

CHAPTER 3

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND THE HEQC

1. INTRODUCTION

Quality assurance (QA) is a statutory responsibility of the CHE, carried out through its permanent sub-committee, the HEQC. According to *the Higher Education Act* of 1997 the functions of the HEQC are to:

- Promote quality in HE
- Audit the QA mechanisms of HEIs
- Accredite HE programmes.

To the above three mandate areas, the Board of the HEQC has added quality related capacity development. The HEQC operates within the framework of the NQF and is accredited by SAQA as the ETQA for HE.

2. HEQC BOARD AND MEMBERSHIP

The HEQC has its own Board with two CHE members represented on it (the chairperson of the HEQC and one other). HEQC members are chosen by the CHE on the basis of nominations from interested parties in HE. All HEQC members are appointed in their own right for a three- to four-year period. The membership of the current Board has been extended to the end of March 2005. They bring expertise from different stakeholder domains. The current membership comprises:

Chairperson

Prof. HP Africa * *Independent Consultant*
CHE member

Voting Members

Ms JA Glennie * *Director: South African Institute for Distance Education*
CHE member

Prof. B Khotseng *Independent Consultant* (previous Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Cape Town)

Prof. N Kok *Senior Vice-Rector (Academic): Cape Technikon*

Ms K Sattar * *Director: Centre for Quality Promotion and Assurance, Durban Institute of Technology*

Dr M Motshekga-Sebolai *Manager: Corporate Affairs, Educor*

Mr I Sehoole *Executive President: South African Institute of Chartered Accountants*

Ms L Gordon-Davis *Executive Officer: South African Tourism Institute*

Mr N Bicket *Director: Human Resources, Old Mutual*

Dr J Reddy * *Independent Consultant*

Mr V Nkabinde *Executive Director: South African Graduates Development Association*

Dr NM Takalo *Vice-Principal: North West University*

Prof. P Eagles (Resigned) *Chairman: Forum of Statutory Health Councils*

Co-opted members

Mr J Landman *National Tertiary Education Staff Union*

Prof. RH Stumpf * *Vice-Chancellor: University of Port Elizabeth*

Non-voting members

Dr M Qhobela *Chief Director: Department of Education, Higher Education Branch*

Department of Education

Dr P Lolwana *Executive Officer: UMALUSI*

Prof. S Badat * *Chief Executive Officer: Council on Higher Education*

Dr M Singh * *Executive Director: Higher Education Quality Committee*

(* Members serving on the Executive Committee of the HEQC)

HEQC Chairperson:

Prof. HP Africa



HEQC Board:

Standing (Fltr):

Mr I Schoole, Prof. S Badat, Mr J Landman, Prof. RH Stumpf, Dr M Qhobela and Prof. N Kok

Sitting (Fltr):

Ms L Gordon-Davis, Dr M Motshekga-Sebolai, Prof. HP Africa, Dr M Singh, Dr P Lolwana and Ms JA Glennie

Insets (Fltr):

Mr N Bicket, Prof. P Eagles, Prof. B Khotseng, Mr V Nkabinde, Dr J Reddy and Ms K Sattar





HEQC Directorate:

Executive Director's Office

Fltr:

Pam du Toit (*Personal Assistant*), Dr Mala Singh (*HEQC Executive Director*) and Dr Herman du Toit (*Projects Manager*)

HEQC Directorate:

Programme Accreditation and Co-ordination

Back Fltr:

Tshepo Magabane (*Manager*), Kenny Shalang (*Project Administrator*), Julia Motaung (*Manager*), Theo Bhengu (*Manager*), Stella Mkhavele (*Clerk*) and Mercy Sondlo (*Administrator*)

Front Fltr:

Rheka Bennindeen (*Secretary/Administrator*), Derrick Zitha (*Project Administrator*), Dr Prem Naidoo (*Director*), Jenny Maloi (*Secretary*), Paulette Macheke (*Clerk*) and Lebogang Serepong (*Clerk*)



HEQC Directorate:

**Programme Accreditation and Co-ordination
(Private Providers)**

Fltr:

Stella Mkhavele (*Clerk*), Derrick Zitha (*Project Administrator*), Paulette Macheke (*Clerk*), Moloko Mothemela (*Administrator*), Colleen Mtjali (*Clerk*) and Theo Bhengu (*Manager*)

HEQC Directorate:

**Programme Accreditation and Co-ordination
(Public Providers)**

Fltr:

Kenny Shalang (*Project Administrator*), Jenny Maloi (*Secretary*) and Tshepo Magabane (*Manager*)





HEQC Directorate:

Quality Promotion and Capacity Development

Fltr:

Nikki Groenewald (*Project Administrator*), Dr John Carneson (*Director*), Thabisile Dlomo (*Manager*), Alpheus Sibuyi (*Clerk*) and Barbara Morrow (*Manager*)

HEQC Directorate:

Institutional Audits

Fltr:

Belinda Wort (*Project Administrator*), Dr Mark Hay (*Manager*) and Pearl Maqubela (*Secretary/Administrator*)



Inset:

Ms Innocentia Mabuella (*Project Administrator*)



3. ORGANISATION

The HEQC Board meets about every two months and the HEQC Executive Committee (EXCO) meets once a month. The work of the HEQC is conducted through the following sub-committees:

- The EXCO
- The Policy Development and Review Committee
- The Accreditation Committee (Private Providers)
- The Interim Joint Committee (Public Providers)

An expanded EXCO functions as a Policy Development and Review Committee. Regular reports on the work of the HEQC are tabled at the bi-monthly full meetings of the CHE.

During the past year, the HEQC Board and the EXCO met regularly as scheduled and also on a 'need to' basis. In addition to regular scheduled meetings, special meetings of the Board were held to make decisions on the MBA re-accreditation exercise.

The work of the HEQC is divided among three directorates and the office of the Executive Director. The three Directorates are:

- Accreditation and Co-ordination
- Institutional Audits
- Quality Promotion and Capacity Development.

