



**Resolution on the Institutional Audit of the
University of KwaZulu-Natal**

December 2010

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1. In June 2009 the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) sent the Vice-Chancellor the HEQC draft Audit Report of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) for the institution to comment on factual inaccuracies and issues of interpretation of the findings of the audit visit that took place in October 2008.
2. The Vice-Chancellor raised two main concerns with the draft Audit Report, which required addressing by the HEQC before it could be formally accepted and circulated for comment within the university:
 - (i) The Vice-Chancellor reiterated his concern first raised in January 2009 that the letter to the HEQC from Prof Martin Hall the chair of the Audit Panel (which was leaked to the Natal Mercury), indicating that the disciplinary action taken by the University against certain staff members constituted a repudiation of the oral feedback provided to the University on the outcomes of the Audit, compromised the integrity of the Audit process and suggested a bias on the part of the Chair. This bias is furthermore reflected in the general tone of the draft Audit Report.
 - (ii) The interpretation of a range of issues in the draft Audit Report were either factually incorrect and in some cases reflected a misrepresentation and/or omission of the evidence presented.
3. In order to address the issues raised by the Vice-Chancellor, the CHE in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor established a Review Panel to assess the validity of the Vice-Chancellor's concerns. The Review Panel consisted of:
 - Dr Mashupye Kgaphola, Vice-Chancellor-elect, Mangosuthu University of Technology.
 - Prof Thoko Mayekiso, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Technology and Planning, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.
 - Dr Mark Hay, Audit Director and Head of Advisory Services, Australian Universities Quality Agency
4. The findings of the Review Panel are as follows:
 - (i) The factual errors and the related issues regarding the interpretation of evidence presented could be addressed as part of the normal interaction between the HEQC and an institution in the course of the audit process.
 - (ii) The audit report generally meets international standards of quality assurance practice in institutional audits
 - (iii) It is unable to firmly conclude that the letter from the chair of the audit panel did not have an impact on the drafting of Audit Report.
 - (iv) The leak of the letter from the Chair of the Audit Panel has substantially compromised the audit process.
 - (v) The reputation of the University would have suffered to some extent as a result of the leak of the letter.
 - (vi) The value of the draft Audit Report to the University may be limited given the long time lapse since the Audit visit in October 2008.
5. In the light of the findings of the Review Panel, the CHE has decided to withdraw the draft Audit Report and regrets any adverse impact on the reputation of the University as a result of the leak of the letter. Furthermore, it is committed, in consultation with the University to developing an appropriate strategy to audit UKZN in such a way that the institution is not disadvantaged in the second cycle of institutional audits, which is scheduled to begin in 2012.