

SAQA UPDATE

SPECIAL EDITION / NOVEMBER 2019



What's the fuss
about learning
outcomes?

The NQF Amendment
Act is there to
protect you

Another good
year for SAQA

Celebrating 21 years of the NQF

SAQA & NQF

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

THE SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY (SAQA) CREATES AND IMPLEMENTS THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (NQF).

THE NQF ENSURES THAT ALL EDUCATION & TRAINING IN SOUTH AFRICA IS STRUCTURED AROUND A RELIABLE QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK.

BECAUSE OF THE NQF, THE QUALIFICATIONS THAT YOU HAVE EARNED THROUGH STUDY AND HARD WORK ARE ON RECORD FOR LIFE!

SAQA'S BIGGEST CHALLENGE TODAY IS TO ENSURE GENUINE QUALIFICATIONS.



GENUINE QUALIFICATIONS



GENUINE QUALIFICATIONS ARE:

- REGISTERED ON THE NQF,
- OFFERED BY A PROVIDER THAT IS REGISTERED AND ACCREDITED TO OFFER THEM,
- OBTAINED LAWFULLY.

IF YOUR QUALIFICATIONS ARE NOT GENUINE, YOU HAVE WASTED TIME, MONEY AND OPPORTUNITIES ON YOUR EDUCATION AND TRAINING!

GENUINE QUALIFICATIONS ARE IMPORTANT

HOW DOES SAQA ENSURE GENUINE QUALIFICATIONS



PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE OF THE NQF AND ITS FUNCTION WILL ENSURE THAT FRAUDSTERS CAN NO LONGER CHEAT THE PUBLIC.



SAQA HAS A STRICT VERIFICATION PROCESS FOR CERTIFICATES. A STRICT VERIFICATION PROCESS WILL ENSURE THAT FRAUDSTERS CAN NO LONGER FORGE CERTIFICATES.



HERE IS HOW YOU CAN HELP!



ALWAYS CHECK CREDENTIALS

ALWAYS CHECK THE CREDENTIALS OF YOUR INSTITUTION. MAKE SURE THAT THE QUALIFICATIONS THAT THEY PROVIDE ARE GENUINE, AND THAT THEY ARE ACCREDITED AND REGISTERED.

CHECK ON THE NQF

CHECK THE REGISTRATION OF THE QUALIFICATION ON THE NQF. YOU CAN DO THIS THROUGH THE WEBSITE OR JUST A PHONE CALL.



TELL EVERYONE ABOUT THE NQF

EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT SAQA AND THE NQF. PLAY YOUR PART IN ROOTING OUT FRAUD! INFORM YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY ABOUT GENUINE QUALIFICATIONS. SHARE THIS GRAPHIC ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

SAQA CONTACT DETAILS

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN GET IN TOUCH WITH SAQA

PHONE
Helpline: 0860 111 673

EMAIL AND WEBSITE
Email: saqa@saqa.co.za
Website: www.saqa.org.za

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTACTS
Twitter: @SAQALive
Facebook: www.facebook.com/SAQA

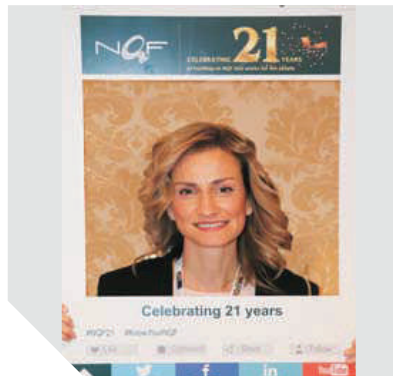
OR SIMPLY WALK IN

SAQA House
1067 Arcadia Street
Hatfield, Pretoria



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Another good
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The NQF
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is there to
protect you



What's the fuss
about learning
outcomes?



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RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

WHAT IS RPL?

WAYS OF ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

Non-formal - planned educational interventions that are not intended to lead to a qualification/part-qualification.

Informal - learning that results from daily activities related to paid/unpaid work, including incidental learning.

Formal - learning that occurs in an organised & structured education and training environment.



WHY RPL?

