

**Quality Enhancement Project**

**Institutional Reports: Phase 1**

**Due Date: 11 December 2015**

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| **Name of Institution** | University of South Africa |
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| **Date of submission** | 9 December 2015 |

**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; to reflect on the journey towards enhancement; and to assess the extent to which the efforts have resulted in improvements.**

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| **1. INTRODUCTION** |
| **ACRONYMS**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | CAS | College of Accounting Sciences | | CAES | College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences | | CEMS | College of Economic and Management Sciences | | CEDU | College of Education | | CGS | College of Graduate Studies | | CHS | College of Human Sciences | | CLAW | College of Law | | CSET | College of Science, Engineering and Technology | | DCCD | Directorate Counselling and Career Development | | DSAR | Directorate Student Application and Registration | | DSAA | Directorate Student Assessment and Administration | | DIR | Directorate of Institutional Research | | CPD | Centre for Professional Development | | DISS | Directorate Instructional Support and Services | | DHRD | Directorate Human Resource Development | | SBL | School of Business Leadership | | ACHRAM | Academic Human Resource Allocation Model | | IPMS | Integrated Performance Management System | | MOOC | Massive Open Online Course | |  |  |   The QEP institutional report is coordinated by the Vice-Principal Academic: Teaching and Learning, supported by the Executive Director: Tuition and Facilitation of Learning and the Executive Dean: College of Science, Engineering and Technology.  The Vice-Principal, after receiving approval from the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee and the Management Committee, appointed the following individuals to contribute to the writing of the institutional report:   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Focus Area number** | **Writers** | **Sub-themes** | **Designation** | | 1 | Prof IO Moche | Coordinator | Executive Dean: CSET | | Prof EO Mashile | Professional Development | Executive Director: Tuition and Facilitation of Learning | | Prof AG Oosthuizen | Excellence in Tuition Awards | Tuition Manager: CEMS | | Prof PH Havenga | Workload and ACHRAM | Executive Director: Academic Planning | | Dr PS Zulu | Conditions of Service | Executive Director: Human Resources | | Prof BJ Erasmus | Policy formulation on IPMS, link to remuneration, resourcing and moderation | Vice-Principal: Operations | | Prof MJ Linington | Teaching and Learning requirements in the IPMS, appointment and promotion criteria | Executive Director: CAES | | 2 | Prof EO Mashile | Coordinator | Executive Director: Tuition and Facilitation of Learning | | Dr MJ Mashiapata | Counselling and Career Advising  Academic Literacy projects | Acting Director: DCCD | | Prof T Mgutshini | Curriculum Advising – role of student advisors in DSAR | Acting Deputy Registrar | | Prof P Lenka-Bula | Life Skills Development – for work with NSRC and RSRCs <add to list of acronyms?> | Dean of Students | | Prof P Mafora | Student development and support activities in the regions | Director: Regional Services | | Prof MC Matoane | Academic skills development of students | Director: Instructional Support and Services | | Mr G Barnes  Prof EO Mashile | Student performance, monitoring and referral | Director: Information and Analysis  Executive Director: Tuition and Facilitation of Learning | | 3 | Prof EO Mashile | Coordinator | Executive Director: Tuition and Facilitation of Learning | | Ms VF Memane-Sedile | T & L spaces – campus master plan and resourcing | Acting Vice-Principal: Finance and University Estates | | Prof P Mafora | T & L spaces in regions | Director: Regional Services | | Ms L Sangqu | T & L spaces – ICT initiatives and provisioning to enhance T & L | Executive Director: ICT | | Prof EO Mashile  Ms L Sangqu  Dr L Steyn | Technology enabled tools | Executive Director: Tuition and Facilitation of Learning  Executive Director: ICT  Head: Academy for Applied Technologies in Teaching and eLearning | | Dr B Mbambo-Thata | Library Services | Executive Director: Library | | 4 | Prof G Moche | Coordinator | Executive Director: CSET | | Prof PH Havenga  Ms L Griesel | Enrolment planning and management | Executive Director: Academic Planning  Executive Director: Directorate Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance | | Dr M Qobela  Prof QM Temane | Admissions | Vice-Principal: Institutional Planning  Deputy Registrar | | Prof QM Temane  Ms L Griesel | Placement | Deputy Registrar  Executive Director: Directorate Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance | | Prof PH Havenga  Prof QM Temane | Re-admission | Executive Director: Academic Planning  Deputy Registrar | | Mr GR Barnes | Pass rates in gateway courses | Director: Information and Analysis | | Mr GR Barnes | Throughput rates at Unisa | Director: Information and Analysis | | Mr GR Barnes  Ms L Griesel  Prof QM Temane | Management information systems | Director: Information and Analysis  Executive Director: Directorate Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance  Deputy Registrar |   The institution dedicated four seminars in July, August, September and October to engage critically with the Unisa community on the QEP. The theme of the July seminar was “QEP: reflecting on the actualisation of student success initiatives at Unisa” and the panel of speakers were Professors Moche, Mashile and Havenga. The second seminar focussed on “Enhancing academics as teachers” and the panel of speakers included Professors Oosthuizen, Linington and Matoane. In September the focus of the seminar was on “Enhancing course and programme enrolment management” with Prof McKay (Executive Dean: CEDU) and Dr Archer (Research Specialist: DIR) as panellists. The October seminar focussed on “Enhancing student support and development” and was facilitated by Prof Mafora, Dr Fynn (head of the Student Success Unit, DCCD) and Ms Deyzel (senior counsellor, DCCD).  In preparing the institutional report, we used the lens of the Framework for Student Success, which was approved by the Senate in June 2011. The Framework is a product of reflective research conducted by the institution and identifies factors that impact on student success and throughput. Five components undergird the Framework:   1. Conceptual model – establishing a common point of reference across the institution 2. Information gathering and dissemination – the tracking system 3. Analysis of information – profiling, assessing and predicting risk 4. Managing the Student Success and Support frameworks – coordinating procedures to address risk 5. Monitoring and Evaluation – measuring impact   We have therefore shaped our operations and structures to address these components of the Framework. For example, a conceptual model for student success in an ODL context is reflected in Figure 1. Figure 2 shows the kind of data that should be captured and analysed as part of Component 3. With respect to Component 4, there is an established institutional committee called the Student Success Forum.    Figure 1 Conceptual Model of Student Success at Unisa    Figure 2 Component 3 of the Unisa Student Success Framework |

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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 Summary of what the University considers to be the key issues in enhancing academics as teachers**  Unisa is in a unique position in that it draws from a pool of academics and aspirant academics who may have roots in residential university contexts but who may not necessarily have a distance education background. Such staff members would be recruited for their disciplinary knowledge and thus need institutional support in the effective use of technology in online and blended learning environments. A distance education environment requires specific competencies for developing study materials, conducting assessment and facilitating learning. These are key issues that should form the core of professional development of new teaching staff.  Academics are also required to engage with the scholarship of teaching and learning and thus the integration of teaching and learning, research and community engagement forms part of their continuous professional development. Engaged academics are sustained by institutional strategies that continuously motivate and recognise them in the form of rewards dedicated to teaching and learning.  **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?**  ***2.2.1 Professional development***  Unisa values the professional development of academic staff and has instituted a dedicated unit for that purpose. The Centre for Professional Development (CPD) has been providing training of academics since 2011, mainly in how to develop curricula and present them using Virtual Learning Environments (VLE).    During 2014 the CPD conducted research and benchmarking outside South Africa on the professional development of academics. The Director of DISS, where CPD is located, the Head of CPD and one member of the CPD visited universities in London and New York to investigate the provision of professional development. A teaching and learning institutional seminar focussing on enhancing academics as teachers was also conducted, in addition to exploratory research conducted within the CPD. These interventions resulted in the development of a Framework for Professional Development (FPD). After development, the FPD was presented to the STLC and Senate and finally approved by the management committee towards the end of 2014. The FPD makes academics' participation in professional development a requirement that will not only be encouraged but measured and reported on. Academics will now be required to demonstrate participation in professional development activities at least every second academic year.  The FPD has an accompanying menu of services which promises to offer a range of professional development interventions. The FPD places greater emphasis on integrating the professional development of academics within the context in which they function as opposed to providing them with interventions that are not suited to their specific contexts. Thus, there is a shift from a generic approach to enhancing academics as teachers to a more contextualized approach. The envisaged menu of services currently being developed include a formal qualification such as an advanced professional diploma in ODL; short learning programmes such as a ‘Threshold competence in ODL’ aimed at providing new academic staff with the necessary competencies to teach in an ODL institution, ‘The design and development of ODL learning environments’, ‘Towards pedagogical leadership’, ‘A scholarly approach to teaching practices in ODL’ and an assessment MOOC. During 2015, 841 academics were trained in a range of subjects, including teaching with OERs, self-assessment, podcast training, e-assessment and PowToon training).  The University developed a new Vision 2030 during 2014 and 2015. Continuous professional development for academics was included as an objective of the new Unisa 2030 vision: “Enhance training and development for teaching and professional staff by institutionalising the framework for professional development”. The activities and targets include training all new academic and professional staff in the FPD, all academic and allied professional staff subjected to continuous training and development over a 2-year cycle, and 30% of academic and allied professional staff completed a teaching and learning qualification or short learning programme.  The institution has a formal partnership with the University of Maryland University College (UMUC) wherein identified academics are offered training in facilitating online teaching. Upon completion of the UMUC certificate these academics are required to proceed to enrol for the Master of Education (ODL) at Unisa. This programme is aimed at increasing capacity within the institution for qualified ODL practitioners.    