

University of Cape Town  
**Review of the Academic Development Programme: 2010**

**SELF-REVIEW REPORT**  
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Ian Scott  
Director: ADP

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Academic Development Programme (ADP) at UCT is a teaching, research and educational development unit with the status of an academic department. It is located in the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED), which has the organisational status of a Faculty.

The ADP comprises a small directorate, three centralised units which work across the University (the Alternative Admissions Research Project, the Language Development Group and the Numeracy Centre) and decentralised Faculty-based units in five of UCT's six regular Faculties (Commerce, Engineering and the Built Environment, Health Sciences, Humanities and Science). The Law Faculty has academic staff who take responsibility for AD work and co-operate with ADP staff but are organisationally independent of the ADP. AD in Law is thus not covered in this report. An organogram of the structure of the ADP within CHED is shown in a brochure provided as **Appendix 1**.

The ADP is responsible through its director to the Dean of CHED and to Senate. The majority of its staff of about 50 are on full academic conditions of service, and most of these are expected to undertake teaching (mainly in specialised developmental courses), educational development work of various kinds, and research on topics of their own choice (though educational research is encouraged). For reasons outlined in the report, most of the staff in the Faculty-based units are primarily involved in designing and teaching foundational courses within extended curriculum programmes (as defined by the Department of Higher Education and Training), but there is growing involvement in Faculty bodies and initiatives. In two of the Faculties (Commerce and Health Sciences), Educational Development Units have been established as joint ventures of the Faculty and the ADP, with remits that cover aspects of educational development in the Faculty at large.

This report offers an overview of the ADP with particular reference to its main goals and roles in the University, its relationship with the Faculties, which is key to its operation, and what are regarded as its central issues and challenges. The details of the ADP's work and performance are given in the individual unit reports, which are provided as **Annexures A-G**. No report is included on the ADP in Humanities as an ADP Co-ordinator has been appointed there only this year, after a long period in which there was no formal organisational link with the ADP (though the Faculty was extensively served by the central ADP units and other CHED

departments). The new programme in Humanities is thus still at an early stage of development.

The unit reports were produced through a process of internal review of each of the seven units that began in the latter half of 2009. Draft reports were produced by the unit heads, then discussed at a series of review workshops, with input provided by panels of relevant UCT academics from outside CHED, and with participation by ADP, CHED and other UCT staff. Where required, follow-up meetings between the unit and the ADP Directorate were held. The unit heads then finalised their reports, including the latest available data. Special thanks are due to Associate Professor Kathy Luckett, then from HAESDU in CHED and now ADP Humanities Co-ordinator, for conceptualising, documenting and providing leadership in this process.

## **A note on terminology**

*Academic Development (AD)*: In South Africa, AD does not refer primarily to academic staff development as it does in Europe and Australasia. The HEQC (2007:74) definition is:

A field of research and practice that aims to enhance the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in higher education, and to enable institutions and the higher education system to meet key educational goals, particularly in relation to equity of access and outcomes.

Academic development encompasses four interlinked areas of work: student development (particularly foundational and skills-oriented provision), staff development, curriculum development and institutional development.

*Course and programme*: In South African educational terminology, a course is a unit of study that is assessed, i.e. a formal component of a qualification. A programme is a combination of courses or modules that leads to a qualification.

*Placement*: In the AD context, placement refers to the placing of students in foundational or mainstream provision on entry.

*'Race'*: 'Race' is recognised as a social rather than biological construct. The categories used are those used by Statistics South Africa with the term 'Black' referring to 'African Black'.

## **Abbreviations**

AARP	Alternative Admissions Research Project
ASP	Academic Support Programme
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CHED	Centre for Higher Education Development
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
EDU	Educational Development Unit
EEP	Equity and Efficiency Project
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
IPD	Institutional Planning Department
NBT	National Benchmark Tests
NSC	National Senior Certificate
SET	Science, Engineering and Technology

# 1. CONTEXT: THE CASE FOR ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

## 1.1 The national position

The conditions of racial discrimination that gave rise to AD (or Academic Support as it was originally termed in the founding universities) at the beginning of the 1980s are well known. The Black, Coloured and Indian population groups were severely under-represented, and students (and staff) had been largely confined to specified institutions or groups of institutions on the basis of race and ethnicity.

When loopholes in the system emerged, some historically white universities found ways to admit small numbers of black students in accordance with their espoused positions on non-racialism and academic freedom (see section 3 below), but many of these students experienced major academic and social adjustment difficulties. Academic Support units – later reconstituted as AD – were then established in the universities concerned, with the mandate of fostering both access and success for students who were subject to structural inequality and disadvantage. In the historically black universities, by contrast, black representivity was not an issue but racial inequality manifested itself equally strongly in academic underpreparedness and lack of resources among the great majority of the intake. When AD operations were established in these institutions in the mid- to late-1980s, the goal was to find ways in which the institution as a whole, particularly the educational process, could respond to the disadvantaged black majority.

AD has thus historically been concerned with addressing the effects of political, social and economic inequalities on access to and success in higher education. A key idea underpinning AD's goals is 'redress' of historical inequalities; this principle is reflected in the South African Constitution, closely associated with the concept of 'fair discrimination', which has particular significance for access and the conditions that facilitate this.

South Africa's political transition has removed political but not social and economic inequality, which continues to be manifested primarily along racial lines. In higher education, despite the advances made in student financial aid and in access, student participation and performance remains highly skewed, as the following summary indicates<sup>1</sup>.

- Participation in higher education is low in relation to countries at a similar stage of economic development, and is very skewed. On the UNESCO gross enrolment rate measure, overall participation is about 16%; White 60%; Black and Coloured 12%. This suggests that the black students currently gaining access to higher education represent a select group with good potential to succeed. However, this is not reflected in the performance patterns, as shown below.
- The proportion of the intake graduating within five years is also low and skewed. The rate for the sector as a whole is 30%, and for contact university programmes (the best-performing sub-sector) it is 50%.
- In terms of equity of outcomes, in key subject areas with particular significance for development, Black graduation rates are less than half of White rates, and the absolute numbers of Black graduates are lower than those of Whites, neutralising the gains made

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<sup>1</sup> The data in this section come from analysis of the 2000-2001 entry cohort, which is the latest available: source Scott, Yeld & Hendry 2007.

in access. The net result is that well under 5% of Black youth are succeeding in any form of higher education, an untenable situation.

- There is a similar pattern in the rates of graduation in regulation time in contact programmes (i.e. excluding distance education). In key subject areas, the rate is under 30% overall and under 15% for Black students. Given low participation, this is a major indicator of systemic problems such as secondary-tertiary articulation failure.

In summary, despite areas of high quality, the sector is collectively still far from meeting the country's needs in terms of both development and social cohesion. It is evident that the potential of large sections of the population is not being realised, pointing to serious systemic flaws and discontinuities. While no student group is performing satisfactorily, it is black students – most of whom continue to be from disadvantaged educational backgrounds – that are least well served by the present system. The status quo is failing the majority, in all senses of that expression. A key to improving the performance of the sector as a whole is to facilitate success among the groups doing least well, viz. Black and Coloured students.

Analyses indicate strongly that the capacity of the school sector to produce substantially higher numbers of well-prepared candidates for higher education will continue to be very limited for the foreseeable future. A necessary condition for meeting the need for both development and social cohesion is therefore that higher education should play its part in social transformation by ensuring that its educational process can realise the potential of our diverse student body.

It is evident from this situation that the goals of AD remain relevant to the social and economic development of the country. In some respects, because of economic globalisation and acute skills shortages in South Africa, the need for higher education development is greater than ever. The redress goal is critical for two related reasons. First, the country's need for good graduates will not be met unless the potential of all groups is developed. Graduate growth must come predominantly from the Black and Coloured groups, so the 'equity' and 'development' agendas are converging. Second, it is likely that political and societal support for higher education will be increasingly strained if its benefits continue to be so inequitably distributed.

