Over two decades of the South African NQF

African Continental Qualifications Framework 7th Peer Learning Webinar
29 October 2020

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South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)
Presentation overview

1. Background to the South African NQF (SANQF)
2. What is the SANQF
3. Features of the SANQF
4. Key lessons
1995: South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act

1996: SAQA established

1998: Eight-level NQF published

2002: Study team review on implementation of NQF

2003: Interdepartmental NQF study team report

2007: Joint statement by Ministers of education and labour

2008: NQF Act

2010: Ministries of higher education and basic education established

2012/2013: Determination of NQF Sub-Frameworks

2013: White Paper on Post-school Education and Training

2014: Three Sub-Framework policies published

2019: NQF Amendment Act
What is the NQF?

Comprehensive, integrated system approved by the M:HEST

Unlocks access, redress and recognition
NQF Purpose / Objectives

- Single, Integrated Framework
- Access, Mobility, Progression
- Quality
- Redress, Transparency
- Personal/Social/Economic development of lifelong learner and nation
Integrated approach:

- Quality Assurance (QA) embedded in the NQF
- Learning outcomes and learning pathways embedded in the NQF

SAQA and the Quality Councils focus on...

- Developing and maintaining an integrated and transparent framework for recognising learning achievements
- Ensuring that South African Qualifications meet appropriate criteria and are internationally comparable
- Ensuring that South African Qualifications are of an acceptable quality
Three Quality Councils have executive responsibility for their Sub-Frameworks.

- National Qualifications Framework
- ABET Levels and the National Senior Certificate

- Council on Higher Education (CHE)
- Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)
- Umalusi

- Adult Education and Training

- Umalusi is responsible for the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework on NQF levels 1 - 4
- Council on Higher Education is responsible for the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework on NQF levels 5 - 10
- Quality Council for Trades and Occupations is responsible for the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework on NQF levels 1 - 8

*Where an occupational qualification is needed at NQF levels 9 and 10, the developers should contact SAQA and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations to motivate.
Established/registered Providers of Education and Training in South Africa offering:

1. **Public provider**
   - Established through an Act of Parliament
   - Registered with DHET

2. **Private provider**
   - Independent schools offering basic education
     - Registered with the Provincial Dept in the Province where they offer their services

All qualifications must be registered on the NQF
Level Descriptors and Learning Outcomes

**Level descriptors**

- Level Descriptors indicate the **generic cognitive competencies** that all qualifications need to develop at all NQF levels.
- Two or more qualifications on the same NQF level indicates comparability of the cognitive levels of the ELOs of the qualification and the generic cognitive competencies.

**Learning Outcomes**

- **Modules/subjects** in NQF qualifications have learning outcomes.
- Learning outcomes are made **visible by specific**: *Exit Level Outcomes (ELOs)*; *Associated Assessment Criteria (AACs)*; *Curriculum content*.
The SANQF Level Descriptors

- Practical competence
- Foundational competence
- Applied Competence
- Reflexive competence

Ten competencies:
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 information
8. Context and systems
9. Management of learning
10. Accountability
Uses Of Level Descriptors

to design new study programmes

to write learning outcomes

to write assessment criteria

to assess / evaluate qualifications

to assess prior learning

to incorporate non-traditional learning into credit-bearing subjects/modules and/or qualifications

to relate modules/qualifications

for accreditation purposes

to assess / determine learning progression at different levels
Critical Crossfield Outcomes

1. **Identify and solve problems** in which responses demonstrate responsible decisions using critical and creative thinking

2. **Work** effectively with others as a **member of a team**, group, organisation, community

3. **Organise** and **manage oneself** and one's activities responsibly and effectively

4. Collect, analyse, organise and critically **evaluate information**

5. **Communicate effectively** using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written presentation

6. Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the **environment and health** of others

7. Demonstrate an understanding of the **world as a set of related systems** by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation
1. Reflect on and explore a variety of strategies to learn more effectively

2. Participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national, and global communities

3. Be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts

4. Explore education and career opportunities

5. Develop entrepreneurial opportunities
Other relational functions linked to the SANQF

NQF Management Information System: NLRD

- Linking qualifications to learning pathways
- Evaluation of foreign qualifications
- Recognition of PBs and registration of PDs
- Verification of national qualifications
- Research
- Advice
National Learners’ Records Database (NLRD) Snapshot as at 30 September 2020

- **206 094** Current and past registered assessors
- **6414** Accredited providers
- **105** Recognised professional bodies
- **384** Registered professional designations
- **1 153 460** professionals with designations
- **20 286 647** Learners
- **17 583 634** Qualification Achievements
- **111 471 414** Part-qualification Achievements
- **99 102** learners with achievements through RPL
Top 30: Learning pathways through NQF Levels between 1995 and 2014

Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF)

L4 to L8 (30 865)
L4 to L7 (25 043)
L4 to L6 (21 008)
L4 to L5 (19 012)
L4 to L4 (14 502)
L4 to L3 (10 978)
L4 to L2 (27 474)
L4 to L1 (17 368)

Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF)

L9 (43 531)
L8 (130 344)
L7 (187 153)
L7 to L8 (69 663)
L6 to L8 (53 120)
L6 to L7 (57 973)
L6 to L6 (43 406)
L6 to L5 (37 411)
L5 to L6 (35 930)
L5 (39 995)
L5 to L5 (33 586)
L5 to L4 (40 158)
L5 to L3 (42 111)
L5 to L2 (22 747)
L5 to L1 (17 166)
L4 (4 456 142)
L4 to L3 (88 904)
L4 to L2 (17 510)
L4 to L1 (17 166)
L3 (88 904)
L3 to L2 (71 044)
L3 to L1 (68 333)
L2 (17 510)
L2 to L1 (17 166)
L1 (17 368)
Recognise foreign qualifications

