

Quality Promotion and Capacity Development Directorate (HEQC)

TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY  
PROMOTION AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT  
IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

(RESEARCH REPORT FOR THE QPCD FRAMEWORK )

Discussion Document

December 2005

Towards a Framework for Quality Promotion and  
Capacity Development in South African Higher Education

Published by:  
The Council on Higher Education  
Didacta Building  
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Pretoria  
South Africa

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**ISBN: 1-919856-51-X**  
Date of Publication: December 2005

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## Acknowledgement

Ms Ashley Symes was commissioned to conduct this research.

## FOREWORD

The Higher Education Act of 1997 assigns responsibility for quality assurance in higher education in South Africa to the Council on Higher Education (CHE). This responsibility is discharged through its permanent sub-committee, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). The mandate of the HEQC includes quality promotion, institutional audit and programme accreditation. As part of the task of building an effective national quality assurance system in a context of restructuring and transformation, the HEQC Board has also included capacity development and training as a critical component of its approach and its programme of activities.

The aim of the HEQC quality assurance system is to move higher education institutions to a greater level of self-regulation within a framework of external validation by the HEQC. Consistent with this, and with the fact that the South African higher education system is characterised by uneven quality of provision, the HEQC's approach to quality assurance combines institutional accountability with a developmental philosophy that relies on improvement strategies. Given the effect that different historical trajectories have had on all South African higher education institutions, the improvement dimension of the HEQC's approach is supported by an extensive capacity development and quality promotion programme that has as its main purpose the preparation of the higher education system for the implementation of the new quality assurance dispensation and the actual enhancement of the quality of provision.

The process of building the policy foundations of the HEQC is almost complete. The development and finalisation of a Framework for quality promotion and capacity development will complete the process started in 2001 to develop the policy foundations of a new quality assurance system for South African higher education. The finalisation of Framework will provide a coherent and integrated set of parameters to locate these capacity development programmes and activities.

In order to inform the finalisation of the HEQC's Quality Promotion and Capacity Development Framework, research was commissioned to inform and enrich the development of a policy framework for the HEQC's functions of quality promotion and capacity development in South African higher education. This document encompasses the findings of the researcher and does not necessarily reflect the policy positions of the HEQC.

As has been the case with a great deal of its research and development work, the HEQC makes this document available for discussion and use by stakeholders in the higher education sector. It is to be read together with the HEQC's draft Quality Promotion and Capacity Development Framework when it becomes available next year.

I hope that this resource document will be of use to colleagues and stakeholders in higher education and will help to inform the discussion on the HEQC's Framework for quality promotion and capacity development when it becomes available early in 2006.

*Dr Mala Singh*

*Executive Director, Higher Education Quality Committee, CHE*

*December 2005*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the outcome of research conducted for the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE), to inform and enrich development of framework policy for the HEQC's functions of quality promotion and capacity development (QPCD) in South African higher education.

Chapter 1 (Background and Context of the Research) sets out the terms of reference of the project. The research aimed to generate a range of conceptual perspectives and options for modelling the QPCD approach of the HEQC, and so to assist the preparation of the QPCD framework document. A review of relevant literature was conducted, as well as a review of relevant approaches in selected national quality assurance (QA) systems. Interviews with HEQC members and a review of HEQC documentation were utilised to compile an inventory of the HEQC's QPCD activities, and to analyse HEQC experiences and insights with respect to the QPCD function. The research took as its point of departure an existing draft QPCD framework document. It used this as a reference point to compare similar or dissimilar concepts highlighted in the literature, and to track conceptual shifts or advances that have been made by the HEQC in the interim as it has designed and implemented various QPCD initiatives.

Chapter 2 (Concepts and Terminologies: QPCD in the Literature) reviews definitions and meanings attached to the key terms of this research – namely: 'quality promotion' (QP) and 'capacity development' (CD) – by examining a range of concepts, models, and terminologies that occur in relevant literature and documentary sources. It finds that, although QP and CD have different conceptual histories and distinctive emphases, they share significant conceptual elements in a contemporary understanding. In particular, they have in common related objectives of continuous improvement and sustainable development. Therefore, in the context of QA in higher education, QP and CD provide fully compatible opportunities for higher education renewal or transformation. The HEQC's draft QPCD framework is by and large consistent with the conceptual emphases of QP and CD as they emerge in this research, and the framework appears well poised, even in its draft form, to track and adapt to future conceptual developments. Given the relatively weak conceptualisation of QP and CD in the specific context of QA in higher education, the framework also appears to have an opportunity to contribute to, and influence, a fuller understanding of QPCD purposes and approaches in its field.

Chapter 3 (Policy and Practice: QPCD Approaches in National Quality Assurance Systems) considers aspects of QA systems in selected countries around the world. Each overall QA configuration is described, highlighting elements relevant to objectives and functions of quality promotion and capacity development (and also quality enhancement

[QE] which is a key objective/function in some systems). The chapter finds that QP consistently serves both accountability and improvement purposes in national QA systems, and that both quality per se, and QA, are promoted. QA systems in most of the countries in the sample are oriented around QE, rather than CD. That is to say: although continuous quality improvement is a central concept in all of these systems, the achievement of higher education quality and effective QA systems tend not to be analysed primarily from the perspective of developing capacity for their achievement. In QA systems where CD and QE functions co-exist, the QA system appears to have been more explicitly conceived as a support to higher education transformation. No 'best practice' conceptualisation of QP, CD/QE is suggested by the case studies, although an interesting diversity of contextualised approaches is in evidence. Thus, the HEQC would appear to have every reason to tailor its own conceptual approach and programme design, and to orient its QPCD framework self-referentially in the first instance – i.e. with reference to the goals of South Africa's transforming and restructuring higher education system, and its customised definition of quality. These points of reference would then serve to inform innovation adapted to context and resources, or selection of approaches that may have been modelled elsewhere.

Chapter 4 (Organisation, Programme and Activities: QPCD in the HEQC's Experience) provides a synthesis of HEQC perspectives on the nature and conceptualisation of QPCD initiatives to date, as well as on the conceptualisation of a QPCD framework and programme going forward. The chapter compiles inventories of QPCD initiatives, strategies, approaches and methodologies, and comments on concrete aspects of the draft framework. A high-level conceptual model for the framework is suggested, as a means of encapsulating key thinking in this chapter, and to provide a platform for further refinements. Core elements of the suggested model are:

- broad context for the QPCD function: the HEQC's mandate and definition of quality;
- key QPCD tasks: deepening theoretical and practical understanding of quality and QA; supporting reflection and intellectual enquiry into theory and practice of quality and QA; and facilitating systemic learning about quality and QA.;
- agreed strategies and approaches that inform design of initiatives and collaborations;
- initiatives categorised by purpose: reflection and research; QPCD projects and co-ordination; operational support to HEQC core functions and systems; and internal support to the HEQC;
- a considered balance in initiatives that fulfil different purposes;
- interlinked QP and CD concepts and practices informing all initiatives;
- multi-level initiatives: spanning individual, academic programme, institutional (differentiated), sectoral (collective), higher education system and public levels;
- integrated set of interventions with appropriate linkages and feedback loops, in

order to: facilitate multi-level learning; develop quality; improve QA practice; and generate new knowledge about quality and QA; and

- dynamic QPCD approach focusing on: legacy issues (goals of transformation and restructuring); contemporary issues (objectives of self-regulation and continuous improvement in a transformation and restructuring context); and emerging issues (needs for ongoing adaptation).

Chapter 5 (Conclusions) notes that the research has elicited broad conceptual insights, as well as fairly detailed concrete suggestions, for possible incorporation in the QPCD framework document. Accordingly, the chapter organises the principal research findings (formulated more discursively or in more detail in the concluding sections of Chapters 2, 3 and 4) as two sets of conclusions, namely: substantive conclusions; and conclusions on developing the QPCD framework document. The chapter observes that, as a QPCD programme has been initiated by the HEQC in advance of full conceptualisation, there is now an opportunity for the framework to overlay the learning of practice with a conceptual clarity that simultaneously frames, captures and advances experience.

## ACRONYMS

ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
APPETD	Alliance of Private Providers of Education, Training and Development
APQN	Asia and Pacific Quality Network
AUQA	Australian Universities Quality Agency
CD	Capacity Development
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CHEA	Council for Higher Education Accreditation (United States)
CHED	Commission on Higher Education (Philippines)
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CNA	National Council of Accreditation (Colombia)
CTP	Committee of Technikon Principals
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of OECD)
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
DoE	Department of Education
ELIR	Enhancement-led Institutional Review (QAA-Scotland)
ENQA	European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
FINHEEC	Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
ICDE	International Council for Open and Distance Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INQAAHE	International Network of QA Agencies in Higher Education
IQAC	Internal Quality Assurance Cell (QE mechanism of NAAC)
ITL	Improving Teaching and Learning
JICA	Japan International Co-operation Agency
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MIS	Management Information Systems
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAAC	National Assessment and Accreditation Council (India)
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
QA	Quality Assurance
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (United Kingdom)
QAMF	Quality Managers Forum (of the HEQC)
QE	Quality Enhancement
QM	Quality Management

QMS	Quality Management System(s)
QP	Quality Promotion
QPCD	Quality Promotion and Capacity Development
SAADA	South African Academic Development Association
SAIDE	South African Institute for Distance Education
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAUVCA	South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association
SIDA	Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency
TQM	Total Quality Management
UGC	University Grants Commission (India)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation



## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This report is the outcome of research conducted for the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE), to inform and enrich development of framework policy for the HEQC's functions of quality promotion and capacity development (QPCD) in South African higher education.

The Higher Education Act (1997) gives the HEQC, as a permanent subcommittee of the CHE, responsibility for the promotion of quality assurance (QA), in addition to the accreditation of higher education programmes and the audit of QA mechanisms of all higher education institutions (HEIs).<sup>1</sup>

The HEQC's Founding Document (2001) interprets the HEQC's quality promotion role, namely: 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.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, the Founding Document identifies two broad areas of work that are critical in the South African context:

- capacity development: the development and implementation of initiatives to build and strengthen the capacity for high quality provision at institutional, learning programme and individual levels; and
- quality promotion: the development of a programme of activities to institutionalise a culture of quality in higher education and the commitment to continuous quality improvement.<sup>3</sup>

The HEQC established a Directorate of Quality Promotion and Capacity Development in order to take forward this work. In accordance with national higher education policy as set out in the White Paper (1997)<sup>4</sup>, and in accordance with the Higher Education Act and the Founding Document, the work of the QPCD Directorate is based on two closely related principles: first, that HEIs have the primary responsibility for quality and for developing effective quality management systems (QMS); and second, that in fulfilling its quality

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1 Republic of South Africa (1997). Higher Education Act No 101 of 1997. Government Gazette No 18515, Notice 1655, 19 December 1997. Pretoria, Government Printers: Sections 5(1)(c) and 7.

2 Council on Higher Education (January 2001). Higher Education Quality Committee: Founding Document. Pretoria, Council on Higher Education (CHE): Section 4.1.

3 CHE January 2001 (HEQC Founding Document): Sections 9.4 and 9.5.

4 Department of Education (1997). 'A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education'. Education White Paper 3. Government Gazette No 18207, 15 August 1997. Pretoria, Government Printers.

promotion mandate, the HEQC will play a facilitating role by developing partnerships with HEIs and a broad range of stakeholders.<sup>5</sup>

During the systems-building phase of its work between 2001 and 2004, the HEQC successfully developed, consulted, consolidated and finalised frameworks and criteria for programme accreditation and institutional audit (by 2005, implementation of the accreditation and audit models has accordingly begun).<sup>6</sup> Development of a comprehensive QPCD framework and model has lagged progress in the accreditation and audit areas, in part because QPCD approaches had to be informed by finalised accreditation and audit models. In the interim, a QPCD framework document has been drafted and currently exists as a work-in-progress draft.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the Directorate has launched a range of initiatives to serve its broad purposes. These include:

- projects to improve the quality of core functions in a differentiated institutional environment:
  - development by the Improving Teaching and Learning (ITL) Project of resources/guides for good practice (programme development, programme review, access and admissions, student development, assessment, staff development and self-evaluation, postgraduate research and supervision);<sup>8</sup>
  - development of resource/good practice guides in the areas of Research, and Community Engagement;
  - development of resources in special-topic areas (e.g. distance education, vocational education, library management, religious education).
- special projects in such areas as: institutional QA needs in the context of mergers, and student quality literacy;
- preparation workshops and programmes for auditors, programme evaluators and national review<sup>9</sup> evaluators;

<sup>5</sup> See: CHE January 2001 (HEQC Founding Document): Section 3.

<sup>6</sup> See: Council on Higher Education/Higher Education Quality Committee (June 2004a). Framework for Institutional Audits. Pretoria, Council on Higher Education (CHE); Council on Higher Education/Higher Education Quality Committee (June 2004b). Criteria for Institutional Audits. Pretoria, Council on Higher Education (CHE); Council on Higher Education/Higher Education Quality Committee (November 2004a). Framework for Programme Accreditation. Pretoria, Council on Higher Education (CHE); Council on Higher Education/Higher Education Quality Committee (November 2004b). Criteria for Programme Accreditation. Pretoria, Council on Higher Education (CHE).

<sup>7</sup> Higher Education Quality Committee (October 2003). Draft Framework for Quality Promotion and Capacity Development. (Draft #5, internal document only.)

<sup>8</sup> Council on Higher Education/Higher Education Quality Committee (November 2004c). Improving Teaching and Learning Resources (ITL Introduction and ITL Resources No 1-7). Pretoria, Council on Higher Education (CHE).

<sup>9</sup> E.g. the HEQC's national review on selected academic and professional programmes in Education, as currently under way.



- facilitating discussion, dissemination of information and sharing of experiences through: the QA Managers Forum (QAMF); national and regional seminars, workshops and forums; newsletters; and various forms of linkage and exchange between the HEQC and its international counterparts; and
- tracking of QPCD needs and issues through internal research, which analysed responses to a questionnaire (November 2001), and reports of one-day institutional visits (2002-2003), as supplemented by interviews and other documentary research.<sup>10</sup>

In the process of designing and implementing these initiatives, the QPCD Directorate has built up a foundation of experience and has generated many insights both conceptual and practical. In 2005, it is necessary to locate, focus and expand (or consolidate, or tailor) this range of initiatives and associated learning within a coherent QPCD framework that takes into account the following –

- a range of possible conceptual models and principles for quality promotion (QP) and capacity development (CD);
- the practical needs of building capability and capacity for high-quality delivery in South African higher education, and in particular building capability and capacity at different levels (individual, programme, institution), and in different areas (core functions of higher education) so that HEQC requirements can be met; and
- requirements for continuous improvement and innovation within the QA arrangements and QMS of South African higher education institutions, especially with the objective of a greater measure of QA self-regulation in view.

Accordingly, the HEQC has undertaken research to inform and enrich the process of QPCD framework development.

## 1.2 TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE RESEARCH

### 1.2.1 Rationale

In order to demonstrate its commitment to quality development in South African higher education, and in order to support and reinforce its functions of accreditation and audit, the HEQC must generate a QPCD framework that will:

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<sup>10</sup> See Council on Higher Education/Higher Education Quality Committee (August 2003). The Effects of the Activities of the HEQC on South African Higher Education: An Impact Study. (Internal document only); and: Council on Higher Education/Higher Education Quality Committee (June 2004c). Investigating the Response of South African Higher Education Institutions to HEQC Requirements. (Internal document only.)

- define and encapsulate an approach and principles compatible with the mandate and mission of the CHE/HEQC;
- afford a robust conceptual underpinning to a specified programme of interventions; and
- provide a platform for developing and sustaining a culture of quality in South African higher education institutions, where such a culture has as critical sub-elements: a culture of institutionally-managed evaluation and self-evaluation, a culture of continuous improvement, a culture of intellectual vibrancy, a culture of innovation, and a culture of diversity.

To generate such a framework, the HEQC needs to develop its own understanding of a range of possible models for QPCD and, as far as possible, to tailor a model that takes account of the South African system's priorities, needs and aspirations. This research was undertaken to assist in clarifying possible directions from both the conceptual and the empirical or pragmatic points of view, in ways that would be mutually reinforcing and so facilitative of HEQC policy perspectives.

#### 1.2.2 Purpose and Objectives

Specifically, the purpose of the research was specified as: to generate through targeted research a range of conceptual perspectives and options for modelling the QPCD approach of the HEQC, and so to assist the preparation of the QPCD framework document.

The objectives of the research were defined as follows –

1. drawing on a variety of documentary sources: to investigate, analyse and report on:
  - a range of conceptual approaches to QPCD in higher education QA environments internationally; and
  - a range of conceptual approaches to advocacy and capacity development in other environments (e.g. development and development aid organisations; funding organisations for research; possibly: advocacy and capacity development initiatives in environmental and public health contexts) and other geographical regions, where these experiences are transferable to the QA environment in South African higher education.
2. to describe, analyse and report on QPCD priorities, needs and gaps within the South African higher education system by:
  - compiling an inventory of QPCD Directorate projects and initiatives to date;
  - analysing project-related and other QPCD Directorate documents (e.g. project proposals and plans, project reports, QAMF reports, seminar papers);

- interviewing HEQC members, in particular members of the QPCD Directorate;
  - considering previous strategic research undertaken by the HEQC regarding: a) the impact of HEQC policies and activities, and b) the response of institutions to HEQC requirements. And the objective of
3. drawing on a) the above analyses, b) existing policy frameworks of the HEQC, and c) the draft QPCD framework document, as an analytical reference point: to synthesise possible options for modelling the QPCD approach of the HEQC and to evaluate ideas in the draft QPCD framework document in light of these.

### 1.2.3 Approach and Methodology

The research, including preparation of this report, was undertaken within a tight timeframe (26 days) on the understanding that it would be:

- Exploratory, in relation to:
  - definitions, theories, concepts and models in a range of contexts;
  - experiences and learnings of the QPCD Directorate; and
  - work-in-progress thinking, as captured in the draft QPCD framework document.
- preparatory to the completion of a QPCD framework that will be consulted and ultimately published as a policy document of the HEQC; and
- integrative and convergent, in its endeavour to draw within one frame a relatively disparate set of information: conceptual material from a range of contexts; QPCD Directorate views, understandings and perceptions derived from praxis; HEQC policies and frameworks; and anticipated future needs of a QA system that is still in its early stages of implementation and typically in its early stages of adoption at institutional level.

The research methodology comprised three principal components:

- literature review:
  - detailed perusal of reference material located through internet, journal and library searches; and
  - consideration of reference material of both immediate relevance (QPCD in QA in higher education) and wider contextual relevance (international development and development aid organisations, funding organisations for research, selected other fields e.g. QP in public health, advocacy and CD in environmental development, etc.).
- inventory and review of QPCD Directorate activities, experiences and learnings:
  - detailed review of HEQC and QPCD Directorate documentation (project

- proposals, project reports (progress and final reports), template plans and detailed plans for QPCD initiatives, reports of QAMF meetings, etc.); and
- interviews with HEQC and QPCD Directorate members in a mix of individual and joint sessions.<sup>11</sup>
- analysis and compilation of findings:
  - collation of findings of literature review, and QPCD inventory and review;
  - recapitulation of relevant findings of prior research (2003 impact study; 2004 one-day-visits research);
  - development of an analytical framework with reference to the above and to HEQC policies and frameworks, including the draft QPCD framework document; and
  - synthesis of findings, analysis and conclusions in a report.

A broad framework of questions was used to guide the research at the outset, namely:

- How can 'quality promotion' and 'capacity development' be defined in the QA context?
- To what extent are 'quality promotion' and 'capacity development' separate or interrelated concepts and activities? How can various distinctions/interrelationships be conceptualised?
- What range of QPCD models and activities are highlighted in the literature? Which of these are most applicable to the QA context in South African higher education and why?
- What range of QPCD models and activities have emerged from the HEQC's own experience to date?
- What patterns of future need can be anticipated given the state of development of South African higher education and its QA environment?
- How does the QPCD Directorate's current thinking (as reflected in its draft QPCD framework document) match up against findings and what suggestions might be made for enriching the framework?

Specific questions asked of interview respondents included:

1. In your view, have QPCD activities to date been fully consistent with, and supportive

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11 The following members of the HEQC were interviewed: Dr Mala Singh, Executive Director; QPCD Directorate: Dr Prem Naidoo, Dr John Carneson, Ms Thabisile Dlomo, Dr Herman du Toit, Ms Barbara Morrow; Audit and Evaluation Directorate: Dr Rob Moore, Dr Mark Hay; Accreditation and Co-ordination Directorate: Mr Tshepo Magabane, Mr Theo Bhengu. Dr Lis Lange, of the CHE's Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate, was also interviewed.

of, the HEQC's mission and conceptualisation of quality, and QA; and with the HEQC's other core functions (i.e. audit and accreditation)? Are there any particular areas you think could be strengthened? Why and how?

2. Has your experience determined a clear distinction between, or an integration of, QP and CD objectives/activities, and if so, how would you describe this?
3. Could you cite key insights from your experience that will aid the conceptualisation of the QPCD programme going forward 'positive' and 'negative' aspects are equally welcome.
4. What aspects of QPCD work do you believe have worked well to date, and what not so well why?
5. What aspects of the developing QPCD programme do you believe augur well for the future, and where do you believe more conceptual clarity is needed in future?
6. Is there a 'good practice model' that you have in mind for the HEQC's QPCD functions? Please describe it.

### **1.3 THE HEQC'S QPCD FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT: WORK IN PROGRESS**

This research is intended to facilitate preparation of a QPCD framework document, i.e. a policy framework that guides and outlines the HEQC's QPCD approach and programme in the same way that the accreditation and audit frameworks do in their respective areas.

For a range of reasons substantive (e.g. the QPCD framework needed to take account of final accreditation and audit frameworks) and practical (e.g. capacity constraints), the preparation and consultation of a QPCD framework has been relatively delayed. However, a draft framework document<sup>12</sup> (which will be referred to as Draft QPCD Framework #5) was developed during the course of 2003. This provides a reference point in the current research, which can use the draft, for example, to compare similar or dissimilar concepts highlighted in relevant literature, or to track conceptual shifts or advances that have been made by the HEQC in the interim as it has designed and implemented various QPCD initiatives.

Key themes, issues and arguments raised by Draft QPCD Framework #5 are outlined below. The outline is reasonably comprehensive, in order to provide a clear picture of emerging thinking in the HEQC, and to serve as a reference point for comparative information in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. To this extent, the outline serves as key background and introductory material for the rest of this report.

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12 HEQC October 2003 (Draft QPCD Framework #5).

1. In establishing a **conceptual and programmatic relationship between quality promotion and the development of capacity for QA**, the HEQC takes three fundamental issues as points of departure:
  - that the South African higher education system is characterised by unevenness of provision as well as by uneven capacity in terms of the development of institutional QMS;
  - that capacity development in general, and in relation to QA in particular, is not new to South African HEIs; and
  - that it is a function of HEIs to conceptualise and implement institutional programmes to develop capacity in QA. The HEQC, however, intends to work collaboratively with HEIs and other stakeholder organisations in order to help to improve QMS and actual quality at institutional level.<sup>13</sup>
  
2. QPCD responsibilities will be conducted in line with the requirements of the HEQC's approach to quality, in an environment of ongoing system- and institutional-level changes (including ongoing higher education restructuring to produce a transformed higher education system). **Thus the QPCD approach will be based in a conception of quality as: fitness for purpose, value for money and transformation in relation to individual learners as well as social development, all of this within a fitness-of-purpose framework.**<sup>14</sup>
  
3. The HEQC aims to move HEIs to a greater level of self-regulation within a framework of external validation, i.e. to combine institutional accountability with a developmental philosophy that relies on improvement plans. **The QPCD programme supports the improvement dimension by:**
  - preparing the higher education system for the full implementation of the QA dispensation;
  - supporting the development of an ethos of quality by enhancing the quality of provision as well as HEIs' accountability; and
  - enhancing the HEQC's internal capacity (staff skills, knowledge and competencies).<sup>15</sup>
  
4. Although different forms of QA were in place for universities and technikons before the creation of the HEQC, a centrally driven, QA system combining audit and accreditation and serving as a steering mechanism for higher education transformation is a new model and poses **fundamental challenges for HEIs and**

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13 HEQC October 2003 (Draft QPCD Framework #5): 2.

14 *Op. cit.*, 3.

15 *Op. cit.*, 3-4.

for the implementing agency.<sup>16</sup>

5. **Quality promotion can be understood as** the set of advocacy, dissemination and research activities that have as their main goal the infusion of a quality ethos in HEIs through the successful implementation of QA systems and the actual improvement of the quality of provision.<sup>17</sup>
6. **Capacity development can be understood as** a process that involves building and enhancing individual and systemic knowledge, skills and techniques in QA to enable individual HEIs and the system as a whole to use relevant resources effectively, and to maintain and renew necessary skills and knowledge in order to improve processes and outputs integral to QA and quality management (QM). Capacity development thus understood has as a key objective enabling HEIs to respond to the policy requirements of the HEQC.<sup>18</sup>
7. **Capacity development has three key characteristics.** It must be:
  - Sustainable, i.e. focused on regenerating and reproducing the skills and practices necessary to implement a workable system of quality management and to improve quality of provision;
  - Institutionalised, i.e. owned by HEIs who engage actively with QA objectives and methodologies, adapt practices to specific institutional and societal contexts, and utilise context-specific opportunities to effect change; and
  - Transformative, i.e. linking knowledge and practice of QA to a notion of quality in the provision of higher education that takes into account broader societal needs.<sup>19</sup>
8. The HEQC's conceptualisation of capacity development has continuous improvement and development of an institutional and systemic ethos of quality as its final objectives. Accordingly it does not only rely exclusively on production and reproduction of skills and practices, but also focuses on fostering an understanding of the meanings and techniques of improvement in order to enhance practice. **This notion of capacity development acquires its full meaning when the implementation of a programme and activities encourage the production of new knowledge about development and improvement, and therefore generate innovation** in the practice of QA.<sup>20</sup>

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16 HEQC, 2005: 5.

17 *Ibid.*

18 *Ibid.*

19 *Op. cit.*, 5-6.

20 *Op. cit.*, 6.