The HEQC comprises 31 full-time members of staff who are clustered into the office of the Executive Director (3), the Accreditation and Co-ordination Directorate (15), the Institutional Audits Directorate (6) and the Quality Promotion and Capacity Development Directorate (5). The HEQC also uses a number of contract staff and consultants as well as the services of local and foreign QA experts at HE and other institutions and organisations. It draws on the general infrastructure of the CHE for its finance, personnel and media related requirements.

4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

The Executive Director provides:

- Oversight for policy and systems development, and ongoing planning and implementation activities in all three directorates of the HEQC
- Liaison with the CHE's projects and activities
- Liaison with international quality assurance organisations
- Liaison with other national initiatives in HE in general and QA in particular
- The management of special projects.

The past year has been highly demanding, being marked by an intensification of planning and development activities relating to the testing and implementation of the HEQC's new QA system. Some of the key activities for which the Executive Director provided leadership and oversight were the following:

■ Accreditation

- The accreditation of 228 programmes from Universities, Technikons and Agricultural Colleges on the basis of the processing of 285 programmes.
- The accreditation of 115 programmes from 79 private providers on the basis of the processing of 255 programmes.

■ Re-accreditation

- The evaluation of 38 MBAs offered by 18 public and 9 private providers in the first national re-accreditation exercise carried out by the HEQC.
- The evaluation of 38 private providers and 138 programmes for the purpose of re-accreditation. On the basis of site visits to all 38 providers, 64 programmes were re-accredited.

- **Meetings with other ETQAs**
 - Several meetings with other ETQAs to exchange information, consult on HEQC developments and plan joint accreditation activities through the development of MoUs.
- **Communication with stakeholders**
 - The HEQC had bilateral meetings with all the key national stakeholders and ongoing communication with particular constituencies. The communications challenge was intensified as a result of the MBA review and the need to engage the media and stakeholders on the matter.
- **Visits to Institutions**
 - The completion of one-day visits to all public HEIs and a sample of private HEIs. Reports were sent to all institutions on the key issues discussed during the visits.
 - Visits to public and private HEIs due to be audited in 2004 and 2005.
 - Visits to institutions which merged in January 2004 to brief them on a merger-related capacity development project of the HEQC.
- **New Policy and Guideline Documents and Training Materials**
 - The finalisation and dissemination of the Audit Framework and Criteria.
 - The development of a range of manuals for audits.
 - The revision of the Programme Accreditation Framework and Criteria.
 - Guidelines to Good Practice in Teaching and Learning.
 - The development of training materials for workshops intended for members and chairpersons of audit panels and writers of audit reports.
- **HEQC Quality Assurance Managers' Forum**
 - The holding of five meetings for QA managers and co-ordinators from public and private HEIs. The meetings were used to convey information on HEQC systems and requirements and to facilitate information sharing.
- **Pilot Audits**
 - The conduct of three pilot audits. The pilot audits were intended to test the HEQC's audit criteria and approach to audits. Audit reports were sent to all three institutions. The findings from a comprehensive analysis of the pilot audits were used to refine and improve the HEQC's approach to audits.
- **HEQC delegations to HEIs**
 - Preparatory investigations into the quality management arrangements at HEIs in the areas of recognition of prior learning, short courses, assessor training and development, moderation of assessment, and certification. The preparations are intended to enable the HEQC to delegate quality management responsibility to HEIs in the above areas.
- **Special Project on Merging Institutions and Historically Disadvantaged Institutions**
 - Development of a funding proposal and an implementation plan to assist merging institutions and HDIs to develop quality management capacity and new internal quality management systems in order to meet the requirements of the HEQC's institutional audit and programme accreditation systems. Donor assistance from a Department of Education bilateral with the Finnish government has been secured to support this project.
- **International Liaison**
 - The engagement of the HEQC in a number of initiatives which focus on QA and accreditation issues in a globalising HE environment. This includes initiatives of UNESCO, the AAU, the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education and the South African Development Community (SADC) which have made it possible for the HEQC to access information on new QA developments in other countries as well as to contribute towards shaping debates about QA in a developing country context.

5. ACCREDITATION AND CO-ORDINATION DIRECTORATE

The Accreditation and Co-ordination directorate has two core areas of work:

- Programme accreditation and reviews
- Co-ordination of quality assurance in relation to other ETQA bodies in HE.

Programme Accreditation and Reviews

This area of work covers:

- The accreditation of public providers to offer stipulated learning programmes leading to NQF-registered qualifications
- The accreditation of private providers to offer stipulated learning programmes leading to NQF-registered qualifications
- The development and implementation of an accreditation and evaluation framework for learning programmes leading to NQF-registered qualifications, which are not covered by professional councils and SETA-based ETQAs
- National Reviews of existing programmes.

New Accreditation System

In line with the policy intentions of the *White Paper*, the HEQC has developed a co-ordinated accreditation system applicable to the public and private HE sectors.

The new system has been developed by a working group of experts and HEQC staff, who in turn received advice from a reference group consisting of representatives from relevant stakeholder organisations and international experts. There has been extensive consultation with all HEIs and other stakeholders. The new system will be ready for institutional submission in 2005. The preparation of new accreditation criteria, guidelines, and manuals are in the process of finalisation. The Accreditation Directorate is collaborating with the Directorate for Quality Promotion and Capacity Development to train programme evaluators for the new programme accreditation system.

Routine Accreditation

During the period April 2003 to March 2004, the HEQC processed 678 applications from public and private providers to offer new learning programmes and qualifications. The applications were processed in a combination of activities that included expert comment on applications, committee screening for approval, conditional approval or rejection, and occasional site visits. The applications were processed by the IJC in the case of Universities, Technikons, Agricultural Colleges and the Polytechnic of Namibia and the Accreditation Committee in the case of private providers. This is an interim arrangement until a new accreditation system is developed and implemented in 2005. This is a large area of responsibility of this directorate as providers demonstrate their responsiveness by developing hundreds of new education and training programmes and qualifications.

