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Higher Education Monitor

The State of Private Higher Education in South Africa

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No. 1, June 2003

CHE

The Higher Education Quality Committee is a
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FOREWORD

The 1997 *White Paper* on higher education identified funding, planning and quality assurance as the three key levers for steering the reconstruction and transformation of South African higher education and the creation of a new higher education landscape that is progressively characterised by equitable, high quality and sustainable institutions that are well governed, led and managed and responsive to the personpower and knowledge needs of economic growth and social development and the consolidation of democracy.

The *Higher Education Act* of 1997 allocated the responsibility for the conceptualisation and implementation of the steering mechanism of quality assurance to the Council on Higher Education (CHE), and specifically to a permanent committee of the CHE, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). The HEQC was to undertake the accreditation of learning programmes of public and private higher education institutions, institutional audits of all higher education providers and quality promotion.

It soon became clear that great potential synergy existed between the quality assurance function of the CHE and other core functions such as advising the Minister on all matters related to higher education, monitoring and evaluating whether, how, to what extent and with what consequences the vision, policy goals and objectives for higher education are being realised and reporting to parliament on the state of South African higher education. For example, knowledge, information and experience derived from quality assurance activities could usefully be utilised in the advisory function and systematic reflection on and analysis of quality assurance activities could become an integral component of the monitoring and evaluation function. As a result the CHE has structured its overall operations and those of its different directorates to ensure that this synergy is indeed realised to benefit the effective steering of higher education, the development of higher education and the achievement of policy goals.

This report on *The State of Private Higher Education in South Africa*, which also inaugurates a new publication series of the CHE, the *Higher*

Education Monitor, is a good example of this synergy. The baseline data analysed in the report was generated by the process of re-accreditation of private providers that was carried out by the Accreditation and Coordination Directorate of the HEQC between May and December 2002. The analytical and empirical questions that were posed in working with data were informed by such policy goals such as the achievement of greater responsiveness of higher education to societal needs and the creation of a single articulated higher education system; issues which are studied and monitored by the Advice and Monitoring Directorate of the CHE. The content and structure of the report was decided upon jointly by the personnel of the Accreditation and the Monitoring directorates, who were concerned not only with the implications of the results of analysis for policy at the national systemic level but also to use the results to reflect specifically on the appropriateness of quality assurance policies and internal HEQC procedures and their efficacy with regard to national policy objectives.

The *Higher Education Monitor* series, of which this report on *The State of Private Higher Education in South Africa* is the first output, has the principal purpose of communicating and disseminating to institutions and key stakeholders, such as government, business, academics, administrators, workers and students, evidence-based reports that analyse different aspects of South African higher education.

The CHE takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and evaluate the achievement of policy goals, and to build understanding of the directions in which the system and institutions are moving in relation to existing policy goals, and the reasons why. However, monitoring and evaluation is not an end in itself but a necessary condition for giving effect to an additional very important CHE responsibility, namely contributing to the effective steering of higher education. This steering is a multilayered task, which is intellectual, conceptual and practical.

Through the reports that were produced as part of its *Higher Education Monitor* series, the CHE hopes to provoke thoughtful and critical debate among key higher education constituencies around key issues but

especially around what should be done and how it should be done. The reports are also intended to flag issues that need further investigation and/or discussion. In this way, the CHE hopes also to stimulate research and the production of knowledge and interpretive frameworks that could contribute to better theorisation of higher education, more rigorous analysis of higher education complexities and more effective strategies for change and progress. A monopoly of wisdom on goals, priorities, key policy drivers and effective strategies does not rest with any single actor and can only benefit from open, informed and critical debate among the key higher education stakeholders.

The CHE is acutely aware that the release of reports and the *Higher Education Monitor* series do not in themselves guarantee the creation of a public space for critical intellectual engagement and where necessary the revision of policy and practice. In this regard we are committed to creating mechanisms for communication and debate that go beyond simply the publication of reports.

Each report that is part of the *Higher Education Monitor* series will for a specified period have an e-mail address for feedback. During this period we will also create chat rooms on our website for interested actors to enter into debate among themselves and with the CHE. Finally, where possible we will also establish CHE Forums, a number of which have already been held for debate on particular reports.

This document can be found on the CHE website at www.che.ac.za under 'Publications'. The address for feedback is monitoreport@che.ac.za Instructions on how to enter the chat room to this issue can be found at http://www.che.ac.za/chatroom

Prof. Saleem Badat
Chief Executive Officer, CHE

Pretoria, June 2003

1. INTRODUCTION

> The Ministry recognises that private provision plays an important role in expanding access to higher education, in particular in niche areas, through responding to labour market opportunities and student demand. The key challenge in expanding the role of private institutions is to create an environment which neither suffocates educationally sound and sustainable private institutions with state over-regulation, nor allows a plethora of poor quality, unsustainable 'fly-by-night' operators into the higher education market. (White Paper on Higher Education 3, 2.55)

Private provision of higher education in South Africa has been growing steadily in the last 15 years. In 1995, the National Commission on Higher Education estimated that approximately 150 000 South African learners were enrolled in private higher education institutions which offered mainly certificates and diplomas in the fields of human resource development, business administration, communications and information technology (WP 2.22). The very importance of the private provision of higher education – current estimates indicate that the number of private providers is approximately 117 – make it necessary to include these providers in a regulatory framework that not only ensures that they will uphold quality standards but also that they will be important actors in the achievement of a transformed single coordinated higher education system capable of serving broader societal needs.

Two fundamental steps in the creation of a single coordinated system in relation to private providers are, on the one hand, the registration of these institutions with the Department of Education (DoE) and, on the other, the registration of the programmes they offer with the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) which indicates the adherence of their programme offerings to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

The Higher Education Act of 1997 and its successive amendments provide a regulatory framework to ensure that institutions are financially viable, can count upon the necessary physical and human resources, and that their academic offerings meet acceptable standards of quality (HE Act, 53). In order to comply with the latter requirement private providers of higher education are asked to submit their academic programmes

for accreditation. Accreditation is the process of external validation that indicates that programmes that lead to registered qualifications achieve set minimum standards, conduct their activities with integrity, deliver outcomes that justify public confidence and demonstrate accountability for the effective use of public and private funds. (See WP 2.56 and HE Act 53, (b) (ii).)

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) was created by the Higher Education Act of 1997 and was given the responsibility for, among other functions, the accreditation of programmes, the audit of institutions and the promotion of quality assurance at the higher education level, which the CHE realises through its permanent quality committee, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). Until 2002, when the CHE was accredited by SAQA as the band Education and Training Quality Authority (ETQA) for higher education, the accreditation of programmes of private providers was done by SAQA itself. Between 1998 and May 2002 SAQA accredited 348 programmes of 89 private providers. These programmes were given provisional accreditation until December 2002 on condition that they apply for re-accreditation in order to offer the same programmes during 2003.

The process of re-accreditation of programmes offered by private providers was undertaken by the HEQC through its Accreditation and Coordination Directorate between May and December 2002. The present report is based on the analysis of the evidence gathered during the three phases of the re-accreditation process: submission- and paper-based evaluation, site visit, and final decision by the Accreditation Committee. One important characteristic of the accreditation process as defined above is that institutions have to satisfy specialist evaluators as well as the Accreditation Committee that they can count upon the necessary human resources, infrastructure, and management systems (policies, regulations, implementing structures) to offer quality education to their students.

The details of the process as well as of the information sessions that preceded the implementation of the accreditation system are explained in Appendix 1.

This report has three objectives: first, to analyse the size, field and level of programme offerings of accredited private providers in relation to the skills and human resource needs of the country as articulated in the White Paper, the Human Resource Strategy and a variety of labour market studies conducted recently; second, to analyse the quality of the provision of these programmes from the point of view of their curriculum design, their ability to meet the NQF level descriptors, their articulation with other levels in the NQF, and the preparedness of their academic and support staff to deliver the programmes; third, to analyse institutions' management systems, especially in relation to quality assurance.

Based on quantitative as well as on qualitative data derived from the re-accreditation process of 58 institutions, or 49.5 per cent of the private providers operating in South Africa, the report argues that a significant segment of private higher education provision seems to be characterised by a qualification upward creep which distorts the value of higher education degrees. Also, related to the issue of the field and content of programmes, the report suggests that there is not enough evidence yet to claim that private higher education institutions are particularly responsive to the socio-economic needs of the country and that, in some cases, the actual quality and appropriateness (in terms of labour market or national interests) of the offerings are seriously undermined by the lack of well-qualified staff. The evidence gathered from evaluators' reports and institutions' submissions suggests that some of these problems actually relate to underdeveloped management systems, especially in terms of quality management. Finally, the report reflects on the lessons learned from the accreditation process and points out some areas for capacity development at the system and individual providers' level.

The report is structured in five sections including this introduction. Section 2, Private Providers in Figures, provides an analysis of the re-accreditation of programmes submitted by institutions from the point of view of the size and shape of private higher education. Section 3, Teaching and Learning at Private Providers, analyses curriculum issues as well as composition and qualifications of academic staff. This section also looks into the availability of necessary infrastructure in relation to programme offerings.

Section 4, Private Providers' Management of Quality Assurance, looks at policies, procedures and structures that allow the adequate functioning of the institutions' quality management systems. Section 5, The Re-accreditation of Private Providers, presents general conclusions on the quality of provision, the decisions made by the Accreditation Committee, and a reflection on the actual process of re-accreditation. Appendix 1 offers a detailed explanation of the re-accreditation process. Each section is based on the analysis of frequencies which are illustrated by qualitative evidence provided by the evaluators' reports. Methodological comments will be made as necessary in each section.

2. Private Providers in Figures

This section focuses on the type of provider, their geographical distribution, and the range and level of programmes they offer, based on the information gathered through the re-accreditation process.

2.1 Providers: How many and where?

From the point of view of the number of institutions that responded to the re-accreditation process the exercise organised by the HEQC received quite a satisfactory response. At the time of starting the process 89 institutions, of which 76 per cent were multi-purpose providers and 24 per cent were single-purpose providers, needed to be evaluated. Out of these, 58 multi-purpose institutions, or 65 per cent of the total number of institutions, made submissions to be re-accredited and also submitted 217 programmes for re-accreditation. While the majority of multi-purpose providers (85%) entered the process of re-accreditation, no single-purpose provider submitted the required application. This section of the report therefore analyses the submissions for institution and programme re-accreditation of 58 multi-purpose providers.