As the participation figures show, representivity by race continues to be an issue, so the equity of access goal of AD remains valid. More importantly, however, equity of outcomes is crucial to the sector's meeting its societal obligations, and should, it is argued, continue to be the central goal of AD. This has major implications for AD – including its scope and focus, its modus operandi in different institutions, its target groups, and who is responsible for 'doing' AD – as discussed in section 5 below.

## **1.2 UCT**

UCT has been an environment that has provided strong support for key aspects of AD work and considerable constraints on others. As the leading South African university in terms of current international rankings, UCT has attracted many top academic staff and students, and has a strong culture of scholarly excellence, associated in many areas with academic conservatism (as indicated in recent debates on topics ranging from academic performance criteria to disciplinary and graduate attributes). To be 'research-led' is the strategic goal

that has evidently resonated most strongly with the majority of the UCT academic community. At the same time, many staff have an undoubted commitment to their students, and there is considerable traditional ‘teaching excellence’ in Kreber’s (2002) terminology. There has also been an historical institutional commitment to non-racialism and equity, within the University’s liberal tradition.

UCT’s dominant culture is clearly a strong determinant of what is possible (or understood by ADP to be possible) in AD work, as is discussed in sections below. There has always been a point of view among some academics that AD does not belong in a research-orientated university like UCT, and debate about this may well be revived by the renewed focus on institutional differentiation that the Ministry of Higher Education and Training is contemplating. It is therefore important to have a picture of UCT undergraduate performance patterns as a backdrop to assessing the validity, scope and focus of AD work.

### **Note on enrolment growth**

UCT’s total undergraduate enrolment has grown at an average annual rate of 2.2% since 2005, reaching 16,924 in 2009. By contrast, Black, Coloured and Indian undergraduate enrolment has grown at an average annual rate of over 7%, reaching 8019 (47% of the total) in 2009. Some of this growth is attributable to expansion of UCT’s Extended Curriculum Programmes (see section 4.1 below).

### **Course success rates**

Course success rates show the number of passes as a percentage of enrolment in a course. UCT’s overall undergraduate course success rate in 2009 was 84% against a national average of 77%. The rates vary by Faculty, academic level and population group, as well as (to a lesser extent) from year to year. The following are some examples from 2009:

<i>Course success rates</i>	<i>All students</i>	<i>SA Black</i>	<i>SA White</i>	<i>Health Sc</i>	<i>Science</i>
100-level courses	80%	71%	88%	95	70
300-level courses	88%	78%	93%	98	89

The main point here is the long-standing problem of differentials in the performance of Black and White students at the course level. The gaps are in fact exacerbated with the cumulative effects of differential course pass rates, as is reflected in the data below.

### **5-year cohort success rates**

Cohort success rates, i.e. the percentage of any given intake that graduates, are widely regarded as the most telling quantitative measure of student performance. The figures here are derived from tracking the performance of first-time-entering students in a given intake until they graduate or leave without graduating, for up to 5 years<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The UCT figures are for the 2005 intake, the latest for which 5 years of data are available.

*5-year cohort performance: all students*

About 70% of the intake cohorts in recent years have graduated within 5 years. The following table offers examples of the variation that exists between Faculties/programmes and reasons for students' leaving without graduating.

<i>2005 intake</i>	<i>BA</i>	<i>Commerce</i>	<i>Engineering</i>	<i>Science</i>
Graduated within 5 years	76%	76%	52%	65%
Continuing	1%	5%	14%	5%
Left voluntarily	15%	9%	7%	8%
Acad excluded	8%	10%	27%	21%

Points to note here include (a) that there are relatively high attrition rates, considering UCT's selectivity, and (b) that failure leading to academic exclusion is generally most prevalent in scarce-skills SET (Science, Engineering and Technology) areas that have particular significance for economic development.

*Equity of outcomes: 5-year cohort performance by population group*

<i>2005 intake</i>	<i>BA</i>		<i>Engineering</i>		<i>Science</i>	
	<i>Black</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>White</i>
Graduated	67%	80%	35%	80%	44%	84%
Continuing	0%	1%	20%	5%	5%	5%
Left voluntarily	8%	15%	3%	8%	8%	6%
Acad excluded	26%	4%	43%	7%	43%	5%

While there is some variation from year to year, the differentials between Black and White success are persistent and considerable, not least in SET programmes. They are the main obstacle to substantial growth in graduate output, and represent what is probably UCT's biggest educational challenge. Given that UCT's Black intake comes predominantly from the top two or three percentiles of Black school-leavers, it is not tenable to 'blame the students'. The problem must lie rather in the inability of the system, particularly the conventional teaching-and-learning process, to successfully accommodate the diversity in the educational backgrounds of the student intake.

**Graduation in minimum time**

As is the case nationally, in a number of key programmes only a minority of the intake graduate in the minimum time. A fairly common pattern in SET programmes is that a third graduate in minimum time, a third graduate in a longer time, and a third do not graduate at all. Significant differentials by 'race' among mainstream students also show up here, as illustrated below.

2003 cohort	BA			Engineering			Science		
	All	Black	White	All	Black	White	All	Black	White
Graduated in minimum time	63%	49%	65%	31%	30%	46%	33%	31%	51%

As noted earlier, this situation is a further indicator of systemic faultlines, particularly the secondary-tertiary articulation gap. The fact that the problem is prevalent at UCT, despite its selectivity, is an indicator of how embedded the systemic problem is. The significance of this problem for equity of access and outcomes has strongly affected the UCT AD agenda, particularly its emphasis on foundational provision and extended programmes. It is also a key element of a wider argument for undergraduate curriculum reform, as discussed later.

### Implications of the performance patterns

The performance patterns indicate that the founding AD goals of equity of access and equity of outcomes remain relevant at UCT, for the following reasons.

- Because of the persistence of inequalities and factors such as home language, relatively small numbers of black students qualify for entry to UCT (especially in SET and professional programmes) on conventional competitive measures based on school-leaving results. Intervention is therefore necessary to ensure that there are places for students from under-represented groups who have the potential to succeed at UCT. AD access interventions include (a) contributing to the development and implementation of equity-focused admissions policy and (b) as a major initiative, the continuous development and running of alternative selection methods designed to identify students whose talents are not adequately reflected in traditional examinations because of poor schooling. This work has been undertaken since the 1980s, primarily through the Alternative Admissions Research Project (AARP), as outlined in the AARP report.
- Critically, meaningful access depends also on provision, as there is an iterative relationship between admissions, curriculum and the teaching-and-learning process. It is not responsible to admit underprepared students, however talented, unless there are forms and levels of provision and support that give them a fair chance to develop their potential. Hence the significance of AD interventions providing alternative entry curricula and development-orientated teaching and support. These have the twin purposes of (a) enabling a more inclusive but responsible admissions policy, and (b) enabling students to build sound academic and affective foundations for succeeding in their studies. The aim is for equity of access and equity of outcomes to be linked, as one is not meaningful without the other.

A goal that was implicit in AD but has recently warranted being more explicitly articulated and addressed is that of fostering the quality and appropriateness, or fitness of purpose, of UCT's degree programmes for the whole student body. This goal in particular calls for ADP to work more closely with other CHED departments.

Along with similar universities in South Africa, UCT has throughout its history been accustomed to the anomalous situation where the educational challenges facing the majority of the population are experienced in the institution as a 'minority' issue. The

original Academic Support Programme was in fact modelled on American minority programmes. Although attitudes have changed, particularly among a number of the University's leaders, equity-related initiatives are still treated as marginal by many in the academic community. This situation, combined with UCT's academic culture, has had a determining effect on the AD agenda, in terms of target groups, the priorities it has identified, and what has been possible to put in place. Section 4 below outlines the scope and focus of AD work in the UCT context, and the rationale for this, against the background of the ADP mission.

