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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AARP</td>
<td>Alternative Admissions Research Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>Advanced Certificate of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADC</td>
<td>Academic Development Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Audit Portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP&amp;SC</td>
<td>Academic Planning and Staffing Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP&amp;QA</td>
<td>Academic Planning and Quality Assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>Business and Commerce</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community Based Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CASRA</td>
<td>Centre for Applied Social Research and Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>CESM</td>
<td>Classification of Educational Subject Material</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHE</td>
<td>Council on Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>CREST</td>
<td>Centre for Research on Science and Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSD</td>
<td>Centre for Social Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>DoE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESU</td>
<td>Extended Studies Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>ETQA</td>
<td>Education and Training Quality Assurer</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>HEMIS</td>
<td>Higher Education Management System</td>
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<td>HEQC</td>
<td>Higher Education Quality Committee</td>
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<td>HoD</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
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<td>Human Resources</td>
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<td>HSS</td>
<td>Humanities and Social Sciences</td>
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<td>IQR</td>
<td>Internationalisation Quality Review</td>
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<td>IP</td>
<td>Intellectual Property</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISI</td>
<td>Institute for Scientific Information of the USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITSC</td>
<td>Information Technology Steering Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>JRC</td>
<td>Joint Research Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>Masters in Business Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>MiST</td>
<td>Mathematics, Information and Science Technology education programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEPAD</td>
<td>New Partnerships for Africa’s Development</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRF</td>
<td>National Research Foundation</td>
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<td>National Student Financial Aid Scheme</td>
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<td>National Qualifications Authority</td>
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<td>PGDHE</td>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education</td>
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<td>Peer Review Team</td>
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<td>Quality Assurance</td>
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<td>Quality Assurance Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>RIBS</td>
<td>Rhodes Investec Business School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>RU</td>
<td>Rhodes University</td>
</tr>
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<td>RUEL</td>
<td>Rhodes University East London</td>
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<tr>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern African Development Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>SANReN</td>
<td>Southern African National Research Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAQA</td>
<td>South African Qualifications Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAPSE</td>
<td>South African Post-Secondary Education (management information system)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SET</td>
<td>Science, Engineering and Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRC</td>
<td>Students’ Representative Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>T&amp;LC</td>
<td>Teaching and Learning Committee</td>
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<td>VC</td>
<td>Vice-Chancellor</td>
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OVERVIEW OF THE AUDIT

INTRODUCTION

The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) has statutory responsibility to conduct institutional audits as indicated in the Higher Education Act of 1997. This responsibility of the HEQC is also recognised by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) in the accreditation of the CHE as the Education and Training Quality Assurer (ETQA) for the higher education band.

The audit of Rhodes University, (hereinafter referred to as Rhodes) was conducted by the HEQC in terms of its mandate. This document reports on the audit process and findings based on the Audit Portfolio and documentary appendices provided by Rhodes, supplementary documentation requested from the institution, and interviews, and observations made during the audit visit that took place between 5 and 9 September 2005.

This report\(^1\), contains an overview of the audit visit, the findings of the Panel in relation to the audit criteria set by the HEQC, and a list of commendations and recommendations made by the HEQC.

THE AUDIT PROCESS

In July 2004 the Executive Director of the HEQC secured the consent of the Vice-Chancellor and the senior academic management team at Rhodes that the University would participate in an institutional audit between 5 and 9 September 2005.

Rhodes conducted its institutional self-evaluation in the agreed time and produced an Audit Portfolio for review by the Audit Panel. Together with its use of the 19 HEQC audit criteria, Rhodes chose, in consultation with the HEQC, to have an additional special focus on the student experience at the institution as a distinctive feature of the University. The Rhodes Audit Portfolio (hereinafter AP) was deliberately structured to reflect this focus. Rhodes’ self-evaluation portfolio was developed in parallel with its 2005 internal academic review process and was managed by the Audit Portfolio Committee, a sub-committee of Rhodes’ Quality Assurance Committee. Different constituencies at the institution were drawn into the self-evaluation process through providing information that contributed to the self-evaluation and the content of the Audit Portfolio. The resulting Rhodes Audit Portfolio 2005 together with its printed annexures: Digest of Statistics 2004, Academic Review Report 2005, Undergraduate Prospectus 2006, University

\(^1\) The report includes four appendices: Appendix A lists the objectives of HEQC audits; Appendix B provides the names of the members of the Audit Panel, Appendix C lists the documents submitted by Rhodes, and Appendix D contains the audit visit schedule.
Calendar 2005 and Vice-Chancellor’s Report 2004 and a host of appendices available on CD, was submitted to the HEQC in July 2005.

The HEQC constituted an Audit Panel consisting of senior academics and academic administrators from the higher education community, most of whom had taken part in auditor preparation workshops run by the HEQC. An Audit Portfolio meeting was convened in Pretoria on 11 August 2005 at which the Audit Panel considered the Audit Portfolio in preparation for the audit visit. During this meeting, the Audit Panel identified additional documents to be requested from Rhodes prior to the audit visit.

A senior member of the HEQC staff undertook a preparatory visit to Rhodes in August 2005. During that visit, the format and programme for the visit and other details of the audit were discussed and generally agreed to by the senior management of Rhodes.

The audit visit took place from 4 to 9 September 2005. The Audit Panel undertook a tour of the campus on 4 September and conducted interviews with senior management and committee members on 5 and 6 September. On 7 and 8 September, the Audit Panel split into three groups and interviewed a wide range of Rhodes’ staff members and students. Interviews were completed on 9 September, and verbal feedback was given to the Vice-Chancellor and the executive team.

Open sessions were also available for any staff or student member of the institution and community to meet the Audit Panel and make a submission. Some staff members and union representatives made use of the opportunity to address the Panel.

In all, the Audit Panel interviewed more than four hundred people in 52 interview sessions during the audit visit, including

- Council members;
- The Vice-Chancellor and members of his executive team;
- Academic and academic support staff;
- Administrative staff;
- Full-time and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate students;
- Civic and community representatives;
- Alumni.

This report reflects the audit process and findings based on the Audit Portfolio provided by Rhodes, supplementary documentation requested from the institution, and interviews, and observations made during the audit visit. Every effort has been made to understand the quality arrangements at the institution at the time of the audit visit and to base the
Panel’s conclusions on the documentation submitted, the interviews held and the observations made.

It is expected that Rhodes will use these findings to strengthen its internal quality management systems and thereby facilitate the improvement of the quality of its core academic activities. Decisions about the manner in which this is done, and the priority accorded to the various recommendations, is the prerogative of Rhodes. It is expected that five months after the publication of the Audit Report, Rhodes will submit to the HEQC an improvement plan based on the HEQC Audit Report.

The HEQC would like to thank Rhodes for the co-operative manner in which it has participated in the audit process. The HEQC also wishes to express appreciation for the openness and confidence shown by the Rhodes management in allowing the Audit Panel to conduct 52 interview sessions during the five-day visit and to have access to key documents. Efficient preparation by Rhodes resulted in a trouble-free audit and this allowed the auditors to focus their attention on the main purposes of the audit. The hospitality and assistance of Rhodes’ personnel was appreciated. Ms Sandy Stephenson and her team are thanked in particular for the preparation of the documentation, as well as for their co-operation and helpfulness throughout the process.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW OF RHODES UNIVERSITY

1. Rhodes is the smallest university in South Africa. It was inaugurated in 1951. However, the history of the university started much earlier in the century, with the establishment of Rhodes University College in 1904. The university takes this as the official date of its creation, and as a result, celebrated its centenary in 2004. Rhodes is, in the South African context, a small sized, “rural”, predominantly contact and residential (47 student residences) English medium university. The “rural” character of Rhodes derives from its location in the Eastern Cape town of Grahamstown, which is considerably isolated from the main provincial economic centres. Until the recent restructuring of the higher education landscape, Rhodes also had an urban dimension, with a campus in East London. This campus was opened in the early 1980s and its student profile included a much larger number of black students than that of the main campus. The restructuring of the higher education landscape announced by the Minister of Education in 2001 identified Rhodes’ East London campus (RUEL) for incorporation into the University of Fort Hare. Rhodes accepted the proposal, and set the date for the transfer to take place at the latest on 1 January 2004.

2. At present, the majority of Rhodes’ students are concentrated in undergraduate degrees, with only about 20 percent enrolled in postgraduate studies. The majority of enrolments (both undergraduate and postgraduate) are in the humanities and social sciences (including education), followed by science, engineering and technology (SET), and commerce. The HEQC audit was of Rhodes University as configured after the transfer of RUEL to Fort Hare. According to 2003 HEMIS data, Rhodes as a single campus institution had a total headcount enrolment of 5,597 students, of which 80.50 percent were undergraduates and 19.49 percent were postgraduates. Rhodes is organised into six faculties: Commerce, Education, Humanities, Law, Pharmacy and Science.

MISSION AND FITNESS OF PURPOSE

3. Rhodes sees itself as an institution which has both an international and a local (African) identity, and as an institution committed to democracy, academic freedom, rigorous scholarship, sound moral values and social responsibility (AP, Appendix 54, Vision). Rhodes’ mission has four main components: (i) a
conception of excellence associated with international recognition, (ii) a description of the overall attributes of its graduates, which includes academic and personal competencies and attitudes, (iii) a conception of scholarship linked to research in which excellence is associated with its international character, and (iv) an indication of the institution’s capacity and desire to contribute to local (Eastern Cape) and regional (Southern Africa) development. While the institution’s understanding of excellence is not explained in the rest of the mission, the other three elements are addressed in the 11 undertakings to which the University has indicated its commitment. The fact that the institution acknowledges that in realizing its mission it has to take into account the legacy of the apartheid past, implies that Rhodes’ understanding and operationalisation of quality in the three core functions cannot be separated from issues of transformation understood both as redress and equity and responsiveness to broader national imperatives. This is the point of departure that the Panel has taken to analyse Rhodes’ audit portfolio.

4. The Audit Portfolio adds two additional features to Rhodes’ identity as expressed in its mission: its affiliation to the liberal arts tradition, and its international character (AP: 7 and 10). The liberal arts tradition, of which Rhodes sees itself a part, has its roots in the 19th century and, to a large extent, is inspired by John Newman’s writings on the concept of “a university”. The Panel noted that, despite its ostensible centrality to Rhodes’ identity, the implications of the liberal arts tradition for Rhodes have not been considered in any strategic document or any other documentary appendix received or requested by the Panel. Consequently, there is little evidence of the kind of thought that may have been given to Rhodes’ interpretation of the liberal arts tradition and thereby of the model which the institution might be pursuing or adapting. The Panel noted with interest that almost no senior management member seemed to have engaged with the notion of a “liberal arts college” or thought it important as a reference point that could inform thinking about the three core functions at the institution. The Panel is of the view that if, as claimed in the Audit Portfolio, “Rhodes has the reputation of being a well-established liberal arts institution” the University needs to make sure that staff and students understand the features that make Rhodes into not only a liberal arts institution but a well-established one. Similarly, drawing on the conceptual and historical distinctiveness of the notions of “liberal arts” and “liberal arts colleges” would require the institution to conduct a university-wide debate involving management, academic staff and students.

**Recommendation 1**

The HEQC recommends that, if Rhodes retains the notion of being a liberal arts university, the University consider the possibility of initiating institution-
wide debate about the liberal arts tradition in order to contextualise its value and currency in South Africa and address its compatibility with the University’s claimed African identity. Such a debate may provide critical reference points for the discharge of the three core functions and for conceptions of quality in those core functions.

5. Rhodes’ understanding of excellence is strongly associated with international recognition. According to its vision, Rhodes strives to be an internationally respected institution. This is translated into the mission of producing “internationally accredited graduates”. Similarly, the idea of excellence in research and in teaching suggests that “excellence” and “internationalisation” are complementary concepts for Rhodes’ management, academic staff and students. The fact that the institution decided to undergo an Internationalisation Review in 2001, coordinated by the “International Management of Higher Education programme of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development”, indicates the importance attached to this issue by Rhodes’ management and staff. One of the most important points made in the report of the Peer Review Team (PRT) was that, in most areas, Rhodes’ approach to internationalisation was reactive and ad hoc. In order to move from an emphasis on profile to an integration of internationalisation in the academic core functions, the PRT indicated that it was necessary to develop a conceptual framework (AP, Appendix 44: 25). In terms of the governance arrangements for this function, the PRT examined several organisational structures and recommended, as the best case scenario, the creation of an International Office. Following the recommendation of the Internationalisation Quality Review (IQR) Report, the institution appointed a part-time Dean: International Office in February 2004. An Internationalisation Policy was approved by the Senate in March 2005, four years after the review had taken place (AP: 78). The Audit Panel analysed the newly approved policy and found that Rhodes now defines internationalisation in line with the IQR as “the process whereby an international dimension is integrated into the teaching and learning, research and service functions of the University” (AP: 78). However, a number of gaps were identified by the Audit Panel. Firstly, the policy does not have a strategic view of where the institution wants to go with its drive for internationalisation or how this will take conceptual and operational shape in the core functions, as suggested in the IQR Report’s recommendations (AP, Appendix 24). Secondly, the policy does not provide a conceptualisation of internationalisation in relation to curriculum development, research or community engagement.
Recommendation 2
The HEQC recommends that Rhodes give continuing attention to the development of a fuller conceptual framework for internationalisation, foster wide debate at the University on how internationalisation could be given expression in the different core functions, and how it could be made compatible with local and regional objectives and the African identity signalled in the institution’s mission and vision.

Equity and transformation
6. Rhodes is well aware of the complex issues that confront the institution in terms of the transformation of the student equity profile. A case in point is the recognition of the need to revise its definition of “disadvantage”, taking into consideration class as well as race issues for its recruitment and admissions policy (AP: 94). The institution has taken some steps to deal with the issue of student equity as can be observed in the Quality Development Plan. In this regard, senior management has indicated the institution’s willingness to support its commitment financially as far as possible. Yet, progress in improving student equity has been admittedly slow. While the University explains this as a constraint of its geographical location and of the poor matriculations record in the Eastern Cape, it seemed to the Panel that the lack of a comprehensive student equity strategy may also be undermining the institution’s efforts in this matter.

Recommendation 3
The HEQC recommends that, in order to accelerate improvement in its redress and equity profile, Rhodes develop a recruitment strategy that indicates firstly, institutional enrolment targets for African, Coloured and Indian students; secondly, the resources and mechanisms that will be put in place in order to achieve these targets, and thirdly, the support mechanisms which the University will institute in order to facilitate the academic success of students.

7. In relation to staff and particularly academic staff, the Audit Portfolio indicates that Rhodes has formalised a number of policies for the selection of academic and support staff since 1999, and that the institution has developed a protocol on employment equity in 2001 (AP: 46). Yet, Rhodes continues to face a challenge in relation to the recruitment of black academic staff. As in most South African universities, the problem of the race and gender profile of Rhodes’ instruction and research staff is compounded by the age of the personnel. Rhodes will soon need to replace the bulk of its professoriate, given that at the associate professor layer, more than 40 percent of the staff is already over 50 years old. If the lack of black in-house candidates for these positions is taken into account, Rhodes will be
facing a serious problem not only of equity but also of simply replacing its current academic workforce. Both issues are problems shared by most historically white South African universities which have not been directly affected by the mergers. The Panel is concerned that, despite the existence of an Equity Policy (AP, Appendix 22) that sets out the principles that should inform implementation, this has not been translated into a concerted recruitment plan for academic staff, apart from statements about affirmative action in the Equity Policy (Appendix 22: 10).

**Recommendation 4**

The HEQC recommends that the University give urgent attention to the consolidation of the institution’s emerging policies on staff equity. This would entail the development of an integrated equity plan that should include a comprehensive strategy focused on recruitment as well as on development programmes and support structures to achieve better and faster results in changing Rhodes’ staff equity profile.

8. Rhodes’ awareness of the role that some aspects of its institutional culture could be playing in the slow pace of the overall transformation of the institution (AP: Appendix 18: 27 and 43: 16) led the University in 1999 to set up a number of investigations into these matters. What emerged from an analysis of the outcomes of that investigation is that cultural exclusivity and racism are complex issues which involve individuals as much as institutions, and that dealing with them is not simply a matter of policy development, although normative frameworks are necessary. Attitudinal changes are also needed. The institution is fully aware of this. Interviews held with staff and students suggest that Rhodes urgently needs to confront the issues which have surfaced through its own investigations into institutional culture, and to understand some of these issues better in order to develop appropriate interventions. This is an area that the institution has included in its Quality Development Plan (AP: 94). Although the inclusion of institutional culture in the Quality Development Plan is an indication of the institution’s concern about this issue, interviews with senior management did not persuade the Panel that this constitutes a matter of urgency for the majority of the institution’s leadership.

**Recommendation 5**

The HEQC recommends that the University consider the development of a bold and transparent strategy to address negative aspects of its institutional culture. This needs to include an institution-wide implementation plan to transform relevant aspects of Rhodes’ institutional culture and clear monitoring mechanisms to track progress.
9. Responsiveness in the sense of identifying and acting on specific educational and knowledge needs in the society and the economy is an important component of the notion of transformation in higher education. Rhodes has developed a series of academic courses designed to respond to specific needs of the Eastern Cape Province. One instance is the Doctorate in Pharmacy programme. In many cases, the development of such qualifications shows the institution’s ability to take advantage of market opportunities. The Panel would like to congratulate the institution on its commitment, inventiveness and deployment of its capabilities to respond to the needs of the provincial and national economy for specific skills in a range of disciplines.

Commendation 1
The Panel commends the institution for the development of programmes and qualifications which respond to specific regional needs, and encourages it to explore further additional areas of responsiveness where it could maximise the synergies between the three core functions of teaching and learning, research and community engagement within a disciplinary as well as a multidisciplinary framework.

Institutional Planning, Resource Allocation and Quality Management

10. At the strategic and planning level, Rhodes is organised in a relatively flat management structure governed by the values of collegiality and trust. According to Rhodes the most salient features of its planning model are:

- A bottom up structure, which allows for the involvement of staff and students
- An ability to respond to departmental and disciplinary needs and changes
- Collegiality
- Accountability based on trust
- Utilisation of statistical information (Digest of Statistics) to support the planning process.

11. The Panel noted that the University has been able, partially because of the small size of its operations, to keep its most strategic decision-making structure, the Academic Planning and Staffing Committee (AP&SC), as a Senate and Council committee and not, as in many other institutions, as part of executive management. The AP&SC is an academic body where the Vice-Chancellor,
elected deans, the registrar and the finance director, together with the structures responsible for quality assurance, quality development and monitoring, and students and union representatives, make decisions about the intellectual size and shape of the institution.

12. To a large extent, planning at Rhodes is centred on the results of the regular academic reviews which are implemented by the HoDs in close communication with the deans. According to the Audit Portfolio the academic reviews have become the most important process of strategic decision-making at the institution. Not only are these reviews an opportunity to analyse and assess the achievement of the institution’s mission, academic shape and direction but they also are opportunities to look into the allocation of financial, human and physical resources to the faculties (AP: 13).

**Commendation 2**
The HEQC commends Rhodes on the utilisation of the academic reviews as instruments for planning, resource allocation and quality assurance, which afford the institution an opportunity for self-reflection and integration of department specific information into institution level analysis.

13. The Panel noted the distinctive aspects of Rhodes’ arrangement for strategic decision-making and planning, and understands the importance that the University attaches to its ability to operate within a framework of collegiality and personal trust. However, the Panel is of the view that this model alone may not be supportive enough of the alignment of Rhodes’ own institutional mission with the national imperatives articulated in the White Paper and in the National Plan for Higher Education, particularly in terms of responsiveness and transformation.

14. Rhodes’ conception of quality has two main dimensions. Firstly, it focuses on fitness for purpose and aligns quality assurance with planning. Secondly, it focuses predominantly on quality assurance, giving much less attention to the support, development and monitoring of quality. The alignment between quality and planning was translated at the institutional level into the Office of Quality Assurance and Planning in 2001. As indicated in the Audit Portfolio, Rhodes’ small management team facilitates the combination of these functions. The implementation of this aspect of the conception of quality assurance hinges on the conduct of institution-wide reviews, both academic and administrative.
15. The conceptualisation of quality primarily as quality assurance, without systematically including support, development and monitoring of quality, has important implications for the governance of quality at the institution and for the ways in which units, such as the Academic Development Centre (ADC), are involved in quality related activities. From the point of view of the governance of quality, Rhodes’ management of quality is both centralised and decentralised, reflecting the institution’s conception of QA as a shared commitment and responsibility. Consistent with this, the University encourages participants in self-reviews to set their own academic and equity objectives within the broader mission of the University/Department (AP: 17).

16. The Panel concurs with the institution that individuals and academic units need to interpret the institutional mission and set their own targets in relation to it. Yet in order for Rhodes to be able to monitor its own progress in the achievement of institution level goals, it is also necessary to develop a number of performance indicators or targets that operate at institutional level. The use of some common performance indicators allows for the identification of problems or areas of weakness and the implementation of appropriate mechanisms for the support, development and monitoring of quality defined both as fitness for purpose and fitness of purpose. The Panel is of the view that, in the area of transformation, especially in relation to student and staff demographic profiles and institutional culture, the lack of high level steering by management with regard to institutional goals may have the effect of constraining the achievement of Rhodes’ own stated goals.

**Recommendation 6**

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes engage with the issue of how, within a decentralised system of quality management, faculties and academic departments could actively engage with and give expression to the achievement of institutional level objectives, which pertain to the conception of quality both as fitness for and fitness of purpose.

17. In relation to the conceptualisation of quality management as including not only quality assurance but also quality development, the Panel noted that the improvement of teaching and research supervision, for example, are left to the initiative of individual academics, who on their own accord take part in the activities initiated by the ADC or the Research Office. The Panel is of the view that Rhodes’s voluntaristic approach to the development and improvement of
quality has a number of serious implications for consistency of achievement in the area of teaching and learning. The Panel would like to draw to the attention of the institution that the achievement of some of its strategic level objectives, particularly in relation to redress, may be predicated on the development of more complex and multi-faceted understanding of quality in the three core functions.

**Recommendation 7**

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes consider, within its framework of collegial governance, a re-conceptualisation of quality management to give greater weight to quality support, development and monitoring as strategic tools for the achievement of institutional level objectives.

**Benchmarking**

18. Rhodes does not have a set of performance indicators that provide a quantitative or qualitative measure of the institution’s achievement of its high level goals. On the whole, the institution appears to be unconvinced about the usefulness of benchmarking or of user surveys. Yet the University is not opposed to inter-institutional comparisons or to the establishment of national benchmarks based on research (AP: 89). As a matter of fact, the institution has undertaken a number of surveys in response to perceived problems.

19. The Panel is of the view that the compilation of the *Digest of Statistics* is an excellent way of sharing information about the institution across academic and support units. However, for this publication to be a more useful element in planning and quality assurance, the institution needs to make some adjustments to its conception. The Panel would like to encourage the institution, through the relevant governance structures (possibly the AP&SC), to identify the strategic areas in the three core functions for which, in terms of the University mission and vision, it would be important to develop indicators. The University is encouraged to reflect on what those indicators ought to be, how information pertaining to them should be collected, what the role of academic departments should be in this task, and who in the institution should be responsible for interpreting, integrating and monitoring those indicators.

**Recommendation 8**

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes consider the identification and use of a set of performance indicators which could reinforce the institution’s planning and quality management functions, and explore the utilisation of
suitable benchmarking tools in a formalised and regular manner to support decision-making for academic planning and quality improvement.

TEACHING AND LEARNING
20. The University prides itself on being able to connect the intellectual and social lives of the students during their stay on campus in a purposeful and programmatic manner. This conceptualisation of teaching and learning is based on the notion that students are active participants in a process which “aims to add value to their personal educational experience” (AP: 32).

21. The Panel noted that the curricular aspect of the student experience at Rhodes is the result of a conceptualisation of teaching and learning that sees teaching as an intellectual discipline that needs to be learned and not as a “common sense” activity. This is supported by Rhodes’ undertakings to create a research-based teaching and learning environment, and to promote excellence and innovation in teaching and learning. This conceptualisation has a number of practical implications for staff training and promotion as well as for the structures and resources which have to be put in place to support both research-based teaching and excellence and innovation in teaching. This becomes all the more important in the light of a second aspect of Rhodes’ understanding of its mission in relation to teaching and learning. This is the awareness that educational disadvantage as a legacy of apartheid needs to be engaged with so that all students can “develop their full potential” and achieve the institution’s desired graduate attributes.

22. There are a number of management and support structures that have responsibility for the quality of teaching and learning at Rhodes. Besides the Academic Planning and Staffing Committee and the Quality Assurance Committee, there are specific structures which focus on teaching and learning: the Teaching and Learning Committee (T&LC), the Academic Development Centre and the Staff Development Committee. A number of policies, instruments and strategies have been developed in order to promote, develop, and to some extent, assure the quality of teaching and learning.

23. Rhodes’ Audit Portfolio clearly indicates that teaching and learning at the institution takes place in the academic departments and that students are attached to an academic department that take care of their academic progress. In this sense,
HoDs at the institution play a key role in ensuring that students are provided with a high quality and enabling academic experience. The Panel noted that HoDs at Rhodes are elected by their peers for a period of three years. HoDs indicated to the Panel that the overall experience of the 2005 academic review, although work-intensive and highly stressful, was generally regarded as positive by the departments. The Panel did not find the same positive view of the reporting activities that take place in between academic reviews. Neither did the Panel find general agreement as to the practicality and desirability of other forms of reporting on teaching and learning among other individuals and structures involved in the management of quality in teaching and learning. The Panel understands the importance of trust and collegiality in the governance of quality at Rhodes and the institution’s concern about avoiding a managerialist approach to education. However, interviews conducted with different layers of academics and management as well as the Panel’s analyses of minutes of the relevant committees suggest that this approach allows for the inconsistent application of teaching and learning policies, which might result in uneven quality of provision across departments. Particularly in relation to the academic review, the Panel learned that, despite the preparation and distribution of detailed guidelines - including for the first time since the reviews started in 1997 a section on teaching and learning - these guidelines were not used across the board.

**Recommendation 9**

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes review its current arrangements for monitoring the implementation of its teaching and learning policies to enable the institution to ensure that high quality teaching is consistently offered across all academic departments, and that appropriate developmental initiatives are in place where required. This should be done in a way that is consonant with the requirements of departmental autonomy and collegiality.

**Support Services**

24. Academic development for students at Rhodes has three main foci: the tutorial system located in the academic departments, Extended Studies located in the ADC, and a mentoring system attached to the Extended Studies programme, which is also located in the ADC. The creation of the Extended Studies Unit as part of the ADC was a consequence of changes in the conceptualisation of both student support and academic development. This resulted in the creation of a specialised support system for students located outside the academic programmes and a shift in the focus of the ADC from student support to the development of teaching skills among staff. The Extended Programme is one avenue used by Rhodes to diversify its student admissions. Students enter the programme via
alternative admissions tests as well as through the deans’ discretionary power to admit students who do not have the points required to enter Rhodes. Through these avenues more than 100 students were admitted in 2004 to the extended programmes offered in the Faculties of Commerce, Humanities and Science (AP, Appendix 7: 8). In 2004 Rhodes received a three year grant from the DoE to offer Extended Programmes as a result of a proposal submitted by the ADC. The Panel congratulates Rhodes and the ADC for their proactive and innovative approach to the extended curriculum.

Commendation 3

The HEQC commends Rhodes on its initiatives for the professionalisation of teaching and learning at the institution, and the development of a mentoring system to support previously disadvantaged students.

25. The Panel would like to urge the institution to monitor the progress of students involved in extended programmes in order to determine the effectiveness and impact of both the extended curriculum and the mentoring programme in different disciplinary areas. This observation is based on the impression gathered by the Panel during interviews that the reasons for moving the extended curricula into the ESU included the need to shield staff allocated to extended curricula teaching from absorption into mainstream departmental commitments, the need to enhance synergies and common approaches across the various extended curricula, and the greater ease with which cohort studies of student throughput could be conducted.

Recommendation 10

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes develop and implement appropriate mechanisms to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the Extended Studies Unit of the ADC and its programmes. In the design of such mechanisms, the institution should consider the need to document the ways in which extended programmes contribute to the throughput and success rates of different groups of students in different disciplines.
26. The Panel was very impressed with the scope, quality and impact of the work of the ADC. In this regard, the Panel would like to stress the importance of providing continuing support for the research on teaching and learning which takes place at the ADC. In this regard the Panel is of the view that many aspects of this research can support the reconceptualisation of quality management as including quality development.

Commendation 4:

The HEQC commends Rhodes University for the quality of the research on teaching and learning undertaken by the staff of the Academic Development Centre.

27. Rhodes has a well-functioning and well-resourced library on the campus that supports academic programmes, research, and the needs of the Grahamstown community. The Audit Portfolio indicates that the Library has an impressive collection of electronic journals (30,000 titles) and a comparatively small collection of printed ones. The Library cooperates with other academic libraries locally, nationally and internationally through different consortia and associations for access to electronic databases and meta-search software. The Panel was particularly impressed by the Library support of open access to information and open source software which allows for the international sharing of research done at Rhodes. The Library is in the process of registering with the Open Archives Initiative.

Commendation 5:

The HEQC commends Rhodes on the quality of its library and the many well-planned steps taken to facilitate open access to information and the use of open source software.

28. During the audit site visit, the Panel visited the IT facilities and interviewed senior staff responsible for the IT services. The Panel observed that students at every level have open and free access to the internet from the first day of arrival at the campus. Administrative registration for students includes the details necessary to access IT facilities. Access to Web resources is limited to 20MB per day for all users and the Panel was informed that Rhodes’ experience has shown that this is adequate in all cases. The Panel heard that this management of bandwidth has ensured efficient and sustained access for all users.
Commendation 6
The HEQC commends Rhodes for a well-resourced IT system, the provision of staff and student access to sources of knowledge and information through the internet and the intranet, and the effective role of the IT division in responding to the institution’s needs and monitoring and managing the quality of its services.

