



**Report on the
Alignment of the South African
National Qualifications Framework
(SANQF) to the
Southern African Development
Community Qualifications
Framework (SADCQF)**

May 2019

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Also acknowledged is the daily contribution of SANQF policymakers, implementers and beneficiaries who contribute to promoting trust in South African qualifications and building a world-class NQF for South Africa.

Authorisation

This report is the official statement that the South African National Qualifications Framework (SANQF) is aligned with the Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF). The report has been endorsed by the National Alignment Committee (NAC) in South Africa.

The alignment process has been conducted by the NAC, which comprises representatives of the:

- Ministries responsible for overall South African education and training: Department of Basic Education (DBE) and Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET);
- Quality Councils responsible for quality assurance (QA) of the SANQF:
 - Council on Higher Education (CHE) responsible for QA of the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF);
 - Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) responsible for QA of the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF); and
 - Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi) responsible for QA of the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFETQSF), and
- South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), custodian of the SANQF and responsible for co-ordinating the NQF Sub-Frameworks.

SAQA provided the NAC Secretariat.

The NAC declares that all the alignment criteria have been met and authorises Mr Joe Samuels to sign off on the report on its behalf.

Members of the NAC

CHE: Prof K Naidoo replaced by Dr A Saidi
DBE: Ms M Maboya/ Mr S Govender/ Dr M Simelane
DHET: Dr N Sishi/ Dr Lloyd
QCTO: Mr T Lata/ Mr M Ndukula
SAQA: Mr J Samuels
Umalusi: Mr E Sibanda/ Dr C Booyse/ Ms A Mohale



MR JOE SAMUELS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, SAQA

Executive Summary

1. In 2011 the SADC Ministers responsible for education and training approved the Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF).
2. The SADCQF is a comprehensive Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) for schooling, technical and vocational education, and training and higher education. Its purpose is to enable easier movement of learners and workers across the SADC region and internationally. It is a 10-level RQF underpinned by learning outcomes and quality assurance (QA) principles that will provide a regional benchmark for qualifications and QA mechanisms in SADC.
3. The Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA) was established to oversee the implementation of the SADCQF and proposed that member states align their National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) or National Qualifications Systems (NQS) and QA mechanisms to the SADCQF.
4. Ten alignment criteria were agreed to by the TCCA, to ensure consistency in the alignment of NQFs/NQS and QA mechanisms across the region.
5. The vision is that, in the SADC region, all new qualification certificates, diplomas, degrees, and other documents issued by competent authorities will show the relevant SADCQF level. Alignment will enable this recognition of achievement at a regional level. The resulting transparency and information about the qualifications and QA of aligned Member States will further assist in embedding mutual trust among SADC Members. Regional alignment will also enable institutions and individuals to make comparisons of their learning and competence levels and will reduce unnecessary duplication of learning and effort when moving through SADC for study or work purposes.
6. This report is the official statement from the South African National Alignment Committee (NAC) that the South African National Qualifications Framework (SANQF) is aligned to the SADCQF.
7. This report provides the analysis, evidence, documentation and conclusions of the NAC and is the South African response to the recommendation from the SADC TCCA that NQFs and QA mechanisms be aligned to the SADCQF. The report also asserts that the SANQF is a key tool for promoting trust in South African qualifications through the demonstrated comparability, transparency and QA of its qualifications. At a national level, the information in the alignment report will also support the further implementation of the NQF.
8. The alignment process in South Africa has been conducted by the NAC, which comprises representatives of the:
 - a. Two Ministries: Department of Basic Education (DBE) and Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET);
 - b. Three Quality Councils: Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi); Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO); and Council on Higher Education (CHE); and
 - c. South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) who also provided the Secretariat to the entire alignment process.
9. Stakeholder representatives have been involved in the alignment process through the NAC members and a public gazetting of the alignment report and comment process.

10. 10. The NAC has verified the report and concluded that all ten alignment criteria have been met and that this report:
- Indicates the relevant national bodies that formed part of the NAC that drove the alignment process in South Africa (SA); and
 - Establishes a clear and demonstrable link between qualification levels in the SANQF and the level descriptors of the SADCQF as follows:
 - The SAQA Board approved the Alignment Report for public comment as well as when it was presented at the end of the alignment process.
 - The Alignment report also served at the Chief Executive Officers (CEO) Committee for scrutiny.



		Below NQF Level 1
Level 1		Level 1
Level 2		Level 2
Level 3		Level 3
Level 4		Level 4
Level 5		Level 5
Level 6		Level 6
Level 7		Level 7
Level 8		Level 8
Level 9		Level 9
Level 10		Level 10

- The SANQF levels are one level higher (cognitively) than the SADCQF for all the levels from Level One to Level Seven. However, the difference in cognitive challenge in the two frameworks narrows as the learner progresses from Level 1 to Level 7;
 - The differences between the two frameworks result in the SANQF Level 7 falling between SADCQF Level 7 and SADCQF Level 8; and
 - Once a research component becomes part of both frameworks at Levels 8, 9 and 10, the SADCQF and the SANQF levels are aligned.
- Demonstrates that the SANQF is based on learning outcomes, and links to non-formal and informal learning and SA's credit system;
 - Describes clearly the published and agreed procedures for including qualifications in the SANQF;
 - Describes SA's national QA system as embedded in the NQF, and that these are consistent with QA guidelines of the SADCQF;
 - Provides transparent information on the relevant national authorities responsible for the verification of qualifications obtained in SA;
 - Provides evidence that the NAC certified the alignment of the SANQF to the SADCQF and endorsed a comprehensive report on the alignment;
 - Made provision for a public comment process for the alignment report; and

- k. Includes SA's plans to make changes to legislation supporting alignment to SADCQF levels on new qualifications documents issued by competent authorities.
11. This alignment report covers the entire SANQF, from NQF level 1 (which is open-ended to include compulsory education) to NQF Level 10, which is at Doctoral level.
12. The report structure consists of a preface, five Chapters, References and Annexures.
- a. As an orientation, the report opens with a preface which comprises the official authorisation and sign-off, the executive summary and relevant acronyms and abbreviations used in the report;
 - b. Chapter One provides an introduction to the SADCQF and its implementation model, which comprises six programmes. One of these programmes includes alignment to the SADCQF. The Chapter also introduces the alignment pilot with eight SADC countries;
 - c. Chapter Two provides the profile of South African education and training, which is embedded in its NQF, from compulsory education to Doctoral level. The Chapter also describes how the NQF was developed, its purpose, scope and structure, as well as how it is being implemented;
 - d. Chapter Three describes the process of alignment in SA and includes details on how SA self-assessed its readiness to align with the SADCQF. It introduces the country's NAC and SA's milestones to alignment. The Chapter also provides information on the capacity building workshops that were held to assist pilot countries to align;
 - e. Chapter Four provides evidence of SA's alignment and presents responses from the SA NAC to each of the ten alignment criteria as well as the alignment sub-criteria. The Chapter also provides a description of the level-to-level methodology and comparison undertaken to demonstrate how the SANQF level descriptors align with the SADCQF level descriptors;
 - f. Chapter Five concludes that this report has achieved its purpose and that all ten SADCQF alignment criteria have been met, and confirms that the SANQF is aligned to the SADCQF;
 - g. The References used in the text follow the Conclusions Chapter and directs the reader to further reading; and
 - h. Seven Annexures provide supplementary documentation and close the report.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AACs	Associated Assessment Criteria
ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AQP	Assessment Quality Partner
AQVN	African Qualifications Verification Network
BE	Basic education
BEEd	Bachelor of Education
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CEM	Council of Education Ministers
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CET	Continuing Education and Training
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CNE	Christian National Education
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DQP	Development Quality Partner
EC	Elementary Certificate
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ELOs	Exit Level Outcomes
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance
EXCO	Executive Committee
FAL	First Additional Language
FET	Further Education and Training
GC	General Certificate
GENFETQA	General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance
GFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework

GG	Government Gazette
HE	Higher Education
Hedcom	Heads of Education Departments Committee
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
HET	Higher Education and Training
HL	Home language
IC	Intermediate Certificate
IEB	Independent Examinations Board
ILO	International Labour Organization
LD	Level Descriptor
LO	Life Orientation
LOs	Learning Outcomes
MHET	Minister of Higher Education and Training
NAC	National Alignment Committee
NASCA	National Senior Certificate for Adults
NATED	National Accredited Technical Education Diploma
NC	National Certificate
NC(V)	National Certificate (Vocational)
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NQS	National Qualifications System
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
OBE	Outcome-Based Education
OFO	Organising Framework for Occupations
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework
PE	Physical Education

PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PSET	Post-school Education and Training
QA	Quality Assurance
QC	Quality Council
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
QSF	Qualification Sub-Framework
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RQF	Regional Qualifications Framework
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCQF	SADC Qualifications Framework
SADCQVN	SADC Qualifications Verification Network
SAL	Second Additional Language
SANQF	South African National Qualifications Framework
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SAQAN	Southern African Quality Assurance Network
SASL	South African Sign Language
SD	Skills Development
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SocSci	Social Science
TCCA	Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation
ToRs	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
Umalusi	Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training
WIL	Work-integrated learning

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction and Background to Alignment in SADC

Introduction

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is an economic development region on the southern tip of the African continent comprising 16 Member States. The Member States are Angola, Botswana, ¹Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Seychelles, Eswatini, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The three official languages in SADC are English, French and Portuguese.

In September 1997, the SADC Ministers of Education signed the SADC Protocol on Education and Training. The Protocol provides for the harmonisation of education and training systems to enable easier movement of learners and workers in SADC. It also requires Technical Committees to implement the provision of the Protocol. The Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA) was established to oversee the matters related to SADC qualifications. It proposed the establishment of a regional qualifications framework (RQF) that will enable the movement of learners and workers across the SADC region. In 2011 the SADC Ministers of Education established the SADC Qualifications Framework (SADCQF).

The SADCQF is a comprehensive RQF for schooling, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Higher Education (HE). Its purpose is to enable easier movement of learners and workers across the SADC region and internationally. It is a 10-level RQF underpinned by learning outcomes and Quality Assurance (QA) principles that will provide a regional benchmark for qualifications and QA mechanisms in SADC. The SADC level descriptors describe what a learner is able to know, understand and do after the completion of a learning process at a particular SADCQF level.

As recommended by the TCCA, Member States agreed to align their National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) or National Qualifications Systems (NQS) and QA mechanisms to the SADCQF. The vision is that, in the SADC region, all new qualification certificates, diplomas, degrees, and other documents issued by competent authorities will contain the reference to the relevant SADCQF level. Alignment will enable this recognition of achievement at a regional level.

The alignment reports that Members have to complete will demonstrate transparency and information about the qualifications and QA of aligned Member States. At the country level, the comprehensive information provided in the report will assist relevant authorities to implement their NQF or NQS in the region further. It will further assist in embedding mutual trust among SADC members about the international comparability of SADC qualifications. Regional alignment will also enable institutions and individuals to make comparisons of their learning and competence levels and will reduce unnecessary duplication of learning and effort when moving through SADC for study or work purposes.

¹ Comoros is the newest SADC country and was given a period of one year from August 2017 to accede to the SADC Treaty and thereafter, participate in SADC activities.

Purpose of the South African alignment report

The purpose of this alignment report is to:

- Introduce the SADCQF and its implementation model, which includes alignment;
- Present a profile of the South African education and training system which is represented by the South African National Qualifications Framework (SANQF);
- Describe the process of alignment in South Africa;
- Provide evidence of South Africa's alignment to the SADCQF; and
- State the concluding remarks based on the alignment process.

The next section elaborates on alignment with the SADCQF, its implementation model and the alignment programme.

The SADC Qualifications Framework

The SADCQF has a rich history dating as far back as 1997, when the SADC Protocol on Education and Training was signed (SADC, 1997). The main purpose of the SADCQF (SADC, 2017) is to:

- Provide a mechanism for comparability and recognition of qualifications in SADC;
- Facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications in all Member States;
- Harmonise (develop a common understanding of comparability of) qualifications wherever possible;
- Promote the transfer of credits within and among Member States and even beyond; and
- Create SADC regional standards, where appropriate.

The activities relating to the SADCQF development since 1997 have a common objective of developing a collective understanding of SADC qualifications (*ibid*).

SADCQF history

The following are key milestones in the development of the SADCQF between 1997 and 2018:

In 1997 the SADC Protocol on Education and Training was signed.

In 2000 the SADC TCCA was established.

In 2001 SADC Ministers of Education endorsed a Strategic Plan put forward by the TCCA to:

- Facilitate the development, implementation and harmonisation of NQFs;
- Review and strengthen national assessment and accreditation systems; and
- Facilitate agreement on entry requirements to higher education in the region.

In 2001 and 2010 a review of the existing qualifications (in SADC Member States) took place. Recommendations included the need for the development of:

- Level descriptors for a SADCQF;
- A framework for the improvement of QA systems in the region, and
- A SADC Qualifications Portal.

In 2008 a set of 16 regional QA guidelines was developed.

In 2009 the development of a SADC Qualifications Portal started and was initially populated with qualifications until 2011. This was a pilot project that was initiated by SAQA but was discontinued.

In 2011, SADC Ministers responsible for Education and Training approved the SADCQF as a ten-level reference framework categorised by level descriptors and QA guidelines.

In 2016:

- In June the SADC Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) guidelines were approved by SADC Ministers;
- In September, at a meeting of the TCCA, member states agreed to revive the SADC RQF. The meeting yielded the following outcomes:
 - The TCCA Terms of Reference (ToRs) were revised;
 - A clear two-year milestone plan was developed;
 - An implementation model, initially consisting of three programmes, was developed and adopted;
 - Ten alignment criteria were adopted;
 - Six countries (Lesotho, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Eswatini and Zambia) offered to pilot the alignment;
 - South Africa agreed to provide technical support to the SADC Secretariat for six months and also agreed to drive Programme 1: Development and alignment;
- In December:
 - The TCCA Executive Committee (TCCA EXCO) was established, based on the SADC Troika Leadership principles, and held its first meeting in South Africa; Botswana agreed to drive the SADCQF QA component; Eswatini agreed to drive the verification component;
 - Research conducted on the comparison of SADC vocational qualifications was finalised.

In 2017:

- In April:
 - A SADC Qualifications Verification Network (SADCQVN) was launched;
 - At a TCCA meeting, two more countries (Botswana and Mauritius) agreed to be part of the SADCQF alignment pilot project;
 - A SADCQF communication strategy was approved, which included a range of advocacy and marketing materials, and the establishment of social media sites;
 - The possibility of a regional digitisation pilot project was introduced;
 - The TCCA held an event to popularise the SADCQF;
- In June:
 - An alignment capacity building workshop was hosted for the eight pilot countries;
 - A second meeting of the TCCA EXCO was held in Eswatini; Zambia agreed to take over from South Africa to assist the SADC Secretariat;
 - The SADC Ministers officially launched the SADCQF at a Ministers Meeting in Eswatini;

In 2017 (continued):

- In September, at a TCCA meeting:
 - The SADCQF implementation model (see Figure 1) was expanded to include six programmes, namely:
 - Programme 1: Development and alignment;
 - Programme 2: QA;
 - Programme 3: Verification;
 - Programme 4: Advocacy and communication;
 - Programme 5: RPL, Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) and Articulation; and
 - Programme 6: Governance
 - Zambia agreed to drive SADCQF communication and advocacy; Namibia agreed to drive RPL, CAT and articulation; Governance is driven by the SADC Secretariat and the TCCA and its EXCO.
- In December:
 - The third meeting of the TCCA EXCO took place in South Africa;
 - A regional digitisation pilot project was discussed in more detail, and four countries agreed to pilot a regional E-Certificate;

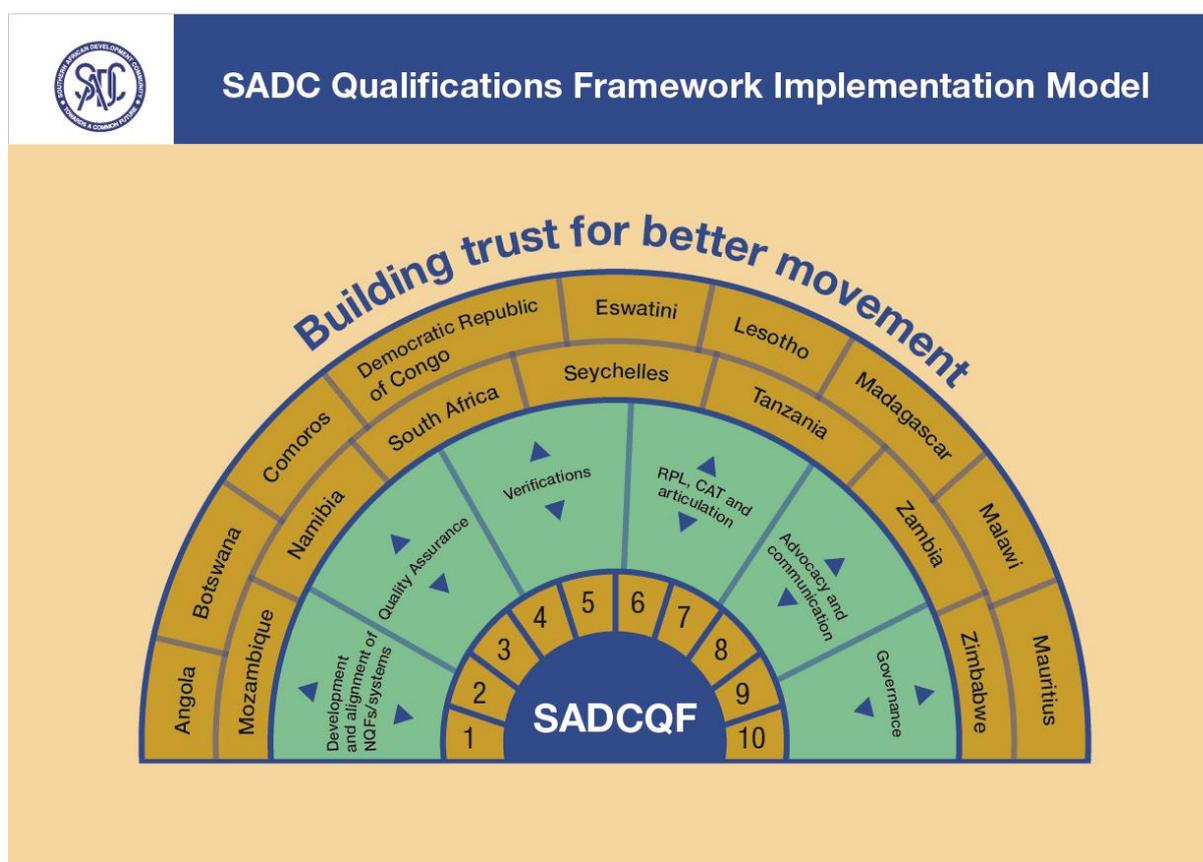


Figure 1: SADCQF implementation model

In 2018:

- In January:
 - A first meeting of the SADC recognition manual Task Team took place in South Africa;

In 2018:

- In April:
 - An alignment report adjudication capacity building workshop for TCCA EXCO members took place in South Africa;
 - A meeting on the digitisation pilot project on the regional E-Certificate was held; and
 - An alignment report writing workshop for SADCQF alignment pilot countries took place in South Africa. Pilot countries agreed to assist each other to submit their alignment reports by the end of 2018.

The Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA)

To prioritise the provisions of the SADC Protocol, in 2000, the SADC Ministers established the SADC TCCA (SADC, 2017). The TCCA was given the task of implementing the SADCQF. The TCCA is a group of experts from the SADC Member States and is supported by the SADC Secretariat. The TCCA is represented by Chief Executive Officers and Directors of National Qualifications Authorities, national Higher Education Councils and Ministries of Education responsible for Certification and Accreditation of education and skills training in SADC. The TCCA also invites representatives of international expert bodies where appropriate and typically meets twice a year.

The SADCQF was approved in 2011, and it was initially proposed that Member States be ²“referenced” to the SADCQF by 2014 (SADC 2011a; 2011b). Progress in the SADC context, however, was slow with “referencing” not initiated and no TCCA meetings held between 2011 and 2016. However, in September 2016 the SADC Secretariat called a meeting of the TCCA with the key aim of resuscitating the SADCQF.

At the September 2016 meeting, Members noted the lack of progress since 2011 and agreed to revive the SADCQF and re-commit to its implementation. This revival included:

- Revising the ToRs of the TCCA to be more focused on the SADCQF;
- Agreeing on a clear two-year milestone plan;
- Adopting a SADCQF implementation model. The implementation model initially comprised three programmes but later three more programmes, relevant to regional development, were added (See Figure 1); and
- Developing and adopting ten alignment criteria to ensure consistency in the approach to SADCQF alignment across the region.

A regional SADCQF implementation unit should ideally underpin the sustainability of the implementation of the SADCQF. However, the SADC region is severely under-resourced in terms of finance and human resources. The TCCA noted this and decided to put in place mechanisms to ensure that the SADCQF gains and maintains momentum. One way to do this was to establish a (TCCA EXCO based on the SADC ³Troika principles and supported by the

² In the SADC region, Member States have chosen to align their NQF/NQS to the SADCQF. The alignment model is similar to the “referencing” model which is the model designed for, and appropriate to, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

³ With its chairpersonship held on a rotational basis, the SADC Troika System confers authority in (1) The current
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SADC Secretariat. The TCCA EXCO will provide support and centrally drive co-ordination of SADCQF implementation between TCCA meetings.

The TCCA EXCO also proposed to increase capacity at the regional level through country support to the SADC Secretariat. Currently, to assist the SADC Secretariat, support is being provided by the Troika Member States and Member States that volunteer support and assistance with the SADCQF implementation efforts.

A fully operational SADCQF will provide the region with the following benefits:

- Improved mobility of skilled labour in the region;
- Easier comparability and recognition, including the verification of qualifications in the region;
- Improved articulation of qualifications within the education systems in the region;
- Improved quality assurance systems in the region;
- Enhanced awareness of how qualifications compare in the region; and
- Reduction of misrepresented and fraudulent qualifications being used in the region.

It is against this background that the TCCA has proposed that a SADCQF implementation unit be established to ensure the sustainable functioning of the SADCQF at regional level.

SADCQF six implementation programmes

There are six programmes underpinning the SADCQF implementation

1. Development and alignment of NQF/NQS to the SADCQF driven by South Africa;
2. QA driven by Botswana;
3. Verification of qualifications driven by Eswatini;
4. Communication and advocacy driven by Zambia;
5. RPL, CAT and Articulation driven by Namibia;
6. Governance driven by the TCCA, its EXCO and the SADC Secretariat.

Programme 1: Development and alignment of NQFs/ NQS to the SADCQF

The main purpose of the SADCQF is to promote mobility and, as such, it plays a key role in setting the regional reference point for comparing qualifications obtained in SADC. Currently, the SADCQF is a reference framework only with the prospect of later developing into a framework that has qualifications registered on it.

At the TCCA meeting of September 2016, ten alignment criteria were developed, agreed to and adopted. The alignment criteria are similar to the “referencing” criteria developed and implemented in the development of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Eight SADC countries volunteered to pilot the alignment of their NQFs/ NQS to the SADCQF. The pilot countries are Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Eswatini and Zambia.

An alignment plan and roadmap, as well as alignment timelines, were developed to assist the eight pilot countries. Included in the alignment plan was a set of self-assessment questions to guide countries to assess their readiness to align. Support was provided via capacity building workshops and peer learning opportunities. During the pilot phase, the alignment criteria were implemented and revised. The revised alignment criteria are described in Table 1.

Chairperson, (2) The Incoming Chairperson who is the Deputy Chairperson at the time and (3) The immediate Previous Chairperson to take quick decisions on behalf of SADC that would ordinarily be taken at meetings.

Table 1: Ten alignment criteria

No	Alignment Criteria
1	Responsibilities of relevant national bodies involved in the alignment process are determined and published by the relevant competent authorities
2	There is a clear and demonstrable link between qualification levels in the NQF/ National Qualification System (NQS) and level descriptors of the SADCQF
3	The NQF/ NQS is based on learning outcomes and links to non-formal and informal learning and credit systems (where these exist)
4	Procedures for including qualifications in the NQF or describing the place of qualifications in the NQS are transparent
5	The National Quality Assurance System for education and training refers to the NQF or NQS and is consistent with quality assurance guidelines of the SADCQF
6	There is a clear indication of the relevant national authorities responsible for the verification of the qualifications obtained in the national system
7	The alignment process shall include a stated agreement of relevant quality assurance bodies
8	Competent national bodies shall certify the alignment of the NQF/NQS with the SADCQF. A comprehensive report on alignment and its evidence must be published by competent national bodies
9	The official platform of the country must provide for a public comment process for the alignment report
10	Clear plans have been made to make changes to legislation and policy supporting alignment to SADCQF levels on new qualification certificates, diplomas and other documents issued by competent authorities

The key purpose of the alignment criteria is to ensure that the alignment documentation published by the participating Member States is:

- Endorsed by competent authorities;
- Relevant;
- Transparent;
- Internationally comparable; and
- Trustworthy.

Transparency and international comparability are crucial because the overall success of the SADCQF will depend on the ability of the participating members to align their NQF/NQS to it in a demonstrable, clear and defensible manner. The intention is that the published alignment reports can be used by interested parties to verify or compare information on a country's qualifications.

Key features of the SADCQF report also include:

- The necessary emphasis on the learning outcomes approach to NQF/NQS and the SADCQF (See Alignment Criterion 3);
- The commitment to robust QA systems and eradication of all forms of fraudulent practices as stipulated in the *Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies*,

Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States commonly known as the ⁴Addis Convention (UNESCO, 2014) (See Alignment Criteria 5 and 6).

Essential to meeting the prescripts of Alignment Criterion 1 is the establishment of a National Alignment Committee (NAC) to spearhead, drive and approve the alignment process within the respective SADC countries. There are standard ToRs for the NACs in SADC (see Annexure B). In Chapter Three of this report, the South African NAC is introduced, and the South African alignment process is described in more detail.

Alignment of level descriptors

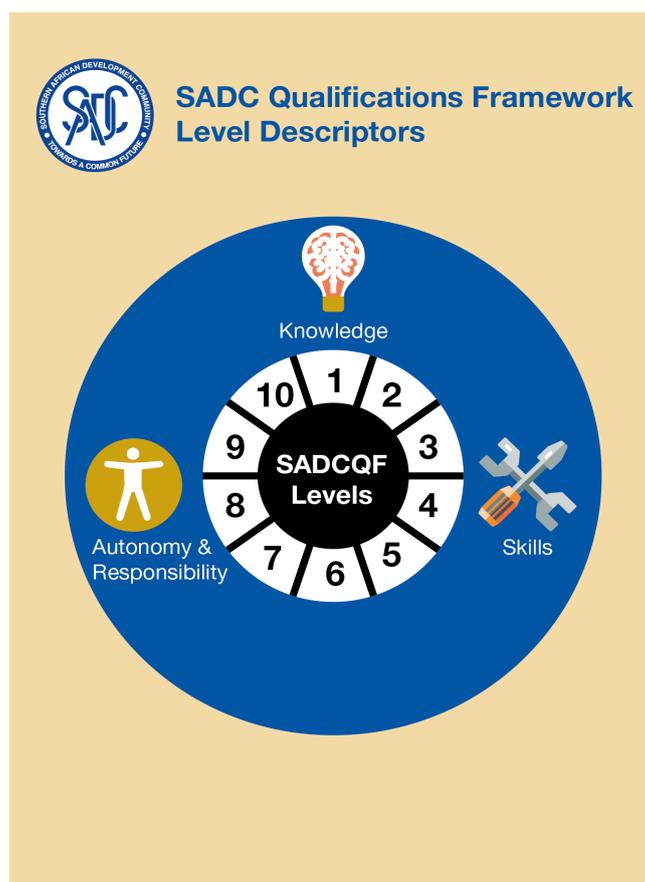


Figure 2: SADCQF level descriptors (infographic)

Essential to Criterion 2 is the undertaking of research on the alignment of the country level descriptors to the SADCQF level descriptors (see Annexure G for South Africa’s research on alignment to the SADCQF). The SADC level descriptors (SADC, 2017) have three domains

⁴ The *Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States* was revised and adopted at an International Conference of States (ICS) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 12 December 2014. It is aligned with other regional Conventions of UNESCO and describes what needs to be put in place to ensure fair recognition of authentic foreign qualifications. Committing to the Convention indicates that members agree that recognition should consider quality assurance and accreditation of institutions offering qualifications (UNESCO, 2014). Embedded in this agreement is a commitment to eradicate all forms of fraudulent higher education practices (*ibid*). The Convention protects learners by ensuring fair and timely recognition decisions of foreign qualifications which requires a firm commitment by a participating country to provide clear information on its education system, its quality assurance mechanisms (including accreditation of programs), and its counter-fraud measures (*ibid*).

or categories of learning at each of the ten SADCQF levels. They are knowledge, skills and autonomy and responsibility.

Figure 2 is an infographic on SADCQF level descriptors. Annexure C provides the SADCQF level descriptors text

The TCCA also identified generic steps to guide alignment across the region.

Steps in the alignment process

As shown in Figure 3, there are nine overarching steps in the alignment process:

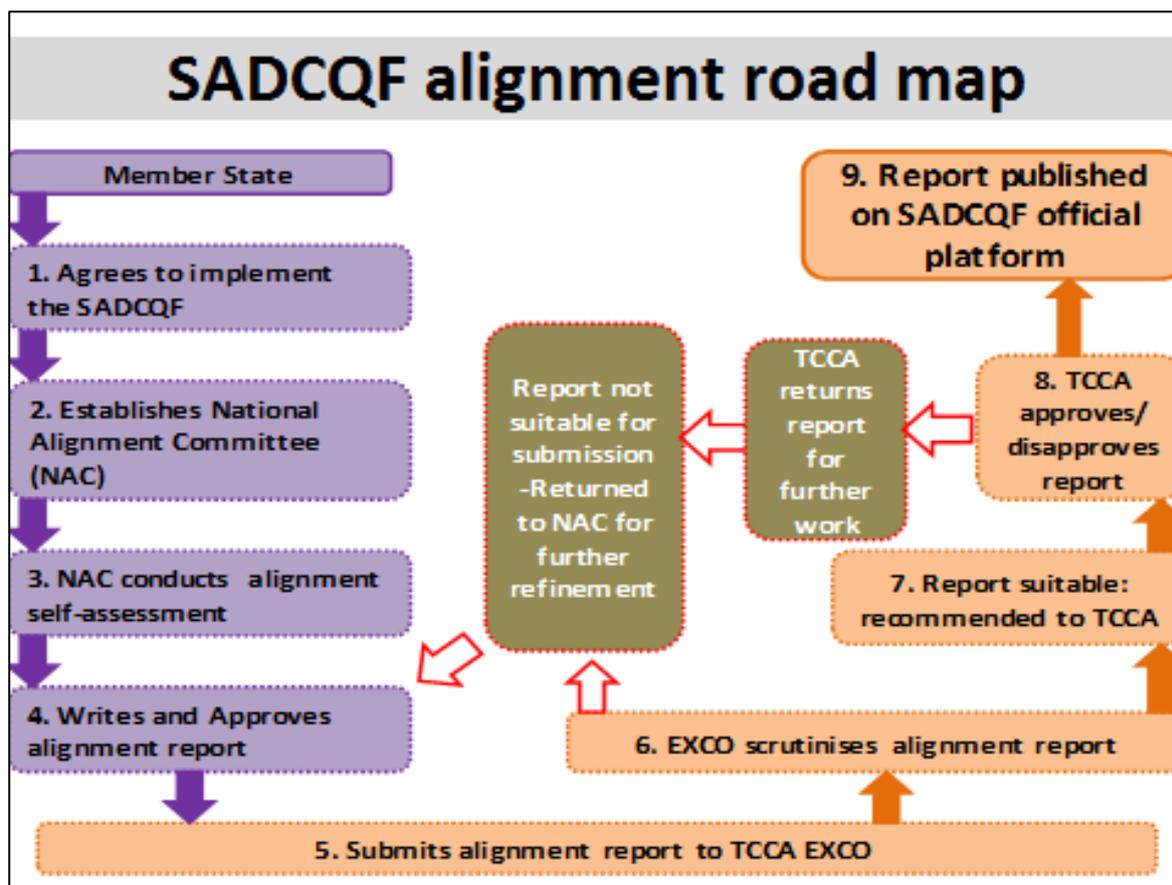


Figure 3: Generic alignment roadmap

- Step 1: The Member State agrees to implement the SADCQF;
- Step 2: The Member State establishes a National Alignment Committee (NAC) (see Criterion 1 for the guidelines on the NAC);
- Step 3: The NAC then conducts the alignment self-assessment exercise;
- Step 4: The NAC writes and approves the evidence-based alignment report;
- Step 5: The NAC submits the approved alignment report to the TCCA Executive Committee (TCCA EXCO);
- Step 6: The TCCA EXCO scrutinises the alignment report;

- Step 7:** If the EXCO, after scrutiny, finds that:
- The report is suitable; the EXCO will recommend the report to the TCCA;
 - The report is not suitable for submission to the TCCA; the EXCO will return the report to the NAC for further refinement;

- Step 8:** The TCCA decides on the report:
- The TCCA approves the report if it is satisfied with the contents and submits it for publication on the SADC website;
 - The TCCA does not approve the report if it is not satisfied with the contents and returns the report to the NAC for further work;

Step 9: The report is published on the SADCQF official platform

The plans of the TCCA include further assisting countries to complete their alignment reports and rolling out alignment to the other eight SADC countries. There is also a plan to develop an inventory of the NQFs and NQS in SADC.

