



CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS
DISCUSSION DOCUMENT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) invites public comment on the revised Criteria and Guidelines document, which was approved for release for public comment at the SAQA Board meeting of 30 November 2011.

Criteria and Guidelines for the Evaluation of Foreign Qualifications were first published in October 2005. The need for revision stemmed from considerable changes: both internally as a result of continuous review of processes, procedures and formats, as well as externally due to new legislation, role players and practices in the NQF landscape.

The document outlines the generic guiding principles and criteria applied, as well as the processes followed by SAQA when it evaluates foreign qualifications, and describes the format of its evaluations. It aims to promote a code of good practice for internal and external use, provides a point of reference for other evaluation and/or recognition activities, enhance the understanding of recommendations made by SAQA and ensure transparency by making all of the above information publicly available.

The document is available on the home page of the SAQA website (www.saga.org.za), under Notices for Public Comment. Hard and/or electronic copies can be requested from sagainfo@saga.co.za, or 086 010 3188. Please note that the document cannot be distributed via fax.

Postal comments should be forwarded to:

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Electronic comments should be forwarded to: ncoetzee@saga.co.za. Please note that electronic messages should not be zipped and should not exceed 1MB.

The closing date for comments is **23 February 2012**. Submissions should be entitled:
Criteria & Guidelines: Evaluation of Foreign Qualifications



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Criteria and guidelines for the evaluation of foreign qualifications

PREAMBLE

1. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) is mandated by the National Qualifications Framework Act, 67 of 2008, to oversee the further development and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and to co-ordinate the sub-frameworks.
2. SAQA addresses a part of its mandate through the work of its Directorate Foreign Qualifications Evaluation and Advisory Services (DFQEAS), which promotes one of the key objectives of the NQF: that of facilitating access to, and mobility and progression within, education, training, development and work.
3. The evaluation function fits into the context of the recognition of foreign qualifications in a global milieu of learner and worker mobility. The recognition process, which includes the evaluation of foreign qualifications, is guided internationally by a number of legal instruments. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) facilitated the development and acceptance of the following regional recognition agreements:
 - Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexico City, 1974
 - Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab and European States Bordering on the Mediterranean, Nice, 1976
 - Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab States, Paris, 1978
 - Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the Europe Region, Paris, 1979
 - Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the African States, Arusha, 1981 (revised 2010)
 - Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 1983
 - Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, Lisbon, 1997
4. The above instruments are supplemented by the Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education, 1993; the Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications, 2001; as well as an array of prominent papers, models and tools for best practice developed by professionals and organisations working in the field in various regions of the world.
5. The evaluation service offered by SAQA continuously strives to incorporate international best practice. Pointers in respect of preferred recognition practice, as documented in the above-mentioned legal instruments and other formal guidelines, as well as applied in the business practice of numerous peer organisations world-wide, therefore serve as a benchmark to ensure that local practice is in tune with international practice that is most widely adhered to. This promotes consistency and coherence of approaches. It also allows South Africa to tap into expertise and experience available on a world-wide scale to ensure enhanced professional capacity, as well as the optimal legitimacy and credibility of the endeavour.
6. Information underlying evaluation and recognition must be updated on an ongoing basis to ensure relevant policy, practice, and decisions. It is intended that the transparency of information should promote collaboration among those involved in recognition of foreign qualifications, albeit in varying capacities and at various levels, and contribute to international mobility of knowledge and

skills. It should, above all, benefit qualification holders hoping to study or work in South Africa. And through them and the skills they carry across, the country as a whole.

PURPOSE

7. Against the above background, the purpose of these criteria and guidelines is to outline the generic guiding principles and criteria applied, as well as the processes followed by SAQA when it evaluates foreign qualifications, and to describe the format of its evaluations. A further purpose is to promote a code of good practice for internal and external use, build a firm foundation for other evaluation and/or recognition activities, enhance the understanding of recommendations made by SAQA and ensure transparency by making all of the above information publicly available.

