



**COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT REPORT  
ON THE**

**WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY**

**April 2023**

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## Acronyms

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| CE       | Community Engagement                                |
| CESM     | Categorisation of Educational Subject Matter        |
| CHE      | Council on Higher Education                         |
| DQMD     | Director: Quality Management Directorate            |
| CTDU     | Curriculum Transformation & Development Unit        |
| DHET     | Department of Higher Education & Training           |
| DLT      | Directorate of Learning & Teaching                  |
| DRI      | Directorate of Research Development & Innovation    |
| DVC      | Deputy Vice-Chancellor                              |
| DVC: AAR | Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic Affairs & Research |
| DVC: IS  | Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Institutional Support       |
| ECSA     | Engineering Council of South Africa                 |
| FTE      | Full-Time Equivalent                                |
| IT       | Information Technology                              |
| ITS      | Integrated Tertiary Software                        |
| HEDA     | Higher Education Data Analyser                      |
| HEMIS    | Higher Education Management Information System      |
| HEQSF    | Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework       |
| HoD      | Head of Department                                  |
| HPCSA    | Health Professionals Council of South Africa        |
| ICT      | Information and Communications Technology           |
| IRP      | Institutional Research & Planning                   |
| PQM      | Programme and Qualification Mix                     |
| QA       | Quality Assurance                                   |
| QMA      | Quality Management & Assurance                      |
| QMD      | Quality Management Directorate                      |
| QMS      | Quality Management System                           |
| RAC      | Rationalisation and Consolidation                   |
| RNA      | Research Niche Areas                                |
| SER      | Self-Evaluation Report                              |
| SLTC     | Senate Learning & Teaching Committee                |
| SoTL     | Scholarship of Teaching & Learning                  |
| SRC      | Student Representative Council                      |
| UCDG     | University Capacity Development Grant               |
| VC       | Vice-Chancellor                                     |
| WIL      | Work Integrated Learning                            |
| WSU      | Walter Sisulu University                            |

## Executive Summary

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) was established through the Higher Education Act (No. 101 of 1997, as amended) primarily to assure quality in the South African higher education sector and to advise the Minister on aspects of higher education. The National Qualifications Framework Act (No. 67 of 2008, as amended) conferred additional responsibilities on the CHE as the Quality Council for higher education, with overall responsibility for the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF). The CHE executes its quality assurance responsibilities through its permanent committee, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). The CHE, through the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), exercises its quality assurance function using a variety of mechanisms, one of which is institutional audits that are mandated by the Higher Education Act.

The *Framework for Institutional Audits (2021)*<sup>1</sup> and its attendant *Manual for Institutional Audits (2021)*<sup>2</sup> are key instruments to regulate the implementation of institutional audits. These documents are also aligned in important aspects to the new Quality Assurance Framework (QAF)<sup>3</sup> that was approved by the HEQC and Council in September 2020 and which will be implemented in the medium term by the CHE. Institutional audits are strongly influenced by both the specific context within which each HEI works, and by the national transformational agenda within which higher education functions. The HEQC has identified a need to do full audits of all HEIs in South Africa. A full audit of an institution determines whether, and to what extent, an institution's IQA systems, policies and procedures ensure the effective provisioning of good quality higher education that enhances the likelihood of student success through quality learning and teaching, research opportunities and integrated community engagement. The emphasis is less on ensuring that required standards are met at a particular threshold than on the deliberate, continuous, systematic and measurable improvement of the student experience, as well as on building reflexive praxis to develop quality cultures in institutions.

The following principles guided the institutional audit of Walter Sisulu University:

1. The primary responsibility for internal quality assurance rests with individual HEIs. Each institution is responsible for the establishment, implementation, maintenance, improvement and enhancement of its own quality management and assurance systems.
2. The uniqueness of each institution's size, shape, location, context and mission is recognised.
3. The value of institutional audits rests on the compilation of credible, contextually relevant and reliable information that is required for internal quality-related planning and self-evaluation, peer review and public reporting (for example, by publishing executive summaries).
4. Student experience, student engagement and participation and the student voice are central

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.che.ac.za/publications/frameworks/framework-institutional-audits-2021>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.che.ac.za/publications/frameworks/manual-institutional-audits-2021>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.che.ac.za/publications/frameworks/quality-assurance-framework-qaf-higher-education-south-africa>

to an evaluation of an institution's quality management system.

