



**HEQC DIRECTORATE: ACCREDITATION**  
**GUIDELINES ON WRITING IMPROVEMENT PLANS**

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As part of its programme re-accreditation process, the HEQC may require institutions to submit improvement plans related to conditions set in respect of programmes evaluated. This document sets out the HEQC's expectations and requirements in relation to such plans.

It is emphasized that all submitted plans must be sent to the HEQC via the office of the relevant Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Registrar or equivalent senior administrator.

**IMPROVEMENT PLANS**

The HEQC recognizes that there is no universally accepted 'format' for improvement planning and does not wish to attempt to impose any particular approach. However, there are some general guidelines which inform what the HEQC expects from institutions.

1. The improvement plan should comprise two parts. The first part is a summary 'template' which sets out key elements of the plan in respect of *each condition* to be met. The second part is a commentary or elaboration on each element in the plan.
2. The Template : It is suggested that the 'template' be structured in the following way:
  - Each condition set should be listed and addressed and the precise wording of each condition should appear in the template.
  - Each condition should be broken down into concrete actions/ tasks to be undertaken to address the terms of the condition.

- For each action/ task and indication should be given of the following: who will be responsible for what is to be done; by what time the action/ task will be completed [please be specific]; what resources [if any] will be required for each action/ task; what evidence/ indicators will be used as ‘progress checks’ in respect of each action/ task and what evidence/ indicators will be used to ‘measure’/ verify that the action or task has been completed or achieved successfully.
  - In addition, an indication should be given as to who is responsible for overall monitoring of progress in the implementation of the plan and for reporting outcomes.
3. The Commentary/ Elaboration: The function of the ‘template’ is to provide an overview or ‘map’ of planning in respect of all the conditions to be met. In addition, and for each condition, institutions should provide fuller written commentary or elaboration on each element in the improvement plan. Such commentary or elaboration should address each condition, in the order in which it appears in the summary ‘template’, and should demonstrate how the actions/ tasks set out in the ‘template’, severally and collectively, have been designed to meet the terms of each condition. Additionally, and among other things, the commentary might highlight such issues as: specified conditions that have been met already; elaboration of progress made to date in relation to any of the conditions; unexpected problems which have been encountered and how these are being addressed; the presentation of evidence in relation to any of the former, or anything else which the institution might wish to explain more fully or bring to the attention of the HEQC.
4. The HEQC will provide comment on the adequacy of the submitted improvement plans, which is intended to serve a developmental function to ensure that conditions are met. In addition, the HEQC reserves the right to require a site visit to confirm compliance with the conditions.