**Quality Enhancement Project**

**Institutional Reports: Phase 1**

**Due Date: 11 December 2015**

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| **Name of Institution** | Central University of Technology, Free State |
| **Contact Person** | Professor Henk de Jager |
| **Date of submission** | 10 December 2015 |

The aim of this institutional report is to demonstrate efforts to bring about enhancements in each of the four Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) focus areas since the beginning of Phase 1 of the QEP in February 2014, reflect on the journey towards enhancement and assess the extent to which the efforts have resulted in improvements.

**BACKGROUND**

The second institutional cycle of audit by CHE namely, Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) commenced last year. CUT launched its project in February 2014 and task teams were formed and presented their findings with the intention to share with wider QEP audiences, apart from Senate which approved the baseline report in August 2014 for onward submission to the CHE.

The aim of the institutional report is to demonstrate efforts to bring about enhancements in each of the four Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) focus areas since the beginning of Phase 1 of the QEP in February 2014, reflect on the journey towards enhancement and assess the extent to which the efforts have resulted in improvements.

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| **1. INTRODUCTION (suggested length 2-5 pages)** |
| **Indicate how the report was prepared. Include a list of the people that were involved, their designations and their roles in the preparation of the report.**In 2014 the Central University of Technology (CUT) welcomed the opportunity to participate in the Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) of the CHE. It coincided with a premeditated and carefully planned institutional enterprise to achieve higher levels of quality and integrity in CUT’s academic project. In August the Academic Planning Unit appointed a Deputy Director Quality Enhancement who is responsible for on-going quality enhancement procedures and maintenance of QE records within the university. A CUT Quality Enhancement Strategy (QES) was developed and approved. The QES serves as a master plan to secure the highest quality outputs that would encourage and develop a culture of quality enhancement at all levels across the university. The CUT ensures that planned and systematic management of the academic project, academic standards, that is enhancement focused, is a central element of the achievement of a high quality student’s experience. At the same time a CUT Quality Enhancement Committee was appointed by the DVC: Academic and Research. CUT was thus well prepared to receive and integrate the first phase of the QEP in the execution of its core functions. In order to effectively address the requirements of the QEP the DVC: Academic and Research thus established four task teams, which were responsible for each of the Key Performance Areas identified by the QEP. Each of the teams had a clear outline of its commission. Overseen by the Academic Planning Unit the task teams conceptualized and interpreted the information gathered as it related to teaching and learning. This culminated in a workshop where the results were profiled against the rationale of the academic project of the university. This set the parameters for an integrated and comprehensive report. The DVC: Academic and Research took it through the decision making structures of CUT and submitted the report to the CHE in August 2014. This report was obviously informed by institutional research, reliable evidence, data and information, applicable analyses, practices, etc. It offered a substantiated understanding of current achievements, activities and challenges in the four KPA’s as related to teaching and learning. The four Key Performance Areas are indeed prerequisites for good teaching and learning. The CHE believes that qualitative emendation teaching and learning in the Higher Education sector will play a pivotal role in the production of graduates required for the reconstruction and development of South Africa. One of the key issues underpinning the CUT strategic plan as envisioned in Vision 2020 is teaching and learning. The Second Strategic Set of Vision 2020 and Strategic Plan, which is being implemented from 2014-2017, is identified as “innovation of the academic project.” especially in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). One of the explicit institutional goals is: “Teaching and learning to shape the academic future of CUT in such a way that it is high quality, niche focused and differentiated.” The objectives are to provide high quality teaching and learning, to review the approach to education; to facilitate our graduate entry to workplace or entrepreneurship, to recruit and support high quality students form all backgrounds. With this guiding framework in place, the CUT could align its institutional activities in this regard with its participation in the CHE-QEP.By the end of the third quarter of 2014 the university was thus ready and geared to engage in the second phase of the QEP of the CHE. After 12 months, under guidance of the same leadership team (the DVC: Academic & Research, Dean: Academic Development & Support, Director: Academic Planning Unit and Deputy-Director: Quality Enhancement), the four task teams in October 2015 submitted the results of their engagement in terms of the prerequisites of the second phase of the QEP as specified for the four KPA’s to the Academic Planning Unit. The task teams, consisting of experienced experts in the respective fields as well as important role players, planned their own activities, meetings and engagements. All information was carefully discussed and considered before it was consolidated in comprehensive reports. The APU then compiled the final report by end October 2015. In his capacity as Project Leader, the DVC: Academic & Research, finalized the report and guided it through for institutional approval. Senate’s approval was given on 9 November 2015, while the University Council discussed and accepted the report on 28 November 2015. CUT was in a position to meet the CHE deadline and submitted the Institutional Report on 11 December 2015. The leadership team were: Project Leader:* DVC Academic & Research: Prof Henk de Jager

Co-Leaders:* Dean: Academic Development & Support: Prof Mabokang Monnapula-Mapesela
* Director: Academic Planning Unit: Dr Daryl Balia
* Deputy Director: Quality Enhancement: Mr Ike Mokhele

The four task teams were respectively chaired by the following people:1. Enhancing Academics as Teachers: Dr W Setlalentoa;2. Enhancing Student Support and Development: Prof Mabokang Monnapula-Mapesela;3. Enhancing the Learning Environment: Mr J Badenhorst; and4. Enhancing Course and Programme Enrolment Management: Dr J Nkonoane. The teams are listed below:**Task Team 1: Enhancing Academics as Teachers**

