

## QUALITY ASSURANCE: THE WORK OF THE HEQC

### 1. INTRODUCTION

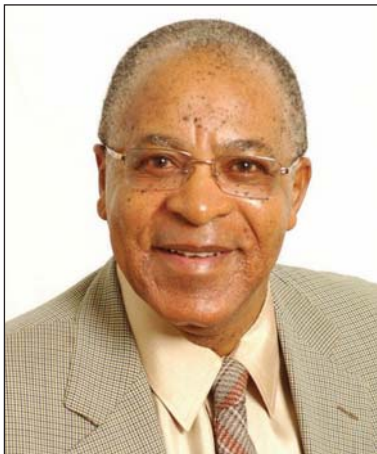
The promotion and assurance of quality is a statutory responsibility of the CHE, carried out by its permanent sub-committee, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). According to the *Higher Education Act* of 1997, the functions of the HEQC are to:

- ◆ Promote quality in higher education
- ◆ Audit the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions; and
- ◆ Accredite programmes of higher education.

To the above three mandate areas, the Board of the HEQC added quality-related capacity development.

The HEQC operates within the framework of the NQF and is accredited by the South African Qualification Authority as the Education and Training Quality Assurer for the higher education band.

### 2. HEQC BOARD AND MEMBERSHIP



**Prof. Hugh Africa:**  
Chairperson HEQC

The HEQC has its own Board with two CHE members represented on it. HEQC members are chosen by the CHE on the basis of nominations from interested parties in higher education. All HEQC members are appointed in their own right for a three to four year period. Board members bring expertise from different stakeholder domains. The new Board was constituted in April 2005. The current membership comprises:

#### Chairperson

Prof. HP Africa \*

Independent Consultant, CHE Member

#### Voting Members

Ms J Glennie\*:

Director, South African Institute for Distance Education, CHE Member

Dr M Motshekga Sebolai\*:

Academic Director, PC Training and Business College

Ms J Favish\*:

Director Institutional Planning, University of Cape Town

Dr D Gihwala\*:

Dean of Science, Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Dr R Stumpf\*:

Vice Chancellor and Rector, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

Prof. H Hanrahan:

Professor of Communications Engineering, University of the Witwatersrand

Dr D Mogari Director:

Quality Assurance and Promotion Directorate, University of Venda,

Dr NM Takalo:

Vice-Principal, North-West University

Mr M Cele:

Deputy Director Research, Department of Science and Technology

Mr T Yako:

Secretary General, South African Students' Congress

Dr P Naves:

Director: Human Capital, SABC

**Co-opted members**

Ms N Nxesi: Chief Executive Officer, ETDP SETA  
 Ms S Jawoodeen: Regional Secretary, NEHAWU, Ikapa Metropole Region

**Non-voting members**

Dr M Qhobela: Chief Director, Higher Education Branch, Department of Education. Since February 2007, Dr Qhobela has been appointed Deputy Director General  
 Dr P Lolwana: Chief Executive Officer, UMALUSI  
 Dr L Lange\*: Executive Director, Higher Education Quality Committee  
 Dr M Singh\*: Interim Chief Executive Officer, Council on Higher Education

(\* Members serving on the Executive Committee of the HEQC)

**3. ORGANISATION**

The HEQC Board meets four times a year and the HEQC Executive Committee (EXCO) meets once a month. In addition to the full Board meetings, the work of the HEQC is conducted through the following sub-committees:

- ♦ The Exco
- ♦ Accreditation Committee
- ♦ Special Accreditation Committee (National Reviews)
- ♦ Institutional Audits Committee

Regular reports on the work of the HEQC are tabled at the full meetings of the CHE.

During the past year, the HEQC Board and Exco met regularly as scheduled.

The work of the HEQC is divided among four directorates and the Office of the Executive Director. The four Directorates are:

- ♦ Programme Accreditation and Coordination
- ♦ National Reviews
- ♦ Institutional Audits
- ♦ Quality Promotion and Capacity Development

The HEQC Directorates work closely with the Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate of the CHE. The HEQC comprises approximately 31 staff members who discharge their responsibilities in the Office of the Executive Director, the Programme Accreditation and Coordination Directorate, the National Reviews Directorate, the Institutional Audits Directorate and the Directorate for Quality Promotion and Capacity Development. The HEQC uses a number of contract staff and consultants as well as the services of local and foreign quality assurance experts from higher education institutions and other organisations. It draws on the general infrastructure of the CHE for services relating to finance, personnel and media and communications. The Executive Director and the directors meet once a month and each director has weekly meetings with the Executive Director. Directors, managers and project administrators meet every two months with the Executive Director.

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### 4. OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**Dr. Lis Lange: ED HEQC**

#### Overview

The beginning of the period under review was marked by several transitions in the organisation of the HEQC following Dr Prem Naidoo's death, the departure of Dr Badat to take up the position of Vice-Chancellor at Rhodes University, and the resignation of several senior staff members. The appointment of Dr Mala Singh as Interim CEO of the CHE required the appointment of a new Executive Director for the HEQC. Dr Lis Lange was appointed first in an acting capacity and after a formal process, in a permanent capacity since January 2007.

It seems opportune to record in this report the fundamental role that Dr Singh, the founding Executive Director of the HEQC, has played in the conceptualisation, design and implementation of the national quality assurance system in South Africa. The success and achievements of the HEQC, and much of its international reputation six years after its launch in 2001, are a tribute to her intellectual leadership, strategic vision, and personal integrity.

The reorganisation of the HEQC during this period took two forms. First, a new directorate was created with dedicated responsibility for the conduct of national reviews. This function was until the 2005/6 period part of the responsibilities of the Programme Accreditation Directorate. Second, a review was undertaken of the focus and scope of work in all directorates. New directors were appointed to fill vacancies in the Institutional Audits Directorate and in the Quality Promotion and Capacity Development Directorate, and a director was appointed to the newly created National Reviews Directorate.

The HEQC continued with its implementation schedule in relation to the accreditation of new programmes, the accreditation of existing programmes in selected disciplines, and institutional audits. Towards the end of the period under review the HEQC reinstated its regular meetings of the Quality Assurance Forum. The main goal of these meetings is to facilitate the sharing of information between the quality agency and higher education institutions and to improve the understanding of key stakeholders of the work of the HEQC.

