Criteria and Guidelines:
Evaluation of Foreign Qualifications

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

Please note:

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>Admissions officers and Credential Evaluators (a professional section of EAIE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>AEI-Noosr</td>
<td>International Education Network / National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEEQ</td>
<td>Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CICIC</td>
<td>Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoL</td>
<td>Department of Labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAIE</td>
<td>European Association for International Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICES</td>
<td>International Credential Evaluation Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQAS</td>
<td>International Qualifications Assessment Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACES</td>
<td>National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (USA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAfSA</td>
<td>Association of International Educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NARIC</td>
<td>National Academic Recognition Information Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NQF</td>
<td>National Qualifications Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAC</td>
<td>Provincial Assessment Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>RPL</td>
<td>Recognition of Prior Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>RVQ</td>
<td>Relative Value Coefficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAQA</td>
<td>South African Qualifications Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEC</td>
<td>Service des Évaluations Comparatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK NARIC</td>
<td>National Academic Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DEFINITIONS

Similar definitions may be used, but have slightly different meanings in various countries or contexts. The purpose of this glossary is to define terms as generally used in international tools and instruments for recognition, unless the meanings differ substantially, or were created or adapted to specifically suit the South African situation.

Academic recognition
The recognition of (foreign) qualifications for the purpose of further studies.

Access
The status of having the general right to apply and to be considered for admission to a next level of education and training, or to compete for a job.

Access qualification
Any qualification issued by a competent authority attesting the successful completion of an education and training programme which gives the holder the right to be considered for admission to any level of higher education.

Admission
The institutional act of, or system for, allowing qualified applicants who meet the selection criteria to pursue studies in a given programme at that institution.

Assessment (evaluation) of (foreign) qualifications
The analysis and written appraisal, by a competent body, of an individual's foreign qualifications.

Competent recognition authority
A body officially charged with making binding decisions on the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Credential
A qualification obtained by completing an education / training programme.

De facto recognition
The recognition of qualifications aimed at non-regulated professions / careers.

De jure recognition
The recognition of qualifications aimed at regulated professions.

Evaluation (assessment) of (foreign) qualifications
The analysis and written appraisal, by a competent body, of an individual's foreign qualifications.
Higher education (and training)
All types of courses of study, or sets of courses of study, training or training for research at the post secondary level, which are recognised by the relevant authorities in a particular country as belonging to its higher education and training system.

Higher education (and training) qualification
Any degree, diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting the successful completion of a higher education programme.

Higher education institution
An establishment providing higher education and training recognised by the relevant authority in a particular country as belonging to its system of higher education.

Professional recognition
Recognition for the purpose of employment.

Programme (of study)
A course of study recognised by the relevant authority as belonging to its formal, national system of education and training, and the completion of which provides the student with a recognised qualification.

Recognition
The formal acknowledgement by a competent authority of the appropriateness of a foreign qualification to access educational and/or employment activities in the receiving country.

Regulated profession
A profession which is regulated by law.

Requirements
Conditions that must be fulfilled for access or for admission to education and training programmes (or to employment)
General requirements
Conditions that must in all cases be fulfilled for admission to a given level of higher education, or for the award of a higher education qualification at a given level.
Specific requirements
Conditions that must be fulfilled, in addition to the general requirements, in order to gain admission to a particular higher education programme, or for the award of a specific higher education qualification in a particular field of study.

Study period
Any component of an education and training programme, which has been evaluated and documented and, while not a complete programme of study in itself, represents a significant acquisition of knowledge or skill.

Sworn Translation
An official document constituting the verbatim (word for word) translation, by a legally sworn or certified translator, from a foreign language into English.
INTRODUCTION

The objectives of the National Qualifications Framework highlight how the NQF is instrumental in meeting various social needs. A key service offered by the South African Qualifications Authority, namely the evaluation of foreign qualifications, is centrally linked to one of these objectives: to facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths.

The evaluation function is, however, not an isolated activity, but forms part of a bigger picture: the recognition of foreign qualifications in general. Neither the difference, nor the relationship between these two concepts is necessarily commonly known. The Criteria and Guidelines: Evaluation of Foreign Qualifications therefore, in the course of three chapters, aims to do the following:

1 Provide background on the need for recognition of foreign qualifications and clarify what it entails, in order to:
   - contextualise the evaluation of foreign qualifications undertaken at SAQA and elsewhere.

2 Describe the nature of the central (SAQA) evaluation function in relation to other roles played in the overall recognition process and give content to the various links of other role players with SAQA as the national information centre, in order to:
   - clarify jurisdictions;
   - give an overview of various practices for reference purposes; and
   - describe relationships in the recognition process.

3 Document the generic guiding principles and criteria applied by the Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Qualifications and describe the format of its evaluations, in order to:
   - set up a code of good practice for internal and external use;
   - build capacity and ensure a coherent approach at other levels of evaluation and/or recognition activity;
   - enhance the understanding of CEEQ recommendations; and
   - ensure transparency by making all the above information publicly available.

The recognition of foreign qualifications is, per definition, an activity that takes place in the international domain. The evaluation service offered by SAQA therefore recognises and continuously strives to incorporate international best practice.

International recognition practice, as documented in a range of legal instruments and other formal guidelines, has been integrated into and in fact serves as a foundation for this document. This not only ensures that local practice is formally in tune with the existing code and promotes consistency and coherence of approach, but allows tapping into expertise and experience available on a worldwide scale, thus enhancing legitimacy as well as building capacity and professional confidence.
The following major documents were consulted to inform the compilation of *Criteria and Guidelines: Evaluation of Foreign Qualifications in South Africa*:

- Lisbon Convention (1997), including Explanatory Report
- Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications (2001) (which encourages the principles and practice it outlines to be applied equally in countries other than those party to the Lisbon Convention), including Explanatory Report
- ACE tools for best recognition practice, with special reference to:
  - Recognition of Foreign Qualifications
- ANAFSA Guide to Selecting a Foreign Credentials Evaluation Service
- NACES Code of Ethics, Membership Criteria and Principles of Good Practice
- Arusha Convention (1981), as revised in 2002

In addition, cognisance was taken of guiding principles, procedures and criteria as documented by leading peer evaluation agencies, with special reference to the following:

- AEI-NOOSR, the Australian national information center, which was established in 1989 and forms part of the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST)
- UK NARIC, the British national information center, which is an agency under contract to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES)
- PAC (Provincial Assessment Committee), representing the following assessment agencies and other role players in Canada:
  - ICES (International Credential Evaluation Service, British Columbia)
  - IQAS (International Qualifications Assessment Service, Alberta) SEC (Service des Evaluations Comparatives, Quebec)
  - Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation
  - CICIC (Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials)

Ultimately this publication wishes to establish a conceptual framework for the recognition of foreign qualifications in South Africa, so as to promote credible and coherent evaluation methods leading to recognition decisions that are consistent and inter-exchangeable, as far as possible, among various jurisdictions. Working collaboratively to address the many issues emerging from recognition will serve all role players, international mobility as such and above all the qualification holders.
CHAPTER 1

Overview: the recognition of foreign qualifications

1 What is meant by the recognition of foreign qualifications and why is this necessary?

The free movement of students and scholars between universities, which was a normal characteristic of the academic life in the Middle Ages, changed dramatically alongside the establishment of nation States and the emergence of national identities and symbols (including language). The International Association of Universities (1970: 11) describes how, by the middle of the nineteenth century, it had become common for universities to identify with their national situation, which resulted in huge diversity and weakened links across borders. In contradiction to this, the knowledge explosion forced upon academics the need for mutual access to academic work and the renewed interest of the younger generation to gain knowledge and experience beyond the borders of their home countries. Of necessity, ways of assessing foreign qualifications were established and reached a high by the end of that century. The essential aim of this was to create a vehicle for the recognition of foreign qualifications.

In the current milieu of economic globalisation and the internationalisation of education, learner and worker mobility more than ever requires the recognition of qualifications across borders. Qualifications (or, as they are often referred to, education credentials) obtained in the education and training system of one country is still not necessarily known in another. From the point of view of qualification holders wishing to enter either education and training, or the job market in a country other than the one in which their qualifications had been obtained, the recognition of their qualifications usually needs to be taken care of before such entry can take effect. From another perspective, prospective recipients of foreign qualifications into home systems are faced with the need to understand foreign credentials as accurately as possible, and therefore be in a position to recognise these.