29. The Audit Portfolio did not include an account of Rhodes’ approach to managing certification. During the audit site visit, however, a sub-group of the Panel visited the facilities responsible for managing certification and familiarised itself with the procedures. From those interviewed, the Panel learned that batch processing of certificates takes place before the main graduation ceremony in April for students who have completed all the requirements for the conferral of their respective qualifications. The names of graduates are printed from the mainframe student record system developed by the Rhodes Data Management Unit. This is operated by a trained staff member who has authorised password-protected access to the system. The Panel found that the arrangements currently in place are adequate to safeguard the integrity of the student records data.

30. During interviews with the Panel, Rhodes’ staff involved in the offering of short courses indicated that all courses are required to elicit evaluations from participants by means of standardised evaluation forms and the feedback from these are reviewed by the AP&QA office. The results of these evaluations are taken into consideration during the annual application to offer the short course during the following year. The Panel congratulates the institution on its ability to respond to local and national skills needs through the offering of short courses whose quality is carefully assured by the relevant academic structures. The Panel did not find evidence that short courses were monitored from the point of view of their comprehensiveness or effective responsiveness to societal or economic needs. Given the sample of offerings included in the 2005 list of short courses, the Panel is of the view that the institution might be underplaying a potentially important area of its work. The Panel would like to encourage Rhodes to institute some form of monitoring of short courses, which focuses on the interactions between Rhodes and its communities, attendance at the courses, and the cost-benefits which they represent for the institution.
Commendation 7:

The HEQC commends Rhodes for the development and implementation of an effective policy framework and system for the offering of short courses which emphasises the development of quality offerings, thus protecting the reputation of the institution.

Programme Development

31. The Panel is concerned that there is no consistency between the conceptualisation of teaching and learning, the policies that support this area of work, and the practices of the different academic departments. Rhodes’ undertaking to offer research-based teaching and to promote excellence and innovation in teaching depends almost entirely on a voluntaristic approach. Those academics who want to use the possibilities offered by ADC may do so, but the Panel found no evidence of lecturers having an obligation to do so, for example, in relation to the module on assessment of the PCDHE. On the contrary, interviews with different layers of academics and members of structures responsible for teaching and learning suggest that the institution’s way of solving the perceived tension between development and accountability, i.e. what the institution calls the “incrementalist approach”, might be undermining the actual realisation of Rhodes’ mission undertakings in the core functions.

Recommendation 11

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes explore an appropriate mechanism to monitor the effectiveness of its voluntarist approach to the evaluation of teaching and learning. This should entail the incorporation of student evaluations of courses in the evaluation of teaching and learning as well as the development of appropriate mechanisms to monitor the extent of and frequency with which evaluation of courses and whole qualifications are being used to improve teaching and learning.

Staff development

32. Interviews with the T&LC and with ADC staff indicated that there is growing awareness in the institution of the need to professionalize teaching and learning activities. These efforts are supported by a number of initiatives. Among them is the New Lecturer’s Orientation Course (AP: 69), which in recent years has provided explicit support for teaching and learning issues. The Panel, however, noted in the T&LC’s minutes for 2004 that attendance at the Orientation Course was small and that there were difficulties getting some staff members to attend.
The feedback from those that did attend was positive. Through interviews with a range of academics, tutors and students, the Panel gained the impression that there is fairly widespread support for the activities of the ADC and agreement on their positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning at the institution. Staff from the ADC, however, noted that much still remains to be done to extend a culture of reflective practice and educational professionalism more evenly across the institution, sometimes in the face of residual resistance.

Commendation 8:

The HEQC commends Rhodes for the way in which the staff development function of the Academic Development Centre has been conceptualised and implemented, resulting in enhanced levels of professionalism in teaching and learning, especially among young staff.

Interviews with ADC staff, the T&LC, the AP&SC as well as with the QAC indicated that, despite the fact that the ADC is said to have a developmental focus, the Centre has been increasingly taking on monitoring and accountability functions, especially as the demands of a new external quality assurance system have emerged. One example of this is the requirement for the ADC to comment on the teaching and learning dimensions of the academic review process conducted in 2005. Academic staff and ADC staff interviewed by the Panel suggested that quality assurance and institutional development functions may be accruing to the ADC because of their relatively well-developed capacity for these activities compared to, for example, the academic planning structures of the university. In interviews it was noted that the ADC’s taking on an accountability function could compromise the developmental dynamic of its work, which has had considerable success. The Panel is of the view that since these additional roles need to be fulfilled, there may be cause to reconceptualise the ADC at several levels.

Recommendation 12

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes review the identity, functions, and resourcing of the Academic Development Centre. This should include a review of its relationship with the university’s central academic planning structures and the senior leadership responsible for teaching and learning.
Assessment

34. The Policy on the Assessment of Student Learning provides for both the formative and summative purposes of assessment, and enjoins appropriate forms of validity, transparency and fairness in assessment practices. In its account of the achievements of this policy, the Audit Portfolio argues that the policy “has been very successful in promoting awareness of the fact that assessment is not unproblematic and a matter of commonsense and is, indeed, a contested area”. The increased awareness of assessment issues is reflected in the fact that several departments have made proposals for adjustments in the relative proportions of requirements for continuous to summative assessment in their curricula. The Audit Portfolio further notes that since 2004, all new staff have been required to take the assessor training module of the PGDHE, and that several senior staff, including deans, have done so as well.

35. Rhodes does not have an operating policy on external examinations. A draft Policy on External Examinations has yet to be formalised for the undergraduate courses. Staff responsible for assessment and examination structures who were interviewed indicated that the general practice is that external examination does not occur at first and second year level and may occur unevenly at senior levels of undergraduate programmes. The Panel found limited evidence of actual external examiners’ reports. Available documentation indicated that external examiners reports are produced and forwarded to HoDs and in some cases to deans in the Faculties of Pharmacy, Education, Law and Commerce, while the arrangements in the Faculties of Science and the Humanities are less structured. It was clear to the Panel that the institution’s acknowledgment of the inadequacy of these informal arrangements had prompted the development of the draft policy. Interviews with relevant academic staff indicated that some details of this policy had been controversial and that the policy may need to be developed further.

Recommendation 13

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes formalise its policy on external examinations and ensure that the systems needed to monitor and respond to external examiner reports are effective in achieving appropriate and consistent management of summative assessment at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels of study.
Student experience (extra-curricular)

36. The Panel noted with appreciation the resources invested by the institution in the provision of a safe and protective environment for staff and students. The Panel was particularly impressed by the new improvements in the security of the campus. These arrangements benefit all students while they are on campus but are a permanent feature only for those students living in residences. Students living in “digs” in town are inevitably more vulnerable in terms of security.

37. The University clearly sees participation in the residences as an essential element in the process of socialising new students into university life. However, the institution’s difficulty in finding space for all first year students in the residences might deny some new students this key dimension of the Rhodes’ student experience. This dimension is likely to be particularly important for black students from poorer backgrounds who could benefit from the academic and cultural resources available through the residence system. The residence system should thus be seen as having a major role in supporting the shift in Rhodes’ student equity profile by providing a protective and nurturing environment for those students who are more vulnerable, both socially and academically, when they first enter the higher education system. In other words, the residence system could be seen as a strategic component of a more integrated recruitment strategy. Given Rhodes’ current spatial and financial limitations, this might require that, without eliminating the opportunity to experience cultural and social diversity as part of life in the residences, the institution revises, for example, the proportion of foreign student enrolments at undergraduate level and the extent to which they share in the residence space.

38. The Panel noted that the student experience has several different dimensions including the physical environment, the residence system, the exposure to cultural and ethnic diversity, and the focus on the development of democratic and socially responsible citizens. There is no doubt that Rhodes’ students are exposed to a caring and stimulating residence system and campus life, particularly in terms of opportunities to develop leadership skills, and that this is greatly appreciated by the students themselves. The Panel gained the impression that many of these aspects of the student experience are broadly successful. It seems to the Panel that many aspects of the “student experience” operate at the extra-curricular level and that while some are not a matter of individual choice, like the residence system,
others that do depend on personal choice, like the volunteer programme, are attracting a small number of students in relation to Rhodes’ overall enrolment.

Commendation 9:

The HEQC commends Rhodes for the many well planned and effective steps that it has taken and the resources that it has made available to provide a nurturing, safe, supportive and stimulating environment for students to acquire skills and to develop as well rounded individuals.

39. Despite the successful aspects of Rhodes provision of a unique “student experience”, the Panel is concerned that not all students have the same kind of experience at Rhodes. The institution has itself pointed out in the Audit Portfolio that, increasingly, issues of class are playing an important part in a student’s ability to fit into the educational and social environment provided by the institution (AP: 94). The Panel is of the view that, as Rhodes transforms its student profile, it will need to revise certain aspects of its conceptualisation of the student experience to take into account a more heterogeneous student body and thus ensure that students with different kinds of social capital can fully participate in and benefit from the full array of Rhodes’ offerings. The Panel would like to bring to the institution’s attention the fact that, to a large extent, Rhodes’ relatively high quality student experience is based on maintaining a very limited growth in student numbers. However, for the institution to improve its equity profile, a measure of growth might be required. The institution will have to devise innovative approaches to solve this apparent contradiction and make the appropriate choices in order to maintain its ethos as a small, residential university that provides a unique student experience and at the same time responds to national imperatives and to its own stated mission.

RESEARCH

40. Rhodes does not define its identity mainly through the performance of research but sees research as an important element in achieving its vision of being an outstanding internationally recognised institution. In this sense the University is “committed to maintaining and further developing its strong culture of research” (AP: 71). The Audit Portfolio indicates that research influences teaching and learning in two ways. On the one hand, research is infused into teaching and learning through researchers’ incorporation of their research findings, methodologies and experience into the teaching of undergraduate students. On the other hand, teaching and learning as academic practices are guided and supported
by research in education, which constitutes a specific feature of teaching and learning at Rhodes. In this regard, the Audit Portfolio presents a number of examples in which these two relationships are successfully established (AP: 99-100).

Commendation 10:

The HEQC commends Rhodes on the successful link between research and teaching established at the Department of Ichthyology and Fisheries Science, in the cluster of departments which deal with English and Linguistics, the Department of Geology and the Environmental Education Studies Unit.

41. One important aspect of the challenge of managing the research function is the identification of institutional priorities and the consistent allocation of resources to those priorities. Members of different committee structures responsible for oversight of the research function at university level who were interviewed by the Panel suggested that a more conscious and deliberate research strategy would be needed to deal with the expansion of research on which the University has embarked. In the Panel’s view, this will be especially important in relation to the development of a stronger focus on research that responds to the needs of the Eastern Cape. Operationalising this aspiration might entail, for instance, environmental scans, workshops, and think-tanks that could help the institution to make an informed decision about where to concentrate resources.

Recommendation 14

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes consider the development of a strategy for the expansion of the research function that takes into account the current research profile of the University, its projected activities, and institution level goals, such as contributing to the development of the Eastern Cape.

42. At a small university like Rhodes where research, although an important activity, does not determine the identity of the institution, research support and administration reside in the same portfolio and are the responsibility of the same office. In this case the Dean of Research and the Research Office are the fundamental elements in the management of research at the institution.

Commendation 11:

The HEQC commends Rhodes on the quality of the services provided by the Research Office and its positive impact on the promotion and support of research at the institution.
43. The Panel interviewed members of the Centre for Entrepreneurship and the Business Unit as well as researchers who have benefited from their interventions. The Panel noted that the institution has been successful in the commercialisation of patents in the case of Rhodes University BioSURE process for the treatment of acidic mine water and the iQhilika Mead Brewery. The Panel congratulates the institution on this initiative, which seems to be producing satisfactory results for the institution and the researchers. The support and encouragement of research has had positive results. The number of university funded research grants has doubled since 1999 and supports more than half of the staff. According to the Audit Portfolio, this, together with a relative improvement in Rhodes’ accessing of local and international grants, has made it necessary for the research office to employ a research accountant.

**Commendation 12**

The HEQC commends Rhodes, and in particular the Office of the Dean of Research, for the successful expansion of the research function at Rhodes, which includes the development of support mechanisms the commercialisation of patents and the setting up of incubators, as well as specific support for the humanities and the performing and visual arts.

44. The quality assurance of research at Rhodes is the direct responsibility of the faculties, which in turn submit research proposals to the JRC. According to the Audit Portfolio, the quality of research carried out at Rhodes is assessed in terms of outputs (journal articles, books, artefacts, conference proceedings) which, in turn, are assessed in relation to their impact. Other factors taken into account to ascertain the quality of research produced at Rhodes are the standing of the researchers among peers, the NRF ratings, external evaluations, and the number, quality, graduation rates, and employment profile of postgraduate students.

45. All faculties have research committees responsible for ensuring that all research proposals comply with the required ethical standards. Above these structures is the University Ethics Committee to which all matters concerning research ethics are referred. This committee is chaired by an appropriately qualified academic and includes a medical doctor from outside the University.
Commendation 13
The HEQC commends the University for the steps taken to ensure that careful and appropriate arrangements are in place for the ethical clearance of all its research projects.

46. In terms of DoE recognised research outputs, Rhodes is one of the most productive universities in the country in relation to the size of its permanent academic staff. Despite this, Rhodes, like all other HEIs, does not meet the benchmark set by the DoE of 1 research output per full-time permanent staff member. In terms of the age of the authors, almost half (44.5 percent) of the journal articles published by Rhodes’ academics in 2003 were authored by individuals between 50 and more than 60 years old, followed by academics in their forties (43.6 percent), and just above 11 percent authored by academics in their thirties and younger. This situation is acknowledged by the institution as a problem. One of the areas for improvement identified for the research core function in the Audit Portfolio is that particular attention needs to be paid to the provision of additional support for new staff to become active researchers (AP: 95).

Recommendation 15
The HEQC recommends that Rhodes consider the development of a comprehensive strategy to recruit new researchers and increase the number of research outputs. The strategy should take into account the urgent need to change the demographics of research production at the institution.

47. In relation to Rhodes’ postgraduate academic profile, the data indicates that the largest increase in numbers is at the masters’ level and the largest concentration of doctoral students is in the science fields. The Panel notes that the further development of strengths in the natural sciences will, to a certain extent, alter Rhodes’ identity as a university predominantly focused on the humanities. Taking this into account, the Panel is of the view that Rhodes needs to make clear whether the expansion of postgraduate enrolments is targeted to specific disciplinary fields. At the same time, given the pressing need to improve the equity profile of enrolments, the institution also needs to think of having an enrolment strategy targeted at increasing the number of South African black students at postgraduate level.
Recommendation 16
The HEQC recommends that the institution develop a recruitment strategy for postgraduate students that takes into account the disciplinary areas prioritised by the institution and the consequences this might have for Rhodes’ identity as a liberal arts college, the unevenness in research production across departments, and the need to change the University’s equity profile. Such a strategy will need to be regularly monitored and appropriately resourced.

48. In order for Rhodes to achieve a substantive increase in the number of postgraduate students in the short term, the institution will have to recruit students with potential but who might not be top students. Much more attention and close supervision will be needed for these students and the institution will have to make sure that both extra support and adequate supervision are available for these students across all departments. Both the Academic Review and the Audit Portfolio mention the interactions between the Dean of Research and the ADC, especially in relation to writing skills for postgraduate students. The Panel concurs with the institution that the forms of support offered by the ADC are essential in the education of postgraduate students.

Recommendation 17
The HEQC recommends that the University consider the possibility of increasing its support for those activities of the Academic Development Centre which are focused on the development of generic competencies and skills of postgraduate students.

49. Supervision is an area in which Rhodes has introduced changes in order to improve the system. The Audit Portfolio (AP: 76) indicates that the implementation of the new policy has highlighted several cases of poor supervision and has allowed for improvement interventions. The Office of the Dean of Research monitors the time taken to complete theses. Problems between supervisors and students are dealt with confidentially by the Dean of Research. The examination process includes three external examiners for doctoral degrees while masters’ theses are examined internally. Doctoral examiners’ reports are considered by a Committee of Assessors that includes the Dean of Research (chairperson), HoD, the supervisor and at least three senior members of the faculty. Recommendations from this committee are submitted to the Vice-Chancellor for approval. The system seems to be sound and works well at the doctoral level. During the audit visit, the Panel had the opportunity of discussing this system with members of the Committee of Assessors and the Vice-
Chancellor. The Panel was concerned about the fact that the Vice-Chancellor’s involvement in the process of assessment leaves students with no instance of redress should conflicts arise in relation to the thesis mark.

**Recommendation 18**
The HEQC recommends that the institution consider the possibility of making international external examiners a requirement for PhDs, and create a procedure for appeals in the process of the examination of postgraduate degrees within the institution.

50. From the point of view of the student experience, postgraduate students are introduced to Rhodes through a process of departmental orientation, peer orientation, a University-wide orientation day, and special information sessions by the Library and the IT Divisions. In 2003, partially as a response to a request from postgraduate students, the institution created the Postgraduate Liaison Committee (PGLC). Besides having its own meetings and discussing concerns about specific aspects of postgraduate education, the PGLC is a sub-committee of the JRC and its president participates in the JRC meetings. The Panel met with the PGLC and with a range of postgraduate students from different disciplines, social backgrounds and nationalities. Generally, students were satisfied with their experiences of supervision and support at Rhodes.

**Commendation 14**
The HEQC commends Rhodes on the creation of the Postgraduate Liaison Committee as a sub-committee of the Joint Research Committee and for the introduction of a system for reporting on the progress of postgraduate degrees that includes students.

**Community Engagement**

51. The university has a long history of community engagement through the Centre for Social Development (CSD) that goes back to the second half of the 1970s. Besides the existence of the CSD, individuals and academic departments have had different types of cooperative relationships with Rhodes’ neighbouring communities. According to the *Audit Portfolio*, this situation not only needed coordination but also as Rhodes’ approach to its surrounding community was perceived as aloof, it needed to be reviewed (AP: 82). Given the institution’s stake in the economy and social conditions in the area,2 the institution decided to develop a new approach to community engagement in 1999. The institution makes an explicit connection between transformation and community engagement.

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2 Rhodes contributes 66 percent of Grahamstown’s GDP.
engagement. In this sense the process initiated in 1999 has given Rhodes the opportunity of redefining its identity in relation to both its immediate environment and the Eastern Cape Province in general.

52. The Panel would like to encourage the institution to include in its new community engagement policy, instruments to assess the quality of the initiatives and suitable forms of monitoring and impact evaluations that could support the improvement of the interactions between community engagement, research and teaching and learning.

**Recommendation 19**
The HEQC recommends that the University develop suitable mechanisms for the quality management of the community engagement core function, which takes into account the differences between community engagement, service learning and voluntarism. This should include the development of a closer interaction between the quality related arrangements and requirements for community engagement and those for the other two core functions.

53. In the Panel’s view, the breadth of the community engagement activities makes all the more necessary the implementation of suitable quality assurance mechanisms. Such mechanisms could help to assess whether communities and students are obtaining the expected benefits from these programmes, ensure adequate, regular and structured feedback on the impact of these activities, and channel the knowledge developed through them into processes for the improvement of conceptions and practices of community engagement.

**Commendation 15:**
The HEQC commends Rhodes for the breadth of its community related activities and for having taken an approach to community engagement that has strong potential to transform the relationship between the institution and its communities.
List of Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations

1. The Panel commends the institution for the development of programmes and qualifications which respond to specific regional needs, and encourages it to explore further additional areas of responsiveness where it could maximise the synergies between the three core functions of teaching and learning, research and community engagement within a disciplinary as well as a multidisciplinary framework.

2. The HEQC commends Rhodes on the utilisation of the academic reviews as instruments for planning, resource allocation and quality assurance, which afford the institution an opportunity for self-reflection and integration of department specific information into institution level analysis.

3. The HEQC commends Rhodes on its initiatives for the professionalisation of teaching and learning at the institution, and the development of a mentoring system to support previously disadvantaged students.

4. The HEQC commends Rhodes University for the quality of the research on teaching and learning undertaken by the staff of the Academic Development Centre.

5. The HEQC commends Rhodes on the quality of its library and the many well-planned steps taken to facilitate open access to information and the use of open source software.

6. The HEQC commends Rhodes for a well-resourced IT system, the provision of staff and student access to sources of knowledge and information through the internet and the intranet, and the effective role of the IT division in responding to the institution’s needs and monitoring and managing the quality of its services.
7. The HEQC commends Rhodes for the development and implementation of an effective policy framework and system for the offering of short courses which emphasises the development of quality offerings, thus protecting the reputation of the institution.

8. The HEQC commends Rhodes for the way in which the staff development function of the Academic Development Centre has been conceptualised and implemented, resulting in enhanced levels of professionalism in teaching and learning, especially among young staff.

9. The HEQC commends Rhodes for the many well planned and effective steps that it has taken and the resources that it has made available to provide a nurturing, safe, supportive and stimulating environment for students to acquire skills and to develop as well rounded individuals.

10. The HEQC commends Rhodes on the successful link between research and teaching established at the Department of Ichthyology and Fisheries Science, in the cluster of departments which deal with English and Linguistics, the Department of Geology and the Environmental Education Studies Unit.

11. The HEQC commends Rhodes on the quality of the services provided by the Research Office and its positive impact on the promotion and support of research at the institution.

12. The HEQC commends Rhodes, and in particular the Office of the Dean of Research, for the successful expansion of the research function at Rhodes, which includes the development of support mechanisms the commercialisation of patents and the setting up of incubators, as well as specific support for the humanities and the performing and visual arts.

13. The HEQC commends the University for the steps taken to ensure that careful and appropriate arrangements are in place for the ethical clearance of all its research projects.

14. The HEQC commends Rhodes on the creation of the Postgraduate Liaison Committee as a sub-committee of the Joint Research Committee and for the introduction of a system for reporting on the progress of postgraduate degrees that includes students.
15. The HEQC commends Rhodes for the breadth of its community related activities and for having taken an approach to community engagement that has strong potential to transform the relationship between the institution and its communities.

Recommendations

1. The HEQC recommends that, if Rhodes retains the notion of being a liberal arts university, the University consider the possibility of initiating institution-wide debate about the liberal arts tradition in order to contextualise its value and currency in South Africa and address its compatibility with the University’s claimed African identity. Such a debate may provide critical reference points for the discharge of the three core functions and for conceptions of quality in those core functions.

2. The HEQC recommends that Rhodes give continuing attention to the development of a fuller conceptual framework for internationalisation, foster wide debate at the University on how internationalisation could be given expression in the different core functions, and how it could be made compatible with local and regional objectives and the African identity signalled in the institution’s mission and vision.

3. The HEQC recommends that, in order to accelerate improvement in its redress and equity profile, Rhodes develop a recruitment strategy that indicates firstly, institutional enrolment targets for African, Coloured and Indian students; secondly, the resources and mechanisms that will be put in place in order to achieve these targets, and thirdly, the support mechanisms which the University will institute in order to facilitate the academic success of students.

4. The HEQC recommends that the University give urgent attention to the consolidation of the institution’s emerging policies on staff equity. This would entail the development of an integrated equity plan that should include a comprehensive strategy focused on recruitment as well as on development programmes and support structures to achieve better and faster results in changing Rhodes’ staff equity profile.
5. The HEQC recommends that the University consider the development of a bold and transparent strategy to address negative aspects of its institutional culture. This needs to include an institution-wide implementation plan to transform relevant aspects of Rhodes’ institutional culture and clear monitoring mechanisms to track progress.

6. The HEQC recommends that Rhodes engage with the issue of how, within a decentralised system of quality management, faculties and academic departments could actively engage with and give expression to the achievement of institutional level objectives, which pertain to the conception of quality both as fitness for and fitness of purpose.

7. The HEQC recommends that Rhodes consider, within its framework of collegial governance, a re-conceptualisation of quality management to give greater weight to quality support, development and monitoring as strategic tools for the achievement of institutional level objectives.

8. The HEQC recommends that Rhodes consider the identification and use of a set of performance indicators which could reinforce the institution’s planning and quality management functions, and explore the utilisation of suitable benchmarking tools in a formalised and regular manner to support decision-making for academic planning and quality improvement.

9. The HEQC recommends that Rhodes review its current arrangements for monitoring the implementation of its teaching and learning policies to enable the institution to ensure that high quality teaching is consistently offered across all academic departments, and that appropriate developmental initiatives are in place where required. This should be done in a way that is consonant with the requirements of departmental autonomy and collegiality.

10. The HEQC recommends that Rhodes develop and implement appropriate mechanisms to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the Extended Studies Unit of the ADC and its programmes. In the design of such mechanisms, the institution should consider the need to document the ways in which extended programmes contribute to the throughput and success rates of different groups of students in different disciplines.
11. The HEQC recommends that Rhodes explore an appropriate mechanism to monitor the effectiveness of its voluntarist approach to the evaluation of teaching and learning. This should entail the incorporation of student evaluations of courses in the evaluation of teaching and learning as well as the development of appropriate mechanisms to monitor the extent of and frequency with which evaluation of courses and whole qualifications are being used to improve teaching and learning.

12. The HEQC recommends that Rhodes review the identity, functions, and resourcing of the Academic Development Centre. This should include a review of its relationship with the university’s central academic planning structures and the senior leadership responsible for teaching and learning.

13. The HEQC recommends that Rhodes formalise its policy on external examinations and ensure that the systems needed to monitor and respond to external examiner reports are effective in achieving appropriate and consistent management of summative assessment at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels of study.

14. The HEQC recommends that Rhodes consider the development of a strategy for the expansion of the research function that takes into account the current research profile of the University, its projected activities, and institution level goals, such as contributing to the development of the Eastern Cape.

15. The HEQC recommends that Rhodes consider the development of a comprehensive strategy to recruit new researchers and increase the number of research outputs. The strategy should take into account the urgent need to change the demographics of research production at the institution.

16. The HEQC recommends that the institution develop a recruitment strategy for postgraduate students that takes into account the disciplinary areas prioritised by the institution and the consequences this might have for Rhodes’ identity as a liberal arts college, the unevenness in research production across departments, and the need to change the University’s equity profile. Such a strategy will need to be regularly monitored and appropriately resourced.
17. The HEQC recommends that the University consider the possibility of increasing its support for those activities of the Academic Development Centre which are focused on the development of generic competencies and skills of postgraduate students.

18. The HEQC recommends that the institution consider the possibility of making international external examiners a requirement for PhDs, and create a procedure for appeals in the process of the examination of postgraduate degrees within the institution.

19. The HEQC recommends that the University develop suitable mechanisms for the quality management of the community engagement core function, which takes into account the differences between community engagement, service learning and voluntarism. This should include the development of a closer interaction between the quality related arrangements and requirements for community engagement and those for the other two core functions.
1. **BRIEF OVERVIEW OF RHODES UNIVERSITY**

Rhodes is the smallest university in South Africa. It was inaugurated in 1951. However, the history of the university started much earlier in the century, with the establishment of Rhodes University College in 1904. The university takes this as the official date of its creation, and as a result, celebrated its centenary in 2004. Like other historically white universities in South Africa, Rhodes received considerable financial support from the mining houses. The Rhodes University Private Act of 1947 included the University College of Fort Hare. The Separate University Education Act of 1959 created a racially segregated higher education system, which caused Fort Hare’s affiliation to Rhodes to end in that year.

Rhodes is, in the South African context, a small sized, “rural”, predominantly contact and residential (the institution has 47 student residences) English medium university. The “rural” character of Rhodes derives from its location in the Eastern Cape town of Grahamstown, which is considerably isolated from the main provincial economic centres. Until the recent restructuring of the higher education landscape, Rhodes also had an urban dimension, with a campus in East London. This campus was opened in the early 1980s and its student profile included a much larger number of black students than that of the main campus. In 2002, out of a total of 7,425 headcount enrolments, 5,304 were enrolled in the Grahamstown campus and 2,121 in the East London campus (*Vice-Chancellor’s Annual Review 2003*). In terms of the racial distribution of enrolments, 74 percent of the students enrolled in the East London Campus were black, with African students constituting 64 percent of the total headcount enrolments. In the Grahamstown campus, 49 percent of the headcount enrolments were black students, with African students constituting 36 percent of the total headcount (*Digest of Statistics Version 8: 2004*).

The restructuring of the higher education landscape announced by the Minister of Education in 2001 identified Rhodes’ East London campus (RUEL) for incorporation into the University of Fort Hare. Rhodes accepted the proposal, and set the date for the transfer to take place at the latest on 1 January 2004. Rhodes and Fort Hare agreed that students registered at RUEL in 2002 would receive a Rhodes qualification; new students registered in 2003 would receive a joint Rhodes/Fort Hare qualification, and students registering from 2004 would receive a Fort Hare qualification (*Vice-Chancellor’s Report 2002*: 4).

The incorporation of RUEL into the University of Fort Hare has introduced a fundamental difference in the analysis of quantitative data about Rhodes. Data about Rhodes before 2004 included RUEL, data about Rhodes after 2004 only includes Grahamstown. The HEQC Audit Panel has used audited institutional data provided by the
Higher Education Management System (HEMIS) of the Department of Education (DoE) to support aspects of its analysis of the University. At the time of the HEQC audit, the most recent data available at the national level was for 2003. Although HEMIS does not usually disaggregate institutional data per campus, in the case of Rhodes, a disaggregation of data for RUEL and Grahamstown was done by the DoE. This was made available to the HEQC. However, this data only focused on the overall demographic profile of headcount enrolments at both campuses. As a result, the HEQC Audit Panel to some extent used data that does not reflect the profile of Rhodes University as it currently exists, i.e. a single campus institution situated in Grahamstown. The Panel was fully aware of this and has made every effort to qualify its conclusions and observations when these have been based on HEMIS data. The Panel has also made extensive use of Rhodes’ Digest of Statistics Version 8: 2004 to compare the trends identified in HEMIS with Rhodes’ own data. Unfortunately, the fields of data collection used internally by the institution did not always provide the information for which the Panel was looking. This audit report indicates all instances of discrepancies or lack of adequate data in each relevant section.

