

# CHE Annual Report 1999/2000

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## **CHE Annual Report 1999/2000**

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## FOREWORD

High quality higher education is a fundamental necessity for equity and economic and social development and a vibrant democracy. Without the production of high-level skilled graduates, the generation of knowledge and responsive knowledge-based community service on the part of higher education, such development will be constrained. The challenges of reconstruction and development are tremendous. Higher education must not fail in meeting the needs of South Africa in the twenty-first century.

The CHE is an independent statutory body established by the Higher Education Act of 1997. Its mandate is to advise the Minister of Education on all matters of higher education so that the system is characterised by equity, quality, responsiveness to economic and social development needs, and effective and efficient provision and management and also contributes to the public good. The CHE is also responsible, through its Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), for quality assurance in higher education.

The CHE is required to submit an Annual Report to parliament. In this regard, it is pleased to present its second Annual Report, covering the period September 1999 to October 2000.

This first Annual Report of the CHE, issued in November 1999, reviewed higher education prior to the democratic elections of 1994 and since the promulgation of the *White Paper* on higher education in 1997. It highlighted new trends and developments, examined progress towards the policy goals embodied in the *White Paper*, identified key challenges and, where appropriate, proposed new directions. The extensive analysis of South African higher education contained in the first Annual Report retains its validity. Indeed, many of the trends and developments that were illustrated in that report have intensified.

The argument in the first Annual Report for considered yet urgent and decisive action towards creating a new higher education landscape and system remains. The CHE Shape and Size task team report, *Towards a new higher education landscape: Meeting the equity, quality and social development imperatives of South Africa in the twenty-first century*, released in July 2000 further amplified the need for change and advanced proposals around a new landscape.

The period between September 1999 and October 2000 has been tremendously eventful for the CHE. Apart from delivering the Shape and Size report to the Minister of Education, the CHE has taken important further steps in building a national quality assurance system for higher education. It has also been involved in a range of other activities, the details of which are covered in this report. In the process, the CHE has begun to establish its identity as an independent body seeking to operate in the national interest. Overall, the CHE is pleased with its performance and looks forward to effectively and efficiently discharging the important and extensive responsibilities that it has been allocated.

Finally, as chairperson, I thank the members of the CHE and the CHE executive committee, the members of various CHE task teams and committees (including representatives of national stakeholders, the South African Qualifications Authority and the Department of Education), and the CHE staff for their selfless contributions to the work and activities of the CHE.

Professor Wiseman Nkuhlu  
CHE Chairperson

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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APPETD	Alliance of Private Providers of Education and Training
CDE	Centre for Development Enterprise
CHET	Centre for Higher Education Transformation
CCERSA	Committee of College of Education Rectors of South Africa
CTCP	Committee of Technical College Principals
CTP	Committee of Technikon Principals
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DoE	Department of Education
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assuror
FETC	Further Education and Training Certificate
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HET	Higher Education and Training
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
IJC	Interim Joint Committee
JIP	Joint Implementation Plan
Minister	Minister of Education
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NRF	National Research Foundation
NSB	National Standards Body
PANSALB	Pan South African Language Board
QA	Quality Assurance
QPU	Quality Promotion Unit of SAUVCA
SAPSE	South African Post School Education
SAQA	South African Qualification Authority
SAUVCA	South African University Vice-Chancellors Association
SERTEC	Certification Council for Technikon Education
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SGB	Standards Generating Body
Task Team	Council on Higher Education Shape and Size Task Team
White Paper	EDUCATION WHITE PAPER 3 OF 1997, <i>A PROGRAMME for the Transformation of Higher Education</i>

# THE COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION, 1999-2000

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) was established in terms of the Higher Education Act of 1997 in May 1998. Its mission is to contribute to the development of a higher education system characterised by equity, quality, responsiveness to economic and social development needs, and effective and efficient provision and management. The CHE seeks to make this contribution:

- by providing informed, considered, independent and strategic advice on higher education (HE) issues to the Minister of Education;
- through the quality assurance activities of its sub-committee, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC);
- through publications and through broader dissemination of information and through conferences and workshops on developments in HE.

## 2. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHE

The *Higher Education Act* and the Education White Paper 3 of 1997, *A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education* of 1997, establish the responsibilities of the CHE. These include:

- advising the Minister on all HE issues on which the CHE's advice is sought;
- advising the Minister on its own initiative on HE issues which the CHE regards as important;
- designing and implementing a system for quality assurance in HE and establishing the HEQC;
- advising the Minister on the appropriate shape and size of the HE system, including its desired institutional configuration;
- advising the Minister in particular on the new funding arrangements for HE and on language policy in HE;
- developing a means for monitoring and evaluating whether, how, to what extent and with what consequences the vision, policy goals and objectives for HE defined in the White Paper on HE are being realised;
- promoting the access of students to HE;
- providing advice to the Minister on the proposed new Education Management Information System for HE;
- formulating advice for the Minister on a new academic policy for HE, including a diploma/degree structure which would advance the policy objectives of the White Paper;
- formulating advice for the Minister on stimulating greater institutional responsiveness to societal needs, especially those linked to stimulating South Africa's economy, such as greater HE-industry partnerships;
- appointing an independent assessment panel from which the Minister is able to appoint assessors to conduct investigations into particular issues at public HE institutions;
- establishing healthy interactions with HE stakeholders on the CHE's work;
- producing an Annual Report on the state of HE for submission to parliament;
- convening an annual consultative conference of HE stakeholders;
- Participating in the development of a coherent human resource development framework for South Africa in concert with other organisations.

These many, varied responsibilities have required the CHE to engage in different kinds of activities and to responding in strategic, flexible, pragmatic yet principled ways.

### 3. MAJOR ACTIVITIES

The CHE has been involved in a number of major activities during the period covered by this Report. These activities have been undertaken by Task Teams that the CHE has established on areas and issues requiring special attention according to the *Higher Education Act* or White Paper, or considered by the CHE to be of particular importance. Each Task Team is convened by a CHE member, comprises different numbers of CHE members and has the option to co-opt people with relevant expertise. In the area of quality assurance, work has been co-ordinated by the Interim HEQC and various committees constituted by it.

#### 3.1 Shape and size of higher education

A Task Team around the shape and size of HE was established in 1998 to enable the CHE to advise the Minister on the HE institutional configuration that would best achieve various policy objectives. The Task Team was spurred on by the Minister's 27 July 1999 *Call to Action: Mobilising Citizens to Build a South African Education and Training System for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* where he stated:

The size and shape of the higher education system cannot be left to chance if we are to realise the vision of a rational, seamless higher education system, responsive to the needs of students of all ages and the intellectual challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The institutional landscape of the higher education system will be reviewed as a matter of urgency in collaboration with the Council on Higher Education.

The Task Team commissioned reports on the key conditions and issues that needed to be taken into account in any consideration of the shape and size of the HE system. A concept paper that looked at these conditions and issues and the principles, criteria and options that ought to inform any shape and size exercise was also developed.

The CHE's 1998-1999 Annual Report and its first consultative conference in November 1999 clearly signalled that:

There is now a need to identify and tackle with vigour the core, priority issues and areas - the size and shape of the HE system, academic policy, how an integrated yet differentiated system is to be achieved and sustained by funding, etc. - to make decisive choices and decisions and issue specific policy declarations. The resolution of a number of other subsidiary issues depends in large part on these initial choices and decisions. (T)here is a need in specific areas and around particular issues for adequate national and central shaping and steering of the HE system and appropriate and timely interventions, with a concomitant development of greater effectiveness and efficiency with respect to these processes. (T)he resources must be mobilised to support institutions to develop capacities congruent with the demands of the new conjuncture. Prioritisation and decision making could contribute to providing greater policy direction, greater focus and depth to the work of central steering bodies and more effective use of the limited human and financial resources available. The movement towards a vibrant, dynamic and well functioning HE system which has both social and economic public and private benefits for society and individuals respectively depends on taking action and meeting the challenges above.

The CHE also indicated the important contextual realities that would inform its work around shape and size. These realities included:

- the legislative framework and national HE policy goals;
- conditions at HE institutions and the challenges that these implied. A wide range of problems and weaknesses established equity, quality, effectiveness and efficiency challenges;
- the rise and extraordinary growth of private sector provision in HE. While the potential importance of this constitutionally entrenched sector of education was acknowledged, concerns were raised about its mode of regulation and its implications for the public HE sector;
- the emergence of a new landscape in which old divisions were being eroded without reference to any systemic plan or to the forms of differentiation necessary to the development of national goals.