## **2. MISSION AND GOALS**

### **Mission**

The ADP's mission has two inter-related elements:

- To promote continuing transformation in the student body by developing, implementing and disseminating educational strategies that foster equity of access and of outcomes.

The significance of this mission lies primarily in the need to increase graduate output and representivity, in the interests of national development and meeting UCT's strategic goals. Analysis of student performance patterns at national level confirms that graduate output will not reach the levels needed in the country without substantial improvement in equity of outcomes. The ADP has since its inception been UCT's primary mechanism for promoting equity in the student body.

- In conjunction with other CHED departments, to promote effective teaching and learning, quality of outcomes and responsiveness to contemporary conditions in UCT's academic programmes, through providing the University with specialised educational contributions.

In the interests of all students.

### **Goals and objectives**

The ADP works primarily in the area of the formal curriculum, in partnership with the Faculties and other CHED departments, in the interests of student development and positive systemic change. It subscribes to a holistic approach to student development, and seeks to co-operate with the Department of Student Affairs and Faculty counselling services to this end. Specific goals include the following:

- To facilitate access for talented but disadvantaged students by providing a developmental selection testing service, expertise in entry-level assessment, and foundational courses that enable such students to succeed in making the transition to higher education.
- To foster equity of outcomes, and thus improvement of overall completion rates, by developing effective extended curricula in the main undergraduate programmes in all faculties.
- To foster educational development in mainstream provision with the aim of building the Faculties' capacity to accommodate diversity in educational background.
- To offer leadership, professional support and specialised teaching in providing for the development of key academic skills and literacies (language development and

numeracy) in extended and mainstream curricula, both as tools for learning and as graduate outcomes.

- In conjunction with other CHED departments, to facilitate continual improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in mainstream degree programmes through professional contributions to curriculum and course design and the development of teaching approaches that are effective in the UCT context.
- In conjunction with the Institutional Planning Department, to monitor and analyse student performance patterns, in order to raise Faculty awareness of factors affecting student progression and as a basis for qualitative research and developmental action.
- To undertake and disseminate research relevant to ADP goals.
- To contribute to national and regional initiatives and policy development relating to educational development.

### **Current areas of activity**

Primary areas of activity include: foundational provision; teaching and research in academic and quantitative literacy; broader curriculum and staff development in the Faculties; selection and admissions research and testing; working with teaching-and-learning committees; and contributions to national educational development initiatives, capacity building and policy development.

## **3. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

Efforts have been made to periodise the development of AD in South Africa in accordance with different parameters or theoretical frameworks (see for example Boughey 2007 and Lockett 2010). Given the range of institutional as well as ideological differences in points of view on AD, theorising AD development is contested terrain. Rich accounts of the factors and attitudes affecting AD issues – in terms of the wider issues of the classic tensions involved, and their effects on practice – might be a key element of understanding the field, but there are thus far few of these.

Analysis of the history of AD and what it stands for is beyond the scope of this report, but it is hoped that two publications provided as appendices will provide background. A detailed account of ASP and AD at UCT is available in Scott, Yeld, McMillan and Hall (2005), a copy of which is provided at **Appendix 2**. A published overview of the development of AD in South Africa is provided at **Appendix 3** (Scott 2009). These articles are offered as they reflect a UCT view of the development of AD.

## 4. CURRENT SCOPE AND FOCUS OF THE ADP'S WORK

### 4.1 The centrality of addressing the systemic problem: the role of extended programmes

The performance patterns identified in recent years have underlined what non-quantitative analysis indicated from the early phases of AD: that systemic problems are at the heart of the educational challenges in South Africa, particularly as they affect the black majority.

Linked partly to poverty, the very poor quality of the mass school system – originating under apartheid but persisting – has had a profound effect on the life-chances and educational opportunities of the greater part of the population. The wider systemic faultlines directly affect higher education as well, not least in the discontinuity – the ‘articulation gap’ – between even the upper echelons of school-leavers and the assumptions underlying traditional higher education curricula.

It must be possible for the school sector to improve: the outcomes of South African schooling compare unfavourably with those in many African countries with far fewer resources. However, there are also constraints on the system that arise from South Africa’s developing-country conditions – including major competing demands for social services – that are likely to persist for the foreseeable future. In short, a range of analyses of South African schooling indicate strongly that there is little or no prospect of substantial improvement, of the kind and order necessary to ensure higher education of a sufficient supply of traditionally well-prepared school-leavers. Higher education can therefore not rely on improvement in external factors to resolve the critical problems evident in the performance patterns. It faces the choice of accepting the status quo or taking responsibility for addressing systemic issues that are within its own control or sphere of influence.

Various analyses of the articulation gap have pointed to its complexity and its far-reaching negative effects on students, particularly those from disadvantaged educational backgrounds. It has been concluded that dealing with it is a *sine qua non* for facilitating substantial improvement in student success. This also has implications for enrolment growth, which must come from the under-represented groups that are most affected by systemic problems.

At UCT, an early form of this thinking led to the establishment of foundational courses in key subjects in the first half of the 1980s, designed to address the articulation gap. These courses, offered mainly in Science and Engineering, were in due course grouped into coherent ‘foundation programmes’ that were preparatory to specific degree programmes. The next stage of development, in the mid-1990s, was the integration of foundational provision into regular degree programmes to form ‘extended (curriculum) programmes’ which provided alternative pathways to the qualifications concerned.

The significance of extended programmes lies in their being a systemic response to a key systemic problem, the articulation gap, through curriculum and course design that aims to take proper account of the realities of the students’ prior learning. Nationally, the founding higher education policy document of the new dispensation, the Higher Education White Paper of 1997, recognised the need for extended programmes as ‘integral elements of a higher education system committed to redress and to improving the quality of learning and teaching’ (DoE 1997:2.34). The White Paper’s promise of funding was finally honoured in the new funding framework of 2003 with the establishment of a recurrent Foundation Grant

scheme. This has had symbolic as well as practical value, and has facilitated the spread of extended programmes to most universities in the country.

Foundational provision and extended programmes have formed the cornerstone of UCT's equity strategy for the last two decades. At selective universities, they have the dual role noted earlier – allowing responsibly for the admission of talented students who would not cope with traditional first-year courses, and enabling such students to find their feet in the university academically and psychologically. Over the years, many thousands of students (almost all coming from the under-represented groups) who did not meet regular admission criteria have gained access via extended programmes and gone on to graduate. Extended programmes are now offered in all six Faculties. Different models have been developed to suit different Faculty and programme contexts. Detailed accounts of the large programmes run as joint Faculty/ADP responsibilities, including performance figures and commentary on impact, are given in the individual ADP unit self-review reports, provided as **Annexures A -G**.

