

GUIDELINES

**Applying for accreditation
as a private provider
of higher education qualifications
registered on the NQF**



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OUR VISION AND 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 effectively and efficiently deliver education, training, research and community service which are of high quality and which produce socially useful and enriching knowledge as well as a relevant range of graduate skills and competencies necessary for social and economic progress. The policies and programmes of the HEQC will be guided by the above commitments and objectives.

OUR MANDATE

In accordance with the Higher Education Act, 1997, as amended by Act 55 of 1999 and Act 54 of 2000, and the ETQA responsibilities of the CHE, the HEQC will:

- Promote quality among constituent providers in higher education in order to facilitate the development of quality awareness and quality responsiveness in public and private provision.
- Audit the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions.
- Accredite providers of higher education to offer programmes leading to particular NQF-registered qualifications by certifying that they have the systems, processes and capacity to do so. In relevant cases, this will be done co-operatively with professional councils and SETAs.
- 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 the provision 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:

- Evaluating the assessment and moderation arrangements of providers.
- Registering assessors for specified standards and qualifications in accordance with criteria which will be developed in consultation with providers and other stakeholders.
- Evaluating the responsiveness, relevance and coherence of provider qualifications in relation to their specified institutional mandates and missions.

ACRONYMS USED IN THE GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION

APPETD	Alliance of Private Providers of Education and Training Development
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CTP	Committee of Technikon Principals
DoE	Department of Education
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance body
FTE	Full-time equivalent
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSB	National Standards Body
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SAUVCA	South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SGB	Standards Generating Body

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INTRODUCTION

These Guidelines are intended as a help for private providers in their application for accreditation with the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and must be studied closely in conjunction with the Application Form before applying for accreditation.

The Guidelines consists of two parts. **Section 1** provides background information on the legal base for the accreditation of private providers and for the HEQC's accreditation activities. It also provides information on the HEQC's general approach to quality and the quality assurance of private providers.

Section 2 deals directly with the accreditation requirements and the procedures involved in applying for accreditation, in close conjunction with the Application Form. It discusses also procedures for appeals, additional accreditations, ongoing quality assurance requirements, as well as the fee structure for applications, site visits and the annual renewal of accreditation.

A list of Concepts and Terminology is included at the end of the document for reference purposes.

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

1.1 LEGAL ISSUES

1.1.1 Registration and accreditation requirements for private providers

In order to offer higher education qualifications, you as a private provider must fulfil the following requirements¹:

- You must be registered with the Department of Education (DoE) as a provider.
- Your institution and each learning programme must be accredited by the HEQC.

¹ In terms of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No 101 of 1997), as amended by Act 55 of 1999 and Act 54 of 2000, and subsequent Regulations under the Higher Education Act. Please refer to the Regulations for the Registration of Private Higher Education Providers under the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, Chapter 2, subsection 3(1), Chapter 3, subsection 11(1) and Chapter 4, subsection 15(3)(b)-(d).

- Each qualification must be registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

Each of the three bodies – the DoE, the HEQC and SAQA – has specific interests, responsibilities and requirements. You may proceed with the three processes in parallel, but the requirements of all three bodies have to be met before you start enrolling learners for higher education qualifications.

1.1.2 What are the CHE's and HEQC's accreditation responsibilities?

The CHE was established in terms of Section 4 of the Higher Education Act and must, through its permanent committee, the HEQC, perform the following duties²:

- Promote quality assurance in higher education.
- Audit the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions; and
- Accredite programmes of higher education.

The CHE and the HEQC perform their quality assurance duties in terms of the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995, (Act No 58 of 1995)³ and the SAQA Regulations of 1998⁴. As an Education and Training Quality Assurance body (ETQA) for higher education, the HEQC is responsible for the accreditation of providers and their learning programmes.

