

CRANEFIELD COLLEGE

REALIGNMENT REPRESENTATION, NOVEMBER 2015

1. Introduction

This representation is in response to the outcome of the realignment application for the Advanced Diploma in Project Management (posted on the HEQSF-online website on the 9th of October 2015). Although the broader context of the finding in respect of the realignment application involves further important issues (which we have to some extent discussed in, *inter alia*, a provisional reaccreditation representation in May, 2015 – on that occasion in relation to the reaccreditation application for our Postgraduate Diploma and Master’s Degree), we will in the current representation focus as narrowly as possible on the specifics of the realignment application for the Advanced Diploma in Project Management.

Notwithstanding the above, a very important general point must again be highlighted due to its particular relevance to the latest realignment outcome: No further information regarding the “Review Comments” in respect of the realignment application for the Advanced Diploma in Project Management was provided after we had specifically requested clarity (on 28 April 2015). Instead we have simply been provided with a vague “Deferral Comment” as follows: “There is a disjuncture between the institution’s response and the comments raise [sic] by the review”. As will be discussed below, our previous submission sought to address the very comments in question, with some specific requests for clarity and/or further information (as mentioned).

In the light of the prevailing situation, we must accordingly again submit this representation provisionally – not having been afforded the further information/clarification as requested. We correspondingly reserve the right to supplement this representation upon further information coming to hand, and we make the current representation without prejudice of any of our rights. We also reserve the right to address, at a later stage, any errors or omissions in the process to date that are not here addressed.

2. Brief Response to the Outcome in respect of the Advanced Diploma

- A) In the CHE reaccreditation assessment for 2013 (please refer to correspondence from you, with reference: H/PRO3/K001CAN), the Advanced Diploma was accredited with recommendations. The comments raised then by the Review Committee in that instance were addressed in

the College's submission, ADVANCED DIPLOMA IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT: REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS (H/PR036/K001CAN), submitted on 31 October 2014.

- B) The first outcome of the Realignment Committee (HEQSF Reference number: PRO36/13746/HEQSF) states that the Advanced Diploma in Project Management "Needs Improvement" (dated 18 the March 2015). The comments by the Review Committee read as follows: "The Institution is required to review the programme design in terms of the minimum number of credits at the exit level, student admission, and WIL in terms of HEQSF-alignment." The following is an extract from our brief representation of April 2015 [bold added]: **"According to the online 'HEQSF alignment outcome, the Advanced Diploma programme "Needs improvement". However, it is not clear what improvement/s is/are required.** The statement provided in the "Review Comments" is as follows: 'The Institution is required to review the programme design in terms of the minimum number of credits at the exit level, student admission, and WIL in terms of HEQSF alignment.' **However, these aspects have been addressed in Cranefield's earlier submissions (ADVANCED DIPLOMA IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT: REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS (H/PR036/K001CAN), which we have included below again (Annexure A) for your convenience. Please advise what specifically might be lacking in what we have submitted. As regards WIL, this would in our assessment not apply to the Advanced Diploma, as also indicated in our realignment documents ("Not Applicable"). Again, please advise if there is some vital information that we are missing in that regard."**
- C) As affirmed in our representation of 28 April, the aspects mentioned in the Review Comments have been addressed in earlier submissions. Very importantly, in our April submission **we requested clarification or some further guidance or information to assist us if we have missed something (or have misunderstood anything) or have perhaps not addressed a particular point in the manner expected.** We appear not to have received any answers to our questions? In the absence of such answers, we can only reiterate what we have submitted before and ask once again for you please to clarify where the problems are and to provide some further guidance or information to assist us if we have missed something (or have misunderstood anything) or perhaps have not addressed a particular point in the manner expected. In sections D) to F)

below, we will again address each of the three aspects mentioned in the Review Comments, namely: 1) **the minimum number of credits at the exit level**, 2) **student admission**, and 3) **WIL** in terms of HEQSF alignment.