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| Designation | Title and Name | First Name |
| Dean: Faculty of Health Sciences (**Chair**)Director: Human Resources Deputy Director: Employment Equity and HR SystemsDeputy Director: Institutional Research HoDLecturerLecturerLecturerLecturerStudent(s) | Prof. S MasheleMr. Leon VenterMs. H KotzeDr. A SzubargaDr. W SetlalentoaDr. L DzansiMr. L SempeDr. M LekhuMs. D MkhizeMs. V VangaMs. D Lefafa | SamsonLeonHeleneAntoniWendyLineoLetlohonoloMotshidisiDaphneVuyelwaDikeledi |

**Task Team 2: Enhancing Student Support & Development**

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| Designation | Title and Name | First Name |
| Dean: Academic Development & Support (**Chair)**Manager: Health Centre and Psych. ServicesDean: Faculty of the HumanitiesCampus Director: Welkom CampusHoDHoDDeputy RegistrarAssistant Director: Student RecruitmentLecturerStudent(s) | Prof. M Monnapula-MapeselaMr. G CronjeProf. D NgidiDr. O MakolaDr. H BrinkProf. T Van NiekerkDr. P TondiDr. C MorekuMs. J NkhebenyaneMr. N QhalaMr. J Nyamane (SRC Bfn) | MabokangGertDavidOupaHarryTrynaPakisoClementJaneNeoJabulani |

**Task Team 3: Enhancing the Learning Environment**

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| Designation | Title and Name | First Name |
| Director: E-Learning (**Chair)** Senior Director: University LibrarianDirector: IT & Logistics Dean: Faculty of EngineeringHoDHoDDepartment ManagerDirector: Curriculum DevelopmentLecturerStudent(s) | Mr. J BadenhorstMr. J KabambaMr. W PengilyProf. A NgowiProf. H VermaakDr. M MasindeDr. M OosthuizenMs. C MaimaneMs. E GreylingMr. C Ndobeni (SRC Welkom) | JohanJulianoWilliamAlfredHermanMuthoniMarithaChichiEricaClive |

**Task Team 4: Enhancing Course & Programme Enrolment Management**

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| Designation | Title and Name | First Name |
| Deputy Campus Manager: Welkom Campus (**Chair)**Deputy Registrar: Academic AdministrationTemporary Deputy Director: Data Management Dean: Faculty Management SciencesHoDHoDHoDHoDStudent(s) | Dr. J NkonoaneMs. N DlaminiProf. R BritzProf. A StrydomProf. P Le RouxProf. H Friedrich-NelProf. F Van SchalkwykMs. A NaidooMr. A KomeniMr. T Mngengwane (SRC Wlk) | JohannesNtokozoRudolphAlbertPietHestaFrancesAmandaAkhonaThembikosi |

The Task Teams planned their own activities, meetings and engagements. Each submitted a report to the Academic Planning Unit, where it was consolidated and finalised on 21 October 2015. The draft report was then submitted to the DVC: Academic & Research, who took it through the decision making structures of CUT:* Senate approval: 9 November 2015
* Council Approval: 28 November 2015

The current report not only indicates what has been achieved, advanced, improved and adjusted during the past year, but also bears witness to barriers still eroding effective teaching and learning, as denoted in CUT’s critical reflection on the different KPA’s.  |

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| **2. FOCUS AREA 1: ENHANCING ACADEMICS AS TEACHERS (suggested length 10-20 pages)*****Includes: professional development, reward and recognition, workload, conditions of service and performance appraisal.***This section of the report should make reference to all of the sub-topics listed above, either by discussing them individually or by integrating them. Note: it is not necessary to respond to each of the questions below for every sub-topic. |
| **2.1 Summarise what the university considers to be the key issues in enhancing academics as teachers in one or two paragraphs.**In 2014 the enrolment total of registered students at CUT passed the 14000 mark. The consequences of the massification of higher education in South Africa into a university sector that is not yet differentiated enough to accommodate the diversity of needs, skills, expectations, etc., of those entering the system, summoned the university to take appropriate action. The new situation obviously fundamentally challenged not only “*the why and the what”* of university education, but in particular the *how* of its teaching activities. Vision 2020 and the Strategic Plan map out the trajectories of the institution’s response. The second strategic set of the University’s Vision 2020 is innovation of the academic project. Providing quality teaching and learning forms an integral part in this regard and postulated the enhancement of its academics as teachers.Accordingly, CUT prioritised the professional development of academics and uses a number of programmes to support and develop them as teachers with the ultimate aim to improve its capacity to reach its goals, to achieve students’ success and thus to underpin the rationale of its qualifications offer. Three key issues in this regard were identified: * the effectiveness of institutional responses to the need for and recognition of informed, substantiated and appropriate pedagogical training (discipline-based education development) to empower staff in the scholarship of teaching and learning;
* the cultivation of induction programmes and advancement of teaching and learning skills pertaining to young upcoming academics to provide the institution with a vibrant young podium of excellence in teaching; and
* the improvement of the qualifications profile of its staff. Currently 33% of staff members hold a doctorate, while 12% serve in the professoriate of the institution.