In terms of the above legal requirements, the HEQC interprets its mandate as the following: To

- *Promote quality among constituent providers in higher education in order to facilitate the development of quality awareness and quality responsiveness in public and private provision.*
- *Audit the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions.*
- *Accredite providers of higher education to offer programmes leading to particular NQF-registered qualifications by certifying that they have the systems, processes and capacity to do so. In relevant cases, this will be done co-operatively with professional councils and SETAs.*⁵

For a further responsibility of the HEQC, see 1.1.3 below.

² The Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No 101 of 1997), section 5(1)c.

³ The South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995, (Act No 58 of 1995), Section 5(1)(a)(ii).

⁴ Regulations under the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995, (Act No 58 of 1995).

⁵ HEQC Founding Document (2001, parr. 4.1-4.3)

1.1.3 Partnerships with other ETQAs in higher education

The document Criteria and Guidelines for ETQAs of SAQA requires the HEQC to co-ordinate and facilitate quality assurance activities in higher education within a partnership model with other ETQAs in the higher education sector.

[I]t is appropriate for the HEQC, through the HEQC, as the ETQA of primary focus for higher education, i.e. universities, technikons, colleges and private higher education institutions, in terms of the ETQA regulations, to perform the co-ordinating function to enable the establishment of the required partnerships with other ETQAs working in the band. The HEQC then will:

- *Facilitate a common interpretation of quality assurance policy for the HET band by ETQAs operating in the band;*
- *Co-ordinate the establishment of a common set of ground rules for the practice of quality assurance, including the inter-relationship between quality assurance promotion, institutional audits and programme assessment;*
- *Provide a platform, together with SAQA, for regular discussion on quality assurance policy and implementation issues by ETQAs in the HET band;*
- *Co-ordinate and facilitate discussions to enable required agreements between ETQAs to be established;*
- *Set up, in consultation with the other relevant ETQAs, co-ordinated time-frames for quality assurance visits to providers and facilitate other administrative quality assurance measures common to all ETQAs.⁶*

The HEQC has begun to enter into strategic partnerships with a range of other ETQAs in higher education. Memoranda of understanding are being developed to lay the ground for co-operation and limit the duplication of quality assurance activities as far as possible. The HEQC will advise providers of further developments as this process unfolds.

1.1.4 Certification

The HEQC is also responsible for certification in terms of SAQA's Criteria and Guidelines for ETQAs.⁷ This entails ensuring the maintenance of the certification and awards process and jurisdiction over the issuing of certificates of award and achievement to constituent learners. The CHE is also able to delegate this responsibility, where appropriate.

⁶ Criteria and Guidelines for ETQAs, SAQA, 2000, Addendum, p. 20.

⁷ Criteria and Guidelines for ETQAs, SAQA, 2000, p. 20.

1.2 THE HEQC APPROACH TO QUALITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

1.2.1 The objectives and approach of the HEQC to quality assurance

The central objective of the HEQC with regard to quality assurance is:

to ensure that providers effectively and efficiently deliver education, training, research and community service which are of high quality and which produce socially useful and enriching knowledge as well as a relevant range of graduate skills and competencies necessary for social and economic progress.⁸

The quality assurance framework and criteria of the HEQC will be based on a multi-faceted definition of quality, viz.:

- Fitness for purpose in relation to a specified mission within a national framework that encompasses differentiation and diversity.
- Value for money judged in relation to the full range of higher education purposes set out in the White Paper on Higher Education. Judgements about the effectiveness and efficiency of provision will include, but not be confined to, labour market responsiveness and cost recovery.
- Transformation, in the sense of developing the capabilities of individual learners for personal enrichment, as well as the requirements of social development and economic and employment growth.

1.2.2 What is the HEQC's definition of accreditation?

The HEQC will operate within the SAQA definition of accreditation, viz.:

The certification, usually for a particular period of time, of a person, a body, or an institution as having the capacity to fulfil a particular function in the quality assurance system set up by the South African Qualifications Authority in terms of the Act.⁹

The HEQC defines its mandate as being to:

Accredit providers of higher education to offer programmes leading to particular NQF-registered qualifications by certifying that they have the systems, processes and capacity to do so.

