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DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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Revised Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework [OQSF] Policy

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NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS ACT -2008 (ACT-NO. 67 OF 2008)

REVISED OCCUPATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SUB-FRAMEWORK (OQSF)

I, Peliwe Lolwana Chairperson of the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations having determined the policy on Occupational Qualifications Sub-framework [OQSF] in Gazette No. 37879 dated 17 July 2014 in terms of the policy on the determination of the Sub-Framework that Comprise the National Qualification Framework, published in terms of section 8 (2) (b) of the National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008 in Government Notice No. 891, Government Gazette No. 36803 of 30 August 2013, hereby replace the published OQSF dated 17 July 2014 Gazette No. 37879 with a Revised OQSF as directed by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology in a correspondence dated 16 February 2020 to publish the Revised OQSF.

This policy is determined in terms of section 27 (k) (iv) of the National Qualifications Framework Act 2008.

Regards

Prof Peliwe Lolwana

Chairperson of the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations

21 February 2020

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I.　　**LIST OF ACRONYMS:**

CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
EISA	External Integrated Summative Assessment
GENFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
NAMB	National Artisan Moderation Body
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework
OFO	Organising Framework for Occupations
QAP	Quality Assurance Partner
QC	Quality Council
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SDP	Skills Development Provider
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
Umalusi	Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training
WIL	Work Integrated Learning

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II. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accreditation	Official approval awarded to a Provider by a Quality Council to offer qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework.
Accredited Provider	A legally established institution (public or private) that has been recognised, usually for a particular period of time, by a Quality Council (QC) or its appointed agent, as having the capacity or provisional capacity to offer a qualification or part-qualification registered on the NQF at the required standard
Apprenticeship	A learning programme in respect of an officially listed trade or occupational qualification, which includes a trade test or EISA in respect of that trade or occupation. Where a learner has employment contract coupled to the learning programme
Articulation	The process of forming possibilities of connection between occupational qualifications and part-qualifications to allow for the vertical, lateral and diagonal movement of learners through the formal education and training system and its linkages with the world of work
Certificate	A document indicating formal recognition by the QCTO of an occupational qualification or part-qualification awarded to a successful learner
Credit(s)	A measure of the volume of learning required for a qualification or part-qualification, quantified as the number of notional hours required for achieving the learning outcomes specified for the qualification or part-qualification. One credit is equated to ten (10) notional hours of learning
Credit Accumulation	The totaling of credits required to complete a qualification or part- qualification
Credit Accumulation and Transfer (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 transfer	The vertical, horizontal or diagonal relocation of credits towards a qualification or part-qualification registered on the same or different Sub-Framework
Cognate	Term used to mean similar or related
Curriculum	A statement of the training structure and expected methods of learning and teaching that underpin a qualification or part-

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	qualification to facilitate a general understanding of its implementation in an education system
External integrated summative assessment (EISA)	The final external integrated evaluation of a learner's occupational competence in the specified registered NQF occupational qualification or part-qualification. A learner gains access to the EISA through meeting the requirement as stipulated in the qualification
Foundational competence	Learning that provides opportunities for the development of proficiency in one or more languages as well as in some form of mathematics or mathematical literacy and which is intended to support further learning or competency required to pursue work in a professional environment
General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GENFETQSF)	The Sub-Framework of the NQF for General and Further Education and Training that is developed and managed by Umalusi
Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF)	The sub-framework of the NQF for Higher Education that is developed and managed by the CHE
Internship	The position of a learner or trainee who works in an organization, sometimes without pay, in order to gain work experience or satisfy requirements for a qualification
Learning Application	Functional combination of practical learning, skills learning and work experience learning or simulated work experience learning
Learning Programme	A structured and purposeful set of learning experiences that lead to a qualification or part-qualification
Learnership	A learning programme registered with the DHET which consists of a structured learning component of a specified nature and duration, and which leads to a qualification registered on the NQF related to an occupation. A learnership is based on an agreement entered into between the learner, the institution and the employer
Level Descriptor	A statement describing learning achievements at a particular level of the NQF that provides a broad indication of the types of learning outcomes and assessment criteria that are appropriate for a qualification or part-qualification at that level

