COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Quality Assurance Guidelines for Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning And Assessment During the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020

Executive Summary

This report flows from deliberations by the CHE, in line with its legislative quality assurance mandate to address concerns related to quality in teaching, learning and assessment during the academic period affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The response by higher education (HE) to the pandemic and to the regulatory environment concerning the restrictions related to the pandemic is structured into four HE Phases, in line with the national lockdown levels, with the main administrative, financial, and academic activities in each.

The potential costs of saving the academic year are briefly discussed with a focus on the anticipated educational costs in terms of social justice, student retention and success, quality emergency remote teaching, learning, and emergency remote assessment. It is important to note that the term *emergency remote teaching and learning* refers to a mode of delivery through which contact and face-to-face delivery has been transferred to usually digital, remote platforms under emergency conditions. Emergency remote teaching and learning is not online learning which is meant to be deliberately and thoroughly planned, designed and developed based on specific pedagogies appropriate for online learning. “Remoteness” in teaching is not an appropriate pedagogy even under emergency circumstances and academics should take care to create as much presence as possible for their students, be it synchronous or asynchronous.

The potential anticipated educational costs of saving the academic year are then addressed with quality assurance guidelines in the following areas:

- Programme management
- Teaching and learning
- Student support
- Staff capacity development and well-being
- Formative and summative assessment.

Finally, the quality assurance guidelines indicate 10 institutional quality areas with associated quality measures and recorded evidence for institutions to use as guidelines during this time, as well as summarising the 5 quality areas above in Tables 1, 2 and 3 for ease of reference.

It is important to note that these Guidelines are applicable to the 2020 academic year and apply to both private and public higher education institutions. Institutions are encouraged to apply these guidelines with due consideration to their own context.

The Guidelines were approved by the HEQC Executive Committee on 18 June 2020 and by the Council on Higher Education on 25 June 2020.

Contents

1. Introduction

The CHE, through the HEQC, performs its quality assurance and quality promotion functions in terms of the HE Act, 101 of 1997, as amended, and in its capacity as the quality council (QC) for higher education, in terms of section 25 of the National Qualifications Framework Act, 67 of 2008, as amended (NQF Act). In fulfilment of its mandate, it is imperative for the CHE and HEQC to provide guidelines to the higher-education sector on quality assurance during the unprecedented time of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly for emergency remote teaching, learning and assessment for the 2020 academic year.

Most public and private higher education institutions (HEIs) in South Africa are contact and residential institutions. The COVID-19 crisis has made the normal *modus operandi* of teaching, learning and assessment in those institutions challenging to maintain. Even before the nationwide lockdown was declared, it was not business as usual for the HEIs because their campuses are concentrations of large communities of students and staff, making it difficult for individuals to practise social distancing. For this reason, the HEIs were among the first public institutions to suspend their operations at the early stages of the pandemic, and the majority of students had to vacate campuses well before the country went into the lockdown. Even HEIs that normally operate at a distance or online, were impelled to make adjustments to venue-based activities such as practical courses and examinations. Since the initial responses in March 2020, several shifts in levels of lockdown have followed nationally, with corresponding shifts in the higher-education sector. Before turning to the guidelines for quality assurance, the phases of the HE response to the pandemic will be described briefly.

2. Phases of the HE response to the COVID-19 pandemic

In order to salvage the 2020 academic year, and in line with the Ministerial directive of 23 May 2020 under the theme *Save the Academic Year, Save Lives*, most HEIs have responded to the COVID-19 crisis by turning to the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) platforms and a variety of emergency remote learning methods to deliver learning material and tuition support to students.

The response of the HE sector to the COVID-19 pandemic can be described in phases, even though these phases are not discrete or watertight categories. HE Phase 1 was the immediate lockdown at Level 5 at nationally, which was accompanied by an emergency planning phase for the sector. This planning phase was characterised by administrators in institutions and the DHET working to ensure devices and access to data for students and staff, as well as by academic staff beginning the onerous task of creating digital material to be delivered to students. Based on the activities of the DHET and individual HEIs to address issues around devices, data, connectivity and its cost, the access challenges have been met head-on and mitigated through deals negotiated with internet service providers for low-cost internet access to students, as well as zero-rating of institutional websites.

The pragmatic approach for teaching and learning that was adopted was that of ‘emergency remote teaching’ (ERT) which is defined as a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode as a response to crisis situations. ERT involves the use of fully remote teaching solutions for instruction or education that would otherwise be delivered face-to-face or as blended or hybrid courses. ERT signals the use of a different form of transmission mode than contact classes but indicates that an online pedagogy has most likely not been adopted. ERT is based on the understanding that there would be a return to the normal contact-mode teaching and learning once the crisis is under control, and a safe return to classes possible. The primary objective of ERT is not to re-create a robust educational ecosystem but rather to provide temporary access to instruction and instructional support in a manner that is quick to

set up and is reliably available during an emergency or crisis.[1] In other words, ERT is a temporary solution mirroring normal activities – the study of text, primarily the textbook, attending (digital) lectures and attending (digital) tutorials. The role of emergency remote assessment in this scenario has not been sufficiently teased out and will be a focus of these quality assurance (QA) guidelines.

An important development in terms of the accreditation of qualifications is that the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) on 7 April 2020 approved that, in order to accommodate the necessity of emergency remote teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, all higher-education qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) that were previously accredited for the contact or distance mode of delivery are now regarded as also accredited for the blended and online modes for the duration of the 2020 academic year. This has been communicated to all institutions, public and private. Whilst such a blanket approval is not ideal, it was necessary and must be accepted for the current conditions. The 2021 academic year will have to be considered on its own terms in the light of prevailing conditions in the future.

HE Phase 1, from March to May 2020, aligned to the national lockdown levels 5 and 4, was therefore a time of emergency planning for access: for administrators to provide access to physical devices and access to data for both students and staff, and for academics to create digital learning material for their students, mostly in the form of digital lectures, digital tutorials and additional digital text-based material.

HE Phase 2 (since June 2020, but earlier in some HEIs), aligned to national lockdown level 3, can in some sense be described as a consolidation phase of emergency remote teaching and learning. The majority of students would have access to devices and data, or alternatively have had materials delivered to them in printed format to circumvent lack of devices, access to data or course materials and learning programmes not being digitised.

The very real problem during HE Phase 1 which centred on compulsory practical work such as in laboratories or for clinical practice during the full lockdown under Level 5 and 4, would be partially mitigated in HE Phase 2 (national lockdown level 3 and possible level 2) by a phased return of students to campus. With the return of 33% of students to campus under Level 3 and 66% of students under Level 2, the problem for administrators now shifts to one of careful planning and adjustment of the timetable and higher education calendar for such students to ensure that they achieve the required number of hours of practical, laboratory or clinical work, as well as to ensuring that all sites of delivery are prepared for a return of students and staff with adherence to health and safety regulations.

HE Phase 2 will comprise the bulk of the emergency remote teaching and learning of the 2020 academic year. It is likely that for most students, HE Phase 2 will continue for the remainder of 2020, and perhaps into 2021, which means that in addition to the emergency remote teaching and learning of most taught classes, emergency remote assessment activities will have to be conducted online and remotely. As the end of the academic year nears, the challenges of emergency remote assessment under the emergency remote teaching and

[1] Illanes, P., Law, J., Mendy, A., Sanghvi, S., & Sarakatsannis, J. (2020) Coronavirus and the campus: How can US higher Education organise to respond. McKinsey & Company https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/McKinsey/Industries/Public%20Sector/Our%20Insights/Coronavirus%20and%20the%20campus%20How%20can%20US%20higher%20education%20organize%20to%20respond/Coronavirus-and-the-campus-How-can-US-higher-education-organize-to-respond.ashx

learning modality will loom larger. Hence the particular focus of these guidelines on assessment.