However, notwithstanding the successful aspects of the extended programmes, there are a range of constraints and problems that affect the current programmes and mirror wider tensions in the practices and identity of the higher education sector in South Africa. Notable among these are the following:

- The fact that at universities like UCT extended programmes cater for a disadvantaged minority, together with the psychological legacy of racism, makes extended programmes vulnerable to perceptions of inferiority among academics, the wider student body, and the participant students themselves. The negative effects of stigma on motivation and learning have long been recognised as a serious problem and identified in various studies. To balance this, many students who succeed in extended programmes reverse their views later in their studies, acknowledging the role of foundational provision and the staff concerned in facilitating their success. Also, dedicated efforts to challenge 'deficit thinking', added to some outstanding course success rates, have significantly changed the image of some of the programmes to date, to the extent that student demand for places exceeds supply (see the Commerce report in particular).
- However, the relative marginalisation of the programmes remains a serious issue. It reflects a tension between public perceptions and what is educationally effective, and this places an uncomfortable burden of responsibility on the university to direct students into forms of provision that will optimise their chances of succeeding, even if the students do not initially perceive this as in their interests.
- The marginalisation of developmental provision like extended programmes is somewhat ironic in the post-apartheid dispensation. The national performance patterns show that the majority of the intake (including the great majority of black students) are not faring well in the traditional curriculum structures, and the figures support a prima facie argument that the majority would be better served by extended programmes. Even at UCT, there is a substantial failing 'tail' in many mainstream programmes – including a high proportion of black students – who would evidently benefit from foundational provision and extended programmes. It is therefore legitimate to ask who is benefiting from the status quo.
- In some of UCT's extended programmes, throughput to graduation is unsatisfactorily low, particularly in Science and Engineering. Given that extended programme entrants are significantly less prepared and more at-risk than mainstream students (and generally

would not have qualified for regular admission), higher attrition rates are not surprising, especially in SET disciplines where the legacy of apartheid has had a particularly damaging effect on schooling. However, the attrition calls for ongoing efforts to improve, not only the foundational provision itself but also its articulation with mainstream courses. Many ADP staff believe that educational disadvantage of the kind arising from South African conditions, together with language challenges, can persist in various forms, so the capacity of the mainstream educational process to cope effectively with educational diversity is critical to the equity agenda.

To balance the concern about attrition, there are very encouraging cases of major improvements in course success rates, quality of pass and throughput to graduation in some programmes. The successes include courses in which extended programme students consistently out-perform their peers in directly comparable mainstream courses (see for example the Commerce report). Details are given in the individual unit reports.

- What would be the alternatives in advancing equity of access and outcomes? Decades of experience, backed by the performance patterns outlined earlier, show that the students admitted to extended programmes would have an extremely low probability of succeeding if they entered directly into current mainstream provision. The current alternatives, then, are clear: continue and possibly expand systemic, curriculum-related interventions, i.e. extended programmes, and manage or mitigate the effects of marginalisation; remove such interventions on the grounds of negative perceptions and insufficient value, and manage the effects on black success rates; admit only students who are satisfactorily prepared for traditional mainstream provision, and manage the negative effects on transformation; or change the mainstream educational process so that it is able to successfully accommodate the diversity in educational background of the current and future student intake. The latter has proved a difficult challenge in various institutional contexts, as noted in 4.5 below.

Despite the difficulties, the extended programmes at UCT are evolving, and increasing institutional attention is being given to them as a result of a sharper focus on transformation in the student body and evidence of declining levels of preparedness in the intake as a whole. However, some of the key challenges are unlikely to be met until such time as the anomaly of treating majority needs as a minority issue is faced and addressed. This may call for reform of the core undergraduate curriculum structures. This relates to the current debate on the need for new, flexible curriculum frameworks to enable the sector to accommodate diversity in educational background – colloquially known as the ‘4-year degree’ issue – in which ADP staff have been active participants. In this regard, a key element of the significance of extended programmes is that they have provided opportunities for researching and gaining hands-on experience with alternative approaches that can inform curriculum development in the sector.

## **4.2 The literacies**

Most of the ADP’s provision takes the form of specialised teaching in key subjects (especially in the Natural Sciences, Economics and Commerce disciplines), mainly at foundation or first-year level in extended programmes. There are also two ADP units that are responsible for teaching, research and development in key literacies across the Faculties, viz. language-related Academic Literacy, which is the responsibility of the Language Development Group (LDG), and Quantitative Literacy or Numeracy, the responsibility of the Numeracy Centre.

These literacies are seen as critical to AD's mission because of the particular needs of students whose first language is not English and who have been through township or rural schooling with poor Mathematics teaching. The LDG and the Numeracy Centre thus make important contributions to the extended programmes, but have also developed wider conceptualisations and applications of their fields, linked to the emergence of the 'new literacies' as an important area of study internationally. The two units work in a range of contexts in a number of Faculties, with postgraduate levels becoming an increasingly significant focus (see section 4.6). They therefore play a key role in the wider AD agenda.

More detailed accounts of the work of these units are given in the relevant Annexures.

### **4.3 The target groups**

#### **The issue of race as criterion for affirmative action**

The student target groups for AD work have been determined by two intersecting focal points in its mission: to facilitate redress of the structural inequalities brought about by apartheid and its legacy, and to provide opportunities for talented but educationally disadvantaged people to realise their academic potential.

From its inception, the ASP/ADP subscribed to the anti apartheid non-racial ideal, and has never recognised race as a biological construct. From the outset, the focus was on students from poor schooling who had done well relative to their immediate peers. As the poor schools were effectively all black, the redress goal was met at the same time. Since the political transition, however, the position has become much more complex: with the opening of schools, and in particular with the growth of a black middle class, an increasing (though still small) number of black children have gained access to schooling of a reasonable to good quality. This has caused a dilemma for the University. Is race in itself a valid basis for affirmative action? ADP programmes have the same principled concerns and also a practical one: AD pedagogy is generally designed for students who have much untapped potential, rather than ones who have already had the benefit of good-quality education but have still not done very well.

The position that the University is taking (uneasily for some, and with vigorous contestation) is that 'race', as a social construct, is a valid equity criterion primarily because the Black and Coloured groups remain seriously under-represented and because there is evidence of educational disadvantage still being associated with race *per se*, because of factors such as stereotype threat and not having access to mother-tongue education. The case, then, is that redress of racial inequalities remains a key element of the ADP's mandate. However, given the spirit of its mission, the ADP will continue to do its best, within the bounds of fair discrimination, to provide as many extended-programme places as possible for talented students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and township and rural schools, as this is where the greatest amount of unrealised potential is likely to be located.

There is also now a distinct possibility that a new approach to admissions at UCT will allow for extended programmes to be available to talented but disadvantaged students of all races without compromising the redress agenda. Up to now, the extended programmes in several Faculties have had to take a major share of the responsibility for increasing black enrolment at an acceptable rate. Policy now being developed provides for the incoming class to be

constituted as far as possible on the basis of agreed equity targets (not quotas), and for placement into mainstream or extended programmes to be done on sound educational grounds. With equity thus being reasonably ensured, it will be possible for admission to extended programmes to be conducted on an educational rather than racial basis, without sacrificing redress. This approach will also help to resolve another major placement problem, as outlined below.

### **An educational basis for placement**

The ADP has argued that aspects of UCT's current approach to admissions and placement are negatively affecting the chances of success for a significant number of students, and are impacting on the gap between black and white performance and on throughput generally. The general position is that enrolment targets (not quotas) are set overall and by population group and the Faculties make admissions offers accordingly, for mainstream and extended programme places – the latter usually being critical to meeting equity targets. There are two closely related problems:

First, because of changes in demand, there can be substantial changes in the ability and preparedness of the intake over time, even from year to year. There are sub-minimum admission criteria, but these are low. The net effect is that, when demand is relatively low, significant numbers of students are admitted who statistically have a low probability of succeeding, and this is commonly reflected in actual results. Both mainstream and extended programmes are affected.

Second, since the cut-off point between the mainstream and extended programmes is strongly influenced by targets and supply-and-demand rather than educational considerations, significant numbers of students are admitted to mainstream when they would be likely to fare much better in an extended programme. Historically-derived mainstream targets are met first, subject only to the sub-minima, even where there is a consistent history of high failure rates. This results in a 'worst-of-both-worlds' position where there is what is colloquially known as a long failing tail in both the mainstream and the extended programme. This damaging situation affects more black students than white since a higher proportion of black entrants are at-risk. Although mechanisms for student transfer between mainstream and extended programmes are increasingly being put in place, the position is still far from satisfactory. The UCT performance patterns provide clear indicators of this.