In the area of accreditation the HEQC has worked on eliminating some of the problems that emerged from the implementation of the new online applications system. After a marked decrease in the number of applications for accreditation of programmes, which might have been caused by lack of familiarity with the new system as well as technical problems, numbers are up again for both private and public provider applications. In the area of coordination, the HEQC signed its first Memorandum of Understanding with the Engineering Council of South Africa on 7 November 2006.

The newly created National Reviews Directorate took over the ongoing activities relating to the review of professional and academic programmes in education, which had started in 2005 with the evaluation of 22 MEd programmes. The year 2006/7 focused on the evaluation of the BEd, PGCE and ACE, offered at 10 higher education institutions. Good professional relations with faculties and schools of education as well as the commitment of individual academics made possible the implementation of a process which has generally been regarded as transparent, participative, and most importantly, as having an impact on improving the quality of programmes.

In the area of audits, to date the HEQC has conducted 11 audits of public higher education institutions and 7 audits of private providers. In general, feedback from institutions as well as the comments of members

of audit panels suggest that the audit process has been conducted professionally and efficiently and that institutions have found the audits useful tools to generate institutional self-knowledge. The HEQC has also introduced further refinements to the auditing of private providers which distinguishes between different types of providers among them.

The work of the Quality Promotion and Capacity Development Directorate has been reconfigured to create greater efficiencies. Specialised training for discipline specific-evaluators in the accreditation system, training for evaluators in the context of national reviews, and training for auditors as well as workshops to support the preparation of institutions that will undergo audits are the activities on which staff of this directorate have concentrated their energies during this year. The review of training modules and the materials provided in the different workshops have been well-received by participants, according to evaluation forms completed after training sessions. In the area of quality promotion, the HEQC finalised a number of projects and refocused its energies on the reconceptualisation of its student literacy project, a process which is still underway. The HEQC has re-launched its QA Forum meetings, this time in partnership with HESA and has resumed similar meetings with private providers of higher education.

Overall, this year, which marked the middle of the implementation of the first cycle of quality assurance, was a successful one. The HEQC continued to use the experience gained in the implementation of its four sub-systems to improve its work in all areas of responsibility. The finalisation of the leadership arrangements in the HEQC has helped to give confidence to staff and to the system as to the direction in which the organisation is moving. However, problems in filling some of the vacant positions have hindered the effectiveness and efficiency of the work of the HEQC. It is hoped that appointments made at the end of the reporting period will have a positive effect on the work of the HEQC.

In the coming year the challenges for the HEQC will become even greater as National Reviews and Institutional Audits start focusing on merged institutions which are in the process of establishing new academic identities after settling some of the more vexing operational aspects of the mergers. One other area of challenge for the coming year will be for the HEQC to develop a closer relationship with the advice function of the CHE. This will make it possible for the HEQC's knowledge and information base on of the higher education system to be translated into constructive and useful analyses on the state of the higher education system and the impact of policy implementation.

## **International Liaison**

### **Staff Activities**

- ♦ Appointment of Dr Lis Lange, the Executive Director of the HEQC to the Board of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) in March 2007
- ♦ Attendance of Dr Singh and Dr Lange of the Annual Conference of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and of the CHEA International Commission meeting in Washington in January 2007. Dr Singh is a member of the CHEA International Commission.
- ♦ Participation of Dr Singh and Dr Lange at the regional seminar of the UNESCO African Scientific Committee on "The Contribution of Higher Education to National Education Systems: Current Challenges for Africa" in Accra in March 2007. Dr Singh was rapporteur at the seminar.
- ♦ Paper presented by Dr Lange entitled "Quality assurance impact on institutional differentiation: Vivre la difference or the homogenisation effect?" Co-authored with Dr M Singh, at the INQAAHE Conference in Toronto in April 2007
- ♦ Participation of Dr Mark Hay and Mr Nhlanhla Cele in the QAA Institutional Audit Training Workshop in Gloucester in February 2007
- ♦ Presentation by Mr Nhlanhla Cele entitled "Making Quality Everyone's Business Through Self-Evaluation" at the St Mary's International Invitational Colloquium held at the St Mary's International University College in London in February 2007

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- ◆ Keynote address by Ms Kirti Menon, at the UNESCO conference on Sustainable Development Education, in Barcelona in February 2007. The title of the address was "Sustainable development initiatives in the formal and non-formal sectors in South Africa."
- ◆ Ms Menon also attended the Peace, Non-violence and Empowerment Conference in New Delhi, India in February 2007.
- ◆ Ms Kirti Menon attended the INQAAHE Biannual Conference in Toronto in February 2007
- ◆ Keynote address by Dr Mala Singh at the World Bank seminar on Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education, Paris. The title of the address was "Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Complex Realities, Simple Solutions."
- ◆ Keynote address by Dr Mala Singh at the Higher Education Forum preceding the meeting of the OECD Ministers of Education held in Greece, entitled "The Social Dimensions of Higher Education."
- ◆ Dr Mala Singh attended the International Conference on Accreditation in Higher Education organised by the Global University Network for Innovation where she presented a paper entitled "The governance of accreditation", Barcelona, November 2006
- ◆ Dr Mala Singh attended the Global Colloquium of the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge, Paris. December 2006.
- ◆ A presentation by Dr Mala Singh on the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for Quality in Cross-border Education at the 16th Commonwealth Education Ministers Conference held in Cape Town, December 2006.
- ◆ Dr Singh made several inputs into the work of the International Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (INQAAHE).
- ◆ Dr Singh was an instructor on an online course on quality assurance organised by the International Institute for Educational Planning of UNESCO and offered to Anglophone countries in sub-Saharan Africa, November and December 2006.

### International visitors to the HEQC

- ◆ The HEQC hosted a four person delegation from Finland in November 2006. The Finnish delegation participated in workshops organized by the HEQC under the auspices of the Quality Systems Restructuring Project, which is part of a South Africa- Finland Cooperation programme.
- ◆ CHE hosted a two day visit of Prof Oyewole from the Association of African Universities. He had several meetings with staff who briefed him on the work and systems of the HEQC and engaged in discussions on the AAU programme on Quality Assurance to which the CHE has made a substantial planning input.
- ◆ Visit by Prof Larkin, Vice-Chancellor and President of Monash University, Australia.
- ◆ Minister of Education and education officials from the Sultanate of Oman.
- ◆ Country visit by Dr Christine Hongoke, member of the SADC team who conducted a study on benchmarking quality assurance systems and qualifications in the Southern African region, in February 2007.
- ◆ Dr Singh met with an education ministry delegation from Burundi in order to provide information on the South African higher education system.

