



Executive Summary

INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT REPORT ON THE

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

(August 2023)

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Abbreviations and acronyms

| | |
|--------|---|
| 4IR | Fourth Industrial Revolution |
| AAC | Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication |
| AGUP | African Global University Partnership |
| AIM | Academic Information Management Module |
| APC | Academic Planning Committee |
| APQ | Academic Planning and Quality |
| B-BBEE | Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment |
| BCMP | Business Continuity Management Programme |
| CA | Chartered Accountant |
| CE | Community Engagement |
| CHE | Council on Higher Education |
| COO | Chief Operating Officer |
| CoP | Community of Practice |
| CPD | Continuous Professional Development |
| CSO | Career Services Office |
| CSR | Centre for the Study of Resilience |
| DD | Deputy Dean |
| DEI | Department of Education Innovation |
| DESA | Department of Enrolment and Student Administration |
| DHET | Department of Higher Education and Training |
| DIP | Department of Institutional Planning |
| DLS | Department of Library Services |
| DRI | Department of Research and Innovation |
| DSA | Department of Student Affairs |
| DSI | Department of Science and Innovation |

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| EBIT | Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology |
| ECP | Extended Curriculum Programme |
| EE | Employment Equity |
| EEOP | Employment Equity Opportunity Plan |
| EM | Executive Management |
| EMS | Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences |
| ERP | Enterprise Resource Planning (part of Oracle PeopleSoft system) |
| ERT | Emergency Remote Teaching |
| Exco | Council Executive Committee |
| FB | Faculty Board |
| FSA | Faculty Student Advisor |
| FTE | Full-Time Equivalent |
| GIBS | Gordon Institute of Business Science |
| HE | Higher Education |
| HEDA | Higher Education Data Analyser (sometimes referred to as PowerHEDA) |
| HEI | Higher Education Institution |
| HEMIS | Higher Education Management Information System |
| HEQC | Higher Education Quality Committee |
| HEQSF | Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework |
| HERI | Higher Education Research and Innovation |
| HIM | High-Impact Module |
| HoD | Head of Department |
| HR | Human Resources |
| IAC | Institutional Audit Committee |

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|-----------|--|
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| ID | Instructional Designer |
| IF | Institutional Forum |
| IPR (Act) | Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research and Development Act, 2008 |
| IQA | Independent Quality Assurance |
| IRA | Institutional Research and Analytics |
| IT | Information Technology |
| ITS | Information Technology Services |
| KPA | Key Performance Areas |
| KPI | Key Performance Indicator |
| LMS | Learning Management System |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MBChB | Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery |
| NAS | Natural and Agricultural Sciences |
| NDP | National Development Plan |
| NESP | Nurturing Emerging Scholars Programme |
| nGAP | New Generation of Academics Programme |
| NRF | National Research Foundation |
| NSFAS | National Student Financial Aid Scheme |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| ORMC | Operational Risk Management Committee |
| PAL | Programme for Academic Leadership |
| PC | Programme Committee |
| PG | Postgraduate |
| PhD | Doctor of Philosophy |

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|---------|---|
| PIRI | Planning, Implement, Review and Improve Process |
| PoE | Portfolio of Evidence |
| PUA | Pre-University Academy |
| QAF | Quality Assurance Framework |
| QEP | Quality Enhancement Project |
| QMS | Quality Management System |
| QQR | Quinquennial Review |
| RPL | Recognition of Prior Learning |
| SA | South African |
| SAGEA | South African Graduate Employers Association |
| SAICA | South African Institute of Chartered Accountants |
| SAULM | Students' Access to and Use of Learning Materials |
| Senex | Executive Committee of Senate |
| SEP-TLF | Staff Experiences of and Perspectives on Teaching and Learning and its Future |
| SER | Self-Evaluation Report |
| SG | Study Guide |
| SoTL | Scholarship of Teaching and Learning |
| SPARC | Strategic Planning and Allocation of Resources Committee |
| SRC | Student Representative Council |
| TIA | Technology Innovation Agency |
| TL | Teaching and Learning |
| TOR | Terms of Reference |
| TPoE | Teaching Portfolio of Evidence |
| TTO | Technology Transfer Office |
| UCDG | University Capacity Development Grant |

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|---------|--|
| UCDP | University Capacity Development Programme |
| UG | Undergraduate |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund |
| UP 2025 | University of Pretoria Strategic Plan (2012–2025) |
| UP IBCP | University of Pretoria Institutional Consolidated Business Continuity Plan |
| UP ISMC | Institute for Sustainable Malaria Control |
| UP | University of Pretoria |
| VC | Vice-Chancellor |
| VP | Vice-Principal |
| VUCA | Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity |
| WIL | Work-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 (SA) higher education (HE) 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). Through the HEQC, the CHE 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)*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 implemented in the medium term by the CHE. Institutional audits are strongly influenced by both the specific context within which each higher education institution (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 internal quality assurance (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 (CE). 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.