The idea of differentiation was regarded as extremely important in the evolution of a reconstructed HE landscape because:

(t)he challenge is to maintain and to consolidate the diversity and differentiation within the system on the one hand [and] to ensure that that there is more effective and efficient steering so that the policy goals of a national integrated and co-ordinated system are not compromised,

- the critical importance of national planning for achieving goals internal to HE and responding to the demands of the economy and of society.

While the reconfiguration of the HE system and the creation of a new landscape were considered a necessity by most stakeholders, the CHE's own particular challenge was how to discharge its mandate to advise the Minister in regard to shape and size and, of course, what should be the nature of its advice. To begin with, during December 1999, the CHE presented a Memorandum to the Minister of Education, *Towards A Framework and Strategy for Reconfiguring the Higher Education System in South Africa: Recommendations and Advice* (Appendix 1).

At his speech at the *Launch of the Implementation Programme for the Tirisano Call to Action* on 13 January 2000, the Minister referred to the recommendations that he received from the CHE and announced that:

In principle, I have accepted the recommendations of the CHE. A task team, comprising representatives of the CHE, the Department of Education, and other persons knowledgeable about higher education, is in process of being set up and will report no later than the end of June 2000.

Later that month he indicated his 'broad agreement with the Council's approach' and stated that he expected the CHE to provide a:

set of concrete proposals on the shape and size of the higher education system by 30 June 2000. The Task Team needed to conduct a sober and far-reaching review that also answered the President's question: Is higher education, will higher education be, a system for the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

He further clarified that the work of the Task Team would be:

an overarching exercise designed to put strategies into place to ensure that our higher education system is indeed on the road to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The restructuring will therefore impact on the system as a whole. There can be no business as usual.

He undertook, further to produce a national plan containing comprehensive proposals which he intended to table in Cabinet linked to the 'ongoing processes of institutional planning and to implementation time frameworks'.

The CHE Task Team was constituted in February 2000. On 7 April 2000, the Task Team produced a Discussion Document to engage the key constituencies in HE around the reconfiguring of HE. On 17 April 2000, a consultative meeting was held around the Discussion Document. The Task Team took note of the various concerns that were expressed and invited public responses to the document. Over 60 written responses were received. These were analysed and the substantive concerns raised by stakeholders were considered during the Task Team's deliberations. These submissions raised questions about the compatibility of the Task Team's ideas with the White Paper, the ostensible rigidity of the proposed structure for differentiation, the resources and capacity for institutional reconfiguration, the 'size' of the system, the qualification and degree structure and the implications of private provision. Concerns were also raised around a national human resource strategy, admissions, research and academic development, and the question of effective national planning and steering.

To aid its work, the Task Team commissioned a number of studies. The studies included work on an international comparative study on differentiation and diversity within HE; the rationale for investing in HE; issues related to the qualifications and degree structure; distance education and the use of information and communication technologies; employment trends and high level skill projections; combinations and mergers; review of the claims of provinces without HE provision; etc. A number of unsolicited reports and studies were also provided to the Task Team, which also had full access

to the institutional plans of all universities and technikons and to various reports and databases of the Department of Education (DoE).

The CHE's Report was handed to the Minister on 18 July 2000 (Appendix 2) and has received wide national media coverage. The Minister subsequently called for public responses to the Report by 15 September 2000. He also indicated his intention to take forward a national planning process on the HE system after receiving and carefully evaluating responses to the CHE's Report.

The CHE indicated that it:

views its Report to be a contribution to the overall activities of national planning, the development of a national plan by the Department of Education, and the production of three-year plans by public higher education institutions. Decisions on reconfiguration should become part of the national plan.

For a number of reasons, the production of the Report by the CHE is not the end of the CHE's role with regard to the configuration of the HE system. The legislative process requires that national planning on the part of the DoE must involve consultation with and the advice of the CHE, and that institutional negotiations must take cognisance of the advice of the CHE. Three-year rolling plans must themselves be developed within the framework of a national plan. Moreover, the Ministry is required to request the CHE's advice on the criteria to be used to assess the suitability and sustainability of institutional plans to ensure a fit between these and national plans. Finally, the CHE is also required by the White Paper to advise and assist around a number of other issues that have implications for the configuration and further development of the HE system.

Taken together these constitute a huge menu of responsibilities, which go to the heart of many of the recommendations framed in regard to reconfiguring the HE system. This, of course, as is the case with other national HE organisations, raises the question of capacity to do all that is required within the constraints of available human and financial resources.



### 3.2 Quality assurance and the HEQC

The *Higher Education Act* assigned to the CHE statutory responsibility for quality assurance and quality promotion in HE, to be carried out through a permanent body, the HEQC. The work of the HEQC, in carrying out its mandate of giving effect to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), is subject to the requirements of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The functions of the HEQC, according to the *Act*, are:

- to promote quality assurance in HE;
- to audit the quality assurance mechanisms of HE institutions;
- to accredit programmes of HE.

The CHE established a six-member Task Team in October 1998 to advise it on setting up the HEQC, given the existing quality assurance arrangements in the country and the statutory requirement to forge a national quality assurance system for HE that would be well co-ordinated and inclusive. On the basis of the preliminary recommendations of this Task Team, in April 1999 the CHE approved the establishment of an Interim HEQC and mandated it to undertake a number of tasks.

The Interim HEQC is composed of CHE members and participants from key constituencies: the Committee of Technikon Principals (CTP), the South African University Vice-Chancellors Association (SAUVCA), the Committee of College of Education Rectors of South Africa (CCERSA), the DoE, the Department of Labour, the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) and professional councils. A first meeting in June 1999 established three



subcommittees to undertake a range of investigative, evaluative, regulatory and consultative tasks. Key among these were:

- preparing a founding document, identifying principles and priorities for the CHE as an ETQA that will seek SAQA registration;
- evaluating the Certification Council for Technikon Education (SERTEC) and the former Quality Promotion Unit (QPU) of SAUVCA to contribute towards identifying best practices for the HEQC;
- establishing appropriate working relationships between the HEQC and a range of other related bodies e.g. the professional councils, the SETA's, other ETQA's, the National Standards Bodies (NSB's) and Standards Generating Bodies (SGB's) of SAQA, etc.;
- attending to a variety of transitional quality assurance issues until a fully fledged HEQC is established;
- On-going consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Since then the Interim HEQC has been involved in a range of research, consultative and planning activities intended to inform the development of a founding document on the basis of which the Council on Higher Education (CHE) could establish the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC).

1. The interim HEQC commissioned an evaluation of Sertec and the former QPU to identify best practices in their operations that could be incorporated into the HEQC. The evaluation was also to furnish information on problems and omissions in the work of these two organisations and make recommendations on issues to be taken into account in the establishment of the HEQC. The evaluation panel, which consisted of participants from universities and technikons and local and international consultants, produced a comprehensive report that was extremely useful for the preparation of the draft founding document. The document was published and circulated to a range of stakeholders.
2. The interim HEQC has also commissioned two further investigations pertaining to the quality related work of other potential ETQAs in HE:
  - a report on the quality assurance mandate, focus, activities and plans of a selected number of professional councils;
  - a report on the quality assurance mandate, focus, activities and plans of a selected number of SETAs.

Both these reports are intended to inform the establishment of partnerships and agreements between the HEQC and professional councils and SETAs. Such partnerships will be a critical strategy to ensure coherence and co-ordination of QA activities in the HE band.
3. From 1 July 2000, the interim HEQC took over from SAQA the responsibility of processing applications from private providers for interim accreditation. Initiatives have been put in place to streamline the process, including an investigation into the accreditation manual ('blue book') currently in use. A new accreditation manual is almost ready and will be discussed with and pilot-tested with private providers and other stakeholders.
4. Meetings have been held with a range of potential partners and stakeholders in HE. This is an ongoing process to ensure that the CHE/HEQC's role as a co-ordinating and facilitating ETQA in HE will be conducted on the basis of a co-operative approach to quality assurance. The interim HEQC has worked closely with the SAUVCA Quality Forum, the Committee on Tutorial Matters of the CTP, the Alliance of Private Providers of education and Training (APPETD) and the Quality Assurance Directorate of SAQA on critical issues identified in the Founding Document
5. The CHE/Interim HEQC took the responsibility to facilitate the development of a Joint Implementation Plan (JIP) to ensure coherence and stability in standard setting and quality assurance activities in HE. Representatives from the CHE/Interim HEQC, SAUVCA, CTP, APPETD, Committee of Technical College Principals (CTCP), CCERSA, DoE and South

African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) have formed a JIP Committee to develop a plan that will address the concerns of HE stakeholders. The JIP Committee is also addressing the issue of a qualifications framework for the HE band as well as level descriptors.