Table 1 Number of multi-purpose and single-purpose institutions that needed re-accreditation

	Type	Institutions	%
Number of multi-purpose and single-purpose institutions that needed re-accreditation	Multi-purpose	68	76
	Single-purpose	21	24
	Total	89	100
Number of institutions that made submissions	Multi-purpose	58	85
Number of institutions that did not make submissions	Multi-purpose	10	15

As shown in Table 2, the majority (63%) of the 68 multi-purpose institutions that needed to be re-accredited were in an urban location, 31 per cent (21 institutions) were situated in the CBDs of the country's main cities, while 4 per cent (3 institutions) were peri-urban and only one institution was located in a township.

Table 2 Location of multi-purpose institutions

Location	Number of institutions	%
Urban	43	63
CBD	21	31
Peri-urban	3	4
Townships	1	2
Total	68	100

From the point of view of the geographic distribution of private institutions in the country, among the 58 multi-purpose providers that applied for re-accreditation with the HEQC more than half (53%) were located in Gauteng, with the next highest concentration being in KwaZulu-Natal (25.8%), followed by the Western Cape (13.7%), while very few institutions among the applicants were located in the Eastern Cape (3.4%), the Free State (1.7%) and the North-West (1.7%). No applications were received from the remaining three provinces. This distribution indicates that there is a direct relation between the locality of private providers of higher education and a high concentration of economic activity. However, an explanation is needed for the predominance of private providers in KwaZulu-Natal. A possible explanation is that, given the high matric pass rates in the Western Cape, the highest in the country, high school leavers in this province are eligible to study at universities and technikons and therefore constitute less of a market for private providers whose entrance requirements are less demanding. Conversely, the low entrance requirements of private providers have a broader market in KwaZulu-Natal where lower matric pass rates jeopardise school leavers' chances of gaining admittance to universities and technikons.

Table 3 Provincial distribution of private institutions that submitted applications

Province	Number	%
Gauteng	31	53.4
KwaZulu-Natal	15	25.8
Western Cape	8	13.7
Orange Free State	1	1.7
Eastern Cape	2	3.4
North-West	1	1.7
Mpumalanga	0	
Limpopo	0	
Northern Cape	0	
Total	58	100

The geographic distribution of programmes submitted for accreditation is consistent with the distribution of providers shown in Table 3. Out of a total of 217 programmes submitted for accreditation, the largest number was submitted by institutions located in Gauteng (49%), followed in order of importance by KwaZulu-Natal (35%) and the Western Cape (12%).

Table 4 Distribution of programmes submitted for accreditation per province

Province	Number	%
Gauteng	107	49
KwaZulu-Natal	76	35
Western Cape	26	12
Orange Free State	4	2
Eastern Cape	3	1.4
North-West	1	0.5
Total	217	100

2.2 Private providers' programmes: Fields and levels

The localisation of private providers in the most populated and economically active provinces of the country, and within them in their urban hubs, is consistent with the localisation of institutions of higher learning in the developing world and with the localisation of private providers worldwide. However, the actual link between higher education institutions and economic activity either directly (collaborative research projects with economic sectors, or explicit training for a particular industry) or indirectly (education of graduates according to current and future labour market needs) is a far more complex aspect of the responsiveness of higher education institutions to the economic needs of a country.

In the case of South Africa the issue of the responsiveness of higher education to the country's needs has been taken up by national higher education policy as well as by the Human Resource Development Strategy, among other legislation.

This section analyses the disciplinary/professional fields of the programmes submitted for accreditation in order to draw some conclusions about the responsiveness of private providers of higher education to the economic needs of the country. The 217 programmes submitted to the CHE for re-accreditation were distributed across ten disciplines/fields: business administration and management; marketing and public relations; architecture and manufacturing; graphic and fashion design; information technology; communications, media and journalism; education and training; religion; and aromatherapy and others. Despite the predominance of a vocational orientation among the offerings, it is noteworthy that the second most important programme offering by private providers is religion (32% of all programmes), and that in cases like the two providers in the Eastern Cape, the only programmes submitted for accreditation were in the field of religion. With the exception of information technology, and to a minor extent business administration, none of the programme offerings respond to the explicit skills needs of the country, especially in relation to science, engineering and technology. Interestingly, as can be seen

from Table 5, among the private providers located in Gauteng, the area of the country that has most clearly expressed its need for high-level IT skills at the provincial and local government level, IT constitutes 6.5 per cent of private providers' programme offerings, while religion constitutes the largest offering (20.5%) among the private providers that submitted their programmes for re-accreditation. Similarly in the case of the North-West province, the only programme submitted for re-accreditation is a certificate in aromatherapy.

One additional problem in this regard is that these programmes, even those responding to actual market and national skills need, do not always offer the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies needed by young higher education graduates. Take, for example, the following quote from one evaluator of information technology programmes:

> The Department of Science and Technology (DST) has prioritised IT as a potential growth area and argued the need to educate more software engineers who are capable of developing new innovative software for a variety of applications in society. These qualifications focus primarily on software application, understanding some hardware design and management of IT. These qualifications train a student on how to use software effectively. The fundamentals of mathematics and computer programming are totally inadequate. These qualifications emphasise the training of technicians and do not produce autonomous creative program developers, and therefore are neither of a degree standard nor of a standard that satisfies the IT need prioritised by DST. The certificates and diplomas seem more in line with NQF 4 rather than 5 and 6.

What this comment stresses is the fact that, at times, the localisation of private providers in economic hubs seems to be more related to the availability of a money supply in the form of fees than to a conscious response to skills development needs. This is even more the case when, given the level at which these courses are taught, no doubt as a consequence of the low admission criteria, students are not actually ready to be trained adequately, for example in maths and programming, to enter the job market successfully.

It would be necessary to conduct at least two broader studies to understand better some of the issues raised by the figures shown in the tables above. On the one hand it is necessary to investigate why qualifications in religion constitute a large part of private providers' offerings, how this relates to the decline in religious studies and theology offered at public institutions and how this apparent shift has affected the nature of the programmes. On the other hand, it seems necessary to study the relation between programme offerings and the labour market from the double perspective of how institutions detect and respond to market needs and how institutions create a demand for certain qualifications and to what extent the latter can be conceptualised as a form of responsiveness.

Table 5 Programmes submitted by discipline/field of study

Discipline/Field	Number	%
Business administration	55	25.3
Religion	32	14.7
Information technology	30	13.8
Marketing and public relations	27	12.4
Communications & media	20	9.2
Education and training	16	7.3
Graphic and fashion design	14	6.4
Aromatherapy and others	9	4.1
Tourism and hospitality	8	3.6
Architecture and manufacturing	6	2.7
Total	217	100

Table 6 Programmes submitted by private providers located in Gauteng (total programmes 107)*

Level	Religion		Marketing & public relations		Business admin.		Graphic design & fashion		Communication & media journalism	
	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%
Cert.	4	18	7	33	10	55	1	8		
Diploma	6	27	8	38	6	33	8	61	3	43
Degree	2	9	6	29	2	11	4	31	4	57
Master	5	23								
Doctor	5	23								
Total	22	20.5	21	19.6	18	16.8	13	12	7	6.5

Table 6 Continued Programmes submitted by private providers located in Gauteng (total programmes 107)*

Level	Education & training		Information technology		Tourism & hospitality		Architecture		Aromatherapy & other	
	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%
Cert.	5	72	3	43	3	60	2	50		
Diploma	1	14	2	28	2	40	2	50	2	67
Degree	1	14	2	28					1	33
Master										
Doctor										
Total	7	6.5	7	6.5	5	4.6	4	3.7	3	2.8

* In all the following tables the bottom row indicates percentage in relation to the total number of programmes submitted in that province while the percentage column indicates proportion of programmes submitted at a particular level.

Table 7 Programmes submitted by private providers located in KwaZulu-Natal (total programmes 76)

Level	Business admin & management		Information technology		Education & training		Marketing & Public Relations		Architecture & Manufacturing		Communication media & journalism		Aroma therapy & Reflexology	
	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%
Cert.	16	47	8	62	4	44	3	50	1	25	2	50	2	67
Diploma	16	47	5	38	3	33	3	50	1	25	2	50	3	33
Degree	2	6			2	22			1	25				
Master									1	25				
Doctor														
Total	34	44.7	13	17	9	11.8	6	8	4	5.2	4	5.2	3	4

Table 8 Programmes submitted by private providers located in the Western Cape (total programmes 26)

Level	Communication media & journalism		Information technology		Religion		Business admin & management		Graphic fashion design	
	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%
Cert.	2	22	6	75	2	29			1	100
Diploma	7	78	2	25	5	71	1	100		
Degree										
Master										
Doctor										
Total	9	34	8	31	7	27	1	4	1	4

Table 9 Programmes submitted by private providers located in the Free State (total programmes 4)

Level	Information technology		Business admin & management	
	Num	%	Num	%
Cert.			1	50
Diploma	2	100	1	50
Degree				
Master				
Doctor				
Total	2	50	2	50

Table 10 Programmes submitted by private providers located in the Eastern Cape (total programmes 3)

Level	Religion	
	Num	%
Cert.	1	33
Diploma	2	66
Degree		
Master		
Doctor		
Total	3	100

Table 11 Programmes submitted by private providers located in the North West Province (total programmes 1)

Level	Aromatherapy and reflexology	
	Num	%
Cert.	1	100
Diploma		
Degree		
Master		
Doctor		
Total	1	100

3. Teaching and Learning at Private Providers

Qualifications structure and curriculum design are two fundamental aspects of the reform of higher education at two interrelated levels: the development of a single qualifications framework and the implementation of an outcomes based education (OBE) for higher education programmes. Teaching and learning, and research, three of the core functions of higher education, have been fundamentally affected by this reform, which is still under way. This section analyses different aspects of teaching and learning at higher education institutions, understood as the actual process of teaching and learning that takes place in the classroom and the policies, plans, procedures and activities undertaken by higher education institutions to provide the necessary conditions for learning to take place.