9. The HEQC programme has **two main interrelated purposes**:
  - helping to prepare the South African higher education system for the implementation of the QA dispensation and its elements, specifically by building and enhancing particular QA-related skills, competences, knowledge and techniques; and
  - building and enhancing a culture of self-improvement that sees QA mechanisms as instruments to achieve better provision and outcomes of higher education.<sup>21</sup>
  
10. Accordingly, the **objectives of the HEQC programme** are to:
  - disseminate information relative to QA systems and their effect on the improvement of provision;
  - initiate studies that investigate the impact of QA systems, their strengths and weaknesses in different national contexts and in relation to specific aspects of higher education;
  - set up formal structures to communicate developments in the HEQC QA system to South African HEIs;
  - institute training and induction workshops in the use of HEQC accreditation and audit criteria and instruments;
  - develop and maintain a pool of potential evaluators and auditors to take part, respectively in accreditation of institutions and learning programmes and in institutional audits;
  - maintain a database of expertise in evaluation and audit;
  - disseminate and stimulate debate on good practice and facilitate exchange of information on QA issues; and
  - build and enhance the skills and knowledge of HEQC staff in relation to QA systems, their conceptualisation and implementation.<sup>22</sup>
  
11. The **focus of the HEQC programme is systemic, institutional and internal**
  - At the systemic level, key activities include: the development and maintenance of a pool of auditors and evaluators, using training modules and materials that are customised to the South African context; and the creation of a database of expertise.
  - At the institutional level, the key focus is on the institutions' QA managers: keeping them abreast of developments in the HEQC's QA system implementation; and involving them in quality promotion activities, such as research projects and seminars that enhance their own understanding and

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> HEQC, 2003: 6-7.



practice of QA;. Internally, the focus is on developing the technical expertise and experience of professional and support staff, and on deepening understanding of the philosophy and principles that underpin the HEQC's and other QA systems.<sup>23</sup>

12. Taking into account legitimate limits and resource constraints upon the agency's level of intervention, **the HEQC has chosen a strategy of local and international partnerships to deal with the needs of capacity development**
  - Locally, HEIs and their stakeholder organisations are the obvious partners of the HEQC in the systemic development, facilitation and implementation of capacity development.
  - Internationally, partnership activities could include the signing of memoranda of understanding (MOUs) or agreements of cooperation with other QA agencies, specifically in order to support the training and development of evaluators and auditors, and to participate in audit panels; as well as to assist internal capacity development through staff exchanges.<sup>24</sup>
13. A second key strategy identified by the HEQC for capacity development is the identification of **structured feedback situations** which operate as part of the overall QA system, as well as part of the QPCD programme. At the system level, audit and accreditation processes will provide feedback as to the effectiveness of institutional QMS, as well as needs and gaps. This feedback can be translated into responsive capacity development in specific cases, or may fall within the scope of the planned capacity development programme. A third form of structured feedback is internal: providing feedback on the effectiveness of evaluator and auditor training and indicating where the HEQC may need, for example, to make adjustments or refocus planned institutional development strategies.<sup>25</sup>
14. The HEQC's **QPCD programme has three main features** – it is
  - participative, i.e. it builds and enhances knowledge, skills and techniques in a dialogical mode that is open to critique and questioning (this links critically to the purposes of continuous improvement, in that capacity development is not about the transmission of knowledge or competences, but about the transformation of concepts and techniques into platforms for new questions and better practices);

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 7-8.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 8-9.

<sup>25</sup> HEQC, 2003:9.

- dynamic, i.e. it encourages participants and trainers in capacity development activities to look for forms of adapting practices and instruments to specific contexts, and to reflect on the broader socio-political objectives of higher education reform in relation to the appropriate utilisation of QA instruments and techniques; and
- critical, i.e. it is based in self-reflection and intellectual engagement with the philosophical and conceptual underpinnings of QA and capacity development both locally and internationally, especially with a view to eliciting new practices and identifying areas for research and new knowledge production.<sup>26</sup>

15. The objective of **capacity development initiatives** is to build and enhance the capacity of QA systems at higher education institutions in order to improve the quality of provision at system, institutional, programme and individual levels. Initiatives include:

- training of auditors, which entails:
  - the recruitment and training of auditors;
  - maintaining a database of trained auditors whose expertise can be used at different stages of each audit cycle; and
  - the development of training workshops that respond to national and institutional priorities and histories.
- training of evaluators, which entails:
  - maintaining a database of evaluators, taking into account subject expertise and professional experience; and
  - developing appropriate training for subject evaluators so that they apply consistently HEQC criteria and instruments.<sup>27</sup>

16. The objective of **quality promotion initiatives** is to institutionalise a quality culture in higher education and a commitment to continuous improvement. Initiatives include:

- dissemination and information flow through:
  - the QA Managers Forum, as a point of entry to, and feedback on, the implementation of QA systems in all HEIs;
  - a high quality literacy programme for students, to promote the provision of quality education as a known right;
  - quality on the Internet/Intranet, as a medium to disseminate information, research and good practice, to conduct advocacy campaigns, to generate debate and communicate with stakeholders; and

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

- possibly, exchange of information with professional councils and Education and Training Quality Assurors (ETQAs) [co-ordination and co-operation with these bodies are functions of the Accreditation Directorate<sup>28</sup>].
- research embracing:
  - impact studies, with a national and/or an international comparative focus; and
  - disciplinary studies, to support national reviews of programmes informed by a re-accreditation process [although it can be noted that, in practice, this activity is located in the Accreditation Directorate].
- focus on quality management, comprising:
  - good practice guides to support QM of teaching and learning, research and community engagement; and
  - a programme to showcase successful and/or innovative approaches to quality development.
- advocacy, in the form of:
  - a campaign (media-based) to advocate institutional registration and programme accreditation.
- international liaison, involving:
  - membership of international organisations, geared to keep South Africa abreast of international developments and to facilitate participation in international quality debates;
  - collaborative relationships with countries within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Education and Training Protocol; and
  - MOUs or protocols of collaboration with other national QA agencies, to facilitate staff exchanges and study visits; sharing of information on systems implementation; and development of research projects on issues of common interest.
- staff capacity development [this section has not yet been not developed].<sup>29</sup>

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28 The HEQC, as the 'band ETQA' for higher education in South Africa, is mandated to be responsible for quality co-ordination in higher education. This entails delegating QA functions to, and concluding MOUs with, other professional councils and ETQAs operating in the band. It also means supporting the convergence of QA approaches and practices through such developmental steps as are necessary and appropriate.

29 *Op. cit.*, 12-15.



## CONCEPTS AND TERMINOLOGIES: QPCD IN THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews definitions and meanings attached to the key terms of this research – namely, 'quality promotion' and 'capacity development' – by examining a range of concepts, models, and terminologies that occur in relevant literature and documentary sources. The review takes some account of how terms are used in different substantive and spatial contexts, and also explores how ideas associated with the key terms have changed over time. The chapter chooses to deal with the term 'capacity development', basically, purely on the basis that there is a wider body of literature on this topic, than on quality promotion (material on quality promotion being relatively difficult to locate). Although procedurally the chapter deals with the two key terms separately, an important objective of this review of the literature is to determine the extent to which the terms are conceptually interrelated in a QA context; this is explicitly considered in the final section of the chapter. The final section also discusses the relevance of the findings of this chapter for the HEQC's conceptualisation of QPCD.

### 2.1 Capacity Development

#### 2.1.1 Some Issues Associated with 'Capacity Development' as a Term

'Capacity development', as a key term of this research, presents a number of issues and challenges at the outset.

First, the topic of capacity development pervades a multitude of fields. Plumbing conceptual debates around capacity development across many fields entails the risk of losing focus on what capacity development means for quality assurance in higher education. Yet, when the literature of QA in higher education was searched for material on capacity development, it yielded almost nothing at all. To reconcile the problem of far too much capacity development material on the one hand and far too little that is sufficiently specific on higher education, on the other, the literature review took as its compass point the conceptual debates of the international development field – seemingly the core of such literature as is available, apparently the richest territory, and also the field that has given impetus to capacity development as a central feature of the development enterprise, including recently in the field of QA. The research has supplemented these debates with assorted capacity development perspectives found, for example, in the documents of funding organisations for research, and in writings about capacity development in such fields as environmental development and public health.

Second, there is the issue of choice in terminology between 'capacity development' and 'capacity building' (a third term, 'capacity enhancement' is also occasionally used, e.g. by the

World Bank). The research failed to pin down any very robust distinction between these terms, although it appears that capacity building is the older and still more widely used term, while capacity development has emerged more recently and is gradually superseding the earlier term. Its emergence tends to be linked to development models that see capacity as a cornerstone of sustainable development, and that focus on the *process* of capacity development, rather than purely its outcomes.<sup>30</sup> 'Capacity development' is the term of choice of the HEQC and this would seem appropriate for a QA environment in which transformation through social and economic development is the overarching framework. However, even an organisation such as Oxfam that views capacity building as 'an approach to development, not something separate from [development],'<sup>31</sup> routinely uses 'capacity building' as its key term. In what follows the terms are taken to be essentially interchangeable, although for its own purposes this report adopts 'capacity development' by preference.

Third, it is apparent that no completely satisfactory definition of capacity development currently exists for QA or for any other purposes, and that the concept is in fact one in a state of flux. While this dynamism is in one sense positive – there is continuous engagement with complex and emergent issues, it is also problematic from a practical and operational perspective:

Our lack of an adequate theory of capacity building reduces our own capacity to engage in the practice.<sup>32</sup>

[Capacity building] includes everything that was covered by the different definitions of “institution building” and much more besides ... [We] would be wise to have no truck with the ... jargon of “capacity building” and to insist on using language and terms that have identifiable and precise meanings.<sup>33</sup>

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30 United Nations multilateral agencies distinguish in theory between *exogenous* processes of **capacity building**, that support *endogenous* processes of **capacity development** – but practical use of the terms often fails to measure up to this distinction. Whyte, A (2004). *Landscape Analysis of Donor Trends in International Development*. New York, Rockefeller Foundation. (Human and Institutional Capacity Building: A Rockefeller Foundation Series, Issue No 2): 23.

31 Eade, D (1997). *Capacity-Building: An Approach to People-Centred Development*. Oxford: Oxfam (UK and Ireland): 24.

32 Community Development Resource Association (1995). 'Capacity Building: Myth or Reality?' (CDRA Annual Report 1994/95). In *Olive Organisational Development and Training* (1996). *Capacity Building: Two Views. Perspectives from a Donor and a Non-Governmental Organisation*. Durban, Olive Information Service. (Avocado Series 01/96.): 12.

33 Moore, M (1995). 'Promoting Good Government by Supporting Institutional Development'. *IDS Bulletin*, Vol 26, No 2. Quoted in Eade 1997: 1.

Imprecision may also be problematic for political reasons. Thus in the international donor aid sphere, capacity development as an apparently neutral technical term may be 'used by donors to impose their viewpoints on organisations in the South and by recipients in the South to cover imprecise project applications and improve their possibilities of being eligible for funding'.<sup>34</sup> While the politics of international aid is not the direct concern of this research, this observation highlights a fourth issue associated with 'capacity development', namely, that the neutrality of the term may be questionable, or in other words that it may be associated with very different agendas in different contexts. Importantly, this suggests a possible trap for a QA agency – such as the HEQC – which seeks explicitly to link quality promotion (gaining buy-in to QA from a rational benefit perspective) with capacity development (which, without due care, may be perceived as agenda-driven).

### 2.1.2 Capacity Development: Conceptual Evolution and Convergence

Capacity development (or capacity building) as a concept has been part of development literature since the 1950s, 'with various twists and turns'<sup>35</sup> and spawning a range of associated terminologies, albeit often inexactly defined:

1. A first conceptual phase in the 1950s and 1960s focused on 'institution building', with minimal attention paid to the political or cultural context of such activities. (In later years, understanding of institution building has become more nuanced, acknowledging that institutions operate not only according to laws, rules and regulations, but also norms and customs.) The focus of institution building was on individual organisations: establishing public-sector organisations, designing functioning organisations, and transplanting models from the North.
2. A second conceptual phase in the late 1960s and early 1970s associated capacity building with 'institutional strengthening', mainly through improvement of the internal functioning of individual structures and organisations, and providing tools to improve performance. (Today it is generally recognised that equating institutions with organisations is limiting in a capacity-development context.)

34 Langthaler, M (2003). Networking and Capacity Development in Developing Countries: Reflections after the Annual Conference of the European Association for International Education. Vienna, Austrian Development Co-operation: 3.

35 Sagar, AD (2000). 'Capacity Development for the Environment: A View for the South, a View for the North'. Annual Review of Energy and the Environment, Vol 25: 377-439: 377.

3. A third conceptual phase in the 1970s focused on 'development management' for delivery systems of public programmes, with a greater awareness of political and strategic issues than earlier models and a tendency to research neglected target groups.
4. A fourth conceptual phase in the 1980s highlighted 'institutional development', with a focus on organisational effectiveness as an outcome of the interaction between internal management and external environment, and emphasising links between sectoral and macro-policy issues, and the role of networks.
5. In the period since the late 1980s/early 1990s, all development organisations, whether multilateral or bilateral have subscribed to the philosophy that capacity building is central in attempts to attain sustainable development – this can be seen as marking a fifth conceptual phase. The conceptualisation of capacity development has nevertheless continued to shift. Thus, an initial focus on technical assistance programmes (notably, the World Bank's structural adjustment programmes) evolved into an increased preoccupation with human resource and professional development, while today the concept of capacity building tends to combine a focus on human capacities, organisational and managerial skills and institutional arrangements. In addition, attention is increasingly drawn to the fact that capacity development must be embedded in the social, economic and political environment in which programmes are being implemented.<sup>36</sup>
6. Since the mid-1990s, in keeping with the rapid development of the knowledge society and knowledge economy, the international development community has sought to conceptualise and implement 'knowledge-based aid' and associated forms of capacity development, marking the sixth and most recent conceptual phase. The concept was first articulated by the World Bank in 1996 – when it declared its intention to be the 'knowledge bank' – and has subsequently taken shape in a variety of ways under the influence of a variety of contextual factors and new development discourses, and given the variable emphases of different agencies. Some broad features associated with the knowledge-based aid concept can be delineated. First, culture and context are acknowledged as critical factors in approaching development. Second, there is a greater emphasis on national ownership of development and development partnerships, on the participation of 'recipients' in development, and

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36 Sources for numbered items 1-5: Sagar (2000: 377-383); Gunnarsson, C (2001). Capacity Building, Institutional Crisis and the Issue of Recurrent Costs. Almqvist and Wiksell, Stockholm. (Synthesis Report of the Expert Group on Development Issues, Department for International Development Co-operation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden.): 2-21; Eade (1997: 3-4); Whyte (2004: 13).



on the value of indigenous or existing knowledge and processes of mutual knowledge construction. Third, expanded knowledge needs are acknowledged and techniques of knowledge management are sought: within aid agencies, communities of practice, help desks, intranets and improved spaces for improved knowledge sharing are all used. Externally, responses include research co-operation, support to networks and portals, improved connectivity for Southern nations, e-learning and other forms of knowledge sharing that is digitised or uses information and communication technologies (ICTs). Fourth, in a knowledge-based aid environment, greater emphasis has been given to learning and capacity as part of a broader knowledge strategy, and there is a shift towards building knowledge and capacity at different levels (system, institutional, organisation, individual). As knowledge-based aid is a new concept, it cannot yet be fully evaluated, but there appear to be some question marks from a capacity-development perspective. Most critically, it is not clear that the rhetoric of mutual knowledge construction and the enhancement of existing knowledge are matched in practice; more traditional models of knowledge transfer by technical experts may still prevail in many quarters and run counter to real transformation. Moreover, it is questionable whether ICTs provide the best strategies for building capacity at institutional and individual levels, or are fully compatible with a growing emphasis on staff learning and internal capacity development. The durability of the knowledge-based aid concept remains to be seen, although 'its most positive future ... is likely to depend on the extent to which it moves further towards a reconceptualisation that connects it intimately with shared knowledge and capacity development [in the South]'.<sup>37</sup>

The numbered points above have made it abundantly clear that the meanings of capacity development are not fixed. In a report such as this, an exhaustive catalogue of definitions is not much to the purpose, especially as many definitions need to be reframed for a direct application to QA. Nevertheless, there is a value in selecting and citing some definitions and models currently in use, especially in order to find convergent elements that may have application in a higher education QA environment. The definitions below are principally generic and drawn from multilateral international development organisations or initiatives, with one or two definitions from bilateral international development organisations, and one or two contextually specific definitions, thrown in for comparative purposes.

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37 King, K and McGrath, S (2004). *Knowledge for Development? Comparing British, Japanese, Swedish and World Bank Aid*. Cape Town, HSRC Publications and London/New York, Zed Books: Chapter 8 and p.212; Singh, M (June 2004). 'Capacity Building in Quality Assurance: Political and Educational Challenges'. Paper presented at the Second Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education, 28-29 June 2004, UNESCO, Paris: 4-5; and Dobie, P (2002). 'Models for National Strategies: Building Capacity for Sustainable Development'. *Development Policy Journal*, Vol 1, Special Issue: Capacity for Sustainable Development: 1-18.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank generically define capacity development as 'the process by which individuals, organisations, institutions and societies develop the ability (individually and collectively) to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives'.<sup>38</sup> The UNDP approach specifies three cornerstones of effective capacity development: continuing learning and change, use and empowerment of individuals and organisations, and systematic approaches in devising strategies and programmes. It considers four key dimensions for capacity-development efforts: individuals, entities, interrelationships between entities, and the enabling environment.<sup>39</sup>

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) adopted new guidelines for technical co-operation programmes in 1991. These included: long-term capacity building rather than short-term performance improvements; the importance of long-term institution building; advancing greater use of local expertise and existing structures; and encouraging broadened participation by the developing countries, acknowledging participation as an element of good governance, effectiveness and efficiency.<sup>40</sup> In 1999, the OECD-DAC stated that capacity development must be premised on 'ownership, choices and self-esteem'.<sup>41</sup> In the more specific context of capacity development for the environment, the OECD-DAC has specified five interrelated components of effective capacity development:

- functions: strategic planning, effective decision-making, delegating responsibility and empowering individuals and groups, networking and collaborating, mediating and consensus building required to accomplish the task involved in environmental management;
- actors: individuals, formal organisations, informal institutions, networks of organisations that carry out the tasks necessary for environmental management;
- normative context: vision, values, organisational strategies, policies that shape capacity development for the environment;
- societal context: political, social, cultural, demographic, and geographic forces and conditions - at the global, regional, national, and local levels - to which any programme must respond; and
- resources: human, informational, financial, technological, and ecological inputs required to develop capacity for the environment.<sup>42</sup>

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40 Langthaler (2003: 3); Sagar (2000: 377-8).

41 Sagar (2000: 381).

42 Sagar (2000: 382).

43 Cited in Whyte (2004: 25).

44 Sagar (2000: 385-6).

The African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) was established as a consequence of a World Bank African Capacity Building Initiative document of 1991 and has therefore worked within the particular context of trying to identify critical institutional and policy factors for capacity development in a continent where failures to build capacity have been anecdotally ascribed to failures of governance. The ACBF defines capacity building as 'the process of transforming a nation's ability to effectively implement policies and programmes for sustainable development' and as being characterised by four elements in close interrelationship:

- restructuring the value systems of decision-makers (e.g. to appreciate the utility of analytic inputs);
- developing human capacity, with a focus on capacity formation (quantitative: increasing the supply of skills), and capacity enhancement (qualitative: deepening skills levels through the transfer of new ideas, techniques and systems);
- transforming institutional capacity: building new institutions and revitalising existing ones, with a focus on changing practices and procedures to encourage effective utilisation of resources; and
- modifying organisational structure, with a focus on strategy to develop human capacity.<sup>43</sup>

Bilateral international development agencies display a variety of approaches to capacity development. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) sees its task as being to make sustainable development possible (so eliminating the need for development co-operation in the long run), and to use capacity development and institutional development as its principal methodologies. In its view, capacity development comes from the combined outcome of activities at three levels of intervention: development of the knowledge and competence of individuals; development of organisations or systems of organisations; and change and strengthening of institutional frameworks within which individuals and organisations operate. SIDA places a particular emphasis on capacity development as the *development of knowledge*, as distinct from the transfer of knowledge – i.e. active give and take between partners leading to creation of new knowledge. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has, like SIDA, developed an agency-wide approach to capacity development in the form of policies, operational tools and monitoring methods, and it views capacity development as an integral part of its programming strategy, while focusing its efforts largely at organisational level. In contrast to SIDA and CIDA, the UK Department for International Development

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43 Wubneh, M (2003). 'Building Capacity in Africa: The Impact of Institutional, Policy and Resource Factors'. African Development Review, December 2003, Vol 15, Issue 2/3: 165-198; 169-170.

(DFID) has not conceptualised capacity development as an agency-wide strategy or methodology. Rather, it views capacity building as a suite of support activities in the context of particular projects, and is still debating the merits of individual, as opposed to institutional, capacity building. There is some evidence that the DFID model is still primarily based on knowledge transfer, although the empowerment of those whose capacities are being built is one of the agency's stated objectives. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) approach to capacity building is framed within the OECD-DAC approach, and frequently depends on traditional modalities of technical assistance. However, the JICA approach has always been distinguished by a commitment to local ownership, as well as to the value of sharing of experience (given that Japan itself was a recipient of aid 50 years ago and therefore offers proven models and systems as a basis for engagement with developing countries).<sup>44</sup>

In a final context-specific example, the Global Forum for Health Research (Geneva, 2000) defined capacity building as 'the ability to define problems, set objectives and priorities, build sustainable institutions and organisations, and identify solutions to key national health problems.' Core concepts and principles for health research capacity building include: promotion of networks, alliances, collaboration and opportunities for action-oriented input; development of mutual trust and shared decision-making; national ownership; and an emphasis on translating research findings into policy and practice.<sup>45</sup>

The definitions and models highlighted above are all of relatively recent date (from the fifth and sixth phases of conceptualising capacity development, as set out earlier in this section). As is therefore to be expected, there are convergent elements between these, which serve to delineate the intellectual context, which has served to shape the conceptualisation of capacity development in QA (i.e. conceptual processes of recent date, explored in more depth in Section 2.1.5). Key convergent elements are a focus on, and are concerned with:

- capacity development that builds both human and institutional abilities to 'think' (identify problems, set objectives, design strategies and solutions, analyse experience) and to 'act' (perform functions, acquire and apply skills and techniques, implement policies and programmes, change policy and practice);
- capacity development that is at least as much process-oriented as it is outcomes-oriented;
- capacity development that is informed by context-specific values and factors and

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<sup>44</sup> Whyte (2004: 45-46); King and McGrath (2004: Chapters 5, 6 & 7).

<sup>45</sup> Reddy, P, Taylor, SE, and Sifunda, S (2002). 'Research Capacity Building and Collaboration Between South African and American Partners: The Adaptation of an Intervention Model for HIV/AIDS Prevention in Corrections Research'. AIDS Education and Prevention, 14, Supplement B: 92-102: 95-97.

- aims to secure the context as an enabling environment;
- capacity development that utilises effectively both new and existing capacity and resources (including human resources) and establishes mechanisms for sustainability;
- multi-level, multi-pronged capacity development;
- participation, ownership and empowerment as part of the process of capacity development and evidence of good governance in the process;
- networks, collaboration and consensus-building as modalities of capacity development; and
- capacity development that is strategic and problem-solving (as well as possibly policy-generating, and sometimes new-knowledge-creating) in orientation.

### 2.1.3 Some Recurring Themes in Discussions of Capacity Development

The literature on capacity development contains recurring themes. Some of these are selected below, in order to expand on issues so far broached in passing in seeking to pin down a contemporary conceptualisation of capacity development. The themes are presented in no particular order, and the relationships between some of them are circular. The intention is to highlight, at a high level, core ideas that can influence the development of approaches for QA capacity development in South African higher education.

#### 2.1.3.1 *Paradigm Shifts and Scope*

Discussion under Section 2.1.2 has shown that conceptions of capacity development, and the way in which it links to development (e.g. as a support to, and separate from, development; or alternatively, as an approach to, and an integral part of, development) have evolved and are likely to continue to evolve, notwithstanding a substantial degree of convergence in current thinking. Unsurprisingly, a recurring theme of capacity-development literature is the notion that certain 'paradigm shifts' need to be achieved to boost the success of capacity-development efforts (and so overcome the limitations of past efforts). Reviewed critically, these urgings to adopt new paradigms seem largely to indicate a view on the part of those with experience of capacity development, that the scope of capacity development as a field of endeavour is greater than may have been thought when notions of capacity building were first formulated. Examples of some recommended paradigm shifts are listed below.

- **A shift from technical and analytical tools that support professional skills development, to systems-oriented change approaches** that develop and co-ordinate human and institutional competencies, and that facilitate problem-solving,

skills utilisation, policy relevance, and new knowledge creation as outcomes. The following is a good example of the kind of invocations that appear in the literature:

Success now depends on our ability to marry knowledge and execution. This means supporting new types of training configurations. It means linking training to the broader goal of building organisations and institutions that are well-managed [*sic*], strategic and stable. It means strengthening organisations that are flexible and nimble enough to adapt to new technologies, changing political conditions and market opportunities. And it means connecting the dots across institutions for mutual reinforcement.<sup>46</sup>

- **A shift from using one or two approaches within a single project to using a suite of different modalities within the same programme.** As one example, modalities used by international donors to build professional competencies span the following: use of advisers and consultants; training programmes, ranging from degree programmes to training of trainers; workshops, meetings and conferences; study tours; twinning arrangements; centres of excellence; networks; research, including collaborative research; awards, scholarships, fellowships, and internships; libraries, resource centres and field stations; equipment, infrastructure, and connectivity; benchmarking; and publications.<sup>47</sup>
- **A shift in focus from the tangible to the intangible elements of capacity development, grounded in a developmental reading of capacity needs.** While many capacity development initiatives (and especially those that target the organisational level) focus on tangible resource needs, skills audits and the like, there is an argument to be made that, as change processes are ambiguous and complex, capacity development primarily demands:

... constant self-reflection, reflection on practice, if practice is to be improved. It demands the exercise of facilitation skills which are labelled “soft” but which are the most difficult, demanding, and challenging skills to master – observation and listening skills, the ability to ask the right question, the holding of ambiguity, uncertainty, and contradiction, the ability to draw enthusiasm out of exhaustion and cynicism, overcoming resistance to change, empathy ... In other words, it demands developmental skills, and although we talk a lot about the

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46 Pitcoff, W (2004). Investing in People: Building the Capacity of Community Development, Training and Social Enterprise Practitioners. New York, Rockefeller Foundation. (Human and Institutional Capacity Building: A Rockefeller Foundation Series, Issue No 1.): 5-6.

