



DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY	
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Related national policies and documents: The Higher Education Act, 1997 and amendments Council on Higher Education (CHE): Founding Document CHE: Criteria for Institutional Audits CHE: Criteria for Programme Accreditation Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET): requirements for new, amended and re-named programmes The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act, 2008 The Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF), 2014 Regulations of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) CHE: Framework for institutional Audits 2021	

QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

I. Preamble

The Durban University of Technology (DUT) is committed to promoting student achievement through maintaining and enhancing the quality of their total learning experience within a well-supported environment that promotes the principle of students, as adult learners, taking responsibility for their own learning.

Managing quality and safeguarding academic standards must be firmly set within the context of the vision, mission and Envision 2030 strategic goals of DUT and must support the achievement of the strategic goals of the university that are underpinned by student and staff-centredness and engagement. Evaluation of the quality of the students' learning experience must form a regular and progressive feature of the work of both individuals and committees within the DUT generally and within each faculty specifically.

DUT is committed to monitoring, evaluating, and tracking the extent to which it is:

- 1.1 Achieving its mission and stated strategic objectives within the context of national imperatives to ensure fitness for and of purpose¹.
- 1.2 Ensuring accountability for the effective and efficient use of all available resources.
- 1.3 Empowering students through promoting their academic success.
- 1.4 Providing effective and efficient support services and appropriate resources to ensure that educational provision and equity access are enhanced.
- 1.5 Establishing an organisational culture of quality.

2. Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework to ensure that across DUT the quality of provision is managed such that all:

- 2.1 Students, irrespective of programme of study or site of delivery, have equity of access to available resources and equity of opportunity for success.
- 2.2 Staff have access to the necessary infrastructure, physical and financial resources, and support for the attainment of the academic standards set by DUT and relevant national bodies.

Through implementation of this policy, DUT will be able to demonstrate to internal and external stakeholders that it has robust procedures for:

- a) monitoring and reviewing existing academic programmes
- b) designing, developing, authorising, and approving new academic programmes and changes or modifications to existing academic programmes
- c) evaluating policy implementation
- d) reviewing inter-related processes that collectively involve both academic and support departments and that ultimately lead to enhancement of the quality of the student experience.

¹ Council on Higher Education. 2001. Founding Document. January 2001 Available at <http://www.che.ac.za>

3. Policy

3.1 Annual quality monitoring

3.1.1 All academic departments are responsible for annual quality monitoring which will be implemented through departmental, sectoral, and/or faculty approved processes as applicable.

3.1.2 The Executive Dean will present the Faculty Annual Quality Monitoring report to the last Quality Assurance Committee and Senate meeting for the year.

3.1.3 The Executive Dean of the Faculty is responsible for addressing all challenges raised in the annual quality monitoring report.

3.2 Programme review and evaluation

3.2.1 All undergraduate and postgraduate programmes will be reviewed in a six-year cycle through external peer review processes managed by the CQPA in collaboration with faculties. Programmes may also be reviewed in response to external factors and/or when requested by the relevant Professional Board/Council, or the Executive Management of DUT.

3.2.2 All academic programmes will be reviewed using the CHE criteria for the accreditation of academic programmes as well as the Professional Body requirements where applicable.

3.2.3 General Education² in the curriculum and the assessment of the DUT Graduate Attributes³ will be evaluated through programme reviews.

3.2.4 The Faculty Quality Committee (see 3.4 below) will have an oversight role in monitoring (a) that good practices are sustained and disseminated within the faculty and (b) the implementation of improvement plans developed in response to the outcomes of the programme review process.

3.3 Institutional audit, national reviews, and accreditation by external bodies

3.3.1 Institutional audits and national reviews to be conducted by the CHE as well as all accreditation visits that are to be conducted by external bodies for example, Professional Bodies and Professional Boards, must be coordinated through the CQPA and the relevant academic department.

3.3.2 The academic departments must, through the relevant Executive Dean's office, timeously notify the CQPA of external accreditation visits.

3.3.3 Prior to an accreditation visit by a Professional Body, a programme review will be conducted, in accordance with 3.2 above, and will be co-ordinated by the CQPA. The CHE programme accreditation criteria as well as the Professional Body requirements will inform such reviews.

3.3.4 All review and/or institutional audit reports, together with the associated improvement plan, must ultimately be submitted, through the CQPA, to Senate for discussion and for Senate oversight⁴.