This section presents an analysis of the curriculum design and qualifications structure of the programmes submitted for accreditation by 58 multi-purpose private providers of higher education. It is organised into three subsections focused on programme design, the adherence to the NQF principles and requirements, and, given the obvious importance of the preparedness and experience of teaching staff in curriculum design and in the adaptation of a qualification to the NQF, the third subsection is focused on the academic staff.

From a methodological point of view this section is based on an analysis of the submissions of 58 private providers, i.e. all the private providers that applied to the HEQC for re-accreditation of their programmes. Each one of the tables below presents an analysis of the frequency with which institutions did or did not do something according to specialist evaluators, e. g. structure a qualification according to NQF level descriptors.

3.1 Programme design

This subsection looks at four fundamental areas in programme design: the relation between core, fundamental and elective modules; the assessment strategies utilised by the institution, and, given the predominance of vocational qualifications, the arrangements made for experiential learning

and the linkages and partnerships established with relevant industries and other institutions in order to fulfil this.

The majority of the providers seemed to have experienced difficulties in programme design at the level of the selection of and articulation between core, fundamental and elective courses within a modular system. These two issues were not clear in the programmes submitted by 49 out of 58 providers or in 84.5 per cent of the cases.

Table 12 Core, fundamental and electives

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative
Valid				
Yes	9	15.5	15.5	15.5
No	49	84.5	84.5	100.00
Total	58	100.00	100.00	

Specialist evaluators pointed to the lack of clear definition and/or the poor implementation of core, fundamental and electives and the confusion that could arise due to this for both employers and potential students. The following are some examples of evaluators' comments which reflect the kind of problems found in the programmes evaluated:

- The core, fundamentals and electives are not clearly identified.
- Core, electives and foundational courses poorly defined.
- Curriculum design around core, fundamentals and electives is poorly implemented.
- The differentiation among the fundamentals, core and electives is poor.
- The electives chosen could indicate the area of specialisation of the diploma. The learners and potential employers should not be confused. Suggestion: that two electives from the same field should be chosen – e.g. HR Management and Training Management.
- Considering the type of learner and entry criteria, one would expect to see Communication/Business English as fundamental and Introduction

to Accounting as core components. Financial Management, Credit Management, etc. should be another pair of electives.
- Misunderstanding of 'electives'.
- It is not clear what the core, fundamental and electives are comprised of.

Related to the difficulties with core, fundamentals and electives is the actual structure of the qualification from the point of view of its curricular contents. The following table indicates that in half of the institutions this constitutes a problem of overall programme design.

Table 13 Qualification structure

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid				
Yes	29	50.0	50.0	50.0
No	29	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	58	100.0	100.0	

The evaluators' comments pointed to problems of content, weight and intensity in the structure of programmes and qualifications:

- The overall structure of the offerings may need addressing.
- The syllabus does not suggest the intensity that would validate the three-year period.
- There is need to develop the digital photography aspect of the course with appropriate curriculum materials, practical work, resources and infrastructure.
- Digital manipulation of photographs needs more emphasis if the course is going to keep its name and qualification.
- History of photography needs to be emphasised more for this qualification.
- The history of art needs to be reconceptualised and offered to provide a foundational base for this course and other course offerings.

Evaluators also found that frequently programmes did not outline assessment strategies or did not justify the election of a particular type of assessment in relation to the programme. This was found to be a problem for 69 per cent of the institutions that submitted programmes for evaluation. Among the most common problems were the lack of alignment of assessment strategies with OBE, the lack of distinction between year marks, final marks and exam marks, and the lack of appropriate forms of assessment for each module.

The following observations from evaluators provide examples of the problems mentioned above:

- Assessment strategies need to be aligned with OBE format.
- The proportion of examination mark is too low in the final mark.
- Project work needs clear guidelines for assessment and must be integrated into the curriculum.
- Each module should have a separate written paper.
- A clear distinction among the year mark, exam mark and final mark needs to be made in order to arrive at a valid and reliable assessment of learners.
- No evidence to show all components of the assessment process – such as what the portfolio consists of. A pre-determined assessment policy is needed.
- It's not clear how the 50% portfolio is made up.

Table 14 Assessment strategies

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid				
Yes	18	31.0	31.0	31.0
No	40	69.0	69.0	100.0
Total	58	100.0	100.0	

The frequencies presented in Table 14 indicate that out of 58 institutions 40, or 69 per cent, have not developed assessment strategies within an

OBE framework that is mindful of students' performance and that only in 18 institutions, or 31 per cent of private providers, were adequate assessment strategies indicated. What the lack of proper mechanisms for assessment actually points out is the absence of structured ways of benchmarking students' performances.

In terms of experiential learning, despite the vocational nature of the majority of programmes submitted for evaluation, institutions do not seem to have the necessary arrangements in place to provide this aspect of the teaching and learning process to their students. Table 15 shows that out of 58 institutions, 60 per cent did not offer experiential learning. This fact was remarked upon by the evaluators who stressed the need to integrate experiential learning into the programmes, to improve both the arrangements for and the quality of experiential learning, and to increase the amount of experiential learning students are exposed to. This is even more worrying given the apparent vocationalism that characterises private providers' offerings. In other words, either private providers are responsive to labour market skills needs and therefore integrate experiential learning consistently into their offerings, or the nature of the vocational training is actually hollow owing to its lack of integration with workplace experience.

Table 15 Experiential learning

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid				
Yes	23	39.7	39.7	50.0
No	35	60.3	60.3	100.0
Total	58	100.0	100.0	

The following are random examples of evaluators' comments:

- Experiential learning aspects need to be strengthened in relation to organisation, supervision and assessment.
- Experiential learning must be integrated into the programme.

- No experiential learning component.
- Too little time for practical work considering the amount of programming work in second year.
- Too little time allocated for practical work.

All curriculum design initiatives must ensure that the baseline requirements for practical work are met. The design must encompass a framework of support that allows learners to attain the desired learning outcomes defined for any particular course.

Related to the issue of experiential learning is institutions' linkages and partnerships with industries and other institutions. It was found in the analysis that despite the fact that many institutions appeared to have linkages in 95 per cent of the cases the nature of the relationships was not clearly articulated, explained or justified. This goes in the same direction as the argument advanced about experiential learning. Vocational degrees need to be constructed with a substantive proportion of workplace experience; this cannot be left to students' initiative or to the goodwill of industries and business. But this issue has not only a student dimension but also one that affects the quality of staff teaching inasmuch as institutions are forced to hire lecturers with little or no workplace experience. The systematic pursuit of linkages and partnerships with industry, business and certainly with public providers that have a long experience with these issues is fundamental to realise the claims of responsiveness made by many private providers.

Table 16 Linkages and partnerships

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid				
Yes	3	5.2	5.2	5.2
No	55	94.8	94.8	100.0
Total	58	100.0	100.0	

3.2 Private providers and the National Qualifications Framework

One fundamental aspect of the reform of higher education was its inclusion in the NQF. Quite aside from the problems pointed out by higher education institutions in relation to some of the implications of this inclusion and the fact that there are still several unresolved issues in this regard, the NQF constitutes the framework within which higher education qualifications operate, and consequently there are a series of requisites and objectives that programmes leading to qualifications need to meet. Among them are that: qualifications are pitched at levels the outcomes of which are described and weighed through credits; qualifications are expected to be portable and allow vertical (along the system) and horizontal (across the system) mobility; institutions have to be prepared to recognise prior learning in order to facilitate the entrance into the system of previously disadvantaged individuals and mature learners.

This subsection analyses the submissions of the 58 private providers that applied for re-accreditation of their programmes from the point of view of the requirements of the NQF. In particular, this subsection is focused on the pitching of qualifications in terms of levels and credits, the issue of exit and standalone qualifications, their articulation within the qualifications framework, and their recognition of prior learning.

As mentioned in Section 2, the HEQC received 217 programmes for reaccreditation, the large majority of which were at the certificate and diploma level, which are the lower and higher education qualifications where institutions may not require matric exemption as a prerequisite for admission.

Table 17 Exit qualifications

Level	Number	%
Certificate	86	39.6
Diploma	93	42.8
Degree	27	12.4
Masters	6	2.7
Doctorate	5	2.3
Total	217	100

The situation, however, is more problematic than the offering of lower level qualifications which do not necessarily respond to stated skills needs and labour market analyses. The analysis done by subject specialists during the accreditation process indicated that despite being pitched at levels 5 and 6 most of these programmes were actually offering qualifications that belong to the Further Education and Training (FET) band of the NQF. Table 18 indicates that of the submissions made by 58 institutions it was found that 49 of them or 84.5 per cent offered programmes that although presented as at higher education level were actually at level 4, and that only 15.5 per cent of the institutions actually offered programmes that belong to the higher education band.

Table 18 Programmes at FET level

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid				
Yes	9	15.5	15.5	15.0
No	49	84.5	84.5	100.0
Total	58	100.0	100.0	

Evaluators' comments pointed to the issue of credits as well as to the actual content of the programmes. These are some examples of the comments:

- It appears that the diploma offered is in the FET band. This does not seem to articulate well with this programme.
- The programme is not a higher education qualification. 250 hours is allocated to PC literacy. This is in line with a further education course.
- The content of the programme is more suited at NQF level 4 (FET band).
- The college should seriously reconsider the level in which they function (HET). Indications are that they will function better in the FET sector.

A similar problem, although not as generalised, was that even when the programmes were correctly within the higher education band, the actual qualification was either not pitched appropriately, or the programme did not take into account the appropriate level descriptors, or the number of credits was not appropriate for the level. In some cases the actual duration of the programmes bore no relation to the NQF levels. Evaluators found these problems in more than half of the institutions.

