
BOARD NOTICE

BOARD NOTICE 78 OF 2009

THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR THE QUANTITY SURVEYING PROFESSION ACCREDITATION POLICY

Preamble

At the end of 2006, the South African Council for the Quantity Surveying Profession (SACQSP) had in place a Policy and Procedures document for the accreditation of Universities and Universities of Technology. This document is identified as SACQS 3, the latest revision (No. 4) being dated February 2006. In terms of this documentation, six (6) Universities and two (2) Universities of Technology (previously referred to as Technikons) were accredited. This recognition lapsed at the end of 2007. The accreditation status of educational programmes is aligned to the current categories of registration (per Clause 18 of the Quantity Surveying Profession Act 2000 [Act No. 49 of 2000]) and is recognised by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) through a reciprocity agreement with the SACQSP. None of the Universities of Technology currently enjoys RICS recognition (1 February 2009).

The SACQSP accreditation policies and procedures include:

1. Section 13 of Act 49/2000: "The Council may (subject to sections 5 and 7 of the Higher Education Act 1997 [Act No. 101 of 1997]) conduct accreditation visits to any educational institution which has a department, school or faculty of quantity surveying, but must conduct at least one such visit during its term of office. If the Council does not conduct an accreditation visit within that term of office, it must notify the Minister accordingly and provide him or her with reasons for the failure to do so." The term of office of the present SACQSP expires in October 2009.
2. The Quantity Surveying Standards Generating Body (QS SGB) compiled documentation covering the body of knowledge relating to the profession. This is incorporated into ("whole") Qualifications at four levels (PhD, Master's, Honours, and Bachelor's degrees) which have been registered with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). In addition, a comprehensive set of Level Descriptors linked to Unit Standards incorporated into the ("whole") Qualifications has been structured. These Unit Standards provide the basis of the Council-approved Policy titled *Identification of Work for Persons registered in terms of the Quantity Surveying Profession Act 2000 (Act No 49 of 2000)* as well as serving as the underlying rationale for the set of Level Descriptors associated with levels of competence and the registration of Quantity Surveyors in terms of Section 18 of Act 49/2000. In addition, unit standards-based qualifications have been developed for the Certificate (NQF Level 4), Diploma (NQF Level 5), Bachelor's Degree (NQF Level 6) and the Honours Degree (NQF Level 7) in Quantity Surveying. These undergraduate qualifications are also SAQA-registered.
3. The S A Council for the Quantity Surveying Profession is the Education and Training Quality Assurer (ETQA) in terms of SAQA legislation. This status is exclusive to the SACQSP, and the Council exercises its ETQA roles and functions in conjunction / consultation / liaison with the Council on Higher Education (CHE).
4. The previous National Qualifications Framework (NQF) has been superseded by the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF), approved by the Ministers of Education and Labour. This has placed Higher Education quality assurance matters more firmly within the domain of the CHE and its quality assurance wing, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). On 9th November, 2006 a delegation from the SACQSP met with the CHE to discuss the way forward and it was agreed the two bodies would enter into the "delegation model" Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), thereby establishing an agreed framework for co-operation and collaboration in quality assurance systems essential to underpinning future SACQSP accreditation processes. Accordingly, at a meeting of

the SA Council for the Quantity Surveying Profession held in early 2007, it was agreed in principle that the longstanding, previous SACQSP policy be replaced (with effect from 1st April 2007). The SACQSP adopted the HEQC "Framework for Programme Accreditation" and "Criteria for Programme Accreditation", which provide clear opportunity for alignment to RICS standards through the incorporation of a nominal set of supplementary clauses. Furthermore, the HEQC system

- is rigorous,
- is flexible in application,
- in all respects meets the standards required by the Quantity Surveying profession in terms of quality assurance principles, and
- (with minimal amendment) which can be applied / implemented by all service providers.

5 The previous long-standing RICS policy with regard to accreditation of tertiary education programmes in South Africa has been aligned with their educational quality assurance procedures adopted internationally. This alignment meant that the RICS invited the 6 South African Universities previously accredited by the Institution (in terms of the joint accreditation process conducted with the SACQSP and valid until the end of 2007) to transfer onto a 'Partnership Threshold' arrangement. In terms of this system, tertiary education providers are required to

- implement rigorous self-evaluation systems, and to
- demonstrate compliance with internationally benchmarked standards relating to student selection, teaching quality assurance, research output, and employability of graduates.

