



Quality Newsletter

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Dear Reader, This newsletter offers a brief perspective on the quality assurance of academic programmes and support departments at the NWU, so as to emphasise the responsibility of everyone within the context of academic and/or support services. Please send any questions and comments to Tommy Pietersen (tommy.pietersen@nwu.ac.za)



ALIGNED EXTERNAL PROGRAMME EVALUATION ANOTHER FIRST FOR THE QUALITY OFFICE

In June 2014, the first aligned external programme evaluation of an academic programme took place at the NWU. This programme, the BEdHons: Learner Support, is currently presented on all three campuses as well as via distance education.

The evaluation panel set aside four days to visit the campuses and evaluate the programme. Prof Hester Geyser (University of Johannesburg) was the chairperson and was supported by Prof Willy Nel (University of the Free State), Dr Ruth Mampane (University of Pretoria), Ms Jean Fourie (University of Johannesburg) and Prof Mso Gumede (UNISA). Prof Gumede was also the first visually impaired person to serve on a panel during an external programme evaluation at the NWU.



In the back from left are Prof Mso Gumede (external evaluator: UNISA), Prof Hester Geyser (Chairperson: University of Johannesburg) and Prof Willy Nel (external evaluator: University of the Free State).

In the middle from left are Dr Muki Moeng (Director: Teaching and Learning), Ms Jean Fourie (external evaluator: University of Johannesburg), Ms Robyn Arnold (report writer), Dr Ruth Mampane (external evaluator: University of Pretoria) and Ms Antoinette Vermeulen (Quality Manager: Academic Programmes).

In the front is Dr Jannie Jacobsz (Institutional Director: Quality).

The evaluation panel of the BEdHons: Learner Support was very impressed with the NWU's facilities and the positive attitude of the lecturers that they met. The panel expressed understanding for the NWU's complexities, especially with regard to the physical distances between campuses and the implications thereof.

The result was very positive – the panel found that the BEdHons programme on all three campuses and via distance education meets the minimum standards.

VISIT TO INDUSTRY ANOTHER FIRST FOR THE QUALITY OFFICE

The Quality Office together with an evaluating panel visited the industry for the first time during the external programme evaluation of four MSc Business Mathematics and Informatics (BMI) programmes.

The evaluation panel visited Barclays in Johannesburg to meet with NWU alumni. During this visit the panel received very positive feedback from the alumni about how these programmes prepared the students for the workplace. Internationally and nationally recognised panellists were also given an opportunity to listen to the research proposals of BMI students.

The international external panellists included Prof Sandjai Bhulai (Free University of Amsterdam), Prof Paul Sweeting (Kent University), Mr Nat Cole (Regional Director: International Association of Professional Risk Managers – Nigeria).

The national external panellists included Prof Paul Fatti (Chairperson: University of the Witwatersrand), Prof Willie Conradie (Stellenbosch University), Ms Ina de Vry (Barclays Africa) and Dr Leendert Haasbroek (External evaluator, Standard Bank).

One of the BMI students presenting a research proposal in the presence of the panel during the external programme evaluation of four MSc BMI programmes.



The Quality Enhancement Project

what are the next steps?

Prof Martin Oosthuizen, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching-Learning

Together with all the other public universities, the North-West University submitted its institutional submission for the Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) to the Council on Higher Education (CHE) at the beginning of September 2014.

Over the next few months, the CHE will analyse the institutional submissions in order to determine common trends that emerge from the QEP's four focus areas. As indicated in the May 2014 Quality Newsletter, these focus areas are: enhancing academics as teachers; enhancing student support and development; enhancing the learning environment; and enhancing course and programme enrolment management.

What lies ahead

During 2015, the CHE will hold various national and regional consultations to discuss important perspectives that the QEP provides on student success, and to consider how to promote sector-wide collaboration in addressing common challenges. One of the planned highlights for 2015 is a national conference in June, where Prof Thomas Olsson of Lund University in Sweden will run a series of workshops on the recognition of pedagogical competence in institutional reward and recognition systems.

Directors of Teaching and Learning, and academic managers with responsibility for teaching and learning will be invited to attend. The CHE held a meeting with Deputy Vice-Chancellors (DVCs) Academic and Teaching-Learning on 5 November 2014 to discuss the creation of a Higher Education Enhancement Committee, consisting of all the DVCs for Teaching and Learning to provide oversight to the QEP.

We made progress

Our institutional submission confirms

that we have made significant progress in the various focus areas. It is pleasing to note the various systems, policies and processes that are in place to professionalise teaching and learning, including the Institutional Course for New Lecturers, the Institutional Teaching Excellence Awards and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, which provides for various projects on teaching and learning at all the campuses as well as an annual institutional conference.

Mechanisms such as Supplemental Instruction, reading and writing laboratories, peer mentoring and the provision of academic literacy provide our students with a range of effective support strategies.