In 2002 the institution’s 7,425 headcount student enrolments were distributed among six faculties: Commerce, Education, Humanities, Law, Pharmacy, and Science. The overwhelming majority of the students were contact. Distance students represented 10 percent of the headcount enrolments in Grahamstown and 33 percent in East London. All distance education programmes were in teacher training.³

At present, the majority of Rhodes’ students are concentrated in undergraduate degrees, with only about 20 percent enrolled in postgraduate studies. The majority of enrolments (both undergraduate and postgraduate) are in the humanities and social sciences (including education), followed by science, engineering and technology (SET), and commerce.

The HEQC audit was of Rhodes University as configured after the transfer of RUEL to Fort Hare. According to 2003 HEMIS data Rhodes (considered as a single campus institution) had a total headcount enrolment of 5,597 students, of which 80.50 percent were undergraduates and 19.49 percent were postgraduates.

Rhodes is organised into six faculties:

- **Commerce:** This faculty consists of the following departments: Accounting, Economics, Information Systems, Management, and also houses the Rhodes Investec Business School (RIBS).

- **Education:** The faculty is not organised into departments but it has one major unit, i.e. the Environmental Education Sustainability Unit. It has also the MiST Research

³ The nature and extent of Rhodes distance education is discussed in Section 4.7.
Centre specialising in Mathematics, ICT, Science and Technology, and the RU Mathematics Education Research Project.

- Humanities: This faculty consists of the following departments: Anthropology, Drama, English, English Language and Linguistics, Fine Arts, History, Journalism and Media Studies, Music and Musicology, Philosophy, Political and International Studies, Psychology, Languages, Sociology and Industrial Sociology.

- Law is not organised into departments.

- Pharmacy is not organised into departments.

- Science comprises of Ichthyology and Fisheries Science.

With the exception of the Faculties of Pharmacy and Law, the others offer a number of undergraduate diplomas or certificates. The Faculty of Commerce offers a Bachelor of Commerce (foundation). The Faculty of Education offers the largest number of programmes/qualifications at this level, 15 in total, including specialisations in mathematics, science, technology and environmental education. The Faculty of Humanities offers two undergraduate diplomas, a BA (foundation) and a Diploma in Fine Arts. The Faculty of Science offers a Bachelor of Science (foundation). The existence of foundation programmes suggests that the institution is creating academic opportunities for students who might not be ready to tackle full degrees in these disciplines immediately after leaving school, or who have been accepted on alternative admissions criteria.

Commerce, Humanities and Science offer general academic first bachelor degrees, and a number of professional first bachelor degrees in accounting and business science, as well as in fine arts, journalism, music and social science. The Faculty of Education offers two different types of BEd, while Pharmacy offers its Bachelor in Pharmacy (BPHA) and the Faculty of Science offers a BSc (Software Development) and BSc (Information Systems). The faculties of Law and Pharmacy offer first professional bachelor degrees.

The postgraduate diplomas or certificates are concentrated in the Faculty of Education, with a small number of programmes/qualifications offered in Humanities and Commerce. These programmes offer an exit level for those students who do not want or cannot continue with further postgraduate studies.

All faculties except Law and Pharmacy offer honours degrees. All faculties offer a variety of masters’ degrees, which follow the lines of the departmental specialisations in humanities, and thematic specialisations in commerce (e.g. financial markets).

All faculties offer a PhD and a number of other doctoral degrees.

In terms of registration at the Grahamstown campus, the Faculty of Humanities is by far the largest with 36 percent of the registered students, followed by Commerce (23
percent), Science (17 percent) and Education (15 percent). The Faculties of Pharmacy and Law are smaller by comparison with 5 percent and 3 percent of the enrolments respectively (Digest of Statistics Version 8: 2004, E4).
2. INSTITUTIONAL MISSION

This section of the audit report focuses on Rhodes’ mission and how, in the context of this mission, the institution positions itself both within the higher education system and in South African society. The section is organised into two parts. The first part looks at the different elements of the institution’s mission and identity and how they are translated into its core functions. The second part looks at the manner in which Rhodes responds to the national objectives of equity and redress, both in relation to staff and students.

2.1 Rhodes’ mission and identity

Rhodes sees itself as an institution which has both an international and a local (African) identity, and as an institution committed to democracy, academic freedom, rigorous scholarship, sound moral values and social responsibility (AP, Appendix 54, Vision).

This vision finds expression in the institution’s mission in relation to the three core functions of teaching and learning, research and community engagement.

“In pursuit of its vision the University will strive to produce outstanding internationally accredited graduates who are innovative, analytical, articulate, balanced and adaptable, with a life-long love of learning; and to strive, through teaching, research and community service, to contribute to the advancement of international scholarship and the development of the Eastern Cape and Southern Africa.

Accordingly, the University undertakes

- To develop shared values that embrace basic human and civil rights;
- To acknowledge and be sensitive to the problems created by the legacy of apartheid, to reject all forms of unfair discrimination and to ensure that appropriate corrective measures are employed to redress past imbalances;
- To create a research-based teaching and learning environment that will encourage students to reach their full potential, that is supportive of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and that will produce critical, capable and skilled graduates who can adapt to changing environments;
- To promote excellence and innovation in teaching and learning by providing staff and students with access to relevant academic development programmes;
• To provide an attractive, safe and well-equipped environment that is conducive to good scholarship and collegiality;

• To provide a safe and nurturing student support system as well as a diverse array of residential, sporting, cultural and leadership opportunities that will foster the all-round development of our students, the university and the region as a whole;

• To attract and retain staff of the highest calibre and to provide development programmes for staff at all levels;

• To promote excellence in research and other creative endeavours;

• To play an active role in promoting inter-disciplinary and inter-institutional collaboration within the Eastern Cape Province;

• Where appropriate, to assist in the development of the Eastern Cape Province by making available the university's expertise, resources and facilities;

• To play a leading role in establishing a culture of environmental concern by actively pursuing a policy of environmental best practice;

• To strive for excellence and to promote quality assurance in all its activities.”

Rhodes’ mission has four main components: (i) a conception of excellence associated with international recognition, (ii) a description of the overall attributes of its graduates, which includes academic and personal competencies and attitudes, (iii) a conception of scholarship linked to research in which excellence is associated with its international character, and (iv) an indication of the institution’s capacity and desire to contribute to local (Eastern Cape) and regional (Southern Africa) development. While the institution’s understanding of excellence is not explained in the rest of the mission, the other three elements are addressed in the 11 undertakings to which the University has indicated its commitment. The fact that the institution acknowledges that in realizing its mission it has to take into account the legacy of the apartheid past, implies that Rhodes’ understanding and operationalisation of quality in the three core functions cannot be separated from issues of transformation understood both as redress and equity and responsiveness to broader national imperatives. This is the point of departure that the Panel has taken to analyse Rhodes’ audit portfolio.

According to its mission, Rhodes produces excellent graduates through the promotion of research-based teaching and innovation in teaching as well as through the provision of a safe and nurturing environment. The moral and attitudinal aspects of the education of undergraduates are promoted through the development of shared values that embrace
human and civil rights. The advancement of international scholarship takes place through the promotion of excellent research and other creative endeavours. The institution seeks to concretise its contribution to the Eastern Cape and the country at large through (i) the acknowledgement of the legacy of apartheid and the need to institute measures of redress, (ii) the promotion of interdisciplinary and inter-institutional collaboration, and (iii) the sharing of Rhodes’ expertise and resources.

The fact that the institution acknowledges that in realizing its mission it has to take into account the legacy of the apartheid past, implies that Rhodes’ understanding and operationalisation of quality in the three core functions cannot be separated from issues of transformation understood both as redress and equity and responsiveness to broader national imperatives. This is the point of departure that the Panel has taken to analyse Rhode’s audit portfolio.

The Audit Portfolio adds two additional features to Rhodes’ identity as expressed in its mission: its affiliation to the liberal arts tradition, and its international character (AP: 7 and 10). Both the liberal arts tradition and internationalisation are cross cutting elements of Rhodes’ identity. In the case of internationalisation, the institution indicates that this has implications for staff, students, teaching and research.

The liberal arts tradition, of which Rhodes sees itself a part, has its roots in the 19th century and, to a large extent, is inspired by John Newman’s writings on the concept of “a university”. The purpose of a liberal arts education is to educate the intellect in a broad number of disciplinary fields in order to prepare the individual for any profession or endeavour as well as for life.4 From an academic point of view, this implies that the institution will have a strong focus on the humanities and that the natural sciences will also be included in the undergraduate curriculum.

Many aspects of Rhodes’ organisation and focus reflect this conceptualisation. Contrary to other South African universities, Rhodes decided not to reconfigure its academic offerings into programmes. In fact, Rhodes’ organisation into faculties and departments based on disciplines can be seen as one element of the liberal arts tradition upheld by the institution. In terms of the curriculum, students cannot take courses in both the sciences and the humanities as part of their undergraduate degrees, although they can take two majors. The Panel had the impression that the educational “roundedness” of Rhodes’ graduates does not depend so much on the combination of different disciplinary cultures in the curriculum as on what the institution calls the “student experience”, which includes

4 “[The purpose of a liberal arts education is to] open the mind, to correct it, to refine it, to enable it to know, and to digest, master, rule, and use its knowledge, to give it power over its own faculties, application, flexibility, method, critical exactness, sagacity, resource, address, [and] eloquent expression . . . .” Newman, J, The Idea of University
curricular as well as extra-curricular programmes. Finally, Rhodes’ conceptualisation of its identity as a liberal arts institution, contrary to the American model of liberal arts colleges, includes a strong research function across all disciplines (see Section 5).

The Panel noted that, despite its ostensible centrality to Rhodes’ identity, the implications of the liberal arts tradition for Rhodes have not been considered in any strategic document or any other documentary appendix received or requested by the Panel. Consequently, there is little evidence of the kind of thought that may have been given to Rhodes’ interpretation of the liberal arts tradition and thereby of the model which the institution might be pursuing or adapting.

The Panel noted with interest that almost no senior management member seemed to have engaged with the notion of a “liberal arts college” or thought it important as a reference point that could inform thinking about the three core functions at the institution. The Panel is of the view that if, as claimed in the Audit Portfolio, “Rhodes has the reputation of being a well-established liberal arts institution” the University needs to make sure that staff and students understand the features that make Rhodes into not only a liberal arts institution but a well-established one. Similarly, drawing on the conceptual and historical distinctiveness of the notions of “liberal arts” and “liberal arts colleges” would require the institution to conduct a university-wide debate involving management, academic staff and students.

This debate might need to encompass three sets of issues. Firstly, there is the issue of Rhodes’ identity and institutional mission. There is little evidence that the institution has sought to reinterpret the liberal arts college model to fit an African context or the specific challenges faced by South Africa. It may be useful to engage with the issue of how a reinterpreted model of a liberal arts institution could help to respond to the political, social, economic and cultural legacies of apartheid. Secondly, there is the epistemological issue of disciplinarity and multi-disciplinarity. While some of the strands of the liberal arts tradition have a strong disciplinary foundation, Rhodes’ focus on the development of the Eastern Cape takes place in the context of multidisciplinarity. How can disciplinarity and multidisciplinarity be reconciled within a readapted liberal arts model? Thirdly, it would be important for the institution to explore and identify the implications for quality of embracing a liberal arts college tradition. Are there specific international benchmarks which could be used to assess the performance of liberal arts colleges in relation to teaching and learning, research and community engagement that Rhodes needs to take into account and/or adapt?

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5 This issue will be analysed in detail in Sections 4.1 and 4.10.
Recommendation 1
The HEQC recommends that, if Rhodes retains the notion of being a liberal arts university, the University consider the possibility of initiating institution-wide debate about the liberal arts tradition in order to contextualise its value and currency in South Africa and address its compatibility with the University’s claimed African identity. Such a debate may provide critical reference points for the discharge of the three core functions and for conceptions of quality in those core functions.

Rhodes’ ability to reinterpret and redefine the liberal arts tradition in its local, national and regional context may also enable the institution to make a significant contribution to the challenges of conceptualising the South African higher education system as a single coordinated system characterised by mission differentiation and innovation in the discharge of core functions.

As already mentioned, Rhodes’ understanding of excellence is strongly associated with international recognition. According to its vision, Rhodes strives to be an internationally respected institution. This is translated into the mission of producing “internationally accredited graduates”. Similarly, the idea of excellence in research and in teaching suggests that “excellence” and “internationalisation” are complementary concepts for Rhodes’ management, academic staff and students.

Rhodes has a long tradition of international enrolments. By 2001, when the report of the Internationalisation Quality Review (IQR) was finalised, there was a clear interest in making internationalisation into one of the drivers to reposition the University in an institutional landscape profoundly altered by the mergers and incorporations which followed the publication of the National Plan on Higher Education (DoE: 2001).

The fact that the institution decided to undergo an Internationalisation Review in 2001, coordinated by the “International Management of Higher Education programme of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development”, indicates the importance attached to this issue by Rhodes’ management and staff. The institution constituted a self-assessment team to prepare a report which was to be examined by peer reviewers. The team included representatives of Rhodes’ East London campus, which had not yet been incorporated into the University of Fort Hare, as well as individuals representing the core functions of teaching and learning and research, academic planning and quality assurance, top management and students. The Self-Assessment Team was chaired by the then Vice-Principal (AP, Appendix 43:2).
The institution’s self-assessment is illuminating in that it presents frankly some of Rhodes’ understandings and doubts about the nature and scope of internationalisation in relation to the core functions as well as in terms of staff and student recruitment. The report from the Peer Review Team (PRT) found that, at both the institutional and individual levels, Rhodes held a narrow view of internationalisation. It was fundamentally associated with international recognition. The IQR Report remarked on the lack of meaning of the concept “internationally accredited graduates”, which was included in the institution’s mission (AP, Appendix 44: 12 and 13). The PRT which conducted the review recommended that the institution move towards strengthening the international dimension of research and teaching and learning activities, as distinct from an emphasis on international recognition and reputation (AP, Appendix 44: 15).

One of the most important points made in the report of the PRT was that, in most areas, Rhodes’ approach to internationalisation was reactive and ad hoc. In order to move from an emphasis on profile to an integration of internationalisation in the academic core functions, the PRT indicated that it was necessary to develop a conceptual framework (AP, Appendix 44: 25). In terms of the governance arrangements for this function, the PRT examined several organisational structures and recommended, as the best case scenario, the creation of an International Office reporting to a Vice-Principal Academic Affairs or a Vice Principal External Affairs, but neither of these positions existed at Rhodes (AP: Appendix 44: 29). If this was not possible, the PRT recommended that the International Office should report to the Vice-Chancellor. The PRT made further recommendations on the possible structure of an International Policy Framework (AP, Appendix 44: 33).

Following the recommendation of the IQR Report, the institution appointed a part-time Dean: International Office in February 2004. An Internationalisation Policy was approved by the Senate in March 2005, four years after the review had taken place (AP: 78). The Audit Panel analysed the newly approved policy and found that Rhodes now defines internationalisation in line with the IQR as “the process whereby an international dimension is integrated into the teaching and learning, research and service functions of the University” (AP: 78). However, a number of gaps were identified by the Audit Panel. Firstly, the policy does not have a strategic view of where the institution wants to go with its drive for internationalisation or how this will take conceptual and operational shape in the core functions, as suggested in the IQR Report’s recommendations (AP, Appendix 24). Secondly, the policy does not provide a conceptualisation of internationalisation in relation to curriculum development, research or community engagement. In relation to curriculum issues, the Panel was told during interviews with senior management that the
Academic Development Centre (ADC) was to look into the issue.\(^6\) This, in the Panel’s view, suggests little involvement as yet on the part of academic departments in conceptualising and implementing the internationalisation of the curriculum (AP: 81). Thirdly, the policy makes no provision for any form of quality assurance of the institution’s internationalisation in the core functions, nor does it suggest forms of monitoring of the progress made in this direction.

The Panel is of the view that, given the narrow understanding of internationalisation on the part of most staff (AP, Appendix 44: 14), the institution should consider conducting a broad and well-informed debate on the meanings and implications of internationalisation in each core function, and assess whether the current practices are aligned with institutional intent. The institution is aware that a 25 percent enrolment of international students does not mean that Rhodes is “internationalised” in terms of the IQR’s definition of internationalisation adopted by the institution.\(^7\) Much more reflection and investment might be needed in order to understand and operationalise the university’s international identity and investigate the ways in which this contributes to quality higher education.

The Panel would also like to bring to the institution’s attention that, in order to operationalise and monitor a more complex and nuanced understanding of internationalisation in the core functions, the International Office may need additional human resources and a more substantial budget. Currently, the International Office has the following functions:

- Serve as a contact and support point for international students (especially study abroad and exchange students), staff and visitors;
- Support Rhodes’ University students and staff who travel and study abroad in the interests of internationalisation;
- Develop international opportunities, links and exchanges for Rhodes University staff and students;
- Liaise with international offices at other South African universities;
- Undertake research on the process of internationalisation at Rhodes University;
- Participate in the activities of organisations of international higher education, both local and elsewhere. (AP: 79-80)

Given its recent establishment, it was difficult for the Panel to assess the International Office’s effectiveness in undertaking the above functions or its actual contribution to the realisation of the notion of “internationalisation” embraced by Rhodes. The Office has only one full-time member of staff, in addition to a part-time dean (AP: 80). This may be

\(^6\) The impact that the addition of these kinds of activities to the ADC’s portfolio for the work of the Centre will be discussed in Sections 3 and 4 of this report.

\(^7\) An analysis of the profile of Rhodes’ international students will be presented in the second part of this section.
weakening its capacity to effectively drive the implementation of Rhodes’ Internationalisation Policy in the core functions of the institution

Recommendation 2

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes give continuing attention to the development of a fuller conceptual framework for internationalisation, foster wide debate at the University on how internationalisation could be given expression in the different core functions, and how it could be made compatible with local and regional objectives and the African identity signalled in the institution’s mission and vision.

2.2 Transformation at Rhodes: equity, redress and institutional culture

As already mentioned, the student enrolment profile of Rhodes was considerably altered through the process of the restructuring of the higher education landscape. Since the early 1980s Rhodes had an urban campus in East London, which attracted large numbers of black South African students and which, in a sense, helped the institution to balance the demographic profile of the Grahamstown campus which had greater white and international student enrolments (see Section 1). The incorporation of RUEL into the University of Fort Hare confronted Rhodes with two issues: how to improve its equity profile without expanding beyond its own capacity, and how to deal with its growing international student enrolments in the face of the national imperative to achieve equity.

In 1996, Rhodes’ headcount enrolments in the East London and the Grahamstown campuses were 4,905 students. According to the DoE’s SAPSE data for that year, 76 percent of these students were enrolled at the undergraduate level, 21 percent were enrolled for postgraduate studies, and the remaining 3 percent for occasional studies. Almost 54 percent of Rhodes’ overall enrolments in 1996 were female students, with a considerably larger number of women than men enrolled in undergraduate degrees (Female: 2,093; Male: 1,640), and marginally more men than women in postgraduate studies (Female: 480; Male: 546). A breakdown of headcount enrolments by race indicates that in 1996, 35 percent of the students at Rhodes were African, 3.3 percent were Coloured; 8.7 percent were Indian, and 53.1 percent were White.

By 2003, Rhodes’ total enrolments (Grahamstown and RUEL) had grown by 53% reaching 7,526 headcounts. In that year women constituted 58.93 percent of the
enrolments and African student enrolments had grown the fastest – from 1,717 students in 1996 to 3,286 in 2003.

In 2003, according to HEMIS data, 3,286 African students were enrolled at both campuses of Rhodes. RUEL had 1,250 African enrolments. If the African students who were transferred to Fort Hare as part of the East London campus are deducted from the total number of African students enrolled at Rhodes (3,286), 2,036 African students were left. These students, however, included 23.74 percent who were not South African born. In other words, once foreign African enrolments are deducted from the overall African student headcount (Grahamstown), the institution had only around 30% African student enrolments (2003 HEMIS data).

In 2002, the Vice-Chancellor acknowledged the impact that the loss of RUEL had on Rhodes:

“Rhodes University deeply regrets the loss of the East London campus, which was established 21 years ago and has grown beyond all expectations. (…) As an urban campus, East London has complemented the Grahamstown campus and has contributed significantly to improving Rhodes’ equity profile and national reputation” (Vice-Chancellor’s Report 2002: 4).

Thus, a lasting effect of the restructuring of the higher education system for Rhodes has been a change in its demographic profile. Addressing this is a fundamental challenge faced by the institution.

The second issue confronted by Rhodes in relation to its student enrolments is the proportion and nationality of its international students. Rhodes, especially its Grahamstown campus, has consistently attracted large numbers of foreign students. The institution is proud of its international character:

“The proportion of foreign students at Rhodes is one of the highest in the world for residential universities, growing from 7% in 1991 to 22% in 2001 (26% on the Grahamstown campus) and representing at least 40 countries around the world” (Vice-Chancellor’s Annual Report 2001:3).

An analysis of foreign student headcount enrolments, based on HEMIS data and confirmed by Rhodes’ own data, indicates that 70.69 percent of these enrolments come exclusively from the Southern African region, with 16.62 percent coming from the rest of the world, 9.2 percent from the rest of the African continent, and 3.4 percent classified as unknown. In other words, a very significant proportion of Rhodes’ African student enrolments are foreign and as such distort the institution’s equity profile from the point of

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8 This regional concentration of Rhodes’ international students explains why in his report for 2002 the Vice-Chancellor remarked on the adverse effect that the deteriorating Zimbabwean situation could have on equity and access for the institution (Vice-Chancellor’s Annual Report 2002: 5).
view of the equity imperative pertaining to South African born African students. While to some extent, the presence of large numbers of foreign African students might have an influence on the development of an African identity, which Rhodes refers to in its vision, the Panel concurs with the institution that these numbers do not solve the problem of Rhodes’ equity profile, now that it no longer has the East London campus.

The institution is well aware that any attempt to recruit more South African born black, and, especially, African students in the Eastern Cape is limited by the fact that the province does not produce enough pupils with matriculation exemptions. Another issue is that, given its location and residential character, the institution associates equity with access to residences and, therefore, with availability of funds and space. However, interviews with different constituencies at the institution indicated to the Panel that the issue of student equity at Rhodes is more complex than the availability of accommodation and funding. In the Panel’s view, addressing the issue of student equity at Rhodes requires a multi-pronged approach which could include: a deliberate and targeted recruitment strategy, an admissions policy focused on student potential combined with a strong academic development programme, strategic allocation of funding, and a policy for the distribution of residence space focused on first year students.9

According to the Audit Portfolio, approximately 50 percent of Rhodes’ students are housed in one of 47 residences (AP: 9) while the other half lives in “digs” in Grahamstown or in the local “African township” in Grahamstown East. Students without accommodation at the University, or in or close to town cannot study at Rhodes. Yet, there is more to access than geographical proximity. In 2001, in its submission to the IQR the institution remarked:

“For the most part, the social culture at Rhodes might best be described as white and middle class. Catering to student backgrounds, and in particular to the backgrounds of black students, has been a major challenge. It must be noted, however, that the majority of black students enrolling at the university come from relatively privileged socio-economic backgrounds with the result that integration into the social life of the university is relatively easy. It is only for a very small number of students, therefore, that the ‘mainstream’ university culture represents a challenge. Senior black staff at Rhodes are of the opinion that cultural differences do not present insurmountable obstacles to black students entering the University. Doubtless the culture and traditions of the University take some adapting to and there are areas in which the institution needs to be more accommodating of the cultural variations on campus. Access to the University is exceptionally difficult for those who have experienced poor schooling and consequently have achieved weak school leaving results. Further, many students from impoverished backgrounds who

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9 Some of these issues will be discussed again in Section 4 in the context of teaching and learning.
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are offered places at the University are unable to take up the places offered because of their inability to pay the fees and accommodation costs. Despite the allocation of considerable bursary and loan funds from national and University coffers there is never sufficient money to assist all students eligible for support” (AP, Appendix 43: 16).

In 2003, the institution indicated that it endeavoured to recruit 1,350 undergraduates per annum by targeting academically strong students through carefully selected visits to potential feeder schools, while also paying careful attention to the recruitment of black Eastern Cape students (AP, Appendix 18: 3). According to the Audit Portfolio the recruitment strategy does not only include traditional feeder schools. A new approach has been devised for the Eastern Cape. The University appointed a dedicated recruitment officer to make contact with Eastern Cape schools. All schools offering matric are visited and top achievers are hosted for a full-day programme of career guidance, and application fees are waived for those students invited to apply. Through this system Rhodes recruited 75 students for the 2005 intake (AP: 24). Despite this, and the reintroduction in 2004 of alternative admissions testing at four centres in the Province, Rhodes has made very slow progress in achieving a more equitable profile in terms of South African students.

The Panel found no evidence indicating that the institution has used its Equity Policy (2003) as a point of departure to develop plans and strategies to improve its student equity profile, which would include a recruitment strategy and an admissions policy. In Section 3.1.6 of the Equity Policy the institution lists a series of future policies related to equity that need to be developed. Among them is an admissions policy (AP, Appendix 22). The Panel noted with concern that Rhodes’ Quality Development Plan does not mention equity as an area of improvement in terms of enrolment planning but deals with it as a separate issue (AP: 93). Neither is there an indication that the analysis submitted to the DoE in 2003, indicating recruitment targets, has led to the development of performance indicators to monitor progress in this area. In this regard, an analysis of the information published in the Digest of Statistics indicates that the data presented in the publication, although useful from a general perspective, is not geared to help the institution monitor equity and design appropriate interventions where needed.

The Panel concurs with the institution that funding is a major issue in relation to equity and redress (AP: 25 and 93). However, it is not the only one. The lack of a recruitment strategy may constitute a major obstacle to the attainment of an equity profile that is more reflective of the country’s demography and more responsive to the needs of the Eastern Cape.

Rhodes is well aware of the complex issues that confront the institution in terms of the transformation of the student equity profile. A case in point is the recognition of the need
to revise its definition of “disadvantage”, taking into consideration class as well as race issues for its recruitment and admissions policy (AP: 94). The institution has taken some steps to deal with the issue of student equity as can be observed in the Quality Development Plan. In this regard, senior management has indicated the institution’s willingness to support its commitment financially as far as possible. Yet, progress in improving student equity has been admittedly slow. While the University explains this as a constraint of its geographical location and of the poor matriculations record in the Eastern Cape, it seemed to the Panel that the lack of a comprehensive student equity strategy may also be undermining the institution’s efforts in this matter.

**Recommendation 3**

The HEQC recommends that, in order to accelerate improvement in its redress and equity profile, Rhodes develop a recruitment strategy that indicates firstly, institutional enrolment targets for African, Coloured and Indian students; secondly, the resources and mechanisms that will be put in place in order to achieve these targets, and thirdly, the support mechanisms which the University will institute in order to facilitate the academic success of students.

In relation to staff and particularly academic staff, the *Audit Portfolio* indicates that Rhodes has formalised a number of policies for the selection of academic and support staff since 1999, and that the institution has developed a protocol on employment equity in 2001 (AP: 46). Yet, Rhodes continues to face a challenge in relation to the recruitment of black academic staff. As in the case of student enrolments, the Panel used DoE data and the institution’s own statistics to understand the characteristics of Rhodes’ staff profile.

In 1996, according to SAPSE data, Rhodes (including the Grahamstown and the East London campuses) had a total staff complement of 1,094 employees of whom 30.89 percent were instruction and research professionals, 2.55 percent were professionals in executive and management positions, and 66.54 percent were non-professional staff. Males and females employed at Rhodes were in almost equal proportions (55.36 percent male and 44.61 percent female).

The distribution of staff by race indicates that half of the Rhodes’ staff in 1996 was white and half was black. While white staff constituted 91.72 of the instruction and research personnel and 75 percent of the executive and management professional personnel, it only constituted 30 percent of the non-professional personnel. The majority of the black staff employed at Rhodes in 1996 was African. They constituted almost half (54.53 percent) of the non-professional personnel, and only 14.29 percent of the executive and
management personnel, which includes administrative staff, and 5.92 percent of the instruction and research professional personnel.

Between 1996 and 2003 the size of Rhodes’ instruction and research professional staff hardly changed (300 in 1996 and 346 in 2003), although there have been some fluctuations in the intervening years. The transfer of the East London campus to the University of Fort Hare also included the transfer of 51 academics or 15 percent of the total instruction and research staff. Just above half of these academics were employed at the lecturer level, 32 percent were employed at levels higher than lecturer (24 percent: senior lecturer, 6 percent: associate professor, and 2 percent: professor).

The analysis that follows is based on HEMIS staff figures that reflect Rhodes’ situation before the incorporation of the East London campus into the University of Fort Hare. Unfortunately, although section G of the Digest of Statistics distinguishes between the two campuses, it does not provide a sufficient level of disaggregation to support an analysis of the equity profile of the academic workforce at Rhodes. For example, the institution’s statistics do not disaggregate academic staff in terms of rank, race and gender.

The lack of change in personnel numbers at Rhodes points to a very stable academic staff which, contrary to trends at other higher education institutions, has neither shrunk significantly nor enlarged through the employment of temporary staff. Between 2000 and 2003 the proportion of temporary academic staff at Rhodes did not reach more than 9 percent. In 2003 it was only 3.5 percent.

There are many reasons for the difference between Rhodes and other historically advantaged institutions in terms of the ratio between permanent and temporary academic staff. Among them are the institution’s own policies. These limit enrolment numbers in order to provide adequate tuition without employing extra staff or lowering the staff-student ratio; the location of Rhodes and that academic staff wishing to live more than 16 km away from the University have to obtain permission from the Vice-Chancellor. This makes it more difficult for temporary staff to consider relocation or commuting.

