



HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY COMMITTEE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Audit Report on Cranefield College of Project and Programme Management

**Report of the HEQC to Cranefield College of Project and Programme
Management**

September 2007

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Acronyms

AP	Audit Portfolio
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DoE	Department of Education
EFQM	European Forum for Quality Management Excellence Model
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance Body
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
ICEA	International Cost Engineers Association
IPMA	International Project Management Association
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MIS	Management Information System
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
OBL	Outcomes Based Learning
PHEI	Private Higher Education Institution
QA	Quality Assurance
QMS	Quality Management System
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SET	Science, Engineering and Technology
UNISA	University of South Africa

Overview of the Audit

Introduction

The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) has statutory responsibility for conducting 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 Cranefield College of Project and Programme Management (hereafter referred to as 'Cranefield') was conducted by the HEQC in terms of the above mandate. This document reports on the audit visit to Cranefield, which took place from 28-30 March 2006.

This report¹ contains an overview of the audit process and a list of the recommendations made by the HEQC. The recommendations are based on the findings of the audit Panel, using the audit criteria set by the HEQC.

The Audit Process

In August 2005, the Executive Director of the HEQC secured the consent of the Principal that Cranefield would participate in an institutional audit from 28–30 March 2006 as a private higher education institution which provides postgraduate programmes.

Cranefield conducted its institutional self-evaluation using the HEQC audit criteria and produced an audit portfolio for review by the audit Panel. Cranefield negotiated for modification of the scope of the audit. It was agreed that the focus should be Audit Criteria 1, 2, 3 and 17.

In February 2006, Cranefield presented its Audit Portfolio (AP) to the HEQC. The HEQC constituted an audit Panel consisting of academics and academic administrators from the higher education community, all of whom had participated in an auditor preparation workshop run by the HEQC. A portfolio meeting was convened in Pretoria on 27 and 28 February 2006 to enable the audit Panel to consider the audit portfolio and to prepare for the audit visit. During this meeting, the audit Panel decided that additional documents should be requested from Cranefield in preparation for the site visit.

The audit visit took place from 28 to 30 March 2006. The audit Panel conducted a tour of the institution's administrative offices at Murrayfield in Pretoria and of the site of delivery at Midrand where interviews were conducted.

In all, the audit Panel interviewed about 60 people during the audit visit, including

¹The 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 Cranefield, and Appendix D contains the audit visit schedule.

- Council members
- Full- and part-time academic staff
- Students
- Employers
- Alumni.

An open session was also available for any staff member or student of the institution and of its wider community to make a quality-related submission to the audit Panel. No members of the institution chose to make use of the open session.

This report reflects the findings of the audit based on the audit portfolio provided by Cranefield, supplementary documentation requested from the institution, and interviews and observations made during the audit visit. Every effort was made to understand the arrangements for quality management at the institution at the time of the audit visit and to base the Panel's conclusions on the documentation submitted, the interviews held and the observations made.

A synopsis of the HEQC's evaluation of the state of the management of quality at Cranefield is found in the summary of findings together with the recommendations. It is expected that Cranefield will use these findings to strengthen its internal quality management systems and thereby improve the quality of its core academic activities. The recommendations indicate priority areas for improvement. Areas of strength or areas in need of improvement are indicated in the main body of the report.

It is expected that five months after the receipt of the report, Cranefield will submit to the HEQC an improvement plan based on the HEQC audit report. The institution will be expected to submit a mid-cycle progress report three years after the site visit.

The HEQC would like to thank Cranefield for the co-operative manner in which it participated in the institutional audit process. The hospitality and assistance of Cranefield personnel is appreciated. Professor P Steyn and Dr A Kruger and their team are thanked for facilitating the audit process as well as for preparation of the documentation.

Summary of Findings

Given the nature of the institution, its stated objectives and commitments, the HEQC raises two general areas in need of immediate attention:

- 1 Cranefield is urged to develop a strategic plan that acknowledges both the business and educational goals of the institution so that an appropriate balance is struck between being a business enterprise and being a provider of higher education, within which it develops and implements an appropriate quality management system for teaching, research and community engagement.
- 2 As a predominantly postgraduate institution, Cranefield needs to develop mechanisms in relation to the management and the supervision of research that will increase the completion rates of its Masters dissertation.

The HEQC makes recommendations in a number of areas to signal to Cranefield those issues that may require attention with regard to quality provision and addressing these issues will need to be incorporated into the overall quality planning and practice at Cranefield.

A summary of the recommendations follows. The body of the report also draws attention to other issues for attention and consideration by Cranefield.

Recommendations

1. The HEQC recommends that Cranefield should not embark on a strategy of expansion until the fundamental aspects of its identity as a higher education institution are established, and appropriate mechanisms for planning, resourcing, implementing and monitoring activities in the area of teaching and learning are developed, as well as having identified what the content of its research activities might be.
2. The HEQC recommends that Cranefield develop a system for resource allocation which is informed by both the commitment to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the operationalisation of its goals and objectives.
3. The HEQC recommends that Cranefield develop an approach which suits the demands of the management of quality in the core functions of teaching and learning, research and community engagement at higher education institutions, and put in place measures which will enable Cranefield to assure and monitor the quality of teaching, research and community engagement.
4. The HEQC recommends that Cranefield implement a formal process which uses the findings of the various benchmarking activities to improve and monitor the quality of teaching and learning, and research.

5. The HEQC recommends that Cranefield urgently review its student records and certification processes to ensure the integrity of student academic records and attendant certification processes.
6. The HEQC recommends that Cranefield put student support systems in place which will enable it to identify the academic development and support needs of students and take steps to introduce such interventions.
7. The HEQC recommends that Cranefield review, as a matter of urgency its current library provision and take steps to ensure that library services, including information literacy, are provided for all its students.
8. The HEQC recommends that Cranefield develop an IT access policy and procedures which provides for student access to IT facilities.
9. The HEQC recommends that Cranefield take the necessary steps to develop a comprehensive framework and procedures for programme design, development, approval, implementation and review systems. This should provide for the systematic involvement of advisory boards in order to ensure the currency and relevance of qualifications.
10. The HEQC recommends that Cranefield develop and implement a comprehensive human resources policy to enhance institutional academic capacity in terms of staff numbers and to ensure academic continuity and sustainability.
11. The HEQC recommends that Cranefield develop a comprehensive approach to professional and academic staff development. Opportunities for the professional development of staff in teaching and learning and research should be considered.
12. The Panel urges that Cranefield review its approach to assessment in all taught modules, identify and implement appropriate assessment methods that would measure effectively the performance of individual student in each module.
13. The HEQC recommends that Cranefield develop a more rigorous approach to postgraduate education which clearly stipulates the supervisor's obligations and which sets out adequate standards for the examination of dissertations.
14. The HEQC recommends that Cranefield review the terms of reference of the Research Committee as part of the academic governance of postgraduate education, to include the approval of research proposals, supervision, and examinations.