5. The institutional audit is a peer-driven and evidence-based process to ensure that the HEQC and its audit panel reports are transparent, informed and consistent.
6. Institutional audits are developmental and intent on supporting continuous quality improvement and enhancement.
7. Institutional audits are required to balance their developmental character with the regulatory requirement that the CHE and the HEQC act on poor provisioning where institutions have no clear commitments, processes, practices or plans to improve.
8. Institutional audits are a key component of the HEQC's broad-based quality assurance mandate.

Aligned to international practice, the HEQC uses a review methodology consisting of an institutional self-evaluation report (SER), and an external peer review which verifies, triangulates and validates the institution's self-evaluation. The external peer review consists of a document analysis of the SER and institutional portfolio of evidence, as well as a site visit at which interviews are conducted with constituencies, and physical infrastructure is visited. This audit report forms the outcome of the institutional audit of Walter Sisulu University.

Walter Sisulu University (WSU) is a product of a history of advantaged- and disadvantaged institutions and a protracted history of inequality in the South African landscape. The university was formed in 2005 from the merger of Border Technikon, Eastern Cape Technikon and the University of Transkei. With approximately 30,000 students and over 1,300 staff members across four campuses – Mthatha, Butterworth, Buffalo City (East London) and Komani - WSU is uniquely positioned to play a powerful role in the national government's focus on rural development in particular. WSU is situated in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

The institutional culture is fragmented and inconsistent across campuses, to such an extent that it can undermine the aspirations of the institution. It seems that many institutional practices have simply continued and were accepted as policy and negatively impacted the forging of a single, shared WSU culture. It is concerning that some 17 years after the merger different campuses of a single university can still operate in notably diverse ways. The PQM of WSU was intended to be a product of the consolidation of the PQMs of the merged institutions but seemingly this process has never been completed. The transition to Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) aligned qualifications is not yet completed and the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) records indicate many continuing students still registered for non-aligned qualifications. The last year for registration of new entrants into these programmes was 2019. Students who failed in completing their programmes in the minimum time will still be registering in 2022 as part of the 'teach-out' of these qualifications.

The University has indicated its commitment to being an institution of access, catering primarily to the educational needs of students in the Eastern Cape. Undergraduate diplomas and degrees will continue to be WSU's staple offerings, but the employment market also demands graduates with higher-level qualifications. To respond to these needs and to extend its community-engaged research agenda, WSU aims to increase its postgraduate offerings and enrolments and improve its research output whilst strengthening articulation routes between vocational,

professional and general qualifications. These intentions are also captured in the revised enrolment plan and in a strategic document on rationalisation and consolidation.

The appointment of the new Vice-Chancellor took effect on the 1st of April 2021. Furthermore, during the first semester of 2021 WSU adopted its 2020-2030 Strategic Plan. The WSU Vision 2030 “In Pursuit of Excellence” was developed to provide the navigational markers for the University’s operations for the next 10 years. The latter is a sharp deviation from the pre-2020 trajectory of WSU as it includes the implementation of a new management model, rationalisation and consolidation of faculties and departments, and a complete overhaul of the current institutional PQM. The University’s vision is to be an impactful, technology-infused African University. The mission of WSU is to, through its core business, respond to societal needs in ethical, scholarly, sustainable, and entrepreneurial ways, and deliver future-ready graduates. The following nine strategic goals are set in the 2030 Vision: (i) quality, impactful teaching and learning; (ii) relevant and impactful research and innovation; (iii) transformative community engagement, internationalisation and partnerships; (iv) enriching student experience; (v) empowered workforce; (vi) financial sustainability; (vii) modern ICT; (viii) state-of-the-art infrastructure; and (ix) people-centred governance and administration.

The SER does not contain a reflection on the extent to which the institution has been able to establish a common institutional culture since the merger. The Panel got the impression that many of the historical idiosyncrasies of individual institutions have been allowed to perpetuate within their relatively isolated geographical locations. The SER and access to the portfolio was made available to the panel well in advance of the audit. Pre-audit preparation took place and the panel familiarised themselves thoroughly with the SER and finalized the site visit schedule; the categories of interviewees as well as the logistical requirements of the audit panel. Due to the multi-campus nature of WSU, the panel members were divided to cover all campuses so that physical site visits could be conducted as an important part of the audit. The panel requested further information and documentation from before, during and after the site visit. The site visit took place from 8-12 August 2022 with a combination of contact, hybrid and online engagements.

