

Session 2
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RPL in South Africa:

Snapshot of policy and implementation

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This presentation....

- **RPL in Context**
- **Policy and Implementation**
- **Data**
- **RPL in Learning Pathways**

RPL in the context of the South African NQF



What is RPL? (South Africa)



“RPL is the principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated, and assessed for the purposes of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development” (SAQA, 2019)

There are two main forms of RPL

RPL for access:

To provide an access route into a programme of learning, a professional designation, employment and career progression

RPL for credit:

To provide for the awarding of credits for, or towards, a qualification or part-qualification registered on the NQF

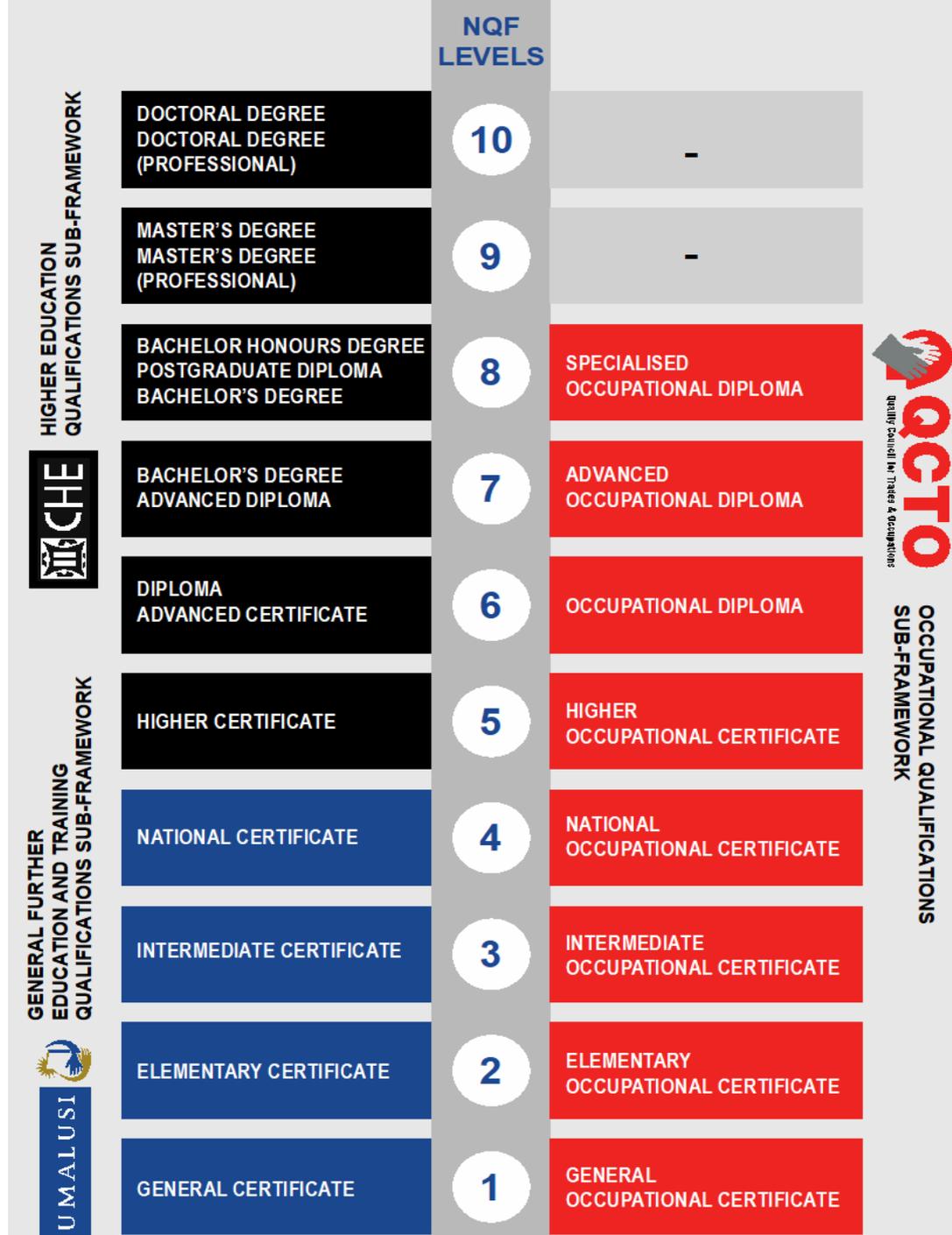
South African NQF

Three articulated NQF Sub-Frameworks, each overseen by a Quality Council:

1. **General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFETQSF) - Umalusi**

2. **Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) - CHE**

3. **Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) - QCTO**



International Trends



Of the **201** United Nations listed countries:

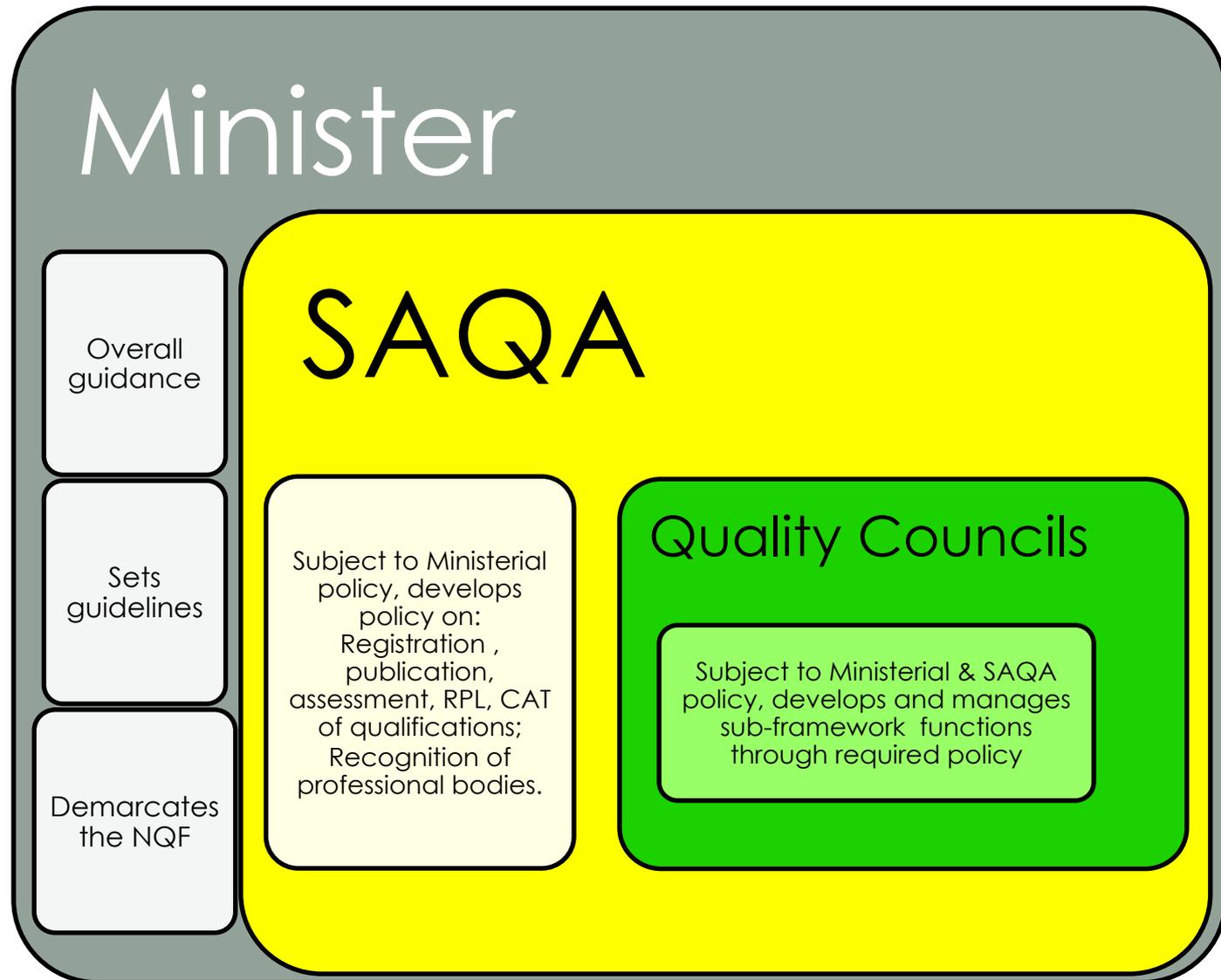
- **136** have National Qualifications Frameworks (**NQFs**)
- **7** have Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks (**SQFs**)
- **18** use only Regional Qualifications Frameworks (**RQFs**)
- **40** countries, insufficient information available
- **161 (80%)** of the 201 countries base their education and training systems on qualifications frameworks
- Almost all **include RPL**