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>

The following principles guided the institutional audit of the University of Pretoria:

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 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 to an evaluation of an institution's quality management system (QMS).
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 with 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 (PoE), as well as a site visit during 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 Pretoria.

A brief overview of the Institution

The University of Pretoria (UP), which was established as the Transvaal University College in 1908, is one of the largest research-intensive universities in South Africa. It has nine faculties, including Health Sciences and Veterinary Science, and a business school, the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). UP has four centres of excellence, 51 research chairs, 72 research institutes and centres, and 120 academic departments. The University has 565 National Research Foundation(NRF)-rated scholars, 16 A-rated researchers, and 69.4% of the academic staff have doctoral qualifications. The research focus areas at UP are agriculture and sustainable food systems; climate change and the environment; economic development and sustainable futures; energy; heritage studies; inequalities; social justice and human rights; One Health; smart infrastructure and innovation; and water. Transdisciplinary research at UP is focused on Engineering 4.0; the Future Africa Institute; Innovation Africa@UP Initiative; and the Javett-UP Art Centre.

The total number of contact students enrolled at UP is 55,738 (UP website, 14.9.2022), of whom 60% are African, 57% are women, and 54% are registered in scarce skills courses. UP has more than 300,000 alumni in more than 130 countries and is highly ranked among African universities in a range of international surveys. It offers 1 175 study programmes in 237 degrees, diplomas and certificates, and learning support via FLY@UP, FLYHIGHER@UP, Social Learning Spaces, Connected Campuses, and the Dedicated Extended Curriculum Programmes (ECPs) Campus at Mamelodi. The University has extended its distance education courses and has developed fully online programmes, as well as blended and hybrid learning modules across faculties. These attract a growing enrolment of international students.

UP showcases some world of work enterprises, including its Centre for Entrepreneurship and the Centre for the Future of Work, as well as a Ready for Work Programme. It also has 33 000 students involved in community projects. The growing international profile of UP is evident in partnerships with African universities and other global networks to enhance its global influence in research and attract foreign students. The University has identified five pillars that describe its aims: quality; relevance and impact; creating

knowledge; developing people; and making a difference⁴.

CHE audit process

The of the CHE panel was to carry out a quality audit of the University of Pretoria (UP) teaching and learning, research and CE at undergraduate (UG), honours, and coursework master's level at the University of Pretoria (UP). The process began with the distribution of the UP-Self-evaluation Report (SER) in June 2022, the CHE *Manual for Institutional Audits* (2021), and the CHE *Framework for Institutional Audits* (2021) to members of the panel. At the end of June, the CHE Director, Dr Britta Zawada, presented an orientation webinar followed by a discussion by the CHE UP panel about the audit plan, which unfolded in virtual weekly meetings scheduled on Fridays from 15:00 to 17:00 from late June to the end of October 2022, when the Draft Report was submitted to the CHE for its first critical reading and comment. Emendations were made during two meetings in November, and the second draft was sent to the CHE officer, Dr Bongwiwe Hobololo, on 2 December 2022. Further refinements were made for the presentation of the Report to the Institutional Audit Committee (IAC) at the CHE, scheduled for January 2023. The CHE panel then made further improvements based on the critical reading of the IAC before referral to UP for factual corrections in March 2023. After that, the Report will be formally approved by the Higher Education Qualifications Committee (HEQC).

The early meetings of the CHE panel focused on a critical reading of the UP SER and an intensive discussion of appropriate lines of inquiry to engage the various constituencies at UP during the CHE audit site visit, scheduled for 5–9 September 2022. To do this systematically, the panel proposed a programme of virtual interviews and campus tours. Once the draft schedule had been devised, the CHE panel began to develop its lines of inquiry in respect of the 16 CHE standards. Each panel member was assigned a focus area, drawing on his or her respective expertise. A detailed set of probing questions was devised for the interview sessions to triangulate the evidence contained in the UP SER, the PoE, and the physical campus tours.