47 Whyte (2004: 28).



development of capacity we tend to concentrate on the delivery of “product”. In short, we do not practise what the situation demands.<sup>48</sup>

This particular analysis argues that capacity development requires capability (on the part of the developing agency) to read the developmental phase of those organisations whose capacity is being built, against an established background theory and with a deep understanding of development.

### 2.1.3.2 *Power and Dependency*

The capacity development literature is marbled with references to dynamics of power and dependency in capacity development. Sometimes the issues are closely addressed (especially in texts that analyse North-South relations);<sup>49</sup> sometimes the issues are tacitly present as if they are so much part of the field that they need not be explicitly surfaced. The conceptual evolution of capacity development from institution building following Northern models, to co-construction of knowledge between development partners, provides the best evidence that dynamics of power and dependency have played themselves out often enough, and with sufficient failures and negative consequences to require new strategies. The sharpest lessons of all have perhaps been afforded by experience in Africa, where realisation has come that unilateral capacity-building solutions have had no long-term impact<sup>50</sup> and that 'donors may be undermining capacities as fast as they are building them'<sup>51</sup>. Experiences such as these have plainly demonstrated that capacity development must take account of: contextual relevance and appropriateness, indigenous and existing knowledge, partnership and participation, and sustainability and innovation.

In a nutshell, the objective of capacity development must be independence, or interdependence, and not dependence. Capacity development initiatives will almost certainly fail if they are thrust upon 'recipients', if they focus on short-term responses and outcomes, or if resources and access are closely guarded by the capacity-building agency. Instead capacity development should be based on processes that incorporate critical self-reflection, action learning and mutual learning; that focus on long-term solutions; and that

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48 Kaplan, A (2000). 'Capacity Building: Shifting the Paradigms of Practice'. *Development in Practice*, Vol 10, Nos 3 & 4, August 2000: 517-525: 521.

49 See for example: Hall, A (2002). 'Innovation Systems and Capacity Development: an Agenda for North-South Research Collaboration'. *International Journal of Technology Management and Sustainable Development*, 2002, Vol 1 Issue 3: 146-152.

50 Wubneh (2003: 166-167).

51 Whyte (2004: 8).

demonstrate willingness on the part of capacity-building agencies to relinquish control.<sup>52</sup>

#### 2.1.3.3 *The Role of Networks*

Consistent with the emerging emphasis on partnership, participation, co-constructed knowledge and new knowledge, the role of networks and collaboration is a recurring theme in contemporary capacity development. It is apparent that networks exist in different forms: as forums, as organisations, as 'inter-organisations', as institutions without much organisational structure, and as virtual arrangements utilising ICTs. Networking projects may, over time, build up a successful track record and become institutionalised in their own right.

Generally speaking, networks are viewed in the literature as cost-effective where capacity and demand is widely dispersed and where no single institution is likely to reach critical mass in terms of needed capacity. However, the real utility of networks for capacity development would seem to be accessed only where they are underpinned by a well-conceived strategy. Accordingly, the literature yields very different opinions on networks. Some are cautious, suggesting that networks constitute capacity development only in the broadest sense. As one example:

The value of networks – whether it be in the form of professional associations or informal networking among peers – is ambiguous. Some feel that the peer-to-peer learning fostered by these groups is highly effective, while others say that the time and costs associated with participating in such networks is simply not worth it.<sup>53</sup>

For others – especially, as might be anticipated, from a research capacity development perspective – networks are critical components of innovation systems, as 'evolving systems of actors' engage in research and the application of research findings. Conceptualised as systems for innovation, networks provide a framework, among other things, to explore patterns of partnership; to reveal and manage the contexts that govern relationships; to understand innovation as a social process of learning; and to think of capacity development in a systems sense.<sup>54</sup>

#### 2.1.3.4 *Multiple Levels and Modalities of Capacity Development*

References have already been made to the fact that contemporary conceptualisations of

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<sup>52</sup> CDRA (1995: 16-18).

<sup>53</sup> Pitcoff (2004: 13).

<sup>54</sup> Hall (2002: 148).



capacity development emphasise the need for interventions at multiple levels and using a wide range of modalities. The limitations of more singular approaches are frequently cited in the literature. Thus, for example, critiques of capacity development that focuses too closely at the individual level include that: human capital is not a fixed asset; that human capital is sometimes not a broad enough tool to effect change; and that human capital can drain resources.<sup>55</sup> From another angle, capacity development approaches that emphasise training are criticised because they may tend to perpetuate top-down modes of knowledge transfer, as well as because they may rely on a single delivery model of capacity development that is not effective in all situations. Where training is selected as an appropriate mode, then it is emphasised that a nuanced approach is needed. For example: training needs to be designed as part of a systematic and planned programme, with built-in support and evaluation processes;<sup>56</sup> and cohorts for group training should be carefully selected in order to match skills levels or interests.<sup>57</sup>

The general emphasis in the literature is therefore on capacity-development strategies, approaches and modalities that work in various kinds of combination. However, the literature occasionally warns of dangers inherent in the development of very complex approaches. It is pointed out, for example, that first-generation ACBF initiatives suffered from 'problems of over-design' as they tried to integrate multiple components in single projects without leveraging central capacities (e.g. policy analysis, research, training and dissemination).<sup>58</sup> The implication is that specific kinds of internal expertise and capacity need to be built and deployed appropriately, if external capacity development is to be effective.

#### 2.1.3.5 *Means, Process and End*

A distinction has already been made between early conceptions of capacity building as outcomes-oriented, and contemporary conceptions of capacity development as process-oriented (Section 2.1.1). The literature suggests that, under a contemporary view, capacity development can quite conceivably be means, process and end at the same time – i.e. constitute a mix of initiatives.

- Where capacity development is conceived as a means to an end, initiatives may focus on strengthening an organisation to perform or implement specified activities.

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55 Pitcoff (2004: 12).

56 Brews, A (1994). The Capacity Building Debate. Durban, Olive Information Service. (Avocado Series 01/94.): 12.

57 *Op.cit.*, 14.

58 Wubneh (2003: 180).

- Where capacity development is conceived as a process, initiatives may focus on processes of leadership and adaptation; reflection and search for greater coherence in theory or practice; debate, relationship building, conflict resolution or developing the ability to deal with differences.
- Where capacity development is conceived as an end, initiatives may focus on strengthening individuals', or organisations', ability to fulfil defined objectives, or on strengthening organisations or systems for mission fulfilment.<sup>59</sup>

#### 2.1.4 A Summing-up on Capacity Development

As a summing-up on contemporary notions of good practice in capacity development, the following 'default principles' – adapted from principles identified by the UNDP<sup>60</sup> – are useful, especially when read in combination with the convergent conceptual elements identified at the end of Section 2.1.2 –

1. Capacity development is a long-term process and cannot be rushed.
2. The value system of participants in capacity-development efforts must be respected, and their self-esteem fostered.
3. For capacity development to occur, knowledge cannot be transferred but needs to be acquired. It is important to scan knowledge both locally and globally, and to reinvent locally as needed.
4. Capacity development requires a challenging of mindsets and power differentials (remembering that capacity development is not power-neutral and challenging mindsets and vested interests is difficult).
5. Capacity development requires reflection and action to support sustainable capacity outcomes. Given that capacity is at the core of development, any course of action needs to promote this end.
6. Positive incentives, aligned with the objectives of capacity development, need to be established. These are likely to include governance systems that respect fundamental rights.
7. The inputs of the capacity development agency need to be integrated into the priorities, processes and systems of the capacity development partner; and where partner systems are not strong enough, they should be reformed and strengthened, not bypassed.
8. The focus should be on building existing capacities, rather than creating new ones.

<sup>59</sup> Eade (1997: 34–35).

<sup>60</sup> Adapted from: Lopes, C and Theisohn, T (2003). 'Ownership, Leadership and Transformation: Can We Do Better for Capacity Development?' Earthscan 2003. New York, UNDP. Cited in Whyte 2004: 74.

9. Engagement must be sustained under difficult circumstances: the weaker the capacity the greater the need.
10. Capacity development programmes must remain accountable to ultimate beneficiaries; and development should be anchored firmly in stakeholder participation and pressure for an inclusive accountability system should be maintained.

#### 2.1.5 Capacity Development in Quality Assurance in Higher Education

This discussion of capacity development indicated at the outset (Section 2.1.1) that a useful literature of capacity development in QA in higher education could not be located by the research. From the perspective of policy and research, the field is a new one (this may be more or less true of practice, which is more fully explored in Chapter 3).

For the present, the most systematic effort to define, or give shape to, capacity development in QA in higher education is occurring under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). The Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications was launched as part of UNESCO's mission to respond to emerging ethical challenges and dilemmas for higher education, as a result of globalisation. The First Global Forum (October 2004) proposed an action plan for implementation by UNESCO focusing on roles of standard setting, capacity building and providing clearing-house functions. The Second Global Forum (June 2004), aimed to set the basis for a strategy for capacity building and partnerships. It considered regional developments in revising recognition conventions; noted progress in the elaboration of UNESCO/OECD guidelines on quality in cross-border provision of higher education; and initiated a needs assessment of capacity building efforts in the regions. This began to formulate prerequisites for efficient capacity building in QA in higher education. Although these factors were identified in the specific context of regional/national quality/QA systems, they include desirable features of capacity development already encountered in this report: inclusive stakeholder participation, long-term processes to assure sustainability, multi-level strategies and initiatives, networks and collaborations, and so on.<sup>61</sup>

At the Second Global Forum, at least one attempt (specified as a 'work-in-progress') was

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61 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (2004). UNESCO's Capacity Building Activities in Qualifications Recognition, Quality Assurance and Accreditation: Towards a Coherent Framework. (UNESCO-OECD Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education: Drafting Meeting 3, Paris, 17-18 January 2005.)

made to give conceptual content to the notion of capacity development in QA in higher education: this contribution was made by the HEQC's own executive leadership. As the only example of its kind located by this research, it is worth quoting in full. Key ideas in this conceptualisation are highlighted below, and evince an emphasis on stakeholder participation and inclusive processes, and contextualised development and application of knowledge. In its citing of a 'maximalist objective in capacity development' as the ability to develop and implement locally-relevant QA knowledge and strategies, this conceptualisation rests on the importance of leveraging new QA knowledge and practice for particular circumstances. Such an objective requires a (contemporary) approach to capacity development that harnesses, mobilises and develops existing capacities for 'step change' in the short term (as technical skills are acquired and utilised), and sustainable system development in the longer run (as reflective practice occurs and is supported).

Capacity development in quality assurance in higher education encompasses a **philosophical approach, a set of objectives, strategies, techniques and procedures, and a programme of activities** which must lead to the **enhanced ability of a range of role-players and stakeholders to act in order to facilitate, support, develop, increase and monitor quality in their respective spheres of operation** in higher education. The role-players and stakeholders could include governments and government departments, national quality assurance and accreditation agencies, higher education institutions, a range of individuals, (e.g. deans or quality assurance co-ordinators at institutions or in faculties, and constituencies (e.g. students), national and regional higher education associations with a focus on quality, professional associations, etc. The **enhanced ability to act is based on the acquisition of relevant information, knowledge and understandings, and the development of capacities and skills to respond creatively and strategically to particular contextual challenges in ways that make a demonstrable difference to the quality of provision.** Becoming well versed in quality assurance techniques would be an important capacity development gain. **Becoming able to develop and implement locally relevant quality assurance knowledge and strategies is the decisive maximalist objective in capacity development.**<sup>62</sup>

#### 2.1.6 Quality Enhancement and Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Although capacity development in QA in higher education receives very little attention in

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62 Singh (June 2004: 6). [Emphasis added].

the literature, the concept of quality enhancement (QE) has been elaborated to some degree.

Under a broad conception, enhancement refers to change resulting in improvement, and QE in higher education is especially about 'making things better' in core functions. Teaching and learning tend to receive particular attention as focuses of QE, although research and service are appropriate focuses also. Improvement typically proceeds from an evaluation of a *status quo*, and is supported as conditions for change are created, and as purposeful change processes are implemented. In the context of QA, QE may be associated with regulatory and/or developmental processes, and may accordingly be promoted for compliance/accountability and/or for developmental purposes:

QE associated with QA is integral to the regulation of quality and standards and is essentially driven by the public and professional accountability imperative. The primary way of achieving enhancement is through self-review and subsequent action often within prescribed frameworks [...] It often involves peer review and discussion with peers and increasingly benchmarking against information contained in codes, guidelines, policies and subject benchmark statements. [...] QE associated with development, innovation and experimentation takes place all the time at all levels of the HE system. It fulfils a deep need for individuals, teams, departments and institutions to creatively exploit new opportunities or solve problems, to learn from existing good practice or to experiment with entirely new practice. It fosters a complementary set of behaviours and actions to that promoted by QA.<sup>63</sup>

QE is conceived as a complex process and as a continuous goal:

At a basic level, enhancement of quality involves examining what one is doing and as a consequence, making explicit aims, objectives and outcomes. At the next level, enhancement may involve making incremental changes [...] At the third level, quality enhancement will involve doing things in new ways. The most radical forms of quality enhancement are those, which involve transformational changes, which call for a complete re-examination, re-conceptualisation and re-direction of existing practice.<sup>64</sup>

63 Learning and Teaching Support Network Generic Centre (September 2002). Principles to Promote Quality Enhancement. Available at <http://www.heacademy/quality> (accessed 11 April 2005): 2.

64 Middlehurst R (1997). 'Enhancing Quality'. In Coffield, F and Williamson, J. Repositioning Higher Education. Oxford, Society for Research in Higher Education and Oxford University. Cited in LTSN-ILTHE-HESDA Creative Thinking Group Understanding Quality Enhancement. (Working Paper No 2). Available at <http://www.heacademy/quality> (accessed 11 April 2005): 7.

Thus, QE is seen as incorporating a dimension of innovation, where innovation is explicitly associated with the purpose of improvement. In addition, this innovation proceeds in the first instance from an evaluation of existing practice, meaning that QE is about effective utilisation of pre-existing knowledge and prior experience in a system.

For the purposes of this research, the key point about quality enhancement is that it constitutes improvement on existing capacity. While its end goals of continuous improvement and innovation are compatible with capacity development's end goals (e.g. sustainable development, building upon existing knowledge, creating new knowledge), the starting point is different. Essentially, QE initiates change for improvement against some baseline capacity that already exists; capacity development begins with an awareness of an existing 'deficit' in the form of undeveloped, underdeveloped, latent or untapped capacity.

## 2.2 Quality Promotion

The literature on concepts and models for quality promotion, or even for advocacy more broadly, appears to be extremely slender and – as in the case of capacity development – very little of it is dedicated to the higher education field. This brief discussion nevertheless begins with higher education, from a perspective that has become familiar in this literature review (international development).

The World Declaration on Higher Education (1998)<sup>65</sup> can be read as providing a broad framework for what quality promotion in higher education should involve. The Declaration acknowledges that if higher education is to meet its social obligations to develop and deliver quality, then the effort to do so must involve not only governments and higher education institutions, but also all stakeholders. Thus, one might derive from the Declaration, as a first conceptual principle, that if a higher education ethos of quality is to be institutionalised, it must be promoted through appropriate framework policy, through the mission statements of institutions, and also through the contributions to both of stakeholders who must co-define the meaning of quality.

The Declaration frames its articles exclusively in terms of quality enhancement (i.e. change for improvement against some baseline of quality that already exists), rather than quality development (i.e. development of capacity to deliver quality in higher education, where such capacity has not already been accessed). Nevertheless, the Declaration is clear on the need to establish independent national bodies that can define internationally comparative

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65 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (1998). World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action. (Adopted by the World Conference on Higher Education, 9 October 1998.) The discussion that follows draws particularly on Articles 11, 12, 13, 15 and 17.



standards of quality, duly contextualised regionally, nationally and institutionally. As a second conceptual principle, then, the promotion of quality in higher education requires some dedicated agency, whose task it is to implement initiatives that will render notions of quality relevant to a particular higher education system.

The Declaration advocates quality as a multidimensional construct, which must be delivered through a multiple focus on all higher education's functions and activities: teaching and academic programmes; research and scholarship; services to the community and the academic environment; staffing and staff development; students and student development; buildings, facilities and equipment; ICTs; higher education management and financing; sharing knowledge and know-how across borders and continents; and partnerships and alliances amongst stakeholders as a prime matrix for higher education renewal. A third conceptual principle, which therefore emerges is that quality promotion is a complex activity that must draw in multiple role players, perspectives and relationships. Although the Declaration goes no further, one might infer that quality promotion will therefore entail the need for consistent messages, appropriately tailored for a variety of audiences (advocacy of a particular idea of quality, and dissemination of that idea through a range of media), and that some process of intellectual enquiry must underpin these activities to ensure that messages have meaningful impact and sustain their relevance for target groups.

The World Declaration, which may be interpreted as promoting quality in these terms, is itself an outcome of a changing environment for higher education since the 1980s. In this period, as economic activities have globalised and as higher education itself has expanded, higher education has come under pressure to deliver and assure quality at a nationally comparable and internationally acceptable standard. During the 1990s, many countries initiated national QA mechanisms and agencies with related QP functions, and this has cascaded in turn into the establishment of 'quality promotion units' in higher education institutions around the world. Against this background, the reason for a scarcity of conceptual literature with respect to QP in higher education needs to be hypothesised. First, the conceptualisation of QA in national systems may have been informed first and foremost by concerns of accountability, so that QP was 'thinly' conceived as a means to the implementation of quality controls. Second, the experience of implementing national QA systems is relatively new: after some years, an intellectual re-evaluation of QP may well be beginning, but these processes have not yet translated into substantial research and published findings. (The validity of these hypotheses may become more apparent in a consideration of QP aspects of national QA systems, undertaken in Chapter 3.)

Conceptualisation of quality promotion in fields other than higher education is also somewhat meagre. This research explored two avenues in order to acquire insights of value

to higher education. The first avenue is the Total Quality Management (TQM) movement in business and organisations. (TQM has had some impact on the conceptualisation of QMS in higher education institutions.) The second avenue is quality promotion in health services. (This sector must fulfil public and social roles as higher education must, and has its own established QA tradition.)

TQM<sup>66</sup> has been highly significant in business, spawning a host of improvement initiatives that share its basic principles, such as business process engineering, business excellence, performance excellence, lean thinking, just-in-time production techniques, six sigma programmes, and so on. In its details, TQM is about management processes and disciplines, and statistical control methods, to eliminate variation in production processes, and so to achieve lower cost, improved productivity, and quality improvements in a final product that will exceed customer expectations. As such, TQM's relevance to this discussion may appear largely tangential. However, TQM has made some important conceptual contributions that can be seen as constituting a relevant quality promotion model:

- TQM rests on a particular philosophy of quality, namely that the management of quality should focus on institutionalising a culture of quality and continuous improvement in all processes of production, rather than on inspection of quality in the final product or service. Thus, it can be said that TQM's starting point for advocating quality is a particular definition of what quality is, and a clear objective for focusing on quality (continuous improvement over the long term).
- TQM aims to engage every member of an enterprise to participate in, and take responsibility for, quality and continuous improvement. TQM therefore seems to regard the promotion of quality as necessary across all layers of those involved in the production of quality. Moreover, TQM envisages the achievement of quality as the outcome of a systems approach.
- TQM believes that quality must be customer-driven, rather than organisation-driven. The promotion of quality therefore requires the gathering of information from customers, and the ongoing modification of services and processes to meet those needs as well as possible.
- TQM relates quality to a focus on the satisfaction of end-customers, but also to the quality expectations of intermediate, or internal service recipients. TQM thus

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<sup>66</sup> This evaluation has been synthesised from the researcher's review of a wide variety of TQM internet sites, in the absence of identified peer-reviewed journal articles dealing with the quality promotional aspects of TQM. See for example, <http://improve.org/tqm/html>, <http://www.isixsigma.com/me/tqm>, <http://hrzone.com/topics/tqm>, <http://www.theworkingmanager.com>, etc.



appears to advocate quality as a 'chain' of benefits, and hence to provide a rational case as well as incentives for a focus on quality.

- TQM requires systematic forms of support, measurement and monitoring. TQM therefore appears to conceptualise quality promotion as requiring concrete processes of engagement, data collection and other forms of enquiry, feedback, evaluation and adjustment.

The health services sector has a long tradition of QA, as it has sought to provide objective evidence that public funds are being well spent in identifying opportunities for service improvement; and in facilitating innovation in health care delivery. Alongside QA mechanisms, concepts and models for quality promotion in health services (as well as models for health promotion, as a separate concept) have emerged. These tend to converge around the following components:

- having in place an agreed philosophy and vision of health, based on sound theoretical principles and a sense of direction and coherence;
- securing strategic leadership and motivated, skilled staff in health services/hospitals;
- basing health service provision on assessed need, with planned approaches and defined methods for quality;
- constructing partnerships for quality delivery in health services;
- encouraging consumer participation and reflection in giving content to quality in health services;
- conducting initiatives to collect, analyse and disseminate information on quality of health services; and
- using information to effect quality improvements on the ground, as well as to reorient key decision makers.<sup>67</sup>

### 2.2.1 A Summing-up on Quality Promotion

This attempt to establish the conceptual elements of quality promotion, drawing on higher education and other sectors, has highlighted the following features:

- The promotion of quality is associated with the objectives of institutionalising an ethos or culture of quality in a system, and of continuously improving quality.
- The philosophy or idea of quality that is being advocated is always particularised and contextualised (quality cannot be promoted in the abstract).

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<sup>67</sup> Kemm, J (1999). The Links Between Quality and Health Promotion. Paper prepared for Health Promoting Hospitals, an international network initiated by the World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe.

- Effective quality promotion requires some defined form of agency, i.e. concrete structures, processes and initiatives.
- Quality promotion involves defining and making accessible certain techniques for quality improvement.
- Quality promotion is a managed process, but is also designed to elicit bottom-up knowledge and perspectives on how quality can be improved, and to encourage participation and involvement in quality improvement.
- Quality promotion is accompanied by enquiry into the actual quality of delivery, and the intention is to act upon feedback or to use feedback as a springboard for further quality improvement.

### 2.3 The Interrelationship of QP and CD in a Quality Assurance Context

This literature review has aimed to highlight conceptual aspects of quality promotion and capacity development, in order to apply these in the context of QA in higher education. It has, in the process, contended with some limitations: terms that tend to be loosely applied, patchy literature, tenuous links between identified source material and the target of the enquiry. Despite these limitations, some key observations can be made.

First, QP and CD have different conceptual histories. Conceptualisation of QP has apparently not travelled very far as yet, although of course it may evolve. Perhaps there is little need to elaborate much beyond the key concept that, if quality is to be attained, institutionalised and improved, then ways must be found to make people aware of what quality is (or is advocated to be), and to become involved or immersed in its achievement. In contrast, the conceptualisation of CD has gone through many phases, especially under the impetus of development organisations grappling with particular agendas and confronting particular circumstances and reactions. As a consequence, CD concepts are time-bound and no definitive conceptualisation is possible. For the moment, however, contemporary thinking about CD appears to have converged very usefully around some key concepts.

Second, therefore, it is possible in the cases of both QP and CD to isolate some core conceptual principles in current thinking. Effective QP is seen as involving: advocacy of a *particular* idea of quality; objectives of institutionalised quality culture and continuous quality improvement; concrete interventions and engagement to support continuous quality improvement (disseminating ideas and techniques, instituting data collection, eliciting and responding to feedback); systemic approaches and inclusive processes and perspectives. Effective CD is seen as involving: building both human and institutional abilities for reflection and action, to ensure sustainable capacity outcomes; multi-level, multi-pronged initiatives for impact; long-term processes for sustainability; value-based processes to match objectives to context; participative processes to access existing and

complementary sources of knowledge, to encourage ownership and to shift power dynamics; and reflective processes to support new knowledge, innovation and reinvention in context.

Third, while there are some distinctive conceptual elements, these tend to be buttressed by shared – or strongly related – elements in the conceptualisation of QP and CD. The most significant conceptual overlaps would seem to be that the effective promotion of quality and the effective development of capacity each require: a conceptual underpinning that is value-based and contextualised (i.e. with respect to the way in which quality, or the objectives of capacity development, are defined); interventions which are multi-level and multidimensional and engage whole systems; associated mechanisms and processes which are participative and empowering; and a focus on outcomes that are self-renewing (continuous improvement, sustainable development).

Table 1 sets out both the 'most distinctive' and the shared/related conceptual elements of QP and CD, for comparison.

**Table 1:** QP and CD – Distinctive and Shared Elements of Contemporary Conceptualisation

	Quality Promotion		Capacity Development	
	<i>Most Distinctive Concepts</i>	<i>Shared/Related Concepts</i>		<i>Most Distinctive Concepts</i>
<b>Objective</b>	Institutionalisation of quality culture	Continuous improvement	Sustainable development	Building human and institutional abilities for action and reflection
<b>Focus</b>	Advocacy	Systemic and multi-level	Systems-oriented, multi-level and multi-pronged	Development
<b>Approach</b>	Involving all levels and actors in quality improvement	Advocating a particularised, contextualised philosophy of quality  Disseminating quality improvement techniques  Eliciting feedback (from customers and those involved in production of quality)  Instituting concrete processes of engagement (e.g. data collection, enquiry, feedback, evaluation and adjustment) for further quality improvement	Setting CD objectives that are contextualised and value-based (in terms of the context and values of development partners)  Transferring knowledge/facilitating knowledge acquisition  Accessing existing knowledge and reinventing knowledge in context  Developing ability for, and encouraging, reflection and analysis to support knowledge acquisition, knowledge creation and innovation	Co-constructing knowledge
<b>Process</b>		Inclusive and empowering processes to involve all relevant parties in the production of quality  Continuous processes	Participative and empowering processes to access existing and complementary sources of knowledge, and to develop ownership  Long-term processes that establish mechanisms for sustainability	

The existence of significant shared conceptual elements leads to observations that are of relevance specifically for the conceptualisation of QP and CD in QA in higher education.

Given that a strong conceptual link exists between continuous improvement (quality renewal as the desired outcome of QP) and sustainable development (capacity renewal as the desired outcome of CD), then in the context of QA in higher education, QP and CD

provide fully compatible opportunities for higher education renewal (or transformation, in the South African higher education environment).<sup>68</sup> This is true whether CD aims to build capacity for the delivery of quality *per se*, or whether it aims to build capacity for QA. In the latter case, the desired outcome is the self-regulation of quality, in itself a form of sustainable development.

