



CONFIDENTIAL

**INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT REPORT
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**

(July 2023)

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACS	Academic Committee of Senate
APDC	Academic Planning and Development Committee (of Senate)
APQA	Academic Planning and Quality Assurance
CARES	Central and Advising Referral Service
CCMA	Council for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
CCWG	Curriculum Change Working Group
CEA	Centre for Educational Assessment
CESM	Classification of Education Subject Matter
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CHED	Centre for Higher Education Development
CIG	Courses Impeding Graduation
CILT	Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching
CS	Careers Service
DASS	Data Analytics for Student Success
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DVC	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
eRA	electronic Research Administration
ERT	Emergency Remote Teaching
FU	First-time Entering Undergraduates
FYCR	First Year Campus Reception
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEMIS	Higher Education Management Information System
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
HR	Human Resources
ICTS	Information and Communications Technology Services
IIU	Institutional Information Unit
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPHE	National Plan for Higher Education
NP-PSET	National Plan for Post-School Education and Training
PAAC	Programme Approvals and Accreditation Committee
PASS	Professional Administrative Support and Service
PDL	Physically Distanced Learning
PMS	Performance Management System
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI Act)

POE	Portfolio of Evidence
PowerHEDA	Name of a Business Intelligence tool
PQM	Programme and Qualification Mix
QAF	Quality Assurance Framework of 2024
QAS	Quality Assurance System
QAWG	Quality Assurance Working Group
QMS	Quality Management System
QC	Quality Council
RAC	Readmissions Appeal Committee
SAICA	South African Institute of Chartered Accountants
SANRAL	South African National Road Agency Ltd
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEC	Senate Executive Committee
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SLP	Short Learning Programmes
SRC	Student Representative Council
SWS	Student Wellness Services
TOTT	Reaching Online Task Team
UCDP	University Capacity Development Programme
UCT	University of Cape Town
UCTL	University of Cape Town Libraries
USD	United States Dollars
VC	Vice Chancellor
WIL	Workplace Integrated Learning

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), exercising 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)*¹ and its attendant *Manual for Institutional Audits (2021)*² 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)³ that was approved by the HEQC and Council in September 2020 and which is being 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 or not, 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 the University of Cape Town (UCT):

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).

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

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

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

4. Student experience, student engagement and participation and the student voice are central 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 the University of Cape Town.

The University of Cape Town (UCT) was founded in 1829 as the South African College. Following its establishment as a college, the institution was formally inaugurated as a university in 1918 and moved to its Groote Schuur campus in Rondebosch a decade later.

The University currently offers 360 approved qualifications, which range from higher certificates to doctoral degrees in 17 of the current 20 Classification of Education Subject Matter (CESM) categories used by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The approved qualifications offered also include diplomas, advanced diplomas, advanced certificates, and postgraduate diplomas. The University's academic offerings are presented by six faculties, namely the Faculties of Commerce (which includes the Graduate School of Business), Engineering and the Built Environment, Health Sciences, Humanities, Law, and Science, as well as the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED). These faculties and centre are each headed by a dean and collectively accommodate 63 academic departments.

Committed to excellence in teaching and learning, research, and scholarship, UCT can be described as a traditional, medium-sized, largely contact University. Its standing as a respected African research-intensive institution is widely acknowledged and underscored by its position on key global university league tables.

Currently, the University has an enrolment of approximately 28 500 students and a staff complement of approximately 4 650.

The University does not have a single institutional structure with the sole responsibility for an institutional quality management system. Instead, according to the University's self-evaluation report, quality is managed through the University's core functions.

The audit interviews took place between 15 and 19 August 2022: from 15 to 17 August, the site visit interviews took place online (Microsoft Teams), and on 18 and 19 August, most of the interviews took place in person.

Prior to the site visit interviews, the audit Panel held three meetings (viz. on 1 July, 14 July, and 10 August 2022) to discuss and analyse UCT's Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and to prepare for the interviews. Following extensive consultation between CHE staff, the Panel and UCT, the schedule for the institutional interviews was finalised a week prior to the commencement of the first interviews.

UCT had provided a comprehensive SER, augmented by a substantial volume of relevant documentation submitted as part of its portfolio of evidence (PoE). During the course of the site visit interviews, it was confirmed that the SER was developed through a broadly consultative process, including the work of several workstreams and inputs from across the University.