In early 2007, three of the 6 universities previously accredited by the SACQSP / recognized by the RICS, transferred onto the new RICS quality management system. It was anticipated that the remainder would do so by the end of 2008. In order to maintain highly-desirable reciprocity between the SACQSP and the RICS, all tertiary institutions offering Quantity Surveying Programmes should be adopt the new RICS approach.

SACQSP Accreditation

SACQSP accreditation takes into account national policies and regulatory frameworks, the institutional quality landscape, and international trends with respect to quality and standards in higher education. In addition, within the particular discipline of Quantity Surveying, cognisance is taken of all other SACQSP Policies, and most particularly those related to statutory registration in terms of Sections 18 and 19 of Act 49/2000.

The basic principle upon which the SACQSP Accreditation Policy is founded is that educational service providers elect to have their programmes evaluated for accreditation purposes at any of the four academic qualification levels recognised for the purposes of statutory registration, viz.

- (i) Honours Degree (480 credits)
- (ii) Bachelor's Degree (360 credits)
- (iii) Diploma (240 credits) and
- (iv) Certificate (120 credits)

These qualifications levels are defined by fundamental and core knowledge areas / unit standards developed by the Quantity Surveying Standards Generating Body (QSSGB). The HEQC criteria for programme accreditation are applied at all four programme (amended where necessary). Outcomes of the programme evaluation are aligned with

published HEQC procedures (refer to Table 5 of the 'Criteria for Programme Accreditation' document issued by the CHE).

A differential accreditation process is adopted for existing accredited programmes, compared with those which have not previously been SACQSP-accredited. Furthermore, the criteria for re-accreditation of existing programmes would be identical to those for new programmes at the same level, and comprise the same categories of programme input, process, output, impact and review. These criteria should also be implemented as the basis for an institution's self-evaluation of its own programme(s), in conjunction with any additional benchmarks which the institution may have set within its own quality assurance systems.

The HEQC recognises a number of different accreditation models, largely dependent upon the experience / capacity and strength of a particular ETQA / professional council, hence the 'Delegation Model' relationship between the SACQSP and CHE.

A fundamental precept underpinning the proposed implementation of this accreditation policy document is the commitment of the SACQSP to support and promote the highest quality standards in quantity surveying education in South Africa. The criteria and outcomes of SACQSP programme evaluation provide a framework for the promotion of the principles underpinning academic development within all institutions offering integrated teaching/learning programmes in quantity surveying. If programmes are not initially accredited, the SACQSP Policy includes procedures to encourage and support all service providers in identifying and addressing the sources of perceived shortcomings, with a view to re-evaluation leading to future accreditation.

Accreditation criteria – minor adaptation of the standard HEQC documentation

A degree of differentiation within the accreditation system is necessary, both to accommodate the practical realities that pertain to the higher education sector in South Africa, as well as the need to benchmark higher levels of professional education with international standards. In considering the amendments, reference should be made to the basic HEQC criteria (nominally amended) which are supplied as accompanying **Annexure A**. Insofar as core and fundamental unit standards within construction management and property studies programmes are concerned, the standards and competencies developed by the relevant SGBs shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

Certificate Level (prescribed programme comprises a minimum of 120 credits)

Criterion 1(iv) : Insert additional text as follows: Service providers are required to offer course material covering all 'Fundamental' and 'Core' unit standards listed by the Quantity Surveying SGB for the 'Certificate in Quantity Surveying' registration level.

Criterion 2(ii) : Currently a Senior Certificate is required. In future, the minimum entry requirement will be a FETC with appropriate subject combinations and levels of achievement.

Diploma Level (prescribed programme comprises a minimum of 240 credits)

Criterion 1(iv) : Insert additional text as follows: Service providers are required to offer course material covering all 'Fundamental' and 'Core' unit standards listed by the Quantity Surveying SGB for the 'Diploma in Quantity Surveying' registration level.

Criterion 2(ii) : Currently a Senior Certificate is required. In future, the minimum entry requirement will be a FETC with appropriate subject combinations and levels of achievement. Alternatively, a Higher Certificate or Advanced Certificate (refer to the HEQF draft document) in a cognate field will satisfy the minimum requirement.

Insert additional text as follows: 75% of first year undergraduate Diploma programme entrants must have at least 11 unweighted Matric points or equivalent in accordance with the following table:

Symbol	Higher Grade	Standard Grade
A	5	4
B	4	3
C	3	2
D	2	1
E	1	0
F	0	0

Criterion 3(i) : Replace first sentence with : Full-time academic staff teaching on undergraduate Diploma programmes generally have relevant academic qualifications higher than the exit level of the Diploma programme, but at least 75% of the full-time academic staff teaching on this programme must have at least a Bachelor's Degree or an equivalent professional qualification.