## 5. PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION AND COORDINATION DIRECTORATE



**Mr. Theo Bhengu: Director of Programme Accreditation & Coordination**

The Programme Accreditation and Coordination Directorate area of work includes:

- ♦ Accreditation of new programmes from private and public higher education institutions.
- ♦ Coordination of quality assurance in higher education through relationships with other ETQAs, professional councils and other regulatory authorities on quality assurance in higher education. This includes delegation of certain quality assurance responsibilities to bodies or institutions with systems to carry out such responsibilities.
- ♦ The delegation of stipulated quality assurance areas (e.g. short courses, RPL, assessor training, moderation of assessment and certification arrangements) to higher education institutions with proven systems to manage the quality of these areas.

### 5.1 Online Accreditation System

As previously reported, in mid-2005 the HEQC launched *heqc-online*, a web-based accreditation application system for new programmes submitted by both public and private higher education institutions. The introduction of the online system was a significant milestone for the HEQC as it signified the actualisation of one of the major goals of *White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation for Higher Education (1997)* - namely, the introduction of an integrated accreditation system for public and private higher education institutions.

#### 5.1.1 Routine Accreditation (Public Providers)

During the period under review, the HEQC received 61 learning programmes from public higher education institutions submitted through the online accreditation system. All these programmes were evaluated during this period. The decision making process, however, depends on the scheduled meetings of the Accreditation Committee and therefore, accreditation decisions were reached during this period in relation to 39 programmes. Out of these programmes, 34 were accredited, which represents a success rate of 87 percent. Accreditation decisions on the remaining 22 programmes will be made at the first meeting of the Accreditation Committee in the new financial year.

**Table 1:** Summary of Routine Accreditation (Public Providers), April 2006 - March 2007

Number of programmes received and evaluated	Decisions pending	Programmes with decisions taken	Number of Programmes Accredited	Not Accredited	Success Rate
61	22	39	34	5	87%

The number of applications submitted by public institutions for the period of April 2006 to March 2007 has increased compared to those submitted in the year 2005/2006. The HEQC is streamlining the online accreditation system in order to support increased programmes responsiveness from higher education institutions.

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### 5.1.2 Re-accreditation of M Tech: Chiropractic Programmes (Public Providers)

Following collaboration between the HEQC, HESA and the Allied Health Professions of South Africa (AHPCSA), the re-accreditation project for M Tech Chiropractic programmes commenced during this

period. The project involves the only two public higher education institutions offering these programmes, namely, the Durban University of Technology (DUT) and the University of Johannesburg (UJ). The main objective of this project was:

- ♦ To undertake an evaluation of M Tech: Chiropractic programmes on offer at higher education institutions in order to establish the quality of provision.
- ♦ To determine whether the quality of M Tech: Chiropractic programmes meet the basic quality requirements of the HEQC in relation to postgraduate provision.

On 16 and 17 August 2006, a site visit was undertaken to evaluate the M Tech Chiropractic programmes offered at the Durban University of Technology (DUT). The programme was initially conditionally accredited. After the institution satisfied all the HEQC's conditions, the programme was granted full accreditation. The site visit for the MTech Chiropractic Programme of the University of Johannesburg will be undertaken in May 2007.

### 5.1.3 Routine Accreditation (Private Providers)

During this period the HEQC received 97 learning programmes submitted through the online accreditation system from private higher education providers. All these programmes were evaluated during this period. The decision making process, however, depends on the scheduled meetings of the Accreditation Committee, therefore accreditation decisions were reached during this period in relation to 53 programmes. Out of these programmes 27 were accredited, a success rate of 51 percent. Accreditation decisions on the remaining 44 programmes will be made during the new financial year.

**Table 2:** Summary of Routine Accreditation (Private Providers), April 2006 - March 2007

Number of programmes received and evaluated	Decisions pending	Programmes with decisions	Number of Programmes Accredited	Not Accredited	Success Rate
97	44	53	27	26	51%

The particularly low success rate of private providers in the accreditation process can be explained through the difficulties these providers encounter to meet HEQC criteria, particularly in the areas of compliance with the national policy framework and human and infrastructural resources. It is worth noting that the private providers that are newly established experience the greater difficulties, while established providers are in a better position to meet the criteria.

#### 5.1.4 Re-accreditation (Private Providers)

During this period, six private providers applied for re-accreditation of 11 programmes. Of these, 8 programmes were accredited which represents a success rate of 73 per cent.

**Table 3:** Summary of Re-accreditation of Private Providers, April 2006 - March 2007

Number of provider	Number of Programmes	Number of Programmes Accredited	Number of Programmes Not Accredited	Success Rate
6	11	8	3	73%

According to the HEQC accreditation system, institutions whose programmes have not been accredited can submit representations to the HEQC on errors of fact or omissions and request a review of decisions within 21 working days of the date of receipt of the report. During the period under review, the HEQC received 14 representations and processed 6 applications for review of which 50% were accredited.

**Table 4:** Summary of Routine Accreditation (Private Providers), April 2006 - March 2007

Number of representations received	Number of Representations Evaluated	Number of Programmes Evaluated	Number of Programmes Not Accredited	Success Rate
14	6	3	3	50%

#### 5.1.5 Evaluation of Multiple Sites of Delivery (Private Providers)

In accordance with the Regulations for the Registration of Private Providers (December 2002), every site of delivery of a private institution must be accredited and registered in its own right, hence the need for this project. In this period, the HEQC undertook an evaluation of 19 sites of delivery and 189 programmes offered by one private provider. Site visits were conducted to evaluate each programme at each site of delivery. Of these, 173 programmes were accredited and 16 were not accredited leading to a success rate of 91.5 per cent (see Table 5 below):

**Table 5:** Evaluation of Multiple Sites of Delivery

Number of sites of Delivery	Total Number of Programmes evaluated	Number of Programmes Accredited	Number of Programmes Not Accredited	Success Rate
19	189	173	16	91.5 %

## 5.2 COORDINATION

### 5.2.1 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)

As the band ETQA for higher education with responsibility to coordinate quality assurance in higher education, the HEQC continues to face challenges in the area of coordination. There are about 70 bodies (ETQAs and professional councils) with statutory responsibility to operate in higher education in the same domain as the HEQC. Because of difficulties experienced in this area of work caused by multiple quality assurance systems of the different ETQAs, the HEQC has adopted a multi-faceted approach, which has included the sharing of knowledge and expertise from its systems with other bodies through planned workshops in addition to attempts to sign MoUs. Workshops have been held with the following bodies in an attempt to share systems information so as to try and coordinate quality assurance in higher education:

- ♦ The Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA)
- ♦ The South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA)
- ♦ The Allied Health Professions Council of South Africa (AHPCSA)
- ♦ The Council for Built Environment (CBE)

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In the context of the framework for the signature of MoUs approved by the HEQC Board on November 2005, the HEQC signed an MoU with the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) on 7 November 2006.

