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EDITORIAL COMMENT

Our second edition of the year focuses exclusively on a workshop held in Pretoria on 12 October to examine many of the issues surrounding Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies so that a better understanding of how they work could facilitate or speed up the workings of the NQF.

As more and more ETQAs are accredited, there will be more and more scope for prospective ETQAs to study the trials and tribulations of their predecessors and hopefully not repeat the same mistakes. The lessons inherent in the THETA presentation indicate that ETQAs are bound to make mistakes during the course of often tricky standards setting processes, but the lessons or insights contained in these pages could prevent the same mistakes being repeated.

It is still early days for ETQAs in terms of accreditation, but the need had arisen to share experiences, particularly relating to the development of a Memorandum of Understanding. One entire presentation has been devoted to this issue, which proved to be a theme repeatedly picked up throughout the proceedings. It need not be a thorny issue as negotiation and consultation should be able to facilitate the demarcation of roles, which is at the heart of a Memorandum of Understanding. While the initial focus was on the concept of a memorandum, it is now shifting towards practical implementation.

The role of the legislative professional bodies was another theme. In this regard Professor Hanrahan contributed an insightful commentary on a proposed model for qualifications, registration and licensing in the engineering profession. This model allows for harmoni-sation of the Engineering Council of SA's system with the integrated national system. Another example was provided by the Memorandum of Understanding reached between the Bank SETA and SAICA, which is the professional body that oversees qualifications of CAs. There are examples to study and learn from.

A few other problems that will have to be addressed in due course were raised. These include multiple accreditation, quality assurance of both generic and specific soft skills, and provision of education and training that does not lead directly to standards and qualifications. In the rapidly expanding field of continuing professional development the difficulty is not so much related to standard setting as it is to quality assurance, as many of the continuing professional development requirements relate to revolutionary technological or other innovative developments.

THE STATUS OF ARTICLES IN THE SAQA BULLETIN

SAQA reasserts its statement in previous issues of the Bulletin that only those parts of the text clearly flagged as decisions or summaries of decisions by the Authority should be seen as reflecting SAQA policy.

INTRODUCTION

ISSUES OF QUALITY IN STANDARD SETTING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE: MR S B A ISAACS

Workshop intentions

The purpose of this workshop and *Bulletin* is to accord those of you who are starting out along the process of quality assurance a variety of inputs from SAQA and from Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQAs) that have progressed somewhat along this often difficult road. Some will offer guidelines, others will highlight the pitfalls inherent in the process. The sum total of their inputs will hopefully be of some assistance in making your task a little easier by clarifying some of the issues likely to present themselves.

Organisations apply for ETQA status for a variety of reasons. The Department of Labour (DoL) has set up the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) which have legislative power to be ETQAs. The Department of Education (DoE) has established the Council on Higher Education (CHE) which through the Higher Education Quality Committee has legislative powers to become an ETQA in higher education. The Department of Education is in the process of trying to fast-track legislation which will transform SAFCERT into the GEN-FETQA Council. The latter council will also be a legislated ETQA in the same way that SETAs are legislated ETQAs. There are a variety of professional bodies. Some have statutory powers while others are voluntary but have a history of exercising quality assurance functions within the system. All these organisations have power within the system and they all have a claim to be ETQAs.

The real issues

The really difficult issue is the management of the **relationship between ETQAs**. Anybody who was involved in quality assurance processes - be it in the old ITB or other councils where demarcation was an issue - will know of the potential for conflict. It is important for SAQA to take the leadership to ensure that in creating these relationships South Africa does not make major mistakes. It is one thing for an organisation to have the legislative power to be an ETQA, but it is another thing to be able to exercise that power. It is our duty to build the capability needed to exercise that power wisely.

Some organisations have a long **history of doing quality assurance**. As individuals we may not like everything that any given professional body does, but for our society's good, we would not like to do without the professional health council for example, a nursing council, or an engineering council. In a sense, these councils have brought us to where we are. We need to take their capabilities and their past track records into account. If we are going to build a workable system, we have to take all these components together to ensure that we achieve the objectives of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

South Africa does not have the resources to start everything **de novo**. Four years ago when I was appointed the chair of SAQA which had a huge mandate, the question was: "Where do we start?" The Minister had appointed an Authority, a board of 30 people, but there was no infrastructure or staff. One of the first things the Authority had to look at was the country's resource base and it was decided early on that SAQA would not set up quality assurance bodies from scratch. It would accredit already existing bodies or bodies that government would specifically set up. It was accepted that we would need to utilise the full capacity of what the country had to offer.

SAQA's main task is to ensure real quality in the system. That raises the question of "How?"

HIGH SUPPORT

Slow, even progress

Complacency

Rapid progress

High performance

LOW

PRESSURE

HIGH

PRESSURE

Stagnation

Under-performance

Conflict

Demoralisation

LOW SUPPORT
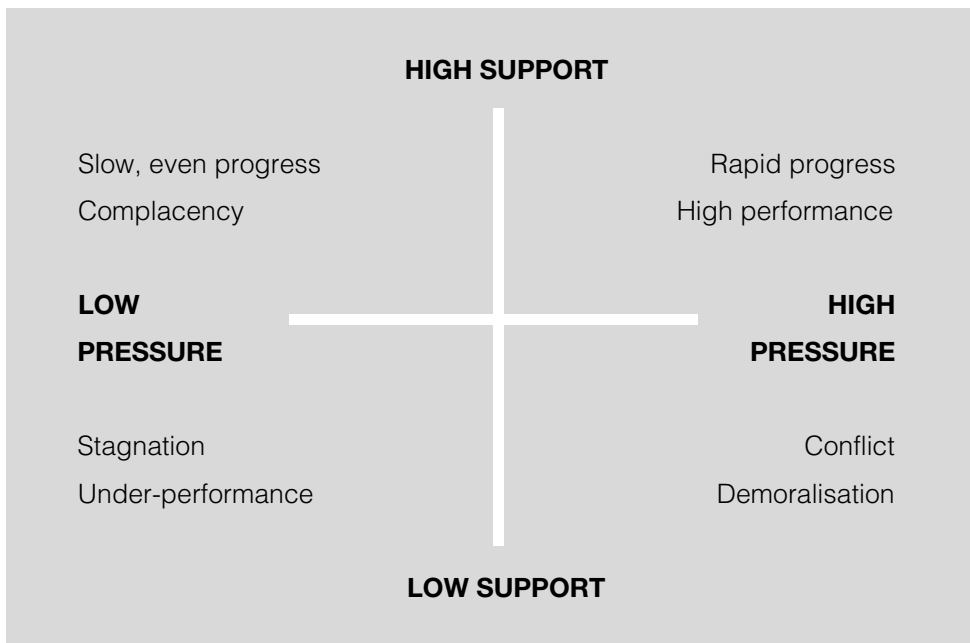
In the diagram[1] Professor Barber and Vicky Phillips look at systems in order to establish how they change. They use the paradigm that systems change through a measure of pressure and support. Studies they undertook showed that where there is high support and low pressure, the systems are slow and marked by uneven progress and complacency. If we pump huge sums of money into a system, but do not apply pressure, we will not get the necessary change. If we have low pressure and low support, we will have stagnation and underperformance. If we move over to the quadrant where there is low support but high pressure, we will have conflict and demoralisation. If we want the system to change, we need both high support and high pressure.

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① MICHAEL BARBER and VICKI PHILLIPS: *The Fusion of Pressure and Support*. **Journal of Educational Change**: Vol 1, No 3; September 2000, p 278

If we look at our SETAs, the Department of Labour has been particularly successful in backing up its Skills Development Strategy with a levy. Resources are therefore a given in their situation. There is financial support for the SETA-ETQAs. The DoL and SAQA are working hand in hand to build the capacity of SETAs. All resources are being utilised to develop the system and ensure high support for these ETQAs and at the same time, high accountability pressure. This will result in rapid progress and high performance. That is our goal for the system.

Barber and Phillips state that there are a number of important conditions related to pressure. While much of their research pertained to a particular school system in Britain, the arguments nonetheless remain important and valid. The main requirements that they identify, are:

1. **Rigorous academic** (education and training) **standards**. Our system is designed to do that and has started delivering. At the SAQA meeting on 11 October 2000, 139 qualifications and 615 standards were registered on the NQF. These are not 'old' standards or qualifications that were converted into an outcomes-based format, but are new ones. Some 8 700 qualifications have been converted into an outcomes-based format and were submitted to SAQA by 30 June 2000 for Interim Registration. To illustrate the point of delivery, the Bank SETA, the initiating body for the standards generating body related to that particular sector, ensured that their qualifications and standards were submitted to SAQA on 8 August 2000. They were registered on the NQF on 11 October. It is our goal to set a client service standard of two months from the time of receipt of standards and qualifications from a standards generating body until the date of registration. Provided there is commitment from all sides, it has been shown that this target is attainable.

2. Standards alone are useless, if not backed up by **robust assessment systems**. Standards-based assessment is the key to our national qualifications programme. The assessment systems become the heart of the quality assurance system. It is therefore important to ensure that there is pressure to deliver on that side.

3. Pressure in terms of accountability is equally important. SAQA and the ETQAs i.e. professional bodies, SETAs and band ETQAs, are all accountable.

4. Accountability will in turn ensure the fourth pressure point – equity of opportunity.

The objectives of the NQF relate to access, quality, redress and development for all South Africans. It is important to recognise these pressure points because it is of no use to go through this exercise at great expense, only to recreate the past. We have to ensure a transformed education and training system for all South Africans.

Barber and Phillips state that they would summarise their approach as "gentle pressure, relentlessly applied and serious support intentionally delivered." **It is SAQA's intention** to guide all concerned toward the realisation that SAQA will **exercise the gentle pressure relentlessly**, but we also want to **be a part of the serious support intentionally delivered**.

Sometimes when we talk about standards, or standards setting and quality assurance, it is almost as if we are talking about two entirely separate processes. They are not separate. If we want a quality assurance system, then we must set quality standards first. We can only conduct an appropriate assessment once we have the quality management systems to support it. At SAQA we have opened up our standards setting system to society in a way that has never been done before. No responsible stakeholder would support a monopoly on standards setting; however it is appropriate for the relevant sector to take the lead. Nonetheless the setting of standards should take place within an open process that allows for participation by key stake-holders to ensure that internationally comparable and legitimate qualifications are registered.

Secondly, for purposes of quality assurance, SAQA recognises the bodies set up either by statute or regulation, and we recognise that capacity in our society. People are participating in both the standards setting and the quality assurance processes and are being asked to organise themselves under the NSB and ETQA frameworks. Many SETAs now find themselves in the position where they have to start from scratch. Others have a history with the ITB system, but in general there is ignorance and uncertainty about a whole range of issues. SAQA's doors are open to all who seek clarity on any of these issues, and together we will try and resolve them.

In August of this year the Bank SETA came to see us, followed by the Textile SETA, the MAPP SETA and the Tourism and Hospitality and Sport Education and Training Authority, THETA. They all expressed concern about whether the process was going anywhere. I told them that the secret to success required a Joint Implementation Plan where SAQA and the body concerned agree to a plan of action. Then together a timeline is mapped out and jointly SAQA and the potential ETQA project manage that timeline. The net result of that discussion is that the Textile SETA, THETA, the Bank SETA and the MAPP SETA were all approved on 11 October 2000 for public comment. They will now be published in the **Government Gazette** for a 30-day period and if there are no objections or once the objections have been addressed, they will be fully accredited as ETQAs. Including the Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA), after the one-month period of public comment expires, SAQA will have five accredited SETAS. That is 20% of the task - we have another 80 % of the way to go.

We do not often celebrate our successes in South Africa and SAQA is no exception. However the work of SAQA has had a significant impact on the South African system. I attended the CHE meeting on Tuesday when the Higher Education Quality Committee Founding Document was ratified. When reporting on it, Dr Mala Singh said that technikons and universities now realise that quality in education and training is vital to their survival. I thought that was very significant and stated that SAQA should take some credit for putting quality on the national agenda.

In terms of the Interim Registration process for existing qualifications, some 5 883 standards qualifications were registered with us in June 1998. On 30 June this year, 8 700 qualifications were submitted to SAQA in an outcomes-based education and training format. The notion of moving from inputs to outcomes has therefore been accepted in our education and training and SAQA's work in this area has been significant. People talk about outcomes and results

are constantly emphasised. The trend is towards results-based leadership and results-based management. This is significant and very positive.

The Department of Labour, which is funded by the German Technical Co-operation (GTZ), coined the phrase "applied competence". Education and training cannot be separated and the notion that a qualification must give you an applied competence has also been embedded in our society. The notion that human resource development is central to what we do and central towards improving society has been established. These notions are embedded in the objectives of the NQF as outlined in the SAQA Act.

If we look at the way in which we relate to one another, there is much more transparency and accountability. This again reflects SAQA's commitment to work in consultation with key stakeholders in education and training.

In the course of his work on learning organisations, Peter Sengay found that no learning has taken place unless:

• There is a change in behaviour; and

• There is a change in understanding.

We hope that what follows will promote your understanding of how to take quality assurance to a higher gear in this country. We want to ensure that there is high support and high pressure. The high pressure is not about control or bullying, but about ensuring rigorous standards, a robust assessment system, accountability and equity for all.

Mr S B A Isaacs is the Executive Officer of SAQA

SESSION 1:

DETERMINING MEANINGFUL CAREER PATHS THAT FACILITATE LIFE-LONG LEARNING   MS A BIRD

Eliminating 'glass ceilings':

I would like to add my words of congratulations to those of Mr Isaacs regarding those SETAs which have achieved such stunning milestones. I know that others are close behind and I think it is a very exciting moment that we should enjoy since so much work has gone into this moment.

This talk is about glass ceilings as an issue to consider when constructing relationships between various ETQAs. Rather than address technical details, I would like to address social purposes. When we set out designing the NQF the crux was to recognise that we would not achieve what we needed to achieve in learning outcome terms overnight. We need to have a system that allows people to enter and re-enter the learning system on a life-long basis. It sounds grand, but there are some really powerful factors that work against this ideal. Some of them are external, and some of them are systemic. The systemic issues will be dealt with later, but I do think we need to keep attuned to some very raw facts about the society we live in when we design our solutions.

To begin, I am sure we all agree that addressing questions of quality within the schooling system is an absolute imperative. Getting things right for first-time learners when they are young **has** to be a good idea, because it will mean not having to fix things later. It therefore has to be a number one national priority. By extension, first time learning for entry into the labour market, in other words, the school-to-work transition and getting it right similarly has to be a good idea. We have to work towards achieving that outcome.