■ National Review (MBA Re-accreditation)

The HEQC is mandated by *the Act* to promote and support the development, maintenance and enhancement of quality in public and private HE provision, to audit the QA mechanisms of HEIs and to accredit programmes of HE.

Since its inception in May 2001, the HEQC has been accrediting new programmes offered by public and private providers and all HE programmes offered by Agricultural Colleges. It has also been preparing new systems for institutional audits and programme accreditation, which are being implemented in 2005. Given the very large number of existing programmes on offer at HEIs in South Africa, the HEQC decided not to begin a re-accreditation exercise of all existing programmes but rather to undertake national reviews leading to re-accreditation in selected programme and qualification areas. The review of the MBA was the first such national review.

A number of factors came together in the decision of the HEQC Board to undertake a re-accreditation of all MBAs offered by public and private providers of HE.

The HEQC Board considered the following issues:

- The need to have evaluation criteria to be able to make judgments on new applications to offer MBA programmes, especially from providers who had not offered MBAs before.
- The HEQC's policy decision to undertake national reviews had to be given effect through the selection of a high profile, high impact programme area, the choice of which would allow for the development of an approach to and a methodology for conducting future national reviews.
- Concerns expressed by the MoE and other stakeholders about the proliferation of MBAs in the country and the need to have a better sense of their quality, costs and benefits, and relevance to country's needs.
- The request in the DoE's *National Plan for Higher Education* that the HEQC should prioritise the review of the quality of Postgraduate programmes.

In the light of the above, the HEQC Board made a decision in 2002 to undertake a formal evaluation of all MBAs being offered by public and registered private HEIs in South Africa (28 registered private and public HEIs, including 8 registered private providers, 5 Technikons and 15 Universities).

The main purposes of the MBA re-accreditation were as follows:

1. To undertake a comprehensive evaluation of MBAs on offer at public and registered private HEIs in South Africa in order to establish the extent, scope and quality of provision.
2. To re-accredit all existing MBAs offered by both public and registered private institutions in order to ensure a common framework for quality.
3. To improve the quality of MBA provision in the South African HE system.

The MBA Re-accreditation project followed an extensive consultative and research driven process. Research was commissioned to examine how other countries and agencies evaluated MBAs. All schools and institutions offering the MBA programme in South Africa and international experts from various countries (USA, Netherlands, Australia, Hong Kong, UK, etc.), were involved and participated in developing, finalising and implementing the criteria and other instruments for the MBA re-accreditation process. In developing the criteria and related instruments for the re-accreditation process, the HEQC had a briefing session for a focus group on 20 February 2003, which was used to discuss the process and criteria for evaluation and other relevant issues pertaining to the evaluation. Following this meeting the draft criteria were sent for comment to all institutions offering accredited and registered MBAs. These comments were taken into account in finalising the criteria document and the development of instruments for the re-accreditation of MBAs.

A questionnaire was developed early in 2003. This was sent to all institutions offering the MBA with the objective of gathering baseline information on all MBA programmes on offer at public and private HEIs. Site visits commenced on Wednesday 9 July 2003 and were completed at the end of September 2003. The HEQC made at least 28 site visits to both private and public HEIs offering a total of 38 MBA programmes. Recommendations from these site visits were tabled at the MBA Re-accreditation Committee meeting on 27-28 November 2003. The Committee carefully evaluated all the reports from peer review panels and other supporting documentation and arrived at a set of recommendations.

The recommendations of the MBA Re-accreditation Committee were communicated to institutions on 12 December 2003. Institutions were given 21 days starting from 5 January 2004 to make representations on errors of fact and omissions. These representations, together with the Re-accreditation Committee recommendations were tabled at the HEQC Board meeting for final decisions on 17-18 March 2004. Final outcomes were communicated to institutions during the week of 17 May 2004, followed by a general press release.

Table 2: MBA Re-accreditation decisions

FULLY ACCREDITED	
SCHOOL/INSTITUTION	PROGRAMMES
Gordon Institute of Business Science University of Pretoria	MBA
Wits Business School University of the Witwatersrand	MBA
Graduate School of Business (USB) University of Stellenbosch	MBA
Graduate School of Business (GSB) University of Cape Town	MBA EMBA
Graduate School of Leadership (SBL) UNISA	MBL
Graduate School of Management University of Pretoria	MBA
CONDITIONALLY ACCREDITED	
SCHOOL/INSTITUTION	PROGRAMMES
School of Management University of the Free State	MBA General MBA (Health Care Management) MBA (Entrepreneurship)
Graduate School of Business of Durban-Westville	MBA
Rhodes Investec Business School (RIBS) Rhodes University	MBA
Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership (TGSL) University of the North	MBA
Graduate School of Business and Leadership University of the North-West	MBA
Potchefstroom Business School Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education	MBA (Contact)
Pretoria Technikon Business School Technikon Pretoria	MBA
MBA Unit Port Elizabeth Technikon	MBA
Milpark Business School Midrand Graduate Institute	MBA

Henley Management College of SA	MBA
Management College of Southern Africa (MANCOSA)	MBA (General) MBA (Tourism Management)
Damelin International College	MBA

NOT ACCREDITED

SCHOOL/INSTITUTION	PROGRAMMES
School of Business University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg)	MBA General MBA (Water Management)
Graduate School of Business University of Natal (Durban)	MBA
School of Operations Management Technikon Witwatersrand	MBA
Business Studies Unit Durban Institute of Technology (Durban & Pietermaritzburg)	MBA
Graduate Centre for Management (GSM) Cape Technikon	MBA
De Montfort SA	MBA
Regent Business School	MBA (General) MBA (Finance) MBA (Health Care Management) MBA (Tourism) MBA (Marketing)
School of Business Bond South Africa	MBA
Business School Netherlands	MBA
Graduate School of the International Negotiation Academy (GSINA)	MBA

Information from the re-accreditation process will feed into a report on the state of MBAs in South African HE. It is planned that a national workshop on this topic will be held in the latter half of 2004. The purpose of the workshop will be to discuss issues on how to improve the quality of MBAs so that graduates leave with the requisite competencies, and to make the South African MBA internationally competitive. An analysis of the experience gained through the MBA re-accreditation process is being used to develop a framework document to conduct national reviews.