In the enhancement of the professional development of its teaching staff, as also informed by the participation in the QEP, the institution is guided by the above three considerations.**2.2 During Phase 1 of the QEP, what changes at institutional level (a) have been made, (b) are in progress, or (c) are in the planning stages that relate to enhancing academics as teachers?**Phase 1 of the QEP indicated that professional development, performance appraisal, recognition of excellence in teaching, workload distribution and conditions of service, despite limitations, were put into effect at CUT. Teaching staff enrolled for modules in assessment and learning facilitation offered by the University of the Free State, participated in need-directed training and development activities according to an annual training programme. The institution supports staff financially to obtain applicable qualifications. The Vice-Chancellor’s Excellence Awards scheme, well established at CUT, includes teaching awards and curriculum innovation. At the same time limitations were identified. These included the participation in and effectiveness of academic staff development programmes, workshops, leadership training, the lack of clear policy and procedural guidelines regarding student peer evaluations and difficulties and hitches with regard to workload distribution and the performance appraisal and promotion. Initiated by the DVC: Academic & Research the findings of the Report was discussed in-depth and evaluated. This lead to the implementation of significant changes at institutional level, in which the Academic Planning Unit and mentioned Task Teams played a pivotal role. In addressing the identified limitations, therefore, significant developments and changes relating to the enhancement of CUT academics as teachers at institutional level included1. the review and or development of new policy documents,
2. the inception of a unit to advance scholarship in teaching and learning,
3. the promotion of an in-depth academic discourse on campus pertaining to teaching, and
4. the ongoing participation in national projects for the enhancement of academics as teachers.

The intention of these institutional efforts is to address the aforementioned issues meaningfully. 1. Policy documents

Three policy documents that aim to guide better performance in teaching and learning as well as to enhance professional development of teaching staff, were approved by CUT during the first phase of the QEP. * During 2014 the newly approved *Policy for the Promotion of Academics* was implemented in full. Obviously, formal and appropriate qualifications, a high level of professional knowledge, scholarly activity and leadership are conclusive in this regard. The policy however, provides for teaching experience and reflection on the underpinning philosophy of education offered by the candidate. Teaching portfolios are stipulated to be an important part of the submitted applications for promotion, which should include proof of teaching experience, curriculum development, assessment and feedback to students.
* The *Employee Development and Performance Management System (EDPMS)* has been re-designed to provide for more explicit reporting on professional training and pedagogical development.
* The *Academic Workload Allocation Model and Working Hours of Academics* was piloted as from January 2015. At the May 2015 meeting of Senate, the university approved the Academic Workload Allocation Model. This ensures an even distribution of staff workload, whilst meeting all the required teaching and research activities and strategic imperatives where applicable. This management mechanism, within an agreed framework for the determination of duties of academic staff, thus provides for a substantiated workload platform that allows for the management and recognition of discipline-based education development.
1. Unit for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
* The 2015 inception of the *Unit for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (SoTL) at CUT should be considered as an important step in enhancing teaching capacity of lecturers. The main focus of the Unit is mentoring academics and promoting research in teaching and learning. The Unit plays a key role in advancing a shared understanding and articulation of what really constitutes effective quality teaching. In profiling the fundamental prerequisite that pedagogical approaches should be rooted in the scholarship of teaching and learning, the Unit promotes the conceptualising of university teaching as a profession in a right of its own, utilising the full resources applicable to the academic and professional discourse.
1. Participation in national projects
* In 2015 CUT continued to participate in two national programmes ((Stars of Academy and Research (SOAR) and the HELTASA Fellowship Programme Teaching Advancement at Universities (TAU)) that enhance teaching development of academics. The objectives of the SOAR programme are to increase the critical mass of young outstanding black female academics particularly in scarce and critical skills, and thus to create, support, promote and sustain excellence in scientific and technological teaching and research. The TAU programme aims to contribute towards the enhancement of teaching and learning in higher education in South Africa by supporting the development of a cadre of academics across institutions and disciplines as scholars, leaders and mentors in their fields, and to enhance the status and stature of teaching.
* The online student and peer evaluations that began in 2014 continued in 2015. The results of the student evaluations are employed to improve teaching strategies and abilities of staff.

CUT believes that these initiatives, embedded in a range of existing activities and support structures offered by ADS and APU, sustain a consolidated institutional basis that not only formally broadens the teaching (pedagogical) requirements for CUT teaching staff, but also ensures that Vision 2020 will be realised. **2.3 Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars to illustrate specific aspects of the changes that are successful. Provide evidence for claims of success. Where an activity is in the planning stages, indicate what evidence will be collected.**The *Unit for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (SoTL) has made strides in establishing a culture of and academic participation (published research outputs) in the scholarship of teaching and learning at CUT. In this regard the Unit has: * organised and facilitated a number of information sessions, workshops and colloquiae in which both national and international SoTL experts took part to raise the profile of SoTL at CUT;
* hosted with institutional support an international SoTL conference (01-02 October 2015) on the Bloemfontein campus in which CUT staff participated; and
* to date, incorporates a total of 50 mentees and 13 mentors from all faculties that participate in SoTL.

The Unit has established itself as an entity of consequence and plays a pivotal role in enhancing teaching quality. Research teams are expected to engage in the following activities:* Develop research development plans for a three year period with clear research output targets and milestones to be achieved annually;
* Identify and participate in research development opportunities (teacher development projects, teaching outputs and publications, and training and development);
* Research seminars and workshops – sharing good practice in teaching and learning;
* Present at least one paper on teaching and learning at an institutional conference such as one held on 1-2 October 2015, one paper at a national teaching and learning conference and one paper at a teaching and learning international conference, all with opportunities for publication of proceedings or papers in accredited journals;
* Get to know various research methods (qualitative and quantitative).