However, there are powerful things working against the achievement of those two goals. Some have to do with the reality of poverty in our country. A figure I saw recently showed that 46% of the working age population of South Africa earn less than R650 a month. This figure would include people who are either unemployed or who are employed in very low-paid work: domestic work, farm labour and some other sectors which have very low-paid job categories. This R650 has to cover rent, food, schooling and learning and everything else. Such people are bogged down by the sheer weight of poverty, and this is a constraint, a glass ceiling, to many people. If you are hungry, you cannot learn. If you have transport problems, because you cannot afford a bus or taxi to get to the place of learning, and you use other cheaper and less reliable means you experience a constraint on learning. As we start to think about breaking glass ceilings and helping people to become genuine life-long learners, we will have to take these factors into account if we want to succeed.

Another sobering factor is that our economy has been described as a low skill equilibrium economy. We have very few professional people – in the region of 3,7% of the total employed workforce. That is **desperately** low, if these are the people who have to pull us into the future. The vast bulk of people in our country are either unemployed or in very low-paid work or they are doing routine and repetitive work in industries under heavy supervision of middle management. Routine and repetitive work driven by the process of production characterises most firms in our country.

If we are training people to get out into the world, and they are faced with routine and repetitive work, our incentive structures are wrong. Routine and repetitive work does not pull people into learning. It is boring – the same thing day in and day out. This acts as a constraint on learning. Unless we can make the external imperatives right, people have no incentive to learn. Why have a PhD if you are going to shovel coal every day? There is not much incentive intrinsic to such work and extrinsically – to the rewards that people get – we have a very low-paid economy and that signals low skill. In South Africa the skill, pay and reward are all low and work is dull and repetitive for vast numbers of people. The ultimate success of SAQA and the goals that we have set ourselves are going to have to serve economic and employment growth as well as social development objectives, otherwise we will not succeed. We will not overcome these factors that act as an endless constraint on learning.

To delve deeper, the way in which people experience these constraints are clearly through boredom and the lack of incentives at work – if you are lucky enough to have work. Women are frequently faced with family responsibilities that erode time or experience other types of pressures on work. There are many other issues, such as HIV-AIDS, which will make people sick with worry before the symptoms take root. When you are sick with worry, you are not going to be a vibrant learner either. This is not to say that people suffering from HIV-AIDS should not have access to learning. The disease, however, will impact on that learning: it has to affect the learning context negatively.

South Africa therefore faces a number of external constraints on learning. Historically many people were not given a good education in their youth. They start off on the back foot and even if they set goals to achieve, it is a very long road. It is difficult to learn a new language or to learn to become literate. The road is a long one, and that too, can discourage people.

These are the external things that act as glass ceilings on learning. SAQA and all the objectives that we work toward have to take the social and economic realities of the day into account if we want to achieve those objectives. While there are many exciting ways we can go about this we must take cognisance of these realities since this is not an abstract exercise of committees sitting aloof from context. We are dealing with the need to unlock the potential of real people.

Certain systemic issues also act as a constraint. I want to relate two stories, which act as a useful reminder of where we came from when we designed the system. Learning their lessons can make sure that we do not slip back into some of those problems. They relate to two people I worked with in 1988.

The first was Hendrix Thabane who was an operator working at Iscor in Vanderbijlpark. He participated in early discussions in the union that I was involved in. I remember talking to Hendrix about life-long learning and career ladders and what it meant to him. His response was that he had been working for Iscor for 12 years. He had acquired a lot of knowledge about his own routine and repetitive work, but had also been exposed to some aspects of artisan's work. He expressed the belief that he could take on a position as an artisan if given a little training.

"But the moment I take that on, I have to get a formal school certificate before I am allowed to enter that course and the thought of going back into a classroom to learn maths, science, a bit of history or geography is a nightmare. I am married and have children. How am I going to go back to school to meet the minimum entry requirement before I can go and learn to be an artisan. I simply do not want to do that. Besides which, my family and other commitments make it physically difficult to take that kind of time out. Furthermore it will take much too long."

Unattainable for him. So when I attend debates or are in hot discussion at SAQA, Hendrix comes to mind and I wonder how he would deal with one or other issue. What would make it feasible while at the same time not lowering the standards?

The two things that we have come up with thus far are:

• recognise what people already know; and

• ensure that the learning is broken into meaningful chunks, so that there are goals along the way.

It goes without saying that prohibitive entry requirements that are not actually needed for progress along that pathway should not be a prerequisite. So for a Hendrix to learn maths or science in order to move from his current occupation to a trade, makes sense. The same cannot be said for history or geography. Imposing too much of the "yes, but we must learn broader educational objectives" can end up being an unintended obstacle. It is difficult because we all want to promote the goals of our new democracy and we want to do it now. But doing it will sometimes act as a break or an obstacle for people like Hendrix.

The second person I was thinking of was Les Nhlapo, a tradesperson who worked at Highveld Steel in the Witbank area. Les was a bright man who had grasped the opportunity when trade training opened up to black people for the first time. He became one of the first black apprentices in the industry, along with Sam Morotoba, whom many of you know. They were pioneers in their field who became trades people but who were so good they actually wanted to progress from being a tradesperson to a technician. They faced the same kind of obstacles. This was prior to the innovative thinking that is now under

way. Once again, a matric exemption was required in order to get into a higher education institution. For Les Nhlapo that was an obstacle. Would he go back to school? His response was: "No thanks". He decided to become a trade union leader and I believe he is now in management through a work-based route which did not set unachievable obstacles. Good people tend to rise to the top, provided a realistic pathway is available.

These are illustrations of the external obstacles that we have to consider, along with the systemic problems. We can make it easier for people like Hendrix, Les and others like them to jump across boundaries that were historically nothing but class boundaries. Working class people who were steered into one direction while others moved directly into higher education from school – those who could afford four years out of the labour market and who could do a technician or professional qualification upfront. Those types of barriers are still very hard to break. We have to remember some of these and other factors when putting our systems together.

To summarise: We have to keep in mind the social and the economic purposes we are trying to achieve and ensure that we do not unintentionally erect obstacles. We have to deal with questions of delivery. There is a lot of talk (which I support) about using the internet and electronic delivery. However, I understand that only 5% of our population is on-line. Too much emphasis on IT delivery could therefore unintentionally end up dis-enfranchising 95% of our learners. The 5% must be expanded and exploited maximally, but let us not do so without understanding the context within which we are working.

We have to look at radio and other mechanisms alongside traditional methods. We have to bolster our Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mechanisms, we must make sure that the systems which we design have meaningful exit points so that the road is not too long for learners. Particular attention should be accorded those boundary points that traditionally held learners in or out, particularly interfaces that were managed by craft unions, such as the apprentices where craft unions required a particular level of education before entry was granted.

We have to investigate those things to ensure that they are needed for that pathway, assuming that people do not always want absolutely open access to all pathways when they make a move. In order to be able to get those things right, we have to ensure that the quality assurance agencies and indeed the standard setting agencies that we put in place are mindful of the need to serve all kinds of learners in terms of the bigger social purpose. I trust that we have a dynamic learning system where the ETQAs, which we are focussing on here, work together in powerful partnerships to overcome these obstacles to the best of their ability.

From the perspective of the DoL a strong labour market focus has been established. I foresee the possibility of really strong partnerships between SETAs and professional bodies. I hope that those two sets of bodies are really able to find one another. Whether they merge or are separately accredited and simply work together is unimportant. All that matters is that the social and economic purposes are achieved.

There are powerful imperatives for SETAs and professional bodies to work together as both focus on occupations for the labour market. Of course SETAs and professional bodies also need to work with the band ETQAs. All these ETQAs have traditionally focussed on the first-time entrant: the young person learner. These systems have to work together to both serve these young learners and also create the facility for older learners and those re-entering the learning system at a late point in their lives to do so with ease. In this way all South Africans will be able to make the very best use of the new opportunities that I believe SAQA is opening up.

Ms Adrienne Bird is a chief director at the Department of Labour

STANDARDS SETTING IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY:
BASED ON A PRESENTATION BY C LEITH AND C KNOWLES

The following is an exposition of some standards setting that was done in the hospitality, travel and gaming industries over the period of time that we were involved in setting standards. This is only one way of doing standard setting. For each individual area there may be a different focus to your requirements or your industry might require it to be done in a different way. There could even be a different geographical spread in terms of population. All of these reasons could contribute towards standards setting in a different way. We have been doing it for six years and have made a lot of mistakes. In the early days we told people the best way to start was to make mistakes and learn from them. It is preferable to learn from the mistakes of others rather than recreating your own.

This presentation includes a suggested process, and our guess is that it might not even work for you. The process is therefore constantly growing and unfolding. To begin, we will deal with the different processes we used, as well as some of their pros and cons.

DIFFERENT PROCESSES USED

- Base on standards from another country

- Use a small SME group

- Use industry at large

- Use consultants to draw info together

- Use several groups

Standards used in another country

In 1993 and 1994 we looked at what was happening to national vocational qualifications in the UK and so loved what they had there that we directly imported the whole system. A month later, we realised that there were a few problems with it. Even though hospitality is hospitality, there are different rules and different ways that people interact with each other. They had things that we do not have, for example the fish found in the North Sea. We had to replace it with something more ethnic. Many of their standards therefore needed to be adjusted.

There was and still is demonstrable similarities between our standards and those of the UK, although our standards are less task-focussed than they used to be. The comparable UK system classifies 27 or 28 different types of jobs on the NBQ, while South Africa only has eight on the NQF: four at certificate and four at diploma level. This considerable difference is due to the fact that we have spread the net far wider, taking much more into account than merely a job.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Fast • Relatively cheap, compared to setting new standards • An international benchmark is already built in	• Tends to remove from the process, not add to it • Not transformative since the qualifications were created for another country

Small subject matter expert (SME) groups

We found this the most satisfactory way of looking at standard generating bodies. In our early days we grouped together subject matter experts in small fields, almost sub-fields and let them report on qualifications developed as unit standards.

When THETA (Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Education and Training Authority) started developing its standards, there was no talk about Skills Development Facilitators (SDF) and people are only now beginning to understand the role of SDFs in the process. In all probability the process will eventually be reversed in the sense that many people who had been involved in standard development initiatives, assessment or quality management will themselves move into the SDF field.

We should also remember that SDFs are appointed primarily to access grants, thereby getting money back into a grant system. At present the functions of SDFs are not clearly understood by industry at large.

From the perspective of the DoL, SDFs were originally intended as a contact point between the SETA and the firm. It would mean having a responsible person in the firm to act as an agent to determine the skills priorities for that firm. This does not necessarily mean that the person is an expert in those skill areas and they will often have to pull people together into standard setting processes once the priorities are determined. Once these two elements come together we will indeed have standard setting that is reacting to priorities that are pushing through from both firm and sector level. That would be ideal.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Focused • Has credibility within the industry (if well selected)	• Less perspective because they are so specialised • Time consuming • Expensive, because of specialisation • Often cannot build whole qualification • Changing membership

Using industry at large

By its very nature this method must be slower because of the wide view adopted and the chance that too many people will be involved.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Coalface perspective • Good supply of participants, but keep numbers in check	• Slower, because of wide scope or large numbers • Often unsynchronised, making final drafting difficult • Masses of information to sift

Using consultants

Outsourcing to consultants is not a bad idea, but it depends on how it is done. Do not tell them to write the standards – they are not from that specific industry and often miss vital information. Because they are not from the industry, they tend to interpret things in ways meaningful to them and not necessarily to the industry.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Faster • Well co-ordinated	• Often misses vital information • Relies on consultant's understanding • Becomes more mechanistic

Using several different specialist groups

In this model different groups can look at the same set of standards. An example would be if one group develops the standards and a second group adjusts or refines it. Different groups will produce different results and it is therefore advisable to clearly demarcate the responsibilities of each. Failure to demarcate could result in domination, polarisation and friction.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Reworks standards, hopefully improving them	• Slower • Often results in major reworking or rewriting • Polarises groups

What we have learned

Some of what we have learned falls into the category of learning by making mistakes. This information is shared in the hope that it will prevent others from making the same mistakes. We have narrowed the process down to seven basic guidelines.

1. Use narrowly focussed SGBs with short lifespans

The SGB we are currently working through was specifically designed in almost the opposite direction since it was designed to be an all-inclusive SGB. It included hospitality, travel, gaming and leisure: a whole host of components covering a very wide area. The reasons for doing that was largely so that it could link through to a latter stage and so ensure transformation in the industry. We found it easier to use SGBs that are focussed on a specific qualification or a set of qualifications from that particular area.

Regarding the issue of achieving coherence, THETA opted for gathering people of similar backgrounds involved in a variety of groups. This created problems in the sense that some were experts in certain fields, while others were not. We did, however, try to concentrate on the fundamentals at large. True coherence will only come in the second round of qualifications. Only then will we be able to pool the expertise emanating from other initiatives. It should also be borne in mind that development, coherence, revision, review and refining are all stages inherent to the process.

In trying to address this issue, the DoL decided that instead of organising or clustering by job title, it would attempt to extract what it considered to be common skill threads, for example communication and information processing or quality management. This entailed setting cluster standards for different levels of any given job – level 1 quality, level 2 management and so forth. While the department felt confident of success, problems arose when the threads were brought back to the unit to make it applicable to a particular job performed by a particular individual at a particular moment of time.

2. Create working groups

Use a small group of subject matter experts which would largely comprise the people you would have in your SGB. If you use the industry at large, ensure that there is more than one group, but be sure that one group does not re-evaluate what the other does. You need to empower that subgroup to do the specified work. If there is no specified demarcation, you could end up creating two sets of standards.

3. Manage the politics and process the results

People tend to forget about the process unless they have hit their heads against it a few times. The politics are often set aside because people think they can attend to that when

they have set up the SGB. Once the SGB is established, they tend to think that they do not need to worry about it any more.

These factors have to be managed constantly throughout the process. Regarding the politics side of things, we have to establish whether the groups that were originally brought on board are still there? If not, why not? Are different members of the groups hitting their heads against each other? Is there some way that we can mediate between the groups? Can we get them to make progress?

Unless we start out knowing clearly how we are going to go about setting standards, we will veer off track very quickly. We therefore have to bear the process in mind. We need a master plan or master process to carry through.

The result we are aiming for is to set qualification standards. If transformation is an agenda item, the process needs to be managed so that we end up getting a good set of standards and a good set of qualifications that actually lead to and assist transformation. What tends to happen in practice is that we think about this upfront, but we easily lose track of it in the hustle and bustle of getting the job done.

4. Use technology to capture information

A lot of software is available to assist you in capturing information. Take for example the number of meetings that SGBs could conceivably have: flying someone in from Cape Town, hosting the person for a few days, then sending that person back again will be extremely costly. Would it not be cheaper to buy that person a computer and write the cost off as part of the project cost? We would have raised the capabilities of that person and cut our own costs.