Personal Development

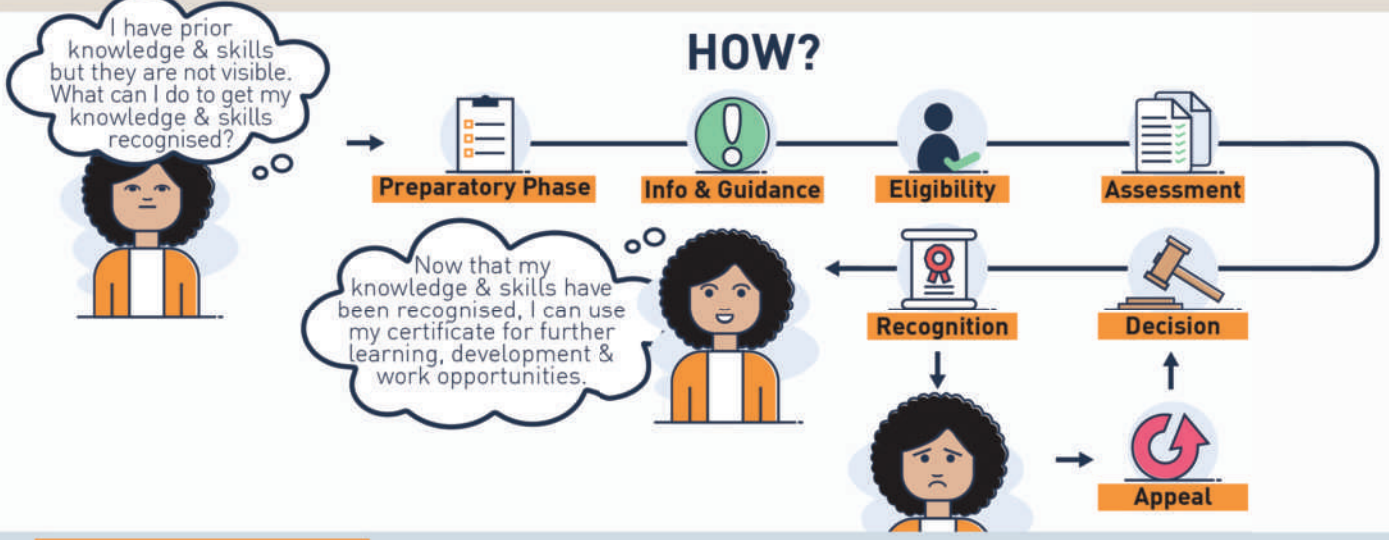
Workplace Advancement

FORMS OF RPL?

For Access - provides an alternative access route into a programme of learning for those who do not meet the formal entry requirements for admission.

For Credits - provides for the awarding of credits for, or towards, a qualification or part-qualification registered on the NQF.

HOW?



WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Higher Education & Training
www.dhet.gov.za
086 999 0123

POLICY MAKERS

MINISTER

- Ensure the development of legislation.

↕

DHET

- Establish the national RPL co-ordinating mechanism.
- Monitor & evaluate RPL implementation.
- Establish a funding mechanism for RPL implementation.

↕

SAQA

- Develop national policy & criteria.
- Receive RPL data from Quality Councils for recording on the NLRD.
- Co-ordinate the alignment of NQF Sub-Framework policies on RPL.

www.saqa.org.za
086 0111 673

CO-ORDINATING MECHANISM

- Manage RPL Fund.
- Establish forum for RPL practitioners.
- Monitor learner referrals to institutions dealing with knowledge and skills gaps.
- Monitor and evaluate RPL implementation.
- Provide support & advice to implement RPL.

RECOGNISED PROFESSIONAL BODIES

- Comply with national & SAQA RPL policies.
- Include an RPL route towards attainment of professional designations.
- Collaborate with SAQA, QCs & Service Providers to support RPL.
- Provide RPL data to the NLRD.

QUALITY COUNCILS (QCs)

- Develop & maintain an NLRD-compatible information management system.
- Work with professional bodies & accredited providers to facilitate RPL.
- Monitor the implementation of RPL within own NQF Sub-Frameworks.
- Collaborate with SAQA, NAMB, SETAs and other role players to advance RPL.

CHE QCTO UMALUSI

RPL PRACTITIONERS

- Adhere to RPL policy requirements.
- Meet professional requirements.

SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Provide advice, counseling & support to assist RPL candidates before, during & after RPL processes.
- Establish an appeal process for RPL candidates to engage with RPL judgements.
- Provide data to QCs about RPL students within institutions.
- Seek QC accreditation.

RPL CANDIDATES

- Accept co-responsibility as an equal partner in the RPL process.
- Expect to be treated with fairness.
- Respect the processes and procedures of institutions & workplaces.



ditorial

Wellington Radu

Welcome to this special edition of the SAQA Update. It's exclusive for three reasons. First, it comes at a time when we are celebrating 21 years of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Second, it's the first publication since 2012. Third, it displays our splendid performance in the last financial year.

We showcase the achievements of the NQF over the last 21 years and look forward to the future of the NQF. We reveal how we have enabled lifelong learners to navigate the NQF with ease. Our performance shows that we conducted ourselves responsibly and accountably.

Aside from the achievements at the national level, we highlight how we have been advancing higher education quality and movement across the African continent. We also reflect on our experience with Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and how other countries like France are dealing with RPL for professional qualifications and professional designations.

The hot topic is the NQF Amendment Act, which the President signed into law on 13 August 2019. Although not in effect yet, the NQF Amendment Act affect learners, education and training providers, employers, job seekers, professional bodies and the education and training sector at large. We outline how the amendments are there to empower and protect you.

As we celebrate 21 years of the NQF, we show how the SAQA Board decisions affect you and why you should care. We also delve into learning outcomes and why they matter.

Given the unique circumstances of refugees and asylum seekers, we bring them into the verification and evaluation of foreign qualifications fold. The cherry on top is that we open the right door for lifelong learners. Happy reading!



THE SOUTH AFRICAN NQF

Achievements to date and priorities for the future

What was the problem?

- In 1994 democratic South Africa inherited from the *apartheid* era:
- a racially segregated, unequal, unfair education and training system
 - the majority of people who had been denied access to education, training, and development
 - uneven access to education, training, development and work opportunities
 - uneven quality assurance across the education and training system
 - an education and training system that was not transparent
 - lack of parity of esteem between different types of qualifications/ learning/ knowledge
 - qualifications that were not necessarily linked to learning pathways

WHAT WAS THE SOLUTION?