HE Phase 3, presumably some time towards the end of 2020 or the beginning of 2021, will again be a planning phase in which the 'new normal' for HE (a possible HE Phase 4) will have to be mapped out for the longer term. This planning phase can, however, not usefully be entered into before a more certain idea of the long-term trajectory of the pandemic has been gained. Questions such as the following will form part of the planning in HE Phase 3:

- How has the 2020 pandemic affected the sustainability of HE in South Africa in general, and individual HEIs, both public and private, in particular?
- Will the forced 2020 investment in infrastructure, both the physical IT infrastructure and intellectual digital resources, affect strategic and academic planning of HEIs in the longer term?
- Can the forced 2020 emergency remote teaching and learning develop into more permanent and sustainable online learning models, based on systemic digitisation strategies and more coherent and deliberate online pedagogies?
- Will all contact institutions return to the normality they knew at the beginning of 2020, or is there no turning back?
- How will the pandemic impact enrolment patterns for 2021 and beyond?
- How have students and staff responded to the 2020 HE Phases 1 and 2? And what will these responses mean for long-term planning in HEIs?

Some of the most important questions to confront now as part of HE Phase 2 of the COVID-19 response, are related to the cost at which the academic year of 2020 is being saved? These costs can be conceptualised from various perspectives: the financial cost which will be substantial but could eventually be calculated, the human and social cost to the well-being of students and staff which will also be substantial but will be more difficult to measure, and most importantly, the educational cost. Since we are currently in HE Phase 2 of the response, it will be important to conceptualise the possible educational cost of saving the 2020 academic year and to put in place mitigating strategies. The QA guidelines in this report are intended to mitigate some of the educational costs of saving the 2020 academic year.

The table below summarises the phases of response to the COVID-19 pandemic by HEIs and the main activities in each phase:

National Lockdown Level	**HE Phase**	**Time frame**	**Leadership, administration, management, and planning**	**Finance**	**Academic**
Levels 5 and 4	**Phase 1**	March – May 2020	Ensuring access to devices and data, printed and digital materials dispatched to students	Re-directing funding	Pivot to emergency remote T&L Creating digital learning resources
Level 3	**Phase 2**	June 2020 - ?	Preparing for phased return of some students and staff Administration of multi-modal	Calculating financial costs	*Consolidating emergency remote T&L, and assessment* *Designing multi-modal emergency*

			emergency remote assessment Anticipating and mitigating human costs to student and staff well-being		*remote assessment* *Anticipating and mitigating the educational costs*
	Phase 3	Late 2020, Or 2021?	Strategic planning and (re-)direction Considering new enrolment patterns	Sustainability	Considering new pedagogical models
	Phase 4	Perhaps 2021, or possibly only 2022?	Multi-modal teaching, learning and assessment integral to future sectoral and institutional strategies Digitisation as central plank in systemic and institutional transformation		

The remainder of these guidelines will focus on the quality-assurance issues for the academic activities of HE Phase 2, namely on anticipating and mitigating the educational costs of saving the 2020 academic year and on consolidating emergency remote teaching, learning and assessment for the remainder of HE Phase 2. Considering longer term pedagogical models will require a different set of quality-assurance guidelines.

3. The HE Phase 1 state of emergency remote teaching and learning globally and in South African HEIs

The COVID-19 crisis has affected the academic programmes in HEIs globally. Therefore, HEIs in other parts of the world also had to adopt ERT methods. According to World Economic Forum[2] one of the HEIs in China that responded effectively and in time was the Zhejiang HEI (ZJU), which has seven campuses in the Zhejiang Province. Its ERT strategy was three-pronged. Firstly, it organised a series of training sessions in mid-February for 3,670 faculty members to demonstrate to them how to adapt contact pedagogy to emergency remote teaching. The possibility in China to insist on compulsory training for academics may not be feasible in South Africa. Other incentives may be required, such as for example, teaching excellence awards, and including the training in promotion criteria. Secondly, in order to bridge the digital divide, the HEI funded access to emergency remote learning for more than 1,000 disadvantaged students since January 2020. Thirdly, the HEI negotiated deals with several network providers to subsidise the data plans of its faculty and students. For students without access to live streaming or those who were grappling with sub-optimal internet connections, Zhejiang HEI provided them with lecture playbacks and courseware packages.

The experience of Zhejiang HEI has been adapted to suit local contexts of different HEIs across the world, although the responses have been varied[3]. In the main, most HEIs have adopted a combination of some of the following measures in their ERT strategies, some of which are also in evidence in South Africa:

[2] World Economic Forum https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/03/coronavirus-china-the-challenges-of-online-learning-for-universities/

[3] https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/apr/25/degrees-of-separation-can-universities-adapt-in-the-rush-to-online-learning

- Video conferencing platforms (using software such as Zoom)
- Student chatrooms for collaboration
- Discussion boards for collaboration
- Basic web-based communication functions (You-tube, Facebook etc)
- Open Classrooms: offer online, state-endorsed undergraduate and master's degrees with individual mentorship
- Web conferencing (giving live online classes using software like BigBlueButton and recording images of computer screens using Mediasite)
- Recorded video lessons for students
- Live student and teacher interactions
- Slideshows prepared by students to display their completed work
- Online study group fora for students
- Virtual lecture halls, accessible online
- Google Meet, Google Classroom and Jamboard for teaching and learning
- Online courses for students.

In South Africa, public HEIs have submitted plans to DHET as required but these are not publicly available. The current responses underline that some HEIs may have misappropriated the term 'online learning' as a distinct form of pedagogy underpinned by its own philosophy, sociology and psychology of education and it is suggested that the term 'emergency remote teaching and learning' should be used instead. It may also be necessary to require private providers to indicate what their plans have been and how they have been managing the pandemic.

The following measures are commonly adopted by HEIs with a clear focus on access (to providing devices and data and making lectures available digitally) in HE Phase 1 in South Africa:

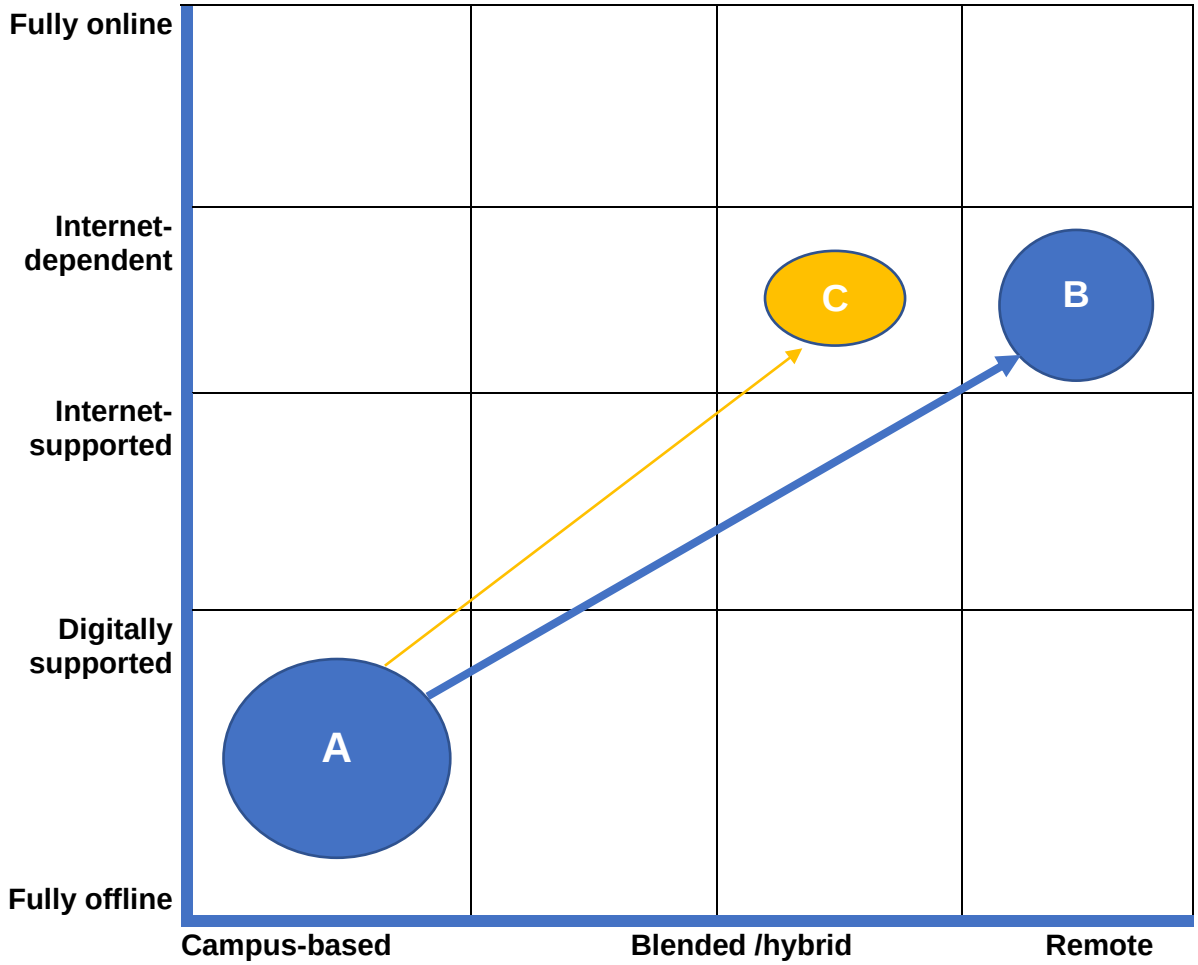
- HEIs have procured laptops that are being made available to students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and who have no connectivity to online learning resources. Some laptops were donations, and some were distributed on a loan basis.
- Once purchased, the computers are pre-loaded with the required learning resources before being delivered via the South African Post Office or courier services to students who need them.
- The Department and HEIs have entered into agreements with telecommunications companies to zero-rate the access to and browsing of HEI websites and LMS's but this does not assist other browsing such as YouTube and other sources of video. Although this reduces the cost of accessing and browsing the relevant websites and online platforms, the amount of free data might also be limited.
- Some HEIs have invested significant financial resources to secure some data per student per month.
- Some HEIs have developed mobile applications for anytime, anywhere access to resources and lectures.
- Where students had no access to any device or data, delivery of paper-based material has been considered in addition to the extension of face-to-face lectures during the September and December vacation breaks, and possibly into the new year.
- Some HEIs are working with the country's broadcasting houses to explore using some of the available channels for teaching and learning.
- Several HEIs have made arrangements to distribute, via Post Office, memory sticks or CDs that are preloaded with learning material.

- Several HEIs have packaged learning materials and loaded them on platforms like Blackboard or Sakai or sent them attached to emails.
- Some have also explored the use of videoconferencing platforms such as Zoom, Skype and Teams, some of which are open platforms but may be heavy on data.

The existing contextual and differentiated nature of the HEI sector in South Africa has been underlined by the responses to the pandemic and strategies for emergency remote teaching and learning. It is therefore recommended that the HE response in South Africa should be differentiated and contextual and based on student and staff profiles, access, capacity and readiness to make the necessary adjustments. A concern remains the lack of information in the response from private HE to the pandemic.

During HE Phase 1, most HEIs have therefore had to make a sudden and largely unplanned shift in mode of delivery from A to B in the diagram below, and in HE Phase 2 including some students on campus for clinical and practical work in C.

Mode of provision (adapted from CHE 2014: 11)



4. Anticipating the educational costs of saving the 2020 academic year

4.1 Social justice, student retention and success

The first educational cost to anticipate is one of social justice as elucidated by Behari-Leak and Gana[4] when they question why the HEIs have rushed to jump onto the 'online teaching bandwagon' without properly assessing the academic, sociological and pedagogical merits of it as an ERT method in South Africa. They argue that the use of online platforms to deliver learning material meant for face-to-face delivery can easily mask or make invisible social inequality and access to the 'goods of the HEI'. They therefore strongly believe that there is a need for an urgent national dialogue of academics, HEI management, policy-makers, statutory bodies and other professional associations before HEIs take it upon themselves to adopt the 'online learning' as pedagogic solution for all, not only during the COVID-19 crisis, but even beyond, making it relevant for the Phase 3 planning mentioned above. Institutional differentiation and autonomy may have a role to play in such a dialogue.

The emergency remote teaching strategy that has been adopted under pressure and within a short timeframe, threatens to exclude or disadvantage many who are not economically or functionally able to participate in such practices, where a physical device and data are not be the only sufficient requirements, albeit that they are necessary requirements. Any decision to pursue online teaching and learning as the only solution to the challenges imposed by COVID-19 poses the risk of reversing the transformation gains of the last twenty-five years, and hence the call for a national dialogue. Emergency remote teaching and learning has been considered a better alternative to doing nothing and the express purpose of this was to ensure that students would not, as far as possible, be unnecessarily disadvantaged by any delays in completing the academic year.

There is still much work to be done to level the playing field for poor students to functionally participate in the virtual environment without being intimidated by personal context, ability, comfortability, isolation, privacy, and a myriad of social conditions, not to mention continued issues with the availability of technology and data. Student well-being in these times of uncertainty and stress might be a particular risk for HE.

The social justice cost as described here may have a direct and serious impact on both ***retention and student success*** for the 2020 academic year. It is of paramount importance that each HEI identifies the students at risk and plans appropriate, differentiated and personalised mitigation strategies. Possible strategies may include building digital literacies and strategies for self-directed learning, regular and personalised mentorship from a tutor, etc. and are discussed in more detail under student support below.

Whilst the focus on HE Phase 1 was on providing access and delivering emergency remote teaching to students in individual courses, an aspect that may have been overlooked is programme management. As we move into the second half of the academic year, students may need assistance with registering for different courses and may be (re-considering) their academic load. Coherent programme management will, therefore, also need focussed attention in HE Phase 2.

4.2 Quality emergency remote teaching

Emergency remote teaching, like other modes of teaching and learning, requires much preparation, in terms of resources, including finances, technology, support infrastructure, investment in human capital and time, and academic capacity building. The ability of

[4] https://www.HEIworldnews.com/post.php?story=20200402072608864

academics to successfully pivot to emergency remote teaching and learning is a short space of time, under pressure and often with little or no training, may seriously impact on the quality of teaching that students receive, which in turn will impact learning outcomes and student success. Continued and structured support to academics, which should include at a minimum training for emergency online delivery, but should be broader than technicist training, is discussed in more detail below.