This is not to say that we should not have meetings, but we should try to cut down the number by using technology wherever possible. The internet and interactive web pages would be further examples of available technology that can be utilised. If technology is used, be sure to train participants in its use. An overhead multimedia projector would be an example. Some software programmers or manufacturers have also created software specially designed for the NQF.

5. Training participants

This may sound like common knowledge, but it often tends to be forgotten. The ultimate aim is to ensure that people are educated better, learn better and can apply their skills.

When working on standard setting, remember that people are constantly going to be joining, bringing new people into play. We cannot train them once at the beginning and think that it is done. Training needs to be an ongoing process and participants must know how the full picture fits together. This also applies to terminology.

Suggested process

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┌─────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────┐
│  Decide on      │        │                 │        │ Scope the area  │
│  an area        │        │  Gather         │        │ • Existing jobs │
│  where          │ ──────▶│  participants   │ ──────▶│ • Industry future│
│  qualifications │        │  (SGB)          │        │ • Transformation│
│  are needed     │        │                 │        │                 │
└─────────────────┘        └─────────────────┘        └─────────────────┘
                                                               │
                                                               ▼
                           ┌─────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────┐
                           │  Submit         │        │  Structure      │
                           │  SGB            │ ◀──────│  the            │
                           │  application    │        │  qualifications │
                           └─────────────────┘        └─────────────────┘
        │
        ▼
┌─────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────┐
│ Find existing   │        │  Decide         │        │                 │
│ standards       │        │  which          │        │  Set up         │
│ and supply      │ ──────▶│  standards      │ ──────▶│  development    │
│ to SGB          │        │  to develop     │        │  systems        │
│                 │        │  and how        │        │                 │
└─────────────────┘        └─────────────────┘        └─────────────────┘
                                                               │
                                                               ▼
                           ┌─────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────┐
                           │  Do             │        │ Do the          │
                           │  international  │ ◀──────│ development     │
                           │  comparison     │        │ and             │
                           │                 │        │ check the       │
                           │                 │        │ quality         │
                           └─────────────────┘        └─────────────────┘
        │
        ▼
┌─────────────────┐
│ Submit the      │
│ qualification   │
│ to SAQA         │
└─────────────────┘
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6. Use consultants as facilitators and not as standards writers

Use consultants to assist in pulling the process together if they have experience, but do not let them write the standards. It is far better to use consultants to facilitate the process and assist with the process of standard setting. The group or SGB that was initially involved should produce the final document.

7. Liaise with other standard writing initiatives earlier rather than later

If we are going to wait until right near the end of the process and then give our draft to another SGB which might have a similar sub-group, we could well end up with two polarised groups. They might rip the standards to shreds and put them back together the way they want them to look. In the early days there were not many SGBs, but this has now changed. There are a lot of initiatives we can learn from now. SAQA also has the NLRD which contains information regarding current initiatives which is there for anyone to access.

Conclusion

The graph on the opposite page reflects the process we suggest be followed. A lot of it is not new as it links up directly with documentation produced by SAQA. As we were among the first standard setting groups to go through the process we initially did a lot of the development before the SGB applications were submitted, but in other cases the procedure was reversed.

It is preferable to try to structure some sort of process prior to the submission of applications. SETAs and ETQAs are involved in more than one standard setting initiative: use and apply what is learnt from one area in another if possible.

Often SETAs or ETQAs do not talk to one another because they have too much work to do. We strongly recommend making the time as it saves duplication and often assists in helping to find improvements to standard setting.

Craig Leith is a consultant to and Colin Knowles is the ETQA Manager at THETA

FROM SWEEPER TO ENGINEER – SETTING STANDARDS IN THE MEIETB: A MABITLA

The Metal and Engineering Industries Education and Training Board (MEIETB) standard setting process was set against the background of the particular industrial relations within the sector. Earlier today, some of the problems prevalent in the industry were highlighted. These problems are similar to those, which led to the initial standards setting processes in the metals sector.

You are probably familiar with the philosophy or slogan "from sweeper to engineer". What follows is an endeavour to link the slogan to what we in the industry perceive to be the route towards achieving that goal.

Background to process

During wage negotiations in 1993 the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA) made proposals regarding the five grade system to the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa (SEIFSA). The principle of life-long learning formed the basis of the proposals which called for:

- reducing the existing 13 grades to 5;

- creating career paths for all workers; and

- implementing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) processes to ensure recognition of skills and knowledge achieved through life and working experiences.

These proposals were agreed to by SEIFSA in 1996. Subsequent to this main agreement the initial groundwork was to cluster tasks in the different grades. The purpose of this was to develop a five-grade structure to allow easier movement from one grade to another and to reduce the meaningless fragmentation of the tasks, which existed in the 13-grade system. A NUMSA training task team was formed to assist the union in implementing the five-grade system. The team was mandated to find a solution to the **X factor** in terms of number of modules per grade in order to achieve a specific qualification.

In the same year the first national standards setting project was commissioned by the National Training Board (NTB) known as the Engineering Manufacturing Processes (EMP) Pilot Project. Participants represented professional bodies, industries, the Department of Education and the Department of Labour.

Methodology

The main purpose of the EMP project was to develop a standard setting methodology, a suite of unit standards and at the same time to build the capacity of participants and to facilitate their understanding of the complex process involved in writing union standards.

A South African template for standards writing was also devised during this project.

In 1997 the MEIETB stakeholders decided to research standard setting experiences in other countries. Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, were identified as countries to be visited. The purpose of the research was to gather information and find viable strategies to successfully implement the agreed five-grade structure.

In May 1997 we had our first standard setting process within the MEIETB context. We did not follow the formal SGB route, but rather that of standard generating activities in which a broad representative group took part.

We used the MEIETB apprentice training schedules and the Australian, the New Zealand and the UK unit standards as source material for the process. We analysed production processes and identified meaningful clusters of skills and knowledge.

One of the more difficult areas was breaking down the artisan qualification into lower grades. At that stage our industry demanded that the concept of grades be used not levels. In the absence of level descriptors we used the indicative tasks described in the 1996 main agreement.

MEIETB
STANDARDS SETTING INITIATIVE 1997 – 1998

Life Long Learning

• 1993 NUMSA Proposal

• 1996 Main Agreement

1996 EMP Project

1997 Study Tours

1997 May First Standards Setting

• Methodology

• Learning Pathways

• Unit Standard Titles

Given the diverse nature of the industry it was often difficult to reach agreement about the titles of the unit standards. When a large group of people is involved in processes of this nature, one needs to ensure that each and every sector is accommodated: from the very small to the very large company. Chances are that the large companies will advance their argument in terms of new technologies and work organisation, this will be different for the SMMEs. The organisation of work also has implications for assessment. Currently in industry work is fragmented in that people do repetitive jobs. How does one ensure that people get assessed in order to achieve credit/s for a unit standard? Our approach was to develop unit standards for future work organisation practices in mind.

Eventually we came up with titles for unit standards by clustering skills and knowledge into meaningful learning that could be nationally recognised. We then developed unit standards and learning pathways and in the process refined the standards setting methodology developed in the EMP Project.

In the period between May 1997 and October 1998 the MEIETB ran six standard settings which covered a large percentage of the designated trades as well as Iron and Steel production processes.

But to come back to the slogan of "from sweeper to engineer", which incidentally applies to all human beings, we had the notion that it was feasible. Some people thought it was too ambitious but we responded by pointing out that in principle the NQF acknowledges progression and links the concept of life-long learning to that concept. Hence we decided to implement the principle of progression. As far as access was concerned, we were driven by the stipulation in the agreement, which stated that all workers should have access to education and training.

In closing, I would like to state that there have been other standard setting initiatives from various sectors. Our role was a pioneering one and some of our standards have already been registered with SAQA on an interim basis as existing qualifications. An Iron and Steel SGB still has to be established and will hopefully be registered next year.

I think there is potentially a contradictory relationship between quality on the one hand and access and progression on the other in terms of actual practical implementation. In building a quality system one is likely to compromise access. By this I mean that the requirements for high quality provision tends to unconsciously exclude people with lower levels of education and training experience.

The challenge we face is to find appropriate mechanisms guided by the principle of RPL that will give people access while at the same time maintaining quality
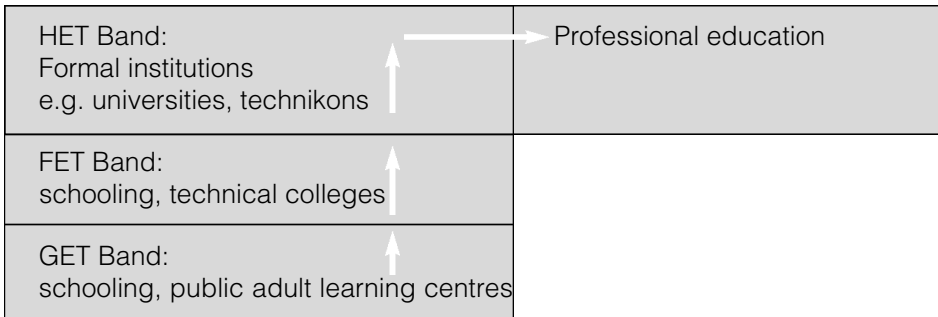
Aubrey Mabitla is the Training adviser at the MEIETB

SUMMARY

Career pathing

- The initial intention of this session was the issue of **career pathing.** Historically this was based on children going to school or people going to formal institutions of learning and then entering the workplace. If you wanted to continue your education, you returned to the formal education system in order to move up. Once you got to higher education, this meant going through the formal institutions, which led to the professional or top ranks. Similarly, workers moved into apprenticeships and from there into technician levels and then finally up to the professional level.

Progression and recognition in the 'old' system

HET Band: Formal institutions e.g. universities, technikons	Professional education
FET Band: schooling, technical colleges	
GET Band: schooling, public adult learning centres	

- By opening up our learning system, we face the danger of creating the progression paths, but still being left with a huge barrier down the middle. On the one hand we now have the formal institutions of learning and the progression taking place within them. On the other hand we have the workplace training and linkages between accredited providers within the SETA forum and professional bodies. This means that there is no true articulation and that we **still have a parallel system**. Depending on one's perspective one could still say that this or that education is better than this or that one, or that this qualification is better than that one. In effect we have therefore still not broken down those societal, or what was earlier termed class divisions.

Progression and recognition in the 'New' system – a danger

HET Band: Formal institutions e.g. universities, technikons, technical colleges	Professional education
FET Band: schooling, technical colleges	FET Band: workplace and SETA accredited training centres
GET Band: schooling, public adult learning centres, NGOs	GET Band: Workplace, ABET, SETA accredited training centres

• What we are trying to do with the NQF and these initiatives discussed here, is to **create a true seamless system**. In a true seamless system learning will take place in a formal environment, or in a workplace or industry-based environment, but movement from one environment to the other will be possible. The key to making this a reality is to describe how the qualifications at each level link to the qualifications at the next level and to stipulate that the site of learning does not determine the qualification. Rather, the criteria would be that the needs of the qualification determine the movements through the system – that would be the ideal. This has never happened in South Africa and even internationally it would be a challenge.

Progression and recognition in the 'New' system – as it needs to be

HET Band: Formal institutions e.g. universities, technikons, technical colleges	Professional education
Band: schooling, technical colleges	FET Band: workplace and SETA accredited training centres
GET Band: schooling, public adult learning centres, NGOs	GET Band: Workplace, ABET, SETA accredited training centres

The international comparatives

Comments are often made that suggest that South Africa is on the wrong track. It is evident in comments such as: 'The NQF was thrown out in New Zealand because the universities rejected it. Why are we going along this route?' In response we must ask the questions:

- Has New Zealand abandoned their NQF?

- Were the needs and the imperatives facing New Zealand the same as those facing South Africa?

- Did higher education serve the needs of New Zealand?

- Does higher education serve the needs of South Africa?

Until we have honestly answered these questions, without imposing our own particular biases, we cannot use these comparisons constructively.

On the other hand, when we talk about **international comparability**, we have to unpick that which we import from other systems carefully in order to determine how relevant they are for us. Questions arise, such as why do things work in one place, but not another or why importing does not necessarily imply that it will not work in South Africa?

Other issues

In this respect, it is important to remember some issues about **making mistakes**. At the first meeting of the Authority in 1996, Prof Bengu, the then Minister of Education, said to the Authority members that they should not expect to get everything completely correct at the first attempt – there will be mistakes. The real error is not in making the mistake; it is in making the same mistake over and over again.

Managing the politics of the system, should in reality translate as **managing the relationships**. Disagreement does not mean a breakdown in a relationship nor should it imply polarisation. We can disagree, but we need to manage that disagreement and monitor how it affects the system

The point about social imperatives that underpin these initiatives, that force us into building the new South Africa and the NQF is about developing our South African citizenry. It is not about one group, or one sector, or one particular initiative. It is about South Africa as a whole and working those things out together.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN QUALIFICATIONS, REGISTRATION AND LICENSING   J SAMUELS

Standard setting and the relationship with statutory councils and international qualifications:

During his presentation Mr Leith made a number of points I agree with. Even if we speak from different perspectives, we often arrive at similar types of conclusions. This bodes well for standard setting. It does not, however, mean that we do not need to learn, but at least we are learning while at the same time moving forward. Both issues are important.

In terms of the NQF we have reached a watershed which has moved us to a new level of policy implementation. The progress achieved falls into four categories:

CONTEXT OF IMPLEMENTATION

FROM UNCERTAINTY TO CERTAINTY

- Will this nightmare go away?
- Can we still change the principles?
- We are the boss, they must listen to us.

FROM SCEPTICISM TO PARTICIPATION

- Will this thing work?

STAKEHOLDER INTERESTS TO NATIONAL INTERESTS

- How can we ensure our own interests?
- How can we secure our own positions?

FROM SETTING UP TO DELIVERY

- Infra-structural deliverables in place
- Outputs delivered

1. From uncertainty to certainty

When a new initiative is started, people tend to be fairly uncertain. In response to a new policy announcement by the DoE, a critic remarked that it was the 40th policy document to be announced and that none of them had ever been implemented fully. Much the same type of uncertainty prevailed when the NQF was launched.

Currently the ministers of Education and of Labour are talking about convening a focus group to assist in speeding up the NQF implementation. The context has therefore shifted away from whether the NQF will work, towards when it will be implemented. We all have to participate to make it work. The principles have been established – we now have to see how they work in practice.

2. From scepticism to participation

People involved in the process have made a move away from scepticism towards constructive participation. When we set out with this process, many of our critics thought it would not work. Now it seems to be working and bearing fruit. Earlier today statistics regarding standards as well as ETQAs were provided, which proves that there is progress. By way of clarification, it needs to be reiterated that an ETQA may never delegate the authority or responsibility of quality assurance. It may, however, enter into agreement with particular people to do the quality assurance, but this is under the auspices of the ETQA, who is still ultimately responsible and accountable.