² Curriculum renewal at DUT: General Education Guidelines. Approved by Senate on 29 August 2012

³ Sattar K & Cooke LA. A Position Paper: Conceptualising the Quality Assurance of Graduate Attributes at the Durban University of Technology. Approved by Senate on 27 August 2014

⁴ The critical path for these reports is documented in the CQPA Handbook

3.4 Establishment of Faculty Quality Committees

Each of the faculties will establish a committee or committees that will take on the role and function of a Faculty Quality Committee (FQC) that will report to the Faculty Board. Such committee/s will be supported by a Quality Promotion Officer who will serve as the Executive Officer. The committee/s will, *inter alia*:

- 3.4.1 have a key role in the planning and development of new learning programmes, monitoring and enhancement of existing programmes, and monitoring the support requirements of lecturers
- 3.4.2 receive reports from academic departments on the outcomes of their annual quality monitoring processes (3.1) and associated improvement plans
- 3.4.3 ensure that a staff-student committee is established for each programme offered in the faculty
- 3.4.4 ensure that Advisory Boards are established for all programmes offered by the faculty in the faculty and that these are fully functional
- 3.4.5 ensure that systematic feedback on modules and academic staff is elicited from students through administration of the DUT subject/module evaluation questionnaires (SEQ/MEQ) and lecturer evaluation questionnaires (LEQ)
- 3.4.6 receive programme review reports and quality improvement plans pertaining to 3.2 and 3.3 above and monitor progress for the implementation of quality improvement plans
- 3.4.7 submit the Faculty annual quality monitoring report to the Faculty Board and the CQPA
- 3.4.8 develop and implement strategies to promote student quality literacy in the faculty.

3.5 New programmes

3.5.1 New programmes must be designed in compliance with the HEQSF, the CHE Criteria for Programme Accreditation and DUT requirements for (a) the inclusion of General Education in the curriculum⁵ and (b) the attainment of Graduate Attributes⁶.

3.5.2 Programme design must comply with the DHET requirements for the CESM category/categories, that is, 50% of the majors and overall 50% of the curriculum must be in the CESM category/categories of the relevant programme.

3.5.3 The design and development of the programme must also adhere to Professional Body regulations, if Professional Body accreditation is mandatory for the discipline/field. The department must ensure that Professional Body endorsement is attained.

3.5.4 All PQM clearance applications, PQM amendment applications, extension of scope applications, professional board endorsements and applications for accreditation of new programmes must ultimately be approved by Senate prior to these applications being submitted by the CQPA to the DHET and the CHE respectively⁷.

3.5.5 All new programmes will be subjected to a mid-term check to monitor:

- (a) compliance with the relevant CHE criteria; (b) the implementation of General Education; and
- (c) the attainment of DUT Graduate Attributes.

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ Refer to the CQPA Handbook for detailed processes and relevant templates to be completed.

3.5.6 Credits must be allocated to modules in multiples of 4 credits with the minimum credits being 8 and the maximum credits 32. Where module credits exceed the maximum, a motivation must be submitted to the relevant committee for approval thereof. Deviations from these credit allocation norms are permitted for Extended Curriculum Programmes and/or if such variations are required by Professional Board/Council regulations.

3.6 Changes to approved (existing) programmes

3.6.1 Applications for changes to existing programmes will be approved by the Faculty Board after due consideration of the motivation for change by the CQPA. Thereafter these applications will be evaluated by the Programme Evaluation Committee and approved by Senate and will be recorded by the CQPA on the PeTALS database.

3.6.2 DUT is authorised to make changes to a maximum of 49% of the credits of a programme, as well the outcomes, contents, curriculum structure, and other aspects of Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

3.6.3 Any changes to the title, purpose, outcomes, field of study, and mode or site of delivery of a programme will also require a submission to the CHE, Professional Councils/Boards (if applicable) and DHET for approval and SAQA will be informed accordingly. Such changes may necessitate an application for accreditation of the programme as a new programme. (See 5.3: definition of a new programme). The CQPA will submit these applications to the relevant bodies, on behalf of DUT.

3.7 Phasing-out academic programmes

Senate must approve proposals for the phase-out of academic programmes. As part of their annual quality monitoring process, the academic department will be responsible for tracking the progress of pipeline students until all have completed such phased-out programmes within the prescribed maximum time. On completion of the phase-out process, the academic department will notify the CQPA who will report to the DHET.