6. The interim HEQC completed the process of developing a draft founding document which sets out the mandate, mission, principles, goals and strategic operational objectives of the HEQC (Appendix 3). The document was circulated to a range of stakeholders for comment. The document was finalised on the basis of stakeholder responses and approved by the CHE at its meeting in October 2000.
7. A call for nominations to the HEQC was made in mid-October 2000.

All of the above preparatory activities will hopefully enable the CHE to establish the HEQC formally by early 2001.

Dr Mala Singh who has convened the Interim HEQC was seconded in April 2000 from the National Research Foundation (NRF) to the CHE for a three-year period to manage the quality assurance responsibilities of the CHE on a full time basis.

Staff for the HEQC have been hired; others are currently in the process of being employed. A detailed business plan and budget for the HEQC is in preparation to ensure that this critical operational responsibility of the CHE will be conducted with appropriate resourcing and strategic planning. An application has been made to SAQA for the CHE/HEQC to be accredited as an ETQA. Once the founding document is finalised, the development of various quality assurance instruments and processes will begin in earnest.

Overall, the interim HEQC has come to a more comprehensive understanding of the scope of work of the HEQC, particularly in the light of a context that has to take into account the following factors:

- the possible reconfiguration of HE in the light of the CHE size and shape investigation. The role of quality and quality assurance in the reconstruction of the HE landscape has been flagged in the CHE report as being critical to equity, efficiency and effectiveness in HE;
- the preparation by a range of professional councils to become ETQAs, in the HE band;
- the establishment of SETAs by the Department of Labour and the development of quality assurance programmes by potential SETA ETQAs intending to cover qualifications in the HE band;
- the acceleration of standard setting activities by NSB's and SGB's established within a SAQA framework and the need for coherence between standard setting and quality assurance in HE;
- an increase in the range and scope of private provision in HE as well as in partnerships between public and private providers, both of which are making issues of quality responsibility and quality assurance more complex.

The establishment of an effective HEQC will be a central plank in the successful reconfiguration of HE in South Africa. The introduction of quality assurance should be viewed as an integral part of the steering and planning instruments which will be used to reconstruct the HE system so that it yields the full developmental objectives of equity, responsiveness to social and economic needs and innovative learning which are so necessary for this country's development.

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### 3.3 Academic policy

The existing academic policy for universities and technikons, including the requirements for the various categories of qualifications, are contained in the SAPSE 02-116 policy document for universities and SAPSE 02 –150 for technikons. In general, these policy documents do not reflect the White Paper's aims for a new academic policy framework which includes issues such as a qualifications structure for HE, articulation between institutions and incorporating multiple entry and exit points in qualification structures. In addition, at least for universities and technikons, these policies are based on a strict binary system in which universities and technikons are each governed by their own academic policies. A new set of norms and standards for teacher education programmes were introduced during 2000.

Since the White Paper's policy goals and aims are broad and insufficiently detailed to serve as criteria to evaluate applications for the introduction of new learning programmes and qualifications, the CHE has had to rely on the existing policies in formulating its advice to the Minister on new programmes. This not only retards innovation at HE institutions but also discourages transformation of academic programmes. The development of new policy governing academic programmes was therefore a necessity.

To address the challenges in this area, the CHE decided:

- that its committee processing applications for the accreditation and (with the mandate of the DOE) approval of programmes of public HE institutions should be expanded to include a nominee of each of the CTP, SAUVCA, CCERSA and the DoE; and that applications for the approval of new learning programmes and qualifications be processed in terms of existing policy documents but be approached with flexibility and in the spirit of the thrust of the new policy goals;
- To establish an Academic Policy Task Team to ensure that a new academic policy for HE is developed that includes guidelines for a diploma and degree structure that reflect the policy aims of the White Paper.

During early 2000, to facilitate co-ordination and communication and provide a one-stop service to institutions, the CHE committee on the accreditation and approval of learning programmes of public HE institutions became the Interim Joint Committee (on Registration of New Qualifications, the Accreditation of New Learning Programmes and the Approval of New Learning Programmes for Funding Purposes) of SAQA, CHE and DoE. A new document that clarified arrangements around the accreditation, approval and registration of new learning programmes and qualifications was produced (the 'purple book') and a meeting of representatives from universities and a representative of the CTP was held in this regard. A number of meetings of the IJC, which is convened by the CHE, have been held and the IJC has been growing in effectiveness and efficiency owing to the commitment and hard work that has been invested by staff.

The first meeting of the Task Team on Academic Policy, which included representatives of CTP, SAUVCA, DoE and SAQA, defined the purposes of an academic policy document and the areas and issues that needed to be covered by such a document. These included providing:

- a cohesive and comprehensive policy framework for HE learning programmes which reflects recently adopted HE legislation and new HE policy developments;
- Guidance to institutions in developing HE learning programmes;
- For the effective and efficient utilisation of public resources expended on HE and for minimising wasteful overlap and duplication of learning programmes.

A Working Group was established to develop an initial draft document on academic policy. The initial research required for developing a new policy on HE learning programmes was completed and a proposed detailed structure for a first draft of the policy document was developed. The latter included:

- the purpose and extent of proposed policy;
- Policy background to HE learning programmes;
- Present policies on learning programmes;

- Developments and changed contexts requiring a new policy on the learning programmes;
- Purpose and aims of HE;
- Distinctive aims for sets of HE learning programmes
- Admission and entry to HE;
- a qualifications structure for HE
- Delivery of learning programmes
- procedures for obtaining approval to offer specific learning programmes.

However, it became apparent that important assumptions had to be made about the future shape of HE which had not yet been agreed on. In the light of this the work of the Task Team was put on hold until there could be clarity on the matter of the shape of HE.

A further meeting of the Task Team, which was extended to include a representative of private providers of HE, was held in September 2000. In the light of experiences during 2000, it became clear that a new comprehensive academic policy document that integrated university and technikon qualifications would also need to address:

- the definition and purpose of each recognised qualification;
- rationale for the extended Bachelors degree and resolving the function of the Honours degree (if this is supported);
- research requirements for higher degrees;
- integrating the qualifications for educators;
- Stipulating the naming conventions for all HET qualifications; a rationale for the pegging of qualifications on particular NQF levels
- a rationale for minimum and maximum credit ratings and entry and exit levels for each of the recognised qualifications;
- Policy on the accreditation of experiential/service learning;
- Policy on short courses and unit standards;
- how the new qualifications structure will link to processes of registration, accreditation and funding (and institutional mission programme size and shape).

The Task Team also recognised that urgent attention should be given to the issues on the agenda of the Joint Implementation Plan (JIP) committee:

- a proposal for a national qualifications structure and framework for the HET Band indicating recognised qualifications, their pegging on NQF levels, credit ratings and articulation possibilities;
- a proposal for a set of level descriptors for the HET Band, and
- the co-ordination of the JIP committee in developing recommendations on a range of academic policy issues for discussion and finalisation.

#### 4. MEMBERSHIP

The Higher Education Act makes provision for a chairperson, ordinary members (13), co-opted members (maximum 3) and non-voting members (6). The Minister of Education appointed the members of the CHE following a process calling for nominations from HE stakeholders and the public. Presently the CHE comprises of the following members:

Chairperson : Prof. W Nkuhlu \*

Ordinary members :

Prof. HP Africa

Mr. K Diseko

Prof. B. Figaji \*

Adv. MA Fouche

Ms. JA Glennie

Dr. N Magau \*

Prof. NS Segal \*

Prof. RH Stumpf \*

Co-opted members :

Mr. B Khumalo

Mrs. M C Keeton

Non-voting members :

Ms. N Badsha\*

Dr. RM Adam

Ms. A Bird

Mr. SBA Isaacs

Dr. K Mokhele

Ex-officio :

Prof. MS Badat \*

(\*Members serving on the Executive Committee of the CHE)

During 2000 there were a number of work-related resignations and departures of ordinary members from the CHE - Mr. M Morobe, Dr. M Ramphele, Dr. R Singh and Prof. M Makgoba. There was also the departure of one co-opted member, Mr. J. Naidoo and the tragic loss of Mr. K. Nkoane who was the non-voting representative of the provincial heads of education.

A call for nominations for new ordinary members elicited over 40 nominations. The Minister will appoint 5 new members shortly. In terms of the statutory requirement of equivalence of male and female members, 4 of the 5 new members will have to be women.

CHE members are appointed in their own right as people with specialist knowledge and expertise on HE matters. In this regard, and despite the members of the CHE being drawn from various constituencies, the CHE functions as an independent expert statutory body rather than a body of delegates or representatives of organisations, institutions or constituencies.

## 5. ORGANISATION

The CHE is structured internally along the following lines: **ORGANOGRAM**

Between September 1999 and October 2000, the full committee of the CHE met every two months and the executive committee met monthly. Task Teams have met as required.

