



**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT REPORT**

**ON THE**

**CAPE PENINSULA**

**UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

**(8 February 2024)**

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
AI	Artificial Intelligence
APC	Academic Planning Committee
APP	Annual Performance Plan
ARC	Application and Registration Centre
AROC	Audit and Risk Oversight Committee
BTech	Bachelor of Technology
BUSSE	Beginning University Survey of Student Engagement
CAPEX	Capital Expenditure
CCEWIL	Centre for Community Engagement and Work-integrated Learning
CE	Community Engagement
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CHEC	Cape Higher Education Consortium
CHED	Centre for Higher Education and Development
CIET	Centre for Innovative Educational Technologies
CO	Curriculum Officer
CoD	Chair of Department
COVID-19	Coronavirus
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CPPD	Centre for Professional and Personal Development
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
CTS	Communications and Technology System
DevMan	Development Manager
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DQIP	Departmental Quality Improvement Plan
DU	Disability Unit
DVC	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
DVC: RTIP	Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Technology, Innovation and Partnerships
DVC: T&L	Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning
ECP	Extended Curriculum Programme
ED	Executive Director
EM	Executive Management

EWS	Early Warning System
Exco	Executive Committee
FAS	Faculty of Applied Sciences
FBMS	Faculty of Business and Management Sciences
FEBE	Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment
FEd	Faculty of Education
FHWS	Faculty of Health and Wellness Sciences
FID	Faculty of Informatics and Design
FISA	Final Integrated Summative Assessment
FQF	Faculty Quality Forum
FQMS	Faculty Quality Management Systems
FSP	Faculty Strategic Plan
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
FYE	First-Year Experience
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDS	Graduate Destination Survey
GES	Graduate Employability Survey
H&W	Health and Wellness Sciences
HDC	Higher Degrees Committee
HE	Higher Education
HEDA	Higher Education Data Analyser
HEI	Higher education institution
HEMIS	Higher Education Management Information System
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
HoD	Head of Department
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
HR	Human Resources
IA	Institutional Audit
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IF	Institutional Forum
IFMS	Institutional Facility Management Services
IPD	Institutional Planning Directorate
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
IQF	Institutional Quality Forum

IQIP	Institutional Quality Improvement Plan
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
ISPC	Institutional Strategic Planning Committee
IT	Information Technology
ITC	Information Technology and Communication
ITS	Integrated Tertiary Software (Institutional Database)
KPA	Key Performance Area
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LMS	Learning Management System
ManCom	Management Committee
MIS	Management Information System
NDP	National Development Plan
nGAP	New Generation of Academics Programme
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NRF	National Research Foundation
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NSI	Needing Substantial Improvement
OPA	Online Personal Access
OPEX	Operational Expenditure
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act
PG	Postgraduate
PGDip	Postgraduate Diploma
PMS	Performance Management System
PoE	Portfolio of Evidence
POPI	Protection of Personal Information
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act
PQM	Programme Qualifications Mix
QA	Quality Assurance
QAF	Quality Assurance Framework
QARM	Quality Assurance and Risk Management
QCTO	Quality Council for Trade and Occupations
QEC	Qualifications Evaluation Committee
QEP	Quality Enhancement Project
QIP	Quality Improvement Plan
QM	Quality Management

QMD	Quality Management Directorate
QMS	Quality Management System
RITAL	Research in Innovative Teaching and Learning
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTI	Research, Technology and Innovation
RTIP	Research, Technology and Innovation Partnership
RTL	Remote Teaching and Learning
SA	South African
SAC	Sports, Art and Culture
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SANC	South African Nursing Council
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SARETEC	South African Renewable Energy and Technology Centre
SASSE	South African Survey of Student Engagement
SAULM	Students Access to and Use of Learning Materials
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
Senex	Senate Executive Committee
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SET	Science, Engineering and Technology
SL	Service Learning
SLU	Student Learning Unit
SMS	Short Message Service
SoTL	Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
SPOC	Small Private Online Course
SRC	Student Representative Council
SSCC	Student Services Committee of Council
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STLC	Senate Teaching and Learning Committee
T&L	Teaching and Learning
TDG	Teaching Development Grant
TDP	Teaching Development Programme
TLA	Teaching, Learning and Assessment
ToR	Terms of Reference
TP	Teaching Practice

UCDG	University Capacity Development Grant
UG	Undergraduate
USAf	Universities South Africa
V2020	Vision 2020
V2030	Vision 2030
VC	Vice-Chancellor
VPN	Virtual Private Network
WC	Western Cape
WIL	Work-Integrated Learning
WOCAP	Working Committee for Academic Planning

## Executive summary

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) was established through the Higher Education Act (No. 101 of 1997, as amended) primarily to assure quality in the South African (SA) higher education (HE) sector and to advise the Minister on aspects of higher education. The National Qualifications Framework Act (No. 67 of 2008, as amended) conferred additional responsibilities on the CHE as the quality council for higher education, with overall responsibility for the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF). The CHE executes its quality assurance (QA) responsibilities through its permanent committee, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). The CHE, through the HEQC, exercises its QA function using a variety of mechanisms, one of which is institutional audits that are mandated by the Higher Education Act.

The *Framework for Institutional Audits (2021)*<sup>1</sup> and its attendant *Manual for Institutional Audits (2021)*<sup>2</sup> are key instruments to regulate the implementation of institutional audits. These documents are aligned with important aspects of the new Quality Assurance Framework (QAF)<sup>3</sup> that was approved by the HEQC and Council in September 2020, and which is being implemented in the medium term by the CHE. Institutional audits are strongly influenced by both the specific context within which each higher education institution (HEI) works, and by the national transformational agenda within which higher education functions. The HEQC has identified a need to complete full audits of all HEIs in South Africa. A full audit of an institution determines whether and to what extent the internal quality assurance (IQA) systems, policies and procedures of an institution ensure the effective provisioning of good quality higher education that enhances the likelihood of student success through quality learning and teaching, research opportunities, and integrated community engagement. The following principles guided the Institutional Audit of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.che.ac.za/publications/frameworks/framework-institutional-audits-2021>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.che.ac.za/publications/frameworks/manual-institutional-audits-2021>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.che.ac.za/publications/frameworks/quality-assurance-framework-qaf-higher-education-south-africa>



- The primary responsibility for internal quality assurance rests with individual HEIs. Each institution is responsible for the establishment, implementation, maintenance, improvement and enhancement of its own QM and assurance systems.
- The uniqueness of the size, shape, location, context and mission of each institution is recognised.
- The value of institutional audits rests on the compilation of credible, contextually relevant and reliable information that is required for internal quality-related planning and self-evaluation, peer review, and public reporting (for example, by publishing executive summaries).
- Student experience, student engagement and participation, and the student voice are central to an evaluation of the QM system of an institution.
- The institutional audit is a peer-driven and evidence-based process to ensure that the HEQC and its audit panel reports are transparent, informed, and consistent.
- Institutional audits are developmental and intent on supporting continuous quality improvement and enhancement.
- Institutional audits are required to balance the developmental character of the institution with the regulatory requirement that the CHE and the HEQC act on poor provisioning where institutions have no clear commitments, processes, practices or plans to improve.
- Institutional audits are a key component of the broad-based QA mandate of the HEQC.

Aligned with international practice, the HEQC uses a review methodology consisting of an institutional self-evaluation report (SER), and an external peer review, which verifies, triangulates and validates the self-evaluation of the institution. The external peer review consists of a document analysis of the SER and institutional portfolio of evidence, as well as a site visit during which interviews are conducted with constituencies, and physical infrastructure is visited. This audit report forms the outcome of the Institutional Audit of the CPUT.