A disaggregation of Rhodes’ academic workforce by race and rank for the period 2000-2003, based on HEMIS data, indicates that:

- The bulk of the academic workforce is employed at the senior lecturer and lecturer level.
- The number of senior lecturers dropped from 69 to 53 between 2000 and 2003.
- Between 2000 and 2003 there was an increase in the number of professors from 51 to 62.
- Between 2000 and 2003 the participation of Africans in Rhodes’ academic workforce grew from 6 to 8 percent.
• Throughout the period, between 87 and 92 percent of the academic workforce at Rhodes was white, and this proportion has not changed substantially since 1996.

• African staff comprised only 3.2 percent of the professoriate (in 2003). A similar situation can be seen at the level of associate professor and senior lecturer.

• With the exception of junior lecturer positions in 2000, white staff do not represent less than 70 percent at any level of appointment.

In terms of the gender distribution of Rhodes’ staff, males predominate over females in all employment categories, except non-professional administrative staff. The figure below shows that in all years the majority of women academics are clustered in the lower echelons of the hierarchy and that:

• In 2000 women constituted 77 percent of the academic personnel below junior lecturer, 50 percent of the junior lecturers, 35 percent of the lecturers, 33 percent of senior lecturers, 21 percent of the associate professors, and less than 10 percent at the professor level.

• Four years later there have been marginal improvements with women constituting 14 percent of the professors and 25 percent of the associate professors, while in the other categories the proportion of women per rank has dropped.
The demographic profile of staff and students at Rhodes both in terms of race and gender indicate that the institution might be lacking the African and women academic staff who could, on the one hand, act as role models for the new generation, and, on the other, give substance to the institution’s claims to an “African identity”.

As in most South African universities, the problem of the race and gender profile of Rhodes’ instruction and research staff is compounded by the age of the personnel. As can be seen from the table below, Rhodes will soon need to replace the bulk of its professoriate, given that at the associate professor layer, more than 40 percent of the staff is already over 50 years old. If the lack of black in-house candidates for these positions is taken into account, Rhodes will be facing a serious problem not only of equity but also of simply replacing its current academic workforce. Both issues are problems shared by most historically white South African universities which have not been directly affected by the mergers. The Panel is concerned that, despite the existence of an Equity Policy (AP, Appendix 22) that sets out the principles that should inform implementation, this has not been translated into a concerted recruitment plan for academic staff, apart from statements about affirmative action in the Equity Policy (Appendix 22: 10).
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Age of academic staff 2003 (HEMIS data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>Associate Professor</th>
<th>Senior Lecturer</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;=60</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Audit Portfolio argues that diversity and excellence are seen as complementary threads and that Rhodes is committed to employing individuals who will make the “best contribution” to the institution (AP: 46). The University’s selection protocol includes the following issues:

- The need for “fresh minds” and new viewpoints;
- The need to balance the composition of staff in terms of qualifications, experience, seniority and role models;
- The ability of a department to support an individual appointed on potential rather than proven merit;
- Balancing the University’s commitment to the employment of South Africans with the importance of attracting and employing foreign nationals;
- The need to create a supportive environment for all students, irrespective of their backgrounds. (AP: 47)

The Panel had the impression that Rhodes’ caution in the appointment of staff on the basis of potential together with wider system level issues is resulting in very slow progress in changing the academic staff equity profile at the institution. The Panel concurs that most HEIs are experiencing great difficulty in attracting black academics and professionals at the current salary levels. However, creative and bolder solutions need to be found if the institution wants to “attract and retain staff of the highest calibre and to provide development programmes for staff at all levels” in order to have a more representative academic workforce.

The Panel noted the importance of the Mellon Foundation Programme for Accelerated Development and the impact which this will have on the growth of a new generation of Rhodes’ academics. In addition, the Panel would like to urge the institution to develop an internal programme supported by institutionally allocated funds to accelerate and strengthen the institution’s capacity to “grow its own timber” (AP: 49).
Recommendation 4
The HEQC recommends that the University give urgent attention to the consolidation of the institution’s emerging policies on staff equity. This would entail the development of an integrated equity plan that should include a comprehensive strategy focused on recruitment as well as on development programmes and support structures to achieve better and faster results in changing Rhodes’ staff equity profile.

Rhodes’ awareness of the role that some aspects of its institutional culture could be playing in the slow pace of the overall transformation of the institution (AP: Appendix 18: 27 and 43: 16) led the University in 1999 to set up a number of investigations into these matters. These included an equity analysis and a series of focus group meetings with black staff. These, together with work done by the Human Resource Division, which recorded staff’s perceptions about the institution, were consolidated in 2003 into the document *Reflections on Institutional Culture and Transformation* (AP, Appendix 39). This document highlights a number of perceptions and trends at Rhodes that need urgent attention if the University is to make progress in moving away from an exclusively white and middle class culture to a more inclusive environment that transcends racial and cultural divisions, in order to enable the University to realise its local as well as its international aspirations.

What emerges from an analysis of the above document is that cultural exclusivity and racism are complex issues which involve individuals as much as institutions, and that dealing with them is not simply a matter of policy development, although normative frameworks are necessary. Attitudinal changes are also needed. The institution is fully aware of this. Interviews held with staff and students suggest that Rhodes urgently needs to confront the issues which have surfaced through its own investigations into institutional culture,\(^\text{10}\) and to understand some of these issues better in order to develop appropriate interventions. This is an area that the institution has included in its Quality Development Plan (AP: 94). Although the inclusion of institutional culture in the Quality Development Plan is an indication of the institution’s concern about this issue, interviews with senior management did not persuade the Panel that this constitutes a matter of urgency for the majority of the institution’s leadership.

The Panel also noted the reference in the *Audit Portfolio* to the “unfortunate continued prejudice of some local landlords” (AP: 31) that prevents black students from finding accommodation in town. This issue, which was also mentioned during the interviews

\(^{10}\) Some of these issues also emerged in the *Quality of Residence Life Survey Report*, AP, Appendix 51.
conducted by the Panel, suggests that Rhodes, in its interaction with the town, could use its influence to draw attention to how the cultural and political exclusivism of Grahamstown works counter to the institution’s objective of addressing and redressing the legacy of apartheid. The University has considerable leverage in addressing this issue, given its large contribution to the GDP of the area.

**Recommendation 5**

The HEQC recommends that the University consider the development of a bold and transparent strategy to address negative aspects of its institutional culture. This needs to include an institution-wide implementation plan to transform relevant aspects of Rhodes’ institutional culture and clear monitoring mechanisms to track progress.

Responsiveness in the sense of identifying and acting on specific educational and knowledge needs in the society and the economy is an important component of the notion of transformation in higher education. Rhodes has developed a series of academic courses designed to respond to specific needs of the Eastern Cape Province. One instance is the Doctorate in Pharmacy programme. In many cases, the development of such qualifications shows the institution’s ability to take advantage of market opportunities.

Good examples of such initiatives in the Humanities Faculty are the Diploma in Local Government Administration, the Diploma in English Second Language, the Higher Diploma in Journalism, the Diploma in Media Management and the Diploma in Psychology. In the Science Faculty there is the postgraduate Diploma in Fishery Sciences and the Higher Diploma in Environmental Biotechnology. An analysis of Rhodes’ accreditation records in the HEQC’s database suggests that the institution has been particularly responsive to the country’s needs in the field of teacher education where Rhodes has been offering several teacher upgrading programmes.

The Panel would like to congratulate the institution on its commitment, inventiveness and deployment of its capabilities to respond to the needs of the provincial and national economy for specific skills in a range of disciplines.

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11 The issue of Rhodes’ responsiveness in terms of course offerings is discussed more fully in Section 4.5.
Commendation 1
The Panel commends the institution for the development of programmes and qualifications which respond to specific regional needs, and encourages it to explore further additional areas of responsiveness where it could maximise the synergies between the three core functions of teaching and learning, research and community engagement within a disciplinary as well as a multidisciplinary framework.
3. **INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING, RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT**

This section of the report looks at Rhodes’ conceptualisation of academic governance and its operationalisation from two perspectives. Firstly, it analyses the relationship between institutional planning and the organisation of the quality management of the core functions. Secondly, it looks at the ways in which these arrangements support the realisation of Rhodes’ mission and vision.

### 3.1 Governance, Management, Planning and Resource Allocation

In the introduction to the *Audit Portfolio* the institution states that:

“Another advantage of being small is that it facilitates transparency and good governance and enables a hands-on approach by the Vice-Chancellor and senior management. All students and staff have easy access to senior managers and an ‘open-door policy’ is a characteristic of the institution’s management style. Moreover, the small number of academic staff means that a high proportion sit on Faculty committees and Faculty Boards which report in turn to Senate sub-committees and Senate. The full Senate normally meets 5 times per annum and is a widely representative and effective decision making body. Rhodes University functions well; it has long had financial stability, good leadership, effective management and a depth of administrative capacity.” (AP: 7)

From the point of view of the management and administration of the institution, there are 12 senior directors and deans who report directly to the Vice-Chancellor and the Vice-Principal. Those that report to the Vice-Chancellor are: Registrar, Registrar Finance and Director of Finance, Director of Communications and Development, Director of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance, Dean of Internationalisation, and Dean of Research. Those reporting to the Vice-Principal are: Director of Estates, Director of Human Resources; Director of ADC; University Librarian, Dean of Students, and Director of IT Division.

At the academic level, the six faculties and the research institutes constitute the core academic organisational units of the institution. All faculties have boards which have responsibility for academic functions and report to Senate.

The Panel learnt through interviews with senior management that, while the deans meet informally once a month to discuss issues that might be elevated to Senate level discussion, the “Wednesday Meetings” i.e., the weekly meeting between the Vice
Chancellor, the Vice Principal, and the directors of the different divisions, the Dean of Research and the Dean of Internationalisation has a fundamental role at the operational level.

At the strategic and planning level, Rhodes is organised in a relatively flat management structure governed by the values of collegiality and trust. According to Rhodes the most salient features of its planning model are:

- A bottom up structure, which allows for the involvement of staff and students
- An ability to respond to departmental and disciplinary needs and changes
- Collegiality
- Accountability based on trust
- Utilisation of statistical information (*Digest of Statistics*) to support the planning process.

The *Audit Portfolio* refers often to the efforts of Rhodes’ management to avoid managerialism in response to deans’ and HoDs’ complaints about the creeping managerialism that is invading the institution through mostly external demands. This same opinion was expressed during interviews with HoDs. The Panel noted that the University has been able, partially because of the small size of its operations, to keep its most strategic decision-making structure, the Academic Planning and Staffing Committee (AP&SC), as a Senate and Council committee and not, as in many other institutions, as part of executive management. The AP&SC is an academic body where the Vice-Chancellor, elected deans, the registrar and the finance director, together with the structures responsible for quality assurance, quality development and monitoring, and students and union representatives, make decisions about the intellectual size and shape of the institution.

The AP&SC was created in 1996. It meets four times a year with additional meetings held if necessary. The responsibilities of this committee are to:

- Ensure the appropriate allocation of University resources;
- Plan at the departmental level - to consider the range of courses offered and their long term viability;
- Review the existing use of resources in academic departments;
- Identify, evaluate and incorporate, where appropriate, new academic developments, including proposals for new qualifications;
- Oversee the internal accreditation and management of short courses;
- Look for synergies at departmental level, not simply to economise but in order to release resources for new initiatives;
• Consider progress made in relation to previous review recommendations;
• Ensure that departmental activities fit in with the institutional strategic plan; and
• Report through the Academic Planning and Quality Assurance Office and/or the Registrar’s Division, to external bodies such as the Department of Education and the Higher Education Quality Committee on institutional plans, policies and academic programmes (AP: 13-14).

The fact that this committee combines strategic planning, resource allocation and quality assurance in its functions makes this structure a pivotal element in the governance of the institution. An interesting feature of this committee is its hand-on approach to certain academic matters, such as the academic review which Rhodes conducts every three years. During the review the AP&SC becomes the Academic Review Committee. The Audit Portfolio indicates that the AP&SC met 22 times in the space of six weeks during the 2005 review process.

To a large extent, planning at Rhodes is centred on the results of the regular academic reviews which are implemented by the HoDs in close communication with the deans. According to the Audit Portfolio the academic reviews have become the most important process of strategic decision-making at the institution. Not only are these reviews an opportunity to analyse and assess the achievement of the institution’s mission, academic shape and direction but they also are opportunities to look into the allocation of financial, human and physical resources to the faculties (AP: 13).

The Guidelines for Departmental Self-Evaluation cover both academic planning and quality assurance as the fundamental focus of the review. The fact that reviews are conducted every three years affords departments an opportunity to look at changes in their work and work environment. In the area of Academic Planning, departments need to reflect and provide information on issues, such as academic staff, research activities and postgraduate students, community service, links with other academics, higher education institutions or business, resources, statistical data, as well as an academic plan for the next three to five years. Departments were also asked in this particular review to comment on the ways in which the incorporation of RUEL by Fort Hare had impacted on them. In the area of Quality Assurance, departments need to reflect and provide information on policies and procedures, the kind of service they receive from support and administrative units, short courses, partnerships and cross border provision, procedures to keep student records, assessment of the quality of courses, a number of specific teaching and learning issues, and equity issues, including how the curriculum accommodates equity and diversity. Departments are also asked to insert the performance indicators and benchmarks, which are to be used to measure their performance.

12 This aspect of the academic review is discussed in greater detail in Section 4.2.
The comments provided by HoDs after the 2004 academic review seem to indicate that, to a large extent, this system of monitoring and planning has broad acceptance at the institution.

**Commendation 2**

The HEQC commends Rhodes on the utilisation of the academic reviews as instruments for planning, resource allocation and quality assurance, which afford the institution an opportunity for self-reflection and integration of department specific information into institution level analysis.

The Panel is of the view that the academic reviews are a good example of Rhodes’ understanding of a collegial system of governance, planning and quality management, and wishes to encourage the institution to take up all the opportunities afforded by the information produced during the academic reviews to improve institutional level analysis.

Rhodes’ management is aware, as are the individual HoDs, that the environment in which higher education institutions operate has changed substantially since 1994. There are a number of national social and political imperatives that require responses by universities. Some of these imperatives are reflected in Rhodes’ mission and vision. Yet, these are not always translated into practice in the three core functions at the departmental level.

The Panel noted the distinctive aspects of Rhodes’ arrangement for strategic decision-making and planning and understands the importance that the University attaches to its ability to operate within a framework of collegiality and personal trust. However, the Panel is of the view that this model alone may not be supportive enough of the alignment of Rhodes’ own institutional mission with the national imperatives articulated in the White Paper and in the National Plan for Higher Education, particularly in terms of responsiveness and transformation.

While the Panel is fully supportive of the value of collegiality in an academic institution, it is also concerned that a balance should be struck between the degree of independence enjoyed by departments and faculties, and the consistent implementation of institution level objectives. Similarly, the Panel appreciates the importance of staff commitment in making the implementation of an institutional strategic plan focused on teaching and learning, research and community engagement both possible and effective. In this regard, the Panel noted that most members of senior management did not regard the Institutional Plan for the period 2004-2006 submitted to the DoE as a document which can influence the strategic direction of the institution. This, in the Panel’s view, is an unfortunate perception for two reasons. Firstly, this plan constitutes a set of commitments by the
institution which have to be engaged with and acted upon. Secondly, in the absence of, as far as the Panel has been able to ascertain, a strategic plan for internal use, the DoE submission effectively constitutes Rhodes’ strategic plan. It seems to the Panel that Rhodes could have used the DoE’s requirements as an opportunity to develop appropriate strategies in relation to, for example, recruitment, equity, and institutional culture, as well as in relation to the institution’s overall mission.

The lack of a clearly stated strategic direction seems to have two main consequences. Firstly, planning is driven by the departments in the sense that the specific concerns of each academic unit, as they emerged from the academic review, constitute the strategic horizon within which the institution plans, allocates resources, and determines its degree offerings. There appears little sense of engagement at departmental level with and contribution to the achievement of institution level objectives. The Panel noted, for instance, how issues such as internationalisation and Africanisation of the curriculum, and the implications of the liberal arts tradition, had not been given much consideration by most of the HoDs who were interviewed (Section 2.1). Secondly, the institution’s budget is allocated within a framework of recurrent expenses and more substantial capital investments, like the construction of new residences, but there is no sense that a strategic fund could be created and used to support, for example, a strategy for the recruitment of black academics.

According to the Audit Portfolio, Rhodes has an annual process of budget allocation which takes place under a number of committees. These include the Budget Committee, Resources Committee, Academic Planning and Staffing Committee, and Finance and General Purposes Committee. The final decision on resource allocation is made by Council while the financial performance of the institution is monitored by different sub-committees of Council. The annual income and expenditure of the University is communicated to the University community in detail in the University’s Digest of Statistics (AP: 15).

Finally, while the Panel concurs with the institution on the need not to stultify ideas through the imposition of a managerialist ethos, the Panel is concerned that there is no indication that Rhodes monitors the extent to which institution level goals and mission are being realised, or how the institution monitors, in between academic reviews, the relative contribution of each faculty and academic unit to the 11 undertakings that Rhodes indicates in its mission.
3.2 The Quality Management System

Rhodes’ conception of quality has two main dimensions. Firstly, it focuses on fitness for purpose and aligns quality assurance with planning. Secondly, it focuses predominantly on quality assurance, giving much less attention to the support, development and monitoring of quality.

The alignment between quality and planning was translated at the institutional level into the Office of Quality Assurance and Planning in 2001. As indicated in the Audit Portfolio, Rhodes’ small management team facilitates the combination of these functions. The implementation of this aspect of the conception of quality assurance hinges on the conduct of institution-wide reviews, both academic and administrative. According to the institution, these exercises

“give staff the opportunity to shape their own futures and have the added advantage of identifying best practice in a non-threatening way, and of spreading awareness of the need for planning and QA throughout the institution.” (AP: 17)

The conceptualisation of quality primarily as quality assurance, without systematically including support, development and monitoring of quality, has important implications for the governance of quality at the institution and for the ways in which units, such as the ADC, are involved in quality related activities.

From the point of view of the governance of quality, Rhodes’ management of quality is both centralised and decentralised, reflecting the institution’s conception of QA as a shared commitment and responsibility. Consistent with this, the University encourages participants in self-reviews to set their own academic and equity objectives within the broader mission of the University/Department (AP: 17). The Panel appreciates the fact that the institution manages to include most academics in the process of quality assurance and its links with planning through the departmental reviews.13

The Panel noted the fit between this type of arrangement and Rhodes’ overall approach to planning and governance. The Audit Portfolio offers various definitions and interpretations of both quality and excellence that need to be taken into account to understand the advantages and disadvantages of a quality management system, which is both centralised and decentralised, and which is focused on quality assurance.

In the introduction to the Audit Portfolio the institution states that the conception of its mission in relation to its students “conforms with the definition of quality as transformation” (AP: 5). Section 5.3 of the Audit Portfolio indicates that quality

13 The implications of this system for the core functions of teaching and learning and research will be analysed in sections 4.2 and 5.1 respectively.
assurance aims at balancing the notions of excellence, efficiency and service provision, within the conceptual framework of fitness for purpose. Finally, the same section indicates that excellence according to Rhodes’ mission and vision requires the University to be:

“an internationally respected academic institution, affirming its African identity, producing internationally recognised graduates and making a contribution to the advancement of international scholarship and the development of the Eastern Cape and South Africa” (AP: 16).

The Panel concurs with the institution that individuals and academic units need to interpret the institutional mission and set their own targets in relation to it. Yet in order for Rhodes to be able to monitor its own progress in the achievement of institution level goals, it is also necessary to develop a number of performance indicators or targets that operate at institutional level. The use of some common performance indicators allows for the identification of problems or areas of weakness and the implementation of appropriate mechanisms for the support, development and monitoring of quality defined both as fitness for purpose and fitness of purpose. The Panel is of the view that, in the area of transformation, especially in relation to student and staff demographic profiles and institutional culture, the lack of high level steering by management with regard to institutional goals may have the effect of constraining the achievement of Rhodes’ own stated goals.

**Recommendation 6**

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes engage with the issue of how, within a decentralised system of quality management, faculties and academic departments could actively engage with and give expression to the achievement of institutional level objectives, which pertain to the conception of quality both as fitness for and fitness of purpose.

In relation to the conceptualisation of quality management as including not only quality assurance but also quality development, the Panel noted that the improvement of teaching and research supervision, for example, are left to the initiative of individual academics, who on their own accord take part in the activities initiated by the ADC or the Research Office. The Panel is of the view that Rhodes’s voluntaristic approach to the development and improvement of quality has a number of serious implications for consistency of achievement in the area of teaching and learning. The Panel would like to draw to the attention of the institution that the achievement of some of its strategic level objectives, particularly in relation to redress, may be predicated on the development of more complex and multi-faceted understanding of quality in the three core functions.
Recommendation 7

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes consider, within its framework of collegial governance, a re-conceptualisation of quality management to give greater weight to quality support, development and monitoring as strategic tools for the achievement of institutional level objectives.

In relation to the creation of a normative framework Rhodes has developed a series of policies and procedures to manage quality, some of which are fairly recent:

- External Examining – draft (due for approval 2005)
- Evaluation of Teaching and Course Design (1998)
- Short Course Management (2000)
- Plagiarism (2003)
- Supervision of Postgraduate Students (2001)
- Assessment of Student Learning (2000)

The conception of quality management narrowly defined as quality assurance accentuates the difference between the manner in which quality is dealt with in the research and the teaching and learning core functions. As can be seen from the above list, the quality assurance policies are specific to the core functions. In relation to the research core function, the Panel found that quality assurance and quality development policies and procedures are consistently implemented across the institution by the Research Office (see Section 5). This is aided not only by the characteristics of the management of the research function at Rhodes but also by the tradition of peer review and external examination prevalent in the area of research at most universities. In relation to teaching and learning, the different elements of quality management are not only newer but also largely reside within individual departments, which are expected to adapt these policies and apply them of their own accord (see Section 4.1).

Interviews with various layers of academic staff and academic governance structures suggest that this has resulted in inconsistent application of policies across departments. The Panel noted that the uneven application of policies across departments does not necessarily mean that mechanisms are not in place to assure the quality of provision in each department. What seems to characterise Rhodes’ conception of quality assurance is the idea of a kind of “community of practice” among academic staff. As indicated in the Audit Portfolio, the institution encourages “a shared commitment and responsibility for QA. An example of this is seen in the University’s stance on self-evaluation where responsibility is placed with individuals” (AP: 17). This approach is part of the collegial
ethos that informs Rhodes’ approach to academic governance. In relation to the operationalisation of this ethos at the departmental level, the Audit Portfolio observes that “There is an understanding in the University Senate that the University is only as good as its academic departments and that departments are only as good as the individual staff members” (AP: 36). The extent to which this results in good quality teaching and learning is reflected in the outcomes of the academic review and in the outcomes of the different levels of assessment applied in teaching and learning (see Section 4.2 and 4.9).

In relation to the core function of community engagement, the general newness of quality management and the relatively recent re-conceptualisation of community engagement might explain why the institution has not yet developed an appropriate quality management system for community engagement (Section 6).

The predominance of quality assurance in Rhodes’ conception of quality does not mean that there are no developmental and improvement elements present in the institution’s organisation of quality management. The Panel noted that accountability, development and improvement are distributed among academic departments and committee structures in a way that seeks to support Rhodes’ collegial model of academic governance.

In the case of research, quality assurance and promotion are undertaken by the Research Office and the Joint Research Committee together with the academic departments and the faculty deans. In the case of teaching and learning, the quality assurance function is shared by the departments with the assistance of the Quality Assurance and Planning Office and the Senate Academic Planning and Staffing Committee. Quality promotion is supported by the Academic Development Centre, the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee and the academic departments.

Analysis of the documentation provided by the institution and evidence gained during the interviews has shown that the lines of division between accountability and development and the quality management of teaching and learning are blurred.

The Panel is concerned that the ADC seems to be required to adopt a monitoring and evaluative role, e.g. commenting on the self-assessments produced for the academic review, over and above its support and development function. Furthermore, the ADC seems to be regarded by some members of senior management and HoDs as the unit where strategic issues about curriculum development are considered (e.g. the internationalisation of the curriculum). The combination of these roles might result in an overcommitted ADC. It might also give rise to the perception that it is the responsibility of this academic unit to take on curricular work and development challenges on behalf of the relevant academic departments (see Section 4.2).
3.3 Benchmarking and Surveys

Despite the fact that one of the stated objectives of Rhodes’ QA policy is to ensure that:

“an appropriate quality assurance system (a set of quality assurance policies, procedures and performance indicators) is in place to realise the mission and the vision of the University” (AP: 16)

Rhodes does not have a set of performance indicators that provide a quantitative (or qualitative) measure of the institution’s achievement of its high level goals. On the whole, the institution appears to be unconvinced about the usefulness of benchmarking or of user surveys. Yet the University is not opposed to inter-institutional comparisons or to the establishment of national benchmarks based on research (AP: 89). As a matter of fact, the institution has undertaken a number of surveys in response to perceived problems. These include:

- A 1999 Student Services Council Survey of student attitudes and opinions on a wide range of issues within the University;
- A survey in 2002 of first year student expectations and experience of Rhodes University;
- A 2002 survey of lecture attendance at Rhodes University where undergraduate students’ perceptions of the value of lectures was researched;
- A 2003 CASRA survey of substance abuse on the Rhodes University Campus;
- A 2004 survey of the Quality of Life in the University Residences;
- A 2004 RIBS survey of the expectations and experience of MBA students at Rhodes University.

According to the Audit Portfolio, surveys such as these are normally commissioned by a Senate Committee and their impact on quality improvement can be tracked via the minutes and actions of the relevant committees (AP: 90). The only regular survey conducted by the institution is the First Job Destination Survey carried out when graduands return to the University each April for the graduation ceremony.

For its own internal purposes, the institution has not formalised target levels or benchmarks. Yet Rhodes considers the annual Digest of Statistics as a valuable instrument in providing measures of Rhodes’ performance that enable inter-departmental and inter-faculty comparisons (AP: 89).

The Panel concurs with the idea that not all types of user surveys and benchmarking exercises are equally useful. However, the Panel does not think that that the external vote of confidence on the “University’s quality, academic strength and strategic direction
manifested in the success of fund raising” on its own is a comprehensive enough indicator of the institution’s overall performance (AP: 91).

The Panel had ample opportunity to make use of the *Digest of Statistics* and found that data is not provided systematically and in a way that could assist management and departments to monitor their performance in the three core functions. Examples of this include: the lack of provision of a time series to understand the changes in the tables reflecting faculty headcount enrolments per race and gender by level of study; and the lack of a table reflecting headcount enrolments by race and nationality per faculty and level of study.

Similarly, in terms of teaching and learning, the *Digest of Statistics* does not offer a disaggregation of throughput and pass rates. Issues related to the management of information for the research function are dealt with in section 5.1.5.

The Panel is of the view that the compilation of the *Digest of Statistics* is an excellent way of sharing information about the institution across academic and support units. However, for this publication to be a more useful element in planning and quality assurance, the institution needs to make some adjustments to its conception. The Panel would like to encourage the institution, through the relevant governance structures (possibly the AP&SC), to identify the strategic areas in the three core functions for which, in terms of the University mission and vision, it would be important to develop indicators. The University is encouraged to reflect on what those indicators ought to be, how information pertaining to them should be collected, what the role of academic departments should be in this task, and who in the institution should be responsible for interpreting, integrating and monitoring those indicators.

**Recommendation 8**

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes consider the identification and use of a set of performance indicators which could reinforce the institution’s planning and quality management functions, and explore the utilisation of suitable benchmarking tools in a formalised and regular manner to support decision-making for academic planning and quality improvement.
4. GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING QUALITY

This section of the report looks firstly at Rhodes’ conceptualisation of teaching and learning and how in this conceptualisation, the curricular and extra-curricular aspects of campus life are combined to provide what the institution claims to be its most characteristic feature: “a multifaceted and well balanced educational experience” (AP: 4). Secondly, it looks into the organisation of teaching and learning and how these arrangements facilitate the realisation of the teaching and learning-focused undertakings of Rhodes’ mission. Thirdly, it deals with the structures that support teaching and learning at the institution as well as with the institutional arrangements to ensure the quality of teaching and learning activities, including staff development. Finally, this section looks specifically at the different elements that constitute the non-curricular aspects of the student experience at Rhodes.

4.1 Rhodes’ conceptualisation of teaching and learning

As indicated in Section 2.1, among the components of Rhodes’ mission is a description of the overall attributes of its graduates, which include academic and personal competencies and attitudes. This aspect of Rhodes’ mission is further elaborated in a series of undertakings which together define the parameters of the institution’s understanding of the educational experience:

- To create a research-based teaching and learning environment that will encourage students to reach their full potential, that is supportive of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and that will produce critical, capable and skilled graduates who can adapt to changing environments.
- To promote excellence and innovation in teaching and learning by providing staff and students with access to relevant academic development programmes.
- To provide an attractive, safe and well equipped environment that is conducive to good scholarship and collegiality.
- To provide a safe and nurturing student support system as well as a diverse array of residential, sporting, cultural and leadership opportunities that will foster the all-round development of our students, the University and the region as a whole.
- To attract and retain staff of the highest calibre and to provide development programmes for staff at all levels.
• To strive for excellence and to promote quality assurance in all its activities. (AP, Appendix 54)

These parameters clearly situate the two elements of Rhodes students’ educational experience: the academic or curricular and the extra-curricular. The University prides itself on being able to connect the intellectual and social lives of the students during their stay on campus in a purposeful and programmatic manner. This conceptualisation of teaching and learning is based on the notion that students are active participants in a process which “aims to add value to their personal educational experience” (AP: 32).

The Panel noted that the curricular aspect of the student experience at Rhodes is the result of a conceptualisation of teaching and learning that sees teaching as an intellectual discipline that needs to be learned and not as a “common sense” activity. This is supported by Rhodes’ undertakings to create a research-based teaching and learning environment, and to promote excellence and innovation in teaching and learning. This conceptualisation has a number of practical implications for staff training and promotion as well as for the structures and resources which have to be put in place to support both research-based teaching and excellence and innovation in teaching. This becomes all the more important in the light of a second aspect of Rhodes’ understanding of its mission in relation to teaching and learning. This is the awareness that educational disadvantage as a legacy of apartheid needs to be engaged with so that all students can “develop their full potential” and achieve the institution’s desired graduate attributes.