### 5.2.2 *Quality Assurance Functions Delegated to Higher Education Institutions*

The HEQC is required to report to SAQA on how its constituent providers quality assure the following areas:

- ◆ Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- ◆ Assessor Training and Development
- ◆ Moderation of Assessment
- ◆ Certification Arrangements
- ◆ Short Courses

The HEQC indicated to SAQA and to all higher education institutions its intention to delegate responsibility to institutions for quality management of these areas. During this period, the HEQC received progress reports in respect of already submitted improvement plans. These were evaluated by a group of experts contracted by the HEQC.

The HEQC has developed a framework for the delegation of these areas to institutions. Comments were obtained from an expert advisory group. The final framework will be approved by the HEQC for implementation to start in the next financial year.

### 5.2.3 *The National Learner Records Database (NLRD)*

As an ETQA, the HEQC has responsibility to submit learner achievements to SAQA at intervals determined by SAQA. For public providers, this data is submitted to SAQA directly from the DoE's HEMIS system. As no such system exists yet at the DoE for private providers, the HEQC has commenced a process of developing a system which will allow private providers to submit their data to the HEQC. After a thorough process of verification, such data will be submitted to SAQA.

The HEQC commissioned a framework detailing requirements for the NLRD during this period. In line with PFMA requirements, the HEQC will ask for tenders for the development and implementation of the system. Preliminary consultations have been held with private providers on this.



**Ms. Kirti Menon: Director of National Reviews**

## **6. NATIONAL REVIEWS DIRECTORATE**

The establishment of the National Reviews Directorate was approved by the HEQC Board in 2005, with the Directorate being effectively constituted in 2006. This Directorate focuses on the re-accreditation of existing programmes in specific disciplines and/or qualification areas. Until the creation of this Directorate, national reviews were part of the responsibility of the Programme Accreditation Directorate. This Directorate initiated the first part of the national reviews of academic and professional programmes in education, which had been approved by the HEQC Board in 2004. The first stage of this review focused on the MEd (Education Management).

The national review continued in 2006 and 2007 with the evaluation of the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE), Bachelor of Education (B Ed) and Post-graduate Certificate (PGCE) in Education programmes. Based on the experience of the M Ed, a decision was taken to ensure that programmes to be reviewed had produced one cohort of graduates. In March 2006 the HEQC Board approved a proposal submitted by the new Directorate to stagger the review over a two-year period based on the large numbers of programmes to be evaluated.

### **6.1. National Review of the M Ed (Education Management/ or other near-equivalent programmes) 2005/6**

During the period under review the Directorate concluded the review of the M Ed (Education Management/or other equivalent programmes). Out of 19 programme evaluators reports submitted for the consideration of the HEQC Board, 11 received full accreditation, 4 received accreditation with conditions and accreditation was withdrawn in the case of 4 programmes. A further four institutions did not feature in the review and their programmes are being phased out. Other M Ed programmes offered by these institutions will be reviewed in 2007 and 2008. The results of completed reviews as at April 2007 are indicated in the table below:

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**Table 6:** Accreditation Decisions on MEd Programmes 2005/6

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Programme</b>	<b>Decision</b>
University of Witwatersrand	M Ed (Structured)	Full Accreditation
University of Stellenbosch	M Ed (Education Policy Studies)	Full Accreditation
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University	M Ed (Educational Management)	Full Accreditation
Walter Sisulu University of Technology	M Ed (Educational Management and Policy)	Full Accreditation
University of Kwazulu-Natal (Durban/Pietermaritzburg)	M Ed (Education, Leadership and Management)	Full Accreditation
University of Cape Town	M Ed (Educational Administration, Planning and Social Policy)	Full Accreditation
Rhodes University (Grahamstown/Namibia)	M Ed (Educational Leadership and Management)	Full Accreditation
University of the Western Cape	M Ed (Educational Management, Administration and Policy)	Full Accreditation
University of South Africa	M Ed (Education Management)	Full Accreditation
University of Pretoria	M Ed (Educational Leadership)	Full Accreditation
Cape Peninsula University of Technology (Mowbray)	M Ed (Structured)	Full Accreditation
University of Venda	M Ed (Education Management)	Accreditation with Conditions
University of Fort Hare (Alice/East London)	M Ed (Dissertation)	Accreditation with Conditions
University of Johannesburg	M Ed (Educational Management)	Accreditation with Conditions
North-West University (Mafikeng)	M Ed (Educational Planning & Administration)	Accreditation with Conditions
University of Limpopo	M Ed (Dissertation: Education Management)	Withdrawal of Accreditation
University of Free State	M Ed (Education Management)	Withdrawal of Accreditation
Central University of Technology (Bloemfontein)	M Ed (Educational Management)	Withdrawal of Accreditation
North-West University (Potchefstroom)	M Ed in Educational Practice (Education Management)	Withdrawal of Accreditation
Durban University of Technology	M Ed Dissertation	The institution is discontinuing this programme
Tshwane University of Technology	M Tech in Education	The institution is discontinuing this programme
University of Zululand	M Ed Educational Management	The institution is discontinuing this programme
Vaal University of Technology	M Ed by Dissertation	The institution is discontinuing this programme

### **6.2. Monitoring of Improvement Plans for the eight institutions that received Accreditation with conditions/Provisional accreditation after the Board decision in March 2006**

The institutions that received accreditation with condition or provisional accreditation for their M Ed programmes had to submit improvement plans to the HEQC. These plans were analysed by the HEQC and feedback provided to the institutions. The Directorate drew up a schedule for monitoring the Improvement Plans of the conditionally accredited/provisionally accredited institutions. Site visits were arranged to verify that conditions stipulated in the accreditation reports were met by the institutions. As a result of these visits, the University of South Africa, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Walter Sisulu University and the University of Pretoria were awarded full accreditation (as indicated in the table above). Final decisions in relation to the University of Fort Hare, North-West University (Mafikeng Campus) and the University of Johannesburg, will be made in the next financial year once all required processes are finalized.

