



Stellenbosch

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Visual Redress Policy



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forward together
sonke siya phambili
saam vorentoe

Visual Redress Policy

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Policy curator²:	Senior Director: Social Impact and Transformation
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Validity:	The English version of this regulation is the operative version, and the Afrikaans version is the translation.

¹ Rules Owner: Head(s) of Responsibility Centre(s) in which the rules functions.

² Rules Curator: Administrative head of the division responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the rules

1. Introduction

Vision 2040 and the Strategic Framework 2019–2024 articulate the positioning of Stellenbosch University (SU) as a leading research-intensive South African university, situated in Africa and with a global reach.¹ The aim of the Visual Redress Policy is to give particular expression to SU Vision 2040, with the focus on positioning SU as a university that expresses its visual embeddedness as part of an ongoing process of redress in relation to its local and global context.

Since 2015, student protests under the banners of #Rhodesmustfall, #OpenStellenbosch and #Feesmustfall, among others, have foregrounded the need for change specifically at South African institutions of higher education and training. The nature of this change is multifaceted and, while the student movements were the catalyst that increased the urgency, change in higher education has been on the agenda since the advent of democracy in 1994 – even earlier, in the form of anti-apartheid protests.² It should also be acknowledged that South African universities have, to a varying degree, reconsidered and removed hurtful symbols from campuses since the early 1990s.

As far as university policy is concerned in South Africa, the need for change has centred on keywords such as ‘transformation’ and ‘redress’, while the student protests foregrounded terms such as ‘decolonisation’. The protests and the accompanying discourse about decolonisation have drawn attention to the need for curricular change (epistemological decolonisation) and for staff and student diversity at South African universities (transformation through physical representation).

The particular focus of this policy is *visual redress* at SU, i.e. concerned primarily with what is visually apparent in the spatial layout, visual iconography and visible symbolism within the SU landscape. In this regard, SU acknowledges that visual symbols evoke different emotions and experiences among people, especially in a diversified and historically divided country like South Africa.³

The Visual Redress Policy will proactively guide visual changes on SU campuses specifically through new art installations, the removal or contextualisation of historically sensitive art and other symbols, campus signage, the naming and renaming of buildings, venues and other facilities and premises and so forth. This will assist SU in its drive for transformation in and through visual redress.

However, promoting transformation requires moving beyond policy to practical projects within higher education contexts. At SU, such projects include visual redress projects in campus spaces. This undertaking is guided by the SU Transformation Plan, which focuses on three pillars: places, people and programmes. Therefore, the implementation of this policy is envisaged to have a direct impact on the renewal of the SU institutional culture as outlined in the Transformation Plan.

The vision of the Visual Redress Policy and the implementation of the various projects resulting from it are intended to inform teaching and learning at SU. The policy provides impetus for disciplinary and interdisciplinary conversations about visual redress activities on campus as regards the University’s curricular and co-curricular offerings. Dialogue in teaching and learning environments about the policy and its implementation is meant to elicit critical awareness about visual redress projects being undertaken on campus, this being envisaged as a continuous process. The Visual Redress Policy is also intended to stimulate research possibilities and outputs at SU in collaboration with other universities, both local and global.

¹ SU Vision and Strategic Framework 2019–2024: <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/about/Pages/Strategic-Documents.aspx?TermStoreId=d4aca01e-c7ae-4dc1-b7b2-54492a41081c&TermSetId=e2594d35-01e6-475a-9355-14d13be20b5d&TermId=5b45c78b-1f53-4676-b8de-457df7a28c29>

² For an overview of art projects linked to visual redress at a number of South African universities, see Schahmann, B. 2013. *Picturing change: Curating visual culture at post-apartheid universities*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

³ See <https://www.sun.ac.za/english/Lists/news/DispForm.aspx?ID=3643>.