DEFINITIONS

8. The purpose of this glossary is to define terms as generally used in international tools and instruments for recognition of qualifications. It should be noted, however, that the terms are used in various ways depending on the country and the context, and some of the terms were created or adapted to specifically suit the South African situation.
 - a. "Competent recognition authority" means a body officially charged with making binding decisions on the recognition of foreign qualifications.
 - b. "Evaluation of foreign qualifications" means the analysis and written appraisal of the foreign qualifications held by an individual. *Assessment* is sometimes used interchangeably with *evaluation*, but in South African official usage, the activity is more correctly seen as *evaluation*.
 - c. "Qualification" means the certified outcome of participation in a formal learning programme.
 - d. "Programme (of study)" means a course of study recognised by the relevant authority as belonging to its formal, national system of education and training and leading to a recognised qualification.
 - e. "Recognition" means the formal acknowledgement by a *competent authority* in a particular country, of the appropriateness of a foreign qualification for access to related education and/or employment opportunities in the receiving country.
 - f. "Regulated profession" means a profession where access, education and training, qualifications, conduct and so forth are governed by statutory requirements.
 - g. "Requirements" mean conditions that must be fulfilled for admission to education and training programmes, or to licensing for professional practice, or employment.

PRINCIPLES FOR THE EVALUATION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS

9. A distinction which is often misconceived is the relationship between the *evaluation* and the *recognition* of qualifications, respectively. When qualifications are *recognised* it means that there is, firstly, a process leading to, and secondly, a decision taken to accept that qualification for a specific purpose. The process leading to that decision normally includes the application of relevant methodology and mechanisms to analyse and interpret the qualification, in order to determine its rightful place in a receiving system. This part of the process is referred to as *evaluation*.
10. *Recognition* decisions are taken by bodies that are legally empowered to do so in a binding manner, as informed by a regulated context. Statutory professional councils applying legal standards to register qualified persons for practice in regulated professions, or education and training institutions admitting students to certain programmes according to selection criteria, are examples of such bodies; called Competent Recognition Authorities (CRAs). Often CRAs have in-house evaluation processes in place. However, evaluation is also undertaken, on a world-wide scale, by so-called National Recognition Information Centres (NRICs). An NRIC plays a general

advisory role which includes the evaluation of foreign qualifications to assist CRAs that are in need of advice. These bodies are normally also responsible for mutual information exchange on education and training systems, qualifications and education and training institutions. SAQA, whose legal mandate in respect of foreign qualifications is to render an evaluation and advisory service, is such an NRIC. The evaluation aims at advising on the comparability of qualifications and is not binding on CRAs.

11. For purposes of consistency, it would be desirable for various practices leading to the recognition of foreign qualifications to comply with a single set of basic guidelines. This is not possible, however, as guidelines followed by CRAs and NRICs, respectively, provide for different contexts and different levels of depth. Ideally the processes should be based on shared principles and mutual support, or at the very least be non-contradictory. In order to promote consensus in the above regard, this section provides information on the guiding principles, procedures and criteria applied by SAQA. The section also provides assistance in the interpretation of its evaluation processes and recommendations.
12. In accordance with international best practice, SAQA abides by the following broad principles for the evaluation of foreign qualifications:

- a. Comparative approach

SAQA takes an approach that acknowledges the international tendency to move away from merely determining *equivalence* in favour of an intention that actively promotes acceptance (or recognition). Assessment is based on the comparison of the structures of education and training systems, and the features of qualifications within those systems, with the structure and features of the South African system and qualifications, respectively. The findings are captured in recommendations that indicate, as far as this is possible, the closest (minimum) comparable South African qualification that can be identified. More importantly, recommended recognition is expressed in terms of a particular level of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

- b. 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. SAQA has a fundamental commitment to serving clients fairly, honestly and consistently. All applications are treated confidentially within the confines of the law.

- c. 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. These criteria are applied consistently to all cases, and seek to promote the principle of recognition, while giving due regard to that of substantial differences. Fairness and consistency of approach and methodology are pursued - even if this leads to an outcome that does not meet the expectations of the applicant. Criteria and procedures are reviewed periodically to ensure continued best practice.