The CHE Manager: Institutional Audits, liaised with the UP coordinator, Prof. Gerald Ouma, and his team to develop the schedule for the CHE site visit, which entailed

⁴ <https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/520/Publications/2021/up-at-a-glance-2021.zp216034.pdf>

identifying interviewees across the University portfolios and its wider stakeholder community for each of the proposed 28 sessions. The schedule was refined until its final iteration was distributed on 3 September 2022.

The virtual interviews were conducted from 5–7 September 2022, the campus tours of Mamelodi, Groenkloof, and Hatfield (and virtual tours provided by UP to the CHE panel) took place on 8 September, and face-to-face interviews and the preliminary oral report to the UP Vice-Chancellor and Principal, members of Executive Management and Deans completed the CHE audit on 9 September 2022.

The CHE panel appreciated the cooperation of the UP Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof. Tawana Kupe, and his Executive Management and Deans, as well as academic and administrative staff across the faculties and campuses of the University, during the CHE Institutional Quality Audit. The project received wide coverage in its preparation and production at UP. The reception of the panel was cordial, and the coordination was seamless, which reflected the professionalism of the collaboration. The panel expressed its sincere thanks. It was especially grateful to the UP co-ordinating team, led by Prof. Gerald Ouma, Senior Director, Department of Institutional Planning (DIP), for its leadership, logistical wisdom, technological support, hard work, and collegiality. The CHE panel found its engagement with students and academic, administrative, and support staff, as well as external constituencies, including professional boards, alumni, and employers, extremely helpful in formulating constructive recommendations, which we trust, will enhance the quality of UP programmes and student 'graduateness', as well as the reputation of the University for quality teaching and world-class research.

The University of Pretoria self-evaluation report

The University of Pretoria (UP) self-evaluation report (SER) shows that the University has subjected itself to deep self-reflection, in line with the CHE requirements and guidelines. The CHE audit panel acknowledged the comprehensive, well-written report on each of the four focus areas. The SER marshaled relevant institutional data to present a credible profile of the University and an evidence-based narrative on each of the 16 standards stipulated in the CHE Framework. The SER is itself a valuable diagnostic and monitoring document.

The *Institutional Profile* (SER, pp. 2–16) in the UP SER is a very useful high-level overview and informs the more detailed contents of the UP ‘Reflections on the 16 Standards’ (SER, pp. 17–140). The comprehensive conclusion (SER, pp. 141–146) distils the areas that UP has identified as ‘highly functional’ or ‘mature’ and sets out a list of strategies and solutions for those standards rated ‘functional’. In its assessment of quality across the 16 standards, the SER rates CHE Focus Area 1, Standards 1 and 4; Focus Area 2, Standards 7–8; Focus Area 3, Standards 9–12; and Focus Area 4, Standards 13, 15 and 16, as ‘mature or highly functional’ (4 on the CHE scale), measured by the CHE (1–4) scale. Only five standards (2, 3, 6, and 14) were rated ‘functional’ (3 on the CHE scale), according to the UP self-evaluation. None needs ‘substantial improvement’ (measuring 2 on the CHE scale).

The CHE panel interviews were based on a careful reading of the 150-page SER, its addenda, and the PoE, which were provided electronically. This archive formed the basis of the investigation by the CHE panel and facilitated a productive engagement with UP and an animated discussion among the members of the panel. The UP SER explored the contours of the four CHE focus areas and elucidated various systems, themes, and issues relating to quality at UP. These informed the lines of inquiry for the CHE panel, and were designed to:

- examine the QMS at the University;
- confirm the differentiated identity of UP as a research-intensive university;
- review the UP-student success rates;
- gauge innovation in digital learning and interactive pedagogies in the Covid-19 and post-pandemic era;
- assess changes to the UP-learning management system (LMS);
- observe equity and parity across all UP campuses with respect to facilities, staffing, and student opportunities and support;
- understand funding and resource allocation to faculties, including student bursaries and other income streams;
- evaluate the transformation of the University, including curriculum, access, and inclusivity;
- estimate the sophistication of the various information and communication technology (ICT) systems, electronic data platforms and cloud solutions in the

interest of institutional efficiency and predictive analytics; and

- measure the relational health of UP among its staff, students, unions, management and external partners.