⁸ HEQC Founding Document (2001, par. 2)

⁹ Regulations under the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995, (Act No 58 of 1995), p. 3.

1.2.3 The different phases of quality assurance activities as envisaged by the HEQC

During its developmental phase, the HEQC will provide support and guidance to strengthen the quality assurance capacity of providers, enhance their ability to engage in rigorous self-evaluation and establish and monitor baseline information on their quality assurance systems, achievements and targets. During this phase, the HEQC may also pay visits to institutions to become acquainted with their quality assurance arrangements. The intention of this developmental phase is to prepare providers to respond to rigorous accountability requirements at the end of the phase.

In its full operational phase, the HEQC will engage in rigorous external validation through site visits and the judicious use of peer reviews and qualitative and quantitative performance indicators.

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 themselves. Accordingly, once the system is fully developed, the role of the HEQC will be to provide external validation of the judgements of providers about their quality levels, based primarily on self-evaluation reports. It will also provide a comparative framework for quality judgements across the system.

1.2.4 Types of qualifications to be accredited by the HEQC

At present, the HEQC is concerned with the accreditation of whole qualifications only (for example, BA, MCom, Diploma in Human Resource Management, etc.), and not of short courses or unit standards. The HEQC will review:

- The learning programme which has been designed to enable learners to achieve a qualification.
- The personnel, infrastructure, systems and processes in place to support learners in their studies.

1.2.5 More stringent quality assurance systems

Part of the requirements of the Higher Education Act is that private providers should:

*maintain acceptable standards that are not inferior to standards at a comparable public higher education institution.*¹⁰

The HEQC will be initiating increasingly stringent quality assurance systems for public and private institutions, evaluating quality assurance arrangements for knowledge production and research, teaching and community service.

1.2.6 The new academic policy for higher education

The CHE task team has developed a new academic policy for higher education. This will replace the current academic policy that includes separate qualifications frameworks for universities, technikons and colleges. Until the new framework is approved, providers should continue to use the following documents.

- **A Qualification Structure for Universities in South Africa** – Report 116, Department of Education (96/02).
- **General Policy for Technikon Instructional Programmes** – Report 150, Department of Education (97/01).

The document **A Qualification Structure for Universities in South Africa** affords an overview of the different degree and diploma programmes currently in use in universities in South Africa with regard to, amongst others, the following aspects: types of programmes, objectives, admission criteria, types of contents, credits and articulation possibilities.

The document **General Policy for Technikon Instructional Programmes** describes the same aspects of typical current technikon-type programmes.

¹⁰ Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No 101 of 1997), section 53(1)bi.

SECTION 2: ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS AND APPLICATION PROCEDURES

PROVIDERS MUST PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS SECTION HAS A DIRECT BEARING ON THE APPLICATION PROCESS ITSELF AND HAS TO BE STUDIED IN CLOSE CONJUNCTION WITH THE APPLICATION FORM. THE RELEVANT SECTIONS OF THE APPLICATION FORM WILL BE INDICATED, WHERE APPLICABLE.

2.1 What will be reviewed in the accreditation process?

2.1.1 Requirements according to SAQA's Regulations

According to the SAQA Regulations, providers must:

- (a) *be registered as a provider.*
- (b) *have a quality management system which includes, but is not limited to*
 - *quality management policies which define that which the provider wishes to achieve;*
 - *quality management procedures which enable the provider to practise its defined quality management policies; or*
 - *review mechanisms which ensure that the quality management policies and procedures defined are applied and remain effective.*
- (c) *be able to develop, deliver and evaluate learning programmes which culminate in specified registered qualifications.*
- (d) *have the*
 - *necessary financial, administrative and physical resources;*
 - *policies and practices for staff selection, appraisal and development;*
 - *policies and practices for learner entry, guidance and support systems;*
 - *policies and practices for the management of off-site practical or work-site components;*
 - *policies and practices for the management of assessment;*
 - *necessary reporting procedures; and*
 - *the ability to achieve the desired outcomes, using available resources and procedures to develop, deliver and evaluate the learning programmes which culminate in the specified qualification.*¹¹

2.1.2 What are the HEQC's requirements for accreditation?

In implementing the Regulations referred to in 2.1.1 above, the HEQC believes that a mixture of qualitative and quantitative criteria have to be considered when evaluating applications for accreditation. There will be different considerations at every level of qualification and these will become more stringent when proceeding towards degree and postgraduate qualifications.