Private Providers

Routine accreditation

Between April 2003 and March 2004, 255 programmes were submitted for accreditation by 79 private providers. Of these programmes 45% were accredited and 55% were not accredited, as they did not meet the requirements for accreditation. In addition, some programmes had to be returned to the providers due to incomplete information. The status of accreditation for private providers for this period is depicted in the table below:

Table 3: Status of accreditation for private providers: April 2003-March 2004

Accreditation Committee Meeting	No. of Providers	No. of Programmes	No. of Programmes Accredited	% Percentage
27/05/2003	15	71	27	38%
22/08/2003	8	34	12	36%
31/10/2003	27	91	55	60%
03/12/2003	6	9	2	22%
26/03/2004	23	50	19	38%
TOTAL	79	255	115	45%

Re-accreditation

Between April 2003 and March 2004, 38 private providers submitted 138 programmes for re-accreditation. Of these programmes 46% were accredited and 54% not accredited as they did not satisfy the requirements for re-accreditation. The status of accreditation for private providers for this period is depicted in the table below:

Table 4: Status of re-accreditation for private providers: April 2003-March 2004

Accreditation Committee Meeting	No. of Providers	No. of Programmes	No. of Programmes Accredited	% Percentage
27/05/2003	7	24	11	45%
22/08/2003	10	51	19	42%
31/10/2003	11	47	23	48%
03/12/2003	4	8	6	75%
26/03/2004	6	8	5	63%
TOTAL	38	138	64	46%

All the programmes submitted by the 38 providers underwent a site-based evaluation.

Accreditation Reviews

In accordance with the *Promotion of Administrative Justice Act*, if an institution and/or its learning programmes have not been successfully accredited, they have 21 days to submit a written representation to the HEQC. Between April 2003 and March 2004, 14 private providers submitted applications for reviews. Of these applications for reviews, 22% were granted and 78% were not granted. In making their accreditation review requests, private providers were expected to abide by the following policy decisions that guided the review process:

- The representation lodged by the institution must set out the grounds for the request for review against the reasons given by the HEQC for not considering accreditation. In making its submission, the institution must confine itself to information available at the time of the

evaluation process. New information will not be considered. The institution must focus on demonstrating that the decision of the HEQC resulted from errors or omissions in carrying out the policies and procedures.

- The HEQC shall consider the grounds and evidence provided by the institution and the record that served before the Accreditation Committee when it made the decision to recommend to the HEQC withdrawal of accreditation.
- The institution's submission may not challenge the reasonableness of the Accreditation Committee's standards, policies and procedures.
- The HEQC will consider the information placed before it by the institution and will advise the institution within 21 days of receipt of the request.
- Failure of an institution to respond to the HEQC letter that sets out the recommendations of the Accreditation Committee will be construed as acceptance of the recommendation.

The status of accreditation reviews for private providers for this period is depicted in the table below:

Table 5: Status of accreditation reviews for private providers: April 2003-March 2004

Accreditation Committee Meeting	No. of Reviews	No. Granted	% Percentage
27/05/2003	1	0	0%
22/08/2003	4	0	0%
31/10/2003	4	1	25%
03/12/2003	3	1	33%
26/03/2004	6	1	16%
TOTAL	18	3	17%

Out of the 18 requests for review considered, 15 were declined. Therefore, the initial recommendation not to accredit HEIs and/or programmes in question was upheld. In the three cases where the HEQC ruled in favour of the institution, new site visits by completely new panels, were conducted. In all three cases, new decisions were taken and accreditation was granted to these institutions and/or programmes.

Public providers

The HEQC received 285 programmes from Universities and Technikons for consideration at its IJC meetings between April 2003 and end of March 2004. The relevant data is provided in the table below:

Table 6: Accreditation of programmes of public providers: April 2003-March 2004

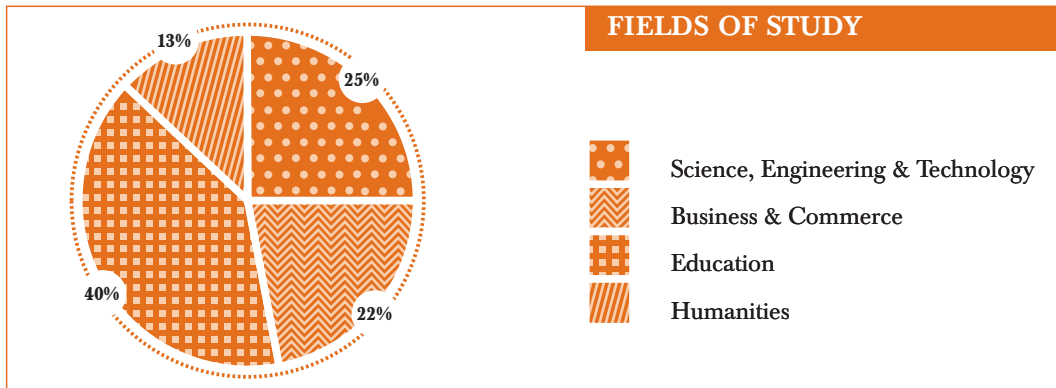
Type of Institution	No. of Applications	Applications not tabled	Applications tabled	Not accredited	Accredited
University	158	-	158	32	126
Technikon	107	-	107	25	82
Agric Colleges / Namibia Polytechnic	20	-	20	-	20
All	285	-	285	57	228

CHAPTER 3: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND THE HEQC

An analysis of the data from the accreditation of public provider programmes indicates the following:

Of the fields of study in the 126 programmes of universities that were accredited during this period, 32 were in Science, Engineering and Technology, 28 in Business and Commerce, 49 in Education and 17 in Humanities. The data is represented in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Accredited programmes of universities by field of study: April 2003-March 2004