It is important to note that the term *emergency remote teaching and learning* refers to a mode of delivery through which contact and face-to-face delivery has been transferred to usually digital, remote platforms under emergency conditions. Emergency remote teaching and learning is not online learning in which the content, materials, learning process and assessment is deliberately and thoroughly planned, designed and developed based on specific pedagogies appropriate for online learning. "Remoteness" in teaching is not an appropriate pedagogy even under emergency circumstances and academics should take care to create as much presence as possible for their students, be it synchronous or asynchronous. Academics are encouraged to continue and to build on good teaching practices such as engaging students and themselves in "deliberative, open and reflexive encounters" with the "criticality, openness, reflexivity, autonomy and imaginativeness… [that constitute] liberatory pedagogic encounters" and that allow students to be provoked to reach their full potential.[5]

Online or digital *presence* can be created by narrowing the so-called transactional distance[6] in a remote setting. The educational experience of students in a remote or distance setting can be mitigated by the cognitive and teaching presence of the academic, in selecting the content and purposefully structuring the learning process, and by social presence, in which a supportive discourse and a particular climate is set.[7]

The pivot to emergency remote teaching has seriously impacted on academic staff in various ways, but mostly in terms of time and stress. In addition to training and support for emergency remote teaching and learning, academics need certainty in terms of what is expected of them and in terms of how best to manage their time and schedules, which might in turn affect their research commitments, as well as require psycho-social support from their employers and line managers. Most staff members, particularly female staff, will have additional responsibilities at home, such as caring for the elderly and emergency home-schooling children.

4.3 Emergency remote assessment of learning

The issues of assessment and grading under ERT have as yet not been fully considered. It is vitally important that the Class of 2020 is not forever known as the class that was not properly assessed and that their qualifications are, therefore, viewed as of lesser value. World-wide, some HEIs have adopted 'temporary' emergency remote assessment and grading systems. A battery of 'rapid appraisal' assessment methods have been developed and students are provided with the opportunity to select the assessment methods that they would like to be

[5] Waghid, Yusef, Waghid, Faiq and Zayd Waghid 2018 *Rupturing African Philosophy on Teaching and Learning: Ubuntu Justice and Education*. Palgrave: Macmillan.

[6] Moore, Michael Grahame 2013 *The Theory of Transactional Distance*. In: Handbook of Distance Education, ed. Michael Grahame Moore, Routledge: New York.

[7] Garrison, D. Randy and Zehra Akyol 2013 *The Community of Inquiry Theoretical Framework*. In: Handbook of Distance Education, ed. Michael Grahame Moore, Routledge: New York.

undertake[8] Similarly, temporary pass/fail grading systems may have been considered in some quarters with the option for conversion to ordinary grading systems after the crisis is over. Such conversion would be rigorous processes designed and implemented at the level of individual faculties or departments.[9] Some institutions may have opted for forms of continuous assessment at lower levels of a programme and with a focus on exit-level assessment. It may be that assessment practices are one of the most complex challenges in the emergency remote teaching scenario, and this report will therefore have a particular focus on emergency remote assessment.

5. Programme management in HE Phase 2

In HE Phase 2 where there is a consolidation of emergency remote teaching and learning in individual courses, specific attention to programme management will be important.

The following guidelines may assist programme managers in line with the following CHE Guidelines:

5.1 Communication with staff and students

Clear and regular communication with students is paramount. Departments, faculties and institutions should communicate clear and unambiguous messages to staff and students. Where a faculty, department or module deviate from institutional practice, the deviation should be explained. Contradictory messages should be avoided.

The official learning management system (LMS) should ideally remain the vehicle for academic communication with students. Students with only limited access (in time and data) could be supported by repeating announcements and postings on other platforms, such as social media, but students need to be informed that the official information is on the formal LMS. The students are on their smart phones and social media platforms such as WhatsApp already; these low-cost vehicles could be used extensively to re-inforce and repeat important communication, even as students understand that the LMS remains the formal channel.

5.2 Affordances of modules to pivot to emergency remote teaching and learning

Programmes, modules and fields of study vary considerably in how easily they can pivot to emergency remote teaching and learning. Most institutions would already be advanced in this process, but it is stressed that HEIs should evaluate each programme and module according to specified criteria and consider adjustments to the curriculum and mode of offering. Such module evaluations for emergency remote teaching and learning could be documented and shared. Appendix A contains an example of a rubric for evaluating the affordances of a module for emergency remote teaching and learning within the national regulations.

After an initial evaluation, each learning programme and module should have a programme and module plans in place, that are continuously reviewed and adjusted as necessary. Records of changes under emergency remote teaching and learning should be kept.

5.3 Curriculum adjustments in terms of programme design

Based on certain criteria such as the affordances of modules to pivot to emergency remote teaching and learning, or not, academic workload allocation and the national, provincial and

[8] Science Business (2020) https://sciencebusiness.net/news/italian-universities-scramble-move-teaching-and-research-online-during-coronavirus-lockdown

[9] HEI World News https://www.HEIworldnews.com/post.php?story=20200324115802272

district alert level of the institution, adjustments can be made to the undergraduate curriculum in the following ways:

(a) Reducing content to focus on outcomes and competencies, especially bearing in mind that online activities typically take longer to develop and to complete than, for example, in a face-to-face (f2f) tutorial
(b) Re-ordering content, outcomes and competencies (e.g. to start the emergency remote teaching and learning journey with students with simpler and / or more enjoyable online material and to move to more complex material requiring higher digital literacy)
(c) Replacing existing content with similar content that is more accessible online or more conducive to online teaching and learning, e.g. using OERs and MOOCs but bearing in mind that such resources may be using video and may be heavy on data use and do not fall within the zero-rating for data cost as negotiated which may exclude some students; alternatives should always be available
(d) Adjusting emergency remote assessment strategies (e.g. using continuous assessment with promotion to the next level either being ratified with pre-assessment in the following year or a capstone assessment in the final year with external moderation)
(e) Creating RPL and service-learning opportunities for students (cf. recommendations below)
(f) In cases where contact-intensive facilities or practical supervision may not be accessible in this academic year due to the state of disaster, students may have to be permitted to complete a progamme part-time over a longer period. An example of such an exceptional case would be a 3-year B Sc in Chemistry moving to 4 years, where laboratory facilities are being preferentially used by final-year and senior students to complete their programmes, and not enough facilities are available to maintain the necessary distancing precautions, wearing masks and sanitising of all used venues. Care should be taken of students' bursary and grant commitments in such cases.

Important provisos:

i. The exit-level programme outcomes and competencies of the programme as accredited should not be changed.
ii. The content of the programme curriculum should not be changed by more than 50% as accredited. Content here does not refer to a specific set of textbooks or lecturer notes, but to conceptual content. Textbooks or resources covering the same conceptual content can be exchanged.
iii. The credit value of the overall programme should remain the same (e.g. a 3-year B degree should remain at 360 credits) as per the HEQSF requirements, with especially the exit-level modules having the correct number of credits at the correct NQF level, e.g. a 3-year B Sc with 360 credits overall should still have a minimum of 120 credits at NQF level 7.
iv. Care should be taken not to shift content to the future expecting a quick resolution to the COVID-19 crisis; students doing a full-time 360-credit degree should still be able to complete the programme in 3 years, except in exceptional cases such as (f) above.
v. **Programme design changes should be recorded with motivation for the changes, the extent of the changes and the effect of the changes which should be kept as evidence**.

5.4 Curriculum adjustments regarding elective modules and topics

(a) Elective modules in a programme could be discontinued for the duration of the state of disaster but the correct number of credits should be maintained (e.g. if students are required to do 2 out of 4 elective modules, only offer 2 through emergency remote teaching and learning). Previous track records of student choices, affordances for pivoting to online learning and lecturer workload could determine which electives are offered. Records with

motivation for the changes, the extent of the changes and the effect of the changes should be kept as evidence. Students should be permitted to return to electives once they are re-instated.

