

**Quality Assurance in Private Higher
Education Institutions in Namibia: A case
study of seven institutions.**

Master of Public Policy and Administration

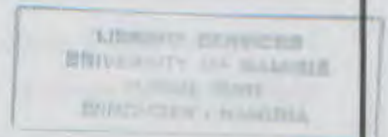
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By

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ABSTRACT

This paper sought to determine how seven Windhoek-based PHEIs complied with two specific elements of the Accreditation Standard developed by the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA), through interviews. Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in Namibia have increased over the last ten years. Most PHEIs offer qualifications at Certificate, Diploma and Degree level.

The most pressing concerns in Private Higher Education provision in Namibia today are the quality of these institutions and the value of the certificates issued by them. These issues of quality assurance are compounded by the lack of centrally documented information on PHEIs coupled with the rise in the institutions is a key issue in this country.

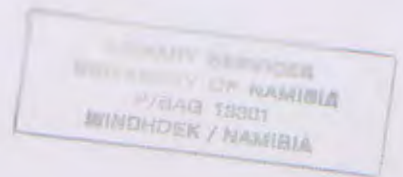
The findings indicated that quality assurance in these higher education institutions is inconsistent. The older institutions have been improving the quality of their services and showed a high degree of compliance with regards to the two elements of the Standard used, but the younger institutions showed a high degree of non-compliance.

Some of the main areas of non-compliance in these institutions found by the study are, (1) the lack of systems of recruitment, (2) staff development, (3) performance management, (4) the lack of relevant work experience of the staff while areas of compliance included, (i) high levels of staff qualifications, and (ii) the quality of the buildings from which institutions operate.

The study concludes that though the PHEIs showed a high degree of non-compliance with the some of the aspects of the two elements, they showed a reasonably high degree of compliance with some of the quality assurance aspects. Their relatively young period of operation is regarded as one of the factors influencing their non-compliance.

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DEDICATION

This research paper is dedicated to my both my late parents, Mbaoua Jephtha Tjatjitua and Theodorphine Tjopi Kazenango who introduced me to the “world of learning” and encouraged me never to give up.

DECLARATIONS

This research paper is true reflection of the candidates own work and contains no material previously published, or substantially overlapping with material submitted for the award of any other degree at any institution, except where due acknowledgment is made in the text.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

CHE:	Council on Higher Education (South Africa)
ESIB:	National Union of Students in Europe
GATS:	General Agreement on Trade Services
GATT:	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
HE:	Higher Education
HEIs:	Higher Education Institutions
IIT/NBI:	Institute of Information Technology/Namibia Business Institute
IUM:	International University of Management
MANCOSA:	Management College of Southern Africa
MHETEC:	Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation
NAMCOL:	Namibia College of Open Learning
NQA:	Namibia Qualifications Authority
OLGN:	Open Learning Group of Namibia
PHEIs:	Private Higher education Institutions
PMS	Performance Management System
PON:	Polytechnic of Namibia
QA:	Quality Assurance
SAQA:	South African Qualifications Authority
UNAM:	University of Namibia
UNESCO:	United Nations Education and Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNISA:	University of South Africa
USIU:	United States International University
WB:	World Bank
WTO:	World Trade Organization
WTO/GATS:	World Trade Organization/General Agreement on Trade Services

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CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the research paper and gives an account of the research conducted to assess the compliance of seven Windhoek-based PHEIs with two elements of the Accreditation Criteria developed by the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA). The first part of the chapter presents the background to the research problem. The research objectives are also outlined here. The history of higher education and the circumstances that led to the emergence of Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in Namibia are discussed. Definitions and descriptions of key concepts in the study such as quality, quality assurance, accreditation, higher education and private higher education are offered. The second part presents the methodology adopted in conducting the research.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

Despite its status as a full-fledged, sovereign and independent nation, Namibia is still dealing with a legacy of more than 40 years of apartheid's social and economic policies. A major deficiency caused by this legacy is the disjointed education system that previously denied indigenous Namibians access to higher education and which created a huge backlog of needed skills, highly skewed income distribution, and uneven socio-economic development.

As a result, the demand for higher education in Namibia increased several fold since independence. The Namibian government, in recognition of the skills shortage in the country, allocates about 4.2 percent of the total government expenditure to higher education each year (Odada et al 2000:39). This amount is substantial and has been growing over the years as depicted by the table on the next page.

Table 1: Allocation within tertiary education sector (NS'000)

Institution	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004
Colleges of Education	69,808	72,995	61,971
University of Namibia	118,131	122,874	153,874
Polytechnic of Namibia	65,192	68,136	79,322
Vocational Training Institutions	52,738	54,761	59,958
Student Support	43,752	43,021	48,621
Total Tertiary	350,046	361,787	403,746

Source: Government revenue and expenditure 2002/2003 and 2003/2004

Looking at the figures provided in the above table, it is apparent that the Namibian government has a genuine concern for higher education in the country. While Taylor (2000) supports an investment in education, he cautions that it is not a sufficient motivation for socio-economic growth, unless it is linked to actual needs and changing demands of the country. The supply of skills from the providers must correspond with the national developmental goals as contained in the First and Second National Development Plans (NDP 1 &2) and Vision 2030. Higher Education must not only review knowledge but create it; it must not only equip people to fill jobs but also to create them; it must not only close the development gap but leap forward with new ideas and practices. Only then, will it contribute to poverty alleviation and wealth creation.

Recognizing the supply-demand gap, the Namibian government fully supported the "liberal market orientation" in higher education and encouraged the private sector to play an active role in shaping the future of higher education as from the early days of independence (MHEVTST 1999: 22). This largely unmet and unabating demand has opened opportunities for private education providers and explains the rapid mushrooming of Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs). Some of these institutions offer residential programmes while others market their services through distant modalities with a wide array of programmes, standards and qualifications.

The growing list of PHEIs includes amongst others: the Institute of Higher Education (IHE) that was established in 1994, Azaliah and Classic College, which came into being in 1995 and later, the Open Learning Group of Namibia (OLGN), Damelin College, Bema College, Lingua Consultancy, Brilliant College, University of South Africa (UNISA) and the Management College of South Africa (MANCOSA). Since then, the Institute of Higher Education (IHE) became the International University of Management (IUM), Azaliah and Classic Colleges have closed down operations while the ownership of Damelin College has changed hands.

Current data on the range, quality of delivery, and value of certificates offered by Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) are limited. In this regard, the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation (MHETEC) receive numerous enquiries from employer groups and individual citizens regarding the standard, quality and comparative value of PHEIs. The Namibia Qualifications Authority Act of 1996 gives the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) the legal responsibility for the accreditation of institutions. In 2004 the Namibia Qualifications Authority developed the Accreditation Standard/Criteria.

The accreditation processes involve assessing the capacity of the institutions to deliver education services against the defined *Standard/ Criteria* for Accreditation. This study attempted to assess the performance of seven of the currently operating PHEIs against two elements of the criteria, namely:

- (a) Staff Appointment and Qualifications; and
- (b) Adequacy of Learning Resources and Facilities.

The seven PHEIs are Damelin Namibia, Bema College, Lingua Consultancy, Anvill College, Brilliant College, International University of Management (IUM) and Institute of Information Technology/Namibia Business Institute (IIT/NBI). The assessment considered the PHEIs capability to sustain quality provision of education and training

services in order to serve and protect the interests of learners and the public at large. A high degree of compliance with the two elements indicated that the PHEIs are likely to provide quality services while a high degree of non-compliance will indicate the contrary. This way learners' interest will be protected in that they would get "value for money" from the PHEIs.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In a period of rapid technological change the world has become a riskier place. The world economy has changed dramatically over the last decade and is driven by globalization of businesses and technology. This change poses new challenges for higher education in both developed and developing countries. Developing countries often become exposed to a sundry of higher education exporters who see Higher Education as a business opportunity rather than a service. This unguarded growth is compounded by insufficient funds from government to finance higher education.

Currently, higher education in Namibia is mainly provided by the University of Namibia (UNAM), the Polytechnic of Namibia (PON), the four Colleges of Education, and the three Colleges of Agriculture. South African and several other overseas universities operating through franchising arrangements with local institutions have increasingly become dominant players.

However, the quality of private providers in Namibia has become a major concern for employers, learners, government and the National Qualifications Authority. For example, learners want to know that the qualifications they enroll for are of 'good' quality and relevant to the market; employers want to be guaranteed that the products they are getting from the education system are able to perform to the expectations of the job market without requiring extensive re-training; the government wants to know that the private sector is really contributing to poverty alleviation by providing quality

education; and the NQA wants to ensure that the qualifications system is robust enough to maintain public confidence.

A growing apprehension seems to focus on PHEIs that have no track record of performance, or are not sufficiently linked with recognized international tertiary-level institutions. As indicated earlier, the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) frequently receives enquiries about the quality of PHEIs. However, the lack of readily available information on the quality of PHEIs hampers the NQA's ability to address the issue of PHEI's quality effectively and to assign value to the certificates being offered to unsuspecting citizens.

In Namibia, the emergence of Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) has generated debate regarding their quality. For some people, they offer new learning opportunities through more flexible methodologies than the ones offered by public institutions. For others, the PHEIs are regarded as a fast way towards the attainment of a qualification while another group regards them with suspicion, perceiving them as providers of poor quality education. There are several possible explanations for these views. In Namibia, the entrance criterion used by the public institutions is a Grade 12 pass in the International Higher/General Certificate for Secondary Education (HIGCSE/IGCSE) Examination with 25 points and more. Not everyone meets the requirements for enrolling with the public institutions, and even then, the public institutions can only accommodate a specific number. This implies that the majority must seek new opportunities for higher education through alternative providers. Another explanation is that not everyone wants to take up full-time studies and these PHEIs offer more flexible opportunities.

The number of enquiries about PHEIs indicates a public concern about the quality of these institutions and is an important signal to justify a closer look at the operations of PHEIs.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

The main objective of this study was to assess the quality of PHEIs and to determine the extent to which seven of these PHEIs mentioned complied with two elements of the NQA Standard/Criteria namely,

- (a) Staff Appointment and Qualifications; and
- (b) Adequacy of Learning Resources and Facilities.

Based on the findings, some recommendations were made on

- (a) improving the usefulness of the two elements of the NQA Standard/Criteria for assessing PHEIs compliance;
- (b) substantiating the perceptions on the quality of the PHEIs;
- (c) identifying areas for improvement in the PHEIs; and
- (d) identifying areas for further research.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To address the key issues identified in the research objective, this study sought answers to two specific questions:

1. Are the staff qualifications in the seven PHEIs in line with the scope, range and level of courses being offered to the public?

This question was appraised in relation to staff qualifications, relevant work experience, authenticity of paper qualifications, the recruitment, staff development and performance management system.

2. Do the scope of services and the operational facilities support the courses and certificate value offered by these PHEIs?

education and one way in which macro policies translate into micro policies is through the identification of performance indicators. The Accreditation Criteria provides the HE community with performance indicators which reduces the complexity of subjective judgments to a single objective measure.

1.7 DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

Higher Education

The Namibia Higher Education Act (2003: 3) defines higher education as:

All learning programmes leading to qualifications higher than grade 12 or its equivalent, and includes tertiary education as contemplated in Article 20(4) of the Namibian Constitution but does not include vocational training provided by a vocational training center registered under the National Vocational Training Act, Act 18 of 1994) or open learning provided by the Namibia College of Open Learning established by the Namibian College of Open Learning Act, 1997, Act No. 1 of 1997.

This definition has one limitation in that it excludes learning offered by the Vocational Training Centres or the Namibia Open College of Learning (NAMCOL). In fact NAMCOL currently offers qualifications at higher education level. In addition the definition is also not consistent with the African definition of higher education which includes universities, vocational institutions, technical institutes, polytechnics and teacher education institutions (Samoff & Carroll 2004). For the purpose of this research higher education and tertiary education would refer to any post-secondary school education, offered at both public and private institutions.

Private Higher Education: Refers to higher education offered by privately-owned institutions that are not funded by the government.

Quality: Refers to "fitness for purpose"—meeting or conforming to generally accepted standards as defined by an accrediting body and offering programmes consistent with customer /client expectations.

Quality Control refers to the verification procedures (both formal and informal) used by institutions in order to measure and monitor quality. It is a system to check whether the products or services provided have reached the pre-defined standards. The quality is usually inspected at the end of the production and is undertaken by someone external to the organization.

Quality Assurance is defined as a process that examines the aims, structures and projected outcomes of higher education systems in order to improve and enhance the quality (Bazarghan 2002). Simply defined, it is the means by which an institution can assure with confidence and certainty, that the standards and quality of its educational provision are being maintained and enhanced. It is based on the premise that everyone in an organization has a responsibility for maintaining and enhancing quality of service. When compared to Quality Control it is a more comprehensive approach to assess quality in HE. It requires not just the detection of defects as in quality control but also their prevention.

Quality Audit is the process of examining the appropriateness of institutional procedures for assuring quality and standards and whether the arrangements are implemented effectively and achieve the objectives. The underlying purpose is to establish the extent to which institutions are discharging effectively their responsibilities for the standards of awards granted in their name and for the quality of education provided to enable students to attain standards.

