

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SAQA congratulates the NSC class of 2018 and encourages conversations about quality education to be conducted using language that is consistent with the NQF

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The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) congratulates the National Senior Certificate (NSC) class of 2018 for their performance. SAQA also commends the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi) for quality assuring the examinations and the subsequent results. SAQA also applauds the Department of Basic Education (DBE), Independent Examination Board (IEB), South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI) and Benchmark Assessment Agency (BAA) for administering the 2018 NSC examinations.

Since the announcement of the results, conversations about the quality of education continue to be heard. While such discussions are healthy for our country, SAQA encourages them to be conducted using language that is consistent with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The different “types of passes” achieved by learners in the NSC examinations continue to be referred to as “types of qualification achievements.” Not only is this misleading and confusing, but could negatively affect the integrity of our qualifications, which the NQF seek to protect.

A type of NSC pass refers to the level of pass that meets the minimum requirements for admission to further and higher education study. A “qualification type” is a classification of a qualification that is registered on one of the 10 levels of the NQF and issued to a learner on achievement. In this case, the NSC is an NQF Level 4 “qualification type” that is registered on the General and Further Education and Training Sub-Framework of the NQF.

Learners achieve the NSC with different “types of passes,” which give them access to different further and higher education learning opportunities. For example, a bachelor’s pass opens opportunities for a learner to study for a Bachelor’s Degree which is an NQF Level 7 “qualification type” that is registered on the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework of the NQF.

Another dimension of the debate is that it tends to position the NSC only as a qualification for further study at university and offers a lesser status to any choice made by a learner, for example, the pursuit of a technical or vocational qualification at a TVET College. This ignores another purpose of the NSC as a qualification that facilitates transition to the workplace. The NSC should be promoted as the optimal pathway into an academic higher education stream but this should not be to the detriment of other pathways to technical, vocational and occupational streams.

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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The other part of the debate is centred around the indicators of quality. Some consider throughput rate as a quality indicator, that is, taking into account the number of learners who entered into grade one 12 years prior to writing the NSC examinations and compare that to the number of students who actually passed the examinations. Others just consider the number of learners who wrote and passed the examinations. Whatever the case, evidence suggests that there has been a slow and steady improvement in the quality of our education over the last 20 years.

As a tool for transparency, the NQF is meant to protect the integrity of our qualifications and it is for this reason that the terminology used in discussions about the NSC examinations results is consistent with the NQF. Through the classification, registration and publication of genuine qualifications, the NQF continues to ensure transparency and inspire confidence in the quality and credibility of our qualifications.

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