Criterion 3(iv) : Insert additional text as follows: Service provider departments must achieve a publication output rating of 0.6 per full-time academic staff member, calculated as a rolling average over three years, in accordance with the following agreed weightings for research outputs:

Research Activity	Weighting
DoE Subsidy earning accredited articles	1.0
Non-subsidy earning Intl. peer reviewed articles	1.0
Internal peer reviewed books (not text books)	4.5
Internal peer reviewed chapters in books	1.0
Published Internal peer reviewed conference proceedings	0.5
Patents	1.0

A=total score N=fulltime academic members of staff (excluding vacancies) in department

Standard = $A / N \geq 0.6$

Criterion 4(i) : Add after first sentence: The full-time senior lecturer equivalent (SLE) staff : full-time equivalent (FTE) student ratio should not exceed 1:40 (excluding PG Diploma, Masters and PhD students).

Criterion 18(iii) : Insert new sub-clause : At least 60% of graduates that exit tertiary education at this level must be in relevant employment within 12 months of graduation.

Bachelor Degree Level (prescribed programme comprises a minimum of 360 credits)

Criterion 1(iv) : Insert additional text as follows: Service providers are required to offer course material covering all 'Fundamental' and 'Core' unit standards listed by the Quantity Surveying SGB for the 'Bachelor's Degree in Quantity Surveying' registration level.

Criterion 2(ii) : Currently a Senior Certificate with Matriculation Endorsement or Exemption is required. In future an FETC with appropriate subject combinations and levels of achievement will be the minimum entry requirement. Alternatively, a level 5 or 6 qualification (refer to the HEQF draft document) in a cognate field will satisfy the minimum entrance requirement.

Insert additional text as follows: 75% of first year undergraduate entrants must have 17 unweighted Matric points or equivalent in accordance with the following table:

Symbol	Higher Grade	Standard Grade
A	5	4
B	4	3
C	3	2
D	2	1
E	1	0
F	0	0

Criterion 3(i) : Replace first sentence with : Full-time academic staff teaching on undergraduate Bachelors programmes generally have relevant academic qualifications higher than the exit level of the Bachelors programme, but at least 75% of the full-time academic staff teaching on this programme must have at least a Masters level qualification.

Criterion 3(iv) : Insert additional text as follows: University departments must achieve a publication output rating of 0.8 per full time academic staff member, calculated as a rolling average over three years, in accordance with the following agreed weightings for research outputs:

Research Activity	Weighting
DoE Subsidy earning accredited articles	1.0
Non-subsidy earning Intl. peer reviewed articles	1.0
Intl. peer reviewed books (not text books)	4.5
Intl. peer reviewed chapters in books	1.0
Published Intl. peer reviewed conference proceedings	0.5
Patents	1.0

A=total score N=fulltime academic members of staff (excluding vacancies) in department

Standard = $A / N \geq 0.8$

Criterion 4(i) : Add after first sentence: The full-time senior lecturer equivalent (SLE) staff : full-time equivalent (FTE) student ratio should not exceed 1:40 (excluding PG Diploma, Masters and PhD students).

Criterion 18(iii) : Insert new sub-clause : At least 60% of graduates that exit tertiary education at this level must be in relevant employment within 12 months of graduation.

Honours Degree Level (prescribed programme comprises an additional 120 credit)

Criterion 1(iv) : Insert additional text as follows: Service providers are required to offer course material covering all 'Fundamental' and 'Core' unit standards listed by the Quantity Surveying SGB for the 'Honours Degree in Quantity Surveying' registration level.

Criterion 2(ii) : The minimum admission requirement is an appropriate Bachelor's Degree.

Criterion 3(i) : Replace first sentence with : Full-time academic staff teaching on Honours programmes generally have relevant academic qualifications higher than the exit level of the Honours programme, but at least 75% of the full-time academic staff teaching on this programme must have at least a Masters level qualification.

Criterion 3(iv) : Insert additional text as follows: University departments must achieve a publication output rating of 0.8 per full time academic staff member, calculated as a rolling average over three years, in accordance with the following agreed weightings for research outputs:

Research Activity	Weighting
DoE Subsidy earning accredited articles	1.0
Non-subsidy earning Intl. peer reviewed articles	1.0
Intl. peer reviewed books (not text books)	4.5
Intl. peer reviewed chapters in books	1.0
Published Intl. peer reviewed conference proceedings	0.5
Patents	1.0

A=total score N=fulltime academic members of staff (excluding vacancies) in department

Standard = $A / N \geq 0.8$

Criterion 4(i) : Add after first sentence: The full-time senior lecturer equivalent (SLE) staff : full-time equivalent (FTE) student ratio should not exceed 1:40 (excluding PG Diploma, Masters and PhD students).