Moreover, it seems that the shared conceptual elements of QP and CD provide a firm basis for well-integrated frameworks, programmes and activities to establish and entrench QA systems, by facilitating simultaneously institutionalisation of quality culture, and development of QA and QM knowledge and capacity. An acceptance of QP and CD as conceptually-integrated approaches with aligned objectives (while also incorporating some distinctive origins and emphases), seems a more rewarding approach than any attempt to parse the concepts and pursue their objectives in ways that may not capitalise on available synergies and complementarities. Because QP and CD share so many conceptual elements, it is difficult to envisage associated activities along a continuum, or even in terms of a clear progression over time. Although logic might suggest that the promotion of quality or QA would precede the development of capacity for quality or QA, this could only be true – if at all – when a QA system is very new. Given the shared elements identified here, it would rather seem that QP and CD elements of a QA system would need to be developed and sustained concurrently. Although this review of concepts and terminologies in the literature has not involved a searching focus on modalities and methodologies, the shared conceptual elements of QP and CD provide some indications as to where QP and CD initiatives in QA in higher education might usefully consolidate (e.g. forums for the sharing and eliciting of information, and to facilitate reflection on practice; networks as bases of knowledge partnership and innovation; research to evaluate quality improvement needs and to identify opportunities for improvement; and so on).

Finally, it is necessary to consider briefly the relationship between the findings of this chapter and the HEQC's conceptualisation of QPCD, as illustrated in Draft QPCD Framework #5 (see Section 1.3).

Notably, many of the framework's conceptual emphases are consistent with conceptual emphases of QP and CD as they have emerged in this analysis (e.g. continuous improvement, institutionalisation of quality ethos, sustainable capacity for QA, context-specific and value-based QPCD approaches, multi-level and multi-dimensional programme focus, participative and partnership QPCD approaches, orientation of QPCD

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<sup>68</sup> The same applies for a higher education QA approach that combines QP and QE, given QE's end goals of continuous improvement and improvement-led innovation.

programme around the fostering of reflective practice, new knowledge and innovation). In addition, the draft framework advances an understanding of QP and CD as interrelated concepts. While it highlights distinctive aspects of the two in its conceptualisation, it generally<sup>69</sup> portrays them as complementary and mutually reinforcing. In sum, the draft framework appears to be well synchronised with contemporary conceptualisation of QP and CD. To that extent, it can be considered a creature of its time and is presumably well poised, even in its draft form, to track and adapt to future conceptual developments. In fact, given the relatively weak conceptualisation of QP and CD in the specific context of QA in higher education, the framework has an opportunity to contribute to, and influence, a fuller understanding of QPCD purposes and approaches in its field.

Development of the framework could possibly encompass attention to some of the more detailed issues that have emerged from this research, where these are judged by the HEQC to be sufficiently striking. Some examples are selected here for illustrative purposes:

- The research has pointed out the risk that the rhetoric of mutual knowledge construction may fail to materialise in reality. The framework places value on co-construction of knowledge by selecting a QPCD approach that is 'participative', 'dynamic' and 'critical'.<sup>70</sup> The framework may wish to detail more concretely ways in which mutual knowledge construction is to be facilitated and supported.
- The research has highlighted that independence (or interdependence) is an ideal outcome of CD initiatives. This is consistent with the HEQC's goal of a self-regulating QA system.<sup>71</sup> There may be an opportunity to profile this aspect of the QPCD framework more sharply, especially as a means of underlining the 'rational benefit case' for a QPCD programme.
- The research has noted the importance of new knowledge generation through QPCD approaches, and has touched here and there on the potential of reflective processes to generate new policy or reorient decision-makers. The framework may have an opportunity to make more explicit the systemic benefits that can be envisaged as flowing from a QPCD programme.

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69 Draft QPCD Framework #5 does, however, try to divide initiatives into distinctly QP and CD initiatives, and encounters some difficulties. See: Draft QPCD Framework #5: 11.

70 See Section 1.3, item 14.

71 See Section 1.3, item 3.

## **POLICY AND PRACTICE: QPCD APPROACHES IN NATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS**

This chapter considers aspects of QA systems that have been adopted by selected countries around the world. In line with the purposes of this research, the intention is to sketch the overall QA configuration in each case, while highlighting those elements of the approach, which are relevant to objectives and functions of quality promotion, capacity development and/or quality enhancement. A distinction is drawn between the last two terms, where quality enhancement is taken to mean change for improvement against some baseline of quality, or QA capacity, that already exists; while capacity development is taken to mean development of capacity to deliver and manage, quality in higher education, where existing capacity is inadequate or untapped.

The chapter begins with overviews of selected national QA systems, and very briefly considers the relevance of international and regional QA networks. As the research did not locate an evaluative literature of national QA systems, it relied heavily on agency websites and documents and/or information compiled by sources sometimes closely associated with agency efforts. It must be noted that there is limited systematic research into the quality impact of national agencies on national higher education systems, given the relatively recent growth of quality assurance in higher education. Accordingly, the overviews and interpretations are presented in a provisional way. The national systems were selected so as to provide a mix of developed and developing country approaches, a mix of experiences, and a mix of cases that are relatively more or less familiar to South African higher education. The chapter seeks to map such common elements as may exist in the QP, CD/QE approaches it has examined, and ends by considering the relevance of these findings for the HEQC's own QPCD framework.

### **3.1 National Quality Assurance Systems and QP, CD and QE approaches**

#### **3.1.1 Australia**

In Australia, the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) promotes, audits, and reports on QA in Australian higher education. AUQA was formally established by Australia's Ministerial Council on Education, Training and Youth Affairs in March 2000, and receives core funding from the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments whose ministers for higher education are members of that Council. Nonetheless, AUQA seeks to maintain strict independence from government and from higher education institutions.



AUQA divides its responsibilities into two areas:<sup>72</sup> quality audit and quality enhancement, which appear to break down broadly into activities for accountability and developmental purposes.

Quality audits are conducted on a five-yearly cycle in two categories. First, audits are conducted of self-accrediting Australian higher education institutions, and aim to focus on the extent to which institutions are achieving their missions, the adequacy of their QA arrangements, and their success in achieving standards deemed appropriate to Australian higher education. Second, audits are conducted of State and Territory Government higher education accreditation authorities, and aim to focus on recognition and accreditation processes, and the consistency of an authority's judgements with those made in other states and territories. Audits constitute a self-evaluation and site visit, and are conducted in line with an AUQA manual of audit policies and procedures, drawing on an AUQA-trained pool of auditors. Audit reports are public and AUQA references audit findings to comment on the relative standards and international standing of the Australian higher education system and its QA processes. As such, although audit is focused on accountability, in-built feedback processes are intended to support quality promotion and quality enhancement also, at both system and institutional levels.

AUQA's quality enhancement activities seem primarily to support research and reflection into QA and quality enhancement, and dissemination of good practices. They include:

- Australian Universities Quality Forum: an annual forum to discuss and advance QA and quality enhancement, and to share good practices. Papers presented are the result of research and experience of academics and QA practitioners, and are published by AUQA.
- AUQA good practice database: an Internet resource of good practices identified in audit and judged to be transferable throughout the sector. The database includes a relatively wide range of topics (e.g. curriculum, internationalisation, support services).
- AUQA workshops, seminars and occasional publications on selected topics and themes.
- AUQA Web site: provides access to the good practice database, occasional publications and other quality-related resources and links.

The Australian QA model appears to represent a 'light touch' approach that has worked well in context. The 'light touch' is perhaps principally associated with the audit model. Yet the

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<sup>72</sup> See <http://www.auqa.edu.org>



quality enhancement aspects of the model also seem to have been strategically selected, and moreover to presuppose an existing capacity for quality and QA. Such an approach appears to have been shaped by earlier experiences which served to promote quality in Australian higher education, to support quality enhancement at institutional level and to create opportunity for institutional self-reflection about quality and QA. AUQA is the successor to a sub-committee of the former Higher Education Council, which administered the application of Australia's quality policy in the early 1990s. This Committee conducted voluntary annual reviews of selected QA processes and outcomes in Australian universities between 1993 and 1995, and had some reported success in facilitating improvements in teaching quality. Ultimately, the Council and its subcommittee were disbanded when the Australian government decided to mainstream quality as part of its more general accountability mechanisms (qualitative performance indicators), without reference to sector experts. The subsequent formation of AUQA, a streamlined variant of the earlier model, may have been linked primarily to the need to assure 'customers' of the quality of Australian higher education in a global marketplace in which competing higher education systems all have highly visible QA mechanisms. Accordingly, AUQA has apparently shifted focus to external quality and QA systems validation from a 'whole institutional' perspective. Interestingly, AUQA continues to showcase examples of good practice, although a similar emphasis by the Committee had led to concerns that diversity would suffer as all institutions sought to emulate those at the top of league tables in the Committee's annual reports.<sup>73</sup>

In sum, the Australian QA model appears to conceive quality promotion at least in part from a 'market' perspective (i.e. advocating quality for external purposes). The model also appears to assume sufficient internal resources in Australian higher education to sustain quality enhancement on a continuous basis, and to generate best practice.

### 3.1.2 Colombia<sup>74</sup>

The QA system in Colombia includes a range of governmental structures and mechanisms for approving new public higher education institutions, for licensing new private providers, for registering new academic programmes, and for supervising the functioning of higher education institutions and academic programmes (ensuring compliance with minimum standards, and guarantees of high quality).

73 Vidovich, L, Fourie, M, Van der Westhuizen, L, Alt, H and Holtzhausen, S (2000). 'Quality Teaching and Learning in Australian and South African Universities: Comparing Policies and Practices'. *Compare: a Journal of Comparative Education*, Vol 30, No 2: 193-209: 193, 196-197.

74 Revelo, JR and Hernández, CA (2003). *The National Accreditation System in Colombia: Experiences from the National Council of Accreditation*. Paris, International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO).

'Law 30-1992' which reformed Colombia's higher education system, established a national system of accreditation as a strategy to promote and recognise quality, and as a tool to augment transparency and to inform more knowledgeable choices by consumers as to professional education on offer. A National Council of Accreditation (CNA) functions under the National Council of Higher Education, which is the main body for policy advice and policy-making in Colombian higher education. CNA performs two QA functions. First, it reports on the evaluation of 'previous accreditation' of specified academic programmes (programmes of wide social impact, such as teacher training, engineering and health programmes); this is known as the 'verification of minimum quality standards'. Second, it reports on the accreditation of undergraduate programmes and higher education institutions.

The second function is constituted under the 'Accreditation of Excellence' process, which is voluntary and temporary (i.e. accreditation is granted for a specified period ranging from three to ten years). The process seems similar to that used in other countries, being based on self- and external peer evaluations made with reference to (66) pre-designed quality characteristics as optima towards which programmes/institutions should strive. The process is supported by CNA guidelines, handbooks and introductory training for peer evaluators. Accreditation of Excellence was intentionally created as a quality enhancement mechanism in autonomous institutions, to complement other elements of the Colombian QA system, which are concerned mainly with quality control. Specifically, Accreditation of Excellence is intended to provide motivation for institutions to engage in processes of continuous quality improvement.

The CNA believes that accreditation processes are making an ongoing contribution to the dissemination and institutional appropriation of a culture of evaluation, which enhances concerns with quality and management processes in general. Yet significant challenges remain. For example, there is a need to bring the Accreditation of Excellence process to scale. The Colombian institutional landscape is heterogeneous, and while some institutions have embarked on systematic self-evaluation, others are still grappling with the need to develop and test instruments for collecting information in the first place. It seems fair to conclude that, while Accreditation of Excellence has helped to promote quality, capacity for optimal participation in the programme has yet to be built presumably by institutions themselves, as the model itself incorporates minimal capacity development elements and takes quality enhancement as its departure point.

### 3.1.3 Finland<sup>75</sup>

In the early 1990s, Finland embarked on various structural reforms in its higher education system, with due regard to economic realities, and with a view to encouraging specialisation in areas of strength, co-operation in appropriate fields, and pruning of redundancy. As part of higher education renewal, efforts have been made to promote and strengthen a culture of evaluation and to engender a focus on higher education development. Today all Finnish higher education institutions (universities and polytechnics) are obliged by law to evaluate themselves and to take part in external evaluations. Evaluations are conducted at institutional and programme level, and some pursue particular themes selected for investigation. Evaluation consists of self-evaluation, in which it is hoped students play an integral part, and a peer review in which international experts should be included; evaluation reports are public.

The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC) was set up in 1995 to support the long-term development of higher education – and quality in higher education – through evaluations. Its roles are intended to include:

- assisting higher education institutions and the Ministry of Education in matters relating to evaluation and QA;
- conducting evaluation of the accreditation and establishment of polytechnics;
- organising evaluations of the operations and policies of higher education institutions.
- initiating evaluations of higher education and promoting higher education development;
- engaging in international co-operation in evaluation;
- promoting research on evaluation of higher education;
- evaluating and accepting professional courses offered by higher education institutions, and keeping a registry of them;
- supporting higher education institutions while they design their own QA and evaluation systems (e.g. providing advisory and consultancy services in the implementation of evaluations, offering educational visits and training seminars on evaluation, maintaining a library and information service, providing financial aid for projects involving several institutions);
- developing evaluation methodology, and disseminating good practices to higher education institutions and the Ministry of Education;

<sup>75</sup> See <http://www.kka.fi>; Ministry of Education, Finland (August 2003). Report on the Finnish Implementation of the Bologna Declaration and the Prague Communiqué; Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (2001). Action Plan for 2000-2003. Helsinki, Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC).

- producing national data enabling international comparison of higher education institutions for policy makers, students, trade and industry; and
- ascertaining legal protection for students through accreditation as regards lifelong learning, network teaching between institutions, and international student exchange in particular.

The FINHEEC model appears to be a strongly developmental one, focusing on the promotion of a culture of evaluation, and seeking to support this with programmatic elements of advocacy (research, dissemination, networking), as well as capacity development (evaluation design, general training, advice on implementing evaluations).

### 3.1.4 India<sup>76</sup>

Forms of quality assurance and control have been present in Indian higher education for 150 years, most of them part of the British colonial legacy (e.g. regulations on minimum standards, inspections and audits by state governments, performance appraisal of universities by the University Grants Commission [UGC], reviews by funding agencies, and certification of professional programmes by professional bodies).

The UGC is responsible for developing quality control mechanisms for Indian higher education (e.g. eligibility criteria for establishment of institutions, minimum standards of instruction, eligibility tests for university lecturers). In addition to mandatory mechanisms, the UGC has initiated schemes with the goal of enriching education quality. These include, for example: inter-university and national centres to improve the quality of teaching and learning and research, and to provide information resources and facilities; curriculum development centres; and subject specialist panels.

In 1994, a new external element was added to this system when the UGC established a National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) as an autonomous institution. Its primary agenda is intended to be one of promoting quality and leading higher education institutions to maximise their potential for quality education (i.e. to assure higher standards, rather than to ensure minimum standards). The NAAC is an attempt to respond to India's need for quality development and enhancement at the national level, in the context of a huge, complex and diverse higher education system<sup>77</sup> and of imperatives to improve access

<sup>76</sup> Stella, A (2002). External Quality Assurance in Indian Higher Education: Case Study of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council. Paris, International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO); National Assessment and Accreditation Council (2004). A Profile. Bangalore, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC); <http://www.naac-india.com>

<sup>77</sup> E.g. universities can be 'unitary' or 'affiliating' with numerous affiliated colleges.

to higher education institutions of comparable quality. Specifically, NAAC's vision is ultimately to make quality the defining element of higher education in India through a combination of self- and external quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance initiatives. Its key tasks are:

- to arrange for mainly voluntary periodic assessment and accreditation of institutions of higher education or units thereof, or specific academic programmes or projects;
- to stimulate the academic environment for promotion of quality of teaching and learning and research in higher education institutions;
- to encourage self-evaluation, accountability, autonomy and innovations in higher education.
- to undertake quality-related research studies, consultancy and training programmes; and
- to collaborate with other stakeholders of higher education for quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance.

NAAC aims to achieve assessment processes that are ameliorative and enabling, rather than punitive or judgemental. Given the needs of the system, however, some inevitable tensions between development and accountability are present; thus, although assessment and accreditation are voluntary, the UGC has now made NAAC accreditation mandatory for development grants. Assessment is conducted at institutional and departmental levels, using NAAC manuals and seven (weighted) assessment criteria, and following the three-stage process of self-study report, on-site visit by a peer assessment panel, and final accreditation decision by the Executive Council of NAAC. Reports are published for individual institutions and also serve to generate a 'state-wise analysis'.

Given that assessment and accreditation are new processes for higher education in India, NAAC has had to identify and apply a range of promotional strategies. Various processes have sought to involve stakeholders in evolving norms, criteria, methods and instruments; awareness programmes have aimed to familiarise academics and administrators with key concepts; debates and workshops have highlighted critical issues; training for assessment panellists has been conducted; UGC support has been sought to meet some of the financial implications of accreditation for institutions; and NAAC has set about forging partnerships with state governments, relationships with other QA role players, and international linkages.

In NAAC's view, its first few years of operation yielded some positive gains. Institutions appear more aware of their responsibilities in respect of quality; a culture of increased participation and accountability is beginning to emerge at institutional level; and some healthy practices are being institutionalised (e.g. student feedback, performance appraisal,

involvement of employers, students and parents in quality improvement efforts). However, NAAC has also acknowledged a need to improve on aspects of its own processes and outcomes. This has meant attempting to consolidate effort in recent years in particular areas:

- developing procedures, guidelines and mechanisms for accredited institutions, or those institutions who are obliged to act on assessment outcomes. As one example, a methodology for re-accreditation has been finalised incorporating post-accreditation reviews, feedback from the accredited institutions and the outcome of national consultations. As a second example, NAAC promotes and has established guidelines for the establishment of Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQACs) in accredited institutions, to develop 'conscious, consistent and catalytic improvement in the performance of institutions'.<sup>78</sup> The IQAC is envisaged as incorporating academic, management and administrative membership and as serving to promote quality at institutional level, by developing quality benchmarks and parameters for the institution, and preparing an annual self-review report. NAAC has recently (April 2005) proposed the establishment of State-Level Quality Assurance Cells as a means to facilitate and co-ordinate awareness programmes and liaison with the Departments of higher education in each state, and to take up post-accreditation quality sustenance measures.
- strengthening efforts to professionalize and expand the pool of peer assessors;
- improving the dissemination of information to stakeholders and involving stakeholders in quality promotion. One area of focus has been the development of action plans for quality evaluation and upgrading, with a view to identifying appropriate incentives for accreditation; these have been approved by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Another focus has been the development of a model student charter, to highlight students' roles and responsibilities in defining and demanding quality in higher education.
- strengthening the NAAC's advisory role by analysing accreditation reports to support policy initiatives at state and system levels (e.g. evolution of a national qualifications framework); and
- initiating collaborations with other national professional bodies for accreditation of specialised subjects.
- Strengthening dialogue with QA agencies of other countries, and participating in QA initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region.

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<sup>78</sup> NAAC 2004: 18; National Assessment and Accreditation Council (January 2005). Revised Guidelines for the Creation of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) in Accredited Institutions: A Post-Accreditation Quality Sustenance Activity. Bangalore, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC).



- Strengthening research on quality assessment.

The Indian QA model is an interesting one for several reasons. First, it is an attempt to combine older (quality control and thus a strong compliance culture) and newer (quality promotion/enhancement and capacity development) QA elements in a complex higher education system with substantial transformation imperatives and associated challenges in terms of gaining buy-in and eliciting response. Second, it has applied a range of quality promotion strategies, underpinning these with articulated development goals. Third, the NAAC in particular appears to apprehend an elaborated approach that will ultimately address not only quality enhancement at institutional and sub-institutional levels, but also the development of stakeholder capacity to engage issues of quality, and system capacity to develop policy that facilitates the achievement of quality.

### 3.1.5 Philippines<sup>79</sup>

Higher education in the Philippines is diversified and pluralistic, reflecting a colonial history in which higher education structures were established consecutively under Spanish, American and Filipino rule. Today, the system comprises Catholic private institutions, private and non-sectarian establishments of Protestant affiliation, and public institutions (accounting for only 25% of total enrolment). The national QA system in the Philippines comprises three principal mechanisms: minimum quality standards stipulated and verified by a national buffer body; the regulation of professional competences of higher education graduates by a designated board; and voluntary, non-governmental accreditation processes.

The accreditation movement began in the Philippines in the early 1950s through the initiative of a group of private-sector educators who believed that a system of standards, monitoring and voluntary self-assessment would be critical for quality enhancement. Between 1957 and 1971, three voluntary private-sector accrediting bodies were formed, and a public-sector body followed in 1989. Each body opted to focus on programme accreditation using its own accrediting instruments and standards, while a federated body was created in 1976 in an attempt to co-ordinate these.

The Higher Education Act of 1994 established a Commission on Higher Education (CHED), as a buffer body with mixed regulatory and developmental powers in the state supervision of higher education. These include such QA roles as setting minimum

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<sup>79</sup> Arcelo, AA (2003). In Pursuit of Continuing Quality in Higher Education Through Accreditation: the Philippine Experience. Paris, International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO).

standards for programmes and institutions; monitoring and evaluating the performance of programmes and institutions for appropriate incentives or sanctions; and identifying, supporting and developing potential centres of excellence in programme areas needed for the development of world-class scholarship. The CHED's policy has been to encourage the continued use of voluntary non-governmental accreditation systems in aid of the exercise of its regulatory functions. It has authorised the federated accreditation body to certify quality of education offered in accredited programmes and institutions. Thus non-government accreditation as practised in the Philippines essentially covers higher education institutions that have already complied with minimum standards set by government. Accreditation is intended to be a voluntary developmental (continuous self-improvement) mechanism, which assures the public of institutions' compliance with and beyond minimum standards.

In the Philippines, non-government accreditation processes have from the start sought to constitute a quality promotion strategy within the academy and at programme level and have, in some cases, included public information campaigns as well. Moreover, government has chosen to utilise the voluntary accreditation system as a mechanism for deregulation, creating a framework of four institutional accreditation levels that entail benefits in terms of administrative autonomy and access to incentive funds. These levels can be characterised as applicant status, accredited status, reaccredited status, and self-accrediting status,<sup>80</sup> and status is ultimately granted by the CHED: the higher the level of status achieved, the greater the measure of autonomy granted. The capacity of institutions to participate in voluntary accreditation processes and to improve their institutional accreditation status is supported by some forms of grant assistance for accreditation, including government grants channelled to accrediting agencies and an Institutional Development Assistance Programme.

Ultimately, the impact of accreditation processes in the Philippines appears to have been limited. Although by 2003, programme and institutional accreditation applications had in practice accelerated, most higher education programmes in the Philippines had yet to be accredited, and additional pressure was being brought to bear by the phenomenon of globalisation, requiring world-class standards in higher education. Accordingly, the ISO certification system has been identified as a basis for benchmarking higher education, in a joint effort with the national system of accreditation. ISO was first adopted in an academic programme of maritime education, and subsequently other programmes (e.g. in nursing

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80 By 2003, no institution had acquired this fourth level of status. However, in 2001 the CHED opted to rationalise its supervision function, granting full autonomy status to 30 private providers and deregulated status to another 22 (effective for five years).



and computer education) have been ISO-certified. All of this leads to the conclusion that revitalised strategies of quality promotion and quality enhancement are being – and need to be – sought.

### 3.1.6 United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales)<sup>81</sup>

In the countries of the UK, various QA processes were initiated by higher education funding councils<sup>82</sup> in the early 1990s. The Academic quality audit from 1991 to 2002 set out to establish the extent to which higher education institutions had effective overall procedures for the management of standards and quality in place. In addition, teaching quality assessments were conducted between 1993 and 2002, with some variation in the ways in which judgements were made and reported. Teaching quality review focused on core aspects of provision or at subject level, and was apparently successful in ensuring higher standards and improved QM practices, establishing a rich evidence base, and promoting quality to higher education management, academic staff and students. The process was however onerous, and seemed to entail the risk of an emergent compliance culture. Ultimately, a more integrated and lighter-touch approach was sought.

In 1997, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) was established as an independent body funded by subscriptions from higher education institutions, and through contracts with the main UK higher education funding bodies. Today, the QAA is charged with safeguarding the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications, and for encouraging continuous improvement in the management of quality in higher education.

In England, the QAA reviews standards and quality through a peer review process of institutional audits (including collaborative provision audits) and academic subject reviews (including foundation degree reviews), and has also initiated a major review of healthcare programmes funded by the National Health Service (2003-06). The audit and review process proceeds on the basis of self-evaluation documents produced by institutions. Building capacity for audit and review purposes was the explicit intention of QAA developmental engagements with institutions in the period before audits began (2002-04).

81 See <http://www.qaa.ac.uk>; Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2003). A Brief Guide to Quality Assurance in UK Higher Education. Gloucester, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education; Council on Higher Education/Higher Education Quality Committee (September 2004). HEQC Seminar (Report): Improving Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in the United Kingdom and South Africa.

82 Higher Education Funding Council for England, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, Scottish Higher Education Funding Council.

In Northern Ireland, institutions are reviewed using the audit method used in England. In Wales, a customised process of institutional review is followed.

In Scotland, an 'enhancement-led' institutional review (ELIR) process was consultatively developed and designed with a view to supporting continuous improvement of the effectiveness of the learning experience of students. The approach is distinctive within the UK because of its strongly collaborative nature, and its emphasis on the student experience of learning. The ELIR process attempts to integrate four elements. First, an annual discussion by QAA-Scotland with each institution considers how the outcomes of institutional subject reviews are contributing to enhanced QM and maintenance of standards. In addition, the four-year institutional review cycle should incorporate a 'reflective analysis' by each institution as a self-evaluation of its own management of quality enhancement; and this is coupled with a two-part review visit by the Scottish agency. Then, the agency provides annual feedback to the sector on the learning points from ELIR activity. In addition to this process, ELIR aims to integrate additional elements, namely, subject-level reviews operated internally by the institutions; improved forms of public information made available by institutions; the effective involvement of students in institutional QM, supported by a national development service; and a national programme of enhancement themes, aimed at developing and sharing good practice in teaching and learning.