During this period the CHE met with the Minister of Education on four occasions. In terms of a commitment to at least annual meetings with all national stakeholders, a meeting was held with the CTP and meetings will take place with other stakeholders. Meetings also took place with numerous institutions and organisations and visiting international delegations.

Good co-operative relations exist between the CHE and the DoE and SAQA, with an open flow of communication and information between the two bodies and, where appropriate, joint initiatives. The CHE registers its appreciation of SAQA for its continued work around the accreditation of private HE institutions while the HEQC phases in to take over this responsibility.

The CHE held its first annual consultative conference of national HE stakeholders during November 1999. It is committed to ensuring that this annual occasion becomes an important and meaningful forum for exchange of ideas and views on the state of HE, the key tasks and challenges, and the initiatives and interventions required to ensure the healthy development of HE.

## 6. SECRETARIAT/PERSONNEL

The CHE has established its office in a wing of the first floor of Sol Plaatje Building, 123 Schoeman Street, Pretoria. This helps ensure ongoing and effective communication with key HE stakeholders, in particular the DoE. To support the work and activities required of the CHE, including the HEQC, the CHE has appointed a core of full-time professional staff with knowledge and experience of HE, supported by able administrators and support staff. Where necessary, the CHE has requested institutions to second personnel with special expertise and skills to the CHE and has also made use of a number of local and international consultants.

The present personnel structure and complement is noted below.

POST	INCUMBENT
Executive Officer (CHE)	Prof.Saleem Badat
Projects Manager (CHE)	Appointment pending
Projects/Resource Officer (CHE)	Mr.Zizi Mlonyeni
Personal Assistant (CHE)	Ms.Gugu Biyase
Secretary (CHE)	Vacant
Office Manager (CHE, CHE HEQC)	Ms.Louise Ismail
Executive Director (CHE HEQC)	Dr. Mala Singh [NRF Secondment]
Director: Quality Auditing and Quality Development (CHE HEQC)	Interviews held: Appointment pending
Director: Programme Accreditation and Evaluation (CHE HEQC)	Interviews held: Appointment pending
Director: (CHE HEQC)	Vacant
Manager: Programme Accreditation and Evaluation (CHE HEQC)	Ms.Kirti Menon
Deputy Manager (CHE HEQC)	Mr.Tsepo Magabane
Personal Assistant (CHE HEQC)	Ms. Pam Du Toit [NRF Secondment]

The success of the CHE depends on quality, effective and efficient staff with the necessary knowledge, expertise and competencies, as well as adequate funding. The recruitment and appointment of such staff at senior levels remains a major challenge, particularly in a context of commitment to employment equity. While just over half of the posts have been filled, crucial and key posts remain vacant. These have a strong bearing on the ability and capacity of the CHE to execute its many responsibilities in a concerted and comprehensive manner.

## 7. FINANCES

Government funding that is adequate for the discharge of all the responsibilities that have been allocated to the CHE, and particularly the quality assurance responsibilities, remains an ongoing concern. The CHE is committed to raising donor funding for various research projects and specific initiatives. However, it believes that core personnel costs and the major part of CHE funding should be derived from the government.

For the 2000-2001 financial year, government funding has covered only 45% of the total CHE budget. Only the absence of a full complement of staff and therefore also the non-operationalisation of some activities, a carry-over of unutilised funds from previous years and donor funding support, enables the CHE to balance its books. During the coming financial year, 2001-2002, state funding will cover only 35% of the requested budget. If a full complement of staff is in place and all activities are implemented, there could be serious pressures on the CHE budget. Meetings have been held with the DoE around this matter and around the issue of fees for quality assurance activities.

During the period covered by this report the activities of the HEQC have continued to be supported by a 1999 grant from the Ford Foundation. During 2000, the Ford Foundation provided a further grant to support the activities of some of the CHE's task teams while the United States Agency for International Development supported the activities of other task teams. A number of donors have pledged financial and other forms of support to the CHE, particularly for its quality assurance activities. The DoE has also undertaken to provide access to foreign government and international agency support.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Within the context of its human resource and budgetary constraints, the CHE is extremely pleased with its progress over the past fourteen months.

The Annual Report of 1998-1999, which provided an extensive analysis of the state of South African HE, has become much sought after document and has been widely utilised and quoted. The Shape and Size Task Team report has stimulated massive debate and has evinced a variety of responses. Investigations were commissioned into language policy for HE and the shape, size and nature of private HE in South Africa. Important new issues related to governance and institutional redress policy have been identified for investigation and advice to the Minister. Considerable progress has been made around launching the Higher Education Quality Committee and beginning the process of institutionalising a national quality assurance system appropriate to South African needs. Overall, the CHE is well poised in the coming years to discharge the mandate and

responsibilities accorded to it by the Higher Education Act and the White Paper more comprehensively, effectively and efficiently.

The CHE has sought to work closely and co-operatively with stakeholders (including the DoE) and be responsive to their concerns and interests. However, it has also not hesitated to provide advice and recommendations that may be at odds with the views of individual stakeholders or sectors of HE but which the CHE believed to be in the best interests of the HE system at large. This is in accordance with its mandate. The CHE is not expected to serve as a transmission belt for the views of stakeholders - stakeholders can and do communicate directly with the Minister of Education. While the CHE takes the views of stakeholders seriously, as a body of persons with specialist knowledge of HE and HE-related issues, it is required to do considerably more than simply collate and aggregate these views in advising the Minister of Education. It is also required to interrogate and mediate these views, and offer its own considered and independent advice to the Minister.

As was recognised during the HE policy development process leading to the Higher Education Act and the White Paper, this is the value of a body such as the CHE. In this sense, during especially the past fourteen months, and as a new statutory body, the CHE has begun to establish its identity as an independent advisory body on HE. However, independent advice does not occur in a vacuum but in the context of the values, principles and policy goals and objectives contained in the White Paper. Ultimately, the goal is to contribute to the development of an equitable, high quality, effective and efficient and democratic HE system.

There is consensus that the development of an effective quality assurance system is a priority and over the next two years activities in this regard will predominate. At the same time the CHE will ensure that it monitors and evaluate progress towards policy goals and advises the Minister appropriately; responds efficiently and effectively to the Minister's requests for advice; and conducts work around issues and areas of major concern with respect to the well-being of HE and advises the Minister proactively. The CHE looks forward to the challenges of the coming years and working with stakeholders to promote and develop a he system characterised by equity, high quality and excellence.



## APPENDIX 1

# MEMORANDUM TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

## TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK AND STRATEGY FOR RECONFIGURING THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA: RECOMMENDATIONS AND ADVICE

DECEMBER 1999

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main purpose of this document is to advise, and make recommendations to, the Minister of Education on how to approach the problem of reconfiguring the higher education system. This problem is often referred to as the 'Size and Shape' question.

The CHE wishes to make the following recommendations and to provide the following advice to the Minister:

#### 1. PRIORITISE POLICY GOALS AND KEY ISSUES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

There is an urgent need to prioritise the goals and key issues for higher education. Attention needs to be urgently given to the following five areas and issues.

➤ A single national, coordinated, and differentiated system

The White Paper explicitly refers to the goal of achieving a single national, integrated, coordinated, [and differentiated] higher education system. There is little unanimity or agreement on how this goal is to be interpreted or achieved.

The CHE will *develop a position paper*. In this paper it will set out its perspective on this issue and will convene debate and discussions between the principal actors so that clarity is achieved about how this goal is understood.

➤ Related priority policy issues

Together with the policy question of a single national, integrated, co-ordinated, and differentiated higher education system, the Minister is urged to prioritize the key policy issues of *quality assurance, funding, a new academic policy for higher education and the regulation of the market for private education*. These policy areas are first order priorities and are crucial in the reshaping of the higher education landscape and in sustaining a new landscape.

➤ Co-ordination of policy initiatives and task and work groups

The Minister needs to ensure that there is strong co-ordination around the key policy issues and a confluence of processes concerning size and shape, quality assurance, funding, a new academic policy for higher education and the regulation of the market for private education.

The CHE will formulate together with the Department of Education *a framework and strategy* to ensure that the various important policy initiatives and processes are effectively and efficiently co-ordinated. In this regard, it is proposed that a workshop hosted by the CHE jointly with the Ministry be held early in 2000.

➤ Private higher education

The Minister is urged to reconsider the implications of the legislation governing the registration of private higher education institutions and it is proposed that in the meantime: (i) a moratorium is placed on the registration of new, and especially new multi-purpose private higher education institutions for a specified period; and (ii) a moratorium on the development of new joint programmes between public and private higher education institutions.