## **Brief overview of the institution**

The CPUT was officially launched on 1 February 2006 when the Cape Technikon and Peninsula Technikon merged as part of the national transformation process implemented across the HE landscape in South Africa.

Today, the CPUT is the only university of technology in the Western Cape. It is also the largest university in the region, with more than 32 000 students, and offers unique and niche programmes with many employment possibilities.

The origins of the institution date back to the early 1900s, with the Cape Technikon being rooted in the Cape Technical College, established in 1920. In the late 1960s, this institution changed its status to a College for Advanced Technical Education and was renamed the Cape College for Advanced Technical Education. In 1976, the institution became known as the Cape Technikon, and was authorised to offer degree programmes, and in the 1990s, the institution launched its new organisational structure, which featured six faculties, a new corporate identity, and a new vision and mission.

In 2001, the Boland and Mowbray Education Colleges were incorporated into the Cape Technikon, forming the Faculty of Education with sites in Wellington and Mowbray.

The Peninsula Technical College is also a component of the CPUT institutional context. The Peninsula Technical College was established in 1962. Its classes were conducted in Cape Town until its relocation to the site in Bellville in 1967. Today, this forms the administrative campus of the CPUT.

In the 1970s, the status of the Peninsula Technical College changed to that of a College of Advanced Technical Education and was rebranded as the Peninsula College for Advanced Technical Education. However, this name and status change was short-lived, and in 1979, the college was legally established as the Peninsula Technikon. The institution was authorised to offer degree programmes in the 1990s. This necessitated restructuring the academic programmes of the institution into the faculties of Engineering, Business, and Science in 1997.

In March 2001, the then-Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, announced the National Plan on Higher Education. This plan saw the merger of various HEIs across South Africa and the formation of universities of technology. In 2003, the name 'Cape Peninsula University of

Technology' was approved for the merged institution, and the institution was officially launched on 1 February 2006.

As the largest university, and the only university of technology in the Western Cape, the CPUT student body of 32 000 is spread across eight campuses, which function as service points for its more than 230 qualifications and programmes.

CPUT has six faculties and various support- and research units, and approximately 4 000 staff, of which about 2 800 are academic staff.

The institution offers undergraduate degrees and postgraduate diplomas (PGDips), and postgraduate degrees in varied disciplines across its six faculties:

- Faculty of Applied Sciences (FAS);
- Faculty of Business and Management Sciences (FBMS);
- Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment (FEBE);
- Faculty of Education (FEEd);
- Faculty of Health and Wellness Sciences (FHWS); and
- Faculty of Informatics and Design (FID).

The faculties are located across campuses, with the Bellville Campus on the Cape Flats being the central administration of CPUT. The District Six Campus, the largest, is located on the slopes of Table Mountain, and is built on a portion of the heritage site known historically as District Six. The Wellington Campus, formerly Boland College, is located in Wellington, in the Winelands. Granger Bay is situated on the seafront of Mouille Point, and the Mowbray Campus is on the slopes of Devil's Peak in Cape Town's Southern Suburbs.

The SER (p. 2) presents the breakdown of students per campus and year as follows, indicating that 11 campuses are currently active.

*Table 1: Distribution of students by campus (2018–2021)*

<b>Campus and site</b>	<b>Head count 2020</b>	<b>Head count 2021</b>	<b>Head count 2022</b>
Athlone Campus	365	190	–
Bellville Campus	10 086	10 200	11 131
College of Cape Town – Crawford	59	55	67
District Six Campus	14 532	14 221	14 234
False Bay College – Fish Hoek	66	47	50
False Bay College – Khayelitsha	65	67	67
George Campus	30	–	–
Granger Bay Campus	820	993	1 083
Groote Schuur Hospital	1	–	–
Mowbray Campus	3 405	3 569	3 975
Northlink College Tygerberg	62	62	61
Saldanha	9	1	–
Tygerberg Dental Radiography	176	162	170
Wellington Campus	2 650	2 770	2 839
Worcester Campus	57	–	–

**Source: SER (p. 2)**

The location of the University in the Western Cape offers many opportunities for curriculum and programme innovation, for the employment of its graduates, and for local, regional, national, and international research and collaboration.

The CPUT provides graduates for the well-established industrial and business base in sectors in the Western Cape, such as finance, real estate, information and communication technology (ICT), retail, and tourism.

## Size and shape

According to the self-evaluation report (SER), the CPUT had a headcount of 32 383 students in 2020, of whom 2 131 (7%) were postgraduate and 30 135 (93%) undergraduate, with 117 occasional students registered for courses for non-degree purposes. Of the total student population, 1 868 students were international students from Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries.

The SER indicates the breakdown of students across faculties, with the largest proportion registered in the scarce skill areas of science, engineering, and technology, followed by business management, education, and other humanities. Table 2 shows the registration trends by field of study from 2018–2021.

*Table 2: Breakdown of students (2018–2021) by field of study*

Field of Study	2018	2019	2020	2021
Science, Engineering, Technology	15 932	15 456	14 645	14 665
Business/ Management	10 963	11 030	10 302	10 210
Education	4 414	4 656	4 784	4 938
Other Humanities	2 912	2 798	2 652	2 598
Distance Education Enrolments	324	466	442	385
<b>Enrolments by Major Field of Study</b>	<b>34 222</b>	<b>33 941</b>	<b>32 383</b>	<b>32 411</b>

### Source: SER (p. 45)

As indicated in Table 2, the overall student enrolment has been gradually decreasing year on year. In particular, the University experienced challenges meeting the enrolment targets between 2019 and 2021. Between 2018 and 2021, the overall actual headcount enrolments declined by 5%.

The SER mentions multiple reasons, including the ‘brand damage’ resulting from student protests, challenges with the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), and the strong competition from traditional universities since the phasing out of the Bachelor of Technology (BTech) qualification. The SER (p. 41) identifies the “delay in the development and approval of new HEQSF-aligned qualifications” as being the main contributing factor to the downward trend. Moreover, the SER refers to the deleterious effects of the pandemic and increasing poverty levels.

The CPUT enrolls students from diverse backgrounds, of which only 22% are from the Western Cape (WC), while the remaining students come from other provinces, making student accommodation an important factor. Notably, over 60% of students come from quintile 1 to 3 schools and from households with high poverty levels. These demographics require intensifying academic and other student support programmes.

The institution takes pride in its legacy and embraces technological advancements in its business operations and academic offerings. The demographic profile of students at CPUT mirrors that of other contact-mode public HEIs with more female students enrolled (at an average of 56.9% in 2021). With regard to enrolment by race, African student enrolments grew from 66.9% in 2018 to 72.2% in 2021; coloured student enrolments declined slightly from 24.9% in 2018 to 22.1% in 2021; white student enrolments declined, from 7.4% to 4.9%, and Indian students remained at an average of 0.7% in the same period. The following table from the SER (p. 45) shows the changing demographics.

*Table 3: Demographic profile of CPUT students (2018–2021) by race and gender*

	2018		2019		2020		2021	
	Headcount	% of Total	Headcount	% of Total	Headcount	% of Total	Headcount	% of Total
Gender	34 222	100.00%	33 941	100.00%	32 383	100.00%	32 397	100.00%
Female	18 884	55.18%	18 889	55.65%	18 107	55.92%	18 447	56.94%
Male	15 338	44.82%	15 052	44.35%	14 276	44.08%	13 950	43.06%
Race	34 222	100.00%	33 941	100.00%	32 383	100.00%	32 397	100.00%
African	22 884	66.87%	23 014	67.81%	22 625	69.87%	23 406	72.25%
Coloured	8 509	24.86%	8 341	24.57%	7 621	23.53%	7 154	22.08%
Indian	290	0.85%	281	0.83%	234	0.72%	207	0.64%
No Information	0	0.00%	17	0.05%	15	0.05%	31	0.10%
White	2 539	7.42%	2 288	6.74%	1 888	5.83%	1 599	4.94%

**Source: SER (p. 45).**

The SER shows the CPUT graduation rates of 7 274 (24%) at undergraduate level and 319 (15%) at postgraduate level in 2021.

