



Policy for the Approval of Results

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAC	Associated Assessment Criteria
AQP	Assessment Quality Partner
CEPs	Community of Expert Practitioners
DQP	Development Quality Partner
EISA	External Integrated Summative Assessment
ELOs	Exit Level Outcomes
IAFAs	Integrated Assessment Focus Areas
NQF	National Qualifications' Framework
OQA	Occupational Quality Assurance
OQM	Occupational Qualification Management
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
QAS	Qualification Assessment Specifications
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SDP	Skills Development Provider
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SoR	Statement of Results
SME	Subject Matter Expert

GLOSSARY

Accreditation	The certification, usually for a particular period, of a body or an institution as having the capacity to fulfil a particular function in the quality assurance system. In this Policy Framework accreditation refers to the accreditation of Skills Development Providers and Assessment Centres
Assessment	The process of evaluating evidence of a learners' work to measure and make judgements about the competence or non-competence of specified NQF registered occupational qualifications and part qualifications.
Assessment centre	A centre accredited by the QCTO for the purpose of conducting external integrated summative assessments for specified NQF registered occupational qualifications and part qualifications.
Assessment Quality Partner (AQP)	A body delegated by the QCTO to manage and coordinate the external integrated summative assessments of specified NQF registered occupational qualifications and part qualifications.
Moderation	The process which ensures that the assessment of the learning outcomes described in the NQF occupational standards, qualifications and part qualifications is fair, valid, reliable and unbiased.
Monitoring	A continuous process of the review of quality that can be conducted internally and/or externally to recommend quality improvements.
Occupational qualification	A qualification associated with a trade, occupation or profession, resulting from work-based learning, developed under the auspices of the QCTO and consisting of the knowledge, practical skills and work experience standards as defined in the Skills Development Act (Act No. 97 of 1998)
Summative assessment	A component of the assessment process and refers to the culmination of the summative process when learners are subjected to a final sitting at the end of the learning cycle for an integrated externally conducted assessment.
Verification	The process managed by the relevant body for externally verifying (checking) the authenticity of processes and products to confirm or overturn the findings.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) was established in 2010 as a juristic person, in terms of section 26G of the Skills Development Act of 1998. It was listed as a public entity in the Government Gazette No. 33900 of 31 December 2010 effective from 1 April 2010 to establish the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) for Trades and Occupations.

The QCTO is responsible for the development, maintenance and quality assurance of qualifications within its Sub-Framework.

An integral and critical component of the QCTO's quality assurance system is the issuing of certificates to learners who have demonstrated competence against occupational qualifications and part qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). In order to issue credible certificates the QCTO has set minimum standards for the quality assurance and approval of learner achievements.

2. LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- (a) National Qualifications Framework (Act 67 of 2008);
- (b) Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act 97 of 1998); and
- (c) QCTO policies
 - i. Policy Framework for the Quality Assurance of Qualifications and Part Qualifications on the OQSF;
 - ii. Policy on Delegation of Qualification Assessment to Assessment Quality Partners (AQPs);
 - iii. Assessment Policy for Qualifications and Part Qualifications on the Occupational Qualifications Framework (OQSF);
 - iv. Assessment Quality Partners (AQPs) Criteria and Guidelines;
 - v. Policy on Accreditation of Assessment Centres;
 - vi. Policy for the implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL); and
 - vii. Certification Policy

2.1 In terms of Section 27 (i) of the NQF Act, the QCTO with regard to quality assurance within its sub-framework is required to:

- (a) develop and implement policy for quality assurance;
- (b) ensure the integrity and credibility of quality assurance;
- (c) ensure that such quality assurance as is necessary for the sub-framework is undertaken.

2.2 In terms of The Skills Development Act, Act 37 of 2008, the QCTO is responsible for:

- (a) establishing and maintaining occupational standards and qualifications;
- (b) the quality assurance of occupational standards and qualifications and learning in and for the workplace;
- (c) designing and developing occupational standards and qualifications and submitting them to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) for registration on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF); and
- (d) ensuring the quality of occupational standards and qualifications in and for the workplace.

The QCTO as custodian of the OQSF is responsible for the certification of learners who have achieved qualifications or part qualifications registered on the OQSF.

3. PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to articulate the policy framework for the quality assurance and approval of learner achievements for qualifications on the OQSF.

This policy:

- establishes a coherent, coordinated and integrated quality assurance regime for the approval of learner achievements for qualifications and part qualifications on the OQSF;
- outlines the minimum requirements set by the QCTO:
 - for assessment partners for the quality assurance and approval of learner achievements;
 - to ensure the integrity and credibility of its quality assurance regime;
 - to ensure compliance with the policy for the quality assurance and approval of learner achievements; and
 - to ensure that qualifications and assessments are fit for purpose and of an acceptable standard across the qualification system.