RPL Policy and Implementation



Policy levels in the NQF environment



RPL legislation/ policy



- **NQF Act 67 of 2008** (Also SAQA Act 58 of 1995)
- **DHET's (2016) RPL Coordination Policy**
- **SAQA's (2019) Policy and Criteria for Implementing RPL**
(Also 2002, 2013, 2016)
- **Quality Council policies for RPL in NQF Sub-Frameworks**
- **RPL as a flexible learning pathway (FLP) tool**

National RPL initiatives



Agricultural sector	Food and Beverage (FoodBev) sector
Artisan RPL (ARPL)	Marine Industry Association SA (MIASA)
Banking sector	National Artisan Moderating Body (NAMB)
Correctional Services	Rand Water
Democratic Nursing Association of SA (DENOSA)	Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC)
Department of Defence (DoD)	South African Police Services (SAPS)
Department of Public Service Administration (DPSA)	South African Sports Coaching Association (SASCA/ SASCOC)
Department of Social Development (DSD)	State Information Technology Agency (SITA)
Department of Transport (DoT)	Work-at-Height sector (IWH)
Education and Labour Relations Council (ELRC)	Worker Education (Workers' College)
E-TV	

Implementation examples....



- **Portfolio Development Course (PDC)**
- **Whole-HEI (Centre for Higher Education Development)**
- **Dual processes**
- **Individualised approach**
- **Online RPL/ lifelong learning processes (e.g. banks)**
- **SAQA RPL initiative for refugees / asylum seekers**

The journey so far....