### **6.3. Monitoring of Improvement Plans for the fully accredited institutions**

The seven institutions that were originally granted full accreditation also had to submit progress reports on minor conditions that were attached to their accreditation. These submissions were analysed and feedback given to the institutions. All seven institutions received comments from the HEQC regarding their progress on meeting conditions. No further reports are required from these institutions.

### **6.4. Monitoring of 'Teach-out' Plans**

The Directorate organized two-day site visits by two-person peer review panels to the four institutions which withdrew their M Ed programmes from the review process (Durban University of Technology; Tshwane University of Technology; University of Zululand; Vaal University of Technology). Reports on the findings on the site visits were provided to the four institutions. Alternative M Ed programmes have been selected for review at the University of Zululand and Tshwane University of Technology which will take place during the 2007/8 reporting year.

The four institutions not granted accreditation for the selected M Ed programmes reviewed, completed detailed plans on arrangements for pipeline students. Progress reports were received in October/November 2006. The four institutions received responses from the HEQC secretariat in December 2006 with a request for further progress reports to be submitted in November 2007.

### **6.5. Review of B Ed, PGCE and ACE programmes**

The HEQC began the review of professional programmes in education in 2006. This review was scheduled to take place over two years (2006 and 2007). Institutions which did not undergo restructuring/mergers and those that had already produced a cohort of graduates were evaluated in 2006. Institutions that have been affected by the merger process will be evaluated in 2007. The review of these programmes focuses on the following specializations:

- ◆ B Ed (Foundation Phase)
- ◆ PGCE (FET Phase)
- ◆ ACE (Mathematics, Science and Technology).

For institutions that do not offer these specializations, another specialization was selected for review. The HEQC had indicated to institutions that it will reserve the authority to evaluate any specialization using criteria such as numbers of students enrolled in that specialization and other considerations.

The first cycle of reviews for the ACE, B Ed and PGCE programmes which included 22 programmes was completed in September 2006. After a meeting of the Special Accreditation Committee held on 23 and 24 November 2007, draft accreditation reports were sent to the institutions. Reports and representations from the institutions were tabled at the HEQC Board Meeting on 5 March 2007 which made the final decision on the accreditation status of the programmes assessed. The final outcomes of this review are indicated in the table below.

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**Table 7:** Accreditation decisions on the B Ed, PGCED and ACE programmes 2007

INSTITUTION	PROGRAMME	BOARD DECISION
Centre for Creative Education	B Ed (Foundation/Intermediate)	Accreditation with Conditions
Rhodes University	ACE (Mathematics Education)	Full Accreditation
	PGCE (Senior/FET)	Full Accreditation
Stellenbosch University	ACE (Mathematical Literacy)	Full Accreditation
	B Ed (Foundation)	Full Accreditation
	PGCE (FET/GET)	Full Accreditation
University of Cape Town	ACE (Mathematics)	Full Accreditation
	PGCE (Senior & FET)	Full Accreditation
University of Kwa-Zulu Natal	B Ed (Foundation/Intermediate)	Full Accreditation
	PGCE (FET)	Full Accreditation
	ACE (Mathematics GET)	Full Accreditation
University of Pretoria	PGCE (FET)	Full Accreditation
	B Ed (ECD/Foundation)	Full Accreditation
	ACE (Educational Management)	Accreditation with Conditions : On notice for withdrawal of accreditation
University of Zululand	ACE (Mathematics and Science Education, GET and Senior)	Accreditation with Conditions
	B Ed (Foundation/Intermediate)	Accreditation with Conditions: On notice for withdrawal of accreditation
	PGCE (FET Full-time/Part-time/Learnership)	Accreditation with Conditions: On notice for withdrawal of accreditation
University of the Western Cape	PGCE (FET)	Full Accreditation
	ACE (Mathematics)	Full Accreditation
Vaal University of Technology	PGCE (Senior and FET)	No Accreditation
Wits University	ACE (Learners with Special Educational Needs)	Full Accreditation
	PGCE (Senior and FET Phase)	Full Accreditation

Quantitative information on the programmes reviewed in the 2006 phase of the evaluation is provided in the table below:

**Table 8:** The process of national reviews in figures 2006

YEAR	ITEM	ACE	B ED	PGCE	TOTAL
2006	No. of programmes reviewed (10 Institutions)	8	5	9	22
	No. of portfolios received	8	5	9	22
	No. of improvement plans	1	1	-	2
	No. of evaluators used	24	28	35	87
	Monitoring Teach-out	-	-	-	-
	Monitoring withdrawals	-	-	1	1
	No. of reports sent	-	-	-	10

As indicated above, the revised system for national reviews was initiated in 2006. On the basis of using the new system, the 2006 review concluded with no major problems to record. Experience from the 2006 review informed the realignment of systems, procedures and processes for 2007. Policy gaps were identified and addressed.

Plans were finalised for site visits to the remaining 14 institutions with a total of 41 programmes to be evaluated between March and June 2007. These programmes include the ACE, B Ed and PGCE as well as the 2 M Ed programmes at Tshwane University of Technology. The programmes scheduled for review in the second cycle are indicated in the table below. The first eight site visits have been completed.

Also included in the table are the institutions that were given the status of Accreditation with Conditions during the M Ed Review of 2005. These institutions had to submit Improvement Plans which were analysed by the Directorate and feedback was given to the institutions. They will now be evaluated to ascertain if they have met the necessary conditions.

**Table 9:** Institutions which have submitted improvement plans

INSTITUTION	PROGRAMME	DATE
Walter Sisulu University	B Ed, PGCE	26-30 March
Central University of Technology	ACE, PGCE	16-20 April
Cape Peninsula University of Technology	ACE, B Ed, PGCE	16-20 April
Hebron Theological College	PGCE	23-26 April
North-West University	ACE, PGCE	7-11 May
University of Johannesburg	ACE, B Ed, PGCE	7-11 May
North-West University (Mafikeng)	M Ed	11 April*
University of Fort Hare	M Ed	11 May*
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University	ACE, B Ed, PGCE	14 -18 May
University of the Free State	ACE, B Ed, PGCE	21st-25 May
Durban University of Technology	B Ed (FET)	4-8 June
University of Fort Hare	ACE, B Ed, PGCE	4-8 June
Tshwane University of Technology	ACE, B Ed, PGCE, M Ed (Ed Tech) and M Ed (General)	11-15 June
University of South Africa	ACE, B Ed, PGCE	18-22 June
North-West University:Potchefstroom	ACE (Ed Management)	25-28 June
North-West University: Namibia	ACE (Ed Management)	13-16 August
University of Venda	M Ed	10-14 Sept August
University of Limpopo	ACE, B Ed, PGCE	3-7 Sept

\* Site visits completed but reports not finalised

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### 7. INSTITUTIONAL AUDITS DIRECTORATE



**Dr. Mark Hay:**  
**Director of Institutional Audits**

The Institutional Audits Directorate is responsible for the conduct of audits of the internal quality management systems that public and private providers of higher education have in place in order to ensure good quality of provision in the three core functions of teaching and learning, research and community engagement.