The position of a foreigner in a host country and the need for qualifications to be interpreted by authorities and recognized are clearly illustrated by the following e-mail received in the SAQA offices:

"I am currently living in France, but am South African, I also studied at the University of Pretoria and obtained a B-ADMIN (International Relations) degree. The problem is here in France they have a completely different system of education. In my search for employment this has become an obstacle. My question is, in my letters of application, would I be correct in saying that university education in South Africa is based on the UK system? I hope you can help me with this, because here the university plays a major role in the success of an application and because South Africa's education is not known it really has become an obstacle."

Broadly speaking, the consequences of a lack of a formal recognition process include a loss of skills and the negative impact of this on the socio-economic development of the country. In the transfer and mobility ambit, it simply means that the assimilation of a foreign qualification holder into a host system is blocked.

"I am currently living in France, but am South African, I also studied at the University of Pretoria and obtained a B-ADMIN (International Relations) degree. The problem is here in France they have a completely different system of education. In my search for employment this has become an obstacle. My question is, in my letters of application, would I be correct in saying that university education in South Africa is based on the UK system? I hope you can help me with this, because here the university plays a major role in the success of an application and because South Africa's education is not known it really has become an obstacle."
2 A closer look at the concept

*Recognition* can be defined as follows:

- The *holistic* process which facilitates an understanding of foreign qualifications and the subsequent placement of foreign qualification holders for work or study purposes.

- The formal end result of the above process, constituting the *decision* taken by an employer or education and training provider, or any other relevant party, to accept the qualification for a particular purpose.

- The *formal acknowledgement* by a competent authority of the appropriateness of a foreign qualification, which enables the qualification holder to access educational and/or employment activities in the receiving country.

For further clarification, related concepts are illuminated below.

2.1 Recognition versus equivalence

The essential approach in the establishment of the standing of a foreign qualification, by the end of the nineteenth century and halfway through the twentieth, was that of determining *equivalence*. Towards the second half of the previous century, however, it had become clear that the equivalency concept was problematic in the sense of cultural bias and a desire to preserve, as well as of ambiguity. Guiton (1977: 10) alludes to the confusion created by the various perceptions, stipulated below, of what equivalence implied:

- A mere relation between the end results of two study programmes, which may be comparable more easily in principle than in practice and therefore not necessarily identical.

- An approximation of identity between features such as duration, content and intrinsic quality.

Rauhvargers (2003: 6) considers the wide diversity in the indicators determining the make-up of programmes and qualifications and concludes that no two qualifications, even if awarded by different institutions in the same country, can be equivalent in principle or in practice - let alone two qualifications awarded in different countries. For this reason, the major international legal instrument for academic recognition, the Lisbon Convention of 1997, is not about equivalence, but about recognition.

The trend (and as a matter of fact the recommended approach) reflected in a number of other international legal instruments and tools for best practice, is that competent recognition authorities should move away from merely indicating equivalence, to actively supporting and facilitating the recognition of foreign qualifications.

In practice the term equivalency still prevails in the documentation of many evaluation agencies, while others refer to *comparability*. None of these terms seem to contradict, however, that foreign qualifications are compared to local ones with a view to recognising the former.
2.2 Recognition versus evaluation

The evaluation of foreign qualifications does not constitute the sum total, but forms a central part of the overall of the recognition process.

*Evaluation* can be viewed as the process whereby foreign qualifications are analysed in terms of their home contexts and points of difference and/or similarity in relation to local qualifications, or the local context, determined. This process constitutes the function of the Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Qualifications (CEEQ) of SAQA and similar central or national advisory bodies worldwide. Acceptance of a particular qualification (i.e. recognition) is not the responsibility or prerogative of, but is very often informed by, *inter alia*, the evaluation process and the recognition recommendations made by a central body.

Essentially distinguishing between the activities *recognition* and *evaluation*, international legal instruments generally refer to two types of bodies:

- Competent (recognition) authorities (bodies officially charged with making formal and binding decisions the recognition of foreign qualifications), as opposed to
- National information centres for purposes of giving advice and information on recognition matters and of evaluation (assessment) of qualifications.

An important difference between these two types of bodies is that, whereas national information centers offer advice, but do not usually have the jurisdiction of making binding decisions, competent recognition authorities may have in place internal systems for evaluation which lead to binding decisions. These internal evaluation processes are, however, relevant to specific contexts and evaluation outcomes are not necessarily universally applicable.

The evaluation of foreign qualifications is dealt with in greater depth in chapters 2 and 3.

2.3 Academic versus professional recognition

In the sense of opening up a pathway to further prospects, qualifications serve multiple purposes. The table below summarises the view of Rauhvargers (2003: 4) in this regard:

| Access (general or restricted) to higher levels of education and training | Access to the labour market (either general, or to a specialized area, or to a regulated profession) |
| Access (general or restricted) to further studies at a given level | Access to professional training |

Broadly speaking, recognition is sought by qualification holders either for the purpose of further study, or for that of employment. Subsequently the need for recognition manifests mainly in two areas:
• Academic recognition, of which the purpose is to determine whether the candidate can be admitted into a programme of further study. According to the EU Commission (in Rauhvargers: 2003: 5), two subcategories can be distinguished:

  ✓ **Cumulative** academic recognition, (the qualification holder completed studies at one level and applies for admission to subsequent level of studies)

  ✓ **Academic recognition by substitution** (the prospective qualification holder wishes to undertake studies abroad which are to substitute for a part of the programme offered in the host country)

• Professional recognition, aiming to determine whether the qualification holder possesses the sufficient skills and competencies to pursue the profession or career in question in the receiving country.

  ✓ **De jure** professional recognition (either the education leading to, or the pursuit of the profession is regulated by law)

  ✓ **De facto** professional recognition (neither the professional activity, nor the appropriate education is regulated by law)

The distinct difference between the above purposes may render the various outcomes of the two types of recognition different, i.e. there is a possibility that the same qualification may be recognised differently for each of these purposes. Various (national and international) legal instruments may guide the recognition process and different bodies may be involved in each case, as indicated by the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic recognition (for further studies)</th>
<th>Professional recognition (for employment purposes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regulated by:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assessment carried out by:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• International Conventions</td>
<td>• Employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bi-lateral / multi-lateral recognition agreements among states</td>
<td>• Governmental Bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Co-operation programmes at institutional level</td>
<td>• Professional Bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(often as advised by national recognition information centres)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Decisions taken by:</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• National recognition bodies (some countries)</td>
<td>• Employers (non-regulated professions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Education and training providers</td>
<td>• Professional or governmental bodies (regulated professions)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The various types of bodies involved in the assessment and/or recognition of foreign qualifications are described in Chapter 2, with emphasis on such specific role players in South Africa, as well as the relevant roles and relationships.
CHAPTER 2
The recognition of foreign qualifications in South Africa

1 Roles in the recognition process

As indicated in Chapter 1, the recognition of foreign qualifications entails both a process (coming to understand what a particular qualification signals) leading to an end result, as well as that end result (a decision to accept the qualification for a specific purpose, i.e. an acknowledgement of its appropriateness for that purpose).

This points to two types of action, involvement or roles:

- A form of analysis and assessment (evaluation) that informs a decision to recognise a foreign qualification, which suggests the competence to do so, i.e. availability of the required knowledge base (including access to information), formal criteria for assessment (either generic or context specific) and the resources to facilitate an assessment.

- That decision being made and the formal acknowledgement of the particular qualification by allowing the qualification holder to access employment or further studies (which suggests that particular contextual requirements or regulations are in place and have been met).

The above roles could be, but are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Whereas a particular role player may have both the competence to assess and the jurisdiction to recognise specific qualifications, another may dispose of either the competence to assess, or the jurisdiction to recognise. The extent to which knowledge, criteria and resources allow for an inhouse assessment will determine the need for a relationship with an external evaluation partner.

The Lisbon Convention provides a useful model for defining the above roles, through its differentiation between competent recognition authorities vis-à-vis national information centers.

Although there may be a need for information and/or recognition advice furnished by a national knowledgeable body, the above implies recognition (inclusive or exclusive of evaluation, depending on the nature of the relationship with the national information centre) at various levels. The nature of decisions taken at these various levels differs according to mandate, purpose and criteria.

