



PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT (PACD) QUALITY MANUAL

Version: 1.0

Approved: Senate

Owner: PACD Director

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List of terminologies and definitions (Annexure A)

Abbreviation	Definition
AQSC	Academic Quality & Standards Committee
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CESM	Classification of Educational Subject Matter
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DVC	Deputy Vice Chancellor
DVC: TLQ	Deputy Vice Chancellor: Teaching, Learning and Quality
ECSA	Engineering Council of South Africa
FET	Faculty of Engineering and Technology
FMC	Faculty Management Committee
FRIC	Faculty Research and Innovation Committee
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Council
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
HOD	Head of Department
IAP	Integrated Accreditation Process
ITS	Integrated Tertiary Software
LMS	Learning Management System
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PACD	Programme Accreditation and Curriculum Development
PDP	Personal Development Plan
PoE	Portfolio of Evidence
PQM	Programme Qualification Mix
QAF	Quality Assurance Framework
QAP	Quality Assurance Policy

QEAP	Qualification Evaluation & Advisory Panel
QPU	Quality Promotion Unit
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SCS	Student Counselling and Support
SEAPDC	Senate Enrolment Academic Planning and Development Committee
SRC	Student Representative Council
VC	Vice Chancellor
VUT	Vaal University of Technology
WIL	Work Integrated Learning

1. INTRODUCTION

The Programme Accreditation and Curriculum Development (PACD) Quality Manual provides the overarching framework within which the department operationalises quality assurance, quality enhancement, and regulatory compliance in alignment with institutional and national imperatives. It serves as a guiding document for academic and administrative stakeholders involved in programme design, accreditation, and review processes.

1.1 Purpose of the Quality Manual (PACD Context)

The Programme Accreditation and Curriculum Development (PACD) Quality Manual provides a comprehensive institutional framework to guide the planning, design, accreditation, review, and continuous enhancement of academic programmes at the Vaal University of Technology (VUT). This manual operationalises national quality assurance requirements within an institutional context and establishes a structured, coherent, and accountable approach to managing academic quality across the Programme Qualification Mix (PQM)

This manual supports the Vaal University of Technology's (VUT) strategic goal of becoming a leading African university by ensuring that all qualifications:

- Are aligned with the **HEQSF**
- Meet **DHET, CHE, and SAQA requirements and industry professional bodies (where applicable)**.
- Comply with the **Integrated Accreditation Process (IAP)** of the VUT and **Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) of the Council on Higher Education**.
- Support **teaching, learning, assessment, and research excellence**.

The manual further:

- Defines **standardised processes, SOPs, and governance systems**
- Ensures **consistency and compliance across programme lifecycle processes**
- Provides a framework for **monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement**
- Supports a **culture of quality within PACD and across faculties**

1.2 Objectives

- Ensure compliance with national QA frameworks (DHET, CHE, SAQA)
- Maintain an accurate and HEQSF-aligned **PQM**
- Facilitate effective **programme design and accreditation**
- Strengthen **quality assurance systems and governance**
- Promote **continuous improvement (PIRI cycle)**
- Enhance academic programme relevance and quality

2. BACKGROUND

The Programme Accreditation and Curriculum Development (PACD) unit reported to the Registrar's portfolio between 2016 and 2025, since March 2026, the department reports to the DVC T&L portfolio. The Department's activities are directly aligned with the strategic, operational, and

academic planning activities of VUT's Strategic Plan 2033+ and have been aligned with the DVC's portfolio since then. The department's focus is to build and manage VUT's PQM through facilitating the qualification design and accreditation processes of new qualifications to be included in VUT's Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM), as well as reviewing existing programmes on the institution's PQM. As of 2022 the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and South Africa Qualifications Authority (SAQA) introduced the Integrated Accreditation Process (IAP) of qualifications, which is associated with the approval, accreditation, and registration of qualifications as outlined in the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF). The QAF consists of processes which are associated with various stages of internal and external approval of quality assurance, which includes accountability of qualification improvement, planning, and delivery. The QAF informs a shift in focus from programme to qualification design and accreditation aligned to QAF guidelines and criteria, which includes:

- Development of Standards, Guidelines, and Criteria
- Draw attention to the enhancement of the quality culture and the interconnectedness of quality experiences
- Strategic Management approach – Quality, Planning, Funding
- Review of Qualifications and Programmes (address the Proliferation)
- Pay attention to your institution's EQA track record