In terms of our learning environment, the past few years have seen great strides in the way that the library services support the academic project, while the student IT walk-in service illustrates our commitment to creating an enabling learning environment for our students.

We also have a well-designed enrolment planning and management system that allows us to manage the enrolment process at our various campuses and in our various programmes effectively.

We can improve

Of course, there is much on which we can improve. A theme that runs through our QEP submission is the need for greater coordination between campuses and different functional units.

During 2015, we will be focusing on various projects that will promote a more integrated approach. Thus it is critical that we develop a coherent framework for student success, so that we can understand the interaction between the various factors that have an impact on it, and so that support units can work from

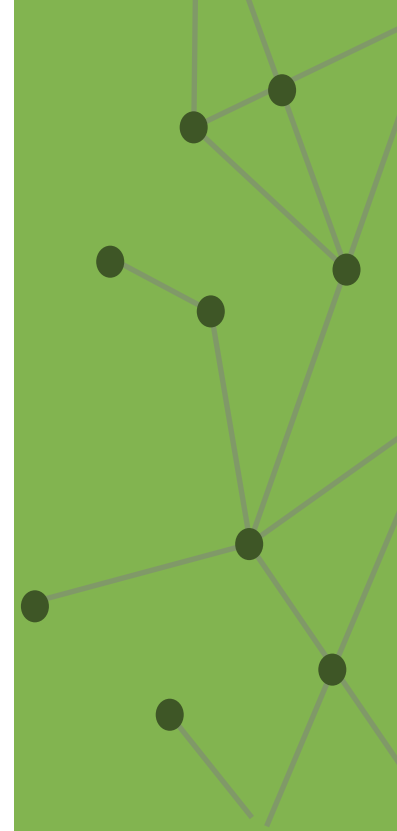
an integrated approach in supporting students. As part of this framework, we should strengthen our ability to use data intelligently to monitor and understand student academic performance, especially to enable us to identify students who may be at risk, and to track their progress.

Similarly, there is a need for a more systematic approach to the provision of professional development opportunities for our academic staff, linked to effective mentoring opportunities and guidance in terms of career planning.

Lastly

As the work on technology-enabled learning gains momentum, we need to ensure that we provide our staff with the necessary capacity development opportunities to be able to design teaching and learning environments that use technology optimally, and to consider the adoption of a blended learning design within their disciplines and programmes.

All of these challenges will receive priority during 2015.



Reviews of support departments: one big one and six small ones...

It was once again a very busy year in this portfolio.

A big one...

A big and comprehensive peer evaluation was done at Human Capital (Institutional Office and the three campuses). The evaluation went on for a week and the panel consisted of one international, five national and two internal panellists. Four of the external panellists were from tertiary institutions and two worked in the private sector.

The panel visits the offices of Human Capital in the Institutional Office.



A very intensive interview session took place on the Mafikeng Campus.



From left are Dr Bertus le Roux (Chair; Head: Post-graduate and Organisation, Potchefstroom Campus), Ms Tokoza Kwinana (Director: Business Partnership and HR Services, University of Johannesburg), Prof Sonia Swanepoel (Dean: Faculty of Commerce and Administration, Mafikeng Campus, NWU; member of South African Board of People Practice; Mr Samson M Vilakazi (HR Manager, John Snow Inc.), Ms Johanna Müller (Quality Manager: Support Departments), Dr Johannes M Mokoale (Senior Director: Human Resources, Durban University of Technology); Prof Marcie Boucouvalas (Programme Director: Adult Learning and HR Development, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, USA); Ms Robyn Arnold (secretary), Mr Kedirang Oagile (Senior Manager: Human Capital Services, CSIR), Mr Lourens Geyer (Senior Director: Human Resources, University of the Free State)

The panel during a sightseeing tour on the Potchefstroom Campus.



The panel does its thing: A breakaway session during the evaluation of Human Capital on the Vaal Triangle Campus.



And six small ones...

Of the seven soft reviews planned for 2014, the following six were conducted: Protection Services (Vaal Triangle Campus), Record Management and Administration (Institutional Office), Management Information (Institutional Office), Interpreting Services (Potchefstroom Campus), Archives and Museum (Institutional Office) and Student Affairs (Vaal Triangle Campus).

A soft review of the NWU's Interpreting Services was done on 14 October. The panel visits their offices. From left are Prof Mbulungeni Madiba (Deputy Dean: Centre for Higher Education Development: Research, Transformation, Staff Development; Multilingualism Project, University of Cape Town), Ms Johanna Müller (Quality Manager: Support Departments), Ms Anneliese Beukes-Liebenberg (Institutional



Language Directorate), Dr Eleanor Cornelius (senior lecturer: Department of Linguistics, University of Johannesburg; SATI-accredited simultaneous interpreter), Dr Tom Larney (report writer), Prof Jan Swanepoel (Dean: Faculty of Arts, NWU) and Mr Johan Blaauw (Institutional Language Directorate).