An important aspect of visual redress activity is inclusive dialogue and consensus-generating processes at the various sites on campus. These processes emphasise the deliberative participation and collegiality necessary for ensuring that visual redress contributes to a cohesive and inclusive campus culture. Processes would also be informed by the artistic, technical and legal expertise required for specific visual cultural activities.

The policy brings together and formalises two ongoing processes at SU: (1) the naming and renaming of buildings, venues and other facilities and premises, as governed by the Committee for the Naming of Buildings, Venues and other Facilities and Premises (hereafter referred to as the Naming Committee) and (2) the activities of the current Visual Redress Committee. Moreover, the policy embeds the naming processes at SU within the framework of visual redress, thus supplementing and enhancing the possibilities and impact of the naming and renaming of buildings, venues and other facilities and premises on all SU campuses. Both committees will remain operative but with a deliberate and direct form of interaction between them, which may include shared membership.

In the final instance, the policy should express the unique character of visual redress at a university. In this regard, it should be remembered that visual redress occurs here within the context of a university. Given the context of the town of Stellenbosch, borders between campus and town are not fixed and, as such, will influence visual redress processes. However, the expression of visual redress through the arts, symbols and names should, in the first instance, acknowledge and celebrate the characteristics of and that which is linked to a university. Further to this, it should stimulate joint initiatives between SU and the town of Stellenbosch.

2. Implementation of the policy

- 2.1 The policy, including regulations and rules that will flow from it, will, by default, be applicable to all members of staff (both permanent and temporary) who work in the management corps of the University, in academic entities and in the professional support environments; it will also be applicable to all students and to the members of the statutory bodies of the University and the members of the companies or legal entities under the control of the University who are involved in the governance of policy and management documents.
- 2.2 Other policies and management documents that are developed after the date of approval of this policy will have to comply with it.
- 2.3 Existing policy and management documents will be adapted to comply with the policy during a general and planned revision process over the first three years after approval of this policy.

3. Purpose of the policy

- 3.1 To serve as a set of general guidelines for a broad framework regarding decision making about visual redress at SU.
- 3.2 To ensure stakeholder participation in the addition or removal of symbols, in the naming or renaming of buildings, venues and other facilities and premises, in the changing of areas around buildings and other spaces, and in the consideration and/or commissioning of future architectural projects.
- 3.3 To obtain expert input from both internal and external stakeholders.
- 3.4 To stimulate critical dialogue among students and staff and, where applicable, members of the broader community about the ways in which visual redress promotes the values of inclusiveness, respect and dignity.
- 3.5 To direct the work of the Naming Committee and the Visual Redress Committee, which will advise SU management structures (including the Rectorate).

4. Aims of the policy

- 4.1 To manage and guide all visual redress processes at SU, including processes prompted by SU Management and processes initiated by specific environments.
- 4.2 To embed the naming and renaming of buildings and venues within the broader framework of visual redress, which will allow for a comprehensive, guided process of naming and renaming at SU.
- 4.3 To incorporate internal heritage guidelines and prescriptions.
- 4.4 To provide guidance to individuals and environments (departments, faculties, divisions, centres and all responsibility centres) responsible for, for example, initiating, developing, approving, handling and implementing visual redress processes.
- 4.5 To stimulate critical dialogue in the teaching and learning environments of the University.
- 4.6 To guide the procedures and operations of the Visual Redress Committee.
- 4.7 To ensure that visual redress (how it is implemented) is transparent and that it allows for engagement both on and off campus.⁴
- 4.8 To ensure that the policy is revised and updated by the target date set during the approval process of the policy and management documents.
- 4.9 To indicate the connection between the policy and other management documents and related documents and to establish a mechanism to identify and eliminate possible contradictory or unnecessary overlaps between policy and management documents.
- 4.10 To ensure the better coordination and identification or delimitation of roles and responsibilities with regard to policy and management documents.