Table 19 NQF levels

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid				
Yes	28	48.3	48.3	48.3
No	30	51.7	51.7	100.0
Total	58	100.0	100.0	

These are some examples of the comments made by evaluators on this particular issue:

- The programme is good apart from the problem of the NQF level. It should be offered as a Bachelors degree programme provided it is pitched correctly.
- The course is pitched at diploma level and not at higher diploma level.
- The programme is appropriate for diploma at NQF level 5.
- The qualification is more appropriate at a diploma level.
- The outcomes of this course are not linked with NQF level 5 descriptors.
- The provider needs to clearly define how the set of learning outcomes are aligned with the NQF levels and requirements.
- Clearer motivation of why a total credit of 50 for end user computing is needed.
- Investigations needed on whether a student can finish 240 credits (2400 notional hours) in one year.
- Recommended at NQF level 6, not what institution indicates.

- This qualification might be the equivalent of the three-year diploma in the old system.
- Credits should reflect the postgraduate certificate.
- NQF structure should be looked at. Make sure whether this programme should be presented at postgraduate level or certificate level.
- Serious anomaly: two-year diplomas and three-year BTech degrees instead of three and four years respectively.
- Level descriptors needed – guides indicating a broadly acceptable level of learning skills and learner autonomy for a particular level on the NQF.

Articulation, that is the mobility of qualifications within the NQF in order for students to be able to enter other qualifications within the same field or to move across to other fields, is one of the requirements of the NQF for the development of programmes leading to qualifications. The problems pointed out in terms of the pitching and weight of the programme components have a bearing on what evaluators found in relation to articulation. The table below indicates that in 67 per cent of the cases the qualifications offered by the programmes submitted for re-accreditation did not take into account articulation. This problem can be partially explained following on the argument developed in the previous sections. The lower admission requirements which force qualifications to be actually at level 4 or to be considered borderline, jeopardise articulation within the NQF. The fact that not much analysis of the implications of existing admission policies and actual programme design has gone into the pitching of these qualifications in the NQF is demonstrated also by the fact that the idea of bridging courses to facilitate entry into a programme did not figure in most of the submissions received by the HEQC. It was a general observation made by evaluators that institutions needed to demonstrate clear articulation of exit levels, showing how vertical and horizontal articulation will be achieved.

Table 20 Articulation within the NQF

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid				
Yes	19	32.8	32.8	32.8
No	39	67.2	67.2	100.0
Total	58	100.0	100.0	

Not surprisingly, in the light of the analysis regarding articulation and NQF levels, 93 per cent of the institutions failed to clearly demarcate exit levels and standalone qualifications.

Table 21 Exit qualifications and standalone qualifications

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid				
Yes	4	6.9	6.9	6.9
No	54	93.1	93.1	100.0
Total	58	100.0	100.0	

Some of the observations made by evaluators illustrate the extent and nature of this problem:

- The certificate is an exit qualification part (first-year) of the diploma and is not clearly defined as a standalone qualification.
- The standalone certificate needs a clear justification i.e. how it articulates with the labour market and other qualifications.
- Exit of national diploma and does not articulate with the world of work.
- It is the first year of the national diploma, therefore is not a full standalone qualification.

There were general problems around understanding exit levels, qualification type, minimum credits at each level, total credits, etc. Providers seemed to

be assuming that the full range of exit qualifications and their associated articulation possibilities would be applicable to every programme and field of study. The fact that exit qualifications should be permitted in a programme only where exit level outcomes clearly lead on to another programme of study and/or career pathways that are recognised by the labour market did not seem to be clearly understood.

There was general misunderstanding about how learners progress up the NQF in a particular programme. For instance, it was believed that as long as a learner remained registered in a particular programme, s/he would not be awarded the exit qualification en route to his/her target qualification, the exception being where a learner chooses or is obliged to exit the programme prematurely. There was a lack of awareness about the fact that a learner may not use the same credits for two different qualifications.

In this regard the re-accreditation process indicated that a number of private providers were offering a qualification at higher education level with many exit points, each with a separate qualification. These exit points were first-year courses or second-year courses presented as standalone qualifications, which contradicts SAQA regulations as well as the intentions of the NQF. This situation has created an anomaly in the higher education system in which a student, after a three-year degree, comes out of an institution with three certificates in the same field – a certificate, a diploma and a degree. An institution must simply have one qualification in a specified field with no exit point qualification. Students can only be given a credit certificate if they drop out without completing the qualification.

Another worrying issue that emerges from this situation is that of the intensity of learning, which cannot be the same at all three levels. In other words, the intensity of learning at the first-year level of a degree cannot be the same as the intensity of learning at certificate level, and the intensity of learning at the second-year level of a degree cannot be the same as the intensity of learning at a diploma level.

According to SAQA, a qualification is:

> … the formal recognition and certification of learning achievements awarded by an accredited provider. In the outcomes-based approach intrinsic to the NQF, a qualification signifies and formally certifies the demonstrated achievement by a learner of a planned and purposeful combination of learning outcomes, at a specified level of performance. SAQA has stipulated that the learning outcomes of all South African qualifications should include critical cross-field or generic skills as well as discipline, domain-specific or specialised knowledge, skills and reflexivity. SAQA's format for qualification specification minimally includes the title and purpose of the qualification, its NQF level, credits, rules of combination for its learning components (modules or unit standards), exit level outcomes and associated assessment criteria, entry requirements, forms of integrated assessment (to ensure that learners synthesise the learning from the various modules) and recognition of prior learning and moderation arrangements.

Anomalies such as the structure of programmes for students to obtain three qualifications in three years seriously undermine the functioning of SAQA's concept of a qualification in that, among other things, there were generally no cross-field outcomes integrated into the curriculum. It was a combination of first-year, second-year and third-year courses leading to a certificate, diploma and degree respectively. This way of structuring programmes did not provide possibilities of articulation with the job market.

The following quotes from evaluators' reports summarise the problems found in relation to articulation of qualification within the NQF and how private providers seem to be placing their programmes and qualifications at levels higher than they actually merit, creating a distorting effect on the value of degrees:

- The overall structure and articulation of the IT qualifications was problematic. The first year is equated with the certificate, the second with the diploma and the third with the degree. After three years

of study the student exits with a degree but also with two other qualifications, that is, a certificate and diploma thus giving the graduate an unfair advantage in the labour market and creating confusion about the value of each qualification. Each year is not a coherent standalone whole qualification but an aggregation of first-year, second-year and third-year degree courses. These institutions have misused this aspect of qualification design.

- These IT qualifications show signs of qualification upward creep thus jeopardising the legitimacy of other higher education qualifications. If this situation is not dealt with then higher education qualification standards could degenerate and public confidence in higher education qualifications will erode. Most of these qualifications should be pegged at further education level. However, these qualifications are offered at higher education levels because of the status of higher education and lack of structures, policies and regulations at further education level. The DoE needs to develop structures, policies and regulations to register these programmes as further education and ETQAs should accelerate their development and accredit qualifications at these levels.

One more area of problems was the recognition of prior learning. The analysis of the data gathered from the submissions for re-accreditation received by the HEQC indicate that private providers of higher education are being affected by the difficulties intrinsic to the assessment of prior learning. In most cases (74%) there were no policies and procedures available to do this.

Table 22 Recognition of prior learning

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid				
Yes	15	25.9	25.9	25.9
No	43	74.1	74.1	100.0
Total	58	100.0	100.0	

Finally, the re-accreditation process raised the issue of the nomenclature of the qualifications. The naming and renaming of qualifications came through from the data largely within the context of compliance with national norms and nomenclature as stipulated by the DoE.

Table 23 Nomenclature of qualifications

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid				
Yes	9	15.5	15.5	15.5
No	48	84.5	84.5	100.0
Total	58	100.0	100.0	

The following evaluator comments provide some insights into the high frequency (85%) of problems regarding nomenclature:

- The renaming of the qualification should be addressed without delay to avoid further confusion of title and of the levels involved.
- The title of the programme needs to be reviewed to avoid the word 'licentiate' in it.
- The licentiate seems to present an alternative name to Bachelors degree with 480 credits. Some of these may be electives?
- Marketing is the secondary aspect and is engaged within the fashion industry. The time allocated to this aspect of the course is insignificant and does not warrant the inclusion of marketing in the programme name.
- The qualification trains a person to become a secretary in the business environment. It is recommended that the qualification be renamed to Certificate in Secretarial Studies.
- Hardly anything in the course is about PC engineering. Does it deal with software and hardware engineering? Rename?
- The name of the qualification should be changed to: Diploma in Business Management as all the electives are in the area of business management rather than administration.

- The institutions must urgently obtain formal approval from the DoE for the change of name which they have already implemented.
- The name should be changed to reflect the focus of the programme, which is not programming as the title suggests.

Generally providers did not seem to be aware that qualification descriptors and qualification types are protected terms and may only be used if the qualifications concerned comply with the specifications prescribed in the relevant qualification descriptor.

3.3 Academic staff profile and performance

The data taken from the applications of the 58 private providers that applied for re-accreditation indicate that from the point of view of staff complement most institutions have a 'skeletal' core staff on a full-time basis and maintain the rest of the staff on contracts or part-time employment. This situation was found in 72 per cent of the cases analysed.

Many institutions did not seem to be aware of the need to apply current national legislation and policies related to staff such as the Labour Relations Act, Employment Equity Act and Skills Development Act. This was found to be impacting strongly on their internal human resource management and practice which ended in many instances as unfair labour practice and conditions of service bordering on possible violations of these laws.

In some instances the same staff service various learning centres resulting in there being no full-time staff at either of the sites, while in others there were simply not enough academic staff to sustain any semblance of quality or support for students in their programme offerings. In these cases institutions emphasised independent study as a way of reducing their contact time with students.

Some institutions consisted entirely of part-time staff. Where there was more than one site of delivery, only part-time staff were to be found at both sites. In some instances part-time staff were appointed as coordinators, a

practice which evaluators found particularly negative given that the role of coordinator should be performed by full-time staff.

The issue of loading a single lecturer with as many subjects as possible also surfaced in the data. This raises serious questions around issues of quality, student access to staff, student support and the virtual absence of a culture of teaching and learning at these institutions.