Academics also participate in training offered by the Unisa Library, DHRD and CGS. The online research training support for students which was developed by the CGS in collaboration with other colleges and the Unisa Library is available to academics. Workshops are offered on master’s and doctoral policy and procedures. In addition, the NUFFIC/NRF supervisor programme, a part of which is presented online, was offered for the first time in 2015 to 25 supervisors nominated by all colleges and the SBL. Staff registered for master’s and doctoral degrees attended a suite of theory and methodology seminars and workshops hosted by the School of Interdisciplinary Research and Graduate Studies. Some of these workshops are offered by Unisa academics, which further enhance their teaching skills. The Ethiopia Project which is a partnership between Unisa and the Ethiopian Ministry of Education also offers senior academics the opportunity to develop their teaching skills in a four-module research methodology programme presented at the Akaki campus. Laboratory research at the Unisa Science campus provides academics with on-site teaching opportunities. The CGS has worked with the personal librarians to develop an online research platform consisting of e-databases and more than 100 guides which further enhance the ODeL capacities of staff. International networks such as ORCID, which display research output, are promoted and assist academics to network with peers.  The DHRD provides academics the opportunity to undertake training offered by external providers and to participate, among others, in national conferences that give exposure to developments in teaching and learning. Established projects such as mentoring, the Young Academics Programme, the Academic Management Capacity Development Programme, and academic induction are offered annually and continue to provide academics with professional development opportunities.  Courses offered by the CPD, DHRD and UMUC allow for trainees to provide feedback about the usefulness of the training interventions. Feedback obtained during these processes gives the institution the opportunity to determine the usefulness and impact of the training.  ***2.2.2*** *R****eward and recognition***  Unisa strives to be an employer of choice and a high performing institution. Investment in employee reward initiatives is therefore aligned to individual performance that impact on the strategic imperatives of the institution.  Administrative employees in Unisa are appointed at the 30th percentile of the applicable salary range (norm). Academic employees, however, are appointed at the 35th percentile of the applicable salary range which is an initiative that impacts on the attraction and retention of academics. A comparison of employee remuneration is done regularly during the year to the national and tertiary market. Remuneration in Unisa currently compares very favourably with the national and tertiary market.  The Performance Bonus Policy and Pay Progression Policy are additional incentives in Unisa that are aligned to the performance of an employee. Where the performance bonus payment is once-off, the pay progression adjustment enables the employee to gradually progress through the salary range. Talent development initiatives such as acting and secondment opportunities are recognised through the payment of applicable allowances for the duration of the development period. Scarce skills allowances are also provided only to academics in Computing, Accounting, Statistics, Engineering, Decision Sciences, Health Sciences, Agricultural Economics, and Veterinary Sciences and also for chartered financial analysts.  During 2015 Unisa introduced a new Policy on Awards for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, which intends to award excellent teaching practices in eight categories, namely enhanced institutional knowledge in tuition, course design, student success and retention, assessment, student support, scholarship and graduateness. To ensure that excellence in tuition is achieved, a process of peer nomination and evaluation is followed. An academic panel of peers consider nominations and select awardees based on strict criteria for each category. The criteria are based on various research papers on tuition quality criteria for distance learning in higher education. The awards are prestigious and carry both monetary awards and institutional recognition through a seminar (Teaching and Learning Festival) and acknowledgement on a virtual awards web gallery. The appreciation and positive effect of this new policy is evident by the large number of nominations received during 2015. The positive effect of this initiative will be further enhanced by the addition of teaching and learning awards nominations in the promotion criteria of the institution.  The APEX Award is awarded to full professors for overall meritorious performance based on their core performance areas. Professors form the core of subject matter expertise in the University and provide a unique opportunity, as a starting point, to ensure that they serve as role models and mentors for other academic employees. In virtue of where the position of professor is located, there are also many opportunities for entrenching career aspiration and progression among other academic ranks in the University.  ***2.2.3*** *W****orkload***  The assignment of work to academics at Unisa is the responsibility of the chairs of departments (CoDs). During 2014, and as part of preparing for enrolment management that would be implemented for the 2016 academic year, the institution identified the need for an institutional framework of allocating work to academics. The envisaged framework would ensure there are ‘effective mechanisms to distribute workload in a fair, transparent and equitable manner’. An institutional process was initiated that lead to the approval of the ‘Framework for Academic Workload Allocation’ by the institutional enrolment planning committee and finally by the Management Committee on 17 February 2015. The framework makes provision for a work allocation ‘model’ and ‘plan’ and will be effective for the 2016 academic year.  *Work allocation model*  The work allocation model is based on the understanding that there are different contexts within academic departments that would necessitate diverse work allocation models (e.g. task allocation models, models based on equivalent full-time teaching units, resource allocation models, time allocation models). The approved work allocation model is based on a number of principles. The Work Allocation Model   * serves as a model for meeting the strategic objectives of the University, College and Department and the operational needs of the department. The model cannot operate in isolation and must advance the strategic objectives of the institution. * takes into consideration both the complexities of the academic discipline and the available resources in the department. Academic disciplines vary in the manner in which the core business is executed. For example, in some disciplines experiential learning forms part of teaching and learning or research is done through community-based projects. The model must take such specifics into consideration. * insures that there is equity in workloads. The model is carefully designed to balance the workloads between employees in academic departments to provide for an equitable distribution. * is drafted by the Chair of Department after consultation with all the academic employees in the department. The Chair of Department is ultimately responsible for developing a model after consultation. * is integrated with institutional policies, for example Policy for Research and Development Leave for Academic Employees. Institutional policies will inevitably have an impact on workload allocation and the model must take this into consideration. * is integrated with the Academic Human Resource Allocation Model (ACHRAM). ACHRAM determines the resources which will be allocated to an academic department at a macro level and this must be taken into account. For example, the teaching input factor generates cost units for a module and the model must ensure that there is some synergy between the cost units generated by a module and the work allocation between academics.   *Work Allocation Plan*  A work allocation plan is the product of the model and indicates the work allocation for each academic employee in a department. The Work Allocation Plan –   * is based on the Work Allocation Model and takes into consideration the changing needs and resources of the department as well as those of individual academics. A Work Allocation Plan is not static and may be changed provided it is consulted. * is based on the model developed to meet the operational needs of the department and provides for all academic key performance areas. The key academic performances areas are identified in performance agreements and include teaching and learning, research and innovation and community engagement. * is integrated with individual performance agreements and with the Integrated Performance Management System. There must be synergy between an individual academic’s performance agreement and the work allocation plan. If, for example, the work allocation plan allocates task to an academic these must be reflected in the performance agreement. Time allocated to a key academic performance area in a performance agreement may not differ from that in the work allocation plan. * is made accessible by posting it on the departmental noticeboard, webpage or any other space where academic employees can access it. * must take into account the general principles provided for in the Framework and may be augmented by departmental criteria. Departmental criteria may add to the general principles but may not detract from the general principles. In all instances principles which are added must reflect the values on which the Framework is based.   ***2.2.4*** C***onditions of Service***  The conditions of service collective agreement applicable to all Unisa employees in the post-merger period were signed in the Unisa Bargaining Forum (UBF) on 18 July 2007. The policy provisions therein are reviewed every three years or earlier if a need arises; such may include a change in legislation or needs of employees that impact on a competitive reward proposition.  The Unisa conditions of employment for academics provide opportunities for developing competence in discipline knowledge, which is a necessary requirement for good teaching. Academics are heavily subsidised for studying towards postgraduate qualifications at Unisa or elsewhere. The University has a specialised programme (AQUIP) in which academics can be released from their duties to pursue postgraduate studies for periods of up to three years. All colleges have programmes such as “Grow your own timber” aimed at developing future academics wherein candidates with honours qualifications are employed and supported to obtain master’s and doctoral degrees. The rules for the research and development leave have various categories that allow academics to structure their postgraduate studies in ways that are flexible given their context and the operational needs of a department. The University’s training fund allows academics to participate in national symposia, seminars and conferences which have a bearing on developing their teaching competence. As of 2014, the use of training funds is strictly tied to the personal development plan that must be submitted annually to the DHRD.  Unlike Support and Professional staff, the conditions of service also provide for the promotion of academic staff from junior lecturer through to full professor. Criteria for promotion were revised during 2014 and approved in 2015. These promotion criteria are also closely coupled to the appointment criteria. The minimum criteria for appointment and promotion at Unisa are approved by the Executive Committee of Senate (SENEX) and apply to all colleges across Unisa. Colleges may take requests for an exception to Senex for approval. There are five focus areas for appointment and promotion and the first area of qualification is the rank determining requirement up to senior lecturer level. All associate professors and full professors must have PhDs for appointment or promotion. The other four areas considered are related to the Key Performance Areas (KPAs) of Teaching and Learning, Research, Community Engagement and Academic citizenship, and are aligned to both the job description and the Integrated Performance Management System (IPMS).  