A perspective on the main differences between national centers and competent recognition authorities is reflected in the table below:

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1 Reference made to the Lisbon Convention is made inclusive of comments in its Explanatory Report.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National centre</th>
<th>Competent recognition authorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General criteria based on structural features of education systems and for purposes of informed decision-making by a broad spectrum of users, at all levels and in all disciplines.</td>
<td>Specific in-house criteria based on selection requirements and for a particular purpose such as admission, registration or remuneration at given levels and in given disciplines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credential evaluation as an informative process is the primary (only) function, although it is underpinned by research and results in the dissemination of information.</td>
<td>Credential evaluation is a secondary activity supporting another function (educational, professional and the like).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipped to assess all qualifications in terms of level indicators and to determine comparability.</td>
<td>Usually equipped to assess certain (specialised) qualifications in terms of content and outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General, advisory, more theoretical and intended as a guideline to be refined or applied.</td>
<td>Specific, confined to one context, more applied – could lack academic foundation / insight in broad picture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serves to collect, coordinate and make available information at a national level.</td>
<td>Draws from information available at national information centre; should feed information back for co-ordination.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.1 A national centre for recognition advice

The Lisbon Convention recommends that only one such centre exists in a particular country. The centre should have national functions and responsibilities, unless national policies and structures make it desirable for a State to appoint more than one centre, as in the case of a federal structure of government, or different language communities within the same country, which are represented by a two-tier governmental structure.

The national information centre should have the necessary resources to fulfil its functions, including an adequate number of competent staff, technical facilities and a sufficient budget. The budget must also allow adequate contacts with education and training institutions in the country in which the centre is located, as well as with national information centres in other countries.

The functions of this body are outlined as follows:

- Facilitating access to authoritative and accurate information on the higher education system and qualifications of the country in which it is located
- Facilitating access to information on the higher education systems and qualifications of other countries
- Giving advice or information on recognition matters and assessment of qualifications, in accordance with national laws and regulations.

In South Africa, this describes the role typically played by the Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Qualifications at SAQA.
Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Qualifications

The Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Qualifications (CEEQ) has, since the groundwork for its establishment in the fifties, fulfilled the role of a national information centre and acted as a central thrust in general recognition matters in South Africa and, to some extent, dictating perceptions about recognition, placement and related matters.

The evaluation service aims to inform a variety of decision makers, who are not knowledgeable about foreign systems and qualifications, of appropriate levels of recognition of credentials obtained in education and training systems other than that of South Africa and to provide guidelines for placement for a range of purposes. In addition it provides access to information on education and training systems around the world, including that of South Africa.

The early years

The CEEQ was first established to address the need for recognition advice that emerged after World War II as a result of an unprecedented influx of immigrants at the time. After research by the former Department of Education, Arts and Science undertaken as from 1957, the evaluation function was assigned to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in the HSRC Act, 23 of 1968.

During the first thirty years of its existence the evaluation function catered largely for a seemingly national need for the classification of both local and foreign qualifications, for purposes of admission to study and for employment and salary categorisation, the latter especially in the public service sector, according to a time-based scale\(^2\). Recognition advice was expressed in terms of years of study, with the South African Senior Certificate (commonly known as “matric”, hence “M+”) as the point of reference.

Evolving over time

A gradual, but steadily ongoing evolution in approach followed developments in the field of credential evaluation, as well as educational change locally and abroad. Quantitative criteria such as the duration of programmes decreased in prominence and gave way to benchmark and other criteria of a more qualitative nature. As internationalisation in education dawned upon the world, new and challenging concepts, such as transnational programmes, became a part of the scope of credential evaluation.

The most far-reaching development was brought about by the transfer of CEEQ and its evaluation function to SAQA in July 1999, following a rationalisation exercise by the HSRC and general agreement that SAQA was the environment best suited to house such a function.

Evaluation in the context of the National Qualifications Framework

In support of the principles of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which promote access, mobility, portability, a focus on outcomes and a culture of lifelong learning,

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\(^2\) The so-called “M+” and related systems, such as the RVQ system on which the Public Service Staff Code used to be based.
considerable change has been implemented in the work of the Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Qualifications since 1999.

A dramatic development was the radical change in the yardstick, or framework of reference against which foreign qualifications are being assessed, i.e. the education and training system per se. Of particular importance is the vast range of new qualifications, the status of qualifications which often differs from that of the previous dispensation and qualification levels as denoted by the NQF.

Working in the NQF context necessitated a shift in mindset from the previous time-based paradigm (visible in the evaluation format) to a focus on outcomes. Considering the scope of its involvement as concerns levels, types and fields of education and training, as well as obvious limitations in terms of resources and methodology, it should be clear, however, that the CEEQ is not equipped to conduct in-depth comparisons of content, or to assess outcomes in the sense of competencies (acquired skills, knowledge and values) as such. In this regard it follows the example of AEI-NOOSR in using learning outcomes of the NQF as a general guide. It also gives regard to the legal rights a qualifications entitles the holder to in the country of origin.

Status of evaluations

In line with statements to a similar effect made by a range of other national information centers around the world, the service is of a general and advisory nature and offers considered opinions based on professional judgment, for a spectrum of purposes, but perhaps mainly for general employment purposes.

Evaluation decisions are not binding and take the form of advice to:

- employers for general employment purposes;
- educational institutions for the purpose of admission into their programmes; or
- any other competent recognition authority.

Recommendations are based on a structural comparison and intend to indicate the relative local “currency” of foreign qualifications, but do not imply identicalness of content or of learning outcomes.

The issuing of Certificates of Evaluation does not necessarily confirm the authenticity of qualification documents. Although steps are taken to verify authenticity when documents are obviously suspect, recipients of this certificate are advised to insist on original qualification documents and/or have the authenticity of these verified by awarding bodies. In most cases, contact details can be provided by the CEEQ.

1.2 Competent recognition authorities

A competent recognition authority is defined in the Lisbon Convention as a body officially charged with making binding decisions on the recognition of foreign qualifications — a
definition pointed out to be specifically concerned with the concept of “competent recognition authority”\(^3\)

Furthermore reference is made to the following:

- "Competence" being the *legal power* to make a certain kind of decision or to take a certain kind of action; rather than the *knowledge* to do so.

- “Different categories of competence” or “varying competence”, i.e. the fact that the competence of an authority may either extend to decisions on all kinds of recognition cases, or be limited (for example to recognition within a particular higher education institution, recognition within one type of higher education, recognition for academic or for employment purposes only).

Authorities, which are competent to make different categories of decisions in recognition cases, may be ministries or other government offices or agencies, a semi-official agency, higher education institutions, professional bodies or any other bodies officially charged with making formal and binding decisions on the recognition of foreign qualifications in the cases concerned. In this regard, another useful distinction is the one, made by Rauhvargers (2003: 5) and referred to in chapter 1, between academic and professional recognition.

**Competent authorities for academic recognition**

Academically speaking, the recognition of a foreign qualification is of importance in the sense that the appropriateness of such a qualification to serve as an adequate basis for entry to a next level of study needs to be determined. In addition, there is the possibility of granting advanced standing, subject exemption or credit for whichever part of the programme leading to the qualification is found to be in excess of the entry requirements to, and comparable to a component or components of, the local programme to which entry is sought.

Competent recognition authorities in this area include mainly higher education institutions\(^4\) and their representative bodies, such as the South African Universities’ Vice Chancellors’ Association (SAUVCA) and the Committee for Technikon Principals (CTP).

Academic recognition focuses on two levels of higher education:

- At the undergraduate level the emphasis is on access qualifications at school leaving level and their suitability for admission into initial, or first, higher education programmes (bachelor’s degrees or other).

  Admission is generally regulated by the minimum legal requirements for university and non-university study. Requirements for admission to bachelor’s degrees are implemented by the Matriculation Board or by individual institutions according to Matriculation Exemption requirements as stipulated in the Higher Education Act, 1997.

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\(^3\) This implies that other authorities may be competent for other parts or aspects of education and training (or employment).

\(^4\) Cases where advice is sought for academic recognition at general and further educational and training level are limited. Internationally the focus in the field of credential evaluation is on higher education.
SAQA evaluations are not performed according to the above requirements and are not suitable for purposes of Matriculation Exemption.