The next section looks into the ways in which the organisation of teaching and learning at Rhodes support the realisation of this aspect of the institution’s mission.

4.2 The organisation of teaching and learning

There are a number of management and support structures that have responsibility for the quality of teaching and learning at Rhodes. Besides the Academic Planning and Staffing Committee and the Quality Assurance Committee, whose functions have been examined in detail in Section 3, there are specific structures which focus on teaching and learning: the Teaching and Learning Committee (T&LC), the Academic Development Centre and the Staff Development Committee. At Senate level, the T&LC, created in 1996, has as its main responsibilities to:

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14 The report will deal with the specific role that the Staff Development Committee and ADC have in relation to teaching and learning in Section 4.8.
• Advise the Senate on the formulation and implementation of University policies for effective teaching and learning.
• Facilitate the development of an appropriate total environment for teaching and learning.
• Promote greater understanding within the University of the learning processes.
• Assess, on an ongoing basis, the effectiveness of policies, programmes and systems relating to teaching and learning and to recommend improvements.
• Monitor the quality of facilities and technology provided by the University for teaching and learning and to motivate new developments where necessary. (AP: 18)

This committee is chaired by the Vice-Principal and besides a number of academics, it includes among its members, a Student Representative Council (SRC) representative and the Director of the ADC. The Panel noted during the interview with this committee that its members understand their function as developmental, and that most of them agree about the need to win academic staff over to the benefits of reporting on teaching and learning rather than enforcing reporting. However, the Panel also noted that some committee members are more persuaded than others of the need for departments to regularly report on teaching and learning based on evidence.

A number of policies, instruments and strategies have been developed in order to promote, develop, and to some extent, assure the quality of teaching and learning. These policies are:

• External Examining – draft (not yet approved)
• Evaluation of Teaching and Course Design (2004)
• Short Course Management (2004)
• Plagiarism (2003)
• Supervision of Postgraduate Students (2001)
• Assessment of Student Learning (2000)
• Curriculum Development and Review (1998)

The policy on Evaluation of Teaching and Course Design has the potential to help academics and students to improve teaching and learning through the feedback provided to them by the ADC, and yet it also has the potential to make academic staff feel that they are, as was indicated in the interview with the T&LC, being policed. The Panel is of the view that HoDs have a fundamental role to play in implementing this policy in such a way that it is received as an opportunity for innovation and not as an added burden.

Rhodes’ Audit Portfolio clearly indicates that teaching and learning at the institution takes place in the academic departments and that students are attached to an academic
department that take care of their academic progress. In this sense, HoDs at the institution play a key role in ensuring that students are provided with a high quality and enabling academic experience. The Panel noted that HoDs at Rhodes are elected by their peers for a period of three years. The responsibilities of the HoDs are spelled out in the *HoDs Guide*. In its foreword to the guide, the VC indicates that

“The Head of an Academic Department (HoD) plays a crucial role in the structure of a university. S/he provides internal and external academic leadership, encourages and develops the staff and students, ensures good teaching practices, stimulates and fosters research as well as manages and administers the department. In addition, the HoD often has a full teaching load and undertakes research. A successful HoD will result in the academic discipline and staff flourishing, and in the department being competitive and attracting students and research funding in a highly competitive environment.” (AP, Appendix 16)

Thus HoDs at Rhodes are responsible for teaching and learning, staff and student development, curriculum renewal and the administration of the department. Interviews with HoDs highlighted that there is some variation in the way in which individual HoDs understand their roles. There is a view of the HoD as having an important role as implementers of the institution’s strategy. Alongside this view, there is the perception that HoDs need to fight for their place in the institutional hierarchy. There is also the view that HoDs might either focus on their discipline (“represent the discipline”) or focus on administrative issues (“represent management”). Most HoDs agree that, except for the financial administration of their departments – for which a budget is allocated centrally – they enjoy a very large degree of autonomy, particularly at the intellectual level. This was confirmed by the deans who were interviewed by the Panel.

Among their many responsibilities, HoDs are, besides the lecturers themselves, the individuals most directly responsible for the quality of the teaching and learning that takes place in their departments and for the success of their students. In interviews with academic staff and professionals involved in the support of teaching and learning, the Panel gained the impression that HoDs are seen as overstretched, particularly in smaller departments where there is no administrative support. The demands made of the HoDs, in the view of some of the academics who were interviewed by the Panel, put the continuity of the intellectual leadership of departments at risk because HoDs may very well refuse to take the position for longer than three years. The Panel would like to urge the institution to ensure that HoDs receive the necessary level of administrative support so that they can fulfil their intellectual roles in their respective departments. It is clear to the Panel that the professionalisation of teaching and learning and the introduction of pedagogical innovation at the classroom level depend on the HoDs’ commitment and openness. In this sense HoDs are pivotal in any fundamental change in this core function.
In the next layer of academic governance, elected deans are responsible for the general administration of the faculties, the disbursement of centrally allocated budgets, dealing with admissions and providing academic leadership to their respective faculties. Elected deans can perform the functions of dean and HoD with or without teaching duties, or be elected as deans without HoD duties. Specifically in terms of teaching and learning, deans are responsible for the general monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, which takes place in their faculties through external examination. Interviews with the deans indicated that the direct aspects of quality assurance in teaching and learning are the HoDs’ responsibility and that most deans consider it important to maintain the existing departmental autonomy.

The Panel noted the pivotal role of academic departments and HoDs in the realisation of Rhodes’ mission in relation to teaching and learning (Section 4.1). This is confirmed by the importance attached by the institution to the academic review. In Section 3.1 of this report, the academic review was examined from both the point of view of the quality management of the educational provision and the academic planning at the institutional level. In this section, the report concentrates on the teaching and learning aspects of the academic review. In this regard, the Rhodes Academic Review focuses on: curriculum design and renewal, student assessment and course moderation, course and teaching evaluation, and on the manner in which equity and redress are incorporated into teaching and learning and curriculum design (AP, Appendix 16). The departmental submissions are analysed and commented on by the ADC. In this context, the ADC performs both a developmental and a quality assurance role.

HoDs indicated to the Panel that the overall experience of the 2005 academic review, although work-intensive and highly stressful, was generally regarded as positive by the departments. The Panel did not find the same positive view of the reporting activities that take place in between academic reviews. Neither did the Panel find a general agreement as to the practicality and desirability of other forms of reporting on teaching and learning among other individuals and structures involved in the management of quality in teaching and learning. The Panel understands the importance of trust and collegiality in the governance of quality at Rhodes and the institution’s concern about avoiding a managerialist approach to education (see Section 3.2). However, interviews conducted with different layers of academics and management as well as the Panel’s analyses of minutes of the relevant committees suggest that this approach allows for the inconsistent application of teaching and learning policies, which might result in uneven quality of provision across departments. Particularly in relation to the academic review, the Panel learned that, despite the preparation and distribution of detailed guidelines - including for the first time since the reviews started in 1997 a section on teaching and learning - these guidelines were not used across the board.

15 The extent to which this is actually taking place is examined in Section 4.9.
Recommendation 9

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes review its current arrangements for monitoring the implementation of its teaching and learning policies to enable the institution to ensure that high quality teaching is consistently offered across all academic departments, and that appropriate developmental initiatives are in place where required. This should be done in a way that is consonant with the requirements of departmental autonomy and collegiality.

The issue of inconsistent application of policies could undermine the institution’s ability to realise its mission, especially with regard to ensuring that students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds have access to the Rhodes educational experience. The fact that the majority of Rhodes’ South African born black students come from ex-model C schools suggests that in general they are able to cope with the academic demands of their degrees and negotiate the institution’s campus life quite comfortably. This was confirmed through interviews with academics and tutors. If, as the Panel recommended in Section 2, Rhodes develops a more targeted strategy to recruit students from a wider range of schools consistency in the application of policies, as well as in the implementation of mechanisms to monitor teaching and learning performance will become much more important to ensure that all students enjoy the Rhodes’ student experience. The following section deals with this issue in more detail.

4.3 Management of Quality in Academic Support Services

4.3.1 Academic Development

Academic development for students at Rhodes has three main foci: the tutorial system located in the academic departments, Extended Studies located in the ADC, and a mentoring system attached to the Extended Studies programme, which is also located in the ADC.

The tutorial system is considered an important aspect of the teaching and learning environment at the University (AP: 8). Interviews with HoDs indicated the value attached to the tutorial system and also the challenges facing departments with high enrolment numbers which struggle to keep the size of tutorial groups small enough to facilitate learning. Tutors at Rhodes are selected among third year and postgraduate students and trained at the ADC, which offers a certificate in Peer Tutoring. This activity, as well as ADC’s work on staff development which will be discussed in Section 4.8, are good examples of Rhodes’ rejection of the conceptualisation of “teaching as common sense”.

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Although the tutors interviewed by the Panel remarked on their insufficient competence in assessment, both academics and students indicated their satisfaction with the tutors’ overall performance. Interviews also suggested that tutoring is regarded as a prestigious activity among Rhodes’ students. The Panel also noted that in some cases tutoring was seen as creating distance between the discipline experts and the students. The Panel heard from tutors that formal evaluations of tutoring programmes were conducted, although there was some doubt as how consistently these evaluations were applied. Similarly, some interviews suggested that the tutor programme itself could be more closely monitored. The fact that tutoring is presented as a qualification offered by the ADC indicates that students are assessed before obtaining their certificate. The Panel did not find any indication of evaluations of the tutor system, which are focused on the impact on teaching and learning at individual departments.

While tutoring takes place in the academic departments and focuses on all students, mentoring is a component of the Extended Studies programme and focuses on disadvantaged students. All students enrolled on the Extended Programme are provided with a mentor appointed as part of the Trojan Academic Initiative (TAI) which aims to mentor and support students “to come to grips with the Rhodes academic and social cultures” (AP, Appendix 7 Academic Development Centre Annual Report, 2004: 10) During 2003 the programme involved 31 mentors working with 81 student protégés.

The creation of the Extended Studies Unit as part of the ADC was a consequence of changes in the conceptualisation of both student support and academic development. This resulted in the creation of a specialised support system for students located outside the academic programmes and a shift in the focus of ADC from student support to the development of teaching skills among staff.

The Extended Programme is one avenue used by Rhodes to diversify its student admissions. Students enter the programme via alternative admissions tests as well as through the deans’ discretionary power to admit students who do not have the points required to enter Rhodes. Through these avenues more than 100 students were admitted in 2004 to the extended programmes offered in the Faculties of Commerce, Humanities and Science (AP, Appendix 7: 8). In 2004 Rhodes received a three year grant from the DoE to offer Extended Programmes as a result of a proposal submitted by the ADC. The Panel congratulates Rhodes and the ADC for their proactive and innovative approach to the extended curriculum.

Commendation 3

The HEQC commends Rhodes on its initiatives for the professionalisation of teaching and learning at the institution, and the development of a mentoring system to support previously disadvantaged students.
The Panel is of the view that although this commitment to the professionalisation of teaching and learning is laudable, it is not supported by sufficiently large numbers of academic staff taking the PGDHE in order to improve their teaching. This issue will be further explored in relation to staff development.

Interviews with the ADC staff indicated that in relation to the results obtained in the Extended Programme, the Centre had to contend with Rhodes’ staff perception of what academic development can achieve. The ADC staff argued that in certain programmes “success rates of between 22 percent and 48 percent are remarkable considering what they started with”. The Panel is not clear, given these comments, how these figures relate to an institutional average of passed credits by Rhodes’ students on NSFAS, which is higher than the national average (see AP: Table 1).

The Panel would like to urge the institution to monitor the progress of students involved in extended programmes in order to determine the effectiveness and impact of both the extended curriculum and the mentoring programme in different disciplinary areas. This observation is based on the impression gathered by the Panel during interviews that the reasons for moving the extended curricula into the ESU included the need to shield staff allocated to extended curricula teaching from absorption into mainstream departmental commitments, the need to enhance synergies and common approaches across the various extended curricula, and the greater ease with which cohort studies of student throughput could be conducted.

**Recommendation 10**

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes develop and implement appropriate mechanisms to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the Extended Studies Unit of the ADC and its programmes. In the design of such mechanisms, the institution should consider the need to document the ways in which extended programmes contribute to the throughput and success rates of different groups of students in different disciplines.

In relation to the shift of the extended curricula courses into the newly-formed ESU of the ADC, the Panel noted with concern that the responsibility for achieving student equity and ensuring the academic success of black students might come to be seen as the responsibility of the ADC rather than the general responsibility of the institution as a whole, and of individual faculties and departments in particular. These issues, together with the frequent mention in interviews of the expectations that different layers of academic staff have about the ADC taking up work on various aspects of curriculum development, particularly in relation to internationalisation and the Africanisation of the curricula, suggest that the centre might soon be over-stretched. The Panel would like to
suggest that Rhodes puts in place the necessary mechanisms to ensure that academic support of students is seen as a shared responsibility of the institution as a whole.

Finally, the Panel was very impressed with the scope, quality and impact of the work of the ADC. In this regard, the Panel would like to stress the importance of providing continuing support for the research on teaching and learning which takes place at the ADC. In this regard the Panel is of the view that many aspects of this research can support the reconceptualisation of quality management as including quality development as mentioned in section 3.2.

**Commendation 4:**

The HEQC commends Rhodes University for the quality of the research on teaching and learning undertaken by the staff of the Academic Development Centre.

4.3.2 Library

According to the Audit Portfolio, Rhodes has a well-functioning and well-resourced library on the campus that supports academic programmes, research, and the needs of the Grahamstown community.

The Audit Portfolio also indicates that the Library has an impressive collection of electronic journals (30 000 titles) and a comparatively small collection of printed ones. The Library cooperates with other academic libraries locally, nationally and internationally through different consortia and associations for access to electronic databases and meta-search software.

The Panel was particularly impressed by the Library support of open access to information and open source software which allows for the international sharing of the research done at Rhodes. The Library is in the process of registering with the Open Archives Initiative.

In terms of self-monitoring systems, the Library tracks the usage of electronic information resources and monitors the usage of all its collections on an ongoing basis. The Library also makes use of other methods of evaluation to obtain feedback on the quality of services provided, including evaluations from students and Rhodes’ participation in the internationally validated Association of Research Libraries LibQUAL survey in 2005, which will provide formal benchmarking of the quality of the library’s services.
A sub-group of the Audit Panel visited the library and interviewed its staff. Two critical issues emerged from this interview. Firstly, the usage of the Library has been increasing at a rate of 30 percent per annum in the last three years. Space thus constitutes a fundamental issue. Library staff indicated to the Panel their disappointment at not having benefited from Rhodes’ Centenary fund-raising drive. However, the Panel learned that a new building for the Library is one of the current capital projects of the institution. Secondly, the personnel who were interviewed indicated that the re-arrangement of the collection into four subject areas staffed by subject librarians is the other priority area for the Library.

Interviews with academic staff also indicated that the Library’s holdings effectively support research activities and that this, together with the service provided by specialised librarians, are among the reasons why academics wish to work at Rhodes.

Interviews with library staff and academics as well as the examination of the Library’s Annual Reports and the Minutes of the Library Committee indicates that Rhodes has an effective academic library, which is committed to the sharing of information with different constituencies.

Commendation 5:

The HEQC commends Rhodes on the quality of its library and the many well-planned steps taken to facilitate open access to information and the use of open source software.

4.3.3. Information and Communication Technology

The Portfolio outlines the provision of information technology (IT) resources at Rhodes, detailing the facilities and services provided for students and staff and the measures for monitoring the usage trends, downtime, and service availability. Rhodes’ IT division reports on its activities to the IT Steering Committee (ITSC). This committee includes representatives of various academic and administrative interest groups on campus, including the SRC, senior students from Computer Science and Information Systems, and the Rhodes University Computer User Society. It has the following goals:

- To provide the best IT access per student in the country;
- To place on the desk of every academic at Rhodes University, IT equipment that is cost-effective and appropriate to the task in hand;
- To design systems that enhance the life of academic users; and
- To pursue a policy of self-service computing in which users can extract and update information according to their needs.
During the audit site visit, the Panel visited the IT facilities and interviewed senior staff responsible for the IT services. The Panel observed that students at every level have open and free access to the internet from the first day of arrival at the campus. Administrative registration for students includes the details necessary to access IT facilities. Access to Web resources is limited to 20mB per day for all users and the Panel was informed that Rhodes’ experience has shown that this is adequate in all cases. The Panel heard that this management of bandwidth has ensured efficient and sustained access for all users.

The Panel confirmed that students have access to their own student records, including transcripts, via the internet. To support access without compromising security the institution has implemented appropriate security control which ensures that security data on the student records cannot be altered. Residences are fitted with jacks for connecting to the internet, but students have to provide their own computers. In addition there are a number of computer laboratories, including one specifically for postgraduate students and another dedicated to open-source software. Several departments have their own specialist computer laboratories. Dial-up access is available to both students and staff who live off-campus.

The Panel was concerned that students who live in the poorer neighbourhoods of Grahamstown East may not be able to access these resources as easily (especially after hours). The Panel urges Rhodes to consider the issue of access to computer resources as its student class and demography changes to ensure equitable provision for all students into the future.

Interviews with academic staff and the ADC staff indicated that access to computers is secondary to the ability to use the technology. Lack of IT literacy is a problem that affects some of the students admitted through AARP. During interviews with ADC staff, the Panel heard that these students come into Rhodes at the “lower end of the mainstream” and that in this regard, issues of epistemological access need to be taken seriously. This seems to confirm the Panel’s view, indicated in Section 4.10, that Rhodes’ student experience depends to a large extent on the social and cultural capital with which students come to the institution. The Panel would once again like to urge to institution to be responsive to these challenges and create the necessary support structures and mechanisms to deal with them.

The Panel heard that IT provision is run on a “demand driven” principle, in that the services provided respond to needs articulated by academics, researchers and by the requirements of the student body. The Panel was informed that the university, in particular the Physics Department, is actively participating in the conceptualisation of the South African National Research Network (SANReN) in anticipation of using it for exchange of large data, particularly in the field of astronomy.
Commendation 6

The HEQC commends Rhodes for a well-resourced IT system, the provision of staff and student access to sources of knowledge and information through the internet and the intranet, and the effective role of the IT division in responding to the institution’s needs and monitoring and managing the quality of its services.

4.4 Management of Certification

The Audit Portfolio did not include an account of Rhodes’ approach to managing certification. During the audit site visit, however, a sub-group of the Panel visited the facilities responsible for managing certification and familiarised itself with the procedures. From those interviewed, the Panel learned that batch processing of certificates takes place before the main graduation ceremony in April for students who have completed all the requirements for the conferral of their respective qualifications. The names of graduates are printed from the mainframe student record system developed by the Rhodes Data Management Unit. This is operated by a trained staff member who has authorised password-protected access to the system. The Panel found that the arrangements currently in place are adequate to safeguard the integrity of the student records data.

With regard to the certification process in the case of short courses, the Panel noted that the student data system was adapted to record the particulars of Short Course attendees. Two types of certificates are issued in accordance with the Policy on Short Courses, viz. Certificates of Competence (normally) and Letters of Attendance (upon special application). All certificates bear the Rhodes University logo and are signed personally by the Registrar.

The names of graduates are recorded electronically for use in conjunction with the hand-operated printing machine, which is kept locked in a strong-room together with the embossed certificates. Only one person has possession of the keys and is involved in the production and packaging of the degree certificates. Her work is controlled by the Registrar, and all certificates are signed personally by the Vice-Chancellor. Academic transcripts can be issued only by the Registrar’s office and upon special application. They will be issued only in accordance with procedures agreed upon amongst higher education institutions. The Panel found that the procedures for safeguarding the certificates and the equipment used for printing the certificates are adequate to safeguard this material and that the security procedures surrounding the production of certificates are effective.
4.5 Management of the Quality of Short Courses

According to the Audit Portfolio, Rhodes started dealing with the regulation of short course offerings by its different academic units in 2000. In that year the institution established its first Policy on Short Courses (AP, Appendix 30). The University indicates in the Audit Portfolio that one of the main factors prompting the development of this policy was Rhodes’ concern about its reputation:

Whilst recognising that short courses can make a valuable contribution to academic and social development as well as provide a much-needed additional income stream for the institution and individual staff, the University is committed to ensuring that its core business of teaching and research is not compromised. (AP: 58)

Taking this into account, the institution formulated the purposes of its 2000 policy on short courses as the following:

- To protect the University’s reputation by approving, monitoring and evaluating the courses offered in the University’s name;
- To ensure that the University’s core business of teaching and research is not compromised;
- To acknowledge and certificate learning, which has taken place outside of the “whole qualification” framework;
- To provide participants, employers, funders, and other stakeholders with appropriate information and assurance that a quality management system is in place;
- To provide a framework for responding to specific labour market and skills development needs.

The actual experience of regulating short courses made necessary a revision of the 2000 policy which culminated in 2005 with a revised Policy for Short Courses. Among the new measures, the Panel noted that:

- Details of the learning outcomes and their associated assessment criteria, which have been developed for the course, are now required if a certificate of competence is to be awarded.
- The policy encourages applicants to align their short courses with unit standards or existing academic modules where possible.
- A process has been included for articulating short courses with whole qualifications.
• The policy discourages short courses pegged at levels below NQF level 5, except in the case of internal staff development and/or community engagement.

Through interviews with Rhodes’ staff responsible for the development of this policy, the Panel learned that the process of approval of short courses involves the relevant HoD and dean, and the AP&QA office. The AP&QA office will refer the application to the ADC, especially when curriculum, outcomes, assessment or evaluation issues need attention. Staff interviewed indicated that these referrals usually resulted in improvement and development not only of the short course on offer, but also of the capacity of the staff member and the department offering the course. Many referrals resulted in staff members enrolling for the Assessment Module of the PGDHE (Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education). The final approval of a short course is given by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of the Academic Planning and Staffing Committee (AP&SC). Proper financial records are required to show both income and expenses with regard to each short course offered by Rhodes. Infrastructural and support services fees are normally covered by a 10% levy on the gross income of a short course. The policy on short courses is reviewed annually by the Quality Assurance Committee. The certification of short courses is processed centrally by the Registrar’s office. The majority of short courses are offered on campus.

From the point of view of curriculum responsiveness, an analysis of the list of short courses approved for 2005 until May suggests that most of these courses focused on specific skills and competencies in different sectors of the economy. The list indicates that 56 short courses were approved (AP, Appendix 48). The largest number of courses was offered by the Department of Human Resources (13 courses) and the majority of these courses were focused on training on specific software packages. 9 courses were offered by the Leadership Development Institute. These covered a number of project management, “train the trainer”, and sector specific courses. 5 courses were offered in areas of environmental education and environmental sciences, which were mostly focused on business and industry and the environment. The Law Faculty also offered 5 courses primarily focused on labour relations. The Sol Plaatje Institute offered 4 courses concentrated on management in different type of media. Other departments involved in the provision of short courses were Psychology, Geography, the ADC, the Institute for Water Research, Geography, RIBS, Drama, and the Institute for the Study of English in Africa.

During interviews with the Panel, Rhodes’ staff involved in the offering of short courses, indicated that all courses are required to elicit evaluations from participants by means of standardised evaluation forms and the feedback from these are reviewed by the AP&QA office. The results of these evaluations are taken into consideration during the annual application to offer the short course during the following year.
The Panel congratulates the institution on its ability to respond to local and national skills needs through the offering of short courses whose quality is carefully assured by the relevant academic structures. The Panel did not find evidence that short courses were monitored from the point of view of their comprehensiveness or effective responsiveness to societal or economic needs. Given the sample of offerings included in the 2005 list of short courses, the Panel is of the view that the institution might be underplaying a potentially important area of its work. The Panel would like to encourage Rhodes to institute some form of monitoring of short courses, which focuses on the interactions between Rhodes and its communities, attendance at the courses, and the cost-benefits which they represent for the institution.

**Commendation 7:**

The HEQC commends Rhodes for the development and implementation of an effective policy framework and system for the offering of short courses, which emphasises the development of quality offerings, thus protecting the reputation of the institution.

### 4.6 Programme Development and Review

According to the *Audit Portfolio*, Rhodes’ policy on curriculum development and review focuses on the “construct of the learning outcome as an organising principle in curriculum design” (AP: 64). This approach had to be accommodated with the institution’s decision to keep the general formative degree instead of opting for the programme route as other South African universities did in the 1990s. In order to help academics who “were not overtly conscious of the practices they engage in”, and to respond to the requirements of the outcomes-based education approach of the National Qualification Framework, the institution developed a course template. This template is structured in seven sections. The first section requires the course coordinator to indicate an overview of the course, its credit value according to the NQF as well as the assumptions of prior learning. The second section focuses on course outcomes both critical and specific. The third section concentrates on the teaching methods to be used. The fourth section focuses on the content of the course. Sections five, six and seven deal respectively with the resources required, the forms of assessment in relation to specific outcomes, and the course evaluation.

Interviews with academic staff involved in teaching and learning in the academic departments and in the ADC suggested that the use of this template is fairly generalised. In this regard the *Audit Portfolio* indicates that the 2005 Academic Review showed that a large number of departments had adopted the learning outcome as the organising principle in course design (AP: 65).
The formal processes governing programme development at Rhodes are the same for all departments and involve the faculty, the AP&SC and Senate. However, departments differ in the drivers for programme development and curriculum renewal. Interviews with HoDs and academics from different disciplines indicated that professional boards and associations play an important role in influencing curriculum renewal in professional degrees. In the humanities and the natural sciences, the interests of lecturers as well as the internal evolution of the discipline, have a fundamental role in initiating new courses. While academics and HoDs who were interviewed indicated that generally Rhodes’ academics are responsive to contextual developments and social needs in the design of new courses, it is evident that short courses are more likely to be promptly developed as a direct response to specific social needs than long courses.

The Panel believes that, despite the efforts made by individuals and structures such as the ADC, in “raising awareness within the University that curriculum is a contested issue and that it is not necessarily common sense” (AP: 65) and the recent approval of the Teaching and Course Evaluation Policy, the view that there is a need to monitor teaching and learning is not shared by all academics. On the contrary, most individuals who were interviewed, irrespective of whether they were deans, HoDs or lecturers, agreed that any imposition in this area would be rapidly rejected by many academic staff as they are used to an approach to teaching and learning that is individually determined and perhaps not very informed by educational research.

The Panel was interested to hear from some of the HoDs and academics who were interviewed that research seems to be more valued than teaching among Rhodes’ academics and that this attitude may seem to be endorsed at management level. During interviews it was even suggested that the absence of a teaching and learning equivalent of the Dean of Research was proof of the relative importance of the two core functions at Rhodes. The Panel is of the view that, if this were the case, the University may be in danger of undermining not only a fundamental aspect of its mission but also jeopardising the institution’s further development in an area of strength and opportunity for innovation.

Besides the academic review with its newly introduced focus, the evaluation of teaching and learning at Rhodes takes place at departmental level based on the policy on Evaluation of Teaching and Course Design. This policy, which was only approved in 2004, constitutes the basis for the development of a regular report on teaching and learning to be submitted to Senate and Council, via the Teaching and Learning Committee. The policy aims to ensure that:

- Courses and teaching are evaluated on an on-going basis in a thoughtful and rigorous manner in order to both assure and enhance quality.

16 The Panel comments on the institution’s plans to enlarge and further support the research core function in Section 5.1 of this report.
• Evaluation of courses is available to feed into programme review cycles.
• Staff are aware of their responsibilities regarding evaluation, and of the support available to them through the Academic Development Centre.
• Feedback is provided to students and staff appropriately.
• Uninterpreted raw evaluation data should not be used to the detriment of individuals. (AP, Appendix 33: 2-3)

In order to achieve its aims, the policy distinguishes between teaching evaluation and different forms of assessment of courses and programmes. The implementation of this policy falls with the HoDs and the individual lecturers. The ADC is responsible for providing support for designing evaluations, collecting evaluation data, analysing the data from evaluations and providing written reports on those evaluations (AP, Appendix 33: 6). The Policy indicates that departments will be asked to report on the implementation and outcome of this policy during the regular academic reviews. The Policy does not indicate the periodicity of these evaluations, except to say that as a minimum, courses should be evaluated as a whole every three years to ensure quality (AP, Appendix 33: 5) and that the evaluation of teaching should take place in an ongoing manner. In this regard, the contents of the policy confirm the tensions pointed out by ADC staff, some HoDs and academic staff about the implementation of accountability and development mechanisms, which require regular and frequent reporting by staff.

The Panel is of the opinion that among the issue of the function and location of the ADC within the governance of teaching and learning at the institution is one manifestation of this tension. In Section 3, it was pointed out that the ADC was performing both quality assurance and developmental roles at the institution. The Panel does not think that this in itself is a problem, however, the institution might want to revise its understanding of quality management so that the ADC and all other structures involved in assuring, developing and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning at Rhodes work in a coordinated manner.

It is clear to the Panel that while some structures, academic departments and individuals support the move to a greater degree of accountability in relation to teaching and learning, a large number of staff, particularly senior academic staff, have a considerable measure of cynicism about the need for, and the advantages of, more regular reporting on teaching and learning. An example of this is that the Panel’s examination of committee minutes showed that in some departments the design of course evaluation questionnaires has been delegated to the secretaries. Similarly, the minutes of the Teaching and Learning Committee indicate that in the reporting on teaching evaluation, sharing the results of the evaluation with the HoD is left to the discretion of the individual member of staff. It seems to the Panel that so far the institution has been very cautious not to step outside of what some staff interviewed called “an incrementalist approach to teaching and learning”.