5. Principles of the policy

- 5.1 Implementing imperatives set out in the SU Transformation Plan, thus ensuring alignment with the plan.⁵
- 5.2 Including processes linked to the naming of buildings, venues and other facilities and premises.
- 5.3 Making provision for SU to reconsider at any time the names of any University buildings, venues and other facilities and premises, symbols (including statues), campus signs and other institutional markers.
- 5.4 If a proposal is made to name a building after a specific person, ensuring that that person's life, work and activities are not at odds with the core values of SU.
- 5.5 Ensuring that the naming of buildings, venues and other facilities and premises after companies or commercial products is handled circumspectly to avoid reputational risks.
- 5.6 Ensuring that visual redress and naming processes comply with applicable legislative frameworks on heritage resource management.
- 5.7 Ensuring that implementation is based on synergistic relationships with the University's research, social impact, and teaching and learning imperatives and that visual redress is aligned with the University's strategic processes and goals.
- 5.8 Ensuring that any visual redress process (whether a consultation or an implementation process) takes place in accordance with SU's values and that SU's specific historical context is taken into consideration.
- 5.9 Taking into consideration that visual redress processes will influence the impact and use of various SU facilities, such as building facades, portals, and public and communal spaces.
- 5.10 Taking into consideration sustainability with reference to architectural heritage, landscaping, artistic value and the environment.

⁴ 'Off campus' refers to public engagement external to the University, e.g. the intersection between the Stellenbosch campus and the town of Stellenbosch.

⁵ This places the policy within the ambit of systemic transformation at SU, which means that transformation initiatives are not to be restricted to the policy; instead, the policy should advance such initiatives.

- 5.11 Taking into consideration the affordability and scalability of projects and initiatives with reference to visual redress.
- 5.12 Ensuring that visual redress processes position SU firmly as a world-class university in and for Africa. SU should therefore be embedded in the context of the Western Cape, South Africa and the continent. The town of Stellenbosch⁶ forms a particular part of the context of SU. This relationship between SU and its context (place) should be expressed in art, symbols (including statues), architectural styles, the honouring of individuals, community-based consultation processes linked to healing the wounds of the past and so forth.
- 5.13 Ensuring that visual redress is characterised by a deliberative participation and dialogue-based consensus-building consultation process to ensure a cohesive, inclusive and respectful campus environment.
- 5.14 Although a formal public participation process should not be a requirement for all processes linked to the naming or renaming of buildings and visual redress projects, ensuring the activation of public participation processes.
- 5.15 Utilising academic expertise at SU and at other institutions in naming or renaming and visual redress processes.
- 5.16 Ensuring that visual redress at SU serves the academic project and is thus embedded in curricular activities. Potential research on topics related to visual redress, for example, should be explored to anchor research in visual redress.
- 5.17 Ensuring that visual redress processes give particular expression to SU's language policy and the language diversity of South Africa.
- 5.18 Ensuring a twofold impact with regard to naming and renaming:
 - 5.18.1 The consideration of visual redress changes, of naming or renaming and of related opportunities and requests.
 - 5.18.2 The prompting of visual redress and naming or renaming changes and opportunities in all SU environments.
- 5.19 Developing complete procedures for both naming and visual redress, aligned and approved by the Rectorate, for the purposes of applying the policy.
- 5.20 Evaluating every request or proposal for visual redress on merit, which includes the grounds of a donation (including a financial contribution) or the meeting of a specific predetermined need. Decisions should be guided by the principles of the policy, aligned with SU's values.
- 5.21 Delegating the power of disposal for visual redress and naming processes to the Rectorate.

6. Conflict settlement

Conflicts in this policy are to be resolved along the normal line management channels within existing SU structures.

⁶ The same should apply to the specific histories and contexts of towns within which SU has campuses, i.e. Tygerberg, Bellville, Saldanha and Worcester.

7. Control of the policy

7.1 Roles

The owner of the policy is the Vice-Rector: Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel. The institutional functionaries (or curators) of the policy are the Senior Director: Social Impact and Transformation and the Registrar.