Programme 2: Quality assurance

The SADCQF encourages SADC countries to develop and implement robust QA mechanisms. In 2008, sixteen regional QA guidelines were established to ensure consistency in quality across SADC.



Figure 4: The 16 QA guidelines of the SADCQF (infographic)

Figure 4 is an infographic of the SADC QA guidelines. The SADC (2017) document provides the text of the sixteen SADC QA guidelines.

As part of the Alignment of Criterion 5, Member States are required to demonstrate the compatibility of their QA systems with the SADCQF QA guidelines. South Africa's compatibility with the SADCQF QA guidelines is demonstrated in Annexure D.

The TCCA encourages interaction between the key QA bodies in the region. Therefore, it engaged with the Southern African Quality Assurance Network (SAQAN) to nominate two QA experts to assist the TCCA with the implementation of QA in SADC. The TCCA plans are to strengthen the QA mechanisms of member countries and build capacity to deliver QA. Progress has been made with creating a list of credible institutions in SADC and making the information publicly available.

The TCCA is consistently seeking further opportunities for QA capacity building, in particular, opportunities to engage with the *Addis Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States*.

Programme 3: Verification

While the preceding implementation programmes promote trust by ensuring that qualifications and QA meet the regional standards, countries must have mechanisms that can verify information about individual qualifications obtained in or used in the Member States. To ensure that credible, trustworthy information is shared across SADC, a regional Qualifications Verification Network (SADCQVN) was established in April 2017. The SADCQVN was initiated to strengthen verification in SADC and is a member of the African Qualifications Verification Network (AQVN), which shares the collective goal of ensuring that African qualifications can be trusted.

A SADCQVN booklet was produced which provides information on the people to contact when verifying qualifications obtained in SADC. The SADCQVN booklet is updated annually and shared with Members. The annual collation of statistical information on learner and worker mobility in SADC, as well as on misrepresented qualifications, is a key feature of the work of the SADCQVN.

The plans of the TCCA entail the development of a SADC recognition manual, the development of regional policies on verification and the establishment of verification agreements between SADC countries.

To modernise SADCQVN verification techniques and encourage innovative technologies, a digital pilot on the real-time verification of qualifications, is underway. The expected output is a regional E-Certificate of Evaluation. There are also plans to assist Member States to develop their qualifications information infrastructure so that trustworthy information on their qualifications can be provided quickly and efficiently.

Programme 4: Communication and advocacy

The TCCA realised that consistent SADCQF advocacy and communication at both national and international levels is imperative in ensuring the sustainability of the SADCQF. In this regard, the TCCA, together with the SADC Secretariat, identified platforms to advocate for and communicate about the SADCQF. Already information about the SADCQF has been distributed at national, regional and international levels.

A communication strategy, which includes promotional material on the SADCQF, was developed and approved. Social media sites: Twitter and Facebook were set up to disseminate real-time information about the SADCQF and related events and milestones.

Despite being approved in 2011, the SADCQF was never formally launched. To ensure that the SADCQF gains and maintains visibility, the SADC Ministers of Education officially launched the SADCQF in June 2017. The Ministers' launch was preceded by a technical launch and popularisation of the SADCQF by the TCCA in April 2017. The TCCA meets regularly to keep members updated with SADCQF matters, and distributes documentation regularly.

Programme 5: RPL, CAT and Articulation

The SADC region has a set of RPL guidelines (SADC, 2016) that was approved by SADC Ministers in June 2016. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has been closely involved in the production of the SADC RPL guidelines and has further indicated a readiness to assist the TCCA with RPL implementation across the region.

SAQAN has been closely involved in the production of the draft regional guidelines for CAT and is available to provide support to SADC. This implementation area will also focus on articulation, namely pathways and progression opportunities within and between schooling, TVET and higher education.

This programme was initiated in September 2017.

Programme 6: Governance

The TCCA, with assistance from the SADC Secretariat, was tasked with implementing the SADCQF. However, implementation has been constrained by a lack of human capacity as well as financial resources at both national and regional level to undertake the SADCQF-related activities. Implementation was improved through effective chairing by member countries, and driving the strategic processes as well as assisting the SADC Secretariat to be the key driving force. As part of the driving force, a TCCA EXCO was established to speed up implementation.

Since September 2016 the TCCA and its EXCO has accelerated implementation of the SADCQF. The following has already been achieved:

- Developing an action plan to start implementation of the SADCQF;
- Setting up and ensuring regular meetings to co-ordinate the work of the TCCA and capacity building;
- Developing an implementation road map and implementation model which includes the six programmes of the SADCQF;
- Mobilising Member States to take on the responsibility to drive the six programmes of SADCQF implementation;
- Mobilising Member States to provide secretarial support to the SADC Secretariat;
- Setting up the Electronic Certificate pilot project;
- Developing and facilitating capacity building workshops for alignment for eight pilot countries; and
- Developing and implementing an advocacy strategy.

Chapter summary

This Chapter provided an overview of the SADCQF, its development milestones and processes to accelerate its implementation. The SADCQF implementation model, comprising six key programmes, was described and showed that SADCQF alignment falls within Programme 1. Included in the Chapter was a description of the TCCA and the actions taken to ensure the sustainability of the SADCQF implementation. It also introduces the ten alignment criteria and roadmap as well as the countries piloting the alignment.

The next Chapter will describe education and training in South Africa, which is embedded in the comprehensive, integrated, quality-assured SANQF.

CHAPTER TWO: Profile of South Africa's Education and Training System

Introduction

This Chapter asserts that the SANQF is the key tool for promoting transparency, QA, international comparability and trust in its qualifications. The Chapter also introduces the relevant authorities responsible for NQF implementation in SA.

The SANQF Act 67 of 2008 (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2008) provides the legal framework for SA qualifications to be registered on its NQF. The objectives of the SANQF are to:

- Create a single integrated national framework for learning achievements;
- Facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within, education, training and career paths;
- Enhance the quality of education and training; and
- Accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities.

The objectives of the NQF are designed to contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the Quality Councils (QCs) must seek to achieve the objectives of the NQF by:

- Developing, fostering and maintaining an integrated and transparent national framework for the recognition of learning achievements;
- Ensuring that SA qualifications meet appropriate criteria, determined by the Minister as contemplated in section 8 of the NQF Act, and are internationally comparable; and
- Ensuring that SA qualifications are of an acceptable quality.

The SANQF came into being through the SAQA Act 58 of 1995 (RSA, 1995). The SAQA Act was a symbol of democracy in South Africa (SA), being the first piece of education and training legislation adopted in a *post-apartheid* SA. The NQF Act replaced the SAQA Act in 2008. This move strengthened and introduced innovative changes to the SANQF. These changes included replacing the 33 Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) Bodies with three QCs, allocating the development of qualifications to Sub-Frameworks managed by the QCs and changing from an eight-level to a ten-level NQF.

Under the NQF Act, QA of qualifications is the executive responsibility of the QCs. SAQA, as custodian of the SANQF, oversees its further development and implementation and coordinates the three SANQF Sub-Frameworks. The NQF Act states that it applies to all education and training programmes leading to qualifications and part-qualifications offered within the RSA by education institutions and skills development providers. This means that every qualification and part-qualification offered in the RSA must be registered on the NQF in accordance with the NQF Act. The NQF Act also states that it applies to professional designations. This means that the NQF Act also brought professional bodies into the NQF landscape through SAQA being mandated to recognise professional bodies and to register professional designations for the NQF.

Since its inception, the SANQF had several reviews which examined the SANQF and the ways its management and administration could be improved [see Bolton and Keevy (2012); SAQA (2003a, 2005, 2015, 2016, 2017a)].

Policy and Related Bodies

The SANQF is a single, comprehensive, integrated system for the classification, registration, publication and articulation of quality-assured national qualifications. It is a ten-level system that comprises three co-ordinated Qualifications Sub-Frameworks.

The Minister of Higher Education and Training (MHET) determined the SANQF and its Sub-Frameworks. SAQA co-ordinates the Sub-Frameworks and has developed the following overarching national policies:

- *Level Descriptors for the South African National Qualifications Framework* (SAQA, 2012a);
- *National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications and Part-Qualifications and Professional Designations in South Africa* (SAQA, 2014b);
- *National Policy for the implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning* (SAQA, 2013a);
- *Policy and Criteria for evaluating Foreign Qualifications within the South African NQF, as amended in 2017* (SAQA, 2017d);
- *Policy and Criteria for Recognising a Professional Body and Registering a Professional Designation for the Purposes of the National Qualifications Framework Act, Act 67 of 2008 (as amended in 2018)* (SAQA, 2018); and
- *Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part-Qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework* (SAQA, 2013c); and
- *Policy for Credit Accumulation and Transfer within the National Qualifications Framework* (SAQA, 2014d).

As shown in Table 2, there are two Ministerial Departments responsible for the South African NQF, namely Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the Department of Basic Education (DBE). The NQF Sub-Frameworks, each developed and managed by a QC are the:

1. Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) covering NQF levels 5 to 10. The Sub-Framework oversight is provided by the Council on Higher Education (CHE);
2. Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) at NQF levels 1 to 8, with provision made for qualifications at Levels 9 and 10 on recommendation by SAQA. The Quality Council provides the Sub-Framework oversight for Trades and Occupations (QCTO); and
3. General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFETQSF) covering NQF levels 1 to 4 (NQF Level 1 is open-ended). The Quality Council provides the Sub-Framework oversight for General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi).

The NQF includes all SA qualifications and part-qualifications. There is one set of level descriptors that applies to all three Sub-Frameworks. The level descriptors give an indication of the general cognitive competencies that should be developed by all qualifications at all levels and, therefore, give broad guidance for the development of Exit Level Outcomes (ELOs), Associated Assessment Criteria (AACs), Learning Outcomes (LOs), curriculum content indication, and assessment for qualifications at each level. The positioning of two or more qualifications on the same NQF level indicates that the qualifications are broadly comparable in terms of the cognitive level of the ELOs of the qualification and the generic cognitive competencies developed. The qualification descriptors provide more detailed information on the purpose and nature of the qualification.

Qualification descriptors and qualification types are unique for each Sub-Framework and have been determined by the MHET. To ensure consistency in NQF nomenclature, there is an NQF glossary of terms that was jointly developed by the relevant NQF bodies (SAQA, 2017f). Access to learning is guided by linkages between and within the Sub-Frameworks (Articulation) and is further guided by RPL and CAT processes.

Table 2: NQF quality assurance responsibilities and oversight

Schooling		Post-school education and training							
DBE oversight responsibility		DHET oversight responsibility							
NQF Level	Umalusi quality assures the GFETQSF			QCTO quality assures the OQSF	CHE quality assures the HEQSF	NQF Level			
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Senior Certificate • Senior Certificate • Intermediate Certificate • Elementary Certificate 			**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctoral Degree • Doctoral Degree (Professional) 	10			
9				**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's Degree • Master's Degree (Professional) 	9			
8				Occupational Certificate, Level 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor's Degree (Honours) • Post Graduate Diploma • Bachelor's Degree 	8			
7				Occupational Certificate, Level 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor's Degree • Advanced Diploma 	7			
6				National N-Diploma	Occupational Certificate, Level 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma • Advanced Certificate 	6		
5				N4, N5, N6	Occupational Certificate, Level 5	Higher Certificate	5		
4				Further Education and Training (FET) Phase (Grades: 10-12; Age: 16-18 years)	NC(V), Level 4	Senior Certificate Specialisation	Occupational Certificate, Level 4		4
3					NC(V), Level 3	N3	Occupational Certificate, Level 3		3
2					NC(V), Level 2	N2	Occupational Certificate, Level 2		2
1				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Certificate End of compulsory schooling: Grade 9		N1	Occupational Certificate, Level 1		1
	Senior Phase (Grades: 7-9; Age: 13-15 years) Ends in Grade 9 which is at NQF Level 1 Grade 8 and below falls below NQF Level 1; Grade 7 is located in the primary school	Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Level 3							
	Intermediate Phase (Grades: 4 – 6; Age: 10-12 years)	ABET Level 2							
	Foundation Phase (Grades: 1-3; Age: 7-9 years)	ABET Level 1							
	Pre-primary (Grade: R; Age: 6 years)								

** Occupational Certificates may be developed and registered at Levels 9 and 10 on consultation with the QCs and SAQA and advice to the Minister.

Quality assurance legend

Umalusi quality assures	
QCTO quality assures	
CHE quality assures	

Each of the QCs is provided for in the NQF Act and established through their respective founding Acts. The founding Acts are:

- For the CHE: *Higher Education Act, Act 101 of 1997 as amended up to, and including the Higher Education Amendment Act, Act 9 of 2016* (RSA, 2016);
- For the QCTO: *Skills Development Act, Act 97 of 1998 amended by Act 37 of 2008* (RSA, 2008c); and
- For Umalusi: *General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (GENFETQA), Act 58 of 2001 amended 2008 and 2010* (RSA, 2010a);

To ensure consistency with the NQF Act, Clause 34 of the NQF Act 67 of 2008 (RSA, 2008b) states that where there is any conflict in interpretation between the NQF Act, the Higher Education Act, the Skills Development Act and the GENFETQA, the NQF Act takes precedence.

The functions of the QCs related to their responsibility to develop and manage their respective Sub-Frameworks of the NQF are to:

- Ensure the development of qualifications or part-qualifications that are necessary for their sectors and recommend them to SAQA for registration on the NQF;
- Ensure that the necessary QA for their Sub-Frameworks is undertaken;
- Maintain a database of learner achievements and related matters and submit such data to SAQA for recording on the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD);
- Conduct and/or commission research on issues of importance for their Sub-Frameworks;
- Inform the public about their respective Sub-Frameworks;
- Together with SAQA, develop, maintain and keep up to date the set of level descriptors applicable to all three Sub-Frameworks of the NQF; and
- Develop policies and criteria for the development of qualifications, assessment, RPL, CAT and QA (including policies on accreditation and standards development) for their respective Sub-Frameworks bearing in mind that these must be aligned to the national policies developed by SAQA.

There is only one national set of level descriptors for the SANQF. This means that all qualifications at the same NQF Level develop the same cognitive competencies as promulgated by the level descriptors, regardless of the Sub-Framework, qualification type or provider. The procedures for pegging qualifications at a particular NQF level is agreed, transparent and applied.

All NQF qualifications must be recommended, by the relevant QC, for registration by SAQA on the NQF. Each QC has published policies on the qualification types that fall within their Sub-Frameworks. These are for:

- Higher Education: *The Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework* (CHE, 2013);
- Occupations and Trades: *Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework Policy* (QCTO, 2014b);
- General and Further Education and Training: *Policy for the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework* (Umalusi, 2014).

Since the QCs have executive responsibility for the management of their Sub-Frameworks, they are also responsible for developing policies for their Sub-Frameworks. These policies must, however, be aligned with the national policies and must now be done in consultation with SAQA.

Historical Context of South Africa's NQF

The present (2018) South African Education system has been in existence since 1994, prior to which it was a divided system designed to meet the needs of *Apartheid* which had been the prevailing political and socio-economic ideology of the country since 1948.

Education before 1994

Prior to 1994, the South African Government introduced Christian National Education (CNE) as the guiding philosophy of education. This philosophy regarded a person's ethnic identity as defining of the person's social and political responsibilities and role. CNE was underpinned by Protestant-Christian principles which aimed at the whole development of the child, i.e. physically, intellectually, mentally, socially, morally and religiously with the focus on honouring and obeying God in every way at all times. This attitude gave direction to the nature, way of living and specific culture of the community/nation in which people lived. This education was separate in terms of language of instruction and for the different race groups in South Africa.

This system saw education provision racially divided with separate institutions for the four main racially classified groups called "Whites", "Blacks", "Indians" and "Coloureds". Schools and higher education institutions were further divided according to language of instruction and race group. The movement of learners from schools for one language group to another language group was severely restricted with no movement at all allowed from institutions for one race group to another.

- The administration and responsibility for school education for "White" learners were allocated to four provincial governments;
- School education for "Black", "Coloured" and "Indian" learners was controlled nationally; and
- The establishment of the "Independent Homelands" further divided education as the Homelands were given control over the schools for Black, Indian and Coloured learners situated in their geographical areas, and they were allowed to establish their universities.

Education provisioning and quality for White learners were far superior to those for the other groups. There was a vast discrepancy in per-capita spending, facilities, teachers, teacher/pupil ratios and textbooks. In the 1980s teacher-pupil ratios in primary schools averaged the following:

- 1:18 in white schools;
- 1:24 in Indian schools;
- 1:27 in Coloured schools; and
- 1:39 in Black schools.

In the 1980s, 96% of all teachers in White schools had recognised teacher qualifications, while only 15 percent of teachers in Black schools were qualified. Separate education was accompanied by both separate residential areas and the socially, morally and economically disastrous job-reservation system through which certain jobs were reserved for Whites.

In 1974, the Minister of "Bantu" Education and Development issued a policy statement, commonly known as the "Afrikaans medium decree," in which the use of both English and Afrikaans was made compulsory in Black secondary schools. This policy meant that:

- Physical Science and practical subjects would be taught in English;
- Mathematics and Social Science subjects would be taught in Afrikaans; and
- Music and cultural subjects would be taught in the learner's home language.

This policy decision was unacceptable to learners and teachers alike, and dissent erupted into violence on 16 June 1976, when students took to the streets in Soweto and eventually in other towns and cities in the country. This event was to eventually change the face of South Africa with the abolition of Apartheid and all its structures, and the adoption of democracy and universal right to vote for all over the age of 18 years.

Education since 1994

With the advent of democracy after the 1994 elections, the new Government was faced with the task of uniting a divided nation and transforming the country into one where all unfair discrimination in education and work was eradicated. All education in the country became the responsibility of a single education department, and Outcome-Based Education (OBE) with a single curriculum was put in place for all school-going learners and tertiary institutions. The NQF was established under the control of the SAQA which was established under the SAQA Act, Act 58 of 1995 (RSA, 1995).

Both OBE and the NQF were exposed to much criticism by educationists, employers and the community at large. Some criticism was justified; for example, the lack of teaching resources, teachers not adequately trained in OBE and the increase in administration that accompanied OBE in terms of ongoing assessment. However, much criticism was the result of people not wanting to accept the new system and its structures, and a lack of understanding of OBE and its benefits for all learners.

OBE in the school environment was replaced by a new curriculum entitled Curriculum 2005, which was a modified outcomes-based approach. This was again modified to another outcomes-based system called the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) which is still in use today. The outcomes-based approach has also been retained for higher education and vocational training.

The NQF was viewed by many, particularly the Trade Union movement, as a way to legitimately and quickly eradicate unfair labour practices through such mechanisms as RPL, which could be used to award qualifications to persons who had been denied access to education and permanent employment yet who did the work in jobs that were formally and legislatively denied them before 1994. RPL was also seen as a way to open access to higher education and workplace programmes for the formerly disadvantaged citizens who did not possess the qualifications for admission.

As from 2009, the single education department was divided into two government departments (RSA, 2009) namely:

- Department of Basic Education (DBE); and
- Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)

The DBE

The DBE is responsible for formal schooling from Grade R to Grade 12.

Schooling starts with the Pre-primary phase at six years of age and carries on until the end of the Further Education and Training (FET) phase when the learner is 18 years old. The highest exit level schooling achievement is the National Senior Certificate (NSC) at NQF Level 4.

The schooling achievements are described in more detail in the description of the GFETQSF later in this Chapter.

The DHET

The DHET is responsible for all post-school education and training (PSET).

According to the *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training*, (DHET, 2013), PSET includes education and training provision for:

- Those who completed school;
- Those who did not complete school; and
- Those who did not attend school at all.

The DHET also assumed responsibility for the training that had been the prior responsibility of the Department of Labour. The DHET responsibilities include the:

- National Certificate (Vocational);
- National Accredited Technical Education Diploma (NATED) qualifications;
- Occupational qualifications; and
- Higher education qualifications.

The highest NQF level achievable is NQF Level 10.

Table 3 shows the NQF oversight responsibilities of the DBE and the DHET.

Table 3: NQF oversight responsibilities of DBE and DHET

	Schooling		Post-school education and training (PSET)					
NQF Level	Department of Basic Education (DBE)		Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)				NQF Level	
10					**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctoral Degree • Doctoral Degree (Professional) 	10	
9					**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's Degree • Master's Degree (Professional) 	9	
8					Occupational Certificate, Level 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor's Degree (Honours) • Post Graduate Diploma • Bachelor's Degree 	8	
7					Occupational Certificate, Level 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor's Degree • Advanced Diploma 	7	
6					National N-Diploma	Occupational Certificate, Level 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma • Advanced Certificate 	6
5					N4, N5, N6	Occupational Certificate, Level 5	Higher Certificate	5
4	Further Education and Training (FET) Phase (Grades: 10-12; Age: 16-18 years) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Senior Certificate • Senior Certificate 	NC(V), Level 4	Senior Certificate Colleges	Occupational Certificate, Level 4		4		
3		Intermediate Certificate	N3	Occupational Certificate, Level 3		3		
2		Elementary Certificate	N2	Occupational Certificate, Level 2		2		
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Certificate End of compulsory schooling: Grade 9		N1	Occupational Certificate, Level 1		1		
	Senior Phase (Grades: 7-9; Age: 13-15 years) Ends in Grade 9 which is at NQF Level 1; Grade 8 and below falls below NQF Level 1; Grade 7 is located in the primary school		Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Level 3					
	Intermediate Phase (Grades: 4 – 6; Age: 10-12 years)		ABET Level 2					
	Foundation Phase (Grades: 1-3; Age: 7-9 years)		ABET Level 1					
	Pre-primary (Grade: R; Age: 6 years)							

** Occupational Certificates may be developed and registered at Levels 9 and 10 on consultation with the QCs and SAQA and advice to the Minister.

Legend

DBE responsibility	
DHET responsibility	

The following legislation governs education and training in South Africa:

- *Adult Basic Education and Training Act, Act 52 of 2000* (RSA, 2000b);
- *Basic Education Laws Amendment Act, Act 15 of 2011* (RSA, 2011);
- *Continuing Education and Training Colleges Act, Act 16 of 2006* (RSA, 2006);
- *Education Laws Amendment Act, Act 31 of 2007* (RSA, 2007);
- *Further Education and Training Amendment Bill* (RSA, 2012);
- *General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Amendment Act, Act 50 of 2008* (RSA, 2010a);
- *Higher Education Act, Act 101 of 1997* (RSA, 1997) as amended up to, and including the *Higher Education Amendment Act, Act 9 of 2016* (RSA, 2016);
- *National Qualifications Framework Act, Act 67 of 2008* (RSA, 2008);
- *Skills Development Act, Act 97 of 1998* (RSA, 1998d);
- *South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996* (RSA, 1996b).

NQF Qualifications Design

NQF definition of a qualification

As defined in the NQF Act (RSA, 2008), a qualification is a registered national qualification consisting of a planned combination of learning outcomes which has a defined purpose or purposes, intended to provide qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning and which has been assessed in terms of exit level outcomes, registered on the NQF and certified and awarded by a recognised body (*ibid*).

Nested learning outcomes approach

The South African NQF uses a nested learning outcomes approach (four layers) for qualifications design and standards development (see Figure 5). This approach encompasses generic and specific outcomes, as described below.

Generic learning outcomes

Outer layer – Level descriptors

The most generic standards are found in the level descriptors (SAQA, 2012a). The level descriptors describe what qualification holders are able to know, understand and do after a learning process at a particular NQF Level.

The SANQF level descriptors have ten categories to describe the learning outcomes at each level of the framework, namely:

1. Scope of knowledge;
2. Knowledge literacy;
3. Method and procedure;
4. Problem-solving;
5. Ethics and professional practice;
6. Accessing, processing and managing information;
7. Producing and communicating of information;
8. Context and systems;
9. Management of learning; and
10. Accountability.

A summarised version of the South African level descriptors is attached as Annexure E.

The NQF levels are populated by qualification types, as shown in Tables 2 and 3 earlier.

The more specific standards specifications are found in the learning outcomes in qualification descriptors. Specific standards/ outcomes (layers 2, 3 and 4) always meet the requirements of the generic standards/ outcomes.

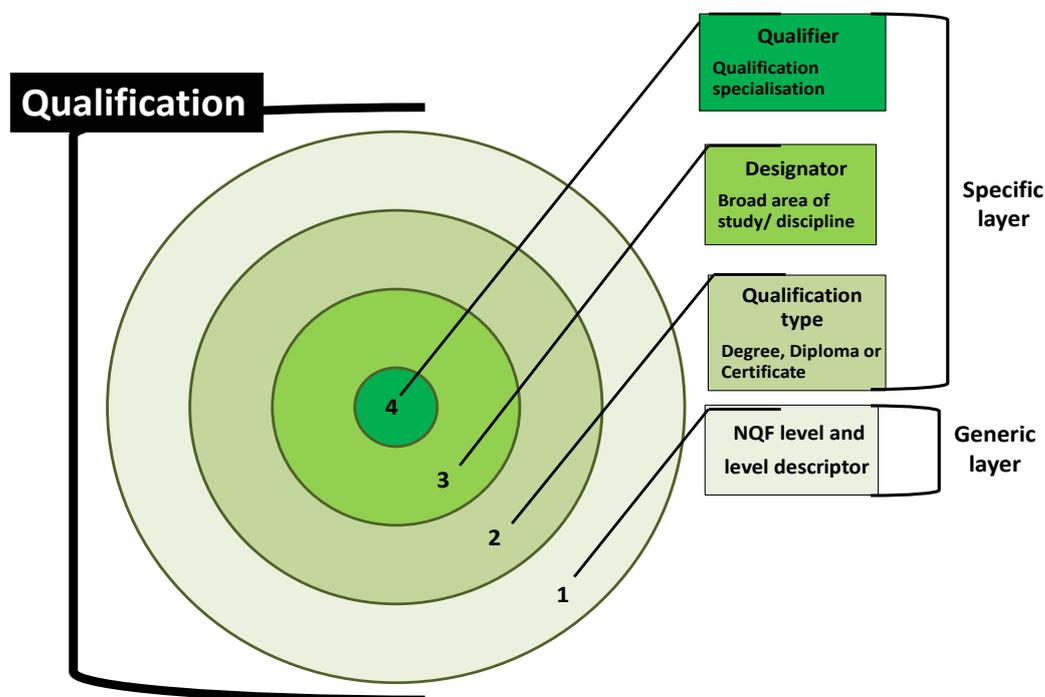


Figure 5: Nested learning outcomes approach

Specific learning outcomes

Second layer – Qualification type

Qualification types are described in terms of learning outcomes. Generic outcomes are embedded in the qualification type through the level descriptors. Specific outcomes are described in the qualification descriptor. Each QC has its unique qualification descriptors and has published them (CHE, 2013; QCTO, 2014b; Umalusi, 2014).

Qualification types such as Certificate, Diploma and Degree are linked to specific NQF levels and are found in the second layer (Figure 5). Qualification types must meet the generic competencies described in the level descriptors and must be guided by the three qualification routes, namely vocational, general and professional. The appropriate route for each qualification is derived from the specific outcome (qualification descriptor) of the qualification.

Third layer – Designator

Designators are a more specific identification of a qualification type. It describes a generic field of study, as stated in the qualification nomenclature.

Fourth layer – Qualifier

The final and most specific layer is the qualification specialisation called the qualifier. Qualifiers may be used in all qualification types. The QQSF qualifications often combine the designator and the qualifier depending on the occupation for which the qualification is designed.

Work-integrated learning

Work-integrated learning (WIL) is characteristic of vocational and professionally-oriented qualifications. These qualifications are designed to integrate theory and practice through the incorporation of WIL into the curriculum. In this framework, WIL includes simulated learning, work-directed theoretical learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning and workplace-based learning.

Where WIL is a structured part of a qualification, the volume of learning allocated to WIL is appropriate to the purpose of the qualification and the cognitive demands of the learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria contained in the level descriptors.

NQF Sub-Frameworks

The three QCs have executive responsibility for the management of qualifications that fall within their respective Sub-Frameworks. The three NQF Sub-Frameworks are:

The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFETQSF) of the South African NQF

Umalusi is the Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training and has executive responsibility for the QA of the GFETQSF. Umalusi manages a range of qualifications for schooling, and for the post-school system as offered in TVET colleges and adult education and training centres. The level descriptors for NQF levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 give an indication of the learning outcomes with regard to competencies expected at the GFETQSF level and provide guidelines for differentiating the varying levels of complexity of qualifications on the Sub-Framework. The positioning of two or more qualifications on the same NQF level indicates that qualifications are broadly comparable in terms of the exit level outcomes of the qualification. The qualification descriptors provide more detailed information on the specific outcomes of the qualification.

The four qualification types on the GFETQSF are:

- NQF Level 4: National Certificate;
- NQF Level 3: Intermediate Certificate;
- NQF Level 2: Elementary Certificate; and
- NQF Level 1: General Certificate

The qualification types create the basis for specific qualifications called "designated variants" (see Table 4).

The GFETQSF has two distinct pathways which cater to two distinct learner groupings:

1. The first commences with general education and leads to qualifications for 15 – 19-year-olds, mainly in schools but also in colleges, and
2. The second, for adults, starts with a general component and leads to an alternative level 4 qualification for adults or to general vocational qualifications.