Concerning its staffing complement, the SER indicates a total of 1 003 instructional and/or research professional staff with a staff-to-student ratio of 25:1. Of its staff complement, 49% hold doctoral degrees.

### **The context for the institutional audit reporting period**

The audit panel noted that the CPUT demarcated the reporting period for the review to reflect the situation “as is at the time of the review”. As the SER notes, this was because of the recent

emergence of the institution from a long period of disruptive student protests that began in 2015, shifting into a calmer mode since 2018, characterised by sporadic protests until 2021.

As the SER explains, student protests (including the national higher education #FeesMustFall 2015) were distinctly violent at the CPUT, “bordering on anarchy”. Student leadership was a much-contested terrain during this period, further fuelling the protests, academic disruptions, and the ensuing university closures for long periods.

The SER reports that, during this period, the CPUT experienced a discontinuity in its leadership, with a member of the Council appointed as acting Vice-Chancellor (VC) in October 2016. There were also critical changes in the appointments of the Council, with a new Council Chair in June 2017, and new Council members instated in August 2018. The appointment of the current VC followed.

During this challenging period, the CPUT initiated its curriculum renewal process and engaged in the development of its newly aligned qualifications. These changes included its transition to shift from managing protests to being student-centred.

In conducting the current audit, the panel acknowledged this context. It was cognisant that the CHE initiated the institutional audit (IA) processes in 2021 while CPUT shifted to Vision 2030 (V2030) and simultaneously tried stabilising the institution.

In contextualising this audit, the panel noted that there had been extensive staff and management changes making it difficult for the institution to ‘pin down’ the time frame for review; hence, as the SER pointed out, its “faculties needed to consider the CPUT institutional status as of 2021, and the impact that the period from 2018 had had in creating the current status”.

### **An overview of the audit process**

Notwithstanding the challenges, the CPUT internal review proceeded and followed a collective and iterative approach to prepare and approve the SER with the final version submitted to the CHE in June 2022.

It was noted that there was a strong show of institutional support with the launch of the internal audit process on 03 August 2021, led by the CPUT Council Chairperson, who expressed the wish that the review process “would be a true exposé of the University’s quality systems while also championing the good practices in the University”. With the support of the VC and the

Deputy Vice-Chancellors (DVCs), the SER underwent several iterations before the final document was approved by the Quality Assurance and Risk Management (QARM) committee, the Institutional Strategic Planning Committee (ISPC), and the Senate Committee, as being ready for submission to CHE in June 2022.

The CHE played a role in preparing the institution for the process and presented training for members of the working groups and the various quality committees. After that, the process involved the production of templates, terms of reference (ToR), ethical considerations, and establishing working groups. The templates aimed to guide and inform the reflective process and the collection of information across the different components of the institution.

The self-reflection process, guided by the focus areas and their sixteen associated standards as reflected in the framework for institutional audits, required that participants from across all departments and sections were engaged in collecting evidence to uncover and appreciate what worked (and by implication, what did not work) in the institution, to identify challenges, and ways by which these might be mitigated. The framing of solutions within the broader working group structure constituted a secondary-level co-reflection, offering additional scope for generating solutions.

All meetings were held through Microsoft (MS) Teams, and data from the 2019 Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) formed the standardised data source for the working groups.

It was determined that the facilitators of the task teams would present their progress reports at weekly meetings and discuss and reflect on the findings. WhatsApp groups were also formed for further sharing of information. In order to increase participation, information was shared and discussed at departmental meetings, and online surveys or emails were sent to solicit input from specific individuals.

As the SER explains, the self-reflection process identified areas that needed strengthening, and provided insights into how the goals of Vision 2030 (V2030) might be achieved, leading to increased awareness of the importance of improving quality.

The intensive reflective process within the institution culminated in attributing a rating for each standard according to the prescribed CHE scale of Mature (M), Functional (F), Needing Substantial Improvement (NSI), or Non-functional (NF).



An audit panel was appointed by the CHE to undertake this review. It convened on 3 August 2022, and underwent training by the CHE on its obligations, as well as the audit principles and procedures. The task of the panel was to review and evaluate CPUT's institutional SER and Portfolio of Evidence, and to participate in further engagements during the scheduled site visit. Guided by the four CHE focus areas and sixteen standards, the panel members held a series of weekly discussions interspersed with extensive reading and analyses of the CPUT SER. Thereafter, the panel crafted lines of inquiry to be used as the basis for the site visit interviews with a view to obtain further information and clarity on the SER.

The panel undertook a five-day site visit which was conducted in two phases. The first phase ran online from 10 to 12 October 2022, and after that, the panel participated in on-site meetings (some of which were held in hybrid mode) at the CPUT main campus in Bellville from 13 to 14 October 2022.

In line with the CHE requirements, none of the interview sessions was recorded, and no designated scribe was appointed. The panel members again compiled extensive notes during the interviews. In compiling this report, the panel relied on the internal discussions, the notes they had made while engaging with the SER and the Portfolio of Evidence (PoE), and those compiled during the interviews. This report thus draws on and triangulates all the various sources of information.

The site visit involved 40 scheduled interviews with approximately 300 key individuals from various levels and classifications of the university structure (see Appendix A). The panel noted, with some concern that, despite two scheduled appointments, the Student Representative Council (SRC) (except for one member) did not participate in the site visit interview process.

On the last day of the site visit, campus tours were arranged to three campuses (District Six, Mowbray and Bellville) to view campus facilities, residences, laboratories, and libraries and to interview campus-based staff on the various inputs for ensuring quality student experiences. The findings of the site visits were triangulated with the SER, and these findings are mapped against the standards in the narrative section of this report.

### **A note on the SER process**

During the site visits, participants were specifically asked about their involvement in the SER and their experience of the SER process. Interviewees generally confirmed that they had

participated in various ways in the SER discussions. A small but significant segment of the university that included members of the SRC, some members of organised labour, and members of the Institutional Forum (IF) (which, although not fully constituted at the time of the SER), had normalized its functions by the time of the site visits. However, the university indicates that the SER had been circulated widely for consultation. With regard to the lack of participation by the SRC, the SER indicates that the last SRC election had been held in 2019. Council approved the postponement of the election to March 2020. Due to student unrest and the COVID-19 pandemic, SRC elections did not take place in 2020 or in 2021. Council approved the 2019 SRC to continue on a transitional basis until an election could be convened. This resulted in a high number of vacancies. The 2021 election did not take place as the SRC failed to review the SRC Constitution at the 2021 SRC Policy Conference. Pending a Council decision at the end of 2021, the SRC election was planned to take place once the 2022 student registrations had closed and the SRC Constitution had been reviewed. Although there were still challenges with the leadership of the SRC at the time of the audit, the institution had established a well-functioning Student Quality Desk which participated in all the institutional audit processes. It is evident that the SRC challenges have been successfully addressed.

Generally, interviewees expressed that the SER had had many benefits for the institution in that it provided it with the opportunity to interrogate and reflect on its practices and to consider the views and opinions of others on their effectiveness. It was also noted as an opportunity for the “units to take a measure” of their approach to quality assurance through strategic engagement with staff, students, and other stakeholders, and to provide an understanding of cross-institutional differences, appreciating some strengths and weaknesses, and reflecting on policies and practices. The role of institutional leadership was cited as being critical to the implementation of the process.