(b) Elective topics within modules could be discontinued for the duration of the state of disaster but correct credits for the module should be maintained (e.g. if students are required to do 1 out of 3 elective topics, only offer 1 topic in emergency remote teaching and learning). Previous track records of student choices, affordances for pivoting to online learning and lecturer workload could determine which electives are offered. Records with motivation for the changes, the extent of the changes and the effect of the changes should be kept as evidence.

5.5 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Existing institutional policies for RPL and the CHE *Policies on Recognition of Prior Learning, Credit Accumulation and Transfer, and Assessment in Higher Education* remain pertinent and should continue to be used.

5.6 Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT)

Existing institutional policies for CAT and the CHE *Policies on Recognition of Prior Learning, Credit Accumulation and Transfer, and Assessment in Higher Education* remain pertinent and should continue to be used.

5.7 Pre- and co-requisites

Pre-requisite and co-requisite requirements for modules may have to be re-considered on a module-by-module and / or a student-by-student case to assist students not to lose time to completion, should they fail a module or not have access to a module.

5.8 Deferment and exclusion policies and rules

HEIs may consider to temporarily re-align their deferment and exclusion policies and rules to the unique requirements of the current emergency. Many students who are dependent on family funding may lose their financial support as a result of the rising unemployment or because they may take longer to complete their studies. Such students could possibly be given the opportunity to defer their studies (for one or two years). The principle of '*no student left behind'* should be the guiding precept, and every attempt should be made to enable students to succeed.

5.9 Service learning

Some modules or programmes may be especially suited for service and work-integrated learning. Such modules may be re-designed according to the recommendations above to allow students to work as volunteers in the community or in essential industries. Low contact and online community work, such as designing and costing plans for interventions to problems specified by communities may also be considered as authentic remote learning activities.

5.10 Out-of-province students

Out-of-province and out-of-district students in each institution should be identified and especially supported within the guidelines given.

6. Quality teaching and learning

In the African context, the concept of 'community' is very important and can best be explained by the notion of 'ubuntu'. Ubuntu can be summarised in the maxim *umuntu ngumuntu nga bantu* in Zulu and *motho ke motho ka batho* in the Sotho languages (roughly translated as "I am human, because you are human, we are human together"). African philosopher Professor Ramose writes, "Although the English language does not exhaust the meaning of this

maxim…it may nonetheless be construed to mean that to be a human be-ing is to affirm one's humanity by recognising the humanity of others, and on that basis, establish humane relations with them."[10] One of the ways in which Ubuntu in the teaching environment generally, and in online learning specifically in this time of isolation and social distancing can be applied, is by linking it to the concept of a "humanising framework" for emergency remote T&L.

Stobel and Tillburg-Webb (2008)[11] set out what they call a "humanising framework" for integrating technologies into instructional design and education. A humanising framework enables teachers to critically evaluate their activities and how technology is used and integrated into the teaching mission. The core principles of the framework are the following:

- fostering independent thinking,
- problem-based learning,
- student-centredness, and
- student engagement and interaction.

The main purpose of the humanising framework is that the *larger educational goal remains in focus* and that the technology is only used as and when and how it may be appropriate to achieve these goals. This approach is what would hold in instructional design for blended learning under normal circumstances. In the COVD-19 scenario with an enforced pivot to emergency remote T&L, using technology is not a choice. The underlying principles of a "humanising framework" with the core principles listed above and the idea of "keeping the larger educational goal" in focus, are important principles for the quality of the learning experiences of our students, especially in the time of a pandemic.

Terry Anderson describes three types of interaction that students are typically involved in[12]:

- student-content interaction when the student is in a direct cognitive interaction with content
- student-student interaction when students discuss, share and learn from each other, and
- student-teacher interaction in what Holmberg calls the "guided didactic conversation[13].

Research has shown that for learning to be successful, all three types of interaction are necessary, but at least two of the three should be very well developed. Merely pivoting standard class lectures to digital lectures creates a strong emphasis on student-content interaction. It is, therefore, very important for lecturers to consciously design at least one of the other two forms of interaction into their courses. Such interaction can be in the form of formative assessment which will be dealt with below.

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[10] Ramose, M.B. (2002). The philosophy of ubuntu and ubuntu as philosophy. In Coetzee, P.H. & Roux, A.P.J. (eds) Philosophy from Africa. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[11] Strobel, J. & Tillburg-Webb, H. (2009). 'Applying a Critical and Humanizing Framework of Instructional Technologies to Educational Practice.' In Moller, L., Bond Huett, J., & Harvey D.M., (eds) Learning and Instructional Technologies for the 21st Century: Visions of the Future. DOI: 10.1007/978-0-387-09667-4.

[12] Anderson, T. (2003). Modes of interaction in distance education: Recent developments and research questions [e-chapter]. In M.G. Moore & W.G. Anderson (Eds.), *Handbook of Distance Education* (pp. 129-144). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

[13] Holmberg, B. (2005). *The evolution, principles, and practice of distance education*. pp. 37-88, 104-105). Oldenburg, Germany: BIS-Verlag der Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg.

6.1 Module outlines and outcomes

An existing quality standard for all modes of delivery would be that clear and approved module outlines and outcomes are in existence and given to students at the beginning of the semester. In a contact situation this might be presented to students in a slide in their first lecture, or in a hand-out that forms part of their pack. It is recommended that the course outlines and modules outcomes are extracted from where they are and posted separately on the module site so that they are easy to find for students and that they can be used as guidelines for assessment.

6.2 Notional hours and classroom timetables

HEIs are encouraged to balance two seemingly contradictory principles:

- The accredited notional hours of a module and programme, including the NQF level and quality arrangements should be maintained, and
- Learning online, especially in times of stress, change and uncertainty in the life worlds of the students, and with limited access for students may take longer than the equivalent in f2f situations.

Academics are encouraged not to stick to their original work schedules and not to overload students, especially with lots of content and with data-heavy video and audio.

All learning activities, including formative and summative assessments, as well as synchronous and asynchronous interactions are part of notional hours.

Replicating the normal classroom timetable by emergency remote teaching and learning video classes with so-called ‘talking heads’ is to be avoided where possible. Smaller, shorter and less data-heavy chunks and podcasts, also accessible on smart phones are preferred. Video classes or even voice-over presentations are not considered student-teacher interactions, they are student-content interactions.

Academics are encouraged to balance student-content interactions (such as studying notes or a textbook) with student-student interactions and student-teacher or student-tutor interactions. Much of these can take place on social media. Student-student interactions when studying in isolation are highly recommended; the students are talking on social media in any case, so get them talking about their studies.

All resources, also interactive sessions, could be recorded and available for students to access in their own time and with due consideration to data costs.

Low-intensity data options should be preferred, and high-intensity data content could be available in other formats, e.g. a video lecture should ideally have a transcript. Multiple modalities (video, audio and text-based) for the same content are encouraged.

6.3 Formative assessment

Regular formative assessment in the emergency remote teaching and learning environment is an essential component to keep students engaged as active learners. It is recommended that assessments should be in smaller, rather than larger, chunks and should not be heavy on data. Formative learning activities should be purposeful and supportive, rather than to ‘test’ or to catch the students out but should be assessment for learning and to engage students. As such, they should ideally be regular (e.g. weekly, writing a paragraph leading up to an essay, or completing a quiz) with both general and personalised feedback rather than only one large assessment (e.g. only one completed essay). In a contact setting, students would have had

tutorials to assist them to work on that one large essay; it is important to continue to build scaffolding into larger or longer assessment activities.

