards: top students *per course* are awarded per department for both Diploma and Degree qualifications.

4.2 Faculty Gold Awards (11) are awarded in each Faculty the top student in the Faculty for a *three year diploma*.

4.3 Faculty Gold Awards (11) are awarded: in each Faculty to the top student in the Faculty for a completion of an *undergraduate bachelor's degree* including *professional degrees and BTech degrees*.

4.4 Senate Gold Awards are awarded in Faculties to the top student for an *Honour's Degree*.

4.5 Council Platinum Awards are awarded in each Faculty to the top student in the Faculty for a *Masters' Degree*.

5. CONTENT OF AWARDS

5.1 The winners of the Council Platinum Awards will receive a WSU study bursary to the value of R5 000.00 each for their own use for further study at WSU.

5.2 The winners of the Senate Gold Awards will receive a WSU study bursary to the value of R3 000.00 each for their own use for further study at WSU.

5.4 The winners of the Faculty Gold Awards will receive stationery to the value of R1000.00 each for their own use.

5.3 The bursary awards will remain active for a period of 5 years after the date of the award. The rationale for this limitation is to encourage the recipients to continue with their studies at WSU within a reasonable period of time.

6. Policy Principles

The prime objective of the Student Excellence Awards is to provide a comprehensive and consistent framework for the administration of the awards and prizes listed above in clause 4.1. The framework is based around each student award or prize having the following principles:

6.1 Clear criteria for the determination of the student or students eligible for prizes or awards;

6.2 Clear, identifiable, equitable and transparent processes;

6.3 Procedural fairness; and

6.4 Recognition of academic excellence comprising the whole or a substantial component of the eligibility criteria.

7. University Prizes terms

7.1 University prizes are awarded annually to students by the Walter Sisulu University.

7.2 University prizes are awarded based wholly or substantially on demonstrable academic excellence.

7.3 University prizes will be publicised on the University's website.

8. Standard Operation Procedures of Student Awards

8.1 In September of each year, Departments will identify top students per course for both Diploma and Degree qualifications. Faculties will identify the top three eligible students in each category for all 11 WSU faculties.

8.2 Faculties will forward the names of the identified top 3 students to the Student Academic Excellence Awards Committee by the first week of October each year. The Committee shall be made up of representatives from all Faculties and academic support departments.

8.3 The Faculties will inform the prospective awardees and invite them to the special awards function at a venue as determined by the Student Academic Excellence Awards Committee. Such an event will be held before commencement of year end student examinations.

8.4 The Faculty Deans will be responsible for the awarding of the University prizes and will communicate details of each recipient to the GAA for inclusion on the recipient's academic transcript.

8.5 In cases where the prizes are sponsored by an external donor, the Student Academic Excellence Awards Committee will be responsible for managing any funds (where applicable) relating to those prizes.

8.6 University prizes will be reviewed by the Faculties at least once every four years. After each review, the Faculties must make a recommendation to the Student Academic Excellence Awards Committee on whether that particular University prize should continue, (in its current form or in a modified form) or be deleted. The Student Academic Excellence Awards Committee must endorse all recommendations for major changes to a University prize before submission to WSU Senate for approval.

8.7 An existing University prize may be amended at any time in terms of minor changes such as course or subject code and title changes by the Student Academic Excellence Awards Committee.

8.8 The WSU Senate may remove a University prize at any time, on the advice of the Student Academic Excellence Awards Committee, if it is considered that the University prize brings the University into disrepute.

8.8 The Policy will be revised according to the WSU Policy/Rules Formulation.

9. IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

Related policies of the former institutions that were in force prior to the commencement of this Policy are replaced with effect from the date on which this Policy is approved.

Draft adapted from Unisa Student Excellence Awards and UKZN Student Excellence Awards policies, UFH University Policy on Student awards, and Wits Student awards policy.