The panel acknowledges that WSU finds itself at a significant juncture in the institution’s history with the appointment of the new Vice-Chancellor; the acceptance of the Vision 2030 Strategy and the stakeholder engagements around the rationalisation and consolidation exercise. It was clear during the site visit that it is no longer ‘business as usual’, although this commitment to change was not fully reflected in the Self-Evaluation Report (SER). It is apparent that WSU Management and the Council are seriously grappling with the problems and challenges confronting the institution. Unfortunately, it seems that WSU did not fully utilise and seize the opportunity to unpack these current realities in a reflexive manner in the SER. The SER is predominantly descriptive and forward-looking and does not reflect on, or to a notable extent even acknowledge the current serious challenges and realities.

The following is a summary of the audit panel's commendations and recommendations for the Walter Sisulu University.

## **Focus area 1: Governance, strategic planning, management and leadership support the core academic functions**

The four standards in Focus Area 1 concentrate on the role that an institution's *governance, strategic planning* (as contained in its *vision, mission and strategic goals*), *management and academic leadership* play in its quality management in order to enhance the likelihood of student success and to improve the quality of learning, teaching and research engagement, as well as accommodating the results of constructive, integrated community engagement. These standards are:

**Standard 1:** *The institution has a clearly stated vision and mission, and strategic goals which have been approved by appropriate governance structures, subject to comprehensive stakeholder engagement.*

### **Recommendations:**

1.1 The institutional leadership should ensure, as part of its implementation plan, effective alignment between the objectives in the Vision 2030 Strategic Plan, the criteria in the PQM viability review, and the proposals for rationalisation and consolidation in the RAC Discussion Document. Whilst steering the rationalisation and consolidation strategies, the University should ensure that the other dimensions of curriculum transformation outlined in the Vision 2030 Strategic Plan are infused in discussions and plans related to meeting the requirements for external accreditation. A single consolidated document covering the objectives from the 3 documents with milestones, timelines and deliverables should be prepared and approved by Senate and Council and aligned with the performance management system.

**Time frame:** This recommendation is urgent and important to facilitate the move of the institution in the right direction. The time frame for this recommendation is, therefore, 3 months for receipt of this report.

1.2 It is of vital importance that Management and the relevant institutional structures are intentional about embedding an institutional culture that will ensure the standardisation of services, processes and procedures across all campuses and build a sense of a common identity as a unified institution. A culture and climate survey should be conducted, followed by an improvement plan with clear outcomes that must be embedded in the performance management system that is under development.

**Time frame:** This recommendation is equally urgent and important to facilitate the move of the institution in the right direction. The time frame for this recommendation is, therefore, that the culture and climate survey is conducted within 3 months from receipt of this report, and that the improvement plan with clear outcomes is developed and implemented within 6 months.

1.3 The Vision 2030 Strategic Plan and the associated detailed proposals for the rationalisation and consolidation of the campuses should be fully canvassed among all

stakeholders to obtain maximum buy-in, to avoid 'disruptions' which may derail the reorganisation and repositioning of the institution which are desperately needed.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is that a communication and consultation plan for the rationalisation and consolidation of the campuses is developed within 3 months and implemented within 6 months.

**Standard 2:** *The stated vision, mission and strategic goals align with national priorities and context (e.g. transformation, creating a skilled labour force, developing scarce skills areas and a critical citizenry, and contributing to the fulfilment of national goals as informed by the NDP and related national planning), as well as sectoral, regional, continental and global imperatives (e.g. Africa Vision 2063 or the Sustainable Development Goals).*

### **Recommendations:**

2.1 The University should identify strategic partners with whom they can collaborate and translate the vision of enriching knowledge creation, the curriculum and pedagogy through community-engaged teaching and research. In formulating targets for implementing the CE policy, the University should consider setting concrete targets over a 5-year period for infusing engagement with communities and other strategic partners into the curriculum, providing opportunities for engaged research for postgraduate students and creating an enabling environment for expanding CE beyond WIL.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is in the longer term, with a strategy developed within 12 months to be implemented as a 5-year plan.

2.2 In line with the Strategic Plan, the University should convene a consultative forum with key external stakeholders about the proposals emanating from the PQM viability exercise and the RAC discussion document to solicit feedback on potential links with local development plans and priority education and training needs. This should be done concurrent to recommendation 1.1 and 3.1.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is that a communication and consultation plan for external stakeholders is developed within 3 months and implemented within 12 months.