- d. Professional integrity

Staff members are expected to act in accordance with the SAQA Code of Ethics and the stipulations of the organisational Fraud Prevention and Detection Policy and Procedures are strictly enforced. In addition to treating clients and conducting evaluations fairly and consistently, all SAQA staff members are required to resist and refuse all improper attempts, including offers of reward, compensation or personal benefit, to bypass standard procedures or influence the outcome of evaluations. Sensitivity to how even *bona fide* tokens of appreciation may be perceived, is promoted.

Members of the public are alerted to the fact that SAQA is committed to operating in a manner that is free of fraud and has a zero tolerance approach towards fraud and corruption, regardless of whether this is perpetrated by its staff or by its clients. They are also urged to

refrain from any behaviour aimed at compromising SAQA staff or processes; and to immediately report any irregular or untoward behaviour by staff.

With regard to delivery, staff members are bound by minimum standards that govern respectful behaviour, deadlines and quality.

e. Consistency of evaluation outcomes

Unless exceptional circumstances warrant otherwise, similar qualifications should have similar evaluation outcomes. To this end, an inventory of previous evaluation outcomes is maintained in an electronic database in respect of which data is cleaned on an ongoing basis. Designated DFQEAS staff members are responsible for the maintenance of up-to-date and reliable information on foreign education and training systems and qualifications and consider such information when exercising their professional judgement.

f. Access to the evaluation service

The evaluation service is conducted in a way that makes it as accessible as possible to all holders of foreign qualifications applying for the service, as well as to institutions applying on their behalf. No individual or other party is barred from access on any grounds not related to the criteria applied to evaluate the qualification(s) as contained in this document. The accessibility of the evaluation service is reviewed from time to time with a view to its improvement. To increase physical access, SAQA has implemented an on-line application system which can be accessed by following the relevant link on the homepage of the SAQA website (www.saqqa.org.za).

g. Right of appeal

Qualification holders have the right to be informed of the rationale underlying, and may appeal against, evaluation results that are not in accordance with their expectations. An appeals procedure is in place to facilitate this process.

CRITERIA FOR THE EVALUATION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS

13. A qualification is situated within the framework of the education and training system within which it belongs. The evaluation process aims to determine the relative positioning of the qualification and its function, in relation to other qualifications in the same framework, and then to identify the most comparable South African qualification. The programmes leading to qualifications at seemingly comparable levels 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 may 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 respect to any of the following:

- Academic and professional legal rights conferred by a qualification in the country of origin.
- Access to further activities offered by the qualification in the country of origin (next level of study, research or employment).
- Key elements of the programme leading to the qualification as stipulated below.
- Quality of the programme, in as far as this can be determined.

14. The following criteria apply to the evaluation of foreign qualifications:

a. The origin of education and training systems

As a result of colonialism, many education and training systems are tailored on, and can therefore be interpreted meaningfully in terms of, "mother" systems such as the British, French, Spanish or Portuguese systems. The achievement of independence by colonised countries often resulted in adaptation of the original systems. As a result, current systems can be complex hybrids of the original systems and local developments. In some countries, the remains of previous eras are more easily detectable than in others, but in each case

constituent systems serve to provide means for classification and therefore overarching bases for comparison. Finding such links is therefore a very useful point of departure.

b. Status of awarding institutions

It is vitally important to determine the status of the awarding institution concerned as a first step in evaluation of each qualification. The wide diversity of provider institutions in higher education and training, recent developments in transnational education and training and the opportunism of dubious institutions and their exploitation of learners make this step a crucially important one. The evaluation process 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. For the credibility of evaluations it is of the utmost importance that transnational arrangements between institutions be scrutinised.

c. Key elements of the programme leading to the qualification

- i. *Purpose* for which the qualification was designed.
- ii. *Date of completion* of the programme leading to the awarding of the qualification, as this informs the context of that qualification.
- iii. *Minimum stipulated entry requirements*, as indicators 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, regardless of differences in the duration of schooling.
- iv. *Minimum stipulated duration*, whether part-time or full-time.
- v. *Structure and type of the programme*, including aspects such as experiential learning, research combined with coursework and vocational training.
- vi. *Programme requirements*, such as credit totals and distribution, grading, dissertations, internships and industrial attachment.
- vii. *Further access gained by virtue of the qualification* - whether full or restricted access, whether access to general employment, or to a regulated profession or further education at a particular level.
- viii. *Formal rights ultimately bestowed on the qualification holder*, such as the right to use a professional title.

