



## Memorandum of Understanding

between

**The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education  
Gloucester, United Kingdom**

and

**The Higher Education Quality Committee  
of the Council on Higher Education, Pretoria, South Africa**

This Memorandum of Understanding is made between the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, of Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB, United Kingdom, hereafter referred to as QAA

and

The Higher Education Quality Committee of the Council on Higher Education, Didacta Building, 211 Skinner Street, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa., hereafter referred to as the HEQC.

### **Recitals**

#### **Whereas:**

The HEQC has statutory responsibility to promote quality, to audit the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions, and to accredit programmes of higher education in South Africa. It was established in May 2001 and is implementing its new quality assurance systems from 2004 onwards;

The QAA was established in 1997 and is responsible for safeguarding the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications and encouraging continuous improvement in the management of the quality of higher education in the United Kingdom;

## **The HEQC and QAA:**

Having similar missions and institutional objectives in the advancement of quality assurance in higher education, now wish to establish closer relations as equal partners for the purpose of exploring ways and means for establishing co-operative and collaborative mechanisms for mutual benefit of both parties.

### **Article I Aims of Memorandum of Understanding**

The HEQC and QAA agree hereby to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding to co-operate for the benefit of both parties and to work towards establishing a strategic alliance to provide for the effective functioning of both parties.

### **Article II Areas of Co-operation and Collaboration**

The HEQC and QAA will work together:

- (a) To exchange information and expertise as appropriate. This will include
  - key policy documents and operational information where appropriate
  - information on programmes of study and institutions in which each party has an interest, subject to any overriding requirement of confidentiality to which either agency may be subject.
- (b) To provide developmental opportunities as appropriate for staff of both parties.
- (c) To collaborate in joint research of mutual benefit.
- (d) To co-operate in any other mutually agreed activities for the benefit of both parties thereto.

### **Article III Duration of Memorandum**

The Memorandum will take effect from 12 March 2005 and will continue in operation until and unless it is terminated by the giving of three months' notice by either party.

#### **Article IV Alteration of Memorandum**

The Memorandum may be altered at any time with the consent of both parties. A review of the effectiveness of the terms of the Memorandum will be undertaken in 2008, with a view to modifying its provisions to ensure that they meet current needs. Further reviews will take place at three-yearly intervals.

#### **Article V Agency Officers responsible for managing the Memorandum**

The Executive Director of the HEQC (at the time of signing, Dr Mala Singh) and the Chief Executive of the QAA (at the time of signing, Mr Peter Williams) will have responsibility for managing the implementation of the terms of the Memorandum. This responsibility may be delegated to relevant members of the agencies' staff in relation to particular areas of co-operation.

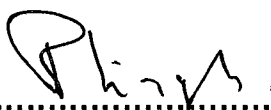
#### **Article VI Resources**

Unless alternative arrangements are specifically agreed to meet particular project requirements, the two agencies will normally cover their own costs of implementing the terms of the Memorandum. When possible, local hospitality will be provided by the host agency, with travel costs borne by the visiting agency. For particular areas of co-operation, donor funding may be sought from other sources.

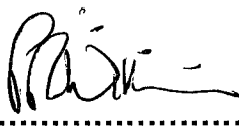
#### **Article VII Schedule of projects and activities**

Any projects or other activities that are entered into under the terms of this Memorandum will be described in administrative schedules to be annexed to the Memorandum.

**Signed in Pretoria, the eighth of March, 2005**

  
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**Dr Mala Singh**  
Executive Director  
The Higher Education Quality Committee  
of the Council on Higher Education,  
South Africa

  
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**Mr Peter Williams**  
Chief Executive,  
The Quality Assurance  
Agency for Higher  
Education  
United Kingdom

## Schedule

Within the broad framework of the Memorandum of Understanding, the HEQC and QAA will use their best efforts to undertake the following activities in the first three-year period of this Memorandum.

- 1 Where appropriate and possible, staff from the two agencies will spend short periods of time in each other's offices to learn more about systems and processes associated with their particular tasks and responsibilities.
- 2 Where appropriate and possible, senior staff will be offered opportunities to observe institutional audits, programme accreditations or other evaluation activities.
- 3 Where appropriate and possible, the two agencies will facilitate the availability of auditors and evaluators from each other's systems to strengthen the international dimension of their work.
- 4 The two agencies will act as a source of information for each other on relevant issues to do with the plans and activities of their respective higher education communities (including relevant ministries and other bodies) for each other's countries.
- 5 Where necessary and feasible, the two agencies will collaborate on institutional audits of United Kingdom universities operating in South Africa or South African universities operating in the United Kingdom. In such cases, a more detailed agreement will be entered into on the parameters and scope of the joint activity.
- 6 The two agencies will continue their collaboration on matters that relate to IT and intelligence systems.
7. The two agencies will initiate collaboration on
  - a. quality enhancement of teaching and learning among academics and academic managers
  - b. improved student understanding of and participation in quality issues at institutional level.

The QAA will undertake this collaboration through its Scottish Office

8. The two agencies will undertake further discussion at a later stage on the possibility of more formal recognition of each other's systems and approaches. This discussion will be initiated once the HEQC implementation is more fully underway in the area of institutional audits, programme accreditation and national reviews.

9 March 2005