



# **Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework [OQSF] Policy**

**As approved by the Minister of Higher Education and Training (Notice 1040 of 2012; Government Gazette No. 36803 of 30 August 2013) in terms of the National Qualifications Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008) and as contemplated in the Skills Development Act, 1998(Act No. 97 of 1998).**

## **Acronyms**

AQP	Assessment Quality Partner
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DQP	Development Quality Partner
FET	Further Education and Training
FLC	Foundational Learning Competence
GFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
NAMB	National Artisan Moderating Body
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OFO	Organising Framework for Occupations
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework
QC	Quality Council
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority

## Glossary of Terms

Apprenticeship	A learnership for an officially listed trade, which includes a trade-test for that trade.
Assessment	The process used to gather and interpret evidence showing achievement of learning outcomes. Learners are assessed against the required competencies in a qualification in order to make a judgement about a learner’s achievement. Assessment is used for many purposes, including certification.
Assessment Quality Partner (AQP)	A body delegated by the QCTO to develop assessment instruments and manage external summative assessment of specific occupational qualifications.
Articulation	The relationships and linkages between components of the NQF which signal the capacity of one qualification to give access or partial access to another cognate qualification, or to allow for learning achievements in one context to be recognised in a different context.
CAT	An arrangement whereby the diverse features of both credit accumulation and credit transfer are combined to facilitate lifelong learning and access to the workplace.
Credit	A measure of volume of learning required for a qualification, quantified as the number of notional study hours required for achieving the learning outcomes specified for the qualification. One (1) credit is equated to ten (10) notional hours of learning.
Credit accumulation	The totalling of credits required to complete a qualification.
Credit transfer	The vertical, horizontal or diagonal relation of credits towards a qualification registered on the same or different levels of the NQF.
Development Quality Partner (DQP)	A body delegated by the QCTO to manage the process of developing specific occupational qualifications, curricula and assessment specifications.
External assessment	Assessment conducted by a person or body that is not directly involved in the development and/or delivery of the learning programme.
Foundational	The intellectual/academic skills of knowledge together with analysis,

competence	synthesis and evaluation, which includes information processing and problem solving.
Foundational Learning Competence Part Qualification	In the context of occupational qualifications, FLC represents a minimum level of competence in Communication and Mathematical Literacy as needed for successful progression in occupational training in the FET band.
Further Education and Training College	A public or private further education and training institution that is established or declared as: (i) a technical and vocational education and training college; or (ii) a community education and training college; or (iii) a private college that is established, declared or registered under the FET Colleges Act.
GFETQSF	The sub-framework of the NQF for General and Further Education and Training that is developed and managed by Umalusi.
HEQSF	The sub-framework of the NQF for Higher Education and Training that is developed and managed by the CHE.
Learnership	A learning programme registered with the DHET which consists of a structured learning component and a practical work experience component of a specified nature and duration. A learnership leads to a qualification registered on the NQF and relates to an occupation.
Learning programme	A structured and purposeful set of learning experiences that leads to a qualification.
Level	One of the series of levels of learning achievement arranged in ascending order from one to ten according to which the NQF is organised, and to which qualification types are pegged.
Lifelong learning	Learning that takes place in all contexts in life from a life-wide, life-deep and lifelong perspective. It includes learning behaviours and obtaining knowledge; understanding; attitudes; values and competences for personal growth, social and economic well-being, democratic citizenship, cultural identity and employability.
NAMB	The body responsible for the external summative assessment of all listed trades.
NLRD	The electronic management information system of the NQF, which contains records of qualifications, learner achievements, recognised professional bodies, professional designations and all related

	information such as registration and accreditations.
Occupational Qualification	A qualification that consists of a minimum of 25 Credits associated with a trade, occupation or profession. It results from work-based learning, consists of three components (knowledge, practical skills and work experience) and has an external summative assessment.
N qualification and part qualifications	Programmes of study originally developed to fulfil the curriculum requirements of the Department of Education's Report 191 (also known as NATED 191 or "N courses").
National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	The comprehensive system approved by the Minister of Higher Education and Training for the classification, co-ordination, registration and publication of articulated and quality-assured national qualifications. The South African NQF is a singled integrated system comprising three coordinated qualifications sub-frameworks for: General and Further Education and Training; Higher Education; and Trades and Occupations.
Notional hours	The agreed estimate of the learning time that it would take an average learner to meet the outcomes defined; this includes consideration of contact time, research, completion of assignments, time spent in structured learning in the workplace, individual learning and assessment. Ten (10) notional hours equate to one (1) credit.
Occupational specialisation	A skills set related to an occupation and which may be more or less complex than that of the occupation to which it is linked.
OFO	A coded classification system to encompass all occupations in South Africa, used as the DHET's key tool for identifying, reporting and monitoring skills demand and supply in the South African labour market.
Occupational qualification document	The QCTO methodology document that defines the learning required to be competent to practise an occupation or occupational specialisation.
Qualification	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.
Qualification	A unique descriptor stating the purpose of the qualification and how it

