

NATIONAL REVIEW OF PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES IN EDUCATION OFFERED BY HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Briefing Document on the National Review

Preamble

The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) has the mandate in terms of the *Higher Education Act* (Act No. 101 of 1997) to:

- ❑ Promote quality in higher education;
- ❑ Audit quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions;
- ❑ Accredite programmes of higher education;

Because of the large number of existing programmes that were offered by higher education institutions at the inception of the CHE and HEQC, the HEQC decided to focus on the accreditation of new programmes. Existing programmes in certain key areas would then be dealt with through national reviews. The re-accreditation of MBA programmes offered by higher education institutions in South Africa was the first national review undertaken by the HEQC.

National reviews constitute a particular form of accreditation that focuses on the re-accreditation of existing programmes in a specific discipline area. National reviews are conducted within the context of the general HEQC accreditation criteria but they also include criteria specific to the programmes /or disciplinary area focused on. They take into account providers' as well as stakeholders' concerns and interests in the training of students or professionals in a particular area including the articulation between the learning programme and the skills required from graduates in the actual work situation.

National reviews have three main components: the re-accreditation of programmes; the follow-up process on the re-accreditation results; and the production of a report on the state of provision in a particular programme/or disciplinary area.

To this effect, in 2004, the HEQC Board took a decision that the next national review will be conducted on selected professional and academic programmes in Education.

The following factors guided the choice of programme area for the HEQC Board:

- ❑ The quality of school leavers qualifying for higher education is dependent on the quality of teacher education, amongst other factors.
- ❑ The ability to implement school reforms depends on the quality of teachers amongst other factors.
- ❑ Concerns have been expressed by the Department of Education and other stakeholders about the quality of teacher education provision in South Africa
- ❑ There is a need on the part of the HEQC for evaluation criteria to enable judgements on new applications to offer teacher and other education programmes, especially from institutions that have not offered these before.

- ❑ The Department of Education's request in its National Plan for Higher Education that the HEQC should prioritise the review of the quality of postgraduate programmes. The development of the next generation of researchers in education depends to a large extent on the quality of such programmes.
- ❑ The fact that a considerable number of institutions are presently involved in mergers could have implications for the quality of teacher and other education programmes.
- ❑ The recent incorporation of former teacher education colleges into universities could have quality implications for these programmes.

A framework document was developed to guide the process. Given that existing data was not sufficient for planning purposes or to support the preparation of the report on the state of provision, it was necessary a baseline survey was designed and completed by providers of teacher education programmes. The data from the questionnaire will inform the selection of programmes/specializations to form part of the Review.

1. FRAMEWORK FOR THE NATIONAL REVIEW

The Framework covers the following:

- ❑ The Policy and legislative context for the work of the HEQC.
- ❑ The Rationale for the Selection of Teacher Education as an area of review.
- ❑ The Purposes of the Review.
- ❑ The Re-accreditation Process.

In a nutshell, the main purposes of the review will therefore be to:

- ❑ Undertake a comprehensive evaluation of teacher and other education programmes at public and registered private higher education institutions in South Africa, in order to establish the extent, scope, relevance and quality of provision of such programmes.
- ❑ Evaluate and re-accredit such programmes, in order to ensure that they are of an acceptable quality.
- ❑ Improve the quality of teacher education provision in South Africa.
- ❑ Benchmark teacher education in South Africa against international developments in this field.
- ❑ Develop a national improvement strategy for fostering excellence in teacher education and other education programmes.

1.1 Re-accreditation Process

The re-accreditation process of the Review consists of 4 phases:

- ❑ Preparatory Phase
- ❑ Evaluation Phase
- ❑ Decision-making Phase
- ❑ Improvement and Follow-up Phase

Consultation

The project is at advanced levels of the **Preparatory Phase**. This phase has involved consultation with various stakeholders in teacher education – i.e.

- ❑ Consultation with the Deans of Education Forum (convened by the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education).
- ❑ Consultative meetings with the Higher Education Branch of the Department of Education.
- ❑ Several bilateral meetings with the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (MCTE).
- ❑ Bilateral meetings with the South African Council for Educators (SACE).
- ❑ Bilateral meetings with the ETDP-SETA.
- ❑ Bilateral meetings with the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC).
- ❑ Consultation with SAUVCA and the CTP.