Across the range of interviews, participants (apart from a few) concurred on the positive influence the SER process had had as an “appreciative inquiry”. They indicated that the SER had engaged the institution in a generally broad-based participatory and reflective process through which they could “unpack” their own experiences relative to the other associated viewpoints contained in the various iterations of the report.

During the site visits, a number of interviewees commented on the reflective process of the SER, with some referring to the collective process as “we were working together for progress”. This afforded those who participated time to “jointly reflect and to gain a full appreciation of

our work and the work of others and how this impacted students”. As one respondent pointed out, “it gave us time to decide how and whether we individually and jointly meet the standards”. Still, others mentioned that it was “eye-opening”, enabling “us to reflect on ourselves and ask what we are doing, who we are, and how to improve”. Interviewees also referred to the role of the SER in breaking traditional barriers, indicating “it enabled us to break down the silos we used to work in. We worked with others we seldom met and co-reflected with other units and with people we hardly knew.”

The CPUT audit panel appreciated the engagement during the various interviews, and the candid way interviewees expressed themselves. Apart from a few ‘no shows’, the organisation and administrative arrangements for the visits were well managed, and the panel was appreciative of the CPUT team who took charge of the process.

This report presents our reflections. The report commends the CPUT for good practice where evident. In some cases, our considerations were elevated to a recommendation where the panel felt the matter warranted more active attention or a directed response from the institution.

The recommendations by the panel are mapped in accordance with the four focus areas and sixteen standards of the CHE, and point to areas of enhancement and development, which the CPUT might consider as it implements its V2030.

The following section summarises the commendations and recommendations by the audit panel for the CPUT.

## **Focus Area 1: Governance, strategic planning, management and leadership support the core academic functions**

The four standards in Focus Area 1 concentrate on the role that an institution’s *governance, strategic planning* (as contained in its *vision, mission and strategic goals*), *management and academic leadership* play in its quality management in order to enhance the likelihood of student success and to improve the quality of learning, teaching and research engagement, as well as accommodating the results of constructive, integrated community engagement.

## **Standard 1**

*The institution has a clearly stated vision, mission and strategic goals, which have been approved by appropriate governance structures, subject to comprehensive stakeholder engagement.*

On considering this standard as discussed in the SER, it was clear that the institution has a strategic plan – with a clearly articulated vision, mission and strategic goals – which was widely consulted and duly approved by the university Council. The panel noted that the institution has positioned itself for ‘oneness’ (unity in diversity) as well as ‘smartness’ (technological developments and innovations). A consultative approach was used in developing the strategic plan with an inclusive range of stakeholders engaged in the process. Measures have been put in place to operationalise the strategic plan as well as to track, monitor and measure the implementation of the plan. While these are considered to be adequate, the panel proposed that they needed to be applied consistently across all departments and faculties as well as units involved in support functions.

## **Recommendations**

1. It is recommended that all departments develop strategic plans that align with faculty and institutional plans, and departments should conduct annual reviews to monitor implementation.
2. It is recommended that mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the performance of V2030 should include the combined assurance function undertaken by the Quality Management Directorate (QMD) and Internal Audit and Compliance as recommended in the SER, and that quarterly reports should be provided to the Council indicating milestones achieved with the implementation of V2030.

## **Standard 2**

*The stated vision, mission and strategic goals align with national priorities and context (e.g., transformation, creating a skilled labour force, developing scarce skills areas and a critical citizenry, and contributing to the fulfilment of national goals as informed by the NDP and related national planning), as well as sectoral, regional, continental and global imperatives (e.g. Africa Vision 2063 or the Sustainable Development Goals).*

The panel found that the CPUT strategic plan (V2030) was informed by and aligned with important local, national and international strategic imperatives, including the NDP, the 2019 White Paper on Science Technology and Innovation, the SDGs and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. This alignment is clearly articulated in the SER and the strategic plan. The panel also noted that CPUT produces the Trends in Higher Education Report which tracks the future of work, jobs and academic programmes. The findings of the report were considered in the development of the V2030 strategy. More benefit could be derived from the report if its findings could be analysed further and more frequently to inform curriculum (re-)design and programme offerings. The panel found that the institution was clearly functional with regard to this standard, as the new university strategic plan, V2030, is informed by and aligned with local, national, continental and international goals. The alignment is clearly articulated in the institutional strategic plan.

### **Recommendation**

3. It is recommended that CPUT should consider developing a systematic, structured way in which the findings of the Future of Work Report are further processed for more enhanced academic planning.

### **Standard 3**

*There is demonstrable strategic alignment between the institution's quality management system for core academic activities across all sites and modes of provision, and its vision, mission and strategic goals, as well as its governance and management processes.*

CPUT is governed in a manner that places quality management at the forefront of its operations. Policies are in place to ensure quality management in all the institutional units. As indicated in Standard 1 above, the 'roll-out plan' of the university positions the CPUT as 'one smart' university. The Research Technology and Innovation (RTI) ten-year blueprint guided all research activities from 2012–2022 and serves the Vision 2020 (V2020) Strategic Plan and the transition into V2030. CPUT's intention of preparing for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is evident in its investment in blockchain, big data, and cloud-based technologies.

The Faculty Strategic Plans (FSPs) and quality management are overseen by the Faculty Quality Forum (FQF), Faculty Management Committees (FMCs), and the Faculty Board. The QMD validates progress of the Departmental Quality Improvement Plan (DQIP) and matters that fall beyond the control of the heads of departments (HoDs) are raised to the Faculty

Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). These reviews track the vulnerability, weaknesses, and threats of faculties, and provide decision-making opportunities and recommendations for resource allocation and funding. Faculty and departmental medium-term strategic plans are translated into operational plans with well-defined objectives, tasks, responsibilities, timelines, key performance areas (KPA's), key performance indicators (KPI's), and resourcing plans linked to a budget, and are well aligned.

### **Commendations**

- a) CPUT is commended for its impressive innovation goals, which include commercialising four technological innovations, launching five nanosatellites, and setting up spinoff companies.
- b) CPUT is commended for its large contingent of 90 postdoctoral fellows to enhance research.
- c) CPUT is commended for its progress in 4IR technologies, including blockchain technology, which will be used for issuing certificates, gathering academic data, and student records.

### **Recommendations**

4. It is recommended that CPUT (QMD) be requested to provide the faculties with guidelines for quality management at faculty level. There is a need to document the QMS processes of the faculty in a quality manual.
5. It is recommended that CPUT realign the institution's annual budgeting cycle with the faculty's strategic planning cycle.

### **Standard 4**

*There is a clear understanding of and demonstrable adherence to the different roles and responsibilities of the governance structures, management and academic leadership.*

CPUT has a properly constituted and functioning governance structure, which has enhanced the stability and confidence in the institution. Interviews with the Executive Management confirmed the Council's focus on governance and its adherence to the separation of functions. As was indicated in the SER, and corroborated during the interviews, there is a clear

understanding of and demonstrable adherence to the different roles and responsibilities of the governance structures in support of the core academic functions. These are assured through Senate and Senate subcommittees, and also through structures at faculty level, including the use of class representatives.

More recently, in 2021, CPUT adopted a combined assurance model with a view to providing a coordinated approach to all assurance activities. The model aims to mitigate risks that CPUT faces, by among others, monitoring the relationship between internal and external assurance providers. The Combined Assurance Framework delineates the roles and responsibilities of the Council and its committees, management, internal assurance providers, internal audit, and external assurance providers (including those of professional bodies). The areas of responsibility for these role players include Council's accountability and oversight, risk management and assurance. Combined assurance matters are reported through the various reporting channels while the Audit and Risk Oversight Committee (AROC) reports to Council, and Quality Assurance and Risk Management (QARM) reports jointly to Senate and Council.