**Standard 3:** *There is demonstrable strategic alignment between the institution's quality management system for core academic activities across all sites and modes of provision and its vision, mission and strategic goals, as well as its governance and management processes.*



## **Recommendations:**

- 3.1 WSU should ensure that an appropriate strategy with structures are established and employed to enhance collaboration and communication between external stakeholders and WSU with a view to ensure responsive curricula and programme offerings. See also 1.1, 2.2 and 16.1.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is that a strategy and structures for external stakeholders is developed within 3 months and implemented within 12 months.

- 3.2 The HEQC recommends that a cycle of surveys to elicit feedback from stakeholders be introduced, with clear channels for engaging with the results thereof. Such a cycle of surveys could include graduate destination surveys, admission surveys, and postgraduate student satisfaction surveys and should contribute to the improvement of teaching and learning and the student experience.

**Time frame:** The first of these surveys should be implemented within 12 months of receipt of this draft report.

- 3.3 Due to the high number of vacancies in critical areas as well as senior managers in acting positions, the University needs to evaluate its HR policies as a matter of urgency to explore the feasibility of introducing a recruitment and retention strategy that will more effectively enable the institution to fill critical vacancies related to the implementation of the QMS.

**Time frame:** The recruitment and retention strategy should be developed within 3 months and implemented within 6 months of receipt of this report.

- 3.4 All the policies related to the QMS should be updated after the implementation of the new structure so that policies are aligned with the new organogram of the University and the performance management system to ensure coherence.

**Time frame:** All policies should be updated within 12 months of receipt of this report.

- 3.5 The University should develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) related to course evaluations and strengthen channels of communication between students and departmental and faculty management structures on quality-related matters so that practices are standardised across the University. Students must be well-informed of the various channels for communication, and more broadly enabled to raise academic and student support issues of concern.

**Time frame:** SOPs for course evaluations should be created within 3 months of receipt of this report and implemented from the end of the first semester of 2023.

**Standard 4:** *There is a clear understanding of and demonstrable adherence to the different roles and responsibilities of the governance structures, management and academic leadership.*

**Recommendations:**

- 4.1 The HEQC recommends that measures should be put in place to manage the principle of 'co-creation' to ensure that it does not lead to confusion or blurring of the lines of responsibilities and accountability between Council and Management. A training session with a governance expert is highly recommended although it is recognised that it is not the only means by which to achieve this objective.

**Time frame:** Governance training sessions with Council and Management should be held during 2023 with at least 2 such sessions.

- 4.2 The university should analyse the implications of the proposals on the rationalisation and consolidation of academic activities for the distribution of support staff across the campuses with clear reporting lines in a manner that will ensure standardisation of support services across campuses. Roles, responsibilities, span of control and reporting lines of all support services should be clearly documented, implemented and monitored and aligned with the performance management system roll-out.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 12 months of receipt of this report.

- 4.3 There is a need to clarify lines of responsibility and accountability for the approval and maintenance of the PQM within the institution. The roles of key players, such as the Quality Assurance Office, the Academic Heads of Department, the Deans, the Director of Institutional Research and Planning and the HEMIS office should be clearly described, and approval routes should be articulated as part of the process- and procedure documentation and should be aligned with the performance management system. The process document must be approved by Senate as a matter of urgency and thereafter monitored by Senate on a bi-annual basis.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 3 months of receipt of this report.

**Focus area 2: The design and implementation of the institutional quality management system supports the core academic functions**

The four standards in Focus Area 2 concentrate on how the *design and implementation of an integrated quality management system* in the institution enhance the likelihood of student success and improves the quality of learning, teaching and research engagement, as well as accommodating the results of constructive, integrated community engagement within the context of the institution's mission. These standards are:

**Standard 5:** *A quality assurance system is in place, comprising at a minimum, of:*

- (i) governance arrangements*
- (ii) policies*
- (iii) processes, procedures and plans*
- (iv) instructional products*
- (v) measurement of impact*
- (vi) data management and utilisation*

*as these give effect to the delivery of the HEI's core functions.*

**Recommendations:**

5.1 A business process mapping of quality assurance processes must be conducted, to outline roles and responsibilities related to the maintenance, review the use of data and to clarify roles and responsibilities related to programme planning, development and review between Academic Heads of Department, the QMD, and Senate. Roles and responsibilities should be clearly assigned for the successful roll-out of the quality assurance dashboard and ensure staff training for effective and sustainable data management and utilisation. The specification of roles and responsibilities should be aligned with the performance management system.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 6 months of receipt of this report.