Quality Assessment is a means of assessing the quality of what is actually provided by the institutions. It involves the judgment of performance against criteria.

Accreditation is the process of external quality review used in higher education to scrutinize colleges, universities, and higher education programs. This process leads to the granting of an accreditation status by the accrediting agency.

The Draft Regulations on Accreditation in Namibia define it as:

the formal status granted by the Council of the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) under Section 13 of the NQA Act confirming that an education and/or training institution in Namibia has the capacity to provide a course or courses of instruction or training and to assess the performance of persons partaking in such a course or courses (MHETEC 2004:3).

Accreditation, therefore, is the result of a review of an education program or institution based on certain quality standards. It is a recognition that a program or institution meets prescribed standards.

Criteria/Standards: Standards for accreditation or certification of an institution or program which involve expectations about quality, effectiveness, compliance with national rules and regulations. Standards serve as benchmarks against which institutional quality is assessed.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative versus Quantitative

This research primarily employed qualitative research methods. Qualitative research methods are designed to help researchers understand people and the social contexts within which they live (Erikson 1986). The subjects were selected on the basis of their willingness to participate in the research. Initially all Windhoek-based PHEIs were

requested to participate but some did not respond. Since the research was concerned with the quality of responses and not the quantity, this change did not have much effect on the data collected. The managers of the PHEIs were selected on the basis of their overarching role in the institutions.

The research adopted a case study approach that focused on the compliance of eight PHEIs with two elements of the Accreditation Criteria. The two elements of the Standards were chosen because they would yield information faster than the others. The case study methodology is frequently applied to explore new areas and issues where little theory is available or measurement is unclear; to describe a process or the effects of an event or an intervention, especially when such events affect many different parties; and to explain a complex phenomenon (Yin 2002). The lack of availability of literature on PHEIs in Namibia justified the selection of a case study as the most appropriate method.

Data Collection

The main research methods employed were face-to-face interviews conducted during September and October 2004. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they focus directly on the topic and provide an opportunity for the researcher to gain extra information relevant to the topic without being restricted by any structure (Yin 1994). They also offer a more flexible style to collect information as they often involve probing to ensure that respondent understands.

The interviews were held on the institutional premise to enable the researcher to assess the background and setting of the PHEI and to gather any informal information. Face-to-face interviews were regarded as the most appropriate method due to the sensitivity of the topic. They also offered a degree of interaction between the researcher and respondents not possible through a questionnaire. Interviews and documentary data

discussed provided confidential information and the protection of confidential information was a key ethical consideration of the research methodology.

Documentary evidence provided by the PHEIs was used to provide background information.

The research assembled and analysed all available relevant publications and contemporary literature on the Namibian PHEI environment. This proved to be difficult because of a lack of readily available literature on this topic in the country. The main source of information on PHEI in Namibia came from the institution's marketing brochures and discussions with NQA officials. Contemporary literature (Mabizela 2002; Banya 2001 & Hahn 2004) assisted in substantiating the research problem.

Literature about research methods is mainly drawn from Lincoln & Guba (1985) whose methodology is quite well defined and instructive for an individual researcher whose primary instrument is an interview for data collection. Data collection involved the design of a questionnaire which adopted a matrix format. This format has a number of advantages. It is faster for the researcher to administer as it involves ticking the appropriate response as opposed to taking down notes. It also simplifies the presentation of data. The only disadvantage is that when used in a questionnaire it could pre-meditate the response and could be open to bias. Since the study employed an interview the respondents had no access to the questions and could not pre-meditate the response (See Appendix A for details of the questionnaire used).

Data were not tape-recorded to ensure honest and anonymous responses without fear of prejudice and publication.

Data Analysis

Yin (2002) suggests that in case studies, data analysis begins in the field during data collection as notes are recorded and initial interpretations are made during discussions. In this study different themes started to emerge during the interviews and there was a need to categorise them for ease of reference.

Maxwell (1998) describes three strategies for qualitative data analysis, a) categorising strategies, b) contextualising strategies and c) memos and displays. The study combined categorising and contextualising strategies based on the headings identified during the questionnaire design. Data were first put into themes using the two criteria as the broad categories before they are analysed.

The results of the analysis are compared and contrasted amongst the PHEIs in order to draw conclusions on the extent of their compliance to the criteria.

1.9 ACKNOWLEDGING THE STUDY LIMITATIONS

Since only two elements of the standard were considered the findings and the conclusions drawn may be limited to the seven PHEIs.

The lack of literature on related studies as a source of reference was another limitation in that no comparisons could be made between the study findings and other work.

The PHEIs were not exposed to the criteria before and did not understand the real meaning of compliance with the elements from a quality assurance perspective.

1.10 CONCLUSION

This paper is divided into five chapters. This chapter has provided a brief overview of the research paper and the methodology involved in conducting the research. It also highlighted the importance of quality assurance as a key strategy towards quality improvement and quality enhancement in higher education, especially in a country with inadequately skilled and qualified human resources.

Chapter 2 lays out the theoretical dimensions of the study, and looks at the concept of quality assurance in PHE by reviewing contemporary literature on quality assurance and accreditation.

Chapter 3 presents the research results through graphical instruments.

Chapter 4 discusses the research findings and integrates the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 into the findings.

Chapter 5 draws conclusions and make recommendations for future research on the basis of the findings.

The paper now continues to Chapter 2, which provides a theoretical and conceptual underpinning of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in PHE.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter commences with a presentation of theoretical perspectives on higher education and private higher education, focusing on the nature, scope and benefits to society. Literature does not make a distinction between quality assurance in public HEIs and PHEIs and the review adopts the same perspective. Global trends on PHE provision and the implications for quality assurance are also illuminated. Some of the most influential and current views on quality assurance of higher education (Bazarghan 2002; Middlehurst 2002, Van Damme 2002) are considered. Quality Assurance systems of countries like United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, United States and South Africa are discussed in order to highlight the different practices adopted in the world. The chapter also discusses accreditation as the most well-known outcome of higher education QA putting emphasis on the accreditation process adopted by Namibia. The discussion of the two elements of the Accreditation Criteria concludes the chapter.

2.2 THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

In the past, higher education was presented in terms of the “cultivation of the elite, the moulding of a class whose general function was the preservation of national unity and the maintenance of the nation’s intellectual identity” (Neave 1989:8).

This elite cultivation theory of higher education links up with the views of Samoff & Carrol (2004) who report that in Africa, all modern higher education institutions have their origin in the colonial period. HEIs were originally developed as universities and were among the tools used by the colonial governments to “control and shape social change in the colonies”. Though HEIs in Africa were developed as satellite campuses of the European universities they were generally a defective copy of the original institution.

South Africa's denial of higher education opportunities to Namibia during the colonial period was an example of the desire by the colonial power to "control" socio-economic development in this country.

Several writers (Cemmel 2002; Katjavivi 2000; Namibia 2000) have acknowledged the contributions of higher education to human development and to national development. Cemmel (2002) identifies the main functions of higher education as: a) the development of new knowledge (research); b) the training of qualified people; c) the provision of services to society and d) social criticism. These functions of higher education are also recognised by Katjavivi (2000: 19) who states that universities as centres of higher learning are charged with "transforming the accumulated body of knowledge", "creating new knowledge", "preserving knowledge on national and international values", and "socio-economic advancement of society at large".

Higher education is centrally concerned with how people learn and also with developing the skills needed for the creation of a knowledge economy. It encourages discovery and innovation which enhances productivity and improvements of the living standards Namibia (2000).

Although higher education is considered to be a key factor for the development of emerging knowledge-based economies, in Namibia, higher education did not exist before 1980 (Otaala 2003).

In terms of Vision 2030, Namibia wants to have:

efficient and well-structured national institutions fully utilizing human potential and delivering an effective client-centred service to produce well-qualified and trained human resources, with qualifications which are nationally, regionally and internationally recognized (Namibia 2002: 35).

The Namibian Government values and encourages private sector participation in higher education but put strong emphasis on responsibility towards the nation. Namibia is

known to have greater disparities in wealth than any other country in the world, characterised by a prosperous group on one end of the scale and a poverty stricken group on the other end. This situation demands a high degree of efficiency from its higher education system which directly feeds into the workforce (Namibia 1999).

Like most countries in Southern Africa, Namibia is challenged by youth unemployment and the devastation by HIV/AIDS pandemic. It can only "leap forward" if it strengthens its higher education sector. There are several ways in which the government is responding to the concern of higher education quality. In addition to having developed the Accreditation Criteria, the MHETEC is currently establishing the National Council on Higher Education (NCHE) which will register HEIs.

2.3 NATURE AND SCOPE OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROVISION

The classification of higher education provision into three types by Hunt et al (1997) is useful in that it places PHEIs in their proper context. Firstly, there are those institutions that provide higher education services in the marketplace "*for-profit*", with a primary mission of earning a profit from their operations. Secondly, there are those private "*not-for-profit*" institutions that rely heavily on endowments, gifts and contributions from international partners or anywhere. And thirdly, there are public institutions funded through taxes and created at central and local levels to provide higher education for the general public. Such institutions are usually established by legislations, such as the University of Namibia Act of 1992 or the Polytechnic of Namibia Act of 1995, which provide for self-accreditation of both institutions. The self-accrediting status granted to publicly-owned institutions by legislations is often regarded as discriminatory practice against privately-owned institutions by the PHE community. There is a general perception that public institutions provide quality education simply because they have

the government support. Ownership should not predetermine quality as the self-accrediting status could be regarded as a means to evade responsibility for quality.

In addition to the three categories by Hunt et al, Middlehurst (2002) draws our attention to five distinctive categories of higher education providers.

- a. Individual providers who offer the full range of educational processes, from enrolment to assessment and certification; UNAM and Polytechnic can be classified under this arrangement
- b. Consortia that also offer the full range of educational processes, from enrolment to assessment and certification; UNAM has several such arrangement for example UNAM/Institute of Social Studies (ISS) or the UNAM/Maastricht School of Management.
- c. Part or joint providers where one partner is responsible for most processes; The Namibia College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) has several agreements with the UNAM as well as with the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU). Under these agreements, NAMCOL offers the programs but the certification is done by the other partner, e.g. the Commonwealth Youth Diploma.
- d. Multi-agent providers where each offer a part of the educational process (City & Guilds has agreement with many PHEIs, in terms of which it is only involved in the assessment and certification), and
- e. "Self-assembly" arrangements where the learner assembles their own provision, with guidance and subsequent certification from elsewhere. In this case, trainees may receive training, for example in a discipline, but the assessment and certification is done elsewhere. NAMWATER trainees in e.g. Diesel Mechanics receive in-house training but are assessed by the Namibia Training and Testing Centre (NTTC). This category poses a challenge in that control of the curriculum is not solely in hands of academics.

2.4 PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

In the United States of America, PHEI is the product of 300 years of development with Harvard University (initially established in 1636 to prepare ministers and teachers) and Yale established in 1701, being amongst the first private universities (Koyzis 1989).

Several studies (Middlehurst 2000) have revealed that many countries have higher education systems dominated by PHEIs, especially in Asia-Pacific region (Japan and Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore). France and Canada are the few exceptions with state-owned institutions in the majority.

Over the last decade, most countries in sub-Saharan Africa have also seen escalating numbers of PHEIs. Kenya was among the first countries in the region to encourage private universities thirty years ago with the establishment of the United States International University (USIU) in 1969 (Banya 2001). The emergence of PHEIs in Uganda, Tanzania and Mozambique is attributed to national economic decline and social disturbances such as wars which resulted in the devastation of public universities.

Namibia has also seen a rapid increase of PHEIs since 1993. It is not known exactly how many PHEIs are currently operating in Namibia but more than 130 institutions have applied for accreditation to the NQA (Gertze 2004). Most of the private institutions have genuine motives though some are not well-established. The escalating growth of PHEI and mobility of PHEI providers across national borders have prompted the enhanced quality assurance agenda in many countries. Quality assurance in general and accreditation have become important policy instruments and regulatory devices in higher education (Van Damme, Van der Hijden & Campbell 2003). Alongside the increase in the number of PHEIs are globalization and regional integration trends, such as the "internationalization" of higher education, and cross-border provision and even by "virtual" or "online" universities (Hahn 2003). While a discussion on cross-border

education is beyond the scope of this paper the challenges posed PHEIs are similar to the ones posed by cross-border education.

2.5 QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Prior studies (Srikanthan et al 2002) have recognized quality as a subject that has been “squarely on the contemporary agenda of higher education”. A number of studies (Watty 2003; ESIB 2002) have also shown that a definition of quality is not easy to come by and it is often easier to recognise quality when it is there than to define it. Quality is not only meant to improve business practices but also to enhance the way people work and live.

Dika & Jonisk (2003) argue that quality and effectiveness are internationally recognized concerns. They list three factors associated with HE quality:

- a) quality as experienced by the students,
- b) quality in terms of the fulfillment of recognised academic objectives and
- c) quality in terms of the broad social relevance of the educational programmes.