#### 7.1 Audit Programme, 2006-2007

The Directorate started its third year of implementation of the audit cycle after a largely successful second year of conducting quality audits. During the period under review, the Directorate conducted six audits, three of public higher education institutions, two of private providers and one audit of the Polytechnic of Namibia. The latter was carried out as part of the HEQC MoU with that institution and the Namibian Qualifications Authority. Five audit reports have been sent out to institutions. Executive summaries of these reports have been placed on the CHE website.

In November 2006 the Directorate conducted an internal review of the efficiency and effectiveness of its processes which resulted in a number of adjustments and improvements for the 2006/7 institutional audits.

**Table 10:** Institutional Audits conducted by the HEQC between April 2006 and March 2007

Name of higher education institution audited by the HEQC	Dates of the audit visit	Type of institution
Vaal University of Technology	1-19 May 2006	Public HEI
Da Vinci Institute for Technology Management	6-8 June 2006	Private HEI
Monash South Africa	28 Aug-1 September 2006	Private HEI
University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg	18-22 September 2006	Public HEI
University of the Free State	16-20 October 2006	Public HEI
Polytechnic of Namibia	5-9 March 2007	Namibian HEI

The HEQC has conducted notification visits to the following institutions to be audited in 2007 and 2008.

**Table 11:** Institutional audits for 2007 which were notified during 2006

Name of higher education institution to be audited by the HEQC	Dates of the audit visit	Type of institution
Tshwane University of Technology	16-20 April 2007	Public HEI
University of Pretoria	21-25 May 2007	Public HEI
Independent Institute of Education	23-27 July 2007	Private HEI
Durban University of Technology	13-17 August 2007	Public HEI
University of the Western Cape	10-14 September 2007	Public HEI

A successful Readiness for Audit Workshop was held from 20 to 21 February 2007 for institutions preparing for an audit in 2008 and early 2009. About 35 senior members of staff from institutions (about five per institution) participated in the workshop.

A number of institutions have submitted post-audit institutional improvement plans to the HEQC, based on the recommendations of the audit report.

## 7.2 Adjustment to the Institutional Audit Cycle

An analysis of the workload of the Directorate in relation to each audit indicated that it is not possible to conduct more than five audits in a year as efficiently as required. This finding combined with the fact that some institutions had started asking for more time to prepare, prompted the secretariat to make a proposal to the HEQC Board that the audit cycle be extended until 2010. In March 2007 the HEQC approved the addition of a further year to the cycle to allow some universities to prepare better for the institutional audit as well as to assist the Directorate to accommodate the demands of an increased workload.

## 7.3 HEQC Evaluative Study of Institutional Audits 2006

At the end of 2005 the HEQC commissioned research on the effect of the audit process on higher education institutions. The overall aim of the study was to evaluate the extent to which the institutional audits conducted by the HEQC since 2004 took place in an efficient and effective manner in each of their phases and in relation to both the participants and structures involved in the process. A key question posed refers to the extent to which the audits have advanced the objectives set out by the HEQC in its *Framework for Institutional Audits*. The HEQC evaluative study was conducted at three public higher education institutions and two private providers during the course of 2006. The report entitled *HEQC Evaluative Study of Institutional Audits 2006* was finalised and placed on the CHE website in January 2007.

A second phase of the research has been commissioned for 2007 as a follow up to the initial study and will be conducted at four institutions to be audited in 2007, two institutions to be audited in 2008 as well as follow-up studies at two institutions audited in 2005 and included in the 2006 evaluation study mentioned above - a total of eight universities. The main focus of the second phase of the research will be the relationship between audit and institutional change and development.

## 7.4 Audit Manual

The *Framework for Institutional Audits and the Criteria for Institutional Audits* which were published in 2004 needed to be supplemented with a manual that could support institutions in their preparations for the institutional audits and provide panel members with an easy reference guide to different aspects of the actual audit process, ethical issues related to audit, etc. Given that the HEQC has been improving its processes since the first audits conducted in 2004 the audit system is now sufficiently refined for the agency to finalise and release an audit manual which will have validity for the conduct of institutional audits until 2010, the end of the first audit cycle. The manual will be made available electronically on the CHE website and in hard copy to institutions in mid-2007.

## 7.5 Training of Auditors

In collaboration with the Quality Promotion and Capacity Development Directorate, three auditor training workshops were conducted in July and October 2006, and March 2007. A total of 128 persons have been trained in the audit system during the period under review.

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### 8. QUALITY PROMOTION AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE



**Mr. Nhlanhla Cele**  
**Director of Quality Promotion**  
**& Capacity Development**

This Directorate is responsible for the implementation of the HEQC promotion and capacity development programme, which focuses on the dissemination of information and knowledge about quality assurance and the preparation of individuals and institutions to participate in the implementation of the HEQC's quality assurance system. This Directorate works in collaboration with all other directorates of the HEQC.

#### **8.1 Projects and activities**

##### ***8.1.1 Training workshops***

The directorate has conducted a number of workshops on Evaluator Preparation and Auditor Preparation. The following table provides a summary of workshops conducted between March 2006 and May 2007.