5.2 The University must establish a policy portal organised around categories such as human resources, finance, academic etc. so that these are easily accessible to staff and students with a user-friendly interface.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 3 months of receipt of this report.

5.3 The HEQC recommends that the University establishes a well-communicated policy framework which outlines the philosophy regarding policy development and establishes management's mandate for and commitment to implementing that philosophy and ensures adherence to this framework. Such a framework should clearly set out WSU's interpretation on the differences between a policy, procedure, standard and guideline. Standard operating procedures should be drawn up covering approval and review procedures as well as stipulations on the style, format naming and version control for the publishing of policies.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 6 months of receipt of this report.

**Standard 6:** *Human, infrastructural, knowledge management and financial resources support the delivery of the institution's core academic functions across all sites of provision, in alignment with the concomitant quality management system, in accordance with the institution's mission.*

**Recommendations:**

6.1 A detailed 5-year plan should be developed with a budget and risk register as well as a long-term infrastructure plan to give effect to the implementation of the new strategy.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 6 months of receipt of this report.

6.2 The HEQC recommends a revision of the budget process. Serious consideration should be given to devolving more authority to the proposed Executive Deans and Executive Directors in relation to budgets. Locating authority for critical teaching and learning line items like staffing and IT at central levels, removes decision-making from those who have direct knowledge of the areas especially relevant to the academic project. Not giving managers sufficient control and flexibility to manage their own budgets within parameters removes incentives for managers to generate additional income to allow them more flexibility in utilising their resources. The University should consider establishing committees to assist with prioritisation in areas like the library, specialised equipment etc. and a university-wide Planning and Budgeting Task Team to assist with the provision of planning-related guidelines and the interrogation of additional budget requests to determine and manage risks and institutional priorities.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 6 months of receipt of this report.

6.3 The University must establish an IT committee composed of the different system users to enable and steer IT planning and resource allocation in line with Vision 2030 and ensure that the IT ecosystem and decisions around IT support the quality project, enhance the student experience, and enable data-driven decision-making in moving towards an integrated system.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 3 months of receipt of this report.

**Standard 7:** *Credible and reliable data (for example, on throughput and completion rates) are systematically captured, employed and analysed as an integral part of the institutional quality management system so as to inform consistent and sustainable decision-making.*

**Recommendations:**

7.1 A staff development strategy should be put in place to ensure that the staff capturing

data on the online systems understand HEMIS well, that academic and support managers learn to understand and work with the data and that an advocacy strategy is mounted to ensure ongoing attention to data integrity. Urgent steps must be taken to ensure business continuity when staff members leave the institution, especially in areas that directly impact on the management of academic programmes and enrolment planning. The digitalisation of key administrative processes related to academic management should continue to be prioritised for resources and staff capacity.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 6 months of receipt of this report.

- 7.2 WSU should finalise a data dashboard after the consolidation of the objectives of the three strategic documents referred to in Recommendation No 1.1 to enable easy and focused monitoring.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 3 months of receipt of this report in line with the recommendation in 1.1 and 2.2.

**Standard 8:** *Systems and processes monitor the institution's capacity for quality management, based on the evidence gathered.*

#### **Recommendations:**

- 8.1 It is recommended that the University considers the development of a five-year plan which clearly identifies priority focus areas for policy review and policy implementation. Within this review process, serious consideration should also be given to the rationalisation of the number of monitoring indicators for some of the policies, which the panel noted are currently both time- and resource-intensive.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 12 months of receipt of this report. Please also refer back to the recommendation in 3.4.

- 8.2 The HEQC recommends that training and capacity building be prioritised and that a succession planning strategy is developed so that a pool of internal people are capacitated to take on more complex data and planning-related tasks. Also, see recommendation 7.1.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 6 months of receipt of this report.

### **Focus area 3: The coherence and integration of the institutional quality management system supports the core academic functions**

The four standards in Focus Area 3 concentrate on the coherence and integration of the various components comprising the institutional quality management system and on how these work in

concert to support the likelihood of student success and improve the quality of learning, teaching and research engagement, as well as accommodating the results of constructive integrated community engagement in accordance with the institution's mission. These standards are:

**Standard 9:** *An evidence-based coherent, reasonable, functional and meaningfully structured relationship exists between all components of the institutional quality management system.*

**Recommendation:**

9.1 An institution-wide performance management system and a workload model should be finalised and implemented and should infuse considerations of quality into the criteria for the assessment of the performance of all staff, especially managers.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 6 months of receipt of this report.

