

# Programme Review at the NMMU – Developing a Quality Culture

*HEQC Workshop - 12-13 August 2008*

Presenter: Martin Oosthuizen

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University  
Port Elizabeth  
South Africa

*Your journey begins here*

## OUTLINE

- **What is a “Quality Culture”?**
- **Objectives of the programme review**
- **Design of the programme review**
- **Linking programme review and planning**

# 1. What is a Quality Culture?

- What is a Quality Culture?
  - Ownership
  - Collective goals/ shared values
  - Information
  - System Design

3

# 1. Quality Culture

- **Ownership:**
  - Placing/ Restoring trust in academic staff
  - Re-thinking and re-framing the language of accountability:
    - Compliance; Reactive; Satisfying requirements;
    - Reflective: Role of HE in a changing society; Trust; Student-centred

4

## 1. Quality Culture

- **Ownership:**

- Professionalism in teaching and learning
  - Shared commitment to good practice standards
  - Understanding key principles re curriculum design, teaching, assessment
- Flexible/ Adaptable
  - Encourage dept/ school initiatives
  - Support collective projects in depts/ schools

5

## 1. Quality Culture

- **Common goals/ shared values:**

- Role of leadership (vision, mission, values...)  
("leadership of engagement" – Wergin)
- Communication/ Dialogue
  - Sharing experiences/ good practice
  - Promoting teamwork
  - Tension with values of HE: Competitive research culture; focus on specific field of expertise...
- Challenge of different institutional cultures from former institutions from across binary divide
- Conducive physical environment

6

## 1. Quality Culture

### •Information

- Collect the right information and use it effectively
- Statistical data – what does it say about teaching and learning, curriculum design, student support?
- Student and other stakeholder feedback
- Benchmarking

7

## 1. Quality Culture

### •System Design

- Integration:
  - across different institutional levels (interactive, interdependent)
  - amongst sectoral “actors”
- Reward/ recognition systems – institutional
- Incentives, Performance indicators – sectoral
- Time and resources to develop and strengthen good practices

8

## 2. Objectives of Programme Review

- **Structured opportunity to discuss good practice in different qualification types in NMMU academic programme profile**
  - ❑ Academic ownership of quality – align quality work with values of academic staff
  - ❑ Focus on core educational processes
  - ❑ Sharing examples of good practice
  - ❑ Evidence & benchmarking
  - ❑ Honest and open dialogue

9

## 3. Design of Programme Review

- **Three cycles: 2006-2008**
- **Basic process:**
  - ❑ Self-evaluation; Peer review; Evidence and information; Follow-up.
  - ❑ Leads to development of quality report per programme or programme cluster

10

### 3. Design – Role of HEQC

- **A compliance exercise?**
  - ❑ Externally oriented – HEQC Merger Project; Evidence for HEQC audit in Sept 2008 etc....
- **Sufficient flexibility to allow for process of authentic institutional learning and development while also addressing accountability demands**

11

### 3. Design – Unit of Review

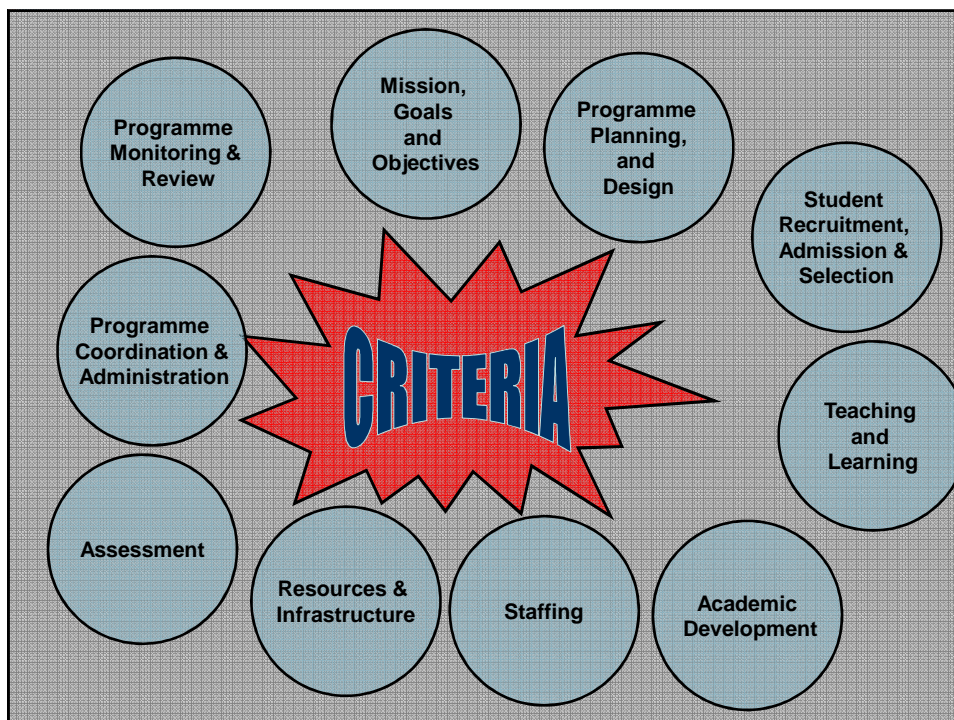
- **HEQC Definition: Purposeful and structured set of learning experiences that leads to a qualification**
- **Dual approach to the review of academic programmes at the NMMU**
  - *Where there is a clearly structured set of learning experiences leading to a qualification – typically leading to professional or vocational qualifications – such a set of experiences will be reviewed as a single programme.*
  - *Where learning experiences are not part of a clearly structured set – typically courses/modules leading to a general formative qualification – such learning experiences will be reviewed per department, school or faculty as appropriate*
- **Challenge: Promote coherence of student learning experience in general formative degrees**