Lack of staff, and, especially, of full-time staff seemed to be undermining student–staff ratios. This was especially obvious in cases where the course involved practical work. In one instance a ratio of 1:35 was maintained for practical work that was highly specialised and required individual supervision of students. It was a concern that academic staff tended generally to be part-time contract workers. As for conditions of employment, in one site at least it was found that:

> The salary and working conditions of these full-time academics are poor and smack of 'sweat shop' tendencies. Academics are given short-term contracts that are renewed often and are paid on average R2500-00 a month. There are no other benefits except sometimes a small fee rebate when academics are studying further. These academics are exploited and face constant threat of job losses, thus refusing to talk about the abuse they face. Also, there is high staff turnover, thereby undermining the sustainable development of quality education.

Despite this, it was found that academics worked hard and that the general atmosphere at this particular institution was conducive to learning. The same evaluator also found that:

> The academic staff seems to be hard working and pay attention to their students' needs. Students are positively disposed to the academics and feel that they get individualised attention, and that academics are prepared to assist them with their problems. Students feel that the class sizes are small enough to afford them individual attention and appreciate the efforts of academic staff to overcome their learning difficulties.

An analysis of staff qualifications and experience, despite the fact that some applications were incomplete, indicates that in 67 per cent of the institutions that submitted programmes for re-accreditation the qualifications, skills and experience of the staff were highly problematic: that is, in some cases staff did not have adequate qualifications for the courses they were teaching or positions they had; in other cases staff had adequate qualifications but lacked the necessary experience to be fully responsible for a course. The most striking case was an institution where the lecturer was registered as a student for his own course.

This points again to the problems derived from both appropriate linkages and partnerships with industry and experiential learning; the latter becomes even more serious and obvious when, as it seems, graduates of a programme become its teachers. Table 24 indicates that in only 19 of the 58 institutions that submitted programmes for re-accreditation did the staff have the necessary qualifications, skills and experience to teach in those programmes. Conversely, in 39 institutions or in 67 per cent of the cases staff did not have the qualifications, or the skills or the experience necessary to teach.

Table 24 Qualifications, skills and experience

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid				
Yes	19	32.8	32.2	32.2
No	39	67.2	67.2	100.0
Total	58	100.0	100.0	

The following comments give an example of the range of problems found in this regard:

- Staff are appropriately qualified and their number (2) is adequate for the number of students (39). One of the lecturers has a B Informatics and the other has a BA and HDE. Both lecturers are indicated as full-time. However, the lack of experience of these lecturers is a

concern.

- Experience and expertise of staff needs urgent strengthening.
- One external examiner is also a part-time lecturer on that course.
- More qualified staff needed in the programme.
- The academic head does not have the appropriate academic qualifications.
- Given that [.....] is a fast-evolving field, staff need to keep updated by actively participating in staff development and research activities.
- The two lecturers in it are not graduates but have done various short courses and diplomas and have adequate practical computer skills to teach at this level.
- All lecturers must comply with the norm set (qualification one level higher than the level they teach in).
- Academics should teach in their areas of expertise, e.g. an HR graduate teaches Travel & Tourism.
- There are full-time academics with an average age of 24 with an IT diploma qualification and in almost all cases this is their first job. Although one appreciates that there is a shortage of skilled academics for IT, the academics are often young, lack academic and appropriate work experience and are under-qualified, thus severely undermining the quality of programme offerings.

Staff development, according to the evaluation, was as problematic as staff recruitment and academic profile. It was especially worrying that paper evaluations and site evaluations were at variance on this particular issue. While paper submissions outlined elaborate staff development policies, plans and initiatives, the site visits revealed these not to be the case. Many staff indicated in interviews conducted during the site evaluation that they were not aware of such policies nor had they been involved in any staff development initiatives. A perusal of minutes of meetings held revealed that some of the attempts to initiate staff development only began after the review process itself. It was also found that since most staff were employed on a part-time or contract basis there was very little or no expectation on their part for development.

Table 25 Staff development

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid				
Yes	25	43.1	43.1	15.5
No	33	56.9	56.9	100.0
Total	58	100.0	100.0	

3.4 Infrastructure and facilities

Infrastructure in relation to teaching and learning has two dimensions. One includes the necessary infrastructure to support directly the learning and teaching process such as laboratories, computers, libraries, cameras, etc., depending on the specific nature and content of the course. The other includes the physical infrastructure of the learning space: building(s), classrooms, and other facilities. This subsection focuses on computer facilities and libraries, and on learning centres and recreational facilities.

3.4.1 Support infrastructure

With regard to computers only half of the institutions had an adequate number of computers to respond to their training needs. Evaluators commented on this aspect as follows:

- Learners need access to computers.
- Computer access and experiential learning is sketchy – this programme needs clear guidelines and implementation strategies for these areas.
- The computer facilities are inadequate.
- Need to increase the availability of computers to learners.
- Computer resources are inadequate.
- Furthermore there are only 30 computers in the lab – inadequate.
- A ratio of 1:40 is too high for computer training.
- They list a computer room with 30 computers which seems a little small for the capacity indicated. Computers and software seem

adequate. Students have to book to use Internet facilities – which is a problem.

- Computer facilities must be increased for IT teaching.

Table 26 Computers and access to computers

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid				
Yes	29	50.0	50.0	50.0
No	29	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	58	100.0	100.0	

Libraries and library collections appeared to be far more problematic than availability and access to computers. The data showed that institutional provision for libraries and in-house library collections ranged from poor to non-existent. The trend to provide students with study guides, especially in professional and vocational programmes, instead of text books, books and journal articles, casts doubt on the students actually achieving some of the applied competences defined by SAQA for levels 5 and 6 or the autonomy of learning, suggested in the New Academic Policy.

Table 27 Library facilities

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid				
Yes	32	55.2	55.2	55.2
No	26	44.8	44.8	100.0
Total	58	100.0	100.0	

Where library facilities did exist (55%) they were cramped, poorly lit and poorly ventilated, with only a few students at a time having access. It was found that the arrangements made by some institutions to grant their students access to municipal libraries were inadequate for a provider of higher education.

The following are examples of evaluators' comments in this regard:

- Need to improve the library collection.
- Inter-loan facilities need attention. Students at distance need good support of library books.
- What library facilities?
- Office library arrangements with the Durban municipal library.
- No library list was included (in the syllabus). There seem to be no resources to integrate into the programme.
- The content of the library (books and academic journals) must be upgraded on an acceptable three-year roll-out plan.
- Library provision at Durban is inadequate for research (dissertation).
- Development literature must be better presented in the library.
- There is no library at all in the institution and students seem unaware of the arrangement with [……..] claimed by the institution. Students articulated complaints around access, poor or non-existent inter-library loan facilities and generally under-resourced libraries that made assignments and other related tasks very difficult to accomplish.

One of the evaluators articulated very clearly the risks involved in the lack of appropriate libraries and computer access:

> - The computer lab facilities and curriculum materials were of reasonable standard. However, there are substantive problems around library resources and quality of academics that teach these programmes. There is a limited range and number of books in the library for the students to access. Moreover, the libraries are small and do not lend books to students for any length of time, hence severely restricting student access to existing library resources. Internet access is very limited. Were it not for site visits, students would have been forced to do without these facilities for years. Often library and Internet facilities were installed just prior to the site visit, thus illustrating the lack of seriousness about providing basic quality education and the importance of site visits.

- There is extensive use of study guides. Students are given study guides for all modules. Although these guides are extensive they do not promote autonomous problem solving and creative learning but rather promote 'spoon-feeding' characteristic of primary and secondary schools. The lack of other library materials creates an overdependency on these study guides. Also there are no effective review procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of these guides. The pedagogic principles on which these guides are developed are often unclear or not factored into the development of these guides. On the other hand, these guides have a valuable role to play among first-year academically challenged learners.

3.4.2 Physical infrastructure

In 90 per cent of the cases, neither the paper evaluation nor site visit made clear the nature and status of many of the decentralised learning centres, satellite campuses and decentralised campuses declared by institutions.

Table 28 Learning centres and satellite campuses

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid				
Yes	6	10.3	10.3	10.3
No	52	89.7	89.7	100.0
Total	58	100.0	100.0	

Institutions provided insufficient evidence to ascertain whether they were operating merely as learning centres for another institution or whether they were fully fledged, autonomous institutions with satellite campuses of their own. In instances where centres were clearly defined as satellite, for example, they were found to be of inferior quality compared to the main site of delivery. Many private providers were found to be aggressively engaging in a strategy of franchising once accreditation was obtained. One of the evaluators involved in a site visit commented:

The above descriptions pertain to main sites of delivery. Branch sites of delivery have poorer quality of facilities and staff. Hence students do not have equivalent experience of education at the different sites of delivery. Although branch sites in smaller towns provide access to rural students they tend to provide inferior quality education as compared to the main city sites. The establishment of branch sites seems primarily motivated by increasing market share and profit making.

Given the situation described above in terms of support infrastructure for teaching and learning and learning centres it is not surprising that sports and recreational facilities were virtually non-existent in 98 per cent of the cases.

Table 29 Sports and recreational facilities

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid				
Yes	1	1.7	1.7	1.7
No	57	98.3	98.3	100.0
Total	58	100.0	100.0	

In some cases institutions had made arrangements with sports clubs but students were generally not aware of such arrangements and in instances where they were aware they complained about problems of access to the facilities. It was also interesting to note from minutes of meetings held by institutions that some of these arrangements or facilities were only put into place after the review process had begun.

4. Private Providers' Management of Quality Assurance

The re-accreditation process showed that some private providers of higher education have an understanding of quality assurance which is limited to conducting satisfaction surveys and which does not include the improvement of teaching and learning or the benchmarking of their programmes. Some of these issues emerged quite clearly from the analysis of different aspects of teaching and learning in Section 3. The problems found in terms of programme design and assessment could be avoided if adequate quality assurance mechanisms were in place at institutions to take care of these issues. This section takes a look at quality assurance arrangements in place at the 58 institutions that applied for re-accreditation.

The analysis of the submissions indicates that 67 per cent of the institutions had some policy on quality assurance. However, in most cases the policies have not been translated into plans and strategies. There was not much available documentation, such as manuals or regulations, reflecting quality assurance arrangements.