QAA audit and review processes are supported by a range of instruments that include: an audit handbook and audit guide for student representatives, and an academic review handbook (England and Northern Ireland); an institutional review handbook (Wales); an ELIR handbook, operational manual, student guide and staff guide (Scotland); and procedures on representation for institutions whose QA procedures or academic standards have been judged inadequate. The QAA publishes and makes available on its Web site the findings of its various audits and reviews as part of the effort to promote quality to prospective students and their advisers, as well as graduate recruiters and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. It has produced a series of working papers, describing features of good practice arising from institutional audits. In addition, the QAA has assisted in the development of clear and explicit higher education standards, for public information and as nationally agreed reference points for institutions, students, parents and employers. The components of this 'academic infrastructure' include a code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards, frameworks for higher education qualifications in the UK, detailed subject benchmark statements, and programme specifications. Finally, the QAA operates a range of liaison schemes and networks. The QAA provides a liaison officer to any institution wishing to have one, with a view to fostering mutual trust and improving two-way communication between agency and sector. A 'quality strategy network' serves as a knowledge exchange for institutional managers

responsible for QA strategy and planning. The QAA jointly sponsors roundtable discussions with other sectoral bodies as a forum on key issues in assuring and reporting on quality and standards in higher education.

The QAA approach (differentiated as it is at country level) appears successfully to mix elements of QA and quality promotion, through a multi-faceted approach that focuses in particular on freely available information, and the agency's continuous improvement of institutional QA systems in line with shared quality baselines or 'reference points' that facilitate both peer evaluation and stakeholder involvement. Quality enhancement aspects of the agency's work seem implicit throughout, given its continuous improvement objectives, while these aspects have acquired a particularly high profile through certain innovations in Scotland. Interestingly, while the QAA approach incorporates many opportunities for participation and reflection on practice, it does not appear to incorporate any strong element of intellectual enquiry into the theoretical and practical aspects of QA.

Other elements within UK higher education, complementary to the national QA system, have tried to consolidate a focus on quality enhancement, reflective practice and research in the areas of teaching and learning. Substantial dedicated funding has been variously sourced from the UK funding councils, universities, and grant and contract income, for initiatives, which have included:

- a requirement upon institutions by funding councils to produce a teaching and learning strategy;
- recognition of individual academic excellence via National Teaching Fellowships awards;
- the creation of a Learning and Teaching Support Network with 24 subject centres and a 'generic centre', to promote and share good practice in learning, teaching and assessment, through a mix of activities that include dissemination, engagement and brokerage of various partnerships and relationships;
- the establishment of an Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education as a membership body to encourage best practice in teaching and learning and to develop the professionalism of teaching in higher education (membership on the basis of experience, or through accredited institutional programmes for academic staff);
- the establishment of a Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning to stimulate development in learning and teaching, and to support take-up of good practices, supported by a National Coordination Team to provide educational development, management and dissemination support for individual projects and staff;
- recent initiative in England and Northern Ireland to establish Centres for Excellence in Teaching in Learning, with a visible presence at institutional level and direct

- engagement with student learning; and
- the establishment of a Higher Education Academy in 2004, joining up the Learning and Teaching Support Network, the Institute for Learning and Teaching In Higher Education and the National Coordination Team. The Academy aims to provide strategic advice and co-ordination for higher education, government, and funding bodies on policies and practices to enhance the student experience. It hopes also to support and advance curriculum and pedagogic development, and to enhance professional development and professional standing of all staff in UK higher education.

### 3.1.7 United States<sup>83</sup>

In the US, governmental and non-governmental QA practices for higher education co-exist. There are federal regulations linked to institutional eligibility for federal programmes and financial aid; and state regulations linked to funding of public institutions, authorisation of institutions to operate or offer programmes, and professional registration of graduates. Alongside these governmental QA mechanisms, a tradition of non-governmental accreditation dates from the early years of the twentieth century. In terms of this tradition, accreditation is conceived as a collegial process of self-review and peer review for improvement of academic quality and public accountability of institutions and programmes. Accreditation processes are decentralised and at least 50 independent, non-governmental agencies carry out this role, some evaluating the quality of entire institutions (these tend to be regionally organised) and others evaluating quality in specific academic programmes. In essence, QA in the US is a 'triad' of complementary roles held by federal and state governments and accrediting agencies. The higher education sector professes a strong culture of internal review informed by academic perspectives, on the basis that US institutions know they will be scrutinised for their educational quality.

Accreditation in the US appears to have undergone a gradual elaboration of cross-cutting policy and procedures (e.g. periodic review as a mechanism for continuing accreditation; formalised procedures for gathering evidence; a methodology of detailed internal review preparatory to a site visit by an agency-appointed evaluation team; graduated agency actions for granting, conditioning or revoking accreditation; and so on). Co-ordination of accreditation activities remains voluntary, although co-ordination mechanisms are a feature: for example, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA, established

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83 El-Khawass, E (2001). *Accreditation in the United States: Origins, Developments and Future Prospects*. Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO); <http://www.chea.org>

1996) is a private, non-profit organisation that co-ordinates accreditation activities and provides access to various kinds of accreditation information and resources. Yet notwithstanding a relatively long tradition of accreditation, procedural convergence and coordinating mechanisms, there has not been a movement in the US towards formulating explicit quality standards. Instead, according to a perspective from within the accreditation community, the respective merits of different focuses (e.g. on structures, processes and resources; on quantitative information; on student or institutional outcomes) are recognised, and the use of judgement in interpreting evidence remains central.

Accrediting agencies have been very instrumental in spurring academic change and improvement within institutions of higher learning. Their expectations for periodic review have spurred the development of strong internal systems of research and self-assessment. Their questioning of how new initiatives relate to an institution's overall mission has served a helpful role in shaping educationally useful innovation. The emphasis they place on developing good evidence has supported better decisions and better planning for new academic programmes. [...] Accrediting agencies have played a 'steering' role in ... helping higher education find methods that adapt to new demands without imposing restrictions or demands for immediate action. [They] have been deeply involved in sorting out a constructive response to most of the major changes faced by higher education in the past several decades, from developing ways in the 1960s to recognise prior learning, to addressing methods of on-line delivery of instruction at present [...] Agencies have helped the entire system of higher education deal with change constructively while also upholding needed dimensions of quality.<sup>84</sup>

This description of the US QA model and its functioning suggests that a culture of continuous improvement, based in academic perspectives with a due sense of public accountability, has been successfully institutionalised in US higher education. Notwithstanding the absence of central quality monitoring, accrediting agencies appear under this view to have imposed long-term expectations on institutions to monitor, evaluate and report on their own operations and accomplishments, and thus to have contributed to the creation of a self-sustaining capacity for quality enhancement. While accreditation as a system of self-regulation in US higher education appears to have been adequately effective and reliable, various legislative proposals after 2000 have nevertheless favoured shifting more responsibility for academic quality to the federal level (e.g. giving great powers to Congress working with the federal Department of Education, in respect of

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84 El-Khawass (2001: 120-1).

determining conditions for transfer of credit, or prescribing student learning outcomes).

### 3.1.8 International and Regional Models

The development of national QA capacities is supported by a range of international and regional networks. Some of the principal of these include:

- International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE);
- International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE);
- Asia and Pacific Quality Network (APQN);
- European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA);
- Nordic Quality Assurance Network in Higher Education; and
- Quality networking initiatives pursued by other regional associations, such as the Association of Arab Universities and the Association of African Universities.

Such networks aim to add a complementary dimension to the quality promotion, quality enhancement and/or capacity development objectives of national QA systems, typically through a focus on the following activities –

- dissemination of information, experience, good practice and new developments; Discussion of QA issues of common interest, including policy issues;
- facilitation of quality-oriented collaboration between countries with common cultural links or historically-similar QA systems;
- training and advisory support to educational stakeholders in the field of QA;
- development of regional methodologies and/or core guidelines for QA and quality evaluation; and
- research into regional QA systems and mechanisms.

International and regional networks model quality promotion and enhancement activities on similar principles to those of their national agency counterparts, with a focus on information dissemination, reflection and research, collaborations and partnerships, and training. Their relevance for this discussion is, first, that they demonstrate convergence on these staples of quality promotion and quality enhancement/capacity building; and second, that they represent a significant resource that national QA agencies need to be prepared to access and utilise as part of their own QA systems design.



### 3.2 International QP, CD and QE Approaches and the HEQC's QPCD Framework

Table 2 summarises the discussion of national QA systems in Section 3.1, for convenient reference and as a means of extracting key QP and CD/QE elements of these systems, which have been discussed in their wider QA-system context.

The overview suggests that quality promotion is a commonplace of contemporary higher education systems, and has become so since the 1990s – although some QP traditions may date from further back (Philippines, US). QP is conceptually located in two primary contexts: it may be integrally linked to a concern with higher education accountability (Australia, UK, US); or it may be linked to quality enhancement initiatives that supplement quality control mechanisms (Colombia, Finland, India, Philippines). In practice, the two conceptual locations blur in almost all cases, so that QP serves accountability and improvement purposes equally or in unison. This tendency appears natural, as national QA systems all combine accountability and improvement elements; and also constructive, as the focus of QA systems crystallises around continuous improvement necessary to higher education in a globalising world.

There is also blurring in practice with respect to the object of promotion. In some systems, QP appears to have originated in a focus on quality *per se* (Colombia, Philippines, United States). In others, QP has been linked to the emergence of a QE or developmental component of QA and the need to build understanding of that component (evaluation in Finland, assessment and accreditation in India). In other systems, a dedicated QP effort appears to have come to the fore at the time of the wholesale establishment of QA systems and the need to promote QA as well as quality, while the enduring QP focus is much more on quality *per se* (Australia, UK; the same may now be true of Finland and India also). Once again, this evolution seems appropriate, given that the overall objective of QA is continuous improvement, and as QA systems – effectively infrastructure to support continuous improvement – become accepted features of the higher education landscape.

While countries, higher education systems and their national QA systems vary in terms of their state of development, the QA systems of the countries in this sample are primarily oriented around quality enhancement, rather than capacity development. This is so even in developing higher education systems (Colombia, Philippines), where basic capacity for quality higher education delivery and for effective quality management appears to exist in pockets, rather than across the system. Thus, although continuous quality improvement is a central concept in all of these systems, it can be said that a conception of quality, or QA, as

fundamentally transformative tools is sometimes weakly developed.<sup>85</sup> Accordingly, the achievement of higher education quality and effective QA tend not to be analysed primarily from the perspective of developing capacity for their achievement – and, in some highly-capacitated higher education systems (Australia, UK, US), this is entirely rational. In the sample, there appear to be two exceptions to the general rule: in these systems, capacity development and quality enhancement co-exist as functions of particular kinds of QA activities in higher education systems with particular transformation objectives. Finland, a developed country, has conceptualised evaluation as a critical tool in revitalising and restructuring its higher education system. The promotion of evaluation as a methodology for quality, and the nature of FINHEEC support to evaluation (e.g. evaluation design, training and advice functions) are developmental activities that aim to build capacity for evaluation (in itself, a mandatory process). The end goal of evaluation and FINHEEC activities is quality enhancement to support the renewal of Finnish higher education. In India, NAAC QP and assessment and accreditation activities have been intended both to develop quality, and to enhance quality. This dual conception of the improvement dimension of QA is related to an acknowledged need to transform a huge, complex and diverse higher education system and to improve equity of access in that system. In both these systems, QPCD activities appear to be linked to policy development (FINHEEC's overall evaluations of higher education and advisory links to the Ministry of Education; NAAC's emerging mechanisms of support to state and system policy initiatives), and hence appear to incorporate – or at least to envisage – a dimension of systemic learning and feedback appropriate to higher education transformation.

Although broad approaches to QP and CD/QE are diverse, 'on-the-ground' methodologies used to deliver the approaches have emerged from this analysis as fairly uniform, converging around such elements as training (e.g. of peer evaluators/assessors); dissemination of best practice through guidelines, publications and structured interactions such as seminars; the creation of opportunities for reflective practice and research; forums and networks; and partnerships and linkages. In addition, accreditation processes are in some systems primary QP and QE mechanisms in their own right.

What do these broad observations about QP, CD/QE aspects of other countries' QA systems mean for the development of the HEQC's own QPCD framework?

It is evident that the broad approaches considered in this chapter are contextualised by the higher education systems and the QA systems in which they have evolved. There is no 'one

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85 It is true that QE envisages improvement-led innovation, and is concerned with 'transformation' to that extent (see Section 2.1.6). However, it appears that in most cases transformation occurs through incremental change, rather than radical 'step change'.



size fits all' or 'best practice' conceptualisation of QP, CD/QE. Rather models seem to have been constructed in a combination of three ways. First, approaches have been conceptualised *instinctively*, as a response to a higher education (or QA) system's own understanding of what is necessary and possible in context. Second, approaches seem to have developed - at least in part - *mimetically*, through research or observation of what has happened elsewhere. (This process is no doubt supported by international and regional networks and linkages, and may explain some uniformity in methodologies). Finally, the approaches have developed *incrementally*, as national QA systems have developed and as a grasp of the possibilities or priorities of the enterprise has grown. In turn, the conceptualisation of QP, CD/QE approaches appears to have grown richer over time, leading to some quite distinctive contextualised approaches.<sup>86</sup> As examples:

- Australia's preference for a light-touch approach in the context of a well-capacitated system has led to an annual quality forum that taps QA capacity and good practice for quality enhancement across the system.
- India's ultimate goal of making quality the defining element in a very large and unevenly-capacitated system is leading, over time, to NAAC initiatives that attempt to reach deeply within, and widely across, that system (e.g. QA cells at institutional and at state level).
- In the UK, where QA systems are both well established and well capacitated, a strong QE orientation is developing, both within the QA system (i.e. ELIR process with strong student involvement, in Scotland) and alongside it. Thus, the UK model for QE of teaching and learning represents an advanced conceptualisation of complementary practices in a particular configuration (but one that it is powerfully resourced in ways a South African model probably cannot hope to envisage at this particular stage of its development).

Against this background, the HEQC would appear to have every reason to tailor its own conceptual approach and programme design, and to orient South African higher education's QPCD framework self-referentially in the first instance – i.e. with reference to: the goals of the South African higher education system; its customised definition of quality; and the quality and QA needs of the system, as defined by our own legacy and prevailing context of higher education restructuring. These points of reference would then serve to inform selection of particular strategies, approaches or practices that may have been modelled elsewhere. To this extent, the process of developing a QPCD

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<sup>86</sup> This would seem to lend support to the hypothesis in Section 2.2 that conceptualisation of QP (and other) approaches benefit from intellectual re-evaluation after some years of experience by national QA systems.

framework needs to be much like the process already followed by the HEQC in developing its audit and accreditation frameworks – and would also be consistent with one of the principles for a sustainable system already encountered in this research: local knowledge and reinvention for local purposes are ultimately the tools of choice. International convergence within particular QP and CD/QE methodologies may be helpful in flagging where a core of QPCD initiatives might lie in the South African case, while still leaving considerable space for innovation, adapted to context and resources.

Unfortunately, this research has not managed to penetrate detailed aspects of the organisation of QP and CD/QE initiatives in other countries, or the details of strategies that underpin broadly defined approaches and practices. More fine-grained research and analysis of this kind could be helpful for the development of the QPCD framework in specific instances, once core choices on approach adapted to the HEQC's own context have been made. Analysis of organisational and programmatic detail in the HEQC's own case, based on experience to date, is tackled in the following chapter.

Table 2: Summary of QP, CD and QE Approaches in Selected National QA Systems

	Quality Promotion Orientation	Capacity Development Orientation	Quality Enhancement Orientation	QP, CD/QE Practices	Evaluation of Approach
<b>Australia</b>	✓ - Quality promotion and QA promotion	✗	✓ - Research and reflection into QA and QE - Dissemination of good practices	- In-built feedback processes of audit (accountability) intended to support QP and QE at system and institutional levels - Annual quality forum - Good practice database - Workshops, seminars, publications, website access to resources	- QP conceived in part from market perspective (quality advocacy for external purposes) - 'Light touch' QE approach: strategically selected QE initiatives assume sufficient internal resources for continuous improvement and generation of best practice - Showcasing of good practices a preferred QE approach
<b>Colombia</b>	✓ - Accreditation as a strategy to promote and recognise quality	✗ - Minimal CD elements (training for peer evaluators) - Model takes QE as its departure point	✓ - Voluntary accreditation process is intended to motivate institutions to a) appropriate a culture of evaluation and b) engage in continuous quality improvement	- Voluntary Accreditation for Excellence process for institutions and undergraduate programmes	- Accreditation for Excellence has helped to promote quality - Capacity for optimal participation in the programme has yet to be built (presumably by institutions themselves)
<b>Finland</b>	✓ - Promotion of a culture of evaluation	✓ - Articulated focus on development, rather than enhancement	- Implicitly, not articulated	- Programmatic elements of advocacy: research, dissemination, networking - Programmatic elements of CD: evaluation design, general training, advice on implementing evaluations	- Model envisages the long-term development of higher education and quality in higher education, through evaluations

	Quality Promotion Orientation	Capacity Development Orientation	Quality Enhancement Orientation	QP, CD/QE Practices	Evaluation of Approach
India	<p>✓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NAAC charged with making quality the defining element of higher education in India</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Articulated need for quality development (complex and diverse system)</li> <li>- NAAC processes seek to be ameliorative and enabling</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Articulated need for quality enhancement (complex and diverse system)</li> <li>- UGC supplements quality control mechanisms with quality enrichment mechanisms</li> <li>- NAAC assessment and accreditation process have QE objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assessment and accreditation of institutions and units/departments</li> <li>- Strategies to promote assessment and accreditation (consensus building around norms and criteria, awareness programmes, training, partnerships and linkages)</li> <li>- Internal QA Cells in accredited institutions</li> <li>- Efforts to professionalize peer assessors</li> <li>- Efforts to increase stakeholder involvement in QP (e.g. student charter)</li> <li>- Analysis of accreditation reports to support policy initiatives at state and system levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Model attempts to combine newer QP/CD/QE elements with older quality control elements, in a complex system with transformation imperatives and challenges</li> <li>- Range of QP strategies is underpinned by articulated developmental goals</li> <li>- NAAC appears to envisage an elaborated approach that would ultimately incorporate QE in institutions, and development of stakeholder and system capacity for quality</li> </ul>
Philippines	<p>✓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- QP through voluntary, non-governmental accreditation processes for institutions that comply with minimum standards set by government</li> </ul>	<p>✓ (indirect)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Voluntary accreditation utilised as a mechanism for deregulation: capacity for institutional participation in voluntary accreditation processes supported by some grant assistance</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- QE through voluntary, non-governmental accreditation processes for institutions that comply with minimum standards set by government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Voluntary, non-governmental accreditation processes for purposes of QE and deregulation</li> <li>- ISO certification being introduced as a complementary basis for QP and benchmarking higher education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accreditation has had limited impact</li> <li>- Revitalised QP and QE strategies being sought, especially in light of globalisation of higher education</li> </ul>

	Quality Promotion Orientation	Capacity Development Orientation	Quality Enhancement Orientation	QP, CD/QE Practices	Evaluation of Approach
UK	<p>✓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- QP by QAA emphasises publicly-available information</li> <li>- QAA promotes continuous improvement in QA/QM at institutional level</li> </ul>	<p>✓ (indirect)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capacity for audit and review was built by QAA in England prior to initiation of audit</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- QE conceptualised as continuous improvement in QA/QM, and implicit throughout QA processes</li> <li>- QA in Scotland is explicitly QE-led</li> <li>- Elements in UK higher education complementary to QA system seek to consolidate a focus on QE in teaching and learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development by QAA of 'academic infrastructure' as nationally-agreed reference points for QA</li> <li>- Published audit and review reports, working papers to highlight good practice</li> <li>- QAA liaison schemes and networks</li> <li>- Higher Education Academy brings together a range of QE initiatives in the area of teaching and learning, to complement QA approaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- QAA mixes QA accountability elements with QP and QE elements</li> <li>- QE, reflective practice and research in teaching and learning are encouraged by initiatives complementary to the national QA system</li> </ul>
US	<p>✓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Triad of complementary QA/QP roles held by federal and state governments, and decentralised accrediting agencies, appears to have fostered a strong culture of internal quality review informed by academic perspectives</li> </ul>	<p>✗</p>	<p>✓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accreditation processes appear to have fostered the development of strong academic planning, educational innovation and a culture of continuous improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Periodic collegial self-review and peer review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Culture of continuous improvement has been institutionalised through long traditions of collegial self-review and peer review</li> <li>- While accreditation systems appear to have been adequately effective and reliable, some are seeking a greater measure of federal control over academic quality</li> </ul>



## ORGANISATION, PROGRAMME AND ACTIVITIES: QPCD IN THE HEQC'S EXPERIENCE

This chapter provides a synthesis of HEQC (including QPCD Directorate) perspectives on the nature and conceptualisation of QPCD initiatives to date, as well as on the conceptualisation of a QPCD framework and programme going forward. The chapter draws on HEQC interviews conducted in April 2005,<sup>87</sup> as well as on selected documentation<sup>88</sup> made available by members of the QPCD Directorate. It should be noted that the chapter is intended to function as an overview, rather than as a catalogue of detail. Accordingly, it does not include exhaustive referencing of documents; it does not provide a quantitative breakdown of interview inputs (e.g. 'four respondents said this'); and it attributes perspectives by exception only, to acknowledge where specific conceptual frameworks are not the intellectual property of the researcher.

An important reason for including HEQC interviews and documentation review in this research was to access relevant knowledge and perspectives already present in the organisation. The underlying reason was a sense that such perspectives might not typically have been captured, and might in some cases have been latent or remained unshared. Alternatively, perspectives might have been discussed only in fragments or between one or two individuals. The key purpose of this chapter is therefore not to craft startling new insights and analysis, but to 'play back', to organise and, to some extent, to interpret and advance – the outcomes of the HEQC's own self-reflection and learning, and to direct this learning towards the conceptual development of a QPCD framework. It must be remembered that the existing Draft QPCD Framework #5 (summarised in Section 1.3) provides a complementary set of formulated perspectives. Accordingly, this document is referenced throughout. In particular, given that interviews and documents facilitated detailed comment on concrete aspects of the draft framework, such comment is made (making this chapter qualitatively rather different from Chapters 2 and 3).

The first section of the chapter constructs an 'inventory' of the HEQC's QPCD initiatives, strategies, approaches and methodologies. The next section highlights key themes in the

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87 Interviews were conducted with Dr Mala Singh, Dr Prem Naidoo, Dr John Carneson, Ms Thabisile Dlomo, Dr Herman du Toit, Ms Barbara Morrow, Dr Rob Moore, Dr Mark Hay, Mr Tshepo Magabane, Mr Theo Bhengu, and Dr Lis Lange.

88 Given logistics, as well as time constraints in this research, QPCD documentation has been reviewed principally as prompted by issues raised in the interviews (rather than the other way around). Documentation was reviewed for the purposes of highlighting conceptual insights, and not for the purposes of mining operational detail. Exhaustive referencing of QPCD documentation has been avoided and documents have been explicitly referenced only when quoted. A list of QPCD documents consulted is included under References, QPCD Documentation.

HEQC's experience of QPCD. The final section attempts an integration of findings arising from this part of the research.

#### **4.1 Inventory of the HEQC's QPCD Initiatives, Strategies, Approaches and Methodologies**

##### **4.1.1 Some Preliminary Considerations**

In constructing an inventory of QPCD initiatives, it is important to bear in mind the way in which the HEQC and the QPCD Directorate have tended to function. As these issues will recur and have some importance in later discussion, it is worth setting them out as preliminaries.

- 'Boundaries' between the HEQC directorates<sup>89</sup> are relatively permeable. The matrix nature of the HEQC as an organisation is an important part of its working and may lead to distributed responsibility for particular initiatives or functions. Accordingly, a cooperative mode of relationship between directorates is desirable, is often a critical success factor in initiatives,<sup>90</sup> and has many constructive results. At the same time, this organisational structure and culture mean that QPCD activities are not necessarily located in one place; or may have moved from one place to another over time; or there may still be some argument about where an activity is best located. The fact that QPCD Directorate capacity was less well established than capacity in other directorates in the early years of the HEQC's existence, has also meant that QPCD initiatives sometimes sprang up inside other directorates.
- The HEQC has committed itself to being an organisation that proactively facilitates, and responds to the need for, development of quality and QA in South African higher education,<sup>91</sup> working as far as possible in a consultative and co-operative mode with internal and external partners. In respect of QPCD-related activities, this has sometimes motivated the HEQC to act opportunistically, rather than strictly

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89 There are three HEQC directorates: Audit and Evaluation Directorate, Accreditation and Co-ordination Directorate and QPCD Directorate.

90 Activity templates (tools for scoping, managing and monitoring projects) used by the QPCD Directorate include a section on important aspects of inter-directorate co-operation.

91 See, for example, CHE January 2001 (HEQC Founding Document): Sections 3.6-7. '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.'



programmatically. Accordingly, some activities have been pursued as once-offs, or for a short duration; others may have been initiated but have not been followed through as other activities have taken priority. A relatively high incidence of 'ad hoc' activities may perhaps be expected in the absence of a finalised overarching framework. It should, however, be noted that willingness to explore the possibilities of a variety of avenues has enabled the HEQC to further a conceptual understanding of its QPCD function through practice, and also to develop some substantial initiatives out of small beginnings. As examples: the student quality literacy project had its early origins in a media communication exercise to warn students about fly-by-night private providers; early efforts initiated in 2003 to evaluate the QA support needs of merging institutions have evolved into 'the South Africa-Finland Cooperation Programme' which incorporates a complex of activities to support the QMS development in merging and historically-disadvantaged institutions, to support the development of new academic infrastructure in merging and comprehensive institutions, and to support quality delivery to pipeline students in all institutions engaged in restructuring.

- Understanding of how best to integrate the various possible purposes of the QPCD Directorate is still developing. At the time this research was undertaken, there seemed to be on the one hand a general acceptance that the Directorate was in part a service unit in the HEQC, supporting and servicing other directorates. On the other hand, there was a clear recognition that the QPCD Directorate could and should constitute a core reflective resource for the furtherance of the HEQC's quality promotion and capacity development objectives. Up to the present, a QPCD programme appears to have developed unevenly in respect of distinct purposes such as these. Reasons include not only the developing understanding of the QPCD function, but also the kinds of priorities that predominated in the HEQC's systems-building phase (e.g. identifying, training, and providing materials for, auditors and evaluators), and the kinds of internal capacities that may, or may not, have been available to support QPCD initiatives.