Qualification approval as per IAP is strongly shaped by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) programme accreditation framework and QAF requirements and criteria, as well as other statutory and professional council's legislative requirements (CHE, 2021). Internal programme approval and accreditation mechanisms (Advisory Committee, Faculty Board, QEAP, SEAPDCSENEX, Senate) ensure that all new and existing academic qualifications meet the necessary quality requirements for submission as per the QAF and HEQC for external accreditation by the CHE, registration by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and Department of Higher Education for funding. PACD monitors and audits, designs and reviews all VUT qualifications and programmes according to the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-framework (HEQSF). The process is done through collaboration with faculties to ensure that the standards of qualifications meet the requirements and criteria of Higher Education National agencies as outlined by the QAF, such as Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), Council on Higher Education (CHE), Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), South Africa Qualification Authority (SAQA) and external professional bodies.

3. POSITIONING AND OPERATING STRUCTURE

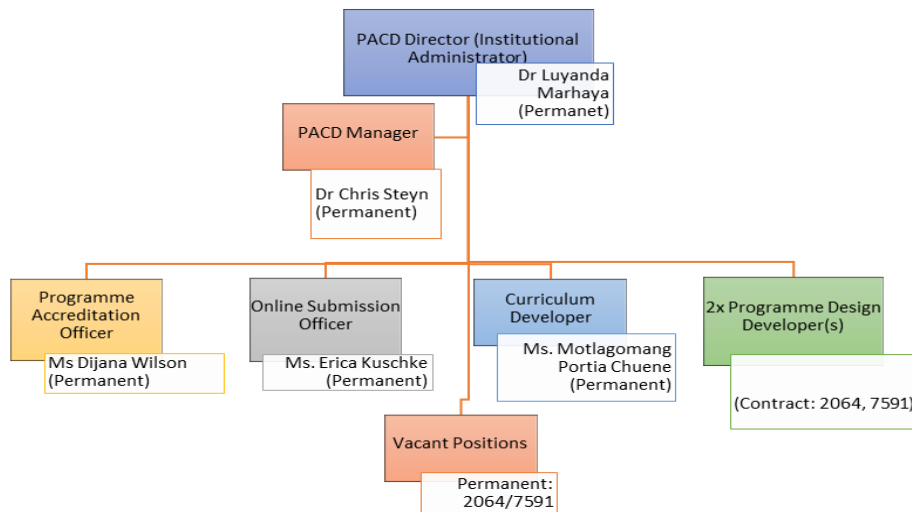


Figure 1: PACD organogram

Key Positions:

- Director: PACD (Institutional Administrator)
- PACD Manager
- Programme Accreditation Officers
- Curriculum Developers
- Online Submission Officer
- Programme Design Developers

4. PACD APPROACH TO QUALITY

The PACD vision and mission are directly aligned with the institutional strategic direction of VUT, ensuring coherence between programme development, academic planning, and national higher education priorities.

4.1 Vision and Mission

Vision: To maintain a high-quality, innovative PQM aligned with national and international standards.

Mission: Facilitate qualification design and accreditation

- Ensure alignment with DHET, CHE, SAQA, and professional bodies
- Maintain accurate PQM records
- Support faculties in programme development

4.2 Strategic Objectives

- Maintain a **quality PQM**
- Align all programmes to **HEQSF**
- Ensure accurate **NQF registration**
- Support **programme design and accreditation**
- Enhance **staff development**
- Strengthen **strategic partnerships**
- Improve **leadership and governance**

4.3 PIRI Cycle Integration

PACD applies a continuous improvement approach:

Phase	Description
Plan	PQM planning, programme design
Implement	Accreditation processes
Review	Internal audits, QEAP reviews
Improve	Address findings, refine programmes.

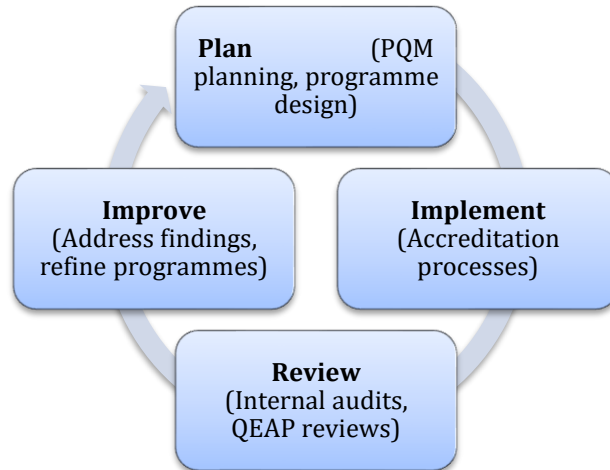


Figure 2: PACD PIRI-cycle

The PACD quality approach ensures the alignment of academic programme development with institutional strategic priorities, national policy imperatives, and global trends in higher education. This integrated approach reinforces the institution's commitment to innovation, relevance, and student success.

