

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **SAQA marks 30 years — the NQF must be a lived advantage for every individual and the overall educational value chain**

This year, as the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) marks three decades of stewardship of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), we celebrate important milestones while also looking ahead to the future. The NQF was created to provide clear pathways, to recognise learning wherever it takes place, and to enable mobility between education, training and work. Over 30 years SAQA has strengthened articulation, promoted Recognition of Prior Learning, built robust evaluation systems while also defending the credibility of qualifications. “Thirty years on, the NQF needs to swiftly move from an administrative concept to being a lived advantage for every individual,” says the SAQA Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Nadia Starr.

That being the case, administrative backlogs, inconsistent employer understanding of NQF levels, opaque articulation between TVET colleges and universities, and unresolved legacy issues with pre-2009 qualifications continue to frustrate real-life individuals. These are not technical debates; they are barriers that block access to study, delay entry to work, and deny recognition for learning already achieved. “The qualifications framework and its associated tools and rules must stop being a bureaucratic obstacle and become an enabling instrument. Coordinating and recognising authentic and responsive qualifications in an ever-evolving ecosystem is an educational, social and economic imperative,” adds the SAQA CEO.

In light of this, SAQA will embark on a landmark four-day conference marking 30 years of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The conference seeks to look back at achievements, takes stock of today’s needs, and sets a forward agenda for trusted

recognition, mobility, and lifelong learning across South Africa's education and skills ecosystem.

Taking place on 6 to 9 October 2025 at the Radisson Hotel & Convention Centre, OR Tambo (Johannesburg) and under the theme “The Establishment, Evolution and Future of the NQF,” the conference will be attended by notable players in the education value chain, including international guests. It will celebrate achievements while pressing for measurable reform — simplifying individual journeys, speeding up verification and evaluation, and scaling Recognition of Prior Learning so it reaches marginalised individuals. This is a moment to have an honest reflection on three decades while equally setting a clear action agenda for the next phase.

To build public traction and to lift the 30-year story beyond the conference itself, SAQA has immediately made its executive management available for interview purposes and in the run-up to the event. Media are invited to profile our milestones, probe our achievements and aspirations, and bring individual testimony into the national conversation. Topics available for interview include UNESCO Convention and mobility, legacy (pre-2009) qualifications, the benefits of verification of qualifications, RPL scaling, and employer recognition of NQF levels.

For any interview requests and further enquiries please contact Dr Rakgwatha Mokou - SAQA's Senior Manager for Communication and Advocacy at [rmokou@saqa.org.za](mailto:rmokou@saqa.org.za) or +27 (0) [83 628 4917].

**Thirty years is an achievement and a test: SAQA chooses to make the NQF a tangible engine of social and economic mobility, and we invite the media and all stakeholders to join us in making it real.**