



**COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION
HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY COMMITTEE**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**AUDIT REPORT
ON
CENTURION AKADEMIE**

Report of the HEQC to the Centurion Akademie (Pty) Ltd

March 2006

HEQC Audit Report Number 7

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|------|---|
| ATS | Accreditation and Training Services |
| CA | Centurion Akademie |
| CBA | Centurion Business Akademie |
| CHE | Council on Higher Education |
| CIC | Community Interaction Committee |
| CQAC | Quality Assurance Committee of Council |
| DoE | Department of Education |
| DoL | Department of Labour |
| EH | Executive Head |
| ETQA | Education and Training Quality Assurer |
| FET | Further Education and Training |
| HEQC | Higher Education Quality Committee |
| HOD | Head of Department |
| MIS | Management Information System |
| NQF | National Qualifications Framework |
| OBE | Outcomes-based Education |
| PHEI | Private Higher Education Institution |
| QA | Quality Assurance |
| RPL | Recognition of Prior Learning |
| SAQA | South African Qualifications Authority |
| SETA | Sector Education and Training Authority |
| SQAC | Quality Assurance Committee of Senate |

OVERVIEW OF THE AUDIT

Introduction

The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) has statutory responsibility to conduct institutional audits as mandated by the Higher Education Act of 1997. This responsibility of the HEQC is also recognised by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) through its accreditation of the CHE as the Education and Training Quality Assurer (ETQA) for the higher education band.

The audit visit to Centurion Akademie was conducted by the HEQC in terms of the above mandate. This document reports on the audit visit to Centurion Akademie (hereafter referred to as CA), which took place between 3 and 6 May 2005.

The report¹ contains an overview of the audit process, the findings of the Audit Panel in relation to the audit criteria set by the HEQC and a list of the commendations and recommendations made by the HEQC, based on the findings of the Audit Panel using the audit criteria set by the HEQC.

The Audit Process

In August 2004 the Executive Director of the HEQC secured the agreement of the Executive Head and the senior management team of CA for the institution to participate in an institutional audit, between 3 and 6 May 2005, on the terms and conditions indicated by the HEQC.

Centurion Akademie conducted its institutional self-evaluation within the agreed time and produced the Audit Portfolio for review by the Panel. According to the Audit Portfolio, the HEQC's Audit Criteria guided the institutional self-evaluation. Although the Executive Management team at CA was primarily responsible for the self-evaluation process, a number of constituencies at the institution were drawn into the self-evaluation process through the provision of information included in the content of the Audit Portfolio.

On 08 March 2005, CA presented its Audit Portfolio to the HEQC. The HEQC constituted an Audit Panel consisting of senior academics and academic administrators from the higher education community, all of whom had taken part in an auditor preparation workshop run by the HEQC. An Audit Portfolio meeting was convened in Pretoria on 13 April 2005 at which the Panel considered the Audit Portfolio. During this meeting, the Panel decided that additional documents should be requested from CA and that some of these documents should be provided to the Panel prior to the audit visit.

¹ The report includes four appendices: Appendix A lists the objectives of HEQC audits; Appendix B provides the names of the members of the Audit Panel, Appendix C lists the documents submitted by CA and Appendix D contains the audit visit schedule.

A senior staff member of the HEQC undertook a preparatory visit to CA on 18 April 2005. During that visit, the format and programme for the visit, and other details of the audit visit were discussed and generally agreed upon by the senior management of CA.

The audit visit took place, as scheduled, at the Centurion Akademie site in Centurion, Pretoria, from 3 to 6 May 2005.

In the course of the audit on Tuesday 3 May, the Audit Panel met with the Executive Head of the Institution, a number of senior staff members and the shareholders. The Audit Panel toured the Centurion campus at Centurion Lakeside including the library, information technology support services, and the certification and administration offices. Thereafter, the Panel conducted plenary interviews, and with the prior agreement of the institution, split into smaller panels for parallel interviews where large and diverse interest groups were to be interviewed.

