

26 September 2003

TO: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

cc. Registrar (Academic)
Quality Assurance Manager

PROPOSED PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) released in March 2003 its document *Proposed Criteria for the HEQC's First Cycle of Audits: 2004 – 2009* for comment and feedback. The document is being revised at present in the light of the feedback and the final version will be released before the end of the year.

Attached please find the document *Proposed Criteria for the HEQC's Programme Accreditation Cycle: 2004 – 2009* for your comment and feedback. This discussion document is the product of a developmental process which involved, amongst others, a reference group of quality assurance experts from higher education institutions and the HEQC Board. Your feedback will be carefully studied and the document revised accordingly. The final version of the document will be released to the higher education community before the end of the year.

In order to provide information and to facilitate the discussion of the document, the HEQC will hold a number of regional workshops on the document from 6 – 8 October 2003, to which your institution has been invited to send a representative(s).

It would be appreciated if you could study the document carefully and provide the HEQC with your final comments and advice before the end of October 2003. The revision of the document would benefit in particular, if you could –

1. Initiate in your institution mechanisms for in depth discussions of the document, which will form the basis of a consolidated response to the HEQC. A summary document on the criteria will be released at the regional workshops.
2. Comment in your feedback, *inter alia*, on the scope of the proposed criteria. The HEQC is mindful of the inherent tension between the need to specify minimum standards which are necessary to support and enhance the quality of higher education, on the one hand, and the danger of over-bureaucratisation, on the other. The HEQC has already substantially reduced the number of criteria since the initial stages of the project. However, it will be appreciated in particular if you could

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make suggestions for further reducing the number of criteria and simplifying the document, whilst ensuring, at the same time, the necessary mechanisms for quality higher education programmes.

3. Make any other suggestions for improving the document.

Thank you for your assistance and support.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Prem Naidoo', with a large, stylized initial 'P'.

Dr Prem Naidoo
Director: Programme Accreditation and Coordination