The following is a summary of the commendations and recommendations of the audit panel for UP.

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 the governance, strategic planning (as contained in its vision, mission, and strategic goals), management, and academic leadership of an institution play in its quality management 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 CE. These standards are:

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

The CHE panel acknowledged that UP has a clear vision and mission, and a flexible strategic plan (UP 2025) with realistic goals, in line with its identity as a research-intensive university. These have been developed as a result of wide consultation across many levels of the institution, from students and external stakeholders to the Council, and have been approved by the appropriate governance structures to drive the efficacy and efficiency of the academic project. The University has developed sound partnerships, which attract investment in innovative research. More engagement with academic, support, administrative, and service staff is required, however, to increase participation in planning to achieve higher standards, student outcomes, and smoother running of a large and complex university.

Commendations:

- a. The CHE panel commended the flexible nature of strategic planning at UP, which is responsive to unexpected events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The annual UP review is agile in a dynamic environment, using the Planning, Implement, Review and Improve (PIRI) model.
- b. The CHE panel commended the strategic relationship UP has with its alumni and external stakeholders in industry and business, which attracts investment and innovation transfer that advances Engineering 4.0 and Innovation Africa.

Recommendation:

1. The CHE panel recommended that UP facilitate more internal stakeholder engagement, especially with the recognised unions at UP, through wider policy advocacy so that all staff members understand the strategic direction of the University and are encouraged to participate in its mission.

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 National Development Plan [NDP] and related national planning), as well as sectoral, regional, continental and global imperatives (e.g. Africa Vision 2063 or the Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs]).*

The UP 2025 Strategic Plan addresses enhanced access and successful student learning, aiming to foster a transformed, inclusive, and equitable university community, as well as improve the University's social responsiveness and impact, in compliance with the NDP and continental African imperatives (e.g. Africa Vision 2063). UP aims to strengthen its research through more international collaboration and engagement linked to the SDGs. The CHE panel found evidence of innovative transdisciplinary research in Future Africa and Engineering 4.0 Institutes at UP. These latter two relate to the pressing issues of the Global South, as well as to advanced training in scarce skills fields, and contributing to solutions related to water, food, climate, and energy security. The CHE panel noted the initiatives towards transformation at UP, especially in its social, cultural

and economic dimensions, which need more impetus to realise greater inclusivity, keener social justice, and a more responsible citizenry. Moreover, the demographic profile of the academic staff, especially at professorial level, should change to reflect our society and its diversity, as well as its intellectual compass. To this end, the Transformation Office needs more capacity and resources to implement policy and monitor change.

Commendation:

- c. The CHE panel commended UP for playing a leading role in the African Global University Partnership (AGUP) initiative. UP contributes a critical academic mass on the African continent, which furthers its aspiration to play a more direct role in sustainability, development, and innovation.

Recommendations:

2. The CHE panel recommended that the University ensure that there is adequate support for the implementation of its transformation agenda, including;
 - provision of more resources for the Transformation Directorate;
 - broader engagement with and implementation of curriculum transformation; and
 - proactive recruitment of more African professors with an unqualified emphasis on women academics.
3. The CHE panel recommended that more support be provided for researchers to declare innovations from their publicly funded research through the disclosure of inventions (as envisaged in the Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research and Development [IPR] Act 51 of 2008) and more visible promotion of commercialisation, as well as more opportunities (via the University Capacity Development Programme [UCDP]) for emerging scholars to complete their PhDs.
4. The CHE panel recommended that UP ensure the implementation of its language policy across all faculties and campuses to advance inclusivity and a culture of belonging, through the expansion of UP Writing Centres and the advancement of indigenous African languages.

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.

The CHE panel recognised the extent of the UP-quality management system (QMS) and the flexibility of its PIRI model. This integrated approach characterised by close collaboration among the Council, Executive Management, and other University structures – advances the strategic alignment of teaching, research, and CE with the goals of quality management processes at the University. In addition, the alignment of the Executive Managers' respective portfolios provides a firm foundation for the annual adjustment of the academic plan of the University. The CHE panel noted that the recently restructured executive portfolios at UP have improved efficiency and governance across the institution. In particular, the appointment of a Chief Operating Officer (COO) has led to a greater focus on the core academic functions. The enrolment, transformation, employment equity, financial sustainability, and spatial development plans at the University articulate with the UP 2025 Strategic Plan. The Deans and Directors, in turn, produce faculty and department plans informed by the overarching University plan. These cascade down to staff across all the campuses and entities. The CHE panel also noted the agility displayed in planning during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the resolve to ensure quality on campuses inherited by UP after the merger of 2004–2006, especially the establishment of the UP-Pre-University Academy, hosted by the Groenkloof Campus and an extension of the offerings of the Mamelodi Campus.