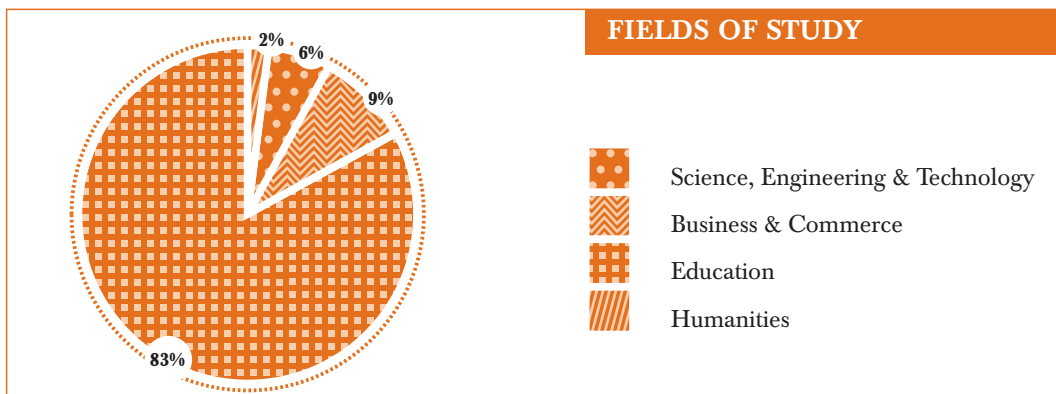
When the 126 accredited university programmes are considered by *levels of study* and by *historical type of institution*, the situation is as follows:

Table 7: Accredited university programmes by levels of study and by historical type of institution: April 2003-March 2004

Level of Study	Historically White Institutions	Historically Black Institutions	TOTAL
Undergraduate Certificates	1	1	2
Diplomas	1	3	4
Bachelor's Degrees	33	0	33
Postgraduate Certificates	4	0	4
Advanced Certificates/Diplomas	16	0	16
Postgraduate Diplomas	20	0	20
Honours	19	0	19
Masters	19	0	19
Doctorate/PhD	9	0	9
TOTAL	122	4	126

In the technikon sector, of the 82 programmes that were accredited, 5 programmes were in Science, Engineering and Technology, 7 in Business and Commerce, 68 in Education and 2 in Humanities. This data is depicted in Figure 2:

Figure 2: Accredited programmes of technikons by field of study



When the 82 accredited technikon programmes are considered by *levels of study* and by *historical type of institution*, the situation is as follows:

Table 8: Accredited technikon programmes by levels of study and by historical type of institution: April 2003-March 2004

Level of Study	Historically White Institutions	Historically Black Institutions	TOTAL
National Diplomas	36	4	40
Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma	31	0	31
B. Tech	5	2	7
Honours	1	1	2
M Tech/Masters	2	0	2
Doctoral	-	-	-
TOTAL	75	4	82

With respect to Agricultural Colleges, the HEQC mandated the CTP to manage quality evaluation visits to Agricultural Colleges during 2003.

In terms of this, the HEQC made 10 site visits to Agricultural Colleges (and one to the Polytechnic of Namibia). The Polytechnic of Namibia has requested that its programmes be evaluated by the HEQC. This is carried out by the HEQC in terms of an MoU between the HEQC, the Polytechnic of Namibia and the Namibian Qualifications Authority. Twenty programmes were part of these follow-up visits. All were given conditional accreditation. When the twenty programmes of Universities that were accredited during this period are considered in terms of fields of study, 17 were in Agriculture and 3 in Science, Engineering and Technology.

For the year 2004, the HEQC took over the overall visits to the Agricultural Colleges. For this exercise, the HEQC is managing QA at Agricultural Colleges (offering higher education programmes) and the Polytechnic of Namibia at its request.

Table 9: Accredited programmes for Agricultural Colleges & Polytechnic of Namibia: April 2003-March 2004

Level of Study	TOTAL
Certificates/Higher Certificates	17
Diplomas	2
B. Tech	1
TOTAL	20

Accreditation and Co-ordination

The HEQC's relationship with Professional Councils and other ETQAs operating in the field of higher education.

This area of work involves:

- Collaboration with professional councils and other ETQAs (such as SETAs) on the accreditation and evaluation of professional and work based programmes leading to NQF-registered qualifications
- Discussion, exchange of information and joint initiatives with relevant ETQAs and other national agencies concerned with HE.

The increase in the number of ETQAs has led to difficulties and challenges of co-ordination in HE with respect to approaches to QA and associated issues. To ensure that HE providers are not overburdened by many and conflicting QA demands, the HEQC has developed proposals for more collaborative approaches to QA.

As a result of the number of ETQAs claiming QA jurisdiction in HE, the co-ordination of QA through MoUs is a time consuming and challenging job for the HEQC as it seeks to develop a credible, manageable and sustainable QA system.

Different models of co-operation have been spelt out in the new draft accreditation Framework document, and MoUs based on these models could be concluded with different ETQAs. In the meantime, discussions and information sharing sessions are being held with ETQAs to find a working relationship. Some co-operation agreements have been concluded, and joint accreditation visits are being undertaken with some professional councils.

Delegated QA Functions to HEIs

SAQA regulations assign responsibility for certification to the relevant ETQA with the possibility of delegation to HEIs themselves.

Due to increasing reports about the offering of fraudulent certificates, the HEQC, has developed a new certification framework for the delegation of certification to HEIs themselves. The framework will help to:

- Determine the nature and status of certification and the certification processes in institutions of higher learning
- Monitor the integrity and credibility of certification processes in institutions of higher learning.

This is to ensure the protection of students and the integrity of higher education qualifications in general. The HEQC was also responsible for undertaking a process toward the delegation of QA functions to HEIs in the following areas:

- RPL
- Assessor Training and Development
- Moderation of Assessment
- Short Courses.

The HEQC requested information from all HEIs on their QA arrangements in the following key areas for the above:

- Policies and procedures in place for QA
- The extent of implementation of the policies and procedures
- Monitoring and oversight arrangements in place
- Evaluation and follow up arrangements for improvement
- Implementation timeframes for the areas that are still being developed.