The overriding idea is that it is an experience which can be defined in terms of its relevance to national needs.

This view is consistent with the often cited work of Harvey & Green (1993). Cited by Watty (2003), Harvey & Green (1993) defines quality from the perceptions of various stakeholders. In their search for a definition of quality the authors identified five categories of thinking about quality.

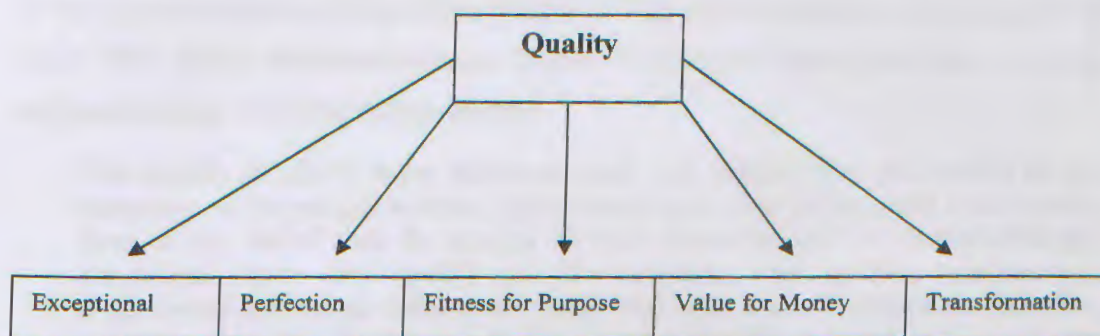


Figure 1: Harvey & Green's (1993) categories of quality adapted from Watty (2003:215)

Exceptional relates quality to excellence in meeting certain standards while *perfection* relates it to getting things right the first time. These two approaches to quality have been found inappropriate for defining higher education quality as being "perfect" and "exceptional" is not the purpose of higher education.

Fitness for Purpose relates quality to the purpose as defined by the provider, the consumers and clients. The goals of HEIs are defined by the provider through the organizational mission's and the consumer is often a recipient and/or beneficiary.

Value for Money focuses on efficiency and measuring inputs against outputs and being accountable to the recipients of the service and nation at large.

Transformation is about doing something *to* as opposed to doing something *for*. This may imply a service to a person, society or region. In countries like Namibia and South Africa, the understanding of quality is incorporated in the country's reform agenda.

In his keynote address at Ongwediva College of Education Graduation ceremony on 19 April 1997, Buddy Wentworth former Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation, told graduates:

The quality of life in every nation on earth will depend upon the quality of the education of the people in those communities and those nations and I am equally firm in my belief that the quality of that education will be overwhelmingly dependent upon the quality of the teacher. The quality, professionalism, vision, dedication, energy and hard work of women and men like ourselves operating in the real theatre of education—the schools and classrooms throughout our country.

In the above cited speech Honourable Wentworth, challenged young graduates to transform the “theatre of education” by empowering the learners through a quality vision. He also identified some key issues associated with quality in education, for example, teacher qualifications, vision of the institution, the classrooms all of which are key elements of quality assurance systems.

2.6 QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality Assurance (QA) emerged as a principal business methodology in the Western world throughout the 1950s and in the early 1960s (ESIB, 2002: 9). It has been a topic of utmost importance in business and is still important in education. Winning companies are those that meet and advance quality standards. In terms of the World Trade Organization and General Agreement of Trade and Services (WTO/GATS), higher education, especially commercialized higher education, is regarded as one of the trades to be controlled by several regulations. HE must now face similar pressures that the business sector has been facing for decades.

The Namibian government argues that high quality in higher education has several components (Namibia 1999). The time has gone when the higher education system was

servicing the domestic economy alone. While striving towards a national identity HE must be cognizant with international standards. Assessing the quality of higher education is not only limited to students' assessments but involves the assessment of programs and institutions.

Previous studies (Le Maitre 2003) have linked Quality Assurance to three main underlying rationales (i.e. accountability, compliance and improvement). HEIs must show that they provide good value for the money they receive. Evaluating the quality of institutions demands compliance with rules by policymakers and improvement is exactly what quality assurance is about. The purpose of a quality assurance system, therefore, is to ensure that educational activities are of high quality and are developing toward further improvements. Quality assurance by its nature is transformative in that it advances effectiveness in the society. The system must be capable of revealing cases of deficient quality and otherwise of detecting "good" and "bad" quality. Barnett (1994) cited by Tam (2001) illustrates the interconnectedness between quality assurance and higher education in the context of four dominant contemporary conceptions of higher education. When higher education is conceived as the production of highly qualified manpower, then the graduates are seen as the products whose career earnings and employment relates to the quality of education they have received. When it is likened to training for a research career, the research output of staff and students become the measure of quality. But when it is regarded as the efficient management of teaching provision, then efficiency indicators such as student-staff ratio, become the quality indicators.

2.7 ACCREDITATION: A QUALITY ASSURANCE APPROACH

Bazargan (2002) distinguishes three types of quality assurance approaches, A, B and C. In Type A standards are externally defined, a self-evaluation is conducted by the senior managers of the institutions, an external quality assessment is done by stakeholders

usually nominated by the quality assurance agency, the results of the assessment are publicized and approval or disapproval is the outcome of the quality assurance process.

The second type, B is similar to Type A in all respects except that the standards are defined by the institutions and the self-evaluation includes managers as well as faculty members. The results are openly publicized.

Type C brings in a participatory approach to quality assurance by involving all staff members, in defining the standards as well as in assessing the quality. External evaluators mainly consist of academic peers. The final outcome is an approval of the outcome by the members themselves and taking actions to improve the shortcomings. This model recognizes that quality assurance is not only a matter of compliance with criteria but that it is the property of the institution. The institution designs QA, in relation to its size and academic profile. It also decides what data and other information are needed to identify variations in quality and select the relevant quality improvement measures. Effectiveness and efficiency are key factors in both A, B and C, but effectiveness and compliance are the focus of Type A as advocated by most qualifications Authorities such as the NQA and New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).

Most countries have established national agencies that promote accreditation of institutions. In Australia, the Australian Universities Quality Agency is responsible for accreditation of universities. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in India accredits HE institutions. New Zealand has a number of quality assurance bodies such as the Academic Audit Unit of the New Zealand Vice Chancellor's Committee which is under the auspices of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. South Africa has devolved this function to the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) a sub-committee of the Council on Higher Education (CHE). In countries like the US and Canada, accreditation is a completely voluntary, non-

governmental process and the cycle may range from every few years to ten years (Eaton 2003).

In Namibia, the NQA has a responsibility to accredit both public and private institutions. Accreditation in this case is granted for not more than three years.

Literature distinguishes two types of accreditation: Institutional accreditation and Program accreditation. Institutional accreditation is awarded when a college or university meets the prescribed standards. The effectiveness of the entire institutional operations including academics, administration, and related services is reviewed and accredited. Standards for accreditation become the benchmarks for institutional quality assurance. In program accreditation, departments, programs, within an institution that is institutionally accredited may seek specialised accreditation.

Elements 2.4 and 2.5 of Criteria 2 dealing with Staff Appointments, Qualifications and Adequacy of Learning Resources, form the basis of the study (See Appendix B for full details on the two elements of the NQA Accreditation Criteria). The two elements require that institutions seeking accreditation show compliance with a number of issues. Amongst other things institutions must ensure:

- (a) the appointment of suitably qualified staff
- (b) fair, valid and rigorous recruitment processes that are likely to secure persons with relevant competencies and experiences that are commensurate with the scope and level of education services offered.
- (c) the advertisement should reflect position descriptions for the position and interview questions should provide opportunities for persons to share information on their knowledge, skills, and experience that are applicable to the position.
- (d) that staff do not only have the knowledge and skills of the area of responsibility but should have knowledge in teaching, assessment and moderation, educational

management expertise, quality management expertise, research and mentoring skills (MHETEC 2004:28).

- (e) the professional development and the improvement of the teaching performance of its teaching personnel which are responsive to the rate of technological change in the subject areas taught and assessed, and ensure that the skills, knowledge and abilities of all staff remain current and relevant to their role and position.

Previous studies have also shown that at the heart of a high-quality education service is the caliber of the staff (Van Damme 2002). In reference to the quality of teaching staff in the school's system in Namibia, Tjitendero (2000) states that there is an unambiguous correlation between increased teacher education, teacher experience, attractive conditions of service for teaching staff and pupil's achievements.

An academically qualified staff is one who possesses a qualification that will enable him to understand the level of teaching he is assigned with, for example, to be able to assist a student enrolled for a Bachelor's qualification, the staff should at least be in a possession of a qualification higher than a Bachelor plus enough industry experience. Staff should have the minimum qualifications and/or industry or sector experience that are consistent with the requirements stipulated by the recognized stakeholder groups for the teaching.

Physical resources at HEIs include facilities such as buildings, classrooms computer and equipment, libraries and other assets that support student learning. In terms of this element any institution worthy of accreditation should have:

- (a) The equipment and facilities necessary for carrying out the institutional mission that it has assigned itself. Physical resources improve the institutional effectiveness and student learning. It institutions

- (b) Provide a safe and sufficient physical environment to support and assure the quality of its services. It is the legal responsibility of managers to ensure that the workplace is free from unnecessary hazards.
- (c) Institutions should provide proof that they have legal rights to the buildings they occupy and that buildings meet health, environment and safety regulations set by local and/ or national authorities.

Many students in Namibia have no access to library facilities especially the ones in rural areas. Having a library well equipped with current and reputable books, periodicals and journals common to the field of study can make a difference to their learning. It is therefore desirable that PHEIs make provision for appropriately resourced library facilities. Library facilities should have sufficient space to hold the resources, books that are consistent with the type of courses offered. They should have sufficient texts and electronic facilities to meet the demands made by the staff and learners. Institutions should maintain an updated asset register. The teaching material and equipment should match the ones that are currently used in industry.

2.8 CONCLUSION

The chapter has provided a conceptual framework for the study and places the study in its proper context by identifying the main approaches in higher education quality assurance. The next chapter presents the results of the research data

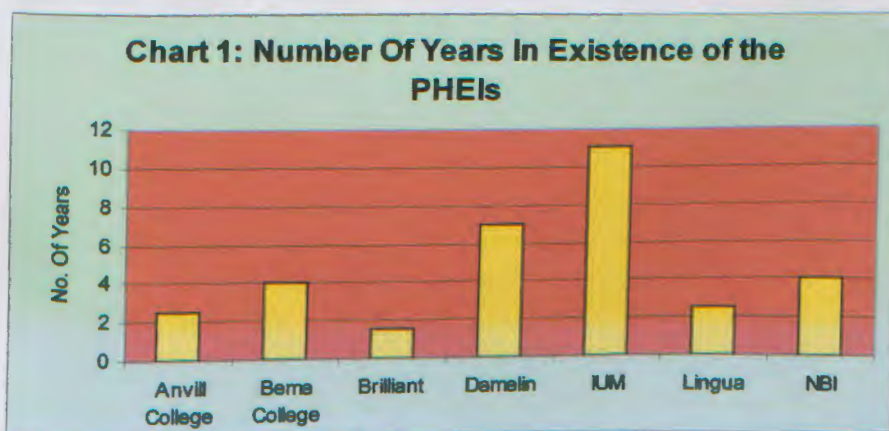
CHAPTER 3: PRESENTATION OF DATA

3.1 INTRODUCTION

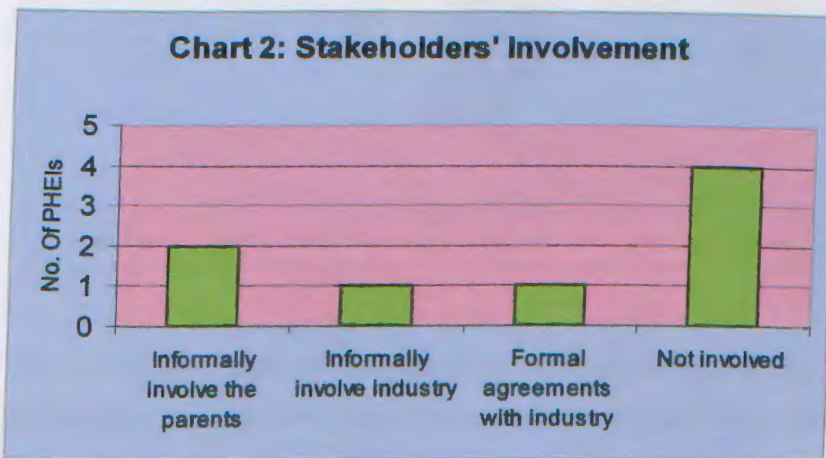
This chapter presents the results of the research conducted to assess the compliance of seven Windhoek-based PHEIs, with two elements of Accreditation Criteria, a) Staff Appointments and Qualifications and b) Adequacy of Learning Facilities. The chapter is organised around three sections. *Section A*, provides background information. This is provided an understanding of the unique institutional contexts. *Section B and C* focus on how the PHEIs comply with the two elements in terms of issues such as the recruitment procedures followed in appointing staff, the qualification levels of the staff, the scope and range of the physical learning facilities and the extent to which they address the institutional missions.