The annual CUT Teaching and Learning conference, presented as a seminar on *Innovation in Teaching and Learning* (28-29 may 2015), focused on innovation in teaching and learning with special emphasis on the utilisation of technology. Ten CUT academics read papers at the seminar, attended by 170 people. In advancing the teaching and learning skills of young upcoming academics, the following should be noted: * Six (6) CUT SOAR fellows completed their programmes in during 2013-2014. For 2014-2017, four CUT follows participate in the programme, three of them as Master’s students and one as a doctoral candidate;
* Three (3) TAU fellows were nominated for a one year teaching advancement at universities programme for the period 2014-2017;
* A total of thirty five (35) women are actively involved in the Mentorship Programme for black female academics that was established in 2014 with the purpose advancing their careers as teachers and researchers;
* CUT has been awarded bursaries for four follows to participate in the New Generation of Academics Project as part of growing a new generation of academics in higher education.

Academic staff development was embodied in the following:* Four (4) capacity-building programmes, conducted across the four faculties to enhance teaching and learning modalities and learner-centred approaches with clear desired outcomes. These included Assessment of Learning (17 staff), Learning Materials Development (44 staff) and Credits Accumulation and Transfer Policy (20 staff);
* The participation of staff in industry exposure. Fifteen academics across the four faculties, supported through the Teaching Development Grant, participated in industry exposure in 2014/2015 in order to keep abreast with new developments and to assist them in preparing and teaching industry relevant curricula.

**2.4 Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars of changes that have not been successful and suggest reasons.**A key issue at CUT pertains to the effectiveness of institutional responses to the need for excellence in teaching. Should this be measured against numbers of participating staff in related formal programmes and activities, a concern would then need to be reflected in the following: * the low number of academics participating in industry exposure, considering that the plan provided for five academics per faculty per year; and
* the fact that a large component of staff still do not attend SoTL seminars and conferences as they do not see the link between research and teaching.

Indicators (as illustrated in the table below) suggest that the qualification profile of teaching staff at CUT maintains itself at a consistent level. This concern should be addressed, since the quality of the academic offerings and the public profile an institution nurtures is reflected in especially the PhD cohort of its teaching staff. The increase of 11 PhD’s among staff is, however, promising.

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|  | PhD Full-time | PhD Part-time | M Full-time | M Part-time |
| Sept 2013 | 79 | - | 117 | - |
| Sept 2015 | 96 | 25 | 119 | 49 |

**2.5 If possible, identify one or more promising practices related to this focus area. Describe the practice and provide evidence for success. Suggest what the key features might be.**A growing interest in obtaining formal qualifications in Higher Education surfaced during the past years. A number of staff members obtained postgraduate qualifications in this regard. This tendency is continuing. Four staff members of Academic Development and Support have enrolled for the Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education at Rhodes University in 2015. The purpose of this Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education is to advance academic developers’ knowledge of higher education as a field of study and to enable them to conceptualise, design and implement formal and informal academic development initiatives (with a particular focus on academic staff development) appropriate to their specific contexts. This obviously enhances the academic integrity and quality of academic support at CUT.An increasing number of CUT staff are participating in intellectual reflection on teaching and learning, as demonstrated in the participation of related conferences, for example.In order to enhance teaching a module on *Assessment and Facilitation of Teaching and Learning* is compulsory for all lecturers and, in 2014, 31 academic staff members registered with the University of the Free State and completed the module. Positive feedback was received from the participants in terms of the impact on their teaching.**2.6 Identify the main challenges the university still faces in relation to this focus area.**The main challenge facing the CUT is, within the markers of Vision 2020, to keep up with the complexity of growing needs of incoming students. The cost-effective enhancement of academics as teachers plays a pivotal role in guiding students to perform successfully in the post-school sector and to exit as educated and responsible citizens, equipped to live and work a meaningful life. |

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| **3. FOCUS AREA 2: ENHANCING STUDENT SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT (suggested length 10-20 pages)*****Includes: career and curriculum advising, life and academic skills development, counselling, student performance monitoring and referral.***This section of the report should make reference to all of the sub-topics listed above, either by discussing them individually or by integrating them. Note: it is not necessary to respond to each of the questions below for every sub-topic. |
| **3.1 Summarise what the university considers to be the key issues in enhancing student support and development.**At CUT organisational structures contributing to student support and development are operative and in terms of a blended approach aim to integrate its activities into academic life at the university. The APU provides a functional platform for institutional research and monitoring that informs management, ADS and relevant structures with reliable data to enhance effective student support and development. Critical self-reflection identified the following key issues in this regard: * to ensure that first-time entering students make correct programme choices, e.g. through academic advising and the introduction of NBT;
* to ensure that all first year students are well prepared to take up and succeed in their university studies, e.g. the Student Peer Mentorship Programme, the Reading Lab, study skills workshops, etc.;
* to track at-risk-students early in their studies, i.e. in the first quarter of their first year;
* to offer high impact student support programmes effectively;
* to ensure that students, particularly first year students, have the best learning experience;
* to ensure that lecturers research their own teaching in order to improve student learning and performance, retention, throughput and success rates at all levels; and
* to ensure that teaching and learning, as well as support programmes, produce well-rounded graduates with attributes for self-employment and employability skills preferred by business and industry.