Instructions for all activities should be **explicit**, clear, unambiguous and implementable. The following guidelines are proposed:

- Link the assessment activity to the module outline and the expected outcomes clearly and explicitly.
- Be clear about the weight and value of the activity in terms of the overall assessment plan for the module, for example, this will contribute 20% to your semester mark, or this will contribute 10% to your overall mark for this module.
- Be clear about the relationship of a formative activity to the final summative assessment, for example, is it designed to assist students to work through content as a build-up to a different kind of exam (for example, content-based multiple choice questions on a literary work that will have an essay in the exam), or will the exam 'look the same' and the activity is a practice run (for example, mathematics problems to practice for the exam).
- Provide mark allocation or rubrics upfront so that students know on what they should focus their efforts.
- Give clear range statements. An activity that is usually timed in a contact tutorial should include a clear and implementable range statement, for example, for a written activity a word count should be given, for a video clip a time limit should be given, preferably not in simple terms, such as 500 words or 5 minutes, but in a range such as between 450 and 550 words or between 4 and 6 minutes.
- Design a range of activities on different cognitive levels and flag this to students, starting with simple recall / reproduction of facts, building up to comparison, application, analysis, evaluation and synthesis, as appropriate.
- Ensure that technical submission information and technical instructions, as well as technical support are available.
- Flexible or alternate submission dates for activities should be the norm.

Personalised individual feedback to students is important to create a sense of engagement in students and should be returned as soon as possible. Communication as to when students can expect their feedback is also important. Feedback should be positive, encouraging, and constructive. General feedback to the class is also recommended. Students are often encouraged by the idea that they are not the only one struggling.

Creativity in making the activities both engaging for students and to build in some levels of authenticity are important factors. Time on task should be an important aim. For example, requiring students to interview their house mates in lockdown or teach a new concept to their class mates and to send an audio file of 3 minutes is fun, low data, can be done on a smart phone and cannot be plagiarised or outsourced to an essay mill. The following free blended learning resource has a comprehensive section on online and emergency remote assessment with more advice: http://blendedlearningresources.co.za and https://www.che.ac.za/#/remote[14]. The CHE (2014: 48-56) provides information on types of activities and the nature of effective formative assessment[15].

[14] The CHE has a newly constructed website that some have been struggling to reach; the solution is to clear the search history in your browser and to type in the web address afresh. The *firebasestorage* links (such as the one in footnote 12) are designed to secure the CHE website.

[15] CHE 2014 *Distance Higher Education Programmes in a Digital Era: Good Practice Guide*. https://firebasestorage.googleapis.com/v0/b/che2020-

Regular formative assessment under emergency remote teaching and learning conditions also forms a way of tracking students and their progress and flagging students who are at risk, academically, socially or even in terms of connectivity. Identifying and tracking students at risk, and designing appropriate student support interventions, should be an important part of this phase of the emergency remote teaching and learning scenario.

7. Student support

Student support (psycho-social as well as academic) and peer learning are more important than ever to keep students engaged and motivated. There is an extensive academic literature showing that such support on online social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter are effective, especially in emergency remote settings. Such student support increases student-student interaction and motivation.

Students with disabilities should be identified and flagged to academics so that they can ensure that such students get their learning material in an appropriate and accessible modality. Administrative staff can, for example, also be tasked to transcribe the voiced sections of digital lectures to create multiple low-cost and alternative access points to the content. The CHE (2014: 41 – 42 (Figure 7), footnote 11) discusses a range of assistive technologies for students with disabilities.

Postgraduate students, especially those whose grants may be affected and who cannot continue with their own research under restrictions, could be employed on contract to assist staff as additional tutors. An online tutor:student group ratio of 1:25 is recommended, but adjustments may be necessary. An online tutor working fulltime should ideally not have more than 8 such groups of 25, i.e. should not be responsible for more than 200 students. Academics should be encouraged to develop guidelines and activities for tutors and monitor their work and interactions with students.

Multiple channels for posting all communication and learning material are encouraged. For example, a voice-over slide presentation with 10 substantive slides on the LMS (as official repository of learning material) can be repeated, one slide at a time on a WhatsApp chat group, with the academic or tutor interacting with students on each slide.

Each HEI should continue to obtain data on student access to devices, to the internet and to funding for data at various levels of granularity (institution, faculty, department, programme, module / module) and should base their decisions on such verifiable and available data. Important information includes the type of device, as well as the regularity of access. For example, a student may have their own smart phone but may have to share a laptop with several family members.

Tutors could also be given access and data to contact students and to coach them on digital literacies.

Technical help and call centres should be available for students and staff to get assistance. The communication guidelines given under programme management are of vital importance.

A note on student feedback:

In the online environment it is essential to get regular feedback from students. Students will be critical and will compare what could be uneven provision or engagement and support

c5efd.appspot.com/o/website%2Feqc0cembdec1.pdf?alt=media&token=0620fdfd-2222-48f4-b440-3b9ea73e9761

across the modules for which they are registered. Students feel valued and part of the solution if their feedback and opinions are solicited and used, and their experiences validated.

8. Staff capacity development and well-being

It is recommended that HEIs invest more resources in staff development and support for pivoting to emergency remote teaching and learning. For example, retired instructional designers or experienced academics may be re-employed on contract. The available OER blended learning resources at http://blendedlearningresources.co.za could be used. A new set of resources specifically designed to assist academics in Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning is being curated on the CHE website at https://www.che.ac.za/#/remote.

Academic staff workload allocations and performance agreements could be re-visited to account for the huge investment in time that they will be making to pivot to emergency remote teaching and learning. Research output at individual level should be adjusted to account for the additional time academics will spend on developing emergency remote teaching materials.

A reduction in research outputs across the sector seems inevitable and should be anticipated.

Academics should be provided with adequate access and data.

All research, community engagement and academic citizenship activities should be assessed and discontinued or adjusted in line with national regulations. Online activities may be used to continue or replace contact community engagement.

Future promotion criteria should take this hiatus in some activities and the elevation of emergency remote teaching and learning activities into consideration.

Developing and maintaining trust in academic staff is important and should be of the highest priority.

Administrative staff should also be given adequate access and data and could be employed effectively to assist academics, for example, by transcribing videos and by contacting tutors and students individually for additional support.

Academic support and administration staff require support to transform services and systems towards supporting emergency remote learning and teaching and to ensure that academic administration is geared towards effective and efficient support to emergency remote teaching and learning.

9. Summative assessment

The *final summative assessment strategies for modules* should be evaluated by academics for suitability under emergency remote teaching and learning conditions, and changes to assessment strategies and plans should be recorded on a module-by-module basis.

The following broad guidelines for summative assessment under emergency remote teaching and learning conditions are proposed:

- Depending on contextual circumstances, final-year examinations could possibly remain as venue-based examinations, perhaps for those students who may return to campus under certain conditions and who would be subject to registration by professional bodies. HEIs need to evaluate their own contexts for readiness for venue-based examinations in line with national guidelines for the return of students. External moderation of final-year examinations is essential.

- Where possible, examinations at the lower levels could be replaced by emergency remote assessments, with promotion to the next year with or without a venue-based examination. Cross-checking mechanisms between students' marks, online orals (in modules with low student numbers) or pre-assessments on a return to campus may be mechanisms for maintaining assessment standards.
- Ideally HEIs should not use a simple pass/fail matrix especially in the final year of study; students who may have achieved distinctions or higher marks than 50% would be disadvantaged in terms of progression to higher degrees as well as grant applications, or employment prospects.
- On an eventual return to campus, pre-assessments may assist academics to ascertain if the required knowledge has been achieved. Students cannot be placed regressively, but additional work may be required in the following year to achieve the required levels.

The CHE *Policies on Recognition of Prior Learning, Credit Accumulation and Transfer, and Assessment in Higher Education* remain pertinent and should be used as guidelines.