Table 30 Quality assurance policies

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid				
Yes	19	32.8	32.8	32.2
No	39	67.2	67.2	100.0
Total	58	100.0	100.0	

A good example of the gap between the existence of quality assurance policies and their implementation is the lack of mechanisms to conduct external evaluations, whether in the form of external moderation of exam papers or in terms of external evaluation and review of the programmes. The analysis of the submissions indicates that in 53 per cent of the cases institutions did not have mechanisms to conduct external evaluations.

Table 31 External evaluation systems

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid				
Yes	27	46.6	46.6	46.6
No	31	53.4	53.4	100.0
Total	58	100.0	100.0	

These are examples of the comments made by evaluators on this issue:

- Need to develop an external evaluation system for the institution, its programmes and examinations.
- External moderation operation is non-existent.
- No evidence of external expertise involved in the programme.
- No external moderators are involved.
- No external moderation in their assessment.
- External moderation must be in place. The habit of international exams for which students have to pay extra fees must be strongly discouraged.
- In future the programme should supply evaluation reports from international agencies.

Similarly, the evaluation found that in 57 per cent of the cases providers did not have advisory committees and governing bodies with relevant academic and industry experience. In the cases of the 43 per cent of institutions that had these structures in place, it was found that this needed to be reviewed periodically and 'regularised' to some extent. It was also found that in some instances the advisory bodies did not include individuals with expertise and skills that were specific to the programme offerings and therefore needed to be expanded to constitute a body of qualified professionals from the field with academic and industry experience. In some instances the advisory boards appeared to be impressive listings of names with very little indication of their roles and the extent of their involvement with the institution.

Table 32 Advisory committees, governing bodies and councils

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid				
Yes	27	43.1	43.1	43.1
No	31	56.9	56.9	100.0
Total	58	100.0	100.0	

However, advisory boards are not the same as and cannot replace internal quality assurance structures. The effective existence of the latter is a fundamental step towards self-regulation in the sense that it is the institution itself which, through its quality assurance office, takes responsibility for the identification of areas for improvement and for the quality control of teaching and learning. In the view of the HEQC this is a fundamental feature of the quality assurance regime for South Africa where institutions themselves are the main body responsible for the quality of provision. This, as has been indicated in the Accreditation Framework, has an important bearing on the attainment of a self-accreditation status.

5. The Re-accreditation of Private Providers

5.1 Evaluation process

This section is focused on the outcome of the re-accreditation process, that is, the paper evaluation, the site evaluation and the final evaluation by the Accreditation Committee. All 58 institutions that applied for re-accreditation went through a paper-based evaluation of both the institution and its programmes and in 25 cases, or 43 per cent, institutions were also visited by evaluators who interacted with staff and students, inspected documentation etc. The details of the procedures are explained in Appendix 1.

The analysis of the overall results of the re-accreditation process and relating this back to the different sections of this report and to some of the decisions taken by the Accreditation Committee has two fundamental functions. On the one hand, it obliges the HEQC to reflect on the accreditation process in order to improve operational as well as conceptual aspects with a view to the implementation of the new accreditation framework. On the other hand, it provides a glimpse of the state of private provision of higher education in South Africa and indicates areas of improvement for the institutions involved and others that might apply for accreditation at a later stage.

Table 33 Re-accreditation outcomes of institutions and programmes (2002)

	Institutions	%	Programmes	%
Full accreditation	14	24.1	40	18.4
Conditional accreditation	30	51.7	120	55.2
De-accreditation	10	17.2	51	23.5
No decision	2	3.4	6	0.9
Total	58	100	217	100

As indicated in Table 33, full accreditation was not the most frequent outcome of the process. On the contrary, 10 institutions or 17 per cent of the institutions that applied, and 51 programmes (23 %) were

de-accredited, while the large majority of institutions and programmes were accredited pending their meeting a series of conditions.

Before embarking upon the general evaluation of institutions and programmes it is useful to have a look at the quality of the applications themselves.

Predictably, the quality of applications varied from carefully prepared submissions to sloppy applications which suggested that some providers did not take this process seriously enough. The performance review questionnaire, in particular, was poorly answered by 60 per cent of the institutions. The most common problems seem to have been incomplete applications in terms of supporting documentation, incomplete answers, and simply contradictory or sloppy answers. The following are some of the comments that evaluators made about the quality of the applications:

- The application reads like an unprofessional first draft.
- Evaluation incomplete.
- No reports available.
- A more detailed submission on outcomes, assessment criteria and learning strategies for individual modules should be made.
- Contradiction in listing of computers. In one section they claim to have 80 computers (2.6.3) and in another section 42 (3.11.1).
- Insufficient information is provided for most questions.
- Full documentation for the postgraduate certificate should be submitted.
- A revised submission is required.
- At face value the submission duplicates the content of the postgraduate diploma. This material cannot be accredited again.
- Material is inappropriate for the certificate level. Wrong material may have been submitted for this programme, hence a re-submission is needed.

Most institutions did not use the opportunity to engage with this document to identify institutional strengths and weaknesses and therefore were unable to present meaningful improvement plans.

The most worrying feature of the submissions by private providers was the variation between what institutions declared on paper and what was found during the site evaluations. In view of all this the Accreditation Committee took the following decisions affecting the evaluation process as well as certain minimum standards expected from institutions:

- Given the predominant disjuncture between the paper submissions claims and actual site practice, all decisions based on paper evaluations should be seen as provisional and subject to a site verification visit.

- Those institutions and programmes that were recommended for conditional accreditation should attend to the conditions within one year, and submit a report satisfying the conditions, which will be followed by a verification site visit.

- All branch sites (satellites) of institutions should be visited to verify their ability to provide quality higher education programmes.

- All programmes that are franchised as providers by the legal provider should be site-evaluated to verify the quality of provision and the ability of the legal provider to make judgements on the quality of the franchised provider. The legal provider may not franchise its programmes to any other providers until they are fully evaluated for having this ability, and without seeking the permission of the HEQC.

- All qualification titles should be harmonised within the current policies and practices of IJC and public providers. Moreover, all standards of programmes are to be evaluated using the NQF standards set by SAQA and the proposed new academic policy. A special task team should be set up to evaluate the NQF levels of all programmes. Therefore all programme accreditation decisions are provisional until this task team has completed its evaluation.

- According to regulations, institutions are not allowed to offer programmes until they have complied fully. They can only offer

programmes after receiving the DoE registration certificate. All those institutions that are offering illegal qualifications must cease immediately and stop enrolling first-year students. They have to submit their programmes for accreditation and registration by the DoE, SAQA and the respective ETQA within three months, failing which these institutions face losing their accreditation status.

- In future, any institution offering qualifications illegally will lose its accreditation status and its other legally accredited programmes for a period of three years. SAQA and the DoE will be advised to de-register the qualifications and the provider for three years.

- In line with the proposals made in the new accreditation framework, all new programme applications from private providers will be site-evaluated for the potential to offer the programme.

- In the case that programmes that are offered fall within the FET band, SAQA will undertake to contact Umalusi for evaluation of such.

- In the case that the re-accreditation process has pronounced similar conditions for conditional accreditation as did the earlier SAQA and DoE evaluation, then the institutions have not more than six months to satisfy these conditions.

- Whole qualifications are defined as per regulation of SAQA and exit after a first or second year/ semester or any stage prior to completion of the qualification is not considered a whole qualification.

- Any academic must have a relevant first degree and have at least one qualification higher than the level at which they lecture.

5.2 General conclusions

Sections 2, 3 and 4 have described the state of provision of higher education in the country based on the evaluation of 58 providers from Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, the Western Cape, the Eastern Cape, the Free

State and the North-West province that represent 49.5 per cent of the private providers registered in South Africa. In general terms it was found that:

- Notwithstanding the fact that some institutions are offering programmes in relevant niche areas with appropriate tuition, the main conclusion derived from the quantitative and qualitative information is that at most private providers there is an uncertain correlation between labour market requirements and programme offerings. This is stressed by the predominance of qualifications in religion in the overall offerings and the lack of offerings in key areas such as science, engineering and technology. This issue becomes even more worrying if instead of taking a straight labour market approach to the issue of qualifications, one takes the perspective of the attributes required from higher education graduates in the world of work and relates this to the evaluators' comments about many of the qualifications offered actually being at level 4 of the NQF, the lack of libraries, and the predominance of a high school-type approach to teaching.
- Teaching and learning were uneven owing to lack of sufficient staff with adequate qualifications and poor or insufficient arrangements for experiential learning.
- There was insufficient infrastructure to support teaching and learning.
- Internal mechanisms to quality-assure programme offerings were absent.
- Knowledge and implementation of a series of national policies and regulations, especially in terms of human resources and labour relations were lacking.

The issue of the quality of provision is a fundamental one if private providers are to actually help in fulfilling the expectations and unleashing the potential of many young South Africans. Poor quality programmes, despite being financially accessible to low-income families, do a disservice to their students and the country in general. One evaluator put these issues in the context of South African history as follows:

> These institutions are islands, isolated from other higher education institutions and from the world of work. At best, these institutions should be classed as further education institutions and not as higher education. Otherwise, they will replicate Bantu Education and once again short-change working class black students. In their current form, these institutions could make a valuable contribution at further education but not at higher education level. They have a long way to go to be seen as higher education institutions.

It is essential that institutions develop the necessary policies and implementing mechanisms to improve their programme design as well as their recruitment of academic staff. Internal mechanisms to moderate exams and to evaluate programmes are decisive tools in benchmarking the quality of students and offerings. A better knowledge of national policies and regulations, especially familiarity with the NQF and the current debates and alternative proposals for the higher education band, even if these are not yet implemented, like the Academic Policy, constitute the point of departure for adequate pitching of programmes and for general improvement of provision.

In relation to standards it is important to point out that professional boards and associations play an important role in promoting and upholding quality standards among professionals. Many of the professional associations are seeking a legal standing and are becoming council and professional boards. A more recent trend among the commerce and business disciplines is that professional councils set up to oversee the standard of professional practice are now becoming private providers of higher education qualifications and act as sector gatekeepers owing to their power to determine who enters the profession. Some of them are involved in standard setting, quality assurance, and the provision of franchises – becoming coaches, referees and players in a game that can only be damaging for the country. Although in some circles this might be seen as a positive development, if there is abuse, as is the case, this practice can have devastating effects on the quality and transformation of higher education system and the labour market in South Africa. The

experience and the actual data brought out by the process of accreditation has made the HEQC Board aware of these problems and it has taken the initiative to ask for a meeting between SAQA, the DoE and the CHE to deal with these issues.