#### 4.1.2 Inventory of QPCD Initiatives

Table 3 aims to provide an inventory of ongoing, current and planned QPCD initiatives, as these stood in April 2005. The inventory is not exhaustive and could doubtless be expanded upon and rendered more accurate by a member of the QPCD Directorate who has deeper organisational knowledge than the researcher has been able to muster in the limited time dedicated to this element of the research. Thus, 'ad hoc' activities referenced in the preliminary comments above (e.g. particular kinds of local or international linkages, or once-off interventions) are not captured in any detail. Neither is the information in the

figure really fine-grained enough to indicate which initiatives are of longer duration or greater complexity than others, although readers familiar with the HEQC's work will be able to fill in this gap.

Limitations notwithstanding, the table attempts to organise an inventory of principal QPCD initiatives in suggested key categories related to the purpose and nature of these activities. The scheme of categories has been derived from a review of project purposes itemised in related documentation, as well as from emphases and 'categories of purpose' that emerged from interviews.<sup>92</sup> The suggested categories of purpose are:

- operational support to HEQC core functions and systems – i.e. QPCD activities that support the operationalisation and implementation of audit and accreditation;
- reflection and research – i.e. QPCD activities that create a reflective basis for directing system change and improvement; that create a framework, or build system, institutional or individual capacity, for reflective and intellectual engagement with quality and QA; or that develop the HEQC's internal reflective capacity to deliver on its QPCD function;<sup>93</sup>
- QPCD projects and co-ordination – i.e. QPCD activities and collaborations that promote quality and develop capacity for quality and/or QA at system, institutional, academic programme and individual levels; and
- internal support to the HEQC – i.e. internal service activities carried out within the ambit of the QPCD Directorate to support the needs of the HEQC as an organisation.

Some initiatives straddle more than one category of purpose – where this occurs, Table 3 indicates the relationship between the purposes, or where one category is subsidiary to another.

It can be noted that the inventory of QPCD initiatives in Table 3 is by and large consistent with Draft QPCD Framework #5 (see items 15 and 16 under Section 1.3). Given that the latter dates from more than 18 months ago, this would seem to indicate that a process of consolidating QPCD initiatives has been under way.

There are some key additions in Table 3, namely, items 8 (building/developing QMS in merging and historically-disadvantaged institutions) and 9 (support to development of

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<sup>92</sup> Acknowledgement is made to Dr John Carneson, who suggested and formulated a similar scheme in his interview.

<sup>93</sup> It is important to note that this category references one purpose of QPCD activities that may be shared by other HEQC activities; clearly, it is not meant to imply that reflection and research in the HEQC is the sole domain of the QPCD Directorate.

academic frameworks and infrastructure). Both these sets of initiatives are directly linked to the unfolding process of institutional restructuring and are therefore still consistent with Draft QPCD Framework #5 (see item 2 under Section 1.3: 'QPCD responsibilities will be conducted in line with the requirements of the HEQC's approach to quality, in an environment of ongoing system- and institutional-level changes').

**Table 3:** High-level Inventory of the HEQC's QPCD Initiatives (as at April 2005)

	Initiative/Activity	Category of Purpose			
		Operational Support to HEQC Core Functions and Systems	Reflection and Research	QPCD Projects and Co-ordination	Internal Support to the HEQC
1.	Auditor preparation and development	<p>✓ (dual purpose: operational support and QPCD are interrelated purposes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preparation for Chairs of audit panels</li> <li>- General auditor preparation</li> <li>- Specialist auditor preparation (e.g. for distance providers, universities of technology, merging institutions)</li> <li>- Preparation for audit report writing</li> <li>- Preparation for institutions to be audited ('institutional readiness' workshops)</li> </ul>	<p>✓ (subsidiary/indirect effect)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research and development of training models and materials (including formal and informal processes of evaluation)</li> </ul>	<p>✓ (dual purpose: operational support and QPCD are interrelated purposes)</p>	
2.	Programme evaluator preparation and development (including training, preparation and development of evaluators drawn from professional councils and ETQAs - to support quality co-ordination across the higher education system <sup>95</sup> )	<p>✓ (dual purpose: operational support and QPCD are interrelated purposes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General evaluator preparation</li> <li>- Specialist evaluator preparation</li> <li>- Subject-based evaluator preparation</li> <li>- Preparation for institutions whose programmes are to be accredited (focus on: planning, monitoring, working with evidence, self-evaluation)</li> <li>- Preparation of a cohort of evaluators inside individual institutions (e.g. merging institutions)</li> </ul>	<p>✓ (subsidiary/indirect effect)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research and development of training models and materials (including formal and informal processes of evaluation)</li> </ul>	<p>✓ (dual purpose: operational support and QPCD are interrelated purposes)</p>	

95 The HEQC, as the 'band ETQA' for higher education in South Africa, is mandated to be responsible for quality co-ordination in higher education. This entails delegating QA functions to, and concluding MOUs with, other professional councils and ETQAs operating in the band. It also means supporting the convergence of QA approaches and practices through such developmental steps as are necessary and appropriate.

	Initiative/Activity	Category of Purpose			
		Operational Support to HEQC Core Functions and Systems	Reflection and Research	QPCD Projects and Co-ordination	Internal Support to the HEQC
3.	Preparation and development of evaluators for national programme reviews (including training, preparation and development of evaluators drawn from professional councils and ETQAs – to support quality co-ordination across the higher education system)	<p>✓ (dual purpose: operational support and QPCD are interrelated purposes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitator preparation</li> <li>- General evaluator preparation</li> <li>- Preparation of institutions whose programmes form part of national review</li> </ul>	<p>✓ (subsidiary/indirect effect)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research and development of training models and materials (including formal and informal processes of evaluation)</li> </ul>	<p>✓ (dual purpose: operational support and QPCD are interrelated purposes)</p>	
4.	Data management	<p>✓ (NB: 'boundary area' between QPCD and other directorates)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- establishing databases of auditors and evaluators (identifying individuals for preparation)</li> <li>- maintaining databases of trained auditors and evaluators</li> <li>- management of online accreditation database</li> </ul>	<p>✓ (subsidiary/indirect effect)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research and development of training models and materials (including formal and informal processes of evaluation)</li> </ul>	<p>✓ (dual purpose: operational support and QPCD are interrelated purposes)</p>	

	Initiative/Activity	Category of Purpose			
		Operational Support to HEQC Core Functions and Systems	Reflection and Research	QPCD Projects and Co-ordination	Internal Support to the HEQC
5.	Initiatives to improve quality of core functions of higher education		<p>✓</p> <p>(dual purpose: reflection and research, and QPCD, at sectoral level are interrelated purposes)</p> <p>- research into best practice</p> <p>- participative and consultative processes to highlight relevant knowledge, elicit new knowledge and learning (e.g. teaching and learning improvement seminars)</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>(dual purpose: reflection and research, and QPCD at sectoral level, are interrelated purposes)</p> <p>- Improving teaching and learning (ITL) (research, preparation and publication of resource guides: programme development, programme review, access and admissions, student development, assessment, staff development and self-evaluation, postgraduate research and supervision; dissemination of guides through workshops)</p> <p>- ITL for success (part of ITL focus: includes a) research on improving quantity and quality of throughputs, with conference on research outputs and workshops on related topics, e.g. good practice in foundation and extended curriculum [academic development] programmes; and b) development of a systematic multi-level CD programme in teaching and learning [professional development])</p> <p>- Quality management of short courses (in context of continuing education: good practice guide and workshops)</p> <p>- Quality management of research (good practice guide and workshops)</p> <p>- Community engagement (service learning good practice guide and workshops)</p> <p>- Improving QMS in 'special topic areas' (e.g. distance education, vocational education, religious education), and with selected focus (e.g. curriculum and programme development)</p>	

	Initiative/Activity	Category of Purpose			
		Operational Support to HEQC Core Functions and Systems	Reflection and Research	QPCD Projects and Co-ordination	Internal Support to the HEQC
6.	Initiatives to improve quality of support functions of higher education			✓ - Library management (preliminary support to mobilisation of a library management network) - Evidence for quality/MIS (input to institutional planners' network)	
7.	Student quality literacy and empowerment programme			✓ - research (including Scotland exchange visit) and baseline survey - information and advocacy campaigns, including e.g. media campaigns, internet site and training workshops (general public, prospective students, registered students at postgraduate and undergraduate levels, institutional officials: student affairs and QA ) - training programme for student leaders and faculty representatives - student manuals and handbooks on QA	
8.	Initiatives to support building/development of QMS in merging institutions and historically-disadvantaged institutions (incorporating focus on comprehensives, universities of technology)  ('the South Africa-Finland Cooperation Programme': supported and funded by the government of Finland)			✓ -- establishing QMS for merging institutions/building QMS in historically-disadvantaged institutions - establishing QM arrangements for developing new academic programme structure - ensuring quality provision for all students in existing programmes (planned 'manual for pipeline students') - preparing merging institutions (comprehensives, universities of technology) and historically-disadvantaged institutions for HEQC audit and programme accreditation	

	Initiative/Activity	Category of Purpose			
		Operational Support to HEQC Core Functions and Systems	Reflection and Research	QPCD Projects and Co-ordination	Internal Support to the HEQC
9.	Initiatives to support development of academic frameworks and infrastructure		✓ (dual purpose: reflection and research, and QPCD, are interrelated purposes)	✓ (dual purpose: reflection and research, and QPCD, are interrelated purposes) - development of generic standards for NQF Level 5 qualifications - support to development of academic infrastructure in merging institutions (see item 8 above) - conceptual inputs to clarification of differentiated institutional missions (especially new institutional types: universities of technology, comprehensives also see item 8 above) - (as part of 'the South Africa-Finland Cooperation Programme') allocating competitive grants to institutions for quality promotion in teaching and learning, or for innovation in core academic functions	
10.	Forums, debates, seminars, dialogue and consultation	✓ (subsidiary purpose/indirect effect)	✓ (subsidiary purpose/indirect effect)	✓ - public- and private-sector forums for QA Managers (QAMF) - various other forums, as role players are drawn into initiatives, projects or dialogue and consultation - including CD-oriented dialogue, workshops and interaction with professional councils and ETQAs to support quality co-ordination across the higher education system	



	Initiative/Activity	Category of Purpose			
		Operational Support to HEQC Core Functions and Systems	Reflection and Research	QPCD Projects and Co-ordination	Internal Support to the HEQC
11.	International networks and linkages			<p>✓</p> <p>(boundary area between HEQC executive leadership and QPCD Directorate; other directorates establish international linkages of their own)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- engagement with international QA and quality frameworks, debates and research</li> <li>- participation in international QA organisations (e.g. INQAAHE)</li> <li>- collaborative relationships with role players in SADC countries</li> <li>- participation in regional, continental and international QA networks and forums</li> <li>- MOUs with CD objectives (e.g. MOU with NAAC to exchange information and expertise, provide developmental opportunities, collaborate in joint research and other projects)</li> <li>- other international agreements with CD objectives (e.g. agreement with Finnish government to mobilise funding and support to projects building QMS in merging and historically-disadvantaged institutions)</li> <li>- link initiatives (e.g. Scotland/South Africa seminars to link relevant role players in different contexts)</li> </ul>	

	Initiative/Activity	Category of Purpose			
		Operational Support to HEQC Core Functions and Systems	Reflection and Research	QPCD Projects and Co-ordination	Internal Support to the HEQC
12.	Other networks and linkages			<p>✓</p> <p>(boundary area: various linkages across HEQC projects)</p> <p>e.g. with SAUVCA, CTP [now HESA](c.f. vocational education), APPETD, SAAIDE (c.f. distance education initiative ) SAADA (c.f. academic development initiative), DoE, bodies representing other role players and constituencies</p>	
13.	Other communication: e.g. public media campaigns, newsletters, internet			<p>✓</p>	
14.	Internal research				<p>✓</p> <p>(boundary area between HEQC executive leadership and QPCD Directorate)</p> <p>- internal strategic research to track the effect of HEQC activities on South African higher education</p> <p>- internal strategic research to track the response of HEIs to HEQC requirements</p>

	Initiative/Activity	Category of Purpose			
		Operational Support to HEQC Core Functions and Systems	Reflection and Research	QPCD Projects and Co-ordination	Internal Support to the HEQC
15.	Monitoring and evaluation of HEQC <sup>96</sup>	<p>✓</p> <p>(multi-purpose: operational support, reflection and research, and internal support to HEQC, are interrelated purposes)</p> <p>- attention to use of evidence and MIS in preparation of auditors and evaluators</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>(multi-purpose: operational support, reflection and research, and internal support to HEQC, are interrelated purposes)</p> <p>- design and conduct of research projects that support monitoring and evaluation by: identifying good practices, identifying areas of weakness in HEIs' core functions, identifying issues to support effective institutional planning and utilisation of MIS, etc.</p>		<p>✓</p> <p>(boundary area between CHE Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate, HEQC leadership and directorates)</p> <p>(multi-purpose: operational support, reflection and research, and internal support to HEQC, are interrelated purposes)</p>
16.	Internal capacity development				<p>✓</p> <p>(boundary area: various initiatives occur within directorates)</p> <p>- staff development seminar programme</p> <p>- staff exchange and study visits abroad</p>
17.	HEQC donor reporting				<p>✓</p> <p>(carried out by QPCD Directorate)</p>

96 It should be noted that this initiative was mentioned in the April 2005 interviews, but few details were provided, as it was in very early stages of development.

#### 4.1.3 Inventory of QPCD Strategies, Approaches and Methodologies

Interviews and documentation review revealed a consistency between QPCD strategies, approaches and methodologies outlined in Draft QPCD Framework #5 (Section 1.3) and strategies, approaches and methodologies in use. Strategies, approaches and methodologies are summarised in Table 4 and are supported by selected examples of QPCD initiatives whose purpose, objectives and activities<sup>96</sup> illustrate respectively strategy, approach or methodology. To this extent Table 3 and Table 4 are intended to be complementary, although neither is exhaustive.

Interviews and documentation yielded a strategy and an approach that are clearly in use, but not directly cited in Draft QPCD Framework #5: this is the '**multi-pronged strategy**' (item 5 under Strategies, Table 4) and '**linked activities approach**' (item 8 under Approaches, Table 4). Several examples of this strategy/approach emerged of which three are:

- QPCD initiatives are supported by activities in other areas of the CHE and HEQC. As one example, an 'ITL for success' focus on improving the quantity and quality of throughputs in higher education is supported, first, by the CHE Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate which determines current throughputs at national and institutional level, and assesses performance against targets; and, second, by the Audit and Accreditation Directorates which identify good practice and common failures, and assess the quality of throughputs.
- A range of QPCD initiatives may combine to build capacity in particular aspects of QA at system and/or institutional level. As one example, capacity development in the area of programme development is currently supported by the following QPCD initiatives: auditor and evaluator preparation; ITL research and resource guides; quality management of short courses good practice guide; special projects in such areas as distance education and vocational education.
- QPCD initiatives generally comprise a set, or complex, of individual activities that are mutually supportive. Thus, as a first example, evaluator preparation and development comprises capacity-strengthening activities (e.g. workshops, guides, mentoring and mutual support); activities to support management information systems (MIS) (e.g. production of reports); and research and evaluation activities. As

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<sup>96</sup> In particular, the research referenced QPCD activity templates and project proposals.

a second example, the 'TTL for success' project incorporates research into throughput patterns and educational strategies to support these; a programme to disseminate research outputs; and development of a multi-level strategy and CD programme to support professional development in targeted areas (beginning with foundation programmes). As a final example, the project to strengthen/develop QMS in merging and historically disadvantaged institutions embraces systems-development; institutional readiness; academic infrastructure conceptualisation and development; and forms of support to quality delivery for pipeline students.

The project to strengthen/develop QMS in merging and historically disadvantaged institutions also illustrates a distinctive methodology. In addition to such elements as institutional visits (to promote quality and gather institutional information) and the delivery of workshops and guides (to strengthen capacity), the project methodology has an important additional component of **applied QA expertise at institutional level** (item 5 under Methodologies, Table 4). In particular, researchers will work with senior academics from these institutions to conduct a diagnostic analysis and review of institutional QMS; and international expertise will be used in the finalisation of diagnostic reports and implementation plans. This is a relatively resource-intensive methodology, which is necessary given the particular aims and objectives of this project. It is entirely consistent with QPCD approaches of reproducing skills, institutionalising QA, using models of partnership and dialogue, and engaging with socio-institutional reality. However, such a methodology may not be typical (or sustainable from an HEQC resource point of view) across other QPCD projects.

**Table 4:** High-level Inventory of the HEQC's QPCD Strategies, Approaches and Methodologies (as at April 2005)<sup>97</sup>

#### 4.2 Critical Review of the HEQC's Experience of QPCD

	Strategies	Approaches	Methodologies
1.	<p>Strategic support to improvement dimension of quality and QA, with a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- preparation of the system for QA implementation (e.g. auditor, evaluator and national review evaluator preparation; building QMS in merging and historically-disadvantaged institutions)</li> <li>- developing an ethos of quality and continuous improvement (e.g. various initiatives developing and disseminating good practices in teaching and learning, research and community engagement in all HEIs)</li> <li>- enhancing HEQC internal capacity (i.e. internal staff development initiatives)</li> </ul>	<p>Integrated approach combining quality promotion and capacity development, i.e. a mix of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- advocacy activities (e.g. student quality literacy programme)</li> <li>- research activities (e.g. research into improving quantity and quality of throughputs)</li> <li>- dissemination activities (e.g. dissemination of good practice guides)</li> <li>- activities to build and enhance systemic and individual skills (e.g. auditor and evaluator preparation)</li> </ul>	<p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- direct training (e.g. auditor and evaluator preparation)</li> <li>- train-the-trainer model training (e.g. training of QA managers and others who can train staff in institutions; facilitator preparation for national reviews; training of student development officers to support student quality literacy)</li> <li>- development of training materials and methodologies (e.g. reading material and portfolios for auditor and evaluator preparation; role plays and other methodologies to mirror complexity of judgement-making process; website for online training of evaluators)</li> <li>- evaluation of training (e.g. formal evaluation of auditor training; structured feedback on evaluator training)</li> </ul>
2.	<p>Multi-level focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- systemic (e.g. auditor and evaluator preparation)</li> <li>- institutional (e.g. building capacity in merging institutions; student quality literacy)</li> <li>- academic programme (e.g. good practice guides, especially in key areas, such as programme design and review)</li> <li>- individual level (e.g. QAMF; student quality literacy)</li> <li>- internal focus (e.g. staff development programme)</li> </ul>	<p>Sustainable approach (regeneration and reproduction of skills)</p> <p>(e.g. auditor and evaluator preparation; ITL for success professional development focus; developing QMS capacity in merging and historically-disadvantaged institutions)</p>	<p>Database management</p> <p>(e.g. identifying appropriate individuals to be prepared as auditors, evaluators, chairs of audit panels, subject specialists for evaluations etc; maintaining databases of trained expertise in institutions; maintenance of online accreditation database)</p>

<sup>97</sup> Items in each column are numbered for convenient reference; however, this does not mean that there is a lateral relationship across rows of numbered items (i.e. there is no substantive relationship between strategy 1, approach 1 and methodology 1); columns should be read vertically.

	Strategies	Approaches	Methodologies
3.	<p>Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- local (e.g. distance education initiative, vocational education initiative)</li> <li>- international (e.g. continental and regional collaborations, MOU with NAAC, agreement with Finnish government)</li> </ul>	<p>Institutionalisation approach (institutional ownership, adaptation, and context-specific change)</p> <p>(e.g. good practice guides with application to all HEIs)<sup>98</sup></p>	<p>Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- participative research and consultation (e.g. participative development of good practice guides through ITL workshops)</li> <li>- research reports (e.g. best-practice research re quality management in core functions of higher education; research into quantity and quality of throughputs and educational strategies to support these; baseline survey of student quality literacy)</li> <li>- institutional visits and eliciting institutional information (e.g. preparation phase of building QMS in merging institutions; internal strategic research on HEQC impact at institutional level)</li> </ul>
4.	<p>Structured feedback situations</p> <p>(e.g. formal evaluation of auditor training; internal feedback regarding performance of trained auditors and evaluators)</p>	<p>Transformative approach (links knowledge and practice of QA in higher education to broader societal needs)</p> <p>(e.g. student quality literacy, building QMS in merging and historically-disadvantaged institutions)</p>	<p>Disseminating information, debate and linkages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public media campaigns in electronic media, print media, Web (e.g. student quality literacy)</li> <li>- Conferences, seminars and workshops (e.g. national conference on quantity and quality of throughputs; ITL seminars; seminars and workshops to disseminate good practice guides)</li> <li>- Forums (e.g. QAMF for public and private providers, and other role player forums)</li> <li>- Guides, manuals and handbooks (e.g. good practice guides; 'manual for pipeline students'; QA handbook for students)</li> <li>- Newsletters, e-briefings and updates (e.g. for institutional planners, QA Managers, auditors and evaluators)</li> <li>- Internet (e.g. QPCD information on CHE website; online accreditation database; online evaluator training)</li> <li>- Relationship-building with local partners/identification of common projects (e.g. projects on vocational education, distance education, academic development, NQF Level 5; dialogue with professional councils and ETQAs)</li> <li>- International linkages (e.g. engagement with international QA debates; involvement and exchange of international expertise in audit and evaluation; participation by HEQC staff at international conferences and meetings; staff exchange visits)</li> </ul>

98 'It is hoped that the Resources will be adapted creatively for a number of purposes and used by higher education practitioners individually and in teams in the process of improving the quality of teaching and learning.' CHE/HEQC November 2004c: Foreword.

	Strategies	Approaches	Methodologies
5.	Multi-pronged strategy  (e.g. complementary activities within the ambit of the QPCD Directorate, and across QPCD Directorate and other directorates of CHE/HEQC)	Participative approach  - dialogic approach (e.g. process of developing good practice guides; consultation in development of student quality literacy programme and facilitation of compiling a charter of students' rights and responsibilities)  - communities of practice (e.g. QAMF, other forums of role players, academics, etc.)	Applied QA expertise at institutional level  (e.g. use of researchers and international experts in the diagnostic analysis and review, and implementation planning activities of the project to strengthen/develop QMS in merging/historically-disadvantaged institutions)
6.		Dynamic approach (engagement with socio-institutional reality in which QA is being implemented)  (e.g. ITL for success; building academic infrastructure in merging institutions; 'manual for pipeline students'; conceptual inputs to clarification of differentiated institutional missions)	Internal staff development  - Staff development seminar programme - Staff exchange and study visits (e.g. visit to Scotland re: student quality literacy)
7.		Critical approach (self-reflection and intellectual engagement with the philosophical and conceptual underpinnings of QA and CD)  (e.g. formal evaluation of auditor training; internal strategic research; background QPCD research)	
8.		Linked activities approach  - Complementary activities in QPCD Directorate and other directorates of CHE/HEQC (e.g. linked activities to increase quantity and quality of throughputs)  - Complementary QPCD activities to strengthen or introduce capacity in particular aspects of QA at system and/or institutional level (e.g. linked QPCD activities to support programme development capacity)  - Set/complex of complementary activities within QPCD initiatives (e.g. programme evaluation and development activities; ITL for success activities; activities to strengthen/develop QMS in merging and historically-disadvantaged institutions)	



## 4.2 Critical Review of the HEQC's Experience of QPCD

The inventories of QPCD initiatives, strategies, approaches and methodologies in section 4.1 provide a 'snapshot' taken by the research in April 2005. This section is intended to add texture to this snapshot, in the form of critical comment and supplementary suggestions arising from interview perspectives and interpretation of these. Points have been selected for attention sometimes on the basis of frequency of mention, but more often because they are striking in other ways (e.g. they highlight particular challenges or gaps, or offer a valuable conceptual insight).

In the following subsections, the critical review is explicitly linked to critique of the draft QPCD framework document (summarised in Section 1.3).

### 4.2.1 Location of QPCD in the HEQC

QPCD is in one sense a distributed function in the HEQC: audit and accreditation activities are in themselves instruments of promoting quality and building capacity for QA in South African higher education. As indicated under Section 4.1.1, this has led to permeable boundaries between directorates, which are managed as part of inter-directorate cooperation. In the course of interviews, some unresolved boundary issues were raised, for example, was the QPCD Directorate or the Accreditation Directorate accountable for the establishment and maintenance of a database of evaluators, or for the maintenance of an online accreditation database? These are operational questions that lie outside the scope of this report. However, their resolution would be linked to conceptualisation of the locus of the QPCD function.

As a summary of this, a first conceptual choice has long been made (by the Higher Education Act in the first instance): QPCD is a distinct function of the HEQC. The HEQC has followed this with a second conceptual choice: although QPCD is a distributed function, its primary location is to be in a dedicated directorate. **A QPCD framework should discuss these issues of location and should articulate a third conceptual choice, which appears to remain: what balance is to be achieved in the nature and purpose of activities that are located in the QPCD Directorate (e.g. balance of substantive and service activities) and how does this constitute a coherent connection with Audit and Accreditation Directorates and functions?** This issue is further explored under Section 4.2.5.

### 4.2.2 QPCD Mandate and Scope

The White Paper and Higher Education Act assigned to the CHE-HEQC, alongside QA functions of audit and accreditation, a function of quality promotion – without explicit mention of capacity development at that stage.<sup>99</sup> This conceptual specification was added by the HEQC Board and is captured in the Founding Document when it elaborated linked functions of quality promotion and capacity development as elements within the scope of its mandate.<sup>100</sup> In highlighting this linkage, the HEQC advocated the importance of quality and QA, and of building capacity for quality and QA in all institutions and across the system, as levers for addressing both legacy issues and restructuring imperatives in South African higher education, and thus for implementing transformative higher education policy.

A further important element in the HEQC's conceptualisation of QPCD is that it has to do with promoting an understanding of quality *per se*, as well as of QA; and with developing capacity for both. This has implications. First, initiatives for promoting quality *per se* must adopt a position that is bound to the HEQC's particular definition of quality (fitness of purpose, fitness for purpose, value for money, transformation); this will lead, in turn, to particular choices of emphasis and scope. Thus, QPCD in a fitness of purpose/transformation frame logically leads to a campaign around ITL for *success*, with a focus on throughput rates, foundation programmes, professional skills in academic development, and so on. Second, developing capacity for the quality and QA of core academic functions raises questions around the necessary reach of QPCD initiatives. To what extent, for example, must capacity development be delivered to support functions that underpin quality academic delivery? QPCD initiatives that have emerged in such areas as library management, MIS for quality, and developing quality awareness in the student affairs sector, arise from just such an interrogation of scope. Third, while QPCD may require multi-level interventions, there are questions about how far to multiply these levels. At institutional level, for example, should initiatives target senior management, middle management, academic leadership, all academics, students, or all of the above?