➤ Co-ordination of other policy structures

Various policy development institutions and bodies need to act in a coordinated way to ensure that there is synergy between the work of these structures. These often straddle Ministries. The failure to achieve synergy gives rise to blockages and to fragmented processes and prevents systematic planning and steering taking place.

## 2. RECONFIGURE THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Minister should give serious consideration to reconfiguring the higher education system.

➤ Reconfiguring the higher education system: Principles and goals

The *Principles* that should inform the approach to the reconfiguration of higher education are

- Equity
- Democratisation
- Development
- Quality
- Academic freedom and institutional autonomy, and
- Effectiveness and efficiency.

The White Paper specifically refers to the *goal* of a single, co-ordinated and differentiated system. Further, it hints at the need for overall coherence in the system and a diversity of institutional types and forms.

➤ **The bases for reconfiguring the system**

The reconfiguring of the higher education system should be approached in the context of a national framework and plan and must be responsive to the emerging national and provincial human resource development needs.

The higher education institutional landscape and the role of each institution within such a landscape must be properly planned by drawing on the information obtained through the planning process presently being undertaken by the Department of Education.

A rigorous assessment must be made of the realistic capabilities of individual institutions in relation to teaching, research and service. The assessment must examine

- the Missions of institutions relative to their programmes
- academic quality and its contribution to the socio-economic and cultural needs of society
- their staffing
- enrolment patterns
- graduate outputs
- human and infrastructural resources
- management and administrative systems
- the financial status and information and planning data which is available
- geographical location of the institutions
- the demographic composition of the student and staff population
- community linkages and the accessibility of institutions to learners of all kinds.
- the track record and future potential of institutions.

➤ The instruments for reconfiguring the system

The White Paper on Higher Education refers to a number of instruments that could be invoked to reshape the higher education landscape. These instruments include changes to institutional Missions, mergers, closures, and varying forms of co-operation and association.

➤ **Purpose of instruments**

The various instruments for reconfiguring need to be applied with a view to:

- Promoting the growth of the higher education system to advance the 'economic, social and cultural needs' of a country
- Achieving a more efficient use of resources, 'more suitable institutional arrangements and more flexible staffing policies'
- Enhancing quality and strengthening weaker institutions
- Creating larger institutions which have the potential to offer more educational offerings, portability of academic credits and better facilities

- Meeting various other purposes which are detailed on *page 15* of the Memorandum.

### **3. ENSURE RESEARCH AROUND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND STUDENT ENROLMENT**

The Minister is advised to establish a research project [or participate in an existing one], relating to national human resource data projections for high and medium level skills and knowledge for the next decade. In addition, there should be **research** on the part of the CHE and/or the Department of Education around various areas of importance to higher education (See *page 16* of the Memorandum).

### **4. THE WAY FORWARD**

The Council on Higher Education proposes the following to give impetus and momentum to the issue of reconfiguring South African higher education.

1. That the CHE establish a Task Team to develop **the details of a framework and strategy** for the reconfiguring of the higher education landscape.
2. The Task Team be composed of representatives of the CHE, the Department of Education, and other persons knowledgeable about higher education.
3. To enable the Department of Education to participate effectively in this Task Team, the Minister find ways of freeing capacity in the Department to do so. The participation of the Department is vital for ensuring close attention to implementation issues in the process of policy and strategy development and for access to information and data.
4. The Ministry provides assistance in securing the resources necessary to accomplish the work of the Task Team.
5. The mandate of the Task Team be clarified early in the new year and in particular the following be specified:
  - Its form of accountability and monitoring
  - The outcomes of its work
  - The stages and time frames [immediate, short and long term] of the work
  - The research requirements to support the work of the Task Team
  - The resources required to enable it to complete its mandate.
6. The Task Team concludes its work by the end of June 2000 and submits document to the Minister. Thereafter, the Department of Education with the advice of and monitoring by the CHE should undertake the process of planning and implementation.

## APPENDIX 2

### **PUBLIC HANDOVER TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, PROFESSOR KADER ASMAL, OF THE CHE SIZE AND SHAPE TASK TEAM REPORT, *TOWARDS A NEW HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE: MEETING THE EQUITY, QUALITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IMPERATIVES OF SOUTH AFRICA IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY.***

#### **BACKGROUND**

During late January 2000, the Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, requested the Council on Higher Education (CHE) to provide him with a set of concrete proposals on the shape and size of the higher education system and not a set of general principles which serve as guidelines for restructuring. I cannot over-emphasise the importance of the point. Until and unless we reach finality on institutional restructuring, we cannot take action and put in place the steps necessary to ensure the long-term affordability and sustainability of the higher education system.

The CHE was requested to conduct 'an overarching exercise designed to put strategies into place to ensure that our higher education system is indeed on the road to the 21<sup>st</sup> century'.

The CHE is an independent statutory body established in May 1998 in terms of the *Higher Education Act*, No 101 of 1997. The mission of the CHE is to contribute to the development of a higher education system characterised by quality, responsiveness, equity, and effective and efficient provision and management through

- ◆ Providing informed, considered, independent, strategic advice on higher education issues to the Minister of Education
- ◆ The quality assurance activities of its Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC)
- ◆ The publication and dissemination of information on developments in higher education, including an annual report to parliament on the state of higher education.

To respond to the Minister's request, the CHE established a Size and Shape Task Team. Its members were drawn from labour, business, universities and technikons, the Department of Education and the CHE itself (The membership is noted below).

#### **THE GOALS AND VALUES THAT INFORM THE REPORT**

The Task Team's point of departure has been the *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education* 1997. It is the goals and purposes that the White Paper advances for higher education, and its core principles and values, such as equity and redress, quality, development, effectiveness and efficiency, that has guided the Task Team and informs its Report. The Task Team also has a common commitment to transforming higher education so that it is 'responsive to the needs of students of all ages and the intellectual challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century'. It shares a passionate belief in the vital importance of higher education to democracy, social justice and the economic and social development of this country.

Equity is a defining imperative of the reconfiguration proposals of the Task Team. The achievement of equity is compromised by inefficiencies, the lack of effectiveness, and shortcomings in quality. Equity targets must be established as part of national planning around access to, opportunities within, and outcomes of higher education.

Equity should mean more than access into higher education. It must incorporate equity of opportunity – environments in which learners, through academic support, excellent teaching and mentoring and other initiatives, genuinely have every chance of succeeding. Equity, to be meaningful, is also ensuring that learners have access to quality education, and graduate with the relevant knowledge, competencies, skills and attributes that are required for any occupation and profession.

Finance is required to achieve equity. While finance is a necessary condition it is not a sufficient condition. A coherent framework for the more effective pursuit of equity is also essential. Such a framework must look forward towards the 21<sup>st</sup> century but also recognise the inequities of the past. It must encompass possibilities of enhancing redress for historically and socially disadvantaged social groups through unhinging institutions from their past and setting them on new roads to development in accordance with social needs.

## **THE REPORT AND PROPOSALS**

As requested by the Minister, the Task Team advances concrete proposals on the creation of a new higher education landscape and the reconfiguration of institutions. The proposals on reconfiguration and combination provide a framework for creating a higher education *system* that is geared towards delivering equity through the effective functioning of all sectors of the system. The Task Team also recommends certain issues for further investigation.

The Task Team Report:

- ◆ Seeks to institutionalise the principles and values of the White Paper in order to realise its social and educational goals. The overall objective is the development of a higher education system which delivers effective and efficient provision and is based on equity, quality and excellence, responsiveness, and good governance and management
- ◆ Points to a historic opportunity to reconfigure the higher education system in a principled and imaginative way, more suited to the needs of a democracy and all its citizens in contrast to the irrational and exclusionary imperatives that shaped large parts of the current system
- ◆ Provides a framework and foundation for making rational the present incoherent, wasteful and uncoordinated higher education system, enabling significant improvements in quality and equity and ensuring that the knowledge and human resource needs of a developing democracy are effectively realised (See *Chapter Three*, pages 34-38)
- ◆ Recommends that the present system should be reconfigured as a differentiated and diverse system so that there can be effective responses from institutions to the varied social needs of the country
- ◆ Recommends that in a new reconfigured system, institutions should have a range of mandates (principal orientations and core foci) and pursue coherent and more explicitly defined educational and social purposes with respect to the production of knowledge and successful graduates (see *Chapter Three*, pages 38-46 )

◆ Recommends that these mandates define institutions as:

1. Institutions which constitute the bedrock of the higher education system. The orientation and focus of these institutions would be:

- ◆ quality undergraduate programmes
- ◆ limited postgraduate programmes up to a taught Masters level
- ◆ research related to curriculum, learning and teaching with a view to application.

2. Institutions whose orientation and focus is

- ◆ quality undergraduate programmes
- ◆ comprehensive postgraduate taught and research programmes up to the Doctoral level
- ◆ extensive research capabilities (basic, applied, strategic and developmental) across a broad range of areas.