5. COMPLIANCE AND LEGISLATION

5.1 Regulatory Framework

The University has an effective institutional system as well as processes and procedures for programme design, review, evaluation, and approval. This system is fully informed by various national and sectoral regulatory structures with which the VUT complies. Paramount among these is:

- The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, which provides for the registration and quality assurance of HEIs in South Africa.
- The CHE, which ensures quality promotion and fulfilment of standards among South African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).
- The HEQC-Online, which is a web-based application system that allows public and private higher education providers in South Africa to submit applications for the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) alignment of programmes online.
- The National Qualifications Framework (NQF), administered by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), which provides clear descriptors for each qualification and critical cross-field outcomes for each level on the NQF.
- The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

These activities are directed by various legal frameworks and managed by a National Higher Education management system.

- Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997 <https://www.gov.za/documents/higher-education-act>
- Higher Educational Qualifications Framework (HEQF) [https://www.dhet.gov.za/Policy%20and%20Development%20Support/The%20High%20Education%20Qualifications%20Framework%20\(HEQF\).pdf](https://www.dhet.gov.za/Policy%20and%20Development%20Support/The%20High%20Education%20Qualifications%20Framework%20(HEQF).pdf)
- Higher Educational Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) – 2013 https://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/inline-files/PUB_Higher%20Education%20Qualifications%20Sub-Framework%20%28HEQSF%29%202013.pdf
- National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act 67 of 2008 <https://www.gov.za/documents/national-qualifications-framework-act>
- SAQA Level descriptors <https://saqa.org.za/level-descriptors-for-the-south-african-national-qualifications-framework/>
- Classification of Educational Subject Matter (CESM) <https://www.dhet.gov.za/Management%20and%20Information%20Systems/CESM%20August%202008.pdf>
- Recognition of Prior Learning <https://vut.ac.za/policies/>
- Language Policy for Higher Education https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202011/43860gon1160.pdf
- Language Policy Framework for SA Higher Education https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202011/43860gon1160.pdf
- Minimum Admission Requirements for Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees <https://www.dhet.gov.za/HED%20Policies/Minimum%20Admission%20Requirements%20for%20Higher%20Certificate,%20Diploma%20and%20Bachelor's%20Degree.pdf>

Policy for measurement of research output in Higher Education

https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/36102gon60.pdf

PACD operates within national legislative frameworks:

- Higher Education Act (101 of 1997) <https://www.gov.za/documents/higher-education-act>
- HEQSF https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201410/38116gon819.pdf
- NQF Act (SAQA) https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/34883gen913a.pdf
- CHE Accreditation Criteria <https://www.che.ac.za/publications/criteria-programme-accreditation>
- DHET PQM Guidelines <https://www.dhet.gov.za/Universities/Guidelines%20for%20Applications%20%2009%2005%202016%20HvR.pdf>

These legislative and regulatory frameworks collectively underpin the institutional quality assurance system and define the parameters within which PACD operates. Compliance with these frameworks ensures that all academic programmes meet national standards for quality, credibility, and academic integrity.

5.2 Key Regulatory Bodies

- **DHET** – PQM approval
- **CHE (HEQC)** – Programme accreditation
- **SAQA** – Qualification registration
- **Professional Bodies** – Programme-specific endorsement

5.3 Professional Bodies

PACD coordinates with relevant professional bodies to ensure:

- Compliance with industry standards
- Programme accreditation and endorsement

ECSA (Engineering)

ECSA is a statutory body that is established in terms of the Engineering Professional Act, 46 of 2000. The primary role of ECSA is to regulate the engineering profession in terms of the Act.

ECSA therefore audits all the engineering programmes offered at the VUT every five years. ECSA awards an accreditation status to each programme that meets the standard for the award of the qualification. The standards are designed to meet the educational requirements for registration as a Candidate or Professional Engineering Technician with ECSA and acceptance as a candidate to write the examinations for Certificated Engineers (for Diploma in Engineering Programmes) and the educational base required for registration as a Professional Engineering Technologist and/or Certificated Engineer with ECSA (for the Advanced Diploma in Engineering Programmes).

