



COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION

REPORT ON THE OFFERING OF QUALIFICATIONS ON THE HEQSF BY SOUTH AFRICAN BUSINESS SCHOOLS



FEBRUARY 2023

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List of Business Schools

Public Business Schools:

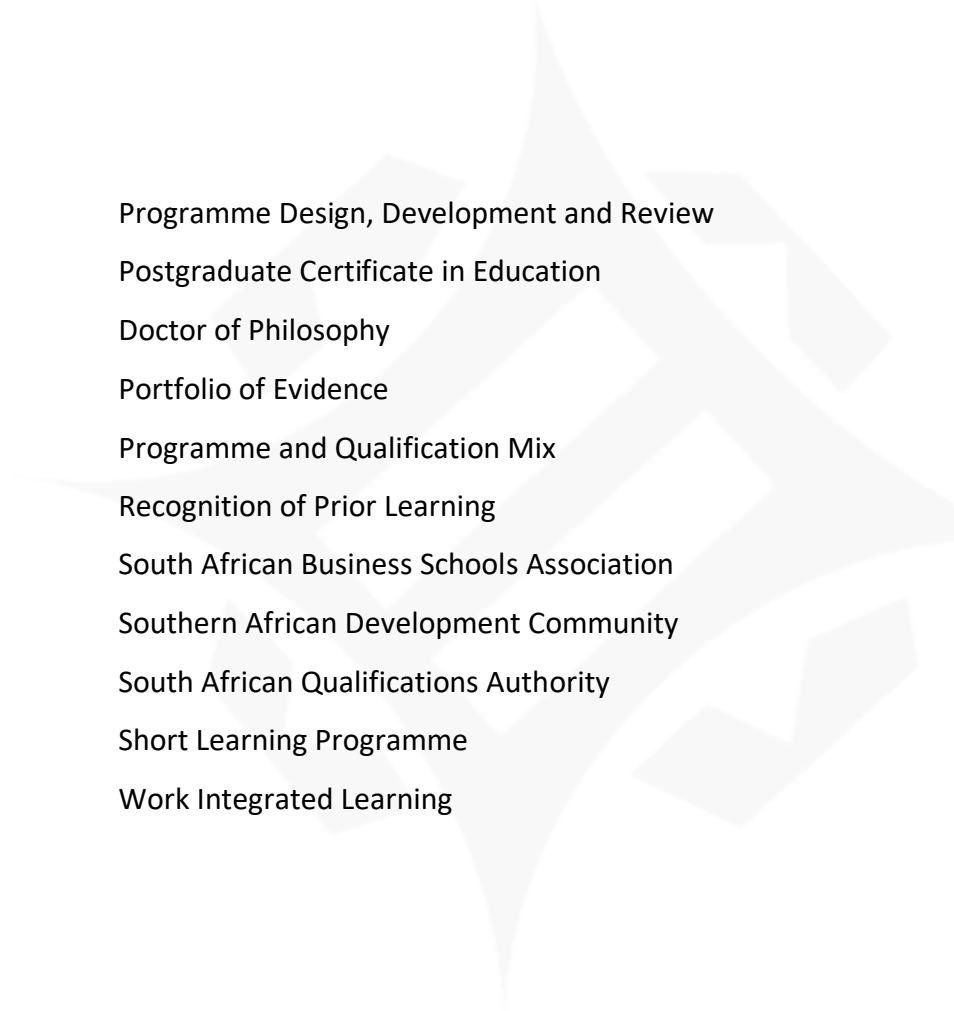

DUT Business School
GIBS (Gordon Institution of Business Science)
Johannesburg Business School
NMU Business School
NWU Business School
Rhodes Business School
Stellenbosch Business School
Tshwane School for Business & Society
Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership
UCT Graduate School of Business
UFS Business School
UKZN Graduate School of Business & Leadership
UNISA Graduate School of Business Leadership
WITS Business School

Private Business Schools:

Da Vinci Institute for Technology Management
Henley Business School
IEMSA
MANCOSA
Milpark Business School
Regenesys Business School
Regent Business School
Richfield Business School

List of Acronyms

AABS	Association of African Business Schools
AACSB	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
AMBA	Association of MBAs
BAC	British Accreditation Council
BGA	Business Graduates Association
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CEEMAN	Central and East European Development Association
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DBA	Doctor of Business Administration
DBL	Doctor of Business Leadership
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
EDP	Executive Development Programme
EFMD	European Foundation for Management Development
EQUIS	EFMD Quality Improvement System
EXCO	Executive Committee
FEC	Faculty Examinations Committee
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MBL	Master of Business Leadership
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework



PDDR	Programme Design, Development and Review
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
POE	Portfolio of Evidence
PQM	Programme and Qualification Mix
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SABSA	South African Business Schools Association
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SLP	Short Learning Programme
WIL	Work Integrated Learning

1. Preamble

SAQA received queries on the status of business schools and the right of certain business schools to offer qualifications that they claim are deemed to be accredited. A concern has been raised with the CHE that the business schools of some universities may be offering Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) qualifications that have not been submitted for accreditation and do not undergo PQM clearance with the DHET because they are not funded by the DHET, relying instead on a full cost-recovery model based on student fees. SAQA requested the CHE to carry out an investigation into these allegations and try to respond to the following questions amongst others:

1. Why are these qualifications not registered on the NQF, or recorded as accredited learning programmes linked to a registered “parent qualification”?
2. Who issues the certificates awarded, is it the business school or the university under which it exists and operates?
3. If it is the business schools who issue the certificates, under what authority is this done?
4. Are the business schools separate and autonomous entities from their affiliated universities?
5. Are business schools registered (and accredited by the CHE) to offer qualifications on the HEQSF?


A preliminary business school survey was conducted by the CHE towards the end of 2021, to which the responses from the business schools were not satisfactory. The CHE concluded that a detailed research project needed to be conducted, which should consider the questions that SAQA had asked above, as well as the questions from the preliminary survey that was conducted by the CHE. The peer academics who were appointed to lead the research project were seeking the input of all the business schools to a series of questions that modify or make additions to the questions raised by SAQA and the CHE. The survey instrument included more areas than the initial brief to the panel, which focused on the offering of qualifications on the HEQSF by South African business schools.

The project included business schools hosted by all South African public and private higher education institutions. The focus of the project is all the NQF Level 5-10 qualifications offered

by these business schools, the accreditation status of all the qualifications offered, the inclusion of these qualifications on the respective PQMs of the public higher education institutions, the inclusion of the programmes in the resource allocations of the schools and the inclusion of the qualifications on the DHET register for the private higher education institutions. By implication, the project includes the quality management and governance structures and processes of the business schools.

Members of the panel signed a confidentiality agreement, which stipulated that information emerging from the project may be disseminated only by the Chair via the CHE or by the CHE itself.

A survey instrument was developed and distributed to the business schools for completion and submission to the panel by 31 August 2022. All the business schools (14 public and 8 private schools) submitted the requested information. The survey instrument included 13 sections with sub-sections. On commencement of analysis of the submissions, it became clear to the panel that the format of submission of data was different amongst the business schools and would pose analytical and interpretation challenges. The main limitations were regarding reported data for enrolments, registrations, throughput rates, success rates, graduation numbers, and registered international students. The panel is satisfied that it has adequately dealt with these challenges within the narrative sections of the report and a general summary of sectoral trends, instead of attempting exhaustively to analyse the data tables of each individual school. Based on the analysis of the submissions, the panel has made recommendations to be used by the CHE, SAQA and the DHET, as well as identified areas for further research. The main findings conclude that all public and private business schools adhere to the CHE accreditation, SAQA and DHET registration, and PQM approval protocols. Nonetheless, notable disparities exist regarding information provided by the business schools and what appears on their websites on the one hand, and the information found on the SAQA database, DHET registration certificates or PQM and CHE accreditation information, on the other hand. It is therefore recommended that all the discrepancies related to qualification data and information be aligned and rectified so that the qualification data and information of the CHE, SAQA and the DHET are correctly aligned with the information recorded and disseminated by the business schools, and vice versa.



The survey was approached and conducted in a cooperative and supportive spirit with cooperation from all the South African business schools. It was clear that several challenges, issues, and matters of concern identified by the report are not unique to the business schools only but apply across the South African higher education environment.

2. Foreword

The Council on Higher Education (CHE), a statutory body established in terms of the Higher Education Act of 1997, is responsible for the accreditation of providers to offer NQF-registered qualifications in the higher education band and for the accreditation of higher education programmes. Through its permanent sub-committee, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), the CHE has overall responsibility for quality assurance and promotion in higher education.

The CHE, through the Management of the Higher Education Qualification Sub-Framework (MHEQSF) Directorate, compiled a report on the offering of qualifications on the HEQSF by South African Business Schools. This report follows a research project on the qualifications offered by business schools based at public universities and private higher education institutions in the country in terms of aspects such as the qualifications offered; quality management structures and processes; admission, RPL, registration and certification processes; the management of WIL; and international connectedness. The research and the compilation of the integrated report was done by a panel of experts.

The purpose of this report is to give a broad overview of the South African Business Schools, based on the research project, and to respond to questions raised by SAQA. The report offers a number of recommendations, which aims to support the various business schools in strengthening their offerings so that they can be able to serve this specific sector.