A comprehensive report on HEIs that will finally be delegated such QA functions, pending SAQA approval, will be released at the end of this process. Activities that are underway with regard to this process are as follows:

- Regional workshops on HEQC requirements for delegation
- Submission of improvement plans by institutions
- Submission of progress reports by institutions
- Establishment of an expert panel to evaluate HEIs' progress reports before finalisation of delegation

The HEQC has indicated that it will delegate quality management responsibility in the above areas to HEIs themselves, institutional arrangements will be looked at in the course of institutional audits.

Priorities

For the immediate future, the Accreditation and Co-ordination Directorate has prioritised the following areas of work:

- Developing and implementing a single integrated accreditation system for both private and public providers
- Entering into and monitoring MoUs and with professional councils and other ETQAs
- Delegation of QA functions to HEIs in the areas of RPL, Assessor Training and Development, Moderation of Assessment, Certification Arrangements and Short Courses.

- Monitoring of certification processes and procedures at HEIs (public and private)
- Developing and instituting a fair administrative process for reviewing programmes that have been refused accreditation or re-accreditation by the HEQC
- Developing professional capacity and expertise both within the HEQC and in the system to implement a rigorous new accreditation system
- Developing a new integrated information management system for the accreditation of programmes for private and public providers, as well as for qualifications that need professional registration.

The Accreditation and Co-ordination Directorate has made tremendous progress in a variety of areas, including developing a new accreditation system, streamlining its current accreditation procedures, processing a large number of applications for the accreditation of new programmes, managing the re-accreditation of MBAs, preparing systems and instruments for more effective co-ordination of QA in higher education, and preparing for the delegation of certain QA functions to institutions themselves.

6. INSTITUTIONAL AUDITS DIRECTORATE

During the period under review, the Directorate underwent a name change to *HEQC: Institutional Audits* in order to more closely reflect the work of the unit. The Directorate continued to develop and implement its programme of activities started in September 2001, in accordance with the requirements of *the Act* that the HEQC audit the effectiveness of the QA mechanisms of HEIs. In particular, the Directorate further developed the policies, protocols and instruments for the institutional audit process, and successfully conducted three pilot institutional audits during the course of 2003. Preparations are now underway for the first round of audits proper to be conducted in 2004.

The Audit Project

The work of the Directorate is divided into a number of sub-projects, each contributing critical components to the emerging system of institutional audits.

Institutional Visits

The programme of one-day institutional visits to all public HE providers, and to a selection of private providers, initiated in 2002, was concluded in this period. These visits had three main goals:

- To follow up on responses to the 2001 HEQC questionnaire so as to arrive at a better understanding of each institution's quality management systems and plans
- To acquaint the institution with the HEQC's mandate, programmes and plans
- To enable the HEQC and HEIs to develop an understanding of what institutional audits could involve in terms of expectations and requirements.

The HEQC team engaged with a range of key constituencies in the course of each visit, including executive managers, academic leadership, support services, quality management units and students. After each visit, a report summarising the discussions sent to the respective institutions. An analysis was then developed of the various issues that were raised across the range of institutions. Evaluative feedback suggests that the visits provided valuable experience and insights that will assist both the development of the HEQC's own systems, as well as quality systems within HEIs themselves.

Audit Documents

Through a process of careful consultation with stakeholders in the sector, through research into international models, and based on our experience so far, four key documents outlining various dimensions of the institutional audit system have been developed. These are:

- *The Framework for Institutional Audits*: This provides a policy framework for a national audit system, including the legislative basis, the HEQC's approach to audits, the scope and focus of audits, and the methodology of the audit process.
- *Criteria for Institutional Audits*: The criteria are evaluative tools that enable the institution, the audit panel and the HEQC to focus on important institutional signals and indicators of quality and quality management. These criteria were revised significantly in the light of comments from stakeholders and the HEQC Board, and from the experience of the pilot audits.
- *Institutional Audit Manual*: This is intended to guide the self-evaluation of QA systems that institutions will undertake, and covers each stage of the entire audit process

- *Auditor Manual:* This provides a detailed guide for auditors in the audit process, documenting the principles, procedures and protocols that should be followed to ensure the integrity of audits.

The first two of the manuals listed above are due to be released in final form into the sector in mid-2004, while revised versions of the latter two manuals are to be tested during the first round of audits planned for the second half of 2004.

The Pilot Audits

Three successful pilot audits were conducted during the course of 2003, which included a university, a technikon and a private provider. Thanks to very detailed planning and preparation from Secretariat staff, the efficient preparations of the three pilot institutions, and the extensive commitment of the audit panellists, the audit visits proceeded smoothly, and no significant procedural problems were encountered.

Two international colleagues participated in the pilot audits. Dr Antony Stella, Advisor from the National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) in India, participated as an auditor on the University of Pretoria pilot audit, and Mr Rob Carmichael, Audit Director from the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) in Australia, participated as an observer in the Vaal Triangle Technikon pilot audit. Both colleagues have submitted detailed reports to the HEQC on the audit process and systems, which have been used to improve the HEQC's approach.

The preparation of the pilot audit reports proved to be a highly instructive process for the HEQC, involving the establishment of an appropriate tone and content for the report, ensuring that the conclusions reached were evidence-based, and aiming for a document that would be of constructive use to the pilot institutions. Attention to the underlying assumptions of the report provided an opportunity for reflection on the intent and purpose of the HEQC's audit mandate and its contribution to QA in HE.

The pilot institutions were provided with opportunities to comment on the final draft reports, and the reports were presented for approval to the HEQC Board at its May 2004 meeting.

The pilot audits were followed by evaluative research in three areas. The first investigated the reception of the audit by the participating pilot institutions, as well as gauging the responsiveness of the HEQC to the needs of the pilot institutions. The second monitored the audit criteria which focused on research, including how appropriate and focused the criteria were, with the goal of making recommendations on how an audit panel might proceed in future audits. The last tracked the experience of auditors with a view to improving future auditor training sessions. The results of these evaluations have resulted in the extensive revision of the audit criteria, and the revision of the audit processes as these are currently laid out in the various audit manuals. On the basis of this experience, the Directorate will proceed with greater confidence into the first round of audits proper that will commence in the second half of 2004.

