

Date of birth: 14.09.1946
Profession: Education Development, Higher Education, Distance Education, Adult and Further Education and training
Nationality: South African
Years of experience: 40 years

Key qualifications:

Fiona has extensive experience in the design and delivery of educational programmes in a variety of disciplines at NQF level 4 (school leaver) and above. She has particular expertise in innovative distance education for learners in remote areas.

Education:

BA, University of Natal, 1967
Higher Diploma in Education, University of Natal 1968
Diploma in Adolescent Development, London, 1974
MEd (Higher Education), University of Natal, 1997

Membership:

1986 - date National Association of Distance Education Open Learning of South Africa.

Experience record:

1986 - 1996 **Education Development, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg**

Overall task

- Responsible for developing programmes to improve access to, and performance at, the University of previously disadvantaged students.

1997 – 2006 **Coordinator of Open Learning Network, University of Natal** (later University of KwaZulu-Natal)

Overall task

- Work with Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor A Bawa, designing and implementing an Open Learning Programme¹ on the Pietermaritzburg Campus 1997
- Conceptualisation and Policy Development of programmes to improve access to, and performance at, the University of previously disadvantaged students
- Establishment of Academic Programmes suitable for mixed mode delivery

Achievements

- Developed a proposal for the establishment of Open Learning
 - Secured funding from Ford for SAIDE (South African Institute for Distance Education) evaluation of University readiness for mixed mode delivery.
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¹ Open Learning provides flexible learning programmes that meet the needs of students who cannot study on-campus 5 days a week 26 weeks per year for three to four years in order to complete degrees (off-campus students who need to be able to study after working hours and from a base other than the University campus).

- Established the Open Learning Working Group to act as a think tank of individuals interested in developing open learning at the University.
- Represented the University of Natal at the second International Conference on Lifelong Learning, Ontario Canada, March 1997.
- Undertook research into administration systems and infrastructure across the University to identify changes needed in order to integrate open learning and mixed mode delivery into the main operations of the University.
- Developed successful proposal to JET for funding for further evaluation on potential for development of School for Rural Development Certificate in Rural Community Development for delivery in mixed mode.
- As member of the evaluation reference group, participated in the process that resulted in the development of the Participatory Development Certificate in Education currently being run in the Centre for Adult Education.
- Facilitated the establishment of Pietermaritzburg and Durban mixed mode programmes in Community Development and the first two off-campus centres for mixed mode delivery in February 2000.
- Appointed and trained local agents with site visits monitoring and supporting registration processes.
- Initiated discussions with Central Applications office, Student Academic Affairs offices, Student Fees and Faculty offices to establish off-campus registration systems.
- Provided support for development of appropriate modules and materials for 2000 programme including negotiations with Faculties regarding resources and focus.
- Initiated recruitment for mature students in off-campus centre regions including presentations on the current status of the University for Alumni functions in Eastern Cape and Northern KwaZulu Natal. Engaged with community leadership presenting the University.
- Motivated for Assistant Coordinator, developed job description and provided orientation for incumbent
- Set administrative procedures in place to handle off-campus operations (including registration and examinations)
- Incorporated major development of School of Education, Training and Development into Open Learning infrastructure for the delivery of the National Professional Diploma in Education in KwaZulu Natal and the Eastern Cape
- Refined student management information gathering and registration procedures
- Established systems for the inclusion of the Decentralised Nursing Programme into Open Learning.
- Provided support in the process of materials development for the NAMDEV project spearheaded by REPSSI and UNICEF in support of work undertaken by individuals within the School of Psychology
- Initiated discussions later taken up by the Research office of UKZN around the development of an "African Centre for Childhood". This led to a memorandum of understanding between UKZN, UNICEF and REPSSI around the establishment of such a centre.

2006 – 2007 **Coordinator of Distance Programme, Department of Accounting, University of KwaZulu-Natal**

Overall task

- Design, establish and manage the infrastructure and teaching programme within the University for the Distance Honours in Accounting programme accredited by the South African Institute for Chartered Accountants.

Achievements

- Improved examination pass rate from 13% to 65%.

2008 – date **Director, African Centre for Childhood, Pietermaritzburg**

Overall task

- Appointed as consultant to design and establish the delivery of the UNICEF/REPSSI distance programme for volunteers and aid workers working with children at risk in 8 African countries

Current Work

All current work is team based working largely with academics from UKZN and in the different countries with REPSSI regional and subregional managers and staff from academic institutions. The development

a. *Distance Delivery design (2007 – 2008)*

Working with the 7 academics and a member of management at UKZN designed a psychosocial distance delivery Certificate programme for adult learners with basic education. The focus of this programme was to ensure that this was a quality accredited programme that would have impact upon the practice of the students.

b. *Distance systems design (2008), implementation and management (2009 – 2010):*

Working initially with 8, and more recently 10, countries in Southern and Eastern Africa designed, implemented and managed systems for:

- Country team orientation
- Student Recruitment, selection, registration and orientation
- Training for local mentors facilitating workshops for groups of students
- Administration systems to support assessment and student feedback
- Design of a database system to support student monitoring and feedback
- Communication with country teams and students

An independent external evaluation described this as *“an innovative model of learning and teaching that combines the use of learning materials, support by trained mentors in regular and well organized group sessions, and continuous assessment it is an exemplary example of a well designed and implemented distance education access programme”*.

c. *Staff Development*

2010 Developed new staff member for overall management of the Certificate Programme

d. *Development of New Programmes*

2011 Submitted expression of interest and participated in interview process that secured UKZN School of Community Development and Development Studies appointment as the lead institution to develop an internationally based distance Post Graduate Diploma for Child Protection in Emergencies.

Conference presentations:

- Presented a paper at the International Conference on Lifelong Learning, organised by the University of the Western Cape, in October 2000.
- Invited to present paper “Transformation at the University of Natal” at a workshop on Institutional Transformation in the Public Sector, held at Sandton International Conference Centre, in August 2001.
- Invited to present paper at the Annual meeting of Partners in Higher Education for International Development, Washington August 2002.
- Contracted by the World Bank to develop and present a case study of Open Learning at the University of Natal for a panel at the Tertiary Education Conference “Tertiary Education in Africa – What Works” Accra September 2003.

Membership of national bodies

- Participated on behalf of the University of Natal in SAIDE-convened working group to develop a response to the Higher Education Report and the Green Paper in relation to Open and Distance Learning (1997).
- Member of National Department of Education Reference Group for the Development of Quality Standards in Distance Education (1997).

- Worked on Organising Committee for South African/USA Partnerships Conference - Cape Town and Durban (1998).
- Represented University of Natal in National Association of Distance Educators of S A, (NADEOSA) (1999 -2006).
- Member of the National Department of Education Reference Group for Research into Open Learning in General Education and Further Education and Training (1999).
- Elected to National Association of Distance Educators of S A Executive Committee (1999 – 2006).
- Member of the Management Committee and the Logistics Committee for the Pan Commonwealth Forum on Distance Learning held in Durban in August 2002 (2001- 2002).
- Represented the University of Natal on the South African University Vice Chancellors' Association Reference group on Learning Delivery Models in Higher Education preparing a document for discussions with the Minister of Education (2002 –2003).
- President of NADEOSA August 2003 –2005.
- Current member of NADEOSA Executive Committee