D) The following is a repetition of part of what we have previously referred to in addressing point 1) above (from the above-mentioned ADVANCED DIPLOMA IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT: REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS document). As is evident, there are **120 credits** in total at the exit level for the qualification, which – according to the information that we have – is in line with the HEQSF.

The redesign of this programme took the following into consideration:

- The changes in the purpose of the qualification as set out on page 66 (according to header numbering) of the Government Gazette of 2 August 2013;
- The new level descriptors on NQF Level 7, as documented in *SAQA: Level Descriptors for the South African National Qualifications Framework* (November 2012, paragraph 28);
- The effect that the modified purpose of the qualification has on the modules of the learning programme;
- The effect that the change in level descriptors has on the module outcomes;
- The effect that the changes in purpose and applied competencies of the relevant level descriptors has on the assessment criteria;
- The following HEQC accreditation criteria have also been considered: Criteria 1 iii, iv, 6i, 13i.

In view of the above, the following:

1. The title of the learning programme remains unchanged. As stated in describing the purpose of this type of qualification (Government Gazette No. 36721, dated August 2013, at page 66): “It may provide entry-level vocational or professional preparation or specialisation for Bachelor’s Degree graduates or diplomates by offering intensive, focused and applied specialisation which meets the specific requirements of a specific niche in the labour market.” Project Management as a profession in a specific niche market within the world of management fits this description. Attainment of this qualification grants the student the opportunity to be certified by the Project Management Institute (PMI) of America as a Project Management Professional (PMP), and on Level C and D of the 4-level

International Competency Baseline (ICB) of the International Project Management Association (IPMA). Moreover, the student will be able to become a member of the South African Project Management Associations affiliated to the above International bodies. No “designators” are applicable, and this qualification falls within the allowable “qualifiers”, i.e. Advanced Diploma in Project Management.

2. The purpose of this learning programme has further been aligned to accord with the following statement in the Government Gazette (No. 36721, p. 66): “This qualification may also be designed to prepare students for postgraduate study through the deepening of their knowledge and understanding of theories, methodologies, and practices in specific academic disciplines and fields, as well as the development of their ability to formulate, undertake and resolve more complex theoretical and practice-related problems and tasks through the selection and use of appropriate methods and techniques.” Accordingly, the realigned purpose of the Advanced Diploma in Project Management reads as follows: **“The purpose of the Advanced Diploma in Project Management is to provide the opportunity to project management practitioners to deepen their knowledge and understanding of project management theories, methodologies and practices to enable them to pursue a career within the project management work context, and to advance to higher organisational positions.”**
3. The exit-level outcomes of this learning programme have been realigned with the latest SAQA level descriptors at Levels 7 and 8 (November 2012, paragraphs 28 and 29, respectively). Cognisant of the applied competencies described at this level, the realigned ELOs of the Advanced Diploma in Project Management are as follows:

Successful candidates will be able to:

- **Evaluate and apply** project management principles as supported by the new-economy management functions of leading, creating, implementing and improving in both a content and context organisational environment; and
- **Understand** the complexities of programme management and continuous improvement principles, and apply these to enhance organisational performance; and
- **Reflect critically** on the role of quality and performance management in the organisational supply chain, in particular the cross-functional programme-managed component thereof, with the aim of improving the performance of the organisational value chain; or [elective]
- **Compare** business strategy theory with practice to meet challenges in both internal and external organisational environments, in a prescriptive and

emergent manner, so as to enhance the value creation ability of the learning organisation; or [elective]

- **Evaluate** the creation of effective and efficient project and process teams, from a behavioural perspective, with the aim of improving the performance of the organisation; or [elective]
- **Analyse** strategic financial management theories, including the fundamentals of contract and corporate law, in order to contribute to the effective functioning of the financial sector of the organisation and to demonstrate how the use of an appropriate financial strategy can add value to the overall corporate strategy of an organisation [elective].