This policy addresses the minimum requirements for the quality assurance and approval of learner achievements through the:

- i. quality assurance of formative assessments;
- ii. quality assurance of external assessment; and
- iii. approval of learner achievements

This document further sets out:

- QCTO's roles and responsibilities in quality assuring the external integrated summative assessment of learner results for trades and occupations on the OQSF
- The roles and responsibilities of assessment partners in providing credible assessments
- QCTO's operational framework for the quality assurance of assessments
- The minimum requirements for the quality assurance processes leading to the approval of learner achievements.

4. AUDIENCE AND APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all assessment partners: Quality Assurance Partners (QAPs) and Assessment Quality Partners (AQP) to whom the QCTO has delegated assessment functions for the assessment of qualifications and part qualifications on the OQSF.

In principle, the QCTO, together with its assessment partners, ensures that assessments are:

- a. developed in line with the OQSF qualification registered by SAQA on the NQF
- b. conducted free from any irregularity that may put the integrity and credibility of the assessment or its outcomes at risk;
- c. in compliance with the minimum requirements prescribed by the QCTO for the:
 - i. development and moderation of assessment instruments conduct of assessments (monitoring, evaluation and verification),
 - ii. marking and moderation of assessments as well as the
 - iii. approval of learner achievements;
- d. conducted in compliance with the admission requirements for the EISA;
- e. in compliance with the quality assurance requirements prescribed by the QCTO which a learner needs to satisfy in order to obtain an occupational certificate; and

- f. in compliance with any other requirement set by the QCTO.

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE OF ASSESSMENTS

5.1 Final External Integrated Summative Assessment

The QCTO's assessment model for certification comprises of an External Integrated Summative Assessment at the exit points of the qualification and part qualification. The QCTO has systems, processes and procedures to monitor, verify and report on the assessment Requirements. These are implemented by assessment partners and assessment centres in order to maintain standards in assessments.

5.2 Formative Assessments

The quality and standard of formative assessments is determined by ascertaining the level of adherence to:

- implementing formative assessment processes by skills development providers;
- the appropriateness of tasks of formative assessments and the
- verification of these tasks by assessment partners.

The QCTO may:

- delegate the moderation of formative assessment to appropriate assessment partners and
- set directives, policies and guidelines for formative assessment.

The above will allow the QCTO to ensure the quality of occupational standards in qualifications.

The QCTO's quality assurance of assessment systems is currently made up of the following processes and procedures:

- a. Evaluation and approval of Assessment Partners
- b. Ongoing monitoring of Assessment Partners
- c. Quality assurance of formative assessment through:
 - i. Verification and monitoring of the implementation of formative assessment by the assessment partners; and
 - ii. Verification of formative assessment by the QCTO.
- d. Quality assurance of the external integrated summative assessment through:
 - a. The External Integrated Summative Assessment instrument;
 - Sample monitoring of the conduct of assessments;

- Sample monitoring of marking; and
- Verification and approval of learner achievements.

5.3 Quality Assurance is based on the QCTO's policies, criteria and guidelines

The quality and standard of assessments is determined by the level of adherence to QCTO's policies, criteria and guidelines in the implementation of: -

- assessment related processes;
- the cognitive challenge of the assessment;
- the appropriateness and weighting of topics in relation to the curriculum;
- the standard of moderation of assessment instruments;
- the efficiency and effectiveness of systems, processes, and procedures for the monitoring of the conduct of the assessments;
- the quality of marking;
- demonstration of applied competence achieved in the context of the occupational qualification or part qualification; and
- the quality and standard of internal quality assurance processes within the assessment partner.

5.4 Quality Assurance is based on the Conduct of Assessments

Through the veracity of the assessment partner's systems, process and reports in respect of the minimum quality assurance requirements, the QCTO is able to verify, validate and approve learner achievements.

5.5 Quality assurance is based on the credibility of outputs/results

The quality and standard of results achieved by the candidates will be based on the following:

- a sample verification of the integrated summative assessment processes;
- A sample monitoring of the conduct and assessment and marking of the EISA;
- data will be analysed and unusual patterns of results will be investigated;
- data on learner enrolment, throughput and achievement will be analysed and findings and feedback will be used to continuously improve the assessments;
- assessment centres will be monitored to ensure currency of resources, expertise and practice; and
- employers/industry and employees (candidates) may also be scrutinised to confirm candidates' competence.
- the adherence of the EISA assessment instruments to the assessment blueprint will be checked.