3. Own versus national interest

When the NSBs and other structures were established, people often joined these structures thinking primarily about their own interests. Experience has shown that the more people work together, the more the question changes to: "What is the national interest?"

4. From setting up infrastructure to delivery

The final shift has been away from setting up the infrastructural deliverables, towards delivering real outputs. From a standards setting and development point of view, the time has now come to move forward and speed up implementation.

Progress report

In respect of standard generation there are 143 SGBs in different stages of formation. Some 63 have been registered and are already delivering. Participation in SGBs and their functions is not limited to professional bodies only – therefore any interest group or association can take part. The only reason why so much attention is given to statutory bodies is because they have specific legislative powers. A complete and updated list can be obtained via our website: www.saqa.org.za. From time to time, information on SGBs is

also included in our monthly newsletter **SAQA Update**. Updates can be faxed or posted to interested parties, as we realise that not everybody is connected to the internet.

There are 12 NSBs which have been functioning for two years. By July/August next year their terms of office will come to an end. SAQA is already planning a process of re-registration for these NSBs. People who would like to join and commit themselves to the NSBs for a three-year period can do so and help consolidate the system.

When the NSBs started, we had a number of difficulties surrounding representation. At one stage one NSB even walked out and we soon realised that it was a problem that had to be sorted out.

The standards and qualifications of the hospitality, leisure and gaming SGB in which Craig Leith played such a leading role were received and registered on 11 October. This is an important milestone as the hospitality industry has been designated a national priority in terms of job creation.

REGISTERED SGBs

- NSB 01: Grain; Forestry
- NSB 02: Heritage Management Studies
- NSB 03: Human Resource Management; Project Management; Financial Services; Economics; Marketing; Public Relations Management Practices; Accounting and Financial Management; Administration and Management.
- NSB 05: Educators of Schooling; ABET Practitioners; Early Childhood Development; Occupationally-directed ETD Practitioners; Development Practitioners.
- NSB 06: Mining and Minerals; Paper and Pulp; Baking; Airconditioning, Refrigeration and Ventilation.
- NSB 07: Christian Theology
- NSB 09: Ancillary Health Care
- NSB 10: Information System and Technology
- NSB 11: Transport and Logistics; Hairdressing, Cosmetology and Beauty; Retail and Wholesale; Hospitality; Tourism, Travel, Gaming and Leisure; Hygiene and Cleaning Services.
- NSB 12: Surveying

A second important area is the education, training and development area. Thus far the National Professional Development Educator Qualification (NPDE) has been registered. When one considers that there are about 85 000 under- and unqualified teachers in the system, the registration of this specific qualification will bring almost immediate relief.

Qualifications for ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training) practitioners have also been registered for the first time. There is a certificate, a diploma as well as a first degree that covers levels 4, 5 and 6. Another first is the registration of Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioner qualifications at levels 1,4 and 5. The same applies to occupation-directed practitioners, in other words the trainers who work throughout industry. The SGBs in that particular organising field got together and established an inter-SGB task group to investigate the issue of articulation. The group has been asked to come up with an outline of what someone would need to do who, for example, is an ECD practitioner but would like to move into the field of ABET. Guidelines will also have to be established regarding articulation in these different qualifications.

This is an example within the ETD organising field where people are beginning to register qualifications and to build articulation at the same time. The process is often not an easy one, therefore we have to accept that the relevant SGBs will need time to develop those articulations. As stated previously, the development of real articulation will take at least three years. But the process is under way and some very difficult consultations lie ahead.

Sometimes standards within a qualification include standards from other SGBs. An example would be the cleaning standards which were included in the tourism standards. The situation on the ground is that the cleaning and hygiene SGB has not yet submitted its standards and qualifications to SAQA. This poses the question of how to deal with such cases and undoubtedly a number of you face similar situations. One way of going about it is to contact SGBs you know are developing similar standards and qualifications to establish what progress they have made and consult with one another.

Industries need to move forward and we need to have standards and qualifications on the framework. In cases where people hold one another back, mechanisms must be found to speed things up.

In difficult cases such as the cleaning standards, we have registered the standards and established a consultative process between the cleaning and hygiene SGB and the hospitality SGB. This enables them to consult in order to find mutual methods of articulation across their respective sub-fields.

When an SGB sets out to develop standards, it is important to:

• Establish whether another SGB has not already developed those standards;

• Consult with other SGBs who are in the process of setting standards to avoid conflict at a later stage; and

• Inform SAQA of pending registration submissions regarding such standards so that mechanisms can be found to mediate the processes

Pathways

Creating a linkage between the professions and the SETAs forms a pathway to get people from the FET into the professional sector. We can use the pharmacy standards as an example of standards which are registered on the NQF. The Pharmacy Council set up an SGB and two sets of standards went through the NSB No 9 and were registered by SAQA. Called the Basic and Post-Basic Pharmacy Assistance Standards, it is an attempt to develop standards at level 3 and 4, which will lead into Level 5 qualification which is the start of the B Pharmacy. The key issue is the entrance requirements that the universities need. This is one example of how we can build steps down, even though there are still a number of other issues that need to be unlocked in this specific process.

SAQA and statutory bodies

The third important issue relates to the relationship between SAQA and the statutory bodies. On the one hand the statutory bodies will, to a large extent, play the role of an ETQA, but an ETQA cannot be the SGB. We have set up a number of memoranda of understanding: One with the Engineering Council and the other with the Health Professions Council. The memoranda clearly outline **exactly** what the relationship would be between the statutory body and standards setting and of course between the statutory body and quality assurance. In terms of their own governing legislation, these bodies have both standards setting and quality assurance rights. Speaking from SAQA's point of view, we have always been mindful of the fact that these statutory powers do exist. As part of our own mandate as contained in the SAQA Act, we have consulted with a number of statutory bodies and councils and we have found a way of moving forward.

In terms of the agreements reached so far the statutory bodies will be able to lead, facilitate, co-ordinate and participate in standard generation, without actually being the SGB. This type of relationship often works very well, but on other occasions other kinds of issues arise. To mention two examples:

1. The Engineering Council of South Africa: The agreement has been reached and the understanding has been established, so the next step is to speak to both the NSB and the council so that there is clear understanding between the various players by the time the SGB begins functioning. This meeting was scheduled for 16 October so that the proposed functioning of the SGB could be expounded upon in clear terms, thus making the joint implementation plan workable. It also facilitates setting up target dates for SGB registration as well as for the production of the standards and qualifications.

2. The Nursing Council: It has set up a steering committee with other stakeholders in the nursing field. The committee is already reporting back to the nursing council on how they propose to set up the SGB, how it will look and what its budget will be. Discussions are also being held on how the SGB will function and when the production and standards and qualifications will be established.

Regarding the issue of registration and licensing, SAQA would like the qualification to be registered (the registration of the practitioner can also be couched in a qualification). The licensing – the registration of the individual person to practice – should, however, remain the responsibility of the relevant council. By having a Memorandum of Understanding between ourselves and the Engineering Council for example, we have reached clarity on this issue.

Internationally branded qualifications and SAQA qualifications

The central question facing the standards setting and development directorate in building the NQF is the relationship between internationally branded qualifications and SAQA registered standards and qualifications. This question was recently addressed at a joint meeting between SAQA, NSB 10 (Physical Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences) and the Information Technology and Systems SGB. The outcome was the establishment of a small group, which targeted six areas of concern regarding internationally branded qualifications.

The crux of the international branding issue is that it is a question of franchise. Unisa is a good example as it is a distance education university which has centres nationwide where tuition is offered to registered students. Past experience with higher educational institutions has shown that they will not register these tuition centres as providers. Higher Education already quality assures Unisa and it has put the onus on Unisa to ensure that all its vendors must be quality assured through Unisa's own internal process.

The nature of internationally branded qualifications

Essentially there are two kinds of internationally branded qualifications: Vendor specific qualifications and vendor neutral qualifications. These qualifications either focus on the skills of people who deal with the hardware components of computers including networking or on software. The vendor-specific certifications are based on the premise that the more people are able to use the product effectively, the more sustainable are the sales of that product. In the case of vendor neutral certification, the motivation comes from the learner or the employer, to demonstrate proficiency and attention to quality in the service environment.

Most of the internationally branded qualifications are awarded on the basis of performance in examinations that learners need to pass and most frequently they comprise questions that can be set via computers. Vendors earn money by charging entrance fees for the examinations. It is therefore important to them to protect the name of the certificates issued. The learning programmes are also much shorter than 120 credits or 1200 notional hours of learning.

i. **Linkage between standards and qualifications**

Standards can be developed to allow for the development of learning programmes and they can form part of a standards-based qualification. For example: these standards could form the core and elective components of the qualifications with the addition of the fundamental components from communication and mathematical literacy. Furthermore the practical components which are usually learning assumed to be in place can form the 48 credits from lower levels of the framework.

ii. Naming of qualifications

The three components, namely qualifications, the learning programmes and the certification must be identified. A qualification may for example be called the Certificate in Computer Technology, it may meet all the SAQA requirements and it may incorporate the standards of a learning programme leading to the A+. In this example the A+ learning programme that will lead eventually to A+ certification is incorporated within a SAQA registered qualification. (Note: A+ is used as an example only. The goal is to treat any international certification that falls within the parameters in a similar fashion.)

SAQA borrows from the Unisa model when people want to enter similar types of franchise agreements. SAQA will ensure that there is an ETQA for IT standards and qualifications. In this case it will be the ICET (Information Technology) SETA which will ensure that there are proper processes at Comptia to offer the A+ and that the quality assurance is carried through. In this manner we meet the requirements of the business to operate and to carry its franchise and rights. At the same time we meet the requirements of the education and training system to ensure quality.

iv. Recognition of the SAQA registered qualification

Comptia, the vendor responsible for A+ certification in South Africa, has to recognise that not only is the SAQA registered qualification comparable, but it is more than an A+.

In order for this recognition to be achieved, the ETQA should recognise Comptia as part of the provider system and enter a contractual agreement with Comptia to quality assure the SAQA registered qualification on their behalf. All providers delivering the A+ will then be accredited and quality assured by Comptia. Hence the assessment for the SAQA registered qualification and the A+ can be done simultaneously. Through this mechanism double payment for the same examination will also be reduced and any learner in possession of an A+ certificate will not need to be reassessed against the NQF unit standards covered in the A+ curriculum. The certificate for the A+ will then also contain the logos of SAQA, the ETQA and Comptia and will show the unit standards references it maps to.

v. Branding

While the branding will be in both the learning programme and the certificate, the standards registered on the framework will not be branded. The standards forming the core and elective components of the A+ will be named to conform to SAQA requirements.

vi. Short learning programmes

Short learning programmes leading to standards are currently being recorded by SAQA. This process is to help develop a map of learning programmes so that SGBs and ETQAs can use this information to enhance their particular functions. The IT

SGB has already developed 60% of all standards used in the field. If the short learning programmes are in compliance with already published standards they do not have to be recorded but can be placed directly under the jurisdiction of the appropriate ETQA.

Workshops

Over the past few months there have been a number of new developments within standards setting. The SAQA Board has accepted a policy document around the criteria and guidelines for how to set up SGBs as well as a document on the criteria and guidelines for the generation and evaluation of standards and qualifications. As SAQA realises the importance of keeping people well informed, documentation is made available. We have also conducted a number of workshops for consultants. This was deemed necessary as a number of consultants are working with various standards generating bodies and are advising various providers.

As part of the process, we have set up a data base – which does not signify that these people are approved consultants – so that we at least know which consultants attended workshops, or which ones understand the criteria. This is an initiative to ensure that the correct information is circulating. Hopefully it will ease delays in the process.

Joe Samuels is Director of standards setting and development at SAQA

A NATIONALLY INTEGRATED MODEL FOR QUALIFICATIONS, REGISTRATION AND LICENSING IN THE ENGINEERING PROFESSION BY PROF H HANRAHAN[2]

[Permission to reproduce this paper originally presented at the 2nd Southern African Conference on Engineering Education, in September 2000, is gratefully acknowledged.]

Abstract

A new integrated education and training system for South Africa is being implemented. This paper presents key aspects of the evolving Standards and Procedures System of the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) and its synergy with the national education and training system. A model is presented for an ECSA system of qualifications, registration and licensing those interworks with the national education and training system. The key element of the proposed ECSA system is the establishment of Stage 1 and Stage 2 qualifications within each category of registration. Stage 1 encompasses the educational component, and may be satisfied by an accredited qualification or by satisfying unit standards. At Stage 2, common to all routes to registration, candidates for registration are assessed against competency standards.

1. Introduction

Since 1994 a new integrated education and training system has been conceptualised for South Africa and is in the process of implementation. The new system addresses the shortcomings of the existing system. Defects include a division between education (head) and training (hand), difficult access and progression other than by main routes. The existing system is not geared to the needs of national development and global competition. A paradigm shift to an outcomes basis is central to the new system. A suite of legislative measures and new institutions define the evolving system. The NQF now provides a registry of standards for whole qualifications and self-contained units of learning, drawn up through a well-defined standards setting system. Education and training providers are to be subject to quality assurance. The development and recognition of skills across all economic sectors and education and training bands is promoted.

ECSA saw the integrated system of engineering and training as essential to the national interest. In 1996 ECSA declared its support for the approach based on a NQF. At the same time, ECSA recognised the need to put its registration and accreditation systems on a competency and outcomes basis in the interests of effective engineering for national development and a competitive economy as well as enhancing protection of public health and safety in relation to engineering activity.

Currently ECSA is converting its professional standards to a competency basis and is redeveloping the criteria for accredited degrees as outcomes. Re-engineering of operational policies and procedures for applying the standards is underway. These processes are executed within the newly developed ECSA Standards and Procedures (S&P) Framework [1]. In developing the S&P System, ECSA has on the one hand, adjusted its approach to fit into the national initiative and, on the other hand, has helped shape the national integrated system of education and training.

This paper presents key aspects of the ECSA S&P system and the way that it is evolving to be synergistic with the national system. Particular emphasis falls on the development of the principal and alternate pathways to registration to be compatible with and benefit from being part of the national system. Section 2 describes the institutions, including the engineering profession, that comprise the national system, and their roles and relationships. Section 3 presents the registration system adapted to satisfy both ECSA's statutory obligations and to harmonise with the integrated national education and training system. Section 4 summarises the achievements and potential gains of the approach.

2. National education and training structures

In order to describe the integrated national education and training system and the role of Engineering Profession, we identify the legislative measures and the authorities they set up. We then describe how the system is intended to work with ECSA as a player.

2.1 *SAQA Act* and the NQF

SAQA was the first institution to be set up in the new system. It has two principal functions essential to the integrated system: firstly, registering standards for education and training on the National Qualification Framework and secondly, recognising bodies to perform quality assurance on providers of education and training. SAQA also operates a register of actual qualifications and a record of learner achievements.