Most of the site visit interviews took place according to the agreed-to schedule. Prior to each interview, the interviewees were assured of the Panel's commitment to: (a) respecting the institution's autonomy, (b) fairness and objectivity, (c) the confidentiality of the sources of the information shared in the interviews, and (d) giving due consideration to all information shared in the interviews. All interviewees were also informed that none of the interviews would be recorded.

All interviews were productive and provided most of the information sought by the audit Panel. Furthermore, the interviews were characterised by a commendably collegial spirit which significantly facilitated the work of the Panel.

The following is a summary of the audit Panel's commendations and recommendations for the University of Cape Town.

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 as well as the University's performance against 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.

The mission, vision, and strategic plans of the University are adequately covered in the SER and cohere with the University's history and ambitions. The mission, vision and strategic plans also respond appropriately to national and global needs. The University's previous strategic plan as well as its current strategic plan, *Vision 2030* and the *Vision 2030 Implementation Plan* were debated throughout the institution before formal adoption. In the main, *Vision 2030* appears to have the support of the University community. As the University capably meets the requirements of Standard 1, there are no recommendations proposed for this standard.

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).

The University's past, current and envisaged strategic plans are appropriately informed by national policies and imperatives, as reflected in, amongst others, the *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education* (1997), the *National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE)* (2001), and the *National Plan for Post-School Education and Training (NP- PSET)* (2016). To its credit, the University's strategic goals and aspirations are also shaped by international imperatives, as reflected in the United Nations' *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* (2015) and the African Union's *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* (2015). Of concern, though, is that at least one of the University's policies related to these imperatives has not been reviewed for at least 10 years.

Recommendation

1. It is recommended that UCT should ensure that all policies and policy frameworks are regularly reviewed and that the review dates are clearly indicated on the cover pages of the relevant documents.

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.

In the main, there is coherence between the University's quality management approach and its vision, mission and strategic plans, as well as its core academic activities. The University's vision, mission and strategic plans all highlight the importance of, *inter alia*,

excellence in research, teaching and learning and social responsiveness, inclusivity (including involving students in governance matters), and transformation. However, while its quality management system meets the expected thresholds in terms of Standard 3, the University should give urgent attention to the development of the proposed revised academic programme-review strategy that is meant to replace the departmental academic review system.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that UCT should expedite the finalisation of the integrated programme review framework that will replace the departmental review framework.

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.

The roles of the members of the Executive as well as those in their reporting lines are sufficiently clear for institutional operations to be carried out efficiently and for quality assurance to remain a foremost priority. It should be noted, however, that the following concerns were repeatedly raised when the various roles of the Executive, and those that they report to, were discussed in the interviews: the apparent difficulty experienced by some Council members in raising issues openly in Council, and the impact that this may have on governance; the high turnover of senior staff, especially senior management staff, without substantive reasons reportedly being provided to the broader University community in a timely manner; the current status of the 2019 ombud's report, and the lack of closure on the 37 issues raised there, and the reputational damage to the University resulting from ongoing negative media reports, particularly ones involving senior staff members.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended that UCT addresses the concerns raised by staff as reflected under Standard 4 of this report, particularly the concern related to senior staff turnover, using a comprehensive formal investigation with clearly specified terms of reference as the point of departure.

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 enhances 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.

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

While the University does not have an overarching framework for quality assurance, nor a single integrated quality management system, the necessary governance arrangements, policies, procedures, impact measurement systems etc. are in place to facilitate quality assurance to a sufficient degree. The exemplary work of the Centre for Higher Education

Development in respect of the imperatives related to Standard 5, in particular, is noted. It is clear that, in the main, the University's quality assurance system meets the expected thresholds in terms of Standard 5. Nonetheless, areas that require attention include the need to develop a policy with a unifying definition of social responsiveness that promotes both quality management and quality assurance. There is also a need for the University to broaden the pool of high school students from which it draws its first-year student cohort.

Commendation

- a. UCT is commended for the work done by CHED for the reasons discussed in the narrative. Specifically, the overall CHED set-up and approaches to the execution of policies, plans, processes, and procedures, including CHED's international reach and its well-coordinated holistic strategies executed individually and collectively by the five departments that comprise CHED, are commended.

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that UCT should move beyond the Social Responsiveness Policy Framework adopted by Senate in 2012 to a formal Social Responsiveness Policy with a definition of social responsiveness broad enough to accommodate all faculties and units, yet sufficiently contextualised to meet the unique or needs of faculties, units, staff, students, and external stakeholders.
5. It is recommended that UCT should endeavour to include more students from Quintile 1 to 4 schools in their annual first-year intake and provide the necessary support for these students in order to ensure their retention and success.