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Lifelong learning	The learning that takes place in all contexts in life from a life-wide, life-deep and lifelong perspective - formally, non-formally and informally. It includes learning behaviours and obtaining knowledge as well as understanding and covers attitudes, values, and competences for personal growth, social and economic wellbeing, democratic citizenship, cultural identity, and employability
Module	An assessed/assessable unit of learning with a defined outcome and associated credits
National Learners' Records Database (NLRD)	The electronic management information system of the NQF under the authority of SAQA, which contains records of qualifications, part-qualifications, learner achievements, recognised professional bodies, professional designations and associated information such as registrations and accreditations
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 quality-assured national qualifications and part-qualifications. The South African NQF is a single integrated system comprising three coordinated qualification sub-frameworks for General and Further Education and Training, Higher Education, and Trades and Occupations respectively
Notional hours (of learning)	The agreed estimate of the learning time that it would take an average learner to meet the defined learning outcomes; it includes consideration of contact time, research, completion of assignments, time spent in structured learning in the workplace, individual learning and assessment. Ten notional hours equate to one credit
Occupational qualification	A qualification associated with a trade, occupation or profession developed and quality assured under the auspices of the QCTO and consisting of knowledge/theory and application (practical skills/work experience/simulated work experience) components and an external integrated summative assessment
Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF)	The sub-framework of qualifications developed and managed by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)
Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO)	A coded classification system to encompass all occupations in South Africa, used as the DHET's key tool for identifying,

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	reporting and monitoring skills demand and supply in the South African labour market
Parity of esteem	Placing equal value and status to qualifications that are on the same NQF Level, but have different routes of study. Parity of esteem is achieved when both qualifications progress equally to employment or to further studies
Part-qualification	An assessed unit of learning with a defined outcome that is or will be, registered as part of a qualification on the NQF
Post-School Education and Training	Education and Training opportunities for people who left school as well as adults who may never have been to school but require educational opportunities
Provider	See Accredited provider
Quality assurance partner (QAP)	A body approved by the QCTO to manage and co-ordinate the external integrated summative assessments of specified NQF-registered occupational qualifications and part-qualifications
Qualification	A registered national qualification consisting of 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 National Qualifications Framework and certified and awarded by a recognized body
Quality Council (QC)	One of the three councils tasked with developing and managing one of the Sub-Frameworks of the NQF in order to ensure that agreed quality standards are met. These Quality Councils are Umalusi for the GENFETQSF; the CHE for the HEQSF; and the QCTO for the OQSF
Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)	The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations established in terms of the NQF Act No. 67 of 2008, which is mandated to achieve the objectives of the NQF and to develop and manage the OQSF
Recognition of Prior Learning (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

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Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA)	A body established in terms of the Skills Development Act, No. 97 of 1998 to develop and implement sector skills plans and promote learning programmes, including workplace learning
Skills Programme	A learning programme which is occupationally based and for which a learner may obtain a certain number of credits towards a registered qualification or part-qualification
Skills Development Provider	A legally established institution (public or private) that has been recognised, usually for a particular period, by a QC or its appointed agent, as having the capacity to offer a qualification or part-qualification registered on the NQF at the required standard
South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)	The statutory authority, established in terms of the repealed SAQA Act, No. 58 of 1995 and continuing in terms of the NQF Act, No. 67 of 2008, which oversees the further development and implementation of the NQF, the achievement of the objectives of the NQF and the co-ordination of the three sub-frameworks
Standard	Set criteria, norms and model that are prescribed
Simulated work experience	The learning achieved through exposure and interactions gained through a simulated workplace environment that a learner has to complete towards a qualification or part-qualification registered on the OQSF
Sub-Framework of the NQF	One of three coordinated qualifications Sub-Frameworks which make up the South African NQF as a single integrated system, namely: the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GEFETQSF), the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF), and the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF)
Trade	An occupation for which an artisan qualification is required as stipulated in the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998)
Workplace-based Learning	The learning achieved through exposure and interactions gained while in the workplace that a learner has to complete towards a qualification or part-qualification registered on the OQSF
Work Experience	Exposure and interactions gained through being in the workplace