These, however, are not the only problems. The report has drawn serious conclusions about the quality of half of the private providers registered in South Africa. Among the most worrying conclusions is that in most cases the degrees offered by private providers are not higher education degrees but belong to the FET band of the NQF. Upward qualification creep undermines the relation between quality and transformation by increasing the access of students, often from disadvantaged backgrounds, to qualifications that cannot deliver what they promise in marketing campaigns. Similarly, this report has put a question mark on the actual responsiveness of private providers' offerings to the economic needs of the country and has suggested that the creation of a market for students is not the same thing as being responsive to the market.

The HEQC Founding Document makes very clear the relation between transformation and quality: the one cannot exist without the other. Both the HEQC and the private providers are facing the same challenge from different perspectives: to implement seriously the relation between transformation and quality in the provision of higher education programmes for the benefit of South African society at large. In this sense the actual link between these qualifications and the labour market and the quality of vocational education are two areas where private providers should work in partnership with APPTED to conceptualise and implement a suitable capacity development programme to improve the quality of provision at these institutions. There is no doubt that, as stated in the quote from the White Paper cited in the introduction, private providers have a significant role to play in this area, and that at least in some cases there are institutions that are taking this seriously.

As an evaluator commented after a site visit:

- The institution has a good quality infrastructure. The filmmaking industry is dependent on cutting edge technology and this institution has the best.
- The students are exposed to the most innovative cutting edge technologies and techniques in advertising. Students are expected to develop a deep understanding of the market and creative competencies.
- The student : lecturer ratio is low, thus students get high quality individual attention from the academics.
- The academics are qualified and have good quality work experience. The curriculum is of good quality with relevant work-based experience. The academics are highly respected within the industries they serve and students benefit from quality experiential learning placements.
- An advisory panel made up of high quality academics and experts from industry reviews all programmes regularly. Consequently the programmes are of high quality and responsive to changes in the industry.
- Students are given high quality learning experiences such as projects and case studies, which are supervised and assessed rigorously. The programmes use appropriate assessment techniques.
- These institutions use competent part-time academics who have good industry experience.
- Graduates of these courses are sought out and immediately employed by industry.

The HEQC hopes that this type of reflective report will create a platform for productive engagement with providers and will help identify areas for improvement.

6. APPENDIX

PHEI RE-ACCREDITATION PROCESS

SUBMISSION DATE: 31 MAY 2002

1. INTERNAL PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS

Application received and logged in by CHE.

▼

Receipt issued to provider with confirmation of application and programmes.

▼

Capturing of data
Programme profile and biographical information of each institution.

▼

Internal screening (screening of applications for completeness).

▼

Communicating with institutions to submit missing information, where applicable.

▼

Response from institutions (re: submission of missing information).

▼

Response from institutions (re: submission of missing information).

▼

Appointment of evaluators
1. Institutional evaluators (experience in HE institutional management).
2. Programme evaluators (subject specialists).

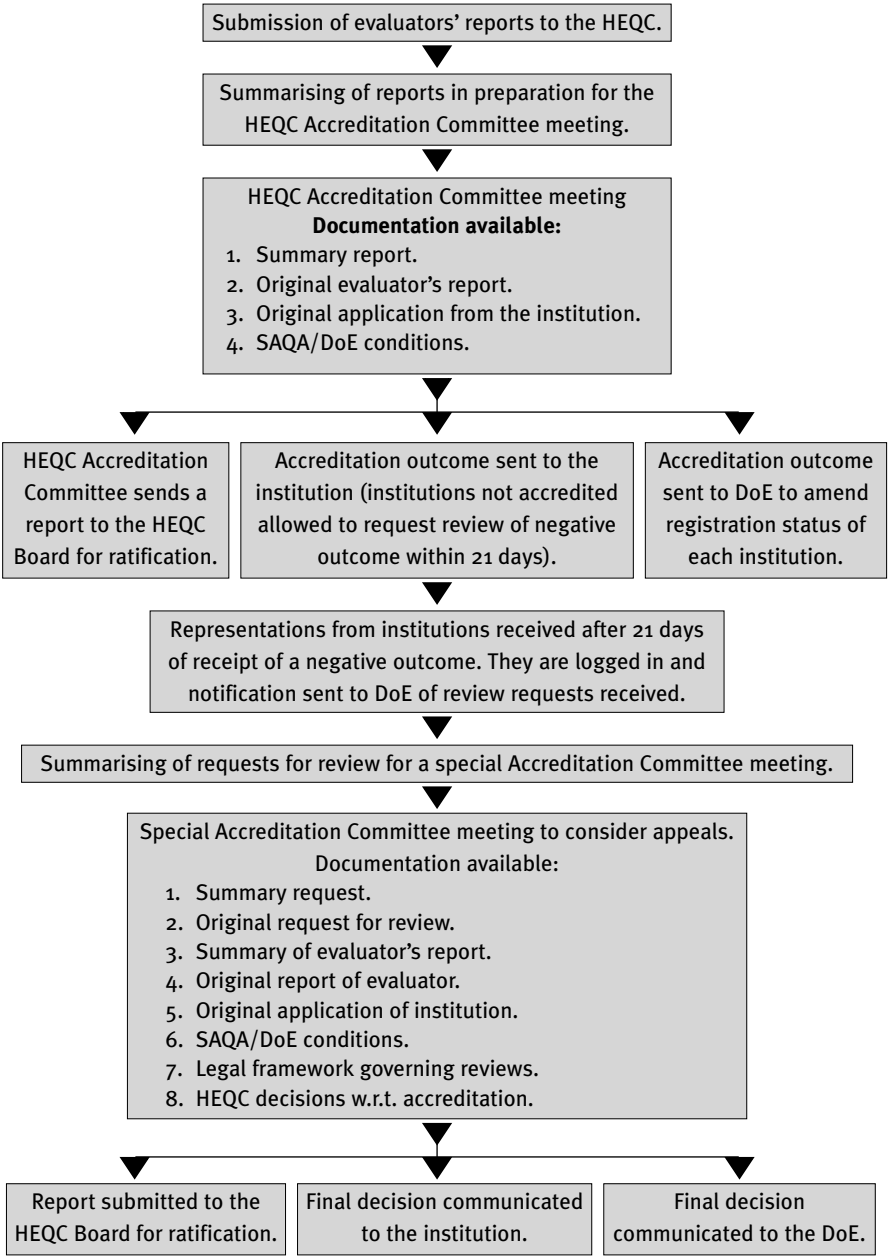
2. PAPER-BASED AND SITE-BASED EVALUATIONS

Paper-based evaluations
Evaluation of documentation submitted to the HEQC. Each institution or programme evaluated had a verifier.

3. SITE-BASED EVALUATIONS

Site-based evaluations (verification process)
Criteria:
- Providers offering 10 or more programmes.
- Providers offering degree programmes.
- Providers who failed the paper evaluation.

NB: As from 2003, the paper-based evaluation and site-based evaluation will be conflated since all institutions will automatically get a site visit irrespective of the number and levels of programmes offered.



1.1 Briefing providers of higher education

Besides sending out detailed written communication informing private providers about the re-accreditation, an information workshop was held at Kopanong Conference Centre on 17 and 19 April 2002 with 72 institutions attending. Although private providers found this useful in helping them complete the HEQC re-accreditation forms and process, they expressed concern about the fact that very little time was available to complete the process. Some indicated that they wanted an extension, which the Accreditation and Coordination Directorate was happy to agree to. However, the directorate pointed out the risk of delaying the process for private providers' plans for the next year.

With respect to the increased fees charged by the HEQC for the re-accreditation of providers, in the main, the non-profit-making private providers felt these fee increases were exorbitant and that they could not afford them. The secretariat of the directorate asked them to write to the HEQC Board requesting a fee reduction. Three letters have been received in this regard. The board did not accede to the request of the providers but asked the HEQC Secretariat to look into the matter regarding non-profit providers.

1.2 Training of evaluators

In the past, the Accreditation and Coordination Directorate had been using a rather limited number of academics from public higher education institutions and personnel from SETA-based ETQAs as evaluators for private higher education applications. Some private providers raised this as a concern. In response to this and to the need to increase the pool of competent evaluators from private providers, each institution was requested to submit the names of two permanent academic staff members to be trained as evaluators and concomitantly build institutional capacity. The nominations were put through a screening process which was followed by a series of evaluators' workshops held in Durban (7–8 May 2002) attended by 24 delegates, Johannesburg (14–15 May 2002)

attended by 36 delegates and Cape Town (16–17 May 2002) attended by only six delegates. A draft training manual for programme evaluation (paper-based) has been developed.

Delegates were generally positive about the workshops, making comments such as:

> 'I really feel secure in the knowledge that I will know where to start if ever called upon to evaluate an application…Here and there presentation techniques could be improved… Thank you very much for a most enlightening experience. You also went to a lot of trouble to make everything work according to plan.'

> 'I personally appreciate the attitude of transparency and co-operation now evident in the process of accreditation.'

> 'Perhaps workshops could be slightly longer – two full days – and could involve more individual and/or group activities. Not enough time allowed at this workshop.'

In all the workshops, robust discussions on the role and ethics of the programme evaluators ensued. Questions posed were about the professionalism of the evaluator – i.e. acting in the interest of the students rather than that of the provider, and the fairness of evaluations if done by competitors.

> 'Maybe people could be notified at the start that they are not representing their institutions, and this is not the appropriate forum for private institutional issues… I think the friendliness and approachability of the CHE staff have added great value to this workshop. The overall discussion and debate presented by the CHE are impressive and inspire confidence in the education transformation process. '

The only unresolved issue from all the workshops was whether evaluators should be paid, as the HEQC is currently doing, or should not be paid, as is standard practice in the developed world and some developing countries, with delegates asking the question:

'Why did you increase accreditation fees by more than 200% if you don't want to pay evaluators?'