Challenges which might constitute risks were noted. Examples of these included the protracted filling of vacancies, particularly as shown in terms of strategic appointments in management and academic leadership, which may place the institution at risk. A number of challenges were referred to by faculties on account of delays in filling vacant posts.

The SER (p. 21) refers to instances of institutional memory loss resulting from the absence of succession planning and the 'gaps' when incumbents resigned or retired. At faculty level, the delays in making appointments have resulted in an over-reliance on contract staff.

It was also observed that there had been delays in constituting the IF, which resulted in this structure not having participated in the SER. However, by the time of the site visit, the IF had normalised its functions.

Of concern was the finding (also noted in the SER) that there were challenges in constituting the SRC. In line with the CPUT Statute, the Higher Education Act (1997), and the SRC Constitution (2018), the SRC has representation on Council and on Council committees, Senate and Senate subcommittees, the Council and QARM, the IF, and six management committees. However, their participation was recorded as low. The SER (p. 107) further notes that SRC elections have been deferred for extended periods with the last one held in 2019.

Moreover, during the site visits, the SRC, except for one member failed to attend the scheduled interviews (which were also conducted virtually) despite the panel rescheduling the meeting with the SRC on two occasions in order to accommodate this structure. The SER refers to the near absence of the SRC over the period under review, noting that first- and second-year students (who had enrolled during the pandemic) were less aware of the SRC than third- and fourth-year students. This was attributed to reduced visibility of the SRC during COVID-19 (2020–2021) when campus activities were curtailed and the deferred SRC election left fragments of the SRC, which rendered it no longer functional. While the SRC election was urgent at the time of the review, there is also a need to explore how the SRC might function optimally with CPUT's shift to a more blended mode. The role of a functional SRC is critical, given the years of student protest and the potential for further flare-ups if student issues are not addressed through relevant structures.

### **Recommendations**

6. It is recommended that CPUT ensures that the SRC elections are held timeously, and that the SRC executive attached to various committees should be fully trained in terms of their respective roles, in particular with regard to ensuring the elected student voice is heard.
7. It is recommended that CPUT develop a strategy for SRC structures to operate in an online learning environment, and that the attendance of SRC representatives at governance meetings be monitored by the Secretariat and Department of Student Affairs.
8. It is recommended that induction training programmes for managerial and academic leadership include specific focus on effective talent management, succession planning, and handover processes.

### **Focus Area 2: The design and implementation of the institutional quality management system supports the core academic functions**

The four standards in Focus Area 2 concentrate on how the *design and implementation of an integrated quality management system* in the institution enhances the likelihood of student success and improves the quality of learning, teaching and research engagement, as well as



accommodating the results of constructive, integrated community engagement within the context of the institution's mission.

## **Standard 5**

*A quality assurance system is in place, comprising at a minimum of the following as these give effect to the delivery of the Higher Education Institution's (HEI's) core functions:*

- *governance arrangements*
- *policies processes, procedures and plans*
- *instructional products*
- *measurement of impact*
- *data management and utilisation.*

The Quality Management System (QMS) at CPUT has policies, plans, and processes for the core functions of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) research and community engagement. Several policies promote research development within the University. The CPUT Workplace Learning Policy provides a framework and criteria for enhancing the quality of work-integrated learning (WIL) and ensuring that CPUT diplomates and graduates have relevant experience and skills. The statutory governance structures at CPUT ensure the effective functioning of the IQMS. The qualifications review schedule follows a three- to five-year cycle for internal reviews, with the external and professional body reviews following their respective cycles. The five-year enrolment plan of the institution considers the current and projected Programme Qualification Mix (PQM) and is submitted to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The Registrar's Office monitors student admissions and registration. It was indicated that there were problems related to the registrations of international students since this function was split between departments.

The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Accumulation allow CPUT to admit learners from diverse backgrounds. The new HEQSF structure that required the CPUT to re-curriculate existing programmes and develop new qualifications offered an opportunity to address the decolonisation of curricula. Annual initiatives and programmes are geared toward student engagement, enhancing the student experience, and improving this experience through satisfaction surveys with consideration given to the findings. One such initiative is the CPUT Orientation Programme, which covers various pertinent topics and occurs over one week at the start of the academic year. First-time CPUT students are supported through the dedicated programmes CPUT101 and the First-Year Experience (FYE) programme. The

Department of Student Counselling, which has a presence on all CPUT campuses, provides counselling and therapeutic services (treatment, prevention, and development) and psychosocial support, and promotes mental health. The CPUT offers co-curricular activities in the form of clubs, societies, and sporting events through the Sports, Art and Culture (SAC) Department. Mechanisms allow students to lodge grievances. Different committees handle general and academic student misconduct. The Residence House Committee is responsible for sanctioning residential students for minor breaches of residence rules.

The CPUT moderation policy provides parameters and guidance for quality practices and assurance in TLA. CPUT issues degrees, diplomas and certificates to candidates who complete a CHE-accredited qualification. The Centre for Professional and Personal Development (CPPD) is the governance structure that oversees all affairs and quality management related to short courses at CPUT. The CPUT QMS conducts internal reviews of its qualifications, and monitors and reviews progress concerning their respective QIPs. The CHE also conducts rigorous qualification reviews of programmes at CPUT (e.g. the doctoral qualifications).

CPUT provides support for researchers, some funded by external agencies, while others are supported through close collaboration with research units and centres. An important mechanism is the institutionalisation of research chairs emanating from the Research, Technology and Innovation Partnership (RTIP) Blueprint 2015. Each faculty has a Faculty Research Ethics Committee, which reviews all proposed research for possible ethical implications and risks for people, animals, and the environment. CPUT encourages academic research staff to obtain National Research Foundation (NRF) ratings and in 2021, 56 staff members received an NRF rating. Community Engagement and Work-Integrated Learning are central to the CPUT vision. The Centre for Community Engagement and Work-Integrated Learning (CCEWIL) was established in 2009 with a director and two managers to manage the WIL and CE projects; however, the need for increased staffing and funding was expressed during the site visit interviews.

Campus Protection Services ensures the safety and security of staff and students, although there have been requests for additional protection services at some of the residences.

CPUT also has a whistle-blowers system in place for the community to report any concerns anonymously.

While the governance policies and processes are in place, there were reports that staff and students were not always aware of these. In particular, it was reported that contract staff were not aware of policies, and they required guidelines on how to teach the modules assigned to them.

## **Recommendations**

9. It is recommended that CPUT develop a clear communication strategy in order to ensure that the university community is familiar with the lines of authority and the QA processes and policies.
10. It is recommended that CPUT ensures that all students are familiar with the psycho-social support available; have information on SRC members and contacts; as well as access to the university rules and on how to use the Learner Management System (LMS). Postgraduate students should be trained on higher degree requirements, and on the specific support available for them, such as the Ubuntu Postgraduate Forum. It is recognised that these challenges may be COVID- and lockdown-specific and that that once teaching is normalised, this recommendation may no longer be necessary.
11. It is recommended that CPUT ensures that all part-time lecturing staff register for training to ensure they are adequately trained to teach their modules. This training should include information on how to give formative feedback.
12. It is recommended that CPUT should ensure that its document management repository becomes functional so that all staff can gain access to relevant governance and institutional QM documents.
13. It is recommended that CPUT create a coordinated system with clear lines of communication and interaction between lecturers, student counselling services, residences, funding staff, building maintenance and student support services to develop a joint plan of action to support and assist students.