As noted above, the new approach to admissions being developed at UCT would allow for substantial change in this position, with more students able to benefit from extended programmes and new forms of developmental provision becoming feasible. There are various constraints, however, in terms of shifting resources, public perceptions affecting student recruitment, attitudes within the UCT academic community, and the difficulty of introducing changes without a supporting national framework. Nevertheless, these developments – driven by real problems and changes in the educational environment – are opening up opportunities for re-thinking the relationship between the traditional mainstream and alternative modes of provision. This represents one of the most significant and interesting AD challenges for some time (see 4.5 below).

#### **4.4 Alternative admissions: the relationship between access and provision**

As noted earlier, there is an iterative relationship between access possibilities and provision: the success of equity of access initiatives depends on there being forms and levels of provision, especially at entry, that allow reasonably for equity of outcomes; and having forms and levels of provision that meet the needs of students from diverse educational backgrounds is necessary to allow responsibly for more inclusive access.

It is for this reason that, since the 1980s, the ASP/ADP has put much effort and resources into building expertise and initiatives in developmental admissions policy and student selection, as an essential complement to its work in curriculum and teaching development. The main vehicle for admissions and selection work has been the Alternative Admissions Research Project (AARP), founded in the latter 1980s by Nan Yeld and Nasima Badsha. AARP's original mission was to develop selection instruments, in the form of pre-entry tests, that could identify academic potential among students who had not had the benefit of good schooling and whose underlying ability was consequently not reflected in conventional assessments such as school-leaving examinations. Innovative approaches, which attracted international attention, produced affordable pencil-and-paper tests that had considerable success in enabling the admission of hundreds of students, predominantly black, who did not meet regular admission criteria but went on to graduate. The tests – covering the domains of Academic Literacy, Mathematics, and later Quantitative Literacy and Scientific Reasoning – came to be used by a number of other South African institutions as well.

In fact, the growth in the use of the AARP tests across the country brought unavoidable changes in the nature and purpose of the instruments, with the emphasis shifting towards complementing the school-leaving examinations by assessing students' levels of preparation – in terms of underlying cognitive skills rather than content – for the real tasks that will be expected of them in higher education. The latest development – the devising and running of rigorously standardised National Benchmark Tests (NBTs) under the auspices of the sector body Higher Education South Africa – illustrates the trend. The NBTs' central purposes are to provide institutions with detailed assessment of the preparedness of their incoming students, designed to enable the institutions to ensure that appropriate forms of entry-level provision are in place, and to assist with optimal placement of individuals in mainstream or extended programmes. The NBT project is generating a great deal of debate and contestation across the sector, which is perhaps an indicator of the significance and sensitivity of the issue of the extent to which the sector is able and willing to respond to the challenges highlighted by the performance patterns.

AARP has also been responsible for establishing and running a major testing operation across the country, with a small presence in some foreign countries as well. More information on its academic, professional and operational work is given in the AARP self-review report.

#### **4.5 The relationship with mainstream provision and staff**

The ADP sees its broader mission as including contributions to improving the effectiveness of mainstream teaching-and-learning policy and practice across the University, to the benefit of all students. However, this aspect of its mission considerably postdates the ADP's original, and still core, mission of facilitating equity of access and outcomes, and has historically

formed only a small part of the ADP's work. This section outlines the growing importance of 'mainstream educational development' to the ADP, with particular reference to its significance for the wider 'equity and development' agenda.

### **Factors affecting ADP involvement in mainstream educational development**

As outlined in section 4.1, the ADP's strong focus on foundational provision and extended degree programmes arose over time from the systemic mismatch between traditional mainstream curricula and the learning needs of talented-but-disadvantaged students, a sector-wide phenomenon. It has also been shaped by conditions particular to UCT, including the following:

- UCT's academic standing and competitive advantage have enabled it to attract a very high-achieving traditional student intake. At the same time, its equity goals have resulted in an increase in the proportion of underprepared students. Coupled with UCT's low enrolment growth policy, this situation has tended to produce a bimodal distribution of student preparedness and forms of cultural capital that are advantageous in higher education. The extent of this form of diversity is difficult if not impossible to address effectively in any individual course or unitary curriculum structure, and this has stood in the way of making UCT's mainstream educational processes responsive to a wider range of learning needs, especially those of underprepared students.
- The ADP's ability to influence the effectiveness of mainstream teaching and learning is strongly impacted on by attitudes to and the status of teaching generally at the University. UCT's research-orientated academic culture – which has intensified over the past decade with the privileging of 'research-led' among its strategic goals – has downplayed the status and recognition of teaching and the kind of educational expertise needed to foster mainstream responsiveness to diverse learning needs. Despite certain policy provisions and occasional cases of promotion on the basis of educational achievement, the dominant perception remains that advancement comes primarily or wholly from research production, and that it is counter-productive to an academic career to devote significant energy and creativity to educational development. This perception has been strongly reinforced in UCT's academic performance management system (known generally as 'rate for the job'), including the recent revision of its criteria.
- Despite educational disadvantage being a majority phenomenon nationally, the fact that a significant proportion of UCT's students cope well with its traditional approaches (see section 1.2) is a further disincentive to mainstream change. No simple cause-effect relationship is implied here, since situations of majority underpreparedness – as found in a number of South African universities – do not necessarily produce notable change or innovation in teaching approaches. However, the evident effectiveness of traditional approaches for the upper sections of the UCT student body provides a justification for retaining the status quo. It also contributes to a view that equates traditional approaches with maintenance of standards. The overall effect is that, despite the shortcomings in performance patterns and their implications, for many academic staff there is no compelling driver for mainstream educational change. In Margaret Archer's terms as analysed by Luckett (2010), efforts to foster such change at UCT are consequently counter-cultural and subject to sustained resistance.

Nevertheless, the goal of influencing mainstream teaching-and-learning is longstanding, with practical manifestations going back to small working groups with interested academics in the late 1980s. Given the minimal acceptance of the need for changing traditional approaches across the University, the ADP has focused overtly on two main justifications for 'mainstream educational development' that are clearly connected to its recognised equity mission. First, since educational disadvantage is often persistent, effective articulation between foundational and mainstream courses calls for the latter to accommodate different educational backgrounds, Second, as direct access to regular programmes has widened, mainstream provision (particularly at first-year level) has increasingly been confronted with educational diversity, including the challenges of catering for students for whom English is an additional language.

### **Progress with mainstream educational development**

ADP efforts to address teaching-and-learning in the mainstream have taken a range of forms, including: providing courses in academic and quantitative literacy; running or funding specialised tutorial programmes in key subjects; integrating language development into selected mainstream courses; partnering with regular academic departments and staff in curriculum development; leading non-formal academic staff development workshops and seminars; and working on Faculty and University Committees responsible for aspects of teaching-and-learning. Special mention is warranted of progress in the following Faculties:

- The Health Sciences Faculty, where there has historically been a particularly strong commitment to education and student development, was the first to establish an Education Development Unit (EDU) as a fully collaborative joint venture with the ADP. The EDU has played a central role in the development and implementation of, *inter alia*, a radically revised curriculum and teaching-and-learning approach for the flagship MBChB programme, a new curriculum for the Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, and an extensive professional development programme to support these key developments.
- The EDU in Commerce, established in 2007, is likewise a joint initiative of the ADP and the Faculty. While the majority of the EDU's resources are devoted to running highly successful extended curricula in Commerce, Business Science and Actuarial Science, these programmes have pioneered interventions in a number of mainstream courses in collaboration with departments and individual staff, as well as taking a holistic approach to students' development throughout their studies. Senior EDU staff have also developed a seminar series on teaching-and-learning that consistently engages the attention of mainstream academics at all levels. The attention the Faculty gives to teaching-and-learning has been reflected in significant improvement in student performance in recent years (2009 UCT Teaching and Learning Report).
- A different but equally interesting approach has been taken in the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment (EBE). The extended programme in Engineering, ASPECT, has had a long history of facilitating access and success for disadvantaged students. However, informed by data from the ADP/IPD 'Equity and Efficiency Project' (see below), the then-Dean of EBE concluded, in 2006, that student performance in the Faculty was not what it could be in relation to the quality of the intake, and that it was necessary and feasible to build mainstream capacity to accommodate educational diversity. A concrete outcome of this was the establishment of a new Academic Development Lecturer (ADL) post in each of the Faculty's seven departments (including ASPECT). The ADLs all have

particular educational specialisations, are full members of their departments, reporting to the relevant HoD, and collaborate with ASPECT staff in various ways. After a difficult start, the ADLs have come to be recognised as making a significant contribution, in diverse ways, through informing policy development, undertaking projects (such as tutor development), and providing specialised teaching. However, it is also recognised by Faculty leadership that the potential collective impact of the ADLs is not being fully realised, and there are ongoing discussions in and between the Faculty and ADP about possible organisational structures (such as a kind of EDU) that could optimise the impact.

(For more detail on these developments, see the Commerce, EBE/ASPECT and Health Sciences unit reports, and those of the Language Development Group and the Numeracy Centre for examples of integrating academic and quantitative literacy into mainstream courses and curricula.)

Comparison of these different models of addressing mainstream educational development – and the relationship between Faculties and the ADP – provides valuable material for analysing what kinds of structures and combinations of resources might best strengthen UCT’s educational mission. Key issues that call for consideration (most of them longstanding) include the tensions between specialised units and Faculty ‘ownership’, between the impact of individuals in departments and that of a Faculty-wide specialist group, and between research-informed and ‘craft’ knowledge of teaching-and-learning. They may perhaps be encapsulated in the over-arching question of who should be responsible and accountable for ‘AD’, standing for the effectiveness of teaching-and-learning with particular reference to equity of outcomes. This question is discussed in section 5.

### **Constraints**

Despite the advances made, the impact of initiatives designed to increase the attention given to mainstream educational processes, and improve their effectiveness for the changing student body, has (outside of one or two Faculties) generally been very limited. There has been much dependence on voluntary co-operation from a small number of mainstream staff and departments with a special interest in education, and efforts have been constrained by shortage of developmental resources and by the dominant academic culture. The constraints affect not only the ADP but CHED as a whole and other University bodies concerned with educational development, notably the Institutional Planning Department (IPD) and Senate committees responsible for aspects of teaching and learning.

Examples of the constraints are the following:

- The Equity and Efficiency Project (EEP), developed jointly by the ADP and the IPD, was established in 2003 as a longitudinal R&D project to produce quantitative data on and analysis of undergraduate student performance that would be readily accessible to the Faculties. The data and analysis were presented in forms designed to identify priority areas for intervention and to allow for further quantitative and qualitative research to inform developmental action. A project goal, endorsed by the SEC, was to ensure that Faculty-level structures were in place to engage in detail with the research, recommend developmental targets, and facilitate initiatives designed to meet these.

Since the EEP produced data that had evidently not previously been sought or been available in these forms, it had some immediate impact of a ‘troublesome knowledge’

kind, and over time had an influence on AD-related developments in some Faculties, including the appointment of the ADs in EBE and the establishment of a DoE-recognised extended programme in Law. However, while Faculty-level structures are in place, they have (with one or two notable exceptions) generally not taken on the focused terms of reference aimed for; and, while some valuable projects have been undertaken, concerted efforts to improve performance patterns have not materialised. As UCT's annual Teaching and Learning Report shows, after gains in recent years some key performance indicators declined in 2009, particularly in relation to equity of outcomes.

- UCT's first formal institutional audit, conducted by the HEQC in 2005, included among its findings that the University needed to clarify the relationship between teaching and research beyond assertions that research benefited teaching, and that CHED's role - presumably referring to the broad educational improvement mission - had not been sufficiently institutionalised. A comprehensive University improvement plan was put in place after the audit, with detailed objectives. However, beyond an initial set of seminars that devolved the issue to the departments, there has not been any substantial exploration of the relationship between teaching and research and its implications for UCT's role in development, so the status quo has remained. While CHED is not seeking any special treatment for itself, the underlying import of the audit recommendation - that UCT should embed a stronger and more systematic commitment to educational effectiveness and innovation in its mainstream goals, policies, practices and reward system - has not been substantively addressed. A recent manifestation of the position is that the executive and Faculty leadership rejected key elements of a senior task team's proposals to strengthen the role and recognition of teaching in the University's academic performance management system.

Overall - but again with notable exceptions - it can be said that notwithstanding change in the student body and the environment, there has not been substantial change or innovation in UCT's mainstream educational thinking and practices.

### **Challenges and opportunities**

Despite the constraints, there are some current developments and challenges that carry some very interesting possibilities of influencing UCT's mainstream towards what the ADP would regard as a fair and productive balance between the University's educational and knowledge-production missions. These developments include the following:

- Current shifts in UCT's admissions policies and mechanisms reflect a strong commitment to meeting increasingly challenging equity targets, with equity criteria likely to encompass socio-economic status and schooling as well as race. This will also affect placement policy, and is expected to result in greater enrolment in foundational courses and/or greater numbers of underprepared students in mainstream courses. This will in turn increase the importance of mainstream educational development for both the equity-related reasons noted above, i.e. improving foundation-mainstream articulation and building mainstream capacity to accommodate diversity.
- The fact that targets for significantly increasing the number of graduates in key subject areas have been specified in the Minister of HET's performance agreement with the President (DHET 2010) is intensifying the focus on the issues of increasing access and/or success rates. UCT has taken the position that improving the success rates of the current

intake is greatly preferable to increasing the size of the intake. Achieving this will require a commitment to foundational and mainstream educational development.

- UCT's success as a high-quality, medium-sized, primarily contact university – its current strategic positioning – depends considerably on being an institution of choice for top students, which in turn depends not only on academic reputation but also (perhaps increasingly) on providing a high-quality student learning experience and value that justifies premium tuition fees. It may be expected that, to retain its competitive advantage, UCT will need to focus increasingly on the effectiveness of its educational processes for all students. This should include successfully accommodating diverse educational backgrounds, as an end in itself but also to minimise stereotyping and other divisive and counter-productive effects of ongoing inequalities. Mainstream educational development may thus have growing strategic significance.

In this regard, a key development is the forthcoming First-Year Experience (FYE) project, to be based in CHED and developed under the auspices of the DVC responsible for teaching-and-learning in close co-operation with Student Affairs, the Faculties, the Students Representative Council and other bodies. It is expected that the FYE project will provide a basis for developing a comprehensive and holistic approach to educational development – including aspects envisaged in the EEP – at first-year level, and perhaps at higher levels in due course.

- As noted earlier, mainstream educational development is advanced in Health Sciences in a number of respects, and recent developments in other Faculties may well provide a stimulus for significant progress. For example:

The reputation of the Commerce AD extended programmes among students has grown to the point where the available places can effectively be filled by students who apply specifically for these programmes or are recommended by bursary donors. A number of these students meet the criteria for mainstream admission, so the situation is raising challenging and intriguing questions about who the programmes should be for. Strong teaching and course design – particularly in 'augmented' versions of mainstream courses – have produced very good success rates relative to those in the mainstream. (See the Commerce unit report.) This, together with growing student demand, raises questions about why these approaches should not be followed in the mainstream. There are no simple answers here, for pedagogical and practical reasons, but the issue of what should constitute the mainstream is an increasingly important one.

