QA Guidelines during the COVID-19 Pandemic:

An Abbreviated Resource for 2020

This abbreviated resource for quality assurance guidelines for emergency remote teaching, learning and assessment is extracted from: CHE 2020 *Quality Assurance Guidelines for Teaching and Learning and Assessment during the COVID-19 Pandemic* approved by the HEQC Exco on 18 June 2020 and is based on the attached resources which are available on the CHE website for Remote Teaching and Learning https://www.che.ac.za/#/remote.[1]

In addition to the 10 institutional-level quality assurance guidelines in Table 1, the following quality assurance guidelines focus on emergency remote teaching and learning (in Table 2) and emergency remote assessment (Table 3) under the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to note that these Guidelines are applicable to the 2020 academic year and apply to both private and public higher education institutions. Institutions are encouraged to apply these guidelines with due consideration to their own context. These Guidelines were approved by the HEQC Executive Committee on 18 June 2020 and by the Council on Higher Education on 25 June 2020.

It is important to note that the term *emergency remote teaching and learning* refers to a mode of delivery through which contact and face-to-face delivery has been transferred to usually digital, remote platforms under emergency conditions. Emergency remote teaching and learning is not online learning which is meant to be deliberately and thoroughly planned, designed and developed based on specific pedagogies appropriate for online learning. "Remoteness" in teaching is not an appropriate pedagogy even under emergency circumstances and academics should take care to create as much presence as possible for their students, be it synchronous or asynchronous.

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[1] CHE 2014 *Distance Higher Education Programmes in a Digital Era: Good Practice Guide.*
https://firebasestorage.googleapis.com/v0/b/che2020-
c5efd.appspot.com/o/website%2Feqc0cembdec1.pdf?alt=media&token=0620fdfd-2222-48f4-b440-
3b9ea73e9761
CHE 2004 *Criteria for Programme Accreditation.*
https://firebasestorage.googleapis.com/v0/b/che2020-
c5efd.appspot.com/o/website%2Fyxqlkgy7gwo1.pdf?alt=media&token=c1ea5d6e-2e05-463d-9f2b-
bbf92d4b402b
CHE 2005 *Improving Teaching and Learning Number Resources 5.*
https://firebasestorage.googleapis.com/v0/b/che2020-
c5efd.appspot.com/o/website%2Fsr14fc01fpa1.pdf?alt=media&token=6a622668-163c-4e99-940f-
84d97ecc1db1
NADEOSA *Quality Criteria for Distance Education.*
https://www.saide.org.za/documents/Nadeosa_Quality_Critiera.pdf

Table 1: Institutional quality-assurance guidelines for 2020

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

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

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

	Quality area	Quality measure	Supporting evidence
1.	Programme management	Active and consultative management of programmes taking the restrictions of the pandemic into consideration	Evidence of consultation with academic staff Evidence of communication with students Evidence of consultation with students Evidence of identifying students at risk and the implementation of appropriate interventions
2.	Teaching and learning	Clear and consistent communication to students of existing (and adjusted) module outlines and outcomes Clear and consistent planning and communication to students (including motivations and explanations of changes) of revised timetables, adhering to notional hours Regular and authentic engagement with students in various forms, including emergency remote formative assessments, to create community as well as presence rather than absence Reflection and evaluation on learning material developed in emergency remote teaching mode with quality feedback loops to second semester material	Substantive evidence of relevant information, emergency remote formative assessment, and feedback to students on the institutional LMS Records of academic reflections and evaluations of the learning material developed in emergency remote teaching mode
3.	Student support	Multiple channels of communication with students, e.g. on social media A student support plan using tutors or other support staff A specific support plan for students with disabilities which includes identification, support and interventions A specific support plan for students who have not had access to devices or data Feedback opportunities for students Interventions based directly on the student feedback	Varied student support plans and implementation reports Student feedback with reports and interventions and responses based on the feedback

4.	Staff capacity development and well-being	Academic staff trained to create digital learning materials	Training materials
			Training schedules
		Academic staff trained to create emergency remote assessment	
		Staff access to devices and data, and how to use them	Reports on staff access to devices and data and their digital literacy
		Workload and performance agreements re-negotiated for new conditions	Revised workload allocations and performance agreements
			Evidence of engagement with staff concerning their ability to cope and general well-being

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

	Quality area	Quality measure	Supporting evidence
1.	Assessment plans and communication for both formative and summative assessment	All assessment activities should be explicit, clear, unambiguous and implementable A clear link between the assessment activity to the module outline and the expected outcomes Clear information about the weight and value of the activity in terms of the overall assessment plan for the module and about the relationship of a formative activity to the final summative assessment Clear mark allocation or rubrics upfront Clear range statements A variety of activities on different cognitive levels Technical submission information and technical instructions, as well as technical support are available	Communication of emergency remote assessment plans to students
2.	Formative assessment	Formative assessments should be regular and directly linked to the module outcomes Flexible or alternate submission dates for activities should be the norm Formative assessments should have personalized, timeous and clear feedback	Actual emergency remote formative assessment activities from students and feedback and results on the LMS
3.	Summative assessment	Summative assessment strategies should be planned within the institutional policies and procedures, which may have been amended for emergency remote assessment Summative assessment is designed, implemented, marked and moderated by adequately trained staff All levels of summative assessment should have gone through a process of internal moderation Exit-level summative assessment should have gone through a process of external moderation Summative assessment outcomes should be reliable	Records of revised emergency remote assessment plans Staff and moderators' CVs Actual emergency remote assessment activities from students and feedback and results on the LMS Internal and external moderation reports

		Summative assessment plans should be explicit and communicated to students in good time Summative assessment should be authentic, i.e. the assessment should be real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills	
4.	Assessment administration	A secure and reliable assessment management system is in place at institutional level that provides accurate, consistent and credible results Student communication on formative and summative assessment must be timeous, explicit, clear and unambiguous with guidance on their rights and responsibilities, at institutional level, at programme level and at module level A student dispute and complaints mechanism should be in place that is explicit, fair and effective	Assessment system Student communication Appeals reports