3.2 PRESENTATION BASED ON IDENTIFIED CATEGORIES

A. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON PHEIs.

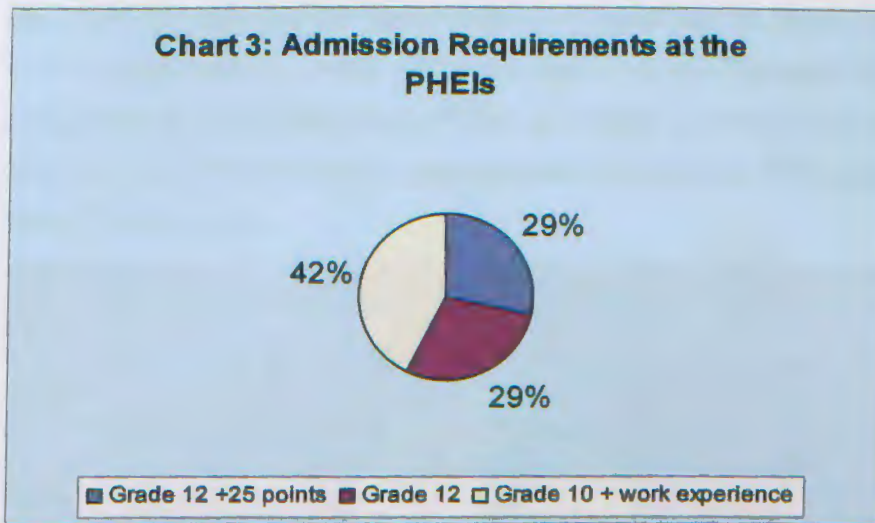


The above data reveal that the oldest PHEI in the sample has a history of 10 years, while the youngest is one and a half years old. However, the average age is approximately four and a half years that is the total number of years of all the PHEIs divided by seven.



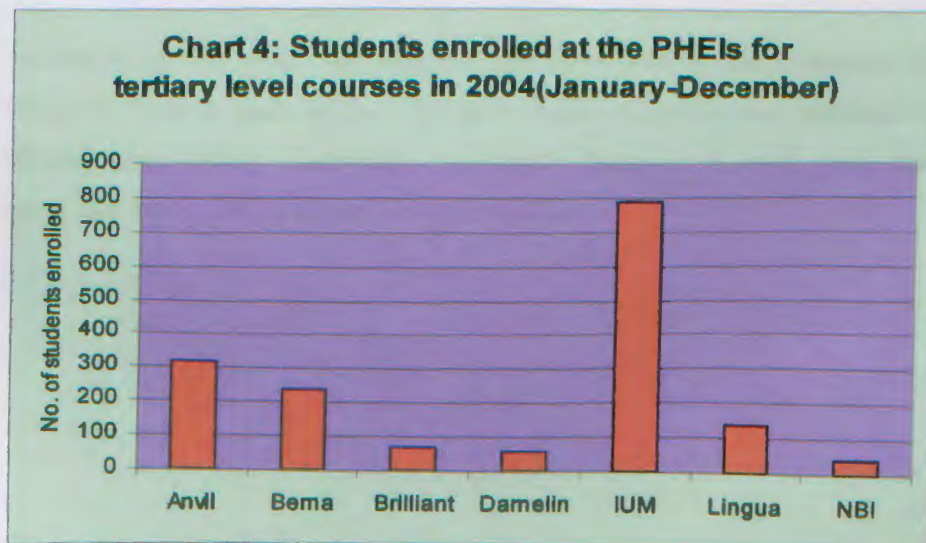
The above chart indicates that the majority (that is four out of seven) of institutions do not involve stakeholders in the running of the institutions and only one has a formal agreement with industry people in terms of curriculum development. Two involve parents and industry informally through word of mouth to students.

Chart 3: Admission Requirements at the PHEIs

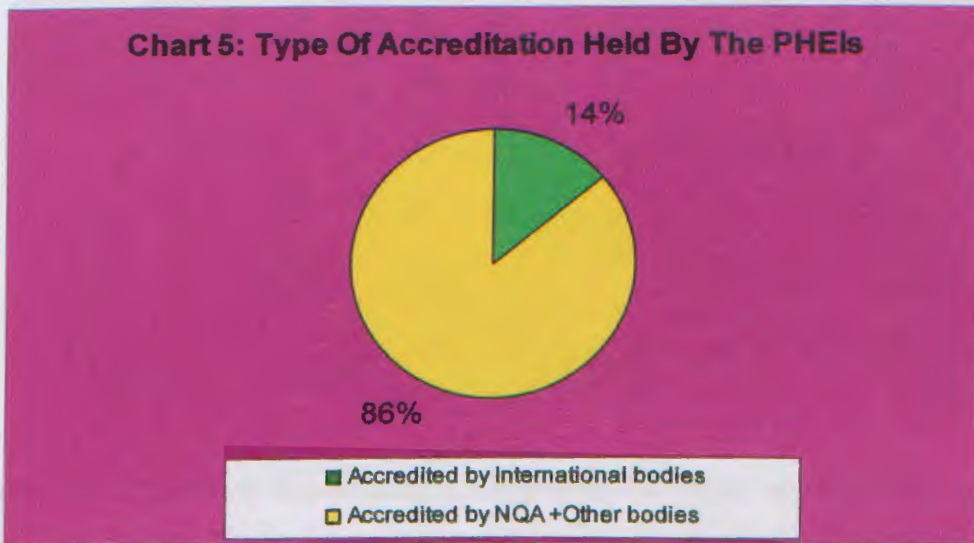


The above chart suggests that proof of work experience is the most commonly (42%) used requirement for admission for the majority of the PHEIs. 29% use Grade 12 and/or Grade 12 + 25 points.

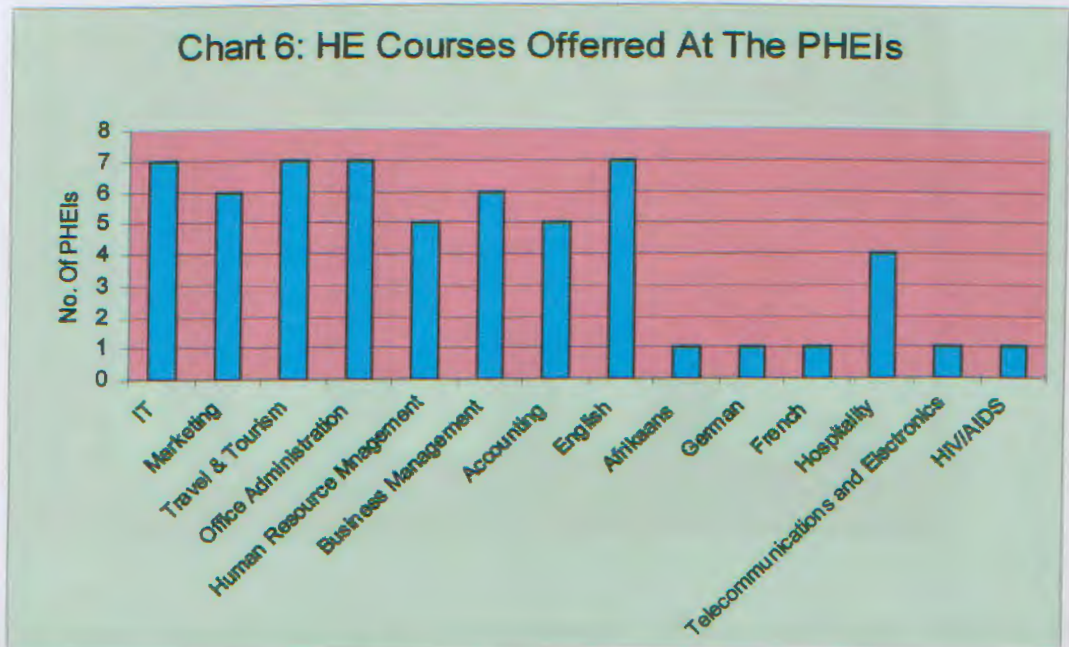
Chart 4: Students enrolled at the PHEIs for tertiary level courses in 2004 (January-December)



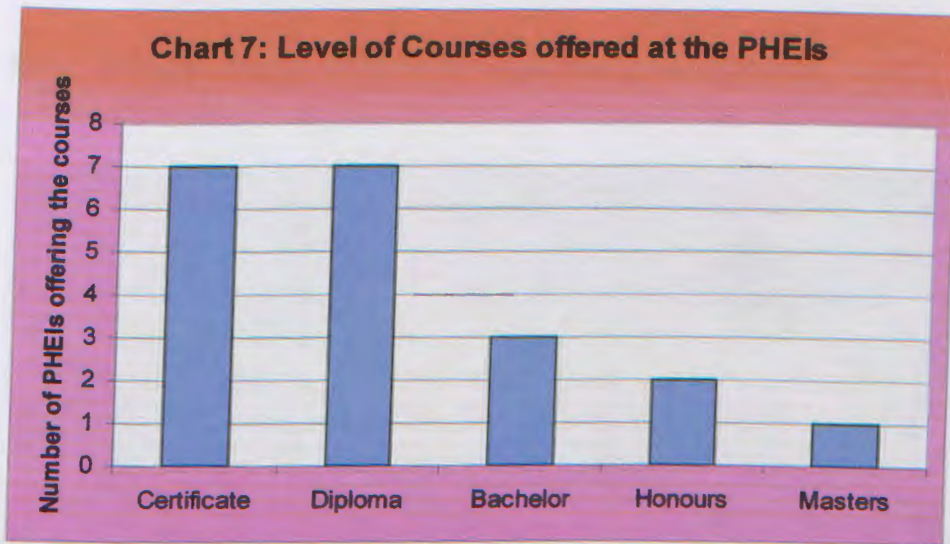
This chart suggests that the highest number of enrolment for the tertiary- level programs is 790 students per year, while the lowest number is 45. The chart also suggests that the average enrolment for the sample PHEIs lies between 150 and 300 students. However, three (3) of the PHEIs have an enrolment rate of less than 100 students per year in the tertiary-level courses.



According to this chart, the majority (86%) of PHEIs are accredited by international awarding bodies such as by City and Guilds, London and Institute of Commercial Management (ICM), Cambridge University Business School. Only one institution is accredited by the NQA as well as other bodies.

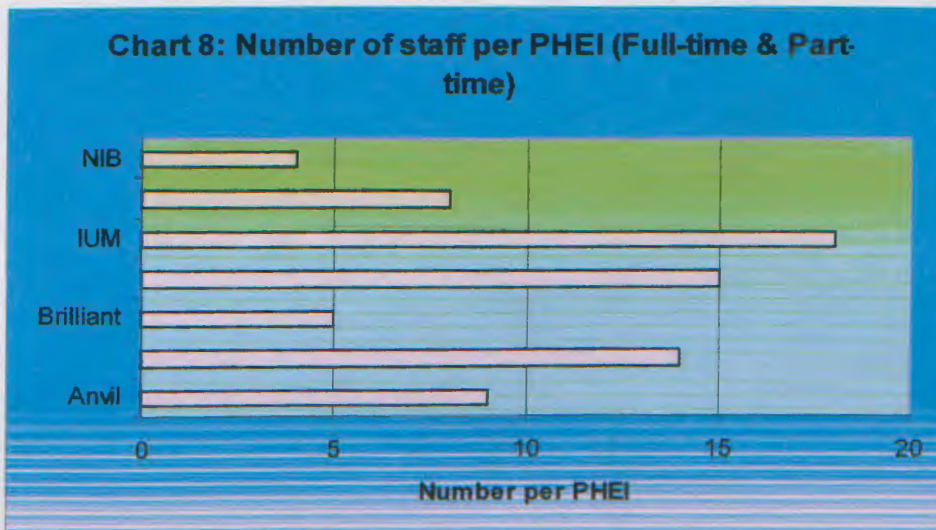


From the chart above it is noticeable that courses commonly offered by the seven PHEIs are Information Technology, Office Administration, Marketing, Travel and Tourism, English, Business Management and Accounting. These are mostly commercial subjects. One PHEI is unique in that it specializes in Languages such as Afrikaans, German, English, Portuguese and French, while another is also unique in that it offers courses in Telecommunications, Electrical and Electronics.