descriptor	relates to other qualification types. It enables comparisons with other qualifications and provides a basis for designing, evaluating, approving and reviewing qualifications and their associated curricula.
Qualification type	The classification of a qualification within a sub-framework of the NQF.
QC	One of the three Quality Councils established to develop and manage each of the sub-frameworks of the NQF: CHE for the HEQSF; Umalusi for the GFETQSF; QCTO for the OQSF.
QCTO	The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations established in terms of the NQF Act of 2008. It is tasked to achieve the objectives of the NQF and to develop and manage the OQSF.
RPL	The principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated and assessed for the purposes of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development.
SETA	A body established in terms of the Skills Development Act to develop and implement sector skills plans and promote learning programmes, including workplace learning. The QCTO has delegated quality assurance powers to the SETAs.
SAQA	The statutory authority established in terms of the NQF Act of 2008 (which replaced the SAQA Act of 1995) to oversee the further development and implementation of the NQF, the achievement of the objectives of the NQF, and the coordination of the three sub-frameworks.
Sub-framework of the NQF	One of three coordinated qualification sub-frameworks which make up the NQF as a single integrated system: the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework, the General and Further Education and Training Sub-Framework and the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework.
Trade	An occupation for which an artisan qualification and relevant trade test is required in terms of the Skills Development Act. SETAs are required to apply to NAMB to have an occupation listed as a trade.
Vocational orientation	Programmes or qualifications which aim to provide the knowledge and skills to enter the economy through a general, broad orientation in vocational areas, as well as general learning in essential areas such

	as Language and Mathematics.
Workplace-based learning	The exposure and interactions required to practice the integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes required in the workplace.

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# I. THE OCCUPATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SUB-FRAMEWORK IN CONTEXT

## A single qualifications framework for a diverse system

1. The Occupational Qualification Sub-framework (OQSF) is one of three sub-frameworks that comprise the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The NQF is a comprehensive system approved by the Minister of Higher Education and Training for the purpose of classifying, registering and publishing quality assured national qualifications, where articulation between and within the sub-frameworks is a noted characteristic.
2. The NQF consists of ten levels representing learning achieved where the levels are listed in ascending order from one to ten. The three sub-frameworks which form the NQF and the NQF levels associated with each sub-framework follows:

<b>Sub-framework</b>	<b>NQF levels associated with sub-framework</b>
General and Further Education and Training Sub-Framework (GFETQSF)	1 to 4
Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF)	5 to 10
Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF)	1 to 8

3. Each of the three sub-frameworks is managed by a Quality Council (QC) with the following general responsibilities:
  - 3.1 Development of qualifications and part qualifications.
  - 3.2 Quality assurance of those qualifications.
  - 3.3 Development and implementation of the following policies for their specific sectors:
    - i. Recognition of Prior Learning
    - ii. Credit Accumulation and Transfer
    - iii. Assessment.

3.4 Recommendation of qualifications to SAQA for registration on the NQF.

4. The QCs oversee the following sub-frameworks:

<b>Quality Council</b>	<b>Sub-framework</b>
Umalusi	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFETQSF)
Council on Higher Education (CHE)	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF)
Quality Council for Trades and Occupations	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF)

5. SAQA (originally established by the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995) continues to exist although the SAQA Act has been repealed and replaced by the NQF Act of 2008. According to the NQF Act, SAQA's role is to:

- 5.1 advance the objectives of the NQF;
- 5.2 oversee the further development and implementation of the NQF; and
- 5.3 co-ordinate the sub-frameworks.