The implementation of the policy is guided and reviewed by the SU Visual Redress Committee, which will function in collaboration with the Naming Committee. The policy will support the roles and functions of three environments, namely Social Impact and Transformation, the Registrar's Division and Facilities Management.

7.2 Implementation and monitoring

The owner and institutional functionaries of the policy are responsible for establishing the requisite controls to monitor its implementation. In this regard, the Registrar is the primary functionary in terms of implementing naming or renaming at SU. The Senior Director: Social Impact and Transformation is the primary functionary in terms of implementing visual redress.

The policy is applicable to all University environments, including faculties and Professional, Administrative and Support Services environments.

All other SU policies must be read together with this policy, the principles of which will come into operation immediately upon approval by Council.

8. Reporting

The impact of the policy and, consequently, the visual redress process will be reported annually to the following bodies:

- the Rectorate
- the Institutional Transformation Committee
- the Institutional Forum
- Senate (via the annual report of the Vice Rector: Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel)
- Council (via the annual report of the Vice Rector: Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel)

9. Release

The policy is a public document that is published on the SU website. The policy is approved by Council after concurrent consultation with Senate and the Institutional Forum.

10. Revision

The policy must be reviewed and, if necessary, revised at least once every five years. Given the nature of the policy and its intended impact, a broad review and revision process must be followed when required.

11. Action in the case of noncompliance

Noncompliance with this policy is handled as per applicable University policies, depending on the nature of the noncompliance. Normal line management practices apply.

12. Core concepts

For the purposes of the policy, core concepts are defined as follows:

Redress

To set things right (to remedy), to make up for something (to compensate), to remove the cause of grievance or complaint and to exact reparation for something (to avenge) – *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*

Visual redress at SU

An attempt to right the wrongs of former and current powers by removing hurtful symbols (e.g. of apartheid), social injustice and misrecognition and by remedying the harm that has been caused by these visual symbols through compensation with new visual symbols that allow for the inclusion of a variety of expressions, stories, identities and histories aligned with the restorative processes of healing at SU.

Transformation at SU

An intentional and structured process of profound change of the University's places, people and programmes by means of intentional processes, practices, plans and policies (see the SU Transformation Plan [2016]).

Systemic transformation at SU

Transformation and a renewal process involving all dimensions of University life, with those dimensions contributing to the transformation of society. Therefore, such transformation includes both transformation *of* the University and transformation *through* the University (see the SU Transformation Plan [2016]).

Diversity

Forms of art, symbols, architecture and other expressions that deliberately share something of the rich historic and cultural heritage of Stellenbosch, the Western Cape, South Africa and Africa (refer to the Visual Redress Task Team [2018]).

Decolonisation at SU

The decolonisation of society and the University necessitates the recentring of the human from the perspective of 'colonial difference' and recentring knowledge to accord Africa a central position of relevance for African knowledge production. This includes socioeconomic injustices that have resulted directly from sustained coloniality being acknowledged and addressed. Decoloniality thus seeks to challenge the Eurocentric hegemony of power, being and knowledge (see the recommendations by the Task Team for the Decolonisation of the Stellenbosch University Curriculum [31 July 2017]).

Decolonisation of space

A corrective measure that uses alternative approaches to foster an environment of inclusion "where people meet, talk, share ideas, and where identities and lifestyles are formed" (Bianchini, 1999:49) to enable diverse cultures to develop and flourish. The spaces to be decolonised include cyberspaces, symbols, offices, buildings, architecture, artefacts, photographs and statues; this is realised through shared processes of dialogue and production.

13. Supporting documents

Item no.	Name of document	Status (e.g. identified, in process or approved)
	Recommendations of the task team for the decolonisation of the Stellenbosch University curriculum	Approved
	Policy on the naming of buildings, venues and other facilities/premises (to be replaced by the Visual Redress Policy)	Approved
	Transformation Plan	Approved
	Universal Access Policy	Approved
	SU Master Plan	Approved
	Internal Heritage Guidelines	In process
	SU Statute	Approved