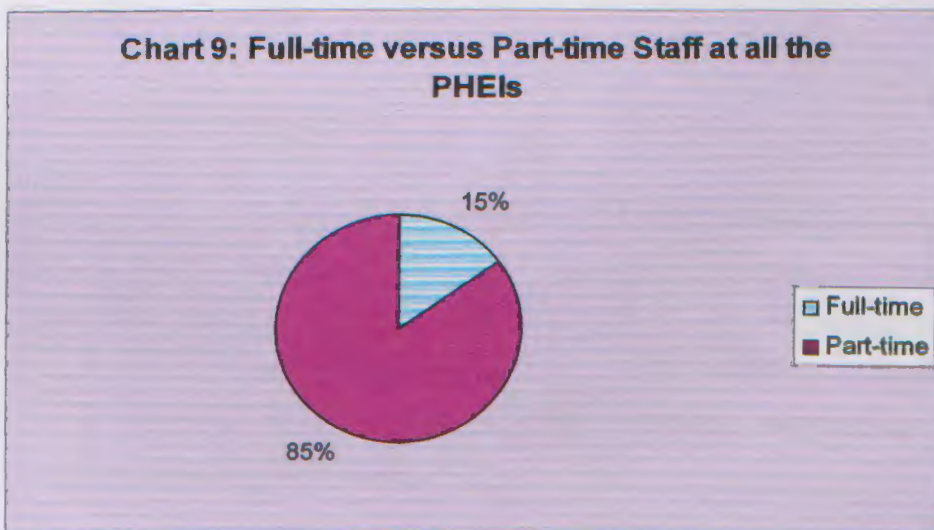


The above data indicate that the most commonly offered qualification types by these PHEIs are the Certificates which have one year duration and the Diplomas which have two year duration. Three of the PHEIs offer degree programs, while 2 offer advanced diploma's or Honours qualifications. Only one of the PHEIs offer courses at Masters Level.

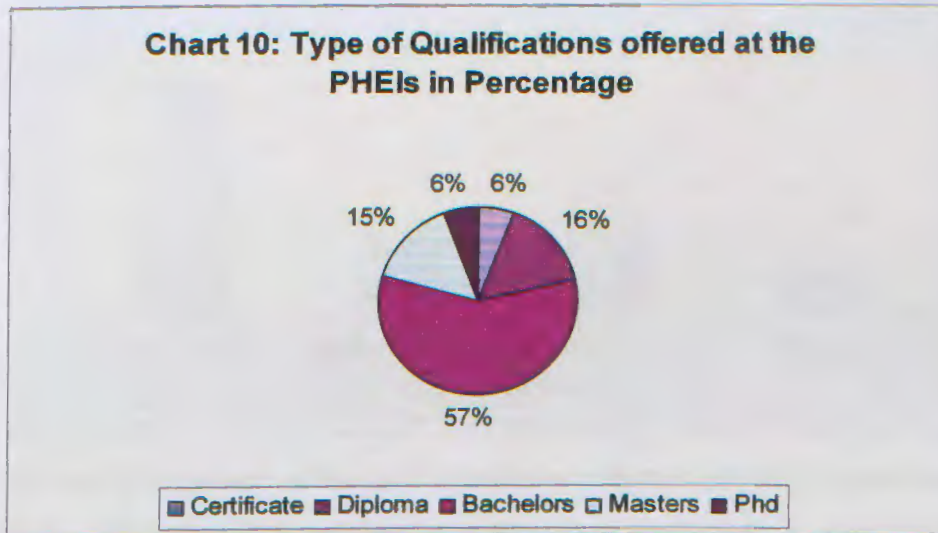
B: STAFF APPOINTMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS



The total number of staff for all the seven PHEIs is 63. This number includes both full-time and part-time staff.



The PHEIs employ staff in majority (85%) on a part-time basis and only 15% on a full-time basis.

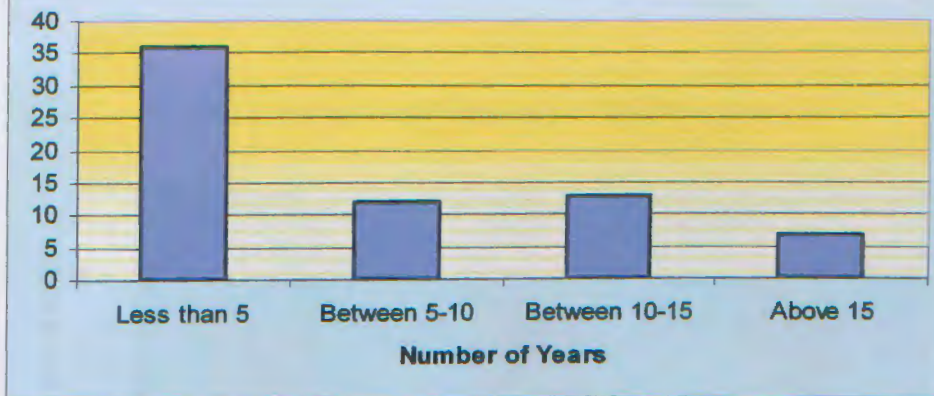


From the data above, the majority (57%) of the staff hold Bachelor's degree, 16% hold two /three year diploma's and 15% Masters and only 6% with qualifications at doctoral or PhD level.

Authenticity of qualifications

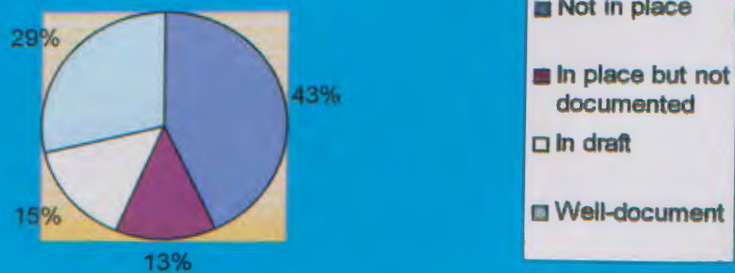
The qualifications of the staff are all from authentic institutions, obtained in countries outside Namibia, with the majority from countries in SADC such as Zimbabwe, Kenya, South Africa, and a small number from the UK and the US. The institutions from which the qualifications were obtained are, for example, UNAM, University of Cape Town, Harvard University, Jomo Kenyatta College, Botswana Polytechnic, University of Zimbabwe, University of Zambia.

Chart 11: Relevant work experience of total staff at all PHEIs

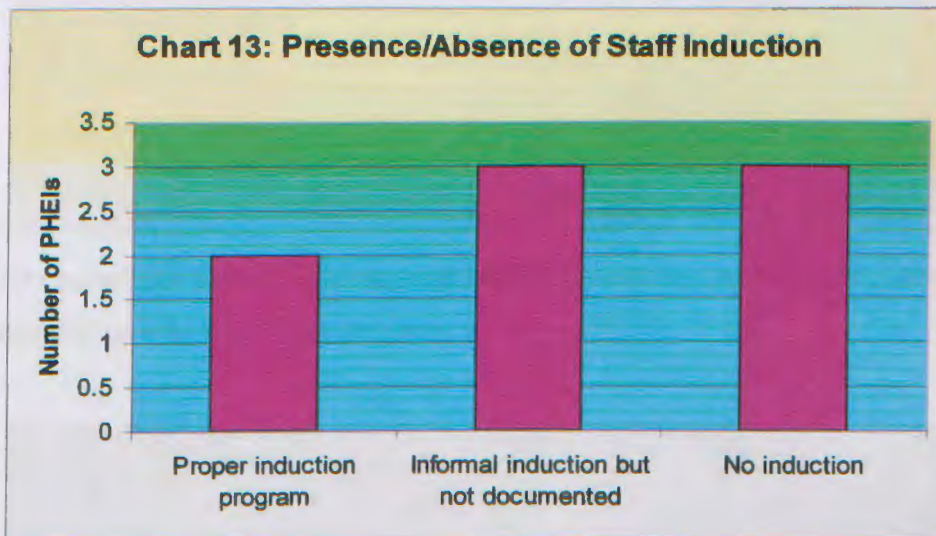


In terms of experience of the staff in teaching or in relevant sector experience, the bulk of the staff at the PHEIs have less than five years experience, i.e. about thirty six (36) of the total of sixty three (63) staff at all the PHEIs only, about thirteen (13) have between 10-15 years of experience, while another 12 have between 5-10 years of experience.

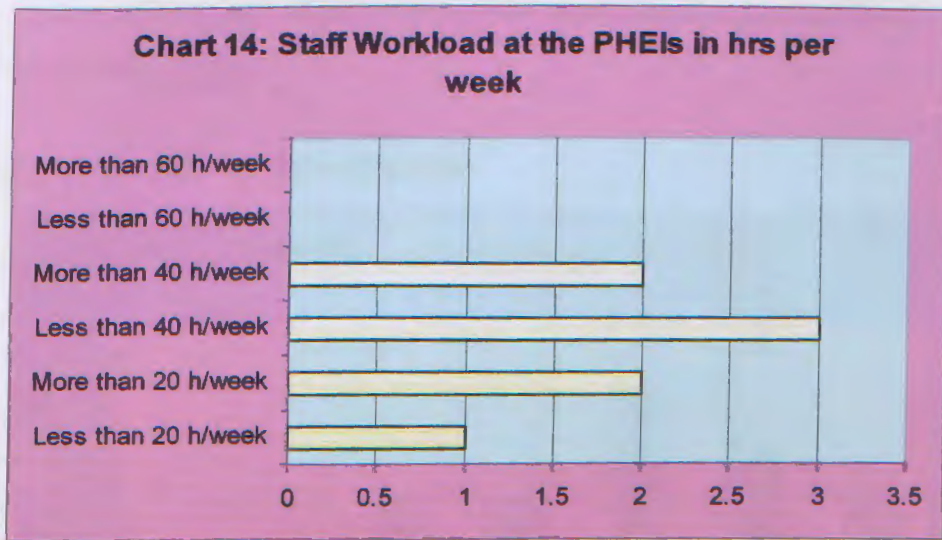
Chart 12: Presence/Absence of policies for Recruitment, Selection & Appointment



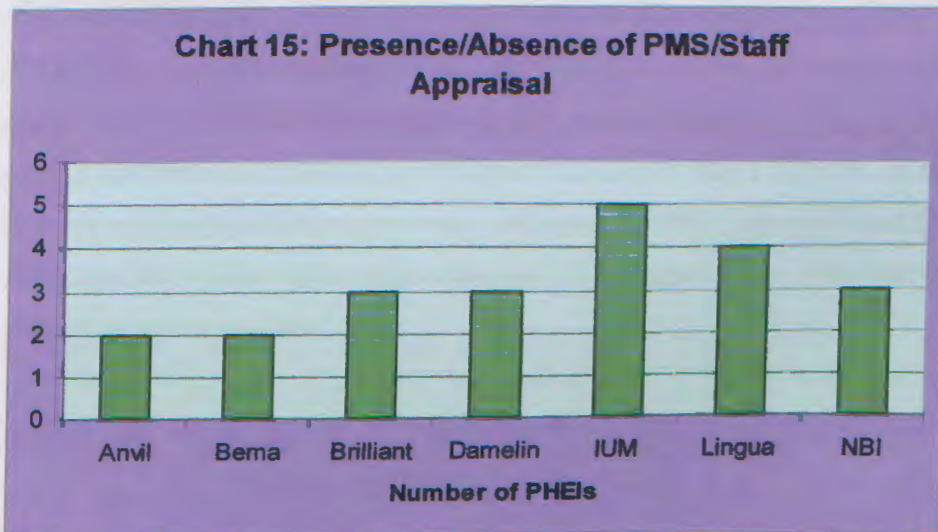
The above data suggest that the majority (43%) do not have documented recruitment policies or procedures in place. Same chart also indicate that 29% percent have well-documented policies in place, while 13% pointed out that they have which are not documented. The implication is that it is not in place. If one add this figure (13%) to the 43% that admitted not to have policies in place, than it becomes 56%.



Only two PHEIs have proper induction program while three have informal induction and another three have no induction program.



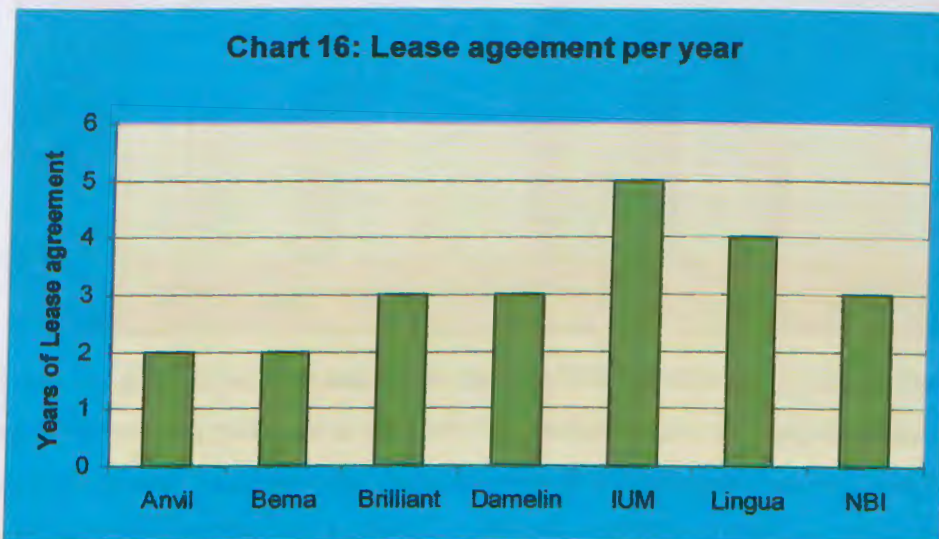
As can be seen from the above graph, the staff workload in terms of hours per week is equal to or below 40 hours per week.