A candidate applying for a position must meet the standards for that position in all four KPAs, for both appointment and promotion. Candidates are scored on a scale of 1-5 as follows:   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | 1. | Does not meet minimum standards | does not meet minimum job requirements | | 2. | Needs improvement | performance in one or more critical areas does not meet expectations | | 3. | Meets expectations | all job requirements were met | | 4. | Exceeds expectations | consistently exceeds established standards in most areas | | 5. | Outstanding | exceptional performance in all areas |   Candidates must score a 3 or above in all areas according to the standards and requirements for the KPA as indicated in the appointment and promotion criteria. The standards for appointment and promotion are identical for candidates who have been within academia, but if a candidate is applying from industry, different criteria may be applied. The weight of each areas changes across the ranks also guided by the job description and IPMS for each rank, with Teaching and Learning having a higher weight at junior lecturer level and research having a higher weight at professor level.  When applying for a position a candidate must submit a teaching statement supported by a portfolio of evidence regarding the Teaching and Learning. Unisa is a comprehensive ODL institution and the teaching and learning must be evaluated in this context. Central to teaching and learning is a student-centred approach and this must also be considered. Short-listed candidates are asked questions based on the statement during the interview, to determine to what extent they meet the requirements for the post.  The teaching statement should address the following elements, where applicable:   * Involvement in or approach to ODL * Approach to fostering a learner-centred approach and ODL pedagogy * Involvement in developing study material * The extent to which the candidate has used a virtual learning environment (VLE) such as myUnisa) * Pass, success and throughput rates in the modules the candidate has taught and methods to improve these rates * Peer and student evaluations * Approach to learner support   For a candidate to be considered for promotion she or he should have registered for or have completed assessor training and provided evidence of training in ODL teaching and learning. Other requirements for appointment and promotion that are considered under the KPA for teaching and learning include years of experience and for associate professor and professor levels the supervision of master’s dissertation and doctoral theses to completion.  ***2.2.5*** ***Performance Appraisal***  *IPMS Policy*  Unisa’s Integrated Performance Management System (IPMS) was implemented for all staff, including academics, in 2009. In 2013 a new IPMS policy was approved by the Unisa Council. As indicated in the policy’s preamble, the IPMS is used primarily as a mechanism to translate the institutional objectives, measures and targets in Unisa’s multiyear plans into performance expectations for individual employees and to assist employees in achieving these expectations through a process of continuous monitoring, review and improvement. The IPMS also forms part of Unisa’s integrated talent management framework which is aimed at recruiting, developing and retaining employees with the requisite mindsets, knowledge and skills to achieve the University’s strategic plan.  The intent of the IPMS Policy is captured in the objectives and principles espoused by the Policy.  The objectives of the IPMS are as follows:   * to foster a culture of performance excellence, accountability and stewardship consonant with Unisa’s values, objectives, institutional identity and culture. * to build relationships of collegiality, openness and trust between employees, their colleagues and their line managers by incorporating mentoring, coaching and regular and honest performance conversations as key elements of performance management. * to link the day-to-day activities of every employee to Unisa’s operational needs and its long-term goals to ensure effective and sustained performance. * to enhance quality by engendering a culture of continuous learning and critical self- reflection. * to promote service excellence by inspiring employees to serve students, colleagues and other stakeholders with integrity and dedication. * to provide an environment conducive to performance by ensuring that employees receive the necessary resources and support to carry out their responsibilities and to correct performance shortfalls in a proactive manner. * to enable employees to showcase their individual contributions towards achieving Unisa’s goals and to receive recognition and acknowledgement for superior performance.   *IPMS Moderation Process*  A moderation process has also been followed since 2011 to ensure the integrity and consistency of the IPMS. The moderation process and guidelines have been updated in 2015. They provide a holistic framework for the moderation of IPMS assessments. The guidelines are firstly aimed at ensuring alignment of the performance ratings of employees with the overall performance of the University, portfolios, colleges and departments on the key performance indicators (KPIs) and operational plans of these respective organisational units. The guidelines are further aimed at developing, maintaining and monitoring good practice in assessing the performance of Unisa employees to ensure the fairness and consistency of both the IPMS process and its outcomes.  The IPMS contracts of academics are based on a centrally determined template. The template specifies the activities of the Key Performance Areas (KPAs) of academics. These activities include academic leadership, teaching and learning, research, community engagement and academic citizenship. Depending on the rank of the academic (full professor, associate professor, senior lecturer, lecturer, junior lecturer), the weight for each KPA differs. The permissible ranges in 2015 for a full professor, for example, are 5 – 10% for academic leadership, 30 – 50% each for research and teaching and learning, 10 – 20% for community engagement, and 5 – 15% for academic citizenship. The teaching and learning KPA covers various elements.  The objectives and high level activities for full professors are given below as an example.   1. Provide academic leadership    1. Provide leadership in tuition by contributing to innovative and leading-edge practices in teaching and learning including student support and assessment 2. Develop and teach modules that are well designed, enhance graduateness, support students through a range of options, and utilise the institutional virtual learning environment (VLE) appropriately and effectively    1. Participate in and manage the development of curricula to support the PQM    2. Lead, manage and participate in the design and implementation of rich environments for active learning    3. Manage, monitor, moderate and conduct formative and summative assessment    4. Foster a culture of continuous improvement in all institutional processes and systems through a ‘learning organization’ paradigm    5. Develop, manage and implement measures to improve student throughput, success and attrition rates   During 2014 and 2015 the STLC commissioned a project to develop a set of teaching standards. The teaching standards and accompanying implementation plan were approved by the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee in 2015. The implementation plan allows for an awareness programme and training for academics across the institution. This will enable them to perform as envisaged in the standards as from the 2016 academic year.  The Unisa teaching standards were modelled on practices elsewhere (e.g. Europe, Australia, USA) and consist of a number of criteria.  Criterion 1: Demonstrate good discipline knowledge and curriculum knowledge  Criterion 2: Demonstrate effective facilitation of Learning  Criterion 3: Use assessment to support student learning  Criterion 4: Design and develop curricula and learning activities  Criterion 5: Engage in continuous professional development and the scholarship of teaching and learning  All the criteria contain a number of standards that describe what academics should do and the type of activities that will demonstrate successful accomplishment.  **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.**  ***2.3.1 CISS Project***  The College of Economics and Management Sciences (CEMS) developed a project primarily aimed at improving student success, called the Colleges Improving Student Success (CISS) project. This project focuses on staff development and integrating new staff members into the College and respective schools and departments. This is done to encourage each member of the College to contribute to students’ success and to support the College vision and quality standards. Some of the key elements of the staff development programme (written in the form of a guide) focus on:   * Knowing where the College fits in within the broader institution * Understanding how students register and what they receive upon registration * Being able to communicate with students and staff using the appropriate means and contact details * Knowing what is expected from a CEMS academic * Knowing what the rules, policies and procedures are and where to find them   Below are examples of some of the practical guides contained in the CISS’s ‘On-boarding starter pack’ to direct new academic staff to specific orientation areas.    Figure 3 Brief overview of the different academic periods and the implications for academics    Figure 4 Deciphering module codes    Figure 5 Study materials basics    Figure 6 Important Unisa abbreviations and terminology    Figure 7 Other features of the starter pack  Staff members who underwent training on the CISS on-boarding training provided positive feedback on the usefulness of the project. The figure below indicates some of the feedback received from participants.    Figure 8 Participant feedback on the usefulness of the CISS on-boarding project  ***2.3.2 Mentoring in CAES***  A mentoring programme which includes teaching and learning has been introduced. The initiative that has made the biggest impact in the short term is the introduction of “Discipline” and “discipline NQF level” groups. Each discipline, and if too large a smaller group at NQF level, meets prior to the submission of assignments and tutorial letters and moderate the assessment of each module. The groups have guiding criteria according to NQF level descriptors, the length and complexity of the assessment, alignment of formative and summative assessment, cohesion of assessment across all modules in the discipline and NQF level, as well as correlation with the module outcomes and study guides.  These groups have created an environment where issues of teaching and learning are discussed and colleagues learn from each other as well as share best practice. The value of enhancing student learning and improving students’ success rates has been immeasurable.  **2.4 Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars of changes that have not been successful and suggest reasons.**  Nothing in particular.  **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.**  Nothing in particular.  **2.6 The main challenges the University still faces in relation to enhancing academics as teachers**  The newly approved Framework for Professional Development emphasizes a shift from skills training to greater emphasis on professional development. Given the current professional needs within Unisa, with migration to blended learning, the institution would need to find ways of creating balance between skills training and professional development.  Another challenge would be to find acceptable practices of integrating professional development in the promotion of academic members of staff and into the newly developed teaching standards. |