Dr Whitfield Green
Chief Executive Officer
March 2023

3. Background

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) is an independent statutory body established by the Higher Education Act No. 101 of 1997, as amended. The core functions of the CHE, as provided by the Higher Education Act, include promoting quality and quality assurance in higher education through its permanent sub-committee, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), monitoring the state of higher education, publishing information of developments pertaining to higher education, and advising the Minister responsible for higher education and training on any issues pertaining to the provision of higher education.

A concern has been raised with the CHE that the business schools of some higher education institutions may be offering Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) qualifications that have not been submitted for accreditation and do not undergo PQM clearance with the DHET because they are not funded by the DHET, relying instead on a full cost-recovery model based on student fees. These qualifications may therefore also not be registered by SAQA on the NQF and, therefore, the records of graduates are not recorded on the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD). If this is the case, the institutions are operating outside of legislative requirements and the situation must be corrected.

SAQA received queries on the status of business schools and the right of business schools to offer qualifications that they claim are deemed to be accredited. SAQA requested the CHE to carry out an investigation into these allegations and try to respond to the following questions amongst others.

1. Why are these qualifications not registered on the NQF, or recorded as accredited learning programmes linked to a registered "parent qualification"?
2. Who issues the certificates awarded, is it the business school or the university under which it exists and operates?
3. If it is the business schools who issue the certificates, under what authority is this done?
4. Are the business schools separate and autonomous entities from their affiliated universities?

5. Are business schools registered (and accredited by the CHE) to offer qualifications on the HEQSF?

A preliminary business school survey was conducted by the CHE towards the end of 2021, to which the responses from the business schools were not satisfactory. The CHE concluded that a detailed research project needed to be conducted, which should consider the questions that SAQA had asked above, as well as the questions from the preliminary survey that was conducted by the CHE. The peer academics who were appointed to lead the research project were seeking the input of all the business schools to a series of questions that modify or make additions to the questions raised by SAQA and the CHE.

The panel for the Business School project comprises:

- Prof. Helena van Zyl (Chair)
- Prof. Marvin Kambuwa (Deputy Chair)
- Prof Nicky Morgan
- Prof Francis Faller
- Prof Jan Meyer
- Ms Jean Skene
- Ms Anne Wilson (SABSA)
- Mrs Carina Oelofsen (CHE)
- Ms Phumzile Ndlovu (CHE)

Members of the panel signed a confidentiality agreement, which stipulated that information emerging from the project may be disseminated only by the Chair via the CHE or by the CHE itself.

4. Scope of the project

The Business School Project includes all the business schools hosted by all South African public and private higher education institutions. The focus of the project is all the NQF Level 5-10 qualifications offered by these business schools, the accreditation status of all the qualifications offered, the inclusion of these qualifications on the respective PQMs of the

public higher education institutions, the inclusion of the programmes in the resource allocations of the schools and the inclusion of the qualifications on the DHET register for the private higher education institutions. By implication, the project includes the quality management and governance structures and processes of the business schools.

5. Survey instrument

The project panel developed a structured questionnaire used to collect the information and data for the project. The chair assigned three-four business schools to each panel member to analyse the submissions. The questionnaire comprises the following categories:

1. Explain the process followed in the preparation of the report, including all parties/stakeholders that were involved in the preparation of the report.
2. All HEQSF NQF Level 5-10 qualifications offered with evidence of CHE accreditation status, PQM inclusion (public HEIs), SAQA registration and DHET registration (private HEIs)
 - (i) Provide a list of all HEQSF NQF Level 5-10 qualifications offered, evidence of accreditation status, PQM inclusion, SAQA and DHET registration.
 - (ii) Indicate the modes of delivery of the programmes referred to in 2(i) and the registered sites of delivery.
3. Governance structure of the business school including all reporting structures
 - (i) How are the vision and mission of the business school aligned with the institutional vision and mission?
 - (ii) Explain the governance structures of the school and provide an organogram.
 - (iii) Give an outline of the strategic goals of the business school.
 - (iv) How do the vision and mission align with or address the enablement of economic and associated transformation in both private/public sector leadership education?
4. Quality management structures and processes
 - (i) Explain the process, design, and approval of programmes, with evidence of approval at institutional committees.

- (ii) Give an outline of the accreditation and registration process of all programmes, institutional and external (CHE, DHET, SAQA).
 - (iii) Give an outline of all international accreditations per programme.
 - (iv) Explain the review and review cycle of all programmes. Do development and approval of qualifications (new or reviewed) in your business schools follow the same rules and procedures as are applied in other parts of the institution?
 - (v) If the results of review have led to amendments of a programme, how far has the current programme deviated from the programme that was accredited/registered?
 - (vi) How do you ensure that in-house amendments are officially documented?
 - (vii) If there are qualifications offered that are not SAQA/DHET/CHE compliant, what measures are in place to legitimise the qualifications – or to phase them out?
 - (viii) How well are academic staff members and students informed of the full compliance (or lack thereof) of qualifications they teach on/register for?
 - (ix) How are students and alumni involved in the quality management and programme design processes?
5. The admission, RPL process and registration process supported by all relevant policies
- (i) What are the relations between HEI, faculty and business school rules and procedures for admission, progression, teaching/supervision, assessment, and certification? If any differences exist, where (by what body/ies) were they approved?
 - (ii) Explain the RPL process. What limits, if any, exist for the granting of advanced credit?
 - (iii) Are there any examples of RPL submissions that qualify for the award of an entire qualification? If yes, provide the relevant examples.
 - (iv) Are there cases where a suite of short courses can be combined to comprise a qualification? If yes, give a detailed outline.

- (v) Explain the registration process per qualification.
 - (vi) Provide the registration numbers per qualification for the past five years, as well as the current enrolled students per qualifications.
 - (vii) Provide the throughput and success rates per qualification and per module for the past five years.
 - (viii) Provide the graduation numbers per qualification per entrance cohort for the past five years.
6. International connectedness
- (i) Give an outline of the international connectedness of the school, e.g., international agreements and the purposes thereof, joint qualifications, joint research projects, etc.
 - (ii) Provide the numbers of the international students enrolled for each qualification for the past five years using the following categories: SADC, African, and the rest.
7. MBA programmes
- (i) In the case of the MBA, what cognizance is taken of the Qualification Standard approved in 2015 by the CHE?
8. The process of marketing each programme, including the website, social media, etc.
- (i) Explain the marketing strategy for programmes.
 - (ii) Give an outline of the process for the development of the website(s), as well as the updating of the website and social media.
9. The vertical and horizontal articulation paths per qualification including the names of the qualifications as well as the names of the higher education institutions offering these qualifications
- (i) What articulation routes are in place for progression from one NQF level to the next (within the institution or beyond).
10. The management of WIL
- (i) Does WIL apply to any of the NQF Level 5-10 qualifications?
 - (ii) If yes, how is WIL managed, monitored, and assessed?
11. The certification process
- (i) Explain the certification process.

- (ii) What security features apply to the certification process?
 - (iii) Who has the authority to issue certificates?
12. The financial model including the management of subsidies in the case of public higher education institutions
- (i) Explain the financial model used by the school.
 - (ii) If university qualifications are not DHET-funded, and are based on a full-cost recovery model, how does that align with university cost-contribution models?
 - (iii) Give an outline of the fees applicable to each qualification.
 - (iv) Does the school offer any financial assistance to students? If yes, please elaborate.
13. EDP programmes
- (i) Give a list of all EDP programmes offered and the quality management structures pertaining to the development and approval of EDP programmes.

6. Meetings

The panel met the first time on 26 May 2022 whereafter the panel initially met once a week. The project was introduced to the business schools during a workshop jointly hosted by the CHE and SABSA on 9 June 2022. During the preparation of the business school submissions and subsequent analysis, the panel met every fortnight. The panel requested additional information from most schools at two occasions after the first scheduled submission date. The most important reason for requesting the additional information was to get information that was previously incomplete or because of a need for further clarification.

The business schools submitted their submissions by 31 August 2022; two schools made late submissions. The last panel meeting took place on 1 November 2022. The chair of the panel updated the business schools on the progress with the report during a SABSA meeting on 8 September 2022. A draft report on the Business School project was submitted to the CHE on 1 November 2022, subject to further non-analytical recommendations made by panel members.

7. Analysis of Business School Submissions

All the questions included in the structured questionnaire that served as research instrument were analysed. The order of the analysis below follows the same order used for the structured questionnaire.

8. Limitations

On commencement of analysis of the submissions, it became clear to the panel that the format of submission of data was different amongst the business schools and would pose analytical and interpretation challenges. The main limitations were regarding reported data for enrolments, registrations, throughput rates, success rates, graduation numbers, and registered international students. The panel is satisfied that it has adequately dealt with these challenges within the narrative sections of the report and a general summary of sectoral trends, instead of attempting exhaustively to analyse the data tables of each individual school. Based on the analysis of the submissions, the panel has made recommendations to be used by the CHE, SAQA and the DHET, as well as identified areas for further research.

It was to a certain extent easier to secure data from the private business schools than from the public business schools. This difference could be ascribed, in the case of public business schools, to the nature of governance structures and to the extent business schools form part of bigger institutions. Private business schools are more agile because of the flatter nature of the institutions, with policies that provide for greater delegated decision-making authority.