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**Table 12:** Training Workshops for Auditors and Evaluators

Type of workshop	Number of workshops	Participating institutions	Number of auditors and evaluators trained
<b>Institutional Audits</b>	<b>Total of 118 auditors trained</b>		
Auditor Preparation	4 workshops	All public institutions; Namibia Polytech; Int'l Hotel School; IIE; NAMQA; Mauritius TEC; Bond SA, IAU; Da Vinci	118
<b>Institutional Audits</b>	<b>Total of 10 audit panel chairpersons trained</b>		
Chairpersons Preparation Workshop	1 workshops	SUN, UCT, WSU, CPUT, UKZN, UNW	10
<b>National Reviews</b>	<b>Total of 244 evaluators trained</b>		
Evaluator Preparation for MEd, ACE, PGCE and BED programme reviews.	8 workshops	All public institutions excluding Mangosuthu Technikon; Henley Management College; Hebron College; SAOU; SADTU; NATU; NAPTOSA; Centre for Creative.	244
<b>Accreditation and Coordination</b>	<b>Total of 221 evaluators trained</b>		
<b>Training of Evaluator per Disciplinary Field</b>			
Environmental Health	1 workshop	NMMU, NWU, Mangosuthu, UI, UL, UOFS, TUT, CUT, UFH, UNIZUL, CPUT, UP, UNIVEN, DUT	27
Biotechnology and Bioinformatics	1 workshop	SUN, CPUT, CUT, MANTEC, UNIZUL, UWC, TUT, DUT, WITS, UKZN	12
Psychology	3 workshops	All public institutions and the Health Professions Council of South Africa	42
Arts and Design (interior design, graphic design, fashion design)	1 workshop	UCT, CTUT, NMMU, DUT, TUT, US, VY, CUT, VUT, Private Providers- JDC, GDCC, DSSA	25
Transport Management	2 workshops	LearnCorp; UNISA; US; NWU; Centre for Logistics	22
Architecture	1 workshop	Umboho Construction cc; South African Council for Project and Construction Management Profession; Letchmiah Daya Mandindi Johannesburg Inc; Projcore; Department of Public Works; South African Council for the Quantity Surveying Profession; South African Council for the Landscape Architectural Profession; Engineering Council of South Africa; Council for the Built Environment; UJ; UCT CPUT; WITS	17
Social Development/ Development Studies	2 workshops	All public institutions; South African Board for Personnel Practice; University of the Western Cape; Centre for Creative Education; Cornerstone Christian College; Cape Town Baptist Seminary; Helderberg College	37
Accounting	2 workshops	All public institutions	39

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### 8.1.2 *Evaluator preparation workshops*

At the beginning of 2006, the HEQC conducted an internal review of the model used for the training of evaluators for programme accreditation. On the basis of the findings, the focus in the training shifted from technical training in the use of the accreditation online system to the specific aspects of programme evaluation. The Accreditation Directorate in liaison with QPCD decided that, while it is important to train evaluators on the technologies and the IT platform used in programme evaluation, the focus of the evaluator preparation should be on the accreditation criteria. The training now focuses on:

- ◆ applying the criteria to evaluate new programmes
- ◆ using the on-line system to evaluate programmes.

This new approach has the advantage of fulfilling another goal of the HEQC capacity development and promotion programme, viz. building capacity within institutions with the purpose of enhancing the quality of programme design and internal reviews.

The *Evaluator Preparation* workshops were co-ordinated and organised by QPCD and aimed at training and capacitating programme evaluators in the following identified subject areas and disciplines. The following are the disciplinary areas proposed by the Accreditation and Coordination Directorate where evaluator expertise needs to be extended and enhanced:

- ◆ Environmental Health
- ◆ Biotechnology
- ◆ Psychology
- ◆ Social Development/Development Studies
- ◆ Accounting
- ◆ Environmental Health
- ◆ Landscape Technology
- ◆ Food Technology
- ◆ Mathematical Technology
- ◆ Actuarial Science
- ◆ Analytical Chemistry

### 8.1.3 *Auditor preparation workshops*

Auditor preparation workshops have been reviewed and streamlined in order to focus on the training of senior administrators and academics in institutions. QPCD prepared an internal report on auditor training based on evaluation forms completed by participants and on feedback provided by the Audit Directorate on the actual experience of audit panels. The report has been used to improve the quality of Auditor Preparation Workshops.

### 8.1.4 *National Reviews preparation workshops*

Evaluator Preparation for the National Reviews directorate has evolved and improved. In 2006, QPCD produced an evaluative report on this training programme which was used to improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of these workshops. In 2007 only one Evaluator Preparation Workshop was conducted. The National Reviews Directorate is currently conducting programme reviews on teacher education. The current number of trained evaluators is sufficient for the purpose of the current phase of the review.

## 8.2 **Quality Forum**

QPCD has entered into a collaborative arrangement with HESA to co-host quality forums for the public higher education institutions. The first jointly hosted event took place in October 2006 and was attended by 29 participants. In 2007 the HEQC will also hold a Quality Forum for private providers of higher education.

### 8.3 Consolidation of the auditor/evaluator database

The purpose of this database is to record all relevant information on individuals who have been trained by the HEQC. The Audit and Accreditation Directorates utilise this information to select trained candidates, to plan for future training workshops, to refine selection processes, and to produce accurate reports and statistics for internal reporting. Not all the information of the individuals trained for the three HEQC sub-systems has been entry yet in this newly developed database. The table below shows that total entries captured in the database. There are still approximately 500 names that need to be entered into the data base to have a complete record of all the individuals trained.

**Table 13:** Data captured in the database

	July 2006	December 2006
1. Total Entries	713	1121
2. Auditors	268	411
3. Evaluators	445	548
4. National Review Evaluators	0	162

### 8.4 Community engagement and service learning

A conference on Community Engagement in Higher Education jointly hosted by the HEQC and the Community Higher Education Service Partnerships (CHESP) took place at the Bantry Bay Hotel, Cape Town at the beginning of September 2006. The aim of the conference was to promote an enabling environment for conceptualising and implementing community engagement in South African higher education. More than two hundred participants from government, national and international HEIs, municipalities, and NGOs took part. Issues arising from the planned report will help the HEQC as well as interested higher education institutions to conceptualise further work in the field of community engagement and service learning.

### 8.5 Student quality literacy project

This area of work of the HEQC focuses on students' role in the improvement of the quality of provision at higher education institutions. The project has two main aspects. On the one hand, it looks at improving the knowledge and ability that potential higher education students have to choose serious providers to enrol for their qualifications. On the other hand, the project looks at the involvement of higher education students in the different structures and processes available to assure the quality of provision at institution level. In 2005, the HEQC undertook a study of student involvement in quality assurance processes in public higher education institutions. Focus group discussions were held with students from six public institutions: University of Pretoria, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Walter Sisulu University, University of Johannesburg, Fort Hare University and Wits University, and questionnaires sent to quality managers and deans of students. The survey was completed in April 2006 and a full report written by the researcher.