**Islands of
good practice
(OECD, 2008)**

Engagements
**2010, 2011,
2014**

**RPL Task
Team 2012**

**RPL
policy**

DHET, SAQA,
QCs, PBs
SETAs,
Providers,
entities

**20+
National
RPL
initiatives**

**200+- RPL
providers**

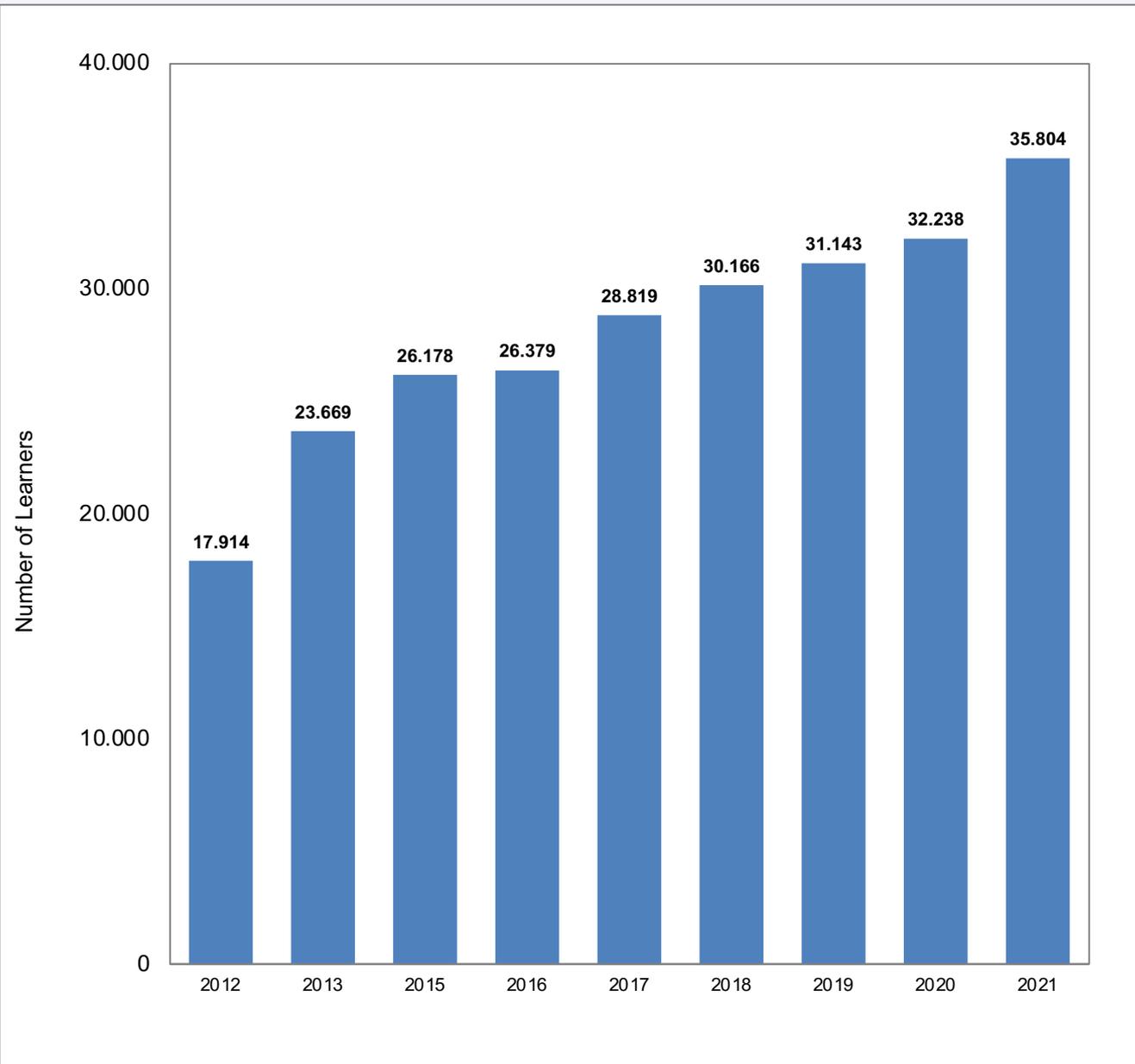
RPL data

**RPL
networks**

Data



Achievements via RPL

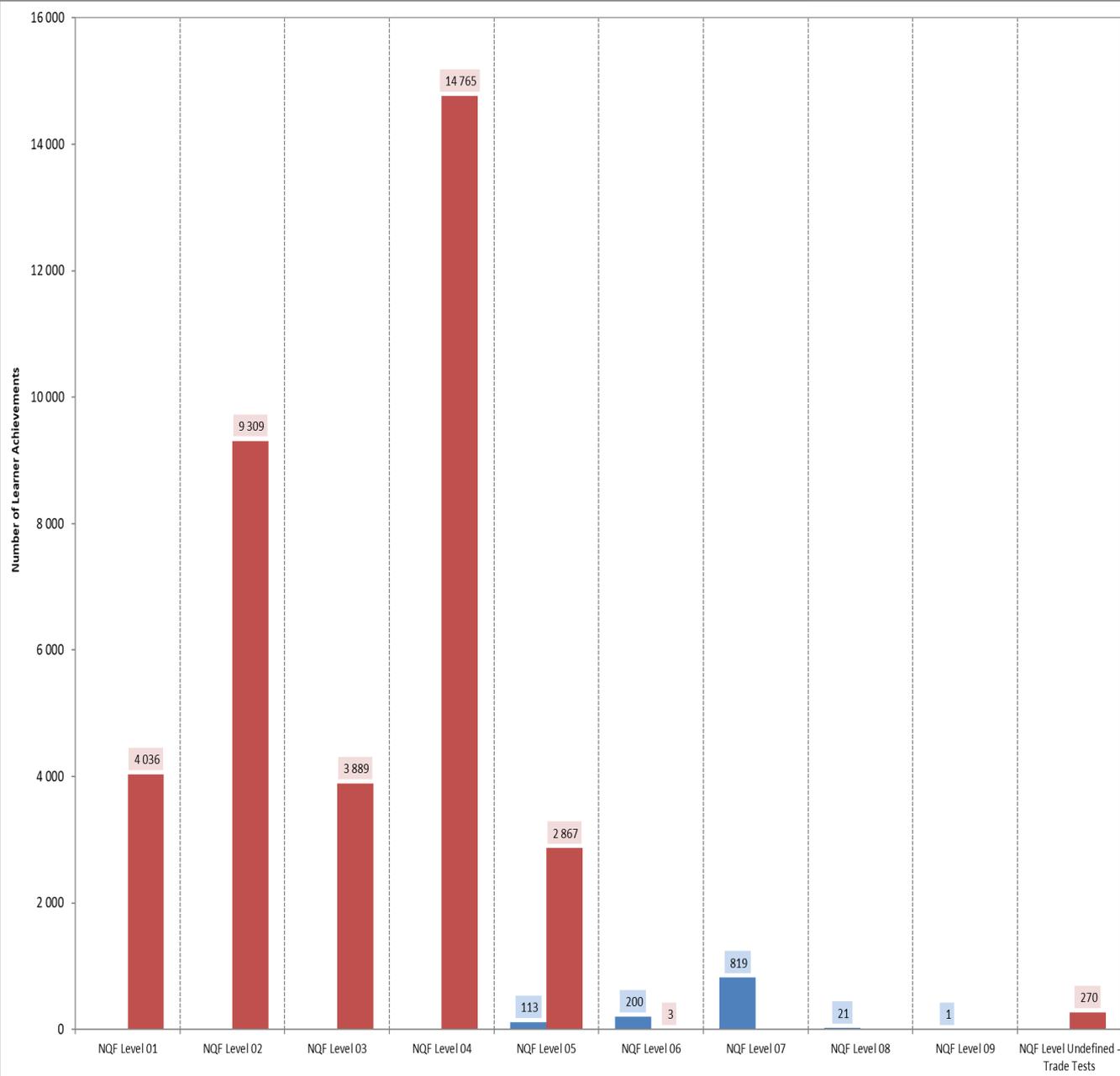


- Steady, consistent increase in achievements via RPL annually.
- Number of qualifications obtained via RPL is 241.
- 97% of achievements via RPL are in the OQSF context, 3% in HEQSF

Disaggregated by:

- NQF Field
- Gender
- Population Group
- Age-group

Achievements via RPL



- 41% RPL achievements achieved at NQF L4, followed by NQF L2 (26%) and L3 (11%)
- Majority of achievement records were in the field of Services (41%) followed by Business, Commerce and Mgt. Studies (35%) and Manufacturing Engineering and Technology (18%)
- Top 3 Qualifications:
 - FETC: Real Estate (L4)
 - National Cert: Contact Center support and
 - National Cert: : Business Administration Services)

SA RPL visibility



- **1st VPL Biennale 2015 (Netherlands) “What is RPL”**
- **2nd VPL Biennale 2017 (Denmark) “Learner at the centre” SA PRIZE**
- **3rd VPL Biennale 2019 (Germany) “RPL Policy for the EU” SA PRIZE**
- **4th VPL Biennale 2021 (SA, but cancelled due to pandemic)**
- **5th VPL Biennale 2022 (Iceland) “How can RPL be integral to LLL policy?”**

RPL in learning pathways (Articulation)



What is a learning-and-work pathway?

‘Articulation’

- **Systemic** (linked qualifications, part qualifications, professional designations, structured workplace learning and other elements within and between country systems, must have **RPL** routes)
- **Specific** (specific arrangements like **RPL**, CAT, MoU/ MoA and other inter-institutional arrangements)
- **Individual** (supporting individuals in their learning-and-work pathways e.g. through career advice, flexible learning and teaching, supportive programmes and structures, **RPL**, CAT, etc)

A learning-and-work pathway can be...



