



Index



Last Quality Newsletter

We are glad to have been part of the history of the North-West University through the merger in 2004, as well as the restructuring of 2016-2017. We have seen so many positive developments over the last 10 years, and have been part of quite a few changes ourselves. Through it all, Quality shone bright and clear, although ours is a field that always finds room for improvement.

On the one hand, we are sad to inform you that this will be our last newsletter; on the other hand, we are excited to mention that this last issue is ushering in a new phase at Quality Enhancement.

We will keep you up to date, and in the coming weeks we will explore new avenues and ways to promote quality

awareness at the NWU.

We have access to many exciting communication platforms and we are looking forward to making our voice heard in Eish!, on Facebook, @NWU, BUAtv, Alumni News, and other multimedia approaches!

We bid you farewell – till we meet again!

Johan Erasmus
Quality Coordinator



Farewell...



Quality@NWU – an opportunity to provide feedback

Since the establishment of the NWU, various quality evaluations, reviews and audits of academic programmes, research entities, and several support departments have been conducted. The Council on Higher Education's (CHE's) latest Framework for the Accreditation and Re-accreditation of Programmes, sent to universities in February 2018, indicated that, "as part of a capacity development initiative, the CHE will conduct workshops and engage with institutions on the development and implementation of their internal programme quality review cycles as part of their internal quality management systems".

The NWU has an approved Quality Policy which is elaborated on by means of a documented explanation of the NWU Quality Management System (QMS@NWU). In addition, all the guidelines, protocol, processes and criteria – to name but a few – are documented as part of the Quality Enhancement Office Quality Manual. These documents are available on the staff intranet page of the Quality Enhancement Office. All these documents form the quality manual for Quality Enhancement, and are currently under review/redevelopment. Minor changes, including process changes, are being made in order to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

You are welcome to access the Quality Policy and QMS@NWU and provide constructive feedback to enhance the improvement

process. Always keep in mind that the purpose of this system is to support the achievement of the university's strategic goals and assure the quality of the university's operations and results.

Furthermore, the QMS@NWU supports the university administration and development towards its dream (vision) and purpose. You will notice that "quality management" is incorporated into the daily activities of the university with the underlying idea of continuous improvement or enhancement in accordance with the Plan – Do – Check – Act cycle. The QMS@NWU covers the core business functions and all support departments of the university .

Each NWU staff member has quality management responsibilities according to his/her role and respective performance agreements.

Kindly take up this responsibility by reading the:

- [Quality Policy](#)
- [QMS@NWU](#)

You are welcome to provide written feedback via email to jannie.jacobsz@nwu.ac.za before or on 21 May 2018.

Jannie Jacobsz
Director: Quality Enhancement



Quality does not happen by accident

John Ruskin (1819-1900), leading English art critic of the Victorian era, draughtsman, prominent social thinker and philanthropist, once said: "Quality is never an accident. It is always the result of intelligent effort".

Globalisation, social justice and accountability are buzzwords in the higher education sector of our time, placing huge demands on financial and intellectual capital. Planning and quality are essential for steering universities to function optimally within this demanding environment.

The purpose of integrated planning is to link the NWU's vision, brand promise, purpose and dream, values, strategic market directions, people, and infrastructure through a dynamic cycle of planning, evaluation, decision-making and action.

Integrated planning should be underpinned by integrated thinking and clear reporting which ought to shape and guide the university as it evolves over time. Integrated thinking will lead to integrated decision-making and implementation plans. Integrated reporting should show evidence of the full value chain of resource utilisation and also explain the link between the strategy, decision making, and progress made in achieving the goals of the NWU.

The purpose of the Quality Enhancement Office, as part of integrated planning, is to ensure that quality assurance standards are specified, achievable and sustainable. This involves a continuous cycle of setting standards for key activities, measuring achievements against set standards, planning for improvement, and taking action to implement the desired changes.

John Lasseter, chief creative officer at Pixar,

said: "Quality is the best business plan". It is for this reason that our annual performance plan is founded on quality. Our annual goals are determined by identifying areas of institutional performance that are critical for the achievement of our mission. They are:

- related to national priorities for the sector/ cluster;
- realistic and achievable;
- written in a statement of intent that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART) and;
- utilising the resources of the NWU, for example financial, manufactured, intellectual, human, social, interactive, and natural resources.

As the Council on Higher Education's (CHE's) draft framework for the accreditation and re-accreditation of programmes clearly states: "The primary responsibility for programme quality rests with higher education institutions themselves. Institutions should seek to establish and sustain effective mechanisms to enhance the offering of programmes of quality and which yield reliable information for internal programme-related planning and self-evaluation, external evaluation and public reporting."

May all our processes continue to be underpinned by the assurance that quality enhancement is constantly on the agenda.

