National Learners’
Records Database (NLRD)

South African Qualifications Authority
(SAQA)
What is the NLRD?

An integrated information system to facilitate the management of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) - the first such system in the world

Developed 19 years ago, in phases, to reflect the business rules of the NQF

Main functions:

• To provide policy makers with comprehensive information to enable informed decision-making
• To provide learners and employers with proof of qualifications obtained
• To provide information that assists with career development and advice
Introduction to the NLRD

Key activities
- Inputs
- Outputs
- System support

Main Streams
- National Learners’ Records Database (NLRD)

Purpose
- Micro
- Macro

Inputs
- Online Capturing (Qualifications, Designations, etc.)
- Batch Loading (Learner achievements)

Outputs
- Publications
- Reports
- Customised Analyses
- Verifications service

System support
- Qualifications & unit standards
- Learners & achievements
The two main streams of the NLRD

- Qualifications and Part-Qualifications (including unit standards), professional bodies and Professional Designations, and all of the resources that support them (such as NQF Sub-frameworks, NQF Levels, Organising Fields, Qualification originators)

- Learners and their achievements, and all of the resources that support them (such as QA functionaries, Providers, Assessors)
## National Qualifications Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NQF Level</th>
<th>NQF Sub-frameworks and Qualification Types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Doctoral Degree&lt;br&gt;Doctoral Degree (Professional)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Master’s Degree&lt;br&gt;Master’s Degree (Professional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bachelor Honours Degree&lt;br&gt;Postgraduate Diploma&lt;br&gt;Bachelor’s Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree&lt;br&gt;Advanced Diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Diploma&lt;br&gt;Advanced Certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Higher Certificate</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>National Certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Intermediate Certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Elementary Certificate</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>General Certificate</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
NLRD Stream 1:
Qualifications and Part-Qualifications
Data Flow to the NLRD (Qualifications and Part-Qualifications)

Originators: DQPs, Providers, etc.

Quality Councils

SAQA – evaluate (DRR)

Capture on the NLRD

Submission to SAQA Q&S Committee and Exco/Board
Searching for Qualifications

www.saqa.org.za
Qualifications and Part Qualifications

Re-registration `N` part-qualifications

Summary lists of all registered qualifications and unit standards - December 2018[Zipped Excel]
(These lists are updated approximately every two months, at the same time as the finalisation of each Board Meeting`s registrations.)

All summaries and searchable databases are extracted from the National Learners` Records Database

There are five active searchable databases of qualifications and part-qualifications on the SAQA website:

- **All qualifications and unit standards**
  - Search for all qualifications and unit standards, no matter what their status

- **Registered qualifications and unit standards**
  - Qualifications and unit standards that are registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

- **Qualifications and unit standards that have passed their Registration End Date**
  - Qualifications and unit standards that were registered on the NQF and have subsequently expired
    - (this includes qualifications and unit standards that have been replaced by others)
Data Flow to the NLRD (Professional Bodies and Professional Designations)

Professional Bodies

SAQA – evaluate (DRR)

Capture on the NLRD

Submission to SAQA Q&S Committee and Exco/Board
Searching for Professional Bodies and Professional Designations

www.saqa.org.za
NLRD Stream 2:
Learners and their Achievements
Data Flow to the NLRD (Learner Achievements)

Providers

Quality Council / Quality Assurance Functionary

Quality Council / Quality Assurance Functionary

Quality Council / Quality Assurance Functionary

SAQA – Loaded onto NLRD
### Summary of Data Sources

The table below outlines the national qualifications framework levels and corresponding data sources:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NQF Level</th>
<th>Sub-framework and Data Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Higher Education Qualifications Sub-framework, HEMIS / HEQCS / SAQA-HEDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>SETAs and a small number of other groupings</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Umalusi / Department of Basic Education</td>
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<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- HEMIS: Higher Education Management Information System
- HEQCS: Higher Education Quality Council of South Africa
- SAQA-HEDP: South African Qualifications Authority: Higher Education and Training Department
- SETAs: Sector Education and Training Authorities
- Umalusi: South African Qualifications Authority: Assessment and Quality Assurance Division
Data Flow to the NLRD (Professional Designations)

Professional Bodies

SAQA – Loaded onto NLRD

Workshops and information
The Higher Education Quality Committee of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) needs an information system for Private Higher Education.

The NLRD has signed a 3-year contract with the CHE, to provide this service.

Name of the system: HEQCIS
HEQCIS

145 Private Higher Providers

CHE’s rented space at SAQA

SAQA’s own space

Workshops and information
Access to Information on Learners and their Achievements

• Publications
• Reports
• Customised analyses
• Verifications
Largest average annual growth: Business and Management Sciences
Lowest average annual growth: Social Sciences and Humanities
Second lowest: Engineering Sciences and Technology
Sample: Trends in Work-Related Qualifications and Part Qualifications: Learner Achievements by Population Group and Gender

Qualifications:

Unit Standards:
Sample of Planned Analysis

“Class of 2002”

- Matric Exemption, 30%
- No Matric Exemption, 70%
- Studied at University, 80%
- Studied elsewhere, 15%
- Did not study further, 5%
- Other, 95%
- Masters in Clinical Psychology, 5%
- Not practising and not registered, 5%
- Designation Clinical Psychologist, 95%

1.14% of the “Class of 2002”

Can include demographics and other descriptors
Items being phased in under the NQF Act

Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT)

• The latest NQF legislation requests a CAT system, and the NLRD will implement this as soon as the system is agreed

• It is hoped that CAT will assist where institutions resist taking in transferring learners
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

- The NLRD already records which achievements are done via RPL
  - Therefore, NLRD aggregations can show RPL
- A great deal more work on RPL is required at individual institutions, especially universities
NLRD Functionality

- Online Data Entry
- Off-line: Appends or Edits via Scripts
- Batch Loads of Data
- Data Access (internal & external)
- Search Capability
- Reporting
General Comments on the Robustness of the NLRD as a System

• Has an excellent Data-Model

• Was rebuilt after a devastating crash (2004)
Conclusion:
The NLRD has come into its own as one of South Africa’s key resources:

- Tracking the paths of individual learners
- Informing policy-making and decision-making in education and training, and labour market analysis
- Providing information that assists with career development and advice