Criterion 18(iii) : Insert new sub-clause : At least 60% of graduates that exit tertiary education at this level must be in relevant employment within 12 months of graduation.

Policy implementation – existing accredited programmes (Refer to Annexure B)

- a) All service providers of programmes currently accredited by the SACQSP and whose administrative structure has not changed since last being granted accreditation, will be advised of the changes to the accreditation policy, and will be invited to submit a self-evaluation report covering HEQC criterion 1 – 19 (where appropriate) by end-February 2008.
- b) Accreditation site visits shall take place to all responding institutions and reports on those institutions are to be finalized by July 2009 2009.
- c) Institutions which do not respond appropriately to the accreditation invitation by the due date to be designated as "Not Accredited", but should be invited to participate with 'new programmes' in a later, two-stage accreditation process (see 'new programmes / programmes not previously accredited' below).
- d) Where currently accredited service providers whose administrative structures relating to programmes have been significantly affected since last being granted accreditation (e.g. through institutional mergers), these institutions will be considered as 'new programmes / programmes not previously accredited' (see section below), once their current accreditation term expires.
- e) The accreditation status of service providers will be publicly displayed on the website of the SACQSP.

Policy implementation – new programmes / programmes not previously accredited
(See Annexure B)

- a) All identified service providers of quantity surveying programmes will be advised of accreditation requirements in terms of Act 49/2000, and provided with details of the new accreditation policy. Such service providers are to be invited to formally signify acceptance into the accreditation process.
- b) Where service providers elect not to submit to the accreditation process, the appropriate registration authority (e.g. CHE, and possibly SAQA) is to be immediately advised and appropriate action taken.
- c) Service providers of quantity surveying programmes that do enter the new accreditation system are required to enter into a two-stage accreditation system as described by the HEQC. The initial 'Candidacy' phase requires that these programme providers demonstrate, firstly, that they meet the SACQSP / HEQC's criteria for the Candidacy phase (the input criteria), or, alternatively, that they have the potential or capability to meet these criteria in a stipulated period of time. The institution's application for Candidacy status should be based on a critical self-evaluation of the new programme measured against the requirements of the SACQSP / HEQC's programme input criteria and should be submitted by end-February 2008. A SACQSP / HEQC panel of peers will evaluate applications for new programmes. The peer panel may also undertake a site visit, if necessary. If the requirements for Candidacy are met, the SACQSP / HEQC will award provisional accreditation to the new programme. This stage is to be completed by end-September 2008. Where institutions that have indicated they wish to participate in the accreditation process fail to meet a deadline stated by the SACQSP, they may apply to be re-considered after a period of 12 months.
- d) Where provisional accreditation is granted following completion of the Candidacy phase, service providers are required to participate in the further 'Accreditation' phase. Within one year of the provisional accreditation being granted, the institution must demonstrate that it has met any conditions set by the SACQSP / HEQC during the Candidacy phase. Acceptable reasons and relevant evidence have to be provided in instances where the conditions have not been met. The institution is also required to conduct a self-evaluation of the programme, using the SACQSP / HEQC's criteria for the Accreditation phase, which include those for programme input, process, output and impact, and review. The institution must submit a programme progression (improvement) plan to address areas in need of attention as identified in the self-evaluation. A site visit may be conducted, if necessary. A new programme receives full Accreditation only after the requirements for the Accreditation phase have been met.
- f) It should be noted that in both phases of Accreditation, institutions will have the opportunity to further develop the programme where it does not meet the required criteria, on the expectation that they have the ability to remedy the problem areas and attain minimum standards within a stipulated period of time.
- g) The Accreditation status of service providers will be publicly displayed on the website of the SACQSP.

Outcomes of programme evaluation

Academic programmes will be evaluated by SACQSP / HEQC-appointed peer review panels of specialists against the criteria indicated in Annexure A. The scheduling of this process is indicated in Annexure B. All the criteria are regarded as relevant for ensuring and enhancing programme quality. The SACQSP / HEQC also recognises the need for flexibility in the interpretation of the criteria, since the relative importance and weight to be attached to specific programme areas and their related criteria may differ between programmes. Members of the peer review panel have the responsibility for using their discipline and subject knowledge to make these judgements within the context of the

programme that is being evaluated. The review panel will first evaluate the programme against each individual criterion, using the following categories to classify the results in each instance:

(i) *Commend*: All the minimum standards specified in the criterion were fully met and, in addition, good practices and innovation were identified in relation to the criterion.