6. With respect to the Quality Councils, SAQA's role entails but is not limited to:

- 6.1 developing a system of collaboration to guide the mutual relations of SAQA and the QCs;
- 6.2 developing the content of level descriptors for each level of the NQF (a level descriptor provides a broad indication of learning achievements or outcomes that are appropriate to a qualification at the relevant NQF level);
- 6.3 registering a qualification recommended by a QC if it meets the relevant criteria; and
- 6.4 developing policy and criteria for assessment, recognition of prior learning (RPL) and credit accumulation and transfer (CAT).

## **The legislative context of the QCTO**

7. The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) was established as a juristic person by the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 as amended in 2008

(see section 26G of the Skills Development Act). As per section 26H of the Act, the QCTO is responsible for:

- 7.1 establishing and maintaining occupational standards and qualifications;
- 7.2 the quality assurance of occupational standards and qualifications and learning in and for the workplace;
- 7.3 designing and developing occupational standards and qualifications and submitting them to SAQA for registration on the NQF; and
- 7.4 ensuring the quality of occupational qualifications and learning in and for the workplace.

## **Purpose of the OQSF**

8. Citizens have a right to education, including an occupational education. The purpose of the trade and occupational qualifications on the sub-framework is to fulfil the state's constitutional responsibility to enable this right.
  
9. The OQSF is designed to:
  - 9.1 facilitate the workplace based education of post school learners to contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of South Africa;
  - 9.2 provide occupational qualifications that can be credibly benchmarked against similar international occupational qualifications;
  - 9.3 be simple, easy to understand and user-friendly; and
  - 9.4 facilitate as far as possible the articulation between occupational qualifications within the sub-framework, and across the NQF to qualifications developed and managed by other Quality Councils.
  
10. The awarding of an occupational qualification indicates that a learner has successfully completed a coherent and purposeful programme of learning at a particular level on the NQF, and that the learner has been assessed as qualified.
  
11. Standards are developed as benchmarks in order to guide the design, implementation and quality assurance of learning programmes that lead to occupational qualifications.

## **The sub-framework and the NQF**

12. The OQSF is an integral part of the NQF. The terms used in this sub-framework are therefore consistent with NQF practice.

13. An occupational qualification is the formal recognition and certification of learning achievement awarded by an accredited skills development provider. The OQSF sets out the range of occupational qualification types in occupational education that may be awarded to mark the achievement of learning outcomes that have been appropriately assessed.
14. Every occupational qualification type is linked to descriptors. These descriptors set out specifications for different features of the qualification as follows:
  - 14.1 the total minimum credits required;
  - 14.2 naming conventions related to designators, qualifiers and abbreviations;
  - 14.3 the purpose and characteristics of an occupational qualification type;
  - 14.4 minimum requirements; and
  - 14.5 progression paths into other occupational qualification types.
15. An occupational qualification must conform to one of the occupational qualification types. The purpose of the OQSF is to define the relationships between occupational qualification types. The movement of individuals within and between occupational qualifications is guided by Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Accumulation and Transfer processes (CAT)

## **Roles and responsibilities**

16. The NQF Act (2008) has introduced changes in the roles and responsibilities of the different bodies that are responsible for ensuring the delivery of quality qualifications under the objectives of the NQF.
17. The Minister of Higher Education and Training has overall responsibility for the NQF and for determining the qualifications structure for the post school education and training system.
18. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) is responsible for the development and implementation of policy and criteria for registering qualifications on the NQF. This includes occupational qualifications on the recommendation of the QCTO.
19. The QCTO is responsible for:

- 19.1 establishing and maintaining occupational standards and occupational qualifications, including naming conventions for occupational qualifications;
  - 19.2 developing and managing the OQSF;
  - 19.3 advising the Minister of Higher and Training on matters relating to the OQSF;
  - 19.4 carrying out quality assurance of occupational standards and occupational qualifications;
  - 19.5 submitting occupational qualifications to SAQA for registration on the NQF; and
  - 19.6 ensuring the quality of occupational standards and occupational qualifications and learning in and for the workplace.
20. The QCTO makes use of Quality Partners whose role is to perform those functions delegated to it by the QCTO as derived from legislation (Sect 32 of the NQF Act and Sect 26 I of the SDA as amended).