SAQA's standards registering responsibility functions through a system of 12 National Standards Bodies (NSB) covering the whole field of learning. National Standards Bodies in turn recognise Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs) to generate the formal statements of the outcomes of whole qualifications and unit standards. A SGB may be recognised in a limited, well-defined area or in an extensive area such as the professional and higher education band of engineering.

SAQA's quality assurance responsibility is discharged by recognising bodies as Education and Training Quality Assurers (ETQA). Each education and training provider is quality-assured by one ETQA only. In general, ETQAs are recognised as belonging either to an education and training band (for example the Higher Education Quality Committee described in section 2.2) or to an economic sector (for example the SETAs described in section 2.3).

2.2 The *Higher Education Act* and the HEQC

The *Higher Education Act* sets up the Council on Higher Education and charges it, through its Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), to perform quality assurance on all programmes in higher education. The Act specifically requires that quality assurance of programmes must be performed against standards registered on the NQF. The HEQC is empowered to delegate this responsibility to appropriate quality assurance bodies.

A process is underway to set up agreements between the HEQC and professional bodies that have appropriate programme accreditation mechanisms. The objective is that the profession's accreditation mechanism, with adjustment as required, performs the programme quality assurance function required under the *Higher Education Act*. Providers will therefore be subject to only one programme accreditation evaluation serving the purposes of both the profession and the national system.

The HEQC also has responsibilities to audit the internal quality systems of providers and to promote quality in higher education.

2.3 The *Skills Development Act* and SETAs

The *Skills Development Act* creates bodies called Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA). SETAs are identified by economic sector. All enterprises within an economic sector are associated with a SETA. A SETA is responsible for quality assurance of education and training within the economic sector. Emphasis within SETAs falls principally on training: quality assurance of higher education qualifications relevant to economic sectors is handled by the HEQC and the professions as described in section 2.2. Every SETA must be accredited by SAQA as an ETQA. In discharging the ETQA function, a SETA may delegate the actual quality assurance function to other ETQAs. Every SETA is also required to develop a skills plan for its sector.

2.4 *Engineering Profession Bill* and ECSA

ECSA, like other professions, is governed by an Act establishing a statutory council and defining its empowerment. The primary function of the Council is to protect the public interest in relation to the work of registered professionals, primarily to safeguard public health and safety from adverse consequences of engineering activity.

In a process known as the Forum on the Built Environment Professions [2], government gave a clear direction that the level of protection of the public must be enhanced. In examining how to extend this protection, it became clear that it is essential to ensure the competence of individuals, and that professional competence be defined in formal standards. Assessment of candidates for registration should also address demonstration of competence directly.

Competence is the result of a holistic process of education, training and experience. To discharge its statutory responsibilities a statutory council therefore requires an integrated system consisting of:

1. A mechanism for generating **standards** for professional competency and for education and training outcomes (whole qualifications and unit standards);

2. A system of **assessment** of candidates for professional status against standards;

3. A **register** of persons assessed as competent;

4. A mechanism for **accrediting** education and training programmes;

5. A process to exercise **disciplinary measures** against registered persons for contravention of codes of conduct, ethics or practice.

ECSA's system contains several **categories of registration**:

• Professional Engineers,

• Professional Technologists (Engineering),

• Professional Engineering Technicians,

• Professional Certificated Engineers; and

• Specified categories in engineering-related health and safety occupations requiring statutory licensing, for example Lift Inspectors.

A number of the latter categories are under development and include functions such as inspection of pressurised equipment and gas installation.

Each category has appropriate standards and mechanisms for competency assessment, registration and accreditation conforming to the S&P Framework.

2.5 National system seen from the engineering perspective

Sections 2.1 to 2.3 describe the essential components of the national system and section 2.4 outlines the essential functions of the engineering profession. The national structures, SAQA, band quality assurers such as the HEQC and the SETAs as sectoral quality assurers, have been designed to interwork to meet national objectives. ECSA, while remaining true to its statutory mandate, is committed to being an important working part of the national system. We explain the inter-operation of the components of the national system from an ECSA-centric viewpoint.

The process of generation of ECSA standards of competence for practice and for education is keyed into the national system as follows. The ECSA Standards Committee will be recognised by SAQA as the SGB for a designated area of engineering, covering higher education, registration and engineering-related health and safety functions assigned to ECSA. The work of generating the standards is performed by Standards Generating Groups (SGG) set up for each standard. SGGs are formed by experts from the relevant constituencies. Standards, after a public comment phase and approval within ECSA, are submitted to National Standards Body 6 (Engineering, Manufacturing and Technology)

for approval and registration on the NQF. ECSA-generated standards thus become part of the national system.

ECSA's current education quality assurance system consists of the University and Technikon Accreditation Committees. ECSA plans to gain recognition from SAQA as the quality assurer for engineering higher education. The Higher Education Quality Committee will gain recognition from SAQA as the co-ordinating ETQA for the higher education band. The HEQC will enter into an agreement with ECSA to perform quality assurance on engineering programmes on its behalf. A programme so accredited meets both the educational requirements toward registration and the quality assurance requirements of the *Higher Education Act*. As the programme is evaluated against a single standard registered on the NQF, the evaluation process is no more complex than for ECSA alone. In addition, the HEQC require an assessment of the viability of the programme.

SETAs cover the entire economy. Some twelve of the economic sectors have strong dependence on engineering skills and their SETAs and ECSA must interwork in future. At the time of writing, the relationship between ECSA and SETAs is at an early stage of development but will undoubtedly encompass a number of areas. For example, engineering-rich SETAs are stakeholders in ECSA's standards generating process and quality assurance. Co-ordination of engineering standards generation activity between ECSA and SETAs is essential. In general ECSA takes ownership of generic standards for whole qualifications such as degrees, diplomas and generic competencies for registration. ECSA would also take ownership of specialised standards in terms of agreements. SETAs have no inherent mandate as SGBs. However, SETAS would facilitate setting up SGBs to generate standards for specific functions, co-operating with professional bodies where necessary.

Engineers, technologists and technicians in training work in industries associated with SETAs. As that training also leads to registration, the ECSA-SETA relationships must be defined. That work lies in the near future.

3. Harmonisation of ECSAs system with the national integrated system

The point of departure in developing the model is registration in any category. The Professional Engineer is used as an example below but the model applies to all categories of registration. In general, a person who wishes to be registered must firstly satisfy an educational requirement, and secondly, demonstrate competence as a result of training, experience and continuing education.

3.1 Routes to registration

Within each category of registration there is a normal or benchmark route that candidates for registration may follow as well as alternative routes to becoming registered.

The benchmark route involves the attainment of an educational qualification (which may have training components) followed by a period of training and gaining experience under a mentor. The educational requirement is normally a qualification accredited or recognised

by ECSA for the purpose. The training and experience period generally involves education components.

Alternative routes to registration recognise that there are other ways of attaining and recognising educational outcomes and professional competence. Articulation systems and recognition of prior learning are increasingly important for candidates proceeding via alternative routes.

The national system stresses the facilitation of access, progression and articulation. ECSA's system must accommodate alternative routes as an integral capability.

3.2 Qualifications and registration

A question arose early in the process of integrating ECSA's operations into the national system: "Is registration a qualification?" The problem to be solved centred around the facts that an individual earns and holds a qualification in perpetuity while registration (and a license) could be taken away or given up.

Once registered, a person assumes the obligation to operate under codes of ethics, conduct or practice as prescribed by the Council. Increasingly, registered persons are required to reinforce and extend their competency through Continuing Professional Development (CPD). A registered person found guilty of unprofessional conduct or contravention of codes may be struck off the register by the council. Registration is not automatically a perpetual status.

The SAQA definition of a qualification as "a planned combination of learning outcomes which has a defined purpose or purposes, and which is intended to provide qualifying learners with applied competence as a basis for further learning" is entirely appropriate to the educational qualifications toward registration in the statutory professions. While this definition could be applied to registration, the ability for a council to remove a person's registration makes it problematic to regard registration as a qualification. The model described in section 3.5 addresses this difficulty
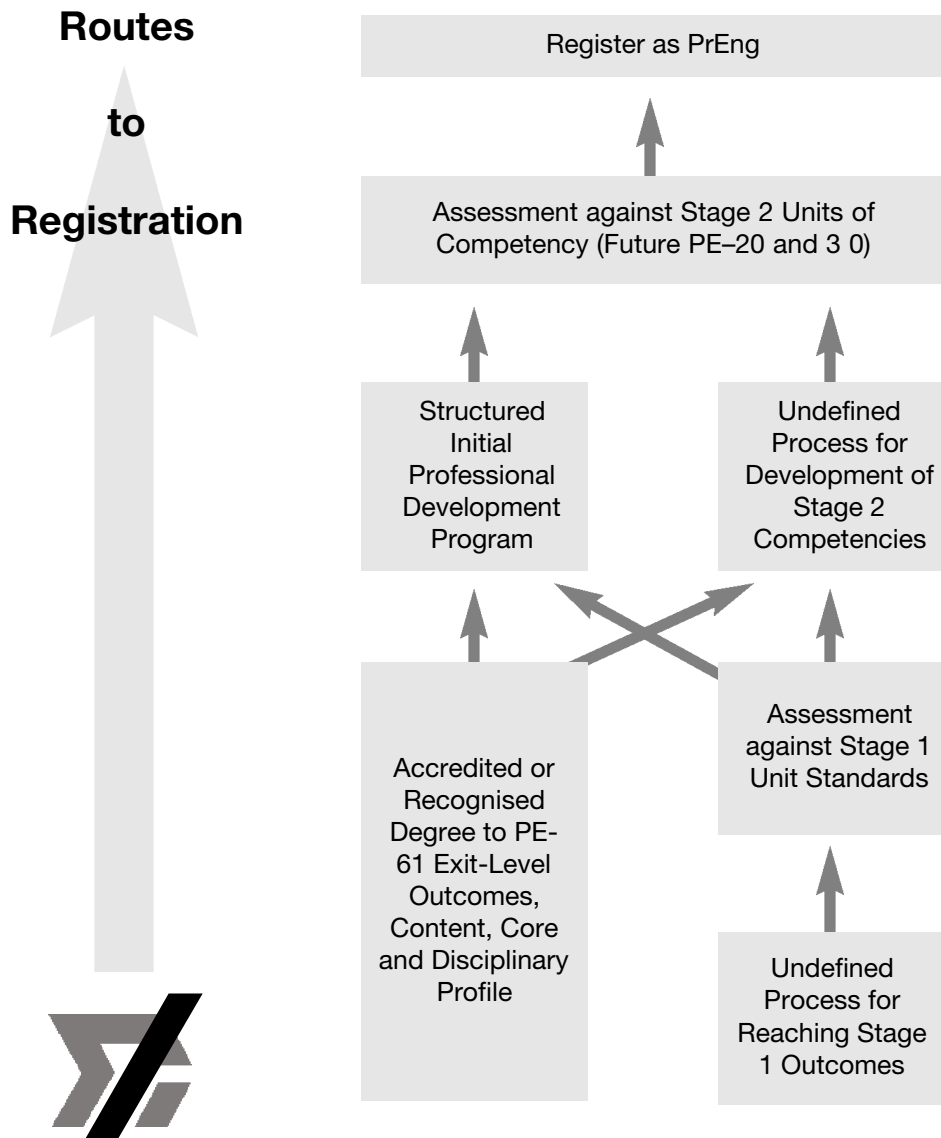
3.3 Multiple jurisdictions

The national system empowers SAQA to recognise ETQAs and places quality assurance of higher education qualifications under the jurisdiction of the HEQC. Simultaneously, the ECSA Act empowers accreditation of engineering programmes. This dual jurisdiction over higher education qualifications is readily harmonised by means of an agreement. Jurisdiction over registration must remain firmly in the hands of the professional body, reinforcing the argument to not regard registration as a qualification. The model described in section 3.5 addresses this requirement.

3.4 Licensing and reservation of functions

Licensing is an entitlement by law granted to persons who meet relevant standards of competence to take defined responsibilities or to perform defined functions. In some but

not all cases, licensing or reservation of functions is granted through registration under the profession's Act. In other cases, the license is granted under another Act by virtue of the person being registered in a particular category. A license is not perpetual. There may be requirements for periodic renewal and CPD. A license may be withdrawn due to contravention of laws or professional misconduct. A license must not therefore be regarded as a qualification.

Routes

to

Registration

Register as PrEng

Assessment against Stage 2 Units of Competency (Future PE–20 and 3 0)

Structured Initial Professional Development Program	Undefined Process for Development of Stage 2 Competencies

Accredited or Recognised Degree to PE-61 Exit-Level Outcomes, Content, Core and Disciplinary Profile	Assessment against Stage 1 Unit Standards
	Undefined Process for Reaching Stage 1 Outcomes

E C S A

Figure 1. Routes to registration: benchmark (left) and alternate (right)

3.5 Model for qualifications registration and licencing

Sections 3.1-3.4 raise a number of requirements which must be satisfied simultaneously if ECSA's system of registration is to interwork with the national system. ECSA supports the national objectives underlying the NQF and will, in the interests of transparency, access, articulation and progression, register generated standards on the NQF. Simultaneously, ECSA has autonomy and obligations under its own Act which no other body should pre-empt. It is therefore necessary to develop a framework in which the objectives and requirements of the national system can be fulfilled and the statutory obligations of the professions can be fulfilled. The following is a proposal[3] for an approach to defining qualifications, registration and licensing which meets the requirements of the professions, SAQA, the HEQC and the various acts that create licenses linked to registration.

The model is designed to accommodate a range of individual progression paths between the benchmark route and a completely undefined route to satisfying the educational and professional competency requirements.

The model is structured around two qualifications for each category of registration. The qualifications are termed Stage 1 Engineer and Stage 2 Engineer, for the professional engineer track. The standards for these qualifications are generated by ECSA as a SGB and are registered on the NQF. Other categories, for example professional technologists, follow the same model. Broad definitions of the two qualifications follow.

Stage 1

Engineer qualification: may be obtained by one of two ways. Firstly by obtaining an accredited degree satisfying the whole qualification standard in ECSA document PE-61 [3] which will be registered on the NQF. Secondly, a set of Unit Standards capturing the essential outcomes and content of Stage 1 will be generated and registered on the NQF. Stage 1 Engineer status may therefore be obtained by satisfying individual unit standards which together are equivalent to the whole qualification. The unit standard route allows Stage 1 assessment to be performed unit-by-unit. ECSA will accredit assessor bodies for Stage 1 Unit standards.

Stage 2

Engineer qualification: The standards for Stage 2 are those defined for competent professional practice in the category of Professional Engineer. Stage 2 is to be defined as a set of Unit Standards Registered on the NQF, termed Units of Competency (UoC). Assessment against the Stage 2 UoC is decoupled from the registration process and may be undertaken UoC by UoC. The registration wing of ECSA is responsible for assessment of candidates. Having satisfied the prescribed UoC, the person holds the Stage 2 Engineer Qualification, a national qualification.

