

**Impact of institutional audits on
teaching and learning.
The case of the HEQC South Africa**

INQAAHE Members Forum

15-16 May 2008

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DEFINING QUALITY

- ❖ Fitness of purpose: how HEIs address national development priorities.
- ❖ Fitness of purpose: mission and vision in relation to the core functions.
- ❖ Transformation: individual and social.
- ❖ Value for money.

AUDIT SYSTEM

- ❖ Audit is evidence-based and peer-driven.
- ❖ Based on 19 criteria which can be divided into four groups:
 - mission and management: mission, planning, quality assurance and resource allocation, benchmarking (3 criteria)
 - Teaching and learning focus: from conceptualisation to management of short courses and certification (12 criteria)
 - Research (3 criteria)
 - Community engagement (1 criteria)

FOCUS ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

- ❖ Teaching and learning understood as both curricular and non-curricular (SA HEI system is mostly contact and residential).
- ❖ This affects the composition of the Panel which include teaching specialists; specialist in the relevant disciplines, registrar, student affairs, etc.
- ❖ Audit lasts 5 days for big institutions and three days of the work are dedicated to teaching and learning and educational infrastructure.

Content and relationships

- ❖ Audit explores conceptualisation of teaching and learning and its implications for the organisation of T&L and quality assurance.
- ❖ Looks into success and throughput rates.
- ❖ Looks at policies, implementation and monitoring of programme design, approval and review, assessment.
- ❖ Teaching infrastructure and teaching environment.

IMPACT

- ❖ Research conducted by HEQC suggests that HEIs find the self-evaluation aspect of the audits particularly useful.
- ❖ Identification of gaps, discover of practices they did not know about; purposeful look at themselves.
- ❖ Interaction with the panel brings out relationships and issues that have been not thought before.
- ❖ Raise awareness of the need to monitor and review.
- ❖ HEIs have to develop an improvement plan based on the recommendations of the audit report.
- ❖ Often following recommendations means: reviewing the entire assessment system; the organisation of programme approval, the integration of quality assurance into teaching and learning.

LIMITATIONS

- ❖ Audits operate at a system level.
- ❖ Do not enter into specific programmes (do not assess content)
- ❖ Do not enter into teaching practices, except indirectly.
- ❖ Do not deal with enough students and academics.
- ❖ The tension between quality and quality assurance remains.
- ❖ The answer to the question of how audits improve the quality of teaching and learning remains tentative.

QUESTIONS

- To what extent does your audit system focus on teaching and learning?
- Do you have specific benchmarks to measure the effectiveness of the system?
- What kind of research has your agency conducted to look into this?
- What is your sense of the impact of audit/institutional accreditation on the quality of teaching and learning in your country?