Institutions follow the guidance of the relevant authorities as concerns general minimum legal requirements and have a legal right to determine their own admission requirements in addition to these. Additional requirements pertain to specific conditions to be met in order to gain admission to a particular higher education programme.

- At the postgraduate level the suitability of access qualifications is determined by faculties, schools or departments of individual institutions, be it independently by means of an internal (subject specific) assessment or through recognition of prior learning (RPL), or on the basis of recognition advice furnished by an in-house evaluation unit, or by the CEEQ.

The above typically refers to *cumulative* academic recognition as defined by Rauhvargers (2003:5) on page 12 of this document. Academic recognition by *substitution* assumes a prior exchange arrangement between a local and a foreign institution, including the evaluation of the programmes and substitute programme components in question.

Academic recognition based on in-house evaluation is considered to be limited and does not have national standing as such, as this is contextually bound. Hence there is a need for a co-ordination at national level as described in par. 2 below.

**Competent authorities for professional recognition**

The purpose of professional recognition is to determine whether the foreign qualification holder possesses the sufficient skills and competencies to pursue a particular profession or career in a receiving country.

- *De jure* professional recognition, as defined by Rauvargers (see chapter 1) entails the recognition of qualifications in professions in respect of which law regulates either the education leading to, or the pursuit of the profession (or both).

Regulations pertaining to such professions in South Africa are implemented by a number of statutory professional bodies (listed in Annexure C), which for this purpose, and each in their particular field, would be the competent recognition authorities. Evaluation of foreign qualifications mostly takes place internally by means of education committees and professional examinations, although some professional councils consider the recommendations of the CEEQ as a single influencing factor in their processes. Recognition decisions are confined to each of the professions in question and therefore of a limited scope.

A related competent recognition authority would be the national Department of Education (DoE). DoE through its sub-directorate for Educator Qualifications and Programmes evaluates foreign teacher qualifications, according to criteria informed by the relevant legal requirements, for the purpose of employment of teachers in public schools. SAQA evaluations are not fit for this purpose.

- *De facto* professional recognition (see page 12) entails the recognition of foreign qualifications for employment purposes, where neither the professional activity, nor the relevant education, is regulated by law.
In this regard, employers in general could be seen as implied competent recognition authorities, although they are normally not officially charged to make binding decisions of such a nature. A central issue here is whether the skills in question, as per an investigation by Department of Labour (DoL), are regarded as scarce skills and warrant the issue of a work permit by Department of Home Affairs. The evaluation of such foreign qualifications by the CEEQ forms an integral part of the DoL process.

1.3 Other role players

Other role players in the recognition of foreign qualifications, such as immigration or personnel agencies, form an important part of the CEEQ clientele. These are seen as instrumental in the recognition process (due to their mediation role and the facilitation of placements), but not as competent recognition authorities per se.

2 Relationships and ensuing responsibilities

The relationship between the CEEQ and other central role players in the recognition arena, both current and potential, is essentially based on a varying degree of reciprocity of a very specific kind of need, on the one hand, and a position of strength from which to meet such need on the other. Awareness in this regard is a contributing factor.

The table below offers a perspective on the unique strengths and specific needs, based on their feedback, of competent recognition authorities in South Africa vis-à-vis the position of the CEEQ as national centre. The purpose of this is to increase awareness and stimulate the will to build new, or enhance existing links, which will be mutually beneficial and create the necessary relationships to optimally support the recognition of foreign qualifications on local ground.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National centre</th>
<th>Competent recognition authorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extensive expertise and experience in the field of credential evaluation, as well as the security of an internationally aligned credential evaluation methodology.</td>
<td>In-depth subject specific, specialist practical and/or academic expertise in a particular field or fields; the ability and mechanisms to compare content and learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate infrastructure, systems, resources and procedures to deliver the necessary output, as well as a sound commitment and the necessary procedures to review these regularly.</td>
<td>Bilateral or and multi-lateral links by means of agreements and accords, i.e. pre-determined comparability which minimises the need for evaluation of qualifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A central position, which is conducive to impartial action and the ability to co-ordinate.</td>
<td>Involvement, from time to time, in the development or accreditation of international programmes, which minimises the need for evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A strong international network and an understanding of issues in the field of credential evaluation.</td>
<td>Experiences on the success or failure of placement, specific shortages, accuracy of evaluation recommendations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on international education and training systems, including that of South Africa, as well as the ability to access and interpret relevant information.</td>
<td>Information on own programmes, admission policies and requirements, spread of qualifications, professional prospects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National centre</td>
<td>Competent recognition authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships with subject specialists to conduct more comprehensive evaluations and increase accuracy and applicability.</td>
<td>A database and other means of information on education and training systems, and institutions, contact details of educational authorities in other countries, comparability of foreign qualifications, confirmation of authenticity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A better understanding of the market needs, as well as of the various uses of different qualifications in the study and work place.</td>
<td>Soundboarding and communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback on the successes and failures of placement recommendations and/or institutional views on appropriateness of recommendations, as well as on actual student performance as related to qualification types and origins.</td>
<td>Guidelines and capacity building for in-house evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on:</td>
<td>Comprehensive evaluations, including comparison of content and assessment of outcomes (partnerships?).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- foreign institutions, (quality of) programmes and qualifications based on overseas visits, contacts, agreements and the like</td>
<td>Assistance in informed decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- local programmes, requirements and academic and professional pathways</td>
<td>Better and more information on the CEEQ service (also through a regular newsletter), more user-friendly evaluations, faster output.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soundboarding.</td>
<td>Interactive database, benchmarking and co-ordination of recognition decisions at various levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients' compliance with own requirements and procedures.</td>
<td>Needs not known.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from the above that, in the relationships between the CEEQ as the national centre and competent recognition authorities, capacity is available on either side to meet specific meets of the other. The level, content and extent of relationships will be determined by:

- the need of one partner (as is also determined by the availability, or lack, of internal expertise, systems and resources) and whether this can be addressed by the other; and

- the level of awareness on both sides, both of need and of available capacity to meet this.

Stakeholder feedback indicates that the demand for the CEEQ service ranges from very high to non-existent, depending on frequency, size and nature of need, but also on the level of awareness of the CEEQ service and what it entails. There is a general need for more and better exchange of information.

Although the processes for admission to further study and professional registration may draw upon recognition advice as a single consideration in reaching recognition decisions, users may and should take own additional or specific requirements into account and are encouraged to supplement SAQA evaluations with further, purpose specific assessments, accounting for content and learning outcomes. The case study attached as Annexure A reflects how partnership evaluation go a long way to support recognition issues.

A summary of responsibilities, as per the CEEQ perspective, is tabled below:
National centre | Competent recognition authorities
---|---
**Responsibilities**
- The establishment and maintenance of the required and appropriate contacts with other role players in the recognition arena, as well as with the relevant professional bodies regulating certification, licensure or professional registration.
- Deal with applications for evaluation strictly in accordance with the published principles, guidelines and criteria and within the published procedural framework and timelines of the unit.
- Obtain, consider and review all the necessary and relevant documentation and sources in evaluating an individual’s qualification(s), with due regard to the purpose for which the application was made, and refuse to process applications for evaluation without the required documentation.
- Build the infrastructure of systems and resources necessary to fulfil the evaluation function, including the professional skills base, current and representative reference material, a comprehensive database of evaluation decisions, networking partners and support services.
- Develop and maintain procedures for identifying and counteracting qualifications issued by dubious education and training institutions, as well as qualification documents which are not authentic. Provide contact details of awarding bodies.
- Make public, on request, information on the composition of professional and administrative staff employed in the unit, evaluation policies, the scope of services offered and the terms and conditions, as well as the fees charged in respect of these.
- Liaison to know needs, ongoing refinement of evaluation formats to meet those needs.
- Co-ordination of feedback re the experiences of competent recognition authorities and other relevant parties re the appropriateness of placements and accuracy of assessments.
- Explore partnerships with competent recognition authorities.
- Continuously benchmark the service against international best practice.
- Obtain information and build institutional understanding of the service offered by the CEEQ. Liaise to clarify problem areas.
- In the event of using the CEEQ service, regularly check recentness of application guidelines, disseminate these to departments and individual clients. Comply with application requirements and conditions.
- Share responsibility as far as the verification of authenticity is concerned, by insisting on the submission of original qualification documents and/or by directly contacting awarding bodies.
- If involved in evaluation at institutional level, ascertain what internationally accepted practice is and comply with this. Adopt (and adapt to internal needs, if necessary) the general principles and guidelines in this document. Contribute to the refinement of methodology.
- Develop and implement internal procedures for regular liaison with feedback to the CEEQ about the accuracy of recommendations. Make information sharing a priority.
- Explore ways of setting up partnerships, and/or assist the CEEQ in refining models for comprehensive evaluation.
- Make available specialist subject expertise to reinforce the recognition process, when required.
- Make available information on internal matters as far as this can assist recognition of qualifications world-wide.