9. Section 1: Process followed in compiling the report

All the members of SABSA (South African Business Schools Association) submitted reports for the CHE Business School Project, of which 14 were from public higher education institutions and eight were from private higher education institutions. Two public higher education institutions are Universities of Technology.

It is evident from the submissions that the bigger business schools that are involved in international accreditation processes have accreditation offices which were instrumental in writing and compiling the reports for this project. The compilation of the reports for the business schools forming part of the public higher education sector was mostly done by the Deans/Directors/Executive Deans and/or the Deputy Deans, Heads of Departments, and Programme Coordinators, with the assistance of the institutional quality assurance units. The Heads/Administrators of Executive Education were also involved in some instances, whilst only a few schools involved their academic staff in compiling the submissions. The bigger schools' Deans/Directors/ Executive Deans were not necessarily directly involved in writing the reports, although they were in the case of the smaller schools. Only one school involved the Registrar and one school the Deputy Registrar in the compilation of the reports. However, the panel is satisfied that the submissions were signed off by individuals holding senior leadership positions at these institutions.

In the case of the private higher education institutions, quality assurance units were mostly involved in the compilation of the reports supported by line functions such as Finance and Human Resources. One private HEI indicated that it does not have a business school, but only offers an MBA which falls under the ambit of the Faculty of Business Economics and Management Sciences. The reason for the inclusion of this institution is that it is a member of SABSA.

10. Section 2: HEQSF NQF Level 5-10 qualifications

It was evident from the information submitted by the business schools that the public business schools mostly offer NQF Level 8-10 qualifications. One public business school offers a first degree, two public business schools offer one Advanced Diploma each and two public business schools offer Higher Certificates, of which one offers one Higher Certificate, and the other two Higher Certificates. There are more private than public business schools offering a comprehensive range of NQF Level 5 to NQF Level 10 programmes. No public business schools offer any honours degrees, whilst three private business schools offer honours degrees, one offering two honours degrees, the second offering one honours degree, and the third offering six honours degrees. One private business school offers a Postgraduate Certificate in

Education (PGCE). Five private business schools offer first degrees, the number of first degrees offered being one, four, six and eight respectively. Two private business schools offer Advanced Diplomas, the number of qualifications being two and four respectively. Three private business schools offer Advanced Certificates: one, three and six Advanced Certificates respectively. Of the five private business schools offering Higher Certificates, the number of qualifications from one to 10, comprising 23 in all. Two private business schools offer qualifications in the Education field.

Except for one, public business schools offer a PhD, a DBA, or a DBL. None of the private business schools offers PhDs; three offer a DBA, whilst one two other doctoral programmes. All the programmes offered at doctoral level carry 360 credits, apart from one public business school offering a PhD with a credit value of 384.

All the public business schools offer an MBA, whilst one offers both an MBA and an MBL. In the case of the private business schools, all except one that offers an MBL, offer MBA programmes. The credit values of the MBA and MBL programmes offered by the public business schools vary significantly from 180 to 220 credits, whilst the MBA and MBL programmes offered by private business schools carry 180 credits, except for one school in which the credit value is 200. One public business school uses the acronym of MBA, although the title of the qualification is Master of Business Management and Administration.

All but four public business schools offer a Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration, with one school offering a Postgraduate Diploma in Management. One further public business school offers a Postgraduate Diploma in Management only, while another offers a Postgraduate Diploma in Management Practice. Nine public business schools offer other Postgraduate Diplomas. Three private business schools offer Postgraduate Diplomas in Business Administration, two offer Postgraduate Diplomas in Management and seven offer other Postgraduate Diplomas. Two of the latter grouping offer, respectively, six and five other Postgraduate Diplomas. Apart from one public business school, the Postgraduate Diplomas in Business Administration carry 120 credits, whilst the exception carries 128 credits. The same credit value of 120 applies to the private business schools, except for one that has 130 credits.

The mode of delivery for the public business schools is mostly contact; one school confirmed a hybrid mode of delivery, and one uses a blended mode of delivery. A more mixed approach regarding the mode of delivery is followed by the private business schools, with two delivering only distance programmes.

According to the evidence and information submitted for this project, all the public and private business schools adhere to CHE accreditation, SAQA and DHET registration requirements. Nonetheless, notable disparities exist regarding information provided by the business schools and what appears on their websites on the one hand, and the information found on the SAQA database, DHET registration certificates and CHE accreditation confirmations, on the other hand. The PQMs of two public higher education institutions pose challenges; in one instance two different PhD qualifications share the same SAQA ID. The same applies to MPhil degrees and Postgraduate Diplomas offered at another public institution.

It was also evident that the learning progression paths differ between public and private sectors. Public business schools are mostly from NQF Level 8 and upwards, whilst the private business schools often offer learning paths from NQF Level 5 and upwards.

Recommendation

The panel recommends that all the discrepancies related to qualification data and information be aligned and rectified so that the qualification data and information of the CHE, SAQA and the DHET are correctly aligned with the information of the business schools, and vice versa.

11. Section 3: Governance structures

As would be expected, the distinctive nature of public and private higher education institutions had a bearing on their vision and mission statements. Business schools within public HEIs (universities) tended to have mission and vision statements that are closely linked to those of their parent universities. For example, one public business school provided its mission but not its vision, instead providing the vision of the university. The business school

provided a “purpose” and asserted that its vision and mission are aligned with the university’s mission and vision in that the business school’s core function is focused on business administration and leadership, which, while distinctive of the school, is aligned with the key elements of the university mission. Another business school had its vision and mission drawn from those of the Faculty, and the university’s vision and mission. Another business school claimed that its vision and mission are “aspirational”, and they flow from the university’s vision and mission. In contrast, public business schools are, in most cases, so closely aligned with the institution that the vision and mission statements of institution and school substantially coincide.

The governance structures of public business schools showed mainly similar characteristics in that they were closely aligned with those of their parent universities, whose own structures are prescribed by their statutes. For example, one public business school stated that it functions as an academic school within the Faculty of Commerce which in turn is accountable to the University Senate. The business school has a Board of Management (chaired by the Dean of the Commerce Faculty), which reports to Senate via the Commerce Faculty Board. Another public school reported that it is a semi-autonomous school within the Faculty of Commerce. The Faculty of Commerce approves the business school’s academic programmes and formally endorses the award of degrees. The business school staff sit on the Faculty of Commerce Faculty Board, and the Deputy Director of the school sits on the Dean’s Advisory Committee for the Faculty of Commerce. As another public business school put it, the business school is subject to general university governance and leadership and strategic planning hierarchies. The business school has autonomy in running day-to-day business, implementing Senate-approved programmes, and allocating discretionary funds. Other examples include the following, where the governance of the school is further described: (i) the business school forms part of the university, which is the parent institution. The University Council fulfils fiduciary responsibilities regarding governance as provided by the Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997); (ii) the business school is in the Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences. The Director of the business school is a member of the Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences’ team; and (iii) the business school forms part of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences.

It is clear, therefore, that the business schools in the universities are firmly entrenched in the university governance structures and follow university rules and procedures regarding governance. This also becomes clear under Section 11 (Certification Process) where the universities are said to be responsible for the award of qualifications achieved at the business schools.

Business schools in the private higher education sector also show varying degrees of vision and mission alignment with their parent institutions. This is heightened by the fact that there are business schools which are entities within the parent institutions, while other business schools are synonymous with the institution itself. For example, one private business school responded that the business school does not see itself as a Faculty or Department within an institution; the business school “sees itself as a whole”. It is, therefore, not relevant to talk about alignment of business school vision and mission with the alignment of a parent institution’s vision and mission. Another responded that it does not have a business school. The MBA falls under the ambit of a Dean of Faculty. Such permutations have implications for business school governance in the private sector, as discussed below.

Like the public business schools, private business schools have varying governance arrangements. While some have adopted names of structures usually associated with universities in the South African context, (e.g., Council, Senate, Faculty etc.), the import of these in the private sector HEIs is not easy to discern. Others have structures named differently, which are proxies for those in the public institutions. One private business school explains that it has a Board and Convocation, which are custodians of the enterprise. The Board has sub-committees responsible for Finance, Audit, IT, Infrastructure and Risk. General oversight is by a Council, with EXCO and Senate. Responsible to Senate are committees in charge of Learning and Teaching, Assessment, Research and Ethics, and the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). An Institutional Forum promotes institutional culture, and the SRC participates in decision-making.

Yet another responded that the business school is a semi-autonomous entity registered in South Africa, with programmes accredited by the CHE and registered on the SAQA qualifications framework. It has its own mission statement. Its associated overseas business

school also has a vision. The vision and mission of the two are aligned with those of an overseas institution, which is the overall 'parent'. The school is registered in South Africa as an "external branch" of a business school by the same name (incorporated overseas) which is wholly owned by a foreign institution. The local business school's Academic Board focuses on the maintenance of academic standards and has its governing body, a local Company Board, which is the highest academic authority of the school. The Dean and Director is the Chief Executive Officer of the local business school, reporting directly to the Global Dean of the business school overseas.