¹¹ Regulations under the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (Act No 58 of 1995), section 13(1).

(i) Reviewing a provider

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS SECTION MUST BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH SECTIONS 1 AND 2 (PAGES 1-8) OF THE APPLICATION FORM.

When reviewing your application to be accredited as a **provider**, the HEQC will want to know whether you have the institutional capacity (policies, procedures, infrastructure, etc.) to run your organisation effectively at each site of delivery and to fulfil your mission as an institution.¹² What is at stake here is capacity on the institutional level and not programme-specific capacity. The requirements for programme-specific issues are indicated under (ii) below.

Table 1 below lists aspects of institutional capacity on which information has to be provided. References to sections in the Application Form are indicated in each instance.

TABLE 1: INFORMATION NEEDED FOR REVIEWING A PROVIDER

INFORMATION NEEDED	RELEVANT SECTIONS IN APPLICATION FORM
Brief overview of the institution	Section 1
Legal requirements	Section 2.1
Mission, vision or objectives	Section 2.2
Language of instruction	Section 2.3
Organisational structure	Section 2.4
Staff	Section 2.5
Lecture rooms/theatres, laboratories and studies	Section 2.6
Library	Section 2.7
Admission criteria and placement of learners	Section 2.8
Assessment policies and procedures	Section 2.9
Research	Section 2.10
Experiential learning	Section 2.11

¹² Financial and legal aspects relating to this capacity are evaluated by the DoE and not by the HEQC.

Learner records	Section 2.12
Learner support	Section 2.13
Quality assurance mechanisms	Section 2.14

(ii) Reviewing a programme

When reviewing a programme leading to an NQF-registered qualification, the HEQC will want to know whether all aspects that have to do with the quality of the training delivered by means of the programme are in order. In Table 2 below is a list of such aspects on which information is needed, with the relevant sections of the Application Form indicated in each instance:

TABLE 2: INFORMATION NEEDED FOR REVIEWING A PROGRAMME

INFORMATION NEEDED	RELEVANT SECTIONS IN APPLICATION FORM
Motivation for learning programme	Section 3.1
Academic staff involved in the programme	Section 3.2
Enrolments and class sizes	Section 3.3
Programme admission criteria	Section 3.4
Credit value of the programme	Section 3.5
Educational outcomes of the programme	Section 3.6
Programme design	Section 3.7
Assessment	Section 3.8
Types of learning activities in the programme	Section 3.9
Library resources available for the programme	Section 3.10
Computer equipment for the programme	Section 3.11
Experiential learning involved in the programme	Section 3.12
Advisory committee for the programme	Section 3.13

In the case of programmes leading to **postgraduate qualifications**, in addition to the above, the HEQC will want information about the following (relevant sections in the Application Form are indicated between brackets after each item):

- Full details of the research activities of the academic staff attached to the programme, in particular their list of publications, research projects directed or contributed to over the past five years, number of postgraduate theses supervised, etc. (Subsection 3.14.1)
- How the programme enables graduates to undertake independent research and other scholarly activities. (Subsection 3.14.2)
- How learners receive a systematic and coherent overview of the body of knowledge, its underlying principles and development, and an appreciation of the limitations of the discipline as well as its interrelationships with other disciplines. (Subsection 3.14.3)
- Postgraduate supervisory practices and other forms of support. (Subsection 3.14.4)
- Processes to approve postgraduate qualifications. (Subsection 3.14.5)
- Links with other research units and researchers nationally and internationally in the field of study. (Subsection 3.14.6)

2.2 The application procedure

The sections below set out the application procedure for private providers who intend offering new programmes. In the case of brand-new prospective providers a full business plan has to be submitted as well and the application form should be completed as fully as possible.