## **Qualification standards**

21. The development of standards is vital in contributing to the successful implementation of the OQSF. Standards provide benchmarks to guide the development, implementation and quality assurance of all components (knowledge, practical skills and work experience) which comprise an occupational qualification. Standards for occupational training must have legitimacy, credibility and a common, well-understood meaning. The development of standards is in the early stages of conceptualisation, and the QCTO will put appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure the integrity of standards development and quality assurance processes respectively.
22. The occupational qualification standard is determined by two elements. One is the design specification for the occupational qualification, which is realised through its supporting curriculum. The other is the design specification of the assessment strategies and tools (both formative and external summative assessment). Evaluation and monitoring of the manner in which the curriculum is delivered and the assessment strategy is implemented supports the standard.
23. Standards are maintained and quality assured through processes developed by the QCTO to measure, evaluate, monitor and report against the

occupational qualification. This happens in relation to the implementation and delivery of the curriculum and its formative assessment by the accredited skills development provider, and the implementation of the external assessment by the Assessment Quality Partner.

24. Certification is at the apex of quality assurance process. Quality assurance is a value chain, a process which certification takes place at the end.

25. Development of an occupational qualification includes various stages that ensure that standards are maintained.

### **Qualifications, volumes of learning and credits**

26. The qualifications of the OQSF consist of level descriptors, the main occupational qualification type and their descriptors and qualifiers including specialisations.

27. The design of knowledge, practical skills and work experience modules in a qualification determines the volume of learning that is necessary to achieve that qualification. In the past, this measure of volume may have been expressed in terms of academic study time such as the number of academic years of study required.

28. The OQSF recognises credits as a measure of the volume of learning required for an occupational qualification. In the occupational domain, credits are quantified as the number of notional study and work hours required for achieving the occupational qualification, and not in terms of academic years of study. The credit rating of an occupational qualification is independent of the mode of delivery of learning. The attainment of credits is demonstrated through appropriate assessment.

29. The volume of learning required for an occupational qualification can be specified in terms of the total minimum number of credits required. In general, the minimum number of credits at the exit level of a trade and occupational qualification is 120. Qualifications carrying a lower credit value are however accepted. The credit value system rates ten (10) notional hours as equivalent to one (1) credit. Credits represent a measure of all the learning activities engaged in by the learner and include, among others,

contact time, self-study, Workplace based Learning, assignments, practical work, and external summative assessment.

30. Study leading directly to an occupational qualification will normally build upon assessed learning from earlier stages of a programme. It may also build on assessed prior learning previously achieved, for example in the workplace.

## **Accumulation of credits towards qualifications**

31. Credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) is the process whereby a learner's achievement is recognised and contributes to further learning even if the learner does not achieve an occupational qualification. In terms of the CAT scheme, any or all credits for an incomplete occupational qualification may be recognised by the same or a different skills development provider as meeting part of the requirements for the same or a different occupational qualification. Individual mobility between qualifications, components and skills development provider is determined by curriculum requirements and flexibility is promoted.
32. In terms of Section 13(h)(iii) of the NQF Act, SAQA is responsible for developing policy and criteria, after consultation with QCs, for credit accumulation and transfer. Until such time as the SAQA CAT policy has been approved, a maximum of 50% of the credits of a completed occupational qualification may be transferred to another occupational qualification. However, no more than 50% of the credits required for the other occupational qualification are credits that have been used for a completed occupational qualification. The purpose of this provision is to avoid the awarding of multiple occupational qualifications for the same work, and to ensure that occupational qualifications with different purposes are not embedded within each other. As exceptions, and subject to specified limits, credits for a completed occupational qualification may be recognised by the same or another training provider as meeting some of the requirements for another occupational qualification. Accumulation will be given based on RPL. The 50% policy will remain in place until the SAQA CAT Policy is finalised and other issues are clarified.

## **Work Integrated Learning**

33. Occupational qualifications are designed to integrate knowledge, practical skills and workplace learning into the curriculum, through incorporation of Work Integrated Learning (WIL). WIL is an umbrella term that covers the Work Experience component of occupational qualifications. It takes various forms, including simulated learning, work-directed theoretical learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning and work experience (work-based learning). WIL is a structured part of an occupational qualification: the volume of learning allocated to WIL should be appropriate to the purpose of the occupational qualification, and to the cognitive demands of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria contained in the appropriate level descriptor.
34. Where the entire WIL component or any part of it takes the form of Work Experience, it is the responsibility of the trade and skills development provider that offers that component to place learners into appropriate workplaces for the duration of training. Such work experience must be appropriately structured, properly supervised and assessed.

