



COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION

HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY COMMITTEE

**CRITERIA AND MINIMUM
STANDARDS FOR
BACHELOR OF EDUCATION
(HONOURS)**

2006

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Note: The B Ed (Hons) programme is not included in the 2006 National Review. This set of criteria is intended to serve the purposes of individual institutions. All new applications for the B Ed Honours must utilise these criteria and minimum standards.

Programme Purpose

B Ed (Hons) is a 120 NQF credit, Level 7 programme. The purpose of the qualification is:

... the advanced and specialized academic, professional or occupational study of education. It is designed to build the competence of expert educators and curriculum specialists, systems managers, or educational researchers. Through this qualification learners will be prepared to embark on a course of study leading to an M.Ed at NQF Level 8. Although the B.Ed (Honours) must include some specialization and a focus on research, the nature of these will vary depending on whether an academic, professional or occupational focus is chosen (*Norms and Standards for Educators, February 2000*).

The Standards Generating Body of Educators in Schooling (10 October 2001) recommended the following four mutually reinforcing exit level outcomes for all post-graduate qualifications (including B Ed(Hons)) in Education:

Exit level outcome 1 - Scholarship

Candidates demonstrate that they have acquired a sound knowledge base and critical understanding of education in general, and of their area(s) of specialization in particular.

Exit level outcome 2 - Intellectual skill

Candidates demonstrate the ability critically to analyse and evaluate knowledge in their area(s) of specialisation, and to contribute to systematic and disciplined thinking about educational matters and issues, with particular reference to their area(s) of specialisation.

Exit level outcome 3 - Independent Inquiry

Candidates demonstrate the ability to conduct independent inquiry in a specialized field of education, training or development, and to report their findings in academically appropriate ways.

Exit level outcome 4 - Academic Leadership

Candidates exhibit the potential to act as academic leaders and experts in the field of education, training and development.

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 B Ed (Hons) 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 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. B Ed (Hons) specialisations and programme outcomes take cognizance of national / regional professional priorities and are congruent with the National Norms and Standards for Educators and the professional dispositions of the SACE Code of Ethics.² Where applicable, there is congruence with the relevant national curriculum.
- vii. The programme is part of the institution's planning, approval, resource allocation and quality assurance process.
- viii. The unit³ offering the programme 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.
- 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:

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.

- 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 a B Ed (Hons) 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 a B Ed (Hons).
- 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. Timetable design provides for one year of full-time study or two years of part-time study. The number of contact hours is explicitly stated and justified/ supported in the programme outline.
- iv. Programme design offers career and learning pathways, e.g. a pathway into MEd for graduates, and opportunities for articulation with other programmes within the institution and between institutions, where appropriate.
- v. Curriculum design reflects the position of the programme as an important bridge between the professional and the academic, research-oriented study of education. Modules represent an appropriate balance between the advanced study of a specialised field in education and introduction to research endeavour.
- vi. Specialisations allow for the cultivation of selected aspects of the roles specified in the Norms and Standards for Educators and are underpinned by educational theory and practice relating to the field of specialisation.
- vii. The programme has a research component comprising an appropriate extended written task (e.g. 'long essay') or a series of tasks to develop and extend students' understanding of research issues and methods.
- viii. The programme has sufficient disciplinary content and theoretical depth at the appropriate level to serve its educational purposes.
- ix. 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.
- x. Curriculum design is coherent, reflecting alignment of explicit outcomes, curriculum choice, teaching and learning methods, assessment, and modes of delivery.
- xi. Learning outcomes, degree of curriculum choice, teaching and learning methods, modes of delivery, learning materials and expected completion time cater for the learning needs of the target student intake. Opportunities are provided for student input.
- xii. Relevant forms of learner support have been incorporated into the programme design.
- xiii. Mechanisms and processes are in place to ensure the equivalence of provision of the B Ed (Hons) offered by different modes of delivery and/or at different sites. In such cases, the arrangements are institutionally approved and supported. In cases where

⁴ as outlined on page 1 of this document.

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:

- xiv. An adequate level of investment has been made in quality programme development, course design and course material.
- xv. 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 commensurate with the programme's academic requirements. 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 B Ed (Hons) 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 and academic development in the selected areas of specialisation and research training, 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 B Ed or national first degree and PGCE is 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:

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

- 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. Policies and procedures for academic staff appointments, promotions and development enable and encourage a competent, committed teaching staff who:
 - have an understanding of research and 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 B Ed (Hons) programme
 - use an appropriate range of formative and summative assessment approaches at the exit level of the programme.
- iii. All academic and professional staff teaching on the B Ed (Hons) have recognized, relevant qualifications to NQF level 7 or higher, and appropriate professional experience. There are appropriately qualified senior staff to provide intellectual and professional leadership in the programme.
- iv. A minimum of 50% of the core, permanent academic staff teaching on the programme has an M Ed degree or an equivalent qualification in a field relevant to the study programme, and at least two years of teaching experience in a recognised higher education institution together with assessment experience at the exit level of the programme.
- v. Responsibility for teaching rests with core, permanent staff to a greater extent than with temporary /part-time personnel.⁶
- vi. The staffing on the programme is in line with the equity programme of the institution.
- vii. Staff composition is balanced and consonant with the range of disciplinary fields and phase / subject specialisations offered in the programme as well as the numbers of students in each.

⁶ Outsourcing of delivery is not permitted.

- viii. 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.
- ix. Academic staff have research experience and use research and/or other forms of structured inquiry to enhance their practice in the field of teacher education. The research profile of the staff includes recognised research outputs.
- x. 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.
- 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. Sufficient administrative staff dedicated to the programme is available, where appropriate.
- 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 B Ed (Hons) programme being that of introducing students to research endeavour in the context of an advanced, specialised study of education. In systematically enabling student learning, 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 the advanced specialised study of education together with an introduction to research.
- 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. There are procedures for monitoring, evaluating and improving teaching and learning.
 - x. There are mechanisms for identifying weak and “at risk” students and for offering appropriate additional academic support.
 - xi. 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:

- xii. 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.
- xiii. The programme makes provision for the development of increasingly sophisticated levels of independent study from learning resources provided.
- xiv. The institution has proven systems and technologies for materials development and delivery for distance learning.
- xv. 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.
- xvi. Training and development opportunities are provided for staff to be able to design, deliver and review programmes offered in a distance mode.
- xvii. There are mechanisms for identifying weak and “at risk” students and for offering appropriate additional academic support.

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.

- i. The 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 staff, students, SACE and other professional bodies; systematic tracking of

- relevant 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, 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. 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, and 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 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 the 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 benefit from academic feedback.
- v. A range of appropriate assessment tasks (including at least one integrated assessment procedure) 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 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 alleviate shortages of expertise in relevant fields, in cases where these are the desired outcomes of the programme.

Minimum standards

- i. Fifty 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

User surveys, reviews and impact studies on the effectiveness of the programme are undertaken at regular intervals. Results 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.
- iv. Reviews form the basis of a feasible development and improvement plan, and the plan is systematically implemented.