2.2.1 Before you can apply you need to meet certain criteria

A private provider of higher education is eligible to apply for accreditation if:

- Learners are registered only in the name of the applying provider.
- The provider regularly evaluates and monitors the programme concerned against its objectives; modifies it according to feedback from learners, external examiners and other interested parties (employers, professional bodies, etc); and updates it regularly so that it conforms to national and international best practice.
- Learners' work is assessed by the applying provider.
- The provider issues the certificate awarded to learners on successful completion of the qualification.¹³

¹³ This should happen after formal delegation by the HEQC.

- The provider takes full responsibility for delivering the learning programme at every site of delivery.

2.2.2 Opportunity for initial discussions

If you want to apply for registration, you may contact the DoE for an initial discussion about whether you are likely to meet the requirements in the Higher Education Act.¹⁴ Providers are also welcome to discuss requirements for accreditation with the HEQC. The HEQC needs to know that:

1. The provider has applied for registration with the DoE.
2. SAQA has registered the qualifications on the NQF.

2.2.3 Make sure you submit all the required information

When an application is received, it is acknowledged by the HEQC and logged into its system. The application cannot be processed further unless all the required information has been submitted. Officials of the HEQC will do a preliminary review of the application to ensure that this is the case. If not, the full application will be returned to the institution and the HEQC will retain 25 per cent of the application fee for administrative costs.

2.2.4 You may have to submit additional information required by the evaluators

The HEQC employs, on contract, a number of people experienced in higher education and in the field of study of the particular programme to work with officials of the HEQC to evaluate applications. Complete applications are sent to these evaluators for evaluation, who also do a second preliminary checklisting of the required items. If additional information is needed, you will be requested by the HEQC to provide it within a specified time. If this is not adhered to, the full application will be returned and 50 per cent of the fee will be retained for administrative costs.

2.2.5 Evaluators make recommendations to the HEQC

Evaluators will be expected to complete their evaluations within 45 working days, after which they should recommend whether or not the provider and its programmes meet

¹⁴ Please refer to the Regulations for the Registration of Private Higher Education Providers under the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No 101 of 1997), Chapter 2.

the requirements of the HEQC. Recommendations will generally be one of the following categories:

- The provider and the programmes should be accredited, as presented.
- Accreditation should be granted, but the provider has to attend to a number of conditions. The provider may be given a specified time within which to demonstrate that it has complied with the conditions, or it may have to report on these in the following year's annual report to the HEQC. If the listed conditions are not met, accreditation will be withdrawn.
- Accreditation should not be granted.

2.2.6 The HEQC Accreditation Committee for Private Providers

Recommendations from evaluators for the accreditation of a provider and its programmes will be referred to the HEQC Accreditation Committee for Private Providers¹⁵. The HEQC Accreditation Committee meets at least every two months and has to:

- Make recommendations to the full HEQC on the quality assurance mechanisms of private providers and on the accreditation of learning programmes based on evaluators' reports and recommendations. Reasons will be provided for the HEQC's decisions.
- Assure the Registrar of Private Higher Education Institutions at the DoE that the programmes of the private provider will:
 - maintain standards not inferior to high standards at comparable public higher education institutions.
 - comply with the requirements of the HEQC.

¹⁵The membership of the HEQC Accreditation Committee for Private Providers is as follows: the Chairperson of the HEQC, the Director of Private Higher Education in the Department of Education, a representative of the QA Directorate of the South African Qualifications Authority, two members nominated by the Alliance of Private Providers of Education and Training Development, three representatives from public higher education institutions and members of the HEQC Secretariat as required.

