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A Practical Guide to Completing the HEQC Programme Accreditation Form

Guidance for VUT faculties and PACD stakeholders on preparing a strong accreditation and qualification registration submission

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Regulatory Entities' Environment

The bodies a new programme passes through – from PQM clearance to NQF registration

1

DHET

Department of Higher Education and Training

- Grants PQM clearance
- Funding

1.1

Professional Body

Statutory or professional council

- For professional qualifications
- Endorsement / accreditation / approval

WHERE APPLICABLE

2

CHE – HEQC

Council on Higher Education

- Responsible for the HEQSF
- HEQC accreditation process
- External quality assurance (EQA)

3

SAQA

South African Qualifications Authority

- Registers qualifications on the NQF once accredited
- Guides qualification design according to SAQA level descriptors

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Why This Guide

1. **Complex, multi-section form**

   The HEQC online application spans nine sections (A–I), each with its own evidentiary and compliance requirements.

2. **High stakes for approval**

   Incomplete rationale, purpose or comparability statements are common reasons for HEQC queries and delays.

3. **One process, many contributors**

   Faculties, programme coordinators, PACD, QPU and the DVC: Teaching, Learning Office via QEAP all touch the same submission.

4. **This guide**

   Walks through each section, the expected evidence, and practical tips for a submission-ready application.

9

sections in the application form (A to I)

15

questions in Section D alone – the design core of the qualification

1

application per programme, regardless of mode of provisioning

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The Form at a Glance – Sections A to I

A **Section A – Site of delivery**
Delivery sites for the proposed programme

B **Section B – Programme / qualification info**
NQF field, CESM classification

D **Section D – Programme / qualification design**
Rationale, purpose, curriculum, ELOs, comparability

E **Section E – Recruitment, admission and selection**
Requirements, RPL, CAT, widening access

F **Section F – Programme provisioning**
Teaching mode, assessment strategy, WIL

G **Section G – Infrastructure, staffing and enrolments**
Venues, staff, coordinators, headcounts

H **Section H – Required documents checklist**
Evidence to be uploaded per programme

I **Section I – Internal quality assurance**
Faculty sign-off and DVC verification

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Sections A & B – Getting the Basics Right

Section A – Site of delivery

- Select every delivery site for the proposed programme – do not list only the main campus if the programme will also run at satellite or partner sites.
- Each additional site selected here triggers its own infrastructure, staffing and headcount questions later in Section G.
- Confirm site names match institutional records exactly – mismatches are a common cause of processing queries.

Section B – Programme / qualification info

- Indicate the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) organising field the qualification falls under.
- Indicate the Classification of Education Subject Matter (CESM) code(s) that best describe the curriculum content.
- These classifications drive downstream reporting, so verify them against the current NQF and CESM manuals rather than a prior submission.

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SECTION D

Rationale and Purpose

A strong rationale answers:

- Why is the qualification needed – what evidence identifies the gap?
- How does it meet a specific sector need, supported by consultation with a recognised professional or industry body?
- Who are the typical learners, and what occupations or roles will they enter?
- Where does it sit on the learning pathway, and what benefit does it offer the learner, society and the economy?

The purpose statement must show:

- The national and professional/career context, and what the qualification is intended to achieve.
- What the qualifying student will know and be able to do on completion.
- A clear link between the Exit Level Outcomes (ELOs) and the stated purpose.
- Graduate attributes, used where appropriate to the qualification type.

TIP

Draft the rationale and purpose together – assessors check that the need identified in the rationale is the same need the purpose statement claims to address.

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SECTION D

Curriculum, Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

1

Module structure

Complete the module table showing how constituent modules build towards the qualification.

2

Rules of combination

Show coherence between compulsory and elective modules, with a rationale for the choice of each.

3

Rules of progression

Indicate semester/year progression and any pre- or co-requisite modules, where applicable.

4

Exit Level Outcomes (ELOs)

List and number every ELO, framed against the appropriate NQF level descriptors.