It is clear that the aforementioned key issues relate to the effectiveness of existing interventions, structures and resources allocated to the enhancement of student support and development. **3.2 During Phase 1 of the QEP, what changes at institutional level (a) have been made, (b) are in progress, or (c) are in the planning stages that relate to enhancing student support and development?**Informed by its realities and contexts the following adjustments or changes relating to student support and development were made:* *National Benchmark Tests* have been written by first year students for the first time as a means to identify students who need academic support and for placement into extended curriculum programmes.
* *The Graduate Attributes Project,* launched in March 2015 on both campuses (Welkom and Bloemfontein), aims not only to raise an awareness of the ten CUT graduate attributes, but also to guide the CUT community (students and staff) to embrace the underpinning rationale in creating a distinctive culture of academic involvement and community service. As an institution-wide non-academic initiative to support and develop first year students, the well-established Student Peer Mentorship Programme, now running in its third year, was therefore adjusted in 2015 to build on the accepted CUT graduate attributes.
* The academic offer of *Supplemental Instruction*, the most popular support programme at CUT, has been improved to include the use of technology.
* *PIM5011*, a module aimed at equipping students with information and research skills and to appreciate and observe academic ethics such as referencing, plagiarism and copyright law, was made compulsory for all first year students in 2015.
* The *core curriculum* (ALP and Digital Literacy) has been integrated in all new HEQSF aligned programmes and is compulsory for all students.
* A *Writing Centre* has been established in August 2015. It functions as a drop-in service on both campuses that assists undergraduate students with academic language support as well as writing and study skills through individual assistance, workshops and online resources.
* CUT has reviewed its *Provision for Students with Disabilities Policy*, to provide for the improvement of learning conditions for students with disabilities. There are, however, still challenges regarding the accessibility of facilities.

Careful consideration was given to the establishment of Academic Advising. In early 2015 ADS developed a proposal to introduce academic advising, to be seated in faculty structures. This is a dedicated endeavour to offer informed career guidance and meaningful exposure within the ambit of WIL to students. It is intended to supplement the student Peer Mentorship Programme and to involve experienced lecturing staff. The full implementation of this initiative should be completed during the fourth term of 2015. Areas demanding further research were also identified. The following projects to enhance student support and development are in the planning stages:* a research project to establish how meaning-centred interventions contribute to student success at first year level is in the planning stages and will be conducted in 2016;
* a study to establish how many students that attend the open day, Winter and Saturday Schools, eventually enrol with CUT;
* CUT also participated in a national collaborative project on graduate attributes and strategic teaching undertaken by UoTs. This project aims to develop some learning programmes as flagship programmes in promoting graduate attributes.

Given the above mentioned changes, aspects and planned developments, it is apparent that the enhancement of student support and development is of the utmost importance for CUT and provides the driving rationale for its academic project. This is our ongoing investment in the future of our people and our country. **3.3 Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars to illustrate specific aspects of the change(s) that are successful. Provide evidence for claims of success. Where an activity is in the planning stages, indicate what evidence will be collected.**Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a long-standing academic support programme at the institution which has proved to be sustainable and popular with the students. This has been improved to include the use of technology. Blackboard and social media are used to advance the effectiveness of SI. SI is still the most preferred support programme by the students and has grown massively. This, however, poses challenges related to capacity and space for offering effective SI classes. **3.4 Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars of changes that have not been successful and suggest reasons.**CUT has identified a few concerns that will be addressed appropriately as follows:* The institution has been grappling to find and establish a reliable and effective tracking system for students-at-risk. Currently CUT depends on lecturing staff to refer all students who obtain 50% and less to attend Supplemental Instruction or engage with Counselling Services. This practise is complicated and depends on the willingness of lecturing staff to refer students for support. Monitoring is also a challenge.
* There is a need to improve the orientation programme. Not all students attend since they are not registered at the time of orientation. The effectiveness of the orientation guide thus was limited to a certain extent.

**3.5 If possible, identify one or more promising practices related to this focus area. Describe the practice and provide evidence for success. Suggest what the key features might be.**The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) project launched in January 2015 is specifically intended to promote teaching as a tool for ensuring sustainable learning. The SoTL Unit at CUT has the following mandate:* to enhance the quality of teaching and learning at the university;
* to improve the student success rate;
* to increase the research outputs, especially in SoTL.

The impact of this academic initiative on student support and development should not be underestimated. This is a well-grounded and scholarly motivated attempt to continuously nurture an environment that places learner-centred practices and principles at the core of teaching. We enrich the educative potential by encouraging students and scholars to enhance their learning and teaching through critical and collective reflection on what is and what should be taught. **3.6 Identify the main challenges the university still faces in relation to this focus area.**Three challenges were identified as follows: * Poor student attendance and participation in support programmes. These are taken as voluntary and add additional strain on the workload.
* Encouraging participation by academic staff in student academic support. There is still a need to integrate student support programmes with teaching to ensure coherence and promote improvement of teaching and therefore student learning. Lecturers should refer students for support and research their teaching practices.