Warm regards

Prof Linda du Plessis

Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Integrated Planning and Vanderbijlpark Campus Operations



National review by the **Council on Higher Education** of doctoral degrees on the way

Following the restructuring and in preparation for the upcoming national review of doctoral degrees by the Council on Higher Education (CHE), Senate approved the immediate alignment of all applicable processes, procedures and general practices within all faculties across the NWU on 14 March 2018.

This is in order to minimise or limit any possible inconsistencies across faculties and/or campuses.

Inconsistencies often lead to review panels deciding that “quality” is inconsistent and may lead to findings such as notices of withdrawal of accreditation. Losing accreditation for doctoral qualifications are very serious and may lead to questioning the very existence of such an institution.

So, you may ask - why a review?

In fulfilling its mandate of human capital development, the National Research Foundation (NRF) has several funding instruments that support the offering of doctoral degrees at universities. However, in making these investments, the NRF requires assurance that doctoral qualifications offered by South African public universities meet national quality standards.

The NRF proposed that the CHE undertake a review of doctoral studies in South Africa. It suggested that, while there was a need to increase the number of doctoral candidates and graduates nationally, the emphasis ought to be placed primarily on quality assurance at this level of postgraduate study.

The quality of doctoral qualifications is of critical importance not only to the NRF and the CHE, but also to the public, the institutions offering doctoral programmes and their students. Quality affects a number of important factors such as international comparability, competitiveness and mobility; as well as the preparation of future researchers and their likely research output. Furthermore it also affects the national capacity to respond appropriately and innovatively through research to the various demands of globalisation, localisation and transformation.

A national standard for the doctoral qualification would be used by higher education institutions to inform and guide their delivery and quality assurance of doctoral programmes, and by students and the public alike as a threshold against which each programme can be evaluated.

The office of the deputy vice-chancellor for Research and Innovation will steer the process internally. As soon as the CHE has released the final standards, criteria and accompanying processes, it will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders, including research entity directors, deputy deans responsible for research, and deans. The CHE will most probably also allow an opportunity for comments.

Jannie Jacobsz
Director: Quality Enhancement





Upcoming workshops to assist support departments in 2018

Following the recent restructuring of the NWU, training and capacity development are very important to ensure a smooth transition to a fully compliant, efficient and effective new organisational structure.

When a need for assistance with the rollout of the restructured working environment was identified among support departments, the Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) came up with the idea of interactive workshops to empower these departments to become fully functional and operational within the restructured environment.



GP van Rheede van Oudtshoorn



Corneels Schabort

These workshops will be facilitated by two well-known and highly competent facilitators: Mr GP van Rheede van Oudtshoorn from Marketing and Student Recruitment, and Mr Corneels Schabort of the School for Chemical and Minerals Engineering.

During these workshops of two to four consecutive days, support departments across the NWU will be guided to align their dream, purpose, strategy, objectives, processes etc. to that of the NWU. One of several proposed outcomes will also be to document a comprehensive, aligned quality manual for each department.

The workshop programmes may also include, if necessary, input from representatives of relevant NWU departments, for example Organisational Development, Legal Services, and Corporate and Information Governance Services, to contextualise and capacitate staff members regarding specific issues. Workshop material as well as refreshments will be provided.

Staff members from the Vanderbijlpark and Mafikeng campuses that are attending these workshops will be accommodated at the Sports Village, with the QEO covering all expenses.

A scribe will also be available to note the proceedings, and heads of departments and line managers will receive a summary from the QEO within 10 working days, after the particular workshop. If needed, follow-up interventions will be provided.

After completing the workshop, each support department will have three months to submit the first draft of its aligned quality manual to the QE Office's quality manager for support departments for input and/or feedback. Rest assured that the QEO will provide continuous assistance until a department's final quality manual is published on the NWU intranet.

The following support departments are planning to have their workshops this year:

- Centre for Teaching and Learning
- Career Centre
- Higher Degrees Administration
- People and Culture

Johanna Müller
Quality Manager: Support Departments



6th INDABA shines!

This annual event for all NWU support staff took place on 1 December 2017 and had the best attendance ever.

Staff members from all three campuses participated in interactive workshop sessions, with opportunities for discussion and many activities.

The speakers/facilitators were the popular and talented GP van Rheede van Oudtshoorn from the Marketing and Student Recruitment Department and Corneels Schabort from the School of Chemical and Minerals Engineering. The INDABA-goers hung on their lips and got much perspective and motivation from each session.

Like the previous five Indabas, this gathering was also characterised by a positive attitude

and goodwill among NWU staff. Everybody had the opportunity to get to know their peers on the other campuses – particularly with a view to good cooperation in accordance with the newly aligned NWU structure.

The overall theme “Super support” included topics such as “A dream for support”, “What’s in a name?” and “Exceeding expectation”. It wasn’t all work, of course – the attendees thoroughly enjoyed the refreshments.

Herewith a few pictures of participants and activities during the Indaba 2017.

Johanna Müller
Quality Manager: Support Departments