6. APPROVAL OF LEARNER ACHIEVEMENTS

Results must be submitted by the AQP to the QCTO in the format prescribed by the QCTO. The QCTO will quality assure the submission of results and inform the AQP of the outcome thereof. Any requirement which is not satisfactorily complied with will be classified as an irregularity. If it is found that the credibility of the assessment is at risk, the QCTO reserves the right:

- Not to approve the outcome of learner achievements (or part of it); and
- In serious cases to revoke the delegation to the assessment partner.

7. IRREGULARITIES

For the purposes of this policy an irregularity refers to any event, act or omission and any alleged event, act or omission, which may undermine or threaten to undermine the standard, integrity, credibility, security, or the fairness of the assessment and assessment process and its resultant outcomes.

Assessment partners are required to report any irregularity to the QCTO which may compromise the integrity and credibility of an assessment or its outcomes.

Minimum Requirements

1. Assessment Partners must ensure that they have appropriate guidelines in place that deal with the various categories of irregularities as well as any person directly or indirectly involved in assessment functions.
2. Proof of an irregularity that has occurred during any of the following stages of the assessment process:
 - Implementation:
 - Formative assessment
 - Administration:
 - Including the appointment assessment officials, assessment instrument development and planning for the conduct of assessments
 - Management:
 - Conduct of Assessments
 - Marking and capturing process
 - Approval:
 - Verification and approval of learner achievement processes.
3. Assessment Partners must ensure that they have procedures and structures in place to effectively investigate and resolve all irregularities, complaints and appeals.
4. Assessment Partners must report the nature and extent of all irregularities to QCTO immediately once they are detected.
5. Assessment Partners must investigate all irregularities and provide the QCTO with a detailed report on the investigation and the corrective actions taken.
6. Assessment Partners must, prior to the approval stage, present the QCTO with a composite report on all of the irregularities and how these were resolved. The report must also indicate the status of irregularities still to be resolved.

8. REQUIREMENTS FOR APPROVAL OF RESULTS

8.1 Criteria and Guidelines

Assessment instruments are developed and moderated by approved Assessment Partners, in compliance with QCTO policies, criteria and guidelines.

Minimum Requirements

1. Assessment Partners must ensure that criteria and guidelines are in place for implementing the External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA)

8.2 Requirements for Formative Assessments

Assessment Partners are required to monitor the implementation of formative assessments that lead to the issuing of a Statement of Results by the Skills Development Providers (SDPs) for all three components of the qualification.

Formative assessment is regarded as any assessment conducted by the provider, the outcomes of which may or may not contribute towards the Statement of Result

Minimum Requirements

1. Assessment Partners may develop Formative Assessment protocols that will contribute towards the Statement of Result.
2. Assessment Partners must ensure that they have appropriate policies, criteria and guidelines for the conduct, administration and management of formative assessment. Such policies must be consistent with the curriculum and other policy documents pertaining to the particular qualification.
3. Assessment Partners must ensure that they have effective procedures for the monitoring of formative assessments.
4. Assessment Partners must make available to the QCTO, upon request, for the purposes of verification, a sample of formative assessments together with the moderator reports. The format of the report and the sample will be specified by QCTO.
5. Assessment Partners must, prior to the approval process, submit to the QCTO on the prescribed format a report on the standard of formative assessments.

8.3 Moderation of Assessment Instruments

In order to ensure the fairness and validity of an assessment, the Assessment Partners must ensure that assessments are representative of the prescribed knowledge, practical and workplace components; that the assessment is moderated by a competent moderator appointed by the Assessment Partner and that the assessment instruments may be subjected to an external verification process by the QCTO for confirmation or approval.

The process of moderation of assessment instruments focuses on ensuring that assessment instruments and tools are of an acceptable standard, appropriately cover the Exit Level Outcomes and assessment focus areas as well as the knowledge, practical and workplace components as prescribed in the qualification, curriculum and qualification assessment specification documents (including the QAS addendum), and are presented in an appropriate manner.

Minimum Requirements

1. Assessment Partners must develop effective guidelines and procedures for the development and moderation of assessment instruments.
2. Assessment Partners must ensure that they have effective procedures for the printing, storage and distribution of assessment instruments.
3. Assessment Partners must provide the QCTO, prior to commencement of each assessment cycle or session, with a schedule clearly indicating when assessments will take place
4. Assessment instruments submitted for verification:
 - Must be in its final state and have been moderated by the Assessment Partner;
 - Must be accompanied by the moderator's report and a completed Qualification Assessment Specification addendum which indicates compliance.
 - Must be accompanied by the marking memoranda (or competency rubrics).
5. Assessment Partners must ensure that "back-up" assessment instruments are readily available should the need arise.

