



COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION

HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY COMMITTEE

**NATIONAL REVIEW OF
THE
ADVANCED CERTIFICATE IN
EDUCATION**

2006

Didacta Building, 211 Skinner Street, Pretoria, 0002; PO Box 13354, The Tramshed,
0126; Telephone: +27 12 392 9119; Fax: +27 12 392 9110; E-mail: bhengu.t@che.ac.za

Visit our website at <http://www.che.ac.za>

Programme Purpose

The Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) is a 120 NQF credit, Level 6 qualification. Introduced by the *Norms and Standards for Educators* (February, 2000) as a replacement for the Further Diploma in Education, the ACE develops:

... further specialized subject/learning area/discipline/phase competence, or a new subject specialization in one or more of the roles as an advanced study intended to ‘cap’ an initial or general teaching qualification. Through this qualification learners will be prepared to embark on a course of study at NQF Level 7. It must, therefore, include appropriate demands in terms of rigour.

The ACE does not qualify candidates as professional educators in schooling, as admission to this programme requires applicants already to have a professional qualification. It is conceived of as a form of continuing professional education with the purpose of enabling educators to develop their competences and/or to change their career path and adopt new educator roles. The Report of the Standards Generating Body for Educators in Schooling (10 October 2001), describes the ACE as follows:

The ACE is a flexible Level 6 qualification aimed at providing educators with an opportunity of either updating, enriching and supplementing their existing knowledge in a particular area of specialisation or of changing their area of specialisation. The former might become necessary due to new developments in an area of study while the latter may be a response to changing national needs or a need for a change in career path. Access to the ACE is open to candidates who are already in possession of an approved Level 6 qualification in the field of education and training, and it creates additional opportunities for further study at Level 7.

Criterion 1: The National, Institutional and Unit Context¹

The programme is an integral part of the offerings of the higher education institution at which it is located and it complies with all the national policies and regulations regarding the provision of higher education qualifications in South Africa. The unit offering the ACE has goals, objectives and forms of internal organisation to support the programme.

Minimum standards

- i. *Public Providers:* The programme is part of the institution's programme and qualification mix (PQM), as approved by the DoE, and meets the criteria laid down in the Criteria for the Recognition and Evaluation of Qualifications for Employment in Education;
- ii. *Private Providers:* The provider is registered with the DoE in terms of the requirements of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997) and the Regulations for the Registration of Private Higher Education Institutions, 2002 and Annexures to the Regulations (Regulation No. 1564 of Government Gazette No. 24143, 13 December 2002) and meets the criteria laid down in the Criteria for the Recognition and Evaluation of Qualifications for Employment in Education.
- iii. The qualification complies with the minimum credit value of the Norms and Standards for Educators (Government Gazette No. 20844, 4 February 2000) and the purpose of the qualification and its phase/ subject specialism(s) are clearly stated. The programme meets national requirements pertaining to programmes which are at present being developed within the context of the NQF (Refer to National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 as amended by Education Laws Amendment Act No. 100 of 1997 and No. 48 of 1999).
- iv. The qualification and all specialisations are registered by SAQA on the NQF.
- v. The programme is accredited by the Universities and Technikons Advisory Council (AUT), SAQA, or the HEQC.
- vi. ACE specialisations and programme outcomes take cognisance of national / regional professional priorities and are congruent with the national Norms and Standards for Educators, the relevant national curriculum (RNCS and/or the new FET curriculum), and the professional dispositions of the SACE Code of Ethics.²
- vii. The programme is part of the institution's planning, approval, resource allocation and quality assurance process.
- viii. The unit³ offering the ACE has an organisational structure that enhances the fulfilment of its stated mission, goals and objectives and provides for the effective participation of faculty and learners in matters of importance.

¹ 'Unit' refers to the operational organizational structure offering the programme. In most cases this will be a Department or School.

² In particular, appropriate professional dispositions include commitment to learners' personal development and welfare as both individuals and citizens.

³ All minimum standards apply to additional sites of delivery and tuition centres.

- ix. Franchising arrangements for programme delivery are not permissible.

In addition, the following minimum standard applies in the case of programmes offered through distance education:

- x. The provider and programme management team can provide a rationale for the use of distance education for the delivery of the programme/course to the intended target learners.