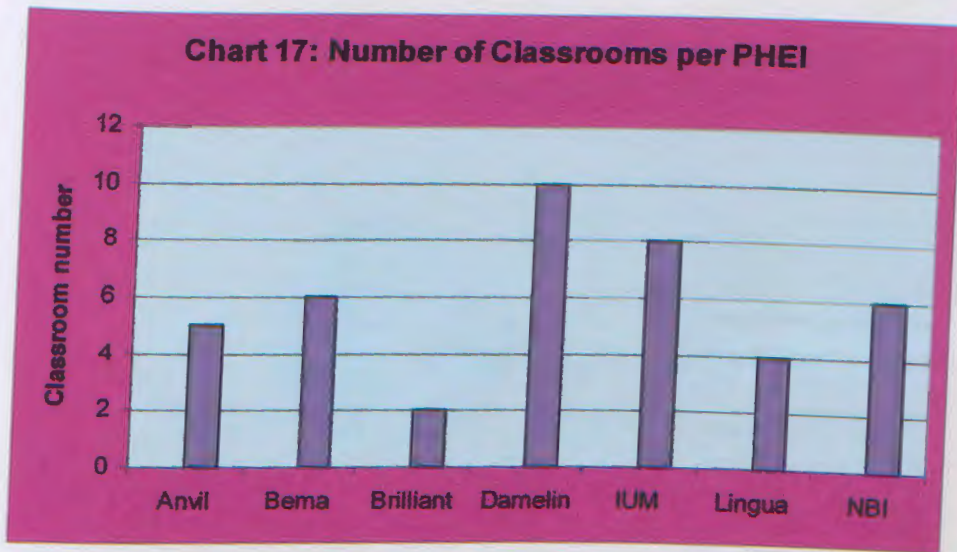
Three(3) of the seven PHEIs have never done staff appraisals and have no documented performance management systems in place, while in two institutions staff is appraised informally by students. Two (2) have documented procedures, but have never done

appraisals. Only two PHEIs indicated that they conduct appraisals leading to promotion and staff development.

C: PHYSICAL RESOURCES

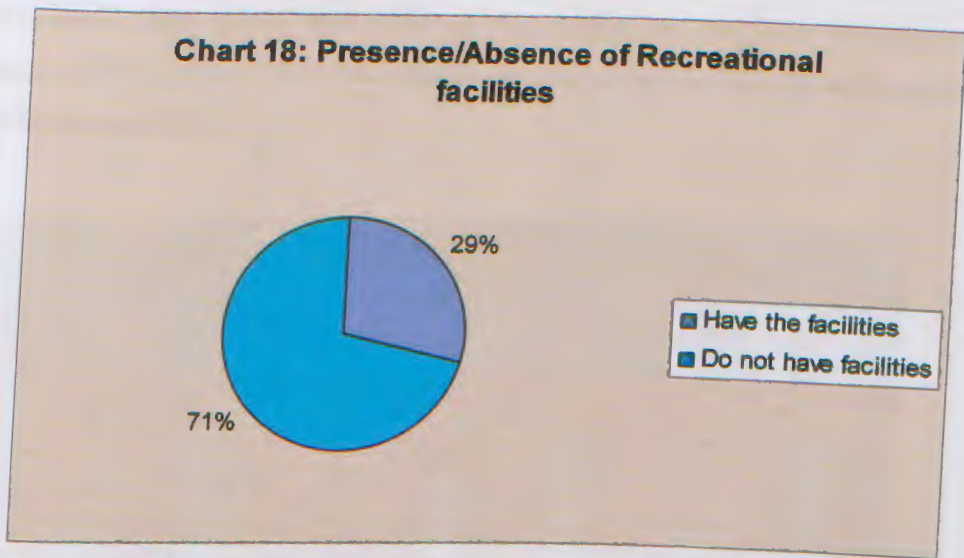


All PHEIs have lease agreements ranging from two years to five years with different companies. The PHEIs have a responsibility for the cleaning of the premises, while the overall maintenance is the responsibility of the owner. The buildings are neat and showed a high degree of maintenance. Only one (1) PHEI operates from the ground floor, the six (6) all conduct their operations from higher floors. The buildings have limited space for parking.



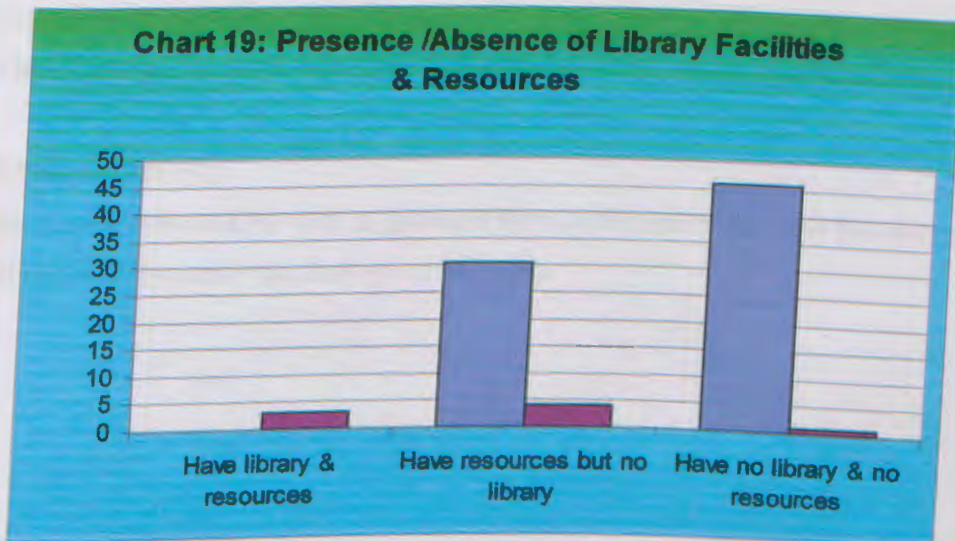
From the data above, it is noticeable that the PHEIs in the sample have classrooms ranging between two (2) and ten (10). The majority have very small classrooms, while only three have spacious classrooms to provide for adequate learning area for individual and group study. The classrooms are neat, air-conditioned and well-equipped with the necessary instructional materials. The other four have small classrooms, originally designed either for office or residential purposes.

Chart 18: Presence/Absence of Recreational facilities

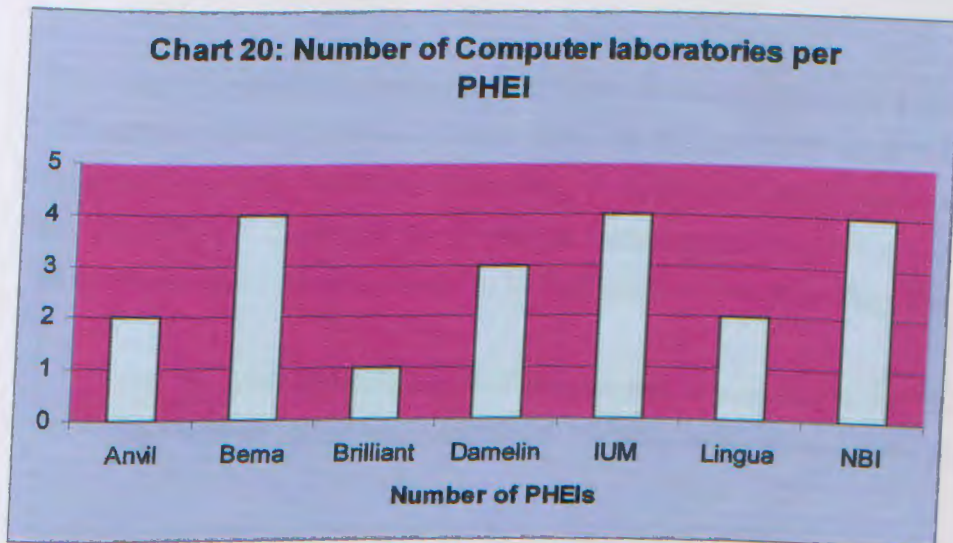


The data reveal that the PHEIs in the study do not provide for a wide range of activities such as meetings of staff, students organizations, small group discussions or informal conversations amongst students, recreational areas for students and staff. However, all PHEIs have ablution facilities on the same floor of the building which are shared between students and staff.

Chart 19: Presence /Absence of Library Facilities & Resources



The above data reveal that 75% of the PHEIs do not have libraries or library facilities. 30% of the PHEIs have library resources, but no libraries while only 3% have well-resourced libraries.



The above data reveal that all PHEIs have between one and four computer centers equipped with between six and 20 functioning computers. Only one PHEI provides for a 24 hour internet access to students.

3.2 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided the data as gathered through the interviews and the next chapter analyses and discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an interpretation of the research findings by placing the results into a theoretical and practical context. Since the purpose of the study was to assess the quality of the seven PHEIs by determining the extent to which they comply with two elements of NQA Standards, this chapter attempts to highlight the findings by reflecting on the two primary questions posed at the beginning of the study. They are:

- 1) Are the staff qualifications and appointment procedures in the seven PHEIs in line with the scope, range and level of courses being offered to the public?
- 2) Do the scope of services and the operational facilities support the courses and certificate value?

The first question was appraised in relation to staff qualifications, relevant work experience, and authenticity of paper qualifications, recruitment, staff induction, staff development, and performance management systems in place. Before addressing the two research questions, demographic information on the PHEIs was discussed. This background proved to be necessary for an understanding of the two elements chosen for the study.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The study findings revealed that:

History

The seven PHEIs have a history of less than eleven years with the oldest being ten years old and the youngest, one and a half years. This supports the literature that suggests that the emergence of PHEIs is a recent development in Southern Africa (Mabizela 2002;

Banya 2001). In Namibia, PHEIs, therefore, are a post-independence development. This is not surprising since the history of higher education only dates back to 1981(Otaala 2003).

Type of Institution

All the PHEIs are *private-for-profit* organizations. This implies that they do not receive any funding or sponsorship from the government or any other organisation and they are maintained through fees paid by students (Hunt et al 1997). The primary motive for their establishment was a response to the market forces.

Stakeholders Involvement

The majority of the PHEIs do not involve stakeholders in the management of the institution. The exclusion of stakeholders could imply a lack of transparency. Transparency is regarded as a condition for quality. Quality in Higher Education implies accountability for the money taken from students. How do these institutions account for this money if they do not have formalized relationships with their stakeholders?

Admission Requirements

42% of these PHEIs use Grade 10 plus work experience as a criterion for admission. The admission requirement at the University of Namibia is Grade 12 pass with 25 points or above in the IGCSE or HIGSE and with the increasing demand for places only the students with the highest points have better chances. The findings also indicated a reasonable percentage (29%) of PHEIs who use Grade 12 for admission. A possible explanation for the admission requirement could be the fact that these PHEIs enroll part-time students who are in full-time employment, but possess some advanced knowledge in the field of study. In this regard, PHEIs seem to be more oriented towards addressing the injustices of the past education system. However, proper systems to assess prior learning or current competencies should be enforced to enhance the quality of the PHEIs.

Student Enrolment

Students who enroll for the higher education level vary from 45 to 720 per institution. Several factors can be associated with this number. This finding is consistent with Gertze (2004) who states that PHEIs in Namibia enroll between 200 and 1500 per institution annually. One possible factor could be the scope and range of courses offered by the institution. For example, institutions such as IUM, Bema College and Anvil College with a larger variety of courses have more students enrolled while PHEIs like Brilliant and IIT/NBI have a small enrolment rate. Another factor could be the size of the institution. Institutions with more classrooms are able to accommodate more students or the availability of full-time staff. The data also suggest that IUM has more full-time staff than part-time staff. An over-reliance on part-time staff can compromise the quality of provision.

Current Accreditation Status

The majority of the PHEIs in Namibia are accredited by international awarding bodies such as City and Guilds, Institute of Commercial Management, Cambridge University Business School. One possible explanation could be the fact that the accreditation policy in Namibia is in draft and not yet operational (Gertze 2004). This situation exemplify one of the categorizations of higher education identified by Middlehurst (2002) where part or joint providers where one partner is responsible for most processes It may also may also imply a move towards "internationalization" of Higher Education and "cross border" HE as argued by Hahn (2004) in chapter two.

Type of Courses/Programs Offered

All the seven PHEIs offer courses in Business Management, Marketing, Office Administration, Accounting, Travel and Tourism, Business English and Information Technology. This finding suggests that there is a high demand for commercial subjects. Several studies have indicated that the biggest demand is in the fields of science and technology. However, HEIs including UNAM and Polytechnic enroll more students in

commercially-related subjects. The question that continues to occupy the minds of many people is whether the developmental needs of the country are addressed or not. If quality is defined as "fit for purpose", then the question that one should ask is "Who defines the purpose?" Clearly, in this case, it is the providers and not the public. This is not surprising, considering the fact that the majority of the PHEIs studied show a low degree of stakeholders' involvement in the management of the institutions.