- [ECSA Policy on Accreditation of Engineering Programmes](#)
- Criteria for Accreditation for Engineering Programmes: [Criteria for Accreditation of Engineering Programmes](#)

HPCSA (Health)

The **HPCSA** (Health Professions Council of South Africa) is the statutory regulatory body that governs healthcare professionals in the country. It is responsible for protecting the public, setting clinical and educational standards, and maintaining professional and ethical conduct across the medical field <https://www.hpcs.co.za/>

The HPCSA oversees a wide variety of medical and allied health professionals through its 12 professional boards. Its core mandate includes:

- **Registration:** Ensuring all practicing healthcare professionals meet required educational and training standards.
- **Professional Conduct:** Investigating complaints and enforcing disciplinary measures against practitioners who breach ethical standards.
- **Continuing Professional Development (CPD):** Mandating ongoing education to ensure practitioners remain competent in their fields.

SANC (Nursing)

The **South African Nursing Council (SANC)** is the statutory regulatory body that governs the nursing and midwifery professions in South Africa. Operating under the Nursing Act, its primary mandate is to protect the public by setting and maintaining standards for nursing education, training, and ethical practice.

Core Responsibilities

SANC performs several critical functions for the healthcare sector in South Africa:

- **Registration:** It manages the official registry of all practicing nurses and midwives. By law, anyone wishing to practice as a nurse in South Africa must be registered with SANC.
- **Education Accreditation:** SANC accredits nursing education institutions and training programmes, ensuring that curricula meet national health policies and universal standards.
- **Setting Ethical Standards:** It establishes the code of ethics and professional conduct for practitioners, investigating complaints to ensure the safety and dignity of patients.

<https://www.sanc.co.za/>

These legislative and regulatory frameworks collectively underpin the institutional quality assurance system and define the parameters within which PACD operates. Compliance with these frameworks ensures that all academic programmes meet national standards for quality, credibility, and academic integrity.

6. ROLE PLAYERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

PACD

- Institutional Administrator (Director PACD)
- Manage PQM
- Facilitate programme design and accreditation
- Manage new programme development and programme amendment tracker system
- Conduct audits and reviews on the PQM.
- Capacity development across faculties
- Manage / implement department quality management system
- Active in internal and external governance structures
- Attend and collaborate with statutory bodies

QPU

- Internal quality assurance
- Monitor review cycles

SEAPDC

- Academic planning and programme approval

SENEX

- Strategic academic governance

Senate

- Final ratification of programmes

Registrar

- ITS updates and programme implementation

The governance structures outlined in this manual ensure that all academic decisions are subject to appropriate levels of review, oversight, and approval. This promotes transparency, accountability, and rigorous quality assurance across all stages of programme development and accreditation.

7. PROCESSES AND RECORD MANAGEMENT

The programme lifecycle managed by PACD reflects a fully integrated internal and external quality assurance framework aligned with the Integrated Accreditation Process (IAP) and institutional governance requirements.

For record purposes, VUT has access to the relevant online repository at both CHE and SAQA. To this extent, it relies on records that exist in both HEQC online and HEQSF online. Through the PACD unit, VUT utilizes the Academic Programme Tracking System (APTS) to digitally store all related data on qualifications and programmes.

7.1 Core Process: Programme Lifecycle – (Annexure B/C: PACD Implementation Plan & SOP)

PQM Planning → Programme Design → Internal Governance → External Accreditation → Implementation → Review → Amendment

- Advisory Board (Faculty, department, qualification / programme specific)
- Faculty Board (Approval)
- QEAP → SEAPDC → SENEX (approval) → Senate ratification
- DHET → CHE → SAQA submission for approval, accreditation and registration)
- Digitally track and store onto APTS.