The modules of this learning programme have been aligned with both the realigned purpose of the qualification (referring to Government Gazette No. 36721, page 66) and the relevant level descriptors at NQF Levels 7 and 8 (SAQA, November 2012, paragraph 28 and 29, respectively) to reflect the deepened knowledge and understanding of project management theories, methodologies, and practices within the specific focus areas of this applied management science. Further, the outcomes of each module have been realigned to reflect and measure the applied competencies in terms of the relevant level descriptors, in line with the specific module purpose.

The aligned module purposes read as follows:

1. Module M1: Project Management: Leading, Creating, Implementing and Improving

Purpose: The purpose of the module is to enable the student to evaluate and to apply, with advanced understanding and insight, project management through the new-economy management functions of leading, creating, implementing and improving in both a content and context organisational environment. (NQF Level 7 – 40 Credits, Fundamental)

2. Module M2: Programme-Managing Organisational Performance and Innovative Improvement

Purpose: The purpose of the module is to enable the student to understand the complexities of programme management and continuous improvement principles, and to apply the related principles to enhance organisational performance. (NQF Level 7 – 40 Credits, Core)

3. Module M3: Supply Chain Quality and Performance Management

Purpose: The purpose of this module is to undertake advanced reflection and development in respect of quality and performance management in the organisational supply chain, in particular the cross-functional programme-managed component thereof, with the aim of improving the performance of the organisational value chain. (NQF Level 8 – 40 credits, Elective)

4. Module M4: Transformational Corporate Strategy

Purpose: The purpose of the module is to undertake advanced reflection and development in respect of the application of business strategy, comparing theory and practice to find solutions to challenges in both internal and external organisational environments, in a prescriptive and emergent manner, so as ultimately to enhance the value creation ability of the learning organisation. (NQF Level 8 – 40 credits, Elective)

5. Module M5: Creating High-Performance Project and Process Teams

Purpose: The purpose of the module is to undertake advanced reflection and development in respect of the creation of effective and efficient project and process teams, from a behavioural perspective, with the aim of improving the performance of the organisation. (NQF Level 8 – 40 credits, Elective)

6. Module M6: Financial Management of Corporate Projects and Programmes

Purpose: The purpose of this module is to undertake advanced reflection and development in respect of strategic financial management, and the fundamentals of contract and corporate law, in order to contribute to the effective functioning of the financial sector of the organisation and to demonstrate how the use of an appropriate financial strategy can add value to the overall corporate strategy used by an organisation. (NQF Level 8 – 40 credits, Elective)

The **assessment criteria** of the module outcomes have been revisited and aligned with the applied competencies at NQF Level 7 (and, where applicable, Level 8). The focus is on the student's ability to demonstrate knowledge and practices in an integrated way, after having enjoyed the benefit of studying the relevant advanced theory and understanding of current thinking, practices, and methodologies in this applied management science. In the formulation of the relevant assessment criteria, Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Assessment was used to select the appropriate action verbs to formulate the criteria at the different levels. The assessment criteria are reflected in the document ADVANCED DIPLOMA IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT: REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS (H/PR036/K001CAN). We will now proceed to E) of the current realignment representation to address point **2) student admission**.

E) In regard to the matter of student admission, the following is a repetition of part of what we have previously referred to in addressing this point (from the ADVANCED DIPLOMA IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT: REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS document). The following applies to the Advanced

Diploma (extracted from Cranefield's Admissions Policy, which covers all learning programmes):

General Rules: Advanced Certificate, Advanced Diploma, Postgraduate Diploma, and Master's Degree