## **II. THE CHARACTER OF OQSF**

### **Characteristics**

35. The OQSF is designed to:
- 35.1 facilitate the training of post school adults who will contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of South Africa and participate successfully in the global economy and skilled society;
  - 35.2 be compatible with international occupational qualifications frameworks in order to ensure international recognition and comparability of standards;
  - 35.3 be suitably flexible to accommodate the development of new trade and occupational qualification types and specialisations as the need arises;
  - 35.4 be simple, easy to understand and user-friendly for the occupational training system and its clients;
  - 35.5 facilitate occupational qualification articulation across the occupational training system and assist learners to identify potential progression routes, particularly in the context of lifelong learning; and
  - 35.7 facilitate vertical, horizontal and diagonal progression within the sub-framework, and across the NQF through articulation with the other sub-frameworks.



## Scope and application

36. The OQSF applies to all qualifications that purport to be occupational qualifications.

37. The OQSF regulates and specifies all occupational types in the occupational training system. This includes occupational qualifications based on the QCTO model, their designators and qualifiers, their design features, and the manner in which occupational qualifications relate to one another.

## Number of levels and level descriptors

38. The NQF has ten levels. Occupational qualifications occupy eight levels, namely levels 1-8 of the NQF. These are described in the following diagram.

NQF	QUALIFICATION DESCRIPTOR	QUALIFICATION TYPE
8	MANAGERS	Occupational Certificate
7	PROFESSIONALS	Occupational Certificate
6	TECHNICIANS and ASSOCIATE PROFESSIONALS/ TRADES	Occupational Certificate
3 - 5	CLERICAL SUPPORT WORKERS/ TRADES	Occupational Certificate
3 - 5	SERVICE and SALES WORKERS/ TRADES	Occupational Certificate
3 - 5	SKILLED AGRICULTURAL, FORESTRY, FISHERY, CRAFT and RELATED TRADES WORKERS/ TRADES	Occupational Certificate
1 - 2	ELEMENTARY OCCUPATIONS, PLANT AND MACHINE OPERATORS AND ASSEMBLERS	Occupational Certificate

39. Each NQF level has a descriptor. Level descriptors provide guidelines for differentiating the varying levels of complexity of occupational qualifications on the framework.

40. The qualification descriptors are the outermost layer of an occupational qualification specification. The varying levels of complexity of occupational qualifications on the framework are structured according to the Organisaing Framework for Occupations (OFO) which is based on the International Labour Organisation International Standard Classification for Occupations (ISCO). Level descriptors are broad qualitative statements against which more specific learning outcomes can be compared and allocated. The positioning of many occupational qualifications on the same NQF level means only that the occupational qualifications are broadly comparable in terms of the general level of learning achievements. It does not mean that they have the same purpose, content, or outcomes, nor does it necessarily demonstrate equivalence between occupational qualifications or credits.

## **Qualification types**

41. The Ministerial Determination allows for only one qualification type on the OQSF, and this is the Occupational Certificate.

## **Qualification descriptors**

42. Occupational qualification descriptors designate specifications such as the NQF exit level and credit value, and the purpose and characteristics of the occupational qualification type recognised by the framework. Each descriptor is a point of reference which enables comparisons with other occupational qualifications and provides a basis for designing, approving and reviewing offerings. All occupational qualifications using a particular type (and designated variant where appropriate) in their titles must be consistent with the descriptor for that occupational qualification type as defined in this policy.

## **Exceptions to the qualification types and descriptors**

43. The OQSF accommodates the qualifications set out in the Nated Report 191 (N4-N6 and N Diploma) and the Foundational Learning Competence Part Qualification. These are exceptions to the qualification types specified in the OQSF, owing to national currency in relation to the trade qualifications and to the supportive function of the FLC Part Qualification. The current list of exceptions is found in Appendix 1. The Minister of Higher Education and Training may amend this list from time to time on the advice of the QCTO.

## **Naming of qualifications**

44. In terms of Section 27 of the NQF Act and based on relevant SAQA policy and criteria, the QCTO is responsible for the development of "a distinct nomenclature for its qualification types which is appropriate to the relevant sub-framework and consistent with international practice". No designator or qualifier may be used in an occupational qualification unless it is consistent with the criteria determined by the QCTO in terms of this policy.
45. The occupational qualification type is the first name given to an occupational qualification.
46. The descriptor is the second name given to an occupational qualification, to indicate its broad area of study, discipline and occupations. The designator is

the trade or the occupation a learner follows, such as Elementary Occupation, Technician or Associate Professional.