These bilateral meetings culminated in a consultative workshop held at Birchwood Conference Centre (Boksburg) on the 20th of October 2004 attended by 104 delegates representing the following constituencies:

- Deans of Education Faculties in public higher education institutions
- Private higher education institutions offering programmes in Education
- SAUVCA (South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association)
- CTP (Committee of Technikon Principals)
- APPETD (Association of Private Providers of Educ, Training & Development)
- National Department of Education
- Ministerial Commission on Teacher Education
- Provincial Departments of Education
- SAQA (South African Qualifications Authority)
- ELRC (Education Labour Relations Council)
- SACE (South African Council for Educators)
- ETDP SETA (Education, Training and Development Practice Sector Education & Training Authority)
- SADTU (South African Democratic Teachers Union)
- NAPTOSA (National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa)
- SAOU (Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysunie)
- CPTA (Cape Province Teachers Association)
- UMALUSI Council for Quality Assurance in Gen and Further Ed & Training
- CEPD (Centre for Educational Policy Development)
- NADEOSA (National Distance Education Organisation of South Africa)
- SAIDE (South African Institute for Distance Education)

The purpose of the workshop was to:

- Provide the context, background and purpose for the intended review.
- Consult on the draft framework for the review.
- Consult on the draft Baseline Survey Questionnaire,
- Discuss the framework for a report on the state of teacher and other education programmes which will result from the national review.
- Clarify the role of stakeholders in the process,
- Discuss the procedure and process to be followed in appointing and establishing reference groups.
- Seek advice and comments on the relevant instruments and activities in undertaking the project,

Comments were received from some institutions and were integrated into the Baseline Survey Questionnaire and the Framework.

To extend the consultative process, in March 2005, the HEQC held 12 regional consultative workshops with students (class representatives, SRCs, etc), academics, quality assurance managers, provincial departments of Education and teacher trade unions at provincial level on the National Review. Wherever possible, institutions were grouped together at a central institution which was requested to host the workshop. Dr Prem Naidoo, Mr Theo Bhengu and Mr Tshepo Magabane of the HEQC conducted these regional workshops. These workshops have been successfully concluded, and attendance ranged from 25 to 108.

Criteria Development

In November 2004, the HEQC appointed six task teams to develop criteria on the following qualifications:

- ❑ Master of Education (M Ed)
- ❑ Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)
- ❑ Bachelor of Education (Hons)
- ❑ Bachelor of Education
- ❑ National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE)
- ❑ Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE)

Given that teacher education is mainly offered through a distance education mode, a seventh task team was appointed to develop criteria for distance education.

Given the immense experience of the academics throughout the country in teaching these qualifications, the HEQC decided to draw on this rich experience in the development of the criteria. The HEQC proposed to use a regional participatory approach involving academics. This approach, which was received with great enthusiasm by the Deans, entailed locating the development of criteria of each qualification in different regions with an institution acting as a coordinator. The coordinating institution had the responsibility to invite the participation of other institutions in the region to form the task team to develop the criteria for the identified qualification. Institutions had the opportunity to choose which qualification type it wanted to participate in.

The details of coordinators are indicated in the table below.

PROGRAMME	COORDINATOR	INSTITUTION
M Ed	Prof D. Meerkotter Dean: Faculty of Education	University of Western Cape
B.Ed (Hons)	Prof J. Jansen Dean: Faculty of Education	University of Pretoria
PGCE	Prof S. A. Pendlebury Head of School of Education	University of the Witwatersrand
B.Ed (Foundation & Intermediate Phase)	Prof R.V. Gabela Dean: Faculty of Education	University of Zululand
B.Ed (Senior & FET Phase)	Prof S. Niemann Head: School of Education	University of the Free State
ACE	Prof B Parker Dean: Faculty of Education	University of Fort Hare
NPDE	Prof P D F Siyakwazi Dean: Faculty of Education	University of Venda
DISTANCE EDUCATION	Prof P. Higgs Director: School of Education	University of South Africa

The criteria development process is complete and draft criteria were submitted to the HEQC and presented at the Deans' Forum of 24 February 2005. The HEQC has now appointed a team that will consolidate and harmonise the criteria into a national framework. After this, the criteria will be released to stakeholders for a month of public comment. Thereafter, comments will be integrated into the document, the criteria will be tabled for HEQC Board approval and then sent out to institutions to start preparing their self-evaluation portfolios.