The NADEOSA Quality Criteria for Distance Education remain pertinent, especially for assessment, see pages 30-31 and 50-51[16]. The evaluative questions and good practice descriptors in the CHE ITL No 5 (pages 126 – 131) remain valid and are useful guidelines.[17]

Criteria 6, 13 and 14 of the *Criteria for Programme Accreditation* on assessment are adapted with guidelines for DE (CHE 2014: 93 and 100 – 103) which are also valid for assessing remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.[18]

A note on authenticity: In the online environment and with emergency remote assessment it is important not to confuse authentic assessment[19] with authenticated assessment. *Authentic assessment* is "a form of assessment in which students are asked to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills"[20] and is an excellent and recommended online practice. *Authenticated assessment*, on the other hand, is considered the authentication of the work of the student as firstly original (i.e. not plagiarised) and secondly, as the work of the actual registered student (i.e. it is not someone else taking a test for the student).

Authentication software in the online environment can be of two kinds, at least:

- Similarity index software such as TurnItIn, some version of which most South African HEIs have already invested in and that can be fruitfully used to teach about plagiarism and can assess student's work, to some extent in terms of originality, in longer narrative assessments such as essays or research chapters

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[16] NADEOSA *Quality Criteria for Distance Education*. https://www.saide.org.za/documents/Nadeosa_Quality_Critiera.pdf

[17] CHE 2005 *Improving Teaching and Learning Number Resources 5:* https://firebasestorage.googleapis.com/v0/b/che2020-c5efd.appspot.com/o/website%2Fsr14fc01fpa1.pdf?alt=media&token=6a622668-163c-4e99-940f-84d97ecc1db1

[18] CHE 2004 *Criteria for Programme Accreditation.* https://firebasestorage.googleapis.com/v0/b/che2020-c5efd.appspot.com/o/website%2Fyxqlkgy7gwo1.pdf?alt=media&token=c1ea5d6e-2e05-463d-9f2b-bbf92d4b402b

[19] https://jolt.merlot.org/documents/vol1_no1_mueller.pdf

[20] http://jfmueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/index.htm

- Proctoring software such as Proctorio or Examity which attempt to monitor the student through their laptop camera to check on so-called cheating behaviours. Some scholars in online learning have questioned the ethical underpinnings of such automated algorithm-based proctoring software, claiming that they are more harmful than useful, especially to vulnerable students, which links to the social justice cost discussed earlier[21].

Creativity, flexibility and trust of students is recommended. For example, authentic online assessments such as the use of case studies, creating video clips and learning journals individualises work and does not allow for memorisation, cheating or essay mills.

The criteria and guidelines referred to above are distilled into the following 11 quality assurance guidelines for the current situation under the pandemic. HEIs should keep data and records to provide evidence that such quality assurance guidelines were implemented adequately:

1) Summative assessment strategies should be **planned** within the institutional policies and procedures, and should be amended for emergency remote assessment, with considered and recorded attention being given to any grounds for deviation.
2) Summative assessment is designed, implemented, marked and moderated by **adequately trained staff.**
3) All levels of summative assessment should have gone through a process of **internal moderation**.
4) Exit-level summative assessment should have gone through a process of **external moderation**.
5) Summative assessment activities should be **valid**, i.e. it should directly relate to and be aligned with the stated module outcomes and the NQF level of the module, or, *are the right things being assessed in the right way appropriate to the module outcomes and level*?
6) Summative assessment outcomes should be **reliable**, i.e. *would the same results be achieved if assessed another way or by another assessor*?
7) Summative assessment plans should be **explicit** and communicated to students in good time.
8) Summative assessment should be **authentic**, i.e. the assessment should be real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills.
9) A **secure and reliable assessment management system** is in place at institutional level that provides accurate, consistent and credible results.
10) **Student communication** on summative assessment must be timeous, explicit, clear and unambiguous with guidance on their rights and responsibilities, at institutional level, at programme level and at module level.
11) A **student dispute and complaints mechanism** should be in place that is explicit, fair and effective.

10. Institutional quality guidelines in HE in the time of COVID-19

One of the standards in the *Draft Framework and Manual for Institutional Audits 2020* is that: *evidence-based systems and processes exist to monitor the institution's capacity for quality management* with the following considerations:

[21] Swauger, Shea 2020 *Our bodies encoded: Algorithmic Test Proctoring in Higher Education*. https://protect-za.mimecast.com/s/Vvk8CO7Gzzc0ONBhEcIyp accessed 9 June 2020.

(i) Decision-makers at all institutional levels have ready, but protected, access to sufficient, reliable and current electronic data that allow them to make informed decisions on the quality management of the core academic functions of the institution.

(ii) Regular, substantive and documented engagements among staff and among staff and students on all aspects of quality management (implementation, support, enhancement and monitoring) take place at all institutional levels.

(iii) The systems and processes for quality management during times of disruption are continuously monitored.

The standard above and the three considerations will be assessed in the next round of institutional audits starting later this year. The following recommendations and guidelines are intended to assist institutions with quality management in the time of COVID-19, emergency remote teaching and learning, online meetings and other restricted activities.

Table 1: Institutional quality-assurance guidelines for 2020

	Quality area	Quality measure	Supporting evidence
1.	Governance	Governance structures should maintain protocols and procedures according to Institutional Statues, policies, approved powers of delegation, accepted roles and responsibilities, etc. as far as possible Exceptions should be consulted and ratified as soon as possible; no unilateral or ad hoc decisions	Formal agendas and minutes of meetings
2.	Strategic planning (such as vision, mission and goals) and management	The focus should be on Business Continuity and Risk Planning and Management	Updated, consulted and approved Business Continuity Plans and Risk Registers
3.	Funding and resource re-allocation	Re-allocations should be: in line with DHET guidelines, based on sound motivations, with formal approvals of the appropriate governance structures	Formal agendas and minutes of meetings
4.	Academic leadership	Changes to policies and the curriculum should be consulted Accountability for emergency remote teaching and learning strategies, staff well-being, capacity development, and student support, well-being and retention	Records of and motivations for programme and module level changes Student feedback Staff feedback
5.	Quality management system	Adjustment for emergency remote teaching, learning and assessment of academic policies, processes and plans as recommended in I above Approval of adjusted academic policies, processes and plans are ideal, but *post-factum* ratifications may be necessary Implementation should be reviewed continuously with improvement where adjustments are required Decisions should be consulted and discussed in communities of practice and in academic teams; individual, unilateral or *ad hoc* decisions should be avoided, especially if they are not in line with the institution's approach to emergency remote teaching, learning and assessment Procedures and practice of identifying and rewarding innovation and	Institutional policies for emergency remote teaching, learning and assessment Records with motivations and reports at programme and module level amendments

		success, validating efforts and sharing of best practice Procedures and practice of identifying and correcting challenges, gaps and errors, without formal censure unless sabotage or malicious intent is in evidence	
6.	Continuous professional development	All staff pivoting to emergency remote teaching and learning should have been trained in the method(s) they will be using, including emergency remote assessment	Training material Records of participation
7.	Decisions based on data	Data on relevant matrices are available at various levels of granularity (institution, faculty, department, programme, module) Specific data and student profiles on devices, access to the internet and funding for data is used to make decisions on emergency remote teaching and learning Capacity to interpret the data	Student profiles Student surveys Interpretative reports with recommendations at various levels of granularity
8.	Planning and implementation for emergency remote teaching and learning	Evaluation of each module and programme for emergency remote teaching and learning as exemplified in Annexure A Detailed module and programme plans for each module and programme for emergency remote teaching and learning, curriculum adjustments and assessment Implementation according to the plans Reviews of the implementation of each module and programme Student input in plans and reviews Clear and regular communication with staff and students	Module plans Programme plans Student activity Module reviews Programme reviews Communication plans and implementation
9.	Increased tutors /student assistants	Appointment and training of tutors to assist academic staff and students	Records of appointments Training material Instructions and guidelines to tutors on activities withs students Reports on activities by tutors
10.	Infrastructure	ICT systems and LMS supported and functional a priority Buildings, residences and labs, etc. sanitised and prepared for phased in use as per government regulations	Low number of ICT incidents Reports

In addition to the 10 institutional-level quality assurance guidelines, the following quality assurance guidelines are a summary of the discussions in Sections 5 – 9 of the report focusing on emergency remote teaching and learning (in Table 2) and emergency remote assessment (Table 3) under the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is important to note that these Guidelines are applicable to the 2020 academic year and apply to both private and public higher education institutions. Institutions are encouraged to apply these guidelines with due consideration to their own context.

