




higher education
& training
Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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DHET PERSPECTIVE ON PQM/HEQSF ISSUES

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PROGRAMME QUALIFICATION MIX (PQM)

BACKGROUND

- In 2002 the initial PQM process was approved by the Minister. These PQMs were at a high level and the Department realised that these PQMs needed to be expanded to include more detail on the qualification name and major fields of study. These PQMs were approved in 2006 by the Minister and were regularly updated as new qualifications were approved and accredited.
- The 2006 PQMs were then updated by the HEMIS directorate until 2008. Thereafter the PQMs were moved to the Directorate: Academic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.
- In 2009 the HEQF was introduced, however there were problems with approving the qualifications as the NQF Act was not finalised until later.

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PROGRAMME QUALIFICATION MIX (PQM)

- In 2013 the HEQSF was promulgated and the alignment process had to commence.
- Where qualifications could not be aligned new qualifications had to be submitted for PQM clearance, accredited and registered on SAQA.
- The Department noted with concern during the enrolment planning exercise of 2014 to 2019 that despite having the HEQF in place some universities did not plan for aligned qualifications such as Advanced Diplomas and Postgraduate Diplomas, in particular the Universities of Technology.
- This was raised in the enrolment planning meetings.

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PROGRAMME QUALIFICATION MIX (PQM)

- During the alignment process the Department with the assistance of colleagues from Universities checked the new HEQSF aligned PQMs against the old PQMs for any qualifications that may have been deemed to be aligned but were not on the old PQMs or were significantly different, e.g an M Tech: Engineering aligned as a MSc: Engineering. This was not possible as there would be not the underpin B Sc qualification.
- Subsequently there was move over from the old PQMs which are no longer maintained to the new HEQSF aligned PQMs. However, until all old qualifications have phased out the auditors will need to check both the old and new PQMS.

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PROGRAMME QUALIFICATION MIX (PQM)

- In circular 4 of September 2004 the Department signalled that the 2004 edition of Report 151 would be the last version of Report 151 and credit values for 2005 should be based on this report. No previous version of Report 151 could be used.
- Subsequent to this directive, as accreditation became institution specific, the former Technikons were instructed to also undertake the 2% test, now the graduate test.
- What are Comprehensive Universities and Universities of Technology doing now? No one should be using report 151. All credit calculations should be undertaken using the graduate test. It is of concern when Universities still refer to Report 151.

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PQM/HEQSF ISSUES

- **HEQSF aligned PQMs**
- Universities should all have copies of their approved old PQMs and their new HEQSF aligned PQMs.
- Universities cannot change their new HEQSF PQMs as they are password protected. No changes should be made to the old PQMs, such as adding their HEQSF aligned qualifications. The auditors should be using the PQMs provided by the Department for auditing purposes. If Universities do not have copies of these PQMs then they should contact the Directorate: Academic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.
- The HEQSF aligned PQMs will be regularly updated as we receive notification of accreditation and registration of qualifications.

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PQM/HEQSF ISSUES

- PQM meetings take place once a month. I am trying to push the turn around time for the preparation and finalisation of the submission to our DDG to be within a month.
- Universities will no longer receive 3 letters from the Department it now only be two. The 3 letters were; stating that the qualification/s can be submitted to the Council on Higher Education (CHE); stating that the qualification/s had been accredited and one stating the qualification/s have been placed on the PQM, or the status had changed and the qualification/s would now be funded.
- The CHE is responsible for ensuring that the universities meet the prior to commencement, long term and short term conditions therefore the Department should not be monitoring if these conditions have been met.

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PQM/HEQSF ISSUES

- The Department has had an engagement with the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) in regards to the request from UoTs and some comprehensives for Honours degrees in Engineering. The Department feels that a Postgraduate Diploma is more appropriate as the majority of students should not be following the research route rather the coursework Masters' route. It was a fruitful engagement and they have agreed to the alternate route of a PG Dip.
- We asked the TUT colleagues to assist with setting up a meeting with the professional body for the Built environment as they were also pushing for Honours degrees. The last update I received it seems like they are also agreeing to the PG Dip route.

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PQM/HEQSF ISSUES

- The Department has however recently received a request from the CBE (and their 6 professional bodies) for a representative from the Department to meet with them to discuss matters relating to the discontinuation of Built Environment qualifications in some Universities, accreditation and other related matters.
- The Department has received complaints from students that there is no articulation route for students in their final year of the two National Diplomas Clinical Technology and Dental Technology. No new students can enrol on the relevant B Techs in January 2020. It is with concern that only now UoTs have highlighted this problem. The Department has interacted with 3 UoTs and submitted a way forward for these students.