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③ This proposal enjoys consensus across a number of professions and is the working model used within ECSA but at the time of writing has not been approved by the ECSA Council

ECSA, like many professions offers registration at two levels in a category linked to the Stage 1 and Stage 2 qualifications.

Candidate engineer or engineer-in-training:

> A person who has obtained the Stage 1 engineer qualification (by either an accredited qualification or by assessment against unit standards by an accredited provider) may apply to register as a candidate engineer or engineer-in-training. The candidate is normally on a structured training programme under a mentor. The programme may involve short courses. The programme should be designed to develop the competencies defined in the required UoC and to progressively transfer responsibility to the candidate as the programme progresses. The term Initial Professional Development (IPD) conveniently encapsulates this process.

Professional registration as engineer:

> A person who has been assessed as satisfying the Stage 2 unit standards, and who applies becomes registered as a professional engineer. Such a person is then subject to codes of conduct (CoC), ethics and practice as prescribed by the Council. *The Engineering Profession Bill of 2000* empowers the Council to place conditions such as CPD on registered persons.

Licensing then flows from registration in a number of cases. The Engineering Professions Bill prohibits an engineer, technologist or technician from using the appellation "consulting" without being registered. In terms of Government policy, the range of work for which registration is required is certain to increase in future. Specific Acts may refer to registration in a particular category to perform health and safety or other functions in the public interest.

The sequence of events in obtaining professional registration is illustrated in figure 1.

1. Attain the required Stage 1 Qualification to standards registered on the NQF;

2. Register as a Candidate (optional or non-existent in some professions);

3. Attain the required Stage 2 Unit Standards to standards registered on the NQF;

4. Apply for registration, acknowledging the requirements of continued registration and compliance with codes of conduct/practice;

5. Where applicable, become licensed to perform prescribed functions by virtue of being registered in the category.

Table 1: Relationships in qualifications, registration and licensing

NQF Standards	ECSA Register	Statutory License	Requirements
Stage 1 engineer			Accredited Degree *or* Recognised degree *or* Stage 1 Unit
	Candidate engineer		Has satisfied Stage 1, applies to be registered, undertakes IPD, subject to CoC
Stage 2			Has satisfied Stage 1 Assessed against Units of Competency for Stage 2
	PrEng		Satisfies Stage 2, applies, is subject to CoC and CPD
		ECSA Act plus others	Restriction on use of "Consulting

Table 1 summarises the responsibility of various authorities for the qualifications, registration and possible licensing mechanisms in the Professional Engineer track.

5. Conclusions

The components of the evolving national education and training system and their roles and responsibilities are identified in this paper. The nature of qualifications, professional registration and licencing are explored and it is established that registration and licensing should not be regarded as national qualifications. Rather, registration and licensing should remain within the confines of the enabling law and statutory bodies.

A model is presented for an ECSA system of qualifications, registration and licensing that interworks with other national education and training structures. The key element of the proposed ECSA system is the establishment of Stage 1 and Stage 2 qualifications within each category of registration. Stage 1 encompasses the educational component, catering for both the accredited qualification and alternative routes. Stage 2 is common to all routes and represents the standards for and assessment of candidates for registration. Assessment at Stage 2 and application for registration are separate actions.

This paper grew out of discussion documents on a possible basis for interactions between the councils of the statutory professions and SAQA and the HEQC [4,5]. Subsequently, the model was expanded to guide the development of ECSA's registration system. While this framework has been prepared by ECSA, it is believed to be applicable in many professions.

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Points of clarification

- The engineering profession is a statutory body and has a legally enforceable code of conduct. Other professions such as the chartered accountants, are not subject to the same code of conduct. In cases of misrepresentation or misconduct, it is recorded on the National Learner's Records Database (NLRD) and the professional body concerned must indicate to SAQA where the option of publication is to be exercised. As yet there are no legal requirements for publication or non-publication regarding non-statutory bodies and this is obviously an area that needs to be looked at.

- ECSA is looking at licensing first, then registration. Licensing follows a written examination, which per se has nothing to do with registration. ECSA registration itself is voluntary.

- Terminology often presents problems of clarity and certain terms, such as *registration* and *accreditation* will need to be defined very clearly, specifically in terms of the concepts they are linked to.

Summary

This session highlighted the fact that there are a number of structures and mechanisms in place that have been set up or are being set up with a view to facilitating consultation to occur within any number of sectors. These consultations surround issues such as:

- How to go about articulation; and

- How structures can bring about harmonisation in terms of accreditation.

SESSION 3: THE PRINCIPLE OF PROVIDER ACCREDITATION THROUGH ONE ETQA AND WAYS OF ENSURING QUALITY PROVISIONING ACROSS SECTORS

MS S MOKHOBO-NOMVETE

The SAQA model for the accreditation of providers by ETQAs:

The SAQA Act of 1995 mandates SAQA to accord accreditation and set up quality assurance. The past six months, however, have been characterised by a number of activities geared towards "harmonisation" of accreditation to coin a phrase from Professor Hanrahan.

SAQA has held a number of meetings and workshops during this period. Some, such as the one which convened the CHE and professional bodies at a single meeting, were important. Others have been sector-specific meetings where we brought together the stakeholders within a specific sector – such as the security sector or the health and welfare sector. The aim was to get all parties together to discuss issues such as harmonisation, finding ways of working within the sector and how to implement the quality assurance process. The single most important issue to emerge from all these meetings revolves around the issue of legislation.

Dealing with legislation

We have found ways of using legislation as a facilitating tool, rather than as an obstruction. Methods have also been devised to ensure that all the different bodies which have an interest in quality education and training have a place in the sun: the NQF sun. The NQF is about quality and all stakeholders interested in ensuring quality throughout the system, now realise that they have a place and a role to play in the NQF. That role includes standard setting through to provisioning and quality assurance of that provisioning.

SAQA has found that issues relating to duplication and overlap become a reality when looking at actual or specific standards or qualifications, rather than when merely surveying the scope or area of work.

At one point the perception arose that being an ETQA was the ultimate. Bodies are now starting to take a step back to re-examine their historical role in respect of inputs and quality assurance. This shift has resulted in a re-evaluation of how that historic experience and capacity can contribute towards the NQF.

Financial viability is another focal point as it became a determinant of whether it was feasible for a given body to make a specific input into the NQF. This issue was one of the determining factors behind the Bank SETA/IOB agreement. Professor Hanrahan has referred to the relationship between the HEQC and ECSA as a developing delegation model. Such factors have compelled the IMM to take a specific route to enable it to make its contribution towards the NQF.

Another interesting case in point was the PAAB/ SAICA agreement, in terms of which PAAB withdrew its application as an ETQA. The PAAB has indicated that it will make an input in the standards setting process because it deems it important in terms of goals relating to practical competence. They will leave the quality assurance of the CA qualifications to SAICA because that is where it belonged historically. Experience has shown that legislation pertaining to the PAAB and SAQA are not contradictory. The PAAB continues and will continue to exercise its principal function of ensuring quality and ethical practice.

Accreditation regulations

The ETQA regulations stipulate that a provider should be accredited by a primary focus or single ETQA. In cases where one provider has a wide range of qualifications and standards, that provider may have an extension of that accreditation from another ETQA, but through its primary focus ETQA. This regulation has resulted in the emergence of many questions regarding possible approaches to solving issues of accreditation. These are preliminary ideas which we will hopefully be able to expound in greater detail in due course. In a sense it is about how to operationalise the model – the provider accreditation through one ETQA – and extension of that occurring through the primary focus ETQA.

Regarding the issue of certification to a provider, even if it is endorsed by another ETQA, for something outside the primary focus of the principal ETQA we have to go back to what options we had before the decision was taken to have a provider/ETQA relationship. We could have a situation where a provider has relationships with a whole number of ETQAs, resulting in multiple accreditations. The problem with multiple accreditations and the rationale behind dispensing with it relates to when people make a shambles of one or two of the accreditations but carry on regardless with others. Poor provision therefore continues.

It is the responsibility of the individual ETQA as the primary focus, to ensure that subordinate standards are clearly defined in extensions and endorsements it agrees to with secondary focus ETQAs.

The key features of the accreditation model are:

1. A provider is accredited once it has been registered under relevant legislation. Currently, the one form of **registration** that is associated with accreditation pertains to DoE legislation: higher education acts, the FET Act and the SA Schools Act. These acts refer to providers that offer whole qualifications. [In terms of SAQA regulations, a whole or full qualification is a certificate which has a minimum of 120 credits.]

2. A provider is **accredited for a specified set of standards and qualifications** that are registered on the NQF.

3. The provider is accredited by one ETQA in terms of the ETQAs own primary focus, that is the specified set of standards and qualifications registered on the NQF.

4. Where a provider is offering standards and qualifications that are not the primary focus of its ETQA, it may seek accreditation for extension which must be done through its ETQA. An example would be the Escom training centre where ABET Standards are offered which may not necessarily be the primary focus of the ISETT SETA, which deals with this specific sector.

What are the frequently asked questions?

Registration and accreditation

1. Do all providers that offer whole qualifications, including company training centres, have to seek registration with the DoE? The SA Airways training centre is an example of this group.

2. What about providers who do not offer whole qualifications? How do they attain registration?

3. How do workplace learning sites attain registration? An example would be accountancy firms currently accredited by SAICA as learning sites for CA qualifications.

4. Is DoE legislation the only means of attaining registration?

Accountability for extension of accreditation

1. Which ETQA does the provider pay for quality assurance services?

2. Which ETQA issues the accreditation certificate?

3. Which ETQA manages and administers the extension of accreditation?

4. Which ETQA does the evaluation, monitoring and auditing of the provider?

5. To which ETQA does the provider report on the extension of standards and qualifications?

6. Which ETQA reports to SAQA on those standards and qualifications that are affected by the extension?

Possible solutions

The following are likely solutions in addressing some of the problems listed above. Any comments or contributions would be most welcome.

Regarding the accreditation and registration a solution could be that perhaps registration needs to be defined so as to include regulations under acts other than DoE legislation.

One would imagine for instance that the SAA Training Centre or any other pilot training centre would be registered in terms of the Civil Aviation Authority Act.

What SAQA therefore needs to do is spell out what registration means so that it encompasses compulsory registration under all legislation. Attaining registration for providers who do not offer whole courses is an issue that needs to be looked at. Primarily the definition of registration needs to incorporate short courses into the system.

Currently company or sector-specific training centres do not have to seek registration with the DoE if they can provide evidence of registration covered by other acts.

Another suggestion that has been mooted from time to time, relates to a type of one-stop shop where the primary ETQA does everything. ETQA regulations actually do contain provisions pertaining to issues such as financial viability and management capacity.

Accountability

In terms of final accountability, the suggestion is that the primary ETQA should have the final accountability and that it should manage and administer the extension of accreditation. Where two ETQAs are involved, they would naturally have to agree on the framework for their collaboration or partnership. Such collaboration could mean that:
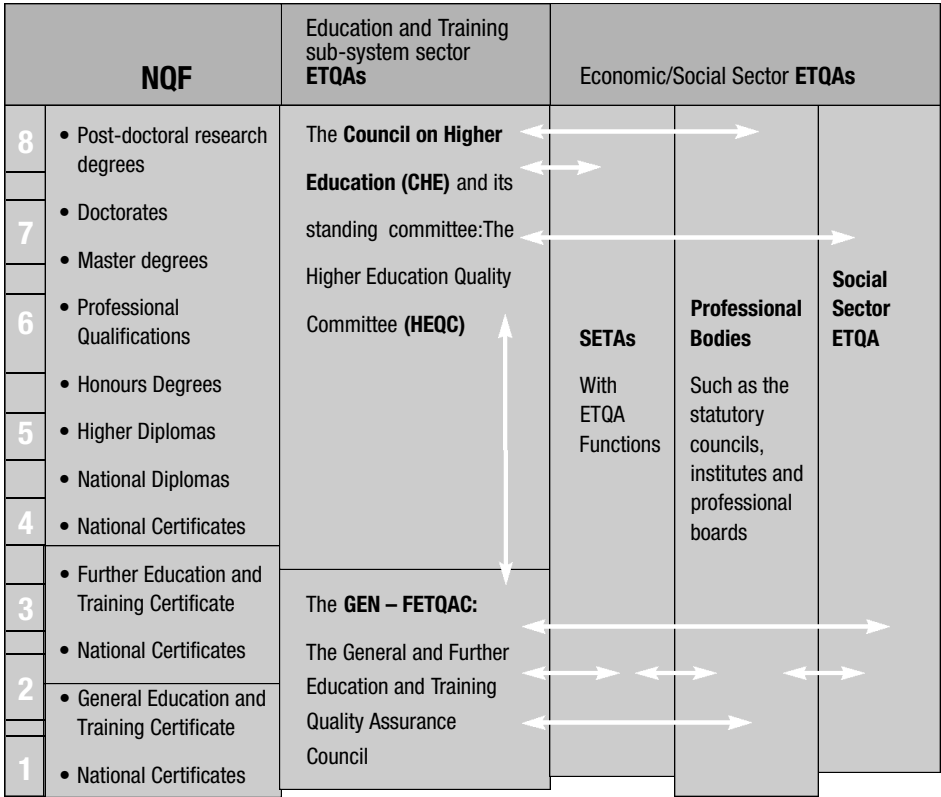
- The provider would pay its primary focus ETQA for quality assurance services;

- The primary focus ETQA would issue the accreditation certification that has the endorsement of the other or secondary ETQA;

- In terms of the framework of partnership and collaboration, the two ETQAs could have discussions about how that money is to be utilised. The ETQA of primary focus would issue the accreditation certificate, but with an endorsement signifying approval by the secondary ETQA;

- The extension ETQA would evaluate, monitor and audit the provider. However, this would be under the management and co-ordination of the primary ETQA;

- The provider reports to its primary ETQA; and

- The primary ETQA reports to SAQA on all standards and qualifications delivered by its providers, including the ones affected by extended accreditation. It would also submit information to its partner ETQA on the standards and qualifications affected by the extension. This somewhat report-laden option sounds like a burden providers, whose primary function is to facilitate learning, could in all likelihood do without.

Ms S Mokhobo-Nomvete is director of quality assurance at SAQA

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING: MS D HAMILTON

Our point of departure is the SAQA criteria and guidelines for ETQAs which refer to the notion of contractual partnerships among equals to deal with the operational principle of maximum coherence and minimum duplication. That should always be the point of departure.