5

Associated Assessment Criteria (AAC)

List the AAC per ELO (or integrated across all ELOs), showing how attainment is assessed.

6

NQF-level alignment

Explain how module outcomes and competencies align to the qualification's NQF level.

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SECTION D

International Comparability and Articulation

International comparability

- Identify at least two countries, with the registered/accredited institutions and qualification titles used for comparison.
- Compare entry requirements, ELOs/content/modules, credits, assessment and duration – not just a link to a website.
- Where relevant, compare against the international standard used to develop the qualification.
- If no comparable programme exists, provide substantive reasons – not a blank field.

Articulation possibilities

Vertical Upward mobility to qualifications on the HEQSF.

Horizontal Mobility between qualifications at the same NQF level.

Diagonal Mobility across sub-frameworks or qualification types.

Where no articulation exists, state substantive reasons why the qualification remains viable on its own.

Recruitment, Admission and Selection

1	**Admission requirements**	State minimum requirements clearly; for postgraduate study, name the specific underlying qualification(s) accepted.
2	**Selection criteria**	Additional criteria beyond admission (e.g. a required subject or achievement level) must be explained and justified.
3	**Widening access**	Explain how the programme actively promotes broader access to higher education.
4	**Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**	Describe the assessment process for admission or module exemption. A maximum of 10% of a cohort may enter via RPL. If RPL does not apply, state why.
5	**Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT)**	Describe how CAT applies to the programme. Up to 50% of credits from a completed qualification may transfer in.

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SECTION F

Programme Provisioning

1. Teaching and learning

- Select every mode of provisioning that applies to this programme (e.g. contact, blended, distance).
- Only one accreditation application is required per programme, regardless of how many modes are offered – do not submit separate applications per mode.

2. Assessment strategy

- Describe the types and forms of assessment used to test conceptual understanding and applied competence.
- Cover integrated (formative and summative) assessment, including percentage weighting of tasks and Work-Integrated Learning (WIL).
- Show clearly how successful completion of learning is determined, and that the strategy fits the NQF level and mode of provision.

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SECTION G

Infrastructure, Staffing and Headcount

Completed per site of delivery selected in Section A

1

Facilities and venues

Number of facilities/venues required, available, and their maximum capacity. Motivate any additional venue needs.

2

Teaching staff

Number of teaching staff members per site, with the Programme Coordinator named for each site.

3

Supporting documentation

CVs (staff and Programme Coordinator), workload allocation model, and staff recruitment plan per site.

4

Headcount enrolments

Planned headcount enrolments per site, completed for every site of delivery selected earlier in the form.

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Sections H & I – Closing Out the Application

Section H – Required documents checklist

- Upload every document listed as required for this specific programme and site of delivery.
- Cross-check the checklist against Sections D, F and G – missing CVs, workload models or recruitment plans are a frequent cause of resubmission.

Section I – Internal quality assurance

- Faculty complete this, confirming internal review of the submission before it proceeds.
- The DVC: Teaching, Learning completes verification and confirmation, followed by a final checklist sign-off and the internal approval process.

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Common Pitfalls to Avoid

Rationale and purpose drift apart
The need identified in the rationale must match the need the purpose statement addresses.

Comparability by hyperlink only
A website reference is not a comparison – international comparability needs a substantive, detailed analysis.

Site information out of sync
Delivery sites named in Section A must match the staffing and headcount detail supplied later in Section G.

Checklist treated as an afterthought
Section H documents (CVs, workload models, recruitment plans) are frequently the missing piece at submission.

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Before You Submit

- ✓ Confirm rationale, purpose and ELOs tell one consistent story.
- ✓ Verify NQF, CESM and site details match institutional records exactly.
- ✓ Check international comparability includes at least two named, accredited comparators.
- ✓ Match every Section H document to the relevant site of delivery.
- ✓ Route the completed form through faculty quality assurance and DVC sign-off (Section I) before submission to PACD.

Prepared as a guidance resource for VUT faculties and PACD stakeholders.

Questions & Discussion

- Contact: PACD