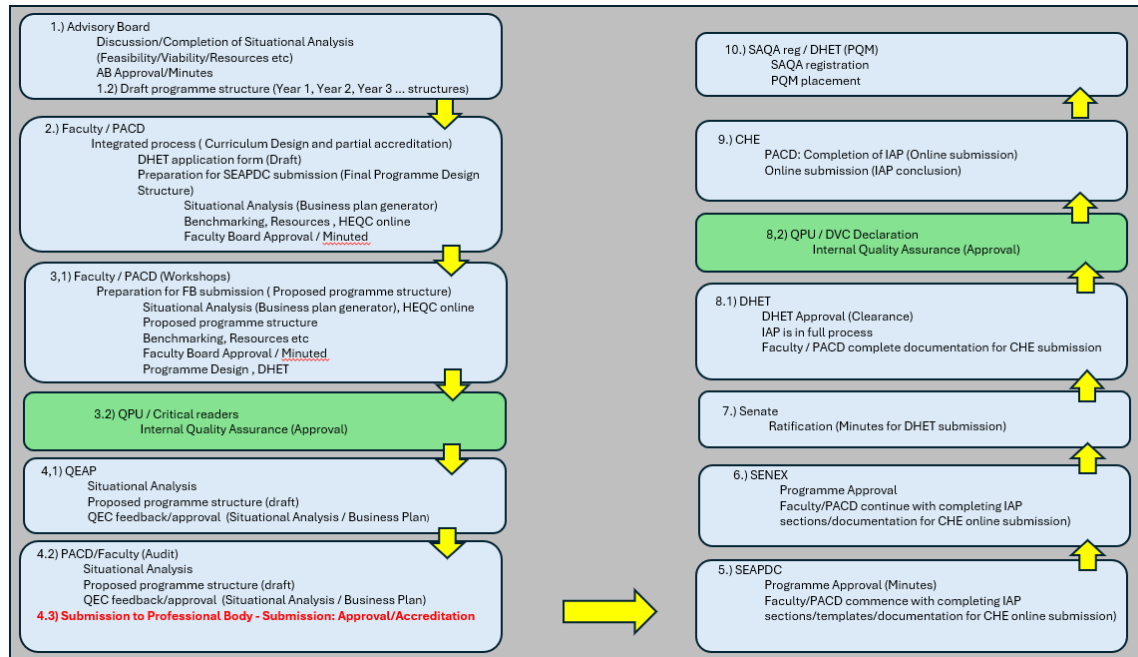


Diagram1: PACD New Programme development process

7.2 Academic programme amendments: roles and responsibilities

Programme amendment constitutes a structured, transparent, and cyclical evaluative process applied to accredited academic programmes listed on the Programme Qualification Mix (PQM) of the Vaal University of Technology (VUT).

This process ensures that qualifications remain academically rigorous, professionally relevant, and aligned with the institutional mandate of a University of Technology (UoT). Furthermore, it provides a systematic mechanism through which programmes may respond proactively to evolving disciplinary knowledge, industry expectations, professional and regulatory requirements, and broader socio-economic imperatives.

Programme amendments are therefore positioned as quality enhancement mechanisms rather than comprehensive qualification reviews and are undertaken within the parameters of existing accreditation by the Council on Higher Education (CHE).

7.3 Purpose of Programme Amendment

Amendments to accredited programmes and qualifications serve as strategic instruments for academic renewal, quality enhancement, and institutional responsiveness. Specifically, they aim to:

- Ensure continued relevance and responsiveness:
Evaluate the extent to which programmes remain aligned with industry needs, professional bodies, graduate attributes, societal expectations, and national development priorities.
- Promote academic excellence and innovation:
Integrate emerging technologies, contemporary scholarship, innovative pedagogical practices, and entrepreneurial approaches into curriculum design and delivery.
- Enhance graduate employability:
Align programme outcomes with labour market demands and professional standards, including the meaningful incorporation and strengthening of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) and industry-informed curriculum practices.
- Inform evidence-based improvement:
Utilise amendment findings to identify strengths, emerging trends, potential risks, and areas for development, thereby supporting continuous quality enhancement.
- Support strategic academic planning:
Provide data-informed insights to guide institutional planning, resource allocation, and future programme development within the PQM framework.
- Strengthen stakeholder engagement:
Facilitate structured consultation with Advisory Boards, industry partners, alumni, students, and relevant professional bodies to ensure that programmes reflect current market expectations, technological shifts, and identified skills gaps.

Through these objectives, programme amendments contribute to institutional sustainability, academic integrity, regulatory compliance, and the futureproofing of VUT's academic portfolio.

7.4 Roles and Responsibilities

The effective implementation of programme amendments is contingent upon clearly defined and formally delegated responsibilities across academic governance and administrative structures. These responsibilities are aligned with the approved Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) flowchart and relevant institutional policies, ensuring procedural transparency, accountability, and compliance with external regulatory requirements.

