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## Higher Education Private Provider Quality Network (HEPP-QN) Academic Leadership Statement

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## Building the Academic Leadership Statement and Charter

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The Academic Leadership Statement was developed through several consultations with key stakeholders of the Higher Education Private Provider Quality Network [HEPP-QN]. The Statement responds to sector developments around the scope, challenges and constraints of academic leadership. It attempts to provide a guide to good academic leadership practice. The Statement grew out of the HEPP-QN's Academic Leadership Project. The Project was a direct response to the findings of the 2016 HEPP-QN Pilot Study on Academic Leadership to ascertain prevailing attitudes to academic leadership amongst its member institutions. The findings provided a mandate for the Academic Leadership project and subsequently the Academic Leadership Statement and Charter.

The findings of the study have been valuable in identifying the perceptions of academic leaders across participating HEPP-QN institutions.

The Pilot Study surveyed 51 Academic Leaders, of which 62% were male and 38% were female. In terms of role and rank, the study was predominantly represented by Deans who together with Executive Deans made up 34% of the sample group.

1. 88% of participants agreed that their institutions had a good understanding of academic governance. 81% of academic leader-participants were satisfied with their Academic Boards with approximately 9% being very satisfied. There was approximately 72% satisfaction with the respective Learning & Teaching Committee but less than 50% indicated satisfaction with their School Boards. These findings provide opportunity for the HEPP-QN to support institutions to investigate further the performance of their committees through both internal and external reviews
2. The study revealed also a sound level of confidence in institutional quality assurance with 66% agreeing and 11% strongly agreeing that their institutions have a well-implemented quality assurance system. However, 20% remained neutral on this question.
3. While there was 77% agreement on a sound quality management system within institutions, the Pilot Study indicated moderate levels of satisfaction [66%] with course review performance. There was also a 20% neutral response with a 7% disagreement for this question with some skipping this question.

Given the importance of course review both in terms of academic governance and in terms of meeting the Standards, the 30% gap encouraged the scoping of the Academic Leadership Project to factor provisions to provide further consideration for the leadership and management of course review. While there was also substantial agreement that external input into courses through the course external advisory is available in most participating institutions, further work was required in benchmarking the terms of reference for these advisory bodies as well as benchmarking the policies and procedures around the governance of course review, especially in relation to closing the loop practices.

4. The Pilot study also revealed the disjuncture between the actual time spent on leadership functions as opposed to the priority rank allocated to each function. In terms of functions, leadership ranked the highest while performance management, though ranked the lowest in terms of importance of academic leadership functions, was regarded as absorbing the most amount of time and focus. The importance of the other functions as ranked by participants are provided in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**

I.	Leading your team
II.	Guiding change & improvement
III.	Developing effective systems & strategies
IV.	Developing & motivating employees
V.	Inspiring others
VI.	Delegating efficiently
VII.	PerformanceManaging

5. In terms of high priorities of academic leaders, the following 12 indicators were rated as of equal value in Academic Leadership
  - a. Contributing to committees
  - b. Reviewing Academic Activities
  - c. Dealing with complaints
  - d. Consulting with staff
  - e. Facilitating evidence-based practice to support QA
  - f. Fostering Innovation and Continuous Improvement
  - g. Developing initiatives
  - h. Sharing Professional Judgment with senior leadership
  - i. Change management
  - j. Providing insightful and instructive feedback
  - k. Reviewing staff performance
  - l. Developing systems and processes
  
6. The Pilot Study also revealed significant pressures on the work-life of academic leaders as indicated below in no particular order.
  - a. Compliance and TEQSA-Related issues
  - b. Work-Life Imbalance
  - c. Lack of clarity with roles and functions