Table 4: GFETQSF qualifications

<i>NQF Level</i>	<i>Qualification types</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Minimum admission requirements</i>	<i>Progression</i>
4	<p>National Certificate (NC) <i>Designated variants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Certificate (SC) and National Senior Certificate (NSC) (Colleges) • National Senior Certificate (NSC) • National Certificate Vocational [NC(V) 4] • National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA) • National Independent Certificate (NIC) 	120	<p>A minimum of 11 years of schooling and satisfactory performance in the grade 11 examination OR Sufficient prior learning</p>	<p>Prescribed levels of achievement indicating access to either Certificate, Diploma or Degree studies (See Tables 5, 6 and 7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum admission policy for HE programmes does not, at present, refer to the NASCA
3	<p>Intermediate Certificate (IC) <i>Designated variants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSC-Grade 11 • National Certificate Vocational [NC(V) 3] • Intermediate Certificate of Education (ICE) 	120	<p>A minimum of ten years of schooling and satisfactory performance in Grade ten OR For adults: satisfactory achievement in the EC OR Sufficient prior learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission to Level 3 qualification (provided the candidate has the necessary requirements for admission into that qualification) • Successful completion of the NC(V)3 meets the minimum requirement for entrance into NC(V)4 • Successful completion of the adult ICE allows access to Level 4 qualification like the NASCA (provided the candidate has the necessary requirements for admission into that qualification)
2	<p>Elementary Certificate (EC) <i>Designated variants</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSC- Grade 10 • National Certificate Vocational [NC(V) 2] • Elementary Certificate of Education (ECE) 	120	<p>A minimum of nine years of schooling and satisfactory progress in Grade nine OR For adults: satisfactory achievement in the GETC: ABET and GETCA OR Sufficient prior learning</p>	<p>Admission to Level 3 qualification (provided the candidate has the necessary requirements for admission into that qualification)</p>
1	<p>General Certificate (GC) <i>Designated variants</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Certificate of Education (GCE) • General Education and Training Certificate: ABET (GETC: ABET Level 4) • General Education and Training Certificate for Adults (GETCA) 	120	<p>A minimum of eight years of schooling and satisfactory progress in the achievement of outcomes for Grade eight OR For adults: a record of satisfactory achievement in at least two learning areas at ABET level 3 OR Sufficient prior learning</p>	<p>Admission to Grade 10, or certain Level 2 qualifications (provided the candidate has the necessary requirements for admission into that qualification)</p>

Detailed descriptions of each of the qualifications in the GFETQSF can be found in the *Policy for the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework* published by Umalusi in September 2014. The GFETQSF qualification types are mapped according to NQF levels 1 to 4 (Table 4) and are described in terms of:

- Minimum total credits;
- Minimum units of learning (Subjects);
- Purpose and characteristics;
- Minimum admission requirements; and
- Articulation rules with other qualification types.

Appointment of teachers

Before educators are appointed to posts, they are required to register with a professional council, namely the South African Council for Educators (SACE). There are minimum qualification requirements for the registration of educators.

SACE was established in terms of the *South African Council for Educators Act, Act 31 of 2000* (RSA, 2000a). The functions of SACE are to:

- Register educators;
- Promote the professional development of educators; and
- Set, maintain and protect ethical and professional standards for educators.

SACE has several programmes and principles to assist educators with their professional development and to enhance the status and image of the teaching profession. These include:

- The Professional Development Portfolio Project, aimed at encouraging educators to reflect on their practice and take responsibility for their professional development;
- Teacher education and development research activities;
- Continuing Professional Teacher Development; and
- The SACE Code of Professional Ethics.

Schooling

NQF Level 1 is open-ended to include adult basic education and training (ABET). The DBE is responsible for public schools, private schools (also known as independent schools), Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres and schools for learners with special needs. The administration and implementation of national policies for Basic Education (BE) and the funding of schools are the responsibility of the nine provinces in South Africa, each with its education department. Private schools have to register with their provincial education departments and are accredited by Umalusi, the QA body for basic education and NQF qualifications in the GFETQSF.

Education in the provincial education departments and the DBE is monitored and controlled by the Heads of Education Departments Committee (Hedcom) which comprise the Director-General of the DBE, the Deputy Directors-General of the DBE and the heads of provincial departments of education. The purpose of the Hedcom is to:

- Facilitate the development of a national education system;
- Share information and views on national education; and
- Co-ordinate administrative action on matters of mutual interest and advise the DBE on a range of specific matters related to the proper functioning of the national education system.

Co-ordination of the South African education system is provided by the Council of Education Ministers (CEM) which consists of the Ministers of BE, Higher Education and Training (HET)

and the nine provincial members of the executive councils for education. It meets regularly to:

- Discuss the promotion of national education policy;
- Share information and views on all aspects of education in South Africa; and
- Co-ordinate action on matters of mutual interest.

According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996a); Chapter 2, Clause 29: Education (1) *Everyone has the right (a) to a basic education, including adult basic education; and (b) to further education.* Education in South Africa is compulsory for children aged between 6 and 15 years of age (or up to Grade 9, depending on which is first attained). This obligation to attend school is secured in the *South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996* (RSA, 1996b).

The DBE is also tasked with the responsibility of reducing the number of illiterate adults in South Africa. For this purpose, it administers, with the assistance of SAQA, the KhaRiGude mass literacy campaign. ABET courses are for adults, who had no schooling, to develop literacy and numeracy. Community colleges and private providers provide ABET.

The SA academic year runs from January up to, and including, December (approximately 200 school days), and is divided into four blocks. The first block runs from mid-January to the end of March or beginning of April. The second block begins in mid-April and runs until June. The third block begins in mid-July and runs until around mid-September, and the fourth block runs from the beginning of October until early December.

Learners in public schools write the NSC school-leaving qualification administered by the DBE and quality-assured by Umalusi. Private school learners may enroll for the NSC administered by the DBE or for the examinations administered by an independent assessment body accredited by Umalusi such as the Independent Examinations Board (IEB). Learners completing the examinations administered by an independent assessment body receive an NSC issued by Umalusi, which is the same as the certificate issued to public school learners without reference to the examinations having been set by the independent assessment body.

The DBE has instituted the National CAPS to guide learning and assessment in its schools. CAPS is a single, comprehensive and concise policy document, entitled "*National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12*" (DBE, 2013) which contains the following:

- The CAPS for each approved school subject as listed in the policy document;
- The number of subjects to be offered to learners in each grade and the promotion requirements to be obtained; and
- *National Protocol for Assessment Grades R – 12* (DBE, 2012) which standardises the recording and reporting processes for Grade R - Grade 12 within the framework.

South Africa has 11 official languages: Afrikaans, English, IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, Northern Sotho, Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga. Government policy regarding the language of teaching and learning is that:

- Primary school pupils have the right to be educated in their home language when they start school. This home language must be one of the 11 official languages;
- From Grade 3, pupils must take another approved language in addition to their language of education;
- All official languages may be taken as the home language (HL), first additional language (FAL) or second additional language (SAL);
- From Grade 4 upwards, the language of education is English or Afrikaans; and
- South African Sign Language (SASL) may be substituted for the home language for learners with hearing impairments.

There are additional subjects for CAPS Grades 10–12 excluding the compulsory subjects: HL, FAL, Mathematics (Maths), Mathematical Literacy, Technical Mathematics and Life Orientation (LO). Learners are required to choose three other school subjects in the right combinations.

No certificate or qualification is issued to learners exiting the school system before successfully completing the NSC at the end of Grade 12. Learners enrolling at TVET Colleges for the National Certificate (Vocational) [NC(V)] are awarded either the NC(V) Level 2, NC(V) Level 3 or NC(V) Level 4 after successfully completing each one-year qualification of 130 credits.

Schooling learning pathways after Grade 9 (NQF Level 1)

Grade 9 is at NQF Level 1.

At the end of grade 9, school learners may follow one of three further learning pathways, namely:

Learning pathway 1:

Continue at school and complete the NSC, NQF Level 4, which gives access to:

- Higher education (Higher Certificate, Diploma or Bachelor's Degree study depending on the nature of the NSC attainment of the learner);
- Occupational Certificates at NQF Level 5; or
- The workplace.

Learning pathway 2:

Continue studies at a TVET College doing either:

- i. a National Certificate (Vocational Levels 2, 3 and 4) which gives access to:
 - Higher education (Higher Certificate, Diploma or Bachelor's Degree study depending on the nature of the NC(V) Level 4 attainment of the learner);
 - Occupational Certificates at NQF Level 5; or
 - The workplace.

or

- ii. NATED part-qualifications at NQF levels 1, 2 and 3 which give access to:
 - N4, N5 and N6 part-qualifications which together with 18 or 24 months of workplace integrated learning lead to the National N Diploma at NQF level 6;
 - A Senior Certificate (Specialisation), NQF Level 4 or NASCA, NQF Level 4 (once it is offered by TVET Colleges);
 - Occupational Certificates at NQF Level 4 or 5;
 - Entry to apprenticeships; or
 - The workplace.

Learning pathway 3:

Learners may enrol for Occupational Certificates at NQF Level 1.

Articulation between the GFETQSF and the HEQSF

Access to Higher Certificate studies, Diploma studies and Bachelor's Degree studies is determined by the MHET and are published in the following government gazettes:

- National Senior Certificate (NSC) requirements (Government Gazette (GG), 2008)
- National Certificate Vocational [NC(V)], Level 4 (GG, 2009).

Table 5 provides the details of the requirements for the NSC and NC(V) to articulate to Higher Certificate studies on the HEQSF.

Table 5: Articulation from the GFETQSF to HEQSF Higher Certificate studies

Admission to:	National Senior Certificate	National Certificate (Vocational)
Higher Certificate studies	An NSC with an achievement rating of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • three (3) obtained in Life Orientation and two other subjects, and • a rating of two (2) obtained in the other four subjects, together with any other university requirements can provide access to Certificate / National Certificate / National Higher Certificate studies	An NC(V) Level 4 and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compliance with the language of teaching and learning in the higher education institution together with any other university requirements can provide access to Certificate / National Certificate / National Higher Certificate studies

Table 6 provides the details of the requirements for the NSC and NC(V) to articulate to Diploma studies on the HEQSF.

Table 6: Articulation from the GFETQSF to HEQSF Diploma studies

Admission to:	National Senior Certificate	National Certificate (Vocational)
Diploma studies	An NSC with an achievement rating of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • three (3) or better obtained in four subjects (excluding Life Orientation) together with any other university requirements can provide access to Diploma / National Diploma studies	An NC(V) Level 4 and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 50% in three fundamental subjects including the language of learning and teaching in the higher education institution • achieve at least 60% in the three compulsory vocational subjects together with any other university requirements can provide access to Diploma / National Diploma studies

Table 7 provides the details of the requirements for the NSC and NC(V) to articulate to Bachelor's Degree studies on the HEQSF.

Table 7: Articulation from the GFETQSF to HEQSF Bachelor's Degree studies

Admission to:	National Senior Certificate	National Certificate (Vocational)
Bachelor's Degree studies	An NSC with an achievement rating of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • four (4) or better obtained in four subjects from the approved designated list together with any other university requirements can provide access to Bachelor's Degree higher education studies	An NC(V) Level 4 and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 60% in three fundamental subjects including the language of learning and teaching in the higher education institution • achieve at least 70% in the four vocational subjects, chosen for the NC(V) Level 4 subjects together with any other university requirements can provide access to Bachelor's Degree higher education studies

The Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) of the South African NQF

The CHE is the QC for the HEQSF. The HEQSF specifies the qualification types in higher education, which are on Levels 5 to 10 of the NQF. Each qualification type is registered at a specific NQF Level. Qualification types must be aligned to the generic competencies described in the relevant level descriptors as well as meet the HEQSF description for the qualification type.

Detailed descriptions of each of the qualifications in the HEQSF, including the permitted exceptions, can be found in *The Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework* published by the CHE in 2013. The HEQSF qualification types are mapped according to NQF levels 5 to 10 (See Table 8) and are described in terms of

- Learning outcomes (generic and specific),
- Total minimum credits required,
- Purpose and characteristics,
- Minimum admission requirements, and
- Articulation rules with other qualification types.

This section is grounded in the published HEQSF and must be read in conjunction with the information in Table 8 as well as the information on designators and qualifiers of each qualification type as described in the published HEQSF (*ibid*).

Table 8: HEQSF qualifications

NQF Level	Qualification types	Minimum credits	Minimum admission requirements	Progression
10	Doctoral Degree	360	Appropriate Master's Degree	Highest qualification type awarded within this framework
	Doctoral Degree (Professional)	360	Appropriate Master's Degree	Highest qualification type awarded within this framework
9	Master's Degree	180	Relevant Bachelor Honours Degree or a relevant Postgraduate Diploma or relevant Bachelor's Degree at level 8	Admission to a cognate Doctoral Degree, usually in the area of specialisation in the Master's Degree
	Master's Degree (Professional)	180	Relevant Bachelor Honours Degree or Postgraduate Diploma or cognate Bachelor's Degree at Level 8	Admission to a cognate Doctoral Degree, usually in the area of specialisation in the Master's Degree
8	Bachelor Honours Degree	120	Appropriate Bachelor's Degree or appropriate Advanced Diploma	Admission to a cognate Master's Degree
	Postgraduate Diploma	120	Appropriate Bachelor's Degree or appropriate Advanced Diploma	Admission to a cognate Master's Degree
	Bachelor's Degree	480	NSC or NC(V) with appropriate subject combinations and minimum admission requirements for Bachelor's Degree programmes	Admission to a cognate Master's Degree
7	Bachelor's Degree	360	NSC or NC(V) with appropriate subject combinations and minimum admission requirements for Bachelor's Degree programmes	Admission to Bachelor Honours Degree or Post-graduate Diploma
	Advanced	120	Diploma or Bachelor's Degree	Admission to Postgraduate Diploma,

	Diploma			Bachelor Honours Degree or Bachelor's Degree
6	Diploma	240 or 360	NSC or NC(V) with entry into Diploma studies or Higher Certificate or Advanced Certificate	Admission to Bachelor's Degree. Completion of a 360-credit Diploma meets admission to an Advanced Diploma
	Advanced Certificate	120	Higher Certificate	Admission to cognate Diploma or Bachelor's Degree
5	Higher Certificate	120	National Senior Certificate (NSC) or the National Certificate Vocational (NC(V) with access to Certificate studies	Admission to an appropriate Advanced Certificate or cognate Diploma or appropriate Bachelor's Degree

HEQSF qualification types can be classified into undergraduate and postgraduate qualification types:

- The undergraduate qualification types include the Higher Certificate, Advanced Certificate, Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Bachelor's Degree.
- The postgraduate qualification types include the Postgraduate Diploma, Bachelor Honours Degree, Master's Degree, Professional Master's Degree, Doctoral Degree and Professional Doctorate.

The HEQSF makes provision for permitted exceptions as explained later in this section.

Undergraduate qualification types

Higher Certificate

The Higher Certificate is an entry-level qualification (primarily vocational), with a strong industry-oriented focus. It provides learners with the basic introductory knowledge, cognitive and conceptual tools and practical techniques for higher education studies. It emphasises selected general principles together with more specific procedures and their application. This qualification suggests that the learner has attained a basic level of higher education knowledge and competence in a particular field or occupation and is capable of applying such knowledge and competence in an occupation or role in the workplace. The Higher Certificate typically includes a work-integrated learning (WIL) component.

Advanced Certificate

The Advanced Certificate is primarily vocational or industry-oriented. It emphasises selected general principles together with more specific procedures and their application and / or technology transfer. The qualification provides learners with a sound knowledge base in a particular field or discipline, and the ability to apply their knowledge and skills to particular career or professional contexts while equipping them to undertake more specialised and intensive learning. Programmes leading to this qualification tend to have a strong vocational, professional or career focus, and holders of this qualification are prepared to enter a specific niche in the labour market. Advanced Certificate programmes typically include a WIL component.

Diploma

The Diploma has a vocational orientation, which includes professional, vocational, or industry-specific knowledge that provides a sound understanding of general theoretical principles as well as a combination of general and specific procedures and their application. The purpose of the Diploma is to develop graduates who can demonstrate focused knowledge and skills in a particular field and has gained experience in applying such knowledge and skills in a workplace context. A depth and specialisation of knowledge, together with practical skills and experience in the workplace, enables successful learners to enter several career paths and to apply their learning to particular employment contexts. Diploma programmes typically include an appropriate WIL component.

There are two key distinctions between the 240- and 360-credit Diploma variants. The latter may provide for up to 120 credits of workplace-based learning, while the 240-credit variant does not, and the 240-credit variant may only be offered where it leads to a professional designation or occupational role as determined by a professional body.

Advanced Diploma

The Advanced Diploma may provide entry-level vocational or professional preparation or specialisation for Bachelor's Degree graduates or diplomates by offering an intensive, focused and applied specialisation that meets the requirements of a specific niche in the labour market. For example, a Bachelor of Social Science graduate might register for an Advanced Diploma in Human Resource Management to enter the field of human resources; a Bachelor of Science (BSc) graduate might register for an Advanced Diploma in Education [or Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)] to become a Science teacher, or a BSc Pharmacy graduate might register for an Advanced Diploma in Marketing to become a marketing consultant in the pharmaceutical industry. This qualification is suitable for continuing professional development and may also prepare learners for postgraduate study.

Bachelor's Degree

There are two types of Bachelor's Degrees, namely general and professionally-oriented.

Both may be structured as a 360-credit qualification with an exit at level 7 or as a 480-credit qualification with an exit at level 8 on the NQF. It is also possible to structure a 480-credit Bachelor's Degree with an exit at NQF level 7. This has a higher volume of learning than the 360-credit qualification, but the level of complexity is the same, therefore at NQF Level 7.

The 480-credit Bachelor's Degree at NQF level 8 has both a higher volume of learning and greater cognitive demand than the 360-credit Degree at Level 7 and should prepare learners for Master's level study by providing research capacity in methodology and research techniques.

The purpose of both Bachelor's Degrees is to provide a well-rounded, broad education that equips graduates with the knowledge base, theory and methodology of disciplines and fields of study, and to enable them to demonstrate initiative and responsibility in an academic or professional context. Both the 360 and 480-credit Bachelor's Degrees may require learners to undertake suitable research to prepare them for postgraduate study.

The general Bachelor's Degree emphasises general principles and theory for entry into general employment or postgraduate studies. The professional Bachelor's Degree prepares students for professional training, post-graduate studies or professional practice in a wide range of careers. The Degree programme may contain a component of WIL. Some professionally-oriented Bachelor's Degree programmes are designed in consultation with a professional body and recognised by a professional body as a requirement for a licence to practise.

Postgraduate qualification types

Bachelor Honours Degree

The Bachelor Honours Degree is a postgraduate specialisation qualification that prepares learners for research-based postgraduate study and typically follows a Bachelor's Degree. This qualification demands a high level of theoretical engagement and intellectual independence. In some cases, a Bachelor Honours Degree carries recognition by an appropriate professional or statutory body. Bachelor Honours Degree programmes must include conducting and reporting research under supervision, worth at least 30 credits, in the form of an appropriate research component.

Postgraduate Diploma

The Postgraduate Diploma is multi- or interdisciplinary and strengthens learner knowledge in a particular discipline. The primary purpose is to enable working professionals to undertake advanced reflection and development through a systematic survey of current thinking in an area of specialisation. It demands a high level of engagement and intellectual independence to undertake professional or highly-skilled work. A sustained research project is not required, but the qualification may include conducting and reporting research under supervision. In some cases, a Postgraduate Diploma carries recognition by an appropriate professional or statutory body.

Master's Degree

The purpose of a general Master's Degree is to educate and train researchers who can contribute to the development of knowledge at an advanced level. There are two variants of the general Master's Degree. Both variants must include a significant research component in the form of a discrete research project:

- **Master's Degree by dissertation:** A single advanced research project, leading to the production and acceptance of a dissertation or other forms of research as indicated below
- **Master's Degree by coursework and mini-dissertation:** A coursework programme with a high level of theoretical engagement and intellectual independence, and in some cases demonstration of the ability to relate knowledge to a range of contexts for professional practice. In addition, this variant of a general Master's Degree must contain a research project comprising a minimum of 60 credits at level 9, culminating in the acceptance of a mini-dissertation or other form of research as indicated below.

Master's Degree graduates, in general, must be able to reflect critically on theory and its application. They must be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, design and critically appraise research, make sound judgements using data and information at their disposal and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences, demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks with a theoretical underpinning and continue to advance their knowledge, understanding and skills. The research component or

components of a general Master's Degree should be commensurate with the characteristics of the discipline and field as well as the purpose of the programme, and in addition to a dissertation or treatise, may take the form of a technical report, one or more creative performances or works, or a series of peer-reviewed articles or other research-equivalent outputs.

Master's Degree (Professional)

The primary purpose of a professional Master's Degree is to educate and train graduates who can contribute to the development of knowledge at an advanced level. In some cases, a professional Master's Degree is designed in consultation with a professional body or fulfils all or part of the requirements for professional registration or recognition, and may include appropriate forms of WIL. It must include an independent study component that comprises at least a quarter of the credits at NQF level 9, consisting of either a single research or technical project or a series of smaller projects demonstrating innovation or professional expertise. Master's graduates must be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, design and critically appraise analytical writing, make sound judgements using data and information and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences, act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks with a professional orientation, and continue to advance their knowledge, understanding and skills relevant to a particular profession.

Doctoral Degree

The Doctorate provides training for an academic career. It requires research at the most advanced academic levels and the submission, assessment and acceptance of a thesis. However, candidates may also present peer-reviewed academic articles and papers, and, in certain fields, creative work such as artefacts, compositions, public performances and public exhibitions in partial fulfilment of the research requirements. Coursework may be required but does not contribute to the credit value of the qualification. The qualification holder is required to demonstrate high-level research capability and make a significant and original academic contribution. The quality of the work must satisfy peer review and merit publication. The degree may be earned through discipline-based or multidisciplinary research or applied research and requires a minimum of two years' full-time study, usually after completing a Master's Degree. A graduate should be able to supervise and evaluate the research of others in the area of specialisation concerned.

A Higher Doctorate may be awarded based on a distinguished record of research in the form of published works, creative works and /or other scholarly contributions that are judged by leading international experts to make an exceptional and independent contribution to one or more disciplines.

Doctoral Degree (Professional)

The professional Doctorate provides education and training for a career in the professions and/or industry and is designed around high-level performance and innovation in a professional context. Candidates are required to undertake a combination of coursework and advanced research leading to the submission, assessment and acceptance of a research component comprising an original thesis or another form of research relevant to the discipline. The research component should comprise at least 60% of the degree and may include appropriate forms of work-integrated learning. This qualification demonstrates high-level research capability and requires the application of theoretical knowledge to highly complex problems.

Permitted exceptions

Bachelor of Education (BEd)

The Bachelor of Education (BEd) is a 480-credit qualification at NQF level 7 and thus differs from most 480-credit Bachelor's degrees that are pegged at NQF level 8. The lower NQF exit level of the BEd recognises the fact that the qualification requires a substantial component of work-placed learning so that it cannot provide students with adequate theoretical preparation to undertake Master's level study. Therefore, students who graduate with a BEd would normally complete a BEd (Hons) or a Postgraduate Diploma in Education before they may enrol for a Master's Degree.

Postgraduate Certificate in Education

The Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) conforms to the specifications for an Advanced Diploma at NQF level 7, and the admission requirements, purpose and characteristics and progression opportunities for the PGCE are the same as those of the Advanced Diploma. However, due to the familiarity of the PGCE in international teacher education circles, the qualification will continue to be denoted by this title.

Master's Degrees in Health Sciences

In certain professions in the Health Sciences (Medicine, Chiropractic, Homeopathy) a specific type of Master's degree is required for registration as a professional (e.g., the Master of Medicine; Master of Veterinary Medicine and Master of Dentistry), that has a credit load far above the indicative 180 credits that the HEQSF requires for a Master's degree, with credits spread across various NQF levels. While such qualifications will continue to be classified together with the Master's Degree, consideration will be given to the formal time and levels of funding that are appropriate for these programme types.

Professional Bachelor's Degrees in the Health Sciences

Qualifications such as the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery; Bachelor of Dental Surgery and Bachelor of Veterinary Science, require a formal learning programme that considerably exceeds the specifications for a professional Bachelor's Degree on the HEQSF in terms of their credit load. Consideration will be given to the formal time and levels of funding that are appropriate for these programmes.

Advanced Bachelor's Degrees

In certain disciplines and fields, an advanced Bachelor's Degree, such as a Bachelor of Laws, may follow on a first undergraduate degree. In such cases, the advanced Bachelor's Degree may be curricularised so that it consists of a minimum of 240 credits and provides the necessary preparation for Master's level study as well as the development of research capacity in the methodology and techniques of the discipline.

The Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) of the South African NQF

There is one qualification type designated for the OQSF, and this is the Occupational Certificate (the OQSF also contains qualifications registered under the SAQA Act that is in the process of being replaced by Occupational Qualifications during the transitional period from the SAQA Act to the NQF Act). Currently, there are Occupational Certificates registered at all NQF Levels from 1 to 8, but Occupational Certificates may be developed and registered at Levels 9 and 10 on consultation with the QCs and SAQA and advice to the Minister. The NQF level reflects the level of complexity of the qualification. Occupational qualifications and part-qualifications are awarded by the QCTO after the assessment and achievement of defined learning outcomes. In terms of Section 26 D (4) of the Skills Development Act (RSA, 1998d), the QCTO is also required to issue Trade Certificates for occupations listed as trades.

Occupational qualifications and part-qualifications are qualifications associated with a trade, occupation or profession resulting from work-based learning. Occupational and part-qualifications are designed to include knowledge modules, practical skills modules and work experience modules which constitute the volume of learning required to achieve the qualification. The OQSF recognises credit as a measure of the volume of learning required for an occupational- or part-qualification.

Components of QCTO qualifications

Occupational Certificates (and part-qualifications) must include three components:

1. Knowledge;
2. Practical skills; and
3. Workplace learning.

Each component must constitute at least 20% of the learning in the qualification/part-qualification. The remaining 40% of the learning may be allocated to any, or all, of the three components as suits the qualification/part-qualification. The qualification is awarded to learners who successfully complete an integrated summative assessment conducted nationally.

Eight major OQSF groupings mapped against the NQF levels

The Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO) provides the basis for the OQSF. The eight major OFO groupings in the OQSF are:

1. Managers;
2. Professionals;
3. Technicians and Associate Professionals;
4. Clerical Support Workers;
5. Service and Sales Workers;
6. Skilled Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery, Craft and Related Trades Workers;
7. Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers and
8. Elementary Occupations

Table 9 shows the eight major OFO groups mapped against the ten NQF levels. Each major group has a range of individual occupations whose associated occupational qualifications are pegged at different NQF levels, skill levels and the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) levels. Further details of the OQSF qualifications can be found in the *Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework Policy (QCTO, 2014b)*.

Table 9: Occupational qualifications mapped against skills levels and NQF levels

NSDS	NQF Level	Skill Level	OFO Major Groups			
High	10	4	2 Professionals			1 Managers
	9					
	8					
	7					
Intermediate	6	3	3 Technicians and Associate Professionals			
	5	2	4 Clerical Support Workers	5 Service and Sales Workers	6 Skilled Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery, Craft & Related Trades Workers	7 Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers
	4					
Entry	3	1	8 Elementary Occupations			
	2					
	1					

Source: QCTO. 2014b, page 20

NATED qualifications on the OQSF

The QCTO is also responsible for NATED part-qualifications N4, N5 and N6 that fall on NQF Level 5 (see Tables 2 and 3). These part-qualifications, together with 18 or 24 months of workplace integrated learning, lead to the National N Diploma at NQF level 6.

NATED part-qualifications at NQF Level 1–3 fall within the QA oversight responsibility of Umalusi as described earlier.

Organising Fields and Subfields of the NQF

The NQF divides all education and training in South Africa into 12 Organising Fields (SAQA, 2000). Each Organising Field has relevant subfields.

Every qualification on the NQF resides in a subfield of a relevant Organising Field, and this is reflected on the qualification document as recorded on the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD) and visible on the SAQA website.

Organising field 01: Agriculture and Nature Conservation

Subfields:

- Primary agriculture
- Secondary agriculture
- Nature conservation
- Forestry and wood technology
- Horticulture

Organising field 02: Culture and Arts

Subfields:

- Design studies
- Visual arts
- Performing arts
- Cultural studies
- Music
- Sport
- Film, television and video

Organising field 03: Business, Commerce and Management

Subfields:

- Finance, economics and accounting
- Generic management
- Human resources
- Marketing
- Purchasing
- Procurement
- Office administration
- Public administration
- Project management
- Public relations

Organising field 04: Communication studies and Language

Subfields:

- Communications studies
- Information studies
- Language
- Literature

Organising field 05: Education Training and Development

Subfields

- Schooling
- Higher education and training
- Early childhood development
- Adult learning

Organising field 06: Manufacturing, engineering and technology

Subfields:

- Engineering and related design
- Manufacturing and assembly
- Fabrication and extraction

Organising field 07: Human and social studies

Subfields:

- Environmental relationships
- General social science
- Industrial and organisational governance and human resource development
- People/Human-centred development
- Public policy, politics and democratic citizenship
- Religious and ethical foundations of society
- Rural and agrarian studies
- Traditions, history and legacies
- Urban and regional studies

Organising field 08: Law, military science and security

Subfields:

- Safety in society
- Justice in society
- Sovereignty of the state

Organising field 09: Health sciences and social services

Subfields:

- Preventive health
- Promotive health and development services
- Curative health
- Rehabilitative health

Organising field 10: Mathematical, physical, computer and life sciences

Subfields:

- Mathematical sciences
- Physical sciences
- Life sciences
- Information technology and computer sciences
- Earth and space sciences
- Environmental sciences

Organising field 11: Services

Subfields:

- Hospitality, tourism, travel, gaming and leisure
- Transport, operations and logistics
- Personal care
- Wholesale and retail
- Consumer services

Organising field 12: Physical planning and construction

Subfields:

- Physical planning, design and management
- Building construction
- Civil engineering construction
- Electrical infrastructure construction

Chapter Summary

This Chapter described the comprehensive, integrated, quality-assured South African NQF. The South African NQF is a key tool for promoting transparency and QA of South African qualifications and is the key mechanism for comparing the NQF with NQFs/ NQS in other countries. The Chapter has also provided information on the key legislation and the principal recognition authorities responsible for the further implementation of the NQF namely CHE, DBE, DHET, QCTO, SAQA and Umalusi.

CHAPTER THREE: Process of Alignment in South Africa

Introduction

Chapter One introduced alignment as one of the six programmes of the SADCQF implementation model. It also introduced the ten alignment criteria and the recommendation from the SADC TCCA that SADC Member States align to the SADCQF.

Alignment to the SADCQF implies a number of focused actions to ensure that Member States provide evidence of alignment in a suitable report format. The actions need to address each of the ten alignment criteria that were developed to assist the process. This Chapter will show the timeline and focused actions involved in demonstrating South Africa's alignment to the SADCQF.

South Africa's Activities and Milestones to SADCQF Alignment

Commitment to implementation of the SADCQF

In September 2016, South Africa, along with the other SADC Member States, agreed to accelerate the implementation of the SADCQF. South Africa was also one of the eight countries that offered to pilot the SADCQF alignment.

The TCCA also recommended an alignment plan and roadmap, as well as alignment timelines to assist with acceleration of the pilot project. Included in the alignment plan was a self-assessment tool for each pilot country to assess their state of readiness to align.

Furthermore, the TCCA recommended a number of capacity building workshops for pilot countries to pilot the alignment to the SADCQF.

SADCQF alignment capacity building

In December 2016, the SADCQF alignment self-assessment tool was shared with the eight pilot countries. The self-assessment tool, based on an international tool and contextualised for SADC, provides a common regional methodology for alignment with the SADCQF. The self-assessment tool unpacks each of the ten alignment criteria into 61 sub-criteria, as shown in Annexure F.

Pilot countries were required to conduct the self-assessment to assess how ready they were to align with the SADCQF. Each of the 61 sub-criteria had a choice of three evidence-based responses, namely a "Yes" response, "Partly" response or a "No" response.

"Yes" response:

Where the country recorded a "yes" response, this indicated an agreement that it fully met the criterion. In this case, clear evidence needed to be presented to back up the positive response.

"Partly" response: Where the country indicated that it partly met the criteria, it needed to show the actions that it would take to achieve the relevant sub-criterion in full (See Table 10 for example of an action plan template).

"No" response:

The "no" response worked in the same way as the "partly" response, namely a clear action plan was required to ensure that Member States remain committed to SADCQF alignment (Table 10).