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5 See page 16.
CHAPTER 3
Criteria and guidelines for the evaluation of foreign qualifications

For purposes of consistency, it is desirable that various levels of evaluation leading to the recognition of foreign qualifications comply with a single set of, or at least non-contradictory, basic guidelines geared towards shared principles and mutual support. Towards this end, this chapter aims to make public information on the guiding principles, procedures and criteria applied by the Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Qualifications (CEEQ) of SAQA. It also aims to provide clarification of and assistance in the interpretation of its evaluation process and recommendations.

1 Guiding principles

In accordance with international best practice, the CEEQ abides by the following broad principles:

1.1 A comparative approach

An acknowledgement of the tendency to move away from merely determining equivalence in favour of an intention that actively promotes acceptance (or recognition), in principle. Assessment is based on the structural comparison of indicators in education and training systems and the features of qualifications within those systems. Recommendations are expressed in terms of the closest (minimum) comparable South African qualification that can be identified, referring also, as far as this is possible, to a particular level of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

1.2 Access to the evaluation service

The evaluation service is conducted in a way that makes it adequately accessible to all holders of foreign qualifications applying for assessment, as well as institutions applying on their behalf. No individual or other party is barred from access on any grounds not related to the merit of the qualification(s) in respect of which an evaluation is sought.

The accessibility of the evaluation service is reviewed from time to time with a view to enhancing this to the benefit of the broad clientele.

1.3 Evaluation without prejudice

Applications are considered and processed without prejudice. No discrimination is made on the grounds of gender, race, colour, disability, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status. The only consideration is the merit of the qualification(s) for which recognition is sought.
Clients are served fairly, honestly and consistently; respecting also the confidential nature, within legal confines, of the information pertaining to their applications.

1.4 Fair, transparent, coherent and reliable criteria

Provision is made for the fair assessment of all applications, according to criteria that are transparent, coherent and reliable and applied consistently to all cases, including cases of study periods (uncompleted programmes). Fairness and consistency of approach and methodology is pursued, even when the outcome of the evaluation does not meet the expectations of the applicant.

Criteria and procedures are reviewed periodically to ensure continued best practice.

1.5 Professional integrity

In addition to treating clients and conducting evaluations fairly and consistently, the staff of CEEQ exercise due resistance against improper attempts, including offers of reward, compensation or personal benefit, to influence the contents and outcomes of evaluations so as to suit a particular purpose.

2 Procedural guidelines

The guidelines below refer to procedural issues as related to clients and do not include the standard operating procedures according to which the CEEQ functions. These are available as an internal document.

2.1 Information

The responsibility for provision of information is shared by CEEQ, the qualification holder and the education and training institution by which a qualification was issued.

Standardised information on procedures and criteria, as contained in the CEEQ application guidelines (Annexure C), is made available to applicants making preliminary enquiries. The information includes documentary requirements, tariffs and payment methods, approximate timelines, the procedure for appeal and the status of the assessment.

CEEQ is also responsible for the maintenance of up to date and reliable information on education and training systems and qualifications, including the South African system and qualifications.

It is the responsibility of the qualification holder, in some cases supported by the education and training institution with whom s/he completed studies in the country of origin, to furnish the required documentation and/or information meeting the requirements and enabling CEEQ to consider an evaluation.

Providing appropriate information integrally includes the obligation to provide such information in good faith, i.e., to provide correct and truthful information, and not to wilfully omit any relevant information or to provide false or misleading information.
2.2 Processing time and delay

Considering the some international time frames of four months, evaluation results are made within more than reasonable time limits. Various options for processing time ranging from five to thirty working days, which are linked to additional fees for prioritisation, are specified upfront together with terms and conditions. Applications are processed according to priority paid for and, in these categories, on a first-come-first-serve basis. Processing time is calculated from such time that all the necessary information, documentation and payment in respect of a particular case have been provided.

In cases where a substantial delay is expected, for example when more information is requested from the country of origin, clients are informed to this effect. The CEEQ has no control over response time, but makes every effort to ensure that contact is established in the most effective way.

2.3 Fees

The fees charged for evaluation are kept as low as possible in order not to constitute a barrier. As the service is self-funded, the cost structure is aimed at recovery of costs, but it is not at gain or profit.

A comprehensive fee structure is made available on request and is included in the application guidelines, which are contained as current tariffs in Annexure C. Fees are revised from time to time in accordance with increased operational costs and with due regard for the principle of accessibility. In the event of a price increase, new tariffs are communicated to regular and prospective clients in advance.

2.4 Documentary requirements

Documentary requirements are clearly indicated (see page 2 of the Application Guidelines: Annexure C).

Copies of documents are accepted, but must be certified (preferably by a diplomatic office of the country in question). In exceptional cases sworn statements may be accepted in lieu of official qualification documents.

Documents are scrutinised for evidence of misrepresentation. If misrepresentation is suspected, a further investigation incorporating verification measures is lodged. If proof of such misrepresentation has been established, an evaluation report is not issued, moneys are retained and the relevant authorities are notified.

Verbatim translations by sworn (certified) translators are required in respect of key/primary documents. These do not substitute for documents in the original language, but are intended as supporting documentation and should be attached to the documents in the original language. Qualification titles in the original language must be provided at all times.

Translations are not required in respect of documents in Dutch, German and French, unless specifically requested.
2.5 Consistency of evaluation outcomes

Unless exceptional circumstances warrant otherwise, similar qualifications should have similar evaluation outcomes. Toward this end, an inventory of previous evaluation outcomes is maintained.

2.6 Right of appeal

A qualification holder has the right to be informed of the rationale underlying, and may appeal over, evaluation results that are not in accordance with his or her expectations with regard to the specific purpose for which recognition is sought. An appeals procedure is available to facilitate this process.

Assistance is, as far as possible, rendered to facilitate the identification of remedial measures in order to meet the requirements of the levels they aim to be assessed at, at a later stage. This is exemplified by an information leaflet advising on the upgrading of Ordinary Level and related subjects (Annexure D).

3 The process for evaluating foreign qualifications

The following steps comprise the procedure followed by the CEEQ for the evaluation of foreign qualifications. A schematic outline of this is attached as Annexure E. As required by other contexts the sequence of these steps may vary, or steps may overlap:

| Step 1: Receipt of enquiry / request for information / application for evaluation | Registration and acknowledgement of receipt of application for evaluation |
| Step 2: Scan documents to determine nature of the correspondence | If general enquiry / request, compile response |
| | If application, continue to analyse documents |
| Step 3: Determine: | |
| (a) Completeness of application | If payment lacks, or documents do not meet requirement i.e. completeness, request the necessary from applicant |
| | If complete, continue |
| (b) Status of Awarding body | If not recognised, inform applicant to this effect and refund, if applicable |
| | If recognised, continue |
| (c) Authenticity of documents | If suspect, request original documents and request verification of authenticity from competent authority in country of origin |
| | If not suspect, continue, but provide contact details of awarding body in evaluation report so that authenticity can be verified by recipient |
Step 4: Analyse each qualification submitted, taking into account:

(a) Purpose for which evaluation is required

(b) Formal regulations such as national legislation, international conventions and formal recognition agreements

(c) Past practice in similar cases

(d) Information / decisions available from other national information centers or competent recognition authorities, or other relevant and reliable sources

(e) Each of the criteria described under par. 2.3.4 below

Step 5: Compile an evaluation report and make available to the applicant and/or other relevant parties, as requested

- Evaluation is accepted as is and supports decision to recognise, partially recognise or not recognise the qualification in question
- Evaluation is supplemented with a purpose specific assessment leading to recognition, partial recognition or non-recognition of the qualification
- Applicant is satisfied
- Applicant is not satisfied, in which case an appeal may be lodged. In case of this, the evaluation is reconsidered

4 Criteria for evaluation

A qualification is situated within the framework of the education and training system it belongs to. The evaluation process aims to determine its relative place and function, compared to other qualification in the same framework, and to identify the most comparable South African qualification.