Level of Courses offered

The majority of the PHEIs studied offer courses at Certificate and Diploma levels, while only one offers Masters qualifications.

4.3 STAFF APPOINTMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS

The findings showed that:

Staff Numbers

The total number of staff (full-time and part-time) at the seven PHEIs is sixty-three (63). The highest number is 18 staff for 720 and the lowest is four for 45 students in the higher education level. The student-staff ratio per institution ranges from 1:8 to 1:13. This is an acceptable ratio in terms of literature which suggests a ratio of 1:15. There is an over-reliance on part-time staff in the PHEIs. Literature suggests that an over reliance on part-time staff can compromise the quality of the service provision.

Staff Qualifications

Contrary to expectations, staff at the seven PHEIs is well-qualified for the range and scope of services they offer. The majority (59%) hold Bachelor's qualifications while only (6%) hold qualifications at PhD level. This finding is consistent with literature which suggests that in assuring the quality of staff, the qualification is the obvious indication (though not always reliable) of whether the staff is able to adequately address the demands of his/her responsibilities. A government publication, *Education for All*

National Action Plan for 2001-2015 recognizes that though the quality of education is influenced by many factors, some factors such as teacher qualifications, professionalism, resource allocation and management are more crucial for the success of the education system (Namibia 2000). A teacher who possesses the necessary qualifications and who is professional in conducting his job is likely to motivate the learners to develop their full potential and enhance their learning and contribute to the success of the education system.

Higher education QA systems require that all staff must be academically and professionally qualified for their responsibilities. An academically qualified staff is one who possesses a qualification that will enable him to understand the level of teaching he/she is assigned with. For example, to be able to assist a student enrolled for a Bachelor's qualification, the staff should at least be in a possession of a qualification higher than a Bachelor plus sufficient industry experience. Staff should have the minimum qualifications and/or industry or sector experience that are consistent with the requirements stipulated by the recognized stakeholder groups for the teaching (MHETEC 2004).

However, this finding may appear to be inconsistent with the shortage of qualified Namibians identified by many studies. But a closer look at the findings indicated that the majority of the staff are non-Namibians with only (2%) being Namibians.

Relevant Work Experience

The majority of staff (36 out of 63) have work experience of less than five years followed by a large number of staff with experience ranging between 10-15 years (15 out of 63). Work experience will impact the quality of the provision since most did not engage in scholarly and work-related activities before appointment. The finding is inconsistent with Tjitendero (2000), who in reference to the quality of teaching staff in the school's system in Namibia, states that there is an unambiguous correlation between

increased teacher education, teacher experience, attractive conditions of service for teaching staff and pupils' achievements.

Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Processes

About (43%) of the PHEIs do not have documented recruitment, selection, appointment policies and procedures in place. The Accreditation Criteria suggest that institutions should have policies in place to secure persons with relevant competencies and experiences that are commensurate with the scope and level of education services offered. This implies that recruitment is not systematic, and not focused on securing "best-for-position" as the use of "handpicking" strategies is common at these PHEIs. A possible explanation could be the fact that the institutions are fairly newly established, but literature suggests that this should not be an excuse for poor HR practices as quality assurance should start in the planning phase of an institution.

In addition, the relevant element of the Accreditation Criteria argues that one way of ensuring that institutions appoint staff with suitable qualifications is to have an open and transparent process for recruiting and appointing its staff. The institutions should ensure that staff do not only have the knowledge and skills of the area of responsibility but should have knowledge in teaching, assessment and moderation, educational management expertise, quality management expertise, research and mentoring skills (MHETEC 2004).

Staff Induction Programs

Three of the seven have Staff Induction Programs in place while another three conduct informal inductions. Only two have no staff induction programs in place. This finding indicates that there is a concern in these PHEIs for introducing new staff to their new surroundings. The staff workload is low and some staff have two to six hours per week. A possible explanation could be the fact that the majority of staff is employed on a part-time basis.

Performance Management

Four(4) of the seven(7) PHEIs studied, which can be classified as a majority have never done performance appraisal of staff, while two have documented procedures but have not done any appraisal. This implies that six (6) PHEIs have not done any appraisals and only one conducts appraisals regularly, i.e. annually. It is interesting to note that the PHEI that conducts appraisals has the longest history of existence. Therefore, it could be argued that "time-in-being" plays an important role in maintaining good systems for performance management and other systems such as staff development and induction programs.

Staff development

Only two institutions have proper staff development systems in place. Staff development in these PHEIs should be regarded a crucial aspect in the enhancement of quality. Most staff have qualifications obtained in countries outside Namibia, the majority do not have relevant work experience. This may imply that the qualifications are not relevant to the local needs as they were designed for a different market. Williams (2000) suggests that there is a strong relationship between staff development and academic growth of staff and quality improvement in institutions. Institutions should make concerted efforts to ensure the professional development the improvement of the teaching performance of its teaching personnel. Staff Development opportunities provide employees with the job-specific skills, experience, and knowledge they need to do their jobs or to improve their performance.

In addition, this finding is inconsistent with the literature (Robbins & De Cenzo 1998) which suggests that the quality of instruction should be monitored carefully and active professional development be encouraged. Staff members are expected to "continue their growth throughout their careers, according to their duties and responsibilities, in relation to teaching, research/creative activity and professional service".

4.4 ADEQUACY OF PHYSICAL LEARNING RESOURCES

Lease Agreements/Site or building Plans

All the PHEIs studied have lease agreements extending between two and five years. The PHEIs are located in buildings of high quality and are well-maintained. The study also provided evidence that premises meet building, health, environment and safety regulations set by local and/or national authorities. This is in accordance with the requirements of the Accreditation Criteria which postulates that any institution worthy of accreditation should have the equipment and facilities necessary for carrying out the institutional mission that it has assigned itself. It is essential that higher education institutions provide a safe and sufficient physical environment to support and assure the quality of its services. It is the legal responsibility of managers to ensure that the workplace is free from unnecessary hazards (MHETEC 2004).

Classrooms numbers and space

The study found that the classrooms at three (3) of the seven (7) PHEIs are generally small and do not have sufficient space. The classrooms range from two to ten classrooms for the various institutions. This number is relatively inadequate considering the fact that in addition to the higher education level courses, a number of short courses in IT and other areas are also offered.

The PHEIs in the sample all rent buildings that were originally designed for office use, for example IUM is located in the old Transnamib buildings, Bema is in Kenya House, Brilliant is in Furnisher House, IIT/NIB is in Schoemans building.

Staff Offices, Study Areas/Ablution facilities and Recreational Areas

Only two PHEIs have staff room facilities and study area for students. The majority of the PHEIs (76%) have no recreational facilities. Two have sports activities for students such as soccer and basketball. Three (3) PHEIS have cafeterias to cater for the needs of

students between classes. However, it is noted that all have ablution facilities within reach of both students and staff.

Library facilities and resources

75% of these PHEIs have no library facilities. Only 5% have libraries with sufficient space to hold the resources and reader-seating volumes that are consistent with the type of courses offered and learner enrolments. However, student and staff amenities are consistent with enrolment numbers and learner profiles. Contrary to the literature (MHETEC 2004), only two of the seven PHEIs have buildings and facilities that are able to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities.

Computer and network facilities

Contrary to expectations the findings indicate that the majority of PHEIs have between one and four computer laboratories well-equipped with between 10 and 25 functioning computers. However, only one provides a 24 hour internet access for the students.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This paper has given an account of a study conducted to determine the compliance of seven Windhoek-based Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) with two elements of the Accreditation Criteria. The Standard was used as a basis to assess the quality of these PHEIs. This chapter summarises the findings of the study and provide recommendations for future work in quality assurance of PHEIs.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

As a case study, the paper provided an understanding into the seven PHEIs only and the findings are not intended to be extended to other PHEIs. However, the study provided valuable information regarding an emerging pattern regarding quality assurance practices at these institutions. The study is, to the best of my knowledge, the first of its kind in Namibia, in that it assesses the quality of PHEIs using elements of the Accreditation Criteria.

The objective of this study was to assess whether the seven PHEIs complied with the two elements of the Criteria, i.e. a) Staff Appointments and Staff Qualifications and b) Adequacy of Physical Learning resources. The discussion that follows provides a conclusive summary of the findings.

5.2.1 STAFF APPOINTMENTS AND STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

➤ *Staff Qualifications*

The majority of the PHEIs offer courses at Certificate and diploma level. There is, therefore, a high degree of compliance with this element.

➤ *Authenticity of Staff Qualifications*

Findings indicated that the majority of staff have qualifications obtained from authentic institutions. Again, there appears to be a high degree of compliance with this element. It can be concluded that staff at these PHEIs hold relevant qualifications from authentic authorities.

➤ *Work Experience of Staff*

The findings showed that the bulk of the staff have work experience of less than five years. This finding implies a high degree of non-compliance, because staff have not had experience to practice in the teaching profession. In terms of this relevant element, the implication is that staff at these PHEIs do not have skills in the areas, such as teaching knowledge; assessment and moderation expertise; educational management expertise; quality management expertise; student support skills; financial and administration expertise; research mentoring and monitoring (where degree-level programmes are offered).

➤ *Recruitment, Selection and Appointment*

The study pointed out that the majority of the PHEIs do not have documented recruitment, selection and appointment procedures. This is inconsistent with the Accreditation Criteria which requires that institutions should have documented recruitment and selection processes which are fair, valid and rigorous and are likely to secure persons with relevant competencies and experiences that are commensurate with the scope and level of education services offered. There is, therefore, a high degree of non-compliance in this score.

➤ *Staff Induction*

The study highlighted that the majority of the PHEIs have no formal induction processes that assist new staff become familiar with their new surroundings. The criteria require that institutions create sufficient and realistic opportunities for staff to remedy any performance gaps.

➤ *Staff Workload*

The study pointed out that staff workload is within the expected requirements of the Labour Act. This indicates compliance with the element of the Standard.

➤ *Full-Time versus Part-time Staff*

Another important finding of the study was that the four (4) PHEIs rely heavily on part-time staff. This suggests non-compliance with the Standard. An over-reliance on part-time staff can compromise the quality of the services.

➤ *Performance Management System/Appraisal*

The study indicated that the majority of the PHEIs do not have documented systems to manage the performance of the staff. This reflects a non-compliance with the element. The element of the criteria requires a regular staff appraisal based on an assessment of performance against relevant and transparent criteria and expectations. It also requires an appraisal focussed on the identification of skills, knowledge and performance gaps that need closing.

➤ *Staff Development*

Staff development opportunities are lacking in the majority of the PHEIs. Staff development processes and priorities should be responsive to the rate of knowledge and/or technological change in the subject areas taught and assessed, and ensures that the skills, knowledge and abilities of all staff remain current and relevant to their role and position. This implies non-compliance.

5.2.1 ADEQUACY OF LEARNING RESOURCES

➤ *Lease Agreements/Site or building Plans*

The study provided evidence that premises meet building, health, environment and safety regulations set by local and/or national authorities. Evidence is also given that the PHEIs have legal rights to the premises required to deliver the education services offered. This implies a high degree of compliance.

➤ *Classrooms numbers and space*

The study found that the classrooms at the PHEIs are small and inadequate. Classrooms are not adequate and suitable for the type and range of education services offered as well as for the number and profile of staff and learners. The lack of study areas and recreational areas are also inconsistent with the requirements of the criteria. This indicates non-compliance in most PHEIs.

➤ *Library facilities and resources (books)*

The study found that only two PHEIs have library facilities. The Criteria require that institutions should have library facilities with sufficient texts and electronic search facilities to meet the demands of the education services offered and the demands made by staff and learners. This should be considered in conjunction with the fact that PHEIs in Windhoek do not have a need for Library facilities and resources since membership to the National, UNAM and PON Libraries is open to the public. Though the PHEIs do not have library facilities enough provision is made for library facilities.

➤ *Computer Network facilities*

The majority of PHEIs have enough computer and network facilities in functional condition. There is a high degree of compliance from the PHEIs on this score.

In addition to the above summary, the following table shows the degree of compliance and non-compliance to the various aspects of the elements used.

Table 2: Compliance versus Non-Compliance of the PHEIs

Elements and Aspects of elements used	Compliance	Non-Compliance
Staff Appointments and Qualifications		
<i>Staff Qualifications</i>	Yes	
<i>Authenticity of Staff Qualifications</i>	Yes	
<i>Work Experience of Staff</i>		Yes
<i>Recruitment, Selection and Appointment</i>		Yes
<i>Staff Induction</i>		Yes
<i>Staff Workload</i>	Yes	
<i>Full-Time vs. Part-time</i>		Yes
<i>Staff Development</i>		Yes
Adequacy of Physical Learning Resources		
<i>Lease Agreements/Site or building Plans</i>	Yes	
<i>Classrooms number and space</i>		Yes
<i>Library facilities and resources (books)</i>	Yes	
<i>Computer Network facilities</i>	Yes	

The above table suggests that the PHEIs in the sample show equal degrees of compliance and non-compliance with the aspects of the elements. However, in assessing

the quality, based on the two elements, it can be argued that though there is a high degree of non-compliance in element one, i.e. staff appointments and qualifications there is also a high degree of compliance in terms of the element two, dealing with the adequacy of physical learning resources. This implies that the PHEIs are showing a concern for the public but the short history of their existence may have had an impact on the findings, since the most crucial aspects such as staff qualifications and authenticity of qualifications show compliance. Compliance, Accountability and Improvement are identified by Watty (2003) as the cornerstones of high education quality assurance. When PHEIs comply with the elements they become more accountable for the value-of-money of the students and accountability enhances improved practices.