The further development of an effective tracking system for students-at-risk. |

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| **4. FOCUS AREA 3: ENHANCING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT** **(suggested length 10-20 pages)*****Include: teaching and learning spaces, ICT infrastructure and access, technology-enabled tools and resources, library facilities.***This section of the report should make reference to all of the sub-topics listed above, either by discussing them individually or by integrating them. Note: it is not necessary to respond to each of the questions below for every sub-topic. |
| **4.1 Summarise what the university considers to be the key issues in enhancing the learning environment.**The enhancement of the learning environment is guided by the strategic goals of the University, the Teaching and Learning Plan, the E-learning Strategy and other strategic considerations and priorities that could affect the learning environment. Two pivotal Strategic Sets in Vision 2020 point to the establishment of the state-of-the-art facilities, to make CUT fit for purpose, and secondly, to learner-centred methodologies and facilities.Over the past ten years CUT has made strides in this regard with the addition of infrastructure based on a rigorous new building programme, with both campuses undergoing significant change. ITC and technological education likewise spread its wings to offer students an advanced learning environment.  |
| **4.2 During Phase 1 of the QEP, what changes at institutional level (a) have been made, (b) are in progress, or (c) are in the planning stages that relate to enhancing the learning environment.**CUT’s infrastructure provides for excellent facilities to enhance its teaching environment. Five major building projects on the two CUT campuses are nearing completion and will become operational during the next eight months. All buildings are equipped with state-of-the-art accoutrements. The following changes should be noted:**Bloemfontein Campus:** * Extension to Teacher Education building (Faculty of Humanities):

This building will be completed in March 2016 and become fully operative at the start of the 2nd semester 2016. * Extension to BHP Billiton building (Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology):

This building will be also completed in March 2016 to be operational at the beginning of the 2nd semester 2016.* New Residence:

The new residence building on campus will be completed in November 2015. It is designed to offer excellent accommodation to 96 students.**Welkom Campus:*** African Languages building (Faculty of the Humanities):

This facility will be completed in November 2015 and become fully operational at the beginning of 2016.* New Residence:

The new residence on campus accommodates 210 students and will be completed in March 2016. The upgrading and renewal programme of facilities also include significant smaller projects. For the period 2014-2016 the following can be reported:Projects completed in 2014 already were the following:1. Refurbishment of Civil Engineering Laboratories in the BHP Billiton building;
2. Move of Jewellery School from Virginia to Bloemfontein Campus;
3. Upgrading of Raku Area at the Art building;
4. Upgrading of Photographic Studios A and B in the Art building;
5. Remove Water Lab and develop Mechanical Workshop in BHP Billiton building;
6. Extension of Emergency Medical Care lecture facilities;
7. Welkom Campus: Additional classrooms in Block O;
8. Welkom Campus: Development of a science laboratory for 48 students.

Projects completed in 2015:1. Installation of new spa at Somatology;
2. Development of new Radiology facilities at the Dirk Coetzee building;
3. Upgrading of the One On Park Restaurant at the Hotel School (Training);
4. Upgrading of the 24 Hour study area at the LIS building;
5. Upgrading of various PC Labs in the BHP Billiton building for the IT department;
6. Upgrading of the CUT Cafeteria;
7. Development of various new laboratories on the first floor of the Dirk Coetzee building;
8. Development of Vending Gazebo’s in front of the Library;
9. Renovations to the existing so called “Volksie Shop” building into a workshop for Mechanical Engineering/SAMTIE;
10. Coffee Bar for students at BHP Billiton building;
11. Development of I-pads Lab at BHP Billiton building;
12. Development of Civil Engineering Motivation Lab at BHP Billiton building;
13. Upgrading of Bronze Casting facility at Art.

Projects planned for completion in 2016 include:1. Medical clinics at Bloemfontein and Welkom Campus;
2. Proposed gymnasium for students in current Gym Hall;
3. Development of Product Development lab at Dirk Coetzee building;
4. Completion of additional PC labs in Library;
5. Additional projects to be added by Academia at FASCOM (ICT Finance committee) meeting.

A second aspect of the enhancement of the learning environment is the availability, accessibility and appropriate use of Information Technology (IT) services. In this regard the following developments and changes since 2014 can be listed:* Wireless connectivity has been extended to all open spaces on both campuses
* All classrooms are provided with data projectors. A continuous programme to replace old non-functional data projectors is in place.
* Sets of clickers were acquired, more specifically for use in large classrooms. These are utilised in all faculties and on both campuses.

The Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology plans the following:* Making processes more student-friendly by installing electronic notice boards and student portals that communicate with students in real time;
* Providing students with continuous access (within and outside the campus) to learning materials through the digital scholarship initiative with all content on Blackboard, e-books, faculty webpages, etc.; and
* Establishing “learning commons” in the FEIT atrium where students can hold discussions with e-access to all the necessary information

