

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN – JULY 2018

The following matter forms part of the Environmental Scan for July 2018:

South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)

1) SAQA Foreign Qualifications Evaluations and Advisory Services: Revocation Policy

<http://www.saqa.org.za/docs/webcontent/2018/Section3RevocationPolicy.pdf>

SAQA published the above policy outlining “the principles according to which SAQA revokes Certificates that it issued and hence annul decisions made regarding the recognition of a foreign qualification; as well as the rights and obligations of qualification holders in the event of such revocation”.

“SAQA will revoke a Certificate it issued when one or more qualifications appearing on that Certificate are found to have been:

- Misrepresented by the qualification holder, or any other party, in any way
- Issued by an institution that at the time of enrolment the qualification holder was not recognised in the home system according to relevant laws, policy or standard practice; or issued by an institution outside of the relevant laws, policy or standard practice applicable in that system at the time
- Incorrectly located within the NQF by SAQA due to the lack, or misinterpretation of, available information at the time of the evaluation. In the case of an erroneous evaluation outcome, and where applicable, SAQA will replace the Certificate with one reflecting the correct outcome”.

“SAQA will take action against all parties who have committed or continue to commit a misrepresentation in accordance with its standard processes and procedures for dealing with misrepresentation, including laying relevant charges with the South African Police Service”.

2) SAQA Foreign Qualifications Evaluations and Advisory Services: Appeals Policy

<http://www.saqa.org.za/docs/pol/2018/Section2AppealPolicy2018.pdf>

SAQA published the above policy making provision for appeals against qualification recognition decisions. The policy outlines the “...principles and process according to which SAQA receives, and deals with, appeals; as well as the structures for that purpose”.

The grounds for appeal are as follows:

- “The facts underlying the decision not to recognise a qualification are incorrect. These facts can pertain to one or more of the following:
 - Issuing body not recognised as part of the national system in country of origin
 - Issuing body recognised, but not authorised to offer qualification / qualification does not have national status in the country of origin
 - Documents not authentic (inconsistencies identified)
 - Award not made to individual (as confirmed by the issuing body)
- The evidence underlying the level at which a qualification is recognised is incomplete, incorrect or irrelevant; or the interpretation thereof is flawed
- The evaluation process deviated from the published principles, criteria and methodology
- Other (to be considered)”.

3) SAQA supports Umalusi’s condemnation of websites that sell fake school leaving certificates

<http://www.saqa.org.za/docs/news/2018/SAQAsupportsUmalusi09072018.pdf>

“The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) reiterates the call by the Council for the Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi) to members of the public to report people or entities selling fake school leaving certificates”.

Council on Higher Education (CHE)

1) CHE Newsletter Volume 1. Issue 9 – June 2018

http://www.che.ac.za/media_and_publications/che-newsletters/che-newsletter-quality-matters-volume-1-issue-no9-june-2018

The matters discussed in this issue included the following:

- **VitalStats 2016 released -**

The statistics relate to public higher education data covering the period 2011 to 2016

- **Ongoing campaign against bogus colleges in South Africa**

The ‘bogus college campus campaign’ driven by the DHET is “...aimed at enforcing compliance with registration and accreditation requirements by private education providers”. “The campaign involved impromptu inspections of colleges with support of local law enforcement officials and accompanied by local media houses over a 3 week period”.

“The other aspect of the campaign was about creating public awareness about the risks of enrolling to study at such colleges”.

“On a positive note, all the colleges that were visited as part of the campaign were able to produce proof of registration as institutions of learning issued by the DHET”.

- **Department of Higher Education and Old Mutual Foundation dialogue session**

A dialogue session organized by the DHET and Old Mutual, where the CHE and NSFAS were also represented, took the form of a panel discussion. The panel welcomed DHET's bursary scheme for students at universities and *Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)* colleges for candidates coming from households earning less than R350 000 per annum, but highlighted other challenges facing the sector. “These included the need for sustainable funding for universities and colleges; the need to develop TVET colleges and the qualifications they offer; low-throughout across all higher education institutions; and inequality in funding (especially private funding) for different institutions”.

“It was also suggested that bursaries should still be offered, particularly for postgraduate students, and the missing-middle students not covered by the bursary scheme. Funding for infrastructure, knowledge generation and technology would also support the development of institutions”.

- **Visit by an official from the British Accreditation Council (BAC)**

The BAC is a joint initiative between the British Council and the Department of Education aimed at providing “..globally respected accreditation to Independent Further and Higher Education providers”.