Criterion 2: Programme Design

It is a fundamental requirement that programme design reflects the necessary and enabling features for an ACE to achieve its purpose.⁴ The curriculum is suited to its purpose, internally coherent, and mindful of the needs of the students.

Minimum standards

- i. Programme design is internally coherent and in alignment with the prescribed level and purpose of an ACE.
- ii. The programme is located within a conception of teacher education as a continuum ranging from the initial professional education of teachers through to continuing professional development.
- iii. In cases where this is appropriate to programme purpose, the programme includes consideration of teachers' conditions of service and national policy, particularly as these pertain to issues such as safety in schools and learner conduct.
- iv. Programme design offers career and learning pathways, e.g. a pathway into BED (Hons), and opportunities for articulation with other programmes within and across institutions, where appropriate.
- v. Timetable design provides for one year full-time study or two years of part-time study during which it enables a coherent development of the programme's specialised focus consistent with selected aspects of the roles specified for 'educators' in the Norms and Standards for Educators. The number of contact hours is explicitly stated and justified/ supported in the programme outline.
- vi. The purpose of the programme informs the statement of applied competence. The curriculum is explicit with respect to exit level outcomes and related assessment criteria, content, level, credits, rules of combination and relative weight.
- vii. Curriculum design is coherent, reflecting alignment of explicit outcomes, curriculum choice, teaching and learning methods, assessment, and modes of delivery.
- viii. Curriculum design ensures sufficient depth of content knowledge and theory to serve a productive relationship between learning area or disciplinary content, pedagogical content knowledge, and practice.

⁴ as outlined on page 1 of this document.

- ix. Curriculum choice, teaching and learning methods, modes of delivery and learning materials cater for the learning needs of the target student intake. Opportunities are provided for learner input.
- x. Relevant forms of learner support have been incorporated into the programme design.
- xi. Mechanisms and processes are in place to ensure that all conditions for programme delivery are met, and that there is equivalence of provision in the case of a programme offered by different modes of delivery and / or at different sites. In such cases, the arrangements are institutionally approved and supported. In cases where decentralised tutor-based learner support systems are in place, these are properly managed and quality assured by the provider.

In addition, the following minimum standards apply in the case of programmes offered through distance education:

- xii. An adequate level of investment has been made in quality programme development, course design and course material.
- xiii. The provider has explicitly designed systems for administering and teaching learners at a distance and has planned for contingencies in order to meet its stated aims in terms of academic quality and standards.

Criterion 3: Student Recruitment, Admission and Selection

Recruitment, access and selection procedures and documents are clear and accurate, attentive to diversity, current legislation and national needs in education, and apt for the particular specialist programme purpose. The number of students selected takes into account the programme's intended learning outcomes and its capacity to offer good quality education.

Minimum standards

- i. Appropriate policies, procedures and regulations are in place for student admission, selection and assessment. These are communicated to all ACE students, and academic and administrative staff, and implemented consistently across the institution and programme.
- ii. Admission and selection criteria and processes are clearly documented. Prospectuses and other recruitment documents are clear, accurate and informative about the programme, its areas of specialisation, formal admission requirements, academic standards and completion requirements, and mode of delivery.
- iii. Marketing and advertising are consistent with DoE and SAQA regulations.
- iv. Selection criteria are commensurate with the programme's academic and professional requirements, within a framework of widened access and equity.
- v. The number of students selected takes account of the programme's intended learning outcomes, its capacity to offer sound professional preparation in the

- selected areas of specialisation, and the needs of schools and other relevant parts of the education system.
- vi. Enrolment practices include provision of accurate, helpful information – including information about funding opportunities - as well as efficient handling of finance and registration information.
 - vii. While the general admission requirement of a PGCE/ BEd or equivalent relevant NQF level 6 qualification is generally applied, provision is made for a flexible RPL entry route within the framework of national guidelines for higher education institutions. Admission through an RPL route may not exceed 10% of the total number of students on any programme.⁵

In addition, the following minimum standards apply in the case of programmes offered through distance education:

- viii. Detailed and up-to-date information is available regarding the demands of the mode of delivery and the support services available. Provision is made for a potentially diverse and geographically widely distributed student body.
- ix. The provider has developed detailed learner profiles that identify the characteristics and situation of learners and this is used to inform teaching and learning strategy.