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.

Based on the evidence provided, it is apparent that the human, financial, infrastructural and information management resources provided by the University are adequate and appropriate for the nature, size and ambitions of the institution. Furthermore, the University's innovative infrastructural developments for research and teaching and learning

are estimable. Importantly, the manner in which the University harnesses its resources for quality enhancement purposes and student success provides sufficient evidence for the University to be adjudged mature in terms of Standard 6. However, while its maturity at this level may be beyond dispute, it is also true that there is room to further elevate its quality enhancement capabilities by ensuring, *inter alia*, that: (a) staff at work-integrated learning sites are given access to the support required to enhance the learning experience of students placed at these sites, (b) academics appointed with soft funding (i.e., external grant funding) are afforded adequate teaching opportunities in instances where teaching is considered in their performance evaluation, (c) efforts to further diversify the staff complement and student body are accelerated, and (d) efforts to enhance student safety are intensified.

Commendation

- b. UCT is commended for its innovative infrastructural developments for research and teaching and learning (such as the One Button Studio),⁴ which not only advances research and student success, but also unleashes human potential as contemplated by UCT's Vision 2030.

Recommendations

6. It is recommended that UCT faculties that host academics appointed with soft funding should ensure that these academics are afforded teaching opportunities in instances where this requirement is considered in their performance evaluation.
7. It is recommended that UCT should consider how library services can be extended to clinicians at WIL sites for joint knowledge creation, based on the requests of external partners who provide placement sites for WIL, and who help close the gap between the clinical and the academic.
8. It is recommended that, given the importance of campus safety, UCT should consider increasing security measures, especially during evenings. In addition, the administration of assessment during the evenings should be avoided or reduced to the absolute minimum.
9. It is recommended that UCT should intensify its efforts at transforming the demographic profile of its staff complement and student body.

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.

According to the evidence provided, the core functions of teaching, research and social engagement at UCT all have access to reliable data-management and retrieval systems that support the quality management system. The University has at its disposal a range of sophisticated and innovative approaches to the interpretation and use of metrics to review

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9nm89liFzQ>

both teaching and research. These include the Data Analytics for Student Success (DASS) system, as well as services provided by the University's Institutional Information Unit, such as the implementation of the subsidy model, which supports financial analyses in faculties, and the '100 FU' spreadsheet model, which maps persistence and time to degree completion. For the most part, therefore, the University's quality management system meets the expected thresholds in terms of Standard 7. Nonetheless, shortcomings in respect of this standard, such as the manifest weaknesses in the University's student course evaluation system and its evaluation systems for all forms of student support require attention.

Recommendations

10. It is recommended that UCT should urgently finalise the review of its student course evaluation system, particularly with regard to the timing of the evaluations, in order to improve the response rates and thus to provide timely and more effective feedback for quality enhancement purposes.
11. It is recommended that UCT should review the evaluation systems for all forms of student support, including student advising, the tutorial system, and the Student Wellbeing Service.

Standard 8

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

The University harnesses an array of electronic data for the monitoring, quality control, and enhancement of teaching and learning, postgraduate education, and research. PowerHEDA and the SAP Business Objects data warehouse are two of the key data platforms used for quality management. Of course, the University also relies on qualitative data for quality management. The key University stakeholders and users of the data for quality management include members of the executive, deans, deputy deans, committee chairs, the Deputy Registrar: Academic Administration, and faculty managers. It is evident that for the most part the University's quality management system meets the expected thresholds in terms of Standard 8. The University acknowledges, however, that the more effective utilisation of external examiners' reports is an area that requires attention.

Recommendation

12. It is recommended that UCT strengthens the accountability lines between lecturers, course co-ordinators, HoDs and Deans in respect of the quality improvement recommendations emanating from external examiners' reports.

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.

Standard 9

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

The University's quality management system is based on the understanding that quality is the responsibility of all stakeholders in the University system rather than the responsibility of specialists only. A range of institutional policies underpin this understanding or approach. In the main, the system is coherent and operationalised in a manner that avoids duplication or organisational contradiction. Based on the evidence provided, the nature of this quality management system is apparent to and supported by staff. However, issues related to this standard to which the University should give attention include staff performance appraisals and the criteria for *ad hominem* promotions.