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Work Integrated Learning	A characteristic of vocational and professionally oriented qualifications that may be incorporated into programmes at all levels of all three Sub-Frameworks. WIL may take various forms including simulated learning, work-directed theoretical learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning and workplace-based learning

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is a comprehensive system for the "classification, registration, publication and articulation of quality-assured national qualifications", as indicated in Section 4 of the NQF Act, Act No 67 of 2008. The NQF comprises, as specified in Section 7 of the NQF Act, three co-ordinated qualification Sub-Frameworks for: General and Further Education and Training as contemplated in the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, Act 58 of 2001 overseen by Umalusi; Higher Education, contemplated in the Higher Education Act, Act 101 of 1997 overseen by the Council on Higher Education (CHE); and Trades and Occupations, contemplated in the Skills Development Act, Act 97 of 1998, overseen by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO).

1.2 The objectives of the NQF, as outlined in Section 5 of the NQF Act, are to:

1.2.1 Create a single integrated national framework for learning achievements;

1.2.2 Facilitate access to, mobility and progression within, education, training and career paths;

1.2.3 Enhance the quality of education and training; and

1.2.4 Accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities.

1.3 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. SAQA and the Quality Councils (QCs) must seek to achieve the objectives of the NQF by:

1.3.1 Developing, fostering and maintaining an integrated and transparent national framework for the recognition of learning achievements;

1.3.2 Ensuring that South African qualifications meet appropriate criteria determined by the Minister as contemplated in Section 8 of the NQF Act and that they are internationally comparable; and

1.3.3 Ensuring that South African qualifications are of an acceptable quality.

1.4 It is against this background that the Minister of Higher Education and Training, in terms of Section 8 (2) (e) of the NQF Act, has determined as policy the three sub-frameworks that comprise the NQF.

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2. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The NQF Act identifies the roles and responsibilities of the different structures/bodies that are responsible for ensuring the achievement of the objectives of the NQF. In this regard, the following roles in relation to the NQF are highlighted:

2.1   The role of the Minister (HET)

The Minister of Higher Education and Training has overall responsibility for the NQF and for determining the qualification design for the occupational qualification sub-framework.

2.2   The functions of SAQA

SAQA must, in order to advance the objectives of the NQF -

(a)   *(i) perform its functions subject to this Act; and*
      (ii) oversee the implementation of the NQF and ensure the achievement of its objectives;

(b)   *advise the Minister and the Minister of Labour on NQF matters in terms of this Act;*

(c)   *comply with policy determined by the Minister in terms of section 8(2)(b);*

(d)   *consider the Minister's guidelines contemplated in section 8(2)(c);*

(e)   *oversee the implementation of the NQF in accordance with an implementation framework prepared by the SAQA after consultation with the QCs;*

(f)   *(i) develop a system of collaboration to guide the mutual relations of the SAQA and the QCs, after consultation with the QCs and taking into account the objects of the SAQA contemplated in section 11 and the regulations contemplated in section 33; and*

      (ii) resolve disputes regarding the QCs;

(g)   *with respect to levels—*

      (i) develop the content of level descriptors for each level of the NQF and reach agreement on the content with the QCs;

      (ii) publish the agreed level descriptors in the Gazette; and

      (iii) ensure that they remain current and appropriate;

(h)   *with respect to qualifications -*

(i)   *develop and implement policy and criteria, after consultation with*

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the QCs, for the development, registration and publication of qualifications and part-qualifications, which must include the following requirements:

(i) The relevant sub-framework must be identified on any document relating to the registration and publication of a qualification;

(ii) each sub-framework must have a distinct nomenclature for its qualification types which is appropriate to the relevant sub-framework and consistent with international practice;

(iii) register a qualification or part-qualification recommended by a QC if it meets the relevant criteria;

(iv) develop policy and criteria, after consultation with the QCs, for assessment, recognition of prior learning and credit accumulation and transfer.