Criterion 4: Staffing

Policy and procedures for staff appointments, promotion and development are legitimate and fair, promote the achievement of equity plans, and encourage a staff complement that exemplifies best professional practice in teaching, assessment, inquiry and professional service. The academic and support staff complement is of sufficient size and seniority for the programme. The institution and/or other recognised agencies contracted by the institution provide opportunities for staff development.

Minimum standards

- i. Recruitment and employment of staff adhere to the stipulations of the Labour Relations Act, 1996, Basic Conditions of Employment Amendment Act, 2002, and the Employment Equity Act, 1998. Appropriate administrative procedures are in place for the selection, appointment, induction and payment of staff members.
- ii. Where applicable, relevant labour legislation and regulations on health and safety in the workplace are observed.
- iii. Policies and procedures for academic staff appointments, promotions and development enable and encourage a competent, committed teaching staff who:

⁵ Exceptions are permissible in cases where RPL admission is consistent with the institution's policy and practice for RPL.

- have an understanding of their specialist fields as well as of the conditions of education in South Africa
 - can interpret and develop learning materials and courses
 - apply the institution's assessment policies in the context of the ACE programme
 - use an appropriate range of formative and summative assessment approaches at the exit level of the programme.
- iv. All academic and professional staff teaching on the ACE have recognized, relevant qualifications (a degree plus teaching qualification or a qualification at least equivalent to the ACE), and appropriate professional experience. There are appropriately qualified senior staff to provide intellectual and professional leadership in the programme.
 - v. The staffing on the programme is in line with the equity programme of the institution.
 - vi. Staff composition is balanced and consonant with the specializations offered in the programme and the numbers of students in each, as well as with the practical and theoretical components of the ACE.
 - vii. Workloads allow sufficient time for the development of curricula and materials, marking of assessment, and the necessary learner support. Where decentralised learner support is offered, or where marking of assessment involves external people, there are appropriate resources in place for the recruitment, training, monitoring and payment of necessary part-time and contract staff.
 - viii. There are clear procedures for assuring, acknowledging and developing the performance quality of associate, off-campus and part-time staff, and for promoting their understanding of and commitment to the programme and its purpose.
 - ix. Through a variety of forums (e.g. informal meeting, research, conferences, formal learning) staff are able to reflect on matters concerning teacher education, national policy and teaching, and on learning and assessment issues pertaining to the programme. Staff responsible for students' academic development have opportunities to advance their disciplinary knowledge.
 - x. Core academic and professional staff engage in scholarly activity and use research and/or other forms of structured inquiry to enhance their practice in the field of teacher education.
 - xi. Programme faculty members have formal opportunities to provide input on issues affecting admissions, progress of students, resource allocation, curriculum design and evaluation, and research.
 - xii. The institution provides orientation, induction and professional development opportunities for both new academic staff members as well as part-time staff.
 - xiii. There are sufficient numbers of administrative, technical and academic development support staff for the effective running of the programme and its activities, both on campus and at various sites of practice.
 - xiv. Support staff are adequately qualified for their duties, and have opportunities for staff development.

In addition, the following minimum standard applies in the case of programmes offered through distance education:

- xv. Staff are trained, monitored and supported for the specialised distance education roles they perform, including the design, management and delivery of the programmes.

Criterion 5: Teaching and Learning

The institution gives recognition to the importance of the promotion of student learning. Teaching and learning policies, strategies, methods and materials take account of the purpose of the ACE programme. In systematically enabling student learning and in developing students' capacity to enable others to learn, teaching and learning strategies are also appropriate for the institutional type (as reflected in its mission) and consonant with the mode(s) of delivery, student composition, and programme design. There are mechanisms to ensure the appropriateness of teaching and learning methods.

Minimum standards

- i. The institution's central operating policies, procedures and resource allocation recognise the importance of student learning and support the programme in enabling learning pertinent to the professional competence of teachers.
- ii. Programme-specific teaching and learning policies and strategies are consonant with the programme design, outcomes, mode(s) of delivery, learning materials, assessment criteria, and student profile.
- iii. Students are provided with guidance on how the different components of the programme contribute to the learning outcomes of the programme. Assessment criteria and/ or an explicit understanding of requirements are clearly communicated to students on commencement of their studies.
- iv. Students are able to develop their specialist knowledge and professional dispositions by being provided with an appropriate mix of academic and experiential learning opportunities, in a variety of teaching and learning contexts.
- v. Learning materials are aligned with the programme goals and underpinning philosophy, and are adequate in respect of content, level, purpose, and the linkage of assessment strategies to specific learning outcomes.
- vi. Pedagogy contributes to transformation by developing the capabilities of individual students for personal enrichment as well as for academic and professional requirements.
- vii. Where necessary, members of the academic staff are trained to develop learning materials.
- viii. There is systematic curriculum development and revision of learning materials, and these processes are responsive to the needs of student and the profession.
- ix. Where appropriate, curriculum initiatives include a focus on HIV-AIDS, in order to develop an informed understanding of the pandemic and its impact on schooling, and to develop the competences to cope responsibly with the effects of the pandemic in learning sites.