Against this background, **it would seem to be important for a QPCD framework to broach quite directly and in some illustrative detail the policy considerations that inform QPCD programme choices, priorities and scope.** (Draft QPCD Framework #5 provides only broad indications. See Section 1.3, item 2.)

#### 4.2.3 Relationship of QP and CD Concepts and Practices

<sup>99</sup> White Paper 1997 Sections 2.69, 2.71, 3.25(g) and 3.28; and Higher Education Act 1997: Sections 5(1)(c) and 7(1).

<sup>100</sup> CHE January 2001 (HEQC Founding Document): Sections 4.1, 9.4, and 9.5.

The HEQC Founding Document defined QP and CD separately. Draft QPCD Framework #5 approaches the concepts for the most part in an integrated way, although it utilises the separate definitions and seeks to preserve the distinction in its delineation of QPCD initiatives (see Section 1.3, items, 5, 6, 15 and 16.). **To recap the definitions used in these two source documents:**

- **QP means advocacy, research and dissemination activities, to institutionalise a quality culture and continuous improvement;**
- **CD means a programme of activities to build and strengthen the capacity for high-quality provision at multiple levels.**

This research has pointed out the difficulty of imposing a definitive distinction between QP and CD, and has argued the benefits of conceptual integration (see Section 2.3). Generally in interviews with HEQC members, there was agreement that the two concepts are integrally linked (while HEQC members readily referenced the definitions cited in the previous paragraph). CD tended to be understood as the broader concept, in that CD initiatives would inevitably also promote quality and QA. It was argued that QP initiatives need not always build capacity – media campaigns, for example, might build it only in the broadest sense; yet in many cases, capacity would be built even when QP was the stated aim of an initiative. In addition, CD initiatives were seen by some as primarily linked to QA, while QP initiatives were seen as doubly linked to quality *per se*, and to QA.

Importantly, a view emerged that QP and CD should not be conceived as the transmission of particular roles, but rather as a set of interlinked concepts and practices underpinned by a critical and reflective engagement with notions of quality and QA – especially as these have been given content by the HEQC; and with a grasp of the social (and political) purposes of quality and QA in South African higher education. Thus while individual QPCD initiatives might focus on 'nuts and bolts' issues with one or another particular bias, they would all be embedded in, and informed by, this kind of conceptual integration. Accordingly, strategies, approaches and methodologies for QP and CD are appropriately shared.

**In broaching the issue of the relationship between QP and CD, a QPCD framework appears to have options: one which moves more in the direction of simplicity, and the other more in the direction of complexity. Whichever course is chosen, a necessary starting point would seem to be an elaboration of how and why the HEQC believes QP and CD to be integrated in concept and practice. As a first option, the framework could – against this background – nevertheless go on to**

develop distinct definitions as an organising device that highlights constituent conceptual elements and practical emphases.<sup>101</sup> As a second option, the framework could point out that while chosen definitions possess some value of clarification, they are not mutually exclusive; and could use these remarks to preface discussion of the overall QPCD approach, and a listing of initiatives based on some alternative organising principle – e.g. QPCD purposes (the kind of idea used in Table 3), or outcomes.

#### 4.2.4 Modes of QPCD Work in a Context of Transformation and Restructuring

Since 1994, the introduction of a comprehensive external QA dispensation in South African higher education has been viewed as a key national strategy for ensuring the achievement of policy objectives for transformation; accordingly, QA is – alongside new national systems of planning and funding – one of three principal levers for steering the higher education system. A conception of QA as a lever for transformation has highlighted the need for a developmental capacity in the South African QA system,<sup>102</sup> which is not necessarily present in other national QA arrangements. While other national QA agencies may address the improvement dimension of QA through quality enhancement strategies and approaches, these are generally initiated from a stable base (e.g. a well-capacitated higher education system, or a system that has undergone three or four cycles of audit). In South Africa, the starting point is very different, given, on the one hand, disparate institutional capacities for quality delivery of core functions, or for QA and QMS; and, on the other, a backdrop of large-scale policy and system change and institutional restructuring, which demands the development of new capacities by all higher education institutions and all parts of the system. This overall context of transformation and restructuring for the HEQC's undertaking was consistently referenced in interviews and explicitly linked to a set of necessary modes for QPCD work.

First, it was clearly recognised that in fulfilling its QPCD function, the HEQC needed to target the whole higher education system and not selected pockets of that system. This is necessary, because the HEQC's conceptualisation of what is needed to transform the quality of higher education delivery and to implement QA sets up challenges that apply across the system; and also because the entire system is engaged in change. Thus, QPCD strategies and approaches need to be:

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101 This is the current approach of Draft QPCD Framework #5, although 'marginal notes' refer to complications encountered when actually listing initiatives. See: Draft QPCD Framework #5: 11.

102 See CHE January 2001 (HEQC Founding Document): Section 3.4. 'The HEQC will uphold the accountability requirements of higher education provision within the context of a strong developmental and formative approach to quality assurance.'

- comprehensive enough to engage and support all institutions, and to address system-wide quality needs and goals. These goals include:
  - the transformation and restructuring of the higher education system; and
  - the sustainable development of quality and QA in South African higher education, as institutions are supported to become self-regulating and oriented around continuous improvement.
- sufficiently differentiated to take account of:
  - uneven institutional capacities. In some instances, unevenness may be a function of historical inequity and be linked to the needs of redress. In other instances, unevenness may have more to do with particular institutional cultures and biases that are not related to historical advantage or disadvantage (e.g. a management-focused culture and a more collegially-oriented culture may dispose institutions differently to meet the requirements of QA and QM).
  - context-specific challenges as posed by a restructuring system that incorporates institutions with differentiated missions; that is, multidimensional strategies and multi-initiative approaches are necessary to take account of different institutional types that now include traditional (research-driven) universities, comprehensive institutions and institutes of technology.

In sum, QPCD initiatives need to be developed to target broad system needs and goals, as well as particular clusters of need and priorities in the system, rather than targeting individual institutional needs.<sup>103</sup>

Second, it was acknowledged that in a context of large-scale system transformation and restructuring, capacity development objectives can only be met by utilising every possible base of knowledge, and every possible resource for improvement. This calls for QPCD modes that are participative, rather than imposed – so as to harness and discover existing capacity and build on it; and modes that are partnership-based, rather than unilateral – so as to deploy multiple capacities towards shared objectives. Accordingly, QPCD is always a joint enterprise of the HEQC, institutions and a range of other partners (e.g. sectoral bodies, professional councils and ETQAs, international partners). On some occasions, however, QPCD may be primarily a facilitative enterprise on the part of the HEQC either a) to mobilise internal institutional capacities for quality improvement and QA; or b) to

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103 This is important if the boundary between the developmental function of QPCD, and the accountability functions of audit and accreditation, is to be clear. The project to build/develop QMS in merging and historically-disadvantaged institutions provides an example of institutional-level interventions, which are individually negotiated, but which are nevertheless motivated by a developmental focus on clusters of need, rather than a focus on bolstering the capacity of individual institutions to satisfy the HEQC's accountability requirements.<sup>1</sup>

place external, non-HEQC capacities at the ongoing disposal of institutions. As an example of a): the national teacher education review is set to unfold over three years, and will focus in the first instance at the Masters level, allowing institutions a reasonable period within which to focus on improvements in areas targeted by the reaccreditation's criteria for programmes that critically affect national teacher supply (Bachelor of Education, Postgraduate Certificate in Education and Advanced Certificate in Education). As an example of b): the HEQC's MOU with NAAC aims to connect South African institutions with their Indian counterparts in a set of mutually beneficial relationships that are quite independent of the HEQC; and many other international or national bilateral or multilateral connections which the HEQC fosters would be of this type.

Third, it was recognised that in a transforming and restructuring system, quality promotion and capacity development for quality and QA, cannot be static or unidirectional. Rather, the QPCD approach needs to be a dynamic one that can focus simultaneously, or at least as and when appropriate, on different dimensions:

- legacy issues and the goals of higher education transformation and restructuring, within the context of promoting, and developing capacity for, quality and QA.;
- contemporary issues and challenges for quality and QA, and the objectives of engendering a culture of self-regulation and continuous improvement in higher education, within the context of higher education transformation and restructuring; and
- emergent issues that have to do with the ongoing development and continuous improvement of South African higher education. Change may be driven by internal imperatives, or by the external demands of a globalising higher education environment (rapid developments in the fields of distance education and e-learning provide cases in point). This dimension of QPCD work entails formulating a goal, and envisaging needs, of ongoing adaptation. It entails the challenge of inculcating in higher education institutions a culture of self-regulation and continuous improvement to the point that they are able to respond to needs that may arise from unforeseen quarters, and are ready to adapt in ways that cannot yet be known.

While insights garnered from interviews with respect to modes of QPCD work were consistent with Draft QPCD Framework #5's delineation of QPCD strategies and approaches, it is possible that **the framework could be strengthened by raising more sharply the relationship between chosen strategies and approaches, and the exigencies of a transforming and restructuring higher education system.** While Section 1.2 of Draft QPCD Framework #5 clearly sets out the 'restructuring and transformative context', subsequent sections on objectives (4.1), focus (4.2), strategies (4.3) and philosophical premises (4.4) do not explicitly reinforce the relevance of this context.



Similarly, although the document constantly raises the theme of continuous improvement as a goal of the QPCD programme, it does not develop the idea that QPCD strategies and approaches conceived in the first place to support transformation (step change for improvement), are therefore also designed by their very nature to support continuous improvement and ongoing adaptation, as South Africa's QA system develops its capacity for self-regulation and positions itself to respond to emerging local and global challenges.

#### 4.2.5 Key QPCD Tasks (Balancing Nature and Purpose of Activities)

This section discusses key QPCD 'tasks' – i.e. overarching aims of the QPCD enterprise that underpin specific activities and their purposes.<sup>104</sup> It goes on to consider what these key tasks imply for a desirable balance in the nature and purpose of QPCD initiatives.

In the course of interviews, four critical QPCD tasks emerged:

- **Task 1: Deepening theoretical understanding of quality and QA at all levels.** A key part of the HEQC's QPCD work has to do with reading and engaging an existing (and emerging) literature around quality and QA; disseminating a theoretical understanding of quality and QA through QPCD activities; and contributing to theoretical understanding of quality and QA by mobilising research and reflection on its theoretical aspects (see Task 3).
- **Task 2: Deepening practical understanding of quality and QA at all levels.** Development of theoretical understanding needs to be matched with an engagement of the practical aspects of quality delivery, and the practice of QA in South African higher education. In part this is a hands-on process of interrogating and listening to practitioners, and developing their capacity for the practice of QA; in part it is an epistemological exercise of mobilising research and reflection on practice (see Task 3).
- **Task 3: Supporting ongoing reflection, intellectual enquiry and research into the theory and practice of quality and QA, especially with a sectoral focus.** In part this task can be accomplished methodologically in non-research initiatives – i.e. QPCD initiatives can incorporate elements that invite and provide opportunities for members of the higher education sector (auditors, evaluators, QA practitioners) to

<sup>104</sup> These tasks are broader than (although compatible with) the 'purposes' and 'objectives' outlined in Draft QPCD Framework #5 – see items 9 and 10 of Section 1.3. They can therefore be seen as framing these purposes and objectives (which this analysis has dealt with in terms of 'categories of purpose' for QPCD initiatives).



reflect critically on the instruments that they are given to use: workshops, seminars and other forums are already designed with this in mind. In larger part, this task requires more formalised processes of intellectual enquiry and research that create a feedback loop between the implementation of HEQC functions and systems, and continuous improvement. As an example in the accreditation area, the QPCD Directorate could advance research reports that are prepared by the Accreditation Directorate on the state of provision in particular fields (e.g. private provision, MBA provision, provision of teacher education), in order to isolate underlying reasons for the findings, and to propose strategies for strengthening provision. As an example in the audit area, the QPCD Directorate could similarly act as a conceptual 'clearing house' by conducting research into good practices that are located through audit at institutional level. Specifically, a QPCD role would be to develop the conceptual and sectoral dimensions of these examples so that they can be disseminated for contextualised interpretation and adaptation by institutions – as opposed, for example, to disseminating 'case studies' which may have the unintended consequence of homogenised and 'compliance' responses by other institutions.

- **Task 4: Facilitating systemic learning about quality and QA.** This task is about extracting systemic values, principles and frameworks for quality and QA from learnings garnered at institutional and sectoral levels. Accordingly, in this task, a link between the QPCD function of the HEQC, and the monitoring and evaluation function of the CHE, which likewise facilitates system improvements, comes into play.

Of course, the four key tasks are interrelated. Figure 1 proposes a framework for this interrelationship, by suggesting a scheme of levels, and kinds, of learning in relation to the QPCD work of the HEQC (culminating in systemic learning).<sup>105</sup> In essence, the table describes a QPCD function that is at once theoretically based, practically oriented, continuously self-reflective and – in some aspects – regulative. In its QPCD work, the HEQC can seek appropriate opportunities for intervention at various levels, to support a 'hierarchical' series of learning processes and feedback loops that will support the development of quality, improve QA practice, and generate new knowledge about quality and QA. Some of the key existing (or envisaged) opportunities for intervention are highlighted in the table.

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<sup>105</sup> Acknowledgement is made to Dr Rob Moore and Dr Mark Hay, who articulated this scheme in their interview. Underlying concepts in the scheme were attributed by Dr Moore to the work of educational sociologist Basil Bernstein

**Figure 1: HEQC-QPCD Work and Levels of Learning**

Levels and Kinds of Learning	Learning in Relation to Work of HEQC-QPCD
<i>Organisational (institutional) learning</i>	
Recognition (descriptive learning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audit and accreditation processes prompt institutional recognition of HEQC accountability requirements</li> <li>QPCD supports operationalisation of audit and accreditation by promoting quality and developing capacity (advocacy, training, information dissemination)</li> </ul>
Evaluation (evaluative learning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institution begins to respond to HEQC requirements by developing QMS in response to audit/accreditation reports and in light of its own context</li> <li>QPCD facilitates evaluative learning by developing institutional understanding of the kinds of evidence that should be provided to support evidence-based audit and accreditation judgements<sup>*1</sup></li> </ul>
Realisation (analytic learning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institution internalises HEQC requirements, analyses and adapts these in its own context, and begins to respond in an integrated and recurrent way</li> <li>QPCD supports analytic learning with sectoral learning tools that identify opportunities for improvement and good practice</li> </ul>
<i>Sectoral learning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QPCD mobilises reflection, intellectual enquiry and research on theory and practice of QA to facilitate sectoral learning (conceptual ‘clearing house’, good practice guides)</li> </ul>
<i>Systemic learning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CHE and HEQC-QPCD monitoring and evaluation of HEQC performance and impact<sup>*1</sup> is able to generate systemic learning (policy analysis and policy recommendations)</li> </ul>

This discussion of key QPCD tasks places a critical emphasis on quality promotion and capacity development in both theoretical and practical dimensions, with a focus on reflection and research on quality and QA to facilitate interlinked levels of learning and, ultimately, system gains.

Such an emphasis sounds a warning bell with respect to *ad hoc* QPCD initiatives, and miscellaneous internal support initiatives, whose contribution to reflection, research and systemic learning may be limited. Thus, in a sense this discussion provides a possible answer to the question raised in Section 4.2.1: what balance is to be achieved in the nature and purpose of activities that are located in the QPCD Directorate (e.g. balance of substantive and service activities) and how does this constitute a coherent connection with Audit and Accreditation Directorates and functions? The answer would appear to be that it is appropriate for QPCD initiatives to serve a mix of substantive and service purposes, provided that the preponderance of these systematically support the fulfilment of key QPCD tasks.

106 \* indicates an area of QPCD work that is envisaged, or is as yet in the early stages of development..

**A QPCD framework could perhaps build its conceptual coherence and richness by detailing a scaffolding of key QPCD tasks, or overarching aims; explaining how these are conceived and interrelated; and how they in turn serve to guide and define the nature and purpose of the QPCD programme, as well as the balance of substantive and service initiatives to be undertaken by the QPCD Directorate.** The framework of levels of learning has been suggested as one possible framework for accomplishing such conceptual coherence. It is clearly important to establish a strong basis for the shape of the QPCD programme, so that primary objectives are fulfilled over the short, medium and long terms. Practically speaking, such principles safeguard the programme from operational vulnerabilities (e.g. work overload, loss of focus, inability to defend budgetary allocations).<sup>107</sup>

#### 4.2.6 Multi-level Advocacy

The discussion in Section 4.2.5 highlighted the ways in which QPCD interventions at different levels (institutional, sectoral, system) build reflective, intellectual and concrete capacity to engage the theory and practice of quality and QA. In the interviews, a range of complementary perspectives was raised, which focused primarily on the question of appropriate strategies linked to *advocating*<sup>108</sup> quality and QA at multiple levels. In particular, advocacy was conceptualised in these perspectives as a set of multi-level approaches that would facilitate attitudinal shifts, that would influence consequent appropriate actions by other role players, and that would ultimately evoke important forms of social change.

While it is clearly a part of the HEQC's mandate to promote quality and QA publicly as well as institutionally and at other levels, and while some existing QPCD initiatives have incorporated public advocacy (e.g. student quality literacy programme), there was a view that the HEQC's conceptualisation of advocacy in the public sphere remains significantly under-developed. Moreover, it was felt that a far clearer conceptualisation was required of ways in which to promote quality and engage student, academic and other institutional capacities for change at institutional level. Again, some evolving ideas are present at the level of individual initiatives. Taking the student quality literacy project once more as an example, this project has recognised that different groups and individuals influence students and their educational choices, and that these groups and individuals need to be leveraged strategically to bring the project to fruition.

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107 Some interview respondents pointed out that organisational service units are especially vulnerable to budget cuts in situations of financial pressure.

108 Always remembering that advocacy (quality promotion) and capacity development are interlinked terms that may be used to emphasise one aspect in particular cases, but are not mutually exclusive.

Two further QPCD strategies for multi-level advocacy of quality and QA were identified in the course of the interviews.

At sectoral level, the importance of communities of practice was noted. Within the ambit of the HEQC, the public- and private-sector QAMFs provide one example of functioning communities of practice, and others – e.g. institutional planners, academic development practitioners – are strengthening as HEQC and QPCD work progresses in key areas. Pre-existing communities of practice – e.g. academic disciplines, research networks, professional, development networks – provide a further important resource. In particular, there was a view that, while all directorates develop communities of practice to some extent, the QPCD Directorate has a particular role to play in pointing out key points of linkage, and in assisting to access or actualise these at critical moments.

At institutional level, it was felt that a key QPCD strategy could be advocating, amongst senior and middle institutional management, the importance of identifying and professionalizing two categories of 'change agent', namely: a) QA practitioners; and b) institutional agents for quality and QA. The second category of change agents could be drawn from those staff whose work bridges the academic and administrative territories (e.g. institutional planners, libraries and ICT staff). Furthermore, and even more critically, they could be drawn quite strategically from within the ranks of mid-career academics. These would be academics with requisite authority and credibility among their peers, and who are also disposed to mobilise change for the benefit of their disciplines and of the academy more broadly.<sup>109</sup>

Through effective advocacy of the kind described, the QPCD Directorate would assist in facilitating the development of quality and QA at institutional level – including having the intellectual and practical problems of higher education taken on within the working body of the academy – without directly intervening in the lower management or academic spheres (where intervention might well be construed as interference). Clearly these are long-term projects that need to be systematically developed. Possible interventions in the short and medium terms could include advocating particular kinds of qualifications for QA practitioners; or mobilising the resources of various higher education research and

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109 In one description, they would 'lead recurrent processes of renewal in the academy, which are responsive to a whole range of changing conditions and which are able *to manage adaptation in the best interests of individual disciplines*, as well as of the key constituencies that stand to benefit from the yield of the disciplines'. Moore, R (2005). 'Quality as Adaptive Capital: Exploring the Implications for Middle-level Management Capacity'. (In press.)

academic development units in institutions to design programmes for the professional development of QA practitioners and institutional agents for quality and QA.<sup>110</sup>

**It would seem necessary for a QPCD framework to give more prominent attention to the question of strategies linked to multi-level advocacy of quality and QA (currently this dimension is absent).** While existing QPCD strategies (focus on continuous improvement, multi-level strategy, partnership model, etc.) and approaches (integrated approach, sustainable approach, institutionalisation approach, dynamic approach, etc.) provide ample scope for executing the kinds of interventions mentioned above, it might be worth referencing their application in the sphere of multi-level advocacy specifically. **In addition, the QPCD framework should provide more examples<sup>111</sup> of the types of advocacy work it is necessary to undertake, either illustratively, or – preferably – concretely, subject to more detailed conceptualisation and scoping of agreed initiatives.**

#### 4.2.7 Needs to be addressed by QPCD Initiatives

The interviews raised a range of needs that respondents felt should be addressed within the scope of QPCD initiatives, and hence **addressed in a QPCD framework document - subject to more detailed conceptualisation and scoping.** These have been highlighted in the context of other discussions and are:

- QPCD activities to develop understanding of, and facilitate reflective practice on, the nature of evidence sought and provided for the purposes of assuring quality (see Figure 1, Organisational learning: sublevel Evaluation). Respondents put forward the view that the HEQC may still not have defined completely adequately the nature of information required to underpin audit and accreditation judgements. In addition, it was felt that institutions proffer policies and other such items arbitrarily as 'evidence' without a clear sense of how they serve this purpose. QPCD activities could include targeted research on the nature of evidence, participative discussions with institutions, and specific elements in the preparation of auditors and evaluators.
- QPCD-initiated reflection and research to create a feedback loop between the implementation of HEQC functions and systems, and continuous improvement

<sup>110</sup> Alternative or complementary approaches are, of course, possible and available – consider, for example, the NAAC (India) approach of promoting the establishment of Internal Quality Assurance Cells at institutional level (Section 3.1.4).

<sup>111</sup> In Section 5.2 of Draft QPCD Framework #5, p. 14.

(see examples for accreditation and audit given under Task 3 of Section 4.2.5).

- A monitoring framework and methodology for the work of the HEQC. This initiative is 'on the map', and being developed: it is already clear that it will need to dovetail with the CHE's own framework for monitoring and evaluation<sup>112</sup> (see Figure 1, Systemic Learning). Although not raised specifically in the interviews conducted for this research, previous internal strategic research commented explicitly on the importance of the HEQC's monitoring the prevailing quality environment of higher education, to support and enable continuous improvement at institutional level. The same research recommended that the HEQC make available national and international indicators and benchmarks, as well as guidelines for the development of MIS, which would optimally support an integrated QA approach.<sup>113</sup> (There is a link here to the need for capacity development and reflective practice on the nature of evidence sought for assuring quality.)
- Strategies and initiatives to facilitate multi-level advocacy of quality and QA (discussed in Section 4.2.6).

#### 4.2.8 Internal Capacity Development

In the interviews, the topic of internal capacity development was explored from two angles. The first angle was the nature of capacities and capabilities needed inside the QPCD Directorate to support delivery of an effective QPCD programme. The second angle was the role of the QPCD Directorate in internal capacity development across the HEQC (this is the kind of internal support role referenced under item 16 of Table 3).

With respect to the internal capacities of the QPCD Directorate, the principal point that emerged was a view that the Directorate required individuals at senior level equipped with key skills in combination, i.e.

- strong analytical capabilities (ability to analyse key clusters of need to be addressed by the QPCD function);
- adaptive capabilities (ability to apply generic QPCD strategies and approaches to a variety of specific higher education quality and QA contexts); and

112 Council on Higher Education (April 2004). Towards a Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation of South African Higher Education: A Discussion Document. Pretoria, Council on Higher Education (CHE).

113 CHE/HEQC June 2004c: Section 5.2.1, Conclusion 1; and Section 5.2.2, Conclusion 4. Also see CHE/HEQC August 2003: Chapter 4 (Conclusion).



- project management capabilities (ability to translate strategies and approaches into specific initiatives with defined objectives, deliverables, activities and resources).

It was felt that only with such internal capacity in place, would it be possible for the Directorate continuously to identify and develop QPCD opportunities so as to support an integrated set of initiatives with systematic purposes, rather than an *ad hoc* set of activities with circumscribed purposes.

With respect to the QPCD Directorate's role in HEQC staff development, there was a feeling that the Directorate could assist in developing a structured response to the HEQC's organisational learning needs, as well as the professional and personal development needs of HEQC staff. Currently, internal capacity development in the HEQC includes staff development seminars (albeit not coordinated by the QPCD Directorate) and opportunities for conferences, international study visits and training (which occur within the ambit of individual directorates).

**Internal capacity development is a rather neglected area of Draft QPCD Framework #5, although the objective of building and enhancing the skills and knowledge of HEQC staff in relation to QA systems, their conceptualisation and implementation, is clearly stated.<sup>114</sup> Even if only under the argument that a clear plan must be demonstrated for establishing and maintaining internal capacities to support external demand on the QPCD function, this is a section of the framework that needs to be developed.** However, there was a sense from the interviews that, despite good intentions, the question of internal capacity development has not been systematically explored in the HEQC and that such exploration needs to occur in order to develop this aspect of a framework. In particular, the following questions need to be answered –

- Is internal capacity development within the HEQC a distributed role or an internal support role of the QPCD Directorate?
- What scheme of roles and responsibilities is needed to support the choice as above?
- What strategy, approach and initiatives are appropriate to building and enhancing the skills, experience and knowledge of HEQC staff?
- What strategy, approach and initiatives are appropriate to building and enhancing QPCD skills, experience and knowledge to support delivery of the QPCD programme?

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<sup>114</sup> See item 10 of Section 1.3.

(Regrettably, this research uncovered in its literature review very little material about internal capacity development. One generic framework was found, which may be helpful. This is included in an adapted form in Appendix A: Generic Internal Capacity.)

### 4.3 Integrating Findings: Developing the HEQC's QPCD Framework

This section draws together the key findings of Sections 4.1 (QPCD inventory) and 4.2 (review of HEQC's QPCD experience). In each of these sections, attempts have already been made to organise material in useful ways (e.g. tabulated inventories, bold text sections highlighting suggestions for QPCD framework document). This final section uses two further organising frameworks to integrate and summarise all of the material.