(ii) *Meets minimum standards*: Minimum standards as specified in the criteria were met.

(iii) *Needs improvement*: Did not comply with all the minimum standards specified in the criteria. Problems/weaknesses could be addressed in a short period of time.

(iv) *Does not comply*: Did not comply with the majority of the minimum standards specified in the criteria.

The outcomes of the programme evaluation as a whole should be determined in a holistic manner and not by merely calculating the sum total of the evaluations against individual criteria. The following classification will be used for the accreditation outcomes of the programme as a whole:

Programme type	Evaluation against stated criteria	Classification of accreditation outcomes
New programme Candidacy phase	Exceeds minimum standards: All minimum standards specified in the criteria were met and, in addition, examples of good practice and innovation were identified in relation to several criteria.	<i>Provisionally accredited</i>
	Complies with minimum standards: All minimum standards specified in the criteria were met	<i>Provisionally accredited</i>
	Needs improvement: Not all minimum standards specified in the criteria were met. Problems / weaknesses could be addressed in a short period of time	<i>Provisionally accredited (with conditions)</i>
	Does not meet minimum standards: Did not meet the majority of minimum standards specified in the criteria	<i>Not provisionally accredited</i>
New programme Accreditation phase	Exceeds minimum standards: All minimum standards specified in the criteria were met and, in addition, examples of good practice and innovation were identified in relation to several criteria.	<i>Accredited</i>
	Complies with minimum standards: All minimum standards specified in the criteria were met	<i>Accredited</i>
	Needs improvement: Not all minimum standards specified in the criteria were met. Problems / weaknesses could be addressed in a short period of time	<i>Accredited (with conditions)</i>
	Does not meet minimum standards: Did not meet the majority of minimum standards specified in the criteria	<i>Not accredited</i>
Existing programmes	Exceeds minimum standards: All minimum standards specified in the criteria were met and, in addition, examples of good practice and innovation were identified in relation to several criteria.	<i>Accredited</i>
	Complies with minimum standards: All minimum standards specified in the criteria were met	<i>Accredited</i>
	Needs improvement: Not all minimum standards specified in the criteria were met. Problems / weaknesses could be addressed in a short period of time	<i>Accredited (with conditions)</i>
	Does not meet minimum standards: Did not meet the majority of minimum standards specified in the criteria	<i>Not accredited</i>

Composition of panels for accreditation visits

Subject to approval by the HEQC, the composition of the visiting accreditation panel shall typically consist of:

- At least one academic with relevant accreditation experience, nominated by the ESR and appointed by the SACQSP
- One nominee from the relevant professional accrediting body e.g., SACQSP.
- One nominee from the relevant professional accrediting body secretariat
- One local employer nominated by the relevant professional accrediting body
- One programme external examiner from the university's or service provider's programme(s) nominated by the tertiary institution undergoing the accreditation inspection
- One nominee from the HEQC

Implementation of new system

In order to promote a smooth transition to the new accreditation system, a number of activities have been undertaken by the SACQSP. These include:

- Identification of all programmes currently offered in terms of quantity surveying practice
- Publication on the SACQSP web page of all presently accredited service providers, as well as the programmes that they offer
- Approval in principle of this Accreditation Policy (April 2007)
- Obtaining clarity on the desirability of and procedures necessary for the SACQSP to be appointed the ETQA for SAQA
- Entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the CHE, based on the 'Delegation Model'
- Communication with all institutions currently providing quantity surveying programmes on the procedures to be followed for Accreditation. Workshops to advise institutions on the required procedures to be followed and the documents to be submitted were held during September 2007
- HEQC training of a pool of assessors (HEQC criteria and amendments)
- Scheduling of various accreditation site visits and reports for existing programmes
- Organising review panels for Candidacy stage submissions of new programmes

Internal review and HEQC accreditation

It is acknowledged that those institutions which have undergone HEQC visits, whose internal reviews of programmes have been approved (by the HEQC) and have been declared "self accrediting" institutions by the HEQC will be exempt from complying with the basic HEQC requirements. Such institutions will, however, still be required to comply with the relevant SACQSP threshold standards of entry requirements, quality assurance, research output, and graduate employability, including the provision of documentary evidence of performance where necessary.