47. The third name given to an occupational qualification type is a qualifier. Qualifiers are used in all occupational qualification types in order to indicate a field of specialisation (e.g. Technician Certificate: Electrician). Occupational qualification types can include a second qualifier. The second qualifier qualifies the first. An example would be Technician Certificate: Electrician in Mining.

48. In order to use a qualifier, at least 50% of the minimum total credits for the occupational qualification and at least 50% of the minimum credits at the occupational qualification's exit level must be in the field of specialisation denoted by the qualifier. The designator and qualifiers attached to the occupational qualification type are subject to the criteria set by the QCTO.

## **Qualifications and statements of results**

49. Occupational qualifications are awarded to mark the achievement of defined outcomes. No occupational qualification may be awarded as compensation for a learner's failure at a higher level, or by default.

50. A statement of results is not an occupational qualification. It is a document issued by an skills development provider giving a descriptive record of the learning a learner has achieved from that training provider, whether or not an occupational qualification has been awarded.

51. If a learner leaves a provider before completing his/her occupational qualification, a statement of results will assist the admitting authorities if the learner wishes to complete the occupational qualification later, or register for a different occupational qualification. A statement of results is based on the learner's record at the training provider. It would generally include the following information:

- 51.1 the name of the skills development provider issuing the statement of results;
- 51.2 the accreditation number of the skills development provider;
- 51.3 the full title of the occupational qualification, including designator and qualifiers;

- 51.4 the name of the learner who is entitled (once all criteria satisfied) to receive the occupational qualification;
  - 51.5 the occupational qualification OFO code and SAQA ID number of the qualification as registered on the NQF;
  - 51.6 the NQF exit level and total credits of the occupational qualification;
  - 51.7 the NQF level and credit value of each component or part component completed by the learner;
  - 51.8 the trade/occupational achievement of the learner; and
  - 51.9 the official stamp (or other designation) of the skills development provider.
52. Each statement of results issued by the skills development or skills development provider to a current or former learner must have an official supplement attached to it. The supplement must provide a description of the nature, level, content and context (if relevant) of the studies pursued by a learner and assessed by the skills development provider. Provision of this supplement is aimed at improving the portability and transparency of trade and occupational qualifications.
53. The language of each occupational qualification certificate and statement of results issued to a learner must be consistent with the Ministry of Higher Education and Training's Language Policy. The QCTO supports the promotion of multilingualism as in the Minister's policy.
54. To enable employers, skills development providers and other stakeholders to understand the achievements and attributes represented by a trade and occupational qualification title, a certificate or statement of results must be issued in English in addition to any other official language.

## **Admission to occupational learning**

55. The OQSF is intended to facilitate articulation between workplace-based training and learning and further and higher education, as well as articulation within occupational learning itself. However, the possession of a trade and occupational qualification does not guarantee a learner's progression and admission to any other occupational qualification pathway.
56. All occupational qualifications on the OQSF specify minimum admission requirements.

## **Progression within the sub-framework**

57. The general principle is that the admitting skills development provider/institution is satisfied that the applicant has proven competence in the appropriate field of intended study at the appropriate entry level of the target occupational qualification.

58. In all cases, the admitting and skills development provider/institution must be satisfied that the applicant has the necessary competence, and that the 50/50 rule applies.

## **Recognition of prior learning**

59. With due regard to the policies, requirements and guidelines of the QCTO, skills development providers may recognise other forms of prior learning as equivalent to the prescribed minimum admission requirements, and may recognise other forms of prior learning for entry to a programme or for granting advanced standing in given components. In all cases the skills development provider must be satisfied that the applicant has the necessary competence.

60. In the interests of transparency, each skills development provider must clearly stipulate the requirements for admission, and make these requirements publicly accessible.

### **III. IMPLEMENTATION DATE AND TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

#### **The implementation date**

61. The implementation of the OQSF will be determined by the Minister of Higher Education and Training. The Minister of Higher Education and Training, in consultation with the QCTO, shall determine the date by which all existing qualifications not aligned with the OQSF will cease being offered to new learners by notice in the Government Gazette.
62. Transitional arrangements for all pre-existing occupational qualifications have been introduced as follows:
- 63.1 Unit standards-based qualifications remain valid until they are replaced or reach the end of their registration period.
  - 63.2 N4, N5 and N6 Part Qualifications remain valid, but are currently undergoing revision to ensure they align with the design of an occupational qualification (that is, they contain the three required components of knowledge, practical skills and work experience).
  - 63.3 The N Diploma remains valid with a revision to ensure the work experience component is structured supervised practical training.