3.8 Handbook of information and guidelines for procedures

All academic departments will develop a handbook of information and guidelines for procedures that are relevant to their respective scope of responsibility. The handbook will be available in electronic format to all students and staff.

3.9 Feedback

3.9.1 DUT will ensure that the quality of provision across the university is regularly evaluated and that feedback from a variety of sources is triangulated for reporting purposes. Such feedback includes user surveys.

3.9.2 The CQPA will be responsible for the design, development and implementation of survey questionnaires that include but are not limited to the following:

3.9.2.1 A subject evaluation questionnaire that will be completed by all students at least once per semester per subject or, in the case of annual programmes, once per annum per subject.

3.9.2.2 A lecturer evaluation questionnaire that will be completed by students at least once per annum per lecturer.

3.9.2.3 A Student experience survey that will be conducted at least once every three years.

3.9.2.4 A Staff experience survey that will be conducted at least once every three years.

3.9.2.5 An annual Graduate survey

3.9.2.6 Miscellaneous surveys as per DUT strategic and operational requirements.

3.9.3 Challenges and areas of enhancement arising from the CQPA surveys administered must be addressed by the HOD and Executive Dean of the Faculty.

3.10 Thematic reviews

The CQPA will be responsible for reviewing inter-related processes that involve academic departments (thematic reviews). Thematic review reports shall be forwarded to the relevant head of department for monitoring the progression of improvement plans and to ensure that there is no slippage of good practice that has been identified.

4. Applicability

This policy is applicable across all DUT campuses.

5. Definitions.

5.1 Quality assurance

The CHE defines quality assurance as “Quality assurance is the process of putting in place and delivering on i) the strategic goals and purposes that an institution has identified for itself and ii) the programmes for delivering sets of learning experiences that support students in attaining the qualifications to which they lead; it also refers to the process of evaluating and providing evidence of the extent to which fulfil their own quality assurance objectives”.⁸

5.2 Quality

The CHE defines quality as⁹:

- “Fitness for purpose in relation to specified mission within a national framework that encompasses differentiation and diversity.
- Value for money judged in relation to the full range of higher education purposes set out in the White Paper. Judgements about the effectiveness and efficiency of provision will include but not be confined to labour market responsiveness and cost recovery.
- Transformation in the sense of developing the capabilities of individual learners for personal enrichment, as well as the requirements of social development and economic and employment growth.”

5.3 A New academic programme is:

5.3.1 A programme that has not been offered previously at DUT, or

5.3.2 A programme whose title, purpose, outcomes, field of study, and mode or site of delivery is changed, or

5.3.3 A programme whose curriculum, including learning, teaching and assessment, has been changed by more than 50%.¹⁰

⁸ Council on Higher Education. 2021. Framework for Institutional Audits. June 2021. Pretoria. Available at <http://www.che.ac.za>

⁹ Council on Higher Education. 2001. ‘Founding Document’. January 2001. Pretoria. Available at <http://www.che.ac.za>

¹⁰ Council on Higher Education. 2004. ‘Criteria for Programme Accreditation’. Revised June 2012. Available at <http://www.che.ac.za>

5.4 Midterm check

A midterm check is conducted in the year following implementation for a diploma/degree programme. For the four-year Professional Bachelor's degree programme, the mid-term check will be conducted in the third year of implementation. For the one-year Higher Certificate, Advanced Diploma, Postgraduate Diploma and Bachelor Honours degree programmes, the midterm check will be conducted at the end of Semester I of the year of implementation. The purpose of the mid-term check is to monitor progress with the implementation of new programmes and to report to Senate and/or a Senate subcommittee accordingly.

5.5 Support departments

The term support departments embraces both academic support and administrative support departments that are not included in the structure of a faculty.

6. Contact for support with implementation of this policy

Centre for Quality Promotion and Assurance.

7. Policy authority / Document Owner

Senior Director: CQPA

8. Related policies and documents

The cover page of this policy refers to related approved national policies.

9. Implementation procedures

The CQPA will develop, and annually update, a comprehensive handbook of procedures, guidelines, and templates to support the implementation of this policy.

10. Monitoring

The Senior Director: CQPA will report annually on the implementation of this policy to the first Senate meeting of the year.

11. Review date

The Senior Director: CQPA is responsible for ensuring that this policy is reviewed as necessary.