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The analysis of the Audit Portfolio, the examination of documentation provided by the institution, as well as interviews conducted with relevant staff suggest that Rhodes has not implemented mechanisms to monitor the teaching and learning core function beyond the level of academic planning characteristic of the academic reviews. The introduction of a teaching and learning section in the 2005 academic review represents a step in the right direction. In this regard, the Panel would like to urge the University to implement institution level studies of throughputs in order to monitor more closely and in greater detail student performance and the effectiveness of teaching and learning. The Panel is also of the view that arrangements for the evaluation of curricula could be more consistently applied across faculties, whether the curricula are professionally oriented or formative in nature. This would enable the students’ full experience of their respective qualifications to be appraised.

The Panel is concerned that there is no consistency between the conceptualisation of teaching and learning (see Section 4.1), the policies that support this area of work, and the practices of the different academic departments. Rhodes’ undertaking to offer research-based teaching and to promote excellence and innovation in teaching depends almost entirely on a voluntaristic approach. Those academics who want to use the possibilities offered by ADC may do so, but the Panel found no evidence of lecturers having an obligation to do so, for example, in relation to the module on assessment of the PCDHE. On the contrary, interviews with the different layers of academics and members of structures responsible for teaching and learning suggest that the institution’s way of solving the perceived tension between development and accountability, i.e. what the institution calls the “incrementalist approach”, might be undermining the actual realisation of Rhodes’ mission undertakings in the core functions (see sections 4.1, 4.2).

**Recommendation 11**

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes explore an appropriate mechanism to monitor the effectiveness of its voluntarist approach to the evaluation of teaching and learning. This should entail the incorporation of student evaluations of courses in the evaluation of teaching and learning as well as the development of appropriate mechanisms to monitor the extent of and frequency with which evaluation of courses and whole qualifications are being to improve teaching and learning.
4.7 Distance Education

According to the Audit Portfolio, Rhodes had 336 students registered as distance education students in 2005, and this is reflected also in its HEMIS returns (AP:113). The Panel learned that these students are classified in this manner because of the way distance education is defined for the purposes of claiming subsidies. The Panel was informed that in order for off-campus students to be classified as “contact students”, they must have access to facilities and services that are the same as those available on the main campus. (Because, for example, sports facilities are not available to these off-campus students, Rhodes has classified such students as “distance education” students.)

Interviews with relevant staff indicated that in educational terms, the off-campus provision undertaken by Rhodes University would not be classified as “distance education”, but as “decentralised contact teaching”. This is because the delivery of the off-campus programmes is the same as that on the main campus; i.e. the curricula, learning materials, lecturers, number of contact hours, etc., are the same for the “distance” students as for the “contact” students. Academic staff travel from the main campus to the remote campus to deliver the programme in block sessions. These students also have access to the University library, which posts items to them on request.

The Panel was informed that Rhodes has had several “distance education” programmes in the past. Some of these have been phased out or handed over to local institutions, where the local capacity has been sufficient. Current “distance education” offerings include Honours and Masters programmes in education that are presented in Namibia. Lecturers are flown to Namibia regularly for week-long block sessions, and the students are flown to Rhodes for a “research design block week”. An ACE in Technology is presented in Kokstad by the Education Faculty. In addition, the Panel heard that a Doctoral programme is offered by Pharmacy on a decentralised basis in a number of different hospitals because there is no academic hospital in Grahamstown. The Panel was informed that this is not different to other medical schools that use more than one hospital and should not be seen as “distance education”, even though much of the communication is done electronically.

Interviews with academic staff associated with programmes presented at remote sites led the Panel to conclude that the quality control mechanisms for the so-called “distance education” programmes at Rhodes are the same as for the university’s contact programmes. Courses are approved in the same way, and student evaluation and external examination mechanisms for these forms of provision are integrated indistinguishably with normal on-campus contact provision. The Panel was satisfied that these limited
instances of off-campus provision were adequately catered for in the normal quality management mechanisms of the university.

4.8 Staffing and Staff Development

This HEQC report has already dealt with the demographic profile of Rhodes’ academic staff and the institution’s slow progress in the recruitment of black academics in Section 2.2. This section focuses on issues of staff development and how it supports Rhodes’ undertaking of providing excellence across its core functions and helps the institution policy of “growing its own timber” in relation to changing the demographic profile of the staff.

In common with broader trends in the higher education sector, data provided by Rhodes on the academic staffing levels sustained in the institution suggests an essentially shrinking full-time permanent academic staff complement in relation to steadily growing student enrolments. In spite of this, however, Rhodes continues to maintain one of the best staff: student ratios in the country. This favourable ratio (estimated by Rhodes to average out at 1:14 across the institution), together with the relatively well-prepared students that Rhodes has been able to attract, must go some way towards accounting for the above-average student throughputs achieved by the institution. These factors are supported by the relatively stable staff complement, and with a relatively low staff turnover rate, thus building and retaining experience and expertise within the institution. The Panel found evidence, however, that the staff: student ratio varied across the faculties, with considerably higher ratios in Commerce and Education than, for example, the Natural Sciences. As the discussion on research outputs later in this report suggests (see Section 5 below), these differential ratios may have implications for the capacity of academic staff to perform equally well across all dimensions of the academic job description, and for differentiated student experiences across faculties. The Panel noted that although there is a growing number of academic staff who hold doctorates across the institution, the proportion of staff with PhDs varies markedly between faculties (AP: 126).

The Panel noted from the Portfolio and interviews with relevant staff that there are three formal policies related to Rhodes’ commitment in its mission to “attract and retain staff of the highest calibre”. These are: the Recruitment and Selection for Academic Posts Policy (Appendix 29), the Staff Development Policy (Appendix 31), and the Procedures and Criteria Governing Personal Promotion for Academic and Research Staff (Appendix 35). The Panel heard that the first of these policies (addressing recruitment and selection) was due for review during 2005, and that issues to be considered in the review may include better provision for the use of search committees to identify appropriate
candidates, and the possibility of a review of salaries. The Panel heard that Rhodes tended to find it relatively difficult to attract black staff but that generally such staff were retained in the institution once they were in place. The Law Faculty was cited as an exception to this trend, with a relatively high turn-over of black staff, who often cited low salary levels as the reason for departure. The Panel was told that the policy would be subject to review on a three-yearly basis in order to keep abreast of changing conditions.

The Policy on Staff Development, among other things, allocates responsibility for academic staff development to HoDs, who may call for assistance from the ADC, the HR Department and the Research Office. The Panel heard in interviews with ADC staff that the ADC is the main development resource aimed at building the capacity of academic staff as educators. The Audit Portfolio as well as interviews with ADC staff indicated that the ADC shifted in the late 1990s from student development to staff development. Most academic staff interviewed by the Panel endorsed the important developmental role played by the Centre, in particular in relation to building teaching and learning skills and competencies among Rhodes’ staff. At a formal level this takes place in the offering of a Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education (PGDHE), which has progressively become an important feature in the development of Rhodes younger lecturers. Consistent with Rhodes’ approach to quality management, the acquisition of the qualification is not obligatory. Despite this, interviews with ADC staff indicated that a growing number of staff members were taking the course. As part of the PGDHE, the ADC offers a module on assessment that can be taken by staff not enrolled in the course.

Interviews with the T&LC and with ADC staff indicated that there is growing awareness in the institution of the need to professionalize teaching and learning activities. These efforts are supported, as already mentioned, by a number of initiatives. Among them is the New Lecturer’s Orientation Course (AP: 69), which in recent years has provided explicit support for teaching and learning issues. The Panel, however, noted in the T&LC’s minutes for 2004 that attendance at the Orientation Course was small and that there were difficulties getting some staff members to attend. The feedback from those that did attend was positive.

Through interviews with a range of academics, tutors and students, the Panel gained the impression that there is fairly widespread support for the activities of the ADC and agreement on their positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning at the institution. Staff from the ADC, however, noted that much still remains to be done to extend a culture of reflective practice and educational professionalism more evenly across the institution, sometimes in the face of residual resistance.

Commendation 8:

The HEQC commends Rhodes for the way in which the staff development function of the Academic Development Centre has been conceptualised and
implemented, resulting in enhanced levels of professionalism in teaching and learning, especially among young staff.

The Panel is, however, concerned that an institution with difficulties to recruit new staff, due, among other things, to low staff turnover (see Section 2.2), seemingly can base its strategy to professionalize teaching almost exclusively on the new generation of incoming teachers, who as the Panel heard, are themselves often uncertain about their long-term employment at the institution. The analysis of the demographic profile of Rhodes’ academic staff, presented in Section 2.2, indicates that there are not many new young staff employed at the institution.

Interviews with ADC staff, the T&LC, the AP&SC as well as with the QAC indicated that, despite the fact that the ADC is said to have a developmental focus, the Centre has been increasingly taking on monitoring and accountability functions, especially as the demands of a new external quality assurance system have emerged. One example of this is the requirement for the ADC to comment on the teaching and learning dimensions of the academic review process conducted in 2005. Academic staff and ADC staff interviewed by the Panel suggested that quality assurance and institutional development functions may be accruing to the ADC because of their relatively well-developed capacity for these activities compared to, for example, the academic planning structures of the university. In interviews it was noted that the ADC’s taking on an accountability function could compromise the developmental dynamic of its work, which has had considerable success. The Panel is of the view that since these additional roles need to be fulfilled, there may be cause to reconceptualise the ADC at several levels.

Recommendation 12

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes review the identity, functions, and resourcing of the Academic Development Centre. This should include a review of its relationship with the university’s central academic planning structures and the senior leadership responsible for teaching and learning.

The Audit Portfolio indicates that Rhodes has a performance management system and reward system (AP: 49-50), as well as Procedures and Criteria Governing Personal Promotion for Academic and Research Staff (Appendix 35). Rhodes does not have a formal process of performance appraisals for academic staff (AP: 49). Performance is monitored through probation requirements, personal promotion policy and specific merit awards. Appendix 35 lists a number of ways in which the procedures for personal promotion are brought to the attention of staff and provides sources of assistance for
those staff wishing to apply for promotion. However, the document does not reflect the composition of the Academic Promotion Committee (although it does specify the composition of the Promotions Appeal Committee). Appendix 35 sets out criteria to be considered as guidelines in determining whether an applicant is eligible for promotion but in this section there is no clear indication as to which criteria apply to which level of promotion, nor the relative weight to be accorded to criteria. However, under the heading “additional considerations”, the “considerations” are grouped and differentiated according to each level of promotion. The wording is discretionary and the staff members interviewed indicated that they believed that the application of these “considerations” was also discretionary. However, during interviews, senior staff indicated that these “considerations” were also indicators of the minimum requirements for promotion at each level. The University is encouraged to revise this document in order to eliminate any ambiguities that may arise from its present wording.

4.9 Management of Assessment

The Policy on the Assessment of Student Learning provides for both the formative and summative purposes of assessment, and enjoins appropriate forms of validity, transparency and fairness in assessment practices. In its account of the achievements of this policy, the Audit Portfolio argues that the policy “has been very successful in promoting awareness of the fact that assessment is not unproblematic and a matter of commonsense and is, indeed, a contested area”. The increased awareness of assessment issues is reflected in the fact that several departments have made proposals for adjustments in the relative proportions of requirements for continuous to summative assessment in their curricula. The Audit Portfolio further notes that since 2004, all new staff have been required to take the assessor training module of the PGDHE, and that several senior staff, including deans, have done so as well.

Through interviews with academic staff and the T&LC, the Panel understood that the mechanism for monitoring the implementation of this policy was intended to be the annual reports from the HoDs to the Teaching and Learning Committee and from there to Senate. It was indicated to the Panel that although this reporting was conducted in 2003, it was met with some resistance from the academic sector. It was consequently decided that the 2004 and 2005 reports would be held back until the completion of the 2005 Academic Reviews. There seemed to be consensus among senior staff interviewed that although the reporting mechanism was not working, the policy was, nevertheless, being implemented fairly widely and that assessment practices at course level were in general following the good-practice principles of the policy. When asked if they would know if the policy was not being implemented, HoDs maintained that the close-knit collegial relations within departments meant they would know. They cited their means of
monitoring as including the feedback from students and the teaching portfolios that new staff members produce. The Panel saw this as further evidence of the key role of HoDs in monitoring the quality of academic practices in the collegial model of management established at Rhodes.

The Panel heard much evidence in interviews with all levels of academic staff of the value of the assessor training provided by the ADC. Staff opinions confirmed for the Panel that the assessment module is now a requirement for all new staff and that this is one of the ADC’s strategies for ensuring that, over time, the majority of the staff at Rhodes will have been exposed to recent developments and new practices regarding assessment. The Panel heard enthusiastic endorsement of the ADC’s assessor module from both deans and HoDs and heard that, in at least one case, an entire department had enrolled for the module with very positive results.

Rhodes does not have an operating policy on external examinations. A draft Policy on External Examinations has yet to be formalised for the undergraduate courses. Staff responsible for assessment and examination structures who were interviewed indicated that the general practice is that external examination does not occur at first and second year level and may occur unevenly at senior levels of undergraduate programmes. The Panel found limited evidence of actual external examiners’ reports. Available documentation indicated that external examiners reports are produced and forwarded to HoDs and in some cases to deans in the Faculties of Pharmacy, Education, Law and Commerce, while the arrangements in the Faculties of Science and the Humanities are less structured. It was clear to the Panel that the institution’s acknowledgment of the inadequacy of these informal arrangements had prompted the development of the draft policy. Interviews with relevant academic staff indicated that some details of this policy had been controversial and that the policy may need to be developed further.

**Recommendation 13**

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes formalise its policy on external examinations and ensure that the systems needed to monitor and respond to external examiner reports are effective in achieving appropriate and consistent management of summative assessment at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels of study.

The Panel heard in interviews that while there are mechanisms for students to appeal against a mark (both re-count and re-mark procedures) these mechanisms are not applied evenly across the faculties. The Panel urges Rhodes to ensure that such procedures are consistently available across departments and faculties, that they are well-advertised to students, and that the frequency and results of such appeals are monitored.
The Panel was informed that a policy on plagiarism exists, but that clear monitoring mechanisms for ensuring consistent implementation have yet to be fully developed. The Plagiarism Committee acknowledged that plagiarism is being encountered throughout the university but that some departments are not adhering to the plagiarism policy. The Panel also found in committee documentation an acknowledgment that due to limited reported cases of plagiarism, it was difficult for the institution to judge the extent of the problem. In the Plagiarism Policy report of 2004, some departments, for example, the Departments of Biochemistry and Information Systems, report numerous cases of plagiarism while two other Faculties reported none. This suggested to the Panel that there may be serious underreporting of incidents of plagiarism in some parts of the institution. The Panel urges Rhodes to ensure more consistent implementation of the measures to combat plagiarism and other forms of academic fraud as a way of safeguarding the quality and credibility of academic achievement.

4.10 The Student Experience beyond the Curriculum

As noted earlier in this report, Rhodes indicated to the HEQC that the institution wanted to be assessed not only in relation to the 19 areas demarcated by the HEQC audit criteria but that it also wished to be assessed in the area of the “student experience”, since the institution considers this to be one of its most distinctive features. This section deals with Rhodes’ conceptualisation of the broader student experience, the different structures that support its implementation and quality issues pertaining to it.

Rhodes maintains that environmental factors (physical, socio-economic, cultural and political) have a fundamental role in the academic success of students. On this premise, the University has taken responsibility for creating favourable environments in which students can live and study (AP: 29). This notion is translated in the following undertakings in Rhodes’ mission:

- To provide an attractive, safe and well-equipped environment that is conducive to good scholarship and collegiality.
- To provide a safe and nurturing student support system as well as a diverse array of residential, sporting, cultural and leadership opportunities that will foster the all round development of our students, the university and the region as a whole.

This section of the report focuses on the non-curricular aspects of the student experience.

The Panel took into consideration its impressions from the site visit, documentation examined relating to the maintenance of the physical plant of the University, and interviews with senior management responsible for these areas. The Panel noted with appreciation the resources invested by the institution in the provision of a safe and
protective environment for staff and students. The Panel was particularly impressed by the new improvements in the security of the campus. These arrangements benefit all students while they are on campus but are a permanent feature only for those students living in residences. Students living in “digs” in town are inevitably more vulnerable in terms of security.

Rhodes has 47 residences that accommodate approximately half of its student population. Rhodes sees the residence system as the “heart of the University” (AP: 30). Until recently the institution required that all first year students live in residence. However, the University is finding it difficult to move second and third year students out of the residences in order to make space for the newcomers. As a result, 15 percent of the 2005 student intake could not be accommodated on campus, including a small number (less than 20) of black first year students who had to seek accommodation in Grahamstown East. The Panel is concerned that this state of affairs has negative implications for the experience of students, both in terms of academic and co-curricula activities.

The University clearly sees participation in the residences as an essential element in the process of socialising new students into university life. However, the institution’s difficulty in finding space for all first year students in the residences might deny some new students this key dimension of the Rhodes’ student experience. This dimension is likely to be particularly important for black students from poorer backgrounds who could benefit from the academic and cultural resources available through the residence system. The residence system should thus be seen as having a major role in supporting the shift in Rhodes’ student equity profile by providing a protective and nurturing environment for those students who are more vulnerable, both socially and academically, when they first enter the higher education system. In other words, as already mentioned (see Section 2.2) the residence system could be seen as a strategic component of a more integrated recruitment strategy. Given Rhodes’ current spatial and financial limitations, this might require that without eliminating the opportunity to experience cultural and social diversity as part of life in the residences, the institution revises, for example, the proportion of foreign student enrolments at undergraduate level and the extent to which they share in the residence space.

During interviews, the Panel heard that Rhodes is very aware of this situation, and is taking steps to ensure that all black South African first year students are accommodated in residence. The Panel urges Rhodes to ensure that black South African students generally (whether at first year or more senior levels) are appropriately situated in residence or good quality oppidan¹⁷ accommodation, so that they can participate fully in the academic and co-curricular dimensions of the Rhodes experience.

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¹⁷ Oppidum/oppida origin latin: town: students living in town as opposed to residences on campus.
According to the Audit Portfolio, over 2700 students live in one of nine halls of residence provided by the University. Each hall comprises several residences grouped around a dining hall. Each hall has its own constitution, rules and traditions. The goal of the residence system is to provide a caring and nurturing environment and to be a community. The residences are managed by wardens who are committed and able to support the overall system (AP: 31-32).

The University claims that its residence system has contributed to the transformative understanding of quality “where the student is an active participant in a process which aims to add value to his or her educational experience” (AP: 32). Moreover, the Audit Portfolio quotes specialised literature which argues that high levels of cognitive development at universities is the result of “purposeful, programmatic efforts to integrate students’ intellectual and social life during their university years” (AP: 32). The Panel was, therefore, particularly keen to see the ways in which Rhodes manages to integrate the social and intellectual life of its students.

The Panel had several opportunities to interview the individuals and structures responsible for the residence system. The evidence suggests that the residence system does provide a caring and nurturing environment for the majority of its students. Residences appear to be clean, safe and reasonably secure. A Report on the Quality of Residence Life (AP: Appendix 51) presents the results of a survey on students’ views on the residence experience, facilities and staff. The survey was answered by 65 percent of the students surveyed who indicated they were fairly satisfied with the residences. Unfortunately, despite the fact that the survey required respondents to provide their demographic profile, the report does not offer a demographic breakdown in its analysis of the responses. This could have introduced a more nuanced interpretation of the conclusions provided. A number of issues were singled out as undermining the quality of residence life: abuse of alcohol, use of drugs, noise levels, attitudes towards diversity, racism, and xenophobia. The survey did not provide any sense of the relative impact of these issues on students’ experiences. Interviews conducted by the Panel suggested, however, that discrimination, intimidation and harassment do not impact overly negatively on the students’ overall experience (although these features are not completely eliminated from the residence environment).

Students’ responses to the residences’ rules were varied, with women students in particular expressing the view that residence life was unduly regulated. This was also a reason given by a number of students for not living in residence. The residence system was seen to support academic success insofar as it provided a study space conveniently close to academic amenities. The Panel, however, found little evidence of “purposeful, programmatic efforts to integrate students’ intellectual and social lives”. Where students were involved in intellectual activities outside of the formal curriculum, these tended to
be in the context of cultural activities (like the Film Society) run by students themselves, rather than in any initiatives run by the university administration or academic staff.

The students living in residences clearly viewed themselves as part of a community and repeatedly distinguished themselves from the non-residence students. A view expressed consistently by the students interviewed by the Panel was that while appreciation of diversity was encouraged in the orientation programme and reflected in general tolerance of differences, a low level of integration between different groups of students remained a characteristic of social life at Rhodes. Generally, students recognised and appreciated the opportunities that residence life gave them to develop leadership, interpersonal and social skills. Students believe that this environment has helped them to develop coherent values and ethical standards.

The wardens and sub-wardens who were interviewed by the Panel appeared to be dedicated to the creation of a supportive environment for all students. Wardens received specialised training. Interviews with sub-wardens, on the other hand, indicated concerns about their lack of training to deal with students’ psychological problems and voiced complaints about not being heard by senior management.

International students who live in residence are the responsibility of the Registrar and not of the Dean of Internationalisation. The latter focuses on exchange students rather than on foreign undergraduate students enrolled at Rhodes. The international students are placed across the residence system but it was evident to the Panel that integration is slow. Postgraduate international students mentioned feelings of isolation and alienation, but this did not seem the case for foreign undergraduate students. Students in general expressed appreciation for the opportunity of engaging with students from a variety of different countries.

The importance of the residence system must be seen together with the way in which students living off campus are integrated into the system. According to the Audit Portfolio Rhodes has just started a Reslink system which links first year Oppidan students who could not be accommodated in the residence system to a Hall of Residence. Participating students may opt to eat some meals in the residence (for which they pay) and are encouraged to take part in the residence’s activities, functions and meetings. (AP: 29). Given the newness of the system, the Panel was unable to assess its impact.

The Panel interviewed the Oppidan Committee and the Oppidan Hall warden. The Panel did not find representation from students living in Grahamstown East in this committee. The Panel subsequently learned that of the 90 students who live in this area, 48 are teachers enrolled in upgrade programmes and 42 are fulltime undergraduate students. Of these students, thirteen are in first year (their ages vary between 18 and 28). The University informed the Panel that it is committed to accommodating these students in residence in 2006 should they so request. Although the number of young first year
students living in Grahamstown East is relatively low, the Panel urges the university to fulfil its undertaking to ensure that all students are provided with the forms of accommodation and support needed to achieve a broadly equivalent student experience.

In the Audit Portfolio the institution remarked on the difficulties faced by black students who want to live in town and who have to contend with “the unfortunate continuous prejudice of some local landlords” (AP: 31). Given this situation, the Panel encourages the university to consider what measures might be available to assist black students who wish to live in digs in securing good quality oppidan accommodation provided by welcoming landlords.

A second aspect of the student experience is the opportunities provided for students to occupy leadership positions. Rhodes provides a diverse array of residential, sporting, cultural and leadership opportunities (AP: 30). The importance of these in students’ lives came across during interviews with students who were part of governance and residence structures. The Panel noted the enthusiasm of such students about the social, cultural and leadership opportunities offered by Rhodes. However, interviews with students who are not part of SRC, suggested that students at Rhodes might have broader and different interests from those reflected in the SRC activities. An important aspect of the leadership opportunities provided by Rhodes is students’ engagement in volunteer programmes at the Centre for Social Development. Yet, as mentioned in 6.1, the Panel did not have a sense that, despite the importance of this activity, that many students actually participate in it. The Panel noted that the student experience has several different dimensions including the physical environment, the residence system, the exposure to cultural and ethnic diversity, and the focus on the development of democratic and socially responsible citizens, and so on. There is no doubt that Rhodes’ students are exposed to a caring and stimulating residence system and campus life, particularly in terms of opportunities to develop leadership skills, and that this is greatly appreciated by the students themselves.

The Panel gained the impression that many of these aspects of the student experience are broadly successful. It seems to the Panel that many aspects of the “student experience” operate at the extra-curricular level and that while some are not a matter of individual choice, like the residence system, others that do depend on personal choice, like the volunteer programme, are attracting a small number of students in relation to Rhodes’ overall enrolment.

A large part of students’ experience of higher education institutions is strongly conditioned by the quality of support they receive from an array of administrative and welfare structures. At Rhodes, in addition to the residence system, students are provided with the following services:

- Counselling services – via residence wardens, SRC counsellor and the Counselling Centre of the University.
• Career guidance services – including career development workshops and graduate placement programmes.
• Office of the Dean of Students – concerned with the administration of the residence system and on-campus student facilities and quality assurance thereof. It also provides the services of an “ombudsman” for students.
• Student Services Council – Senate committee with strong student representation (1:1 staff/student ratio), which may make recommendations in respect of any aspect of student life on campus.
• A Sanatorium – provides primary health care, HIV/AIDS testing and counselling, first aid and contraception services.
• Leadership training and team-building programmes.
• The Sports Administration – management of all student sports clubs, with strong student involvement.
• Student Disciplinary Committee – handles student disciplinary matters and has an appeal system.
• Student conference and events support – support provided by the conference office and catering services.
• Vacation employment service – assists students in finding vacation employment.
• HR Division’s student employment system – assists students in finding employment within the University.
• Student transport services – provides transport for student functions off-campus, transport to and from campus at vacation times, and emergency transport.

Commendation 9:

The HEQC commends Rhodes for the many well planned and effective steps that it has taken and the resources that it has made available to provide a nurturing, safe, supportive and stimulating environment for students to acquire skills and to develop as well rounded individuals.

The Panel congratulates the institution on the variety of support services offered to its students. Students who were interviewed clearly indicated their appreciation of these facilities. However, the Panel noted students’ comments about the need to increase capacity in some of the support services in order to improve their efficiency. One example mentioned is the Careers Services, which most students indicated was an excellent service but lacking the necessary human resource capacity. The Panel also noted with concern the recurrent mention of students suffering from emotional problems such as anxiety and depression, and the reference to alcohol abuse on campus, and heard that the well-functioning counselling unit sometimes had difficulties in meeting demand for its services within its resourcing constraints. The Panel also noted from the interviews
that students do not always seem to be aware of the full range of services offered to them. The University is encouraged to address the above issues in its attempt to create a comprehensive supportive leaning and living environment.

Despite the successful aspects of Rhodes provision of a unique “student experience”, the Panel is concerned that not all students have the same kind of experience at Rhodes. The institution has itself pointed out in the Audit Portfolio that, increasingly, issues of class are playing an important part in a student’s ability to fit into the educational and social environment provided by the institution (AP: 94). Referring particularly to its South African born African students, the University indicated that while the white and middle class institutional culture of the campus can be largely negotiated by black middle class students, poorer students who do not come from model C schools find both academic and social life more difficult to negotiate (AP, Appendix 18). The document Reflections on Institutional Culture and Transformation (AP, Appendix 39: 2) raises concerns about the perception (and experience) of Rhodes as Eurocentric and patriarchal. It moreover suggests that issues of class difference among black students might have a potentially problematic role in relation to social integration. The Panel would like to urge the institution to investigate the extent and prevalence of these issues, and to identify possible ways of dealing with those aspects of institutional culture which might be working counter to the University’s conceptualisation of the student experience.

The Panel is of the view that as Rhodes transforms its student profile it will need to revise certain aspects of its conceptualisation of the student experience to take into account a more heterogeneous student body and thus ensure that students with different kinds of social capital can fully participate in and benefit from the full array of Rhodes’ offerings.

Finally, the Panel would like to bring to the institution’s attention the fact that, to a large extent, Rhodes’ relatively high quality student experience is based on maintaining a very limited growth in student numbers. However, for the institution to improve its equity profile, a measure of growth might be required. The institution will have to devise innovative approaches to solve this apparent contradiction and make the appropriate choices in order to maintain its ethos as a small, residential university that provides a unique student experience and at the same time responds to national imperatives and to its own stated mission.

The report above has noted instances where the quality of this student experience may not be consistent for all students, particularly because of the increasing class diversity of the student population. Rhodes is urged to address these challenges in what is an otherwise positive student experience provided by the institution. The Panel noted, however, that the various dimensions of the student experience, curricular and extra-curricular, tend to be utilised and enjoyed by students on their own initiative, rather than as a consequence
of planned, programmatic efforts by the institution to integrate these dimensions. In the Panel’s deliberations on this issue, it was recognised that there are clear limits to deliberate or enforced efforts at such integration. It was the view of the Panel that a productive avenue for possible programmatic integration of the intellectual and social dimensions of university life could include a study programme that engages with the requirements of good citizenship and the implications thereof for institutional culture.
5. MANAGEMENT OF RESEARCH QUALITY

In analysing the research function at Rhodes, the Audit Panel examined the relevant sections of the Audit Portfolio, the research related documentary appendices submitted by the institution, and minutes of the pertinent committees made available to the Panel during the site visit. A sub-section of the Audit Panel interviewed the Dean of Research, the Joint Research Committee, the Ethics Committee, individuals associated with the management of innovation and entrepreneurship, a number of researchers from different disciplines as well as postgraduate students, supervisors, postdoctoral students, and the institutional structures that affect postgraduate education.

Research and postgraduate education at Rhodes take place in the six faculties, 19 research institutes and units, and three associated research institutes and organisations.

5.1 Quality Related Arrangements for Research

This section of the audit report deals with the ways in which Rhodes conceptualises and organises its research function in relation to its mission and vision statement. The section begins by examining the Rhodes’ vision for research and then analyses the different aspects of the organisation of the research function.

5.1.1. Rhodes’ approach to research

Rhodes strives to produce “outstanding internationally-accredited” graduates who contribute to the advancement of international scholarship and the development of the Eastern Cape and Southern Africa. In pursuit of this, the University promotes “excellent research and other creative endeavours, and creates a research-based teaching and learning environment” (AP, Appendix 54).