Recognition, in the form of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

The bulleted items in this box show what the NQF was set up to achieve, with a score out of 10 for each in terms of success after 21 years of implementation

- Single national framework (10)
- Articulation: learning pathways (6)
- Access open to all (10)
- Redress (Kha Ri Gude=7) (RPL=5) (Worker Education=5)
- Different types of qualifications and parity of esteem (7)
- Quality (6)
- Transparency (P&C/info/processes exist=10)(known, understood=7)
- Recognition of Professional Bodies and Registration of Professional Designations (8)
- Foreign qualifications (8)
- National database (NLRD) (8)
- Contribute to personal development of individuals and socio-economic development of the nation (7)

Where have we come from; where are we going? PRIORITIES FOR THE WAY FORWARD

1 SAQA Act

1995 – Integrated approach in a national system; centralised standards development and quality assurance
1995 - Two separate departments (Department of EDUCATION and Department of LABOUR)
1998 – NSB and ETQA Regulations

5 White Paper for Post-School Education and Training

2013 – Published vision widely circulated; Focus on:

- SIMPLIFICATION of the NQF;
- Systemic ARTICULATION, learning pathways, mobility;
- FLEXIBILITY in the system – LESS RESTRICTION;
- COORDINATION and FUNDING OF RPL – national RPL system

2 NQF Reviews & Joint Policy Statement

2002, 2005 – NQF reviews
2007 – Joint Policy Statement: agreement re three differentiated coordinated NQF Sub-Frameworks



6 Evaluation of the NQF Act Implementation

2018 – Focus on: RELEVANCE & appropriateness, COHERENCE, EFFICIENCY, EFFECTIVENESS & EMERGING IMPACT

- Outcomes:
- NQF accepted by stakeholders
- NQF implementation underfunded
- Areas of inefficiencies
- Improvement plan to deal with inefficiencies

3 NQF Act

2008, promulgated 2009 –

- SAQA oversees implementation, development, coordinates the three NQF Sub-Frameworks [GFETQSF, HEQSF, OQSF];
- Quality Councils oversee standards development, quality assurance [Umalusi, CHE, QCTO];
- Minister of Higher Education and Training [MHET] responsible;
- NQF Forum; Inter-Departmental NQF Steering Committee;
- Department of Basic Education responsible for basic education

7 NQF AMENDMENT BILL

2019 – Focus on:

- Stronger coordination role for SAQA
- Defining authenticity of qualifications and part-qualifications
- Combating misrepresentation and fraud
- Establishing separate registers for misrepresented and fraudulent qualifications, and professional designations

4 Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training

2012 – Vision for the system going forward, widely consulted
2012 – Determination of the Sub-Frameworks

8 • 2019 – Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology established
• 2019 – NQF Amendment Act promulgated

GFETQSF = General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework
HEQSF = Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
OQSF = Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework



From the

CEO

Joe Samuels

One of the first pieces of legislation promulgated in the new South Africa was the SAQA Act, No. 58 of 1995. It enabled the creation of SAQA as a legal entity to develop a National Qualifications Framework for South Africa. Three years later, the South African NQF

was established through a set of regulations published in the Government Gazette on 28 March 1998. It is for this reason that we celebrate 21 years of building a world-class NQF that works for the people in South Africa.

Over the years, the NQF has gone through various stages. Its development could be traced through the following periods:

- **1990 - 1995:** Rationale, advocacy and legislation for the NQF;
- **1996 - 1999:** Development of NQF structures, policies and nature of relationships;
- **2000 - 2008:** Implementation of the SAQA Act, review and navigating uncertainty;
- **2009 - 2015:** Policy development under the NQF Act and building international footprint; and
- **2016 - 2019:** Policy implementation and consolidating global footprint.

With this rich history of our NQF, we can now brag about having one of the first generation Qualifications Frameworks. We no longer have a racially segregated, unequal, and unfair education and training system, which we had before. We now have a single and integrated framework that is transparent and trusted. Our qualifications have clear learning pathways, and we recognise prior learning. These are some of the NQF achievements.

As a system, the NQF was designed to broaden the quality of our education, respond to our country's needs and create confidence in the quality of our education and training system. In essence, the system was designed to enable and encourage lifelong learning. It is perhaps appropriate that the NQF's coming of age coincided with the passing of the NQF Amendment Act, No. 12 of 2019. The Amendment Act tightens the legal requirements and strengthens the hands of NQF bodies to inspire confidence in our education and training system.

The Amendment Act makes provision for all South African qualifications and part-qualifications to be registered on the NQF, offered by registered and accredited institutions, and obtained lawfully for them to be authentic. This provision, among others, is about protecting the public from unscrupulous education and training providers. For instance, if a qualification is not registered on the NQF and an education and training provider claims that it is and offers it to the public, that is an offence.

We welcome the NQF Amendment Act because it aims to protect the public. The changes it brings will enable us to continue delivering services that are of value to the public. We will, therefore, focus on raising awareness about the changes and encourage South Africans to use the NQF to change their lives.



Like all public entities, SAQA is required, in terms of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), to submit its Annual Integrated Report to Parliament at the end of August each year. For SAQA, the 2018/19 financial year was full of great achievements as it met 96% of its deliverables.

SAQA continued its unbroken record of unqualified audit reports over its 23 years of existence. Even better, SAQA received a clean audit, adding to its long and illustrious history as a model statutory body that executes its mandate in a responsible and accountable manner.

“It’s of utmost importance to ensure that all resources are used towards improving the quality of life of each learner and the socio-economic development of the nation at large,” said the SAQA Board Chairperson, Dr Vuyelwa Toni-Penxa.