3. Institutions whose orientation and focus is

- ◆ quality undergraduate programmes
- ◆ extensive postgraduate taught and research programmes up to the Masters level
- ◆ selective postgraduate taught and research programmes up to the Doctoral level
- ◆ select areas of research (basic, applied, strategic and development).

4. An institution whose orientation and focus is dedicated distance education.

5. Private higher education institutions.

◆ Stresses that the Minister must be mindful that under apartheid, institutions designated for black South Africans and the technikons were disadvantaged in different ways. The Task Team's reconfiguration proposals makes possible developmental trajectories for institutions to enable them to undertake specified mandates within a new national framework

◆ Advocates that there should be no closure of institutions but that the absolute number of institutions should be reduced through combination

◆ Argues that combination offers the opportunity for creating a more responsive higher education landscape than that which is a legacy of apartheid, particularly in relation to increasing the participation rates of African and Coloured learners, and mature learners

- ◆ Provides examples of possible combinations for illustrative purposes (*see Chapter 4, pages 61-63*)
- ◆ Strongly recommends that the Minister should investigate the full range of possibilities for combinations, and should also be open to compelling combination possibilities that may emerge from the iterative national planning process
- ◆ Proposes that as part of national planning and the development of a national plan, there should be an iterative process between the Minister and institutions around the reconfiguration of the system, combination and the mandates of institutions (*see Chapter Four, pages 54-55*)
- ◆ Emphasises that the success of reconfiguration will require the setting of nationally negotiated priorities and targets, as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress in their achievement
- ◆ Urges that the current levels of public funding of higher education should be maintained
- ◆ Highlights that without the mobilisation of public, international donor and private sector funds for key strategic interventions, the achievement of a new institutional landscape will not be possible

A range of proposals and recommendations – around reconfiguring the system, pre-requisites for successful reconfiguration and combination, the process of creating a new differentiated and diverse landscape, distance education, funding, and a number of other issues are also advanced in the Report.

The Task Team views its Report to be a contribution to the overall activities of national planning, the development of a national plan by the Department of Education, and the production of three-year plans by public higher education institutions. Decisions on reconfiguration should become part of the national plan. The proposals on the reconfiguration of the system, on combination and on nationally agreed targets will give a new shape to higher education. The proposals on participation rates, public sector enrolments, increasing access for disadvantaged social groups and mature learners, and on reducing the overall number of institutions will impact on the size of the system.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Task Team is convinced that the problems and weaknesses of the South African higher education system that it points to in the Report (*Chapter One, pages 17-22*) will not disappear on their own or be overcome by institutions on their own. They must be confronted and overcome in a systemic way. This will require the reconfiguration of the present system and the creation of a new higher education landscape. It will entail extensive, integrated, iterative national planning as well as multiple co-ordinated interventions and initiatives. It will also require political will, sustained commitment and the courage to change at system and institutional level.

The Task Team is adamant that no public institution should believe that it is exempt from the imperative of system-wide reconfiguration, from the need to change fundamentally, and from contributing to the achievement of a new higher education landscape. No higher education institution can assume that its track record with respect to equity, quality, social responsiveness and effectiveness and efficiency is beyond dispute and self-evident. Much remains to be achieved by all



institutions to advance new social goals and to take us beyond the distinctions between historically advantaged and historically disadvantaged.

## **THE CHE SIZE AND SHAPE TASK TEAM**

*Convenor:* Dr. Mamphela Ramphele

*Deputy Convenor:* Dr. Khotso Mokhele

### **Members:**

Prof. Wiseman Nkuhlu (Chairperson, CHE)

Mr. Saki Macozama

Mr. Ebrahim Patel

Mr. Bobby Godsell

Prof. Mapule Ramashala

Prof. Brian Figaji

Ms. Nasima Badsha

Mr. Ahmed Essop

Prof. Rolf Stumpf

Prof. Denis van Rensburg

Prof. Saleem Badat (Executive Officer, CHE)

## APPENDIX 3

### HEQC FOUNDING DOCUMENT (SELECT SECTIONS)

#### 1. Introduction

The institutionalization of quality assurance is firmly on the agenda of higher education in a number of developed and developing countries around the world. The demand for greater accountability and efficiency in respect of public financing, trends towards mass participation in the face of shrinking resources, and greater stakeholder scrutiny of education and training processes and outcomes have led to the increasing implementation of formal quality assurance arrangements within higher education institutions and systems. A quality assurance system is intended to ensure that higher education and training programmes at under-graduate and post-graduate levels are responsive to the needs of learners, employers and society at large.

The development of a national quality assurance system for higher education in South Africa is a critical component of the restructuring of higher education which is currently underway. The quality assurance system is intended to support the achievement of the purposes and goals for higher education identified in the Education White Paper 3: *A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education*. Quality is identified as one of the principles that should guide the transformation of higher education, together with equity and redress, democratisation, development, effectiveness and efficiency, academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability. Given the history of discriminatory exclusion in this country, it is important to ensure that the quality assurance system enhances access not simply to higher education but to high standards of provision and their concomitant intellectual and economic benefits.

#### 2. Vision/Mission

The HEQC is committed to a quality driven higher education system that contributes to socio-economic development, social justice and innovative scholarship in South Africa. To achieve this end, the HEQC will support the development, maintenance and enhancement of the quality of public and private higher education provision in order to enable a range of stakeholders to benefit from effective higher education and training. The central objective of the HEQC is to ensure that providers deliver high quality, cost effective education and training, and research which produces socially useful and enriching knowledge and skills as well as employable graduates. The policies and programmes of the HEQC will be guided by the above commitments and objectives.

#### 3. Principles/Values

- 3.1 The quality assurance system of the HEQC will seek to advance the related purposes and goals of the White Paper on higher education.
- 3.2 The quality assurance system of the HEQC will contribute to the role of higher education in the building of the NQF.

- 3.3 The HEQC will link the achievement of quality to equity and the fostering of innovation and diversity in higher education in order to ensure that quality requirements do not constrain higher participation rates or inhibit creativity and variety in higher education provision. The pursuit of excellence in relation to specified mandate and mission is assumed to be an imperative for all provision.
- 3.4 The HEQC will uphold the accountability requirements of higher education provision within the context of a strong developmental/formative approach to quality assurance. However, the HEQC will not hesitate to expose and act against persistent and unchanging poor quality provision.
- 3.5 The HEQC is committed to independence, objectivity, fairness and consistency in all its quality assurance activities. In the interest of transparency, evaluation reports will be available in the public domain, subject to the agreement of the HEQC.
- 3.6 The HEQC will work in a consultative and cooperative mode with partners and stakeholders in the attempt to develop a principled consensual or negotiated approach to quality and quality development.
- 3.7 The HEQC will strive to complement and enhance the internal quality development initiatives of providers in order to encourage and support their search for continuous performance achievement.
- 3.8 The HEQC will seek to facilitate the delivery of high quality education and training in relation to the relevant values and objectives of policy frameworks like the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele White Paper).

## **4. Mandate**

In accordance with the Higher Education Act, 1997, and the ETQA responsibilities of the CHE, the HEQC will

- 4.1 Promote quality among constituent providers in higher education
- 4.2 Audit the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions and accredit them as providers of programmes leading to one or several NQF-registered qualifications
- 4.3 Accredit programmes of higher education by certifying that providers have the systems and capacity to offer programmes leading to particular NQF-registered qualifications.
- 4.4 Co-ordinate and facilitate quality assurance activities in higher education within a partnership model with other ETQAs

The above functions will be conducted within the framework and requirements of SAQA's Criteria and Guidelines for ETQAs. The primary responsibility of the Council on Higher Education as an ETQA will be to ensure that the quality of qualifications in higher education is maintained and enhanced through evaluating and monitoring the capacity of higher education providers to deliver those qualifications effectively and efficiently. This will include looking at the quality assurance systems and processes of providers, their arrangements for assessment and moderation as well as the responsiveness, relevance and coherence of their qualifications in relation to their specified institutional mandates and missions.

## 5. Goals

5.1 A more coordinated and diversified public higher education system is under construction in South Africa. The requirement to demonstrate the quality of provision measured against institutional mandate and mission will be common to all higher education institutions.

The HEQC will put in place a framework to support quality provision across a differentiated higher education landscape in order to ensure that mission specification is accompanied by quality improvements in the whole system. The framework will include a developmental approach to the quality requirements of mission achievement where appropriate and affordable. The implications and pre-requisites of such an approach for public and private providers will be addressed in further consultations.