The emergence of the Student Academic Support Centre (SASC) as an alternative learning environment next to the library provides study cubicles, computer laboratories and a conducive learning/study environment to supplement library facilities. As a result overcrowding in the library is no longer a perennial occurrence. The on-going construction of computer laboratories within the library premises will mitigate the challenge posed by larger classes for students who attend information literacy/skills (PIM) classes organised by library staff. The decision by CUT to make the information literacy programme compulsory for all first year students as part of the core curriculum resulted in a sharp increase in the number of students attending classes. Completion of the new computer labs (under construction) will help in this regard.  |
| **4.3 Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars to illustrate specific aspects of the change(s) that are successful. Provide evidence for claims of success. Where an activity is in the planning stages, indicate what evidence will be collected.** |
| The use of clickers in the classroom and as well as for assessment has proven very successful. The staff can now get a quick indication of the current knowledge/students’ comprehension of work being done. Clickers are used in short courses with success. Students’ feedback on the use of clicker technology is positive and it keeps the lecturer on par with his/her class understanding of what is happening in the class.Among the main success stories is the introduction of CUT Institutional Repositories (IR) under the auspices of the library. To date all born digital dissertations are uploaded on the IR and are available to the national and international community online. While arrangements are in place to convert older dissertations, which appear exclusively in print format, into electronic media in readiness for uploading on IR, many other individual scholarly works have been populated on the IR. This is an on-going project to capture and make accessible online the institutional scholarly output of the CUT. Thus far there is evidence that use of these resources is on the increase month after month. |
| **4.4 Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars of changes that have not been successful and suggest reasons.** |
| Setting up Research Commons has been hindered by financial constraints. Although the library has a dedicated space for post graduate students it is yet to be fully developed as a fully-fledged Research Commons. A funding proposal has been prepared to make progress in the endeavour. |
| **4.5 If possible, identify one or more promising practices related to this focus area. Describe the practice and provide evidence for success. Suggest what the key features might be.** |
| The decision to subscribe to e-books has really served to increase the range of library e-resources available for teaching, learning and research. The advantage of e-books is that they are accessible 24/7 and can be accessed by multiple users at the same time. E-books are not subject to theft or mutilation and neither do they need shelve management. This project has proved successful especially in the Faculty of Engineering and related sciences were some titles have been adopted by the teaching staff as prescribed texts.   |
| **4.6 Identify the main challenges the university still faces in relation to this focus area.** |
| Facilities, in the form of online assessment rooms, with adequate work stations to do online assessment are still a very burning need at CUT. |

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| **5. FOCUS AREA 4: ENHANCING COURSE AND PROGRAMME ENROLMENT MANAGEMENT (suggested length 10-20 pages)*****Includes: admissions, selection, placement, readmission refusal, pass rates in gateway courses, throughput rates, management information systems.***This section of the report should make reference to all of the sub-topics listed above, either by discussing them individually or by integrating them. Note: it is not necessary to respond to each of the questions below for every sub-topic. |
| **5.1 Summarise what the university considers to be the key issues in enhancing course and programme enrolment management**.In response to focus area 4, the CUT considers key issues to be:* a well-informed assessment of the extent to which programme enrolment management practices are responsive and supportive of the institutional strategic trajectory. Where such practices are found not to be adequately responsive, a clear improvement plan would have to be developed for consideration and ultimate approval for adoption. Conversely, where such practices are adequately responsive, an on-going enhancement strategy would then need to be rolled out through regular monitoring and evaluation. A case in point is the recently introduced on-line enrolment process whose features should continue to be monitored and enhanced for effectiveness and relevance;
* the use and interpretation of NBT tests for placement of students;
* the continuous reviewing of the institution’s Admission Policy to ensure, among other considerations, compliance with the legislative framework and articulation with the TVET sector.

**5.2 During Phase 1 of the QEP, what changes at institutional level (a) have been made, (b) are in progress, or (c) are in the planning stages that relate to enhancing course and programme enrolment management**.The University’s Admission Policy continues to receive attention as mentioned above. What started as online registration in 2013 has been broadened to include an on-line application process. Work is also underway to ensure that these online activities can also be performed remotely off-campus. The use and interpretation of NBT test results for placement of students into relevant academic support programmes served to enhance course and programme enrolment management. A representative sample of the 2015 cohort of first year students have also participated in Beginning University Survey of Student Engagement (BUSSE), the results of which will be used for channelling resources for intervention strategies and student tracking. It is envisaged that participation in this survey, run in collaboration with the University of the Free State (UFS), will be made mandatory in order to enhance course and programme enrolment management, thereby assuring student success.**5.3 Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars to illustrate specific aspects of the change(s) that are successful. Provide evidence for claims of success. Where an activity is in the planning stages, indicate what evidence will be collected.**The roll out and utilization of National Benchmarking Tests (NBT) underlined the possibilities these tests offer to manage the enrolment processes better. Although not fully implemented for the 2015 enrolment process, it is envisaged the results of the test will be used for appropriate placement of the 2016 first year cohort, through closer collaboration with the Test co-ordinators from UCT by way of faculty training regarding appropriate use of the tests and the results thereof. A workshop is being organized to capacitate different role players on analysis and interpretation of scores in order to enhance the utility of NBT. The success rate of on-line enrolment is approximately 70%, but there is a need of a closer co-operation between Student Enrolment Services and Faculties to ensure cleaner and more reliable data on the academic structure. This will ensure that students who do not meet admission criteria are not erroneously enrolled as has happened in some instances.**5.4 Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars of changes that have not been successful and suggest reasons.**Early closing dates for applications have ensured timeous completion of associated administrative processes, although this has been blamed for the University’s failure to meet enrolment targets. However, financial constraints experienced by students remain the main barrier to their access to higher education. A large number of admissions could not be translated into registrations, mainly due to financial constraints. More attention needs to be paid to the admission of students into semesterized programmes and implications for subjects requiring pre-requisites. The use of “auto-promote” in order to do away with applications for continuation by returning students is currently being explored. More programmes will have a WIL component to assure employability of CUT graduates. The University’s HEMIS data should provide the necessary evidence to corroborate the foregoing assertion.**5.5 If possible, identify one or more promising practices related to this focus area. Describe the practice and provide evidence for success. Suggest what the key features might be.**The establishment of a one-stop-shop on both campuses has been very effective for registrations. The management of walk-ins in 2015 has improved, mainly due to clearly communicated enrolment timetables across the institution as well as co-operation among all role players, including the SRC. There is also a marked improvement regarding the enrolment of international students who continue to be supported by the international office, and thereby obviating and mitigating associated risks and ensuring legal compliance. **5.6 Identify the main challenges the university still faces in relation to this focus area.**Financial constraints still remain a serious barrier to access and student success, and thereby contributing to student attrition. Inadequate NSFAS funding and a stricter financial exclusion policy has also exacerbated the rate of student attrition. The non-credit bearing nature of some academic support programmes coupled with voluntary attendance remain an impediment to the assurance of student success. However, this is receiving attention within the broader University decision making structures, and hopefully firm decisions will be taken sooner rather than later to obviate student attrition. |