12

### 3. Design – Quality Criteria

- **HEQC programme criteria:**
  - ❑ Input – Process – Output & Impact – Review
  - ❑ 19 criteria – 154 criteria and sub-criteria
- **NMMU review: Simplified set of 29 key statements covering all HEQC aspects**
  - ❑ C1-9 input 17 criteria
  - ❑ C10-16 process 9 criteria
  - ❑ C17-18 output, impact 2 criterion
  - ❑ C19 review 1 criterion

13



### 3. Design – Judgements on Programme Quality

- **Judgements on programmes (as per HEQC)**
  - Commendable
  - Meets minimum standards
  - Needs improvement
  - Does not comply
- **Judgements – context-specific; qualitative**

15

### 3. Design – Judgements on Programme Quality

- **Composition of review panels:**
  - Involvement of external disciplinary experts – optional
  - Senior academic from another faculty as chair
  - Member of Centre for Teaching, Learning and Media

16

### 3. Design – Judgements on Programme Quality

- **Variable capacity for self-review:**
  - Compliance mentality
  - Misinterpretation of criteria
  - Failure to recognise good practice
  - Effective use of evidence and information
- **Steps to address challenges in self-evaluative capacity**
  - Review as interactive process
  - SE report as living document

17

### 4. Linking Programme Review and Academic Planning

- **Aspects of Academic Planning that need to inform programme review:**
  - Purpose of:
    - Different types of educational programme (Vocational, Professional, Formative)
    - Different types of qualification (Diploma, Degree)
  - Models for access, articulation and curriculum design in specific academic fields

18

## 4. Linking Programme Review and Academic Planning

- **Academic Planning Decisions at Faculty level:**
  - Programme prioritisation and consolidation; Programme Mix; Resource allocation
  - Criteria for programme prioritisation
  - Consolidated Faculty planning and quality report

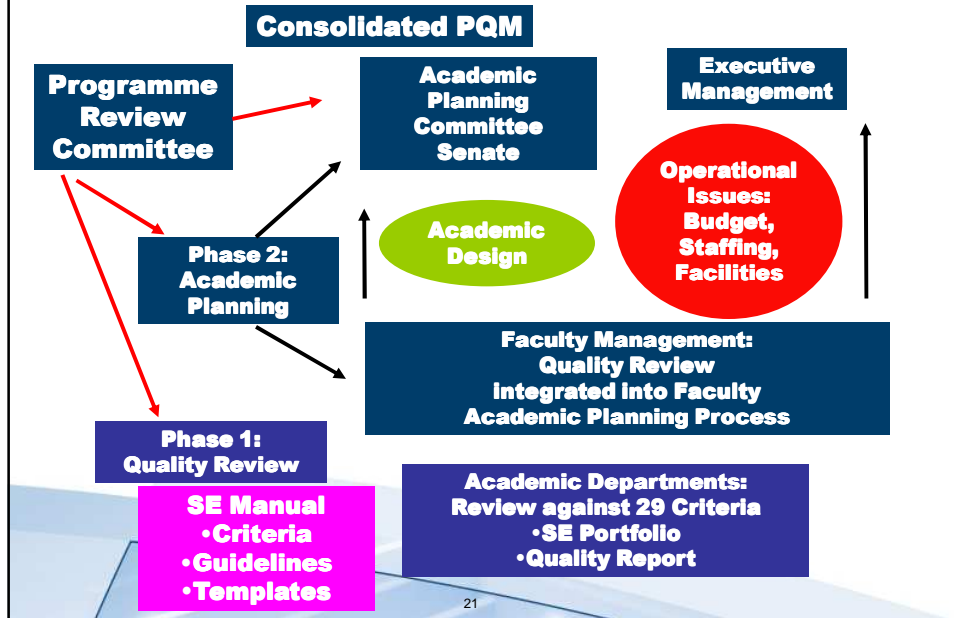
19

## 4. Linking Programme Review and Academic Planning

- **Academic Planning Decisions at Institutional level:**
  - Decisions on academic planning (programme mix, academic focus areas etc)
  - Policies, decisions, practices re institutional support (facilities, budget, staffing)

20

## 4. Programme Review and Academic Planning



## Challenges and way ahead

- **Engaged departments**
  - Authentic engagement with teaching and learning challenges
- **Leadership of engagement: Creation of conditions in which planning decisions support programme quality**
- **Future questions:**
  - Focus on student learning experience at programme level – formative and inter-departmental programmes
  - Definition, dissemination and use of evidence and information
  - Flexible use of quality criteria

# Thank You

**Martin Oosthuizen**  
**Planning and Institutional Development**  
**Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University**  
**Port Elizabeth, South Africa**  
**+ 27 (0)41 5042152**  
**[Martin.oosthuizen@nmmu.ac.za](mailto:Martin.oosthuizen@nmmu.ac.za)**