- d. Excessive administrative loads
  - e. Poor work-flow, processes and systems
  - f. Resistance to change
  - g. Attrition and Completion Rates
  - h. Staffing Issues
  - i. Rapid changes in technology
  - j. Building and maintaining quality relationships with a wide group of stakeholders
  - k. Pressures arising from increasing levels of intra-sector competition
7. The Study indicated that Academic Leaders wanted to see changes that could impact more positively on their roles as follows:
- a. Clarity and purpose of leadership roles
  - b. Better fit between the role and expertise of academic leaders
  - c. Targeted training, resourcing, support and skill development
  - d. Focus on Course Development Performance
  - e. More effective delegation of work
  - f. Greater support for strategic application
  - g. More efficient systems
  - h. Support for innovation in learning and teaching
  - i. Nested leadership
  - j. Less bureaucracy; More time for vision and planning
  - k. Less marketing of courses
  - l. Skills for coping and managing demands for continuous improvement
  - m. Reward and recognition of academic leadership roles
  - n. More coherent professional development framework
  - o. Greater ownership of compliance across institution
  - p. More opportunity for community engagement and networking
  - q. Addressing workload issues

Based on the findings of the HEPP-QN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP PILOT STUDY, eight priority clusters were nominated as desired anticipated outcomes for future referencing of which benchmarking and academic leadership development were significant.

The Academic Leadership Statement and Charter is a direct response to these identified priorities.

As indicated, the Academic Leadership Statement and Charter [2019] is an outworking of the discussions that followed the HEPP-QN pilot study. The Statement and Charter took 18 months to build and was workshopped on the HEPP-QN Online as well as National Forums over 2017 and 2018. It attests to the commitment of the HEPP-QN to evidence quality and professionalize academic leadership. It responds to TEQSA's invitation for serious consideration of the central importance of academic governance to successful higher education operations and the student and graduate experience. The HEPP-QN Academic Leadership Statement and Charter is intended to help provide clarity to academic leaders committed to developing a strong consensus statement on the guiding principles and performance indicators of good academic leadership.



## The HEPP-QN Academic Leadership Statement ©

### PURPOSE

The Leadership Statement provides members of the HEPP-QN with a charter to guide their academic leadership practice.

The Statement asks that leaders in the academic sphere **commit** to the following:

1. Endorse and support a **formal academic governance structure** to ensure effective review and monitoring of academic outcomes in the context of the Higher Education Threshold Standards Framework [2015] and relevant professional standards
2. Adopt an **integrated approach to quality assurance** by aligning the faculty's performance to committee-endorsed institutional policy and practice
3. Ensure a **robust internal continuous improvement system** supported by an **external system of review and validation**
4. Apply a **transparent and communicative approach** with internal and external stakeholders
5. Support a **distributed model of academic leadership** through deploying shared leadership skills and collegial team-building strategies to connect faculties with the institution's strategic goals and to the formal structures of academic governance.

### Definition of Academic Leadership

Academic leadership is the art of leading a team in good academic governance to support the achievement of effective academic outcomes measured by indicators of student success.

It involves the application of a combination of capabilities and competencies encompassing the design, delivery, implementation and evaluation of all

functions of an academic, a team, a faculty, or an institution for the purpose of supporting quality student-centred higher education outcomes.

With an eye to continuous improvement, academic leadership involves both the leadership and management of higher education outcomes in the following areas:

1. Academic Governance
2. Operational Administration
3. Learning & Teaching
4. Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)
5. Discipline Scholarship, Research and Supervision
6. Course and Curriculum Design
7. Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL)
8. Innovation
9. Academic Policy Development
10. Capacity Building and Sustainability of Academic Roles
11. Stakeholder and Community Engagement
12. Continual Professional Development
13. Application of Professional Learning for Academics
14. Benchmarking and Quality Assurance
15. Managing and Mitigating Academic Risks

## **HEPP-QN Academic Leadership Charter**

To assist in implementing this Statement, we developed the HEPP-QN Academic Leadership Charter, which **presents the focal points of academic leadership. The HEPP-QN Academic Leadership Charter is intended to guide leaders in good academic leadership practice as well as provides a self-assessment framework for shaping academic leadership practice.**