2.2.7 For the next two years, accreditation is provisional

As indicated in 1.2.3, the next two years will be a development phase for both the HEQC and providers applying for accreditation. All accreditation granted in this period will be regarded as interim accreditation, granted for three to five years, after which more permanent procedures will be put in place. The HEQC will keep stakeholders informed about its proposals.

2.2.8 Reinforcing comparability between public and private providers

The HEQC will organise its administrative and committee work in ways which will reinforce comparability between public and private higher education providers.

2.3 Appeals¹⁶

2.3.1 Appeals procedure

If an unsuccessful candidate wants to appeal after being notified by the HEQC about the reasons for not granting accreditation, notice should be given of the intention to appeal within ten working days of receiving the HEQC letter.

Within a further thirty working days, a letter must be submitted, with the appropriate fee, which sets out the grounds for the appeal against the reasons given by the HEQC for not granting accreditation.

2.3.2 The HEQC Appeals Committee

A separate HEQC Appeals Committee will consider the appeal.¹⁷ The HEQC will not contract a new set of evaluators or conduct site visits, but will pay close attention to the processes and procedures followed in the first evaluation. The Appeals Committee will consider the following documents:

- Original application.
- Report from the evaluators.
- Letter of appeal.

¹⁶ See the Regulations for the Registration of Private Higher Education Providers under the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No 101 of 1997), Chapter 10.

¹⁷ The Appeals Committee consists of the Chief Executive Officer of the CHE, the CHE representative on the HEQC and co-opted specialists when necessary.

The recommendation of the Appeals Committee will be referred to the HEQC Accreditation Committee for Private Providers for a final recommendation, which will be considered by the full HEQC. The applicant will be informed of the result of the appeal within two months of submitting full grounds for the appeal.

2.4 Public statements about accreditation

The accreditation process is lengthy because of the nature of the processes followed (cf. 2.2 and 2.3 above). Applying providers should, therefore, avoid making any public statements which may later embarrass them or put pressure on either them or the HEQC. Public statements should be confined to the status of the application with the HEQC at that time and should not create any expectation that accreditation will be awarded, or that it will be awarded by a specific time.

A list of accredited providers and accredited qualifications will be made available to the public in a variety of forms, should this information be required.¹⁸ All other documents are internal to the HEQC.

2.5 Additional accreditation and procedures in the event of changes to accredited programmes

2.5.1 Each new programme and/or site of delivery must be accredited

Accredited providers may want to add more learning programmes or sites of delivery to their existing arrangements. Each new programme or site of delivery should be accredited and will be subject to the fee structure as set out in subsection 2.8 below.

2.5.2 Changes to an accredited programme

The HEQC recognises that after a programme has been granted accreditation, changes to the programme may, after some time, be necessary to take into account new developments in the scope, content, or techniques of the subject or field of study or on account of feedback from learners, employers or professional organisations. Providers will be expected to secure new accreditation if changes are made to the programme with respect to:

¹⁸ Please refer to the Regulations for the Registration of Private Higher Education Providers for other documents which will be made public.

- The title of the programme.
- The objectives of the programme.
- The mode of attendance or duration of the programme.
- The type and exit level of the programme (for example, a diploma becoming a higher diploma).
- The addition of options and/or streams (for example, if a specialisation such as tourism is added to a general formative qualification such as a BCom), where such additions effect a substantial change in the scope, objectives and contents of the programme.
- Curriculum changes so that 60 per cent or more of the content or outcomes is different
- A significant reduction in the provision of resources (staff, finance, equipment, etc.) for the programme.

Providers are welcome to consult the HEQC for guidance in this regard.

2.6 Loss of registration or accreditation

If registration by the DoE or accreditation by the HEQC is withdrawn, the provider may no longer operate.

2.7 Ongoing requirements

2.7.1 Learner and stakeholder satisfaction

Providers will be expected to establish their own systems to gauge learner and other stakeholders' satisfaction on a regular basis. The HEQC will take up quality related concerns during its visits to institutions. Providers may be required to improve their internal quality assurance mechanisms or learning programmes with quality problems within a stipulated time-frame in order not to lose their accreditation.