2. BASELINE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

As already mentioned, a baseline survey questionnaire was developed and comments from stakeholders were integrated. The final version was sent to 29 institutions in November 2004 and institutions were given till January 2005 to complete and submit to the HEQC. Only 26 institutions (23 public and 3 private institutions) offer professional and academic programmes in Education. 25 institutions completed the baseline survey. An initial analysis of 17 institutions (presented at the Deans' Forum on the 24th of February 2005) reveals the following:

- 88 228 students enrolled for Education programmes.
- 1999 academic staff, of which 874 are permanent.
- there are about 611 programme specializations.
- one institution has 29 different M Ed specializations.
- one institution offers 127 programme specializations.
- in total, there are about 180 sites of delivery.

A more complete analysis of the size and shape of provision will be completed and reflected on the report on the state of professional and academic programmes in Education after the submission of missing information by institutions. The report will give a reasonably accurate picture of the nature of supply of teacher education. A list of higher education institutions offering education programmes is included.

3. SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

A schedule of activities was presented at the Deans' Forum listing timelines for the National Review.

The following activities are planned for 2005 and 2006:

- The MEd programme will be the first to be evaluated in 2005. This decision is in keeping with the goals of the National Plan for Higher Education – namely, the evaluation of the quality of postgraduate programmes. This decision was taken so as not to impact negatively on teacher supply. Within the next two weeks, the HEQC will communicate which M Ed specialization/s will form part of the Review.
- Following a nomination process, teams of programme evaluators will be trained to evaluate the MEd programmes.
- Regional workshops will be held with institutions during June 2005 to guide them on doing self-evaluation portfolios.
- After the comments on criteria and integration of comments, the final version will be presented to the HEQC Board for approval. This will be released to the sector via a series of regional workshops. All criteria, including those of programmes that will only be evaluated in 2006 and those that may not be evaluated at all, will be released at the same time so that institutions use them to improve the quality of these programmes.
- Institutions will submit their portfolios for the M Ed by the 31st of July 2005.

- A preliminary analysis of portfolios will be undertaken immediately thereafter to the middle of August 2005.
- Site visits will take place to all institutions offering MEd programmes between September and November 2005.
- The HEQC Board will appoint an Accreditation Committee to examine the consistency of reports and make recommendations to the HEQC Board. A meeting will take place in late November/early December 2005.
- The Secretariat will communicate recommendations with institutions by 15 December 2005. Institutions will have 21 days to make representations to the HEQC on errors of fact or omission.
- The Board will meet in February/March 2006 to make final decisions. The Minister of Education will be briefed shortly thereafter about the decisions. These decisions will then be communicated to institutions and also made public.
- Institutions which have been granted accreditation with conditions will have 12 months to address their conditions of accreditation. Within 12 months, they will be expected to submit compliance reports and evidence of such to the HEQC. Site visits will be scheduled in 2007 to determine the degree of compliance.
- Depending on the deeper analysis of baseline data, the following programmes will undergo a similar process in 2006 and 2007: B Ed (pre-service programme), ACE (in-service) and PGCE.
- The HEQC will regularly brief the Minister at any point during the process.
- A report of the state of the M Ed will be developed and disseminated via a national conference.

3. MAKING JUDGEMENTS

The HEQC has developed a document to guide institutions on how criteria will be used to arrive at judgements.

SUMMARY DECISION TABLE

CATEGORIES	RECOMMENDATION/ DECISIONS
<p>Systemic Issues and Minor Shortcomings</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p>	<p>Institution to provide the HEQC with a report indicating steps taken to address problems identified. Areas fixable in 21 days to be addressed immediately.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HEQC to monitor.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FULL ACCREDITATION</p>
<p>Fixable Short-term Shortcomings</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p>	<p>Institution to send improvement plan with details on compliance strategy with time-lines not exceeding 1 year. At the end of the period, a detailed report to be submitted to the HEQC for monitoring and evaluation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ACCREDITATION WITH CONDITION/S</p>
<p>Irreparable Shortcomings</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p>	<p>Institution notified that the programme did not meet the criteria and minimum standards.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NO ACCREDITATION</p> <p style="text-align: right;">6</p>