6. Unless otherwise agreed to, only QCTO verified assessment instruments may be presented to candidates completing the External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA).

8.4 Monitoring the Conduct of Assessments

Assessment Partners must take adequate measures to combat irregularities before, during and after assessment and during marking and must take adequate security measures to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of the assessments.

The QCTO will monitor the following three main aspects:

- Verifying the Assessment Partners' processes and systems;
- Monitoring their state of readiness to administer assessments; and
- Monitoring the administration and conduct of assessments.

Minimum Requirements

1. Assessment Partners must ensure that they have appropriate policies, criteria and guidelines to regulate the conduct, administration and management of assessments. Such policies must be consistent with the policy documents pertaining to the particular qualification.
2. Assessment Partners must, 3 months prior to the commencement of the assessment, notify the QCTO of the scheduled EISA.
3. This notification, amongst others:
 - indicates the "state-of-readiness" of the assessment partner;
 - includes the submission of Examiner and Moderator reports on the assessment instruments;
 - includes the assessment partner's marking and moderation plan
4. Assessment Partners must submit irregularity reports (specified format), where relevant, to the QCTO during the writing and marking/assessment phases of the assessments.

5. Assessment Partners must, prior to the approval of learner achievements, submit to the QCTO a report on the conduct and marking of assessments.

8.5 Moderation of Assessments

Moderation of assessments is conducted to ensure that marking is conducted in accordance with acceptable practices and requirements in order to ensure the reliability and consistency of assessments.

Assessment Partners must ensure that a representative samples of scripts or evidence are moderated. The sample must be representative across the mark range as well across assessors/markers. The following is a guide to the number of scripts or evidence to be moderated.

- If less than 10 – 100 %
- If less than 100 – 25 %
- Above 100 – 10 %

If the assessment is marked/assessed by the Assessment Centre, at least 25 % should be moderated. The QCTO may verify a sample of the marked and/or moderated assessment scripts and assessment tasks.

Minimum Requirements

1. Assessment Partners must ensure that they have appropriate policies, criteria and guidelines to conduct the assessment and moderation of assessment scripts or assessment tasks.
2. Assessment Partners must submit to QCTO the assessment model which will be used in the QAS Addendum. QCTO approval of the model will be required for the qualifications it quality assures and certificates.
3. Assessment Partners must conduct memorandum discussions (including pre-marking) for all assessments prior to the commencement of the marking of assessments.

4. Assessment Partners must ensure that they have procedures in place to ensure that the approved marking memorandum is used across all marking/ assessment centres if the decentralised model is used.
5. Assessment Partners must ensure that they have the necessary facilities, structures, personnel and security measures during marking/ assessing and moderation.
6. Assessment Partners must make available to the QCTO upon request, for the purposes of verification, a sample of scripts or assessment tasks. The sample will be specified by the QCTO.
7. Assessment Partners must, prior to the approval of results, submit the Markers' and Moderators' reports to the QCTO.
8. Assessment Partners must conduct an evaluation of all personnel involved in the marking and moderation of assessment scripts or assessment tasks.

8.6 Approval of Learner Achievements

The Assessment Partner is required to submit the learner achievements within 21 working days from the date the EISA was conducted, in the format determined by the QCTO.

The QCTO may verify the assessment results. Moderation may be necessary to address the variation in the standard of assessment instruments and the marking/assessment that could occur by an Assessment Quality Partner.

Minimum Requirements

1. Assessment Partners must ensure that they have functional and adequately tested computer systems capable of:
 - Capturing candidate details and candidate results;
 - Processing results as per QCTO specifications;
 - Providing data sets and reports in the format prescribed by the QCTO; and

- Providing access only to authorized personnel and providing an audit trail.
2. Assessment Partners must ensure that they have procedures in place for the generation, capture and control of mark sheets.
 3. Assessment Partners must ensure that they have procedures in place for the verification of marks captured (e.g. double capture etc.)
 4. Assessment Partners must provide the QCTO with the specified computer generated data for the approval of learner achievements.
 5. Assessment Partners must ensure that the data sets provided for verification and approval of learner achievements are based on the QCTO prescribed minimum capture percentage.
 6. Assessment Partners moderation proposals in the format specified by QCTO must be submitted to the QCTO within 21 working days of the EISA conducted.
 7. Assessment, Marker and Moderator reports to complement and substantiate adjustment proposals must be submitted to the QCTO within 21 working days of the EISA conducted.
 8. Assessment Partners must ensure that approved moderation adjustments are captured accurately and a data set in the format required by the QCTO is submitted to the QCTO for verification before resulting may commence.
 9. Assessment Partners must submit to the QCTO the post resulting data sets and required ports for verification before the issue of certificates will be considered.