#### **Qualifications and curriculum**

63. A new qualification or curriculum is one which has not existed before, or one which has been significantly changed in relation to its purpose, outcomes, area of study, mode or site of delivery.
64. The qualification design process is the basis for the quality assurance of occupational qualifications. It is expert-driven and is based on the desired occupational profile.
65. The development of curricula will be integral to the qualification design process. The curriculum must cover three components:
- 66.1 theory/knowledge;
  - 66.2 practical skills; and
  - 66.3 work experience.
66. The curriculum will include guidelines for teaching and learning provision.

67. The curriculum will include guidelines for the assessment of each curriculum component.
68. The curriculum will specify the requirements for accreditation of providers and approval of workplaces.
69. All occupational qualifications and curricula must comply with this policy by a date to be determined by the Minister of Higher Education and Training by notice in the Government Gazette.

### **Minimum admission requirements for external integrated summative assessment**

70. The Foundational Learning Competence (FLC) Part Qualification replaces the compulsory Fundamental unit standards in Communication and Mathematical Literacy that were previously required by SAQA at NQF Levels 1-4. The achievement of FLC is compulsory for the award of occupational qualifications at NQF Levels 3-4. This means that learners must produce evidence of the achievement of FLC in order to qualify for the External Integrated Summative Assessment for Occupational Certificates at NQF Levels 3 and 4.
71. All occupational qualifications specify the minimum admission requirements for entry into the External Integrated Summative Assessment.

### **Management of Information System**

72. The QCTO collaborates with SAQA in maintaining the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD) comprising of qualifications, part qualifications, learner uptake and achievement, and any other associated information.

### **Quality assurance**

73. The OQSF formally demarcates the QCTO's responsibilities, in terms of which the QCTO develops policies that express the standards used to quality assure the qualifications of the sub-framework, their provision and assessment.

74. In terms of the Skills Development Act, the QCTO is responsible for quality assurance of standards and qualifications. This includes the External Summative Assessment of all occupational qualifications.

75. The External Summative Assessment in respect of those occupational qualifications related to the gazetted trades is a trade test conducted at a trade test centre accredited by the QCTO.

76. The assessed curriculum associated with each qualification is subject to a coherent set of quality assurance practices and processes. The QCTO must be able to assure that the qualification has been credibly assessed and achieved through the External Summative Assessment.

77. The QCTO only approves the release of results if it has satisfied itself that the assessment body concerned has complied with all the quality assurance requirements prescribed by the QCTO for the conduct of assessment.

## **Categories of certification**

78. The QCTO will issue the following categories of certificates:

78.1 Trade Certificates for (i) existing trades without associated occupational qualifications; and (ii) trades listed on the OFO code with associated occupational qualifications.

78.2 Occupational Certificates for occupational qualifications with the minimum specified credits.

78.3 Occupational Part Qualifications for occupational qualifications that may form part of an occupational qualification, and/or are registered as such on the NQF. Currently this refers only to the NATED Part Qualifications and the FLC as exceptions within the OQSF.



## **APPENDIX 1 TO THE QOSF POLICY DOCUMENT**

### **Exceptions to the Qualification Types**

#### **1. Foundational Learning Competence (FLC) as part qualification**

##### **Qualification descriptor**

NQF exit level:	2
Minimum total credits:	40 (20 for Foundational Learning Competence in Communications and 20 for Foundational Learning Competence in Mathematical Literacy)

##### **Purpose and characteristics**

The FLC is a part-qualification consisting of two learning areas: Communications and Mathematical Literacy. It describes (i) the minimum competence needed in these two key areas for people to function optimally in the world of work and (ii) the minimum competence required of learners to deal successfully with occupational learning at NQF Levels 2-4.

The FLC is required for the award of all new qualifications developed under the auspices of the QCTO at NQF Levels 3 and 4. This does not mean that developers of qualifications at NQF Level 2 cannot include Foundational Learning as a requirement.

#### **2. National N Certificates (N4-N6) and National N Diploma**

NATED/ Report 191 programmes are delivered under the auspices of the Department of Higher Education and Training. The programmes generally consist of 18 months of theoretical studies at colleges and 18 months relevant practical application in workplaces. N courses and Diplomas include Engineering Studies, Business Studies and Utility Studies. The N qualifications are registered on the NQF.