

Communiqué 3 of 2024

To: Public and Private Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of South Africa.

Subject: Extension of the concession for programmes accredited for the contact mode of provisioning to continue to be offered through remote online distance and / or blended modes of provisioning, the development of a Higher Education Practice Standard (HEPS) and a themed review in this area.

1. The CHE Communiqués of November 2020, July 2021, July 2022 and June 2023 provided a concession to institutions from the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) regarding mode of delivery of programmes regardless of the mode for which they were accredited. This was required in order to enable continuity in learning and teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant that programmes accredited for the contact mode of delivery continued to be deemed to be accredited despite the shift to emergency remote teaching and learning. The concession was extended to include the 2024 academic year.
2. Institutions that were accredited for the contact mode of provision pre-pandemic, must therefore, in theory, return to the accredited mode of provision.
3. However, many institutions have made investments to harness the affordances in digital technologies in learning and teaching since the pandemic and have indicated that they would like to continue with the new modes of delivery going forward.
4. In 2023, the HEQC decided that consideration of modes of provision other than what has been accredited for specific programmes, such as blended and online learning, will be managed as part of the implementation of the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), and that changes to modes of provision will be considered through the implementation of a themed review.
5. A Community of Practice (CoP) was constituted to develop a Higher Education Practice Standard (HEPS) for *Modes of Learning and Teaching Provision* which will form the basis for the themed review for institutions wishing to continue offering the programmes that were originally accredited for the contact mode, in a variety of modes of provision.

6. The development of the HEPS for *Modes of Learning and Teaching Provision*, as well as the *Manual for the Themed Review on Modes of Learning and Teaching Provision*, are nearing completion and will soon be released for comment. Institutions are requested to respond to the requests for comment on these documents when they are released.
7. The first purpose of the themed review is to enable institutions to demonstrate that quality arrangements for the modes of provisioning that they wish to continue using are in place for programmes that were originally accredited for the contact mode. The second purpose of the themed review is for the CHE to gain an understanding of the state of play as regards multi-modal provision in the sector and to enable the CHE support institutions that need assistance through quality assurance-focused capacity development initiatives.
8. It is planned that the themed review will be completed and that all participating institutions will receive HEQC outcomes on accredited modes of provision by the end of December 2025, in time to inform institutional planning for the 2027 academic year.
9. The envisaged timelines above are based on the CHE's capacity, as well as the need to consider institutional planning.
10. The concession on modes of provision that is currently in place is therefore extended to the end of the 2026 academic year.

Yours sincerely



Dr Whitfield Green
Chief Executive Officer

Date: 15 April 2024