Another private HEI reported that the institution does not have a business school. The Chief Executive Officer of the parent company, therefore, has ultimate managerial responsibility for the institution. The Director of the business school is responsible for all academic and regulatory affairs. Another different governance arrangement is that of an institution which states that the business school is one of several other schools in the institution. The institution operates by means of a committee system under which core academic issues are referred to one of several standing committees, including Senate and academic, research, ethics, programme design and review, learning and teaching, quality assurance, RPL, graduation, finance and related committees.

It is clear from the foregoing that private business schools (and institutions that are synonymous with their business schools) are making conscious attempts to emulate structures which exist in the universities. The challenge is to strike a balance between the academic requirements of a higher education institution with the unique imperatives of a business operation. This becomes more evident where a local business school falls under the business operations of an overseas institution. Designations such as Chief Executive Officer, a position normally associated with the private business sector, within an academic context highlights the challenges that private business schools must navigate.

In so far as the setting of goals is concerned, both public and private business schools appear to take seriously the importance of goals that address acknowledged mandates of academia, namely, learning and teaching, research and innovation, and community outreach (or engagement), but business schools appear to pursue goals beyond the three traditional ones.

For example, one university-based business school indicated the following goals, in order of priority: Size, Shape, Access, Distinctive Brand and Philosophy; Learning and Teaching; Research and Innovation; Engagements; Institutional Culture; Financial Growth and Development; Human Capital.

Another public business school stated its goals as follows, much of which can be classified under sustainability, business expansion, contribution to the bottom line, viability, competitive edge, amongst others:

- Establishing a strong corporate identity and improving the competitive position of the school.
- Updating our programme structure to become more competitive with clear value propositions to students and customers.
- Developing a strong HR competence base, value system and performance culture.
- Substantially improving the financial sustainability and governance of the business school over the next five years.
- Enhancing our Africanisation and improving our stakeholder focus.

Private business schools, while demonstrating a recognition for the importance of fulfilling the three mandates of academia, pay equal attention to their financial or business sustainability. The following are goals set by one private business school. The strategic goals of the “Africa branch” of the school include being a significant part of the institution’s global and African business; supplying skills to empower national growth and economic strength; having autonomy as a business school in critical programme and research areas, including thought leadership; offering dual South African- and overseas-accredited programmes; recognition of influence in environmental, social and ethical movements and issues; increasing business size and scalability through partnerships, acquisitions, equity and growth.

One of the private business schools commences its list of goals with what is a growing preoccupation for both public and private business schools, namely, digitalization, international accreditation, and achievement of high rankings. Another private HEI, that is not a business school but offers an MBA, aims to become the first private South African university

when it is permitted by government, while a third business school includes as focus areas twenty-first century skills and contribution to the National Development Plan.

12. Section 4: Quality assurance structures and processes

The quality management approach may be defined in broadly two distinct groupings. One applies to the public business schools and the other to the private business schools. With regards to the fourteen public schools all have described basically similar processes albeit that committee names and faculty structures might be different (Faculty vs Colleges). In all cases and irrespective of autonomy granted by the institution, the business schools do follow the institutional approval processes through Faculty/College to Senate. This process will be initiated at school level through mainly the Programme Managers (or similar person), the School Teaching & Learning Committee, School Exco, Faculty Exco (or similar). In all cases the responsibility for the schools will be to obtain authorisation from the quality management unit of the institution (also bearing various titles). After Senate approval, the PQM clearance forms are updated and submitted to the DHET. The external processes are also essentially the same with the PQM being updated by the DHET once it has received notice of accreditation from the CHE. For external approval (new programmes/qualifications) or major changes the processes are administered via the Registrar, to HEQC/SAQA/CHE. No programme is offered until registration. The public institutions all follow a 3- to 5-year cycle for review and all of them reported changes of less than 50% changes to their original registered qualifications. For example, one institution declared a 30% change to its MBA.

With regards to the eight private schools, the process is slightly less complex in terms of the internal approval cycle. As for the internal processes, the private schools all have a quality department to verify requirements for new programmes/qualifications, or amendments to existing programmes/qualifications. In most cases the institution's Board will approve amendments suggested by an Academic Director (based on changes suggested by the Programme Manager), except in one instance where the institution also refers to a Senate for approval. This same institution did not allude to any review cycle or provide clarity on programme changes. In most instances the private institutions also have a 3-to-5-year review

cycle with one exception stating a 6-year cycle. The private institutions also declared minimal changes to their programme offerings with no instances exceeding 50%.

All schools declared compliance with the communication of programme statuses either in yearbooks or via brochures. On the aspect of having non-compliant programmes, the schools (bar one) stated that all programmes did comply. One private institution stated that it is phasing out its three non-HEQSF compliant programmes. With regards to programme reviews, one public and one private business school declared no review thus far as their first cohorts were in 2021. Both these schools also declared no alumni participation for the same reason. Regarding the participation of the alumni in curriculum development, all schools declared that they apply surveys as a tool. Two public and one private institution also apply external facilitators to obtain input and/or participation from their alumni.

External accreditation varies amongst the schools. The following are the external accreditation agencies involved:

1. EFMD Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) – 3 public, 1 private
2. Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) – 3 public, 1 private
3. Association of African Business School (AABS) – 1 private
4. Association of MBA's (AMBA) – 7 public, 2 private
5. Business Graduates Association (BGA) – 1 public

Two lesser-known accreditation agencies were listed by one private and one public business school: BAC (British Accreditation Council, being linked to UK-based educational qualification authorities) and CEEMAN (Central Eastern European Management Association).

In summary, the business schools comply with all required policies and procedures as per institutional and statutory requirements. However, although all business schools have robust quality assurance procedures and processes, the monitoring and evaluation of quality assurance are not always on par and do not always translate into efficient quality management.

13. Section 5: Admission, RPL and registration

In the case of all public universities, business schools are situated within a faculty. Their policies are aligned with faculty and university policies, rules, and regulations. In four cases there was mention of possible minor deviations, such as the maximum time allowed for completion of a qualification, term timelines, or the use in the selection process of psychometric testing and interviews. In all four cases, any deviation needs to be approved at Faculty level at least, and in some cases at Senate Executive, Senate, or central Higher Degrees Committee level. No instance was cited of a business school having complete autonomy in relation to these rules and procedures.

As mentioned previously, private business schools are either institutions in their own right or they are located within a faculty or other larger unit. There were no cases where the rules and policies differ from the institution itself. One business school stated that it is registered as an external branch of a holding limited company registered outside of South Africa. While administrative matters are handled by a company board, the holding company is represented on its Academic Board and, for its MBA, admissions, progression, teaching, supervision, assessment and certification are managed jointly by the external holding company and the local branch in South Africa. This raises the question whether the external branch is subject exclusively to South African contractual law affecting institution-student relations and South African policies for quality assurance.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is applied almost universally across the sector – although in at least one case no access via RPL has, up to now, been allowed, and in another case no data were provided. RPL and CAT policies and procedures are generally in place, almost always approved at institutional level. In the case of RPL most business schools adhere to the 10 per cent per cohort limitation, except that three did not specifically confirm it and one stated that there are ‘no specific limits’ as each case is considered individually. There appears to be some uncertainty about the definition of ‘cohort’. Some confirmed the limitation ‘per cohort’ without specifying whether ‘cohort’ referred to an annual intake or a combined ‘cohort in a programme’ as stated in the CHE *‘Policies on the Recognition of Prior Learning, Credit Accumulation and Transfer, and Assessment in higher education’* (CHE, 2016). If the

former connotation is applied, then it could be that, with multi-year programmes, the combined RPL intake could exceed the limit. One business school remarked that it was difficult to comply with the limit in the face of pressures from corporate clients. Another business school stated that it accepts no CAT from other institutions on the grounds that international credit agencies are not in favour of it as it compromises 'cohort integrity'. The school is willing to review this rule if the demand proves significant.

For RPL applications most institutions require a portfolio of evidence, and the level of approval varied widely from a Programme Manager to a RPL Committee to the institutional Senate, although recommendations by subject matter experts and/or panel interviews are common practices. A period of relevant work experience is often a requirement; a candidate needed, in the most extreme case, as much as ten years' experience.

While RPL is widely applied, there are variations in the conditions for or scope of the application.

Some examples follow:

- For some programmes, RPL is for admission only.
- RPL is considered only when all 'normal' applications have been processed.
- RPL admission is provisional, subject to the student passing all first semester courses.
- RPL is promoted as part of the institution's transformation agenda; in another instance, it is only for exceptional cases.
- RPL applies only to entry into full research programmes.
- No credit is awarded for modules covered through RPL.
- Some public business schools outsource the assessment of previous learning (PL) to an external (foreign) agency, at a cost to applicants. What is unclear is whether selection and admission (the Recognition of PL) of students remains the sole responsibility of the business school, or is likewise outsourced.

Recommendations

In cases where it is relevant and as long as CHE policy requires it, business schools should ensure that the 10 per cent limitation on admissions via RPL applies to a programme, rather than annual intake in the programme.

Where RPL assessment is outsourced, business schools need to ensure, and be able to provide evidence, that selection and admission of successful students remains the sole responsibility of the school and complies with institutional RPL policy, and that selection and admission are not likewise outsourced.