Table 10: Country self-assessment action plan

Sub-criterion No	Action	By whom	Timeframe
What sub-criterion was being referred to?	What was the action taken to ensure that the country meets the criterion	Who was responsible for the action	By when would the action be completed

Between December 2016 and April 2017, Member States worked through the self-assessments and reported on their progress at the April 2017 TCCA meeting. The TCCA recommended that an alignment capacity building workshop be held that will include all pilot countries.

On 7 and 8 June 2017, an alignment self-assessment capacity building workshop was organised under the auspices of the SADC TCCA and held in South Africa. The key purpose was to provide a peer-learning opportunity to systematically work through each of the ten criteria and the 61 sub-criteria, and share ideas on the action plans to achieve the sub-criteria fully. Pilot countries were also required to submit a first draft of the completed self-assessment document. At this meeting, the methodology for describing the level-to-level alignment between the country NQF and the SADCQF was discussed and agreed. The agreed approach included demonstrating structural, conceptual and linguistic links between the country NQFs and the SADCQF. All eight pilot countries submitted a first draft of their self-assessments on 8 June 2017.

After 8 June 2017, members needed to continue refining their self-assessments and establish their National Alignment Committees (NACs). The pilot countries requested that ToRs for the NAC be drawn up to ensure consistency in these committees across the region. On 30 June 2017, the approved NAC ToRs (Annexure B) were disseminated to all pilot countries.


<p>Report outline for the final SADCQF alignment report</p>
<p>The following report outline is proposed for the final alignment report:</p>
<p>Title of Report: Report on the Alignment of (Country) to the SADC Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) Date: DD/MM/YYYY Use both country logo and SADC logo</p>
<p>Include Contents Page</p>
<p>Authorisation page with statement that all the criteria have been met: - official sign-off</p>
<p>Executive Summary</p>
<p>Chapters:</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction and background to alignment with the SADCQF 2. Profile of (country name) education and training system 3. Process of alignment in... (country name) 4. Evidence of (country name)'s alignment to the SADCQF 5. Conclusion
<p>References</p>
<p>Annexures</p>

Figure 6: Alignment report format (as revised)

In September 2017, a draft format for the final SADCQF alignment report was approved at a TCCA meeting. The TCCA EXCO revised the report format in April 2018 (Figure 6).

In December 2017, the TCCA EXCO recommended an alignment report writing workshop for pilot countries. The writing workshop was held on 10 and 11 April 2018. The purpose was for all pilot countries to work through the requirements of the alignment report and submit a first draft.

On 11 April 2018, all eight pilot countries submitted a first draft of their alignment reports. At the workshop, Member States worked through the next steps as recommended by the TCCA EXCO. See Figure 7:

- By June 2018, the report should go through the internal country processes so that it can be in public comment by July 2018.
- Member States also need to budget time for consideration of public comments and revision of the report before seeking approval from their internal structures for submission to TCCA Secretariat by November 2018.
- The TCCA EXCO will meet in December 2018 and will then consider the report and make recommendations.
- The TCCA will meet in April/May 2019 and will consider the report for publication. If the report meets all the approval processes, it will be published on the SADCQF official platform by June 2019.

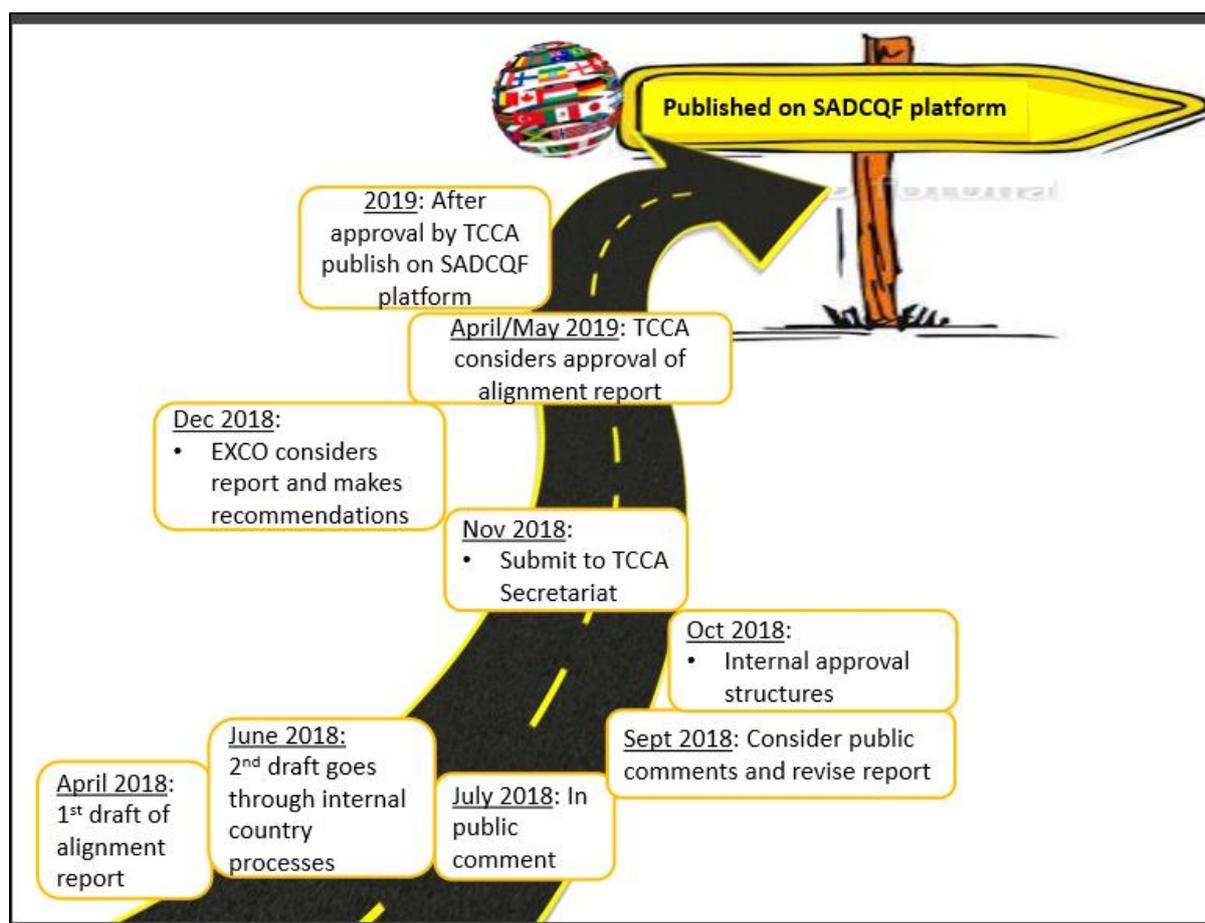


Figure 7: Next steps for SADCQF pilot countries

South Africa's NAC and actions towards SADCQF alignment

In SA, it was decided that the NAC would be a Sub-Committee of the NQF Chief Executive Officers (CEO) Committee. In this regard, the NAC membership was extended to the key NQF bodies in the country, namely CHE, DBE, DHET, QCTO, SAQA and Umalusi.

In July 2017, invitation letters were sent from the office of the CEO of SAQA to the:

- Directors-General of the DHET and DBE; and
- Chief Executive Officers of the three QCs.

The letter invited them to nominate a representative to serve on the NAC. The NAC ToRs were included with the letter to ensure that NAC members were aware of the responsibilities attached to the roles. (See copies of the invitation letters attached as Annexures A1 to A5).

On 7 December 2017, a first meeting of the NAC was held at SAQA House. At the first meeting, the NAC membership and ToRs were adopted, and a further refined first draft of the SADCQF self-assessment was presented and adopted. On advice received from the NAC, further refinements were made to the self-assessment. The final self-assessment results are described in detail in Chapter Four which also provides the responses to the 61 sub-criteria. A clear work plan was developed after the first NAC meeting indicating the actions required from each NAC member. SAQA agreed to provide the Secretariat function for the NAC.

Also at the 7 December 2017 NAC meeting the methodology and results of a first draft of the level-to-level alignment research was discussed with the NAC (see Annexure G).

On 12 April 2018, a second meeting of the South African NAC took place. Further decisions and actions were identified. The NAC endorsed the level-to-level alignment research between the NQF and the SADCQF (Annexure G), and in principle, adopted a first draft of the SADCQF alignment report.

The alignment milestones identified by the South African NAC are shown in Table 11.

Alignment is considered complete once the alignment report is published on the official SADCQF platform. The alignment report must go through the internal processes for publication which includes a public comment period, which included submission to the SAQA Executive Committee of the Board for approval. The South African alignment report was in public comment from 15 June to 16 July 2018, after which the public comments were considered, and the report revised where appropriate. The report was then submitted to the SAQA Board.

Only once the SAQA Board approved the final report was submitted to the TCCA EXCO for adjudication and recommendation to the TCCA.

The approval meeting of the NAC took place on 23 August 2018.

Table 11: South Africa's SADCQF alignment milestones

Date	Alignment milestones
8 June 2017	First draft of the Self-assessment completed at alignment workshop
October 2017	NAC Established (invitations sent, meeting packs compiled)
7 December 2017	First NAC meeting held and work plan agreed upon
	NAC agrees on updated self-assessment document
17 December 2017	Level to level alignment comparison conducted and sent to NAC members
31 March 2018	First draft of the alignment report prepared and shared with NAC
12 April 2018	NAC agrees on level to level comparison and alignment report
	NAC provides updates from their stakeholders regarding placement of SADCQF levels on qualifications certificates or transcripts
May 2018	Alignment report submitted to CEO Committee for notification and SAQA EXCO for approval for public comment
30 May 2018	SAQA EXCO considers for approval for public comment
4-8 June 2018	Internal processes to secure procurement of Government Printer for public comment notice
11-13 June	Notice for gazetting for public comment approved and signed
14 June 2018	Submit to Government Printing Works for gazetting on 15 June
15 June-16 July 2018	Alignment report in public comment
18 July- 31 August 2018	Consider public comments and revise the report
23 August 2018	Third meeting of the National Alignment Committee
1-28 September 2018	Edit and layout of report for final publication
28 September 2018	Submit for inclusion in SAQA Board pack
25 October 2018	SAQA Board considers approval for submission to TCCA EXCO
1 November 2018	Pending approval by SAQA Board, submission to TCCA
December 2018	TCCA EXCO considers recommendation to TCCA
April/May 2019	TCCA considers approval of alignment report, Possible presentation of the report by SAQA
2019	After TCCA approval, publication on the official SADCQF platform

Chapter Summary

This Chapter provided details on the steps taken by the TCCA and the pilot countries to accelerate alignment to the SADCQF. It further outlined the actions taken by South Africa to establish favourable conditions for alignment in South Africa, which included the establishment of its NAC and consulting with the key stakeholders and public about the alignment process. The Chapter also described the actions taken for publication of the South African alignment report in a government gazette and the SAQA website.

The next Chapter is dedicated to providing the evidence that the SANQF meets the ten alignment criteria and is aligned to the SADCQF.

CHAPTER FOUR: Evidence of South Africa's Alignment to the SADCQF

Introduction

This Chapter establishes the alignment of the SANQF to the SADCQF in accordance with the ten alignment criteria, and underlying sub-criteria (Annexure F) approved by the SADC TCCA.

It provides an evidence-based response to the recommendation by the TCCA that Member States align their NQFs/NQS to the SADCQF.

Criterion 1:

Responsibilities of relevant national bodies involved in the alignment process are determined and published by the relevant competent authorities

Sub-criteria:

1. Have all the relevant bodies and stakeholders been informed about the decision to implement the SADCQF?
2. Which bodies will be part of the National Alignment Committee (NAC)?
3. Is the country's NAC functional? Does the NAC have resources and a work plan for SADCQF-related activities?
4. Are the NAC roles and responsibilities for alignment with the SADCQF clear and allocated through a decision / legal order?
5. Is the communication (about aligning with the SADCQF) with the broader public and stakeholders clear, prepared and organised?

Evidence

All the relevant bodies and stakeholders in South Africa have been informed about the decision to implement the SADCQF:

Sub-criterion 1.1

In addition to communication at the national level, SA also communicated the alignment of the SANQF alignment process with international stakeholders. At a national level, it has been reported to:

- The SAQA Board which includes representatives of, the QCs, education and training providers; and, labour, business and organisations representing community and development interests;
- The South African CEO Committee which consists of CEOs of SAQA and the Quality Councils, the Inter-departmental NQF Steering Committee (representatives of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and Department of Basic Education (DBE) meetings which take place four times a year at SAQA House;
- The NAC consisted of representatives from the CEO Committee.
- The Advocacy and Communication Sub-Committee of the CEO Committee on 22 February 2018; and
- The Professional Bodies Forum consisting of 105 statutory and non-statutory professional bodies on 27 March 2018.
- The DHET, DBE and QCs also communicated the information about the alignment to their respective stakeholders.

In addition to communication at the national level, SA also communicated the alignment of the SANQF alignment process with international stakeholders; it has been reported as follows:

- October 2016: The Southern African Regional Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education held in South Africa;
- November 2016: 5th Experts meetings on World Reference Levels in Brussels;
- 12 – 13 June 2017: High-level meeting on the Addis Convention;
- 29 – 30 June 2017: 6th Experts meetings on World Reference Levels in Paris;
- 25 October 2017: Keynote lecture on Regional Qualifications Frameworks in Harare; and
- 18 March 2018: 7th Experts meetings on World Reference Levels in Brussels.

Sub-criterion 1.2

The NAC comprises representatives of SAQA, the three QCs (CHE, QCTO and Umalusi) and the inter-departmental NQF steering committee which comprises the DHET and DBE.

Sub-criterion 1.3

South Africa's NAC is functional and has resources and a work plan for SADCQF-related activities. SAQA provides the Secretariat function for all NAC meetings and takes responsibility for driving the entire process, including correspondence. The first NAC meeting took place at SAQA House on 7 December 2017. The second NAC meeting took place at SAQA House on 12 April 2018.

Sub-criterion 1.4

There are standard Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the NAC which were presented to and adopted by, the NAC. Therefore, the NAC is aware of its roles and responsibilities. The NAC adopted the self- assessment against the ten alignment criteria as well as a clear action plan. The NAC roles and responsibilities for alignment with the SADCQF are clear and in line with SAQA's mandate in terms of the NQF Act, Act 67 of 2008, Chapter 4 Section 13 (1)(j) (i) and (ii). This states that, with respect to international relations, SAQA is required to collaborate with its international counterparts on all matters of mutual interest concerning qualifications frameworks; and inform the QCs and other interested parties about international practice in the development and management of qualifications frameworks. SAQA reports on the above to the CEO committee.

Sub-criterion 1.5

The communication with the broader public and stakeholders regarding alignment with the SADCQF is clear, prepared and organised. A standard presentation, using the relevant SADCQF infographics is available and has been distributed to all NAC members for presentation to their stakeholders. An updated article about the SADCQF (Jaftha and Samuels, 2017) was sent to all NAC members on 10 December 2017 for placement on their websites. Each NAC member will take responsibility for ensuring that their providers and stakeholders receive the SADCQF information. SAQA placed the article on its website and sent the link to all members of the public making inquiries about the SADCQF.

Criterion 2:

There is a clear and demonstrable link between qualification levels in the South African NQF and level descriptors of the SADCQF

Sub-criteria:

1. Is the country NQF adopted and in application?

2. Are the country NQF level descriptors (LDs) clear, complete and understood by the relevant stakeholders?
3. Are the country NQF LDs implemented in practice?
4. Do the NQF LDs clearly indicate vertical progression?
5. Are the LDs used in practice the same as those of the NQF LDs?
6. Are the SADCQF (regional) level descriptors understood by stakeholders?
7. Is there an agreed approach (method) to present the demonstrable link of the country LDs with that of the SADCQF? Is the diagram showing the level to level links as well as the underlying research attached?

Evidence

Sub-criterion 2.1

The South African NQF is fully adopted and has been applied since 1996; that is, it is fully operational. All NQF Policies are in place. South Africa is currently in the policy implementation phase.

Sub-criterion 2.2

South Africa's NQF level descriptors (LDs) are clear, complete and understood by the relevant stakeholders. There is a policy on the South African level descriptors. As is the usual process with policies, the level descriptors policy is currently undergoing a routine review. SAQA is also conducting surveys to determine the understanding and application of the South African LDs.

Sub-criterion 2.3

The South African LDs are implemented in practice. All qualification developers must use the LDs to develop and recommend qualifications at a certain level of the NQF. The QCs use the level descriptors to confirm the level recommended by the qualification developers. In addition, SAQA uses the LDs as part of its evaluation process to determine whether qualifications meet the criteria for registration on the NQF. SAQA then registers qualifications at the relevant NQF level.

Sub-criterion 2.4

The NQF LDs indicate vertical progression. The LDs are arranged in ascending order from Level 1 to Level 10 and indicate levels of progression (see Annexure E for the summarised version of the SANQF LDs). There are specific qualification types at each NQF Level. The same 10 competencies are used at all ten Levels of the NQF. The competencies are progressive and cumulative from NQF Level 1 to NQF Level 10.

Sub-criterion 2.5

There is only one set of level descriptors (LDs) in the law and being implemented in practice. The LDs used in practice are the same as those of the NQF LDs in that all qualifications must meet the relevant LD. However, this is something that needs to be consistently monitored to be understood. SAQA routinely reviews the LDs to ensure that all stakeholders understand them.

Sub-criterion 2.6

The SADCQF (regional) level descriptors are understood by stakeholders. The SADCQF policy booklet and infographic on level descriptors were disseminated to all NQF bodies at the SADCQF popularisation event held in April 2017. The level-to-level alignment research (Annexure G) was presented and disseminated to the NAC members in December 2017. NAC members adopted the comparison on 12 April 2018.

Sub-criterion 2.7

There is an agreed approach (method) to present the demonstrable link of the SANQF LDs (see Annexure E) to that of the SADCQF LDs (see Annexure C). The approach was agreed at a June 2017 workshop with the alignment pilot countries (see Figure 8). The approach includes demonstrating structural, conceptual and linguistic links between the two frameworks. The conclusions of the research are presented below.

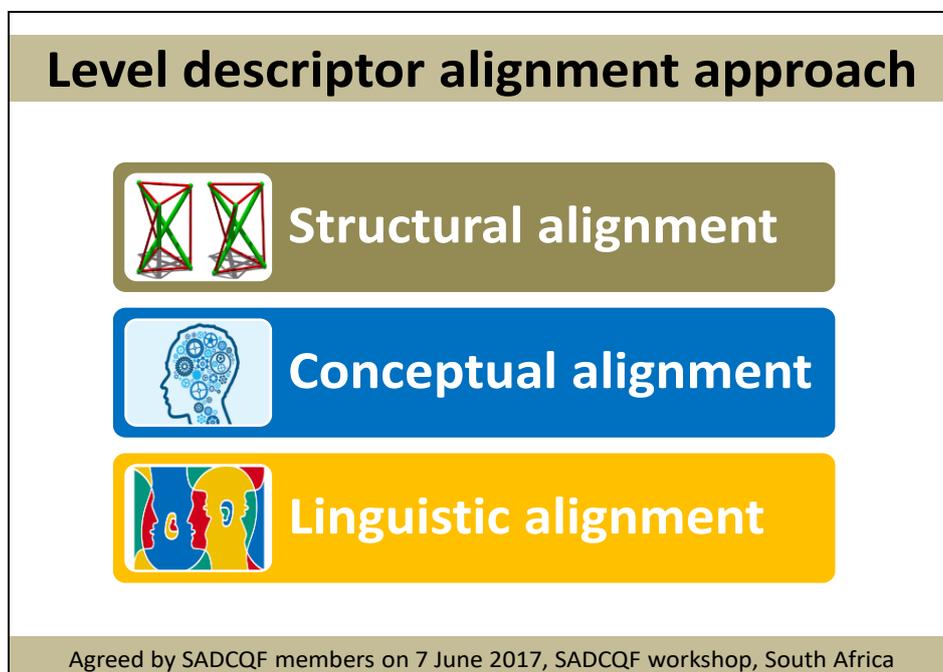


Figure 8: Level-to-level alignment methodology

Structural alignment

To determine whether the two frameworks were structurally aligned, the architecture of the two frameworks was compared to ascertain the similarities and differences between the two frameworks.

The two frameworks are structurally similar in the following ways. Both have a ten-level NQF structure; Both have a focus on learning outcomes rather than input; Both are integrated and comprehensive (include all three sectors: schooling, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education; and both have a focus on lifelong learning).

The two frameworks differ significantly in the purpose for which they were established:

- The SADCQF is an overarching RQF which sets the regional standards for what a learner is able to know, understand and be able to do after a process of learning. Its purpose is to provide a translation device between the national education and training systems of SADC. It is a reference framework meaning that there are no qualifications registered onto it;
- The SANQF is an NQF which sets the national standards for what a learner is able to know, understand and do after a process of learning. It has a strong redress focus, clearly stated in its objectives. This focus reflects the importance of this factor in the South African education system. It ensures that qualifications must have fair non-discriminatory admission requirements, allow for RPL to be used for admission and the awarding of exemptions/credits towards qualifications, contain articulation possibilities and are linked to employment and/or further learning opportunities. It is a framework on which authentic qualifications, offered in South Africa, are registered. There is

evidence of registered Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees.

Considering this necessary difference in the purpose of each framework, it can be concluded that there is a close correspondence between the architectures of the two frameworks.

Conceptual alignment

The use of concepts was examined to see whether there were conceptual links between the two frameworks. The outcome statements were examined in both frameworks. Where these outcome statements at a particular level were more specific, it was easier to compare the two frameworks and place qualifications at that particular level. Although both frameworks have their underpinnings in learning outcomes, the comparison was complicated for the following reasons:

- There are differences in the number of categories;
- The SADCQF lacks consistency in its outcome statements;
- The SADCQF is silent on ethics and professional practice; and
- The SADCQF descriptors do not show progression.

Different number of categories:

The two sets of level descriptors have different numbers of categories. The SANQF has ten categories, and the SADCQF has three. Because of the inclusion of ten categories rather than three, the SANQF categories are more descriptive. Even in similar categories, for example, knowledge and autonomy and responsibility, the SANQF categories are more detailed.

Consistency:

The ten SANQF categories are all used in every level from NQF Level 1 to NQF Level 10. The three SADCQF categories do not contain the same sub-categories/competencies in all ten SADCQF levels. For example, the SANQF category, “*Knowledge literacy*” which is particularly important for learners using multiple and sometimes conflicting sources of information and who are subjected to multiple ways of doing something, is only included and addressed in the SADCQF categories at levels 9 and 10.

Ethics and professional practice:

SANQF outcomes in qualifications not only serve academic and workplace needs, but are seen as contributing to the personal development of the individual learner and the development of, or changes in, societal behaviour. The South African education system and South African society, in general, regard ethics and professional practice to be an integral part of every qualification registered on the NQF. The NQF, therefore, requires outcomes for ethics and professional practice to be developed and applied in a progressively complex manner in all qualifications. The SANQF Levels start with the development of the learner’s ethical standards at NQF Level One and end with the learner at NQF Level Ten being able to make autonomous ethical decisions which affect knowledge production, or complex organisational or professional issues, and critically contribute to the development of ethical standards in a specific context. Ethics and professional practice is not included in the SADCQF categories either explicitly or implicitly at any level.

Progression from level to level:

The three SADCQF categories do not always reflect progression in complexity from level to level. Many of the categories in the SANQF descriptors that naturally fall into one of the three SADCQF categories are either not mentioned or not progressively included from level to level

in the latter. Two such categories, for example, are communication and problem-solving. Full details are available in Annexure G.

Given that an RQF needs to be able to accommodate at a broad, overarching level the different underpinning philosophies of each NQF or NQS in its region, it is understandable that the SADCQF might not accommodate the outcomes specific to a particular NQF/NQS. However, these significant differences indicate that the two frameworks are conceptually different. Nonetheless, even though these differences exist, a link can be established between the SANQF and the SADCQF.

Linguistic alignment

The comparison was conducted by using the three-level descriptor categories of the SADCQF. The ten SANQF categories were combined, and where applicable, grouped under the three categories of the SADCQF namely Knowledge, Skills and Autonomy and Responsibility.

It is important to note that the level of the categories/outcomes/competencies at a specific level on an NQF is not determined by the number of competencies to be considered, but by the cognitive challenge (degree of difficulty) the competencies pose the learner. For example, solving a complex problem in a variable context presents a greater cognitive challenge to a learner than solving a basic problem in a known environment.

This comparison of the levels of the SADCQF with those of the SANQF was done by looking at the cognitive challenge that the categories/outcomes/competencies pose the learner and not the number of competencies facing the learner.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the comparison. See Annexure G for the full descriptions:

- a. The lack of specificity in the SADCQF levels made the comparison difficult as the cognitive skills and knowledge stated in the SANQF might be implicit in the SADCQF;
- b. The lack of progression of categories (competencies) at each level through the SADCQF also made comparison difficult;
- c. Lack of progression is a weakness in the SADCQF;
- d. As shown in Figure 9, the SANQF levels are one level higher cognitively for all the levels from Level one to Level seven. However, the degree of difference in cognitive challenge in the two Frameworks narrows as the learner progresses from Level 1 to Level 7. This results in the SANQF Level 7 falling between SADC Level 7 and SADC Level 8; and
- e. Once a research component becomes part of both frameworks at Levels 8, 9 and 10, the SADCQF and the SANQF Levels are aligned.

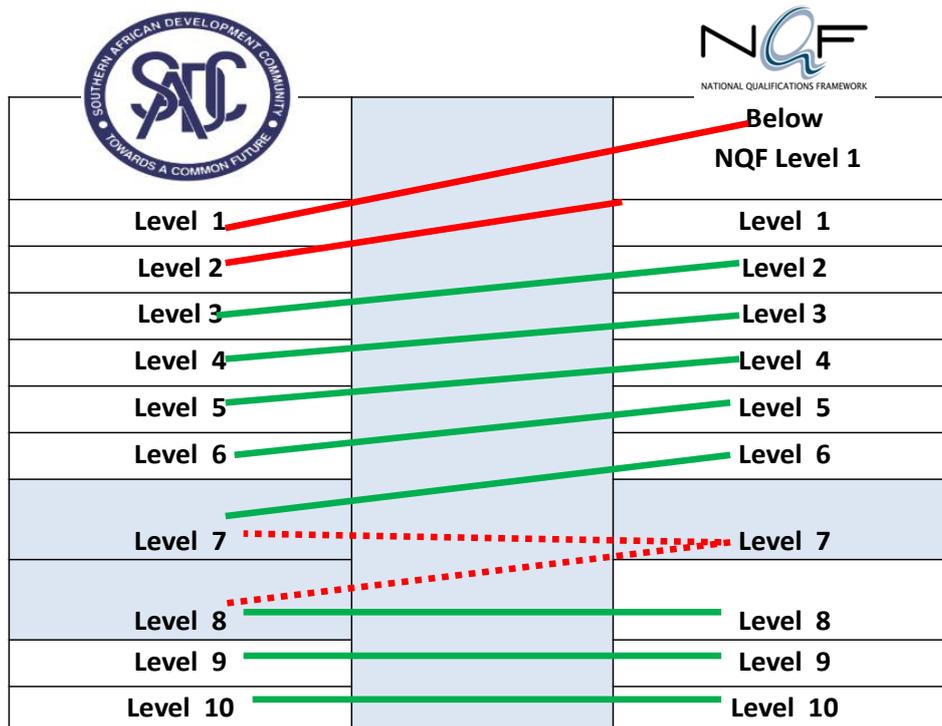


Figure 9: Alignment between SADCQF and the SANQF

Criterion 3:

The SANQF is based on learning outcomes and links to non-formal and informal learning and the South African credit system

Sub-criteria:

1. The Learning outcomes (LO) approach is included in/ enabled by relevant legislation.
2. The LO approach is agreed in all or some sub-sectors / qualifications? Which ones?
3. The LO approach is being practised in all or some sub-sectors / qualifications? Which ones?
4. Do the LOs of qualifications take account of societal and labour market needs?
5. Is the classification of qualifications in the NQF based on a comparison of LOs of the qualification with the LDs of NQF?
6. Is the recognition/ validation of non-formal and informal learning defined and agreed at policy level?
7. Is the recognition/ validation of non-formal and informal learning applied in all or some sectors/cases? Which ones?
8. Does the assessment of LOs apply to formal and non-formal and informal learning?
9. Is recognition/ validation of formal, non-formal and informal learning related to the NQF?
10. Is the credit system implemented in all or some sub-sectors? Which ones?
11. Is the credit system related to the NQF?
12. Are there studies/ research/ analyses to support this criterion?

Evidence

Sub-criterion 3.1

The Learning outcomes (LO) approach is included in/enabled by relevant legislation. The level descriptors provide the generic outcomes, and the qualification descriptors describe the specific outcomes. A nested learning outcomes methodology is applied in South Africa. NQF qualifications are framed in terms of Exit Level Outcomes (ELOs) and their Associated Assessment Criteria (AACs). Modules/subjects in NQF qualifications have learning outcomes.

Sub-criterion 3.2

The LO approach is agreed in all NQF Sub-Frameworks: HEQSF, OQSF and GFETQSF.

Sub-criterion 3.3

The LO approach is being used for all qualifications in all Sub-Frameworks.

Sub-criterion 3.4

The LOs of qualifications take account of societal and labour market needs. A variety of stakeholders are involved in the development of qualifications, and they must use the level descriptors. Qualifications, as a complete entity, are developed to meet labour market and societal needs, and the ELOs are directed at realising the aim and purpose of each qualification.

Sub-criterion 3.5

The classification of qualifications in the NQF is based on a comparison of the ELOs and LOs of the qualification with the LDs of NQF. The ELOs of the qualification must meet the LDs of the NQF for the qualification to be registered at that NQF Level.

Sub-criterion 3.6

The recognition of non-formal and informal learning is defined and agreed at policy level. There is a *National Policy on the co-ordination of RPL* (DHET, 2016) and a *National Policy for the Implementation of the RPL* (SAQA, 2013a) which is in line with *the RPL coordination policy*. Comparison of the SA RPL Policy with the SADC RPL Policy has yet to be undertaken.

Sub-criterion 3.7

The recognition of non-formal and informal learning is applied in all sectors. The Quality Councils (QCs) and professional bodies have their RPL policies which are in line with the National Policies. Providers and RPL practitioners, in turn, have their RPL policies and practices which should be aligned with the relevant QC's policies. All successful RPL achievements must be recorded on the NLRD.

Sub-criterion 3.8

The assessment of LOs applies to formal and non-formal learning. Formal, non-formal and informal learning is used in assessment for RPL purposes.

Sub-criterion 3.9

The recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning is related to the NQF. There is a *National Policy on the co-ordination of RPL* (DHET, 2016) and a *National Policy for the Implementation of the RPL* (SAQA, 2013a) which is in line with *the RPL coordination policy*.

Sub-criterion 3.10

The credit system is implemented in all sectors. The credit system of one credit = ten notional hours applies to all qualifications across the NQF.

Sub-criterion 3.11

The credit system is related to the NQF. The *Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part-qualifications on the NQF* (SAQA, 2013c) which is used by qualifications developers, QCs and SAQA to develop and register qualifications explicitly states the credit system. There is also a *Policy for Credit Accumulation and Transfer within the National Qualifications Framework* (SAQA, 2014d).