## Five references have either motivated or been useful in developing the HEPP-QN Academic Leadership Charter:

1. The findings of the HEPP-QN Academic Leadership Pilot Study [2016]
2. Discussions on the HEPP-QN Online Forum and National Forums.
3. Scott et al., “Learning Leaders in Times of Change”, May 2008
4. TEQSA’s Guidance Notes on Academic Leadership [2013]
5. Bolman & Deal’s Four-Frame Model<sup>i</sup> \*

The HEPP-QN Academic Leadership Charter adopts the four structural frames model proposed by Bolman and Deal (2013) as an organising framework for its focal points in academic leadership practice [See Table 1]. It unpacks four categories of work-practices and aligns relevant focal-points for academic leadership to each of the four-frames.<sup>1</sup>

### HEPP-QN ADAPTATION OF FOUR-FRAME MODEL

Table 1 and 2 indicate how the HEPP-QN has adapted the Four-Frame Model for its own use. Table 1 provides a set of Key Performance Indicators for each frame. The KPIs assist in determining the relevant focal points of the Charter as outlined in Table 2.

**TABLE 1**

SYMBOLIC	STRUCTURAL	PEOPLE	POLITICAL
Aligning, linking and leading through institutional mission, ethos, purpose; rituals and symbols	Aligning to purpose through enabling formal structures, clarifying roles and responsibilities supported by a robust QMS framework	Investing in Human Capital by developing talent and facilitating Staff Engagement;	Encouraging strategic alliances and collaborations to reduce competition and encourage strategic cooperation through disseminating understanding of efficient outcomes, appropriate delegations and good resource management practice

<sup>1</sup> The HEPP-QN Charter is aligned to Bolman & Deal’s four frames.

**Table 2 HEPP-QN Academic Leadership Charter ©**

<b>Bolman &amp; Deal Lenses</b>	<b>Academic Leadership Focal Points</b>
<p><b>Frame 1</b></p> <p><b>Symbolic</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Academic leaders inspire, develop and communicate strategies for aligning the achievement of academic and scholarly outcomes to an institution's mission and ethos through connecting academics to the institutions' history, culture and value.</li> <li>b) Academic leaders champion academic and research integrity.</li> <li>c) Academic leaders uphold the pursuit of academic freedom.</li> <li>d) Academic leaders identify and own important rituals and symbols of the institution and help review and moderate the institution's organisational culture.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Frame 2</b></p> <p><b>Structural</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Academic leaders ensure the quality of academic and scholarly outcomes through supporting a formal academic governance structures</li> <li>b) Academic leaders assure a robust Quality Management framework linked to the institution's strategic and operational plans while referencing the Threshold Standards, AQF and relevant Professional Standards as appropriate.</li> <li>c) Academic leaders work within a quality management structure in managing course design, delivery and review.</li> <li>d) Academic leaders participate both formally and informally in ensuring that the standards are met through continuous improvement.</li> <li>e) Academic leaders review and organise work-flows around efficient structures and strategies and clearly-defined roles.</li> <li>f) Academic leaders identify good practice, address gaps, mitigate risks and ensure closing-the-loop on reporting through committees and organised work-flows.</li> <li>g) Academic leaders ensure that the academic outcomes, student experience and quality frameworks are benchmarked and submitted regularly for external review and validation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Frame 3</b></p> <p><b>People</b></p> <p><b>[HR]</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Academic leaders access professional development opportunities and apply professional learning in leading, mentoring and managing teams and individuals to improve good academic practice.</li> <li>b) Academic leaders engage in advising and recruiting talent into the institution as well as help build capacity for emerging leaders.</li> <li>c) Academic leaders facilitate the reward and recognition of leaders and academic staff.</li> <li>d) Academic leaders support staff in fostering a student-outcome-focused work-practice.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Frame 4</b></p> <p><b>Political</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Academic leaders invest in building and sustaining strategic stakeholder relationships</li> <li>b) Academic leaders uphold appropriate delegations of authority</li> <li>c) Academic leaders build collegial and effective workplace environments.</li> <li>d) Academic leaders consult widely, defer to knowledge experts and seek consensus where appropriate.</li> <li>e) Academic leaders prioritise teambuilding while taking the lead on difficult decisions.</li> </ul>