d. Qualifications frameworks

Qualifications frameworks, where these form either a part or the foundation of education and training systems, are useful indicators of the relative position and status of qualifications in the country of their issue, as well as of quality assurance processes that are in place. There is a growing awareness of an international drive to increase transparency around qualifications and the role that qualifications frameworks can play in this in terms of the new way in which qualifications are described through level, workload, learning outcomes and profile.

e. General considerations

- i. The SAQA evaluation focuses on the qualification submitted for evaluation and takes into account all the relevant, official and available information.
- ii. The set of criteria applied by SAQA is useful in determining the level of achievement reached at the end of a programme, but its significance depends on learning outcomes and the quality of delivery. Where such information includes reference to learning outcomes which cannot be evaluated by the DFQEAS, this should take precedence over the programme elements. DFQEAS recommendations highlight such matters for the attention of competent recognition authorities. 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 programmes on various features of a programme.

- iii. The existence of national and/or international legal provisions, such as contained in the regulations for professional practice or in bilateral and multilateral agreements between governments, may require a specific decision to be reached or procedure to be followed. These provisions must be taken into account.
- iv. Past evaluation decisions, whether made by DFQEAS or by other evaluating agencies or CRAs, serve as a guide. It can be expected that the analysis of similar qualifications will lead to similar outcomes, unless adapted recommendations can be justified.

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS

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

16. Information

- a. Issues associated with recognition-related information include the fact that this is filtered, selected, accessed, quality assured, interpreted, presented and organised from the differing perspectives of provider and consumer. This alludes to the way that the responsibility for provision and consumption of information must be shared by SAQA, the qualification holder and the education and training institution from which a qualification was issued.
- b. SAQA: Apart from the information contained in this Criteria and Guidelines document, standardised information on procedures and criteria is contained in the DFQEAS application material. This information is made available to applicants when they make preliminary enquiries. The information includes documentary requirements, tariffs and payment methods, approximate timelines, the procedure for appeal and the status of the assessment. Qualification holders also have the right to be informed of the rationale underlying the outcome of evaluations.
- c. *Qualification holders*: It is the responsibility of qualification holders to furnish the required documentation and information meeting the requirements and enabling SAQA to consider an evaluation. In doing this, they may be supported by the education and training institutions at which they completed studies. Applicants are expected not only to provide *all* the required information, but also to provide correct and truthful information in good faith and to *not* wilfully omit any relevant information or provide false or misleading information.
- d. *Education and training institutions*: Education and training institutions have a responsibility to make available complete sets of qualification documents to qualifying students. Upon request, they must also furnish all the required information pertaining to a particular programme or qualification to SAQA for evaluation purposes.

17. Processing time and delays

- a. Evaluation results are made available within reasonable time limits. Various options for processing times are specified upfront together with terms and conditions. Fast tracking of applications is linked to the payment of additional fees. Applications are processed according to certain priority options paid for upfront and, within these categories, on a first-come-first-serve basis. An application is considered active and processing time calculated only once the applicant has provided all the necessary information, documentation and payment.
- b. 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 DFQEAS has no control over the response time taken for information to be supplied from abroad, but makes every effort to ensure that contact is established in the most effective way and that cases are reactivated and concluded as promptly as possible once information becomes available.

18. Fees

- a. The evaluation service rendered by SAQA is self-funded on a non-profit, cost-recovery basis. The fees charged for evaluation are thus kept as low as possible in order to not constitute a barrier for applicants.
- b. A comprehensive fee structure is made available on request, as well as on the SAQA website (www.saqa.org.za) as part of the application material. Fees are revised from time to time in accordance with increased operational costs; always bearing in mind the principle of accessibility. In the event of a price increase, new tariffs are communicated in advance to regular and prospective clients.