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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 Summary of what the University considers to be the key issues in enhancing student support and development**  The senate approved Framework for Student Support highlights the following areas of student support and development as key, both at entry level and during the teaching and learning phase.  Entry-level factors:   1. Confidence of students and motivation 2. Support of entering under-prepared students 3. Preparation of students to study independently in an ODeL institution 4. Developing a sense of belonging to the institution   Teaching and learning factors:   1. Orientation to each learning programme 2. Access to an enabling environment (study materials, library, ICTs, regional offices) 3. Student engagement (active learning, interaction with study material, peers and instructors)   To enhance student support and development, it is necessary to base practice on research that allows for an understanding of prevailing practices and how these impact on the student experience. This is in line with one of the institution’s values, which is “responsive student-centeredness”. Additionally, student support cuts across all aspects of the student’s academic life (referred to in the institution as the student walk) – at the point of applying for registration, during registration, at the teaching and learning phase and at the point of exiting the University.  **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?**  *3.2.1 Career and curriculum advising*  Central and regional offices annually provide career fairs. These interventions attract a large number of students. The career fairs also attract a significant number of companies who are allocated stands for exhibition.  Enrolled students can contact career specialists within the DCCD at any time should they require advise. Once at the DCCD, students can also receive curriculum advice either from registered counsellors or from the DSAR advisers. At the Sunnyside campus, these services are geographically located in close proximity although provided by different directorates, thus providing a seamless interface for students. Advisory services cover the following areas: exemptions, recognition of prior learning, qualification requirements, application, registration, and so on. As an ODL institution, a number of students are advised electronically and so the institution makes use of workflow programmes to service students. Since there is a large student body, the number of advising transactions is large and often gets complex, especially with the complex PQM in the institution that is composed of phasing out qualifications and new qualifications. The institution is thus investing in a Student Relationship Management (SRM) programme that will provide a single interface for advising and dealing with student inquiries. The first phase of the SRM was implemented in 2015. The effectiveness of the first implementation of the SRM will be evaluated at the beginning of the 2016 academic year.    The DCCD is currently developing an online Career development programme for Science Foundation Programme students as a starting point for the development of other online discipline specific career advising. An online career development programme was developed for the institution’s learning management system (myUnisa) and will be implemented from August 2015. The programme aims to facilitate the career development of students, specifically encouraging more self-awareness, learning more about various career opportunities, and developing as a future graduate. The programme consists of a self-assessment in order to engage with students on an individual level, as well as learning units to achieve the objectives of the programme. Activity on the site will be tracked in order to understand student engagement, and a formal programme evaluation will be conducted. One of the aims of the programme evaluation would be to understand the outcomes of the programme in terms of students’ career development learning.  The DCCD is further exploring the adaptation of existing open educational resources (OERs) to provide digital content to students. The first such product is an online career development programme for students that will be adapted for publishing on the DCCD website. The aim of the programme is to support students in developing their careers throughout their studies at Unisa and will include career planning and management, as well as preparing them for employability and graduateness. The programme is currently in a draft stage and will be made available to practitioners for feedback before implementing.  *3.2.1.1 Career choice and ODL orientation programme*  Students intending to study at Unisa often do not fully understand the implications of studying through distance education. With the implementation of the new ICT student system and enrolment management, a selection process is included during the application system. The application process has an in-built system to select students who meet predetermined criteria (see focus area 4). To enable students to choose learning programmes for which to register the DCCD has developed and implemented an integrated career counselling process for applicants with the following components:   * The online career counselling process enables the applicant to consider his or her self-knowledge and career planning, together with linking his or her interests to specific Unisa qualifications. Consequently a new student readiness tool was developed to help applicants to consider the implications of studying through open distance learning. The tool is available online and gives the applicant the opportunity to reflect on the qualities and skills needed to be a successful ODL student. If a user selects certain options in the tool, he or she will be referred to the counselling and career development content on the applications website, and given the opportunity to contact a counsellor by e-mail. * Applicants who cannot be offered a place to study in their selected learning programmes because they, for example, do not have enough academic point scores or the qualification quota has been reached are referred from the online portal to the DCCD for further conversations about their career planning.   *3.2.2 Life and academic skills development*  *3.2.2.1 Integrated Tutor Model*  The majority of Unisa students reside far away from the main centres. Student support programmes requiring physical presence at one of the main centres therefore only reach a few students. The face-to-face tutorial programme offered at the various regional offices is a case in point. The programme is, however, necessary for students who come straight from school. These students to visit institutional offices regularly. The number of students in this category is constantly increasing. Since the institution is in no position to provide face-to-face tutorials in all its modules at every regional office, only at-risk modules are allowed such tutorials. At-risk modules are monitored closely by the Student Success Forum and thus institution wide and college specific interventions are implemented for these modules. The interventions often lead to modules being taken off the list and therefore the list for modules allowed to offer face-to-face change annually. The change has negative consequences for students and regional staff because it is not always possible to find suitable tutors year on year. The SSF has now reconsidered the practice and will allow modules to remain on the list for a period of three years, starting from the 2016 academic year. The demand for the face-to-face tutorials is increasing, with students perceiving the absence of such tutorials as inadequate support by the institution.  In order to provide academic support to students everywhere, an e-tutorial programme was implemented for the first time in 2013. We started the implementation first with modules at NQF level 5. In 2014 colleges identified a limited number of modules at NQF level 6 and appointed e-tutors for these modules. The roll-out of e-tutorials was extended to a limited number of NQF level 7 modules in 2015. Recruitment of suitable e-tutors with at least an honours qualification is a major challenge and not all modules in all disciplines are able to find candidates. For example the number of modules that were able to appoint e-tutors at NQF level 5 has been slowly increasing since 2013 and only reached the 90% mark in Semester 2 of 2015.  The introduction of e-tutorials is a catalyst for engaging academics to consider the pedagogies undergirding their teaching. Academics are also able to increase student engagement in learning tasks in manners that were not possible in the past. By offering e-tutorials greater student-student contact and student-instructor contact are made possible. These are necessary in providing higher education through distance education. In this way the institution is able to move away from correspondence pedagogies to fifth-generation distance education models that focus more on student-centeredness. Although the programme is still at its infancy stage, a baseline study is underway in 2015 and formal evaluation strategies are being developed.  *3.2.2.2 Academic literacies*  The development of the Academic Literacies Diagnostic Assessment Test (ALDAT) is continuing. A literacies diagnostic test is crucial to help develop tailored academic literacies interventions. The ALDAT is in the first year of development and is currently being piloted in the Western Cape Region on three modules (QMI1500, MAT1501, ENN1501) as well as with the Science Foundation Programme for all students who are registered for the extended degree in the Natural Sciences. The overall objective of the study is to revise and develop a valid and reliable ALDAT instrument which can be used in conjunction with the matric results to identify, in a holistic manner what students’ academic skills (linguistic and numeracy) are in need of further development. The specific aims are as follows:   * Criterion-based revision of ALDAT because other versions are lacking in this regard. Criterion-based revision implies that all the main competence domains will be assessed separately (i.e. linguistic and numeracy) and sub-scales be defined with specific criterions and scores. * Revision of norm-referenced ALDAT, this will allow for test results to be corroborated against externally benchmarked academic literacy assessments. * The long-term aim is to revise ALDAT which will be disciplinary specific, implying that there will be ALDAT tailored for all disciplines the seven colleges at Unisa.   The proposed revision aims to integrate the diagnostic assessment systems into the existing learner support programmes conducted at Unisa.  *3.2.2.3 Foundation programmes*  The science colleges introduced foundation support in 2007. Originally, it consisted of extra tutorial material and opportunities to improve reading, writing and studying competencies. Tutoring was then introduced with specifically foundation designed tutorial matter, and E-tutors were introduced a year before mainstream introduction. E-tutors were essential as some areas had less than 5 students and could not be tutored. In 2015 the extended programme, rather than additional material was introduced. Students in the foundation programme are those that meet the admission criteria, but have low matric symbols. The success has been that the pass rates of the less prepared students in the programme has been similar or slightly better than the mainstream, and even more interesting, is that in later years these students perform better or average and have a lower dropout rate. The foundation programme therefore has a long-term benefit in terms of student performance.  Foundation programmes were introduced for the first time in the CEMS during 2014. Uptake is reportedly low and a formal evaluation of the first cohort is underway.  *3.2.2.4 Student development programmes*  The Department of Student Affairs provides a variety of training programmes to the SRC (national and regional), party political structures represented in the SRC, student academic bodies (e.g. COMSA), and discipline interest groups (e.g. Black Lawyers Association, Students with Disabilities Forum). During 2014 and 2015 the new Dean of Students increased the focus on life skills training in a number of areas, for example strategic planning and development skills, policy development and review skills, project management skills, and the management and implementation of student parliaments.  *3.2.3 Counselling*  Changes were effected in the training of associate counselling staff. Capacity to counsel many students has been enhanced through the development of an online training programme for peer helpers and assistant student counsellors. The DCCD offers training opportunities to senior Unisa students to prepare them for delivering a basic career guidance services to other students. This programme is known as the peer help programme. Assistant student counsellors are appointed on a contract basis to assist the DCCD to implement the various programmes offered (including basic career guidance, and study skills development services in person and by e-mail). In order to deliver a service that meets with the necessary quality and ethical guidelines, these practitioners undergo intensive training and supervision. The training and supervision sessions take place face-to-face and in 2015, an online programme was developed in order to support a blended learning approach. The content of the programme relates to building the necessary helping skills in order to provide a service to students through a series of action learning activities. The activities include counselling skills (online and offline), dealing with challenges, ethics, and career development. Peer help and Assistant Student Counsellor supervisors and/or training facilitators may choose to prescribe specific activities depending on the needs of the individual Assistant Student Counsellor or peer helper.  *3.2.4 Student performance monitoring and referral*  After the approval of the Conceptual Framework for Student Success by Senate, the Student Success Forum (SSF) was formed to perform the following functions:   * oversee the implementation of the student success and support frameworks and monitor its impact; * ensure the cross-functional, institution-wide integration and coordination of all initiatives to enhance student success at undergraduate and postgraduate levels; * provide a working forum for in-depth engagement with reports, analyses and tracking system information and alerts as well as the sharing of information and best practices across the institution; * monitor the dissemination of student and institutional intelligence to all relevant student support role-players.   To execute the above functions, the Student Success Unit was formed in April 2014 under the auspices of the DCCD. The purpose of the Student Success Unit (SSU) is to establish a unit that will follow up on the work of the Student Success Forum and set up new systems and processes to support at-risk students and interventions directed at high-risk modules. The project will assist in motivating students to cope with the demands of Open and Distance Learning (ODL), support students to actively participate in teaching and learning activities and initiate the institutionalisation of specialised interventions for high-risk students and modules.  The project deliverables are conceptualised as follows: Conduct research and develop a strategy and implementation plan for supporting high-risk students; conduct research and develop a strategy and implementation plan to provide additional student support in modules identified by the institution as high-risk modules; develop strategies and interventions to motivate enrolled students who are identified to either be at risk of dropping out or of failing the required number of modules to qualify for re-admission to the University; and develop a follow-up environment to coordinate the various interventions in the institution and monitor impact and effectiveness.  The SSU is currently busy with a project that develops a near real-time Student Risk tracking system. The purpose of the project is to develop a profile of student risk at Unisa and to develop focused, sustainable interventions based on the areas of need identified in the risk model. The project aims to use approaches derived from big data in education to develop models of risk for Unisa students. Data analytic techniques within learning analytics are used to develop nuanced student risk profiles that are, as far as reasonably possible, discipline specific. The project will therefore work closely with each college at the institution to understand the specific requirements for attaining epistemic access to the learning processes at each college. The aim of the project is to build a risk tracking system that draws from existing data within the Unisa system and compile it in a user-friendly interface that will allow access to all staff members who are involved in providing support to at risk students. The project is a collaboration with the Directorate: Institutional Research and draws from existing student information systems to provide a summary of student progress and performance. The product development is an iterative process with each version of the system presented to identified stakeholders for user feedback which is then integrated into the subsequent version of the system. The risk dashboard integrates student activity, demographic profiles and information from the Shadowmatch project.  The figure below is a screenshot from the latest version of the student risk tracking system.    Figure 9 Screen grab of student risk dashboard  The student risk dashboard has been further updated to include Shadowmatch profiles for the institution. Currently the Shadowmatch integration is in early development and requires further refinement. The second iteration of the student risk tracking system is live on the Unisa information management system. Internal testing of the new version is currently underway and a round of stakeholder testing was undertaken in April and June 2015 where the SSU and the Directorate: Institutional Research interacted with potential users of the system to ascertain further improvements to the system.  We are at the planning stage for a mental health education and referral programme for students. There has been an increase in the number of students who present with mental health concerns at the DCCD (or who are referred to the DCCD from colleagues in the University). In 2013, a personal counselling referral protocol was developed to inform DCCD colleagues about appropriate referral strategies and organisations. The mental health education and referral programme for students will build on this document in order to develop an online resource for students and Unisa staff to be able to recognise mental health concerns, and how to negotiate support and referral for these concerns. It is planned that open educational resources (OER) will be adapted to create an online resource that will be available to Unisa students and staff.  **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.**  *3.3.1 Coaching in CAS*  Colleges have designed and implemented interventions to support their students. For instance, the College of Accounting has introduced a “life and academic coaching” programme aimed at students registered for CTA. The diagram below depicts specific areas covered in the coaching programme to date.    Student support is varied and geared for students with diverse needs, ranging from problems with curricular compilation and study skills to personal emotional issues. Support is provided from the point of registration and continues throughout a student’s study at Unisa. Learner support is provided both for module content and academic literacy skills. The latter serves as a sound bedrock for mastery of module content. Additional face-to-face tutorials are provided for Science and Technology students and for modules with historically high failure rates (high-risk modules).  *3.3.2 Teaching practice in CEDU*  The Teaching Practice Office’s (TPO) main function is to give students work-based or school-based experience as required by education policy. This is achieved by organising, administering, coordinating and facilitating teaching practice activities in the teacher education programmes offered in the University. The TPO ensures that all student teachers are placed in schools for their teaching practice and subsequently, supported by both the TPO, supervisors and mentor teachers throughout their school-based learning experience.  The TPO has made agreements with the various provincial departments to place student teachers in their schools. From time to time relevant provincial education officers attend the TPO Reflection workshop with the regional supervisors (external supervisors).I Issues of concern to the provincial education departments and the critical role of mentor teachers are some of the pertinent issues discussed in these workshops, as well as the challenges experienced and progress made by all partners (student teachers, supervisors, mentor teachers, principals, TPO administrative staff).   * With the help of the ICT department, the TPO developed a placement Tool on myUnisa which is linked to the Registration System. The Department of Basic Education assisted by providing the TPO with website links to all schools registered with the DBE. The TP tool is used to capture student teacher placement information and also to send confirmation letters to both the students and the schools. When doing placement updates on the system, the TP tool sends reports such as the number of students registered, the number of students placed in schools and the number of students’ allocated to supervisors. Therefore, this tool is very helpful for statistical purposes and speedy student school placement and allocation of supervisors to students during their TP. * When school placements are confirmed, the school assists by choosing a school-based mentor teacher who is trained by the TP unit to support the student teacher throughout the teaching practice period on day-to-day school activities in the subjects the student is practising in. * Due to the high number of students registered (currently at around 38 000 ) for the TP program, the TPO has contracted approximately 450 independent supervisors to support student teachers. These supervisors have the necessary qualifications and supplement the internal college staff who do the quality assurance of teaching practicals. * It is TPO policy to train all new supervisors properly in how to support student teachers. For this purpose, the TPO has developed a training manual for supervisors and mentor teachers to enable them to adequately support student teachers. Besides the fact that all our supervisors have been trained, about 1101 mentor teachers have also been trained during the year 2015.   *3.3.3 Regional interventions*  In addition to leased space for tutorial classes, some regions such as the Western Cape have established contractual relationships with HEIs and public libraries in their vicinity to provide venues for tutorial information and support and academic literacies to Unisa students.  **3.4 Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars of changes that have not been successful and suggest reasons.**  Nothing in particular.  **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.**  Nothing in particular.  **3.6 The main challenges the University still faces in enhancing student support and development**  One of the primary challenges facing student support at the institution is the integration of academic support processes into the curriculum and daily activities of lecturers and students. A number of innovative and pro-active programmes are offered to support students in their learning, career and personal development. The challenge is to motivate students to utilise these services and view these as important to their success. It must be noted that there are numerous capacity and infrastructure considerations to take before deciding to integrate academic support services into the day-to-day teaching and learning activities. The Integrated Tutor Model is an excellent working example of how academic support can be integrated into day-to-day teaching and learning activities as well as of the multiple considerations to bear in mind while doing so.  Available space in regions is limited and cannot accommodate all students for private study and scheduled tutorial sessions. |