Sub-criterion 3.12

There is a Ministerial Articulation policy for the post-school education and training system of South Africa (DHET, 2017). There are also studies to support this criterion. There are SAQA Bulletins that deal with RPL, CAT and Articulation. There are also published papers and a book on RPL as a specialised pedagogy [Bofelo, Shah, Moodley, Cooper and Jones (2012). Further, there are other publications namely: Bolton, Samuels, Takatso, Omotola and Shapiro (2017); Cooper and Harris (2013); Tloubatla, Penya and Shapiro (2012); Cooper and Ralphs (2016); Hart (2005); Lloyd (2012); Samuels (2005); SAQA (2004; 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006e, 2011a, 2012c, 2013b, 2014a, 2014c, 2016, 2017c)]

Criterion 4:

Procedures for including qualifications in the NQF or describing the place of qualifications in the NQS are transparent

Sub-criteria:

1. The existing legislation defines key principles and roles/responsibilities for developing, approving, and accrediting qualifications. What are the key institutions/stakeholders – and their roles?
2. NQF decision-making is based on a clear institutional setting (Agency, department, Board, Council). Is this operational?
3. The procedures and method(s) for pegging a qualification at a particular NQF Level/levelling are agreed, transparent and applied.
4. Levelling/inclusion of qualifications in the NQF is based on transparent interactions of the relevant bodies (e.g., in charge of Quality Assurance, sectoral committees, certification, NQF decision making bodies).
5. The levelling and inclusion of qualifications in the NQF is quality-assured. By whom (specificities by sub-sector)?
6. The scope of the NQF: The NQF is inclusive of various types of qualifications. Which types can be included? Are qualifications outside of the formal system included?
7. Database(s) of qualifications are up-to-date, accessible and transparent for users.
8. Are there studies/ research/ analyses to support this criterion?

Evidence

Sub-criterion 4.1

The existing legislation defines key principles and roles/responsibilities for developing, approving, and accrediting qualifications. The key institutions/stakeholders and their roles include the following:

- South African qualifications are registered on the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) by SAQA as encapsulated in the NQF Act, Act 67 of 2008. The SANQF is a single integrated system for the “classification, registration, publication and articulation of quality assured national qualifications”. The NQF Act states that it applies to all learning programmes that lead to qualifications and part-qualifications offered within the Republic of South Africa, by education institutions and

skills development providers. This means that every qualification and part-qualification offered in the Republic must be registered on the NQF in accordance with the Act. The NQF comprises three Qualifications Sub-Frameworks (QSFs): HEQSF; OQSF; GFETQSF. SAQA co-ordinates the Sub-Frameworks and develops overarching policies that ensure that qualifications meet national standards.

- The NQF Act, Act 67 of 2008 (RSA, 2008) gives QCs the executive responsibility for:
 - The development of such qualifications or part-qualifications as are necessary for their sector which they must recommend to SAQA for registration; and
 - Ensuring the integrity and credibility of quality assurance and ensuring that such quality assurance as is necessary for the Sub-Framework is undertaken.
- A number of stakeholders are involved: Providers, Assessment Bodies, QCs, Assessment Quality Partners (AQPs), Development Quality Partners (DQPs), Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and professional bodies.

- Roles and responsibilities are spelt out in the NQF Act (RSA, 2008b); Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 (RSA, 1997); Higher Education Amendment Act 9 of 2016 (RSA, 2016); Skills Development Amendment Act (RSA, 2008c); GENFETQA Act (RSA, 2010a); Adult basic Education and Training Act (RSA, 2000b); FET Amendment Bill (RSA, 2012); Basic Education Laws Amendment Act (RSA, 2011); South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996b) and the relevant Policy and Criteria documents developed at national and Sub-Framework level. These are:
 - Only the QCs may make recommendations to SAQA for qualifications to be registered on the NQF;
 - All qualifications offered in South Africa must be registered on the NQF by SAQA; and
 - All Providers that want to offer NQF qualifications must be registered with the relevant Department and accredited by the relevant QC;
- Professional bodies may not be registered by the Department of Higher Education and Training and may not be accredited by a QC as an education and training provider as outlined in the Professional Body Policy (SAQA, 2018).

Sub-criterion 4.2

NQF decision-making is based on a clear institutional setting and is operational. All NQF qualifications must be recommended, by the relevant QC, for registration on the NQF. The SAQA Board registers qualifications on the NQF. The SAQA Board is fully operational and appointed by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, SAQA co-ordinates the Qualifications Sub-Frameworks (QSFs) and develops overarching policies that ensure that qualifications meet national standards. The QCs have executive responsibility for the development and quality assurance of qualifications on their QSFs.

Sub-criterion 4.3

The procedures and method(s) for pegging a qualification at a particular NQF Level/ levelling are agreed, transparent and applied. The following documents are applied to ensure that the qualification is pegged at the proper NQF Level:

- Qualification descriptors as seen in the Sub-Framework Policies;
- *Level Descriptors for the South African National Qualifications Framework (SAQA, 2012a)*; and
- *Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part-Qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework (SAQA, 2013c)*.

Sub-criterion 4.4

Levelling/inclusion of qualifications in the NQF is based on transparent interactions of the relevant bodies:

- Public providers are established through an Act of Parliament; DHET must register private providers;
- The relevant QC must accredit providers if they want to offer qualifications that fall within the QSFs of the respective QCs. Each QC has its specific system and process for the development of qualifications for its QSF. All three systems/processes include consultation with relevant stakeholders but at different stages in the development process:
 - HEQSF: Providers develop their qualifications, consult relevant stakeholders, and then seek CHE accreditation. The CHE recommends registration of the qualification to SAQA. After registration of the qualification, the provider may market and offer it. Providers also develop learning programmes and submit to the CHE for accreditation;
 - OQSF: The QCTO establishes a Qualifications Development Committee, consisting of representatives for the sector, which develops the qualification. The QCTO recommends registration of the qualification to SAQA. After registration of the qualification by SAQA, providers apply for QCTO accreditation to offer it;

- GFETQSF: The GFETQSF works similarly to the QCTO system. A committee established by Umalusi develops qualifications. Umalusi recommends registration of the qualification to SAQA. After registration of the qualification by SAQA: Public institutions may offer it; Private institutions must apply for Umalusi accreditation to offer it.
- The QC makes the recommendation to SAQA to register the qualification on the NQF;
- SAQA evaluates the qualifications for registration by applying using three documents:
 - Qualification descriptors as seen in the Sub-Framework Policies;
 - *Level Descriptors for the South African National Qualifications Framework*;
 - *Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part-Qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework*;
- Qualifications are submitted to a SAQA Board Sub-Committee (Q&S Committee) for recommendation to the SAQA Board; and
- The SAQA Board registers the qualification.

Sub-criterion 4.5

The leveling and inclusion of qualifications in the NQF is quality-assured. Three QCs manage their respective NQF Sub-Frameworks. The QCs have executive responsibility for their Sub-Frameworks and the qualifications that fall into their Sub-Frameworks. The QCs ensure that qualifications for their Sub-Frameworks are aligned to the

- Qualification descriptors as seen in the Sub-Framework Policies
- *Level Descriptors for the South African National Qualifications Framework*
- *Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part-Qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework*

SAQA evaluates qualifications recommended by QCs to ensure they meet the relevant:

- Qualification descriptors as seen in the Sub-Framework Policies
- *Level Descriptors for the South African National Qualifications Framework*
- *Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part-Qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework*

There is one set of level descriptors for all qualifications on the South African NQF. The level descriptors apply to all NQF qualifications.

Sub-criterion 4.6

The scope of the NQF is inclusive of various types of qualifications. The NQF caters for qualifications at Level 1 to Level 10 of the NQF. Only registered qualifications are included. The NQF provides for a formal process to include qualifications obtained through RPL. Qualification certificates awarded to learners do not indicate how the learning was achieved (i.e. through RPL or a traditional route). Informal and non-formal learning are brought into the formal system via the formal RPL process. Providers may offer courses and programmes not registered on the NQF but they may not use NQF nomenclature like NQF Levels or credits.

Sub-criterion 4.7

Database(s) of qualifications are up-to-date, accessible and transparent for users. There is a National Learners' Records Database (NLRD) that has information on all learners, qualifications and providers, as well as recognised professional bodies and registered professional designations.

Sub-criterion 4.8

There are studies to support this criterion. The NQF impact study (SAQA, 2003a, 2005, 2015, 2017a); SAQA Bulletins; and the NLRD trends report (SAQA, 2003b, 2004, 2005, 2006d, 2013d, 2017e) are regularly completed. There are also studies on learning pathways (SAQA and the Financial Planning Institute (FPI), 2017 and SAQA, 2017b).

Criterion 5:

The National Quality Assurance System for education and training refers to the NQF or NQS and is consistent with quality assurance guidelines of the SADCQF

Sub-criteria:

1. The national QA systems are operational. The various relevant institutions act in a co-ordinated and linked manner.
2. The design and award of qualifications are quality-assured and use explicit and transparent procedures and arrangements.
3. Quality assurance procedures refer to context, inputs, process and output dimensions while giving special emphasis to outputs and learning outcomes.
4. Quality assurance of learning outcomes refers to planning; implementing; reviewing; feedback.
5. Quality assurance measures include qualification requirements for teachers/trainers, assessors; accreditation; and external evaluation of providers of programmes.
6. Labour market and society stakeholders are involved in relevant phases/aspects of quality assurance of qualifications.
7. The sixteen common quality assurance (QA) guidelines of the SADCQF are compatible with the national QA framework (legislation, institutions, policy).
8. Are there studies/ research/ analyses to support this criterion?

Evidence

Sub-criterion 5.1

The national QA systems are operational. The various relevant institutions act in a co-ordinated and linked manner. There are three Quality Councils (QCs) that have executive responsibility for the QA of their Sub-Frameworks. SAQA co-ordinates the Sub-Frameworks.

Sub-criterion 5.2

The design and award of qualifications are quality-assured and use explicit and transparent procedures and arrangements.

- The QCs have policies on providers and qualifications. The NQF Act states that all qualifications registered on the NQF must be recommended to SAQA for registration by one of the three QCs. Before recommending qualification to SAQA, the QCs evaluate new qualifications against the:
 - Qualification descriptors as seen in the Sub-Framework Policies;
 - *Level Descriptors for the South African National Qualifications Framework;*
 - *Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part-Qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework;*
- The documents named above are available on the SAQA website for all interested parties; and
- The SAQA Board registers qualifications on the NQF. All qualifications are placed on the NLRD making them publicly available.

Sub-criterion 5.3

Quality assurance procedures refer to context, inputs, process and output dimensions while giving special emphasis to outputs and learning outcomes:

- The QCs have executive responsibility for the management of their Qualifications Sub-Frameworks;
- Quality Assurance procedures are applied to all providers who want to offer qualifications on the Sub-Frameworks;

- The three QCs have specific quality assurance procedures that are suited to their sectors;
- Quality Assurance by the QCs involves:
 - Accreditation of the provider to ensure that the provider has the capacity to deliver the qualification;
 - Accreditation of the provider's programme to ensure it is aligned to the outcomes of the qualification and will deliver the qualification as registered on the NQF;
 - Monitoring of programme delivery by the provider;
 - Moderating of provider assessments; and
- Qualifications at the same NQF Level develop the same cognitive competencies as laid down by the level descriptors, regardless of the Sub-Framework, qualification type or provider.

Sub-criterion 5.4

Quality assurance of learning outcomes refers to planning, implementing, reviewing and feedback. All QCs use this approach. The evidence can be found in their quality assurance policies and procedures.

Sub-criterion 5.5

Quality assurance measures include qualification requirements for teachers/trainers, assessors; accreditation and external evaluation of providers of programmes. These are included in the policies of the QCs.

Sub-criterion 5.6

Labour market and society stakeholders are involved in relevant phases/aspects of quality assurance of qualifications. The SAQA Board includes representatives of the Ministries, the Quality Councils, professional bodies, labour, business and organisations representing community and development interests. Stakeholder engagement, including professional bodies, forms part of qualification development. Some professional bodies perform delegated quality assurance functions, on behalf of, or in conjunction with the QCTO.

Sub-criterion 5.7

The sixteen common quality assurance (QA) guidelines of the SADCQF are compatible with South Africa's QA framework (legislation, institutions, policy). South Africa completed the QA self-assessment questionnaire sent by Botswana and submitted on 28 November 2017. See Annexure D for South Africa's compatibility with the SADCQF QA guidelines.

Sub-criterion 5.8

There are studies/research/analyses to support this criterion. The QCs have policies that are available [CHE (2001, 2004a, 2004b, 2014a, 2014b); QCTO (2011, 2014a, 2014c); Umalusi (2012a, 2012b, 2013). There is also a wide range of research that has been conducted by the QCs (see QC website details in Criterion 6). The NQF impact study is also another supporting document (SAQA, 2003a, 2005, 2015, 2017a).

Criterion 6:

There is a clear indication of the relevant national authorities responsible for the verification of the qualifications obtained in the national system

Sub-criteria:

1. The contact details of the body/ies responsible for the country's qualifications framework is accurate and accessible.
2. The contact details of the body or bodies responsible for QA is accurate and accessible.
3. There is a central qualifications information system in the country.
4. Full details of the qualifications information system are accurate and accessible.
5. The contact details of the body or bodies responsible for verification of national qualifications are accurate and accessible.
6. The contact details of the body or bodies responsible for verification of foreign qualifications is accurate and accessible.
7. Do you have policies regarding your national and foreign verification/ validation/ evaluation/ recognition? Describe.

Evidence

Sub-criterion 6.1

The contact details of the body responsible for the country's qualifications framework are accurate and accessible. SAQA (www.saqa.co.za) is the custodian of the South African NQF. Contact details that have been submitted to the SADCQVN include:

- Mr Joe Samuels: Chief Executive Officer (CEO); Tel: +27 12 431 5001; Email: jsamuels@saqa.org.za
- Ms C Jaftha: Director; Tel +27 12 431 5130; Email: cjaftha@saqa.co.za.

Sub-criterion 6.2

The contact details of the bodies responsible for QA are accurate and accessible. The contact details of the three QCs have been published in the SADCQVN. They are;

- Higher Education, the Council on Higher Education (CHE), website: www.che.ac.za;
 - Prof Narend Baijnath: CEO; Tel: + 27 12 349 3859; Email: Baijnath.N@che.ac.za;
- Trades and Occupations, Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), website: www.qcto.org.za;
 - Mr Vijayen Naidoo: CEO; Tel: + 27 12 003 1849; Email: Naidoo.v@qcto.org.za;
- General and Further Education and Training; Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi), website: www.umalusi.org.za;
 - Dr Mafu Rakometsi: CEO; Tel: + 27 12 349 1510; Email: rakometsi@umalusi.org.za

Sub-criterion 6.3

There is a central qualifications information system in the country called the National Learners' Record Database (NLRD). The NLRD is fully functional, and it currently contains more than 18 million learner achievement records. The type of information available on the NLRD includes the number of:

- NQF qualifications;
- Unit standards/part-qualifications;

- Qualification achievements;
- Qualification achievements via RPL;
- Learners;
- Professional bodies;
- Professional designations;
- People with Professional designations;
- Accredited providers; and
- Assessors.

Sub-criterion 6.4

Full details of the NLRD are accurate and accessible. The information is accessible via the SAQA website: www.saqa.co.za and can be accessed via the searchable databases.

Sub-criterion 6.5

The contact details of the body or bodies responsible for verification of South African qualifications are accurate and accessible. The details of the Verifications Project have been published in the SADCQVN:

- SAQA Verifications Project
 - Mr Dirk Strydom, Director; Tel: +27 12 4315107; Email: dstrydom@saqa.org.za

Sub-criterion 6.6

The contact details of the body responsible for the verification of foreign qualifications are accurate and accessible. The details of the Directorate Foreign Qualifications Evaluation Advisory Services (DFQEAS) has been published in the SADCQVN:

- SAQA Foreign Qualifications Evaluation and Advisory Services
 - Ms Nadina Coetzee, Director; Tel: + 27 12 431 5004; Email: ncoetzee@saqa.org.za

Sub-criterion 6.7

There is a verification of foreign qualifications policy. This has been taken up in the Policy and Criteria for evaluating foreign qualifications within the South African NQF as amended in 2017 (SAQA, 2017).

Criterion 7:

The alignment process shall include a stated agreement of relevant quality assurance bodies

Sub-criteria:

1. The alignment process shall include a stated agreement of relevant quality assurance bodies.
2. All relevant QA bodies are adequately involved and informed about the SADCQF alignment process and plans.
3. Level to level alignment and the way the system is described: The relevant QA bodies agree and validate the content of the report.

Evidence

Sub-criterion 7.1

The alignment report includes a stated agreement by the QA bodies in South Africa CHE, Umalusi and QCTO, as well as the DBE and the DHET.

Sub-criterion 7.2

All relevant QA bodies are adequately involved and informed about the SADCQF alignment process and plans. They have been informed via the April 2017 TCCA event to popularise the SADCQF: all QCs were invited. The first meeting of the NAC took place on 7 December 2017 and included the history and implementation plans for the SADCQF. A standard presentation and article on the SADCQF were disseminated to all NAC members.

Sub-criterion 7.3

Level-to-level alignment and the way the system is described: The relevant QA bodies agree and validate the content of the report. A first draft of the level-to-level alignment was submitted to NAC members on Friday, 15 December 2017. The comparison was adopted at the NAC meeting on 12 April 2018. At the same meeting, they also adopted, in principle, the SADCQF alignment report.

Criterion 8:

Competent national bodies shall certify the alignment of the NQF with the SADCQF. A comprehensive report on alignment and its evidence must be published by competent national bodies

Sub-criteria:

1. The institutions/ competent national bodies that will certify the SADCQF alignment are clearly defined.
2. Roadmap for SADCQF alignment and target date for presentation of the final report: Is there a general/broad agreement?
3. Structure of the alignment report: is it relevant, placing the criteria and procedures at the core of the report?

Evidence

Sub-criterion 8.1

The competent national bodies that will certify the SADCQF alignment are clearly defined. The usual process, for submission of policies, will be followed. The completed report will go to the CEO Committee; SAQA EXCO and then to the SAQA Board.

Sub-criterion 8.2

There is general agreement on the roadmap for SADCQF alignment and target date for presentation of the final report:

- 8 June 2017: First draft of the Self-assessment completed at alignment workshop;
- October 2017: NAC Established (invitations sent, meeting packs compiled);
- 7 December 2017: First NAC meeting held and work plan agreed upon;
- 7 December 2017: NAC agrees on updated self-assessment document;
- 17 December 2017: Level-to-level alignment comparison sent to NAC members
- 31 March 2018: Alignment report prepared;
- 12 April 2018: NAC agrees on level to level comparison and alignment report;
- 12 April 2018: NAC provides updates from their stakeholders regarding placement of SADCQF levels on qualifications certificates or transcripts;
- May 2018: Alignment report submitted to CEO Committee for notification and SAQA EXCO for approval for public comment;
- 30 May 2018: EXCO considers for approval for public comment;
- 4 – 8 June 2018: Internal processes to secure procurement of Government Printer;

- 11 – 13 June: Notice for gazetting for public comment signed off;
- 14 June: Submit to Government Printing Works for gazetting on 15 June;
- 15 June – 16 July 2018: Alignment report in public comment;
- 18 July – 31 August 2018: Consider public comments and revise report;
- 23 August: Third meeting of the National Alignment Committee
- 1–28 September 2018: Edit and layout of report for final publication;
- 28 September 2018: Submit for inclusion in SAQA Board pack;
- 25 October 2018: SAQA Board considers approval for submission to TCCA EXCO;
- 1 November 2018: Pending approval by SAQA Board, submission to TCCA;
- December 2018: TCCA EXCO considers recommendation to TCCA;
- April/May 2019: TCCA considers approval of alignment report, Possible presentation of the report by SAQA;
- 2019: After TCCA approval, publication on the official SADCQF platform.

Sub-criterion 8.3

The structure of the alignment report is relevant, placing the criteria and procedures at the core of the report. The following report outline was used:

- Title of Report: Report on the Alignment of (Country) to the SADCQF
- Date: DD/MM/YYYY
- Use country logo and SADC logo
- Include Contents Page
- Authorisation page confirming that all the criteria have been met:
- Official sign-off
- Executive Summary
- Chapter One: Introduction to the report and background to alignment with the SADCQF
- Chapter Two: Profile of South Africa's education and training system
- Chapter Three: Process of alignment in South Africa
- Chapter Four: Evidence of South Africa's alignment to the SADCQF
- Conclusion
- References
- Annexures

Criterion 9:

The official platform of the country must provide for a public comment process for the alignment report

Sub-criteria:

1. There is a clear plan to revise and finalise the alignment report before publication on the country's official platform.
2. Responsibility for timely publication of the final version of the report is agreed upon by the relevant structures in the country.
3. Final national published version of the report takes account of received comments and recommendations.
4. Possible presentation of the final report is planned.

Evidence

Sub-criterion 9.1

There is a clear plan to revise and finalise the alignment report before publication on the

SADCQF official platform. Revision has been factored into the roadmap towards completion of the report.

Sub-criterion 9.2

Responsibility for timely publication of the final version of the report was agreed upon (on successful presentation to the TCCA). The proposed publication date is 2019, after approval by the TCCA.

Sub-criterion 9.3

The final published version of the report took into account the received comments and recommendations. A public comment period, as well as time to consider public comments, has been factored into the roadmap towards completion of the report.

Sub-criterion 9.4

Possible presentation of the updated report has been factored into the planning, on presentation of the report to the TCCA. A draft presentation on the alignment report has been delivered to the NAC members. This presentation will be updated and used to present the final report to the TCCA EXCO and TCCA as required.

Criterion 10:

Clear plans have been made to make changes to legislation and policy supporting alignment to SADCQF levels on new qualification certificates, diplomas and other documents issued by competent authorities

Sub-criteria:

1. Legislation and policy supporting the alignment with the SADCQF levels on new qualifications documents: Has this been discussed?
2. The roadmap/ plans for discussion/ agreement among stakeholders. Has this been defined, agreed?
3. Are the key conditions for implementation of this Criterion in place?
4. The communication and information of users and stakeholders on the meaning/ advantages of having SADCQF levels on qualifications documents. Has this been prepared?
5. Networking with other countries about greater mobility and the meaning of future adjustments in qualifications documents: Has this been done?

Evidence

Sub-criterion 10.1

Legislation and policy supporting the alignment with the SADCQF levels on new qualifications documents have been discussed. Each QC has its own set of certification standards/policies/procedures. A set of guidelines/standards will be developed to ascertain what will be the best option, i.e. to place the SADCQF level on the transcript or the certificate. Each NAC member will follow up with its sector.

Sub-criterion 10.2

The roadmap/plans for discussion agreement among stakeholders has been defined and agreed at the first meeting of the NAC. The NAC will ensure that their sector stakeholders are informed.

Sub-criterion 10.3

The key conditions for implementation of this Criterion are in place. Each QC has its own set of certification standards/policies/procedures and would need to state what would be the best option per sector and what can be proposed.

Sub-criterion 10.4

The communication with stakeholders on the meaning of having SADCQF levels on qualifications documents has been prepared. There is a presentation that provides an overview of what this will mean.

Sub-criterion 10.5

Networking with other countries about greater mobility and the meaning of future adjustments in qualifications documents has been done. There have been discussions at the TCCA level. There is an alignment pilot with eight (50%) of the SADC countries and these countries know what alignment means. A real-time verification pilot has also been discussed with some SADC countries.

Chapter Summary

This Chapter provided evidence that the SANQF is aligned to the SADCQF.

CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusions

This report provided the analysis, documentation and conclusions of South Africa's NAC regarding the alignment of the SANQF to the SADCQF. It provides the South African response to the recommendation from the SADC TCCA that member states align their NQFs and NQS to the SADCQF.

This report is the official authorised statement from the NAC that the SANQF is aligned to the SADCQF. The report also asserts that the South African NQF is a key tool for promoting transparency and QA of its qualifications in other countries. Furthermore, at a national level, the report will also assist relevant authorities to implement the SANQF further.

This report set out to meet the following objectives:

- Introduce the SADCQF and its implementation model, including alignment;
- Present a profile of South African education;
- Describe the alignment criteria and alignment process in South Africa;
- Provide evidence that the South Africa NQF meets the alignment criteria; and
- State the concluding remarks based on the alignment process.

Each Chapter of this report shows that the report has met its objectives as summarised below:

Chapter One introduces the SADCQF and its implementation model which consists of six programmes namely Development and alignment of NQFS/NQS to the SADCQF; QA; Verification; Communication and advocacy; and RPL, CAT and articulation. It also introduces the TCCA (a body that has been tasked with implementing the SADCQF, by the SADC Ministers) and its work, as well as the driving agencies behind each of the six implementation programmes. The Chapter elaborates on alignment to the SADCQF and how the alignment ideas were initiated and accelerated. Furthermore, the ten alignment criteria are described and the alignment pilot project introduced.

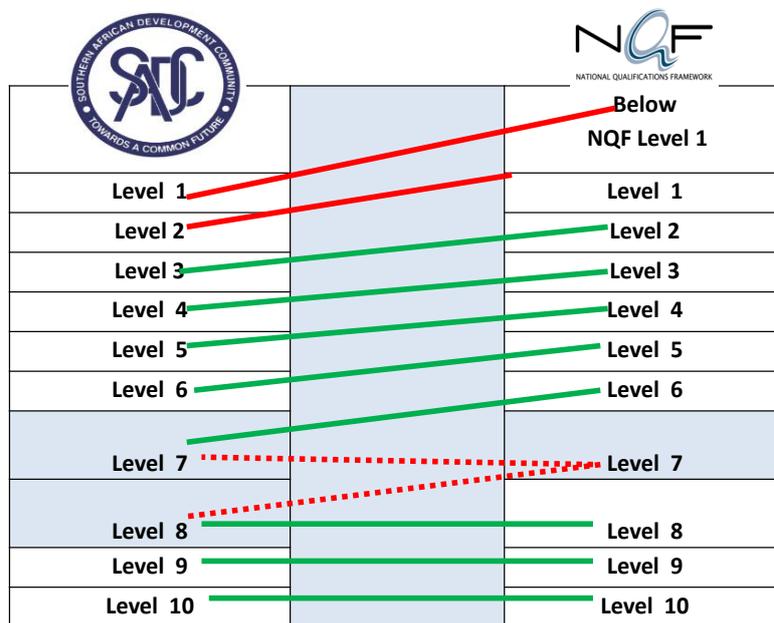
Chapter Two presents a profile of South African education and training, which is embedded in the SANQF and its three co-ordinated, quality-assured Sub-Frameworks. It also provides details of the overarching NQF responsibilities of the two Ministries namely DHET and DBE, the QA responsibilities of the three QCs and SAQA's role as custodian of the SANQF.

Chapter Three describes how the alignment process was initiated and accelerated in South Africa. It also provides information on the South African NAC that provided oversight responsibility for the writing and approval of the alignment report. The Chapter further provides information on the next steps to ensure approval and publication of the alignment report.

Chapter Four provides evidence that each of the ten alignment criteria was sufficiently met:

- The responsibilities of the relevant national bodies involved in the South African alignment process were determined and published by the relevant competent authorities.
- There is a clear and demonstrable link between qualification levels in the SANQF and level descriptors of the SADCQF as shown in the structural, conceptual and linguistic links:
 - a. The Structural link: The architecture of the two frameworks was compared, and it was concluded that there is a close correspondence between the architectures of the two frameworks;

- b. The Conceptual link: Despite significant conceptual differences between the two frameworks in terms of the purpose of each, a link was established between the SANQF and the SADCQF;
- c. The Linguistic link: It was concluded that:
- i. The SANQF levels are one level higher (cognitively) than the SADCQF for all the levels from NQF Level One to Level Seven.
 - ii. The degree of difference in cognitive challenge in the two frameworks narrows as a learner progresses from Level One to Level Seven. This results in the SANQF Level 7, falling between SADCQF Level 7 and SADCQF Level 8.
 - iii. However, once a research component becomes part of both frameworks at levels 8, 9 and 10, the SADCQF and the SANQF levels are aligned.
- d. The level-to-level alignment is shown below:



- The SANQF is based on learning outcomes and links to non-formal and informal learning and the South African credit system of 1 credit = 10 notional hours;
- Procedures for including qualifications in the SANQF are transparent, agreed and published;
- The National QA system for education and training refers to the SANQF and is consistent with the QA guidelines of the SADCQF;
- There is a clear indication of the relevant national authorities responsible for the verification of SANQF qualifications;
- The alignment process included a stated agreement by the relevant QA bodies in South Africa;
- Competent national bodies, as included in the South African NAC, certified the alignment of the SANQF to the SADCQF. A comprehensive report on alignment and its evidence was published;

- Provision was made for a public comment process for the alignment report; and
- Clear plans have been made to make changes to legislation and policy supporting alignment to SADCQF levels on new qualification certificates, diplomas and other documents issued by competent authorities.

Chapter Five provides the concluding remarks that the SANQF is aligned to the SADCQF and that the report has achieved its objectives. Chapter Five also provides a summary of the key points in the Chapters.

Relevant references, as used in the text of the report, follow the conclusion to direct the reader to further reading.

Seven Annexures provide closure to the report and direct the reader to supplementary documents referred to in the report:

- Annexures A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 and A6 provides the invitation letters sent to the NQF partners to serve on the NAC namely DHET, DBE, Umalusi, CHE and QCTO.
- Annexure B provides the Terms of Reference for the NAC.
- Annexure C describes the SADCQF level descriptors.
- Annexure D provides evidence of the compatibility of South Africa's QA with the sixteen QA guidelines of the SADCQF.
- Annexure E provides a summarised version of the South African level descriptors.
- Annexure F describes the ten SADCQF alignment criteria and the 61 underlying sub-criteria.
- Annexure G provides a detailed comparison of the level descriptors of the SANQF with the level descriptors of the SADCQF.

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Annexures

Annexures A1 to A5: Invitation letters sent to DHET, DBE, Umalusi, CHE and QCTO to serve on the NAC

Annexure B: Terms of Reference for the National Alignment Committee



Terms of Reference: SADC National Alignment Committee (NAC)

Introduction

1. The Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) was established in 2011 by the Ministers of Education in the SADC region.
2. The purpose of the SADCQF is to enable easier movement of learners and workers across the SADC region and internationally.
3. The SADCQF is a reference framework consisting of 10 Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) Levels based on learning outcomes.
4. The SADCQF will provide a regional benchmark for qualifications and quality assurance (QA) mechanisms in SADC.

Implementation of the SADCQF

5. To give effect to the Ministers' decision, a Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA) was given the task of implementing the SADCQF.
6. The TCCA is a group of experts from the 15 SADC Member States and is supported by the SADC Secretariat.
7. At a September 2016 TCCA meeting, the SADCQF was positioned for implementation:
 - a. A clear two-year milestone plan was developed, and
 - b. An implementation model was adopted.
8. The SADCQF implementation model comprises three key focus areas:
 - a. Development and alignment;
 - b. Quality assurance and
 - c. Verification.
9. Communication and advocacy is a fourth focus area that was added later as an overarching dimension that cuts across the three key implementation focus areas.

Alignment with the SADCQF

10. To assist the alignment process, the TCCA adopted ten alignment criteria.
11. Member States are expected to align their National Qualifications Frameworks/ National Qualifications Systems and quality assurance mechanisms with the SADCQF.
12. Alignment will be enabled by mutual trust and recognition of achievement at a regional level.
13. Regional alignment would enable individuals to make comparisons of their learning and competence levels and reduce unnecessary duplication of learning and effort when moving through SADC for study or work purposes.
14. An essential criterion for alignment is the establishment of a National Alignment Committee (NAC) in each of the SADC Member States.

The National Alignment Committee

15. The National Alignment Committee (NAC) is an *ad hoc* group of experts operating in the Member State and coming together for the sole purpose of assisting the SADC Member State to align with the SADCQF.
16. The purpose of the NAC is to oversee the alignment of the National Qualifications Framework/ National Qualifications System (NQF/NQS) (of the Member State of which it is a part) with the SADCQF.
17. The lead agency in the Member State is part of the NAC and drives the alignment process.