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| **6. REFLECTION ON PHASE 1 OF THE QEP (suggested length 2-6 pages)** |
| **6.1 What has been the effect on the university of participating in the QEP for the past two years?**Within the range of considerations and views related to the enhancement of academics as teachers, a significant shift from experience to reflection surfaced during the past two years. The initial emphasis on the person (her/his needs, motivation, input, rewards) gradually moved to the interest of investment in students. An awareness of the effectiveness of the institution’s response to national imperatives started to direct the need for appropriate pedagogical training and discipline-based educational development. This explains the focus on the cultivation of induction programmes in which young upcoming academics participate.Initially, reflection on student support and development was embedded in the rendering of formal documents and organisational structures contributing to and driving this key activity at CUT. However, the QEP initiated a shift towards mutual accountability and institutional engagement (including academics) to enhance effective student support and development. Addressing the issue of course and programme enrolment management within the parameters of quality enhancement, the first overview attested to a detailed exposition of all aspects including policy documents, procedures, practises, constraints and challenges which CUT has to deal with. At the end of phase 1 of the QEP, the engagement of the task teams was much more focused and each identified key issues such as student financial constraints, management of walk-ins, the use of NBTs to place students, and the growth in numbers enrolling for Extended Curricular Programmes (ECPs). The tendency to move from an overall picture to specific issuesis evident.The overall effect of the QEP on the university is reflected in the above indicated trajectories of shift in emphasis in delivery of the academic project, from a more formal and holistic approach to a more direct engagement with specific key issues.**6.2 In what ways did the university’s involvement in the QEP promote or strengthen collaboration with other universities on specific issues?**Apart from participation in programmes such as NBT, BUSSE, SOAR, TAU and benchmarking, structures of joint involvement related to specific issues have not yet been developed.**6.3 Looking back over the past two years, in a page or two, summarise the university’s main triumphs, improvements, changes and challenges related to the four QEP focus areas.**As indicated, the*Policy for the Promotion of Academics*, the *Academic Workload Allocation Model and Working Hours of Academics* and the *Employee Development and Performance Management System*were adjusted and approved to serve the interests of the teaching portfolios of academics to a greater degree. This provided a formal framework that guided the participation of staff in capacity-building programmes and initiatives (e.g. SOAR, TAU, New Generation of Academics Project, the Mentorship Programme, industry exposure, etc.). The inception and activities of a Unit for SoTL enhanced an appreciation among academics to take ownership for advancement of their teaching competencies and strategies. This should be regarded as a positive change of course in understanding the role of an academic as teacher. These developments prepared the breeding-ground for growing interest among staff to obtain formal qualifications in Higher Education Studies. It is therefore clear that the inclination to value the quality of teaching has gained momentum during Phase 1 of the QEP. In order to enhance student support and development the institution introduced significant initiatives and changes. A few should be briefly mentioned here. * Participation in *National Benchmark Tests* was phased in, providing a better platform for student placement and support.
* The upgrading of the tracking of at-risk students early in their studies remained a priority.
* Through on-going in-depth analyses and discussions, the institution is seeking to improve its overall academic effectiveness.
* The *PIM5011* module, which aims to equip students with information and research skills and to appreciate and observe academic ethics, has been made compulsory for all students on both campuses.
* Academic Advising, seated in faculty structures, was carefully planned and is in the implementation phase.
* The establishment of a Writing Centre in August 2015 on both campuses embodies an investment in student support and development.
* The *Graduate Attributes Project* resulted in adjustments to the well-established *Student Peer Mentorship Programme*. The *Programme* builds on the accepted CUT graduate attributes more explicitly than before.

These efforts carry a consolidated approach to enhance meaningful intervention in student support and development.CUT has and is provided with an excellent infrastructure that comprehensively deals with the underpinning concerns of focus area 3. It probably represents the best that the country can afford at this time. The university is deeply aware of the challenges and problems raised in and linked to focus area 4. The QEP guided involvement of a task team brought the effectiveness of institutional responses in enhancing course and programme management to a higher level. In conclusion, it needs to be mentioned that in the management and involvement of the institution in promoting sustainable quality enhancement as stipulated in the four focus areas of the QEP, trajectories of development can be distinguished. The trajectories reflect a new dynamic, from the initial more formalistic approach, to a more specific issue-driven involvement. This development is aligned with the underlying rationale of the institutional enhancement strategy which, other than the QEP, is based on cycles of quality enhancement over a longer period of time. Participation in the QEP thus strengthened institutional quality enhancement at CUT most significantly.  |