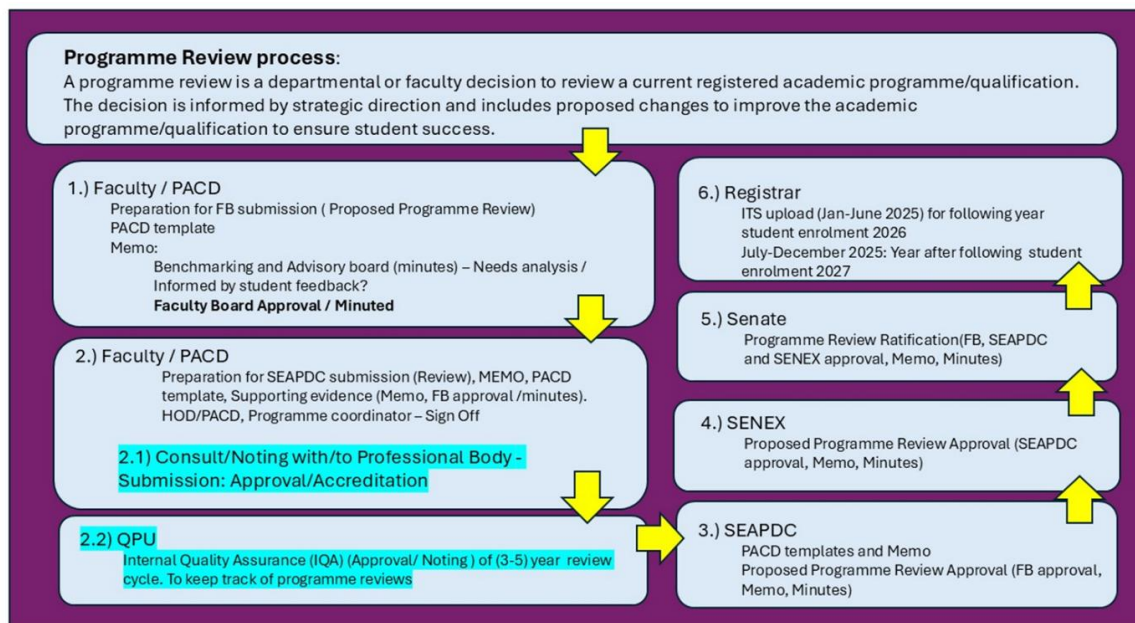


Diagram 2/3: PACD Programme amendment process

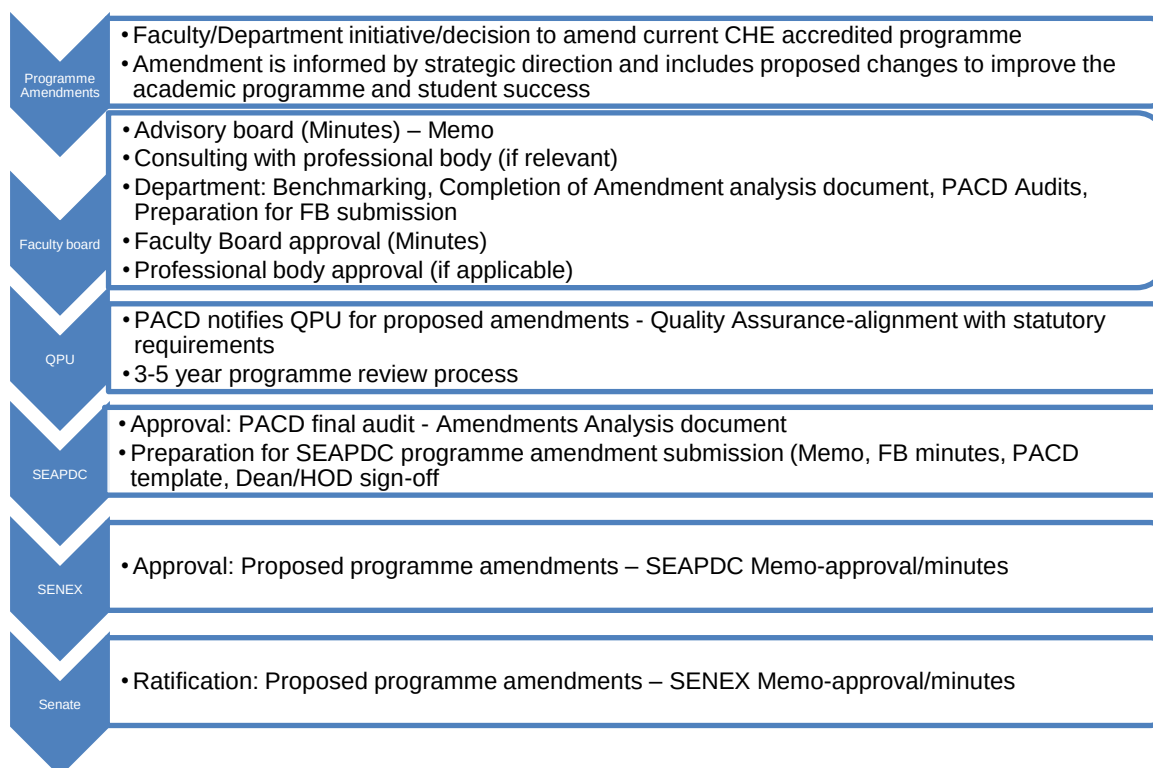


Diagram 3

7.5 Document Control SOP (Annexure B/C)

Approval

- PACD documents → Director
- QEAP presentation – comment amendments
- QPU submission – Quality Assurance
- Institutional → SEAPDC → SENEX →
- Senate (ratification)

Controls

- Versioning (v1.0, v2.0 - date)
- SOP numbering (PACD-SOP-Update)
- Approval signatures
- Change logs

Storage

- OneDrive (operational)
- SharePoint (policies)

7.6 Record Retention

Record	Period
Programme files (APTS / Manual repository)	Permanent
Accreditation	10+ years
Audits	5 years

8. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Quality assurance within PACD is both compliance-oriented and enhancement-driven, ensuring that academic programmes not only meet minimum regulatory standards but are continuously improved to enhance educational effectiveness and stakeholder value.

8.1 Quality Assurance

- HEQSF alignment audits
- IAP compliance checks
- Tracker monitoring
- Governance approvals
- Manage and implement the departmental Quality Management System (QMS)

Quality assurance within PACD is both compliance-driven and enhancement-led, ensuring that programmes meet minimum standards while continuously improving academic relevance and educational effectiveness

8.2 Risk Management

Identify Risk → Assess (Impact/Likelihood) → Mitigate → Monitor → Report

Key Risks:

- Advisory Board delays
- Internal governance delays
- External submission and governance delays
- Professional body: endorsement/approval/accreditation/evaluation