19. Documentary requirements

- a. In addition to specific requirements relevant to documents from particular countries, some requirements pertaining to the type of documents to be submitted are generally applicable:
 - i. Verbatim translations by sworn (certified) translators are required in respect of key or primary documents issued in foreign languages. These translations are not a substitute for documents in the original language, but are intended as supporting documentation and should accompany the documents in the original language. Qualification titles in the original language of issue must be provided at all times.
 - ii. Secondary school qualifications must be issued, or at least endorsed, by the official examining / certification bodies in the countries of origin. Documents issued by schools are not accepted when the examinations were conducted by external examining bodies. School qualifications need not be submitted when the evaluation is needed for qualifications obtained in higher education, but specific documents are required in respect of the latter qualifications.
 - iii. Academic records, transcripts or diploma supplements convey important information about the composition of study programmes, credit requirements, student performance and other explanatory details and are therefore crucial in the evaluation process. Final awards are required, although these can be substituted with official statements (issued by the awarding bodies in question) confirming completion of all the requirements for those awards. Preceding qualifications, when available, assist in the understanding of learning paths and may ensure more complete and accurate evaluation outcomes.
- b. Copies of documents are accepted, but these must be certified as true copies (preferably by a diplomatic office of the country in question). However, SAQA reserves the right to request original documents, should this be deemed necessary. Electronic documents often pose a data integrity challenge and submission in this format is not only discouraged, but not provided for in the on-line application facility.
- c. Authenticity
 - i. Although the primary role of SAQA with regard to foreign qualifications is often perceived as that of verification of authenticity, this perception is not correct. The purpose of the evaluation is to guide the recognition of foreign qualifications by determining their relevant levels in relation to the NQF – it does not necessarily guarantee the authenticity of qualifications. This is stated on every SAQA certificate. However, every attempt is made to limit the possibility of fraud in as far as this is feasible in the evaluation process.
 - ii. The evaluation process, which is outlined in paragraph 21 and in Annexure A, is undertaken within strict timelines. Step 3(c) in paragraph 21 shows how the verification of authenticity requires communication with source authorities in the countries of origin of qualifications; an action which shifts the control over response time away from SAQA to those authorities. If verification was generally applied as a precondition to evaluation, an enormous risk would be posed to delivery within the stated timelines. This is aggravated by the alarming reality that data received from some resources cannot be trusted, which may render the verification process in itself not credible, or leave it at a dead end.

- iii. Despite the above challenges, step 3(c) also shows that action to counteract fraud is firmly embedded in the evaluation process. All 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 local authorities are notified. Prospective applicants for evaluation are alerted to the above in the application material and have to declare the authenticity of qualification documents. SAQA uses various contacts and tools to ensure the pre-verification of qualification documents received from certain countries, where these are available and legitimate.

20. Appeals

- a. An appeal does not necessarily indicate an error on the part of SAQA, but rather a different opinion or even a misunderstanding on the part of the qualification holder. An appeal requires the deployment of resources for the review of documentation and the interpretation thereof against new information to be submitted by the qualification holder. For this reason, an appeal fee is payable when the appeal is lodged. The appeal fee is fully refundable in the event of a successful appeal.
- b. Wherever possible, guidance is offered to assist applicants in taking the remedial measures needed to meet the requirements of the levels to which they seek admission.

THE EVALUATION PROCESS

21. The following process is followed by the DFQEAS when evaluating foreign qualifications. A schematic outline of this is attached as Annexure A. As required by other contexts, the sequence of these steps may vary, or steps may overlap:

STEP	ACTION	COMMENT / OUTCOME
1:	Enquiry / request for information / application for evaluation is received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receipt is acknowledged and the application registered.
2:	Documents are screened to determine the nature of the correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If general enquiry / request, a response is compiled. If application, document analysis is continued.
3:	The following is determined:	
(a)	Completeness of application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If payment lacks, or documents do not meet requirement in terms of completeness or clarity, the necessary is requested from the applicant. If complete, processing is continued.
(b)	Status of awarding body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If not recognised, applicant is informed to this effect and refunded, if applicable. If recognised, processing is continued.
(c)	Authenticity of documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If suspect, original documents are requested from the applicant and verification of authenticity is sought from the relevant authority in country of origin of the qualification. If not suspect, processing is continued. If required, contact details of awarding bodies are provided so that recipients can have authenticity verified.
4:	Each qualification submitted is analysed, 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 and/or decisions available from other national information centres or competent recognition authorities, or other relevant and reliable sources	
(e)	Each of the criteria described in paragraph 14 above	
5:	An evaluation report is compiled and made available to the applicant and/or other relevant parties, as requested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation outcome is accepted as is and supports a 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 at additional cost. In case of this, the evaluation is reconsidered on the basis of additional information furnished by the applicant in support of his/her case.

