



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)

The NWU has a new structure – but quality remains!

All NWU staff members are finding themselves to a greater or lesser degree in the midst of a difficult transition process. Old structures, groups, roles, etc. must make room for new ones...

BUT – one thing will remain constant – quality!

First and foremost, it is about a “quality” attitude in each member of staff.

Because people are always seeking out stability and the familiar, and because change sometimes brings uncertainty and tension, the challenge to all of us is to be **positive participants** instead of critical observers and grumblers! Hence, the challenge is to become part of the solution and not remain part of the problem.

What are the implications for quality service delivery? This enables us to remember and execute the

following principles of quality:

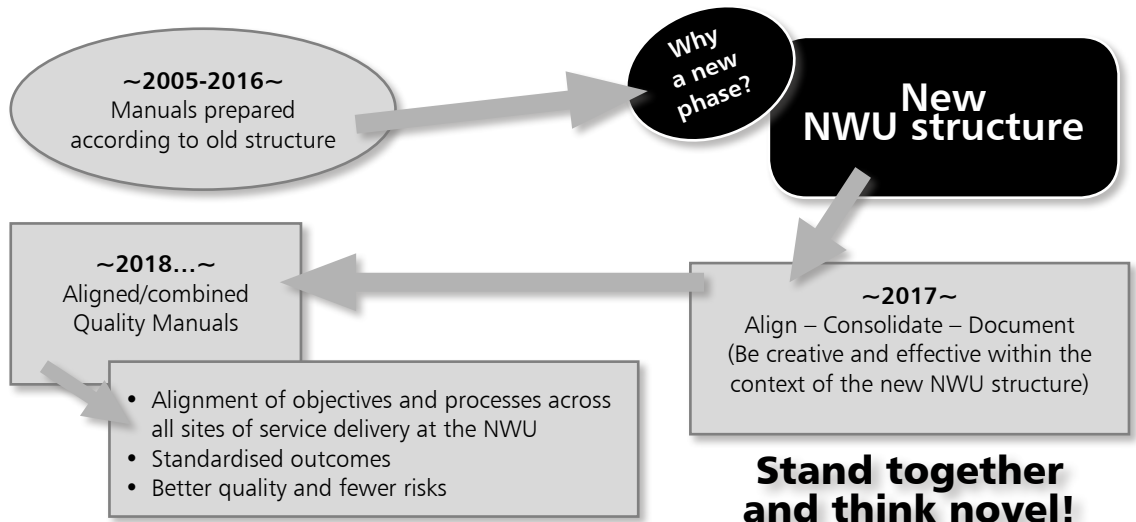
- Be part of a quality assurance culture in all areas of your work environment.
- Empower yourself with processes and mechanisms for the implementation of such a culture.
- Support and undertake quality evaluations and improvement actions.
- Participate in activities in the interest of quality promotion.

Despite changes and challenging times, with quality service delivery we can all help realise the dream and objective of our university!

Joel Barker once said:

*Vision without action is merely a dream
Action without vision just passes the time
BUT
Vision with action can change the world.*

A new phase for NWU QUALITY MANUALS!



For any enquiries and support/assistance, contact Johanna Müller at 99 4875 and/or send an e-mail to 10254668@nwu.ac.za

The Quality Enhancement Project, the NWU and the way forward

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) drives the Quality Enhancement Project (QEP), a national project that aims to improve student success. This project replaces the institutional audits that were conducted during the first audit cycle.

The QEP has been designed to promote collaboration in the higher education sector and to support the sharing of information and insights on what helps and hinders student success. In its documentation on the QEP, the CHE identifies student success as follows: "Enhanced student learning with a view to increasing the number of graduates with attributes that are personally, professionally and socially valuable."

The expected outcomes of the QEP are:

- Benchmarks and codes of good practice for quality undergraduate provision;
- Policy recommendations;
- Tools and resources for improving student success;
- Research;
- Communities of practice.

The QEP runs over four years, from 2014 to 2017. The first phase of the QEP, which ran from 2014 to 2016, required that the NWU develop an institutional submission and report relating to the four QEP focus areas, namely:

- Enhancing academics as teachers;
- Enhancing student support and development;
- Enhancing the learning environment;
- Enhancing course and programme enrolment management.