In all, the Audit Panel interviewed approximately 119 people during the site visit, including:

- Academic and academic support staff
- Undergraduate students from the Centurion campus
- Shareholders
- External representatives from advisory panels
- External moderators
- Members of the Advisory Board
- Employers of graduates, and
- Alumni.

An open session was made available on 6 May 2005 for any member of staff or student of the institution or the institution's community to meet the Panel and make submissions. No one made use of the opportunity. However, a group of students interviewed was recalled to clarify comments made during the interviews.

This report reflects the audit process and findings based on the Audit Portfolio provided by CA, supplementary documentation requested from the institution, and interviews conducted and observations made during the audit visit. Every effort has been made to understand the arrangements for quality management at the institution at the time of the site visit and to base the Panel's conclusions on this understanding. A draft copy of the report was sent to Centurion Akademie for correction of factual errors and for comment on gaps or omissions. The Report was finalised by the HEQC after taking the institution's comments into account where appropriate.

A synopsis of the HEQC's evaluation of the state of quality management at CA is contained in the summary of findings. Good practices and institutional strengths are recognised in the commendations, while the recommendations indicate areas requiring attention with regard to the improvement of quality arrangements. It is expected that CA will use these findings to continue strengthening its internal quality assurance arrangements. Other areas of strength or in need of improvement are indicated in the main body of the report. Decisions about forms of implementation of the recommendations and their further prioritisation are the responsibility of the institution.

It is expected that five months after the receipt of the Audit Report that CA will submit to the HEQC an improvement plan based on the HEQC Audit Report. The institution will submit a mid-cycle report about three years after the audit visit.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This section contains a brief overview of the main findings of the audit, including a list of recommendations for easy reference.

Centurion Akademie (CA) was founded on 28 September 1999 and registered as the company Centurion Akademie (Pty) Ltd on 8 November 1999. Centurion Akademie is situated in the central business centre of Centurion and is registered with both the Department of Education and Department of Labour.

Subsequent to registering as a Private Higher Education Institution (PHEI) in 1999, CA received conditional accreditation from the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) to offer the following programmes:

- Certificate in Computer Programming (NQF level 5)
- Diploma in Marketing and Public Relations (NQF level 5)
- Diploma in Tourism Management (NQF level 5)
- Diploma in Hospitality Management (NQF level 5)
- Diploma in Administrative Management (NQF level 5)
- Diploma in Computer Programming (NQF level 5)
- Diploma in Computer Technology (NQF level 5)
- Diploma in Nature Management (NQF level 5)
- Diploma in Sports and Recreation Management (NQF level 5)
- Diploma in Somatology (NQF level 5)
- Certificate in Cosmetology (NQF level 5)
- Advanced Diploma in Sport Management (NQF level 6)
- Advanced Diploma in Hospitality Management (NQF level 6)
- Advanced Diploma in Somatology (NQF level 6).

At the time of the audit, CA had 370 registered students and a permanent staff complement of 43. The Centurion campus is the main site of delivery, with a second site at Phokeng currently under development. In addition, CA certifies the qualifications provided by EduCity in Port Elizabeth.

The institution plans to extend its operations through additional sites in South Africa. Centurion Akademie indicates also that it intends to run a Centurion Business Akademie (CBA) (Audit Portfolio, Section b, pp 50, 53) which will offer short courses, vacation schools, bridging courses, and mathematics for teachers. The Portfolio indicates that CA also has plans to expand internationally.

The Panel noted that CA characterises itself as a small, relatively young private provider offering a range of vocationally focused programmes. In its interactions with staff members at various levels, with students, and through reading the documentation provided, the Panel gained the impression that CA takes the quality of its core activities seriously. The Panel noted, and students confirmed, the commitment to and enthusiasm of academic staff for their work. Academic staff are generally appropriately qualified for the levels at which they teach, and are increasingly supported by management in their efforts to further improve their

qualifications. The Panel was informed that students from CA readily find employment on completing their qualifications. Centurion Akademie involves itself in several community engagement projects which appear to have positive benefits for the communities involved. The Panel was informed of recent steps undertaken by the institution to formalise its quality management systems. Members of the senior management team indicated that the preparation required for the audit process had highlighted the value of clarifying roles and recording formally the key decisions and communications as part of a systematic approach to quality management. The Panel noted that since some of the more recent measures outlined by the institution are still in the process of implementation, it was not able to evaluate the effectiveness of these newer quality management processes.

