

Communiqué 3 of 2022

To: DVC's/Directors/ Chief Academic Officers/ Head of Institution/ Academic Heads
Subject: Standards Development through Communities of Practice (CoPs) for the implementation of the QAF in 2024

Dear Colleagues,

The HEQC-approved Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) to be implemented by the CHE in 2024, requires the development of Standards for a number of Higher Education Practices to support the implementation of the QAF. In addition, the CHE will continue with the development of Qualification Standards to support our work with the HEQSF.

The QAF (2021: 42) states that *different kinds of standards employed in higher education include content standards, learning and teaching standards, standards for the assessment of student achievement, and standards for institutional performance. Standards typically differ concerning their purpose, use and scope.* Standards are codes of practice for quality assurance used in higher education, which HEIs must consider and adhere to in all aspects of their activities and in all types of higher education provision. In the context of the implementation of the QAF, these general types of Standards (as opposed to Qualification Standards) have been termed Higher Education Practice Standards (HEPS). Higher Education Practice Standards (HEPS) are, therefore, codes of practice for specific functional areas/areas of practice in higher education where quality must be maintained, such as learning and teaching, assessment, student achievement, governance, student support, etc.

Standards will form the basis for capacity development in the sector, as well as for the future Quality Reviews and Accreditation under the QAF. The HEPS will also form the basis for the structure of the Institutional Dashboards that will reflect the institutional functionality in terms of quality assurance which, in turn, will determine the CHE's engagement with an institution within the context of the QAF. The QAF also identifies the reflexive-generative methodology for the development of Standards (as is currently the case in the development of Qualification Standards) within the context of Communities of Practice (CoPs).

The HEQC has identified the importance of developing Communities of Practice (CoPs) of peer academics and support professionals that are inclusive and truly representative of the consultative and collaborative approach the QAF espouses. Developing truly representative, consultative and inclusive CoPs will enhance the buy-in and ownership of the developed Standards in the sector.

The QAF also identifies learning and teaching as the focus area for the first iteration of its implementation. The CHE has therefore identified the need to put student learning and the student experience at the centre of the Standards Development process.

The following overarching/thematic HEPS areas with three main cross-cutting themes have been identified:

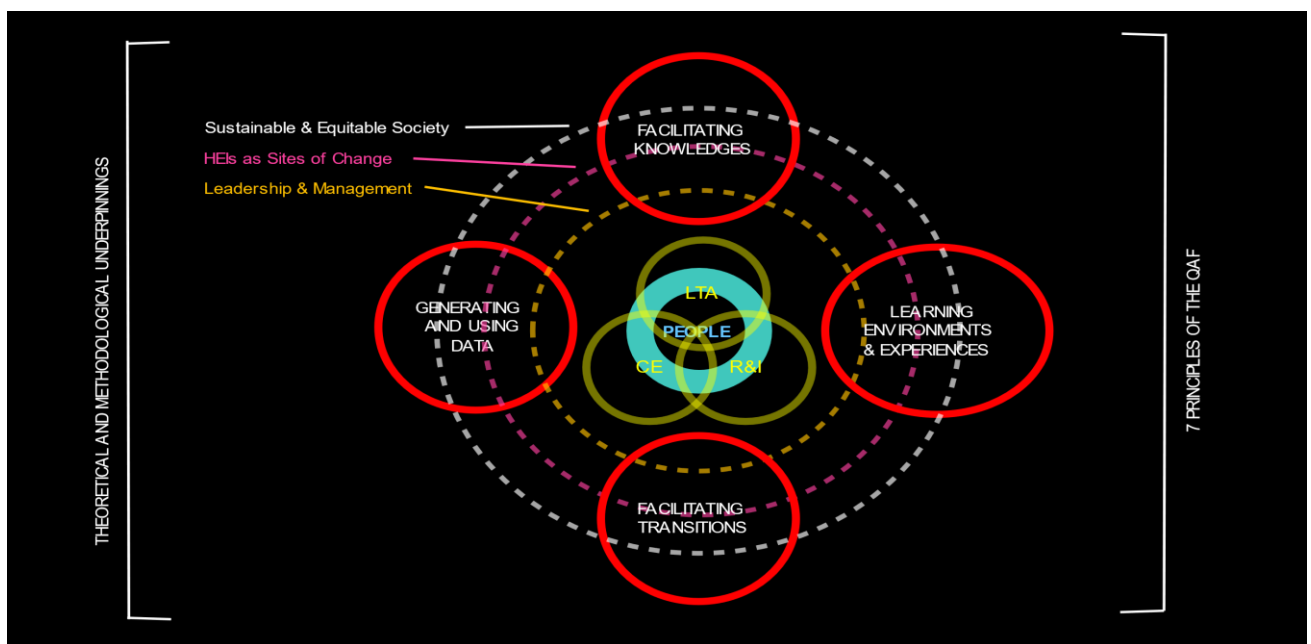
The thematic areas guiding the development of Standards for the implementation of the QAF:

1. **Facilitating knowledges and developing new knowledges and practices:** Curriculum design, programme development, delivery, management, review and renewal (including assessment, modes of delivery, T&L strategy, teaching quality, CPD, student and lecturer load, WIL as defined in the HEQSF); indigenous knowledges, multilingualism
2. **Learning environments and experiences:** Facilities, infrastructure, laboratories, library, residences and study spaces, connectivity, digital infrastructure and support, student support (academic and psychosocial), administrative and professional support systems and the resourcing thereof
3. **Facilitating transitions:** Access and admission, RPL, CAT, articulation within and between institutions and sectors, micro-credentialing, joint qualifications, national and international collaborative partnerships, tracer studies, graduateness, staff transitions; PQM / HEQSF
4. **Generating and using data:** Information management and research (institutional, SOTL and scholarship of QA) to inform decision-making about students.

The following cross-cutting themes will support the thematic areas:

- a) Achieving a sustainable, equitable society and the role of HEIs in that
- b) HEIs as sites of personal, cultural and societal change and transformation
- c) Leadership and management – for and in service of the academic project.

The HEPS areas and cross-cutting themes are represented visually as below:



It is of vital importance that the Communities of Practice for the development of the HEP Standards are set up as soon as possible. We therefore call for nominations of peer academics and higher education professionals to participate in the Communities of Practice of the 4 thematic areas.

Institutions may nominate colleagues by submitting their CVs or interested colleagues may submit their CVs (with a clear identification of which thematic area they wish to participate in) to Mr Collins Baloyi (Baloyi.M@che.ac.za) by 31 May 2022.



We thank you for the engagements so far and look forward to a productive and positive standards development process.

Yours sincerely



Dr Whitfield Green

Chief Executive Officer

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