

THE INVOLVEMENT BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY (SAQA)

In 1995, the Department of Education formed the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and passed an Act determining the way in which qualifications would be developed, recorded and assessed.

SAQA is the core driver for “outcomes-based” learning. Outcomes-based learning is learner-driven, which means that learners must (in their own time) demonstrate the achievement of an outcome and will be assessed as being competent or not yet competent. Learners (students) will also have to master the foundational knowledge (theory), skills, techniques and methods that can be applied in similar and new situations. Outcomes-based implies that education and training will now be defined by its outcomes at specific NQF Levels and will be assessed in a practical or simulated environment.

SAQA's Mission

SAQA's mission is to ensure the development and implementation of a National Qualification Framework which contributes to the full development of each learner and to the social and economic development of the nation at large.

SAQA Functions

- ▶ To oversee the development of the National Qualifications Framework
- ▶ To oversee the implementation of the NQF
- ▶ To formulate and publish policies and criteria for:
 - ▶ The registration of bodies responsible for establishing national education and training standards (NSBs and SGBs)
 - ▶ The accreditation of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of standards and qualifications (ETQA)
- ▶ To register National Standards and Qualifications
- ▶ To ensure international comparability of standards and registered qualifications
- ▶ To accredit courses in the absence of ETQAs

Representation on SAQA

SAQA comprises representatives from the following groups:

- ◆ Employer organizations
- ◆ Unions
- ◆ Training providers
- ◆ Professional bodies; and
- ◆ Government

THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (NQF)

The NQF is a system and structure that provides the means to register all types of learning achievements within one of eight levels. The NQF enables each person who enters learning to achieve nationally recognized and internationally comparable qualifications.

Education and Training Bands of the NQF

The General Education and Training Band (GET)

This band consists of NQF level 1 (Compulsory Education) and comprises the following three phases:

- ▶ ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training)
- ▶ Foundation Phase: This phase includes Grades 1 – 3 (the old Grade 1, Grade 2 and Standard 1)
- ▶ Intermediate Phase: This phase consist of school Grades 4 - 6 (the old Std 2 – 4)
- ▶ Senior Phase: This phase consist of school Grades 7 – 9 (the old Std 5 – 7)

The Further Education and Training Band (FET)

This band is made up of NQF level 2 – 4. It is non-compulsory and comprises Grades 10 -12 (the old Std 8 – 10 [Matric=NQF Level 4])

The following providers could provide learning programmes in this band:

- ▶ Senior Secondary Schools
- ▶ Private providers and private colleges
- ▶ Community colleges
- ▶ Technical Colleges
- ▶ Private Companies

The Higher Education and Training Band (HET)

This band is made up of NQF levels 5 – 8. It is non-compulsory and leads to the achievement of:

- ▶ Diplomas and occupational certificates
- ▶ First degrees and higher diplomas
- ▶ Higher degrees
- ▶ Doctorates and further research degrees

The following institutions provide higher education and training:

- ▶ Universities
- ▶ Technikons
- ▶ Colleges for professional training
- ▶ Technical colleges
- ▶ Private colleges

Purpose of the NQF

- ▶ To integrate training, education and prior experience into one system
- ▶ To make training and education more directed and portable
- ▶ To ensure that one level of learning progresses to another
- ▶ To ensure the articulation of learning, ie a national certificate should have the same, nationally defined interpretation.