The NWU hosted the institutional visit relating to QEP Phase One on 7 February 2017, with a highly successful interaction with the CHE panel. This led to the conclusion that the university has engaged in a comprehensive strategy to transform teaching and learning, and has over the past few years made tremendous progress in terms of

the scale of the development of a new strategic direction and institutional structures, all of which should make a significant impact on student success. QEP Phase One will conclude with the provision of an institutional report on this phase to the university, which will discuss areas of good practice as well as areas for improvement.

At its meeting of 9 February 2017, the Higher Education Quality Committee approved the framework for QEP Phase Two for public universities, which will deal with the **theme of the curriculum**. The meeting of the CHE DVCs Forum on 3 March 2017 determined the 2017 timeline for the submission of the institutional reports on QEP Phase Two, which will be the end of 2017.

QEP Phase Two proposes to address the theme of the curriculum, by requiring institutions to develop a report that addresses the following topics:

- Curriculum renewal and transformation;
- Diversity and inclusivity: How does the formal curriculum provide for students with diverse needs, and promote inclusivity of all students regardless of demographics, countering bias towards and alienation of sections of the student population?
- Curriculum development capacity and quality (capacity development in curriculum design, development and implementation);
- Participation in curriculum design and development: How are students and diverse external stakeholders involved in the ongoing development and transformation of the curriculum?

The topics addressed in QEP Phase Two link integrally to the NWU Teaching and Learning Strategy, with particular reference to the intention to provide students with meaningful learning experiences characterised by innovative teaching and learning designs, the strategic goals, the graduate attributes, the educational approach, the guiding principles and various strategic drivers, including teaching and learning innovation, the recruitment, development and retention of talented academic staff, access, retention and success, and curriculum renewal and transformation.

It follows that the NWU Teaching and Learning Strategy should form the basis for the university's work on the QEP Phase 2 report, and that this work will form a vital part of the broader project for the transformation of teaching and learning at the NWU. It is also understood that the QEP Phase 2 report provides a basis for the development of a deeper, more comprehensive framework for curriculum renewal and transformation at NWU.

NWU hosts successful SAAIR 2016 Conference

For the first time in the University's history the NWU hosted the 23rd annual Southern African Association for Institutional Research (SAAIR) Conference that was held from 17 to 20 October 2016 at the Institutional Office.

The Quality Office, in cooperation with the SAAIR's executive committee, was responsible for the planning, logistics and presentation of this event.

The conference was attended by more than 130 delegates from across South Africa, Botswana and Namibia.

The theme was the #mustfall campaigns and their impact on the higher education landscape. Speakers offered a variety of perspectives and insights based on their experience and institutional research on the effect of student protest action on higher education.

The keynote speakers were:

- Prof Dan Kgwadi – NWU Vice-Chancellor
- Prof Adam Habib – Wits Vice-Chancellor
- Prof Linda Brown – Guest speaker from Australia

Prof Brown shared her insights about the delivery of quality higher education and postgraduate employability in the midst of cumbersome regulatory, policy and

funding frameworks. She is CEO at Laureate Australia and Think Education and Rector of the Torrens University. Apart from intense academic sessions and panel discussions, the conference-goers were served delectable meals.

The following social activities were offered at the conference:

- An insightful presentation about the Vredefort Dome by Prof Frans Waanders from the Faculty of Engineering, followed by a wine and cheese cocktail party;
- A bus tour through the town and campus with Mr Chris Windell and Ms Lennie Gouws as hosts;
- A gala evening with NWU artists such as the Marimbas and Puk Amici.

Months of hard work eventually paid off with very positive feedback from all participants. As Dr Jannie Jacobsz, Director of the Quality Office, remarked: "This conference gave us all something to think about and provided a platform for people to share their experiences."

The Quality Office would like to thank all role players who helped with the SAAIR Conference.

Garmin forum benchmarks quality problems

The Quality Office staff members regularly attend the annual Garmin forum to caucus on quality-related matters in the university context.

This year's Garmin forum was hosted by the Central University of Technology (CUT) at Golden Gate in the Free State and addressed the benchmarking of quality matters, which is currently a challenge for many universities. Apart from the NWU and CUT, several other universities such as the Vaal University of Technology, Tshwane University of Technology, the University of Venda, the University of Johannesburg, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Walter Sisulu University and the University of Limpopo also attended the event.