Likewise, SAQA continues to make great strides towards the realisation of a world-class NQF for all South Africans. To this end, SAQA set itself the following five strategic outcome-oriented goals to deliver on its mandate in the 2018/19 financial year.

1. LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION

SAQA continued to provide decisive and coherent leadership, coordination, and effective monitoring and evaluation to achieve an articulated NQF in the following ways:

- Addressed issues related to the registration of qualifications on the NQF to promote coherence among Qualifications Sub-Frameworks;
- Hosted a workshop for members of the NQF family in July 2018 on the implementation of the NQF Act;
- Provided advice to the Minister on the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) landscape after consulting with the quality councils;
- Provided inputs into the Draft NQF Amendment Bill to the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training; and
- Continued to implement its Policy and Criteria for Registering Qualifications and Part-Qualifications on the NQF to ensure that every registered qualification has articulation options.

2. NQF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

SAQA continued to oversee and facilitate the implementation of NQF policies in a coherent, simple and integrated manner across education, training, development and work as follows:

- Promoted the mobility of learners through the evaluation of their foreign qualifications. It evaluated qualifications from 116 different national systems during the financial year. The turnaround time for evaluation is three months;
- Played a role in the ratification of the Addis Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States; and
- Produced two mutual recognition of qualifications agreements with Cyprus and Italy.

As of 31 March 2019, the National Learners’ Records Database had the following figures:



3. RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

SAQA continued to use and promote constructive relationship building for the effective implementation of the NQF’s objectives in the following ways:

- Made effective use of the system of collaboration to ensure constructive working relationships among the NQF family and stakeholders to further simplify the NQF, strengthen the promotion and understanding of the NQF, promote a culture of articulation, promote genuine qualifications, and internationalise the NQF;
- Provided comments on Umalusi’s Revised Assessment Policy, as well as the National Skills Development Strategy and the Draft Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework Policy;

OTHER...

ear for SAQA



- Interacted with international counterparts in the rest of the African continent and the world, for example concerning the SADC Qualifications Framework;
- Hosted the Professional Bodies Forums in September 2018 and March 2019 to ensure that professional bodies are aware of the issues that affect them; and
- Participated in international forums that took place in Washington, Norway and South Africa.

4. PUBLIC POSITIONING

SAQA continued to make the NQF visible and understood through its positive impact and structured advocacy and communications in the South African context.



5. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Equally, SAQA continued to look for innovations to optimise capacity, encourage and value the contributions of staff towards organisational effectiveness, efficiency and economy to achieve excellence in service delivery in the following ways:

- Improved staff benefits (dread disease cover and waiting period);
- Recognised and rewarded qualifying employees through the performance and development management system;
- Placed 16 new interns; and
- Provided education assistance to employees.

SAQA's staff development is geared towards developing a world-class NQF that works for the people in South Africa. As a result, constant learning interventions were implemented for staff to become better NQF ambassadors.

"It is with a sense of pride and accomplishment that SAQA concluded the 2018/19 financial year with the celebration of the NQF's 21st Anniversary. The achievements reflected here represent the 21 years of building a world-class NQF," said SAQA CEO, Joe Samuels.

By Lucas Malambe

Advancing higher education quality and movement across Africa

An increasingly globalised context means that people can travel, work and study anywhere in the world. Within this constant movement between countries, fair recognition of foreign qualifications is critical to making sure that knowledge, skills and competences benefit the economy of the receiving country. A significant International Conference of States (ICS) took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in December 2014. The purpose of the ICS was to adopt the revised text of the 1981 Arusha Convention. This Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States is commonly known as the Addis Convention.

Why is the Addis Convention relevant?

The Addis Convention provides an enabling mechanism for fair recognition of all forms of foreign higher education in public or private recognised higher education institutions. Successful application of the Convention means stronger international co-operation; better use of human capacity in Africa; enhanced mobility of learners and programmes; improved collection and exchange of qualification information and more importantly an alignment of quality assurance and accreditation at national, regional and continental levels.

Typically, the Convention states that recognition should consider quality assurance and accreditation of institutions offering qualifications. This task reinforces a commitment to eradicate all forms of fraudulent practices regarding higher education qualifications. Where a quality-assured qualification has been verified as authentic, parties commit to recognise studies unless there are substantial differences. A further undertaking is to promote lifelong learning by facilitating the recognition of refugee qualifications, partial studies and prior learning and experience. The Convention protects learners by entitling them to recognition decisions within a reasonable time in line with procedures that are transparent, coherent and reliable. Timely recognition demands a commitment by participating countries to provide clear and adequate information on their education systems, quality assurance mechanisms, accreditation of programs and counter-fraud measures.

Where are we now?

After the adoption in 2014, SAQA set to work to prepare South Africa to ratify the Convention. Ratification means that a country gives consent to be bound by the Convention modalities. As a first step, SAQA assessed South Africa's readiness to implement the Convention and consulted with key stakeholders and national structures. The outcome indicated that South Africa was ready to ratify. Areas of improvement included finalising procedures to recognise refugee qualifications and partial studies, and in March 2019, SAQA published an Addendum on the Recognition of Qualifications of Refugees and Asylum Seekers. The ratification recommendation passed through all the Cabinet procedures, and in May 2019, the South African Parliament ratified the Addis Convention. On 1 July 2019, Minister Naledi Pandor signed and deposited the ratification instrument with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which in turn completed South Africa's ratification on 4 September 2019.

What are the next steps?