Conclusions can be drawn from on the study that the key to quality in higher education is the time of existence and this also applies to public institutions. A comparison of the quality of education services at the University of Cape Town, which has a history of more than 40 years, with the 12 year old University of Namibia would be very unfair. Quality does not happen the first time and is therefore time-bound and gets better every time.

It can be concluded that the perceptions on the quality of these PHEIs in general are valid in some instances and invalid in other instances. The study provided a good basis for substantiating these perceptions. There are areas where the PHEIs conduct business based on quality principles e.g. the appointment of well-qualified staff and a low workload, but there are areas where they need to improve, such as the absence of documents for the major processes.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are offered:

- 5.3.1 This study only focused on PHEIs in Windhoek, it is recommended that further research be conducted country-wide in order to provide a comprehensive picture of PHEIs in the country.
- 5.3.2 The study also focused on two elements that are generally employed to measure quality inputs as opposed to outputs. In many countries there are debates about the outputs of higher educational institutions and whether societies are getting real value for their investment in higher education. Further research is therefore required to assess:
- 1) the employability of the students graduating from the PHEIs and
 - 2) the relevance of the qualifications to the workplace/their performance in the workplace.
- 5.3.3 Finally, it is recommended that further research be conducted to compare the quality of Private and Public HEIs in Namibia.
- 5.3.4 Because of the novelty of Standard is “new”, a pilot phase would be recommended with few institutions to expose the PHEIs to what compliance to the Criteria implies.
- 5.3.5 The PHEIs in Namibia conduct a self-evaluation using the criteria in order to improve their business practices and enhance the quality of their provisions.

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APPENDIX A

**QUESTIONNAIRE TO ASSESS HOW SEVEN PHEI COMPLY
WITH TWO NQA ACCREDITATION STANDARDS:**

- A) STAFF APPOINTMENTS & QUALIFICATIONS
B) ADEQUACY OF PHYSICAL LEARNING FACILITIES**

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON PHEI.

1. Demographic Information

Name of PHEI	
Location/Residential Address	
Name of Head/Director/Principal	
Nationality	
Institutional mission	

1. Number of years in existence

1	2	3	4	5+

2. General Admission requirements

Grade 10	Grade 12	Grade 12 +work experience	Work experience	None

3. Number of students enrolled currently?

Less than 20	Less than 50	Less than 100	Less than 200	More than 200 state....

4. Type of Management

Private-for-profit	Private-not-for-profit	Denominational	Public	Community Organisation

5. Motive for the establishment of the PHEI

Response to market forces	Entrepreneurial	Received funding	Passion	Concern for standards
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6. Accreditation status (regional or national)

Accredited	Not Accredited

7. PHEI's Educational Objectives

Not well defined	Broadly defined and documented; clearly tied to mission;	Comprehensive; defined, documented and measurable; clearly tied to mission and national educational goals	Comprehensive; defined, documented and measurable; clearly tied to mission; responsive to national needs; systematically reviewed and updated	Comprehensive; defined documented, measurable and flexible; clearly tied to mission; readily adaptable to meet national needs; systematically reviewed and updated

8. Stakeholders involvement in the management of the PHEI

Informal contact	Somewhat involved in defining objectives and desired outcomes, and assessment	Clearly involved in defining objectives and desired outcomes, and assessment; evidence of some sustained strategic partnerships	High degree of involvement in defining objectives and desired outcomes; evidence of many sustained strategic partnerships in all constituent groups	High degree of involvement in defining objectives and desired outcomes, assessment; and improvement cycles; sustained evidence of strategic partnership with all key stakeholders

9. Programs offered

Name of Program	Number of students enrolled

SECTION B: INFORMATION ON STAFF

1. Academic and Professional Experience of Staff

Name of staff	Qualifications	Subject/s taught	Institutions where qualifications are obtained	Years of Experience

2. Recruitment policies

Not in place	In place but not documented	Documented only in draft	Well-documented	Documented and in line with

3. Selection criteria include

Not in place	Clear and indicate duties and responsibility of the post	Clear and indicate duties and responsibility of the post, proof of ability and experience to teach the course/program/subject:	Clear and indicate duties and responsibility of the post, proof of ability and experience to teach the course/program/subject, remuneration and allowances	Clear and indicate duties and responsibility of the post, proof of ability and experience to teach the course/program/subject, remuneration and allowances Conditions of service and other expectations:

4. Staff development system

Not in place	In place but not documented	In place and well-documented	In place, documented and aligned with international best practices	Fully functioning and transparent to all staff

5. Performance Management System/Staff Appraisal

Never done	Informal by students and other staff and documented	Documented PMS policy in place but not known by all staff yet	Documented PMS policy in place known by all staff yet but not operational	Annually, documented, understood and leads to effectiveness of staff

6. Staff Workload

Less than 20 hours per week excluding research & preparation	More than 20 hours per week including research & preparation	Less than 40 hours per week including research & preparation	More than 40 hours per week including research & preparation	Less than 60 hours per week including research & preparation

SECTION C: INFORMATION ON PHYSICAL RESOURCES**1. Number of Classrooms**

1	2	3	4	5+

2. Library facilities

Never done	Informal by students and other staff and documented	Documented PMS policy in place but not known by all staff yet	Documented PMS policy in place known by all staff yet but not operational	Annually, documented, understood and leads to effectiveness of staff

3. Computer laboratories

1	2	3	4	5+

4. Social area

Yes	No

*Standard for Accreditation***The person, institution, or organisation:**

1. Clearly states measurable goals and objectives, supported by relevant stakeholders, that are relevant to a specified range of education services for a specified cohort of learners in specified learning environments and contexts.
2. Has the necessary internal structures and systems to achieve the stated goals and objectives, where such structures and systems ensure:
 - 2.1 appropriate and adequate governance, operational and educational management, and quality management
 - 2.2 the design and documentation of appropriate and adequate courses
 - 2.3 fair, transparent and equitable access granted to learners to education and assessment services offered
 - 2.4 the recruitment, management and development of appropriate and adequate staff
 - 2.5 the provision of adequate and appropriate learning facilities and resources in physical contexts that are conducive to learning
 - 2.6 the consistent delivery of planned courses
 - 2.7 that learners are well informed, guided and supported throughout their learning
 - 2.8 fair, valid and consistent assessment of learner performance
 - 2.9 learner enrolment, progression and achievement records are safely maintained
 - 2.10 appropriate, adequate and ethical research is carried out in relation to degree-level courses and programmes (where applicable)
 - 2.11 the breadth and quality of learning opportunities are enhanced through well documented and soundly-based franchise and partnership arrangements (where applicable)
 - 2.12 the regular and robust review of the systems related to the above and the adoption of appropriate opportunities for improvement.
3. Substantially achieves, through the application of its internal structures and systems, stated goals and objectives and builds upon them.

2.4 *Staff appointment and development*

Requirements	Criteria
1. Documented recruitment and selection processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The recruitment sources, processes and criteria are fair, valid and rigorous and are likely to secure persons with relevant competencies and experiences that are commensurate with the scope and level of education services offered. b. Statements of service include, as a minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • statement of duties; responsibilities and accountabilities; • subject-related and teaching/assessing qualifications (where applicable) and/or experience needed; • person specifications; • remuneration and allowances; • code of conduct requirements; • service conditions and expectations. c. Advertisements clearly reflect position descriptions for the position advertised. d. Selection criteria do not unfairly discriminate against some prospective applicants. e. Interview questions relate to the position and provide opportunities for persons to share information on their skills, knowledge and experience, and person qualities that are applicable to the position. f. The procedures for recruitment and selection are adhered to and are effective.
2. Employment of appropriate staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The structure and levels of professional (teaching) and administration (ancillary) staff is relevant and appropriate to the scope of services and the size and nature of the provider. b. The provider has staff with skills in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teaching and subject knowledge; • assessment and moderation expertise; • educational management expertise;

- quality management expertise;
 - student support skills;
 - financial and administration expertise;
 - research mentoring and monitoring (where degree-level programmes are offered).
- c. All professional staff have minimum qualifications and/or sector/industry/work experiences that are consistent with the need to ensure the attainment of the types of qualifications to be awarded and are generally qualified one level higher than the qualification for which the course is intended. In the case of degree-level courses, the minimum qualification to be held is a Masters degree.
 - d. Professional staff have qualifications and/or experiences stipulated by recognised stakeholder groups for the teaching and awarding of national qualifications.
 - e. All administration staff have minimum qualifications that are consistent with the need to provide the level of support needed to ensure the smooth running of the provider and its courses, and the attainment of goals and objectives.
 - f. Staff demonstrates a clear commitment to and interest in the learning and attainments of their learners.
 - g. The sourcing of staff from any franchise or collaborative partner does not compromise the continuity of teaching and learning.

3. Fair conditions of employment

- a. The provider complies fully with current employment-related legislation regarding appointment, conditions of employment, health and safety, discipline, and dismissal requirements.
- b. There is an induction process that assists new staff become familiar with their new surroundings, organisational values, and policies and procedures.
- c. The provider acts as a "good employer" in regards to the health, welfare and ethical treatment of all staff.

4. Regular appraisal of staff performance

- a. Staff appraisal is based on an assessment of performance against relevant and transparent criteria and expectations.
- b. Appraisal is a regular though not burdensome activity.
- c. The appraisal process is fair and equitable.
- d. Appraisal is focussed on the determination of successes and the identification of skills, knowledge and performance gaps that need closing.
- e. The appraisal process is well documented and enables outcomes to be actioned and monitored. Information on the process is clear, transparent and accessible to staff.
- f. The appraisal system is applicable to all staff.
- g. The performance appraisal system is followed as documented.

5. Commitment to staff development

- a. There are sufficient and realistic opportunities for staff to remedy any performance gaps.
- b. Staff development is adequately resourced and is consistent with the financial position of the provider.
- c. Staff development processes and priorities are responsive to the rate of knowledge and/or technological change in the subject areas taught and assessed, and ensures that the skills, knowledge and abilities of all staff remain current and relevant to their role and position.
- d. Staff development opportunities are made available to all staff.

2.5 *Learning facilities, resources and contexts*

Requirements

Criteria

1. Adequate and appropriate buildings

- a. Evidence is given that the provider has regular legal rights and/or access to any sites and premises required to deliver the education services offered.
- b. Site plans show the current location of key buildings and services.
- c. Local authority zoning laws permit the conduct of the education services offered.
- d. Premises meet building, health, environment and safety regulations set by local and/or national authorities.
- e. Premises are clean and well maintained.
- f. Premises are sufficient for the type and range of education services offered and the number and profile of staff and learners.
- g. Premises are sufficient to meet any staff or learner residential demands (where applicable).

2. Adequate and appropriate facilities

- a. Library facilities have sufficient space to hold the resources and reader-seating volumes that are consistent with the type of courses offered and learner enrolments.
- b. Library facilities have sufficient texts and electronic search facilities to meet the demands of the education services offered and the demands made by staff and learners.
- c. Student amenities are consistent with enrolment numbers and learner profiles.
- d. Staff amenities are consistent with staff numbers.
- e. Specialist rooms and teaching facilities are sufficient for the number and type of courses offered, learner numbers and maximum capacity levels.
- f. All buildings and facilities are capable of accommodating the needs of persons with disabilities.

- g. There are sufficient operational ablution facilities for the number of staff and learners on site at any one time.
- h. The number, size and type of housing or accommodation units, where applicable, are sufficient to meet the numbers of staff and learners requiring such residences.
- i. The nature of any residences provides a standard of accommodation and comfort consistent with residences found in similar circumstances.

3. Adequate and appropriate teaching materials and equipment

- a. An Assets Register is maintained.
- b. Sufficient financial provision is made to provide for the acquisition and maintenance of equipment and specialist materials and equipment of an appropriate volume, form and currency that is relevant to the outcomes of learning being developed.
- c. Teaching materials and equipment is of a kind that matches that currently used in the industry settings relevant to the intended outcomes of each course.
- d. Teaching materials and equipment is of a kind, currency and volume relevant to the mode of delivery and enrolments for each course and is accessible at the time of need.
- e. The lease or loan of equipment and specialist materials is covered by agreements that ensure access and availability at the time of need.

4 Adequate and appropriate learning materials and equipment

- a. Textbook and learning materials acquisition, distribution and maintenance procedures are sufficient to meet the needs of staff, learners and the learning demands generated by the intended outcomes of each course.
- b. Learning materials and equipment are relevant to materials and equipment in current use in the industry setting relevant to the intended outcomes of the course.

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