The NWU Quality Office benchmarked inter alia the following matters with their peers:

- Database maintenance and the management of panel recommendations as contained in evaluation reports (Antoinette Vermeulen);
- Short courses (Dr Jannie Jacobsz); and
- Student engagement, supporting committees/forums, strategic partners and the decentralisation of the quality function (Johanna Müller).

The Garmin forum always brings new insights into quality matters that are applicable to all peers in the country. This year's experience was enriching and enables the Quality Office to further strengthen the strong ties that already exist with other universities.



Garmin representatives listen attentively to one of the many presentations at the annual Garmin forum.

Information session about quality addresses needs

On 20 and 21 June 2016 the Institutional Quality Office hosted an information session on several quality topics. This event was presented in consequence of the results of a needs analysis questionnaire that was sent out to staff who deal either directly or indirectly with quality in their place of work.

During the one-and-a-half-day-long programme the speakers spoke on a variety of topics:

- "Management information service at the NWU" by Mr Jan-Hendrik Viljoen, Acting Manager for Management Information
- "Workload management and job structuring" by Ms Helen Lekalakala, Senior HR Specialist at People and Culture.
- "Performance management" by Mr Peet du Toit, HR Specialist at People and Culture.

- "Risk versus purpose-drivenness" by Ms Madelein van der Merwe, Director Internal Audit
- "Instruments and data for quality measurement", by Dr Jannie Jacobsz, Director of the Quality Office

Other topics that were discussed include:

- "Towards effectiveness"
- "Policies, guidelines, processes and procedures: How they are developed and measured"
- "Quality: Quality design versus quality inspection"
- "Follow-up: How to identify, report and manage risks"

The staff who attended this event found the information session valuable: "We hope that practical follow-up workshops on these topics will be presented in future."

Meerkats the focal point of fifth Indaba

Who'd have thought that meerkats could be so fascinating and functional? During the fifth Indaba, their survival strategies in nature were communicated to the audience by Estienne de Beer – with practical examples of how to apply these strategies in the workplace.

Focal points

The speaker, or “Meerkat man”, explained how to “achieve success in the workplace meerkat style”. Different focal points and behavioural patterns of how meerkats live and survive were explained to the staff. These focal points included executing tasks, personal development, resilience and courage, effective teamwork and inspiring leadership. The application of the above contributes to overcoming the daily challenges of the meerkat and can thus also contribute towards facilitating the challenges experienced by staff in the work environment.

Course of events

Once NWU staff had arrived at the Indaba, registered and enjoyed their refreshments, they were welcomed by Johanna Müller, Quality Manager for support departments. Prof Johannes Froneman, the strategic communication adviser in the office of the Vice-

Chancellor, was the opening speaker. He captured the audience's interest by talking about turning points, positive attitudes and leadership within the new NWU environment. Next, Johanna introduced the keynote speaker to the audience. Estienne kept the audience thoroughly entertained with his excellent presentation and meerkat anecdotes. Staff members then had an opportunity to ask questions and to discuss some important issues.

Who is the Meerkat man?

Estienne de Beer is an award-winning professional speaker who has empowered academic and corporate audiences worldwide at conference and business events through his wildlife presentation. He is a leadership development specialist with in-depth experience across many companies, countries and cultures. In addition to receiving a speaker of the year award, Estienne also authored a book entitled: “Boosting your career – tips from top executives”. Besides being a professional speaker, Estienne is a rehabilitated adrenaline junkie who has collected a variety of painful souvenirs including knee surgery, titanium screws in his shoulder, cracked ribs, broken fingers, a few stitches and the loss of sight in one eye. Estienne also did a stint in the jungle and became manager of the year in 2000 for one of the top 3 companies in South Africa.



The team that was responsible for the success of Indaba 2016: In front are Tommy Pietersen, senior administrative officer at the Quality Office, Estienne de Beer, motivational speaker, and Johanna Müller, Quality Manager for support services. At the back are Dr Jannie Jacobsz, Director of the Quality Office, Audrey Vanya, temporary student assistant, and Antoinette Vermeulen, Quality Manager for academic programmes.



Estienne de Beer, the speaker, or “Meerkat man”.