The Engineering disciplines in EBE are next year embarking on their first major curriculum review and redesign for a decade, one of the main drivers of which is expected to be the accommodation of educational diversity and changes in the school curriculum. The Faculty leadership have agreed that a review of the role of ASPECT, in the context of a general reconsideration of the relationship between foundational and mainstream provision, will be an integral element of the curriculum review. A signal of the Faculty's intent to decisively address equity and development issues has been given in the decision, welcomed by the ADP, to fund new ASPECT posts to enable the programme to double in size. These plans can generate a rare stimulus for advancing mainstream educational development.

There are also some important opportunities forthcoming:

- UCT has thus far not benefited from the Teaching Development Grant element of the state higher education funding framework, but this is expected to change shortly with

the introduction of a new policy for this grant, scheduled for 2012. The new grant will be distributed among all higher education institutions as earmarked funding, UCT's share of which may be in the region of R10 million to R15 million per annum. While the detailed conditions of the grant may still change, it is likely that the funding will provide good opportunities for supporting mainstream educational development.

- For the first time (at least in a long period) UCT's executive portfolio distribution and Senate committee structure is moving in the direction of a consolidation of responsibilities for teaching-and-learning. A DVC now carries a named teaching-and-learning portfolio, and consideration is being given to the constitution of a fully-fledged Senate Teaching and Learning Committee, which would serve as the parent body for a range of subsidiary committees with related remits. This could provide much-needed promotion and co-ordination of mainstream educational development.

However, given that the Faculties are the site of educational development, the ADP sees it as essential that teaching-and-learning committees with focused terms of reference be established at Faculty level, with organic links to the Senate committee.

Given its significance and difficulty, mainstream educational development is emerging as a central challenge for the ADP. A key task is to gain a nuanced understanding of the conditions under which teaching and educational development can achieve greater currency, in the wider national interest, and be accommodated in a more balanced way in UCT's academic culture. It is hoped that the ADP Review will include this issue on its agenda.

#### **4.6 AD at postgraduate level**

ADP, within CHED as a whole, is responding actively to UCT's strategic aim of significantly growing postgraduate education (especially at Masters and doctoral level). Need for postgraduate educational development work is being increasingly identified, particularly among students coming to UCT from other South African and African universities but also in some cases among UCT's own graduates. There are a number of points of similarity with undergraduate educational development.

The ADP's main vehicle for work at postgraduate level is currently the Postgraduate Literacies project. The Writing Centre, which is part of the LDG, has been active in this area for many years, but the project is now in the process of being strengthened and expanded. It is led from the LDG but is flagged as a growing CHED-wide project. A brief account of the project is given in the LDG and Writing Centre reports.

Another interesting and potentially important project is the Extended Honours Programme that forms part of UCT's flagship National Astrophysics and Space Science Project (NASSP) funded by the Department of Science and Technology. The Extended Honours, being developed and run by the ADP's Science Co-ordinator, is intended to enable promising black graduates from other South African universities to prepare themselves for this demanding postgraduate programme. As a curriculum innovation, it may have significance beyond NASSP.

## 4.7 Research

### Compass

Research has become increasingly important to the ADP's mission, both for its own sake as a means of deepening educational knowledge and expertise, and because, as ADP work and academic staff have become more embedded in the University, the articulation of the scholarly basis of educational development has become significant for credibility and communication with the academic community.

A key element of the case for educational research in higher education, particularly in the South African context, is that educational 'expertise' (Kreber 2002) – based on systematic, research-informed knowledge of teaching-and-learning – is critical to developing educational approaches that are effective for 'non-traditional' students and changing educational settings, and for accommodating diversity in educational background. Much educational practice in higher education is said to be based on 'craft knowledge' – an apprenticeship model in which academics commonly teach as they were taught – which has served well in many traditional environments. However, craft knowledge, without a theoretical or systematic knowledge base, lacks tools for analysing unfamiliar conditions and identifying or innovating effective responses. It is possible that many mainstream academics, faced with rapid changes in student profiles and institutional demands, are uncertain or frustrated in their educational work. Moreover, the student performance patterns suggest, *prima facie*, that the traditional educational assumptions and approaches are not proving effective in contemporary conditions.

This is not to say that the concept of educational expertise is well developed or understood, or that there is yet compelling evidence that such expertise – or the wider concept of the 'scholarship of teaching and learning' – has the power to make a substantial difference to shortcomings in performance patterns of the kind and magnitude found in South Africa. (This may in itself be a key area for research.) However, seeking scholarly understanding of teaching-and-learning and the conditions that facilitate or constrain it, as well as exploring ways of applying this understanding, is put forward by the academic educational community as an intellectually valid and socially essential pursuit.

In general, ADP research is directed at purposes of this kind. The research interests of ADP staff are, in the main, focused on understanding and improving key aspects of learning, teaching and assessment in Higher Education, analysing conditions at institutional and national level that affect learning and teaching, and contributing to educational policy development and implementation. Many ADP staff have a particular interest in the effects of prior educational disadvantage on student learning and the implications of these for educational development.

Much ADP research can thus be said to fall under the heading of the 'scholarship of teaching and learning' (SoTL), which is now established as a substantial international movement and community. SoTL has historically focused largely on micro- and meso- aspects of teaching-and-learning but is increasingly embracing a wider agenda: for example, the theme of the 2010 London SoTL Conference referred to 'Expanding the notion of SoTL beyond the confines of the classroom and across the boundaries of the discipline'. Similarly, while much ADP research is pedagogically focused, there has been a strand of research-informed policy analysis and advocacy, and there is a growing interest in sociological, epistemological and ontological topics related to higher education.

However, some ADP staff would not be comfortable with a SoTL classification. For example, the Language Development Group, which has a two-decade history of research and publication with an international reach, identify themselves strongly with areas such as Applied Linguistics and the New Literacies. Also, some staff, particularly those involved in Science, Engineering and Health education, identify with educational research in their disciplinary areas. Also, a few ADP staff are able to sustain a research record in their home disciplines as well as educational research, which is a considerable achievement. The range of research interests is reflected in the diversity of journals in which ADP staff publish, covering local and international education journals, discipline-specific educational journals, and journals in the disciplines themselves. The maturing of some staff as researchers is evident in the prestige of the journals they are able to publish in.

To provide an account of the research areas and topics favoured by ADP staff, **Appendix 4** contains extracts from UCT Research Reports, including the Dean's Report (to give an overview of CHED research) and a list of ADP staff research interests from the 2009 report, together with the recognised ADP research outputs from the 2005-2009 reports. The Research Report has latterly included only outputs that appear in approved journals or meet other strict peer-review criteria, so the listing does not cover what is an interesting and diverse array of other works produced by ADP staff, including commissioned policy papers, consultancy reports, institutional research reports and position papers, and textbooks. Please also see the relevant sections of the unit reports.

The impact of AD research, as well as research within CHED as a whole, is a matter of considerable importance and interest to the CHED leadership, both academically and strategically, and calls for systematic investigation.

### **Research productivity**

The ADP has produced a steady output of conventionally recognised research, though it represents a very small proportion of total UCT production. Between 2005 and 2009 there were 80 articles in approved journals and peer-reviewed conference proceedings, 18 chapters in books, and three books or monographs.

Since a number of ADP staff have not had conventional academic careers, an unusually large proportion of staff research time has in recent years been spent on gaining advanced qualifications, particularly doctorates. The achievement of such qualifications has enabled more staff to undertake postgraduate supervision. (However, CHED does not register its own students but undertakes supervision under the auspices of the regular Faculties, so supervision credits do not accrue to CHED.) By the beginning of 2010, four ADP staff had been awarded a research rating by the National Research Foundation; one of these has recently transferred from his ADP post to a senior academic post in his home department.