2.7.2 Annual requirements for accredited providers

Accredited providers have to supply the information indicated in Table 3 on an annual basis:

TABLE 3: ANNUAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITED PROVIDERS

At the end of each calendar year

Success rates for each programme. This includes success rates at the different levels (e.g. Year 1, 2 etc), where applicable, as well as through-put rates for the whole programme.

At least six months before the anniversary of the formal granting of accreditation

A comprehensive, but concise report, on both the provider and its accredited programmes. This has to be done against the background of the accreditation outcome and the information supplied by you in the Application form, Sections 2 and 3). The report should include the following:

- How any conditions placed by the HEQC on accreditation have been met (See 2.2.5 above on the consequences of not meeting the conditions.
- Changes or improvements with regard to any aspects mentioned in Sections 2 or 3 of the Application Form.
- Problems identified in the internal quality assurance mechanisms of the institution or in the programme itself and action planned for their resolution.
- A review of learner and stakeholder satisfaction as well as action arising out of this.
- A review of action taken on external examiners'/moderators' reports, or on advisory committee recommendations, where applicable.
- A review of action taken after internal evaluations.
- Progress on implementing a full internal quality assurance system.
- Any reduction in or loss of academic, administrative or technical personnel, facilities or support.
- The termination or suspension of any programme (including a report on arrangements made to enable learners to complete their qualification or to transfer to another programme or institution without loss of credit).

2.8 Application fees

Fees for the accreditation of private providers and each of their programmes, as well as site visits, where applicable, are reviewed annually. These fees reflect the administrative costs to the HEQC in processing applications, including payments to independent evaluators. Any changes come into effect on 1 January of each year.

(i) Fee for accreditation as a provider: R5 000

(ii) Fee for each additional site of delivery: R1 000

(iii) Fee for accreditation of each programme

Please note again that the HEQC is concerned only with whole qualifications (for example a BA), not unit standards or short courses, as indicated in 1.2.4 above. This also means that if a qualification has an earlier exit point (for example, a first degree with an exit point of a certificate after one year), there is a separate fee for each qualification.

The fees are as follows:

- Each undergraduate qualification (NQF levels 5 and 6): R4 000
- Each postgraduate qualification (NQF levels 7 and 8): R8 000
- Each additional stream to any qualification: R1 000

(iv) Additional fee for site visits requested by the HEQC: R3 000

Where additional days are required because of the need to visit more than one site, there will be an additional charge of R2 000 per day. To this should be added the direct costs of travel, accommodation and subsistence for a minimum of two evaluators. The HEQC will liaise with the provider to keep these fees to a minimum.

(v) Administrative costs of returned applications

When applications are returned because providers have not provided all the required information (cf. 2.2.3 and 2.2.4 above), part of the application fee will be retained to cover administrative costs.

This will be done as follows:

- 25 per cent of the application fee will be retained if the application is returned following a preliminary review by the HEQC staff.
- 50 per cent of the application fee will be retained if the application is returned following a preliminary review by the evaluator or if additional information requested is not received within the stated time.

(vi) Fee for all appeals (cf. 2.3 above) : R1 000

(vii) Fee for annual renewal of accreditation in preliminary period (cf. : R1 000)

Summary

Accreditation as provider	R5 000
Plus	
Each additional site of delivery	R1 000
Plus	
Each qualification:	
All undergraduate qualifications	R4 000
All postgraduate qualifications	R8 000
Each additional stream to any qualification	R1 000
Site visit if requested by HEQC	R3 000
Plus	
Additional fee for each separate site	R2 000
Plus	
Direct costs of travel, accommodation and subsistence	To be advised
Appeals	R1 000
Annual renewal of accreditation of provider and qualifications	R1 000

CONCEPTS AND TERMINOLOGY

Refer to Chapter 1 of the Regulations for the Registration of Private Higher Education Providers under the Higher Education Act as well as the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) documents for lists of definitions within which the HEQC operates. Some of the definitions which relate to learning programmes are provided in this section, with some others.