- PQM reviews – PQM/ITS data evaluations / discrepancies / inaccuracies

Risk Categories

- Governance (Internal / External)
- CHE Accreditation
- Professional body (endorsement/approval/accreditation/evaluation)
- Compliance (National legislations and Statutory bodies)
- Data Management
- Capacity

Risk tracker example

Link to:

- Internal stages
- External stages
- Risk scoring (Low/Medium/High)

Programme	Risk Category	Risk Description	Impact	Likelihood	Risk Level	Owner	Mitigation	Status
Example	Governance	Advisory Board delay	High	High	High	Faculty	Enforce deadlines	Open

8.3 Customer Definition

Internal:

- Faculties
- Academic staff
- Governance structures
 - Internal governance (SEAPDC, SENEX, Senate)

- External governance (DHET, CHE, SAQA)

External:

- DHET, CHE, SAQA
- Professional bodies

8.4 Communication

- Emails
- One-on-one consultation
- Workshops (Accreditation / Programme Design / Submission processes)
- Committees:
 - Deans Forum
 - Academic Quality & Standards Committee (AQSC)
 - Qualification Evaluation and Advisory Panel (QEAP)
 - DVC meetings – Portfolio
 - Senate Enrolment Academic Planning and Development Committee (SEAPDC)
 - SENEX
 - Senate

8.5 Continuous Improvement

- PIRI cycle (Figure 2)
- Programme Tracker analytics/system (EXCEL)
- Feedback loops (PACD weekly/monthly/quarterly meetings)
- Continuous alignment with PACD KPI's

SOP 2026: Document Control (PACD-SOP-2026-001)

Purpose: Ensure document integrity and compliance

Process:

1. Draft document(s)
2. Internal review(s)
3. Director approval(s)
4. Governance approval (if / when applicable)
5. Version update(s)
6. Store in SharePoint