Recommendations

13. It is recommended that UCT establish what percentage of academic staff regularly complete their performance appraisals, and set targets for universal or near universal participation, where this is not yet the case.
14. It is recommended that UCT give further attention to ensuring that the criteria for excellence in teaching and student support are adequately developed and articulated, and that academic staff and their managers are fully informed of their relevance in the *ad hominem* promotions process.
15. It is recommended that UCT urgently addresses the declining proportion of academic staff with doctoral qualifications in its employ, given that the proportion of a university's staff complement with doctoral qualifications generally impacts significantly on their research productivity and the quality of its research output.

Standard 10

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

The University's quality assurance processes are embedded in a range of internal and external reviews as well as a fairly well-developed governance system. As previously indicated, all staff are also held individually responsible for quality assurance. Oversight is provided by the Deputy Vice-Chancellors responsible for Teaching and Learning, Research

and Internationalisation, and Transformation and Student Affairs. In addition, the Registrar's office manages the processes that ensure that the underpinning rules of operations, data management (i.e., data collection, integrity, security and analysis), and governance are adhered to. Areas that require attention in respect of the University's performance in relation to Standard 10 include the career advancement of academics employed on teaching-only tracks and follow-up on external examiners' reports.

Recommendations

16. It is recommended that UCT gives consideration to staff on teaching-only tracks being eligible for promotion beyond senior lecturer rank, and that appropriate criteria are developed in support of this.
17. It is recommended that UCT sends course and programme leaders all external examiner's reports, positive as well as negative.

Standard 11

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

The University has a well-established financial policy which was introduced in 2009. The policy sets out the key governance and related processes that underpin the budget allocations to all sectors of the University. The budget allocations are presented annually to the University's Finance Committee, and thereafter to Council for approval. The baseline budgets for faculties are primarily based on subsidy income, historical staffing- and operational spending trends. Quality management as far as finances and budgets are concerned involves routine monthly and quarterly reporting within units. These are managed by the unit head, with the support of a dedicated finance manager. On the whole, the University has sound financial and fundraising processes in place. Academic workload allocations, however, appear to be somewhat of a challenge. The workloads of academics are allocated at the faculty level. While it is argued that the workloads of academics within departments are equitable, the University acknowledges that workload allocations may not be sufficiently consistent or 'even' across faculties. For this reason, the Deans, since the end of 2019, have been working on developing a set of principles for a commonly accepted workload model to guide work allocations across all faculties. At the time of the audit, this work had not yet been finalised.

Commendation

- c. UCT is commended for its sound financial plan and fundraising model that have thus far enabled it to ensure sustainability, despite the many challenges faced by the sector in recent years. As indicated in the SER: "The Financial Policy has stood UCT in good stead through several external challenges in the period of review: the disruptions to the academic year in 2015 and 2016, the loss of fee revenue in residences as a result of the zero-fee increase decision in 2017, and the additional resources required to manage the emergency pivot to remote teaching during Covid-19 in 2020" (p. 99).

Recommendation

18. It is recommended that UCT finalises the development of the University's academic workload model, as a quality assurance measure based on the commonly accepted principles of transparency and fairness in the allocation of work, as expeditiously as possible.

Standard 12

The quality assurance system achieves its purpose efficiently and effectively.

The University argues that allocating human and financial resources specifically to a quality management system will not have a direct impact on quality. Instead, its focus is the provision of significant and appropriate resources to the key areas of its functioning. While this approach certainly has its merits, in the absence of an overarching high-level system, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the University's quality assurance and enhancement endeavours comprehensively and meaningfully, particularly in view of the current suspension of departmental reviews.

Recommendations

19. It is recommended that UCT's Academic Planning and Development Committee and Academic Planning and Quality Assurance Committee should develop an overarching high-level system integrating quality assurance in a manner that retains the ongoing involvement, responsibility and accountability of academics, departments, and faculties in the quality assurance system.
20. It is recommended that UCT should incorporate within CHED's Heads of Department/Division Enhancement Programme for professional development, how to strategically interface and implement departmental review recommendations, planned improvements and resource allocation.

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.

Standard 13

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

UCT has well developed, and robust policy supported systems and procedures in place for programme design, approval, delivery, and management. The process for programme

design and approval is characterised by a 'bottom-up' approach, with Senate ultimately required to provide final approval for academic programmes. Despite the well-structured programme design process, it was clear from the interviews with teaching and learning group stakeholders at the University that programme design could be a more integrated process across the institution. This was, in fact, suggested in the University's *2018 Teaching and Learning Report*, which indicated that UCT has a somewhat siloed approach to curriculum and programme development. It is worth noting that the University made a fairly seamless transition to emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 national lockdown period, despite challenges with tutor training and assessments. While it meets the expected thresholds in terms of Standard 13, the University should give attention to doing the necessary market research prior to the development of new programmes, the assurance of the integrity and validity of online assessments, and the training of tutors.