THE SAQA CERTIFICATE OF EVALUATION

22. Composition

Each Certificate of Evaluation contains the following information in respect of each qualification or group of qualifications evaluated:

- a. Personal details of the qualification holder
 - i. Name(s) as these appear in the current identity document or passport. If these differ from names used on qualification documents, names as they appear on qualification documents are also indicated on the certificate.
 - ii. Date of birth as this appears on an official identity document.
- b. Record of information analysed and interpreted in respect of each qualification submitted for evaluation:
 - i. Name of the qualification; where possible in the language in which it was issued, together with an indication of the major subject(s), concentration or field of specialisation.
 - ii. Name of the awarding institution and status in the country of origin.
 - iii. Date of the award (or years of enrolment, if not completed).
 - iv. List of documents submitted for evaluation.
 - v. Admission requirement (and deviations from this on the strength of other considerations).
 - vi. Duration and type of study.
 - vii. Programme requirements and features, including structure and credit weighting, where available.
 - viii. Legal rights bestowed on the holder in the country of origin, if any.
 - ix. National status in country of origin in terms of levels of the education system or qualifications framework, if any.
- c. A recommendation as to what the appropriate level of recognition of a particular qualification, or combination of qualifications, would be in South Africa. Comparability is expressed in terms of:

- i. The closest comparable (specific) South African *qualification*, or if one does not exist, the closest comparable *type* of South African qualification; as well as
 - ii. The relevant NQF level. Two NQF levels will be indicated at least for the duration of the transition period from the old eight-level to the new ten-level framework. Where the new level is pending due to the re-evaluation of a particular qualification to determine its new level, this will be indicated through the acronym NLAP (New Level Assignment Pending).
- d. Additional information, if applicable, provided in the form of comments or provisos. These may relate to one or more of the following:
- i. A recommendation for further refinement of the evaluation by a competent recognition authority.
 - ii. The status of the recommendation in relation to legal requirements for admission or professional status in the particular field or at the particular level.
 - iii. The status of the evaluation in terms of authenticity of qualification documents (see paragraph 19.c).
 - iv. The conditions for finalising a provisional recommendation.
 - v. Indication of an evident substantial difference or differences as compared to a local comparable qualification, if applicable.

