

# HEQCIS Technical Workshop

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Firstly, I would like to welcome you to our workshop and to say how delighted I am to see such interest in the HEQCIS.

I am Judy Backhouse, the Director for Advice and Monitoring at the Council on Higher Education. My responsibility is for coordinating the CHE's advice to the Minister and part of that process is monitoring the system, so that the advice that we give is well informed.

I have just completed a report on the State of Higher Education, which is currently at the printers and will be released at the end of this month. This report reviews the performance of the higher education system over the past five years. What will interest you about this report is that, for the first time, we have also tried to reflect on private higher education and the role it plays in our national higher education system.

In putting together this report, I made use of what data and research was readily available. And this is where the difficulty with private higher education lies. There is very little information available about how big the sector is, how many graduates it contributes to the economy and with what skills.

Which brings me to the importance of the HEQC Information System. For the CHE, this system fulfils two important functions. On the one hand, we have a statutory obligation to report information about the awards that you make to the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD), and on the other hand, we want to know more about you. The more we know, the more we can take account of the private higher education sector in national planning and policy. It also means that the role of private institutions can be better understood and acknowledged.

I am delighted at the progress we have made so far. The HEQCIS team have been dedicated in getting the system up and running and we are beginning to see greater participation. At the moment 70 of just more than 100 private providers have applied for their edu.dex licenses. Forty-five have reached the stage of completing their qualifications templates and we have four institutions who have submitted data. I would like to sincerely thank those of you who have started the process. Your participation is really important to us.

We are hoping that, as of next year, we will begin to have meaningful data about the size and configuration of the private higher education sector. We are also under pressure to meet our statutory obligations to provide data. I know too, that many of you are keen to be able to prove that you have met your obligations to provide data.

We will be issuing letters confirming that you have complied from January next year. At the end of January, we will also providing the Department of Higher Education and Training with our first report of all the providers that have complied. This means we would like to have at least one data submission from each of you by the end of January. But the process can be complicated, especially if your organisation is large and complex, so please don't wait to start. On average it takes about three months to get from your initial application for edu.dex to your first successful submission. Which means that you need to start now.

I do appreciate that there is effort involved on your side in making this work. We would like to make the process as simple as possible for you. I trust that by now you all know Phuti Semenya, our project manager and have her contact details. She is extremely knowledgeable and helpful and your first port of call for assistance.

We are in the process of reworking our web site to make it clearer and more user-friendly, so look out for that and, if you have any suggestions as to what you would like to see on the web site, please let us know. Michael Gordon here is our web master. You can direct your comments to him.

This workshop is of course another of our initiatives to make the process easier for you. We have Kirstin Bath here who is the technical guru. She will be walking you through the process and answering all your technical questions. This is your opportunity to hear in detail how it all works and to ask questions. Please take advantage of it.

From me, thank-you very much for joining us today and for your participation in the HEQCIS work. I would like to reiterate how important it is for me to get a full understanding of the higher education sector that includes the private providers. I do hope that you will have a productive and informative morning.

Judy Backhouse  
4<sup>th</sup> September 2009