Responsibilities of the National Alignment Committee

18. The key purpose of the NAC is to produce a report that provides evidence that the country has met the ten alignment criteria.
19. In conducting its work, the NAC will:
 - a. Support the alignment process;
 - b. Attend meetings where necessary
 - c. Make inputs into written drafts of the alignment reports;
 - d. Represent their sector's views when making inputs into written drafts of the alignment report;
 - e. Ensure written drafts are consistent with national education policies;
 - f. Effect research where necessary; and
 - g. Ensure sign-off of the reports submitted to the TCCA.
20. The NAC will determine when the alignment report has been completed and is ready for submission:
 - a. Alignment reports must be submitted to the TCCA Executive Committee (TCCA EXCO);
 - b. The TCCA EXCO also serves as the Regional Alignment Sub-Committee;
 - c. The TCCA EXCO meets twice a year, usually in June/July and November/December;

21. The NAC will make a recommendation to the TCCA EXCO for the alignment report to be recommended to the TCCA.
22. The lead agency, which is part of the NAC, will ensure that the alignment report is placed on the agenda of the TCCA EXCO meeting and must keep the NAC informed of all developments.

Composition of the NAC

23. The NAC operates within the Member State and has expertise in the NQF/NQS of the country.
24. Each country may determine who will comprise the NAC in their country. Invitations to serve on the NAC may be sent to:
 - a. Quality Councils;
 - b. Ministries;
 - c. Relevant Departments dealing with qualifications;
 - d. Professional bodies;
 - e. Learning institutions;
 - f. Employers;
 - g. Organised labour;
 - h. Industry; and
 - i. Student organisations
25. The work of the NAC is complete once the alignment report is published on the SADC website.
26. The NAC may reconvene at a later stage to review the alignment report as and when necessary.

Annexure C: SADCQF Level descriptors

Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy and responsibility
10	Makes a substantial and original contribution to knowledge in the field of study through research and scholarship.	Conducts original research which is evaluated by independent experts against international standards. Demonstrates problem-solving ability and critical evaluation of research findings for academic discussion.	Demonstrates full responsibility and accountability for all aspects of advanced research work.
9	Demonstrates mastery of theoretically sophisticated subject matter, showing critical awareness of current problems and new insights at the forefront of the discipline area.	Conducts original research deploying appropriate research methods and processes primary and secondary source information using rigorous intellectual analysis and independent thinking and applies knowledge in new situations; and demonstrates independent thinking, problem-solving, critical evaluation of research findings and ability to make judgements based on knowledge and evidence.	Shows independence, initiative and originality and the ability to manage own and group outcomes in complex and unpredictable situations.
8	Demonstrates critical understanding of the principles, theories, methodologies, current research and literature of the discipline.	Demonstrates capacity to use a coherent and critical understanding of the principles, theories and methodologies of a particular discipline. Selects and applies appropriate research methods and techniques, and critical analysis and independent evaluation of information.	Operates within the context of a strategic plan with complete accountability for management of resources and supervision of others.
7	Demonstrates knowledge of a major discipline with possible areas of specialisation, including command of the ideas, principles, concepts, chief research methods and problem-solving techniques of the recognised discipline.	Demonstrates intellectual independence, critical thinking and analytical rigor, and advanced communication and collaborative skills in complex and variable contexts.	Designs and manages processes and works with broad accountability for determining, achieving and evaluating personal and group outcomes
6	Demonstrate specialist knowledge in more than one area and ability to collate, analyse and synthesise a wide range of technical information.	Demonstrate ability to apply specialist knowledge and skills in highly variable contexts and formulate responses to concrete and abstract problems.	Manages processes and works with complete accountability for personal and group outcomes.
5	Demonstrate a broad knowledge base with substantial depth in some areas, ability to analyse information and construct a coherent argument.	Applies a wide range of technical and/or scholastic skills in variable contexts using standard and non-standard procedures, often in combination.	Works independently under broad guidance and can take some responsibility for supervising the work of others and group outcomes.

4	Demonstrates a broad knowledge base, incorporating some abstract and technical concepts, and ability to analyse information and make informed judgements.	Applies a moderate range of technical and/or scholastic skills which are transferable in familiar and unfamiliar contexts, using routine and non-routine procedures.	Shows ability for self-direction, requiring little supervision, and complete responsibility for own outcomes and some responsibility for group outcomes.
3	Demonstrates basic operational and theoretical knowledge and ability to interpret information	Demonstrates a range of well-developed skills and ability to apply known solutions to familiar problems	Works under general supervision with some responsibility for quality and quantity of output
2	Demonstrates recall and a narrow range of knowledge and cognitive skills	Can carry out processes that are limited in range, repetitive and familiar	Apply in directed activity under close supervision
1	Demonstrates basic general knowledge and numeracy and literacy for everyday purposes	Can follow simple instructions and perform actions required to carry out simple concrete tasks requiring no special skills	Works under close supervision in familiar situations and structured contexts

Annexure D: Alignment with SADC quality assurance standards

QA Principle 1

The Government and relevant institutions in South Africa shall participate in initiatives intended to lead to the harmonisation and quality assurance (QA) of education structures, frameworks for content selection and organisation, teacher training and quality, teaching and learning resources, course delivery systems, students' achievement and performance standards, nomenclature and framework of certification and governance and management of institutions.

The NQF Act, Act 67 of 2008 gives the three Quality Councils (QCs) responsibility to ensure that such quality assurance that is required for their Sub-Frameworks of the NQF is conducted. All qualifications for registration on the NQF must be recommended to SAQA for registration by a Quality Council. Roles and responsibilities are spelt out in the NQF Act as well as the:

- Higher Education (HE) Act, Act 101 of 1997
- Skills Development Act (SD Act)
- General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, Act 50 of 2008 (GENFETQA Act)
- The Further Education and Training Colleges Act, Act 16 of 2006
- The South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 and
- Relevant Policy and Criteria documents developed

There are three Quality Councils (QCs) that have executive responsibility for the quality assurance of their Sub-Frameworks. SAQA co-ordinates the Sub-Frameworks.

The Minister of Higher Education and Training has promulgated the qualification types to be offered on each of the three Sub-Frameworks of the NQF and has assigned unique titles to each. For example, a Diploma may only be registered on the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework at NQF Level 6 and may have either 360 or 240 credits and may only be offered by providers accredited by the Council on Higher Education (CHE).

- All qualification provision is quality assured before and during provision. Assessments are externally moderated according to QC processes.
- The Minister has declared a *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications*.
- These qualifications must be accredited by the relevant QC, namely the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and registered on the NQF by SAQA. Quality assurance of delivery and assessment is done according to the CHE quality assurance processes.
- There is a standard laid down for public institutions, and private institutions must meet them to be registered as providers of education and training. Certification is done strictly according to QC procedures.
- Public and private institutions are required to have senates/councils to oversee operations and approve qualifications for submission to the CHE for accreditation and SAQA for registration.
- All qualifications are required to list systemic articulation and specific articulation possibilities.
- RPL and Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) policies apply to all qualifications.

QA Principle 2

The Government and relevant institutions in South Africa shall ensure the planning for and provision of adequate financial resources for the provision of high-quality education and training at all levels in the region.

Government funds Quality Councils.

Funding and the provision of financial resources for public institutions is the responsibility of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) for higher and occupational qualifications and by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) for public schools.

- Public schools are provided with an annual budget by the Department of Basic Education (DBE). Uniform provision of physical resources has not been rolled out to all schools in rural areas, and some schools are under-resourced.
- Public universities receive government funding (subsidies) related to student numbers.
- Private institutions are self-funding and must meet minimum physical and financial resource and staffing standards to be registered and accredited.
- Institutions may raise additional funding.
- There is a national student finance scheme for needy students.

All teachers must be registered as educators by the South African Council for Educators (SACE) for which they must hold at least the minimum teacher education qualifications.

- All teachers must undergo a minimum number of hours of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) every year as approved by SACE.
- There are government bursaries available for initial teacher training.
- The Provincial Education Departments run in-service courses for teachers to improve teaching and assessment performance. Some are government-funded and some for the account of the teachers/ schools.
- There are subject committees in every region to deal with teaching matters as well as subject advisers to give guidance and assistance to teachers.
- Teacher remuneration is negotiated annually by teacher unions, with the government.

QA Principle 3

The Government and relevant institutions in South Africa shall ensure improved designs, scopes, quality and adequacy of programmes, courses and curricula at all levels of education and training and hold those programmes and courses accountable for the results realised by the learners.

The QCs have executive responsibility for the management of their Qualifications Sub-Frameworks which relates to the development of qualifications needed for their Sub-Frameworks and ensuring that the necessary quality assurance is carried out. SAQA has drawn up a *Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part-Qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework* and each QC has developed its policy in this regard bearing in mind the SAQA policy. The national set of *Level Descriptors for the South African National Qualifications Framework* applies to all qualifications registered on the NQF. Qualifications at the same NQF Level develop the same cognitive competencies as laid down by the level descriptors, regardless of the Sub-Framework, qualification type or provider. SAQA only registers qualifications on the NQF that are recommended for registration by one of the

QCs.

The relevant QC applies quality Assurance procedures to all providers who want to offer qualifications on their Sub-Frameworks. The three QCs have specific quality assurance procedures that are suited to their sectors. Quality Assurance by the QCs involves:

- Accreditation by the provider to ensure the provider has the capacity to deliver the qualification
- Accreditation of the provider's programme to ensure it is aligned to the outcomes of the qualification and will deliver the qualification as registered on the NQF.
- Monitoring of programme delivery by the provider.
- Moderating of provider assessments.

Qualification and curricula development is done with stakeholder involvement or consultation to ensure they meet workplace needs. Institutions are held accountable for learner results.

The Rationale for every qualification, which is a compulsory component must provide the following:

- The reasoning that led to the identification of the need for the qualification;
- How the qualification meets specific needs in the sector for which it is developed;
- Details of the consultation with the relevant professional body or industry body regarding the need for the qualification;
- The range of typical learners and an indication of the jobs or areas of activity in which qualifying learners will operate;
- The learning pathway in which the qualification resides; and
- How the qualification will provide benefits to the learner, society and the economy.

All qualifications registered on the NQF must have a Purpose statement which indicates:

- The context of the qualification and what it is intended to achieve in the national, professional and/or career context;
- What the qualifying learner will know and be able to do on achievement of the qualification;
- The Exit Level Outcomes and Associated Assessment Criteria linked to the purposes of the qualification;
- Graduate attributes which may be used where appropriate

The SAQA Board appointed by the Minister of Higher Education and Training and which includes the CEOs of the QCs registers the qualifications. Stakeholder engagement, including professional bodies, forms part of qualification development. Some professional bodies perform delegated quality assurance functions, on behalf of, or in conjunction with the QCTO.

QA Principle 4

The Government and relevant institutions in South Africa shall ensure ideal standards of infrastructures, facilities, teaching and learning resources and generally conducive environments for the different forms and levels of education and training within the region.

Funding and the provision of financial resources for public institutions is the responsibility of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) for higher and occupational qualifications and by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) for public schools. They may raise additional funding. Uniform provision of physical resources has not been rolled out to all schools in rural areas, and some schools are under-resourced. There is a national student

finance scheme for needy students. Private institutions are self-funding and must meet minimum physical and financial resource and staffing standards to be registered and accredited.

Standards for infrastructure are part of institutional registration requirements laid down by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and accreditation requirements of the Quality Councils.

Private institutions must meet a quality standard that is equivalent to what applies to public institutions.

Public and private institutions are monitored regularly for compliance with academic, administrative and recreational facilities.

Health and safety provisioning is a part of institutional registration requirements laid down by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and accreditation requirements of the Quality Councils. All learning institutions are required to get certificates of compliance regarding health and safety regularly from the relevant local government department.

E-learning is provided for in the policies of the Ministries to ensure adequacy of ICT resources to support e-learning. The Council on Higher Education has criteria for institutions using distance and blended learning models. The DBE is beginning a process of supplying schools with tablets in place of textbooks.

QA Principle 5

The Government and relevant institutions in South Africa shall promote quality and relevance of education to the needs and expectations of individual learners, member states, the region and international community as a whole and hence facilitate staff and brain retention as well as competitiveness of qualifications earned in the SADC region.

A compulsory component of all qualifications registered on the NQF is International Comparability which is intended to ensure that the qualification is comparable with the best on offer internationally. This comparability exercise should also include qualifications offered by African institutions other than South African ones.

A variety of stakeholders are involved in the development of qualifications. As a complete entity, qualifications are developed to meet labour market and societal needs, and the learning outcomes are directed at realising the aim and purpose of each qualification.

Qualifications are registered for three years and may be re-registered for subsequent three-year periods if they are still relevant.

- The relevant QC can only make recommendations for re-registration after the qualification has been reviewed and found to be still relevant, or it can be registered after amendments.
- Qualifications can be reviewed and amended at any time during the registration period.
- Part of the review includes the relevance of the qualification to industry and societal needs.

The QA processes of the QCs also include regular reviews of the qualification, particularly regarding:

- The Rationale for a qualification which is a compulsory component must provide the

following:

- The reasoning that led to the identification of the need for the qualification;
- How the qualification meets specific needs in the sector for which it is developed;
- Details of the consultation with the relevant professional body or industry body regarding the need for the qualification;
- The range of typical learners and an indication of the jobs or areas of activity in which qualifying learners will operate;
- The learning pathway in which the qualification resides; and
- How the qualification will provide benefits to the learner, society and the economy.
- The Purpose statement which indicates:
 - The context of the qualification and what it is intended to achieve in the national, professional and/or career context;
 - What the qualifying learner will know and be able to do on achievement of the qualification;
- The Exit Level Outcomes and Associated Assessment Criteria linked to the purposes of the qualification, and
- Learning content.

QA Principle 6

The Government and relevant institutions in South Africa shall ensure improved, safe, secure environments for the delivery of education and training through assured high quality, learner-friendly infrastructure and facilities including water, sanitation facilities, arrangements for good nutrition and health support, accountable institutional leadership and management, and general cohesion of students and staff.

This is a part of institutional registration requirements laid down by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and accreditation requirements of the Quality Councils:

- There have to be student support structures in place to deal with student learning and related problems at all higher education institutions.
- The DBE and provincial education departments have local student support structures in place.
- There are feeding schemes in place for learners in primary schools in poor areas.
- There are also systems and programmes in place to vaccinate and inoculate school children such as German measles vaccination for girls in primary schools.

QA Principle 7

The Government and relevant institutions in South Africa shall promote improved and effective teaching and learning across the region through better training, retraining, remuneration and retention schemes for committed teachers and university lecturers, appropriate and relevant curricula, suitable teaching and learning resources, use of learner-centred course delivery methods, appropriate class sizes, sufficient learning time, and student learning support.

All teachers must be registered as educators by the South African Council for Educators (SACE) for which they must hold at least the minimum teacher education qualifications. All teachers must undergo a minimum number of hours of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) every year as approved by SACE. The Provincial Education Departments run in-service courses for teachers to improve teaching and assessment performance. There are subject

committees in every region to deal with teaching matters as well as subject advisers to give guidance and assistance to teachers. The CHE has minimum requirements for the qualifications and maximum times for teaching of lecturers to ensure quality provision. This is part of the accreditation process. Higher education institutions conduct their assessments of their staff and re-training of staff.

There is a maximum class size for the different types of school, but this is sometimes exceeded in under-resourced areas. Class sizes form part of the criteria for accreditation of higher education institutions and qualifications.

Minimum times are laid down for every subject in the school syllabus as well as the minimum number of teaching days in the year for all schools. The credits assigned to each higher education and occupational qualification determines the minimum time to be spent by the learner to obtain it. New Occupational qualifications developed under the NQF Act, in operation since 2010 include at least 20% of workplace learning and 20% practical learning. The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) system used in schools is learner-centred.

Provincial Education Departments have learner support structures and personnel in all regions to assist learners with serious learning, social and emotional challenges. Higher education institutions (public and private) must have well-structured and organised learner support mechanisms and systems in place.

Teacher remuneration is negotiated annually with the government by teacher unions. The Ministries have Teacher Appreciation and Support Programmes to incentivise teachers in the country. Teachers can be awarded additional salary notches and /or bonuses for outstanding work and further formal study. Universities have similar incentives to retain staff.

QA Principle 8

The Government and relevant institutions in South Africa shall ensure periodic reviews and improvement of policies, plans and programmes for training, re-training and induction of education personnel including supporting initiatives for the establishment of a regional centre for professional training of education personnel for the region.

NQF Policies are reviewed every five years by SAQA. Quality Councils also have regular reviews of their policies, although many of them have only just been finalised and are in the first phase of implementation. Public and private providers do teacher training according to *the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications*. The institutions offering teacher training qualifications are accredited by the CHE and their qualifications approved by the DHET and registered by SAQA on the NQF. The South African Council for Educators (SACE) accredits CPD training programmes for teachers who must do a minimum number of hours of in-service training per year. The provincial education departments and the DBE also offer in-service courses.

There are regulations relating to minimum uniform norms and standards for provincial teacher development institutes and district teacher development centres in South Africa. There are regulations relating to minimum uniform norms and standards for provincial teacher development institutes and district teacher development centres in South Africa. SADC has regional teacher standards and competencies framework that can be used as a guide for Member States to develop their own. SACE has a draft that is being finalised.

QA Principle 9

The Government and relevant institutions in South Africa shall promote and ensure the sharing and exchange of information and best practices on all issues pertaining to education and training for purposes of achieving high standards of achievement and mastery while enabling students in the region to promote interpersonal understanding, peace and conflict resolution and to cope with change, diversity, promoting intra-state and inter-state relationships and enhancing their abilities to learn throughout life.

SAQA, the DHET, the DBE, the CHE and Umalusi (the Quality Council for the general and further education and training qualifications Sub-Framework of the NQF) hold regular workshops and seminars on requirements. There are a number of initiatives aimed at sharing and exchanging information. The bodies also have a number of publications to promote understanding and high standards. There is also an *Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, 2011–2025*. Schools and higher education institutions arrange staff and student exchange programmes as and when applicable.

QA Principle 10

The Government and relevant institutions in South Africa shall promote an understanding of quality and the establishment and enhancement of a quality culture as an ideal, and characterising standards of education and training outcomes throughout the SADC Region.

There are numerous examples of NQF structures and institutions striving to achieve high quality, but the promotion of SADC Regional objectives has not received much attention except at government department level. A National Alignment Committee has been set up to take forward the regional initiatives. The first meeting is taking place in December 2017.

QA Principle 11

The Government and relevant institutions in South Africa shall develop, induce and, where necessary, enforce adherence to defined and regionally agreed education quality and performance standards and indicators, learning outcomes and programme monitoring criteria and procedures.

National Standards are enforced through registration of institutions, accreditation of institutions and registration of qualifications and insistence that the policies laid down in this regard be adhered to.

The learning outcome approach is being practised for all qualifications in all Sub-Frameworks. Assessment and monitoring of institutions and assessments are an integral part of the quality assurance done for all three Sub-Frameworks of the NQF as prescribed by the relevant Quality Councils. The expansion of these measures to include SADC regional standards etc. must still be implemented.

QA Principle 12

The Government and relevant institutions in South Africa shall promote and support education quality research and evaluation efforts that lead to improved regional mechanisms and performance.

SAQA, the DHET and the Quality Councils have active research bodies and agendas. Higher education institutions are required to do research and are monitored by the DHET in this regard. All research is analysed and applied where applicable. All research is available on the websites of the relevant bodies. Website details are available in the SADCQVN document.

QA Principle 13

The Government and relevant institutions in South Africa shall participate in sponsoring, hosting and or attending periodic regional meetings to facilitate reaffirmed collaboration, sharing information and experiences, solving common problems, considering and adopting new plans, criteria and procedures and removing obstacles to further collaboration, and planning for the future.

SA is participating in a number of international collaborative initiatives including the implementation of the Addis Convention and the SADC Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) which incorporates the Southern African Quality Assurance Network (SAQAN), the SADC Qualifications Verification Network (SADCQVN) (member of the African Qualifications Verification Network (AQVN) and the Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA).

The Quality Councils participate in regular intra- and inter-state quality assurance meetings. SAQA provided support to the SADC Secretariat and hosted a number of SADC meetings.

DHET, DBE, SAQA and the QCs host regional meetings as required. Foreign delegations are received regularly by DHET, DBE, SAQA and the QCs for information gathering and training. SAQA is hosting a regional QA meeting in May 2017.

SA also hosts foreign delegations who wish to benchmark their practices with the country's practices.

QA Principle 14

The Government and relevant institutions in South Africa shall foster strategic approaches for stronger partnerships for education development and promotion, maximum use of available facilities and resources in the region, dissemination of information on successful collaboration arrangements and provide on-site technical assistance for QA where it is needed and requested.

There are several collaborative projects between learning institutions, the Ministries, Quality Councils and SAQA.

SA is participating in several international collaborative initiatives including the implementation of the Addis Convention and the SADC Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) which incorporates the Southern African Quality Assurance Network (SAQAN), the SADC Qualifications Verification Network (SADCQVN) (member of the African Qualifications Verification Network (AQVN) and the Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA). SA also hosts foreign delegations who wish to benchmark their practices with the country's practices.

QA Principle 15

The Government and relevant institutions in South Africa shall solicit and encourage international organs and institutions to:

- support regional initiatives for an integrated and harmonised education and training system for the realisation of regional human ideals, ideas and values that build sustainable futures in which individuals and communities develop in unity and full respect of each other, and
- support cultural and linguistic diversity of the region in building a common education system.

International bodies like Unesco is closely involved in the SADC, and African initiatives Qualifications of all international bodies offering qualifications in SA must have their qualifications registered on the NQF.

All South African qualifications must contain an international comparability component.

SA is participating in a number of international collaborative initiatives including the implementation of the Addis Convention and the SADCQF which incorporates SAQAN, the SADCQVN, member of the AQVN and the TCCA

QA Principle 16

The Government and relevant institutions in South Africa shall participate in the development of a database, linkages and networking systems through e-mail, websites, telephone contacts to facilitate prompt advice and information on matters of regional importance in education development and quality assurance.

SAQA manages the National Learners' Records Database for the recording of national learner achievements, registered qualifications and part qualifications, recognised professional bodies and registered professional designations.

SA is participating in a number of international collaborative initiatives including the implementation of the Addis Convention and the SADCQF which incorporates SAQAN, the SADCQVN, member of the AQVN and the TCCA. The SADCQVN is a network of contacts to link SADC members on matters of quality assurance and verification matters.

Regular TCCA meetings and TCCA EXCO meetings ensure that members stay updated with SADC matters.

Annexure E: Summarised version of the SANQF Level descriptors

The text below presents a summarised version of the South African level descriptors. the full text can be found at http://www.saga.org.za/docs/misc/2012/level_descriptors.pdf

Level descriptors at South African NQF Level 10

Level 10 qualifications are awarded to learners who are able to meet the ten competencies described here:

- a. Scope of knowledge: Demonstrate expertise and critical knowledge in an area at the forefront of the field/ discipline/ practice, and Conceptualise new research initiatives, and create new knowledge
- b. Knowledge literacy: Contribute to scholarly debates around theories of knowledge and processes of knowledge production in an area of study/ practice
- c. Method and procedure: Develop new methods, techniques, processes, systems or technologies in original, creative and innovative ways appropriate to specialised and complex contexts
- d. Problem-solving: Apply specialist knowledge and theory in critically reflexive, creative and novel ways to address complex practical and theoretical problems
- e. Ethics and professional practice: Identify, address and manage emerging ethical issues; and Advance processes of ethical decision-making, including monitoring and evaluation of the consequences of these decisions where appropriate
- f. Accessing, processing and managing information: Make independent judgements about managing incomplete or inconsistent information or data in an iterative process of analysis and synthesis, for the development of significant original insights into new complex and abstract ideas, information or issues
- g. Producing and communicating of information: Produce substantial, independent, in-depth and publishable work which meets international standards, is considered to be new or innovative by peers, and makes a significant contribution to the field/ discipline/ practice; and Develop a communication strategy to disseminate and defend research, strategic and policy initiatives and their implementation to specialist and non-specialist audiences using full resources of academic and professional/ occupational discourse
- h. Context and systems: Demonstrate an understanding of theoretical underpinnings in the management of complex systems to achieve systemic change; and Independently design, sustain and manage change within a system or systems
- i. Management of learning: Demonstrate intellectual independence, research leadership and management of research and research development in a field/ discipline/ practice
- j. Accountability: Operate independently and take full responsibility for own work, and where appropriate, lead, oversee and be held ultimately accountable for the overall governance of processes and systems

Level descriptors at South African NQF Level 9

Level 9 qualifications are awarded to learners who are able to meet the ten competencies described here:

- a. In terms of scope of knowledge: Demonstrate specialist knowledge to enable engagement with and critique of current research or practices and an advanced scholarship or research in a particular field
- b. In terms of knowledge literacy: Evaluate current processes of knowledge production and choose an appropriate process of enquiry for the area of study/ practice
- c. Method and procedure: Design, select and apply appropriate and creative methods, techniques, processes or technologies to complex practical and theoretical problem
- d. Problem-solving: Use a wide range of specialised skills in identifying, conceptualising, designing and implementing methods of enquiry to address complex and challenging problems within a field/ discipline/ practice; and understand consequences of any solutions or insights generated within a specialised context
- e. Ethics and professional practice: Make autonomous ethical decisions which affect knowledge production, or complex organisational or professional issues; and critically contribute to the development of ethical standards in a specific context

- f. Accessing, processing and managing information: Design and implement a strategy for processing and managing information, to conduct a comprehensive review of leading and current research in an area of specialisation to produce significant insights
- g. Producing and communicating of information: Use the resources of academic and professional or occupational discourses to communicate and defend substantial ideas that are the products of research or development in an area of specialisation; and use a range of advanced, specialised skills and discourses appropriate to a field/ discipline/ practice, to communicate to audiences with different levels of knowledge or expertise
- h. Context and systems: Make interventions at an appropriate level within a system, based on an understanding of hierarchical relations within the system; and address the intended and unintended consequences of interventions
- i. Management of learning: Develop his/ her learning strategies which sustain independent learning and academic or professional development, and interact effectively within the learning or professional group as a means of enhancing learning
- j. Accountability: Operate independently and take full responsibility for his/ her work; Account for leading and initiating processes and implementing systems, ensuring good resource management and governance practices

Level descriptors at South African NQF Level 8

Level 8 qualifications are awarded to learners who are able to meet the ten competencies described here:

- a. Scope of knowledge: Demonstrate knowledge of and engagement in an area at the forefront of a field/ discipline/ practice; and Understand theories, research methodologies, methods and techniques relevant to the field/ discipline/ practice and understand how to apply such knowledge in a particular context
- b. Knowledge literacy: Interrogate multiple sources of knowledge in an area of specialisation; and evaluate knowledge and processes of knowledge production
- c. Method and procedure: Demonstrate an understanding of the complexities and uncertainties of selecting, applying or transferring appropriate standard procedures, processes or techniques to unfamiliar problems in a specialised field/ discipline/ practice
- d. Problem-solving: Use a range of specialised skills to identify, analyse and address complex or abstract problems drawing systematically on the body of knowledge and methods appropriate to a field/ discipline/ practice
- e. Ethics and professional practice: Identify and address ethical issues based on critical reflection on the suitability of different ethical value systems to specific contexts
- f. Accessing, processing and managing information: Critically review information gathering, synthesis of data, evaluation and management processes in specialised contexts to develop creative responses to problems and issues
- g. Producing and communicating of information: Present and communicate academic, professional or occupational ideas and texts effectively to a range of audiences, offering creative insights, rigorous interpretations and solutions to problems appropriate to the context
- h. Context and systems: Operate effectively within a system or manage a system based on an understanding of the roles and relationships between elements in a system
- i. Management of learning: Apply, in a self-critical manner, learning strategies which effectively address professional and ongoing learning needs of self and others
- j. Accountability: Take full responsibility for own work, decision-making and use of resources, and full accountability for decisions and actions of others where appropriate

Level descriptors at South African NQF Level 7

Level 7 qualifications are awarded to learners who are able to meet the ten competencies described here:

- a. Scope of knowledge: Demonstrate integrated knowledge of the central areas of one or more fields/ disciplines/ practices; Apply and evaluate key terms, concepts, facts, principles, rules and theories of that field/ discipline/ practice and detailed knowledge of area/s of specialisation and how that knowledge relates to other fields/ disciplines/ practices
- b. Knowledge literacy: Demonstrate an understanding of knowledge as contested; Evaluate types of knowledge and explanations typical within the area of study/ practice

- c. Method and procedure: Demonstrate an understanding of a range of methods of enquiry in a field/ discipline/ practice and their suitability to specific investigations; Select and apply a range of methods to resolve problems or introduce change within a practice
- d. Problem-solving: Identify, analyse, evaluate, critically reflect on and address complex problems, applying evidence-based solutions and theory-driven arguments
- e. Ethics and professional practice: Take decisions and act ethically and professionally and justify those decisions and actions drawing on appropriate ethical values and approaches within a supported environment
- f. Accessing, processing and managing information: Develop appropriate processes of information gathering for a given context/ use; Independently validate the sources of information and evaluate and manage the information
- g. Producing and communicating of information: Develop and communicate ideas and opinions in well-formed arguments using appropriate academic, professional or occupational discourse
- h. Context and systems: Manage processes in unfamiliar and variable contexts, recognising that problem-solving is context- and system-bound and does not occur in isolation
- i. Management of learning: Identify, evaluate and address learning needs in a self-directed manner and facilitate collaborative learning processes
- j. Accountability: Take full responsibility for own work, decision-making and use of resources and limited accountability for decisions and actions of others in varied or ill-defined contexts

Level descriptors at South African NQF Level 6

Level 6 qualifications are awarded to learners who are able to meet the ten competencies described here:

- a. Scope of knowledge: Demonstrate detailed knowledge of the main areas of one or more fields/ disciplines/ practices, including knowledge and application of key terms, concepts, facts, principles, rules and theories of that field/ discipline/ practice to unfamiliar but relevant contexts; and Show knowledge of area/s of specialisation and how that knowledge relates to other fields/ disciplines/ practices
- b. Knowledge literacy: Demonstrate an understanding of different forms of knowledge, schools of thought and forms of explanation within an area of study/ operation/ practice, and an awareness of knowledge production processes
- c. Method and procedure: Evaluate, select and apply appropriate methods, procedures or techniques in processes of investigation within a defined context
- d. Problem-solving: Identify, analyse and solve problems in unfamiliar contexts, gathering evidence and applying solutions based on evidence and procedures appropriate to the field/ discipline/ practice
- e. Ethics and professional practice: Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical implications of decisions and actions within an organisational or professional context, based on an awareness of the complexity of ethical dilemmas
- f. Accessing, processing and managing information: Evaluate different sources of information, select information appropriate to the task and apply well-developed processes of analysis, synthesis and evaluation to that information
- g. Producing and communicating of information: Present and communicate complex information reliably and coherently using appropriate academic/ professional/ occupational conventions, formats and technologies for a given context
- h. Context and systems: Make decisions and act appropriately in familiar and new contexts, demonstrating an understanding of the relationships between systems and of how actions, ideas, or developments in one system impact on other systems
- i. Management of learning: Evaluate performance against given criteria; Accurately identify and address his/ her task-specific learning needs in a given context and provide support to the learning needs of others where appropriate
- j. Accountability: Work effectively in a team or group; and take responsibility for his/ her decisions and actions and decisions and actions of others within well-defined contexts, including responsibility for use of resources where appropriate

Level descriptors at South African NQF Level 5

Level 5 qualifications are awarded to learners who are able to meet the ten competencies described here:

- a. Scope of knowledge: Demonstrate an informed understanding of the core areas of one or more fields/disciplines/ practices, and an informed understanding of the key terms, concepts, facts, general principles, rules and theories of that field/ discipline/ practice
- b. Knowledge literacy: Demonstrate an awareness of how knowledge or a knowledge system develops and evolves within the area of study/ operation
- c. Method and procedure: Select and apply standard methods, procedures or techniques within the field/ discipline/ practice; and plan and manage an implementation process within a well-defined, familiar and supported environment
- d. Problem-solving: Identify, evaluate and solve defined, routine and new problems within a familiar context; and Apply solutions based on relevant evidence and procedures or other forms of explanation appropriate to the field/ discipline/ practice demonstrating an understanding of the consequences
- e. Ethics and professional practice: Take account of, and act in accordance with prescribed organisational and professional ethical codes of conduct, values, and practices; and Seek guidance on ethical and professional issues where necessary
- f. Accessing, processing and managing information: Gather information from a range of sources, including oral, written or symbolic texts, select information appropriate to the task; and apply basic processes of analysis, synthesis and evaluation on that information
- g. Producing and communicating of information: Communicate information reliably, accurately and coherently, using conventions appropriate to the context, in written and oral or signed form or in practical demonstration including an understanding of and respect for conventions around intellectual property, copyright and plagiarism, including associated legal implications
- h. Context and systems: Operate in a range of familiar and new contexts, demonstrating an understanding of different kinds of systems, their constituent parts and the relationships between these parts; Understand how actions in one area impact on other areas within the same system
- i. Management of learning: Evaluate his/ her performance or the performance of others and take appropriate action where necessary; Take responsibility for his/her learning within a structured learning process and promote the learning of others
- j. Accountability: Account for his/her actions to work effectively with and respect others; In a defined context, take supervisory responsibility for others and for the responsible use of resources where appropriate

Level descriptors at South African NQF Level 4

Level 4 qualifications are awarded to learners who are able to meet the ten competencies described here:

- a. Scope of knowledge: Demonstrate a fundamental knowledge base of the most important areas of one or more fields or disciplines and a fundamental understanding of the key terms, rules, concepts, established principles and theories in one or more fields or disciplines.
- b. Knowledge literacy: Demonstrate an understanding that knowledge in one field can be applied to related fields.
- c. Method and procedure: Apply essential methods, procedures and techniques of the field or discipline to a given familiar context, and the ability to motivate a change using relevant evidence.
- d. Problem-solving: Use own knowledge to solve common problems within a familiar context, and the ability to adjust an application of a common solution within relevant parameters to meet the needs of small changes in the problem or operating context with an understanding of the consequences of related actions.
- e. Ethics and professional practice: Demonstrate the ability to adhere to organisational ethics and a code of conduct, and the ability to understand societal values and ethics.
- f. Accessing, processing and managing information: Gather relevant information, analysis and evaluation skills, and the ability to apply and carry out actions by interpreting information from text and operational symbols or representations.
- g. Producing and communicating information: Communicate and present information reliably and accurately in written and in oral or signed form.
- h. In terms of context and systems: Demonstrate an understanding of the organisation or operating environment as a system within a wider context.