So far eight African countries have deposited their Addis Convention ratification instruments with UNESCO, namely, Togo, Gambia, Congo, Djibouti, Mauritius, Senegal, Mauritania and South Africa. Another African country is in the process of ratifying the Convention, taking the total to nine. The Convention will come into force one month after ten African countries have ratified.

SAQA is working on improvement plans to recognise foreign partial studies as well as an implementation plan for South Africa when the Convention enters into force. This Convention signifies a noteworthy advancement in the approach to recognition of qualifications across the African continent, and South Africa looks forward to its successful implementation.

By Coleen Jaftha



How to scale up RPL implementation: **LESSONS FROM FRANCE**

“SAQA will keep engaging and monitoring professional bodies to scale up RPL implementation for professional qualifications and professional designations,” said SAQA CEO, Mr Joe Samuels. He was speaking at an International Seminar on RPL for Professional Qualifications and Professional Designations held on 21 June 2019.

The seminar, which forms part of a series of events to mark the 21st anniversary of the NQF was held in partnership with the Insurance Sector Education and Training Authority (INSETA). Representatives of the 105 SAQA-recognised statutory and non-statutory professional bodies attended the seminar to reflect on their RPL practices. RPL practices are different in every sector, but there are common threads of practice.

Presentations were made by the South African Council for Project and Construction Management Professions, a statutory body, and the Marketing Association of South Africa, which is a non-statutory body. Delegates grappled with the challenges faced in implementing RPL and also offered solutions to mitigate those challenges. This made for a fruitful peer-learning experience.

The highlight of the seminar was the keynote address by Dr Borhene Chakroun, Director: Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Dr Chakroun shared lessons learnt in the application of RPL to professional qualifications and professional designations in France.

France has a long history of RPL implementation compared to South Africa. However, there are similarities in the conceptualisation of RPL in both countries. For example, qualifications can be awarded in full or in part through RPL. Another is that both countries have a database with learner achievements, including information on qualifications and part-qualifications obtained through RPL.

“What you can learn from France is that RPL is widely accepted and there is funding for it. It has been in existence for over 80 years as a practice, and 86% of employers have a positive perception

about it. What is gratifying is that 91% consider it useful for their staff even though 64% of employers think RPL as a complicated process,” said Dr Chakroun.

“This is where professional bodies come in,” says SAQA CEO Joe Samuels. “They can play a pivotal role in encouraging industry to value RPL so that we can reach the transformative objective of the NQF.” RPL in South Africa is about transformation, redress of past injustices and access to further learning as well as work opportunities.

A thought echoed by the INSETA CEO, Ms Nadia Starr, “Professional bodies need to use sustainable models of RPL to scale up its implementation.” Broader implementation of RPL helps the industry in that it results in labour that is skilled and certificated. For employees, this is a plus in that possibility for upward mobility in work and education, and training is increased.

It is for this reason that SAQA reaffirmed its commitment to support its recognised professional bodies in implementing RPL to assist in the fight against poverty, inequality and unemployment.

By Tumelo Modisane



Guest Speaker: Dr Borhene Chakroun, Director: Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).



NQF
Amendment Act

PROTECT

SAQA welcomes the promulgation of the NQF Amendment Act, No. 12 of 2019 as it seeks to protect the public. The Amendment Act aims to protect the integrity of the South African education and training system by filling the gaps in the NQF Act, No. 67 of 2008.

Among other things, the Amendment Act clarifies what an authentic South African qualification or part-qualification is by stipulating that it must be:

- Registered on the NQF;
- Offered by a registered and accredited institution or skills development provider; and
- Lawfully obtained.

The Amendment Act also outlines penalties for education institutions and skills development providers that falsely claim registration and accreditation to offer qualifications and part-qualifications registered on the NQF. “Unscrupulous education and training providers (public and private) often misrepresent the qualifications they offer,” SAQA CEO, Joe Samuels explained. “For example, they might say they offer qualification X and V, yet they have only been given permission to offer X”, he further stated.

“Other providers are neither accredited nor registered, and in some cases, learners only find out after completion of their studies - which is a waste of time and money. That is why prospective students should visit the SAQA website and verify the registration of the qualifications they want to pursue. They should also check the registration and accreditation of the institutions offering the qualifications before enrolling,” he added.

By imposing penalties, the NQF Amendment Act sends a clear message against such practices. The sanctions also extend to

anyone who makes or causes false entries to be made into the National Learners’ Records Database or the misrepresented or fraudulent registers. Again, this is about protecting the public.

The Amendment Act also provides for the formulation of the criteria for evaluating foreign qualifications. By so doing, the quality of both national and foreign qualifications will be protected. If, after verification or evaluation by SAQA, a qualification or part-qualification is found to be misrepresented or is declared fraudulent by a court of law SAQA must:

- Record the finding in the register of misrepresented qualifications and part-qualifications or the register of fraudulent qualifications and part-qualifications;
- Inform the requester and the holder of the qualification or part-qualification of the finding; and
- Refer such a finding or information to the relevant professional body.

“To achieve this, SAQA will continue to work together with all stakeholders to ensure that the quality of our education system is maintained and enhanced. SAQA will also ensure that implementation of the NQF Amendment Act benefits all lifelong learners,” Samuels said.

By Tumelo Modisane and Lucas Malambe

**THE NQF
AMENDMENT ACT
IS THERE TO
PROTECT YOU**

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE ABOUT SAQA BOARD DECISIONS

I caught up with the SAQA CEO, Mr Joe Samuels (JS), to find out what the SAQA Board has been up to and why you should care about its decisions.