Qualifications of seemingly comparable level may in fact show considerable differences in duration, content, profile or learning outcomes. These differences are to be considered in a flexible way, but ultimately differences that are substantial may be pointed out and have an influence on the outcome of the evaluation. The overarching aim is that foreign qualifications should be recognised, unless substantial differences can be indicated with regard to the following:

- Learning outcomes, (usually established at the level of the competent recognition authority by means of professional examinations, interviews and the like).

- Access to further activities in the country of origin (next level of study, research or employment).

- Key elements of the programme as stipulated in par. 4.3 below.

- Quality of the programme, in as far as this can be determined.
4.1 The origin of education and training systems

As a direct aftermath of colonialisation, many education and training systems are tailored on, and can therefore be interpreted meaningfully in terms of, “mother” systems such as the British, Spanish or Portuguese.

Independence in such countries often resulted in much scoring and scraping of the original systems according to adapted political philosophies, socio-economic circumstances and the needs related to these, to the effect that current systems are mere hybrids of the original systems. In some countries, the remains of previous eras are more easily detectable than in others, but in each case they serve to provide a means for classification and therefore an overarching basis for comparison. Finding such links is therefore a useful point of departure.

4.2 Status of the awarding institution

The wide diversity of provider institutions, especially in higher education and training, developments in transnational education and training and the opportunism of dubious institutions necessitate that the status of an institution be determined before an evaluation is undertaken.

The evaluation process therefore needs to establish beyond doubt whether an awarding institution belongs to the national education and training system in the country of origin of the qualification. Transnational arrangements between institutions need to be scrutinised.

4.3 Key elements of the programme leading to the qualification

The following key elements inform the analysis of qualifications:

- Ultimate purpose for which the qualification was designed.
- Date of completion. Qualifications issued several years ago may be outdated, but may need to be considered in conjunction with experience.
- Minimum stipulated entry requirement, as an indicator of the level at which the qualification is pitched. A benchmark approach is followed in this regard, allowing, for example, for school leaving qualifications to be accepted as such, regardless of a difference in the duration of schooling.
- Minimum stipulated duration, whether part-time of full-time.
- Structure and type of the programme, including aspects such as experiential learning, research combined with coursework, vocational training.
- Programme requirements to be complied with, such as credit totals and distribution, grading, dissertations, internships.
• Further access gained by virtue of the qualification, whether in full or restricted and whether to general employment, a regulated profession or further education at a particular level.

• Formal rights ultimately bestowed on the qualification holder, such as the right to use a professional title.

4.4 Qualifications frameworks

Qualification frameworks, where these form a part of education and training systems, are useful indicators of the relative places and status of qualifications in their home countries, as well as of quality assurance processes that are in place.

4.5 General considerations

The evaluation should focus on the qualification submitted for evaluation and account for all the relevant published information. Where such information includes reference to learning outcomes, this should take precedence over consideration of the programme as such.

Quantitative criteria are useful in determining the level of achievement reached at the end of a programme, but should be considered as subject to learning outcomes and quality of delivery. The evaluation process acknowledges the influence, for example, of recognition of prior learning, credit transfer, different forms of access to programmes, double degrees and excelled programmed on the duration of a programme.

The purpose for which the evaluation is required has a bearing on the way a qualification will be evaluated. Sight should not be lost of this. The existence of national and/or international legal provisions may require a specific decision to be reached or procedure to be followed and this must taken into account.

Past evaluation decisions, whether made in-house or by other evaluating agencies or competent recognition authorities, serve as a guide. The analysis of similar qualifications should normally lead to the same outcomes, unless a change can be justified.

5 Composition of the SAQA Certificate of Evaluation

Each Certificate of Evaluation contains the following information in respect of each qualification evaluated, unless two or more qualifications are evaluated in conjunction:

- Personal details of the qualification holder
  - Current name (with reference to the names on qualification documents, if these differ from the current name used).
  - Identity or passport number.
○ Recording of the qualification (or period of study)
  - Name and country of origin of the awarding institution, with an explanatory note on its status, if deemed necessary.
  - The indigenous (and/or translated, if necessary and applicable) name of the qualification awarded, or the programme studied, if not completed.
  - Date of the award (or years of enrolment, if not completed).
  - Supporting documentation (or lack thereof).

○ Description of qualification (or period of study) as analysed according to the criteria in par. 4 above:
  - Duration and type of study.
  - Admission requirement (and deviations from this on the strength of other considerations).
  - Field and specialisation, with an indication of concentration or weighting, where possible.
  - Programme requirements and features.
  - Legal rights bestowed on the holder in the country of origin, if any.
  - National status in country of origin in terms of a qualifications framework, if any.

○ Indication of an evident substantial difference or differences as compared to a local comparable qualification, if applicable. This may refer to duration, education and training sectors, sub-structure (preceding qualifications as formally required), content as far as this can be determined on the basis of a structural analysis, legal rights, or any other relevant aspects.

○ A summary of the education and training completed and the qualifications obtained (optional).

○ A recommendation as to what the appropriate level of recognition of a particular qualification, or combination of qualifications, would be in South Africa. This is expressed in terms of:
  - the closest comparable (specific) South African qualification, or if one does not exist, the closest comparable type of South African qualification; as well as
  - the relevant NQF level.

○ Additional information or provisos, if and as applicable. These may relate to one or more of the following:
  - A recommendation for further refinement of the evaluation by a competent recognition authority.
  - The status of the recommendation in relation to legal requirements for admission or professional status in the particular field or at the particular level.
  - The status of the evaluation in terms of authenticity of qualification documents (see page 16).
  - The conditions for finalising a provisional recommendation.
Security features

- A unique reference number and the date of issue.
- Two signatures, the authenticity of which can be verified by the CEEQ.
- A SAQA security hologram with a unique identity number, attached to the upper right hand corner of the Certificate of Evaluation\(^6\).

\(^6\) Planned for implementation in 2005.
SOURCES


ANNEXURE A: PARTNERSHIP EVALUATION: CASE STUDY

Purpose of evaluation: Unknown.

Qualification: Diploma za Zavarseno Visshe Obrazovanie, issued in 1990. (Officially translated by the issuing body as Diploma of Higher Education; also referred to in reference works as Diploma of Specialist)

Institution: Higher Institute of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, Sofia, Bulgaria.

Background: Awarded on completion of five years of undergraduate study in Mechanical Engineering with a focus on Nuclear Engineering. The admission requirement was the full course of formal schooling (eleven years) in Bulgaria, or the recognized equivalent.

The course requirements in respect of this type of qualification usually include a standard component of cultural/dogmatic education. The Diploma Supplement (academic record) submitted by the qualification holder reflected completion of a total of 4025 hours of lecture and exercise hours, of which 795 (20%) in the Bulgarian and Russian languages, Philosophy, Political Economy, History of the Bulgarian Communist Party and Scientific Communism. He also completed a research report.

The qualification was, as is often the case, accompanied by a standard statement issued by the Bulgarian embassy, which states that it corresponds with the MSc degree of English universities. This contradicts the view of the official evaluating agency in the UK that the Diploma za Zavarseno Visshe Obrazovanie is considered comparable to British Bachelor degree standard.

CEEQ recommendation: A first degree in Mechanical Engineering, comparable to a South African Bachelor of Science in Engineering (Mechanical).

Appeal: The qualification holder appealed over the above recommendation on the following grounds:

- The total number of years studied, including two years of study at University of Zululand and a preliminary course in Bulgaria
- The good standing of the awarding institution
- His acceptance, by University of Cambridge, for PhD studies

Appeal process: The qualification holder was requested to submit a translated version of his research paper. This was submitted to a visiting Cambridge professor at University of Cape Town, who evaluated the content in collaboration with the then Reactor Fuel Engineering Manager of the ESKOM Generation Nuclear Group.