Information on advanced credit (or CAT) was not always provided. Where it was, the 50 per cent limitation per qualification was confirmed. Some institutions have more stringent limits: maximum percentages of 30 and 25 per cent were cited in particular cases.

Some examples of institutional specifics include:

- The transferability of Postgraduate Diploma modules (NQF Level 8, 15 credits) to the MBA (NQF Levels 9, 8 credits) – while the academic rationale is questionable, the HEQSF allows for a maximum of 60 credits at a NQF level lower than 9.
- The transferability (in the same institution) of two EDPs and their credits (15 and 30 respectively) to the Postgraduate Diploma.
- Selected courses offered for non-degree purposes may be accepted for CAT in a PG Diploma programme.
- CAT is subject to an 80 per cent curriculum compatibility, and only applies to modules of 12 credits or more.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the practice of allowing credit transfer from one qualification to a qualification at a higher NQF level should be reviewed.

There were no examples of institutions awarding an entire qualification based on RPL. One private business school's policy had allowed for it, but the policy has recently been amended to exclude that provision; the revised policy was due for Senate approval in September 2022.

No cases were evident of a suite of short courses being combined to comprise an entire qualification. In one public institution Higher Certificate modules are also registered as short learning programmes. A candidate can apply for up to 50 per cent credit transfer but must be registered for a minimum of six months. One private business school stated that short courses registered on the OQSF may be relevant, but it does not apply to qualifications on the HEQSF. A public institution stated that passing relevant short courses was not a guarantee of admission to a formal qualification.

Most business schools summarised a registration process that applied largely to undergraduate programmes, with an almost universal process of online applications. School processes are subject to university (or institutional) and faculty (where applicable) regulations, criteria, and procedures. In most cases applications are administered centrally, with academic criteria being assessed by subject or programme experts. Decisions are made at varying levels, from a Programme Manager, through Head of Department, Dean to a Selection Committee.

Much less information was provided on the registration process for postgraduate programmes. In the few cases where it was provided, the following institutional practices came to light:

- In the case of the Master's programme, registration must be completed prior to the commencement of coursework. Doctoral candidates attend research workshops and must submit a research proposal within 12 months and achieve a minimum mark of 60 per cent.
- Master's candidates must complete a research module before submitting a research proposal within 12 months.
- Postgraduate students are sometimes interviewed.

- Master's students prepare a research assignment that forms the assessment of a Research Methods module; Doctoral candidates submit a pre-proposal; the school checks on the availability and suitability of infrastructural and supervisory resources; once approved, it is followed by a formal proposal under a provisional supervisor; once accepted, the candidate is formally registered.
- As part of registration the student must complete a Memorandum of Understanding with the supervisor.

In the case of research qualifications, what remains unclear is the contractual relationship between candidate and institution during the period of proposal writing prior to formal registration, in terms of institutional liability, supervisor responsibility, access to campus and facilities such as library resources, computer laboratories, fees, and so on. It is possible that, in some cases, candidates are situated in a lacuna in which good will substitutes for a formal contract.

Annexure A provides a composite overview of registration numbers in 2018 and 2022, a breakdown of those numbers into public and private HEI numbers, and an indication of the numerical change from 2018 to 2022. The data are according to what was submitted by institutions, and must be interpreted with the following caveats: i) the data were submitted by different institutions in different formats, some clearly derived directly from institutional information management systems, some from annual reports, others from uncertain origin; ii) some institutions submitted data for all qualifications including some that are not associated with the concept 'business school' and, in such cases, only qualifications related to business, commerce and management were included; iii) raw data were unaccompanied by any explanation of apparent anomalies, such as big differences in enrolment in a particular qualification between one year and the previous and/or following years; and iv) some 2022 data were indicated as 'provisional' or 'as at June'.

The data indicate significant increases in enrolments in Advanced Certificate, Advanced Diploma, Bachelor's degree and Bachelor Honours degree qualifications. They are qualifications offered mainly by private business schools. There were somewhat lesser increases in Higher Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and Doctoral programmes. Diploma

programmes showed a drop in enrolments, and Master's programmes a marginal decrease (although relatively high in some institutions). Taking caveat iv) above into account, there were some cases showing a decrease in overall enrolments from 2021 to 2022. One public institution stated that its postgraduate decrease was deliberate due to a shortage of appropriate supervisors. In almost all other cases, year-on-year variations in registration patterns were not discussed.

Some particular observations follow.

- There is evidence of an increasing use of the Higher Certificate for admission into a Bachelor degree, and an increasing preference for the Postgraduate Diploma for admission to a Master's programme. (Three private business schools offer a Bachelor Honours degree in the field, of which one has over 80 per cent of the registrations.)
- None of the data for Master's qualifications distinguishes between registration for dissertation only, and coursework accompanied by research, so it has not been possible to provide information on the relative use of General and Professional variants.
- While registrations for the Master's degree at NQF Level 8 has decreased significantly and is, for the most part, close to being phased out, in the case of one private school there was an apparent increase in registrations from 2021 to 2022, following a decrease in the previous three years. This discrepancy is unexplained.
- One public business school distinguished between registration for a 'new' and an 'old' Doctorate. In the latter case, the number decreased, by 2022, to zero. However, other schools did not specify any such distinction, so it was unclear whether the 'old' qualification has been entirely phased out elsewhere.
- One public business school had, from 2022, registrations for its Doctoral qualification in both thesis-only and coursework programmes. (For the latter there are eight students registered.) This appears to be the first time that the HEQSF-aligned Professional Doctor's variant has been introduced in the field of business, commerce, and management.

Recommendations

In cases where there are significant changes in enrolment numbers for a qualification from one year to the next, the school should ensure that its enrolment planning and targets are able to ensure on-going resource adequacy and quality assurance.

With regards to Master's and Doctoral research-based programmes, business schools should ensure that there is clarity on the candidate's contractual status vis-à-vis the school/institution prior to proposal approval and formal registration. In addition, supervisor-student Memoranda of Understanding should be standard practice, and the compliance thereto adequately monitored by the school.

As indicated earlier, data submissions differed in many respects which necessitated a careful and prudent approach. It was difficult to provide a quantitative collective analysis of the data submitted on throughput and success rates. The business schools provided varying versions of the data, from annual rates to cumulative rates, rates per programme but not module rates or vice versa, different variants of qualifications not being distinguished, unclear or uninterpretable data and, in a few cases, no data at all. Many schools submitted extensive module pass rates data, but very few included discussions of any anomalies that were apparent. There was also the problem that throughput in a multi-year undergraduate programme has a different meaning from throughput in a Doctoral programme (where it may mean simply re-registration). Per-module data for a Doctoral qualification that appeared to be awarded by thesis alone was also confusing. From this variation, the following observations may be made.

Distinction was not always made between full-time and part-time students. More than one private business school emphasised the fact of all its students studying part-time as being a factor in its throughput rates. Another stated that throughput depends on intake numbers, without providing a rationale for the link. While, in some cases, module pass rates were relatively high, they were not converting into comparable throughput rates. In many schools pass rates are consistently high, often in the 80 – 100 per cent range, some even in the 90 – 100 per cent range, although there are some cases where particular modules stand out as having exceptionally low rates. An example was a number of modules (identified only by

module codes) being as low as 10 – 29 per cent. At one school semester two rates were lower than semester one rates. Another business school identified quantitative management modules as having lower rates than others. In another case, at the Master's level, modules on research methods had lower rates than other modules.

A composite indication of graduation numbers for the years 2018 and 2021, as provided by institutions, is contained in Annexure B. As with registration numbers given in Annexure A, there were some gaps, some anomalies and some discrepancies in the data submitted. One public business school provided a detailed analysis of graduation in terms of time taken for completion per cohort, from six months to five years and beyond. To give an illustration of the value of such detailed analysis, the institution's MBA 2018 cohort is included in Annexure B as an example. Another public school included the average time taken per qualification type (Doctorate: 5 years; non-research Master's: 1.45 years; Postgraduate Diploma: 1.12 years). But such composite analytical information was scarce.

In most cases, the data were based on year-on-year graduation numbers, without cohort subdivision. For that reason, it was not feasible to provide an accurate picture of cohort registration-graduation ratios. Instead, Annexure B shows trends in overall annual graduation numbers.

Between 2018 and 2021 there has been a large increase in the number of students completing the Advanced Certificate and Advanced Diploma qualifications (mainly because they were introduced relatively recently). Diploma graduates have decreased, while Postgraduate graduation numbers have remained more or less constant. As would be expected, Master's NQF Level 8 graduates have lowered significantly, while Bachelor's degree and Doctoral graduate numbers have shown marginal decrease. The Master's NQF level 9 graduation rate has shown a more significant decrease. While the ratio of graduates at the Doctoral level between public and private institutions has remained more or less constant, the ratio at Master's level is to the advantage of the public sector.

The low rate of graduation at Doctoral level, compared with registration numbers, suggests that business school ought carefully to assess the readiness of Master's graduates to cope

with research demands at Doctoral level, and to introduce appropriate measures to ensure that students, prior to formal registration are ready for the demands. There are various ways in which this could be addressed.

Recommendations

In cases where a comprehensive data collection system is not in place, the business schools should implement such system that can monitor and analyse success, pass, throughput and graduation rates including, in the last-mentioned aspect, time for completion.