2.3 The functions of the QCTO

2.3.1 The QCTO must advise the Minister on all matters of policy concerning occupational standards and qualifications.

2.3.2 The QCTO must perform its functions in terms of the Act and the National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008.

2.3.3 Subject to any policy issued by the Minister in terms of section 26F, 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 for registration on the National Qualifications Framework;

(d) ensuring the quality of occupational standards and qualifications and learning in and for the workplace;

(e) promoting the objectives of the National Qualifications Framework Act No. 67, 2008 and the Skills Development Amendment Act 97 as amended in 2008;

(f) liaising with the National Skills Authority on the suitability and adequacy of occupational standards and qualifications and on the quality of learning in and for the workplace;

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(g) liaising with the South African Qualifications Authority, other Quality Councils and professional bodies responsible for establishing standards and qualifications or the quality assurance of standards and qualifications; and

(h) performing any other prescribed function.

2.3.4   The QCTO has all such powers as are necessary to enable it to perform its functions in terms of this section.

2.3.5   The Minister may issue written instructions, which are not inconsistent with any policy made by the Minister in terms of Section 26F, to the QCTO regarding the performance of its functions in terms of Subsection (3).

2.3.6   The QCTO must comply with -
(a) any policy determined by the Minister in terms of Section 26F; and *(b)* any written instruction issued by the Minister in terms of Subsection (5).

2.3.7   The QCTO performs its functions in accordance with Sections 24 to 27 of the NQF Act, 2008 and Section 26H of the Skills Development Act, 1998.

2.3.8   In summary the QCTO is responsible for the development and management of the OQSF and for advising the Minister of Higher Education and Training on matters relating to the OQSF in consultation with SAQA; for quality assurance in occupational education and training; and for the development of standards, occupational qualifications and part-qualifications. Further, the QCTO is responsible to ensure that RPL, CAT and assessment (Section 27(h) (ii)) as well the as the level descriptors (Section 27(g)) are part of its sub-framework.

3. PURPOSE OF THE OCCUPATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SUB-FRAMEWORK (OQSF)

3.1   The purpose of the OQSF is to facilitate the registration of quality-assured occupational and trade-related qualifications and part-qualifications from NQF Level 1 to 8. The OQSF makes available occupational qualifications and part-qualifications that give people access to occupations, trades and/or relevant professions.

3.2   The OQSF gives effect to the Ministerial determination (Gazette No. 36803, 30 August 2013) of the three sub-frameworks of the NQF. It meets the needs of existing and emerging sectors by ensuring that all learners, professionals,

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workers, unemployed and those classified as NEET (not in employment, education or training), are equipped with relevant and portable competencies that support lifelong employability.

3.3 The OQSF is designed to:

3.3.1 Facilitate the education and training of post-school learners who will contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of South Africa and participate successfully in the variety of skills needed in the global economy.

3.3.2 Be comparable with occupational qualifications offered by foreign institutions and international standards, where applicable.

3.3.3 Be suitably flexible to accommodate the development of emerging trade and occupational qualification types and part-qualifications as the need arises.

3.3.4 Be simple, easy to understand and user-friendly for the occupational education and training system and its stakeholders.

3.3.5 Facilitate the articulation of occupational qualifications and part-qualifications within the OQSF, and between the OQSF and the other two NQF Sub-Frameworks - and assist learners to identify potential progression routes (options), like entry, exit and learning pathways, particularly in the context of lifelong learning.

3.3.6 Facilitate vertical, horizontal and diagonal progression within the sub-framework, and across the NQF through articulation with the other sub-frameworks.

4. SCOPE AND APPLICATION

4.1 The OQSF policy applies to all occupational qualifications and part-qualifications that are registered on the OQSF on the NQF in South Africa, and which are offered in the country by accredited skills development providers.