5.2 A comprehensive accountability framework for quality assurance is also under construction in the country. This requires concurrent responsiveness by higher education institutions to the quality demands of SAQA and its structures, professional councils, Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) as well as the HEQC. Meeting the quality demands of these bodies should not be confusing and unnecessarily burdensome for providers.

The HEQC will seek to develop a sensible accountability regime for providers through partnerships with other quality assurance bodies and the coordination of the quality assurance activities of multiple agencies in higher education.

5.3 South African higher education manifests a legacy of uneven quality in a sector divided along the lines of historically advantaged and disadvantaged institutions, universities, technikons and colleges, contact and distance education institutions, public and private providers, etc. The entry of private providers, both local and foreign, has opened up many new opportunities for learners but also raised concerns about the quality levels of private provision. The delivery of education through new technologies is also challenging traditional forms of quality assurance.

**Within the context of the criteria and guidelines of standard setting bodies in higher education, the HEQC will focus on and ensure threshold levels of quality for public and private higher education within a common national framework. The intention is to instill public confidence in the quality of higher education provision, facilitate articulation between higher education institutions and programmes, and provide the foundations for the development and support of excellence at all levels of higher education and training. The identification of threshold levels of quality and their appropriate exit level outcomes will take into account changing notions and expectations of quality.**

5.4 The effective functioning of a National Qualifications Framework to enable articulation and progression between the further and higher education bands and within the higher education band requires clear quality specifications for the different levels of qualifications.

**The HEQC will seek to ensure that the quality, integrity and appropriateness of qualifications is maintained at all levels of the NQF relevant to higher education in order to guarantee the national and international credibility of South African qualifications. This task will include the evaluation and development of qualifications and appropriate recommendations to the National Standards Bodies and Standards Generating Bodies.**

- 5.5 Debates and initiatives around the transformation of higher education have largely focused on issues of governance, financing, access, etc., and not sufficiently on crucial issues of teaching and learning, research, and knowledge based community service.

The HEQC will develop a quality assurance framework that includes an explicit focus on the quality of teaching and learning activities, research and community service in order to deepen and extend the process of higher education transformation.

## 6. Approach to Quality

Despite the often differing conceptualisations and expectations of quality among different stakeholders in higher education, the HEQC intends to signal clearly its understanding of quality in order to:

- Allow providers to engage with and operationalise such understandings within their own institutional contexts and missions.
- Provide stakeholders with a framework within which to make judgments about the quality of higher education and training.
- Enable the HEQC itself to develop the appropriate policy and procedures for the ETQA responsibilities of the CHE.

The HEQC will develop a quality assurance framework and criteria based on:

- 6.1 Fitness for purpose in the context of mission differentiation of institutions within a national framework.
- 6.2 Value for money judged not only in terms of labour market responsiveness or cost recovery but in relation to the full range of higher education purposes set out in the White Paper.
- 6.3 Transformation in the sense of developing the personal capabilities of individual learners as well as advancing the agenda for social change.

External judgments about the achievement of quality in respect of the above will be based on a rigorous but flexible approach which takes into account different degrees of emphasis on the above elements as well as different approaches to their achievement. All of the above will be located within a **fitness of purpose** framework based on national goals, priorities and targets.

## F. 7. Approach to Quality Assurance

The HEQC supports the view that the primary responsibility for the quality of provision and appropriate mechanisms to assure that quality rests with higher education providers. The role of the HEQC will be to provide external validation of the judgements of providers about their quality

levels, based on self evaluation reports. It will also provide a comparative framework for quality judgments across the system.

The HEQC will engage in rigorous external validation through site visits and a judicious/balanced use of peer review and qualitative and quantitative performance indicators. Once the HEQC is satisfied that demonstrable quality assurance capacity has been established across a spectrum of higher education providers, it will use a 'light touch' approach to quality assurance, based on an increasing measure of reliance on the self evaluation reports of providers.

Until that point is reached, the HEQC will facilitate the development of the quality assurance capacity of providers, strengthen their ability to engage in rigorous self evaluation and establish and monitor baseline information on the quality assurance systems, targets and achievements of providers. This support is intended to prepare providers to respond to rigorous accountability requirements at the end of the development phase. Private providers are also subject to the quality assurance requirements of the HEQC. Similar arrangements for external validation and self-evaluation will be put in place, and discussions initiated with relevant stakeholders on the capacity development needs and responsibilities of private providers.

## **8. Scope of work**

8.1 The needs and interests of a number of stakeholders are served by quality assurance in higher education – learners, educators and researchers, parents, employers, the government and other funders, society at large.

For example, learners want opportunities for personal development as well as certification from high quality providers to enhance progression and employment possibilities.

Higher education providers want an enabling regulatory environment and sensible accountability costs to be able to deliver high quality education and training.

Educators and researchers want an enabling work dispensation which allows them to focus on the core activities of teaching, research and community service and which also allows for their own development.

Employers want flexibly skilled graduates who do not need a long settling in period before they contribute to productivity and competitiveness.

Government and society in general want value for money in terms of an increasingly high skilled work force, economic competitiveness and social development.









The HEQC will have to ensure that the assurance and information needs of these different stakeholders are acceptably addressed through the focus and quality requirements of its work.

Because of the responsibility to accredit providers through the ETQA role of the CHE, the HEQC will focus on providers and their ability to develop and enhance quality in their under-graduate and post-graduate learning programmes leading to NQF-registered qualifications, with the intention that this will serve the quality assurance interests of all major stakeholders. The inclusion of a range of relevant stakeholders on audit and evaluation panels will ensure that providers are addressing the quality assurance interests of different constituencies.

- 8.2 The quality of research is assumed to be an integral part of the CHE/HEQC's overall responsibility for quality assurance in higher education. However, the actual assessment of research will be conducted co-operatively with other relevant organizations within the context of a policy framework that is acceptable to the CHE/HEQC.
- 8.3 The quality of community service programmes is assumed to be an integral part of the CHE/HEQC's overall responsibility for quality assurance in higher education. Many countries have seen an increase in the inclusion of community service programmes in higher education curricula and in their assessment and certification as part of formal learning processes. The National Skills Authority and its associated Sectoral Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) are committed to the concept of "learnerships" in higher education which provide learners with on-site work experience, education and training. The quality assurance of community service programmes and/or learnerships will be conducted co-operatively with other bodies, such as SETAs, within the context of a policy framework that is acceptable to the CHE/HEQC.
- 8.4 The NQF is premised on the achievement of a range of competencies as the outcomes of education and training systems. This will require the HEQC to develop appropriate quality assurance measures to validate specified outcomes in relation to the different purposes of higher education. However, within the context of a developmental approach to quality outcomes in the first phase of its work, the HEQC will also address the systems and processes of quality assurance of providers with a view to providing formative support for the successful delivery of outcomes.

The major part of the next two year period will be a development phase both for the HEQC and the providers which it will accredit. This time will be used to develop appropriate quality assurance criteria, programmes and instruments in consultation with other roleplayers, pilot test some of the instruments, embark on quality promotion and advisory visits to higher education providers, identify key quality development needs, develop the appropriate mechanisms for interaction with other ETQAs, etc. In the process of constructing a new national quality assurance system, effective quality assurance arrangements which are already in place will be supported and incorporated into the new dispensation.

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## 6. SECRETARIAT/PERSONNEL

The CHE has established its office in a wing of the first floor of Sol Plaatje Building, 123 Schoeman Street, Pretoria. This helps ensure ongoing and effective communication with key HE stakeholders, in particular the DoE. To support the work and activities required of the CHE, including the HEQC, the CHE has appointed a core of full-time professional staff with knowledge and experience of HE, supported by able administrators and support staff. Where necessary, the CHE has requested institutions to second personnel with special expertise and skills to the CHE and has also made use of a number of local and international consultants.

The present personnel structure and complement is noted below.

POST	INCUMBENT
Executive Officer (CHE)	Prof.Saleem Badat
Projects Manager (CHE)	Appointment pending
Projects/Resource Officer (CHE)	Mr.Zizi Mlonyeni

Personal Assistant (CHE)	Ms.Gugu Biyase
Secretary (CHE)	Vacant
Office Manager (CHE, CHE HEQC)	Ms.Louise Ismail
Executive Director (CHE HEQC)	Dr. Mala Singh [NRF Secondment]
Director: Quality Auditing and Quality Development (CHE HEQC)	Interviews held: Appointment pending
Director: Programme Accreditation and Evaluation (CHE HEQC)	Interviews held: Appointment pending
Director: (CHE HEQC)	Vacant
Manager: Programme Accreditation and Evaluation (CHE HEQC)	Ms.Kirti Menon
Deputy Manager (CHE HEQC)	Mr.Tsepo Magabane
Personal Assistant (CHE HEQC)	Ms. Pam Du Toit [NRF Secondment]
Secretary (CHE HEQC)	Interviews held: Appointment pending

The success of the CHE depends on quality, effective and efficient staff with the necessary knowledge, expertise and competencies, as well as adequate funding. The recruitment and appointment of such staff at senior levels remains a major challenge, particularly in a context of commitment to employment equity. While just over half of the posts have been filled, crucial and key posts remain vacant. These have a strong bearing on the ability and capacity of the CHE to execute its many responsibilities in a concerted and comprehensive manner.