Taking the low rate of graduation at Doctoral level into account, business schools are encouraged to consider ways in which Doctoral students are adequately prepared, prior to formal registration, for the research demands.

14. Section 6: International connectedness

The responses to this question were very diverse, ranging from “not applicable” or “no international agreements in place” to comprehensive listings of international agreements and very detailed narratives on international connectedness and on the partnerships, collaborations, and agreements in place.

Some of the business schools who indicated that they have international agreements/arrangements do not have formal agreements in place. All but one of the public business schools provided listings of their international agreements and the names of the partner institutions.

One public business school has a comprehensive list of international involvement which includes school-wide and project-specific partnerships. The Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) provide for faculty exchanges, visits of faculty and personnel, inbound and outbound student exchanges, joint conferences, seminars and workshops, joint research projects, training of faculty, students and administrative personnel, development of joint distance education projects, staff development projects, etc.

A public business school provided a list of six key partner institutions with agreements covering staff and student exchanges. In addition, there is a partnership pertaining to

executive education for the delivery of joint programmes. Each programme has its own MoU, and it is stated that they strictly adhere to the CHE's good practice guide (2016) for short learning programmes. The business school recently signed an MoU with another international academic institution, identifying several areas of collaboration with a priority area identified as the academic development of their faculty, through higher degrees. This will become a faculty-wide initiative. No joint programmes are envisaged. A module is to be added to their Postgraduate Diploma programme to better equip entrepreneurs with technology skills for successful business projects. The module will be done in collaboration with an international partner institution and students who participate in this programme will benefit from an exchange visit and will gain experience in global entrepreneurial and technological opportunities.

Another public business school indicated that their students have various opportunities to go on study exchanges to enhance their global perspective. The business school has bilateral agreements with several schools across four continents from which students can choose, and they can select a full-semester exchange or shorter summer/winter schools and one week immersion options. In addition, study immersions, in which the business school receives groups, is stated to enhance the school's international engagement profile, forming the basis for longer two-way collaborations. Eleven international participating universities were listed.

Other public business schools who have MoUs in place with international institutions indicated that the purpose of these agreements is for student exchanges, faculty exchanges, study tours, research collaboration, joint programmes, lecturer exchange and field trips for MBA students. One of these business schools indicated that it has specifically targeted agreements in specific fields of study with leading international universities who specialise in these areas, and another business school targets agreements with international business schools which align with the school's focus on digital transformation.

Four public business schools have indicated several formal collaborations/partnerships which are at institutional level or at institutional and/or faculty level. One of these business schools has a partnership specific to the business school through its Faculty but there is no indication if there is a MoU for this partnership. The initiative for these partnerships is student and staff

exchanges, conference speakers, research projects, joint supervision, lectures, and workshops. Another school has its own internationalisation unit and it promotes international partnerships through collaboration and engagement to add value to its learning and teaching and research. Activities include attendance at national and international conferences, interaction with international academics who act as advisors, moderators and research companions as well as being part of various forums and discussion groups. The institution's International Office assists the business school with international study tours. A third business school that taps into its Faculty and institutional agreements indicated that the purpose of the agreements, among others, are for student and staff exchange, research cooperation and curriculum development. It indicated that it does not currently have any joint degrees with other institutions. Similarly, the fourth business school indicated that the MoUs were to facilitate cooperation between students, staff and for research engagement.

Two of these four public business schools provided lists of partnership agreements, but it was not clear if these were specifically with the business school or with their institutions. One school indicated that the agreements make provision for faculty, student, and professional administrative staff exchanges, as well as joint research and projects. It noted that some of the agreements were very active, others are dormant, and some currently only have student mobility activities. The other school indicated collaboration in engaged scholarship, including research and capacitating the other country's civil servants with leadership skills, but no purpose was indicated in the other two cases.

One public business school has no international agreements in place but indicated that in 2018 there was a staff and student excursion and the institution participated in the Erasmus+ staff training programme. Another does not have any international agreements but has international facilitators and members on its advisory board are of international origin.

One private business school indicated that it does not have joint degrees but has co-operative engagements with national, regional, and international stakeholders to remain responsive and relevant in its offerings. Supervisors from outside the country are contracted for their expertise and experience as linked to the research topics of students. As the institution works

on partnerships the first step is to develop research centres. It is also in the process of formalising international student exchange programmes.

In the case of one private institution there are no international agreements pertaining to the four qualifications reported on, and another private business school indicated that international connectness was “not applicable”. Another private school listed three joint research projects and are participating in five research centres. The institution confirmed that no MoUs are in place, only SLAs between the local institution and the holding company.

One private business school provided a list of four MoUs with a purpose of research collaboration, faculty exchange, co-presenting webinars and short courses and in one instance a Dean serves on the international university's advisory board. Included in the list was an indication of their membership of accreditation bodies. One of their MBA electives comprises two parts, the second of which is a study tour to one of the BRICS countries including master classes, company visits and cultural visits.

Other private business schools have developed immersion programmes with some institutions, but no indication of the purpose, scope and benefit of these programmes was provided. There are linkages with internationally-recognised institutions for the purpose of affording students the opportunity to travel via exchange and study abroad programmes and to build partnerships and connections that will help the institution grow and develop on a global level. It is also stated by one of these business schools that the partnerships have afforded students and staff with opportunities to collaborate in terms of teaching and learning, research, benchmarking quality of education, curriculum development and training staff for the effective planning, management and decision-making within the institution and the HE sector. Another business school states that it builds partnerships and connections that will help the institution grow and develop on a global level, providing students and staff with opportunities for international development and collaboration. None of these institutions has MoUs in place.

Recommendations

It is recommended that where business schools have collaborations/partnerships that are not supported by MoUs, they should consider putting MoUs in place or an agreement at institutional level that should be monitored.

Most of the business schools did not indicate whether they have joint and/or double degrees and it may be necessary to obtain this information in the light of the Department of Higher Education and Training's policy on internationalisation.

International student enrolments for all qualifications (NQF Levels 5-10)

In 2017 there were 5772 international students enrolled at the business schools; of these 3619 were from SADC, 252 from other African countries and 114 from the rest of the world.

In 2018 there were 6503 international students enrolled at the business schools; of these 4144 were from SADC, 408 from other African countries and 195 from the rest of the world.

In 2019 there were 8188 international students enrolled at the business schools; of these 5996 were from SADC, 422 from other African countries and 162 from the rest of the world.

In 2020 there were 8361 international students enrolled at the business schools; of these 6266 were from SADC, 391 from other African countries and 159 from the rest of the world.

In 2021 there were 9870 international students enrolled at the business schools; of these 7770 were from SADC, 368 from other African countries and 158 from the rest of the world.

In 2022 there were 4125 international students enrolled at the business schools of these 3524 were from SADC, 497 from other African countries and 104 from the rest of the world.

Table 1 International, SADC and African Registration numbers, 2017 -2022

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
PG Dips						
SADC	740	927	1300	1577	1850	697
Africa	47	84	58	73	75	198
Rest	39	38	25	38	45	32
TOTAL	826	1049	1383	1688	1970	927
MBA/MBL						
SADC	1474	1487	1620	1578	1728	593
Africa	47	93	75	58	63	68
Rest	52	110	91	75	65	28
TOTAL	1573	1690	1786	1711	1856	689
Doctoral degrees						
SADC	97	147	151	171	167	150
Africa	93	136	124	149	146	128
Rest	9	21	15	19	15	14
TOTAL	199	304	290	339	328	292

The decline in enrolments between 2021 and 2022 could be because only 14 business schools submitted data for 2022.

Limitations

There was no consistency in the data provided. Some business schools provided data for the years 2017 to 2021, some from 2017 to 2022 and some from 2018 to 2022. Some business schools appear to have included South African students in the SADC total. In addition, some business schools included a range of qualifications from NQF Level 5 to NQF Level 10.

One public business school did not name their qualifications in their statistics. As a result, Masters' degrees other than the MBA could be included in the MBA/MBL numbers.

The Postgraduate Diploma and Doctoral degree numbers include all qualifications listed by the business schools.

Recommendation

Business schools need to ensure that registration data accurately disaggregate student numbers into South African, SADC, other African and Rest of the World cohorts.

15. Section 7: MBA qualification standard

The evidence from most of the submissions indicates a positive compliance with the MBA Qualification Standard approved in 2015. In fact, many members from the business schools had participated in the Standard Development Reference Group. Some exceptions were noted, with one private institution declaring a “not applicable” to the MBA standard as they were not offering this programme. Another private school resorted to explaining compliance through the previous entity which they had bought, and, one public school did not respond to this question. With those exceptions, all business schools declared full compliance with the Qualification Standard. No anomalies were noted.

16. Section 8: Marketing of programmes

Marketing of programmes for business schools is either undertaken through the various institutions' marketing departments or in some instances by the Marketing Department of the relevant business school. However, in a few responses it is not always clear whether the marketing function falls under the institution's marketing division or the business school.

