



HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY COMMITTEE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Audit Report
on
PC Training and Business College**

Report of the HEQC to PC Training and Business College

September 2007

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HEQC Audit Report Number 13

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Acronyms

AUETD	African Union Education Training and Development Holdings
AP	Audit Portfolio
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DoE	Department of Education
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurer
GAQAD	Group Academic and Quality Assurance Department
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
ISO	International Standard Organisation
NEHAWU	National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union
MBA	Master of Business Administration
NAQARB	National Quality Assurance and Research Board
PCT&BC	PC Training and Business College
SABS	South African Bureau of Standards
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SRC	Student Representative Council
SSoD	Satellite Site of Delivery
Unisa	University of South Africa

Overview of the Audit

Introduction

The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) has statutory responsibility to conduct institutional audits as indicated in the Higher Education Act of 1997. This responsibility of the HEQC is also recognised by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) in the accreditation of the CHE as the Education and Training Quality Assurer (ETQA) for the higher education band.

The Audit of PC Training and Business College (hereinafter referred to as PCT&BC) was conducted by the HEQC in terms of its mandate. This document reports on the audit visit to PCT&BC, which took place from 15-18 August 2006.

This report¹ contains an overview of the audit visit, a list of the commendations and recommendations made by the Audit Panel, and the findings of the Panel in relation to the audit criteria set by the HEQC.

The Audit Process

In May 2005, the Executive Director of the HEQC secured the consent of the Principal of PCT&BC that the institution would participate in an institutional audit from 15-18 August 2006 as a private higher education institution that provides one degree and several diploma programmes.

PCT&BC conducted its institutional self-evaluation in the agreed time and produced an Audit Portfolio for review by the Audit Panel. PCT&BC did not negotiate for modification to the scope of the audit.

The HEQC constituted an Audit Panel consisting of academics and academic administrators from the higher education community, all of whom had participated in an auditor preparation workshop run by the HEQC. An Audit Portfolio meeting was convened in Pretoria on 18 and 19 July 2006 at which the Audit Panel met to consider the Audit Portfolio and to prepare for the audit visit. During this meeting, the Panel identified additional documents to be requested from PCT&BC prior to the audit visit.

A sub-group of the Audit Panel conducted one-day visits to the Johannesburg and Pretoria satellite campuses of PCT&BC on 3 and 5 July respectively. The team visiting these campuses comprised Professor Dolina Dowling and Mr Bheki Mbhele. These sites were visited as they are large sites with approximately 1200 and 850 students

¹ The report includes five appendices: Appendix A lists the objectives of HEQC audits, Appendix B provides the names of the members of the Audit Panel, Appendix C lists the documents submitted by PCT&BC, Appendix D contains the audit visit schedule, and Appendix E provides the satellite campus visit schedule.

respectively. At both campuses the team conducted interviews with management, academic and administrative staff, and students (see Appendix E, Satellite Campus Visit Schedule).

The audit visit took place from 15-18 August 2006. The Audit Panel toured the institution's campus in Durban on 15 August and conducted interviews with the CEO, senior management and a wide range of staff and students on 16 and 17 August.

In all, the Audit Panel interviewed more than 150 people during the audit visit, including

- Members of the Board of Directors
- The CEO and the senior management team
- Members of the National Academic, Quality Assurance and Research Board
- External Partners and employers
- Academic and administrative staff
- Students
- Alumni.

Open sessions were also available for any staff or student member of the institution and of its wider community to meet the Audit Panel and to make a submission. No one chose to make use of the opportunity to address the Panel.

This report reflects the audit process and findings based on the Audit Portfolio provided by PCT&BC, supplementary documentation requested from the institution, and interviews and observations made during the audit visit. Every effort has been made to understand the quality related arrangements at the institution at the time of the audit visit and to base the Panel's conclusions on the documentation submitted, the interviews held and the observations made.

It is expected that PCT&BC will use these findings to strengthen its internal quality management systems and thereby facilitate the improvement of the quality of its core academic activities. Recommendations made in the report indicate priority areas for improvement. Areas of strength or areas in need of improvement are indicated in the main body of the report. Decisions about the manner in which this is done, and the priority accorded to the various recommendations, is the prerogative of PCT&BC.

It is expected that five months after the publication of the Audit Report that PCT&BC will submit to the HEQC an improvement plan based on the HEQC Audit Report. The institution will be expected to submit a mid-cycle progress report three years after the site visit.

The HEQC would like to thank PCT&BC for the co-operative manner in which it has participated in the audit process. The HEQC wishes to express appreciation to PCT&BC management in allowing the Audit Panel to conduct its work. The hospitality and assistance of PCT&BC's personnel was appreciated. Mr Kay Naidu and his team in particular are thanked for the preparation of the documentation, as well as their co-operation and helpfulness throughout the process.

Summary of Findings

PC Training and Business College (PCT&BC) is a contact private teaching higher education institution with 5 campuses located in four provinces, namely, KwaZulu-Natal (Durban), which is also the Head Office, Free State (Bloemfontein), Western Cape (Cape Town) and Gauteng (Johannesburg and Pretoria).

PCT&BC is a subsidiary of African Union Education Training and Development (AUETD) Holdings (Pty) Ltd. AUETD is a broad based Education, Training and Skills Development Group, which was launched in November 2005.