First, a high-level and visual conceptual model is suggested as a means of encapsulating some of the key thinking in this chapter, and to provide a platform for further refinements (Figure 2). Explanatory notes for the figure are set out below.

Second, a table is used to collate ideas that have been highlighted in this part of the research for taking forward the QPCD framework document, as well as the implications of these for strengthening QPCD initiatives, strategies, approaches and methodologies (Table 5). The table is self-explanatory, once the rest of the chapter has been read.

#### 4.3.1 Conceptual Model for the HEQC's QPCD Framework

The following brief indications are intended to aid an understanding of Figure 2. They highlight the core elements of the model, which are based in turn on important aspects of the discussion in the rest of this chapter. It should be noted that the model is intended to be conceptual, rather than technical – i.e. it is neither an organisational diagram, nor a process flow diagram.

- The HEQC mandate and definition of quality provide the broad context for the QPCD function, and will lead to particular choices of emphasis and scope in the QPCD programme.
- Key QPCD 'tasks', or overarching aims, guide and define the nature and purpose of QPCD activities (i.e. programme purpose and objectives, balance of substantive/service initiatives).
- A set of agreed strategies and approaches informs the development of specific QPCD initiatives (including collaborations), with their own design elements.
- Initiatives fall into four key categories of purpose (reflection and research, QPCD projects and co-ordination, operational support to HEQC core functions and systems, internal support to the HEQC). The figure suggests a greater weighting to



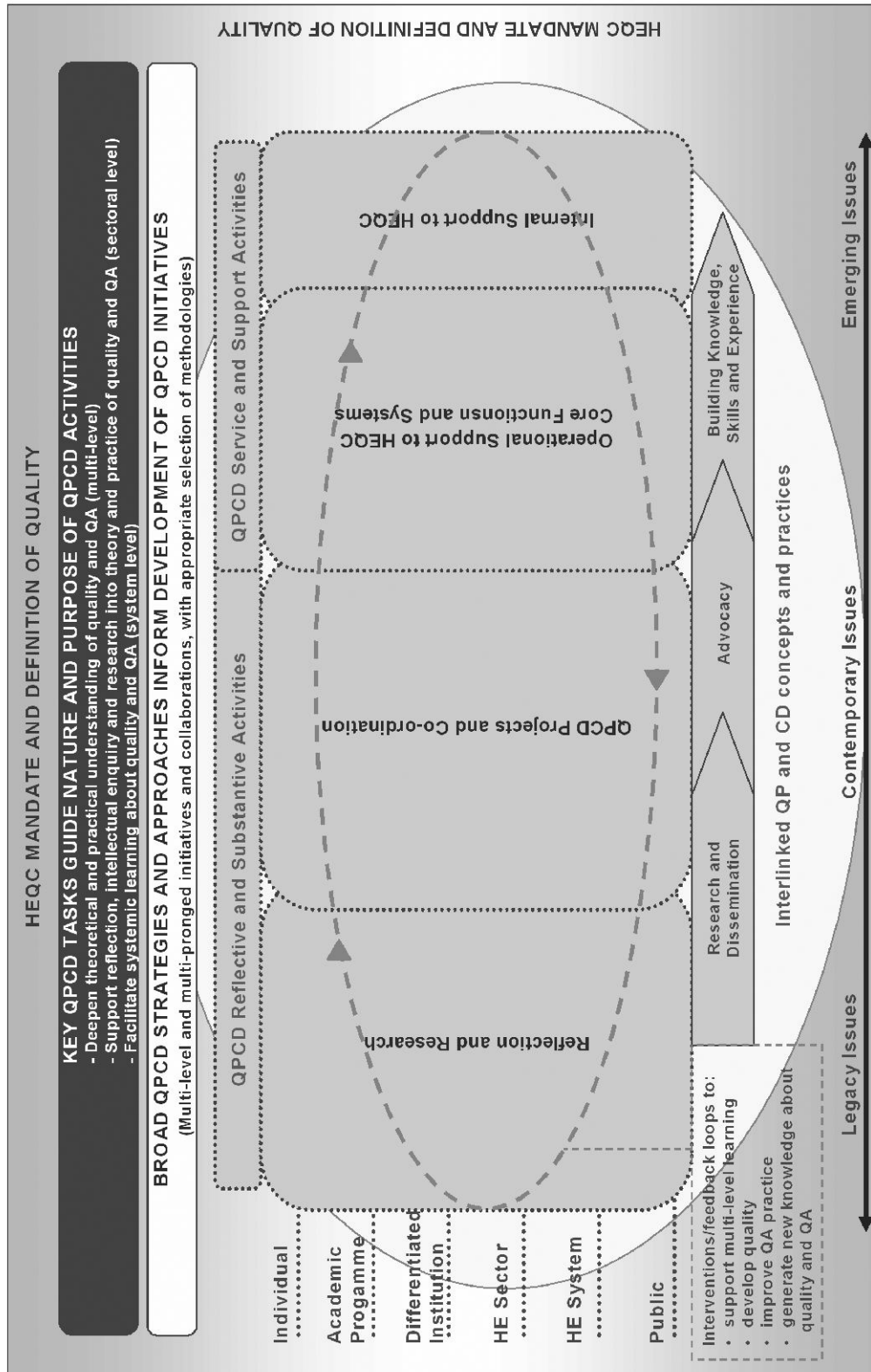
reflective and substantive activities, and a lesser weighting to service and support activities; this is aspirational and yet to be determined in practice, but the idea is to indicate a deliberate balance in different kinds of initiatives.<sup>115</sup>

- QP and CD are interlinked concepts and practices: initiatives associated with different categories of purpose are connected and even overlapping, rather than independent, and are embedded in an integration of concept and practice. Different qualitative kinds of activity (research and dissemination; advocacy; building skills, knowledge and experience) are applied in all areas according to purpose.
- QPCD initiatives and/or collaborations are multi-level spanning from the individual to the public levels. Other levels are the academic programme level (academic programmes across the spectrum), the institutional level (incorporating institutions with differentiated missions), the sectoral level (the collective of institutions), and the higher education system level.
- Overall, the QPCD programme functions as an integrated set of interventions, with appropriate linkages and feedback loops, to fulfil key tasks (facilitate multi-level learning, develop quality, improve QA practice and generate new knowledge about quality and QA).
- The QPCD endeavour is a dynamic one. It promotes, and develops capacity for, quality and QA in South African higher education with a focus on: legacy issues and the goals of transformation and restructuring; contemporary issues and challenges, and the objectives of self-regulation and continuous improvement (in a transformation and restructuring context); and emerging issues and needs for ongoing adaptation.

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<sup>115</sup> It should also be noted that the figure is not about organisational location: i.e. it does not specifically represent QPCD initiatives as being located inside a QPCD Directorate, and is compatible with an understanding of the HEQC as a matrix organisation.

**Figure 2:** Conceptual Model for the HEQC's QPCD Framework



**Table 5:** Collated Suggestions for Developing the HEQC's QPCD Framework

	Suggestion	Related Findings	Any Implications for:				Key Cross-References
			Strategies	Approaches	Methodologies	Initiatives	
1.	QPCD framework should <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>discuss the location of the QPCD function</li> <li>articulate a conceptual choice regarding the nature and purpose of activities that are to be located in the QPCD Directorate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QPCD is a distinct function of the HEQC</li> <li>QPCD is a distributed function, but with a primary location in the QPCD Directorate</li> <li>The balance in nature of QPCD purposes and activities must support key overarching aims of QPCD (see point 6 below)</li> </ul>				Appropriate balance of substantive and service QPCD Directorate initiatives is required	Section 4.2.1 Section 4.2.5
2.	QPCD framework should discuss and illustrate how policy considerations inform QPCD programme choices, priorities and scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HEQC Founding Document elaborated linked functions of QP and CD</li> <li>QPCD requires a dual focus on quality per se and QA</li> <li>HEQC's mandate and definition of quality lead to particular choices of emphasis and scope in QPCD</li> </ul>					Section 4.2.2
3.	QPCD framework should <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>articulate how and why the HEQC relies on QP and CD to be integrated in concept and practice</li> <li>and link this to a consistent organising principle for discussion of overall QPCD approach and listing of initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appears to be agreement in the HEQC that QP and CD are integrally-linked concepts</li> <li>QP and CD are not conceived as transmission of particular roles but as interlinked concepts and practices underpinned by the content given to quality and QA by the HEQC</li> <li>Individual QPCD initiatives may have a particular bias, but are embedded in this conceptual integration</li> </ul>	Strategies for QP and CD are broadly shared	Approaches for QP and CD are broadly shared	Methodologies for QP and CD are broadly shared	Initiatives are conceived as sharing a common basis of concept and practice	Section 4.2.3
4.	possible organising principle for the QPCD frameworks listing of QPCD initiatives is one which highlights categories of purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible categories of purpose are:</li> <li>Operational support to HEQC core functions and systems</li> <li>Reflection and research</li> <li>QPCD projects and co-ordination</li> <li>Internal support to the HEQC</li> </ul>				Initiatives could be conceptualised in terms of categories of purpose	Section 4.1.2

	Suggestion	Related Findings	Any Implications for:				Key Cross-References
			Strategies	Approaches	Methodologies	Initiatives	
5.	QPCD framework should raise more sharply the relationship between chosen strategies and approaches and the exigencies of a transforming and restructuring higher education system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In fulfilling its QPCD function, the HEQC must target the whole higher education system, given that the entire system is engaged in transformation</li> <li>QPCD strategies and approaches need to be comprehensive (targeting broad system needs) and differentiated (targeting particular clusters of need in a restructuring system)</li> <li>CD objectives can only be met by utilising all possible bases of knowledge and resources for improvement, and therefore call for QPCD modes that are participative rather than imposed</li> <li>QPCD approach needs to be dynamic, addressing legacy issues (goals of transformation and restructuring), contemporary issues and challenges (objectives of self-regulation and continuous improvement in a transformation and restructuring context) and emerging issues (needs for ongoing adaptation)</li> </ul>	Discussion of strategies should reinforce the relevance of the transformation and restructuring context	should reinforce the relevance of the transformation and restructuring context			
6.	QPCD framework could build its conceptual coherence by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>detailing a scaffolding of key QPCD 'tasks' (overarching aims)</li> <li>explaining how these are conceived and interrelated</li> <li>and how they serve to guide and define nature and purpose of the QPCD programme, as well as the balance of substantive and service initiatives to be undertaken by the QPCD Directorate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Four critical QPCD tasks emerged: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deepening theoretical understanding of quality and QA at all levels</li> <li>Deepening practical understanding of quality and QA at all levels</li> <li>Supporting ongoing reflection, intellectual enquiry and research into the theory and practice of quality and QA, especially with a sectoral focus</li> <li>Facilitating systemic learning about quality and QA</li> </ul> </li> <li>The four tasks are interrelated and can be understood in relation to various levels and kinds of learning about quality and QA, culminating in systemic learning</li> <li>In its QPCD work, the HEQC can seek appropriate opportunities for intervention to support multi-level learning; develop quality; improve QA practice; and generate new knowledge about quality and QA</li> </ul>				It is appropriate for QPCD initiatives to serve a mix of substantive and service purposes, provided these systematically support the fulfilment of key QPCD tasks	Section 4.2.5 Error! Reference source not found.

	Suggestion	Related Findings	Any Implications for:				Key Cross-
			Strategies	Approaches	Methodologies	Initiatives	
7.	QPCD framework should raise more sharply the relationship between chosen strategies and approaches and the exigencies of a transforming and restructuring higher education system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-level advocacy has the potential to: facilitate attitudinal shifts, influence actions of role players, and evoke forms of social change</li> <li>The HEQC's conceptualisation of advocacy at multiple levels (public sphere, sectoral level, institutional level etc.) is underdeveloped although a set of ideas is emerging</li> </ul>	Existing QPCD strategies provide ample scope for executing multi-level advocacy interventions	Existing QPCD approaches provide ample scope for executing multi-level advocacy interventions		More detailed conceptualisation and scoping is necessary for multi-level advocacy initiatives	Section 4.2.6
8.	QPCD framework should incorporate additional instances of strategies, approaches, methodologies and initiatives identified as significant in the research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Table 4 lists current QPCD strategies, approaches and methodologies</li> <li>Table 3 lists current QPCD initiatives</li> </ul>	Additional strategy identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-pronged strategy</li> </ul>	Additional approach identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linked activities approach</li> </ul>	Additional methodology identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applied QA expertise at institutional level</li> </ul>	Additional potential initiatives identified for detailing in QPCD framework: (subject to more detailed conceptualisation and scoping) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QPCD initiatives to develop understanding of evidence</li> <li>QPCD-initiated research to create feedback loop between implementation of HEQC functions and systems and continuous improvement (e.g. research into 'state of provision' findings of reaccreditation exercises; research into good practices identified by audit)</li> <li>A monitoring framework and methodology for the work of the HEQC Strategies and initiatives to</li> </ul>	Section 4.1.2 Table 3 Section 4.1.3 Table 4 Section 4.2.7

	Suggestion	Related Findings	Any Implications for:				Key Cross-References
			Strategies	Approaches	Methodologies	Initiatives	
9.	QPCD framework needs to give fuller consideration to the subject of internal capacity development, which is currently a neglected aspect of the draft framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QPCD Directorate requires key skills in combination at senior level (analytical, adaptive and project management capabilities)</li> <li>QPCD Directorate could assist in developing a structured response to the HEQC's organisational learning needs, as well as the professional and personal development needs of HEQC staff</li> <li>HEQC needs to explore more systematically the following question – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is internal capacity development within the HEQC a distributed role or an internal support role of the QPCD Directorate?</li> <li>What scheme of roles and responsibilities is needed?</li> <li>What strategy, approach and initiatives are appropriate to building/enhancing skills, experience and knowledge necessary a) to HEQC staff? b) to support delivery of the QPCD programme?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Discussion of strategies should reinforce the relevance of the transformation and restructuring context	should reinforce the relevance of the transformation and restructuring context			



## CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1 Context of Conclusions

This research set out to generate a range of conceptual perspectives and options for modelling the QPCD approach of the HEQC, and so to assist the preparation of the QPCD framework document.

The development of a QPCD framework has not followed the pattern typical for development of HEQC framework policy. It is, by and large, true to say that the audit and accreditation frameworks and criteria of the HEQC were developed prior to implementation of the systems they frame, delineate and guide.<sup>116</sup> However, QPCD activities have been initiated in the absence of a framework – albeit with due purposefulness and receptiveness to need. The formulation of a QPCD framework can now take account of the learnings of practice, as well as overlaying these with a conceptual clarity that simultaneously frames, captures and advances experience.

The research itself has anchored on *conceptualisation* of QPCD, while trying to incorporate perspectives from both 'theory' and 'experience'. It is possible – flowing from its methodology – that the research has yielded a somewhat uneasy mix of broad conceptual insights and narrower concrete suggestions for tightening up an existing framework document. Certainly, there is a sense that an important next step will be an exercise to bridge the two kinds of content as they reflect within this research report, in order to apply them seamlessly within a revised QPCD framework document.

Accordingly, this final chapter organises the conclusions of the research in two sections. First, it recapitulates the most significant substantive conclusions of the research. Second, it recapitulates the most significant conclusions of the research with regard to developing the QPCD framework document. In each case, the chapter references and extracts from the concluding sections of Chapters 2, 3 and 4, where these conclusions were formulated more discursively or in more detail. The conclusions are consecutively numbered in the following two sections, for ease of reference.

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<sup>116</sup> This is perhaps less true in the case of accreditation, than in the case of audit. For example, re-accreditation exercises for private providers and MBA programmes were undertaken in parallel with the development of an overarching accreditation framework, and completed before the finalisation of accreditation framework and criteria.



## 5.2 Substantive Conclusions

From its review of concepts, models and terminologies associated with quality promotion and capacity development respectively, the research concluded (Section 2.3):

1. QP and CD have different conceptual histories, and it is important to recognise that concepts are time-bound and evolving.
2. Currently, QP and CD have some distinctive emphases. QP aims to institutionalise a quality culture through advocacy of a particularised idea of quality, and through involving all levels and actors within a system in quality improvement. CD aims to build human and institutional abilities for action and reflection, to support the co-construction of knowledge and new knowledge, and to ensure sustainable capacity outcomes.
3. QP and CD share significant conceptual elements in a contemporary understanding. The most significant conceptual overlaps (see Table 1) are that the effective promotion of quality and the effective development of capacity each require: a conceptual underpinning that is value-based and contextualised (i.e. with respect to the way in which quality, or the objectives of capacity development, are defined); interventions which are multi-level and multidimensional and engage whole systems; associated mechanisms and processes which are participative and empowering; and a focus on outcomes that are self-renewing (continuous improvement, sustainable development).
4. In the context of QA in higher education, conceptual links between QP and CD provide compatible opportunities for higher education renewal or transformation. They enable a conceptually-integrated approach and programme of activities for promoting quality/QA and building capacity for quality/QA in a higher education system, and hence for simultaneously institutionalising a culture of quality, and developing QA and QM knowledge and capacity.

From its review of the quality promotion, capacity development and quality enhancement aspects of national QA systems (summarised in Table 2), the research concluded (Section 3.2):

5. QP serves both accountability and improvement purposes in national QA systems, and both quality *per se*, and QA, are promoted. These dualities are typical, although QP may, in specific instances, initially be linked primarily to accountability, or to QE, concerns; or may initially be linked to a focus on quality, or on QA. The dualities seem

appropriate as the focus of QA systems crystallises around continuous improvement necessary to higher education in a globalising world.

6. While countries, higher education systems and their national QA systems vary in terms of their state of development, many national QA systems are oriented around QE, rather than CD. In such systems, although continuous quality improvement is a central concept, the achievement of higher education quality and effective QA are not analysed primarily from the perspective of developing capacity for their achievement. In QA systems where CD and QE functions co-exist, the QA system appears to have been more explicitly conceived as a support to higher education transformation.
7. QP, CD/QE approaches in national QA systems illustrate diversity and distinctiveness in context, rather than 'best practice' – i.e. they are contextualised by the higher education systems and QA systems in which they have evolved, and their conceptualisation appears to have grown richer over time.

From its review of the HEQC's QPCD experience, the research concluded (Section 4.3):

8. A high-level conceptual model for the QPCD framework can be suggested, with the following core elements –
  - broad context for the QPCD function: the HEQC's mandate and definition of quality;
  - key QPCD tasks: deepening theoretical and practical understanding of quality and QA supporting reflection and intellectual enquiry into theory and practice of quality and QA; and facilitating systemic learning about quality and QA;
  - agreed strategies and approaches that inform design of initiatives and collaborations;
  - initiatives categorised by purpose: reflection and research; QPCD projects and co-ordination; operational support to HEQC core functions and systems; and internal support to the HEQC;
  - a considered balance in initiatives that fulfil different purposes;
  - interlinked QP and CD concepts and practices informing all initiatives;
  - multi-level initiatives: spanning individual, academic programme, institutional (differentiated), sectoral (collective), higher education system and public levels;
  - an integrated set of interventions with appropriate linkages and feedback loops, in order to: facilitate multi-level learning; develop quality; improve QA practice; and generate new knowledge about quality and QA; and
  - a dynamic QPCD approach focusing on: legacy issues (goals of transformation and restructuring); contemporary issues (objectives of self-regulation and

continuous improvement in a transformation and restructuring context); and emerging issues (needs for ongoing adaptation).

### 5.3 Conclusions on Developing the QPCD Framework Document

From its review of concepts, models and terminologies associated with quality promotion and capacity development respectively, the research concluded (Section 2.3):

9. The existing draft framework appears to be well synchronised with contemporary conceptualisation of QP and CD, emphasising as it does such themes as: continuous improvement, institutionalisation of quality ethos, sustainable capacity for QA, context-specific and value-based QPCD approaches, multi-level and multi-dimensional programme focus, participative and partnership QPCD approaches, orientation of QPCD programme around the fostering of reflective practice, new knowledge and innovation.
10. The existing draft framework is in a position to track and adapt to developments in the conceptualisation of QP and CD. Perhaps more importantly, as the framework is developed, it may be able to influence a stronger conceptualisation of QP and CD purposes and approaches in the specific field of QA in higher education.
11. Development of the framework could encompass attention to detailed issues emerging from this research. For example, the framework might benefit from profiling more prominently such themes as: the importance of co-constructing QA knowledge; self-regulation as a rational benefit of a QPCD programme; and the systemic benefits of a QPCD programme in the form of new knowledge and appropriate policy development in higher education.

From its review of the quality promotion, capacity development and quality enhancement aspects of national QA systems (summarised in Table 2), the research concluded (Section 3.2) that

12. QP, CD/QE approaches in national QA systems illustrate diversity and distinctiveness in context, rather than 'best practice'. Thus, the HEQC has every reason to tailor its own QPCD conceptual approach and programme design in line with the goals of South Africa's transforming and restructuring higher education system, and its customised definition of quality. These points of reference would then serve to inform innovation adapted to context and resources, or selection of approaches that may have been modelled elsewhere.

From its review of the HEQC's QPCD experience, the research concluded (Section 4.3) that

13. Consistent with a suggested high-level conceptual model (see Figure 2), the existing QPCD framework can be developed in a number of concrete ways (itemised in Table 5). Importantly, some suggested areas of development in the framework require a prior process of more detailed conceptualisation and/or scoping by the HEQC. These areas include:
  - a fuller elaboration of how and why the HEQC believes QP and CD to be integrated in concept and practice;
  - development of a coherent framework of key tasks/overarching aims, which can serve to guide and define 'categories of purpose' of QPCD initiatives, and the desired balance of initiatives across categories;
  - development of particular initiatives, including strategies and initiatives linked to multi-level advocacy of quality and QA; and
  - a plan for internal capacity development.

## APPENDIX A: GENERIC INTERNAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT MATRIX

This matrix suggests a generic set of internal capacities and capabilities which might be developed by an agency such as the HEQC, which itself has sectoral capacity development objectives and functions.

**Figure 3:** Generic Internal Capacity Development Matrix<sup>117</sup>

Internal Capacities and Skills: Internally-Oriented (Management and Operations)	Internal Capacities and Skills: Internally- and Externally-Oriented	Internal Capacities and Skills: Externally-Oriented (Policy, Analysis and Access)
Goal setting	Sector-specific knowledge (e.g. higher education, QA and QM)	Policy development
Strategic planning	Policy and legal frameworks knowledge	Socio-political analysis
Organisational development	Information management	Sectoral analysis
Monitoring and evaluation	Facilitation	Needs analysis
General management	Team building and group dynamics	Research
Project management	Negotiation, mediation and conflict management	Networking and relationship-building (sectoral and other)
Proposal writing		Information access
Committee support		Accessing relevant power structures
Budgeting		Advocacy and lobbying
Computer skills		Fundraising and resource identification
Administrative (e.g. human resources, employee relations, bookkeeping)		Communications and mobilisation

<sup>117</sup> This matrix was suggested by, and is adapted from, a 'capacity building matrix' developed by Alan Brews. See Brews (1994: 15).

## GLOSSARY (CURRENT HEQC USAGE OF TERMS)<sup>118</sup>

<b>Academic development</b>	A field of research and practice that aims to enhance the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in higher education, and to enable institutions and the higher education system to meet key educational goals, particularly in relation to equity of access and outcomes. Academic development encompasses four interlinked areas of work: student development (particularly foundational and skills-oriented provision), staff development, curriculum development and institutional development.
<b>Accreditation</b>	Recognition status granted to a programme for a stipulated period of time after an evaluation indicates that it meets minimum standards of quality. Depending on the context, accreditation may be part of an internal accreditation system, or may be external (e.g. by the HEQC or a professional council).
<b>Benchmarking</b>	A process by which an institution, programme, faculty, school, department or other unit compares itself in chosen areas against internal and external, national and international reference points, for the purposes of monitoring and improvement.
<b>Capacity development (CD)</b>	The development and implementation of initiatives to build and strengthen capacity for high quality provision at multiple learning programme and individual levels.
<b>Community engagement</b>	Initiatives and processes through which the expertise of the institution in the areas of teaching and learning, and research, are applied to address issues relevant to its community. Community engagement may find expression in informal and relatively unstructured activities, or in formal and structured academic programmes (service learning programmes – see: Service learning).
<b>Evidence</b>	Information provided by an institution to enable audit or accreditation judgements.
<b>Fitness for purpose</b>	Institutional fitness in terms of conditions at institutional level that enable and support the implementation of autonomously determined visions and missions.

<sup>118</sup> The purpose of this research is to explore a range of concepts and terminologies. This glossary lists current HEQC usage of key terms (as well as other terms that appear in the text) for purposes of reference, and possibly comparison.

<b>Fitness of purpose</b>	Institutional fitness in terms of autonomously determined visions and missions that seek to align institutional purposes with national policy goals, priorities and targets for transformation.
<b>Institutional audit</b>	An improvement-orientated external evaluation (e.g. by the HEQC) of institutional arrangements for quality in teaching and learning, research and community engagement, based on a self-evaluation conducted by the institution.
<b>Programme</b>	Purposeful and structured set of learning experiences that leads to a qualification.
<b>Quality assurance (QA)</b>	Processes of ensuring that specified standards or requirements for quality have been met.
<b>Quality management (QM)</b>	Institutional arrangements for assuring, supporting, developing and enhancing, and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, research and community engagement.
<b>Quality promotion (QP)</b>	The development of a programme of activities to institutionalise a quality culture in higher education and the commitment to continuous quality improvement.
<b>Self-evaluation</b>	The process by which an institution reviews the effectiveness of its QMS for assuring, developing and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, research and community engagement. In the context of an institutional audit, self-evaluation would be against the requirements of audit criteria (e.g. HEQC audit criteria) and any other quality criteria that the institution deems relevant.
<b>Service learning</b>	Applied learning, which is directed at specific community, needs and is integrated into an academic programme and curriculum. It could be credit-bearing and assessed, and may or may not take place in a work environment.

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<sup>119</sup> 'QPCD documentation' constitutes documents provided by the QPCD Directorate and referenced by the researcher in compiling an inventory and conducting a review of QPCD activities. Substantive documents are listed here. The researcher was also provided with miscellaneous short documents (e.g. notes on project progress, notes of meetings, outlines of possible future projects or documents, slides, other commentaries), which are not referenced here.

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