- x. There are procedures for monitoring, evaluating and improving teaching and learning.
- xi. There are mechanisms for identifying weak and “at risk” students and for offering appropriate additional academic support.
- xii. The quality requirements for programme delivery take into account all delivery modes.

In addition, the following minimum standards apply in the case of programmes offered through distance education:

- xiii. The design of the programme encompasses the aims and intended learning outcomes, the scope of the learning materials, and the strategies for teaching at a distance.
- xiv. The programme makes provision for the development of increasingly sophisticated levels of independent study from learning resources provided.
- xv. The institution has proven systems and technologies for materials development and delivery for distance learning.
- xvi. Learning materials, teaching and learning support strategies and modes of assessment are designed in order to give distance students a reasonable chance of achieving the intended learning outcomes.

Criterion 6: Programme Coordination

The programme is effectively coordinated in a way that facilitates the achievement of its purpose and intended outcomes, with due attention to mode/s of delivery.

Minimum standards

- i. The ACE programme is suitably coordinated and defined within the faculty/departmental and institutional system. An appropriately qualified senior academic with relevant experience manages the programme within the framework of an agreed-upon mandate.
- ii. The programme coordinator provides intellectual leadership and ensures that the academic coherence and professional integrity of the programme are maintained (e.g. through appropriate procedures for curriculum development and review; consultation with fulltime and part-time staff, students, SACE and other professional bodies; systematic tracking of policy developments in areas such as the school curriculum and teacher development).
- iii. The programme coordinator contributes to the achievement of the programme purpose by effectively coordinating programme delivery and assessment, annual planning, and advising the institution on resource allocation and staffing needs.
- iv. Opportunities are created for student input and participation in relevant aspects of programme coordination.

- v. Programme coordination ensures that regular and effective communication takes place with the students. This includes providing reliable information on the various aspects of the programme.

Criterion 7: Student Assessment

Assessment policies and procedures are explicit and appropriate for the programme purpose, mode/s of delivery, exit level outcomes. There are clear, educationally sound policies for internal formative and summative assessment and the appointment and responsibilities of external examiners. There are mechanisms for monitoring of student progress; ensuring the validity and reliability of assessment practices; recording of assessment results; settling of disputes; maintaining the rigour and security of the assessment system; RPL; and for the development of staff competence in assessment.

Minimum standards

- i. Assessment is integral to the programme design, teaching and learning strategies, to student and staff development, and to the improvement of the curriculum and learning materials.
- ii. Assessment policies, procedures and practices match and support the programme purpose.
- iii. There are clear procedures for both formative and summative assessment; and the mix, balance, assessment criteria and weighting of assessment activities are consonant with the exit level outcomes and selected aspects of the roles specified in the Norms and Standards for Educators and National Framework for Teacher Education). Such procedures are made explicit to staff and students.
- iv. Procedures exist and are followed to ensure that assignments/ tests/ projects are returned in sufficient time to allow students to profit from academic feedback.
- v. A range of appropriate assessment tasks (including at least one integrated assessment procedure and, when appropriate, RPL) is used effectively to measure students' attainment of the intended learning outcomes.
- vi. Assessment records are thorough, accurate and systematically used to generate data for grading, selecting and predicting, and review. A system is in operation for maximising the accuracy, consistency, fairness and credibility of results, including consistency of marking, and concurrence between assessors and external examiners on the nature and quality of the evidence of achievement of learning outcomes. Where more than one assessor is involved, internal moderation checks are undertaken to ensure the reliability of the assessment procedures.
- vii. The assessment of student learning achievements at the exit level of the qualification is subject to external examination by appropriately qualified academics. External examiners are properly informed about the course they examine (curriculum and assessment), and review in full 10% of the written work being assessed, and conduct a random check of a further 20%.
- viii. Completed external examiner reports are returned to the relevant academic member of staff and also to the programme coordinator. Problems are discussed