A common theme running through the various marketing strategies is the use of digital platforms and print media. The various social media platforms used in the marketing strategies include Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. The institutional or business school websites are part of the marketing strategy. Other forms of marketing strategies are print media such as regional newspapers, corporate magazines, brochures and promotional literature, radio, advertisements, billboards and digital screens word of mouth, and open days. Only one private business school indicated school visits; this could be on account of offering a range of qualifications from Level 5 on the NQF. Other marketing programmes mentioned are business breakfasts, corporate visits, trade shows and through

Business Chambers. In addition, some business schools had online activities such as information sessions and webinars.

Most of the business schools indicated the relevant official/s responsible for quality assurance of the marketing material before it goes out to the public. This includes the checking and approval of programme content and admission requirements that will be published. Business schools who marketed their own programmes indicated their compliance with the institution's marketing strategy and where assistance is provided by their institution's centralised Marketing Department. One public business school in 2022 appointed a public relations company to assist with media and public relations to enhance its national and international reputation.

Some of the business schools have their own websites which are "public facing"; others do not have their own websites but are accessible through the institutions' websites. Most of the business schools indicated that the websites are managed by the Marketing or Marketing and Communications Departments but there were two business schools who managed their own websites without indicating who was responsible, that is whether it is the Marketing Department or the Information Technology Department. Three business schools indicated that their Web Administrator/Manager or Chief Information Officer was responsible for the website. Two business schools indicated they make use of external agencies (specialising in graphic design/marketing and advertising) to assist with websites.

It was not always clear where marketing departments are responsible for the websites if the technical aspects were undertaken by the IT Department or by a dedicated web developer in the Marketing Department.

Feedback on the updating of the websites range from "annually" to "annually and/or when the need arises" or "when the need arises".

17. Section 9: Vertical and horizontal articulation

With some exceptions, the main vertical articulation routes available in business schools of public universities range from NQF Level 8 to NQF Level 10 (Postgraduate Diploma to Master's to Doctorate). The exceptions are two public business schools that provide articulation from NQF Level 5 (Higher Certificate) to NQF Level 10, and three who offer articulation from NQF Level 7 (Bachelor's degree, Advanced Diploma) to NQF Level 10. Vertical articulation from NQF Level 5 to NQF Level 10 – or, in some cases, to NQF Level 9 – is more common in the business schools of private higher education institutions. While most schools indicated that vertical articulation is available both internally and externally, not all business schools provided this information and, in some cases, external providers were not identified.

One public business school stated that vertical articulation was made feasible by the fact that the lower qualification was mapped onto the higher one. There are instances where articulation from a qualification in Business Administration is possible into a cognate discipline, for example Commerce. In certain sub-disciplines vertical articulation is not feasible because neither that school nor any other school offers it at a higher level; examples given included Retail Management and Credit Banking.

A business school stated that very few students enquire about horizontal articulation, so options remain limited. The most common options cited were articulation between cognate Master's programmes (Business Administration, Public Administration, Education Management, Organisational Leadership, Environmental Business Management, and Business Leadership and Development were some examples given from various schools). There are also cases of horizontal articulation between cognate programmes at the Higher Certificate, Advanced Diploma and Postgraduate Diploma levels. No data were available on the frequency of horizontal articulation, but it does not appear to be a common occurrence.

Recommendation

Where it is currently not the case, business schools should ensure that published external articulation options are clearly linked with specific institutions.

18. Section 10: Management of WIL

Evidence from the submissions to this question indicated that WIL is largely “Not Applicable” in both private and public institutions. It could be deduced that at the design level, business schools rely more on the application of teaching using portfolios of evidence (PoEs) or the dissertation module. Some schools might also have a capstone project (Company Project) which allows for the implementation of teaching design, thus, practical application of all taught material. With some exceptions (two private institutions), Postgraduate Diplomas in Management were WIL-based and the submissions indicated an appropriate monitoring and evaluation system. One private business school had an Advanced Diploma with a WIL component, also well managed. It was clear from the submissions that in some situations, especially where an institution goes beyond the business school environment, they will rely more on WIL but had then also reflected on the monitoring, evaluation, and final assessment thereof. Exceptions did occur (as in one private business school) where an ambiguous submission was received. Gauging from the submission as a whole, it appeared that WIL was applicable to some as yet unidentified programmes. In general, the deduction may be made that WIL is not applied to MBA programme, but might be to some of the other, especially undergraduate, programmes at mainly private business schools. In such cases, no evidence was provided on whether WIL is credit-bearing and, if so, the scope, timing, duration and the number of credits it carries.

19. Section 11: Certification process

Submissions from all public business schools indicated that certification processes were strictly managed by parent universities through existing structures. One public business school noted that its certification processes were governed by the university’s Certification Rules and Procedures and all graduation certificates are only issued after full compliance. There is clear indication that the Registrar’s office plays a key role in the process. As one public business school stated, the Registrar’s office is responsible for the certification process as per statute. Several schools gave more detailed information, which included that the university issues certificates to qualifying candidates and that its degrees are conferred, and diplomas awarded, and certificates issued under the authority of the Senate after receiving recommendations from the Faculty Board. Another public business school described the

process as follows: for students to qualify, they must be presented to the Faculty Examinations Committee with all relevant documentation (the student's signed course results schedule, showing a complete record, and any relevant research approval). The FEC deliberates on all cases and then awards "QUAL" (qualifier) status. At this point, administrators at the business school complete the student's record and responsibility shifts to the University Record's Office. The University Records Office reviews all qualifiers to ensure that the expected number of credits has been obtained, and checks other details, like thesis titles, for correctness. A similar process takes place in most other public institutions.

It is clear from the submissions that the business schools do not issue certificates and degrees. The university Registrar's Office, and the university Examination and Graduation Office (or equivalent) play a key role in the process.

Business schools at private HEIs also show robust processes for certification. As a typical example, one private business school stated that, once completion of all requirements shows on the Learner Management System, a Programme Coordinator will confirm them. Finance checks that fees are paid up and Registry checks student details. The Registrar presents a graduation report to the Assessment Committee, which recommends the graduation list to Senate for ratification.

Here, as with public business schools, the role played by the Registrar and Senate is highlighted. In many cases, the Registrar's office also oversees the printing of certificates. One private business school makes it clear that a secure printer, duly authorised by the Registrar, prints bar-coded certificates from the signed graduation/certification list.

All business schools highlighted that they pay attention to the security of certificates. For public business schools, security features include a unique numbering system on certificates, use of security paper, printing of certificates on secure closed-circuit printing systems, watermark, silver tone, microtext, variable data, etc. Comprehensive security controls seem to be maintained by the university Graduation Offices (or equivalent structure), in the Registrar's portfolio. College-level security measures, such as access control to functions are in place. Graduation officials are the only ones allowed to make students' academic records complete and are responsible for safe keeping, storage, access control, etc.

At least one private business school referred to the use of a block-chain certification solution to digitise the issuance of certificates.

For both public and private business schools, security features for certificates include the following:

- The official institution logo is printed on all certificates
- The student's full names and surname as they appear in their ID documents
- The student's identity/passport number as it appears in the identity book/passport
- The qualification name as it appears on the DHET certificate in the case of private business schools, and on the PQM of public schools
- The signature and titles of the institution's authorized signatories
- The date of issue
- A unique certificate number is printed on every certificate. A unique foiled seal is embossed on the certificate.
- The Institution's logo is printed in clear varnish in a repeated pattern to cover the entire underside of the certificate.

Authority to sign certificates at public business schools rests variously with the Vice Chancellor, Registrar, and/or other appropriately designated authority. Similar protocols apply in the case of private business schools, where designated authorities include Registrar and Assistant Registrar, Dean, etc.

It is clear, therefore, that business schools in the public and private institutions have developed robust certification processes, with the latter emulating structures that perform this function in the public HEIs. Private HEIs appear to be more willing to provide detailed information on the certification process, while public HEIs may have presumed that their processes are already known to the panel because of their long-standing traditions. Nevertheless, it was possible to supplement the information they provided with information contained in their original institutional documents, such as policies.

20. Section 12: Financial models

The conventions and principles applied to budgeting are all present in the overall approach to the financial management of business schools of higher education institutions.

The financial models and range of financial strategies are dependent on:

- The type of HEI, whether a public or private HEI
- The distinctiveness and uniqueness of the business school relative to conventional faculty structures
- Location within and backbone support offered by existing faculty and departmental structures, existing policy frameworks, budgeting practices and resource-sharing capacity
- Senate, Council and Board oversight protocols of programme approvals, quality assurance, staffing levels and deployment, shared expertise, viability (cost/contribution), etc.

Although not always explicitly stated in responses to the questions, the strategic element of financial models includes diversity of income streams and cost drivers.

The cost drivers include the following:

- The programme delivery mode
- The nature of qualifications offered
- Seniority of the qualifications offered
- Sustained reputational achievement of qualifications including national and international accreditation
- Coursework development and intellectual property agreements and dispensations
- Infrastructure and facilities required in teaching, learning and support spheres, including the digital services' capabilities deployed
- Evaluation practices
- Workplace integration
- Cross- population of modules or units within the qualifications offered

- Cross subsidisation between faculty/departmental finances and the benefits from or support for the business school.

Several factors determine the nature and strength of income:

- Student and enrolment numbers and throughput, i.e., subsidy dependence-based funding.
- Horizontal and vertical articulation.
- Integration of corporate client personnel development support programmes and negotiated packages to that end.