Rhodes does not define its identity mainly through the performance of research but sees research as an important element in achieving its vision of being an outstanding internationally recognised institution. In this sense the University is “committed to maintaining and further developing its strong culture of research” (AP: 71). The Audit Portfolio indicates that research influences teaching and learning in two ways. On the one hand, research is infused into teaching and learning through researchers’ incorporation of their research findings, methodologies and experience into the teaching of undergraduate students. On the other hand, teaching and learning as academic practices are guided and
supported by research in education, which, as seen in Section 4 of this report, constitutes a specific feature of teaching and learning at Rhodes. In this regard, the Audit Portfolio presents a number of examples in which these two relationships are successfully established (AP: 99-100).

Commendation 10:

The HEQC commends Rhodes on the successful link between research and teaching established at the Department of Ichthyology and Fisheries Science, in the cluster of departments which deal with English and Linguistics, the Department of Geology and the Environmental Education Studies Unit.

The Audit Portfolio adds two other elements to the description of the University’s identity provided in the mission and vision, i.e. the liberal arts college tradition and the international dimension. Both these issues have been addressed in 1.1. In this section, they are considered from the perspective of the research function.

The research function at Rhodes started developing systematically in 1998 with the appointment of a dedicated Dean of Research, who also serves on all committees involved in the academic governance and management of the institution. This is a signal of the importance accorded to the research function at the institution. The Audit Portfolio indicates that this post was established to guide and support a research focus concentrated on the developmental needs of South Africa and the Southern African region, policies and initiatives such as NEPAD, and to address the shortage of researchers and academics in the country (AP: 71).

The current research goals of the University include increasing the number and quality of its postgraduates and research outputs, an increased regional research focus and collaboration, and building international links and activities (AP: 71). The Panel found no evidence of an integration of these goals into a research plan where these objectives were set out as priorities within a strategy to which resources were allocated. Although the institution identifies the definition of the idea of excellent research among its areas for improvement (AP: 95), this is focused on the development of assessment criteria and not on its implication for Rhodes’ mission and vision. The Panel is of the impression it has not been a clear attempt to engage with what “excellent research” means in practical terms in relation to the institution’s international outlook, its rootedness in the Eastern Cape, and its affiliation with the liberal arts tradition. As already mentioned, (see Section 2.1) a deeper engagement with the different dimensions of a reinterpreted liberal arts tradition according to Rhodes’ mission and vision could constitute a valuable contribution to a system level understanding of mission differentiation. In the case of the research function, it seems to the Panel that, it would be worthwhile to explore the manner in which an expanding research function can contribute to a reconceptualised...
idea of a liberal arts institution, which is typically characterised by more modest research endeavours.

Rhodes has a growing profile as a research university and the institution has clearly stated its intention to expanding its postgraduate intake from 20 percent to 25 percent. Rhodes seems to be also growing its research capacity and entering quite rapidly into the areas of commercialisation and contract research, especially in the natural sciences.

In relation to the management and the institution level objectives of the research function, the Panel was told in many interviews that as Rhodes is a small university, it wants to maintain a collegial spirit among academics, between academics and management, and to keep managerial tools, such as planning and monitoring, to a minimum. The Panel understands that the practice of non-intrusive management is the institution’s strategy to protect the collegial spirit. However, the Panel is of the view that the realisation of institution level goals by individual academic units cannot be left to an ad hoc combination of personal willingness and good interpersonal relations between managers and researchers. In order to achieve 25 percent enrolments in postgraduate studies, for example, Rhodes will have to undertake a conscious and concerted recruitment effort. This, together with the expansion of the research function, especially in terms of contract research, commercialisation and incubators, and the drive to internationalisation (see Section 2.1), poses a challenge to the management of research and research quality at the institution. Increased postgraduate enrolments cannot be met without a measure of institution-wide planning and monitoring.

One important aspect of the challenge of managing the research function is the identification of institutional priorities and the consistent allocation of resources to those priorities. Members of different committee structures responsible for oversight of the research function at university level who were interviewed by the Panel suggested that a more conscious and deliberate research strategy would be needed to deal with the expansion of research on which the University has embarked. In the Panel’s view, this will be especially important in relation to the development of a stronger focus on research that responds to the needs of the Eastern Cape. Operationalising this aspiration might entail, for instance, environmental scans, workshops, and think-tanks that could help the institution to make an informed decision about where to concentrate resources.

The Panel noted the disjuncture between views expressed in the interviews and the absence of a planning framework or strategy for the growth of the research function in the identified areas for improvement in the Audit Portfolio. These are:

- Defining “excellence” in research as indicated in the mission statement and developing internal criteria against which to evaluate research and other creative endeavours.
• Considering ways of providing additional support for new staff to become active researchers.
• Assisting with the conversion of conference papers into journal articles.
• In consultation with the Joint Research Committee, formulating suggestions for an incentive scheme and quantifying the funding implications of such a scheme.
• Challenging the national policy regarding the (lack of) recognition by the Department of Education of book and chapter research outputs and of research outputs in the creative arts.
• Providing further access to writing respondents in addition to the regular writing workshops for postgraduate students.
• Ensuring that faculties review their criteria for accepting students onto Masters’ programmes.
• Identifying competent students with the potential to succeed at Honours level and investigating bursary support for such students.
• Increasing the number of postdoctoral fellowships at the University.
• Closely monitoring the University’s Postgraduate Supervision Policy and ensuring that challenges and trends are reported to faculties.
• Continuing to seek funding for Masters’ and doctoral students, and to encourage growth at the postgraduate level with the aim of reaching 25 percent postgraduate students within the next review period. (AP: 95)

In the view of the Panel, the list presented above identifies different orders of objectives at a variety of levels without proposing an articulated plan that will coordinate individual efforts and steer faculty (and departmental) initiatives in the direction of institutional goals. In particular, there is no reference about how, and to what extent, the institution plans to support research that is regionally relevant. From the point of view of broader transformation issues, there is no mention of the need to develop a core of researchers and postgraduate students that is far more representative of the demography of the country.

The Panel noted that the research section in the Audit Portfolio does not engage with the issue of internationalisation and how this might affect the management of research. It seems to the Panel that international recognition (and therefore relevance) has been a longstanding element in the assessment of the quality of research at Rhodes. Publications in international journals, participation in reputable international conferences, joint research projects, are historically acknowledged as signals of good quality research. What “internationalisation” adds to the research function at Rhodes is a question which the Panel thinks the institution needs to consider carefully. For example, does this mean that Rhodes should pursue joint postgraduate degrees, and if so with which institutions, taking into account that the institution is committed to its African identity and its local links?
Does this require that Rhodes diversify its research partnerships? The Panel would like to encourage the institution to engage with these issues, and to involve researchers as well as postgraduate students in the debate.

**Recommendation 14**

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes consider the development of a strategy for the expansion of the research function that takes into account the current research profile of the University, its projected activities, and institution level goals, such as contributing to the development of the Eastern Cape.

### 5.1.2 Framework for the support of research

At a small university like Rhodes where research, although an important activity, does not determine the identity of the institution, research support and administration reside in the same portfolio and are the responsibility of the same office. In this case the Dean of Research and the Research Office are the fundamental elements in the management of research at the institution.

Besides the Dean of Research and the Research Office, Rhodes has two main structures that deal with the administration of research. These are the Joint Research Committee (JRC), and the Ethics Committee. The Centre for Entrepreneurship and a Business Unit assists researchers in the commercialisation of the results of their work. (The structures that deal with postgraduate education are analysed in Section 5.2)

The highest management structure in relation to research at Rhodes is the JRC. This committee is chaired by the Dean of Research and includes a representative of the Postgraduate Liaison Committee. The JRC is responsible for the research policy of the institution, the administration of the research budget, the university research grants, as well as the administration of the budget for academic travel to present papers at recognised conferences.

The *Audit Portfolio* indicates that in its allocation of funds, the JRC gives priority to new and young staff with the remaining funds being allocated to established staff on a needs basis and on their record of published work. Rhodes has specific focus areas which constitute niches of excellence. These include: Biotechnology, Communication Technology, Ichthyology, Entomology, Astronomy, and Medicinal Chemistry in the Sciences; Sociology, Politics, Philosophy and Anthropology in the Humanities and Social Sciences; and environmental research and water research constituting areas of excellence in the field of interdisciplinary work. However, the *Audit Portfolio* indicates that the fact that the JRC does not limit its support to niche areas has stimulated research in the Humanities and Social Sciences in particular (AP: 71-72).
The Research Office, headed by the Dean of Research, provides research support at Rhodes. The *Audit Portfolio* indicates that the mission of this office is to be a “one-stop-shop” for all research matters and postgraduate funding. This requires that the staff have a thorough understanding of all of the University’s research activities and policies, of the national system of research, and of the international research environment (AP: 76). The office ensures the quality of applications and reports, evaluates research contracts, and attends to the thorough and accurate collection of annual research outputs. The *Audit Portfolio* remarks that with the expansion of contract research at the University, the checking and authorisation of research contracts and agreements is an increasingly important responsibility of the Research Office, and that it has sought legal input and assistance in this task.

The *Audit Portfolio* indicates that the identification of sources and opportunities for research projects and funding is another function performed by the Research Office. This is done through the use of national and international databases and through interaction with the national research councils, government agencies, industry and commerce. The Office assists staff and students in the preparation of research funding applications, particularly, in relation to the applications for NRF grants. During interviews with researchers and postgraduate students, the Panel heard about the efficient and committed way in which the Research Office’s staff carry out their work.

**Commendation 11:**

The HEQC commends Rhodes on the quality of the services provided by the Research Office and its positive impact on the promotion and support of research at the institution.

Rhodes has an Intellectual Property Policy which acknowledges that IP (Intellectual Property) and copyright reside with the academic staff and not with the University. The Centre for Entrepreneurship and a Business Unit assists researchers to exploit their ideas commercially. In some cases the University has provided seed funding and/or partnerships to commercialise innovations. According to the *Audit Portfolio*, three spin-off companies, six entrepreneurial research units and seven closed corporations have arisen from this activity. The Panel notes that Rhodes has “generous conditions” to regulate academics’ consultancy work outside the institution, which, according to the *Audit Portfolio* has helped in retaining academic staff, especially in market-related disciplines (AP: 72).

The Panel interviewed members of the Centre for Entrepreneurship and the Business Unit as well as researchers who have benefited from their interventions. The Panel noted that the institution has been successful in the commercialisation of patents in the case of
Rhodes University BioSURE process for the treatment of acidic mine water and the iQhilika Mead Brewery. The Panel congratulates the institution on this initiative, which seems to be producing satisfactory results for the institution and the researchers. The Panel would like to suggest that the institution consider using these ventures as training grounds for postgraduate students in need of “real life” experience of work and research.

In terms of direct support of researchers, the Audit Portfolio outlines some of the strategies and mechanisms used at Rhodes to encourage research. These include: orientation on research administration for new staff, the organisation of workshops on specific topics, the Dean of Research’s regular visits to all academic departments, the Vice-Chancellor’s Distinguished Research Award, the Senior Research Award, and the Vice-Chancellor’s Book Award. (Support for postgraduate research is analysed in section 5.2.)

The support and encouragement of research has had positive results. The number of university funded research grants has doubled since 1999 and supports more than half of the staff. According to the Audit Portfolio, this, together with a relative improvement in Rhodes’ accessing of local and international grants has made it necessary for the research office to employ a research accountant.

**Commendation 12**

The HEQC commends Rhodes, and in particular the Office of the Dean of Research, for the successful expansion of the research function at Rhodes, which includes the development of support mechanisms the commercialisation of patents and the setting up of incubators, as well as specific support for the humanities and the performing and visual arts.

The fact that the Research Office prides itself on a 24 hour turnaround time speaks of the efficiency and dedication of the staff, the size of the research enterprise at Rhodes, and of a particular management style supported by interpersonal relationships with the researchers. The institution is aware that, should Rhodes become more research intensive, some changes to the current form of research administration might have to be introduced, even if the size of the institution remains unchanged.

**5.1.3 Quality assurance of research and research ethics**

The quality assurance of research at Rhodes is the direct responsibility of the faculties, which in turn submit research proposals to the JRC. According to the Audit Portfolio, the quality of research carried out at Rhodes is assessed in terms of outputs (journal articles, books, artefacts, conference proceedings) which, in turn, are assessed in relation to their impact. Other factors taken into account to ascertain the quality of research produced at
Rhodes are the standing of the researchers among peers, the NRF ratings, external evaluations, and the number, quality, graduation rates, and employment profile of postgraduate students. Discipline specific practices and cultures are taken into account at the time of applying these indicators. Rhodes is aware of the limitations and problems that internal peer review poses in the context of a small institution. The Panel would like to urge the institution to pay closer attention to this particular area in order to avoid the development of a self-referential system of peer review.

The administration of the research budget also has a quality management dimension. This takes place through the JRC, which considers requests and plans from the University researchers for new or extended research projects. These plans are rigorously interrogated by members of the committee (and where necessary by external bodies such as the NRF) prior to receiving support.

Reviews are another fundamental mechanism to assess the effectiveness of the quality assurance of research at Rhodes. University research institutes are reviewed every three to five years. In 2003, the Vice-Chancellor convened a Review Committee consisting of the Vice-Principal, the Dean of Research, the Director of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance, and the relevant deans and senior professors from cognate disciplines in order to review these research units and centres. The focus of the review included contracts and finances, postgraduate education and involvement in the University. In 2005, the institution set up a review of academic departments, which was planned to feed into the HEQC audit of Rhodes. All departments had to respond to the following three questions in relation to research:

- What procedures are in place for the quality assurance of research activities?
- How does the department support and encourage research participation and productivity?
- How does the department ensure that it complies with the University’s policy on postgraduate supervision?

The outcomes of the 2005 academic review indicated eight conclusions in relation to the research function; three focused on research production and five on postgraduate education. The review indicated the unevenness of research outputs across departments (this issue will be dealt with in detail in the next section) and the need to develop appropriate incentives for producing research outputs. Similarly, the review indicated the need to place greater emphasis on the development of junior staff as researchers and to increase the institution’s research outputs. Finally, the academic review pointed out the urgent need to review the DoE position on the weight of books and chapters in books as research outputs, as well as the manner of evaluating the research outputs of the visual and performing arts (Academic Review 2005: 13-14).
In all cases suggestions were made about how the problems identified could be solved. The Panel congratulates the institution on the implementation of regular academic reviews that have a focus on the research function at department level, and that place emphasis on quality assurance as well as on research support and development and postgraduate education.

All faculties have research committees responsible for ensuring that all research proposals comply with the required ethical standards. Above these structures is the University Ethics Committee to which all matters concerning research ethics are referred. This committee is chaired by an appropriately qualified academic and includes a medical doctor from outside the University.

Commendation 13
The HEQC commends the University for the steps taken to ensure that careful and appropriate arrangements are in place for the ethical clearance of all its research projects.

5.1.4 Research outputs and impact
In terms of DoE recognised research outputs, Rhodes is one of the most productive universities in the country in relation to the size of its permanent academic staff. Despite this, Rhodes, like all other HEIs, does not meet the benchmark set by the DoE of 1 research output per full-time permanent staff member.

DoE data indicates that the institution experienced a noticeable growth in research outputs between 1996 and 2000 and then a fairly sharp decline. No analysis of this fluctuation is provided in the Audit Portfolio or in any other documentation provided to the Panel. However, the institution mentions in its self-evaluation three problems that need to be addressed: (i) the uneven distribution of research outputs across faculties (Academic Review 2005: 13), (ii) the fact that 80 percent of Rhodes’ research outputs are produced by 25 percent of the academic staff, and (iii) the first two points are compounded by the ageing of Rhodes’ most active researchers (AP: 73).
The *Audit Portfolio* provides information on research outputs per faculty for the years 2001 to 2004.

### Research outputs per faculty 2001-2004 (Rhodes’ own data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>101.7</td>
<td>110.5</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>118.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>192.2</td>
<td>193.0</td>
<td>175.1</td>
<td>195.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures presented here indicate:

- The Science Faculty is by far the most productive in terms of research outputs in all years (which is consistent with the high numbers of PhD students enrolled in this faculty). Except for a drop in 2003, the faculty has been increasing its research outputs steadily.

- The Humanities Faculty produces less than half of the research outputs of Science, despite the fact that it is the largest faculty. This observation needs to take into account the specific nature of knowledge production and publication in the humanities and in the natural sciences, which is one of the reasons why the institution is seeking to revise the weight of books as research outputs in the DoE SAPSE system.

- Law, one of the smallest faculties, has a higher research production relative to size than Education, Commerce and Pharmacy.

- Commerce and Education have the lowest research outputs, which is again consistent with the relative importance of postgraduate education in these two faculties.

The unevenness of research outputs across faculties and between academics in a faculty is an aspect of Rhodes’ knowledge production which the institution might want to take into account when designing any strategy directed at increasing the number and quality of research outputs as well as attracting postgraduate students to Rhodes.

The following analysis of Rhodes’ journal publications in South African journals both accredited and non-accredited, and in foreign journals, both in the ISI (Institute for Scientific Information of the USA) and non-ISI indexed, is based on the data stored in the SA Knowledgebase maintained at CREST, University of Stellenbosch.
The total number of articles authored by Rhodes’ academics improved between 1996 and 2003, although current outputs are below the best output year (1998). Every year, with the exception of 2003, just above half of the articles produced by Rhodes’ academics were published in overseas ISI-journals, with the majority of the remaining articles being published in local non-ISI journals.

A demographic analysis of SA Knowledgebase data for Rhodes indicates that for all years between 1996 and 2003, male authors produced the majority of all articles while white academic authorship of journal article equivalents varied between 93 and 82 percent. In 2003, Rhodes’ white academics produced 82 percent of all articles published, African academics produced 11.7 percent, Indian academics 4.9 percent and coloured academics produced 1.2 percent. This distribution also reflects the demographic profile of Rhodes’ academics, as indicated in Section 1.2. The Panel notes the absence of any specific mention of the demographics of knowledge production in the Audit Portfolio’s analysis of the research function or in the identified areas for improvement.

In terms of the age of the authors, almost half (44.5 percent) of the journal articles published by Rhodes academics in 2003 were authored by individuals between 50 and more than 60 years old, followed by academics in their forties (43.6 percent), and just above 11 percent authored by academics in their thirties and younger. This situation is acknowledged by the institution as a problem. One of the areas for improvement identified for the research core function in the Audit Portfolio is that particular attention needs to be paid to the provision of additional support for new staff to become active researchers (AP: 95).

Recommendation 15

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes consider the development of a comprehensive strategy to recruit new researchers and increase the number of research outputs. The strategy should take into account the urgent need to change the demographics of research production at the institution.

In relation to research productivity by faculty, SA Knowledgebase confirms the trend identified above, i.e. that the Science Faculty produces most of Rhodes’ research outputs. Between 1996 and 2003 Education was the least productive faculty followed by Commerce and Pharmacy. The Law Faculty produced between 5 and 8 percent of

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18 From a methodological perspective, SA Knowledgebase counts articles as both units (each article published) and as article unit equivalents (the proportion of authorship that each author has in a co-authored article. For example if a Rhodes’ academic produces an article in collaboration with two colleagues from other institution, Rhodes’ article equivalent in the database would be 0.33).
Rhodes’ journal articles during this period, with 2000 marking the highest point of productivity (10 percent). However, in 2003, this faculty produced only 5.3 percent of all journal articles. Throughout this period, the Humanities Faculty produced approximately 30 percent of all journal articles published by Rhodes academics.

Finally, disaggregation of the published articles by main scientific field for the full period covered by the database (1990-2003) indicates that the largest number of publications is concentrated in ten fields, the majority of which are in the natural sciences. Even if due consideration is given to the different pace and patterns of publications between the humanities and the natural sciences, and to the fact that natural scientists, contrary to academics in the humanities and social sciences, publish their work in the form of journal articles and not in books, the relative research output of the humanities at Rhodes is still low. This issue was mentioned in the context of the review of the relevant departments during the 2005 Academic Review. The Panel would like to bring to the attention of the institution the fact that the areas of strength in undergraduate teaching do not seem to be the areas of strength in terms of research production and postgraduate education. The Panel would like to encourage the institution to monitor more closely this issue to ascertain what is holding back the productivity of some departments. This is particularly important as Rhodes signals the link between research and teaching as one element of its mission.

Main scientific fields of journal articles 1990-2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scientific Field</th>
<th>Number Authorships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zoology and Entomology 918</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ichthyology</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biochemistry and microbiology</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botany</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geology</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3642</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of individual productivity the analysis indicates that for the period 1990-2003, 50 Rhodes academics produced 41 percent (1176.7) of the total number of article equivalents produced by the staff (2874.6). The remaining 59 percent article equivalents were produced by 878 authors. These figures highlight the importance of the huge gap
between productive and non-productive researchers at Rhodes, the importance of investment in incentives, and the capacity needed in order to expand research participation at the institution.

One of the issues, which emerged quite clearly from the analysis of the research function in the context of the academic review, is the active role that HoDs are expected to play in relation to closing the gap between the research productivity of different departments. Given the range of issues involved in increasing research productivity at department level, HoDs will require support from the central management of research at the institution.

The Panel urges the institution to design a concerted approach to increasing research productivity and changing the demographic profile of Rhodes’ active researchers. Such an approach should involve HoDs as well as faculty deans in the planning, implementation and monitoring of staff recruitment and development programmes for young and inexperienced researchers. The Panel noted that the institution has identified areas for improvement. These include, a series of activities, for example, assisting all academics with the conversion of conference papers into journal articles, with a view to increasing the number of research outputs.

5.15 Management information systems and monitoring capacity

The Panel learned through its interviews with the staff of the Research Office and the Dean of Research that the current system being used to manage research information is Protea Database and that this is the system that is used across the university. This system is designed primarily for data collection and does not allow for manipulation of data in a way that might be more conducive to an analytical understanding of the core functions. This, in turn, creates information gaps which undermine the institution’s ability to plan and monitor strategies.

The analysis of three substantive research reports – 2001, 2002 and 2003 – shows that the research reports list the outputs and research activities per department. Although the lists of publications are interesting, the Panel noted that there is no meta-analysis that situates research within any faculty in the context of an overall analysis of the institutional research profile of Rhodes.

In 2002, the format of the report changed to one a more analytical approach, including the actual subsidy claims and a brief introduction for each faculty. Despite this, the reports do not provide a sense of a concerted research strategy for the institution, which includes an analysis of the areas of strengths and weakness in terms of both knowledge production and the equity profile of researchers and postgraduate students in relation to
specific fields of study. Despite the growing importance that the research function has in defining Rhodes’ identity, the research reports provide no analysis of the progress the institution is making in achieving its strategic goals in this area.

Although in the documentation provided there is no indication of any intention to develop a management information system for the management of research, interviews with the Dean of Research and the Research Office as well as the interview with members of the JRC stressed to the Panel that the institution is aware of the technical implications of a move towards a more research-intensive institution. The Panel realises that the incorporation of more analytical work on the research function into the management of research at Rhodes will require either outsourcing the production of its research reports or increasing the capacity of the research office. The panel would like to urge Rhodes to consider the development of a new management information system for research and the analytical capacity necessary to make use of it at the research office in order to support the planning and monitoring of an expanded research function.

5.2 Quality Related Arrangement for Postgraduate Education

According to the Audit Portfolio, Rhodes University embarked on a strategy eight years ago to increase internal funding and donor support for postgraduate scholarships and bursaries. This strategy focused on Black and female students, especially South African nationals and permanent residents. Between 1999 and 2005, as a result of this strategy funding for Honours, Masters and Doctoral students rose from R635 000 distributed in 35 awards in 1999 to R2.2 million distributed in 62 awards (AP: 74).

The total scholarship and additional financial aid awarded for postgraduate study in 2004 was R9.9 million (750 awards). In addition to these competitive scholarships, the University grants automatic scholarships to third year and Honours students, who obtain first class passes and Masters students who obtain distinctions. The Audit Portfolio indicates that in six years there have been almost no drop outs and that all students have obtained high marks, and in some cases proceed to the next postgraduate level. The Academic Review does however raise the problem of the financial support for postgraduate students, especially at the Honours level “who are not high-flyers”, and for foreign students who usually need top-up funding (Academic Review: 14).

The administration of all postgraduate funding is the responsibility of the Research Office. Feedback from students and staff suggests that its role in providing funding and more general support is highly valued and is essential to the success of postgraduate studies at Rhodes University.
The Audit Portfolio indicates that between 2000 and 2004 the number of postgraduate students at Rhodes increased by 19 percent (AP: 75). HEMIS data and the institution’s own data presented in its Digest of Statistics 2004 indicate a steady increase in the number of headcount enrolments at the postgraduate level (Digest of Statistics: A3). Yet, Rhodes also notes that while the numbers have increased, the proportion of postgraduate students in the overall enrolment has dropped due to the fast growth of undergraduate enrolments (Academic Review: 7). These figures suggest that achieving the institutional target of 25 percent postgraduate students will require considerable planning and investment. One aspect of the investment is to procure adequate physical space to accommodate postgraduates. The establishment of the Gavin Relly Postgraduate Village is one response to the issue of accommodation.

This section is based on DoE’s data that reflects Rhodes’ postgraduate enrolments and graduations prior the incorporation of RUEL to the University of Fort Hare. Given that postgraduate students at RUEL never constituted more than 12 percent of the total headcount enrolments, and that postgraduate degrees at RUEL were offered in a handful of areas, the Panel considered it appropriate to use the data available to analyse trends in postgraduate education at Rhodes as it exists at the time of the HEQC audit. From the point of view of the profile of Rhodes’ postgraduate students, the DoE’s SAPSE and HEMIS data for the years 1996, and 2000-2003 indicates the following:

- Between 1996 and 2000 the participation of black students in headcount enrolments at masters’ level nearly doubled to remain virtually unchanged until 2003.
- As a consequence of the above, the participation of white students in masters’ enrolments decreased from 74.10 percent in 1996 to 45.34 percent in 2003.
- African students’ participation in enrolments at the doctoral level increased from 13.84 percent in 1996 to 30.05 in 2003.

In terms of the distribution of postgraduate enrolments per CESM category, the data presented in the figure below indicates that:

- The majority of headcount enrolments in postgraduate degrees are in the humanities and social sciences followed by SET disciplines
- Education has increased its participation in postgraduate enrolments since 2000. However, it is important to remember that the bulk of these enrolments is below the honours level.
- Business and commerce is the field of study with the least number of postgraduate enrolments.
- The field of study with the largest number of enrolments at postgraduate level below honours is education. This field is the second smallest in terms of doctoral enrolments.
- The largest number of honours’ and masters’ enrolments is in the humanities and social sciences followed by SET.
- The largest number of enrolments in doctoral degrees is in the SET disciplines, although in four years the numbers have not increased.
- In the period 2000 to 2003, humanities and social sciences has had the same number of doctoral enrolments each year (61).

**Postgraduate headcount enrolments by CESM 2000-2003**

Overall, the analysis of Rhodes’ postgraduate profile suggests that the bulk of enrolments is at the honours and masters level in most CESM categories. SET is the exception, where enrolments in doctoral degrees constitute between 24 and 29 percent throughout the period. In the remaining CESM categories, doctoral degrees go from less than 1 percent (BC), to just above 10 percent (HSS).

Despite the international character of student enrolments at Rhodes, the institution did not provide an analysis of postgraduate enrolments per nationality. HEMIS data and the institution’s own data suggest that foreign students constitute a rather small proportion of postgraduate enrolments at Rhodes at all levels and in all fields of study. The highest proportion of foreign enrolments is that of SADC students enrolled in education masters’ degrees (almost 30 percent of enrolments at that level in the education CESM).
Rhodes’ own data (AP: Tables 17.1 and 17.6) indicate that international student enrolments at the postgraduate level represented 24 percent of all international enrolments in 2002 and 26 percent in 2003, while international student enrolments at the postgraduate level (above honours) represented 27.17 percent and 30.70 percent of Rhodes’ total headcount enrolments (Grahamstown data) for 2002 and 2003. The faculties that attract the largest number of foreign students in order of importance are education (masters), humanities and science.

Based on the analysis of all the data mentioned above, and taking into account the information gathered through the interviews conducted at the University, the Panel is of the view that the desired expansion of postgraduate enrolments to constitute 25 percent of the total enrolments has fundamental implications for the identity of the institution, and that the institution’s data should be taken into account in order to design a recruitment strategy that targets students that fit in with Rhodes’ vision of its postgraduate academic profile.

In relation to the first issue, until recently Rhodes has had less than 20 percent enrolments at postgraduate level and has defined its identity mainly as an excellent teaching and learning institution within the liberal arts college tradition in which research is a fundamental component of good scholarship. Growing postgraduate enrolments to 25 percent suggests putting more emphasis on the research function, especially if the institution is seeking to increase the numbers of its doctoral students. Postgraduate students, particularly at the doctorate and post-doctorate level are attracted by the track record of departments and individuals and, in the case of the natural sciences by the quality of the research equipment and laboratories available. In this regard the institution will have to not only make a commitment to sustainable investment in the upkeep of materials but also in the support of research, in order to proceed with its project of expansion of postgraduate enrolments.

In relation to Rhodes’ postgraduate academic profile, the data indicates that the largest increase in numbers is at the masters’ level and the largest concentration of doctoral students is in the science fields. The Panel notes that the further development of strengths in the natural sciences will, to a certain extent, alter Rhodes’ identity as a university predominantly focused on the humanities. Taking this into account, the Panel is of the view that Rhodes needs to make clear whether the expansion of postgraduate enrolments is targeted to specific disciplinary fields. At the same time, given the pressing need to improve the equity profile of enrolments, the institution also needs to think of having an enrolment strategy targeted at increasing the number of South African black students at postgraduate level.
Recommendation 16
The HEQC recommends that the institution develop a recruitment strategy for postgraduate students that takes into account the disciplinary areas prioritised by the institution and the consequences this might have for Rhodes’ identity as a liberal arts college, the unevenness in research production across departments, and the need to change the University’s equity profile. Such a strategy will need to be regularly monitored and appropriately resourced.

Another aspect of the expansion of postgraduate enrolments, which needs to be taken into account, is the support required by new postgraduate students, especially at the Master’s level.