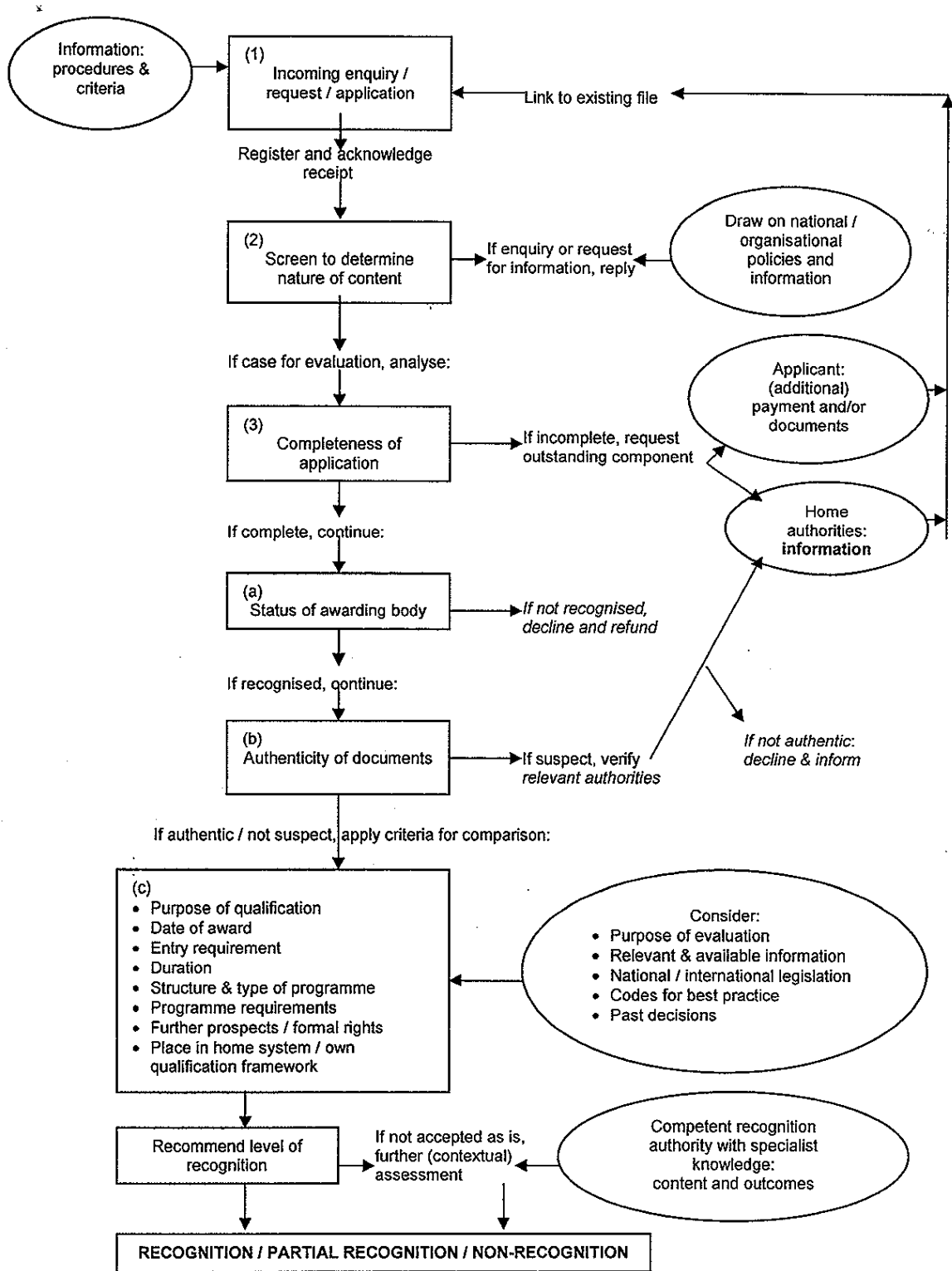
23. Security features

- a. Evaluation reports are printed against a background with the acronym SAQA printed in blue and in evenly spaced horizontal lines. A Q device resembling the SAQA logo appears across certificates towards the right-hand side of the page.
- b. All SAQA certificates must bear the following:
 - i. A unique reference number and a date of issue.
 - ii. Two signatures, the authenticity of which can be verified by the DFQEAS.
 - iii. A SAQA security hologram with a unique identity number, attached to the upper right-hand corner of the Certificate of Evaluation.
- c. Samples of current certificate formats issued by SAQA are available for reference purposes as Annexure B.
- d. Written requests for the verification of authenticity of SAQA certificates may be posted to verifysaqacert@saqa.org.za with a scanned copy of the certificate in question attached. Where this information is disclosed to verification agencies, a verification fee is payable and detailed information about this will be provided in the initial response.

24. Disclaimers

- a. SAQA certificates are issued in the context of the following disclaimers, which appear on the reverse side of each certificate:
 - i. Evaluations are done *bona fide*, taking into account all the relevant facts available to SAQA.
 - ii. Recommendations should be seen as advisory and are not binding on other institutions.
 - iii. SAQA accepts no responsibility for claims for damages resulting from evaluations.
 - iv. The evaluations are issued in writing and may not be changed in any way; nor may any extracts from certificates be made, reproduced or distributed.

ANNEXURE A: SCHEMATIC OUTLINE OF THE PROCESS FLOW FOR EVALUATION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS BY SAQA



ANNEXURE B: CURRENT FORMAT OF THE SAQA CERTIFICATE OF EVALUATION

**SAMPLES OF CERTIFICATES
WILL BE PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION
AFTER THE PUBLIC COMMENT PHASE**