A notable aspect of the ADP is that there remains a tension between developmental work and conventional research production. Given its core mission, the primary responsibility of the ADP is developmental, in relation to educational processes, policy, curricula and staff as well as students. Its role and identity are therefore distinct from those of a regular academic department, including a Department of Higher Education Studies which would focus on researching, supervising and (probably postgraduate) teaching in its own disciplinary area, i.e. HES. There are examples in South Africa of development units similar to

the ADP becoming regular academic departments, no doubt with some advantages but invariably at the expense of developmental work.

As a number of the staff came into AD work motivated by social justice rather than more standard academic reasons, coming to terms with UCT's academic culture has sometimes been difficult. For very busy, committed staff who are playing a fundamental role in transformation and equity, undertaking research – particularly if it is unlikely to have real impact or is being done primarily to comply with performance demands – is experienced as a distraction from their core work and value to the institution. At the same time, others have developed an affinity for research but struggle to find the time for it that they would like, within a demanding teaching and development schedule. It is also evident to most that advancement at UCT, and in contemporary academia generally, depends greatly on conventional research production.

It is fortunately the case that a number of staff have found something close to a fair balance between research and developmental work, particularly when their research is linked to their practice, and are stimulated by both. The desirability of analysing and documenting educational challenges and responses – 'going public', in SoTL discourse – is increasingly recognised in the ADP. However, the tensions in identities, roles and priorities remain, without any easy solutions. The issue of identity affects the ADP as a whole, and it is hoped that it will be included on the agenda of the Review.

## **5. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND OWNERSHIP**

### **Who should 'do' AD?**

The question of the distribution of responsibility and accountability for AD in its broad sense – that is, for the effectiveness of the educational process for the diverse student body, with particular reference to facilitating equity of access and of outcomes – is longstanding and complex, and has a far-reaching effect on the ADP's form, opportunities and constraints. It underlies much of the substance of this report.

One position, with roots in debates at the time of the conceptualisation of AD in South Africa, is that responsibility must lie with all academic staff, and that establishing any specialised AD units is counter-productive in that these units will be expected to shoulder all AD work and responsibility and this will take pressure off the regular academic community to adapt to diversity and the needs of underprepared students in particular. The change strategy underlying this position is that the demands of the student body and of wider accountability will provide sufficient pressure to ensure institutional responsiveness. In AD experience, it is important to recognise the first part of this argument: there is an ever-present risk of the onus of any contentious or counter-cultural change being placed squarely on a dedicated unit which is then contained. However, the radical change theory has not been vindicated in South African higher education, in that there is little if any evidence that the pressures associated with high or growing proportions of underprepared students have in themselves produced forms of teaching across mainstream provision that are effective in addressing non-traditional learning needs, even in institutions where the great majority of the student intake come from disadvantaged educational backgrounds. The performance patterns appear to bear this out. The reasons are no doubt complex, and analysis of them is not within the scope of this report.

This is not to say, however, that it is not important for psychological ownership of the responsibility for dealing with diversity to be embraced by the University's mainstream academic structures, particularly the Faculties and departments, where teaching-and-learning predominantly takes place. There are a number of examples of centralised AD units being ineffectual because of lack of credibility and having virtually no influence on practice or policy in the Faculties.

The ADP at UCT holds the view that it is critical for the mainstream academic structures to accept psychological ownership of the responsibility for facilitating equity of access, for doing whatever is feasible to meet the legitimate learning needs of all the students who are admitted, and thus for fostering transformation in the student body. AD is a field of work, not a unit. At the same time, however, there is an essential role for higher education specialists in gathering, creating, applying and disseminating systematic knowledge about teaching-and-learning and the conditions that affect it, as well as undertaking specialised forms of teaching and educational development initiatives. This position is predicated on there being a substantial and growing international body of knowledge about teaching-and-learning, and the view that specialists in this field bring value to the institution through contributing to its capacity to fulfil its educational mission, especially in the complex South African context.

There is of course a continuum of involvement in systematic educational knowledge. Many ADP staff straddle disciplinary and educational knowledge, and there are a number of mainstream staff who have education as a sub-speciality. The contention is that this is realistic and valuable, that some growth in educational knowledge among mainstream staff is desirable and feasible, but that specialists who have education as their central intellectual project have a significant role in the contemporary university. The ADP's approach to translating these views into structural organisation is outlined below.

### **The ADP organisational model**

The ADP's status and internal structure is outlined in the Introduction. This section offers a note on the ADP's relationships with the Faculties.

Given the ADP's view on responsibility for AD work, its relationship with the Faculties has from an early stage been built on the goal of partnership and complementarity. The main model that has been used for the Faculty-based units is that the posts belong to the ADP staff establishment but the staff are fully seconded to the relevant Faculties and in some cases to particular departments. The intention of this is essentially power-sharing: the Faculties have the inherent power but ADP ownership of the posts ensures that the ADP has an equal say in the key decisions about the integrity, scope and priorities of the unit's work. Given that the areas of responsibility are clearly demarcated, the arrangement has worked well for over twenty years.

Recently, however, as AD work has become more embedded, new organisational arrangements are evolving, with higher levels of partnership. For example, the EDUs in Commerce and Health Sciences are joint ventures between the ADP and the Faculty, with shared financial responsibility, EBE is funding new posts in ASPECT to enable it to grow.

The ADP's relationship with the Faculties is key to its success, and it is hoped that the Review will explore this matter.

## **6. CURRENT ADP MODELS**

The terms of reference of the Review raise the question of the effectiveness of current ADP models, which is taken to refer primarily to the models used for the extended programmes and for provision in academic and quantitative literacy. Given that there is no single model, and that all the ADP programmes have been developed in relation to the profile of the target student intake, the nature of the mainstream programmes to which they are attached, and other contextual factors, aggregate statements are not very meaningful, so details are instead provided in the individual unit reports.

## **7. STUDENT VIEWS**

Stigmatisation of students on ADP programmes has been a longstanding danger, and it will probably not be eradicated until such time as new forms of mainstream provision are introduced to meet the needs of the majority of the intake. However, some ADP units (particularly Commerce) have made strides in overcoming deficit views, and student views of ADP have been found to change over time. Accounts of student views are given in the unit reports.

## **8. FUNDING**

After an early period of considerable dependence on external donor funding, the ADP is now virtually fully funded by a combination of University funds, largely offset by revenue generated by fees and teaching subsidy, and dedicated funding for extended programmes provided by the DHET as part of the higher education funding framework.

## **9. SUMMARY OF SOME KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE ADP**

- Implications of UCT's evolving new admissions approaches: for AD target groups, growth in enrolment in foundational courses and extended programmes, and involvement in mainstream provision and practice.
- The challenges thrown up by the Commerce and Engineering extended programmes in particular: growth and change in student demand, new course and curriculum models, and their relationship with mainstream provision.
- The ADP's relationship with the Faculties and mainstream educational development: towards EDU structures in all Faculties?
- The ADP's relationship with other CHED departments: are the current divisions productive?
- The status and recognition of teaching at UCT and its implications for the ADP's role and influence.

- National issues: curriculum reform and the '4-year degree'; graduate growth through increasing access or success rates?; future funding; institutional differentiation; relationship with the embryonic Further Education and Training sector; and institutional accountability for graduate output and outcomes.

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## **APPENDICES**

1. CHED brochure.
2. Scott, Yeld, McMillan and Hall 2005. Equity and excellence in higher education: the case of the University of Cape Town.
3. Scott 2009. Academic Development in South Africa.
4. Extracts from UCT Research Reports 2005-2009.
5. An outline and examples of ADP performance data

## **ANNEXURES A-G**

### **The ADP units' self-evaluation reports**

- supplied on CD.