## **Standard 6**

*Human, infrastructural, knowledge management and financial resources support the delivery of the institution's core academic functions across all sites of provision, in alignment with the concomitant quality management system, in accordance with the institution's mission.*

The institutional model has various faculties located at dedicated campuses (see Table 1), and this allocation contributes to the intra-faculty quality across the sites. The institutional QA strategies are cross-cutting across campuses and faculties, and each faculty has its own dedicated structures in place to ensure the quality of teaching and learning, student support, CE, research and innovation, and WIL. The SER mentions differences in inter-faculty QA processes, and refers to the fact that assurance mechanisms were not universal across faculties. Interviewees however explained that the differences between the QA practices and the measures in place were informed by specific programme requirements as well as by the requirements of professional bodies where these were applicable. The IA panel observed that there was a need for faculty guidelines to be developed and disseminated to staff members.

With regard to ensuring the capacitation of staff for purposes of quality, the CPUT has a number of customised programmes for continuous professional development (CPD), with some joint programmes being presented through collaboration with the Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC) on Design for Learning with Technologies.

Across the range of this standard, it was found that there were many excellent practices in the institution that need to be commended, such as –

- the use of the simulated virtual environment in radiation therapy;
- the exemplary services provided by the libraries;
- the timely transition of the institution to online learning to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on teaching and learning;
- the introduction of Blackboard Ally;
- the student analytic dashboards on the LMS; and
- additional features to accommodate students with disabilities.

The range of the standard also included focus on the management of the institution's fiscus as deployed for the academic project. It was noted that CPUT has had unqualified audits for the period under review, and that the institution was able to navigate its fee challenges during the student protests and the COVID-pandemic. The panel also observed that the institution had established a close working relationship with NSFAS in an endeavour to mitigate problems associated with student funding.

The SER refers to numerous problems associated with the general backlog of building repairs, the insufficient deployment of security, incidences of vandalism, and challenges arising from

inadequate ICT connectivity in some residences. These challenges were observed during the visits by the panel to the various campuses. The panel was specifically made aware of the long-standing breakdown of the air conditioner at the District Six library.

The SER (p. 145) points out that the Student Life Improvement at Residences Project has been raised to the level of an institutional project under the management of Student Affairs, to address the integration required between the Department of Communications and Technology System (CTS), Security Services and Residences. It is recommended that this project be accelerated.

## **Recommendations**

14. It is recommended that CPUT should conduct an investigation into the causes of administrative inefficiencies stemming from unresponsiveness and/or delays in addressing staff and student requests, queries, or needs including protracted procurement and recruitment processes. Strategies for improvement should be formulated to address these.
15. It is recommended that CPUT develop improvement plans for the backlogs in the maintenance of buildings, residences and the air conditioner in the District 6 library. The repairs of the air conditioner at the District 6 library should be prioritised.
16. It is recommended that CPUT allocates adequate human and financial resources for the academic project, including WIL, SL, and Community Engagement which are labour intensive involving student placements, management and monitoring, and which academic departments report as requiring extra financial and human resources.

## **Standard 7**

*Credible and reliable data (for example, on throughput and completion rates) are systematically captured, employed and analysed as an integral part of the institutional quality management system so as to inform consistent and sustainable decision-making.*

Over the past two years, the institutional systems underpinning data-use have seen significant developments to put the required information technology (IT) in place. However, elements of the collection, management and analysis of institutional data still require substantial improvement with particular reference to the data related to human resources and the quality

of some of the survey data. With respect to the HR data, there are concerns about the consistency and reliability of the data, its usability (comparability of the data for trend analysis), and the interpretation thereof (with concerns about the categorisation and reliability of the HR-related data). Also, with respect to the survey data, there are concerns about the validity and reliability of the data, in particular with regard to the methods of data collection, the low response rates, absence of bias analysis (establishing the validity of the responses or data by analysing the attained sample of the population) and questions related to the generalisability of the data. Examples include the graduate survey, which may compromise the effectiveness of the institution with regard to the employability status of its graduates. Another example is the survey on transformation, for which the panel was unable to establish any findings or methodology or utilisation.

In contrast, the student analytic data from the LMS appeared exemplary in terms of its possibilities for tracking student progress and its potential influence on teaching and learning although the usability amongst lecturing staff is limited with access being restricted to HoDs who should cascade the data to academics.

The panel was unable to ascertain the status of the archived student records from institutions (Cape Peninsula Technikon, Peninsula Technikon, Cape Town Teachers Training College or Mowbray Teachers Training College, Boland Teachers College) that had been merged into CPUT. This is a matter for concern, since it may have significant national considerations for professions, such as teachers, unable to confirm their qualifications through the institution.

### **Commendation**

- d) CPUT is commended for the student analytic data available on the LMS in terms of the possibilities for tracking student progress and its potential impact on teaching and learning.

### **Recommendations**

17. It is recommended that CPUT provide further support and/or training for staff responsible for the collection, management and analysis of the data related to institutional HR information in order for it to be valid, reliable and consistent so as to optimise its usability for decision-making.

18. It is recommended that CPUT provide additional support and/or training for staff responsible for the analysis, interpretation and reporting of the institutional-level data as well as survey data used for decision-making purposes. The institution should review the requirements for and access to training of academic and support staff to optimise the IT developments to utilise the relevant databases, platforms and systems optimally.
19. It is recommended that CPUT review the policy and practice to enable the expanded use of Blackboard and the student analytical data by academic staff.
20. It is recommended that CPUT utilise an online web-based instrument that can be administered via a mobile device for graduates to complete prior to attending their graduation ceremony. The instrument should include sufficient demographic characteristics to ensure generalisability.
21. It is recommended that CPUT consider using online digital technological solutions for all data collection to increase the validity and reliability of future surveys.
22. It is recommended that, given the history of mergers, CPUT collaborate with the DHET and South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) to compile a digital database of all historic graduate records of previous institutions (that merged at different times) and which ultimately comprise the current CPUT. These are the previous Cape Technikon, Peninsula Technikon, Boland Teachers College, Cape Town Teachers Training College (Mowbray Teachers Training College).

## **Standard 8**

*Systems and processes monitor the institution's capacity for quality management, based on the evidence gathered.*

CPUT has systems and processes in place for quality management. The Online Personal Access (OPA) and the Management Information System (MIS) portals provide institutional information. The institution has a data warehouse and a dashboarding system (PowerHEDA) for data analysis, forecasting, prediction, academic and institutional planning and decision-making.

There are multiple opportunities for staff and students to engage in quality management at the institution, including the Faculty Board, faculty committees that report to Senate

subcommittees, such as the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee (STLC), Academic Planning Committee (APC), Transformation Committee, and the Language, Library, and Research and Ethics Committees. Faculty staff also represent their constituencies at Senate subcommittees and report on these committee discussions at Faculty Board and Faculty Exco meetings. The CPUT IQMS follows the Quality Review (QR) cycles for monitoring and reviewing the QA system and the associated QIPs. The three- to five-year qualification review cycle was disrupted because of the new HEQSF qualifications and COVID-19.

Staff actively engage with students in aspects of quality management through –

- lecturer meetings with class representatives;
- the presence of class representatives in departmental meetings;
- meetings of programme heads with class representatives;
- Faculty Student Council meetings chaired by the dean; and
- activities of the FYE Forum.

Quality management during the pandemic was conducted in accordance with the COVID-19 contextually responsive academic project plans to ensure the completion of the 2020 academic year. The QMD Multimodal Guidelines and the face-to-face assessment protocol guidelines were implemented.

By way of engaging students, the QMD has implemented the Ubuntu forum for postgraduate students and a quality desk for undergraduate and postgraduate students to express their views and/or complaints. Moreover, the Transformation Directorate regularly hosts student leadership seminars to empower student participation; however, students and staff mentioned inadequacies in assuring and supporting the wellness of staff and students.

### **Commendation**

- e) CPUT is commended for the systems and processes that are in place to monitor the QMS of the institution. Data are available from QMD business processes and on the PowerHEDA dashboard and are used to track and make informed decisions on the quality management of the core academic functions of the institution.



