

COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**How learning outcomes are
conceptualised, used in the Higher
Education Qualifications Sub-
Framework (HEQSF) - Challenges,
successes and key lessons learnt**

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OUTLINE

- The HEQSF – An Introduction
- The approach adopted for qualifications
- Classification of Learning Outcomes
- Organizing principles for qualifications
- Challenges, successes and key lessons learned
- Conclusion

HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (HEQSF)

Levels

10

Doctorate - 360 Credits

Prof Doctorate - 360 Credits

9

Research / Coursework Master's
180 Credits

Prof Master's -180 Credits

8

Postgraduate Diploma
120 Credits

Honour's
120 Credits

7

Advanced Diploma
120 Credits

6

Advanced Certificate
120 Credits

Diploma
240
Credits

Diploma
360
Credits

Bachelor's
degree
360 Credits

Bachelor's
Degree -
Prof
480 Credits

5

Higher Certificate
120 Credits

QUALIFICATION TYPES

THE HEQSF:

A Nested Approach To Qualifications

- **Level descriptors** - *levels of complexity of knowledge and skills for the qualifications*
- **Qualification types and their descriptors** - *purpose and characteristics in relation to the knowledge types and skills to be developed*
- **Qualification designators** - *describe a generic field of study*
- **Qualifiers for qualification specialisations** - *learning outcomes and specifications for a programme that include specialised learning outcomes related to the field of study*
- **Qualification routes**

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Level descriptors and qualification descriptors are expressed in terms of learning outcomes

The HEQSF sets out the range of qualification types in higher education that may be awarded to mark the achievement of *learning outcomes* that have been appropriately assessed (*HEQSF 2013*)

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

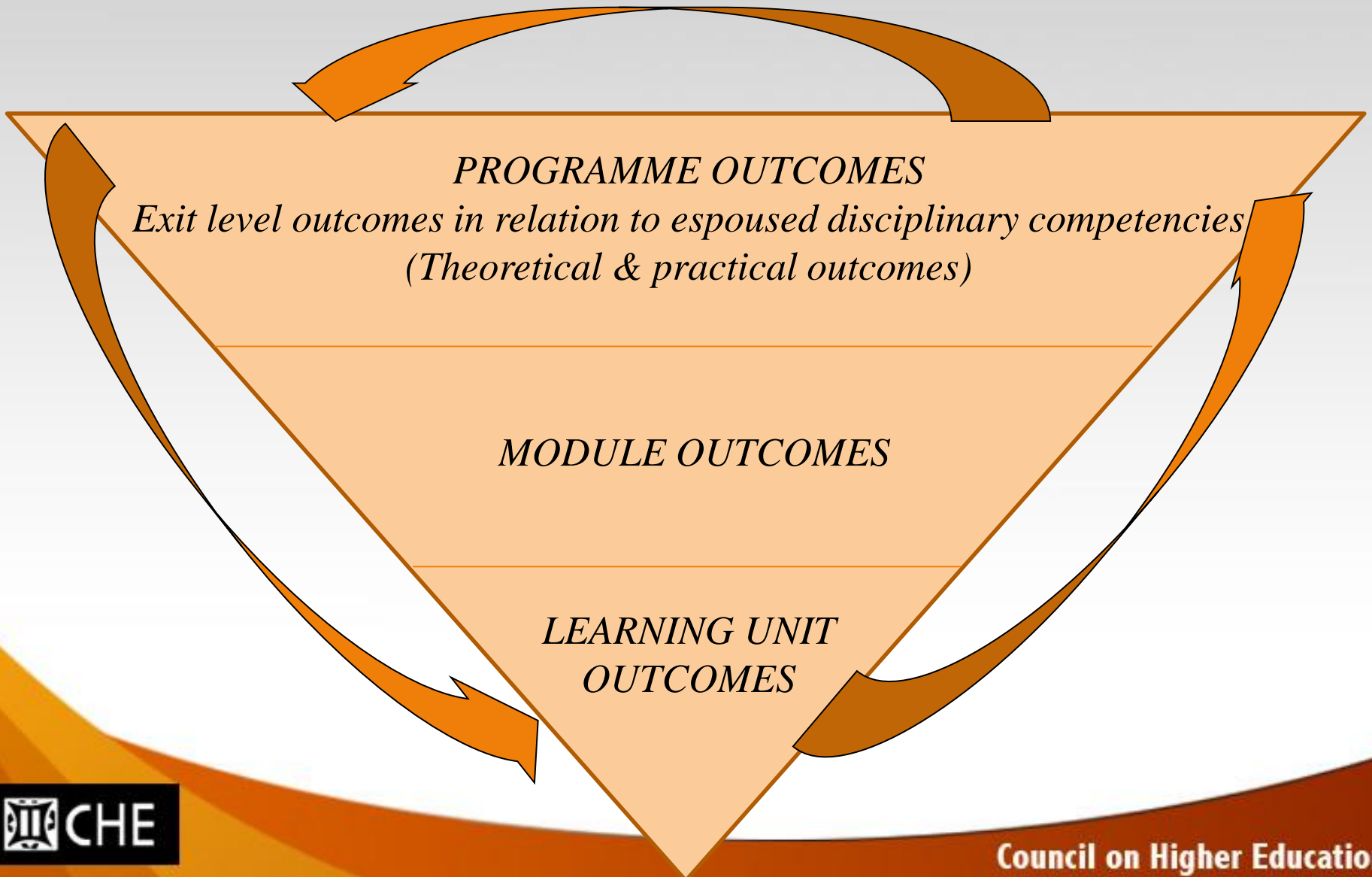
1. Generic Learning Outcomes (qualification type)

(Level Descriptors - Scope of knowledge, Knowledge literacy, Method and procedure, Problem solving, Processing and managing information, Producing and communicating of information, Context and systems, Management of learning, Accountability)

2. Specific Learning Outcomes (the qualification descriptors – subject/theme specific)

(SAQA 2012)

LEARNING OUTCOMES: The Organizing Principle of Programmes



CHALLENGES

MACRO	MESO	MICRO
Systemic Matters	Institutional - Programmatic matters	Teaching and learning Environment - Curricula Matters
Differences in focus - Product / output orientation	Process orientation & practices - QA & Compliance	Input orientation - Disciplinary Knowledge & pedagogic practices
Policies vs. Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Terminology: Learning Outcomes vs. objectives vs. competencies - Designing LO and aligning to appropriate levels - Differentiation of learning outcomes (intended & achieved) - Assessment practices & evaluation 	

Discourses and Theories Framing LO, Institutional contexts, Labour/market and Societal needs

POTENTIAL SUCCESSES

- Quality assured qualifications
- Recognisable & shared understanding of qualifications in the sector
- Improved parity of qualifications
- Legitimacy of qualifications

KEY LESSONS LEARNED

- HEQSF - Alignment process
 - necessity for clarity on the purpose of qualifications & align qualification type with designators
 - Proliferation of qualifications – areas of specialisation at undergraduate levels
- Need for a common understanding of the what, why and how of LO and a clearer distinction of the different learning outcomes in the development of qualifications relevant to the disciplines

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- Are the current discourses framing learning outcomes appropriate for teaching and learning for in higher education Centennials (Generation Z) & millennials (Generation Alpha)?
- How should learning outcomes be conceptualised for fitness for purpose and epistemic access for developing ways of thinking and knowing that are necessary and relevant for the future graduate whilst also addressing the national imperatives & the global and societal needs?

REFERENCE

- HEQSF (2013). The Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
- SAQA (2012). Level Descriptors for the South African National Qualifications Framework

Thank you

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