Commendation:

- d) The CHE panel commended the development of the Mamelodi Campus as a Social Innovation Hub and the establishment of the UP-Pre-University Academy (PUA), hosted by the Groenkloof Campus, which can be viewed as an 'above the threshold' practice for universities that inherited historically disadvantaged campuses during the merging of HEIs in 2004–2006.

Recommendations:

- 5. The CHE panel recommended the allocation of additional resources to capacitate the more remote campuses from Hatfield to ensure parity of provision across UP, and to improve the overall convenience of staff and students at UP since inter-campus travel carries safety and other risks.

6. The CHE panel recommended that UP create an enabling environment for broader and more effective collaboration across faculties and campuses, especially with respect to resource parity and interdisciplinary teaching.

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 CHE panel acknowledged that UP has an elaborate and hierarchical governance structure of different bodies, authorities, and committees. The roles and responsibilities, composition, and terms of reference (ToR) are clearly defined, and the separation of governance and management is maintained to ensure accountability. The system is organised into logical categories of institutional governance, which include oversight and policy, academic governance for teaching and research, student governance and representation, strategic governance via advisory bodies, and operational governance, which encompasses decision-making at the executive management level. Some members of advisory bodies have an uneven understanding of their roles, as defined in the Higher Education Statute.

Focus Area 2: The design and implementation of the institutional quality management system (IQMS) support 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 improve the quality of learning, teaching, and research engagement, as well as accommodating the results of constructive, integrated CE within the context of the institution's mission. These standards are:

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

- (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 core functions of the HEI.

The CHE panel acknowledged that UP has a comprehensive policy environment that regulates the operations, governance, and management of the three core functions of the University. Academic planning policies provide a framework and guidelines for quality assurance. The UP SER and interviews confirmed that the development and revision of academic policies are initiated by direct stakeholders and finally approved by the Senate in a bottom-up approach to the curriculum and programme mix. The Registrar's Office ensures that policies are available online and updated regularly. In the interviews with staff, as well as in evidence provided in the UP SER, gaps were identified in the policy review cycle and are being addressed. Responsibility for academic quality assurance is primarily the responsibility of faculties, with faculty boards (FBs) playing a key role. The University has copious policies and procedures relating to teaching, research, and CE, but lacks an overarching institutional quality policy or framework to direct quality management. The Academic Planning and Quality (APQ) unit, located in the DIP, is specifically tasked with conducting various internal reviews, as well as supporting faculties that are subjected to external accreditation by professional bodies. Instructional products at UP are rigorously evaluated and revised, and modules are monitored to improve student performance and maintain relevance. The sophisticated ICTs at the University are employed to provide platforms, data, and predictive analytics for academic decision-making. The CHE panel acknowledged the integration and coherence of the various electronic platforms at UP, including the LMS, to enable staff and students to monitor their performance and organise their TL portfolios, as well as apportion resources equitably across campuses, faculties, residences, and departments.

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.*

The CHE panel found that UP has an extensive infrastructural ambition set out in its spatial development plan, which includes the expansion and upgrade of its campuses, as well as a generous commitment of resources for ICT capacity across the University, including residences. Considerable financial resources were invested in digital learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the development of online, blended learning, as well as systems for knowledge management in teaching and research. In terms of human resources, the Deans play a major role in the delivery of the academic project. The academic ecosystem also depends on the Department of Library Services (DLS), as well as the construction of residences as living and learning spaces. UP also focuses on private student accommodation to ensure a positive student environment through an accreditation system. The focus on the IQMS across all faculties and entities as a key driver of the academic project was endorsed by all the stakeholders with whom the CHE panel engaged during interviews and the site visits in September 2022. The mainly positive feedback from the support staff and academic management accords with the estimate of the UP SER for this standard.

Commendation:

- e) The CHE panel commended the detailed and realistic UP Spatial Plan, which demonstrates commitment by the University to maintain and expand systematically a favourable learning, research, and social environment for all students and staff; and to include important safety measures in the Plan. The flexibility and level of detail provided give effect to the strategic priorities of the University.