The finding was as follows:

“I refer to our letter of the 17th September 1994 requesting my comments on the Dissertation [… by Mr [...]. I have evaluated it in terms of the typical Master’s degree in Engineering at a South African University.

7 Letters issued by University of Cambridge only referred to his acceptance as “a Graduate Student” and to conditional acceptance by the Department of Engineering (no programme mentioned). A copy from a prospectus indicates that prospective candidates for the PhD degree are normally admitted for a probationary period in the first instance, either not registered for any qualification or registered for an appropriate one-year MPhil, Diploma or Certificate course.
“I find that the dissertation is well presented and the candidate has a good grasp of the subject matter. The standard of the thesis is however not up to that of a M.Sc. Eng degree but rather appears to be of the level of what is expected of an undergraduate project. If it is assumed that this is at the undergraduate level then the work is of a high standard.

“For a Masters level I would expect more in-depth work. The dissertation is only 50 pages long and of this some 25 pages are a detailed print-out and description of a computer programme derived to determine the operating parameters. I do not consider that the computer programme printout is a necessary component of a Mater’s thesis.

“I have given a copy of the thesis to Koeberg Power Station for their comments. Dr […], who is the Reactor Fuel Engineering Manager, has read the thesis and he reports that the dissertation ‘…is in my opinion at a pre-graduate level. In terms of the South African standards this type of work would not constitute more than 10% of the requirements for an M.Sc degree, even if the academic content was considered to be at a suitable level’.

“Thus Dr […] and I agree that the dissertation is at a Bachelor's degree level and is not at the level of a Master's degree in South Africa.

**Outcome:**

The legal representatives of the qualification holder were informed of the above finding. The evaluation decision was maintained and a Certificate of Evaluation issued in the then current format.
ANNEXURE B: LIST OF STATUTORY PROFESSIONAL BODIES

Allied Health Professions Council of South Africa (AHPCSA)
Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA)
Financial Services Board (FSB)
Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)
Law Society of South Africa (LSSA)
Public Accountants’ and Auditors’ Board (PAAB)
SA Council for the Project and Construction Management Professions (SACPCMP)
Security Industry Regulatory Authority (SIRA)
South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA)
South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions (SACNASP)
South African Council for Property Valuers (SACPV)
South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP)
South African Council for the Architectural Profession (SACAP)
South African Council for the Landscape Architectural Profession (SACLAP)
South African Council for the Quantity Surveying Profession (SACQSP)
South African Nursing Council (SANC)
South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC)
South African Veterinary Council (SAVC)
ANNEXURE C: EXTRACT FROM CURRENT CEEQ APPLICATION GUIDELINES (four pages)

THE EVALUATION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS

The purpose of this evaluation function is to compare foreign qualifications with South African qualifications and to advise on the level of recognition of the foreign qualifications in the South African context in terms of the National Qualifications Framework. Qualifications obtained at South African education and training institutions, public or private, should not be submitted for evaluation under cover of this document, unless they form the basis on which candidates were admitted to foreign postgraduate study.

Recommendations are intended as general guidelines and are not binding on other institutions (employers, professional councils, education and training institutions and the like). Such institutions should ideally see these recommendations as a point of departure and embark on a further, context specific assessment accounting for content and/or learning outcomes. Evaluations are conducted:

- bona fide, with due regard to all the relevant information available to the Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Qualifications (CEEQ);
- without prejudice;
- strictly according to the procedures, guidelines and conditions outlined in this document; and
- in line with international best practice.

Applicants have a right to appeal over evaluation results. For a review to be considered, appeal must be made in writing and contain substantiating documentation. After submission, a personal appointment can be made in advance with the evaluator concerned, or with the Head: CEEQ, should that be necessary.

APPLYING FOR THE EVALUATION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS

A proper and complete application will include the following:

- Documentation (section 1, page 2)
- Payment (section 2, page 3)
- A completed application form (section 3, page 4)

Please assist CEEQ in avoiding unnecessary delays by:

- preparing applications carefully and in accordance with the requirements as set out. In preparing the application, please make use of the available check lists. Ensure that the application contains the appropriate documentation, payment (or proof of payment) and a completed application form. Do not fax applications.

- making enquiries before the lodging of the application. Make ample provision for the meeting of your own deadlines, accounting for the dosing of applications annually (between the end of November and the first full week in January of the next year) and unforeseen circumstances that might delay processing. Please do not call CEEQ repeatedly to check on progress, as this interrupts valuable processing time. Remember to allow time for postage after the expected date of completion before following up.

- giving clear instructions to indicate whether evaluation results should be posted or will be collected, as well as with regard to the forwarding of these to any third parties. Provision for instructions is made on page 4 of this document. The correct addresses for SAQA appear above, as well as on page 4.
**SECTION 1: Documentation**

**General requirements**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>To minimize the risk of loss of, or damage to original qualification documents, copies of these are acceptable in most cases, but must be completely legible and certified as true copies, preferably by a diplomatic office representing the country of origin of the qualification holder. Copies will be retained for record purposes. All original qualification documents (and only original documents) will be returned per registered mail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>CEEQ reserves the right to request original documents and/or have the authenticity of documents verified by the relevant authorities in the countries of origin. If falsified documents are submitted, no evaluation will be issued, no refund will be made, the designees for the evaluation will be notified and the information shared with the relevant authorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>The quality of faxed/scanned documents is not acceptable for evaluation purposes. Applicants are advised not to use these methods to submit applications, as this may delay the process. Please stick to the submission methods as outlined on page 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Documents which are bound in any way other than with paper clips, or not properly organised, cause an unnecessary administrative burden and therefore a delay.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1.5 Primary and secondary schooling:**

- School leaving certificates/results must be issued by the **official examining bodies** in the countries of origin.

**1.6 Higher education:**

- Complete and legible **academic records/transcripts/subject lists** are needed in respect of all higher education qualifications.

- **Final certificates** must be submitted. If these are not available, an official statement (issued by the awarding body) must confirm **completion of all the requirements for the award** of the particular qualification, as well as the prospective date of the award.

- Certificates in foreign languages must be accompanied by sworn translations into English. Note that both the document in the original language and the translation are needed. This requirement does not apply to exempted languages (indicated in specific requirements below).

- **Postgraduate/other advanced qualifications** must be accompanied either by preceding qualifications, or by official statements reflecting the grounds for admission to these programmes.

**Specific requirements**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Documents in French, Dutch or German</td>
<td>Only documents in the original language can be submitted. Translations may be requested in exceptional cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>Documents to be homologated by the SA Embassy in Angola.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>School certificates must be homologated by the Ministry of Education in Mozambique.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>School certificates to be accompanied at least by the Bulletin for the sixth year of schooling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
<td>Copies of qualification documents (certificates and academic records) as issued by education institutions, certified by the Embassy of the PRC. The names on seals must be legible. Notarial certificates may be submitted in support of the above, but not exclusively.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Do the documents you are about to submit meet both the general and the specific requirements above? If not, this may cause a delay...**
SECTION II: Payment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need (mark one)</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Product / service</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Evaluation: An analysis of (any number of) foreign qualification(s) and a recommendation with regard to the level of recognition</td>
<td>R300-00</td>
<td>Certificate of Evaluation stating recommended level of recognition; processed within 30 working days</td>
<td>Intended as a general guideline, not binding on other institutions. Does not account for in-depth content / actual competency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Re-evaluation: Amendments to a previous evaluation, not as a result of an error made by CEEQ.</td>
<td>R175-00</td>
<td>Amended Certificate of Evaluation; processed within 30 working days</td>
<td>Not to be confused with an appeal over evaluation results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Certified statement: A letter which conveys official information to relevant authorities</td>
<td>R175-00</td>
<td>A certified statement containing the required information (if within the jurisdiction of SAQA)</td>
<td>Not to be confused with an evaluation (1) or a re-evaluation (2). This does not form part of the evaluation process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional payment (only if service / product is required by the applicant or renders extra cost to SAQA)

| 4 Prioritisation of the application: |  |
| Option 4.1 | +R150-00 | Processing within 15 working days | Although due priority will still be given, the time span may increase if: • available capacity does not match demand • additional information has to be obtained • application does not meet requirements as set out • considerable research, unusually busy periods, or any other circumstances beyond the control of CEEQ render delivery within the stated timelines impossible. |
| Option 4.2 | +R300-00 | Processing within 5 working days | |