The following institutions have been identified for audit in 2004:

- Central University of Technology
- Management College of Southern Africa (MANCOSA)
- Varsity College
- Oval
- City Varsity
- Bond SA

Staff from the Directorate have begun to engage with these institutions in order to support their self-evaluation and portfolio-writing processes.

Other Activities

Other activities of the Directorate have included:

- *The selection and preparation of potential auditors* in collaboration with the Quality Promotion and Capacity Development Directorate (QPCD). Two preparation sessions were conducted in July 2003 and three further sessions are planned for later in 2004, based on projections of the numbers of auditors needed for the first cycle of audits (2004-2009). In addition, refresher sessions are planned for auditors trained in 2003, in order to update them on revisions to the

system implemented in the light of the pilot audits. Specialised preparation sessions are also planned for panel chairs, and for audit report writers.

- *Case study reports from pilot institutions* have been commissioned from QA managers in these institutions. It is intended that these reports will be collated and disseminated for the information of institutions to be audited.
- *Planning of regional workshops* to inform institutions about the revised audit criteria, and adjustments to the audit process. Five regional workshops will be delivered in May and June of 2004.
- *Regulations governing the conduct of audit* have been drafted, and these are to be finalised during the course of 2004.
- *The development of a schedule of audits* for the first cycle of audits (2004-2009), to enable effective planning in the Audit Directorate. The public institutions have now all been included in the tentative schedule, but work on assessing priorities amongst private providers continues, and will be concluded later in 2004.

Overall, the Directorate concludes this reporting period confident that a robust framework, and series of procedures, has now been established for the conduct of institutional audits. However, a considerable challenge lies ahead in finding ways of fulfilling the mandate to audit all registered HE providers (public and private) within the given six-year time-frame. The Directorate may need to consider more than one model of audit procedure in order to facilitate appropriate coverage of (especially) the large number of private providers in the sector. Further, the Directorate will need to ensure that adequate numbers of appropriately-skilled personnel (apart from permanent Directorate staff) are available to fulfil the various functions associated with audits.

A further challenge will be to develop audit-related capacity at systemic, institutional and individual levels throughout the sector, especially in skills such as generating and interpreting appropriate management information, planning and conducting self-evaluation, developing systemic approaches to educational and research-development processes, writing audit portfolios, etc. The Directorate will work with the QPCD Directorate to this end.

Another priority will be to keep track of the latest developments in approaches to institutional audit in other countries. We aim to build on relationships currently being developed with colleagues in Australia, India, United Kingdom, Norway and in the SADC states.

Finally, the Directorate will consider ways of managing data arising from audits in ways that enable the HEQC to develop a baseline picture of quality management trends at institutional level. The goal will be to feed into the work of the CHE Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate.

7. QUALITY PROMOTION AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

In addition to promoting quality and supporting the building of capacity, the Directorate is responsible for supporting the HEQC's national QA system by preparing a pool of expert peers who can serve on institutional audit and programme evaluation panels. The major activities of the Directorate were:

- The preparation of an initial pool of institutional auditors who could serve on HEQC audit panels
- The development of a first draft of Resources for Improving Teaching and Learning and holding workshops with practitioners to get their input
- Completing a programme, started in 2002, of one-day visits to HEIs by the HEQC.

In addition, a substantial grant was given to the CTP for capacity building in respect of quality management in Technikons.

Institutional Auditor Preparation

A total of fifty potential auditors were selected according to HEQC criteria. They attended two auditor preparation workshops held in July 2003. There was collaboration on the design, delivery and evaluation of the process with Dr David Woodhouse, who heads the Australian Universities Quality Agency, and with the Centre for Higher Education Development at the University of Cape Town. A number of trained auditors served on pilot audit panels in 2003 as chairpersons and members of panels. The process was evaluated and was used to improve the auditor preparation programme as well as the overall system of institutional audits that is being implemented in 2004.

Improving Teaching and Learning Project

The broad aims of the project are:

- To stimulate the sharing of good practice, and critical reflection, debate and scholarship, in respect of HE teaching and learning and related quality issues
- To enhance the capacity of HEIs to improve the quality of their learning and teaching systems and practice; and to develop and improve their internal quality management systems in line with HEQC requirements
- To provide HEIs and practitioners with resources that they can effectively adapt, use, develop and share as individuals, institutions and via regional and national networks, as appropriate.

The Guides to Good Practice which were drafted in the first phase of the project were further developed as a set of Resources for Improving Teaching and Learning. Practitioners from all public HEIs and a number of private HEIs came together at 14 regional workshops to give input on the guides, to share experiences and to develop strategies for improving teaching and learning. An average of 25 persons attended each workshop. The host institutions were the Durban Institute of Technology, the Border, Peninsula and Pretoria Technikons, the Universities of Stellenbosch, Durban-Westville, Rhodes, UNISA, Witwatersrand and the Rand Afrikaans University. Input from the workshops was subsequently used to improve the Resources and enhance the development of the project. The revised Resources will be made available in late 2004.

One-day visits to HEIs by the HEQC

The main objectives of the visits, which began in 2002, were:

- To arrive at a better understanding of the institution's QA systems and plans
- To acquaint the institution with the HEQC's mandate, programmes and plans
- For the HEQC and HEIs to develop an understanding of what institutional audits could involve in terms of expectations and requirements.

Institutions were told that the visits did not constitute audits. Teams consisting of HEQC board members and HEQC staff conducted the visits. Institutions provided documentation to assist the teams, and subsequent to the visit, were sent a record of the salient points discussed. The programme of visits to public HEIs was completed in 2003, with visits to 23 institutions. One private HEI was also visited, in addition to the 9 visited in 2002.