- i. Management of learning: Demonstrate the capacity to take responsibility for own learning within a supervised environment, and the capacity to evaluate own performance against given criteria.
- j. Accountability: Demonstrate the capacity to take decisions about and responsibility for actions, and the capacity to take the initiative to address any shortcomings found.

Level descriptors at South African NQF Level 3

Level 3 qualifications are awarded to learners who are able to meet the ten competencies described here:

- a. Scope of knowledge: Demonstrate a basic understanding of the key concepts and knowledge of one or more fields or disciplines, in addition to the fundamental areas of study.
- b. Knowledge literacy: Demonstrate an understanding that knowledge in a field can only be applied if the knowledge, as well as its relationship to other relevant information in related fields, is understood.
- c. Method and procedure: Demonstrate operational literacy, the capacity to operate within clearly defined contexts, and the ability to work within a managed environment.
- d. Problem-solving: Use own knowledge to select appropriate procedures to solve problems within given parameters.
- e. Ethics and professional practice: Demonstrate the ability to comply with organisational ethics.
- f. Accessing, processing and managing information: Summarise and interpret information relevant to the context from a range of sources, and the ability to take a position on available information, discuss the issues and reach a resolution.
- g. Producing and communicating information: Produce a coherent presentation and report, providing explanations for positions taken.
- h. Context and systems: Demonstrate an understanding of the organisation or operating environment as a system, and application of skills in measuring the environment using key instruments and equipment.
- i. Management of learning: Demonstrate the ability to learn within a managed environment.
- j. Accountability: Demonstrate the capacity to actively contribute to team effectiveness.

Level descriptors at South African NQF Level 2

Level 2 qualifications are awarded to learners who are able to meet the ten competencies described here:

- a. Scope of knowledge: Demonstrate a basic operational knowledge of one or more areas or fields of study, in addition to the fundamental areas of study.
- b. Knowledge literacy: Demonstrate an understanding that one's own knowledge of a particular field or system develops through active participation in relevant activities.
- c. Method and procedure: Use a variety of common tools and instruments, and a capacity to work in a disciplined manner in a well-structured and supervised environment.
- d. Problem-solving: Use own knowledge to select and apply known solutions to well-defined routine problems.
- e. Ethics and professional practice: Apply personal values and ethics in a specific environment.
- f. Accessing, processing and managing information: Apply literacy and numeracy skills to a range of different but familiar contexts.
- g. Producing and communicating information: Collect, organise and report information clearly and accurately, and the ability to express an opinion on given information clearly in spoken/signed and written form.
- h. Context and systems: Demonstrate an understanding of the environment within which he/she operates in a wider context.
- i. Management of learning: Demonstrate the capacity to learn in a disciplined manner in a well-structured and supervised environment.
- j. Accountability: Manage own time effectively, develop sound working relationships and work effectively as part of a group.

Level descriptors at South African NQF Level 1

Level 1 qualifications are awarded to learners who are able to meet the ten competencies described here:

- a. Scope of knowledge: Demonstrate a general knowledge of one or more areas or fields of study, in addition to the fundamental areas of study.
- b. Knowledge literacy: Demonstrate an understanding that knowledge in a particular field develops over a period of time through the efforts of a number of people, and often through the synthesis of information from a variety of related sources and fields.
- c. Method and procedure: Use key common tools and instruments, and a capacity to apply him/herself to a well-defined task under direct supervision.
- d. Problem-solving: Recognise and solve problems within a familiar, well-defined context.
- e. Ethics and professional practice: Identify and develop own personal values and ethics, and the ability to identify ethics applicable in a specific environment.
- f. Accessing, processing and managing information: Recall, collect and organise given information clearly and accurately, sound listening and speaking (receptive and productive language use), reading and writing skills, and basic numeracy skills including an understanding of symbolic systems.
- g. Producing and communicating information: Report information clearly and accurately in spoken/signed and written form.
- h. Context and systems: Demonstrate an understanding of the context within which he/she operates.
- i. Management of learning: Sequence and schedule learning tasks, and the ability to access and use a range of learning resources.
- j. Accountability: Demonstrate the ability to work as part of a group.

Annexure F: Ten alignment criteria and underlying sub-criteria

Criterion 1

Responsibilities of relevant national bodies involved in the alignment process are determined and published by the relevant competent authorities

1. Have all the relevant bodies and stakeholders been informed about the decision to implement the SADCQF?
2. Which bodies will be part of the National Alignment Committee (NAC)?
3. Is the country's NAC functional? Does the NAC have resources and a work plan for SADCQF-related activities?
4. Are the NAC roles and responsibilities for alignment with the SADCQF clear and allocated through a decision / legal order?
5. Is the communication (about aligning with the SADCQF) with the broader public and stakeholders clear, prepared and organised?

Criterion 2

There is a clear and demonstrable link between qualification levels in the NQF/ National Qualification System (NQS) and level descriptors of the SADCQF

1. Is the country NQF adopted and in application?
2. Are the country NQF level descriptors (LDs) clear, complete and understood by the relevant stakeholders?
3. Are the country NQF LDs implemented in practice?
4. Do the NQF LDs clearly indicate vertical progression?
5. Are the LDs used in practice the same as those of the NQF LDs?
6. Are the SADCQF (regional) level descriptors understood by stakeholders?
7. Is there an agreed approach (method) to present the demonstrable link of the country LDs with that of the SADCQF? Is the diagram showing the level to level links as well as the underlying research attached?

Criterion 3

The NQF/ NQS is based on learning outcomes and links to non-formal and informal learning and credit systems (where these exist)

1. The Learning outcomes (LO) approach is included in/ enabled by relevant legislation.
2. The LO approach is agreed in all or some sub-sectors / qualifications? Which ones?
3. The LO approach is being practised in all or some sub-sectors / qualifications? Which ones?
4. Do the LOs of qualifications take account of societal and labour market needs?
5. Is the classification of qualifications in the NQF based on a comparison of LOs of the qualification with the LDs of NQF?
6. Is the recognition/ validation of non-formal and informal learning defined and agreed at policy level?
7. Is the recognition/ validation of non-formal and informal learning applied in all or some sectors/cases? Which ones?
8. Does the assessment of LOs apply to formal and non-formal and informal learning?
9. Is recognition/ validation of formal, non-formal and informal learning related to the NQF?
10. Is the credit system implemented in all or some sub-sectors? Which ones?
11. Is the credit system related to the NQF?
12. Are there studies/ research/ analyses to support this criterion?

Criterion 4

Procedures for including qualifications in the NQF or describing the place of qualifications in the NQS are transparent

1. The existing legislation defines key principles and roles/responsibilities for developing, approving, and accrediting qualifications. What are the key institutions/stakeholders – and their roles?
2. NQF decision-making is based on a clear institutional setting (Agency, department, Board, Council). Is this operational?
3. The procedures and method(s) for pegging a qualification at a particular NQF Level/levelling are agreed, transparent and applied.
4. Leveling / inclusion of qualifications in the NQF is based on transparent interactions of the relevant bodies (e.g. in charge of Quality Assurance, sectoral committees, certification, NQF decision making bodies)
5. The leveling and inclusion of qualifications in the NQF is quality-assured. By whom (specificities by sub-sector)?
6. The scope of the NQF: The NQF is inclusive of various types of qualifications. Which types can be included? Are qualifications outside of the formal system included?
7. Database(s) of qualifications are up-to-date, accessible and transparent for users.
8. Are there studies/ research/ analyses to support this criterion?

Criterion 5

The National Quality Assurance System for education and training refers to the NQF or NQS and is consistent with quality assurance guidelines of the SADCQF

1. The national QA systems are operational. The various relevant institutions act in a co-ordinated and linked manner.
2. The design and award of qualifications are quality-assured and use explicit and transparent procedures and arrangements
3. Quality assurance procedures refer to context, inputs, process and output dimensions while giving special emphasis to outputs and learning outcomes.
4. Quality assurance of learning outcomes refers to: planning; implementing; reviewing; feedback
5. Quality assurance measures include qualification requirements for teachers/trainers, assessors; accreditation; and external evaluation of providers of programmes.
6. Labour market and society stakeholders are involved in relevant phases/aspects of quality assurance of qualifications.
7. The sixteen common quality assurance (QA) guidelines of the SADCQF are compatible with the national QA framework (legislation, institutions, policy).
8. Are there studies/ research/ analyses to support this criterion?

Criterion 6

There is a clear indication of the relevant national authorities responsible for the verification of the qualifications obtained in the national system

1. The contact details of the body/ies responsible for the country's qualifications framework is accurate and accessible
2. The contact details of the body or bodies responsible for QA is accurate and accessible
3. There is a central qualifications information system in the country
4. Full details of the qualifications information system is accurate and accessible
5. The contact details of the body or bodies responsible for verification of national qualifications are accurate and accessible
6. The contact details of the body or bodies responsible for verification of foreign qualifications is accurate and accessible
7. Do you have policies regarding your national and foreign verification/ validation/ evaluation/ recognition? Describe

Criterion 7**The alignment process shall include a stated agreement of relevant quality assurance bodies**

1. The alignment process shall include a stated agreement of relevant quality assurance bodies
2. All relevant QA bodies are adequately involved and informed about the SADCQF alignment process and plans
3. Level to level alignment and the way the system is described: The relevant QA bodies agree and validate the content of the report

Criterion 8**Competent national bodies shall certify the alignment of the NQF/NQS with the SADCQF. A comprehensive report on alignment and its evidence must be published by competent national bodies**

1. The institutions/ competent national bodies that will certify the SADCQF alignment are clearly defined
2. Roadmap for SADCQF alignment and target date for presentation of the final report: Is there a general/broad agreement?
3. Structure of the alignment report: is it relevant, placing the criteria and procedures at the core of the report?

Criterion 9**The official platform of the country must provide for a public comment process for the alignment report**

1. There is a clear plan to revise and finalise the alignment report before publication on the country's official platform.
2. Responsibility for timely publication of the final version of the report is agreed upon by the relevant structures in the country
3. Final national published version of the report takes account of received comments and recommendations.
4. Possible presentation of the final report is planned.

Criterion 10**Clear plans have been made to make changes to legislation and policy supporting alignment to SADCQF levels on new qualification certificates, diplomas and other documents issued by competent authorities**

1. Legislation and policy supporting the alignment with the SADCQF levels on new qualifications documents: Has this been discussed?
2. The roadmap/ plans for discussion/ agreement among stakeholders. Has this been defined, agreed?
3. Are the key conditions for implementation of this Criterion in place?
4. The communication and information of users and stakeholders on the meaning/ advantages of having SADCQF levels on qualifications documents. Has this been prepared?
5. Networking with other countries about greater mobility and the meaning of future adjustments in qualifications documents: Has this been done?

Annexure G: Level to level alignment

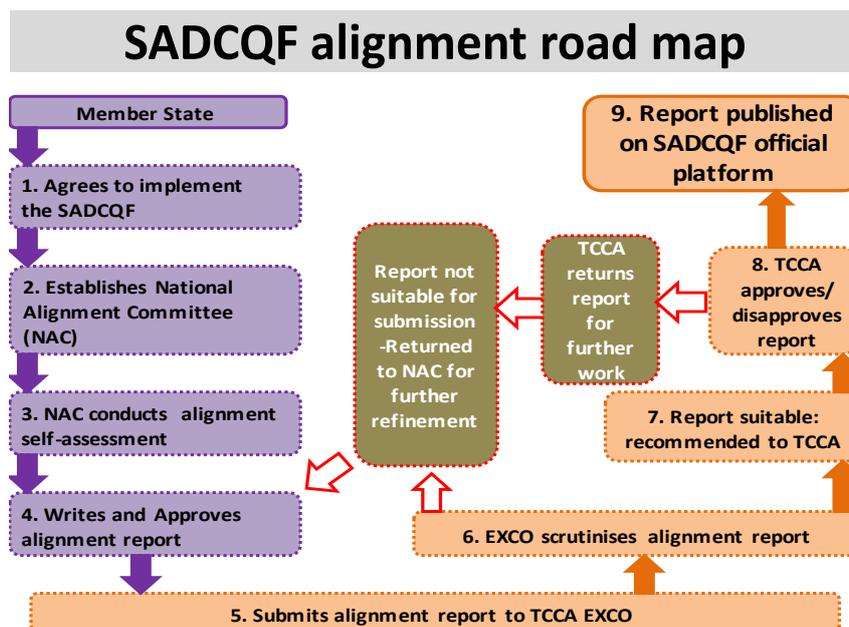


Comparison of the level descriptors of the South African NQF (SANQF) with the level descriptors of the SADC Qualifications Framework (SADCQF)

Introduction

The SADCQF, a comprehensive Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) for schooling, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and higher education, was established in 2011 by the SADC Ministers of Education. Its purpose is to enable easier movement of learners and workers across the SADC region and internationally. It is a 10-level RQF underpinned by learning outcomes and quality assurance (QA) principles that will provide a regional benchmark for qualifications and QA mechanisms in SADC.

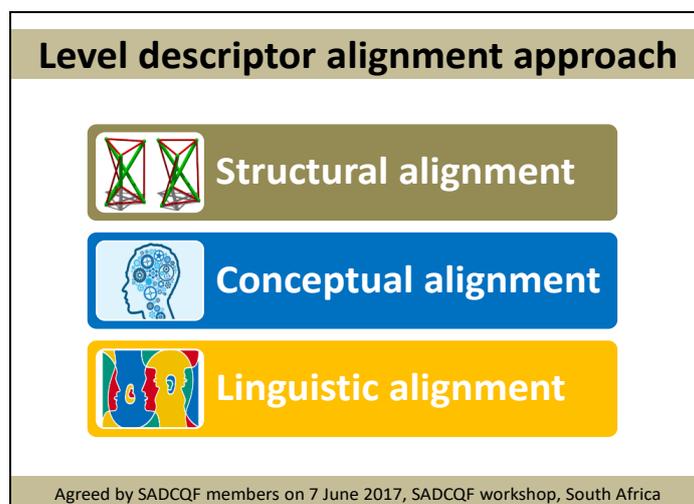
Member States agreed to align their qualifications and QA mechanisms to the SADCQF. The vision is that, in the SADC region, all new qualification certificates, diplomas and other documents issued by competent authorities will contain the relevant level on the SADCQF. Alignment will enable this recognition of achievement at a regional level. The resulting transparency and information about the qualifications and QA of aligned Member States will further assist in embedding mutual trust amongst SADC Members. Regional alignment would also enable institutions and individuals to make comparisons of their learning and competence levels and would reduce unnecessary duplication of learning and effort when moving through SADC for study or work purposes. Eight countries volunteered to pilot the alignment of their qualifications frameworks or education and training systems to that of the SADCQF. The pilot countries are Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Eswatini and Zambia.



Ten alignment criteria, an alignment plan and roadmap (shown above) as well as alignment timelines were developed to assist the eight pilot countries. Criterion 2 states that there should be a clear and demonstrable link between qualification levels in the NQF/ National Qualification System (NQS) and level descriptors of the SADCQF. Sub-Criterion 2.7 indicates that there should be an agreed approach (method) to present the demonstrable link of the country level descriptors (LDs) with that of the SADCQF.

At a regional workshop (7-8 June 2017) with the eight pilot countries, there was agreement on a specific approach that would be used to show the clear and demonstrable link. The approach would include three components (see Figure below):

1. Structural alignment
2. Conceptual alignment
3. Linguistic alignment



Structural comparison

To see whether the two frameworks are structurally aligned, the architecture of the two frameworks was compared to ascertain the similarities and differences between the two frameworks.

The two frameworks are structurally similar in the following ways:

- Both have a ten NQF level structure;
- Both have a focus on learning outcomes rather than input;
- Both are integrated and comprehensive (includes all three sectors: schooling, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education; and
- Both have a focus on lifelong learning.

The two frameworks differ significantly in the purpose for which they were established:

- The SADCQF is an overarching regional qualifications framework which sets the regional standards for what a learner is able to know, understand and be able to do after a process of learning. Its purpose is to provide a translation device between the national education and training systems of SADC. It is a reference framework meaning that there are no qualifications registered on it.
- The SANQF is a national qualifications framework which sets the national standards for what a learner is able to know, understand and do after a process of learning. It has a strong redress focus, clearly stated in its objectives. This focus reflects the importance of this factor in the South African education system. It ensures that qualifications must have

fair non-discriminatory admission requirements, allow for RPL to be used for admission and the awarding of exemptions/credits towards qualifications, contain articulation possibilities and are linked to employment and/or further learning opportunities. It is a framework on which authentic qualifications, offered in South Africa, are registered. There is evidence of registered Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees.

Summary

Considering this necessary difference in the purpose of each framework, it can be concluded that there is a close correspondence between the architectures of the two frameworks.

Conceptual comparison

The use of concepts was examined to see whether there were conceptual links between the two frameworks. The outcome statements were examined in both frameworks. Where these outcome statements at a particular level is more specific, it is easier to compare the two frameworks and place qualifications at that particular level. Although both frameworks have their underpinnings in learning outcomes, the comparison is complicated for the following reasons:

- There are differences in the number of categories,
- The SADCQF lacks consistency in its outcome statements,
- The SADCQF is silent on ethics and professional practice,
- The SADCQF lacks progression.

Different number of categories: The two sets of level descriptors have different numbers of categories. The SANQF has ten categories, and the SADCQF has three.⁵ Because of the inclusion of ten categories rather than three, the SANQF categories are more descriptive. Even in categories that are similar, e.g. knowledge and autonomy and responsibility, the SANQF categories are more detailed.

Consistency: The ten SANQF categories are all used in every level from NQF Level 1 to NQF Level 10. The three SADCQF categories do not contain the same sub-categories/competencies in all ten SADCQF levels. For example, the SANQF category, “*Knowledge literacy*” which is particularly important for learners using multiple and sometimes conflicting sources of information and who are subjected to multiple ways of doing something, is only included and addressed in the SADCQF categories at levels 9 and 10.

Ethics and professional practice. SANQF outcomes in qualifications not only serve academic and workplace needs, but are seen as contributing to the personal development of the individual learner and the development of, or changes in, societal behaviour. The South African education system and South African society, in general, regard ethics and professional practice to be an integral part of every qualification registered on the NQF. The NQF, therefore, requires outcomes for ethics and professional practice to be developed and applied in a progressively complex manner in all qualifications. The SANQF levels start with the development of the learner’s ethical standards at level one and end with the learner at level ten being able to make autonomous ethical decisions which affect knowledge production, or complex organisational or professional issues, and critically contribute to the development of ethical standards in a specific context. Ethics and professional practice is not included in the SADCQF categories either explicitly or implicitly at any level.

Progression from level to level: The three SADCQF categories do not always reflect progression in complexity from level to level. Many of the categories in the SANQF descriptors that naturally fall into one of the three SADCQF categories are either not mentioned or not progressively included from level to level in the latter.

Two such categories, for example, are communication and problem solving:

⁵ For the purposes of this alignment project, the ten SANQF categories have been grouped into the same three categories used in the SADCQF, namely Knowledge, Skills and Autonomy and Responsibility

- Communication is not systematically and progressively handled in the SADCQF descriptors and is missing at most levels.
 - The SANQF includes communication as follows at each level:
 - Level 1: Report information clearly and accurately in spoken/signed and written form.
 - Level 2: Collect, organise and report information clearly and accurately and the ability to express an opinion on given information clearly in spoken/ signed and written form
 - Level 3: Produce a coherent presentation and report, providing explanations for positions taken.
 - Level 4: Communicate and present information reliably and accurately in written and in oral or signed form.
 - Level 5: Communicate information reliably, accurately and coherently, using conventions appropriate to the context, in written and oral or signed form or in practical demonstration including an understanding of and respect for conventions around intellectual property, copyright and plagiarism, including associated legal implications.
 - Level 6: Present and communicate complex information reliably and coherently using appropriate academic/ professional/ occupational conventions, formats and technologies for a given context.
 - Level 7: Develop and communicate ideas and opinions in well-formed arguments using appropriate academic, professional or occupational discourse.
 - Level 8: Present and communicate academic, professional or occupational ideas and texts effectively to a range of audiences, offering creative insights, rigorous interpretations and solutions to problems appropriate to the context.
 - Level 9: Use the resources of academic and professional or occupational discourses to communicate and defend substantial ideas that are the products of research or development in an area of specialisation; and use a range of advanced, specialised skills and discourses appropriate to a field/ discipline/ practice, to communicate to audiences with different levels of knowledge or expertise.
 - Level 10: Produce substantial, independent, in-depth and publishable work which meets international standards, is considered to be new or innovative by peers, and makes a significant contribution to the field/ discipline/ practice; and Develop a communication strategy to disseminate and defend research, strategic and policy initiatives and their implementation to specialist and non-specialist audiences using full resources of academic and professional/ occupational discourse.
 - The SADCQF only includes communication as follows at levels 6 and 7:
 - Level 6: Skills: Demonstrate ability to apply specialist knowledge and skills in highly variable contexts and formulate responses to concrete and abstract problems.
 - Level 7: Skills: Demonstrates intellectual independence, critical thinking and analytical rigour, and advanced communication and collaborative skills in complex and variable contexts.
- Problem-solving
 - The SANQF deals with it as follows:
 - Level 1: Recognise and solve problems within a familiar, well-defined context.
 - Level 2: Use own knowledge to select and apply known solutions to well-defined routine problems.

- Level 3: Use own knowledge to select appropriate procedures to solve problems within given parameters.
 - Level 4: Use own knowledge to solve common problems within a familiar context, and the ability to adjust an application of a common solution within relevant parameters to meet the needs of small changes in the problem or operating context with an understanding of the consequences of related actions.
 - Level 5: Identify, evaluate and solve defined, routine and new problems within a familiar context; and Apply solutions based on relevant evidence and procedures or other forms of explanation appropriate to the field/ discipline/ practice demonstrating an understanding of the consequences.
 - Level 6: Identify, analyse and solve problems in unfamiliar contexts, gathering evidence and applying solutions based on evidence and procedures appropriate to the field/ discipline/ practice.
 - Level 7: Identify, analyse, evaluate, critically reflect on and address complex problems, applying evidence-based solutions and theory-driven arguments.
 - Level 8: Use a range of specialised skills to identify, analyse and address complex or abstract problems drawing systematically on the body of knowledge and methods appropriate to a field/ discipline/ practice.
 - Level 9: Use a wide range of specialised skills in identifying, conceptualising, designing and implementing methods of enquiry to address complex and challenging problems within a field/ discipline/ practice; and understand consequences of any solutions or insights generated within a specialised context.
 - Level 10: Apply specialist knowledge and theory in critically reflexive, creative and novel ways to address complex practical and theoretical problems.
- Problem-solving is not explicitly stated or progressively handled in the SADCQF. The SADCQF includes problem-solving in level 3, 6, 9 and 10 as follows:
 - Level 3: Skills: Demonstrate a range of well-developed skills and ability to apply known solutions to familiar problems
 - Level 6: Skills: Demonstrate ability to apply specialist knowledge and skills in highly variable contexts and formulate responses to concrete and abstract problems.
 - Level 9: Skills: Demonstrate independent thinking, problem-solving, critical evaluation of research findings and ability to make judgements based on knowledge and evidence.
 - Level 10: Skills: Demonstrates problem-solving ability and critical evaluation of research findings for academic discussion.

Summary

Given that a regional framework needs to be able to accommodate at a broad, overarching level the different underpinning philosophies of each national framework in its region, it is understandable that the SADCQF might not accommodate the outcomes specific to a particular NQF/NQS. However, these significant differences indicate that the two frameworks are conceptually different. Nonetheless, even though these differences exist, a link can be established between the SANQF and the SADCQF.

Linguistic comparison

The basis of the comparison of the two sets is done using the three categories of the SADCQF, combining the ten SANQF categories, where applicable, under the three categories of the SADCQF namely, Knowledge, Skills and Autonomy and Responsibility.

It is important to note that the level of the categories/outcomes/competencies at a specific level on a qualifications framework is not determined by the number of competencies to be considered, but by the cognitive challenge (degree of difficulty) the competencies pose the learner, e.g. solving a complex problem in a variable context presents a greater cognitive challenge to a learner than solving a basic problem in a known environment.

This comparison of the levels of the SADCQF with those of the SANQF is done by looking at the cognitive challenge that the categories/ outcomes/competencies pose the learner and not the number of competencies facing the learner.

The process of comparing the SADCQF levels and the SANQF levels began by grouping the ten SANQF level descriptors under the three SADCQF categories. The key is presented below:

	 NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
The SADCQF statement	The relevant SANQF statements on the same level

This is a level-to-level analysis to see whether the ten SANQF levels are aligned with the ten SADCQF levels.

Analysing Level 1

Level 1 Knowledge	
	 NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
basic general knowledge and numeracy and literacy for everyday purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a general knowledge of one or more areas or fields of study, in addition to the fundamental areas of study, and • the ability to access, process and manage information: Recall, collect and organise given information clearly and accurately

The Knowledge outcome in:

The SADCQF demands “basic general knowledge and numeracy and literacy for everyday purposes”.

The SANQF requires:

- a general knowledge of one or more areas or fields of study, in addition to the fundamental areas of study, and
- the ability to access, process and manage information: Recall, collect and organise given information clearly and accurately.

The SADCQF Knowledge which focuses on numeracy and literacy for everyday purposes presents less of a challenge than the SANQF which requires general knowledge in one or more fields in addition to the fundamental areas as well as the ability to access, process and manage information and to organise given knowledge.

Level 1 Skills	
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • follow simple instructions • perform actions required to carry out simple concrete tasks requiring no special skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use key common tools and instruments, • apply themselves to a well-defined task under direct supervision, • report information clearly and accurately in spoken/signed and written form, • sequence and schedule learning tasks, • access and use a range of learning resources and • recognise and solve problems within a familiar, well-defined context.

Under Skills:

The SADCQF requires learners to:

- follow simple instructions, and
- perform actions required to carry out simple concrete tasks requiring no special skills.

The SANQF requires learners to:

- use key common tools and instruments,
- apply themselves to a well-defined task under direct supervision,
- report information clearly and accurately in spoken/signed and written form,
- sequence and schedule learning tasks,
- access and use a range of learning resources and
- recognise and solve problems within a familiar, well-defined context.

The SANQF demands more cognitively of the learner in terms of Skills than the SADCQF does at this level.

Level 1 Autonomy and responsibility	
	
work under close supervision in familiar situations and structured contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sequence and schedule learning tasks, • access and use a range of learning resources, • work as part of a group

Under Autonomy and Responsibility:

The SADCQF requires learners to work under close supervision in familiar situations and structured contexts”.

The SANQF requires learners to:

- sequence and schedule learning tasks,
- access and use a range of learning resources,
- work as part of a group.

The SANQF is cognitively more challenging than the SADCQF in the category of Autonomy and Responsibility

Summary

The SADCQF Level 1 is at a level lower than the SANQF Level 1.

Analysing Level 2

Level 2 Knowledge	
	
<p>demonstrate recall and a narrow range of knowledge and cognitive skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a basic operational knowledge of one or more areas or fields of study, in addition to the fundamental areas of study and • an understanding that one's own knowledge of a particular field or system develops through active participation in relevant activities.

The Knowledge category in:

The SADCQF requires learners to “demonstrate recall and a narrow range of knowledge and cognitive skills”.

The SANQF requires learners to demonstrate:

- “a basic operational knowledge of one or more areas or fields of study, in addition to the fundamental areas of study and
- an understanding that one's own knowledge of a particular field or system develops through active participation in relevant activities”.

The SADCQF, in Knowledge, presents less of a cognitive challenge than the SANQF.

Level 2 Skills	
	
<p>carry out processes that are limited in range, repetitive and familiar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use a variety of common tools and instruments, • work in a disciplined manner in a well-structured and supervised environment, • use own knowledge to select and apply known solutions to well-defined routine problems, • apply literacy and numeracy skills to a range of different but familiar contexts, • collect, organise and report information clearly and accurately, • express an opinion on given information clearly in spoken/signed and written form.

Under Skills:

The SADCQF requires learners to “carry out processes that are limited in range, repetitive and familiar.”

The SANQF requires learners to:

- use a variety of common tools and instruments,
- work in a disciplined manner in a well-structured and supervised environment,
- use own knowledge to select and apply known solutions to well-defined routine problems,
- apply literacy and numeracy skills to a range of different but familiar contexts,
- collect, organise and report information clearly and accurately,

- express an opinion on given information clearly in spoken/signed and written form.

The SANQF presents more of a challenge regarding Skills than the SADCQF.

Level 2 Autonomy and responsibility	
	 NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
apply in directed activity under close supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manage own time effectively, • develop sound working relationships, • work effectively as part of a group, • learn in a disciplined manner in a well-structured and supervised environment

Under Autonomy and Responsibility:

The SADCQF requires learners to, “apply in directed activity under close supervision”.

The SANQF requires learners to:

- “manage own time effectively,
- develop sound working relationships,
- work effectively as part of a group,
- learn in a disciplined manner in a well-structured and supervised environment.”

The SADCQF statements are too broad to be able to compare with the SANQF.

Summary

The SADCQF Level 2 is close to SANQF Level 2, but still below.

Analysing Level 3

Level 3 Knowledge	
	 NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate basic operational and theoretical knowledge and ability to • interpret information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the key concepts and knowledge of one or more fields or disciplines, in addition to the fundamental areas of study, • Understand that knowledge in a field can only be applied if the knowledge, as well as its relationship to other relevant information in related fields, is understood and • understand an organisation or operating environment as a system, • apply skills in measuring the environment using key instruments and equipment

In the Knowledge category:

The SADCQF requires learners to:

- demonstrate basic operational and theoretical knowledge and ability to
- interpret information. (See SANQF Level 2).