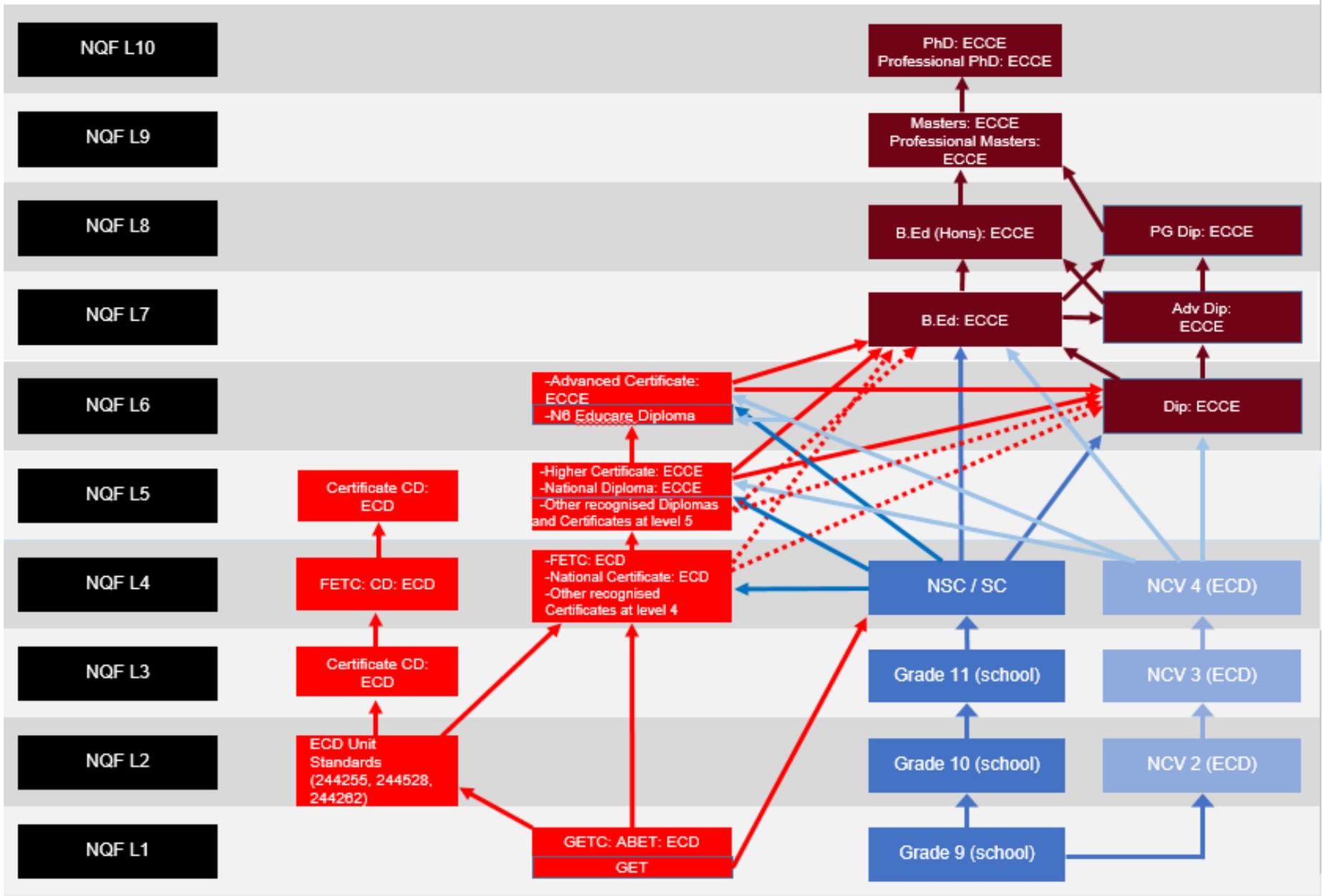
- **Horizontal** (between qualifications on the same NQF level)
- **Vertical** (across NQF levels and within NQF Sub-Frameworks)
- **Diagonal** (across NQF levels and NQF Sub-Frameworks)

What is a flexible learning pathway?

(access, progression)