**Standard 10:** *Evidence-based regular and dedicated governance and management oversight of the quality assurance system exists.*

**Recommendation:**

10.1 Management, as well as all concerned stakeholders in the institution, should become more intentional about and sensitised to the importance of quality by setting up systems at strategic levels that focus on continuous quality improvement. WSU should have systems which monitor, record and report quality flaws timeously, so that they can be dealt with and not allowed to negatively impact core academic and operational functions.

Note: Recommendations 7.1 and 9.1 also bear relevance to Standard 10.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 6 months of receipt of this report.

**Standard 11:** *Planning and processes exist for the reasonable and functional allocation of resources to all components of the institutional quality management system.*

**Recommendation:**

11.1 The HEQC recommends the drafting and implementation of a change management strategy coupled with a clear communication plan to support the implementation of the Vision 2030 Strategic Plan, as well as the rationalisation and consolidation process.

Note: Recommendations 6.1-6.3 also bear relevance to Standard 11.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 6 months of receipt of this report.

**Standard 12:** *The quality assurance system achieves its purpose efficiently and effectively.*

### **Recommendations:**

The specifics of improvements to the quality assurance system are covered in a number of recommendations (see 1.2, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 4.3, 5.1, 6.1 and 9.1).

### **Focus area 4: Curriculum development, learning and teaching support the likelihood of student success**

The four standards in Focus Area 4 concentrate on how effectively the institutional quality management system enhances the likelihood of student success, improves learning and teaching and supports the scholarship of learning and teaching. These standards drill down in greater detail in Focus Area 2. These standards are:

**Standard 13:** *An effective institutional system for programme design, approval, delivery, management and review is in place.*

### **Commendation:**

The HEQC commends the institution on the way they mustered resources together in time of a crisis, became resilient and found ways to deliver laptops, tablets and data to all students, including those who live in remote rural communities. This reflects positively on the degree of commitment to keeping the academic project going.

### **Recommendations:**

13.1 The University, through the department responsible for student housing, should strengthen its effort to enforce landlords to adhere to minimum norms and standards for student housing and provide internet access and connectivity to students at all times. The inability to provide this service may compromise student success as well as student safety, as they may be compelled to be on campus during odd hours to access the internet.

Note: Recommendations 1.1, 2.1 and 3.1 also bear relevance to Standard 13.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 3 months of receipt of

this report.

**Standard 14:** *There is evidence-based engagement at various institutional levels, among staff, and among staff and students, with:*

- a. *curriculum transformation, curriculum reform and renewal;*
- b. *learning and teaching innovation; and*
- c. *the role of technology (1) in the curriculum, (2) in the world of work, and (3) in society in general.*

**Recommendations:**

14.1 The HEQC recommends the University reconsider the decision to combine internationalisation and community engagement portfolios within a context of current tensions that the institution is still trying to address, as these may have a negative impact on CE.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 12 months of receipt of this report.

14.2 For the dual language policy and curriculum transformation efforts to be fully actioned, the HEQC recommends that management set up a structure that could catapult the use of isiXhosa in the classroom, guided by appropriate pedagogical approaches.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 12 months of receipt of this report.

14.3 The HEQC urges WSU to make induction and orientation compulsory for all new staff members. This should also be the responsibility of the direct line manager and be part of the performance management process.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 6 months of receipt of this report.

**Standard 15:** *The students' exposure to learning and teaching at the institution, across all sites and modes of provision, is experienced as positive and enabling of their success.*

**Recommendations:**

Recommendations 3.1 and 3.4 bear relevance to Standard 15.



**Standard 16:** *Institutions engage with and reflect on the employability of their graduates in a changing world.*

**Recommendations:**

16.1 The HEQC recommends that the institution, from Council to the lowest level, need to redefine the meaning of employability and this should also influence discussions within the institution about curriculum design. Senate and faculty discussions on required skill sets and graduate attributes should be placed high on the agenda in various study programmes. The focus should be on the implications of the changing nature of work, and how unemployment should broaden thinking to cover the Social and Solidarity Economy and alternative models of creating sustainable livelihoods (cross-reference with recommendation 3.1).

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 6 months of receipt of this report.

16.2 The HEQC recommends that WSU strengthens the tracer and impact studies to research and reflect on the employability and/or economic activity of its graduates, and actively engage with and act on the results of these findings. Consistent efforts must be made to ensure that alumni remain active in the affairs of WSU.

**Time frame:** The time frame for this recommendation is within 12 months of receipt of this report.