NQF		Education and Training sub-system sector **ETQAs**	Economic/Social Sector **ETQAs**		
8	• Post-doctoral research degrees	The **Council on Higher Education (CHE)** and its standing committee:The Higher Education Quality Committee **(HEQC)**			
7	• Doctorates				
	• Master degrees				**Social Sector ETQA**
6	• Professional Qualifications		**SETAs** With ETQA Functions	**Professional Bodies** Such as the statutory councils, institutes and professional boards	
5	• Honours Degrees				
	• Higher Diplomas				
	• National Diplomas				
4	• National Certificates				
3	• Further Education and Training Certificate	The **GEN – FETQAC:** The General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Council			
	• National Certificates				
2	• General Education and Training Certificate				
1	• National Certificates				

◄———► Indicates a partnership,contractual agreement between ETQAs

The diagram is based on SAQAs view of the NQF structure and a number of likely cross-sectoral partnerships or contractual agreements between ETQAs and/or professional bodies. These relationships will need to be formed if the NQF is going to work.

When working on a Memorandum of Understanding, the first step is to look at what is happening within your sector. Identify the role players in your sector.
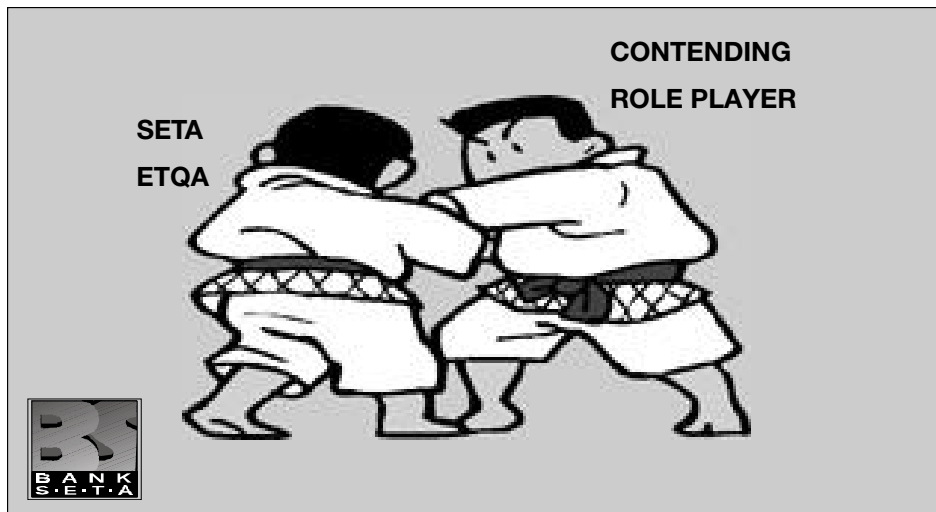
Unlike the depiction, this should not resemble a battle zone with contending role players (ETQAs, professional body ETQAs, the ETQAs of professional bodies not registered as ETQAs and the band ETQAs) fighting to defend their respective territories against what they perceive as a contending role player. In our experience, reality does not match this perception.

Even though the Bank Seta and the IOB have often been cited as examples of a complex issue of contention, it was in fact a simple issue to resolve. Before the sector's application for accreditation to SAQA was presented, the relationship between the Bank SETA ETQA and the proposed IOB ETQA was resolved and the division of responsibilities was established. In the case of the Bank SETA it was a simple matter of consultation between two parties.

FASSET, however, is a different matter as it has far more role-players within its sector. [FASSET stands for Financial and Accounting Services SETA]. For example there is SAICA which is a professional body with statutory powers, but then there are also a number of professional bodies which are not registered as ETQAs. So at the end of the day consultation will lead towards demarcation of the specific fields each of these bodies will have jurisdiction over.

The second step is to identify your overlaps and then to demarcate your sub-fields. Following that you have your actual process of consultation. Another area for a Memorandum of Understanding will be across sectors. This issue was addressed by the

previous speaker. Once again you identify your need. If we take banking as an example, the point of departure would be to recognise that banking is multidisciplinary: We do not deal only with banking, but also with issues such as:

• Security;

• Health services; and

• Catering.

This serves as an illustration of the number of sectors the Bank SETA would have to incorporate in its setting of standards.

Regarding the relationship between ETQAs and professional body ETQAs, there is a need for an understanding between the Bank SETA ETQA and SAICA, who is responsible for the Chartered Accountants, who in turn work in banks. Again, it all boils down to a process of consultation.

Once the specific need has been identified, the next step would be to look at the unit standards which are required from other fields and finally one will have to look at the delegated functions. When it comes to the band ETQAs and the universities and technikons in particular, one would also need to clarify the issues of articulation and mobility. Theoretically one could start with a national banking certificate at level 2 and move from there up the learning pathway to eventually gain access to a university. This is the progression earlier referred to in **From sweeper to engineer.**

When it comes to cross-sectoral relationships, the Bank SETA sees itself as a gate-keeper. The providers are all beyond the gate, while other SETAs, the professional bodies, the statutory councils, the HEQC and GEN-FET QA are all on this side of the gate. In the
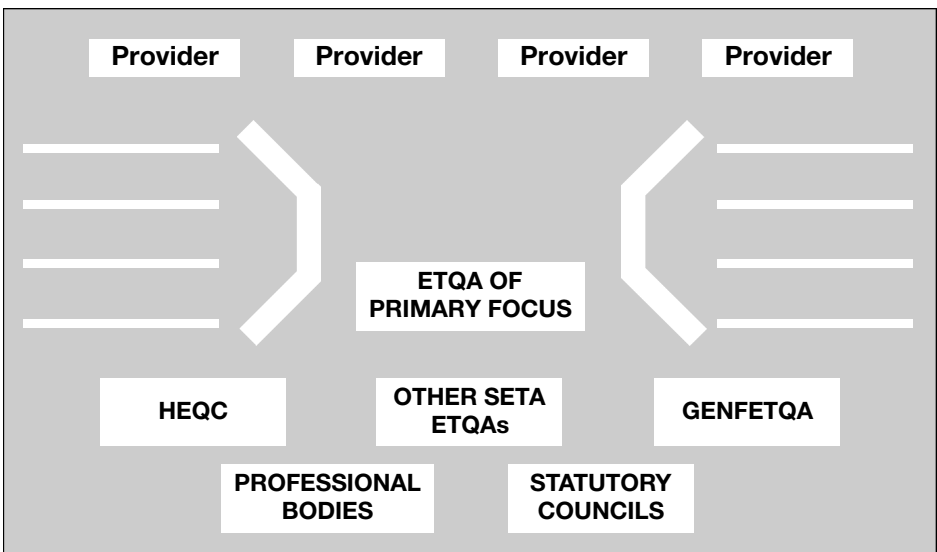
banking sector, the majority of providers are largely within the organisations, so it would not be feasible for them to have direct access on matters such as quality management with each and every bank: They would rather work through the offices or gate of the Bank SETA. The SETA would therefore negotiate agency agreements and such like.

Common features of a Memorandum of Understanding

Thus far three Memoranda of Understanding have come into existence: the Mining Qualification Authority, which is a generic one, the Bank SETA memorandum with the IOB and the FASSET-SAICA memorandum. The common features of a generic model include:

• Start with a definition of terms/terminology so that everybody starts from the same place. Task teams are inclined to use terms very loosely, which could result in a great deal of confusion. Mention has already been made of the terms registration and accreditation.

• Your introduction to the process: give an outline of what has already been achieved and state that it is a joint initiative founded on a process of consultation and explain briefly how you go about it.

• The purpose of the memorandum: State what its intention is and then set out the mode of operation that you intend following.

• The items of agreement: the very first one there would be the participating bodies, for example between FASSET and SAICA, or between the Bank SETA and the Police, Private security, Legal and Correctional Services SETA (POSLEC), which is required because of the security situation.

• What the FASSET model has done is to have an agreement with agency for delegated functions and the following is a fairly generic list of the functions (chose whichever ones are suitable and exclude the others):

a) The accreditation of providers so that if FASSET says "we will recognise accreditation by SAICA";

b) The promotion of quality;

c) The monitoring of quality assurance;

d) Evaluation of assessment and facilitation of moderation among constituent providers;

e) Recommendation of new standards;

f) Database maintenance;

g) Submission of reports;

h) Registration of learners;

i) Registration of assessors;

j) Certification of learners; and

k) Learnerships (which will play an increasingly greater role in the coming year).

- Learning pathways and progression routes would be next and these address issues of articulation and mobility.

- The process for quality assurance.

- Parties already accredited by SAQA and the quality assurance functions pertinent to assessment.

- The issuing of certificates in respect of those standards in the custody of the agent.

- The financial arrangements. The Bank SETA does not intend charging any fees in the banking sector, with the possible exception of appeals. Many people do not agree with this, but the intension is that the agency of one party is to be seen as sufficient consideration for the agency of the other. The FASSET agreement has a clause in terms of which they may consider fees in respect of functions performed as allowed by legislation. [In view of the Bank SETA decision not to charge fees for services rendered, it should be pointed out that ETQA regulations state that ETQAs may levy fees for services rendered, but they are not compelled to do so.]

- Rules and procedures for collaboration.

- Provision for emerging national and sector developments so that the agreement may be amended or added to.

How does the Memorandum of Understanding work in practice?

The answer to the question is that we simply do not know yet. These are still early days, but we all recognise that there is a need for these partnerships which are equal, clearly defined and clearly understood.

The Bank SETA sees partnerships as important in ensuring that the learning pathways are smooth. Various ETQAs are at various stages of development, thus the partnerships to be formed will be dependent on the identification of needs and will emerge piecemeal, rather than upfront.

Ms Daphne Hamilton is quality assurance manager of the Bank SETA

THE HEQC AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: DR M SINGH

This outline is not so much about a model, which is still in a state of evolution, but rather a status report as to where the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) is and some of its intentions and plans.

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) is a statutory body established in 1997 to advise the Minister of Education on all matters pertaining to higher education. It has one operational responsibility, which is to establish and run a quality assurance system for higher education. This is to be achieved through a permanent subcommittee, known as the HEQC.

The Higher Education Act stipulates that the HEQC shall:

• promote quality assurance;

• audit the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions; and

• accredit programmes of higher education.

Some 18 months ago the CHE established an interim HEQC to prepare a founding document. This document was then circulated to a variety of stakeholders: All higher education institutions, all SETAs, all professional councils, all national student organisations, all national staff organisations – in fact everyone that the DoE could think of. The responses were taken on board and a final version was presented and ratified at the CHE meeting of 11 October. Interested parties can obtain full details of the founding document via the CHE website at www.education.pwv.gov.za/che/ or the printed version, also from the CHE. References to professional bodies or councils would include both statutory and non-statutory groups as there would be no sense in the HEQC working with only the one or the other category.

HEQC founding document

The key features of the founding document are highlighted in order to indicate HEQC thinking about its work. In order to construct it clearly, the compilers had to take into account what kinds of issues conventional quality assurance bodies in higher education faced in other countries. The CHE looked at needs and contextual circumstances that confronted it so that it could fashion a quality assurance system that would be responsive to issues that were confronting it in a very direct way. The founding document is therefore an attempt to balance the local and the global views.

The biggest challenge was for the CHE to think about a single quality assurance system – one framework – with a common set of premises that would be valid across different

kinds of higher education provision. It would have to be valid for the technikons as well as for the universities. It would have to be valid for public as well as for private provision. It would have to construct a quality assurance system that would take into account provision that is offered in fairly conventional higher education-type institutions such as universities. Also, increasingly, higher education provision is happening outside traditional contexts; in workplace learning centres or in corporate universities. Naturally this has been an enormous and ongoing learning exercise for people accustomed to a very academic way of thinking about higher education.

The founding document looks at quality assurance across conventional forms of higher education delivery and forms that are not traditionally taken on board, even within quality assurance systems in other countries. There is a very strong developmental focus and the circumstances of our country and our history are factors that cannot be ignored. The move towards excellence – i.e. the standard towards which all quality assurance must aim – has to then take on board how questions of redress and equity are to be incorporated in the pursuit of excellence. As a result, there is a very strong emphasis on capacity development.

The document contains a commitment to a quality assurance system that will be phased in over a two-year period, meaning that there will not be a fully-fledged quality assurance system operating in higher education from Day One of the life of the HEQC, but that it will be phased in over a period of time. Built into this developmental focus is a balance between the accountability responsibilities of the HEQC and its commitment to building capacity to quality enhancement.

The model of quality assurance that the document expounds, is a conventional one, again found in quality assurance systems in other countries. It is a combination of self-evaluation and external validation provided by an external agency like the HEQC using peer review. Self-evaluation enables providers the opportunity of evaluating themselves, asserting an opinion as to their capacity and their readiness to deliver on certain kinds of stipulated quality outcomes. The CHE had long debates about the fact that peers should not be thought of in a narrow academic context. Peers must in some sense also incorporate the whole question of users and widely divergent stakeholders. The HEQC will then use peer review panels and a combination of quantitative and qualitative performance indicators.

A definition of quality is contained in the document and it tries to take different dimensions into account. It is an attempt to balance value for money, fitness for purpose, a transformation, both in an individual and at a social or systemic level. All of this is located within a broad fitness of purpose context – in other words, in terms of the responsiveness of provision in relation to broad national priorities. It also makes a very strong commitment to partnerships and to co-operative agreements with professional councils and SETAs.

As the Interim HEQC had little understanding of what partnerships entailed or how to go about giving effect to such partnerships, two investigations were commissioned. The first looked at a selection of professional councils. The aim was to:

- Understand what kind of quality assurance systems and what kinds of quality assurance requirements were operative within these different professional councils;

- Understand the scope and areas of work of these councils, and their qualifications; and

- Establish whether the councils were already developing a view about a possible relationship with the HEQC.

We recently completed a study of 10 SETAs to try to establish exactly the same things in relation to SETAs. What we are hoping to do then, is to use this information to shape the nature of the contractual agreements that we will establish eventually with professional councils and SETAs, depending on the particular areas of work that we have identified as a basis for collaboration. These reports are being finalised. They will include a series of recommendations for the HEQC that will help to shape the protocols, the Memoranda of Understanding and so on. We hope to circulate these investigations to all SETAs and to all professional councils and a range of other role players – to see if there is general agreement about the observations of our researchers about where organisations stand in relation to the questions that we have asked. We intend to have a workshop at the beginning of next year with professional councils and SETAs on the basis of this research. After that we will negotiate on a one-to-one basis.

The permanent HEQC does not yet exist and nominations for people to serve as members will be advertised. The CHE has stipulated that membership of the HEQC will not be on an organisational or sectoral basis, even though nominated by sectors or organisations, but that nominees would be appointed in their individual capacities. It will be a 13-person HEQC which will hopefully be established by next January.

The CHE took over accreditation activities for private higher education institutions from SAQA in July this year and has lodged its application to be the accredited ETQA for Higher Education with SAQA. This application is currently being processed.