The SANQF requires learners to:

- understand the key concepts and knowledge of one or more fields or disciplines, in addition to the fundamental areas of study,
- Understand that knowledge in a field can only be applied if the knowledge, as well as its relationship to other relevant information in related fields, is understood and
- understand an organisation or operating environment as a system, and
- apply skills in measuring the environment using key instruments and equipment.

The SADCQF Level 3 is closer to the SANQF Level 2 in the Knowledge category.

Level 3 Skills	
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “demonstrate a range of well-developed skills • apply known solutions to familiar problems.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate operational literacy, • operate within clearly defined contexts, • work within a managed environment, • use own knowledge to select appropriate procedures to solve problems within given parameters • produce a coherent presentation and report, providing explanations for positions taken.

In terms of Skills:

The SADCQF requires learners to:

- “demonstrate a range of well-developed skills and
- apply known solutions to familiar problems.”

The SANQF requires learners to:

- demonstrate operational literacy,
- operate within clearly defined contexts,
- work within a managed environment,
- use own knowledge to select appropriate procedures to solve problems within given parameters and
- produce a coherent presentation and report, providing explanations for positions taken.

The SANQF presents more of a challenge than the SADCQF in terms of Skills.

Level 3 Autonomy and responsibility	
	
Work under general supervision with some responsibility for quality and quantity of output	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn within a managed environment • actively contribute to team effectiveness

In Autonomy and Responsibility:

The SADCQF requires learners to, “Work under general supervision with some responsibility for quality and quantity of output”.

The SANQF requires learners to learn within a managed environment and actively contribute to team effectiveness.

The statements are too different to be able to compare them.

Summary

The SADCQF Level 3 can be equated with the SANQF Level 2.

Analysing Level 4

Level 4 Knowledge	
	
<p>demonstrate a broad knowledge base, incorporating some abstract and technical concepts, and the ability to analyse information and make informed judgements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate a fundamental knowledge base of the most important areas of one or more fields or disciplines and demonstrate a fundamental understanding of the key terms, rules, concepts, established principles and theories in one or more fields or disciplines and demonstrate an understanding that knowledge in one field can be applied to related fields.

In the Knowledge category:

The SADCQF requires learners to “demonstrate a broad knowledge base, incorporating some abstract and technical concepts, and the ability to analyse information and make informed judgements.’

The SANQF requires learners to:

- demonstrate a fundamental knowledge base of the most important areas of one or more fields or disciplines and
- demonstrate a fundamental understanding of the key terms, rules, concepts, established principles and theories in one or more fields or disciplines and
- demonstrate an understanding that knowledge in one field can be applied to related fields.

The SADCQF makes more of a cognitive challenge on learners in the Knowledge category than the SANQF.

Level 4 Skills	
	
<p>apply a moderate range of technical and/or scholastic skills which are transferable in familiar and unfamiliar contexts, using routine and non-routine procedures.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply essential methods, procedures and techniques of the field or discipline to a given familiar context, • motivate a change using relevant evidence, • use own knowledge to solve common problems within a familiar context and • adjust an application of a common solution within relevant parameters to meet the needs of small changes in the problem or operating context with an understanding of the consequences of related actions.

Regarding Skills:

The SADCQF requires learners to “apply a moderate range of technical and/or scholastic skills which are transferable in familiar and unfamiliar contexts, using routine and non-routine procedures.”

The SANQF requires learners to:

- apply essential methods, procedures and techniques of the field or discipline to a given familiar context,
- motivate a change using relevant evidence,
- use own knowledge to solve common problems within a familiar context and
- adjust an application of a common solution within relevant parameters to meet the needs of small changes in the problem or operating context with an understanding of the consequences of related actions.

The focus on motivating change and adjusting applications to meet small changes in a problem or operating context raises the cognitive demand of the SANQF in Skills above that of the SADCQF.

Level 4 Autonomy and responsibility	
	
<p>show ability for self-direction, requiring little supervision, and complete responsibility for own outcomes and some responsibility for group outcomes.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “take responsibility for own learning within a supervised environment, • evaluate own performance against given criteria, • take decisions about and responsibility for actions, and • take the initiative to address any shortcomings found.”

Concerning Autonomy and Responsibility:

The SADCQF requires learners to “show ability for self-direction, requiring little supervision, and complete responsibility for own outcomes and some responsibility for group outcomes.”

The SANQF requires learners to,

- “take responsibility for own learning within a supervised environment,
- evaluate own performance against given criteria,
- take decisions about and responsibility for actions, and
- take the initiative to address any shortcomings found.”

The outcomes are similar in the cognitive challenge, but the requirement of the SANQF for learners to address shortcomings in their performance represents a higher level of functioning than that required by the SADCQF. In terms of Autonomy and Responsibility.

Summary

The SADCQF Level 4 is slightly lower overall than the SANQF level 4.

Analysing Level 5

Level 5 Knowledge	
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate a broad knowledge base with substantial depth in some areas and • analyse information and construct a coherent argument 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an informed understanding of the core areas of one or more fields/disciplines/ practices • an informed understanding of the key terms, concepts, facts, general principles, rules and theories of that field/ discipline/ practice • an awareness of how knowledge or a knowledge system develops and evolves within the area of study/ operation

The Knowledge required by:

The SADCQF is for the learner to:

- demonstrate a broad knowledge base with substantial depth in some areas and
- analyse information and construct a coherent argument

The SANQF requires learners to demonstrate:

- an informed understanding of the core areas of one or more fields/disciplines/ practices, and
- an informed understanding of the key terms, concepts, facts, general principles, rules and theories of that field/ discipline/ practice and
- an awareness of how knowledge or a knowledge system develops and evolves within the area of study/ operation

The informed knowledge of core areas and terms, concepts, facts and general principles demanded by the SANQF represents a higher cognitive challenge than the broad general knowledge with substantial depth required by the SADCQF but the requirement to construct a coherent argument raises the latter's cognitive demand. The Knowledge category of the SANQF, however, poses more of a cognitive challenge than the SADCQF.

Level 5 Skills	
	
<p>apply a wide range of technical and/or scholastic skills in variable contexts using standard and non-standard procedures, often in combination.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • select and apply standard methods, procedures or techniques within the field/discipline/ practice; • plan and manage an implementation process within a well-defined, familiar and supported environment • identify, evaluate and solve defined, routine and new problems within a familiar context; • apply solutions based on relevant evidence and procedures or other forms of explanation appropriate to the field/ discipline/ practice demonstrating an understanding of the consequences • identify, evaluate and solve defined, routine and new problems within a familiar context; • communicate information reliably, accurately and coherently, using conventions appropriate to the context, in written and oral or signed form or in practical demonstration including an understanding of and respect for conventions around intellectual property, copyright and plagiarism, including associated legal implications.

The Skills demanded by the SADCQF are to “apply a wide range of technical and/or scholastic

skills in variable contexts using standard and non-standard procedures, often in combination.”
The SANQF requires learners to demonstrate:

- select and apply standard methods, procedures or techniques within the field/discipline/ practice;
- plan and manage an implementation process within a well-defined, familiar and supported environment
- identify, evaluate and solve defined, routine and new problems within a familiar context;
- apply solutions based on relevant evidence and procedures or other forms of explanation appropriate to the field/ discipline/ practice demonstrating an understanding of the consequences
- identify, evaluate and solve defined, routine and new problems within a familiar context;
- communicate information reliably, accurately and coherently, using conventions appropriate to the context, in written and oral or signed form or in practical demonstration including an understanding of and respect for conventions around intellectual property, copyright and plagiarism, including associated legal implications.

The SADCQF presents less of a cognitive challenge than the Skills demanded by the SANQF.

Level 5 Autonomy and responsibility	
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work independently under broad guidance and • take some responsibility for supervising the work of others and group outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate their performance or the performance of others and take appropriate action where necessary, • take responsibility for their learning within a structured learning process, • promote the learning of others, • account for their actions, • work effectively with and respect others, • in a defined context, take supervisory responsibility for others and for the responsible use of resources where appropriate

In terms of Autonomy and Responsibility:

The SADCQF requires learners to:

- work independently under broad guidance and
- take some responsibility for supervising the work of others and group outcomes.”

The SANQF requires learners to:

- evaluate their performance or the performance of others and take appropriate action where necessary,
- take responsibility for their learning within a structured learning process,
- promote the learning of others,
- account for their actions,
- work effectively with and respect others,
- in a defined context, take supervisory responsibility for others and for the responsible use of resources where appropriate.”

These requirements in the two frameworks for Autonomy and Responsibility in general place the same cognitive demand on learners.

Summary

The SADCQF level 5 is at a lower level the SANQF level 5.

Analysing Level 6

Level 6 Knowledge	
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate specialist knowledge in more than one area and collate, analyse and synthesise a wide range of technical information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “detailed knowledge of the main areas of one or more fields/ disciplines/ practices, knowledge and application of key terms, concepts, facts, principles, rules and theories of that field/discipline/practice to unfamiliar but relevant contexts; knowledge of area/s of specialisation and how that knowledge relates to other fields/disciplines/practices, an understanding of different forms of knowledge, schools of thought and forms of explanation within an area of study/operation/practice and an awareness of knowledge production processes.

The Knowledge required by the SADCQF is for learners to:

- demonstrate specialist knowledge in more than one area and
- collate, analyse and synthesise a wide range of technical information.

The knowledge required by the SANQF is:

- “detailed knowledge of the main areas of one or more fields/ disciplines/ practices,
- knowledge and application of key terms, concepts, facts, principles, rules and theories of that field/discipline/practice to unfamiliar but relevant contexts;
- knowledge of area/s of specialisation and how that knowledge relates to other fields/disciplines/practices,
- an understanding of different forms of knowledge, schools of thought and forms of explanation within an area of study/operation/practice and
- an awareness of knowledge production processes.

In the Knowledge category, the SANQF is more challenging in that it demands application of detailed knowledge to unfamiliar contexts and how it relates to other fields, different schools of thought and an understanding of knowledge production.

Level 6 Skills	
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> apply specialist knowledge and skills in highly variable contexts formulate responses to concrete and abstract problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluate, select and apply appropriate methods, procedures or techniques in processes of investigation within a defined context, identify, analyse and solve problems in unfamiliar contexts, evaluate different sources of information, select information appropriate to the task and apply well-developed processes of analysis, synthesis and evaluation to that information, make decisions and act appropriately in familiar and new contexts, demonstrating an understanding of the relationships between systems and of how actions, ideas, or developments in one system impact on other systems.

The SADCQF Skills are to:

- apply specialist knowledge and skills in highly variable contexts and
- formulate responses to concrete and abstract problems.

The SANQF skills are for learners to:

- evaluate, select and apply appropriate methods, procedures or techniques in processes of investigation within a defined context,
- identify, analyse and solve problems in unfamiliar contexts,
- evaluate different sources of information,
- select information appropriate to the task and
- apply well-developed processes of analysis, synthesis and evaluation to that information,
- make decisions and act appropriately in familiar and new contexts, demonstrating an understanding of the relationships between systems and of how actions, ideas, or developments in one system impact on other systems.

The SANQF's requirement for learners to identify problems and to select appropriate information and to make decisions as well as understand how actions and developments in one system impact on another makes the SANQF requirements for Skills cognitively more challenging than the Skills of the SADCQF at this level.

Level 6 Autonomy and responsibility	
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manage processes and • work with complete accountability for personal and group outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate performance against given criteria, • accurately identify and address their task-specific learning needs in a given context, • provide support to the learning needs of others where appropriate, • work effectively in a team or group and • take responsibility for their decisions and actions and decisions and actions of others within well-defined contexts, including responsibility for use of resources where appropriate

The Autonomy and Responsibility category of:

The SADCQF requires learners to:

- manage processes and
- work with complete accountability for personal and group outcomes.

The SANQF requires learners to:

- evaluate performance against given criteria,
- accurately identify and address their task-specific learning needs in a given context,
- provide support to the learning needs of others where appropriate,
- work effectively in a team or group and
- take responsibility for their decisions and actions and decisions and actions of others within well-defined contexts, including responsibility for use of resources where appropriate.

The SADCQF requirement of taking complete accountability for own and others outcomes is more demanding than the SANQF requirement of taking responsibility for own decisions and actions and those of others. However, the SANQF requirement for learners to evaluate performance against given criteria and to address own task-specific learning needs and to provide support to the needs of others and to work effectively in a team places demands on learners above those of the SADCQF.

Summary

The SADCQF level 6 categories are one level lower than those of the SANQF.

Analysing Level 7

Level 7 Knowledge	
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate knowledge of a major discipline with possible areas of specialisation, and have a command of the ideas, principles, concepts, chief research methods and problem-solving techniques of the recognised discipline.” The SANQF requires learners to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate integrated knowledge of the central areas of one or more fields/ disciplines/practices apply and evaluate key terms, concepts, facts, principles, rules and theories of that field/discipline/practice demonstrate detailed knowledge of area/s of specialisation and how that knowledge relates to other fields/disciplines/practices, demonstrate an understanding of knowledge as contested, evaluate types of knowledge and explanations typical within the area of study/ practice, identify, analyse, evaluate, critically reflect on and address complex problems, applying evidence-based solutions and theory-driven arguments.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated knowledge, not merely knowledge. The evaluation and application of key terms, etc. rather than having a command of them, The evaluation of types of knowledge and the identification, evaluation and reflection on complex problems not merely having a command of the problems.

For Knowledge:

The SADCQF requires learners to:

- demonstrate knowledge of a major discipline with possible areas of specialisation, and
- have a command of the ideas, principles, concepts, chief research methods and problem-solving techniques of the recognised discipline.”
- The SANQF requires learners to:
 - demonstrate integrated knowledge of the central areas of one or more fields/ disciplines/practices
 - apply and evaluate key terms, concepts, facts, principles, rules and theories of that field/discipline/practice
 - demonstrate detailed knowledge of area/s of specialisation and how that knowledge relates to other fields/disciplines/practices,
 - demonstrate an understanding of knowledge as contested,
 - evaluate types of knowledge and explanations typical within the area of study/ practice,
 - identify, analyse, evaluate, critically reflect on and address complex problems, applying evidence-based solutions and theory-driven arguments.”

The SANQF requirements are more challenging than those of the SADCQF as they include:

- Integrated knowledge, not merely knowledge.
- The evaluation and application of key terms, etc. rather than having a command of them,
- The evaluation of types of knowledge and the identification, evaluation and reflection on complex problems not merely having a command of the problems.

Level 7 Skills	
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intellectual independence, • critical thinking and analytical rigour, • advanced communication and collaborative skills in complex and variable contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an understanding of a range of methods of enquiry in a field/ discipline/ practice and their suitability to specific investigations, • selection and application of a range of methods to resolve problems or introduce change within a practice, • develop appropriate processes of information gathering for a given context/use, • independently validate the sources of information and evaluate and manage the information, • develop and communicate ideas and opinions in well-formed arguments using appropriate academic, professional or occupational discourse, • manage processes in unfamiliar and variable contexts, recognising that problem-solving is context- and system-bound and does not occur in isolation

The Skills required by the SADCQF are:

- intellectual independence,
- critical thinking and analytical rigour,
- advanced communication and collaborative skills in complex and variable contexts.

The SANQF skills are:

- an understanding of a range of methods of enquiry in a field/ discipline/ practice and their suitability to specific investigations,
- selection and application of a range of methods to resolve problems or introduce change within a practice,
- develop appropriate processes of information gathering for a given context/use,
- independently validate the sources of information and evaluate and manage the information,
- develop and communicate ideas and opinions in well-formed arguments using appropriate academic, professional or occupational discourse,
- manage processes in unfamiliar and variable contexts, recognising that problem-solving is context- and system-bound and does not occur in isolation.”

The skills of the two Qualification Frameworks at this level cover different competencies, however they could imply a similar cognitive challenge. The SANQF skills of the selection of methods related to the introduction of change, the development of processes for information gathering and the management of processes in variable and unfamiliar contexts are more challenging than those explicitly stated for the SADCQF.

Level 7 Autonomy and responsibility	
	
<p>designing and managing processes and works with broad accountability for determining, achieving and evaluating personal and group outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify, evaluate and address learning needs in a self-directed manner, • facilitate collaborative learning processes, • take full responsibility for own work, decision-making and use of resources and limited accountability for decisions and actions of others in varied or ill-defined contexts

Autonomy and Responsibility for:

The SADCQF entails “designing and managing processes and works with broad accountability for determining, achieving and evaluating personal and group outcomes.” The SANQF requires learners to:

- identify, evaluate and address learning needs in a self-directed manner,
- facilitate collaborative learning processes,
- take full responsibility for own work, decision-making and use of resources and limited accountability for decisions and actions of others in varied or ill-defined contexts.”

The SANQF categories demand more of learners in that they have to facilitate collaborative learning processes and manage them and take full responsibility for own decision making, work and use of resources and limited responsibility for those of others rather than be broadly accountable for them as required by the SADCQF.

In the SADCQF the taking of broad accountability for determining, achieving and evaluating own personal outcomes at this level contrasts and conflicts somewhat with the outcome at level 4 where the learner takes complete responsibility of own outcomes in the SADCQF categories.

Summary

The SADCQF categories at level 7 are lower than those of the SANQF at Level 7, and the SANQF Level 7 speaks partially to Level 8.

Analysing Level 8

Level 8 Knowledge	
	 NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
demonstrate critical understanding of the principles, theories, methodologies, current research and literature of the discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• demonstrate knowledge of and engagement in an area at the forefront of a field/discipline/practice,• understand theories, research methodologies, methods and techniques relevant to the field/discipline/practice and understand how to apply such knowledge in a particular context,• interrogate multiple sources of knowledge in an area of specialisation and• evaluate knowledge and processes of knowledge production

The Knowledge category in the SADCQF requires learners to, “demonstrate critical understanding of the principles, theories, methodologies, current research and literature of the discipline.” The SANQF requires learners to:

- demonstrate knowledge of and engagement in an area at the forefront of a field/discipline/practice,
- understand theories, research methodologies, methods and techniques relevant to the field/discipline/practice and
- understand how to apply such knowledge in a particular context,
- interrogate multiple sources of knowledge in an area of specialisation and
- evaluate knowledge and processes of knowledge production.

While the SANQF requires application of knowledge in an area and interrogation of multiple sources of knowledge and the evaluation of processes of knowledge production the SADCQF requirement that the learner has a critical understanding of principles, theories, etc., makes the latter more complex, particularly as the listed competencies in the SANQF could be implicit in the SADCQF.

Level 8 Skills	
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use a coherent and critical understanding of the principles, theories and methodologies of a particular discipline, • select and apply appropriate research methods and techniques • critically analyse and independently evaluate information.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “an understanding of the complexities and uncertainties of selecting, applying or transferring appropriate standard procedures, processes or techniques to unfamiliar problems in a specialised field/discipline/practice, • using a range of specialised skills to identify, analyse and address complex or abstract problems drawing systematically on the body of knowledge and methods appropriate to a field/discipline/practice, • critically reviewing information gathering, synthesis of data, evaluation and management processes in specialised contexts in order to develop creative responses to problems and issues, and • operating effectively within a system or managing a system based on an understanding of the roles and relationships between elements in a system.”

The Skills of the SADCQF are to:

- use a coherent and critical understanding of the principles, theories and methodologies of a particular discipline,
- select and apply appropriate research methods and techniques
- critically analyse and independently evaluate information.”

The SANQF skills are:

- “an understanding of the complexities and uncertainties of selecting, applying or transferring appropriate standard procedures, processes or techniques to unfamiliar problems in a specialised field/discipline/practice,
- using a range of specialised skills to identify, analyse and address complex or abstract problems drawing systematically on the body of knowledge and methods appropriate to a field/discipline/practice,
- critically reviewing information gathering, synthesis of data, evaluation and management processes in specialised contexts in order to develop creative responses to problems and issues, and
- operating effectively within a system or managing a system based on an understanding of the roles and relationships between elements in a system.”

While the SANQF requires the learner to develop creative responses to problems and to understand the uncertainties of transferring standard processes to unfamiliar problems which are not in the SADCQF, the two framework categories pose the same cognitive challenge in terms of Skills.

Level 8 Autonomy and responsibility	
	 NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
operate within the context of a strategic plan with complete accountability for management of resources and supervision of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply, in a self-critical manner, learning strategies which effectively address professional and ongoing learning needs of self and others and • take full responsibility for own work, decision-making and use of resources, and full accountability for decisions and actions of others where appropriate

Autonomy and Responsibility in:

The SADCQF category is for requires learners to “operate within the context of a strategic plan with complete accountability for management of resources and supervision of others.”

The SANQF requires learners to:

- apply, in a self-critical manner, learning strategies which effectively address professional and ongoing learning needs of self and others and
- take full responsibility for own work, decision-making and use of resources, and full accountability for decisions and actions of others where appropriate

The SADCQF requirements are at the same level as those of the SANQF.

Summary

The SADCQF level 8 is at the same level as that of the SANQF.

Analysing Level 9

Level 9 Knowledge	
	 NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
demonstrate mastery of theoretically sophisticated subject matter, showing critical awareness of current problems and new insights at the forefront of the discipline area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate specialist knowledge to enable engagement with and critique current research or practices and an advanced scholarship or research in a particular field • evaluate current processes of knowledge production and choose an appropriate process of enquiry for the area of study/practice.

The Knowledge category of the SADCQF requires learners to “demonstrate mastery of theoretically sophisticated subject matter, showing critical awareness of current problems and new insights at the forefront of the discipline area.” The SANQF requires learners to:

- demonstrate specialist knowledge to enable engagement with and critique current research or practices and an advanced scholarship or research in a particular field
- evaluate current processes of knowledge production and choose an appropriate process of enquiry for the area of study/practice.

The two categories could be regarded as posing the same cognitive challenge in regard to Knowledge.

Level 9 Skills	
	 <small>NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK</small>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct original research deploying appropriate research methods and processes and primary and secondary source information using rigorous intellectual analysis and independent thinking • applying knowledge in new situations • independent thinking and problem solving, • critical evaluation of research findings and • make judgements based on knowledge and evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "design, select and apply appropriate and creative methods, techniques, processes or technologies to complex practical and theoretical problems, • use a wide range of specialised skills in identifying, conceptualising, designing and implementing methods of enquiry to address complex and challenging problems within a field/discipline/practice • understand consequences of any solutions or insights generated within a specialised context, • make autonomous ethical decisions which affect knowledge production, or complex organisational or professional issues, • critically contribute to the development of ethical standards in a specific context, • design and implement a strategy for processing and managing information, in order to conduct a comprehensive review of leading and current research in an area of specialisation to produce significant insights, • use the resources of academic and professional or occupational discourses to communicate and defend substantial ideas that are the products of research or development in an area of specialisation, • use a range of advanced, specialised skills and discourses appropriate to a field/discipline/practice to communicate to audiences with different levels of knowledge or expertise, • make interventions at an appropriate level within a system, based on an understanding of hierarchical relations within the system."

The Skills required for:

The SADCQF are to:

- conduct original research deploying appropriate research methods and processes and primary and secondary source information using rigorous intellectual analysis and independent thinking
- applying knowledge in new situations
- independent thinking and problem solving,
- critical evaluation of research findings and
- make judgements based on knowledge and evidence."

The SANQF skills are:

- "design, select and apply appropriate and creative methods, techniques, processes or technologies to complex practical and theoretical problems,
- use a wide range of specialised skills in identifying, conceptualising, designing and implementing methods of enquiry to address complex and challenging problems within a field/discipline/practice
- understand consequences of any solutions or insights generated within a specialised context,
- make autonomous ethical decisions which affect knowledge production, or complex organisational or professional issues,
- critically contribute to the development of ethical standards in a specific context,

- design and implement a strategy for processing and managing information, in order to conduct a comprehensive review of leading and current research in an area of specialisation to produce significant insights,
- use the resources of academic and professional or occupational discourses to communicate and defend substantial ideas that are the products of research or development in an area of specialisation,
- use a range of advanced, specialised skills and discourses appropriate to a field/discipline/practice to communicate to audiences with different levels of knowledge or expertise,
- make interventions at an appropriate level within a system, based on an understanding of hierarchical relations within the system.”

The SADCQF category requires learners to carry out research which includes all the cognitive skills that accompany it such as creativity, communication, critical thinking, without spelling it out in detail. The SANQF also requires research at the same level but spells out the related competencies that are involved. The two categories pose the same cognitive challenge in regard to Skills.

Level 9 Autonomy and responsibility	
	 <small>NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK</small>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • showing independence, initiative and originality • managing own and group outcomes in complex and unpredictable situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop their own learning strategies which sustain independent learning and academic or professional development, • interact effectively within the learning or professional group as a means of enhancing learning, • operate independently • take full responsibility for own work and • account for leading and initiating processes and implementing systems, ensuring good resource management and governance practices.”

Autonomy and Responsibility is regarded by:

The SADCQF as:

- showing independence, initiative and originality and
- managing own and group outcomes in complex and unpredictable situations.

The SANQF requires learners to:

- develop their own learning strategies which sustain independent learning and academic or professional development,
- interact effectively within the learning or professional group as a means of enhancing learning,
- operate independently
- take full responsibility for own work and
- account for leading and initiating processes and implementing systems, ensuring good resource management and governance practices.”

The differences at this level are that the SADCQF details the autonomy and responsibility to take place in complex and unpredictable circumstances, which is not stated in the SANQF requirements. The SANQF details interaction with a learning and professional group and ensuring good resource management and governance practices as requirements but the SADCQF does not. The underlying requirement of both frameworks is independent work and managing/taking responsibility for own and group outcomes so the two frameworks could be

seen as offering the same cognitive challenge in the category of Autonomy and Responsibility.

Summary

The SADCQF Level 9 can be regarded as at the same level as the SANQF.

Analysing Level 10

Level 10 Knowledge	
	
<p>make a substantial and original contribution to knowledge in the field of study through research and scholarship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrating expertise and critical knowledge in an area at the forefront of the field/discipline/practice, • conceptualising new research initiatives, • creating new knowledge, • contributing to scholarly debates around theories of knowledge and processes of knowledge production in an area of study/ practice.

Under Knowledge, the SADCQF requires learners to, “make a substantial and original contribution to knowledge in the field of study through research and scholarship.” The SANQF sees knowledge at this level as:

- demonstrating expertise and critical knowledge in an area at the forefront of the field/discipline/practice,
- conceptualising new research initiatives,
- creating new knowledge,
- contributing to scholarly debates around theories of knowledge and processes of knowledge production in an area of study/ practice.

Both frameworks require the learner to undertake research and produce original/new knowledge in a field. They demand the same cognitive challenge to learners in the Knowledge category.

Level 10 Skills	
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct original research which is evaluated by independent experts against international standards, • solve problems and • critically evaluate research findings for academic discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply specialist knowledge and theory in critically reflexive, creative and novel ways to address complex practical and theoretical problems • make independent judgements about managing incomplete or inconsistent information or data in an iterative process of analysis and synthesis, for the development of significant original insights into new complex and abstract ideas, information or issues, • produce substantial, independent, in-depth and publishable work which meets international standards, is considered to be new or innovative by peers, and makes a significant contribution to the field/ discipline/ practice, • develop a communication strategy to disseminate and defend research, strategic and policy initiatives and their implementation to specialist and non-specialist audiences using full resources of academic and professional/ occupational discourse,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate an understanding of theoretical underpinnings in the management of complex systems to achieve systemic change, and • independently design, sustain and manage change within a system or systems.”
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The Skills required by:

The SADCQF are to:

- conduct original research which is evaluated by independent experts against international standards,
- solve problems and
- critically evaluate research findings for academic discussion.

The SANQF requires learners to:

- apply specialist knowledge and theory in critically reflexive, creative and novel ways to address complex practical and theoretical problems
- make independent judgements about managing incomplete or inconsistent information or data in an iterative process of analysis and synthesis, for the development of significant original insights into new complex and abstract ideas, information or issues,
- produce substantial, independent, in-depth and publishable work which meets international standards, is considered to be new or innovative by peers, and makes a significant contribution to the field/ discipline/ practice,
- develop a communication strategy to disseminate and defend research, strategic and policy initiatives and their implementation to specialist and non-specialist audiences using full resources of academic and professional/ occupational discourse and
- demonstrate an understanding of theoretical underpinnings in the management of complex systems to achieve systemic change, and
- independently design, sustain and manage change within a system or systems.”

While the SANQF gives greater detail regarding the skills to be demonstrated through the research to be done, the two sets of Skills requirements offer the same cognitive challenge.

Level 10 Autonomy and responsibility	
	 <small>NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK</small>
demonstrate full responsibility and accountability for all aspects of advanced research work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate intellectual independence, research leadership and management of research and research development in a field/ discipline/ practice, • operate independently and take full responsibility for own work, and where appropriate, lead, oversee and be held ultimately accountable for the overall governance of processes and systems

For Autonomy and Responsibility:

The SADCQF requires learners to “demonstrate full responsibility and accountability for all aspects of advanced research work.”

The SANQF requires learners to:

- demonstrate intellectual independence, research leadership and management of research and research development in a field/ discipline/ practice,

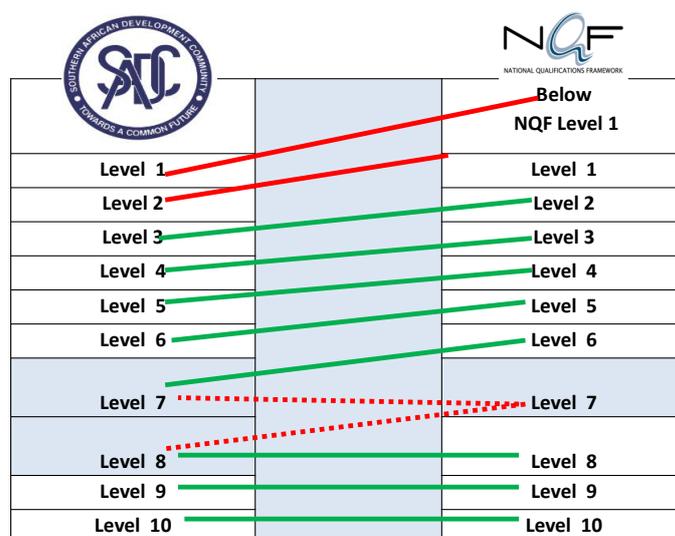
- operate independently and take full responsibility for own work, and where appropriate, lead, oversee and be held ultimately accountable for the overall governance of processes and systems.

The two sets of requirements, apart from the SANQF requiring the learner to lead, oversee and be held ultimately accountable for the overall governance of processes and systems, are similar in cognitive demand.

Summary

The SADCQF level 10 is at the same level as the SANQF level 10.

Conclusion and recommendations



The following conclusions can be made from the comparison:

- The lack of specificity in the SADCQF levels made the comparison difficult as the cognitive skills and knowledge stated in the SANQF might be implicit in the SADCQF.
- The lack of progression of categories (competencies) at each level through the SADCQF also made comparison difficult.
- Lack of progression is a weakness in the SADCQF.
- The SANQF levels are one level higher for all the levels from level one to level seven. However, the degree of difference in cognitive challenge in the two frameworks narrows as one progresses from Level 1 to Level 7. This results in the SANQF Level 7, falling between SADC Level 7 and SADC Level 8. See Figure above.
- Once a research component becomes part of both frameworks at levels 8, 9 and 10, the SADCQF and the SANQF levels are aligned. See Figure above.

The following recommendations are made:

- The SADCQF be more specific about the competencies required within each of its three categories (Knowledge, Skills and Autonomy and Responsibility).
- The competencies used in the SADCQF be included at each level and that they progress in complexity clearly from level to level.
- Thought be given to including competencies such as communication, managing change and ethics in the SADCQF levels in the relevant category, e.g. knowledge or skills.