## APPENDIX: A

### HIGHER EDUCATION STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 2000

**TABLE A: Head count enrolment totals**

**TABLE A.1: Head count enrolment totals: summary for the system**

Institutions	1998	1999	2000	Enrolment changes comparing:		% change: 2000	
				2000 to 1998	2000 to 1999	To 1998	To 1999
HWU's	183.6	192.3	194.7	11.1	2.4	6%	1%
HBU's	91.1	79.9	71.5	-19.6	-8.4	-22%	-11%
HWT's	85.5	92.3	94.4	3.9	-2.9	5%	-3%
HBT's	45.3	44.2	45.5	0.2	1.3	0%	3%
Distance Institutions	197.9	173.2	171.9	-26.0	-1.3	-13%	-1%
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>603.4</b>	<b>581.9</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>-25.4</b>	<b>-3.9</b>	<b>-4%</b>	<b>-1%</b>

**TABLE A.2: Head count enrolment totals in distance institutions.**

1998	1999	2000	Enrolment changes comparing:		% change: 2000		
			2000 to 1998	2000 to 1999	To 1998	To 1999	
Unisa	120.8	107.8	111.6	-9.2	3.8	-8%	4%
TSA	77.1	65.4	60.3	-16.8	-7.0	-22%	-11%
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>197.9</b>	<b>173.2</b>	<b>171.9</b>	<b>-26.0</b>	<b>-1.3</b>	<b>-13%</b>	<b>-1%</b>

**TABLE B: Head count enrolment totals (thousands): Historically White Universities**

**TABLE B.1: Overall head count enrolment totals at historically white universities (HWU):**

	1998	1999	2000	Enrolment changes comparing:		% change: 2000	
				2000 to 1998	2000 to 1999	To 1998	To 1999
UCT	15.9	16.3	17.1	1.2	0.8	8%	5%
Stellenbosch	16.8	18.6	21.3	4.5	2.7	27%	15%
Natal University	19.1	21.7	21.5	2.4	-0.2	13%	-1%
Rhodes	5.4	6.2	6.3	0.9	0.1	17%	2%

*OFS	10.4	10.4	10.4	0.0	0.0	0%	0%
Potchefstroom	13.4	14.4	14.4	1.0	0.0	7%	0%
Wits	17.6	17.2	17	-0.6	-0.2	-3%	-1%
Pretoria: contact	26.7	??26.5	??26.1	-0.6	??-0.4	??-2%	??-2%
Pretoria: distance RAU	26.4 20.7	??28.6 19	??27.2 19.5	0.8 -1.2	-1.4 0.5	3% -6%	-5% 3%
UPE: contact	6	6.4	6.9	0.9	0.5	15%	8%
*UPE: distance	5.2	7	7	1.8	0.0	35%	0%
<b>Total: HWU's</b>	<b>183.6</b>	<b>192.3</b>	<b>194.7</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>1%</b>

\*Note: Institutions which have not yet reported their 2000 data: are OFS and UPE for its distance students. The figures included are based on estimates of their 2000 totals.

??Pretoria University figures are yet to be rectified.

**TABLE B.2: Black and white students as total % of total enrolment in historically white universities:**

	1998		1999		2000	
	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White
UCT	48%	52%	47%	53%	48%	52%
Natal University	74%	26%	78%	22%	79%	21%
Rhodes	48%	52%	43%	47%	46%	44%
UPE: contact only	50%	50%	55%	45%	56%	44%
Wits	51%	49%	54%	46%	54%	46%
Potchefstroom	44%	56%	48%	52%	47%	53%
Pretoria: contact	27%	73%	28%	72%	29%	71%
Stellenbosch	20%	80%	25%	75%	32%	68%
RAU	52%	48%	51%	49%	50%	50%
<b>Average for HWU's</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>

**TABLE B.3: Head count enrolments of white students in historically white universities:**

	1998	1999	2000	Enrolment changes comparing:	
				2000 to 1998	2000 to 1999
UCT	8.3	8.6	8.9	0.6	0.3
Natal University	5	4.8	4.5	-0.5	-0.3
Rhodes	2.8	2.9	2.8	0.0	-0.1
Wits	8.6	7.9	7.8	-0.8	-0.1
<b>HWU (English)</b>	<b>24.7</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>-0.7</b>	<b>-0.2</b>
UPE: contact only	3	2.8	2.8	-0.2	0.0

OFS	5.7	5.5	5.5	-0.2	0.0
Potchefstroom Pretoria: contact	7.5 ??19.4	7.5 19	7.6 ??20	0.1 0.6	0.1 1.0
Stellenbosch RAU	13.5 10	14.1 9.4	14.5 9.8	1.0 -0.2	0.4 0.4
<b>HWU (Afrikaans)</b>	<b>59.1</b>	<b>58.3</b>	<b>60.2</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1.9</b>
<b>Total for HWU's</b>	<b>83.8</b>	<b>82.5</b>	<b>84.2</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>1.7</b>

?? Pretoria University figures are yet to be rectified.

**TABLE B.4: Head count enrolment totals in historically black universities (thousands):**

	1998	1999	2000	Enrolment changes comparing:		% change: 2000	
				2000 to 1998	2000 to 1999	To 1998	To 1999
*Fort Hare	4.4	2.9	2.5	-1.9	-0.4	-43%	-14%
UDW	9.3	7.9	8.1	-1.2	0.2	-13%	3%
UWC	11.5	9.5	9.6	-1.9	0.1	-17%	1%
Medunsa	3.9	3	3.1	-0.8	0.1	-21%	3%
North	12.5	10.4	8.4	-4.1	-2.0	-33%	-19%
*North-West	6.4	6.2	5.5	-0.9	-0.7	-14%	-11%
Venda	6.2	5.3	5	-1.2	-0.3	-19%	-6%
Vista	28.2	26.8	22.5	-5.7	-4.3	-20%	-16%
*Unitra	5.9	4.5	3.7	-2.2	-0.8	37%	-18%
Zululad	7.2	6.3	5.6	-1.6	-0.7	-22%	-11%
<b>Total: HBU's</b>	<b>91.1</b>	<b>79.9</b>	<b>71.5</b>	<b>-19.6</b>	<b>-8.4</b>	<b>-22%</b>	<b>-11%</b>

\*Note: Institutions which have not yet reported their 2000 data are the University of North-West, Fort Hare and Transkei. The figures included are based on estimates of their 2000 total; in the case of North-West and Transkei on enrolment totals mentioned in institutional documents.

**TABLE C: TECHNIKON HEAD COUNT ENROLMENT TOTALS**

**TABLE C.1: Overall head count enrolment totals in historically white technikons**

	1998	1999	2000	Enrolment changes comparing:		% change: 2000	
				2000 to 1998	2000 to 1999	To 1998	To 1999
Cape Technikon	10.4	10.1	10.6	0.2	0.5	2%	5%



				1998	1999		1999
Border	4	4.5	4.6	0.6	0.1	15%	2%
*Eastern Cape	3.8	3.8	3.8	0.0	0.0	0%	0%
Mangosuthu	6.3	5.7	5.6	-0.7	-0.1	-11%	-2%
ML Sultan	9	8.6	9.2	0.2	0.6	2%	7%
NW Tech	4.6	4	4.3	-0.3	0.3	-7%	8%
PenTech	8.4	8.4	8.6	0.2	0.2	2%	2%
TNG	9.2	9.2	9.4	0.2	0.2	2%	2%
<b>Subtotal: HBT's</b>	<b>45.3</b>	<b>44.2</b>	<b>45.5</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3%</b>

\*Note: Eastern Cape has not reported its 2000 data. The figures included are estimates based on 1998 and 1999 enrolment.

## TABLE D: HEAD COUNT ENROLMENTS by PROVINCE

TABLE D.1: Overall head count enrolments by Province

Province	Year		
	1998	1999	2000
W.Cape	63	62.9	67.2
E.Cape	45	44	43
Kwazulu-Natal	60.7	59.3	58.7
Free State	16.7	16.2	16.4
North West	19.8	20.6	20
North	18.7	15.7	13.4
Gauteng	155	153	158
<b>National</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>195</b>

**CHE Audit Report:**

**The CHE Audit Report shall be available soon.**