Strengthening Quality Programme Development and Governance at VUT

From Institutional Planning to Programme Approval

Programme Accreditation & Curriculum Development

VUT

Purpose of this session

Planning, governance and external dependencies for new VUT qualifications

FOCUS

- PQM planning and initiation
- Situational Analysis and Business Plan
- QEAP and internal governance
- PACD coordination and external interfaces

OUTCOME

- Clear responsibilities and decisions
- Evidence-based planning and viability
- Realistic milestones and governance
- Early identification of dependencies

PRINCIPLE

- Faculty owns the academic work
- PACD coordinates and supports
- Follow the current approved VUT SOP

The VUT programme-development architecture

Internal planning and governance connect to distinct external decisions

Faculty PQM planning

- 3–6 year planning cycle

Programme identification

- Department / Faculty need
- National, provincial, industry and community need

Development

- Task Team + Coordinator + support units
- Situational Analysis / curriculum design / Business Plan

Quality assurance

- PACD / QPU checks and internal quality assurance

Governance

- Applicable VUT academic governance structures

External processes

- CHE / SAQA / DHET / professional body where applicable

Running case: a fictional new qualification

Use one example to connect planning, curriculum design and governance

Proposal

VUT is considering a fictional BCom in Digital Supply Chain Management.

Initial claim

Local employers report demand for graduates who combine supply-chain knowledge, data literacy and digital systems.

Evidence still needed

Labour-market and stakeholder data; national/international benchmarking; projected enrolment; duplication analysis; staff and infrastructure capacity.

Decision challenge

Should the Faculty begin full curriculum development now—or first strengthen the evidence, viability case and PQM alignment?

1. Faculty PQM planning comes first

The proposed qualification must sit within institutional planning

1 Faculty planning

Identify priority areas within the 3–6 year PQM planning cycle.

2 Institutional planning

Qualification is included in the VUT enrolment/PQM planning process facilitated by IPU.

3 PACD verification

PACD verifies that the proposed programme is reflected in the Faculty planning and enrolment plan.

Planning question: Is the proposal part of VUT's planned portfolio, with a credible basis for development?

2. From programme idea to a development project

An idea becomes actionable when ownership, evidence and resources are established

1 Identify

Department proposes the qualification within Faculty planning.

2 Establish

Create the core Task Team and include relevant service departments.

3 Coordinate

Assign a Programme Coordinator for the development cycle.

4 Evidence

Complete Situational Analysis and Business Plan.

5 Engage

Establish appropriate Advisory Board/Committee engagement.

The development project needs an accountable academic owner and a documented plan before the evidence burden increases.

3. Task Team: programme development is a team activity

The implementation plan identifies the Task Team as critical to programme design

CORE TEAM

- Relevant academic discipline expertise
- Programme Coordinator
- Curriculum / teaching and learning support
- Relevant service departments
- PACD and other support functions as required

TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

- Define the qualification rationale and purpose
- Develop and test the curriculum
- Generate and validate evidence
- Address resources and implementation
- Maintain progress against agreed milestones

WORKING PRINCIPLE

- The team owns the academic work
- PACD coordinates the accreditation process
- Evidence should be generated as design decisions are made
- Issues should be escalated early—not at final audit

4. Programme Coordinator: academic coordination and accountability

The quality of the programme cannot be delegated to PACD

Academic leadership

- Coordinate the programme-development work and academic decisions.

Curriculum coherence

- Ensure qualification purpose, ELOs, curriculum, teaching and assessment align.

Evidence ownership

- Coordinate the evidence needed for the HEQC-online application.

Stakeholder engagement

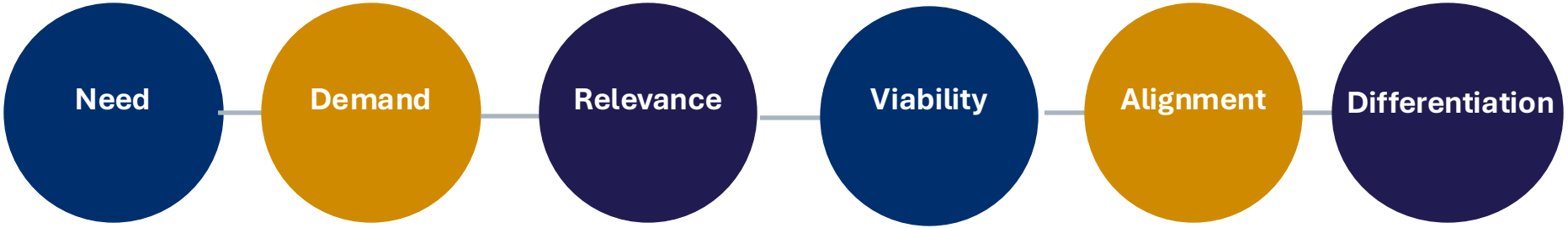
- Ensure consultation informs the design rather than merely documenting attendance.

Implementation readiness

- Coordinate staff, resources, WIL and operational requirements where applicable.