PCT&BC (or PC Training, as it was then called) commenced operations fifteen years ago through providing basic computer skills training. During the next eight years, it provided training on end-user computing and basic business and information technology (IT) skills (NQF level 4) at seventy decentralised branches in South Africa as well as sites in Swaziland and Botswana. In October 2001, PCT&BC's quality management system was accredited by the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) ISO 9001:2000 Quality Standard (AP: 26). Since 2004 PCT&BC has met the requirements for the 'Investors in People' Award.

In 2001 PCT&BC registered with the DoE as a private provider of higher education and received conditional accreditation from the HEQC for its certificate and higher certificate programmes in Information Technology and Business Administration. The programmes were also registered with SAQA. PCT&BC offers programmes that lead to Diplomas in Information and Communications Technology and Business Administration at NQF level 5 at all of its campuses. Furthermore, in November 2005 the diploma qualifications were moved from conditional to full accreditation except those offered at the Pretoria campus, which was awaiting an accreditation site visit.

PCT&BC has had a steady growth in student numbers. In 2002 student registration was 682, 1788 in 2005, and 2759 in 2006 (AP: 38). From 2005 to 2006 this amounted to a 54% growth. 95% of the current student population is African. PCT&BC employs 170 staff of which 77 are academic staff (AP: 32). All academics are full-time staff. Of the total staff complement, 43.6% are female and 56.4% male. 71.2% are African, 23.5% Indian, 4% Coloured, and less than 2% White (AP: 32).

Given the nature of the institution, its stated objectives and commitments, the Panel flagged three general areas in need of immediate attention:

1. PCT&BC is an institution which caters mainly diploma programmes at NQF level 5, and as a consequence must ensure that there is quality of academic provision across all campuses, well developed academic leadership and qualified and experienced teaching staff, appropriate academic support and a rigorous system to ensure the quality of provision.

2. PCT&BC needs to develop and implement a comprehensive academic planning framework, which has measurable objectives, timeframes and which allocates responsibilities for action. This would also provide a framework for making decisions about the development of new programme offerings and increase of the number of satellite campuses.
3. PCT&BC needs to conceptualise and develop mechanisms for monitoring and tracking performance in areas, such as enrolment planning, staffing, student access and student success rates, to ensure equivalence in the quality of provision across all the campuses.

The HEQC makes recommendations in a number of areas to signal to PCT&BC those issues that may require attention with regard to quality provision. These issues will need to be incorporated into the overall quality assurance planning and practice at PCT&BC.

A summary of the commendations and recommendations follows. The body of the report also draws attention to other issues for attention and consideration by PCT&BC.

Commendations

1. The HEQC commends PCT&BC for having put in place a robust system to ensure the integrity of certification.

Recommendations

1. The HEQC recommends that PCT&BC continue with its plans to identify an appropriate quality management system that would support and enhance the work of the Kaizen teams, and take steps to ensure that the system is formalised, implemented, monitored and reviewed effectively across all campuses.
2. The HEQC recommends that attention be given to the development of systems for benchmarking, student and employer surveys, and impact studies which include implementation plans with timeframes and allocated responsibility.
3. The HEQC recommends that PCT&BC develop and implement a comprehensive academic planning framework which will guide the management of academic activities of the institution such as the making of decisions about the development of new programme offerings and expansion of the number of satellite campuses.
4. The HEQC recommends that PCT&BC reconceptualise its approach to access and academic development at the institution in a way which will enable it to design and develop appropriate programmes to ensure that students in all its campuses are optimally prepared and supported throughout the duration of their studies.

5. The HEQC recommends that PCT&BC develop a structured growth plan for libraries on all its sites of delivery which will include budget allocation so that facilities and resources are upgraded to ensure that student needs for access to information are met, and that there is equivalence of provision across campuses.
6. The HEQC recommends that PCT&BC develop an ICT policy, which addresses usage of IT facilities, the adequacy internet access for students, the equitable access to IT facilities for all students across campuses, and ensure that such provision is monitored and evaluated.
7. The HEQC recommends that PCT&BC continue with the development and implementation of an integrated management information system, which ensures the safety and integrity of learner records and which enables the institution to access critical information for decision-making purposes.
8. The HEQC recommends that PCT&BC ensure that every student has an appropriate experiential learning placement, and that there is a functioning system to record, monitor, and assess the content and progress of the student's learning experience in the workplace.
9. The HEQC recommends that PCT&BC review its programme design, development and approval processes and put in place measures for the continuous monitoring of the effectiveness of these mechanisms.
10. The HEQC recommends that PCT&BC review its current assessment policy and practices and align them with the academic plan of the institution in order to ensure an appropriate balance for teaching and learning and assessment activities in the academic calendar of the institution
11. The HEQC recommends that PCT&BC develop a research plan appropriate to the institutional size and programme niche areas at institutional level, which can be rolled out across all campuses; develop and implement a system to manage the quality arrangements for research; and develop a systematic plan to enhance staff capacity for undertaking research, particularly in teaching and learning.
12. The HEQC recommends that PCT&BC review its community engagement policy in a way which will support a well co-ordinated implementation of community engagement through the development and monitoring of appropriate activities across all campuses, and which will include ways to integrate community engagement into the curriculum.