Under the CHE umbrella, the interim HEQC has been engaged in the accreditation of programmes of public providers but this has been quite a difficult exercise because the HEQC does not have any established instruments to facilitate this task. The two-year phasing-in period will give the HEQC the opportunity to construct a clear set of requirements, manuals, framework and so on.

The issue of partnerships

During the past year, the CHE has been coming to grips with what partnerships would mean, particularly in relation to issues of quality assuring that which is offered in either the workplace or in conventional general formative educational programmes. The hope is that these partnerships will enable the HEQC to achieve a process which will provide something of value to our country at large. The interaction with the SETAs and the professional councils will hopefully enable us to understand and then operationalise a

conception of quality that goes beyond a narrow academic "ivory tower" focus. But we also hope to look beyond that to the requirements of quality in the workplace. Undoubtedly there will be some hard discussions about issues of partnerships, but at the end of the day we hope to have a convergence that will be in the interest of all.

While the Higher Education Act does give the CHE statutory oversight for quality assurance across a number of sectors, it does not necessarily mean that the HEQC must or will elect to exercise operational oversight in relation to all these sectors. The professional bodies have their own individual quality requirements, regardless of whether these are contained in legislation or not, and such issues will have to be addressed in agreements or partnerships that the HEQC will enter into. The issue of accountability must also play an important role in the formation of such partnerships.

Dr Mala Singh is Convenor of the Interim HEQC

Summary

There is clearly a need for an ETQA forum where clarification can be obtained regarding issues of partnerships or agreements and how to operationalise them. SAQA will give some consideration to establishing such a forum on a regular basis. It should be of benefit to ETQAs, particularly those starting the process.

SESSION 4: QUALIFICATIONS WITH COMPONENTS THAT ARE SHARED BY MORE THAN ONE ETQA; CREDIT ACCUMULATION AND ISSUING OF THE QUALIFICATION; CERTIFICATION AND QUALIFICATION OWNERSHIP

MS A OBERHOLZER

Further issues ETQAs need to consider:

SAQA deems it expedient to highlight some issues needed to operationalise the system. Many of them are not new issues. But we have reached a point in our deliberations where it has become evident that the development of, for example, a Memorandum of Understanding, is not such a difficult issue: We get people around a table, they talk about the issues and then by agreement divide the tasks. The next stage is to put the agreement into practice: "How will you do this and how will I do that in such a way that we do not bang our heads in the process?

The idea is therefore to raise some of the operational or technical issues that need clarity to operationalise a Memorandum of Understanding. Essentially the focus is on three issues:

• Certification and the related issues: Who issues the certificate, how is it done, who pays for it, do learners pay for it?

• Soft skills: Generic skills such as leadership, interpersonal skills and the fundamental areas.

• Provisioning of education and training that does not lead directly to registered standards and qualifications and how to devise a system of quality assurance in respect of such processes.

Certification

When an ETQA applies for primary focus it will be given accreditation for particular standards and qualifications. Associated with that accreditation is the issuing of certificates for those qualifications and standards.

In some areas that is not a problem, but in other areas the qualification requires a Memorandum of Understanding between possibly two ETQAs. If one looks at Levels 1 – 4 where credits for Communication and Mathematics in the fundamental areas of learning are compulsory and added to that there are sector specific standards, at least two ETQAs will be involved. In some qualifications the coverage of the qualification may extend to more than two ETQAs.

The question then becomes how is the tracking of accumulated credits done. Furthermore who issues the certificate when credits are evenly shared across two or more ETQAs? What is the cost of the certificate? Who does the learner pay and how is that money allocated? Such issues may have been sorted out with the Bank SETA which does not intend charging learners for these services. However it may not be as clear and simple in other cases. If one

looks at the experience of SAFCERT – the paper used for certificates alone, in order to prevent fraud, is very costly. These are some of the issues embedded in the certification question.

Ms Mokhobo-Nomvete picked up the question of quality assurance across ETQAs. Questions that may arise, include: "If I am doing a quality assurance for you, who is going to pay for that?"

Another important consideration that needs clarification is the issue of logos, particularly when one looks at branded qualifications and international qualifications. People may want the international qualification logo on their certificate. The protocols of other ETQAs and SAQA also need consideration. It may sound trivial, but the use of more than one or two logos raises questions of feasibility and credibility. One cannot ignore such practicalities.

A very real issue around certification is the question of RPL and integrated assessment. In South Africa RPL is of particular importance in that the pressures for RPL are greater than they are in other parts of the world. Hence South Africans are testing the issues around RPL far more intensively than is evident in the international trends that we are aware of.

The international RPL assessment system appears to emphasise traditional assessment methodologies. The major difference is that RPL assessment happens at a different time from the traditional assessment! So one would still assess Science I as Science I is assessed at university. However in the South African context, it is precisely that method of assessment which is creating the problem in the first place. Perhaps the core of the RPL issue is how to build mechanisms of credibility into it so that it does not become a "back door" mechanism for getting a qualification. ETQAs will have to look at the issue of RPL and how to go about it because in the end it is linked closely to the credibility of the certificate.

Further work in the field of integrated assessment and how it is used is necessary. The international experience has indicated a tendency for credit accumulation to have a task-oriented focus i.e. related to the performance of specific tasks, and the purpose of the qualification as a whole is lost. This is particularly true in the workplace. In some areas people do a particular job and they have no idea where it originates, or where it goes to, once they have completed their part. Integrated assessment coupled with the concept of applied competence, places South Africa in a unique position to challenge the usefulness of such practice.

These two issues i.e. RPL and integrated assessment, are quality issues – they are issues for the ETQA to pick up and give very serious consideration to if they are to ensure that our system as a whole retains its credibility, both nationally and internationally and that our certificates have currency locally and internationally.

Soft skills

There are two versions of soft skills courses: The generic and the specific. For example there are the generic critical cross-field outcomes which include problem-solving courses, courses in leadership, management skills on a generic level across sectors and interpersonal skills. At the moment the fact that there is no clear home for the accreditation of

providers of such courses is problematic. People are increasingly asking: "I want to be an accredited provider in leadership skills: Who do I approach to get that accreditation?" A few SETAs have indicated an interest in looking at that area. The complication arises when another ETQA says: "ETQA X may accredit providers of courses in generic management. However, management within our particular sector makes particular demands. Therefore we want to accredit providers of management courses who wish to operate in our sector." The provider is now caught in a difficult position. There is an ETQA that looks after the accreditation of providers in generic management skills, but the ETQA within a particular sector declares that it cannot use these providers unless they are accredited by the sector specific ETQA itself! However by the regulations, a provider can only be accredited by one ETQA. This is an issue that has already raised its head and needs to be sorted out.

It becomes particularly important when considering assessor standards. These clearly fall within the Education, Training and Development field. However, when assessors are used in other sectors and those sectors want particular emphases, some fairly in-depth discussions will be called for to ascertain how these relationships can ensure coherence. Attention will also have to be given to issues of duplicate accreditation across different areas.

Provision of education and training that does not lead directly to standards of qualifications

This category includes the "feel-good" or motivational courses, workshops where the aim is not to develop intellectual or academic understanding of particular skills, but are inspirational in changing attitudes and ways of doing things. These types of courses help us understand a particular situation and our working environment a lot better and in that way improve our performance.

The problem for SAQA is that while such provisioning does exist in our system, it is not directly related to a qualification or a standard. Nonetheless, people still want re-assurance that this provisioning is of quality. Attendees at workshops want to know that it is not going to be a waste of time and money, that it actually delivers a valuable service. How is this provisioning quality assured in our society?

The associated question is: At what point does the attendance of such courses lead to an understanding say, of motivation? One moves from the experience of the effect of the psychological models of motivation to a deeper understanding of the theory itself i.e. the academic world.

There is an issue that needs consideration to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the provider,which relates to assessment and the registration of assessors. It is particularly relevant in multi-purpose providing institutions e.g. a teacher of motor mechanics in a technical school. The school as a multi-purpose provider is likely to be accredited as a provider with the relevant band ETQA. However quality assurance in the sector-specific area of motor mechanics will in all likelihood have to take place in conjunction with the relevant SETA. The following options in respect of assessment are possible, but specific attention will have to be given to it in the Memorandum of Understanding:

- The providing institution 'brings in' the assessment service from the primary (sector-specific) ETQA or 'brings in' an assessor from the primary (sector-specific) ETQA when it is necessary;

- The providing institution employs an assessor who is registered in the primary (sector-specific) ETQA as its facilitator of learning in this area;

- The facilitator of learning employed in the school is registered as an assessor in both ETQAs. This option may have to be explored more fully, especially in cases where the facilitator of learning is teaching in the sector-specific area as well as in another more traditional area of schooling e.g. mathematics.

There may well be other variations. The point is that no matter which model is adopted, there will have to be a clear understanding of the model between ETQAs and a monitoring of the arrangement to ensure credibility of the system and prevent 'standards drift' across ETQAs.

In reality there are a number of models for the provider to work with in order to give flesh to a Memorandum of Understanding and to establish how overlaps are to be managed. It is not just a question of saying: "I will manage these standards and you manage those". Rather, it will become an issue of jointly managing specific standards within a single provider and making the connections that will make it viable. So it is a question of taking current understanding a step further.

There is a growing demand, particularly from the professional bodies, for continuing professional development and courses to cover new developments within such professional fields and for the standards to be formally registered on the NQF. This would facilitate credit accumulation and tracking.

Continuing professional development is a very new field and some issues still have to be addressed e.g. should such training be voluntary or compulsory; should provisioning be formal or informal; what should its frequency be; how does one go about assessing what would in many instances be ground-breaking developments in highly specialised fields. The issue of continuing professional development in areas outside the primary focus of the professional also needs consideration e.g. courses that address issues such as Finance for non-financial managers.

Conclusion

These are some of the issues frequently raised with SAQA. Undoubtedly there are others within sectors or providers and they all need to be put on the table so that we can start tackling them.

Ms Anne Oberholzer is Director: Strategic Support and Communications at SAQA

CONCLUSION

S B A ISAACS

When we started off this morning, we outlined the rationale for this workshop:

- The leadership role that SAQA needs to play;

- Understanding some of the complex issues that need clarification; and

- Exploring the integrated nature of standards setting and quality assurance, especially in relation to ETQAs.

There are obviously a lot of questions and the devils are indeed in the details. One cannot build these systems in theory alone - one has to be involved in implementing them to see how they work and how the issues relate and unfold.

The concept of a Memorandum of Understanding was thoroughly covered today with practical inputs on how to make them work. The focus has now shifted to how to manage the overlaps. We sometimes underplay aspects such as logos, but they are sacrosanct, particularly to universities. Ultimately the universities will still issue their qualifications under the auspices of the CHE as the relevant ETQA.

I trust that we have demonstrated today that we are trying to work as partners, with SAQA's role being to oversee developments as we implement the NQF. We have always seen that role as one of stewardship and service. In the final analysis it is about co-operative governance as we ensure the fulfilment of our multiple roles, designated by law. The HEQC founding document clearly states that the HEQC will operate under the paradigm of a NQF and under the auspices of the SAQA Act in respect of quality assurance. In the fulfilment of its other duties, it will be responsible to the Minister of Education. Such relationships can only be built if there is mutual respect, trust, credibility and integrity. While building relationships it is important to spell out the implications of our under- standing of the contractual arrangements we enter.

The SETAs need to get together to discuss issues of development, process and the relation- ship between standards setting and quality assurance within ETQAs. In its founding document, the HEQC has indicated that it will consult with the SETAs and professional bodies. Perhaps these consultations can be complemented by a SAQA-led forum of ETQAs, which has been mooted today and which could possibly be held on a quarterly basis. We will explore support for such an idea.

During the course of the various presentations, a number of speakers spoke about the move from fragmented systems to an integrated National Qualifications Framework. The one real danger that we face is that old methods still lurking at the back of our minds may yet come to the fore and create new barriers. This will mean going from fragmentation,

through integration, back to fragmentation. Somewhere along the quality assurance line, we have to ask the critical questions:

- What have we changed?

- Have we gained anything?

- Are we meeting the objectives of the NQF in terms of one integrated national framework?

- Are we meeting the objectives of the NQF in terms of access, equity and redress?

- What new barriers are we creating?

We must remember that quality is a social construct and that what is quality to one individual or group is not necessarily quality to another. If there is no access to quality education and training for all learners, then our efforts are meaningless.

Currently RPL amounts to rhetoric as we do not yet have a viable implementation strategy. It has been employed in some industries and it has succeeded, but this is not yet wide-spread enough. Ultimately the NQF is not only about how many jobs it has created, but about rapid and sensible transformation so that we can make a difference in the lives of the millions of learners in South Africa.

We have two accredited ETQAs and six others on the accreditation route and it is estimated that eventually we will have in the region of 35. Today we have seen that quality assurance is not a dream: it is attainable and there is a willingness to apply high support as well as high pressure.

In their article "The Fusion of Pressure and Support" Barber and Phillips, whom I quoted earlier, address systemic changes in education and training as follows:

"It is our conviction that the conflicts, the setbacks and the disappointments of the past arise from a single, constantly repeated error. Over and over again important, potentially transformative ideas have been placed in opposition to each other by ill-informed, bitter, and heated controversy. As a result, the potential for transformation is lost. The more effective course of action, which is supported both by the evidence and our own experience, is to allow these apparent opposites to work in concert to create radical change. As Arthur Miller, describing Brooklyn Bridge, said: 'the beauty in the tension of opposites, I saw everywhere – the pull of gravity actually strengthened the bridge's steel arches… .' Bringing together ideas that are often considered to be opposites – what we are calling "fusion" – can unleash irreversible change for the better. It is that simple – and that difficult!"

So let us not go the route of bitter controversy, but let us intentionally join in holding the tensions while building the NQF.

APPENDIX 1

Glossary

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
Bank SETA	Banking Sector Education and Training Authority
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DoE	Department of Education
DoL	Department of Labour
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECSA	Engineering Council of South Africa
ETD	Education, Training and Development
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance body
FASSET	Financial and Accounting Services SETA
FET	Further Education and Training
GEN-FET QA C	General and Further Education and Training Qualification Assurance Council
GET	General Education and Training
GZT	German Technical Co-operation
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HET	Higher Education and Training
ISETT SETA	Information Technology SETA
ITB	Industry Training Board
MEIETB	Metal and Engineering Industries Education and Training Board
MQA	Mining Qualifications Authority
NGOs	Non-Government organisations
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSA	National Skills Authority
NSB	National Standards Body
NUMSA	National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa
PAAB	Public Accountants' and Auditors' Board
POSLEC	Police, Private Security, Legal and Correctional Services SETA
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAFCERT	South African Certification Council
SAICA	South African Institute of Chartered Accountants
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SEIFSA	Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SGB	Standards Generating Body
THETA	Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Education and Training Authority