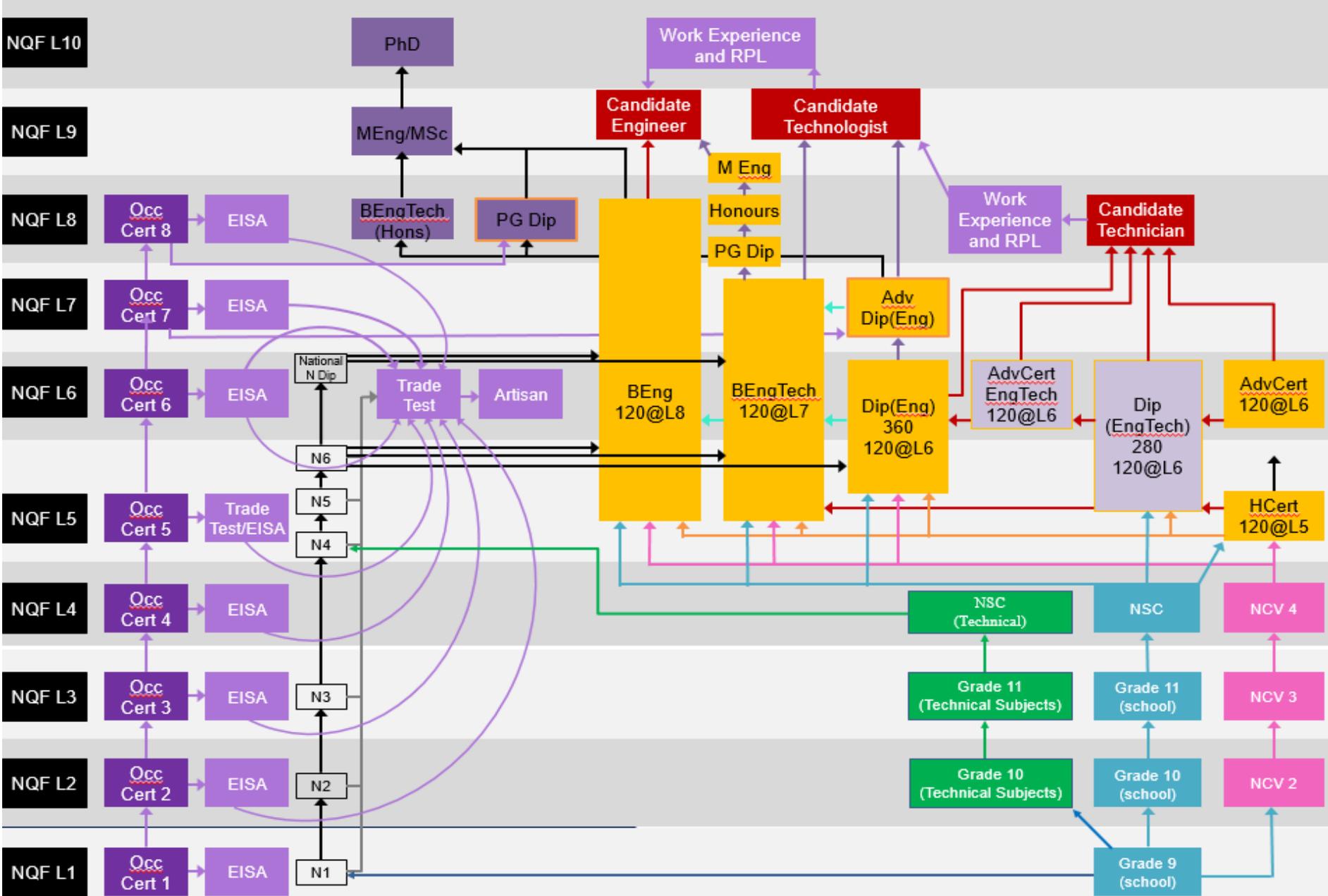
(Start with a pathway map.....)

Early Childhood Development Learning Pathways



Draft matrix of learning-and-work pathways in Engineering (developed by SAQA)

- ↑ Exit points of interest (ECSA)
- Stated progression Route (ECSA)
- ↔ Transfer of Accumulated Credits (ECSA)



Priorities for the future

- Mapping/ developing articulation pathways for more sectors
- Taking good practices to scale
 - Enhancing communication and information-sharing
- Ring-fencing funding for RPL/ FLPs
- Expanding TVET, CET and NQF Level 5 qualifications (UPSET)
- Closing data gaps
- Enhancing:
 - articulation through curricula
 - flexibility of administration systems
 - student support in FLPs
 - flexible modes of delivery
 - sharing good practices

Sources



- **SAQA Bulletin 2018(1) 'Articulation initiatives'**
- **SAQA Bulletin 2019(1) 'Inclusivity' (In education, training and professional development)**
- **SAQA-UNESCO 2020 'Flexible Learning Pathways: The National Qualifications Backbone' (Case study of flexible learning pathways in higher education/ PSET in South Africa)**
- **2nd VPL Biennale book (peer reviewed)**
- **3rd VPL Biennale book (peer reviewed)**



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