Given the nature of the institution and its stated objectives and commitments, the Panel flagged three general areas in need of developmental attention.

1. Although Centurion Akademie plans a new site of delivery at Phokeng which will contribute to the educational needs of the Royal Bafokeng nation, the institution is urged to ensure that its student enrolments and its staff complement increasingly reflect the demographics of the country at all its sites of delivery. Further, CA is urged to ensure that provision is made for the academic success and social integration of its diverse student cohorts.
2. Centurion Akademie is encouraged to further develop the academic leadership and management capabilities of its senior and middle-level management staff to further strengthen the quality of its provision and to manage any further expansion which may be contemplated. Centurion should not undertake any further expansion until these capabilities are securely in place.
3. Centurion Akademie is encouraged to further strengthen its systems for ensuring the quality of its programme offerings, including the capacity in departments for curriculum development and assessment design, and the systems for ensuring consistency of programme quality across different sites of delivery.

The HEQC makes recommendations in a number of areas to signal to Centurion Akademie those issues that require attention. The body of the report also draws attention to other issues for attention and consideration by Centurion Akademie. A list of the recommendations follows. Please note that the recommendations are not listed in order of importance. They are clustered below to provide a quick overview for the reader.

Recommendations

1. The HEQC recommends that Centurion Akademie take active and urgent steps to address the equity profiles of both its staff and students at each site of delivery, and to ensure that its equity plans are implemented and monitored effectively.

2. The HEQC recommends that Centurion Akademie develop clear terms of reference and procedures for its various governance structures and their subcommittees, and defines the responsibilities and accountabilities of each structure in relation to the quality management of education and training delivery.
3. The HEQC recommends that Centurion Akademie review the responsibilities of middle managers and consider ways of enhancing academic leadership and management at these levels to reinforce the quality of their offerings. Centurion Akademie needs to assure itself that its capacity for professional practice in curriculum development, pedagogy and assessment is consistent across all departments and sites of delivery.
4. The HEQC recommends that Centurion Akademie move urgently to ensure that all its sites of delivery are appropriately registered and accredited.
5. The HEQC recommends that Centurion Akademie continue to develop its formal quality management systems across all forms of provision and to ensure the implementation and monitoring of quality management arrangements across all sites of delivery.
6. The HEQC recommends that Centurion Akademie formalise its educational delivery review processes and encourages the institution to develop systematic measures for the use of evaluation and other institutional data to guide its decision-making processes.
7. The HEQC recommends that Centurion Akademie review the appropriateness of its classroom language policy for its changing student demography, as well as the extent to which its broader institutional culture accommodates student diversity. The review of the language policy should include an assessment of its application in practice, and a determination of whether the current language policy, and the wider institutional culture, is sufficiently responsive to the academic and social needs of all students registered at CA.
8. The HEQC recommends that before Centurion Akademie planned future growth in the diversity of its intake, the institution develop a systematic method to evaluate the academic preparedness of students entering the institution, and develop, implement and monitor appropriate programmatic measures for addressing the diversity of student learning needs.
9. The HEQC recommends that Centurion Akademie ensure consistency in the levels of academic and information literacy required of students, in the access to academic literature provided by departments, and in the appropriateness of how academic literacy skills are assessed across academic departments and sites of delivery.
10. The HEQC recommends that Centurion Akademie establish and implement formal mechanisms for the development, approval and review of its academic programmes, and ensure that all academic staff are aware of these measures.

11. The HEQC recommends that Centurion Akademie evaluate its arrangements for the development, approval, management and review of its programme offerings to ensure that it has a coherent, consistent and effective programme management system in place before embarking on institutional expansion.
12. The HEQC recommends that CA's programme management capacity be further supported through staff development measures aimed at ensuring more consistent curriculum and materials development and evaluation capacities across all departments.