The HEQC sent a representative to the SABC careers fair held at the Polokwane Civic Centre on 7-9 June 2006. The fairs are attended by Grade 9-12 pupils who wish to enter higher or further education in the near future. The purpose of HEQC's participation is to alert prospective students and parents to the importance of choosing good quality higher education, and to the role which students and associated stakeholders can play in ensuring attention to and improving quality.

This project was established to equip currently registered and prospective higher education students to make informed decisions relating to quality education, and to engage in quality assurance and quality promotion activities.

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HEQC collaborated with NADEOSA in offering a Student Quality Literacy Workshop during the NADEOSA Conference that was held from 22-24 August 2006. The workshop was held on the last day of the conference targeting representatives of the South African Union of Students. The workshop was facilitated by Ms. A Venter from UNISA who has submitted a workshop report to QPCD.

HEQC also participated in the conference for Student Affairs Professionals under the auspices of NASDEV and SAASSAP. This conference was held at the University of Free State (Bloemfontein Campus) from the 4-6 of October 2006. An HEQC staff member presented a paper entitled *The Role of Student Affairs in the HEQC Institutional Audits*. QPCD is currently reviewing this project in order to align its conceptualisation more effectively with broad HEQC functions.

### 8.6 Quality systems restructuring project

The main purpose of the project is to support the institutionalisation of internal quality assurance systems at merged and historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs), in order to enable them to prioritise quality issues in their planning and to respond more effectively to the HEQC's audit and accreditation systems. Grants are also allocated on a competitive basis to the remaining public institutions on the basis of plans submitted to the HEQC for the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning, and to departments within institutions for innovation plans developed for the improvement of quality of any of the core functions.

The process of awarding competitive grants commenced on 30 June 2006 with letters of invitation sent to the Vice-Chancellors of all relevant institutions, inviting them to participate and setting out the conditions and procedures. The institutions invited to participate were: University of Cape Town, University of Stellenbosch, Rhodes University, University of the Free State, Central University of Technology, Vaal University of Technology, University of Pretoria, and University of the Witwatersrand.

All institutions which qualified for the grants submitted applications to the HEQC by 15 September 2006. The Awards Committee, which was set up by the HEQC as an independent body for allocating the grants, met on 4 October 2006 and awarded two institutional grants (R400,000 each) and 12 departmental grants (R70,000 each), as follows:

- University of Stellenbosch (1 institutional and 2 departmental grants)
- University of Cape Town (3 departmental grants)
- University of Pretoria (1 departmental grant)
- University of the Witwatersrand (1 institutional, and 1 departmental grant)
- Rhodes University (2 departmental grants)
- Central University of Technology (Free State) (1 departmental grant)
- University of the Free State (2 departmental grants)

The programme for and process that leads to the awarding of these grants is still continuing.

The HEQC received a group of visitors from Finland in the period 9-12 October 2006, as part of the Project's annual exchange of expertise. The visitors were the following:

- ◆ President Dr. Pentti Rauhala, Laurea Polytechnic (University of Applied Sciences) Also chairperson of the Rectors Conference of Polytechnics.
- ◆ President Dr. Jorma Niemelä, Diaconia Polytechnic (University of Applied Sciences). Also vice chairperson of the Rectors Conference of Polytechnics.
- ◆ President Dr Ritva Laakso-Manninen, Helia Polytechnic (University of Applied Sciences).
- ◆ Dr Seppo Saari (Project Manager, Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC)).

The visitors attended an internal seminar with HEQC and CHE staff and a HEQC workshop at the Graduate Centre of the University of Pretoria to which representatives of merged institutions and HDIs were invited. The seminar focused on Quality Challenges at Merged and Historically Disadvantaged Institutions.

The delegation also visited the Soshanguve Campus of the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), and the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) in Port Elizabeth.

The following institutions which are funded by the HEQC as part of its Merger and HDI Project received follow up visits from the Project Coordinator

University of Limpopo (20 Nov. 2006)  
 University of Venda (21 Nov. 2006)  
 University of Zululand (24 Nov. 2006)  
 Mangosuthu Technikon (27 Nov. 2006)  
 University of Fort Hare (28 Nov. 2006)

The year was concluded with the annual meeting of contact persons of the HEQC's Merger Project and Project for HDIs at the Birchwood Conference Centre on 5 December 2006, in order to reflect on activities in 2006 and plan for 2007. The meeting was attended by representatives from 12 institutions.

In February, the amounts allocated for 2007 were transferred to merged institutions and HDIs that completed their activities planned for 2006 and handed in successful progress reports. The amounts are intended for developing / refining quality management systems in merged institutions and HDIs, also in preparation for HEQC audit and programme accreditation requirements.

On 12 March 2006, a meeting to report on progress in the project and discuss ways to measure the impact of the different components of the project, viz. quality assurance (HEQC), information and communications technology (DoE), and research and collaboration (CHE/DoE) took place between a delegation from Finland and the coordinators of the different projects.

## **8.7 International links**

The Scottish South African link developed as one of the results of the Memorandum of Understanding between the HEQC and its counterpart organization in the United Kingdom, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). Its purpose was to enable Scottish and South African quality assurance practitioners, and the HEQC and QAA, to exchange experiences and share information of mutual benefit.

In November 2005, a five-person group consisting of Professor Nthabiseng Ogude (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University), Dr Makhapa Makhofola (Walter Sisulu University of Technology), Dr Chrissie Boughey (Rhodes University), Professor Hugh Africa (Chair: HEQC Board) and Barbara Morrow (HEQC) undertook a one-week visit to six Scottish universities and to QAA: Scotland.

In September 2006, a return visit took place. Members of the Scottish group were Dr Claire Carney, QAA Scotland; Heather Gibson, QAA Scotland; Professor David Lines, freelance consultant; and Professor Simon van Heyningen, University of Edinburgh. The group had discussions at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Walter Sisulu University and the University of Fort Hare, as well as informal conversations with academic colleagues at the 'Assessment Event' convened at Rhodes University and at which members of the Scottish group gave presentations.

Because of the relatively short time available, the programme focussed entirely on the one province: the Eastern Cape. It included a one-day visit to the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, and key participation in the "Conversations about Assessment" event organised by Rhodes University. The purpose of this event, which drew participants from across the country, was to share experiences of assessment practices and concepts. Professor Simon van Heyningen (University of Edinburgh), Claire Carney (QAA: Scotland) and Dr David Lines (The Robert Gordon University) presented keynote addresses in the programme.