

Dear Registrar and Institutional Administrator

DIRECTOR'S LETTER: AN UPDATE ON HEQF IMPLEMENTATION

As you are aware, the CHE is currently implementing a plan for the alignment of all existing programmes with the HEQF, a project that is envisaged to take until 2015 at the earliest to complete. Phase one has involved the submission of data on institutions' current offerings categorised into A, B and C categories. Institutions have been collecting data in spreadsheet formats, which they will then submit onto the HEQF-online system.

There have been some minor changes to the plan – the changes have been made to make the process easier and simpler rather than more complicated – and this communication serves to outline what they are. The reasons for these have been threefold. First, the template has needed some adjustment to take account of the changing data needs for registration purposes with SAQA. This has required the removal of validations on some fields – this means that some of the required fields such as fields requiring narrative information on international comparability are now optional, or can be populated from SAQA's database if there is a SAQA ID. Secondly, the fact that the HEQF itself was under review caused uncertainty in the system about what new qualification types might be possible, such that some institutions found it difficult at this stage to commit to specifying what form their Category B programmes would take. The main proposals made, however, relate to the addition of some new qualification types and have relatively little impact on existing programmes. Thirdly, some institutions communicated to the CHE that they were finding the original deadline difficult to meet.

Phase One changes

1. Change of deadline dates:

For the first phase, the submission deadline has changed to **31 October 2011** for early bird submissions, i.e. those institutions that are ready to submit can do so and have their programmes processed to receive an outcome by early March 2012. For those not quite ready, a second date of **15 January 2011** is possible, to receive an outcome by late May 2012.

2. Section 2 for Category B programmes:

For submissions in the first round according to the dates above: while it was originally requested that institutions should submit data on what their current offerings are, that is Section 1 of the template for A, B and C categories, as well as what A and B types would be post changes, that is Section 2 of the template, in recognition of some of the uncertainty in the system, only the following is now required:

Category A: Sections 1 and Section 2

Category B: Section 1

Category C: Section 1.

This does not preclude an institution that is ready with Section 2 information for Category B programmes from submitting by the dates above. Section 2 information for Category B programmes will be requested 6 months prior to an institution's Category B evaluations in Phase 2 of the plan (see below).

3. There are now fewer required fields in the template than there were previously.

In effect, the changes mean that all institutions will now be submitting information on all their current offerings, but indicating the amendments (Section 2s) only for those programmes that are changing minimally and in somewhat technical ways. It also means that where institutions know that certain programmes need to change (but by less than 50%, i.e. Category Bs), they will have more time to determine what form those changes will take (Section 2). The intention is still, however, to process the majority of all institutions' offerings, which are likely to be Category As, in the first phase, such that most of the programmes in the higher education system are HEQF-aligned by the end of May 2012.

Phase Two changes:

Given the need to postpone the submission dates in Phase One, the dates for Phase Two will be amended as follows:

January – March 2012	Universities (Blue Group)	S2 Forms
July – December 2012	Universities (Blue Group)	Category B Applications
July – September 2012	Universities (Purple Group)	S2 Forms
January – June 2013	Universities (Purple Group)	Category B Applications
January – March 2013	Private Providers	S2 Forms
July – December 2013	Private Providers	Category B Applications
July – September 2013	Comprehensive (Red & Orange Groups)	S2 Forms
January – June 2014	Comprehensive (Red & Orange Groups)	Category B Applications
January - March 2014	Universities of Technology	S2 Forms
July – December 2014	Universities of Technology	Category B Applications

(Please note that for the Universities the Blue and Purple groups will be related to the date of submission in Phase One).

Technical information:

1. The HEQF-*Online* went live on 29 August 2011 and is available <http://heqf-online.che.ac.za>. Similarly, version 7 of the HEQF Implementation Template is also available on the HEQF-*Online* webpage or <http://www.che.ac.za/heqf/>.
2. Institutions should note that older versions of the HEQF Implementation Template are still compatible with the HEQF-*Online*, although these older versions may contain some columns that have been deleted from Version 7 and will not contain some columns that have been added to Version 7. To align an older version of the template with the HEQF-*Online*, some columns may need to be deleted to allow the spreadsheet to be uploaded onto the HEQF-*Online*.
3. Institutional administrators and users will be able to access the HEQF-*Online* as for the HEQC-*Online*.
4. The Institutional Administrator for the HEQC-*Online* will also be defaulted as the Institutional Administrator for the HEQF-*Online*. Should an institution wish this not to be the case, the institution should indicate in writing the user name and following details to allow the CHE Administrator to appoint this user as the Institutional Administrator:
 - User Name
 - E-mail address
 - Password (6 characters)

5. To access the HEQF-*Online*, all users may use their existing username and passwords as for the HEQC-*Online*.
6. New users may be added to the HEQF-*Online* by the Institutional Administrators or by the CHE Administrator.

We trust that the changes noted above will accommodate the needs of institutions yet lead to an expeditious implementation of the HEQF-alignment process.

For technical queries and concerns please contact Tamara Bezuidenhout on heqfonline@che.ac.za or 012 349 3852 .

Regards,



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