Wellington Radu (WR): So why should I care about the SAQA Board decisions?

JS: Look, you should care because the SAQA Board makes decisions that have far-reaching implications for the entire education and training sector. For example, at the last Board meeting which took place at the end of July 2019, the Board made three crucial decisions. It registered qualifications with learner achievements that were not previously registered on the NQF. It also decided to speed up the registration of higher education qualifications to meet the 31 December 2019 deadline for the realignment of qualifications to the 10-level NQF. Lastly, it addressed the proliferation of qualifications.

WR: These are significant decisions with massive implications for the sector so can you unpack each of them?

JS: Well, when the South African NQF was established 21 years ago, all institutions were required to submit existing qualifications to SAQA for registration on the NQF. Most institutions complied with this requirement, but others did not. As a result, there are learner achievements that are recorded against qualifications that were never registered on the NQF. The consequences for learners who have achieved such qualifications are serious because when the NQF Amendment Act comes into effect, these qualifications would be classified as misrepresented. This means they will be placed on the Register of Misrepresented Qualifications and the institutions that offered them would be reported, and imprisonment and/or fines will be imposed.

WR: How can learners be protected?

JS: To protect learners and safeguard the quality of our education system, the Board registered all such qualifications. The provision was that institutions will provide content for all those qualifications that do not currently have content and take them through the quality assurance process. Institutions are therefore encouraged to submit content to the Council on Higher Education (CHE) for such qualifications.

WR: What will happen if the 31 December 2019 deadline is not met?

JS: The deadline cannot be missed! By 31 December 2019, all higher education qualifications must be aligned to the 10-level NQF. To ensure that the deadline will be met, the SAQA Board is prepared to review and register all outstanding qualifications. What this means is that if the CHE recommends all the remaining qualifications before the deadline, the SAQA Board has the mechanism to register all of them, without compromising quality. This will ensure that higher education institutions and learners will not be prejudiced for advertising and taking up these qualifications, respectively.

You see, the SAQA Board always strives to offer efficient public service. At this meeting, the Board registered 106 qualifications that were recommended by the CHE to SAQA for registration on the NQF. All these qualifications were registered between 2 and 4 months, which is within the required 5 months. Also, the SAQA Board, after consideration of the recommendation from the CHE, transferred 75 registered qualifications from the University of Limpopo to Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University. These qualifications were previously offered by the former Medunsa Campus of the University of Limpopo. The implications are that learners can be assured that these qualifications are genuine and have gone through a rigorous quality assurance process.

WR: How about the proliferation of qualifications? Is it proliferation or duplication, and how did the Board deal with it?

JS: Whether you call it proliferation or duplication is neither here nor there. What the Board observed is that between 2012 and 2018, there has been an increase in the number of qualifications recommended to SAQA for registration on the NQF by the CHE. These qualifications are submitted by providers to the CHE for accreditation and subsequent registration by SAQA. Ordinarily, an increase in the number of qualifications offered in the country is not necessarily a bad thing as it increases the pool from which learners can choose. However, these qualifications contain similar titles, credits and in most instances, the same content, which if registered will create duplicates. To address this, the SAQA Board announced the following:

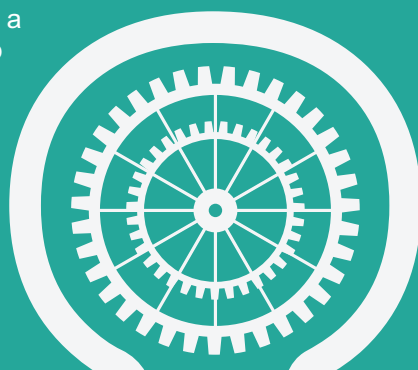
- *As from 2 January 2020, the CHE must ensure that it recommends a qualification for registration to SAQA if it has never been registered on the NQF;*
- *If the qualification is already registered on the NQF, the CHE must recommend the recording of a learning programme against the registered qualification on the NQF; and*
- *If the qualification is already registered on the NQF and the institution wishes to add a specialisation, the CHE must submit a recommendation to add a specialisation to SAQA, not to register another qualification.*

What other decisions should the public be aware of?

JS: The other decision I should mention relates to advice SAQA gives to the public on the accreditation and legal status of foreign institutions. Learners who want to study abroad should check the status of foreign institutions with SAQA before they enrol. They can do so by visiting the SAQA website and following the on-screen instructions. SAQA will continue to offer this vital service for free until such time the SAQA Board sees the need to charge. This will ensure that learners will continue to benefit and their qualifications will be recognised by SAQA at the end of their studies.

Given that SAQA achieved a clean audit and met 96% of its deliverables in the last financial year, what does the Board think of its performance?

Of course the SAQA Board is thrilled by its performance. It believes that good governance is not an end in itself. Instead it is a means to good management, good performance, good stewardship of public money, good public engagement and, ultimately, good outcomes. Therefore, its conduct through the decisions it makes and the guidance it provides shows determination to achieve good outcomes for the people of South Africa.





Ms Anne Oberholzer (middle) being honoured by the SAQA Board Chairperson, Dr Vuyelwa Toni-Penxa (left), and the SAQA CEO, Mr Joe Samuels (right)



SAQA CEO, Mr Joe Samuels (left) and SAQA Deputy CEO, Dr Julie Reddy cutting the cake at the launch.