On 29 September, the Management Information Department also underwent a soft review. On the left Prof Martin Oosthuizen (Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching-Learning); External panellist Mr Neil Grobbelaar from Stellenbosch University; External panellist Mr Glen Barnes Acting executive director: Institutional Statistics and Analysis, UNISA).

Data of external programme evaluations: 2007-2014

In addition to the Quality Office conducting its first external aligned programme evaluation (EPE) this year, numerous individual programme evaluations also took place in the last seven years. The Quality Office executed a total of 64 evaluations across the NWU during the period – all enhancing quality promotion at the University.

Mafikeng Campus

During 2007-2014 a total of 24 programmes were evaluated externally. These programmes were mainly in the faculties of Human and Social Sciences, Commerce and Administration and Agriculture, Science and Technology. During 2014, a whopping six programmes were evaluated in the Faculty of Commerce and Administration.

Potchefstroom Campus

Since 2007, a total of 27 programmes were evaluated. The evaluations that were done on this campus were evenly spread across the eight faculties. Most of the evaluations were done in the faculties of Natural Sciences (eight evaluations) and Health Sciences (five evaluations).

Vaal Triangle Campus

A total of 13 programmes were evaluated on the Vaal Triangle Campus from 2007 to 2014.

Number (N) of external programme evaluations (undergraduate and postgraduate) for the period
(a) 2007-2013; (b) 2014 and (c) total

Mafikeng Campus (Faculties)	(a) 2007-2013	(b) 2014	(c) Total
Law	0	0	0
Education and Training	0	1*	1
Human and Social Sciences	6	0	6
Commerce and Administration	4	6	10
Agriculture, Science and Technology	6	1	7
Total: Mafikeng Campus	16	8	24
Potchefstroom Campus (Faculties)			
Arts	4	0	4
Theology	2	0	2
Economic and Management Sciences	2	0	2
Health Sciences	5	0	5
Natural Sciences	4	4	8
Law	0	0	0
Education Sciences	2	1*	3
Engineering	3	0	3
Total: Potchefstroom Campus	22	5	27
Vaal Triangle Campus (Faculties)			
Humanities	9	1*	10
Economic Sciences and Information Technology	3	0	3
Total no EPEs at VTC	12	1	13
TOTAL (NWU)	50	14	64

*Aligned programme evaluation

Protection of Personal Information and Quality at NWU

The POPI Act (2013)

Werner Coetzee, SLA, NWU Legal Office.

The Protection of Personal Information Act of 2013, or "POPI" as it is commonly known, protects personal information that is processed by any private or public body. Personal information includes but is not limited to any information relating to a person's age, sex, marital status, gender, religion, culture, e-mail address, telephone numbers, physical address, biometric information, personal views or opinions, physical or mental health and criminal, financial or employment history.

Personal information may, however, be collected for a specifically defined and lawful purpose related to a function or activity of the responsible party, in this case, as part of the quality processes at the NWU. Any person involved in these

quality processes has to be aware of the purpose of the collection of his or her personal information and this is why the purpose linked to each process is clearly stated in all the related guidance documentation as placed on the staff intranet of the NWU.

The Quality Office of the NWU will from time to time collect and process personal information of employees, as part of supporting evidence, in order to fulfil its role and mandate within the context of the University.

The processing and/or screening of personal information such as a curriculum vitae, a job description and/or performance agreement by the NWU Quality Office is done in accordance and strict compliance with the POPI Act. This, because the

role performed by the NWU Quality Office relates to a lawful function as embedded in, inter alia, the Higher Education Act and the Quality Policy of the NWU.

The processing of such information by the NWU Quality Office and/or panel members, who have signed a confidentiality agreement prior to participation in the "quality evaluation or review process", does not entail the furnishing of any personal information of employees to any third party or parties.

These confidentiality agreements are legal documents, and should any party furnish confidential information to any third party or parties outside of the NWU they are exposed to possible litigation in a court of law.

Indaba 2014

Ethics on quality of work and quality of life

"Whenever we interact with other people, there is always an ethical dimension involved. As most of our decisions and actions have an impact on other persons, our work is deeply infused with ethics. But we do not always pay attention to the ethical implications of our words or actions..."

This was one of the phrases uttered by Prof Deon Rossouw, guest speaker at this year's Indaba.

Photo Left: Prof Rossouw is the CEO of the Ethics Institute of South Africa and extraordinary professor at the University of Stellenbosch.



Indaba 2014 took place at the Institutional Office of the NWU on 28 October. This annual event, presented by the Quality Office, was well-attended by NWU support staff. The theme of this year's Indaba also attracted some academics.



Ms Johanna Müller (Quality Manager: Support Departments) with Indaba speaker Prof Deon Rossouw and Prof Marlene Verhoef (Institutional Registrar)



NWU staff socialising at the Indaba