## REFERENCES

Bolman & Deal., *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice and leadership*”, cited in Libby V. Morris, ‘Management and Leadership in Colleges and Universities’, *Innov High Educ* (2016) 41:1–3 DOI 10.1007/s10755-015-9352-5.

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HEPP-QN, ‘Academic Leadership Pilot Study’, 2016.

Scott, G., H Coates & M Anderson., ‘Learning Leaders in Times of Change’, University of Western Sydney and Australian Council for Educational Research, [May 2008].

TEQSA, ‘Guidance Notes on Academic Leadership’, 2014,

<https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/teqsa-guidance-note-academic-leadership>

## ENDORSEMENT:

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ACADEMIC BOARD CHAIR

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## INSTITUTION

By endorsing this Statement, institutions agree to be guided by the HEPP-QN Academic Leadership Charter as their Academic Leadership Framework. This Statement and its Charter are freely available for use by all higher education institutions so long as it is appropriately cited.

It should be cited appropriately for scholarly purposes as: Fernandez J, K Ardzejewska & A Haddad., 'HEPP-QN Academic Leadership Statement,' HEPP-QN Online Forum, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2019, HEPP-QN.

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## APPENDIX 1

<p>Libby V. Morris, 'Management and Leadership in Colleges and Universities' <i>Innov High Educ</i> (2016) 41:1–3 DOI 10.1007/s10755-015-9352-5</p> <p>Libby Morris cites Bolman and Deal [2013] in identifying 4 frames that are critical to understanding academic leadership.</p>	
<b>Structural Frame</b>	Roles; Formal Relationships; Teams; Rules; Policies and Procedures
<b>Symbolic Frame</b>	Purpose and Meaning; institutional culture; rituals and symbols; your strengths and weaknesses; aspirations
<b>Human Resources Frame</b>	People and their needs, skills, relationships and attitudes
<b>Political Frame</b>	Questions of Power and Conflict, competition for resources and coalitions
<p>Bolman L and T. Deal (1984; 2013) <i>Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice and Leadership</i>.</p>	

### Definitions

'**professional development**' – extending professional knowledge for the individual's development or growth "in order to influence his/her practice"

'**professional learning**' – [integration and application] 'implies an internal process in which individuals create professional knowledge through interaction with this information in a way that challenges previous assumptions and creates new meanings. [...] Professional learning is an active process of systematic inquiry into the effectiveness of practice for student engagement, learning and well-being and through this process become self-regulated learners. This inquiry process has many parallels to formative assessment practices found to be effective in promoting student learning'. <https://www.mheducation.co.uk/openup/chapters/9780335244041.pdf>

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<sup>i</sup> See Libby Morris, 'Management and Leadership in Colleges and Universities', Springer Science Business Media, New York, 2015 who draws attention to Bolman & Deal's 'Four-Frame Model'. 'A classic among the books is *Reframing organizations: Artistry, Choice and Leadership*. Authors Bolman and Deal (2013) provide four frames or lenses through which decisions and activities can be considered or analyzed. In a nutshell, the structural frame is characterized by roles, formal relationships, teams, rules, policies, and procedures. The human resources frame is about people and their needs, skills, relationships, and attitudes. The political frame raises questions of power and conflict, competition for resources, and coalitions. The symbolic frame deals with purpose and meaning, institutional culture, rituals and symbols. / An understanding of these lenses may indeed assist an administrator in the analysis of issues and in contemplating strategies for action' [Morris L].