SOP Section 2: Programme Accreditation (PACD-SOP 2026-002)

Steps:

1. PQM planning (New qualification / programme development and amendments)
2. Advisory Board (Faculty, department, qualification/programme, and professional body, where applicable)
3. Faculty Board (approval)
4. QEAP review
5. SEAPDC approval
6. SENEX approval

7. Senate ratification
8. DHET submission
9. CHE accreditation
10. SAQA registration

Programme Approval Governance Flow

SOP Section 3: PQM Management (PACD-SOP 2026-003)

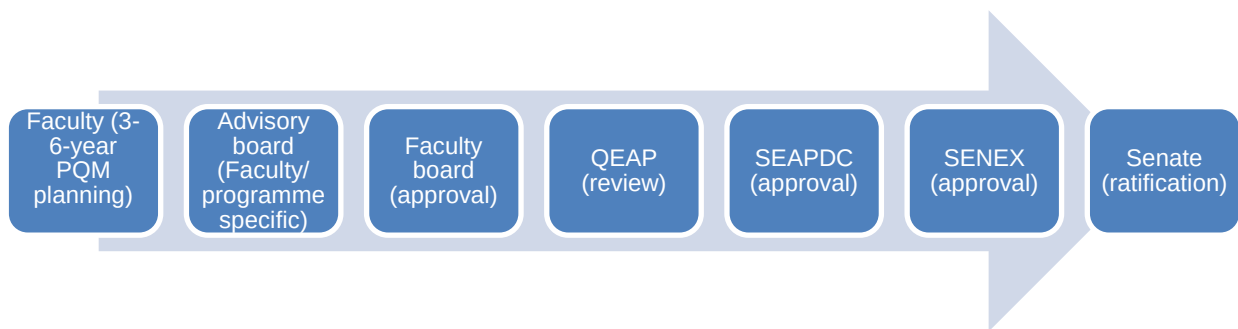
Process:

1. Capture qualification data
2. Verify DHET approvals
3. Align with HEQSF
4. Update tracker system
5. Maintain SAQA records

9. VISUAL PROCESS DIAGRAMS

9.1 Programme Governance Flow

Internal governance: Faculty → Advisory Board → Faculty Board → QEAP → SEAPDC → SENEX → Senate →



External governance/statutory: DHET → CHE → SAQA

9.2 Programme Lifecycle

PQM Planning → Programme Design → Internal Governance → External Accreditation → Implementation → Review → Amendment

9.3 PIRI Cycle

PLAN → IMPLEMENT → REVIEW → IMPROVE → (Cycle repeats)

9.4 Risk Management Flow

Identify → Assess → Mitigate → Monitor → Report

10. CONCLUSION

This Quality Manual establishes a comprehensive, integrated, and institutionally aligned framework for the effective management of academic quality within the Programme Accreditation and Curriculum Development (PACD) Department at the Vaal University of Technology (VUT).

Through its alignment with national legislative and regulatory frameworks, including the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF), the Integrated Accreditation Process (IAP), and the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), the manual reinforces the institution's commitment to academic excellence, compliance, and continuous quality enhancement.

The manual provides clearly articulated governance structures, defined roles and responsibilities, and standardised operating procedures that collectively ensure the effective design, accreditation, implementation, and review of academic programmes across the Programme Qualification Mix (PQM). The integration of the Plan–Implement–Review–Improve (PIRI) cycle further ensures that quality assurance processes remain dynamic, evidence-based, and responsive to internal and external drivers of change.

In addition, the incorporation of risk management, document control, and data governance mechanisms enhances the institution's ability to proactively manage operational challenges, ensure data integrity, and maintain compliance with statutory requirements. These elements strengthen institutional accountability, transparency, and operational effectiveness.

The collaborative engagement between PACD, academic faculties, institutional governance structures, and external regulatory and professional bodies ensures that academic programmes remain relevant, responsive, and aligned with industry needs and national priorities. This contributes directly to graduate employability, academic integrity, and the sustainability of the institutional academic offering.

In conclusion, this Quality Manual serves not only as a compliance instrument but as a strategic enabler for continuous improvement, innovation, and academic excellence. It provides a robust foundation for advancing the quality of teaching and learning, strengthening programme relevance, and supporting the realisation of VUT's long-term strategic vision.

Annexures

- Annexure A: Terminologies
- Annexure B: PACD Implementation plan
- Annexure C: PACD Standard Operating Procedures