“In order to apply for BAC accreditation the providers must firstly demonstrate that they are accredited by the national accrediting authority of the country in which the institution is offering. The benefits to providers are, marketing of their institutions internationally”.

- **To accredit or to not accredit: Is this is the only question?**

Included in this article is the fact that following the requirement for all programmes to be HEQSF aligned, approximately 3500 programmes have to be taught out which has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of programmes that have been submitted to the CHE for accreditation.

- “Between 2005 and 2010 the Directorate used to receive less than 200 applications per year. From 2013 until 2017 the number of applications that were submitted increased to between 400 and 500

submissions per year. These numbers only refer to new applications submitted for accreditation".

- "It is important to note that each new application might not be accredited when first tabled. The outcome might lead to a deferral, accredited with conditions or not accredited. This may result in delays in finalizing the accreditation process. If such delays are factored in, it could take up to 18 months from the date of submission to the date on which the final outcome (accredited or not accredited) is arrived at".

Dr Louie Swanepoel describes the accreditation process in detail indicating various timelines.

- **Rolling up Quality Enhancement Project and a Glimpse into the Future**

Following the QEP submissions from 26 public universities and 22 private higher education institutions, the CHE Directorate will begin with the first of three major QEP related projects which will be published.

The 3 QEP related projects are:

- QEP phase 1 synthesis document – a resource for the enhancement of Teaching and Learning
- Code of Good Practice for enhancing student success
- QEP phase 2 base-line report, focussing on institutions' submission on curriculum development

- **Chinese delegation visit to the CHE**

The "...CHE hosted a delegation from the People's Republic of China (PRC). The purpose of the visit by the delegation was to be introduced to the work of the CHE with a hope of establishing a working relationship between China and South Africa on a possibility of offering international qualifications".

- **Appointment of a new Higher Education Quality Committee**

The newly appointed members of the HEQC are as follows:

- Prof Nicolaas Johannes (Niek) Grové
- Prof Patrick Ngulube
- Prof Angina Parekh
- Dr Jeffrey Mabelebele
- Prof Robert John Balfour
- Prof Lesley Lionel Leonard le Grange
- Dr Siphokazi (Muki) Moeng (Council representative on the HEQC)
- Prof Wendy Kilfoil
- Dr Penny Law
- Dr Caroline Selepe

The term of office of the new HEQC runs from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2021.

- **Workshop on the ethics of scholarly publishing**

Owing to an apparent increase in the number of unethical practices related to scholarly research in recent years, a workshop was held where the importance of quality and the link between quality research, quality programmes and quality institutions was discussed.

In conclusion, it was “.. suggested that a Working Group be established,..to find a coordinated, national way of dealing with unethical scholarly publishing. The effect of unethical scholarly publishing on institutional reputations was highlighted, together with the wider effect on the reputation of South Africa's higher education sector”.

2) **DIES/CREST ONLINE TRAINING COURSE FOR SUPERVISORS OF DOCTORAL CANDIDATES AT AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES**

<http://www.che.ac.za/newsroom/announcements>

With the increase in the number of doctoral enrolments and graduates at many African universities, there is a demand for well-prepared doctoral supervisors.

CREST at Stellenbosch University has developed, with financial support from DAAD, a fully online course especially targeting novice doctoral supervisors. Successful participants will receive a Certificate of Competence issued by Stellenbosch University.

Department of Higher Education (DHET)

1) Minister Naledi Pandor: Joint Meeting of SADC Ministers

<https://www.gov.za/speeches/minister-naledi-pandor-joint-meeting-sadc-ministers-21-jun-2018-0000>

At this Joint Meeting, Minister Pandor made the following statements:

“As countries we have our own platforms and structures, but we cannot make progress on our own. This gathering must be guided by our vision of a shared future, to be attained through regional cooperation and integration in the socio-cultural, economic and political areas.

“I'm looking forward to hearing about the initiatives being undertaken to share education experiences. We need to ensure that there is portability and mobility of qualifications for citizens in our respective countries”. I'm also concerned

about measures we can take to promote social cohesion in the region. I welcome the initiative for introducing Southern African liberation history in curriculum in SADC countries. I also welcome the proposal to introduce a skills competition in SADC.

"I cannot overemphasise the importance of TVET. We need to share curriculum and materials in order to improve our systems".