The Audit Portfolio indicates that the process of admission of postgraduate students is rigorous and that the institution has recently revised its process for acceptance into Masters’ and PhD programmes. In the new system more information is required of the student and supervisor by the faculty deans before applications are approved. The Panel learned through interviews that these adjustments were necessary, due to negative experiences of students who could not complete their degrees. Related to students’ chances of success at the postgraduate level is the remark made in the Academic Review about the “lack of competence of some postgraduate students, especially Masters”, and particularly the lack of writing skills (Academic Review: 14).

In order to achieve a substantive increase in the number of postgraduate students in the short term, the institution will have to recruit students with potential but who might not be top students. Much more attention and close supervision will be needed for these students and the institution will have to make sure that both extra support and adequate supervision are available for these students across all departments. Both the Academic Review and the Audit Portfolio mention the interactions between the Dean of Research and the ADC, especially in relation to writing skills for postgraduate students. The Panel concurs with the institution that the forms of support offered by the ADC are essential in the education of postgraduate students.

Recommendation 17
The HEQC recommends that the University consider the possibility of increasing its support for those activities of the Academic Development Centre which are focused on the development of generic competencies and skills of postgraduate students.
As mentioned in section 5.1.3, proposals for postgraduate degrees are assessed by faculty higher degrees committees. These proposals are prepared by the student and the supervisor and go through a process of departmental approval that usually includes the presentation of a seminar. The Audit Portfolio indicates that reports from most faculties suggest that, in general, departments have improved the support for students in the preparation of their proposals. The rigour of this process has resulted in an improvement in the acceptance rate of proposals (AP: 76). The Panel did not find any documentation supporting this claim. Furthermore, the results of the academic review and the areas singled out for improvement under research in the Audit Portfolio seem to suggest that there are postgraduate students in need of support to complete their studies successfully. The Panel would like to stress that the drive to increase the number of postgraduate students affords the institution a prime opportunity to revise its overall approach to postgraduate education and to focus on support mechanisms at departmental level and ensure consistency within and across faculties.

Supervision is an area in which Rhodes has introduced changes in order to improve the system. The Audit Portfolio (AP: 76) indicates that the implementation of the new policy has highlighted several cases of poor supervision and has allowed for improvement interventions. The Office of the Dean of Research monitors the time taken to complete theses. Problems between supervisors and students are dealt with confidentially by the Dean of Research. The examination process includes three external examiners for doctoral degrees while masters’ theses are examined internally. Doctoral examiners’ reports are considered by a Committee of Assessors that includes the Dean of Research (chairperson), HoD, the supervisor and at least three senior members of the faculty. Recommendations from this committee are submitted to the Vice-Chancellor for approval. The system seems to be sound and works well at the doctoral level. During the audit visit, the Panel had the opportunity of discussing this system with members of the Committee of Assessors and the Vice-Chancellor. The Panel was concerned about the fact that the Vice-Chancellor’s involvement in the process of assessment leaves students with no instance of redress should conflicts arise in relation to the thesis mark.

**Recommendation 18**
The HEQC recommends that the institution consider the possibility of making international external examiners a requirement for PhDs, and create a procedure for appeals in the process of the examination of postgraduate degrees within the institution.
The Dean of Research has developed a comprehensive *Higher Degrees Guide* which provides most of the information required by both students and supervisors. The Guide includes information on higher degree studies (what constitutes a master’s and a PhD), admission requirements, the higher degrees programme available at the institution, procedures for registration, submission requirements, responsibilities of supervisors and students, research resources available, financial matters, examination of theses, general rules of RU, appropriate forms, etc. (*Appendix 17*).

Rhodes has introduced a new system of reporting for postgraduate degrees in which the student and the supervisors submit independent reports on progress. Postgraduate students and academics involved in supervision who were interviewed by the Panel, indicated that the system was working well and that it constituted an improvement over the previous form of reporting.

From the point of view of the student experience, postgraduate students are introduced to Rhodes through a process of departmental orientation, peer orientation, a University-wide orientation day and special information sessions by the Library and the IT Divisions. In 2003, partially as a response to a request from postgraduate students, the institution created the Postgraduate Liaison Committee (PGLC). Besides having its own meetings and discussing concerns about specific aspects of postgraduate education, the PGLC is a sub-committee of the JRC and its president participates in the JRC meetings. The Panel met with the PGLC and with a range of postgraduate students from different disciplines, social backgrounds and nationalities. Generally, students were satisfied with their experiences of supervision and support at Rhodes.

**Commendation 14**

The HEQC commends Rhodes on the creation of the Postgraduate Liaison Committee as a sub-committee of the Joint Research Committee and for the introduction of a system for reporting on the progress of postgraduate degrees that includes students.
6. MANAGEMENT OF THE QUALITY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This section focuses firstly, on the way in which Rhodes conceptualises community engagement, the location of this function in the academic governance of the institution and how this conceptualisation is operationalised across the University. Secondly, the section deals with the arrangements for the management of the quality of community engagement, in particular its integration and alignment with the quality management of teaching and learning and research.

6.1 Conceptualising community engagement at Rhodes

Rhodes states in its mission that “through teaching, research and community service it will contribute to the advancement of international scholarship and the development of the Eastern Cape and Southern Africa”. In none of the 11 undertakings which form part of Rhodes’ mission does the institution indicate any specific commitment to community engagement. However, the university has a long history of community engagement through the Centre for Social Development (CSD) that goes back to the second half of the 1970s. Besides the existence of the CSD, individuals and academic departments have had different types of cooperative relationships with Rhodes’ neighbouring communities. According to the Audit Portfolio, this situation not only needed coordination but also as Rhodes’ approach to its surrounding community was perceived as aloof, it needed to be reviewed (AP: 82). Given the institution’s stake in the economy and social conditions in the area, the institution decided to develop a new approach to community engagement in 1999.

This new approach has two main components. Firstly, it redefined the relationship between the CSD and the University in order to make the Centre into the interface between Rhodes and its communities. Secondly, the institution created a Senate Committee for Community Engagement with the function of coordinating, enhancing and giving visibility to the community initiatives of the University (AP:84).

A fundamental step in this direction has been the development of a Community Engagement Policy which was approved in July 2005. In this document Rhodes made a “declaration”, which establishes a specific link between the institution’s vision and mission and its community engagement policy:

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19 Rhodes contributes 66 percent of Grahamstown’s GDP.
Rhodes University commits itself to democratic ideals, sound moral values and social responsibility.\textsuperscript{20} As part of its mission, the University strives to contribute to the development of the Eastern Cape and Southern Africa by, amongst other aims:

- Developing shared values that embrace basic human and civil rights.
- Acknowledging and being sensitive to the problems created by the legacy of apartheid and ensuring that appropriate corrective measures are employed to address past imbalances.
- Producing critical, capable and balanced graduates who are aware of their social responsibilities.
- Making available the university’s expertise, resources and facilities where appropriate. (AP, Appendix 20: 2.1)

Thus, the institution makes an explicit connection between transformation and community engagement. In this sense the process initiated in 1999 has given Rhodes the opportunity of redefining its identity in relation to both its immediate environment and the Eastern Cape Province in general.

In terms of the purposes of this policy, the document suggests that the goals of the Community Engagement Policy are to:

- Clarify how the University interprets the notion of community service.
- Specify how it aims to fulfil its mission in this area.
- Ensure that ongoing community service activities are identified and communicated to staff, students and the wider community.
- Promote community service as a form of higher education transformation, both in relation to working with the community towards a better future and generating graduates who have a sense of civic responsibility.
- Promote the inclusion of service-learning in academic courses where appropriate in order to benefit the community as well as provide students with the opportunity to apply the theory of their discipline to local, regional and national development issues.

It appeared to the Panel that the restructuring of the relationship between the CSD and Rhodes, the appointment of the Director of CSD as Chairperson of the Senate Community Engagement Committee, and the appointment of a Manager with a coordinating function as well as appointing a member of staff responsible for the Student Volunteer Programme to the CSD, are very important steps towards giving content to community engagement as an active core function of the University. However, the Panel noted the absence of an explicit strategy to implement some form of quality management of community engagement initiatives. This should be considered not only in relation to the specific objectives of each academic unit and programme but also in relation to the

\textsuperscript{20} Vision and Mission Statement, March 2000
achievement of those specific aspects of Rhodes’ mission and vision which can be better realised within this core function. It will be particularly important in this regard to establish the forms through which support for, and the development of, community engagement will take place in relation to the core functions of teaching and learning.

At a conceptual level, Rhodes’ Community Engagement Policy distinguishes between community engagement/service, voluntarism and service learning as distinct activities, which have different components in terms of both structured learning and pedagogical underpinnings. The policy includes a section on monitoring which suggests that the CSD, through the Community Engagement Manager and the Community Engagement Committee, is responsible for monitoring policy implementation. Although the monitoring section of the policy covers most areas, it does not indicate the mechanisms which will be put in place in order to undertake the monitoring.

The Panel was not clear about mechanisms for academic departments to report on their community engagement activities in between academic reviews to enable the CSD to capture these activities in its database. In this regard, the Panel is concerned that other explicit monitoring methodologies are not indicated in the policy. At an academic level and from the point of view of teaching and learning, the institution might want to develop appropriate mechanisms for departments to be encouraged to think in terms of community engagement more systematically and continuously than only in relation to the reporting requirements of the academic review cycle.

From the point of view of the quality management of community engagement and its relationship with the management of quality in teaching and learning and research, the policy suggests that the institution is concerned about the quality as well as the sustainability of its projects. With the objective of preserving both, the policy indicates that the following steps will be taken:

- The Community Engagement Manager will be the contact point for meeting and networking with the NGOs of the Grahamstown community in order to establish in what ways Rhodes can use its existing resources to add value to their work.
- The Community Engagement Manager will ensure that adequate resources and enabling mechanisms will be put in place to enable effective implementation of the policy.
- Systems and processes will be designed in order to track NGO and CBO needs as well as to monitor staff and student activity within different NGOs and CBOs and the benefits of these activities. This will be accomplished by ensuring appropriate communication and preventing fragmentation and duplication of efforts. (AP, Appendix 20: 3.1)
As already mentioned, the policy is too new for the Panel to comment on its effectiveness. However, the Panel would like to encourage the institution to include in the quality management of community engagement, suitable forms of monitoring and impact evaluations that could support the improvement of the interactions between community engagement, research and teaching and learning.

**Recommendation 19**

The HEQC recommends that the University develop suitable mechanisms for the quality management of the community engagement core function, which takes into account the differences between community engagement, service learning and voluntarism. This should include the development of a closer interaction between the quality related arrangements and requirements for community engagement and those for the other two core functions.

The Panel acknowledges the bold step taken by the institution in the development of a policy framework for the core function of community engagement as part of its mission and vision. The University is encouraged to create the necessary conceptual and procedural basis for the inclusion of a stronger focus on innovative service learning for students who are not part of the professional disciplines. The need to develop opportunities to learn on the job in the social sciences and humanities at the postgraduate level was a comment heard repeatedly by the Panel in its interviews with young postgraduate students.

### 6.2 Current projects and activities

The *Community Engagement Review 2005/6* is a good inventory of the wide range of activities and projects in which a large number of departments are involved. It lists more the 30 fields in which the institution has programmes and activities. Some of which are: academic departments involvement in activities that range from the offering of staff capacity and experience to solve a particular community’s problem, the support of government activities (often through providing evaluation services), programmes focused on the development of specific skills in communities (e.g. mathematics, journalism, entrepreneurship, etc.).

The *Audit Portfolio* classifies Rhodes community engagement under three headings: community engagement, which includes activities such as those undertaken by the Environmental Education and Sustainability Unit, the Public Service Accountability Monitor, the Business Information Centre, and the Student Volunteer Programme; service
learning, which includes the work of fourth-year students in the department of Journalism and Media Studies in the Grocotts community newspaper; the work of Counselling Psychology, Sociology, Law and Drama students, all of whom have to do credit bearing service as part of their studies; and school outreach, which includes programmes that aim to contribute to improving education in the Eastern Cape: such as Mathematics, Information and Science and Technology Education and Rhodes’ Mathematics Education Project, Drama for Development, Ethnomusicology, and the work of the Institute of Water Research (AP: 84-86).

In the Panel’s view, the breadth of these activities makes all the more necessary the implementation of suitable quality assurance mechanisms. Such mechanisms could help to assess whether communities and students are obtaining the expected benefits from these programmes, ensure adequate, regular and structured feedback on the impact of these activities, and channel the knowledge developed through them into processes for the improvement of conceptions and practices of community engagement.

**Commendation 15:**

The HEQC commends Rhodes for the breadth of its community related activities and for having taken an approach to community engagement that has strong potential to transform the relationship between the institution and its communities.
Appendix A: Objectives of the HEQC Audit System
(From the HEQC Framework for Institutional Audits, June 2004)

The general objectives of HEQC audits are to:

- Encourage and support higher education providers to maintain a culture of continuous improvement, by means of institutional quality processes that build on HEQC and institutionally set requirements;
- Validate the self-evaluation reports of institutions on their quality arrangements for teaching and learning, research and community engagement;
- Enable higher education institutions to develop reliable indicators that will assure institutional stakeholders and the HEQC that their policies, systems, strategies and resources for assuring and enhancing quality in teaching and learning, research and community engagement, are effective;
- Provide information and evidence that will enable higher education institutions and the HEQC to identify areas of strength and excellence as well as areas in need of focused attention for planned improvement in the short, medium and long term; and
- Enable the HEQC to obtain baseline information in the targeted areas through the use of a common set of audit criteria for all institutions. Such information will:
  - Help to identify and disseminate good practices in quality arrangements in the higher education sector;
  - Facilitate capacity development and improvement programmes by the HEQC and other role-players;
  - Form part of the rationale for granting self-accreditation status to institutions; and
  - Enable the HEQC to generate a national picture of quality arrangements in higher education, and to monitor system and sector-level quality improvement.
Appendix B: The Audit Panel

Prof Cheryl de la Rey, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, University of Cape Town (Chairperson)
Prof Johan Groenewald, Coordinator: Institutional Planning, University of Stellenbosch
Prof Antony Melck, Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, University of Pretoria
Dr Suellen Shay, Co-ordinator: Academic Staff Development, University of Cape Town
Prof Gansen Pillay, Director: Research Management and Development, Durban Institute of Technology
Prof P J. Schwikkard, Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice, University of Cape Town
Dr Andrew Kaniki, Executive Director, National Research Foundation
Ms Naziema Jappie, Executive Director: Student Services, Durban Institute of Technology
Dr Frank Quinault, Director of Learning and Teaching Quality, University of St Andrews, Scotland (International Auditor)

The following HEQC staff supported the Panel:

Dr Rob Moore, Director: Institutional Audits, HEQC (Audit officer)
Dr Mala Singh, Executive Director, HEQC
Dr Prem Naidoo, Director: Quality Promotion & Capacity Development, HEQC
Dr Lis Lange, Director: Monitoring and Evaluation, CHE
Mr Bheki Mbhele, Manager: Institutional Audits, HEQC
Ms Belinda Wort, Project Administrator: Institutional Audits, HEQC (Audit Administrator)
Appendix C: List of Documents submitted by Rhodes University

(i) APPENDICES ATTACHED TO THE PORTFOLIO

1. Digest of Statistics 2004
2. Review of Academic Departments 2005
3. Undergraduate Prospectus 2006
4. University Calendar 2005
5. Vice-Chancellor’s Report 2004

(ii) APPENDICES AVAILABLE ON CD

9. Audit Portfolio Committee Timetable
10. Audit Portfolio Feedback from Professor Deryck Schreuder
11. Committee Membership Booklet, 2005
12. Course Template
14. Estates Division Control System
15. Fundraising Model
16. Head of Department’s Guide
17. Higher Degrees Guide
19. Policy on Class Representatives (draft)
20. Policy on Community Engagement
22. Policy on Equity
23. Policy on External Examining (draft)
24. Policy on Internationalisation
25. Policy on Language (revised)
26. Policy on Plagiarism
27. Policy on Postgraduate Supervisory Practice
28. Policy on Quality Assurance
29. Policy on Recruitment and Selection of Academic Staff
30. Policy on Short Courses
31. Policy on Staff Development
32. Policy on the Assessment of Student Learning
33. Policy on the Evaluation of Teaching and Courses
34. Policy Protocol
35. Procedure for Academic Promotions
HEQC AUDIT REPORT

36. Programme and Qualification Mix
37. Recruitment Data per School
38. Recruitment and Selection Criteria for Support Staff
39. Reflections on Institutional Culture and Transformation
40. Request to share Good Practice Letter
41. Research Institutes Review Report 2004 (incl a list of RU Research Institutes)
42. Review of Administrative Divisions 2002
44. Review of International Dimension, 2001: IQR Panel Report
45. Research Report 2004
46. Review of the Science Faculty 2005
47. Reviews held at RU since 1997
48. Short Courses offered at Rhodes University, 2005
49. Student Support Systems outline
50. Survey on the First Year Experience
51. Survey on the Quality of Residence Life
52. Survey on Working at RU (draft)
53. Student Disciplinary Code
54. Vision and Mission Statement

(iii) APPENDICES AVAILABLE ON SITE IN GRAHAMSTOWN

55. Allan Webb Hall Constitution and Rules
56. Annual Report to the Mellon Foundation, 2004
57. Annual Report 2003: Vice-Chancellor
58. Careers Centre Documentation
59. Community Engagement Review 2004
60. Departmental Self-Evaluation Reports: 2005
61. Departmental Handbooks
62. Faculty Handbooks
63. House Committee Roles and Responsibilities
64. Integrated Development Plan 2003 – 2008
65. Letters Received commenting on the University’s Performance
66. Library Usage Statistics 2005
67. Minutes 2004 - 2005:
   Academic Planning and Staffing Committee
   Community Engagement
   Council
   Faculty Board
   Finance and General Purposes
   Higher Degrees Committee
   Internationalisation Committee
   IT Steering Committee
   Joint Research Committee
   Library Research Committee
Postgraduate Liaison Committee
Postgraduate Supervision Report Samples
Quality Assurance Committee
Senate
Senate Executive
SRC
Student Services Council
Teaching and Learning Committee

68. Professional Body Reports:
Accounting (SAICA)
Pharmacy (SAPC)

69. Namibian DoE letter 2005
70. NSFAS Audit Report 2005
71. Quality Assurance Policy prepared for the QPU, 1997
72. Rhodos Newsletters Samples
73. RU Audit Report 1997 (QPU)
74. Schools’ Booklet
75. Student Assessment Samples
76. Student Disciplinary Code
77. Student Recruitment Pack
78. Sub-Warden Booklet
79. Survey of graduate destinations: Journalism
80. Survey of graduate destinations: Pharmacy
81. Survey of graduate destinations: RU
82. Survey of graduate destinations: Zoology & Entomology
83. TAI Mentoring Initiative Report
84. Teaching Portfolio Assessment Criteria
85. Teaching Portfolio Samples
# Appendix D: The Audit Visit Schedule

## RHODES UNIVERSITY

### Audit Visit Schedule
5-9 September 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09:00</td>
<td>Panel arrive at Rhodes University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:00 – 9:15</td>
<td>Brief Welcome from Dr Woods and team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:30 – 13:00</td>
<td>Agenda:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revisiting purposes and conduct of audit, including the role of chair, “sub chairs” and auditors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Updates and other analyses since the portfolio meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allocation of reading tasks for the review of on site documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rationale and logic of site visit schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparing the questions for two days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00 – 14:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:00 – 16:30</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:30 – 18:30</td>
<td>Campus Tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19:00 – 20:00</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:00</td>
<td>Auditors to start preparing their comments and continue to update their notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## DAY ONE – Monday (5 September)
### FULL PANEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>MEETINGS</th>
<th>OTHER NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08.00 – 09:00</td>
<td>The Panel to interview Vice Chancellor.</td>
<td>Dr Woods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:00 – 09:15</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:15 – 10:00</td>
<td>The Panel to interview members of Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:15</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 – 11:15</td>
<td>The Panel to interview Senior Management</td>
<td>Vice-Principal, Registrar, Dean of Research, Directors of support services; Dean of Students and Dean of Internationalisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15 – 11:30</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 – 12:30</td>
<td>Planning and Finance structures</td>
<td>Colleagues from Finance and General Purpose Comm., Budget comm., Resource comm. + Academic planning &amp; staffing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 – 13:00</td>
<td>Panel Review and Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00 – 13:45</td>
<td>Panel to interview the Quality Assurance Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:45 – 14:00</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:00 – 15:00</td>
<td>Panel to interview Deans</td>
<td>Six faculties + Dean of Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00 – 15:15</td>
<td>Panel review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:15 – 16:00</td>
<td>Panel to interview SRC</td>
<td>Executive (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:00 – 16:15</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:15 – 17:00</td>
<td>Panel to interview Staff Unions</td>
<td>NTESU &amp; NEHAWU (Exec. of each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:00 – 17:30</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:30 – 20:00</td>
<td>Reflections, conclusions and follow-up and preparation of questions for day 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:30 – 21:30</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Panel members continue to update their notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## DAY TWO (Tuesday, 6 September)
### FULL PANEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>MEETINGS</th>
<th>OTHER NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:00 – 08:45</td>
<td>Director Academic Planning and Quality Assurance</td>
<td>Ms Stephenson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:45 – 09:00</td>
<td>Panel review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:00 – 09:45</td>
<td>Director Academic Development Centre</td>
<td>Prof C Boughey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:45 – 10:00</td>
<td>Panel review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:45</td>
<td>Equity Committee / Institutional Forum</td>
<td>(Mix of the two)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45 – 11:00</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 – 11:45</td>
<td>Internationalisation Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 – 12:00</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 – 12:45</td>
<td>Director of Centre for Social Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45 – 13:00</td>
<td>Panel review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00 – 13:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:30 – 14:15</td>
<td>Panel to interview academics involved in CE &amp; Experiential Learning activities</td>
<td>Panel splits– (p 84 portfolio) 30 diverse initiatives across departments, include members of Community Engagement Committee (Music, arts, NGO’s, environmental unit, drama &amp; recently established)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Concurrent</strong></td>
<td>Academics responsible for the implementation of Service Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 departments who have implemented structured programmes (p85 portfolio)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:15 – 14:45</td>
<td>Panel Report and review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:45 – 15:30</td>
<td>Provincial community and business partners</td>
<td>Panel Split</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Concurrent:</strong></td>
<td>Student Services Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:30 – 16:30</td>
<td>Panel Report back and review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:30 – 20:00</td>
<td>Reflections, conclusions and follow-up. Overview of the big issues at the institution. Consider who should be recalled. Preparation for day 3 &amp; 4. Preparation of spoken feedback begins.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:30 – 21:30</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panel members continue to update their notes and prepare comments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DAY THREE (Wednesday, 7 September)**

**GROUP ONE (TEACHING AND LEARNING) morning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:00 – 09:00</td>
<td>Teaching &amp; Learning Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:00 – 09:15</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:15 – 10:15</td>
<td>Faculty Deans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 – 10:30</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 – 11:15</td>
<td>Academic Staff development structures</td>
<td>Human Resources, ADC, Dean of Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15 – 11:30</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 – 12:15</td>
<td>Panel interview black academics</td>
<td>Long serving &amp; new (mix)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15 – 12:30</td>
<td>Panel review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 - 13:30</td>
<td>HoD’s (Mix of Faculties)</td>
<td>Panel splits into 6 groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:30 – 13:45</td>
<td>Panel review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:45 – 14:15</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DAY THREE (Wednesday, 7 September)**

**GROUP TWO (RESEARCH) morning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:00 – 08:45</td>
<td>Dean of Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:45 – 09:00</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:00 - 09:45</td>
<td>Joint Research Committee</td>
<td>No Faculty Deans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:45 – 10:00</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – 11:00</td>
<td>Research Leaders</td>
<td>Include Research Institutes, Top-rated Researchers (+ HoD’s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### DAY THREE (Wednesday, 7 September)
#### GROUP ONE (TEACHING AND LEARNING)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14:15 – 15:00</td>
<td>Academics, tutorial and mentoring staff</td>
<td>Panel splits into 4 groups (young and newly inducted staff, probation category, tutors of different departments &amp; teaching assistants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00 – 15:15</td>
<td>Panel review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:15 – 16:15</td>
<td>Students (Undergraduate)</td>
<td>Panel splits from range of programmes – SA black, African foreign black, International, residential, non- residential, student volunteers, community engagement &amp; service learning) 4 groups of 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:15 – 16:30</td>
<td>Panel review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:30 – 17:15</td>
<td>Alumni (advisory bodies; employers)</td>
<td>Panel splits to consider telephonic interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:15 – 17:30</td>
<td>Panel review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:30 – 18:30</td>
<td>Reports back from panel splits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:30 – 20:00</td>
<td>Reflections, conclusions and follow-up. (group 1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:30 – 21:30</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Panel members continue to update their notes and prepare comments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DAY THREE (Wednesday, 7 September)
#### GROUP TWO (RESEARCH)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14:15 – 15:00</td>
<td>Research Administration and support</td>
<td>Research Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00 – 15:15</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:15 – 16:00</td>
<td>Ethics committees</td>
<td>4-5 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:00 – 16:15</td>
<td>Panel review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:15 – 17:00</td>
<td>Post Graduate Liaison Committee</td>
<td>Panel splits Researchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Concurrent</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Innovation and Entrepreneurship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:00 – 17:15</td>
<td>Panel review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:15 – 18:15</td>
<td>Reports back from panel splits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:15 – 20:00</td>
<td>Reflections, conclusions and follow-up. (group 2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:30 – 21:30</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Panel members continue to update their notes and prepare comments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### DAY THREE (Wednesday, 7 September)

**GROUP THREE (STUDENT EXPERIENCE)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14:15 – 15:00</td>
<td>Dean of Students</td>
<td>Panel splits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Concurrent</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Dean of Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:15 – 15:15</td>
<td>Panel review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:15 – 16:00</td>
<td>Dean of Internationalisation + Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:00 – 16:15</td>
<td>Panel review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:15 – 17:00</td>
<td>Board of Residence and Hall Committees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:00 – 17:15</td>
<td>Panel review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:15 – 18:00</td>
<td>Group of sub wardens</td>
<td>Possible panel splits into 3 groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:00 – 18:15</td>
<td>Panel review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:15 – 20:00</td>
<td>Reflections, conclusions and follow-up (group three)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:30 – 21:30</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panel members continue to update their notes and prepare comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DAY FOUR (Thursday, 8 September)

**GROUP ONE (TEACHING AND LEARNING - continue)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:00 – 08:45</td>
<td>Panel interview ADC staff Extended studies unit/ faculty based staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:45 – 09:00</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:15 – 09:45</td>
<td>Student development structures Mix of support and academic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:45 – 10:00</td>
<td>Panel review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:45</td>
<td>Programme Development Structures Course coordinators/ Short Course co-ordinators / Distance Education, Namibia &amp; Mthatha. (Panel splits into 3 groups)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45 – 11:00</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 – 11:45</td>
<td>Programme Review Structures Academic planning &amp; staffing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 – 12:00</td>
<td>Panel review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 – 12:45</td>
<td>Examination and Assessment structures T&amp; L committee oversee, registrar and mix of deans Mix of academics who did and did not do assessor training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45 – 14:00</td>
<td>Panel review, reflect and conclude on T &amp; L.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:00 – 14:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DAY FOUR (Thursday, 8 September)

**GROUP TWO (RESEARCH - continue)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:00 – 08:45</td>
<td>Examination and Regulatory structures for PGE (RPL systems in place) Higher Degrees committee / Committee of Assessors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:45 – 09:00</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:00 – 09:45</td>
<td>Supervisors Selection of 8 across faculties &amp; different levels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:45 – 10:00</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:30</td>
<td>Other researchers Contract, performing arts etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 – 10:45</td>
<td>Panel review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45 – 11:30</td>
<td>Postgraduate support structures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Include ADC staff, other staff involved in the Writing Respondent Programme.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 – 11:45</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 – 12:30</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 – 14:00</td>
<td>Panel review, reflect and conclude on research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:00 – 14:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DAY FOUR (Thursday, 8 September)**

**GROUP THREE (STUDENT EXPERIENCE - continue)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:00 – 08:45</td>
<td>Staff of Admissions Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Include registrar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:45 – 09:00</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:00 – 09:30</td>
<td>Recruitment staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:30 – 09:45</td>
<td>Panel review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:45 – 10:30</td>
<td>Oppidan Council and Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 – 10:45</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45 – 11:30</td>
<td>Staff of Counselling Centre &amp; Careers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concurrent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Director of Estates and Head of Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heads, staff including interns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 – 11:45</td>
<td>Panel review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 – 12:30</td>
<td>Panel interview students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panel splits into 4 groups (from range of programmes and 1st - 3rd year students – SA black, African foreign black, International, residential, oppidan, student volunteer prog, students who use career centre, community engagement &amp; service learning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 – 13:00</td>
<td>Panel report back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00 – 14:00</td>
<td>Panel review, reflect and conclude the student experience, include lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:00 – 14:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DAY FOUR**

**FULL PANEL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14:30 - 15:30</td>
<td>Reading of sample documentary evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selected departments are sampled through paper-based evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:30 – 16:00</td>
<td>Panel Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:00 – 17:30</td>
<td>Report back from the three groups, consider who should be recalled on day 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(30 min per group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:30 – 18:30</td>
<td>Review and consolidate findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:30 – 19:00</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19:00 – 20:00</td>
<td>Panel members produce summary of recommendations and commendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:30 – 21:30</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panel members continue to produce summary of recommendations and commendations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## DAY FIVE (Friday, 9 September)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:00 – 09:00</td>
<td>Recall session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:00 – 10:00</td>
<td>Open Session</td>
<td>Visit to facilities (Library, IT, Certification)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Institution advertise this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – 13:00</td>
<td>Closed Session</td>
<td>Include lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:30 – 13:45</td>
<td>Spoken Feedback</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:45</td>
<td>Panel Depart</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>