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 to inform consistent and sustainable decision-making.

The CHE panel acknowledged the well-developed and highly functional ICT infrastructure supporting the academic project, as well as key institutional support services, such as Finance and Auditing, Administration, the LMS, online library services, connectivity, the Digital Twin Cities project, and simulation capabilities supporting learning. The University has a suite of electronic platforms, such as Oracle PeopleSoft

Campus Solutions, PowerHEDA, and Pyramid Analytics, which define the capacity of UP to generate granular data that agglomerate to provide Big Data for predictive analytics. Institutional and Research Analytics (IRA) provides data to influence decision-making at senior and executive levels of management and to satisfy the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) reporting on the many-faceted performance of UP. The CHE panel acknowledged the role of the Tshebi Analytics Committee at UP in providing an accessible dashboard, reflecting student performance.

Commendation:

- f) The CHE panel commended the University for having highly developed and integrated ICT systems and infrastructure, which provide management information and sophisticated analytical capability for decision-making across all portfolios and campuses, in support of the UP strategy.

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

The University has a suite of technological platforms dealing with data, learning management, and assessment systems. Students' data are tracked and monitored with interventions to support at-risk candidates and to provide detailed learning analytics. Information is readily available at the various levels, from first-year UG to coursework master's (postgraduate [PG]) level, on a needs basis (access control) to manage and support the core functions of the University. Students can readily access their information and compare their performance with peers. The coherence of electronic platforms at UP permits integrated statistical analysis and therefore a calibrated future scenario of academic success.

Commendation:

- g) The CHE panel commended the University for its comprehensive and agile Risk Plan in which the mitigation strategies are realistic and implementable, and for monitoring the risks against the Plan to give effect to the Review component of the PIRI model.

Focus Area 3: The coherence and integration of the institutional quality management system support the core academic functions

The four standards in Focus Area 3 concentrate on the coherence and integration of the various components comprising the IQMS and on how these work in concert to support the likelihood of student success, improve the quality of learning, teaching, and research engagement, and accommodate the results of constructive integrated CE in line with the mission of the Institution. 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.*

UP has a well-established QMS embedded within its governance and management system and is supported at the highest level of the University. The iterative strategic planning process reflects the integrated approach at the Institution to quality management, following the PIRI model. The Senate oversees the regulation of teaching and learning, research, and CE, as well as the implementation of academic support services at UP. The Senate also plays an important role in ensuring that the academic processes are fit for purpose, as evidenced in the recent Senate review and revision of the General Academic Regulations. The University is in the process of aligning and updating its policies in line with the revised regulations, and the CHE panel supports its efforts in this regard. The panel was informed that, in some instances, practice needed to inform policy in areas, such as ethics and research, reflecting flexibility and responsiveness of UP to changing contexts. The integrated and structured relationship between various quality assurance measures is supported by the institutional planning mechanisms, which are implemented at every level of the institution, as well as at the individual level, through individual performance contracts. All core functions are aligned with the Faculty Implementation Plan, which identifies priorities and provides a means of monitoring progress. It is clear that the QAF of the University accommodates both top-down and bottom-up approaches, and the CHE panel was confident that an integrated and complementary QMS had been developed. Quality has been identified as a value at the highest levels of the Institution, and UP is encouraged to move beyond a culture that can be viewed as compliance-focused to one where quality is seen as a dynamic part of

the fabric of the University and is equally valued across all faculties to support synergy and innovation.

Recommendation:

7. The CHE panel recommended that UP implement a timely review of policies in line with its recently approved General Academic Regulations. These include those relating to PG education, teaching and learning, work-integrated learning (WIL), and external evaluation.
8. The CHE panel recommended that UP ensure a proper understanding of and adherence to the performance management system, across all skill levels, to ensure compliance leading to an improved performance culture.

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

Accountability for the implementation of the QMS is managed through the University hierarchy, i.e., the Vice-Chancellor (VC) is held accountable by the Council, and, in turn, the VC holds the Executive Management to account. Regular meetings are held between Executive Management and their reports to monitor the progress of Faculty Implementation Plans, staffing, and quality assurance. There are clear lines of reporting in faculties as well as in professional services departments. Institutional-level committees provide further means to monitor achievements and facilitate accountability. Proposals from these committees are considered by FBs before being submitted to Senex and the Senate. Interviews with staff by the CHE panel reflected a clear understanding of the lines of authority and a comprehensive awareness of responsibilities concerning the monitoring of and reporting on the implementation of the QMS.