Quality Managers' Forum

The purpose of the forum is to bring together a key institutional constituency, to facilitate debate, share experiences and disseminate information. The following tables indicate attendance at the Quality Managers' Forums held.

Table 10: Participation: HEQC Public HEIs Quality Managers' Forum

Date	No. of Participants	No. of HEIs represented	Other HE Organisations /Regional Consortia
6 March 2003	40	34	6
12 June 2003	38	34	5
11 November 2003	44	34	5

Table 11: Participation: HEQC Private HE Providers Quality Managers' Forum

Date	Total Number of Participants	Number of HEIs represented
5 March 2003	78	111
13 November 2003	88	115

Supporting Capacity Development

The CTP received a grant from the HEQC for a project aimed at capacity building in respect of:

- Developing quality management and tracking systems
- Providing an overview of current quality management practices
- Incorporating HEQC requirements into quality management arrangements and initiatives to improve quality
- Generating a set of recommendations.

A key phase of the project included experts from the Australian Technology Network facilitating five regional workshops that were attended by senior staff from all Technikons. Universities were invited to send representatives, and QA managers took part in activities that built on the outcomes of workshops. A project report has been published by the CTP¹.

Other activities

1. *The Act* mandates the HEQC to 'promote quality assurance in higher education'. Work began on drafting an HEQC policy Framework for Quality Promotion and Capacity Development. The final draft will be circulated to stakeholders for comment in late 2004.
2. A workshop on Vocational Higher Education was held in October 2003, facilitated by Dr John Brennan of the Centre for Higher Education Research and Innovation in the United Kingdom. Participants included persons from HEIs, SETAs, industry, CTP, APPETD and the HEQC. The workshop is part of an ongoing project to promote quality in respect of vocational HE.
3. Research was commissioned to draw on the responses to the questionnaire on QA arrangements sent to HEIs in late 2001, and related information gathered during the one-day visits by the HEQC to the same institutions. The research is intended for internal use and will inform HEQC planning and policy implementation.
4. The Directorate participated in a workshop for heads of academic departments at the University of Venda (9-10 March 2004). The focus was on self-evaluation and planning for quality improvement. A regional programme of capacity building will be rolled out in the second half of 2004.

8. DEVELOPMENT OF A MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR THE HEQC

Since the beginning of 2002 the HEQC has set up a team to develop a Management Information System (MIS) capable of supporting the implementation of the different aspects of the HEQC QA system at a national level the accreditation of programmes, institutional audits, and capacity development and promotion.

The MIS has five main objectives:

- To allow HEIs to submit documentation to the relevant HEQC Directorate online, thus accelerating and making more effective the different tasks involved in the processing of accreditation applications and audit portfolios
- To provide a project management, workflow and reporting system for the management of work of the three HEQC Directorates that allows for efficient and effective processing of applications and conduct of tasks within processes; permanent improvement of internal processes and easy retrieval of documentation generated in the work of the three HEQC Directorates
- To provide appropriate interfaces with the CHE Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate that allow for the storage, and analysis of system level data, and the identification of areas and issues that need to be researched
- To provide external interfaces with the DoE and SAQA
- To provide a portal online to support the work of evaluators and auditors.

The development team is constituted by four external IT experts (programmers, designers and a project manager) and a CHE senior manager who takes care the system analysis and design.

¹Capacity Building For Effective Quality Management in South African Technikons (January 2004)

The development of the MIS is done in phases. The first one corresponds to the development of the sub-system for the Accreditation Directorate. The following are the elements taken into account in the conceptualisation of the system:

- The system has been conceptualised as an integrated architecture that includes a series of sub-systems (directorates) that are linked to each other through the workflow. Every task can contain one or more of the following functions: updates, queries of databases and feedback
- The system is designed taking into account external users, HEIs, and internal users, i.e. HEQC staff responsible for different aspects of the workflow in each directorate
- Given the above, and the HEQC's understanding of capacity development, the system not only guides users through a process but also explains the process conceptually. This is evident in the help function
- The system operates as a combination of information management, document management and project management principles, that at the internal level allows for the filing and retrieving of text documentation, the search in quantitative and qualitative databases; the automation of the different tasks involved in the workflow, as well as the supervision of the realisation of these tasks.

Elements of the Accreditation sub-system:

- *Online application* form to be used by HEIs that wish to apply for accreditation
- *Programme Evaluation Online*. Parallel to the application online there is an evaluation form online that can only be accessed by authorised evaluators. In this "place" evaluators fill in an evaluation form which mirrors the application in its conceptualisation. This space creates the possibility of having virtual evaluators meetings
- *Internal Interface*. It is based on the detailed analysis of the workflow staff will follow with the implementation of the new accreditation system
- *Document Management*. This part of the system deals with all the text/paper-based documentation received by the Accreditation Directorate as part of a submission and its processing. It is based in a double system of electronic and physical archiving with cross-referencing for the location of files in registry.

The accreditation sub-system is in its final draft version. During next year it will be presented to the Accreditation Directorate staff for comments and refinement and then it will be tested.

9. CHALLENGES FOR 2004-2005

Many of the HEQC's key policies and systems for QA and development have now been developed, consulted on, finalised and disseminated to the HE community and other stakeholders. Implementation of the institutional audit and programme accreditation systems begins in 2004, bringing in train all the challenges of capacity, resourcing and additional work responsibilities both for the HEQC and the HEIs. However, implementation also brings the promise and the potential of creating new and improved foundations for the HE system to offer better quality education to students in all the sectors of South African HE in ways that meet the intellectual, social and economic objectives of new policy frameworks in HE.

Some HEIs are already using HEQC frameworks and criteria to plan new internal quality management systems, even before the HEQC's implementation of the new systems has started. Others are struggling with a range of restructuring tasks which do not always prioritise quality. One of the main challenges facing the HEQC and other national agencies in HE will be to ensure that a new divide, along lines of quality and QA, does not become entrenched in the emergence of a new South African HE dispensation. The capacity development work of the HEQC will become even more critical as the new institutional audit and programme accreditation systems of the HEQC are implemented.