5. Situational Analysis: build the case for the programme

Move from assertion to evidence



Need	Demand	Relevance	Viability	Alignment	Differentiation
What problem or opportunity is being addressed?	What evidence indicates a need for graduates?	How does the programme respond to the context?	Can VUT realistically support the programme?	How does it fit institutional and Faculty planning?	What is its place within the existing portfolio?

Principle: the programme proposal should be evidence-led rather than supply-driven.

6. Business Plan: test viability before implementation

Each new qualification needs a clear business case for institutional decision-making

ACADEMIC CASE

- Qualification rationale and purpose
- Target student / market context
- Expected graduate profile
- Strategic and PQM alignment

OPERATIONAL CASE

- Staffing and expertise
- Infrastructure, equipment and technology
- Learning resources and support
- WIL or professional requirements where applicable

FINANCIAL / VIABILITY CASE

- Anticipated enrolment
- Resource implications
- Sustainability considerations
- Implementation implications

7. Advisory Board Role / stakeholder engagement

Relevance cannot be established solely from within the University

1 Identify

Determine which external and internal stakeholders can provide meaningful disciplinary, professional, industry or societal insight.

2 Engage

Use structured engagement to test the proposed qualification, graduate capabilities and curriculum relevance.

3 Document

Capture recommendations, responses and resulting design changes.

4 Use

Reflect stakeholder evidence in the programme case and curriculum.

8. QEAP: an important advisory point in the process

The implementation plan places the qualification through QEAP and the relevant Faculty/governance pathway

BEFORE QEAP

- Faculty planning and institutional alignment established
- Situational Analysis and Business Plan prepared
- Programme rationale and evidence sufficiently developed
- Relevant Faculty recommendation/process completed

AFTER / THROUGH THE GOVERNANCE PATHWAY

- Address recommendations and evidence gaps
- Proceed through applicable VUT academic governance structures
- Maintain a traceable record of decisions and revisions
- Avoid progressing an incomplete case simply to meet a date

10. PACD support: programme design and accreditation coordination

PACD coordinates programme design and accreditation processes

PROGRAMME DESIGN

- Qualification rationale and purpose
- Programme structure
- CESM and ELO considerations
- Admission and progression rules

PROCESS COORDINATION

- Programme documentation and evidence coordination
- Internal quality readiness
- Audit preparation where required
- Coordination of applicable dependencies

PROJECT COORDINATION

- Programme-specific project plan
- Milestone and dependency tracking
- Status reporting
- Early escalation of risks

11. PDAP: turn the programme into a managed project

Programme Design and Accreditation Process (PDAP)

1 Log

PACD logs the programme and initiates the project management plan.

2 Plan

Agree milestones, responsibilities, dependencies and target dates with the Programme Coordinator.

3 Track

Monitor documentation, actions, QA, governance and external processes.

4 Report

Maintain current programme status and support reporting, including quarterly Deans' Forum reporting described in the implementation plan.

PDAP is a control mechanism: it does not replace academic ownership or governance.

External entities: distinct roles and dependencies

Distinct functions; confirm programme-specific requirements

DHET

PQM clearance / approval

CHE / HEQC

Programme accreditation

SAQA

NQF registration

Professional bodies

Required professional accreditation, andorsement

Faculty / VUT

Internal decisions and approvals

PACD

Process coordination

Planning dependency

Confirm dependencies early

Key caution

Check route with PACD – SOP of new programme development

Internal quality assurance: resolve gaps before governance

Internal review strengthens the proposal; ownership stays with the Faculty

Programme team

Check evidence and viability.

PACD

Coordinate process readiness.

QPU / quality support

Apply required quality checks.

Governance readiness

Confirm decisions and records.

External dependencies

Confirm dependencies with PACD.

14. Academic governance: know where your programme is going

Use the approved VUT SOP and programme-specific requirements

1 Faculty Board

Proposed programme submission Faculty-level academic consideration/ recommendation.

2 QEAP

FB approved proposal Advisory academic consideration within the VUT process.

3 SEAPDC

Programme Submission / approval Institutional academic planning/ development governance.

4 SENEX

Programme Submission / approval Executive academic consideration as applicable.

5 Senate

Institutional academic authority; ratification as applicable.

Important: programme-specific requirements and the approved SOP determine the applicable route and sequence.

15. Project tracking: visibility prevents surprises

A programme should have one current status view

TRACK

- Actions and responsible persons
- Required documents / evidence
- Dependencies and decisions
- Internal governance milestones

ESCALATE

- Missing evidence
- Unresolved curriculum decisions
- Staffing/resource gaps
- External/professional-body dependencies