INSETA CEO, Ms Nadia Starr (left), receiving a token of appreciation from the Director for Registration and Recognition at SAQA, Ms Faith Nyaka



CELEBRATING **21** YEARS
of building an NQF that works for the people

Launch

14 June 2019

NQF 21st Celebrations Launch

NQF 21ST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

We kicked off our NQF 21st Anniversary Celebrations with the launch on 14 June. After that, we hosted the international seminar on Recognition of Prior Learning for Professional Qualifications and Professional Designations on 21 June. This was followed by the Policy Learning Forum on the Conceptualisation of Learning Outcomes on 24 and 25 June.

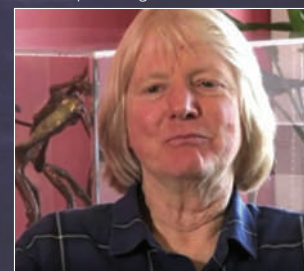
The highlight of the celebrations was the NQF 21st Anniversary Reception held on 24 June. The Reception was to celebrate the achievements of the NQF and honour those who have contributed immensely to the development and implementation of the NQF. It was attended by past and present SAQA Board members as well as esteemed guests from the African continent and beyond.

It was an evening to remember! The meticulously crafted get together started very well with delegates joining the SAQA Board Chairperson, Dr Vuyelwa Toni-Penxa, in extending its deepest condolences to the Bird family on the untimely passing of Ms Adrienne Bird who is regarded as a doyenne in education, training, work and development. "South Africa has lost an influencer who contributed immensely to the establishment of the NQF," said Dr Toni-Penxa.

Adrienne Bird championed the rights of workers to education and training and was one of the main architects of South Africa's post-apartheid skills development legislation.



Tshwane University of Technology postgraduate students providing entertainment



Ms Adrienne Bird was honoured posthumously for her immense contribution to the development of the NQF





**WHAT'S
THE
FUSS
ABOUT
LEARNING
OUTCOMES?**



Have you ever gone on a learning programme and found yourself wondering what you'd learned? Yes, you were given a lot of information, yet you realised that it had no meaning. Well, that's where learning outcomes come in.

Learning outcomes are what a learner should know, understand and do after a learning intervention. Learning outcomes are the universal language used in education and training even though the contexts in which education and training take place are different.

For example, if Andile has obtained a National Certificate Vocational (NCV) in Electrical Engineering and Fumani has a National Senior Certificate (NSC). Both qualifications are on level four of the NQF. Both should, in theory, allow them to access further education or employment if they meet the admission requirements of their chosen institution or employer.

So how will a prospective institution of learning or employer know what these two candidates know and what skills they have obtained? Learning outcomes can be useful in such cases as they reveal what the learner should know, understand and do. Even if learners studied in two different contexts, learning outcomes help determine what the learners know and can do. This is the common language!

As with all things in life, it isn't always that simple. There is a difference between intended learning outcomes and actual learning outcomes. This difference may be brought about by various issues ranging from the conditions of learning to a total disregard of learning outcomes in the learning process.

Learning outcomes are an essential part of qualifications and qualifications frameworks. In the case of qualifications frameworks, they are useful in benchmarking qualifications from different qualifications frameworks. For example, a Bachelor of Commerce degree in Accounting from a higher education institution in South Africa can be compared with a similar degree from an institution in Ghana or France.

It is for this reason that SAQA hosted a two-day international Policy Learning Forum on the conceptualisation and use of learning outcomes in South Africa from 24 – 25 June 2019. The Forum was funded by the European Union through the SA-EU Dialogue Facility as part of a series of events to commemorate the 21st anniversary of the South African NQF.

The delegates were joined by representatives from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region as well as representatives from the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), the agency driving learning outcomes implementation in Europe through the European Qualifications Framework for the past 11 years.

The Forum reflected on how learning outcomes were thought about and developed over time, how they have been used, how they are currently used, and how best to implement them. This is important if education and training are to address our challenges of inequality, poverty and unemployment.

It came out quite strongly that many of the challenges we experience in South Africa are also experienced by our counterparts in Europe. This Forum achieved its purpose in that South Africa and Europe learned from each other as "peers."

The Forum affirmed the importance of using learning outcomes and urged stakeholders to ensure their proper use. The challenge for qualification developers is that they must develop qualifications that include green skills and sustainable development, and take into account the changing world of work. Given that qualifications that are written now are for jobs that do not yet exist, it remains to be seen how learning outcomes for such qualifications will be developed.

"We are happy with the outcome of this interaction," says SAQA CEO, Mr Joe Samuels. "We look forward to convening a national conversation on learning outcomes as it is essential for our education and training sector," he added.

By Tumelo Modisane

Bringing refugees and asylum seekers into the verification and evaluation of qualifications picture

Sarah was forced to leave her home country due to conflict, and there are many like her. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, an unprecedented 70.8 million people around the world have been forced to leave home, and among them are nearly 25.9 million refugees as well as 3.5 million asylum seekers.

Among these refugees and asylum seekers are skilled professionals with genuine qualifications. As a refugee and asylum seeker, you arrive in the host country with nothing. You are not in a position to go back to your home country to get your qualification certificates. Authorities in your home country cannot be contacted for verification as that would reveal details of your whereabouts and put you in danger.

In a world where your certificates are proof of your academic qualifications, what do you do? Many organisations in the education sector, including the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), have been grappling with this question. SAQA evaluates foreign qualifications submitted to it for evaluation. The evaluation process includes verifying if the qualifications are authentic and then locating them within the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for comparative purposes.