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PQM/HEQSF ISSUES

- A special meeting was set up by the Department of Health for nursing qualifications. This meeting was with the Department, CHE, SANC, Deans of Medical Schools, Fundisa and other relevant stakeholders. The meeting had been requested by the Joint Health Sciences Education Committee (JHSEC) in order to resolve the issue around Nursing qualifications. The Chief Nursing Officer has subsequently requested all parties to provide an update on the status of the nursing qualifications and this update will be tabled at the next JHSEC meeting on the 22 August 2019.
- At this meeting a concern was raised about the PG Dips but it was agreed that universities may use the competencies to develop their qualifications until such time as the regulations are approved.

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PQM/HEQSF ISSUES

- The Minister has signed a communiqué which clarifies that the last time students can enrol for non-aligned qualifications is in the 2nd semester. New students may not be enrolled in 2019 for the 2020 academic year.
- The Department also received a letter from the DVCs Academic regarding delays in PQM clearance, accreditation and registration on the NQF.
- Subsequent to a meeting with the CHE, SAQA and USAf the Department held a workshop with all universities to ensure that there is a smooth transition into the 2020 academic year and the purpose of this meeting was to have a compact between all parties.

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PQM/HEQSF ISSUES

- In addition to a presentation to by the Department, CHE and SAQA also presented on the current status. Based on the findings of a technical task team set up by the CHE to ensure alignment between the HEQSF online, PQMs and the NQF one on one meetings were also held with certain universities were specific issues had been identified.
- The Department is working on ensuring that all critical qualifications that have been submitted are cleared, subject to due processes. This is particularly applicable to Advanced Diplomas, PG Dips to follow the AD and Nursing qualifications.
- Any new programmes not yet curriculated are in all likelihood not going to be ready for January 2020.

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PQM/HEQSF ISSUES

240 Diplomas

- Initially the Department approved the offering of 240 diplomas but when a institution noted that they were implementing the engineering 240 diplomas because then students could graduate as no WIL was required this raised a red flag.
- Engagements were held with the relevant university and it was agreed that they should revert back to the 360 diplomas.
- A meeting was also held with ECSA and the issue of the 120 WIL credits were raised.
- The HEQSF indicates that the 240 credit variant may only be offered where it leads to a professional designation or occupational role as determined by a professional body.

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PQM/HEQSF ISSUES

240 Diplomas

- In addition it states that candidates who complete the 240 credit diploma may enter an advanced diploma upon successful completion of a work-integrated learning component or a combination of work-integrated learning and coursework equivalent to 120 credits that is approved and accredited by an education provider and/or a professional body and a QC.
- ESCA has been requested by the Department to look at curriculaing a QCTO qualification for the 120 credits of WIL. They cannot use the Advanced Certificate for the 120 credit WIL component.

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PQM/HEQSF ISSUES

- The Department is trying to assist SAQA with support in order for them to finalise the registration of all qualifications recommended to them by the CHE.
- In addition where old qualifications were never registered on the NQF - content is required in order for these qualifications to be registered and SAQA has requested this information from universities.
- The Department is updating the PQM guidelines and in addition drafting Standard Operating Procedures for assessing applications from universities as there have been inconsistencies in approvals.

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QCTO QUALIFICATIONS

- The Higher Education Act of 1997 (as amended) states universities may offer occupational qualifications quality assured the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations. It even states that the Minister may instruct a university to offer a QCTO qualification.
- The Department is in the process of drafting guidelines for universities on the offering of QCTO qualifications. The Department will also have an engagement with the QCTO in regards to universities offering qualification on the Occupational Qualifications Sub-framework (OQSF).
- There have been internal discussions that maybe these qualifications would also have to go through a PQM process so that the Department can monitor the offering of QCTO qualifications by universities.

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FOUNDATION PROVISION

- Universities who have submitted new qualifications during the HEQSF alignment process need to ensure that their Foundation provision programmes have also been submitted to the Department where applicable.
- The auditors must not only check to see if the foundation programmes are on the universities' approved PQMs but also that there is a letter from the Department indicating that the qualification has been approved for foundation provision.
- The Department has recently found cases of where foundation programmes are being offered and they have not been approved by the Department. They may be a qualification on the PQM but if they have conditions outstanding such as incorrect HEMIS values, outstanding information on admission requirements, etc. they cannot be offered until these have been met.

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INTRODUCTION OF NEW QUALIFICATIONS

- If a university is approached to introduce a new qualification in a field of study for which they do not have approval they should immediately contact the Department.
- A meeting will then be set up between all parties to resolve a way forward.
- Universities wanting to enter for example the Health Sciences or Agricultural sciences will have their proposals taken taken through JHSEC and JAFFSEC.
- Universities entering totally new fields of study will be required to submit a feasibility study. Guidelines are being drafted on what is required in a feasibility.

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PQM SYSTEM

- **PQM DATABASE**
- A proposal has been submitted to the African Development Bank for funding to develop a system for the PQMs.
- This will enable the Department to receive applications through a structure like the Macro Infrastructure Framework.
- The database will be a searchable database.
- The purpose is to enable universities to submit their applications electronically, to be able to readily access their PQM. In addition it will enable the Department to respond quickly to queries around qualifications that are approved and which institution is offering a particular qualification

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