

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NQF Amendment Bill seeks to protect the public

12 April 2019

The [National Qualifications Framework \(NQF\) Amendment Bill](#) aims to protect the integrity of the South African education and training system by giving the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) the legal responsibility to verify qualifications and part-qualifications. SAQA acknowledges the key role played by Ms Naledi Pandor, the Minister of Higher Education and Training as well as the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training in getting this important Bill through the parliamentary processes.

The Bill, which is currently awaiting the president's signature, makes provision for the registration by the Department of Higher Education and Training of all private education institutions and skills development providers as well as for the accreditation of these providers by the Quality Councils. It further makes provision for organs of state, employers, education institutions, skills development providers and Quality Councils to refer qualifications and part-qualifications to SAQA for verification and evaluation. The Bill also provides for the formulation of criteria for evaluating foreign qualifications.

This means that in the case of national qualifications and part-qualifications, SAQA must verify that they are authentic. In the case of foreign qualifications, SAQA must first verify that they are authentic and then compare them with South African qualifications for placement within the South African NQF. By so doing, the quality of both national and foreign qualifications would be protected.

The Bill clearly defines authentic qualifications and part-qualifications. It also defines misrepresented as well as fraudulent qualifications. SAQA identifies misrepresentation but only a court of law declares a qualification or part-qualification fraudulent. In the event that a qualification or part-qualification is found to be misrepresented or fraudulent, it will appear in the register of misrepresented qualifications and part-qualifications or fraudulent qualifications and part-qualifications. This will deter would-be qualification fraudsters from misrepresenting qualifications.

Another form of deterrent is the imposition of penalties to not only the qualification fraudsters but also to education institutions and skills development providers that falsely claim that they are registered and accredited to offer qualifications and part-qualifications. Hence, it is a criminal offence for an education institution or education skills provider to falsely claim to be registered and accredited, and let alone offer qualifications that are not registered on the NQF.

The penalties range from five to 10 years imprisonment or a fine or both. This means that learners will not be taken for a ride by unscrupulous providers. Moreover, the penalties are not limited to qualification holders and providers but also extend to anyone who makes or causes a false entry into the National Learners' Records Database or the misrepresented or fraudulent database. Therefore, the public will be protected on all fronts.

The changes brought about by the Bill should be welcomed as they seek to protect the public against unscrupulous education and training providers. They also protect government and businesses from hiring people who do not have authentic qualifications. SAQA will continue to work together with all stakeholders to ensure that the quality of our education system is maintained and enhanced. SAQA will

SAQA'S MISSION

To ensure the development and implementation of a National Qualifications Framework which contributes to the full development of each learner and to the social and economic development of the nation at large

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also ensure that once, the Bill is signed into law it will be implemented for the benefit of all living in South Africa.

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