Commendation

- d. UCT is commended for its proactive response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in particular for its investment in the appointment and deployment of additional tutors during the COVID-19 lockdown period. Students interviewed spoke highly of the invaluable academic and psychosocial support offered by tutors during and immediately following the period of emergency remote teaching (ERT).

Recommendations

21. It is recommended that UCT must ensure that the development of new programmes is supported and substantiated by suitable market needs analyses.
22. It is recommended that UCT should institute appropriate measures to ensure the integrity and validity of online assessments (including examinations) where applicable.
23. It is recommended that UCT makes the training of tutors mandatory.

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: (i) in the curriculum, (ii) in the world of work, and (iii) in society in general.

The documentation provided by the University as well as information gathered from the interviews conducted provided ample evidence of staff and (to a lesser extent) student engagement with matters of transformation and the role of technology in the worlds of education and work. While the University meets the expected thresholds in terms of Standard 14, it is evident that its curriculum transformation and renewal endeavours could benefit from the implementation of an explicit monitoring system.

Recommendation

24. It is recommended that UCT should implement an explicit monitoring system for the implementation of curriculum transformation and renewal across faculties.

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.

The documentation provided by the University indicates that it uses three key strategies to garner student feedback on their courses and student experience, namely course evaluation questionnaires, student satisfaction surveys and focus groups. Importantly, the data collected by means of these course evaluation questionnaires, student satisfaction surveys, and focus groups, once analysed, is used, according to the documentation provided, to improve teaching and course content and to enhance the student experience. For the period under consideration, student feedback has been largely positive. While the University generally performs fairly well in terms of Standard 14, the following lacunae in its functioning have been identified as requiring attention: the less-than-optimal student completion rates at both under- and post-graduate levels; the functioning of the UCT Central Advising and Referral Service (CARES) system, and the need for ongoing analyses of the differential success rates of its students based on historical and current social divides.

Recommendations

25. It is recommended that the UCT CARES system must be structured in such a way that all queries submitted are responded to in a reasonable time (for example, at least within 48 hours of submission).

26. It is recommended that UCT should intensify its efforts at redressing the less-than-optimal student completion rates at both under- and post-graduate levels.

27. It is recommended that UCT undertakes an ongoing study of the differential student success rates based on historical and current social divides, such as race, gender and the socio-economic background of students, and to implement whatever interventions are required to deal with these.

Standard 16

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

The Careers Services division of the University (a division that has matured over a period of more than 50 years) supports students with their career planning during their undergraduate studies, as well as up to three years following their graduation. Careers Services also engages in several employment-related partnerships. Based on the contents of the documentation provided, however, the University in recent years does not appear to

have done comprehensive or sufficiently meaningful research on the economic activity of its graduates. Specifically, it does not appear to have conducted systematic graduate destination research in recent years. It also does not appear to have kept updated records of all of its employment-related partnerships across all faculties. Furthermore, the response rates for its annual Graduate Exit Survey appear to be declining. Nonetheless, based on the data provided, the University clearly is endeavouring to provide its students with an academic environment and experiences that will enhance their chances of suitable employment following graduation. Furthermore, in recent years the University has consistently worked towards ensuring ongoing alumni engagement with their alma mater through its Career Conversation programme and its alumni giving initiatives, in which regard the University has been singularly successful.

Commendations

- e. UCT is commended for the exemplary service provided by its centralised Careers Service division in support of all faculties over many years.
- f. UCT is commended for its endeavours to ensure the involvement of its alumni in the affairs of the University and for the exceptional service rendered by the latter to the University.

Recommendations

- 28. It is recommended that UCT must keep a record of all employment-related partnerships as well as all liaisons with professional bodies for all faculties.
- 29. It is recommended that UCT must develop a strategy to improve the response rate for the Graduate Exit Survey.
- 30. It is recommended that UCT should fast-track the proposed 'destination tracker' initiative (or a cognate alternative) so that it can monitor the career trajectories of its graduates as a means of constantly assessing the appropriateness of its academic programmes, particularly in view of the rapidly changing world of work.