1. Possession of prescribed qualifications for admission to any learning programme does not automatically qualify a student to register. A student may be required to comply with additional requirements such as a special assignment, or an oral or written examination.
2. The admission policy is reviewed annually, and the admission requirements from the previous year may not apply. Because of the nature of the admission procedures, deadlines are enforced strictly. All relevant documentation must be provided by the specified deadlines.
3. Application to any programme implies acceptance by the applicant of the admission policies and procedures.
4. Applications for registration may be submitted online or on hardcopy application forms. The applications of students who did not obtain their previous qualifications at Cranefield College must be accompanied by certified copies of their highest qualifications and, if requested, also original statements (indicating marks obtained) from the relevant academic institutions. Students may not submit original degree certificates. Only certified copies of original certificates are accepted.
5. Applicants must also submit a *curriculum vitae*, which must reflect all their qualifications and the latest marks received.
6. The Admissions Committee may, in addition to the copies referred to in 4. above, require a student to provide certified copies relating to all courses/programmes attended at any other institution, prior to approving admission to the learning programme involved.
7. When undergraduate courses are in progress at the time of application, or graduate programmes are being taken, and not reported on the certified copies, applicants must provide a "statement of registration" to the Registrar (Academic).
8. Applicants must understand that where it is discovered that any application information is false or misleading, or has been concealed or withheld, the application will be invalid. This will result in immediate rejection. If the student has already been admitted and registered, he or she will be required to withdraw from the programme.

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Specific Admission Requirements

▪ Advanced Diploma in Project Management

1. For admission to the Advanced Diploma learning programme, students are required to hold a Degree OR a National Diploma (NQF Level 6) (or equivalent) AND to have appropriate practical experience.

2. Students who matriculated, but do not hold a Degree or National Diploma (or equivalent) may qualify for admission under exceptional circumstances, as set out in 4.2 a) to c) of the College's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy.

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The document ADVANCED DIPLOMA IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT: REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS (H/PR036/K001CAN) then proceeds to provide details regarding Cranefield's RPL policy as well. We will now proceed to F) of the current realignment representation to address point 3) **WIL**.

F) As far as we are aware, we have always indicated on all our applications for accreditation, reaccreditation and realignment that "WIL" is not applicable in any of our learning programmes. Virtually all our students are working people who apply what they learn through Cranefield the very same (or next, as the case might be) day at work after learning from us. There is, in our assessment, no need for any formal WIL component. According to the HEQSF document (Published by the Council on Higher Education in 2013), WIL is typical of Certificate and NQF6 Diploma (as opposed the Advanced Diploma at NQF7) programmes. It is clearly also not compulsory. As stated at 34: "Some qualifications will be designed to integrate theory and practice through the incorporation of work-integrated learning (WIL) into the curriculum. WIL is characteristic of vocational and professionally-oriented qualifications, and may be incorporated into programmes at all levels of the HEQSF...". It is further stated (at 35): "Where the entire WIL component or any part of it takes the form of workplace-based learning, it is the responsibility of institutions that offer programmes requiring credits for such learning to place students into appropriate workplaces. Such workplace-based learning must be appropriately structured, properly supervised and assessed." As submitted on 28 April 2015, WIL is not, in our assessment, applicable to the Advanced Diploma, as also indicated in our realignment documents ("Not Applicable"). Again, please advise if there is some vital information that we might be missing in this regard.

G) The outcome that appeared on HEQSF-online website on 9 October 2015 (HEQSF reference number: PRO36/13746/HEQSF) reads as follows: "Not HEQSF-aligned and Re-categorised to Category C". As mentioned above, the "Deferral Comment" received reads as follows: "There is a disjuncture between the institution's response and the comments raise by the review". As discussed, our previous submissions have sought to address the very

comments in question. Please provide some clarity as to where the above-mentioned disjuncture lies, or whether some of our information was perhaps missed. Once again, if we are missing crucial information on our side, please provide guidance in this regard.

H) As affirmed in our previous brief representation of 28 April 2015, continuous improvement is one of Cranefield's core values, and we appreciate and pursue every opportunity for further development. However, in order for any institution to be able to develop and improve in accordance with the findings of quality-promotion bodies such as the CHE/HEQC, such findings must be communicated with appropriately clear and sufficient information and, where necessary, further guidance and support – in constant pursuit of the promotion and development of quality higher education and access thereto. Cranefield College remains firmly committed to providing the highest level of quality education, and we welcome any and all constructive guidance from the the CHE/HEQC.