## Recommendations

23. It is recommended that the student feedback evaluation system be formalised and compulsory. Student feedback should be factored into the Performance Management System (PMS) to enable HoDs to identify challenges and monitor improvements.
24. It is recommended that CPUT develop a culture of data-guided practices among all academic staff by providing training to access, engage and interpret the range of quantitative and qualitative data already available through various platforms (Blackboard, PowerHEDA, etc.)
25. It is recommended that a system be developed so that a single report can be developed drawing on real-time data (for example, information on registration projections vs acceptance status) rather than having data fragmented across platforms.
26. It is recommended that CPUT prioritise the development of secure, centralised faculty repositories for all faculty documents and collaboration processes via the institutional platforms (e.g. OneDrive, MS Teams, and SharePoint).
27. It is recommended that CPUT continue to monitor capacity development and the optimisation of the various digital platforms and tools to enable regular, substantive and documented engagement to be operationalised in the strategic QM implementation plan (as part of V2030) in the faculty.

## **Focus Area 3: The coherence and integration of the institutional quality management system supports the core academic functions**

The four standards in Focus Area 3 concentrate on the coherence and integration of the various components comprising the IQMS and on how these work in concert to support the likelihood of student success and improve the quality of learning, teaching and research engagement, as well as accommodating the results of constructive integrated CE in accordance with the mission of the institution.

## **Standard 9**

*An evidence-based coherent, reasonable, functional and meaningfully structured relationship exists between all components of the institutional quality management system.*

The CPUT has an integrated QMS (IQMS) with policies, guidelines, structures, committees, and subcommittees to support the core academic areas. The Institutional Planning Directorate (IPD), the Academic Planning Unit, HEMIS and Higher Education Data Analyser (HEDA) support the core academic functions and provide current, credible, institutionally relevant and reliable information for planning and review. New qualifications are developed in academic departments, approved by the Faculty Board and submitted to the Qualifications Evaluation Committee (QEC). The QEC engages with the qualifications, and tables them at the Senate APC for approval. They are then submitted to Senate, and forwarded to external statutory bodies for final approval, accreditation and registration.

Several systems support students and staff during admission and registration. Students are registered online, and the information is captured on Integrated Tertiary Software (ITS). The lecturers use ITS to access their subject information and upload their assessment marks. Support systems, such as the library, the LMS (Blackboard), and other marketing services supplement student learning. QA systems monitor and evaluate all core functions of TLA, research, and community engagement (CE). Programme and subject guides, updated each year, provide students with curriculum details. The University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG) grant supports student success by appointing tutors, mentors, and teaching assistants. The FYE programme assists students in making the transition from school to university and the Early Warning System (EWS) is in place for poorly performing and at-risk students. Qualification reviews are held internally by each department every three to five years and are facilitated and administered by the QMD. A multimodal or 'carousel' approach was developed for undergraduate and postgraduate TLA. This was implemented and driven by multiple stakeholder representatives of all faculties and support units during the COVID-19 pandemic. The panel noted that performance evaluation has been done only for post grades 1 to 4.

## **Commendation**

- f) CPUT should be commended for the library services in general and specifically for the services provided at the Mowbray Campus, which is the only library in the country that provides a national service to anyone that may wish to seek answers to questions.

## **Recommendations**

28. It is recommended that CPUT ensure an alignment between the various QMS tools and use these to complement or triangulate different data sets.

29. It is recommended that CPUT ensure more consistent monitoring measures of student performance at departmental level by, for example, using data analytics to track student progress and to minimise the number of subjects and students at risk.

## **Standard 10**

*Evidence-based regular and dedicated governance and management oversight of the quality assurance system exists.*

The panel found Standard 10 to be functional but made certain recommendations for improvements. It was found that the implementation of core academic functions at the faculty- and departmental level complied with the relevant institutional policies, and that the QA policies are cascaded from the institutional to the departmental level. Interviewees however referred to problems with the application of policies and the lack of compliance by individuals.

The quality assurance of TLA is accounted for by programme delivery, student success, examinations and moderation processes. The EWS determines at-risk students, and institutional subject reviews contribute to ongoing monitoring, reflection, and improvement at institutional and faculty level. Institutional structures, such as the QMD, Fundani, the Centre for Innovative Educational Technologies (CIET), the CPPD and the CCEWIL provide support to improve TLA. The CPUT has various awards and recognition mechanisms to reward teaching, research and CE excellence by academic staff. Administrative staff interviewees indicated that they were excluded from these rewards and benefits.

## **Recommendation**

30. It is recommended that CPUT consider including administrative staff for performance awards and for funding to further their studies and professional development.

## **Standard 11**

*Planning and processes exist for the reasonable and functional allocation of resources to all components of the institutional quality management system.*

The financial resource planning and processes were found to be in place at CPUT with substantial allocations for the IQMS. The SER and staff interviews, however, raised significant concerns highlighting risks associated with the relative decreases in funding both from the subsidy as well as from the alternative income stream. This was despite the expansion of the PQM with additional new qualifications approved with some being implemented as well as an increase in local student enrolments at undergraduate level.

With regard to HR planning and processes, the panel observed widespread concerns raised by staff during interviews about the negative impact of funding and the management, organisation and administration of the human resources on the quality of the academic programmes and functions at CPUT.

### **Commendation**

- g) CPUT is commended for its decentralised budget process, which provides scope for different environments and/or entities to prioritise according to its disciplinary and contextual needs within faculties and departments.

### **Recommendations**

- 31. It is recommended that CPUT develop a coherent fundraising strategy for increasing third-stream income. This should outline the responsibilities of various entities and responsibility centres.
- 32. It is recommended that CPUT provide support to the HR division to accelerate and improve the planning and implementation of recruitment, as well as to capacitate HR staff to support entities in allocating workloads.
- 33. It is recommended that support be provided for reviewing the work-sharing model for ensuring efficiency and the equitable distribution of work. The model should also be applied consistently across the University. This was a recommendation made in the SER and was also a finding of the department of internal audit.
- 34. It is recommended that CPUT provide support for the SER recommendation to disaggregate the staffing budget into three components: the total staffing budget for the University, a part-time or contract staffing budget, and budgeting regarding staff vacancies.

35. It is recommended that CPUT provide support for the SER recommendation to introduce an online system to monitor differentiated budget allocations for staffing. This should be aligned, however, with a specific staffing plan for each faculty, which strives for full-time, competent, qualified staff whilst lessening the dependency on part-time lecturers and still allowing for the appointment of specialised contract staff where particular knowledge sets are required on a short-term or fixed basis (e.g. for research projects).

## **Standard 12**

*The quality assurance system achieves its purpose efficiently and effectively.*

The panel found that the QA system was efficient and effective in supporting the core academic functions of CPUT at various levels. At faculty level, the Quality Assurance Policy sets out the processes, procedures, and review cycles. These rely on adequate resources being allocated to ensure the sustained quality of TLA, research, and CE, optimal human capacity and responsiveness to the findings of reviews.

Interviewees indicated that the number of vacant academic posts resulted in the overburdening some staff, and that it constituted a risk for the QMS. However, as many of the academic interviewees mentioned, despite the lack of a full staffing complement, the QA system was only functional because of the high levels of commitment of staff in the faculties who ensure quality. In the long term, however, this not sustainable.

One of the elements that the SER referred to as being problematic within the QMS pertained to obtaining student feedback and utilising this to advance TLA. The absence of the student voice is a significant problem, and the institution needs to formalise the process of gathering student feedback and acting on it.