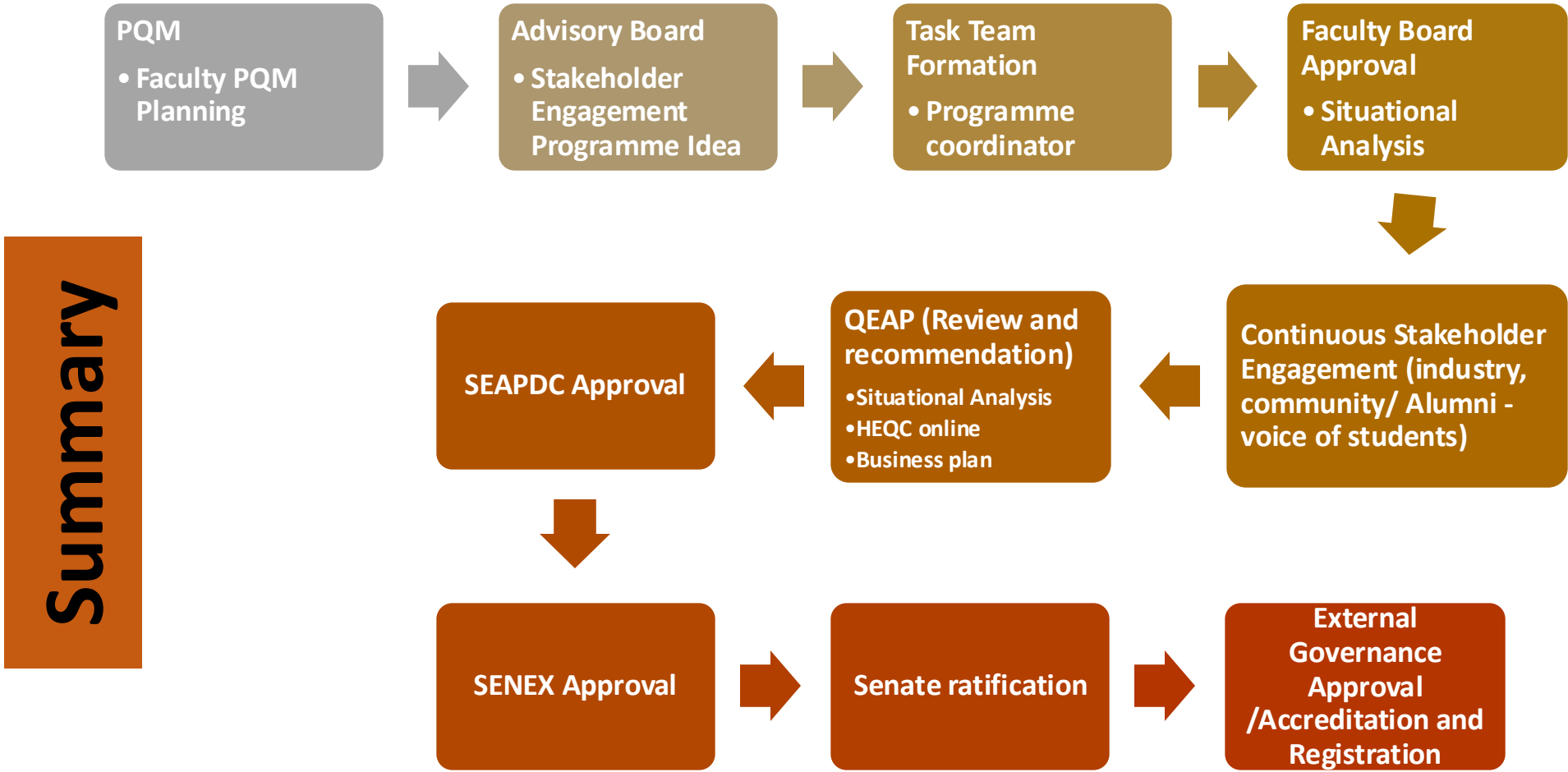
REPORT

- Current programme status
- Milestones achieved / outstanding
- Risks and required decisions
- Next actions and expected dates

Faculty readiness checklist: before asking “what happens next?”

Ask whether the programme is actually ready to move to the next stage

1. **PQM** — Is the programme included in the Faculty planning/enrolment process?
2. **Ownership** — Is there an accountable Programme Coordinator and functioning Task Team?
3. **Evidence** — Is the Situational Analysis sufficiently evidenced?
4. **Business case** — Is the Business Plan credible and viable?
5. **Curriculum** — Is the programme and curriculum coherent and aligned?
6. **Stakeholders** — Has meaningful stakeholder/professional input shaped the design?
7. **Resources** — Are staffing, facilities, technology and learning resources addressed?
8. **Governance** — Are the applicable internal governance requirements understood and scheduled?
9. **QA** — Has internal quality assurance identified and resolved major gaps?
10. **Dependencies** — Are programme-specific dependencies and the applicable governance route understood?


PQM
• Faculty PQM Planning
Advisory Board
• Stakeholder Engagement Programme Idea
Task Team Formation
• Programme coordinator
Faculty Board Approval
• Situational Analysis
Continuous Stakeholder Engagement (industry, community/ Alumni - voice of students)
QEAP (Review and recommendation)
•Situational Analysis
•HEQC online
•Business plan
SEAPDC Approval
SENEX Approval
Senate ratification
External Governance Approval /Accreditation and Registration
Summary

CLOSING MESSAGE

Plan early.
Design coherently.
Evidence everything.

PACD coordinates and supports the process; programme quality remains a shared responsibility of the programme team, Faculty and University.