5 Extra documents to be issued:

| Additional certificate (original) | +R35-00 (each) | Required number of extra certificates |
| True copy of certificate (to applicant) | +R10-00 (each) | Required number of true copies (signed) |
| True copy of certificate (to third party) | +R20-00 (each) | True copies (signed) forwarded as requested |

6 Evaluation of the qualifications of more than five candidates

| +R100-00 (per set of 10, or part thereof) | A full set of certificates |

7 Currency conversion or other bank charges

| +R85-00 | Compulsory if payment is made in foreign currency |

Total payable by applicant (please add up and enclose) R

Payment options:

- Crossed postal orders in favour of SAQA (preferred option)
- A crossed, bank guaranteed cheque in favour of SAQA
- A cash deposit or electronic transfer in favour of SAQA:
  - Standard Bank Account no 010516433, Branch no 010045 (Pretoria)
  - Swift code no: SBZA ZA JJ + account no.
  - Enclose copy of transaction record (stamped by the bank)

8 Handling fees (charged by SAQA when applicable – please do not enclose):

| Refunds | -R25-00 |
| Cancellation | -R100-00 |

On receipt of your application, will we know that you have paid? If not, this may cause a delay...
SECTION 3: Application form

1 Personal details of the qualification holder or other contact person (to be completed at all times)
Title: Mr ☐ Ms ☐ Mrs ☐ Prof ☐ Dr ☐ Other: ………………………………………
Family name / surname: ……………………………………………………………
Maiden name (if applicable): ………………………………………………………
Full names: …………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………….
Address ☞ ………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………..
……………………………………………………………………………..
Code: ……………………… Fax: …………………………………
E-mail: ……………………………….. @ ……………………………

2 Purpose of the application (tick one or more)
☐ Employment
☐ Permanent residence
☐ Professional registration
☐ Further study
☐ (excluding bachelor’s degree study at a South African university. Contact Matriculation Board at 012 481 2927)
☐ Use in a foreign country (background information on South African qualifications to be assessed in foreign countries)
☐ Other (please specify)
……………………………………………………………………….

3 Other contact details
NOTE: *Optional - only if results should be forwarded
* Maximum of three persons / institutions
* Additional payment required (see section 2.5, page 3. Without this results will not be forwarded)
Institution 1.
Contact person: ………………………………………………………………………
Address ☞ ………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………..
Code: ……………………… Fax: …………………………………
E-mail: ……………………………….. @ ……………………………

Institution 2.
Contact person: ………………………………………………………………………
Address ☞ ………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………..
Code: ……………………… Fax: …………………………………
E-mail: ……………………………….. @ ……………………………

Institution 3.
Contact person: ………………………………………………………………………
Address ☞ ………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………..
Code: ……………………… Fax: …………………………………
E-mail: ……………………………….. @ ……………………………

4 Required method of dispatch of evaluation results (please tick the preferred option)
☐ To be posted to the postal address provided under personal details above.
☐ To be collected from the SAQA offices. Applicants will be called on the telephone number(s) provided under personal details above and collection arranged only once results are ready - kindly wait to be contacted.

5 Signature of applicant as indication that the procedures, requirements and conditions outlined in this document are understood and accepted:
……………………………………………………………………….. Date: ……………………………………….

Please attach the necessary documents and payment (or proof of payment) to this form. Mark your application for the attention of CEEQ and
• mail to SAQA at Postnet Suite 248, Private Bag X06, WATERKLOOF, 0145 (address Postnet to Postnet delivers to Postnet Brooklyn), or
• deliver to SAQA at 6th Floor Reception, Hatfield Forum West, 1067 Acadia Street, HATFIELD.

Receipt of the application will be acknowledged electronically only. Ensure that an e-mail address for the applicant, if available, has been provided and is legible.
ANNEXURE D: INFORMATION LEAFLET ADVISING ON THE UPGRADING OF ORDINARY LEVEL AND RELATED SUBJECTS (two pages)

GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION
INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION
CAMBRIDGE OVERSEAS SCHOOL CERTIFICATE
INTERNATIONAL GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION
AND SIMILAR SCHOOL LEAVING CERTIFICATES

A minimum of five subjects passed at Ordinary Level (Grades A-G / 1-8), including English Language and/or the mother tongue, warrants an evaluation of Grade Eleven.

To obtain an evaluation of a Senior Certificate (in its most basic form, i.e. excluding Matriculation Exemption), one of the following subject combinations is required:

1. A total of four different subjects, including three Ordinary Level / IGCSE subjects graded A to C (or 1 to 6), plus one Advanced Level
   or
   a total of six different subjects, including five Ordinary Level / IGCSE subjects graded A to E (or 1 to 8), plus one Advanced Level.

2. A total of five different subjects, including three Ordinary Level / IGCSE subjects graded A to C (or 1 to 6), plus two passes at one of the following levels: Advanced Supplementary, Higher General Certificate of Secondary Education (graded 1-3), South African Senior Certificate Higher Grade, or recognised equivalent
   or
   A total of seven different subjects, including five Ordinary Level / IGCSE subjects graded A to E (or 1 to 8), plus two passes at one of the following levels: Advanced Supplementary, Higher General Certificate of Secondary Education (graded 1-3 – Grade 4 is considered to be the equivalent of IGCSE Grades A-C), South African Senior Certificate Higher Grade, or recognised equivalent.

Each of the above combinations must include English Language, or the mother tongue as a first language.

This evaluation will primarily be intended for employment purposes, but may be accepted by tertiary institutions, such as technikons and nursing colleges, for purposes of further study according to their own requirements in terms of subjects and grades. Candidates should therefore ascertain the acceptability of such an evaluation to the admitting institution beforehand. University admission for purposes of first degree studies is subject to Matriculation Exemption, which is the sole prerogative of the Matriculation Board and not likely to be considered on the basis of the conditions for upgrading as set out above.

Information on lectures for study purposes and arrangements for official examinations may be obtained from existing correspondence or technical colleges.

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Grade 4 is considered to be equivalent to IGCSE Grades A-C
### GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION
### INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION
### CAMBRIDGE OVERSEAS SCHOOL CERTIFICATE
### INTERNATIONAL GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION
### AND SIMILAR SCHOOL LEAVING CERTIFICATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL SUBJECTS (including English Language / mother tongue as a First Language)</th>
<th>LOWER</th>
<th>HIGHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LEVEL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRADES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation: GRADE ELEVEN (11)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation: SENIOR CERTIFICATE (without Matriculation Exemption)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Grade 4 is considered to be equivalent to IGCSE Grades A-C.*
ANNEXURE E: SCHEMATIC OUTLINE OF THE PROCESS FLOW FOR EVALUATION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS BY CEEA AT SAQA

Information: procedures & criteria

1. Incoming enquiry/receipt
   - Register and acknowledge receipt
   - If enquiry or request for information, reply

2. Screen to determine nature of content
   - If case for evaluation, analyse:
     - Completeness of application
       - If incomplete, request outstanding component

3. Home authorities: Information
   - Applicant: (additional) payment and/or documents
   - If not recognised, decline and refund
   - Home authorities: Information
   - If not authentic: decline & inform relevant authorities

(1) Incomplete application
   - Applicant: (additional) payment and/or documents
   - If not recognised, decline and refund
   - Home authorities: Information
   - If not authentic: decline & inform relevant authorities

(2) Complete application
   - Status of awarding body
     - If recognised, continue:
       - Authenticity of documents
         - If suspect, verify

(3) If authentic/not suspect, apply criteria for comparison:
   - Purpose of qualification
     - Date of award
     - Entry requirement
     - Duration
     - Structure & type of programme
     - Programme requirements
     - Further prospects/formal rights
     - Place in home system/own qualification framework

Recommend level of recognition

RECOGNITION / PARTIAL RECOGNITION / NON-RECOGNITION

Competent recognition authority with specialist knowledge: content and outcomes

Consider:
- Purpose of evaluation
- Relevant & available information
- National/international legislation
- Codes for best practice
- Past decisions

Draw on national/organisational policies and information

Inquest, request for information, reply