Application → Verification

Institution Qualification Award/Documents

Comparison

UQP
CERTIFICATE OF EVALUATION

VINCENT MANO

Qualification: Bachelor of Information Technology
Awarding Body / Institution: University of Argentina
Date of Completion / Award: 2019

Closest Comparable South African Qualification / Qualification Type: Bachelor of Commerce: Information Systems
Organising Field: Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences
Sub Framework Location: Higher Education Qualifications Sub-framework
NQF Level: 7
Credits: 380

eSAQA Certificate of Evaluation

VINCENT MANO

16:47 PM (Africa/Johannesburg) on 19 Aug 2020

SAQA has confirmed the above information, for digital certification and sharing by PrivySeal Limited, at 16:45 PM (Africa/Johannesburg) on 19 Aug 2020.
Verify national qualifications

SAQA Verifications Service

This service is to verify South African Qualification Achievements

Private Sector Clients

Public Sector Clients

Individual Verification Letters

Extract from the NLRD

VeriSearch
Definition of authentic qualification:
- Provider/ programme accreditation to offer qualification;
- Qualification registered on NQF;
- Authentic qualification holder

SAQA responsible for two separate registers: fraud and misrepresentation

- Maintain register of fraudulent qualifications
- Maintain register of misrepresented qualifications
**Professional Body:**
- Statutory or non-statutory body of expert practitioners in an occupational field

**Professional Designation:**
- A title or status conferred by a professional body in recognition of a person’s expertise and/or
- Right to practise in an occupational field

In addition to recognising professional qualifications:
- Recognise professional bodies
- Register professional designations (separate register, NQF Amendment Act, 2019)
### Research

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Study Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>NQF Impact Study</td>
<td>NQF helped SA to transform its system in the directions desired</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>NQF Impact Study</td>
<td>Learning pathways research (learning pathways at three levels: systemic, specific agreements, learner support) Flexible learning and teaching practices (FLTP) research (implementing FLTPs needs flexibility in the admin, curriculum, provision and student support systems)</td>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>NQF Impact Study</td>
<td>Increased integration of public and private HE over time Need for enhanced communication in some sectors Where NQF partner policies are aligned/not-aligned Widespread use/appreciation of the NQF Level Descriptors - with some difficulties in distinguishing between certain levels; and the need for enhancement to use for occupational qualifications Use of the transparency tools of the NQF (NLRD, verifications)</td>
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<td>2018</td>
<td>DPME NQF Impact Evaluation</td>
<td>Showed the NQF is embedded and being implemented across the system - although unevenly National Articulation Baseline Study - identified 75 strong articulation initiatives</td>
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<td>2020</td>
<td>Case Study of Flexible Learning Pathways in SA</td>
<td>Part of UNESCO's eight-country study of FLPs Leading examples identified in terms of national policy framework, structures, instruments and institutional practices</td>
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SA NQF alignment with SADCQF

Link to SANQF completed alignment report (May 2019):
Samuel Isaacs: “We make the NQF road by walking: boldly, accountably, and reflectively”

NQF = “No Quick Fixes”
Gino Govender

“If you build it, they will come”
Dennis Gunning
Key points and lessons from developing/implementing QFs

- Growth in the **numbers of sectoral, national, regional, continental QFs**
- QFs **integrate** systems for education, training, development and work, and are linked to **transformation** in many countries – the principles of access, inclusivity and equity are key principles for establishing NQFs
- **Lifelong learning (LLL)** is central to QFs – it needs to be understood *holistically* as being for personal as well as socio-economic development. Learning outcomes need to reflect lifelong, life-wide and life-deep contexts
- There is **increased use of NQF Level Descriptors and learning outcomes** internationally
- The **impact of QFs depends on** (1) how well they are aligned to country systems (2) the ability to use learning outcomes for clarity, transparency and articulation, and (3) participation in the system. The shift to an outcomes-based approach has many advantages – quality must not be sacrificed in when pursuing access
- There are useful theoretical frameworks for **assessing the impact of NQFs**
- QFs are found to be **catalysts for connectivity** between qualifications, learning pathways, sectors and organisations
- QFs are linked to **access, redress, learning pathways and mobility, quality and transparency** internationally
- It is important to **allow extended time for full stakeholder participation and inclusivity** in the context of QFs – the implementation of QFs is a multi-year process informed by continuous improvement
- **Global Framework for 2030** - QFs need to ensure (1) that learning pathways bridge low level to high level skills (2) sustainable development (3) the centrality of TVET (4) the right to education (5) mobility across borders and (6) alignment with Global Framework for 2030
LESSON 1 - QFs are here to stay: systems cannot be transplanted across countries because they are embedded in socio-cultural contexts, but instruments and approaches could be considered and there are many commonalities across QFs, and lessons to be learned, e.g.:

- QFs link education and training systems to lifelong learning, personal development and socio-economic development and transformation
- within NQFs, level descriptors and learning outcomes are used to enhance redress, access, learning pathways, mobility, quality and transparency

LESSON 2 - it is important to assess the impact of QFs and several studies show how this can be done

LESSON 3 - QFs need to address system alignment and so stakeholder involvement and inclusivity are important for the implementation of QFs - whether at sectoral, national, regional or continental level. Relational agency is needed to implement QFs as relational mechanisms
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