Table 2: Emergency remote teaching and learning quality-assurance guidelines for 2020

	Quality area	Quality measure	Supporting evidence
1.	Programme management	Active and consultative management of programmes taking the restrictions of the pandemic into consideration	Evidence of consultation with academic staff Evidence of communication with students Evidence of consultation with students Evidence of identifying students at risk and the implementation of appropriate interventions
2.	Teaching and learning	Clear and consistent communication to students of existing (and adjusted) module outlines and outcomes Clear and consistent planning and communication to students (including motivations and explanations of changes) of revised timetables, adhering to notional hours Regular and authentic engagement with students in various forms, including emergency remote formative assessments, to create community as well as presence rather than absence Reflection and evaluation on learning material developed in emergency remote teaching mode with quality feedback loops to second semester material	Substantive evidence of relevant information, emergency remote formative assessment, and feedback to students on the institutional LMS Records of academic reflections and evaluations of the learning material developed in emergency remote teaching mode
3.	Student support	Multiple channels of communication with students, e.g. on social media A student support plan using tutors or other support staff	Varied student support plans and implementation reports Student feedback with reports and interventions and responses based on the feedback

		A specific support plan for students with disabilities which includes identification, support and interventions A specific support plan for students who have not had access to devices or data Feedback opportunities for students Interventions based directly on the student feedback	
4.	Staff capacity development and well-being	Academic staff trained to create digital learning materials Academic staff trained to create emergency remote assessment Staff access to devices and data, and how to use them Workload and performance agreements re-negotiated for new conditions	Training materials Training schedules Reports on staff access to devices and data and their digital literacy Revised workload allocations and performance agreements Evidence of engagement with staff concerning their ability to cope and general well-being

Table 3: Emergency remote assessment quality-assurance guidelines for 2020

	Quality area	**Quality measure**	**Supporting evidence**
1.	Assessment plans and communication for both formative and summative assessment	All assessment activities should be explicit, clear, unambiguous and implementable A clear link between the assessment activity to the module outline and the expected outcomes Clear information about the weight and value of the activity in terms of the overall assessment plan for the module and about the relationship of a formative activity to the final summative assessment Clear mark allocation or rubrics upfront Clear range statements A variety of activities on different cognitive levels	Communication of emergency remote assessment plans to students

		Technical submission information and technical instructions, as well as technical support are available	
2.	Formative assessment	Formative assessments should be regular and directly linked to the module outcomes Flexible or alternate submission dates for activities should be the norm Formative assessments should have personalized, timeous and clear feedback	Actual emergency remote formative assessment activities from students and feedback and results on the LMS
3.	Summative assessment	Summative assessment strategies should be planned within the institutional policies and procedures, which may have been amended for emergency remote assessment Summative assessment is designed, implemented, marked and moderated by adequately trained staff All levels of summative assessment should have gone through a process of internal moderation Exit-level summative assessment should have gone through a process of external moderation Summative assessment outcomes should be reliable Summative assessment plans should be explicit and communicated to students in good time Summative assessment should be authentic, i.e. the assessment should be real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills	Records of revised emergency remote assessment plans Staff and moderators' CVs Actual emergency remote assessment activities from students and feedback and results on the LMS Internal and external moderation reports
4.	Assessment administration	A secure and reliable assessment management system is in place at institutional level that provides accurate, consistent and credible results Student communication on formative and summative assessment must be timeous, explicit, clear and unambiguous with guidance on their rights and responsibilities, at institutional level, at programme level and at module level A student dispute and complaints mechanism should be in place that is explicit, fair and effective	Assessment system Student communication Appeals reports

Annexure A: Rubric for academic evaluation of the affordances of a module for emergency remote teaching and learning

The rubric below is an example of how academic units can evaluate their modules for emergency remote teaching and learning with subsequent categorisation for returning to campus according to the alert levels. Such evaluations should ideally be undertaken by module teams with documented motivations and with a clear understanding that most modules should be moved from contact to emergency remote teaching and learning. The criteria are proposals only and could be amended and / supplemented. Student access to the type of device, access to the internet and funding for data should be based on real information and not be hypothetical as in the examples below. The examples are for clarity on how to conceptualise such an evaluation rubric only and are not intended as instructions to HEIs for these modules. The principle of '*no student should be left behind'* should be maintained and alternatives should be considered for students with no or low access. Every attempt should be made for students to succeed.

A large proportion of staff and students have never used or experienced online learning. Therefore, even if they have smartphones or tablets, they may have never used the devices for learning and teaching purposes. It is therefore important to understand that certain types of devices may not be suitable for delivering quality learning. For instance, using a mobile phone to conduct a demanding assessment for an exit-level module may not work. Reading dense text on a small-screen smart phone may also be difficult. Differences between learning using a phone and a laptop should be considered. The type of devices that students have access to may be important depending on the field of study. Some teaching strategies also do not lend themselves to mobile learning on smart phones, whereas others do.

Module	Student access to devices (indicate type) and data	Nature of T&L interaction required	Essential requirement by profession	Low data pivot possible	Curriculum	Summative Assessment	Conclusion
Final year Clinical Vet Pathology	99% of students have access to a laptop	Hands-on f2f lab-based	Yes	No	Cannot be adjusted	Required to be hands-on f2f lab-based	Not suitable for emergency remote T&L
First-year Clinical Vet Pathology	90% of students have access	Some theory, some practical hours observation in lab	Yes	With effort	Can be adjusted by moving practical observation to following year or to simulations	Theory assessment venue-based; practical assessment can be based on records	Suitable for emergency remote T&L
First-year Anatomy	90% of students have access but mostly only smart phones	Theoretical and visual simulations	Yes	Yes, OERs available	Content bases can be adjusted	Emergency remote assessment, verified in next year with venue-based assessment	Suitable for emergency remote T&L
Community-based Social Work	80% of students have access	Some theory, some practical hours under supervision with clients	Yes	Final year: no Previous years: yes	Non-final years can be adjusted; final years cannot be adjusted	Required to be practical assessment	Final year not suitable for emergency remote T&L; non-final years may be suitable for emergency remote T&L with adjustments
First-year Agriculture	60% of students have access	Practical Group work on HEI farm	No	No	Can be adjusted by moving practical observation to following year or to simulations	Portfolio can be signed off by farmer or employer	Suitable for emergency remote T&L with support for access
Business Management	45% of students have access	Theory and practice	No	Partly	No adjustment required	Portfolio can be signed off by employer	Suitable for emergency remote T&L with support in access
First-year History	45% of students have access	Text-based curriculum and student interaction	No	Yes	No adjustment required	Continuous emergency remote formative assessment and summative assessment for promotion possible	Suitable for emergency remote T&L with support in access