- with the lecturer concerned and the programme coordinator monitors the implementation of agreed improvements.
- ix. Measures are taken to ensure the security of the assessment system. Assessment results are recorded securely and reliably.
 - x. Policies for ensuring the integrity of certification processes for the qualification obtained through the programme are effectively implemented.
 - xi. There is a fair and effective procedure for settling student disputes regarding assessment results, and students are acquainted with this procedure. Breaches of assessment rules are dealt with effectively and timeously.
 - xii. Student progress is monitored and appropriate action is taken, where applicable.
 - xiii. Provision is made for the development of staff competence in assessment.

In addition, the following minimum standard applies in the case of programmes offered through distance education:

- xiv. There are systems and processes in place to make possible individual academic support for learners by telephone, email, appointment, video-conferencing or online.

Criterion 8: Infrastructure and Library Resources

Suitable and sufficient venues, IT infrastructure and library resources are available for students and staff in the programme. Policies ensure the proper management and maintenance of library resources, including support and access for students and staff. Staff development of library staff takes place on a regular basis.

Minimum standards

- i. At all official sites of learning where the programme is offered, there are sufficient, suitable, properly equipped venues. Where appropriate, such venues include laboratories in addition to facilities for large class teaching and for small group seminars and tutorials.
- ii. Each member of the fulltime academic staff has an office, a personal computer and access to printing facilities. Appropriate provision is made to accommodate part-time staff.
- iii. Suitable and sufficient IT facilities, equipment and support are available at all sites of learning. This includes functionally appropriate hardware (computers and printers), software (programmes) and databases, and IT staff to provide training and support for the effective use of the facilities for teacher education.
- iv. Administrative/ technical staff have suitable working space and adequate systems of technology and communication in order to support the programme.
- v. Relevant, properly maintained and regularly updated library resources are available to support effective teaching, learning, curriculum development and research in teacher education.

- vi. Appropriate use of the library and other locally accessible curriculum resources is built into the programme design and teaching and learning strategies. A library or resource centre education specialist supports and encourages appropriate library use. Resources complement the curriculum and make provision for independent student learning related to their fields of specialisation.
- vii. Orientation workshops are presented to ensure that students are enabled to access all library resources including IT infrastructure and web-based resources.

In addition, the following minimum standard applies in the case of programmes offered through distance education:

- viii. All services offered to the learners are designed and efficient taking into account the location of the learners and the needs of the programme.

Criterion 9: Student Retention, Throughput Rates and Programme Impact

Student retention and throughput rates in the programme are monitored, especially in terms of race and gender equity, and remedial measures are taken, where necessary. The programme has taken steps to enhance the employability of students and to alleviate shortages of expertise in relevant fields, in cases where these are the desired outcomes of the programme.

Minimum standards

- i. Sixty-six percent of full-time students who enter the programme complete it successfully within 1 year (part-time students complete within 3 years).
- ii. Over the past three years, the unit offering the programme has had access to, and has monitored and guided the analysis of information on retention and throughput rates of students.
- iii. Planning includes mechanisms (at faculty or departmental level) for improving retention and throughput rates, and for attaining appropriate demographic diversity and responding to patterns of supply and demand with respect to skills and competences.
- iv. Students who complete the programme successfully have attained the required level of professional competence.

Criterion 10: Programme Reviews

Insights and recommendations arising from regular programme reviews and impact studies are used to improve the programme's design, delivery and resourcing, and for staff development and student support, where necessary.

Minimum standards

- i. The institution has procedures and appropriate guidelines for periodic programme reviews, with accountability to Faculty Board and/or Senate.

- ii. User surveys are undertaken at regular intervals for feedback from academics involved in the programme, graduates, peers, external examiners, SACE and other professional bodies and employers, where applicable, to ascertain whether the programme is attaining its intended outcomes.
- iii. On an annual basis, the programme coordinator or the unit undertakes (in collaboration with programme staff) a systematic, focussed review of pertinent aspects of the programme in order to monitor its success in enabling students to achieve the required exit level outcomes and professional commitment.
- iv. Reviews form the basis of a feasible development and improvement plan, and the plan is systematically implemented.