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

UP budgeting is aligned with strategic objectives and operational commitments, supported by a systematic, well-embedded process involving a wide range of stakeholders. The drafting of the budget and the allocation of resources are the responsibilities of the Strategic Planning and Allocation of Resources Committee

(SPARC), which is chaired by the Vice-Principal (VP): Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Education. The CHE panel was informed that the composition of SPARC reflects an appropriate division of labour and ensures that there is a multi-perspective approach to resource allocation, in line with the operational and strategic imperatives. While the overall budgeting process is managed by the Department of Finance, which monitors and updates the budget every quarter, all faculties and professional services are expected to manage their own allocated budgets. UP aims to support the delegation of budget responsibilities to the level at which operational decisions are made and based on evidence from a range of stakeholders, the CHE panel was confident that this was being implemented effectively in practice.

Recommendation:

9. The CHE panel recommended that UP address the issue of disparity in student-to-staff ratios and expedite the implementation of its academic workload model to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning, and research is maintained and supported across all faculties.

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

At UP, the responsibility for ensuring that resources allocated to the QMS are used for their intended purpose falls under the DIP. Reports on progress against strategic objectives, in line with expenditure, are part of the institutional planning cycle and are submitted to the Executive who has primary oversight in this area. SPARC, as an Executive Committee, and the Academic Planning Committee (APC), as a Senate committee, ensure that academic planning and resourcing are aligned. UP has developed an Enrolment Plan to manage controlled growth in student recruitment in agreement with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), and annual faculty plans provide the means for ensuring that strategic objectives are operationalised within departments. Learning, teaching assessment, and research are formally monitored through the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Implementation Plan, managed through the DIP Implementation Plan. From a staff perspective, the results of the Institutional Culture Survey indicated positive support for leadership and management, but there are perceived barriers to robust debate and freedom of speech, reflecting a

potentially submissive culture. UP recognises the need to move beyond a compliance-driven culture to support its transformation agenda (as set out in the Review of Transformation Policy), and this opportunity should be used to instil an enhancement-focused quality culture in the institution.

Recommendation:

10. The CHE panel recommended that UP ensure that improvements identified through the implementation of M&E frameworks are followed up and that responsibility for making these improvements is identified and shared with stakeholders.
11. The CHE panel recommended that the University review its current decentralised and compliance-orientated approach to quality to lift it to a higher conceptual level in an overarching framework that promotes quality across faculties and campuses to realise the view that 'quality is a value' as stated by UP.

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 IQMS enhances the likelihood of student success, improves learning and teaching, and supports the scholarship of learning and teaching. These standards are examined in 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.*

A variety of teaching and learning (TL) policies and procedures (SER, p. 109) cover broad areas from staff development and teaching and evaluation to curriculum development, with a particular focus on the latter. The publications below are particularly instructive in the curriculum development and renewal processes at UP:

- the *Guidelines for Academic Regulation Amendment Proposals*;
- the *Process for Drafting Academic Regulation Amendment Proposals for the Introduction of New Programs or the Modification of Existing Programs*;

- the *Guidelines on Curriculum Design, Development, and Implementation*; and
- the *Curriculum Transformation Framework*.

Before external processes grant programme approval for compliance with the registration requirements of the DHET, CHE, and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), UP follows a stringent internal process. The CHE panel noted from minutes of various structures, starting with the PCs, that UP ensures that input and scrutiny from various levels of the University, using a bottom-up approach, begin with academics at the centre of programme delivery, and then flow upward to the Senate. In addition, various professional services departments work with educational consultants (ECs) and instructional designers (IDs) to support the development, renewal, and design of curricula. The CHE panel noted that UP followed the CHE *Quality Assurance Guidelines for Teaching and Learning and Assessment during the COVID-19 Pandemic (2020)*, but went beyond that to develop its strategies, drawing on its mature LMS. The innovative strategies are aptly captured in the report on the Status of Remote Teaching and Learning at UP. The University was innovative in the use of virtual teaching, and in some cases, used guest academics from local and international universities to collaborate in the teaching programme, a model that should be expanded widely in different configurations. Moreover, clinical work was made possible through virtual classes. A case in point is the ‘digital crit space’ used in the Architecture programmes. The space enables the invaluable scrutiny of students’ projects, which are reviewed in the same way as in real-world work situations. Intensive support was offered to improve access and success, and this included the provision of devices and data to students in need.