If a person does not have certificates as proof of their qualifications, they cannot go through the evaluation process. However, South Africa is a signatory to the Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States, also known as the Addis Convention. The Convention recognises the plight of refugees and asylum seekers. It recommends that member states create a special provision for recognising the qualifications of refugees and asylum seekers given their unique circumstances.

Before South Africa's ratification of the Addis Convention, SAQA included the Addendum on the Recognition of Qualifications of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in its Policy and Criteria for Evaluating Foreign Qualifications in 2017. The Addendum was the first step in bringing refugees and asylum seekers into the verification and evaluation of qualifications picture.

Since then, work is afoot to create an appropriate model and procedures for evaluating the skills of refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa. According to Navin Vasudev, Deputy Director in the Directorate: Foreign Qualifications Evaluation and Advisory Services at SAQA, research into how other countries deal with the matter shows that Recognition of Prior Learning is the most suitable route to follow.

SAQA continues to engage its international counterparts and local organisations that work with refugees and asylum seekers to fine-tune the model and procedures for testing as a pilot project. The results will inform the evaluation model and processes.

By Tumelo Modisane

The special provision can go a long way in enabling people like Sarah to rebuild a life that would otherwise be difficult to do.



Have you lost your certificate?
Do you want to verify or evaluate your qualification?
OPEN THE RIGHT DOOR

I want to verify my South African qualification



FREE

Qualification Holder: e-mail your National ID Number and Full Name, with the subject **"Request for Record of Learning"**, to verifications@saqa.org.za



Employers can also verify employee's qualifications. Contact SAQA's Verifications Project on tel: 012 431 5010, email: verifications@saqa.org.za or visit www.saqa.org.za to complete an online request and for more information

FEE

Wow, I got my Record of Learning in 48 hrs!



DID YOU KNOW THAT SAQA EVALUATES FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS?

Application is done online only! Access the relevant link on the SAQA website through selecting Services; Evaluation of Foreign Qualifications; Online Application

SAQA verifies foreign qualifications, and compares them with local qualifications registered on the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

To apply, have the following documents:

- Signed Consent Form
- Certified copy of your National Identity Document
- Qualification documents
- FEE (amount available in the application form)



Helpline: 0860 111 673 OR Website: saqa.org.za



higher education & training
Department: Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Helpline: 086 999 0123 Website: www.dhet.gov.za

HOW DO I KNOW MY QUALIFICATION IS LEGITIMATE?

- * Always check the credentials of your institution with the Department of Higher Education and Training
- * Make sure that the institution is accredited to offer the qualification that is registered on the National Qualifications Framework
- * You can check the registration of your qualification on the NQF by contacting SAQA

I lost my trade/occupational certificate

Requirements for applying for a replacement certificate:

- Affidavit
- Certified copy of ID
- Trade Centre name and year of the trade test
- Personal details
- Administration fees



GO and apply for a new certificate from your

- Assessment Quality Partner (AQP)
- Trade test centre
- Indlela
- National Artisan Moderation Body
- SETA

An AQP is a body delegated by the QCTO to manage the quality assurance of occupational qualifications

I NOW have my replacement certificate



- 1 Replacement of lost occupational/trade certificates
- 2 Maintain a database of issued certificates from which to verify issued certificates and issue replacement certificates
- 3 Quality assurance of occupational/trade qualifications

To request for verification of a trade and occupation qualification - tel: 012 003 1800, email: verification@qcto.org.za or visit www.qcto.org.za

I passed my school leaving qualification but now I can't find my certificate



What you need to apply

- 1 A completed APPLICATION FORM, which can be obtained at any of the departments of education or on the website of the National Department of Basic Education (www.education.gov.za)
- 2 A signed AFFIDAVIT from a police station stating the status of the original certificate, for example stolen; lost in a move
- 3 A certified copy of the candidate's IDENTITY DOCUMENT
- 4 Proof of PAYMENT of administration fees

Go and apply for the replacement of your Senior Certificate (SC) and National Senior Certificate (NSC) at the District, Provincial or National Department of Basic Education.



basic education

Department: Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

U MALUSI



Umalusi issues and verifies the following certificates: General Education and Training Certificate (GETC); ABET, NSC (Schools and Colleges), SC, N3, NC (V), Subject certificates, Learning Area certificates

Tel: 012 349 1510 Website: www.umalusi.org.za

DID YOU KNOW?

Umalusi verifies certificates issued from November 1992 - contact verification@umalusi.org.za. All certificates issued before November 1992 (SC, N3 certificates) must be verified by the Department of Basic Education - contact verification@dbe.gov.za. The Higher Education and Training Department issues and verifies TVET college certificates and N Diplomas - contact verification@dhet.gov.za.

It wasn't as hard as I thought to get a replacement certificate



I lost my higher education certificate. What must I do?



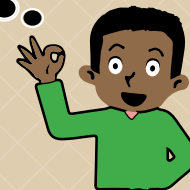
Go to the institution at which you attended.



- 1 Contact the Office of the Registrar/Graduations
- 2 Provide a sworn affidavit declaring the loss of the original certificate, a covering letter indicating your postal address and contact details, and a certified copy of your identity document. Many universities have a copy of the affidavit form on their websites



Thanks to my varsity I now have my replacement



Council on Higher Education (CHE) is responsible for:

- 1 Developing standards and quality assurance for all higher education qualifications
- 2 Accrediting learning programmes offered by public and private higher education institutions

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