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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 Summary of what the University considers to be the key issues in enhancing the learning environment**  As an Open Distance Learning (ODL) institution, Unisa is acutely aware of its responsibility to minimise the transactional distance by inter alia making provision for teaching and learning spaces located in the regional centres scattered across the various South African provinces, a well-resourced, state of the art library (including those at the various Unisa learning centres), robust ICT systems and access to technology.  Unisa acknowledges that integrated library and information services and access to information resources and services are essential to attain superior academic skills in higher education. Unisa has therefore made ample provision for the development, expansion and maintenance of the library and information services, resources and facilities. The Unisa Library draws on the best models of university libraries worldwide. The growth and use of collections (more than 2,8 million items) confirm that the Unisa Library is a valued asset of the University. Within the context of ODeL, the focus on e-collections resulted in a collection of 557 commercially electronic resource databases, which provides access to over 97,000 individual full-text e-journal titles.  **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.**  *4.2.1 Teaching and learning spaces*  Unisa is a dedicated distance education institution that aims to provide higher education to students wherever they are with no need for them to physically visit the campus. The original design of Unisa teaching and learning spaces were based on this understanding. The changing nature of ICT infrastructure in the country and the adoption of blended learning as a valid pedagogical strategy for teaching distance education students necessitate the provision of electronic learning spaces in addition to physical spaces.  *4.2.1.1 Physical teaching and learning spaces*  The exponential growth of student numbers at Unisa in the past five to ten years has put a burden on the campus plan. In order to maintain an acceptable student lecturer ratio colleges have increased the appointment of academics. The number of students who regularly use the regional facilities has increased substantially and pose a challenge to provide for both staff space and student teaching and learning spaces. All buildings owned by Unisa, except the Pietermaritzburg campus, are no longer able to support the increased demand. As a consequence, the University is renting buildings for use by both staff and students. Rented property has its limitations because landlords do not always adequately address long-term infrastructure developments. The table below shows the geographic distribution of regional sites occupied by Unisa for both staff and students.   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **REGIONAL HUB** | **REGIONAL SERVICE CENTRE** | **CITY/TOWN** | **REMARKS** | | Gauteng | Sunnyside | Pretoria | Property owned by Unisa | | Johannesburg | Johannesburg | High rise rented building | | Daveyton | Benoni | Erstwhile Vista campus; property being transferred to Unisa | | Vaal | Vereeniging | Rented building, second floor. | | Florida | Roodepoort | Unisa campus | | KwaZulu-Natal | Stalwart Simelane  Nedbank building | Durban | Property owned by Unisa. The second building is rented. | | Pietermaritzburg | Pietermaritzburg | Property owned by Unisa | | Richards Bay | Richards Bay | Rented building | | Newcastle | Newcastle | Rented building | |  | Wild Coast | Wild Coast | Rented building | | Western Cape | Parow | Cape Town | Property owned by Unisa | | George | George | Rented building | | Limpopo |  | Polokwane | Property owned by Unisa | | Makhado | Makhado | Rented building | | Giyani | Giyani | Rented building | | Midlands |  | Rustenburg | Property owned by Unisa | | Bloemfontein | Bloemfontein | Rented building | | Kroonstad | Kroonstad | Rented building | | Mahikeng | Mahikeng | Rented building | | Eastern Cape |  | East London | Property owned by Unisa | | Mthatha | Mthatha | Rented building | | Port Elizabeth | Port Elizabeth | Rented building | | Mpumalanga |  | Nelspruit | Rented building | |  | Middleburg | Middleburg | Rented building |   As indicated earlier, some students are in need of physical facilities but due to their remoteness from the sites above, are unable to utilise the infrastructure of the University. The University therefore identifies spaces in areas where there is a large number of students to provide for tutorials, examination venues, and access to computers and the internet. The latter is done through partnerships with telecentres where students use these facilities free of charge and the University pays the providers. The telecentre process, as from 2014, is expanded to include even public spaces that have computer technologies such as schools, TVET colleges, and public libraries.    *4.2.1.2 Virtual teaching and learning spaces*  *Learning Management System*  Virtual spaces are critical for providing teaching and learning spaces in an ODL context. Unisa therefore makes extensive use of the learning management system, myUnisa to create flexible, accessible learning environments. All modules offered by the University are made available on myUnisa and students are able to download study material, submit assignments, perform collaborative activities such as development of wikis, blogs, discussion forums, and participate in e-tutorials. There are also fully online modules which are offered only on myUnisa. Given the nature of our student profile, capacity has been developed to enable students to use ‘digi-bands’. This allows students to work offline but as if they were on myUnisa. As soon as they are connected to the internet the digi-band synchronises with the myUnisa portal. This enhancement was introduced in 2014 and 2015 for online course called ‘Signature courses’. Plans are underway to roll this technology out to other full online courses.  *Academy of African Languages and Science*  The Academy of African Languages and Science contributes to the intellectualisation and modernisation of the African languages by enhancing their use in the scientific, technological, academic and educational domains through the development of high quality digital African language resources and language technologies.  *Postgraduate Portal*  The master’s and doctoral e-research platform which is being developed by the CGS and ICT holds the promise of an enhanced virtual environment aimed at improving research learning and production. The project has been managed by the School of Interdisciplinary Research and Graduate Studies in the CGS. Ultimately this will articulate with the other online support facilities on myUnisa and the Unisa Library. Lessons learnt from this project will also filter into infrastructural developments to enhance undergraduate provision.  *4.2.2 ICT infrastructure and access*  Since 2011, ICT has focussed on building a robust platform suitable for ODL. The model depicted below provides an overview of the ICT platform for ODL. The aim of this model is to achieve the following strategic objectives, namely to provide   * accessible ICT services from anywhere, at any time, using any device * expandable, available and fast network connectivity * an available, capacitated and secure data centre * available and integrated transactional business systems     Each objective is underpinned by a number of initiatives, targeted for completion in December 2015.  The red-amber-green (RAG) colour-coding is used:  • Red – work not yet started  • Amber – work-in-progress  • Green – work completed; in continuous improvement phase  Student access to computers and the internet is central to improving teaching and learning in an ODL environment. During 2014 and 2015, we have increased student access to computers and the internet through the following activities.  At all regional offices, the number of computers available to students for studying purposes were increased. A total of 1575 computers are now available at the various regional offices. Computers which were previously only used for ‘applications and registrations’ are now configured for re-use during the tuition period. Installation commenced at the beginning of 2014 and was concluded in September 2015. To enable regions to properly utilise the computers, at least one ICT support technician has been appointed, in addition to the laboratory supervisors appointed at each region. Computer laboratories at Unisa’s regional centres have been allocated a total of 83 specialized computers that cater for students with disabilities (see distribution below).   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **NO OF DISABILITY LAB PCs** | | | Benoni | 4 | | Bloemfontein | 4 | | Durban | 10 | | Florida | 3 | | Johannesburg | 10 | | Kimberly | 2 | | Kroonstad | 3 | | Mafikeng | 2 | | Mthatha | 2 | | Parow | 6 | | PMB | 5 | | Polokwane | 15 | | Potchefstroom | 3 | | Rustenburg | 6 | | Sunnyside | 6 | | Vaal | 2 | | **TOTAL** | **83** |   The University regularly seeks new partners to provide students with access to computers and the internet. For example, during 2015 an additional 15 new telecentre partners were contracted and more students were able to freely access computers and the internet for study purposes.  Through the PURCO initiative, students are now able to purchase laptops at a discounted rate. There is a steady uptake of discounted laptop and tablet computer deals by Unisa students. Total statistics for *January to June 2015* are:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Brand** | **No of Devices** | | SMD (Azpen) | 7 | | Acer | 18 | | Pinnacle | 35 | | Dell | 83 | | **Total** | **143 devices** |   In addition, the University has negotiated a highly discounted rate for 3G for students. Unisa students can now purchase 3 gigabytes of data for only R100. There is a steady uptake of 3G internet data bundle deals by Unisa students. Total statistics for *January to June 2015* are:   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **MONTH** | **NEW** | **RENEWALS** | **TOTAL UPTAKE** | | January | 452 | 198 | 650 | | February | 729 | 228 | 957 | | March | 589 | 296 | 885 | | April | 327 | 134 | 461 | | May | 271 | 129 | 400 | | June | 272 | 120 | 392 | | July | 705 | 323 | 1 028 | | August | 460 | 293 | 753 | |  |  | TOTAL | **5 526** |   Unisa implemented Education Roaming (Eduroam) some time ago and it has been working effectively. All problems were attended to and individual problems are dealt with through the ICT Helpdesk. Please visit http://eduroam.ac.za/list for a list of institutions using Eduroam.  Unisa has an agreement with the Department of Correctional Services through which incarcerated students can have access to the institution’s learning management system, myUnisa. Currently students have access to myUnisa at the following sites.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Prison** | **No of Students** | | BANGKOK,THAI PRISON,THAILAND | 1 | | BARBERTON PRISON | 38 | | BREEDERIVER PRISON | 19 | | DRAKENSTEIN MAXIMUM | 4 | | DURBAN FEMALE PRISON | 17 | | DURBAN MALE PRISON MEDIUM B | 41 | | EAST LONDON PRISON | 24 | | EAST LONDON WOMEN'S PRISON | 2 | | EBONGWENI C-MAX (KOKSTAD) | 4 | | GROENPUNT PRISON-VEREENIGING | 14 | | JOHANNESBURG FEMALE PRISON | 34 | | JOHANNESBURG PRISON MED C | 82 | | KIMBERLEY NEW CORRECTION CEN | 18 | | KIRKWOOD CORRECTIONAL CENTRE | 1 | | KUTAMA-SINTHUMULE PRISON | 22 | | LEEUWKOP PRISON MEDIUM C | 11 | | LOSPERFONTEIN PRISON (BRITS) | 42 | | MANGAUNG MAXIMUM PRISON | 5 | | MOUNT FRERE PRISON | 2 | | POLLSMOOR PRISON | 1 | | PRETORIA CENTRAL PRISON | 109 | | PRETORIA FEMALE CORRECTIONAL | 11 | | PRETORIA LOCAL PRISON | 4 | | QALAKABUSHA CORRECTIONAL CEN | 30 | | ROOIGROND PRISON | 15 | | WINDHOEK CENTRAL PRISON | 4 | |  |  | | **Total** | **555** |   *4.2.3 Technology-enabled tools and resources*  *Changes in progress*  The Academy for Applied Technologies in Teaching and eLearning (AATTeL) has been mandated to research and explore appropriate technology in support of teaching and learning. The following projects are currently under investigation and are at differing stages of advancement:   * Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) Application * Review and reconfiguration of the Unisa assessment systems and practices * College of Education Tablet project to investigate the digitization of the student teacher assessment process * Animation project aimed at enhancing student learning through the use of animations and to explore a suitable software for use by academics in creating animations * Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) project aimed at enhancing the predominantly text base learning environment with AR and VR to illustrate important principles or scenarios, based on the learning material.   *Changes in the planning stages*  AATTeL is planning to commence with a project to investigate digital badges as a tool to be used by the Centre for Professional Development (CPD) as an assessment and credentialing mechanism housed and managed online for all staff who participated in CPD’s professional development programmes.  *4.2.3 Library facilities*  *4.2.3.1 Library commons*  The research commons offers clients a comprehensive service in support of teaching, learning and research. The use of the commons increases annually and reflects the value of the service and facilities.  *4.2.3.2 Extended library hours*  The Unisa Library has implemented extended hours and it proved to be a valuable service to clients who cannot visit the libraries during regular office hours.  *4.2.3.3 Library upgrades*  The funding allocated for the upgrades of the branch libraries was optimised to improve the infrastructure, establish computer training facilities and general refurbishment. This has enhanced the learning environments in Akaki (Ethiopia), Cape town, Durban, East London, Ekurhuleni, Johannesburg, Nelspruit, Polokwane, Rustenburg and Sunnyside. Collections and services of the two mobile libraries are used very well and planning is underway to implement mobile libraries in all regions. The collections of the branch libraries and mobile libraries have grown significantly and the total number of items is 188 344.  *4.2.3.4 Mobile libraries*  Mobile libraries are available for the Western Cape and Limpopo. We are currently upgrading the connectivity of the mobile buses from using 3G to using satellite dishes. The project will be completed by the end of the year.  *4.2.3.5 Institutional repository*  The Unisa Institutional Repository (UnisaIR) is developed within Open Access principles. It offers clients a digital library that captures the original research output and other academic intellectual property generated by the academia and researchers. The increased use of the UnisaIR indicates that it enhances the learning environment by offering electronic preservation, management and dissemination of Unisa’s intellectual output. Since its inception during 2009 it has been growing rapidly, hosting 14 000 items by the end of 2014. These items are accessed from various international locations and a total of 5,887,149 full-text views were logged from January until December 2014. Being harvested by various international databases, including Google Scholar has resulted in significant increase in the global visibility of Unisa researchers and scholars. Citations of publications by Unisa authors that are archived in the UnisaIR could also be reflected in their Google Scholar profiles and support the NRF-rating process. The UnisaIR was ranked 4th in Africa and 139th internationally by the Ranking Web of Repositories during July 2015.  *4.2.3.6 Library App*  The Library App has been implemented and is available in Google Play Store and Apple store. The availability of the app was advertised on social media and the Library’s website. Even before the official launch of the app (15 September 2015) it had already been downloaded more than 500 times on Google Play Store (Apple store data not available). This confirms the value of this tool for users in and ODeL environment.  **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.**  *4.3.1 Improving student access to computer technologies*  The teacher education project on extending students online access (from the College of Education) is currently nearing its implementation phase. A contract is soon to be finalized with the service provider with a projected implementation date of November 2015.  Collaborative networks with different universities are in the process of being forged, with ICT a member of ASAUDIT, an association of University ICT Directors, which facilitates co-operation and collaboration among the different ICT departments at universities.  *4.3.2 Enhancing ICT infrastructure*  The implementation of self-help services in the libraries enables librarians to focus on client services and support for clients due to time saved with manual issue and return services. Statistics indicate the in most branches the self-help issue and return services are used more than the manual service.  *4.3.3 Use of electronic resources to support teaching and learning*  The lecturers of the Department of Taxation (in conjunction with Unisa’s Audio-Visual Department) annually produce five DVDs for students enrolled for five undergraduate tax modules. In the DVDs the lecturers discuss and work through a previous examination paper. The presentations range from approximately 60 to 90 minutes in length. The DVDs ensure that every student has access to a full audio-visual presentation, as opposed to discussion classes where attendance is often low. This department also initiated a ‘Tax Stories’ project regarding the history and application of various court cases which, having been published, aims to be an open educational resource which could be prescribed as study material by any South African university.  *4.3.4 Teacher Project Centre*  The TPO in the College of Education in its endeavour of improving the facilitation of teaching and learning for teaching practice arrangements has implemented a Teacher Centre Project (TCs). The project entails extending student online access and support through deployment of ICT infrastructure (i.e. laptops, connectivity, video conference and printing/scanning) and systems development at 34 TCs in various provinces. The project is rolled-out in collaboration with the DBE and Vodacom as partners. In addition to the 34 TCs, CEDU/ Unisa will also use the 60+ TCs resourced by Vodacom to facilitate teaching and learning.  The TPO is also in the process of acquiring tablets supervisors can use to enhance the teaching and learning environment. It is envisaged that besides the speedy reception of assessment forms from supervisors, supervisors will also be in a position to negotiate with schools to take photos of classroom practice and videos to be used for school-based practice. These tablets will also assist in integrating paper-based assessment forms into web-based assessment forms and they will make it more convenient for the assessment forms to be transferred from our office to various academics for further review and student support endeavours.  *4.3.5 Lecturer-led tutorial materials*  Tutoring in an ODL and ODeL environment plays an important role in student learning. The introduction of the foundation programme, a VLE (such as myUnisa), and e-tutoring created an opportunity to reflect on how best to support students as academics. The CAES debated the question, “Who is the academic?” and created a structured tutor framework for the foundation students where the curriculum was broken down into weekly segments to be covered by the tutor/e-tutor, and resources were made available to the tutor to facilitate tutoring sessions. As these resources were electronically available, they were posted onto the module sites each week. Students who attended tutoring at a different venue than usual or who were e-tutored received the same support and those who missed tutoring sessions could retrieve the material on myUnisa. This placed the lecturer firmly in the centre of the teaching and learning process, and allowed for consistent tutoring quality. It has worked well, and we are trying to expand the service to other modules. Problems experienced were that some academics did not create the tutor manual, or gave vague and poor support. Tutors also at times ignored the tutoring materials and presented their own tutorials, not always in line with the module outcomes. These problems have largely been overcome in the foundation modules.  **4.4** **Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars of changes that have not been successful and suggest reasons.**  Nothing in particular.  **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.**  Nothing in particular.  **4.6 The main ICT challenges the University still faces in enhancing the learning environment**  ICTs remain Unisa’s major challenge. A stable, extendible and reliable network is required to support almost all of the institution’s teaching and learning endeavours. Increased and improved access for students to ICTs, at home, at partner institutions and at all regional offices will enhance teaching and learning.  Research and consultations were done to compile a comprehensive renovation plan for the Muckleneuk and Science Campus libraries. The Unisa Library on the Muckleneuk campus was relocated to its current building in the late 1980s and for more than 30 years, only structural maintenance and a number of small renovations and changes were done.  The Unisa Library on the Science Campus was relocated to the current building in the early 1990s with small ad hoc upgrades in later years. A major change for this library was the relocation of two Unisa colleges to the Science Campus as well as the integration of the undergraduate collection from the G Block into the collections of the C Block. This relocation has crowded collections and users into a very limited space.  The planned renovations will not only address these challenges but is designed to ensure flexibility, to accommodate future technologies and to comply with future library space requirements. However, the delayed implementation has a negative impact on this valuable learning environment. |

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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 Summary of what the University considers to be the key issues in enhancing course and programme enrolment management**  Traditionally, Unisa had a practice of admitting all students who met the minimum admission requirements for any of its qualifications. This resulted in exponential growth that impacted negatively on all administrative processes and on teaching and learning. The University now embraces the notion of rigorous selection and placement of students in appropriate qualifications as a mechanism of adhering to the ministerial targets whilst ensuring it maintains its social mandate of increasing access to higher education.  The importance of stable and reliable ICTs is central in the operation of the institution that needs to select and register students away from campus. However, ICTs cannot be used exclusively given the socio-economic status and geographical distribution of our students where ICT infrastructure is not well developed.  In order for the institution to ensure it registers students in accordance with the targets contained in its enrolment plan, it is critical that it knows before the end of the registration period which students will take up the places offered to them. Failure to enforce such an arrangement, as contested by the student body, will at best result in an inability to reach the ministerial targets.  **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.**  *5.2.1* *Admissions, selection, placement and readmission refusal*  Historically Unisa did enrolment planning but there was no comprehensive system of managing the targets. Students who registered for the first time in 2013 were subjected to the strict implementation of the admissions policy that required students to progress satisfactorily from one year to another. As from the end of 2013 students who do not obtain at least 36 credits in their first year of enrolment for a learning programme and 48 credits thereafter are not readmitted.  The Unisa Council approved a comprehensive enrolment plan in April 2014. This entailed the following:   * Determining enrolment targets for every qualification. The targets had to ensure that institutional parameters such as comprehensiveness are taken into account. * Developing an (online) application process that determines the pool of applicants per qualification and then applies the selection criteria to determine placement. * A selection process through which an academic point score is calculated that is constituted by an M-score together with other institutional parameters (e.g., college requirements, gender, race, socioeconomic status, disability, incarcerated students, age)   To carry out the computations above, a new student system ICT application was procured, namely SITS. Applications for the 2016 academic year are now processed through this new SITS platform. The SITS platform for admissions has been designed to automate applications and enrolments in line with the enrolment targets set for each qualification and approved by Council. The enrolment plan includes selection criteria which permit the tracking of student progress from registration to graduation.  During 2013 and 2014 students who registered prior to 2013 were warned that they need to meet the progression rules contained in the admissions policy of the University. A plan was provided to students to resuscitate their studies within acceptable timeframes. For example students who have not completed 120 credits within three years of the first registration would be given one year to complete the 120 credits and would be expected thereafter to complete at least 120 credits within a period of two years thereafter.  *5.2.2 Success in gateway courses*  Gateway courses can have different formats. They can be foundational, characterised by high enrolment or growth, or regarded as high-risk courses according to a given set of criteria. For the purposes of this report, gateway courses will be defined as ‘at-risk’ in accordance with the various definitions used within the colleges at Unisa. During 2013 and into 2014 the concept ‘at-risk’ was broadened to recognise different criteria across colleges and saw a move away from the traditional ‘high-risk’ definition which was confined to only modules with enrolments exceeding 1500 and with a course success rate below 50%. In the smaller colleges that would mean that even modules with poor performance would never be classified as ‘high-risk’ due the high enrolment requirement.  The ranking of modules on college-specific criteria meant that the classification of ‘at-risk’ modules would account for these differences and be more representative. The following analysis will consider the pass rate over time for all modules identified as ‘at-risk’ in 2015 based on the data up to and including 2014. The objective is to observe the change in pass rate over time which could indicate the possible effect of face-to-face tuition interventions. Success of Semester 1 Modules Success of these courses can be monitored as a group, the figure below shows the aggregated pass rate of all Semester 1 modules identified as ‘at-risk’ in 2015. A year-on-year increase in the pass rate for these modules is observed from 2011 to 2015, and while the changes were relatively small in the past, the change from 2014 to 2015 is marked (3,1%). The examination survival rate (proportion that wrote relative to admitted) remains high around 96%. A steady decline in the examination absence rate is observed over time from 5,9% (2011) to 3,5% (2015).  *Figure 10: The examination survival rate, pass rate and absence rate for Semester 1 ‘at-risk’ modules*     |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Ratio (%)** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | | Survival Rate | 94,4 | 95,3 | 95,9 | 96,1 | 96,6 | | Pass Rate | 43,4 | 47,1 | 47,6 | 48,6 | 51,5 | | Absence Rate | 5,9 | 5,0 | 4,3 | 4,0 | 3,5 |  Success of Semester 2 and Year Modules A year-on-year increase in the pass rate for these modules is observed from 2012 (44,6%) to 2014 (48,9%). Similar to the Semester 1 modules, the examination survival rate remains high around 96%. The examination absence rate is stable around 4,5% (2012 to 2014).  *Figure 11: The examination survival rate, pass rate and absence rate for Semester 2 and year ‘at-risk’ modules*     |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Ratio (%)** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | | Survival Rate | 99,6 | 95,7 | 95,7 | 95,7 |  | | Pass Rate | 47,8 | 44,6 | 46,8 | 48,9 |  | | Absence Rate | 0,4 | 4,5 | 4,5 | 4,4 |  |   *5.2.3 Monitoring throughput*  Cohort analyses form the basis of determining the success of programmes and academic offerings over time. These statistics clearly indicate retention and throughput in the different cohorts and monitoring the trends over time provides the opportunity to identify where possible barriers to graduation reside and allow the prioritisation of interventions in specific areas.  The following analysis will consider a cluster of programmes as the cohort and track the retention and throughput results over time. Throughput is best measured within a particular time frame in order to afford comparisons across programmes and to determine measurable success. For the purpose of these analyses, the minimum expected time for completion is used. This measure is determined by the workload of students in the cohort and affords comparisons over cohorts of varying delivery time frames.  The table below presents the results of all cohorts from 2004 to date and indicates three measures, (1) the dropout rate in the first year, (2) the dropout rate within the expected completion time, and (3) the graduate rate (throughput) of the cohort within the expected minimum time. A comparative study of the three censoring years is given as this affords the ability to compare the results at different stages in time. Note that the censoring year is the year in which the data are extracted.  *Table: UG and PG retention and throughput for cohorts from 2004 to 2014*    The results in the table have been colour-coded to indicate areas of improvement (green) and areas of concern (pink). Improvements in both retention and throughput were observed over all cohort clusters (except honours and equivalents) when comparing the censoring periods 2012 to 2013. This means that all cohorts from 2004 to date have on aggregate improved in terms of first-year dropout, dropouts in expected time and graduates within expected time. It must be noted that since these data include all cohorts over time, it is unlikely that marked changes will be evident from censoring year to year.  Similar results are observed when comparing the censoring years 2013 and 2014. Improvements are seen over all cohorts except in honours and equivalents. While the question remains about what these rates should ideally be, the important point is that these are real improvements in retention and throughput measured over time.  **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.**  Most activities of this focus area are coordinated at institutional level.  **5.4 Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars of changes that have not been successful and suggest reasons.**  Nothing in particular.  **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.**  Nothing in particular.  **5.6 The main challenges the University still faces regarding course and programme enrolment management**  The following areas require closer scrutiny and better management in order to improve the efficiency of monitoring throughput:   * New qualifications and modules with no history to inform ratios * The translation of qualification headcounts to module enrolments * Incomplete and disparate data from operational systems * Incorrect module weights * Old and new qualifications and modules |

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| **6. REFLECTION ON PHASE 1 OF THE QEP** |
| **6.1 The effect on the University of participating in the QEP for the past two years**  We have created a platform in the University to address teaching and learning issues on a monthly basis through the teaching and learning seminars. The seminars afford us the opportunity to reflect on our practice and also to provide external experts a space to engage with the University and provide different perspectives on particular issues.  The University has now reassessed how the quality of learning programmes is promoted, managed and assured. As from 2015 we have introduced, in addition to the modular reviews, the review of whole learning programmes using a panel of experts from outside Unisa. There is now a focussed attention on the conditions of programme delivery.  The focus on teaching and learning has also impacted on the new Unisa 2030 strategic plan, with the first of three strategic objectives falling on the academic project. For the first time in its history the University has developed an academic plan that will inform all other activities. For example, the budget process for 2016 is focussed on resourcing the academic project.  **6.2 Ways in which the University’s involvement in the QEP promoted or strengthen collaboration with other universities on specific issues**  We have been collaborating with a number of universities mainly through asking their experts to address our monthly seminars on particular topics.  We have also benchmarked the various implementations of our experience during the first year against other universities and are now busy developing or refining our processes and structures for an introduction of the first-year experience programme.  **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.**  Initiatives such as the QEP help in increasing the discourse on teaching and learning within an institution. Since the commencement of the QEP, the discourse on the four focus areas has increased within the university. Below is a description of the triumphs, improvements, changes and challenges encountered since the inception of the QEP or enhanced by the QEP processes within Unisa.  The QEP process highlighted the importance of continuous professional development for academics, a process we started in 2012 already by the creation of the Centre for Professional Development. During 2012 the STLC approved that the mode of teaching at postgraduate level (Honours, Masters, Doctorate) will be online. The CPD thus initially focused on building capacity within the institution for online learning by training academics in Virtual Learning Environments.  Towards the end of 2012 the CPD was also tasked to train all e-tutors that would be appointed for the 2013 academic year. By 2014, a year after implementing the e-tutor model, it became clear that academics, as well as e-tutors required training on facilitation of learning. Training on VLEs was broadened to include all academics teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The CPD then developed a framework that different modules could take in integrating ICTs as part of teaching and learning. An important lesson learnt is that the improvement of teaching and learning requires improvements in student support interventions, in enhancement of curriculum development and in improvement of teaching competence for all staff involved in teaching and learning within a distance education environment. Improvements in these areas require institutional initiatives as described above but also College (Faculty) initiatives as demonstrated earlier in discussions of the focus areas.  Lessons from other institutions and from discourse at institutional and national level highlighted the importance of academics as teachers. In order to enhance the teaching capacity of academics it is necessary for them to continually reflect and research on teaching and learning. For the first time in the history of the institution continuous professional development has now been included in a framework for professional development approved by the management committee and enforced through performance management. Developing competence in the teaching function and provide sufficient student support impacts on the time at the disposal of academics and therefore issues of workload had to be looked into. Through experiences of the QEP the institution for the first time developed a workload framework during 2015. In addition, the model used in allocating human resources for the academic sector underwent a major review during 2014/2015 and will be implemented for the 2016 academic year.  To ensure that teaching and learning expectations are made transparent to every academic, the STLC developed teaching standards which were approved by the STLC during 2015. The CPD is charged with training academics during 2016 on implications and requirements contained in the teaching standards which will be enforced as from the 2017 academic year. High performance in the teaching function needs to be aligned with the reward structures in the institution and this necessitated a review of the teaching and learning awards during 2014. In 2015, academics who demonstrated high performance and innovation in teaching and learning received prestigious awards at a special function of the university.  A major setback encountered is in introducing enrolment management for the 2016 academic year. An elaborate system was developed that would have seen the enforcement of enrolment targets agreed to with the DHET. However the ICT systems required to support the new enrolment management process was delayed and management had to make amendments during October and November 2015. This, together with the “Fees must Fall” campaign, scuppered the business processes developed by the university for the purposes of proper managing enrolments. The full impacts of these challenges are yet to be assessed as they happened only recently.  Another major challenge encountered is meeting the needs of students with regard to facilities and services at the various Unisa learning centres. Students at the various learning centres insist on receiving similar services which places huge demands on the institution financially.  The QEP thus highlighted the importance of the four focus areas and that the institution should invest in initiatives that have a potential to enhance student success. |