Applied competence SAQA definition	The ability to put into practice in the relevant context the learning outcomes acquired in obtaining a qualification.
Assessment SAQA definition	The structured evaluation of a person's ability to demonstrate acquisition and application of the outcomes of a programme of learning, leading to the award of a qualification.
(i) integrated assessment SAQA definition	That form of assessment which permits the learner to demonstrate applied competence and which uses a range of formative and summative assessment methods.
credit SAQA definition	That value assigned to a given number of notional hours of learning. One SAQA credit equals ten notional learning hours. 120 SAQA credits are equivalent approximately to one year of full-time study.
core learning SAQA definition	That compulsory learning required in situations contextually relevant to the particular qualification, and "core" has a corresponding meaning.
examination SAQA definition	A written, oral or practical assessment, as the case may be, in accordance with general education policy. Also supplementary and re-examination, continuous evaluation, and the evaluation of experiential learning.
exit survey	An exit survey is conducted at the end of a learner's contact with a provider, usually when he/she graduates. An exit survey asks a range of questions including about the learner's experience of the programme, the strengths and weaknesses of the programme from the learner's perspective, how useful the learning was, whether the learner has already secured employment or whether the learner plans to study further.
fundamental learning SAQA definition	That learning which forms the grounding or basis needed to undertake the education, training or further learning required in the obtaining of a qualification and "fundamental" has a corresponding meaning.
Moderator SAQA definition	A person, apart from the examiner, that is appointed by the provider to be responsible for ensuring the standard of the examination and its accompanying marking framework and response exemplars, and for marking a representative sample of examination responses.

notional hours of learning SAQA definition	The learning time that it is conceived it would take an average learner to meet the outcomes defined, and includes concepts such as contact time, time spent in structured learning in the workplace and individual learning.
Outcomes SAQA definition	The contextually demonstrated end products of the learning process.
(i) exit level outcomes SAQA definition	The outcomes to be achieved by a qualifying learner at the point at which he or she leaves the programme leading to a qualification.
(ii) critical outcomes SAQA definition	Those generic outcomes determined by SAQA, which inform all teaching and learning, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Identifying and solving problems in which responses display that responsible decisions using critical and creative thinking have been made.b) Working effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation, community.c) Organising and managing oneself and one's activities responsibly and effectively.d) Collecting, analysing, organising and critically evaluating information.e) Communicating effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written persuasion.f) Using science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and health of others.g) Demonstrating an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation.h) Contributing to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the society at large, by making it the underlying intention of any programme of learning to make an individual aware of the importance of:<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively;ii. Participating as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities;iii. Being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts;iv. Exploring education and career opportunities; andv. Developing entrepreneurial opportunities.
(iii) specific outcomes SAQA definition	Contextually demonstrated knowledge, skills and values, which support one or more critical outcomes.
specialised learning SAQA definition	That specialised theoretical knowledge which underpins application in the area of specialisation and "specialisation" has a corresponding meaning.

OUR PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

The quality assurance system of the HEQC will seek to advance the related purposes and goals of the White Paper on higher education.

The quality assurance system of the HEQC will contribute to the role of higher education in the building of the National Qualifications Framework.

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.

The HEQC will uphold the accountability requirements of higher education provision within the context of a strong developmental and formative approach to quality assurance. However, the HEQC will, where necessary, expose and act against persistent and unchanging poor quality provision.

The HEQC is committed to independence, objectivity, fairness and consistency in all its quality assurance activities. In the interest of transparency, appropriate audit and programme evaluation information will be available in the public domain, subject to the agreement of the HEQC.

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.

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.

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.

**An independent statutory body
established in terms of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997)
to advise the Minister of Education on all higher education issues
and to be responsible for quality assurance in higher education
through the Higher Education Quality Committee.**

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