In both Johannesburg and Cape Town, it was felt that payment of evaluators should continue so that evaluators would take the task seriously and regard it as a priority.

In Durban, whereas the dominant view was that evaluators should not be paid, some individual delegates argued that payment should continue for the same reasons mentioned in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

1.3 The re-accreditation process

The objective of the exercise was the full re-accreditation of PHEI programmes, which had been conditionally accredited during the preceding SAQA evaluation. The focus was, accordingly, on all aspects related to institutional quality assurance mechanisms and programme quality, and was not restricted to issues found deficient during the first evaluation. This approach was necessitated mainly by gaps in information in certain cases, owing to complications arising in the transition of accreditation activities from SAQA to the HEQC. It also provided the HEQC with an opportunity to conduct a thorough evaluation within its own policy and procedural framework.

The overall time frame set for the re-accreditation activity was March–October 2002. The modality for re-accreditation was that of 'paper' applications within HEQC policies and procedures, complemented by site visits, where applicable. Phase 1 entailed the check by the HEQC secretariat for completeness of paper applications and evaluation of paper applications (performance review questionnaire, institutional application form and programme application form) by institutional and programme evaluators. Phase 2 entailed a site evaluation by institutional and programme evaluators. PHEIs were required to submit two types of documentation for each programme, both of which were considered to determine the outcome of the re-accreditation.

1.4 Paper-based evaluation

The first type of documentation was identical to that required for a 'normal' application for accreditation, which was based on a self-evaluation of institutional and programme-related information and substantiated by supportive documentation, within the new prescribed HEQC format. This documentation was first scrutinised by HEQC personnel for completeness, and the programme-related parts submitted to subject specialists, following normal HEQC procedures. The subject specialists had to evaluate whether programmes offered by PHEIs led to qualifications registered on the NQF between level 5 and 8. In order to evaluate whether programmes were pegged appropriately, the HEQC was guided by the following documents:

- The New Academic Policy (draft).
- Report 116/150.
- SAQA Draft Level Descriptors.
- Qualifications registered on the NQF.

In terms of the above, the following criteria for programme evaluation were applied:

- Entry to programme.
- Process of teaching and learning.
- Reliability and validity of assessment strategy.
- Outcomes achieved.
- Design of programme.
- Organisation of resources to support programme.

The second type of documentation required focused on performance-related issues, providing, inter alia, evidence of the implementation of claims and undertakings made by the institutions concerned during the preceding evaluation. This was especially relevant in the case of 'new' institutions and programmes, where various issues were still in a developmental stage during the first application. Items covered in the

report were, for example, student throughput rates, staff appointments and retention, library acquisitions, student satisfaction indicators, evidence of financial sustainability, expenditure indicators, etc. A performance-related questionnaire was developed and made available by the HEQC for this purpose. The performance review questionnaire focused on the following areas:

- Staff profile and performance.
- Student profile and performance.
- Research output and integration.
- Student, staff and stakeholder satisfaction.
- Infrastructure and facilities.
- Recurrent expenditure.
- Linkages and partnerships.
- Internal quality promotion and assurance.

An institutional evaluation panel established by the HEQC specifically for this purpose evaluated the performance-related reports and institutional applications. The review process focused on analysis of the information provided, with a view to determining the following:

- Organisation of the institution's resources to achieve its stated purposes.
- Performance of the institution with respect to student performance.
- Sustainability of the institution's operations.

The outcomes of this evaluation were fed into the evaluation by subject specialists' programme evaluators. Paper-based evaluation of type 1 and 2 documentation was part of phase 1.

1.5 Site evaluation visits

Complementary to the procedures described in 1.2.1 above, the HEQC conducted site evaluation visits in any of the following circumstances. These were where PHEIs:

(i) Offer 10 or more programmes that have to be re-evaluated.
(ii) Offer any degree programmes that have to be re-evaluated.
(iii) Failed the paper-based evaluation of the re-accreditation process.

Site visits for categories (i) and (ii) above were arranged as soon as applications for re-accreditation were checklisted by HEQC personnel. Site visits resulting from (iii) above were arranged by the secretariat once results of the paper-based evaluations were known. The providers that were site-evaluated were informed in advance of the visit and were given guidance on what to prepare. Where possible, site evaluators' names were disclosed in advance and no provider objected to any evaluator used. Institutions were provided with the instruments to be used by the HEQC-appointed panel. Institutions were advised to provide the panel with or give access to the following documents:

- Registration documents (DoE and SAQA).
- Programme prospectus.
- Marketing information.
- Quality assurance documents.
- Linkage and partnership agreements.
- Examinations and assessment documents.
- Staff and student equity documents.
- Staff and student development documents.
- Research publications.
- Challenges and improvement plans.

In addition, institutions were requested to ensure that the panel could review the systems/processes for the maintenance of learner records, the examination system and the institution's certification processes. The

Evaluation Panel considered documentation supplied by the applicant both in the various submissions and on site.

The examination and scrutiny of materials was supplemented by conferring with institutional representatives from both academic and administrative staff. Interviews with students and other support staff members were scheduled. An inspection of the facilities was also conducted. The chair of the Evaluation Panel assumed responsibility for the preparation of a report containing an overview of the findings, comments and recommendations of the Evaluation Panel.

1.6 HEQC Accreditation Committee

Two additional members from the private higher education sector were co-opted onto the private provider accreditation committee. Two special meetings (25 and 26 September 2002 and 4 November 2002) were scheduled to deal with the re-accreditation of programmes from private providers.

The HEQC Secretariat assumed responsibility for drawing up comprehensive reports for the Accreditation Committee. Reports were based on the evaluators' reports based on the performance review questionnaire, the application form for accreditation and, where relevant, the site visit evaluation panel reports. The Accreditation Committee recommended to the HEQC any of the following decisions:

- Accreditation for the institution (with or without conditions).
- Conditional accreditation for institutions or programmes where deficiencies were identified that could be rectified within a specified period of time.
- Accreditation subject to site visit within a specified period of time.
- Continued accreditation refused either for the institution or for specific programmes.

7. CHE MEDIA

INTERNET SITE

http://www.che.ac.za/

PUBLICITY BROCHURES

- The Council on Higher Education
- The CHE Higher Education Quality Committee
- Quality Assurance in higher education

PRESS RELEASES

- Public handover to the Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, of the CHE Size and Shape Task Team Report, Towards a New Higher Education Landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the Twenty-First Century (18 July 2001)
- The National Plan for Higher Education of the Ministry of Education (5 March 2001)
- Launch of the Higher Education Quality Committee of the Council on Higher Education (2 May 2001)

NEWSLETTERS

- CHE News No.1 (November 1999)
- CHE News No.2 (November 2000)
- CHE News No.3 (May 2001)
- CHE News No.4 (November 2001)
- CHE News No.5 (March 2003)

ANNUAL REPORTS

- Annual Report 1998/1999 (November 1999)
- Annual Report 1999/2000 (November 2000)
- Annual Report 2000/2001 (November 2001)
- Annual Report 2001/2002 (November 2002)

Kagisano (discussion series)

- Higher Education Transformation and the Public Good, No. 1 (November 2001)
- Good Governance in Higher Education: Reflections on Co-operative Governance in South African Higher Education (Issue no. 2 – Summer 2003)
- The General Agreement on Trade in Services and South African Higher Education: What should South Africa Do? (Issue no. 3 – Autumn 2003)

Policy documents

- Higher Education Quality Committee: Draft Founding Document (August 2000)
- Higher Education Quality Committee: Founding Document (January 2001)
- Policy Report: Promoting Good Governance in South African Higher Education
  - Council on Higher Education Governance Task Team, May 2002

Research reports

- Governance in South African Higher Education Research Report
  - Council on Higher Education Governance Task Team, May 2002

Task Team reports

- Towards a New Higher Education Landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of SA in the 21st Century (July 2000)
- A New Academic Policy for Programmes and Qualifications in Higher Education: Discussion Document (October 2001)

Commissioned reports

1. An Evaluation of Sertec and the Quality Promotion Unit (July, 2000)
2. Quality Assurance in Higher Education: The Role and Approach of Professional Bodies and SETAs to Quality Assurance (November 2000)
3. Thinking about the South African Higher Education Institutional Landscape: An International Comparative Perspective on Institutional Differentiation and Restructuring (November 2000)
4. Increased Government Support for Higher Education (May 2000)
5. Labour Market Trends and the Demand for High-level Human Resources in South Africa. (May 2000)
6. Mergers in Higher Education and Training. A Brief Document (April 2000)
7. A Summary of UTEC's Proposal and the Implications thereof for the Size and Shape Task Team (April 2000)
8. Synthesis Report of Submissions in Response to the CHE Size and Shape Task Team Discussion Document (June 2000)
9. Synthesis Report of Institutional and Stakeholder Submissions. In Response to the Discussion Document of 07/04/2000 of the CHE Task Team on Size and Shape (May 2000)
10. Information and Communication Technologies and South African Higher Education (May 2000)
11. Review of Proposed Framework for COLISA Position Paper and Regional Review of the Three-year Rolling Plans (April 2000)
12. Sertec Transition Plan, 2001 – 2002 (April 2001)
13. Registration and Recognition of Private Higher Education Providers: Problems, Prospects and Possibilities with Specific Reference to the Higher Education Amendment Bill, 2000 (July 2001)
14. Conditions and Criteria under which Higher Education Institutions should be Permitted to Use the term 'university' (July 2001)
15. Clarification of Private Provider Usage of Terms 'Accreditation', 'Validation' and 'Endorsement' and Related Terms (August 2001)

Reports

i. The Council on Higher Education 1st Annual Consultative Conference (29 – 30 November 1999)
ii. The Council on Higher Education 2nd Annual Consultative Conference (23 – 24 November 2000)
iii. The HEQC Launch and Strategic Planning Workshop (May/June 2001)
iv. Workshop of HEQC Forum of Quality Assurance Managers of Higher Education Institutions (24 July 2001)
v. HEQC Institutional Audit and Programme Review Training Workshop (25-29 September 2001)

Occasional papers

- National and Continental Human Resource Development Initiatives: Challenges for Higher Education. February 2002.
  Paper 1.