Recommendation:

12. The CHE panel recommended that the strides made in online learning be expanded to attract wider international student enrolments, in line with the global ambitions of UP, as well as to promote lifelong education through flexible short courses and micro-credentialing.

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

- (i) *curriculum transformation, curriculum reform and renewal;*

- (ii) *learning and teaching innovation; and*
- (iii) *the role of technology (1) in the curriculum, (2) in the world of work, and (3) in society in general.*

The University of Pretoria (UP) has formal structures, which focus on curriculum transformation, reform, and renewal, as well as methodological innovation. The CHE panel acknowledged that UP has a broad definition of curriculum transformation (decolonisation and democratisation) guided by four drivers:

- responsiveness to social context;
- epistemological diversity;
- renewal of pedagogy and classroom practices; and
- an institutional culture of openness and critical reflection to guide an inclusive process of engagement on what curriculum transformation entails (through the Curriculum Transformation Framework).

The CHE panel noted that UP invests in teaching innovation and student support, and there is evidence of established support units, such as the APQ Unit, which assist in presenting academic proposals to the Senate while promoting systematic reviews and academic quality assurance measures linked to improvement plans. Moreover, UP has a Department of Education Innovation (DEI) for teaching and learning. The DEI has a team of dedicated instructional designers and educational consultants that support academic staff academically. The University uses Blackboard Learn LMS (branded as 'clickUP'), Blackboard Mobile, and Blackboard Collaborate technologies to support its hybrid approach to teaching and learning. In 2020, UP implemented its recalibrated TL strategy, Teach and Learn: The UP Way, to enhance the student learning experience and success rate.

Commendation:

- h) The CHE panel commended UP for adopting a flexible approach to programme delivery to ensure that technology is used in learning and assessment, supporting an effective hybrid and blended learning environment, as well as pursuing

innovation in digital learning. Other universities could also learn from the use UP makes of the 'crit space' in architecture and augmented reality.

- i) The CHE panel commended the UP's approach to CE, acknowledging that, in many courses at the University, CE activities are credit-bearing. In some programmes, students cannot graduate without demonstrating that they have completed CE-related modules. The fact that the community sometimes contributes to the CE evaluation of students' performance is even more commendable.

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 UP solicits student feedback on the delivery of modules and recognises that students play a crucial role in enhancing their own learning experiences. The fact that this occurs under institutionalised guidelines in the Policy Framework of Procedure: Student Feedback on Teaching Survey, is noteworthy. The module evaluation system enables academic staff to assess their teaching and obtain a fresh perspective on their work to improve the quality of instruction. The process also enables academic staff to compile a PoE that could be used for academic promotion and/or performance management. Students indicated that they are knowledgeable about curriculum changes, including contemporary debates about transformation. Some students commented that their work was not only theoretical but also had a practical component. Their experiences appeared to vary from faculty to faculty, and views on a positive experience differed among UG and PG students. The CHE panel observed that the University is actively involved in measures to monitor student behaviour and activities to improve student success. Blackboard automated notifications allow students to track their performance, thus enabling them to take responsibility for their learning, thanks to recent enhancements to online course management.

Recommendation:

13. The CHE panel noted staff shortages under the wellness programme and recommended that the Human Resources Unit develop a system to identify and prioritise emergency cases.

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

The University of Pretoria (UP) regularly conducts graduate destination surveys to gather information about the type and anticipated length of graduate employment or self-employment, and whether this is closely related to their programme of study. Since 2009, the University has used the biennial survey to collect information on the work situations of graduates and admission to PG programmes. The response rate to this survey compares favourably with data obtained by other universities both locally and abroad, so the information can be relied upon to monitor the activities of the UP-Career Services Office (CSO). The University regularly updates the knowledge and attributes that students require in the future, mainly in industry, to improve employability. This list takes into account research on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and relates to the following abilities and values: adaptability, career navigation, self-directed learning, lifelong learning, the capacity to solve complex problems by using a multidisciplinary approach, critical thinking, innovation (creativity), teamwork (collaboration), environmental awareness, and a successful work ethic.