Student input into processes was also cited as a problem. As has been mentioned elsewhere in this report, the SRC is required to participate fully in institutional structures, including the College Board and the STLC when programme and quality matters are discussed. The SRC is also required to participate in Council committees and senate where academic oversight is deliberated. It is incumbent upon the SRC to ensure that it participates fully in governance and academic structures to ensure its opinions are expressed and its voice heard, and that feedback is obtained. Well-functioning student structures are needed both as part of the QMS and to avert possible protest flare-ups.

During the site visits, the panel was able to engage with external structures and stakeholders. Faculties regularly engage with a range of external stakeholders, such as professional bodies, industry, government, community organisations, research institutes, as well as other local, regional, national and international HEIs. The stakeholders interviewed by the panel proposed more formalised and structured arrangements so that the institution might optimise on their expertise. It was clear from the various sources of information that CPUT values the views of all stakeholders, including students. The SER (p. 192) provides recommendations for improving stakeholder engagement as a QA mechanism.

The SER indicates that CPUT conducts and participates in a range of stakeholder surveys as part of its commitment to quality assurance. The findings of these and other QA reviews are incorporated in the QIPs, which are monitored by the QARM unit on a regular basis, and reported on in Senate and Council. Senior managers are responsible for the implementation of the improvement actions. To improve efficiency, the SER (p. 192) recommends that reporting on QIPs should also be included as a standing item on Faculty Management Committee (ManCom) and Faculty Board agendas. In addition, the SER (p. 192) recommends the need for additional resources to enable QA processes to be better integrated into different university structures and to develop greater staff awareness of quality functions and assurance.

While there are opportunities for academic staff to engage in QA development activities and ensure levels of competence, these need to be maintained and enhanced, and new staff need to be capacitated. This requires adequate resources as well as dedicated staff time to be allocated for participating in training.

With the differing QA approaches required by different professional bodies and by different teaching and learning (T&L) areas, the SER (p. 193) points to the importance of faculties documenting their specific QM processes in a Faculty Quality Manual. This should be coupled with structured, quarterly reporting on the implementation of the Faculty QM and how it supports the core academic functions.

## **Recommendations**

36. It is recommended that CPUT ensure that formalised processes are put in place for conducting regular surveys and obtaining feedback in order to enhance interaction between stakeholders, staff and students. Regular student feedback on learning modules should be sought. This feedback should be used to improve teaching and

learning, and the results and/or outcomes should be communicated to the relevant student body involved to assure that student voices are being heard and taken seriously.

37. It is recommended that the institution capitalise on the modes of communication that were established during lockdown to engage students. These modes will continue to be beneficial – irrespective of whether the institution reverts to fully campus-based, blended or hybrid modes of teaching.

38. It is recommended that reporting on the implementation of the QIPs be included as a standing item on Faculty ManCom and Faculty Board agendas. These reports could be expanded to include reporting on curriculum transformation and the use of ICTs in teaching and learning.

39. It is recommended that additional resources be allocated to enable further enhancement of the QMS.

## **Focus Area 4: Curriculum development, learning and teaching support the likelihood of student success**

The four standards in Focus Area 4 concentrate on how effectively the IQMS enhances the likelihood of student success, improves learning and teaching, and supports the scholarship of learning and teaching. These standards are drilled down in greater detail in Focus Area 2.

### **Standard 13**

*An effective institutional system for programme design, approval, delivery, management and review is in place.*

Four policies at CPUT govern the design of new programmes. A departmental team consisting of a Chair of Department (CoD), the HoD, subject specialists, and industry partners contribute to the development of new programmes. Completed programme proposals follow an established pathway before receiving final approval from Senate, and thereafter programmes are submitted to the CHE for accreditation. Internal qualification reviews are undertaken in a three-year cycle by the QMD. Panel members include invited industry experts and professionals, CPUT academic staff, students, alumni, the advisory board and/or committee and external peer reviewers. Feedback from various sources is used to determine the

relevance and quality of programme curricula. Industry advisory members and stakeholders are consulted in the design of new learning programmes, and the input of current students and alumni is solicited via surveys. CPUT followed the DHET and CHE directives and guidelines to complete the educational project during the 2020–2021 COVID-19 restrictions. A multimodal approach was used to complete the academic programmes. Guidelines and resources for blended and online learning were established, and a number of surveys were done during COVID-19 to establish the impact of online learning on the staff and students. Areas of concern pertain to the responsiveness of the institution to the changing demographics of the student profile.

## **Recommendations**

40. It is recommended that CPUT include more extensive external peer review input into curriculum development. It is recommended that CPUT strengthen its partnerships with industry, community, and government through regular engagement sessions, in addition to what is already in place. In order to improve the efficiency of these partnerships, it is recommended that a formalised process be established.

41. It is recommended that CPUT investigate the sharp rise in pass rates in some subjects, especially during the COVID-19 lockdown period. There is a need for ensuring that the institution responds to the changing student demographics through its provision of student support and student success.

## **Standard 14**

*There is evidence-based engagement at various institutional levels, among staff, and among staff and students, with:*

- *curriculum transformation, curriculum reform and renewal;*
- *learning and teaching innovation; and*
- *the role of technology in the curriculum, in the world of work, and in society in general.*

The panel found CPUT to be functional in the area covered by this standard. There are numerous structures comprising staff, students and external stakeholders to facilitate engagement on TLA matters. The extent to which effective communication occurs is however not consistent. Curriculum transformation is driven through various mechanisms. Curriculum



officers contribute to driving curriculum transformation. The active implementation of the language policy is one tool to drive transformation. There have been several initiatives to transform venues and spaces. The Centre for Higher Education and Development (CHED) and faculty research activities focus on the improvement of TLA.

### **Recommendation**

42. It is recommended that CPUT ensure curriculum transformation and general student inclusiveness.

### **Standard 15**

*The students' exposure to learning and teaching at the institution, across all sites and modes of provision, is experienced as positive and enabling of their success.*

The range of Standard 15 is vast and covers many different components with uneven functionality across them. Accordingly, the panel found that some components of this standard were functioning optimally while others were found to require substantial improvement.

Well-functioning areas include the tools developed for student feedback, and the strategies in place to create a sense of belonging for students and staff development initiatives. Service delivery in some support departments however appear to require substantial improvement in respect of supporting students and, as cited elsewhere in this report, processes for obtaining student views and some of the feedback mechanisms need to be more finely tuned.

### **Recommendations**

43. It is recommended that CPUT ensure that the policy on Student Feedback on Teaching and Assessments be implemented consistently with a view to providing timely formative feedback and feed-forward feedback.
44. It is recommended that CPUT consider implementing a ticketing system for complaints and queries across all faculties.

## **Standard 16**

*Institutions engage with and reflect on the employability of their graduates in a changing world.*

The last Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) was conducted in 2018. The low participation rate of the GDS and Graduation Employability Survey (GES) makes it difficult to provide a true measure of the employability of CPUT graduates. The data for 2018 showed that 54% of graduates were unemployed at the time. Perhaps this is a reflection of the national unemployment rate. It was estimated that 74% of the GES participants were satisfied with the overall learning experience at CPUT. Although some alumni provided very positive experiences about their association with CPUT, others who were contacted to provide input to the SER were not very positive. CPUT should be more proactive in tracking its alumni.

### **Recommendations**

45. It is recommended that CPUT use the GDS and GES data to improve TLA, measure student success and employability, and provide data to enhance department programme offerings. The institution should state clearly which entity is responsible for implementing the GDS and GES.
46. It is recommended that CPUT should ensure enhanced collaboration and synergy between the IPD and the Alumni Office, and that faculties track alumni.
47. It is recommended that CPUT ensure that the DevMan (Development Manager) is better utilised and integrated with the GDS for greater efficiency and completeness of data and longitudinal alumni tracking.