Access to government subsidies represents the most notable difference between public and private institutions' financial strategies and related financial discipline applied in consideration of business propositions, use of innovations and market. Other factors include decision-makers who apply their minds to programme viability and cost and income mixes, niche areas such as IT, finance, responsiveness to public policy priorities, competitiveness, market appeal (opportunities), public and private program endorsements, private and public sector partnerships and clientships (management skills and executive development programmes) as well as tailored sponsorships.

Student fees are covered by a variety of sources:

- Paid for by the student
- Subsidised by institutional resources allocated to schools
- Donor contributions
- Corporate and social investment projects
- Bursaries and loans
- International collaboration projects
- National and regional development initiatives

Fees ranges are determined by differences in qualification levels (certificates, diplomas, bachelor's degrees, master's qualifications, etc.); generic masters tend to attract lower fees. High-end fees include MBAs tailored towards innovation, information technology, finance,

and other specialisations such as entrepreneurship and internationalisation. Qualifications offered under license may have packaged fees.

All respondents have qualification-based fee structures. Fee information provided by institutions include a host of undergraduate qualifications, namely certificates, diplomas in a broad range of areas, offered in the contact mode or online. The level of the fees is also dependent on augmentation by other business investments owned by institutions, cross-subsidisation and cross-resourced via business units, or absorbed on central budgets.

Programme input costs are affected by different programme design elements: niche programmes, programmes with international collaboration (content, expertise, work integrated learning, international stays) such as joint Master's, international exchange opportunities, teaching and research collaboration agreements, and field trips.

Not all HEIs have provided the percentage of fees relative to subsidy, to third stream income, to total expenditure, and to net contribution to the university. These are important markers in the business models and financial management of the business schools, whether they stand alone or are part of a faculty.

Summary of analysis of financial models

1. In general, the business school income is derived from a combination of fees, DHET subsidies, cost recovery, and project overhead cost sharing.
2. The value of EDPs can be quite significant and is aggressively pursued where opportunities are present.
3. There is a direct link between the qualifications, their levels and variety offered, and the financial strategy of the higher education institutions, whether public or private.

21. Section 13: EDPs and quality assurance processes

There are several executive development programmes (EDPs) mentioned in the reports, many of which reflect the business school's responsiveness to its vision and mission,

economic development imperatives, international competitiveness, public sector efficiency demands, inter alia.

These EDPs range from certificate level through to master's qualifications, which can be structured and, in some instances, have credit values to ensure that, in the articulation with formal qualifications, they meet the credit allocation requirements of the institutions and external bodies (SAQA and CHE).

In some instances, business schools report significant overlap with existing programmes already offered by the schools, but there are cases where there is no relationship with existing programmes offered by the faculties.

Revenue models, influenced by the type of programmes, programme delivery plans and viability considerations, are concurrently addressed during the development and design of the EDPs.

Typically, short learning programmes are offered in several ways, over several days, during continuous periods (residency and non-residency) or intermittent block periods (residency and non-residency).

22. Conclusion

The value of this project is well expressed by what it has exposed through the questions posed and business school responses, the analysis of data and related conclusions, findings, and recommendations. The project provides a holistic view of the South African business school sector that can assist several stakeholders with decision-making regarding strategic and programme-related matters, such as the DHET, SAQA, CHE, SABSA, and individual schools in the future.

Business schools are not easy to define without looking at how they started, how an entity identifies itself by its vision and mission, what they actually offer in response, how they function, how they relate to and distinguish themselves from other disciplines, how they relate to structures within the institution, how they relate to other entities doing what they

do within their institutions and other outside institutions, how they are affirmed as business schools by graduates/alumni and peer institutions, how they relate to the community of practice among business schools, how they relate to business and how the business and management principles are embedded to support other disciplines, types of enterprises, public enterprises, private enterprises, NGOs and specialised business entities in relation to national development objectives and international relevance and competitiveness.

This broad description may not necessarily be very helpful without any further analysis and clarification. This Business School project required some form of taxonomical exposition without which these project objectives would have been difficult to achieve. The survey instrument, although not exhaustive, served that purpose and assisted with answering the initial questions posed by SAQA. The panel did not identify any irregularities, but identified recommendations and areas for further research as indicated below. It is important that the findings, recommendations and areas of research will feed into the governance, quality assurance, and management systems of the South African business schools.

Several recommendations flow from the report that may be considered by the CHE and SAQA for monitoring, and evaluation. Areas for further research are also highlighted.

23. Summary of recommendations

Below follow the recommendations based on the analysis conducted by the panel responsible for the Business School project:

1. The panel recommends that all the discrepancies related to qualification data and information be aligned and rectified so that the qualification data and information of the CHE, SAQA and the DHET are correctly aligned with the information of the business schools, and vice versa.
2. Where it lacks, proper monitoring and evaluation procedures and processes related to quality management must be implemented.
3. In cases where it is relevant and as long as CHE policy requires it, business schools should ensure that the 10 per cent limitation on admissions via RPL applies to a programme, rather than annual intake in the programme.

4. Where RPL assessment is outsourced, business schools need to ensure, and be able to provide evidence, that selection and admission of successful students remains the sole responsibility of the school and complies with institutional RPL policy, and that selection and admission are not likewise outsourced.
5. The practice of allowing credit transfer from one qualification to a qualification at a higher NQF level should be reviewed.
6. In cases where there are significant changes in enrolment numbers for qualification from one year to the next, the business school should ensure that its enrolment planning, and targets are able to ensure on-going resource adequacy and quality assurance.
7. With regards to Master's and Doctoral research-based programmes, business schools should ensure that there is clarity on the candidate's contractual status vis-à-vis the school/institution prior to proposal approval and formal registration. In addition, supervisor-student Memoranda of Understanding should be standard practice, and the compliance thereto adequately monitored by the school.
8. Taking the low rate of graduation at Doctoral level into account, business schools are encouraged to consider ways in which Doctoral students are adequately prepared, prior to formal registration, for the research demands.
9. In cases where a comprehensive data collection system is not in place, the business schools should implement such system that can monitor and analyse success, pass, throughput and graduation rates including in the last-mentioned aspect, time for completion.
10. Where business schools have collaborations/partnerships that are not supported by MoUs, they should consider putting MoUs in place or an agreement at institutional level that should be monitored.
11. Most of the business schools did not indicate whether they have joint and/or double degrees and it may be necessary to obtain this information in the light of the Department of Higher Education and Training's policy on internationalisation.

12. Business schools need to ensure that registration data accurately disaggregate student numbers into South African, SADC, other African and Rest of the World cohorts.
13. Where it is currently not the case, business schools should ensure that published external articulation options are clearly linked with specific institutions.

24. Areas for further research

The panel recommends that the following matters must be considered for further research:

1. The supervisory capacity of both public and private business schools regarding research projects, dissertations, and theses must be analysed and assessed. In addition, the reliance on supervisors external to the institution and/or part-time supervisors must be investigated, as well as the impact of all types of supervision on the workloads of supervisors.
2. The throughput, success, and graduation rates of RPL admissions must be determined.
3. The applicability of horizontal articulation opportunities in business schools must be investigated for NQF Level 8-10 qualifications.
4. The role of EDPs/Executive Education in the programme offerings of business schools must be determined.
5. The extent of transformation of business school qualifications must be evaluated and ways forward with transformation interventions promoted.

Appendix A

Registration numbers 2018 and 2022

	H Cert	Adv Cert	Dip	Adv Dip	PG Dip	Bachelor	Honours	M NQF 8	M NQF 9	Doctorate
Total 2018	4 591	382	2 262	0	7 862	13 134	1 292	1 174	9 240	892
Total 2022	5 901	862	1 343	2 616	10 780	27 117	2 407	201	8 975	1 148
Public HEIs 2022	214	0	0	392	4 780	258	0	96	5 019	964
Private HEIs 2022	5 687	862	1 343	2 224	6 000	26 859	2 407	105	3 956	184
Change 2018-2022	29%	126%	-41%	2616%	37%	106%	86%	-83%	-3%	27%

Appendix B

Graduation numbers 2018 and 2021

	H Cert	Adv Cert	Diploma	Adv Dip	PG Dip	Bachelor	Honours	M NQF 8	M NQF 9	Doctorate
Total 2018	1 369	84	604	17	2 830	2 059	355	273	2 272	98
Total 2021	869	467	346	335	3 100	1 941	340	27	1 672	89
Public HEIs 2018	94	0	0	0	2 013	152	0	273	1 722	98
Private HEIs 2018	1 275	84	604	17	817	1 907	355	0	550	0
Public HEIs 2021	28	0	0	0	2 043	82	0	27	1 329	86
Private HEIs 2021	841	467	346	335	1 057	1 859	340	0	343	3
Change 2018-2021	-37%	455%	-43%	1870%	10%	-6%	-4%	-90%	-26%	-9%

Illustrative example of graduation trend: the 2018 MBA cohort at one public business school

Mode

Time to completion, in months

	Students	6-12	13-18	19-24	25-30	31-36	37-42	43-48	49-54	Total	Rate
Full-time	23	0	10	6	0	2	0	0	0	19	83%
Part-time	272	0	57	20	1	52	0	1	1	132	49%