4.2 The OQSF regulates occupational qualifications and part-qualifications in terms of design, provisioning and quality assurance as part of the post school education and training system.

4.3 The OQSF promotes the facilitation of access to as well as mobility and progression within education, training and career paths.

4.4 The OQSF contributes to enhancing the quality of education and training in the post school education and training system.

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5. THE REVISED OCCUPATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SUB-FRAMEWORK (OQSF)

5.1 Occupational qualifications and part-qualifications are competency based. Such qualifications or part-qualifications enable learners to acquire the knowledge, skills and values required for a specific occupation, trade or profession.

5.2 The OQSF consists of registered qualifications and part-qualifications. Qualifications and part-qualifications consist of two key components, namely knowledge/theory and application. Application means the functional combination of the practical component and the workplace component through skills learning or simulated work experience learning. For certain categories of occupational qualifications and part-qualifications as specified by industry, the key components may be specified as knowledge/theory and application.

5.3 The OQSF provides for 6 (six) occupational qualification types, described in Section 22 of this policy, which replace the single qualification type, viz. the occupational certificate on NQF levels 1-8 issued by the QCTO in terms of the Ministerial determinations as provided for in Gazette 36003 of 2012. The occupational qualification types are:

5.3.1 General Occupational Certificate: Level 1

5.3.2 Elementary Occupational Certificate: Level 2

5.3.3 Intermediate Occupational Certificate: Level 3

5.3.4 National Occupational Certificate: Level 4

5.3.5 Higher Occupational Certificate: Level 5

5.3.6 Occupational Diploma: Level 6

5.3.7 Advanced Occupational Diploma: Level 7

5.3.8 Specialised Occupational Diploma: Level 8

5.4 Occupational Qualification

5.4.1 An occupational qualification means a registered national qualification.

An occupational qualification should have a minimum of 120 credits. In certain instances, registered occupational qualifications may have less than 120 credits. This is where the qualification cannot be classified as a part of any registered full qualification. The qualification descriptor will justify the reason for full qualifications with less than 120 credits.

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5.4.2 An occupational qualification consists of a theory/knowledge component, a practical component and a workplace component with each component consisting of a minimum of 20% of the credits.

5.4.3 An occupational qualification must contain between 5% and 10% of soft skills which may include inter alia personal development, self-learning, workplace preparation, personal finance management, basic entrepreneurship or emotional intelligence.

5.5   Part-Qualifications

5.5.1   A part-qualification is an assessed unit of learning that is registered as a part of a qualification on the NQF.

5.5.2.   Part-qualifications will be developed and published in accordance with the SAQA Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part-qualifications of the NQF;

5.5.3   The design of a part-qualification:

5.5.3.1   Part-qualifications should have knowledge/theory and application learning components;

5.5.3.2   Part-qualifications could be part of more than one occupational qualification;

5.5.3.3   Part-qualifications should indicate the name of the registered or to be registered qualification(s) of which it forms part;

5.5.3.4   Part-qualifications should have no more than 120 credits;

5.5.3.5   A learner completing EISA of a part-qualification will receive an occupational certificate.

5.6.   Skills Programmes

5.6.1   A skills programme is an occupational learning programme that is credit bearing but not be registered on the NQF. The QCTO will maintain a record of all skills programmes and learner achievements. Skills programmes may be recognised towards the achievement of an occupational qualification or part-qualification.

5.6.2   Minimum requirement for admission to a skills programme

5.6.2.1   Skills programmes that are regulated in terms of legislation and/or which are necessary for practising an occupation but are not aligned or linked to a registered occupational qualification, will not be registered on the NQF. A record consisting of all

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Skills Programmes and learners who achieved these programmes will be maintained by the QCTO.

5.6.2.2 Skills Development Providers or Quality Assurance Partners must submit to the QCTO such Skills Programmes that they seek to offer. The QCTO will accredit the Skills Development Provider to offer the Skills Programmes if the required criteria had been met.

5.6.2.3 A skills programme can be developed from a number of qualifications or part-qualifications

5.6.2.4 Learners completing a Skills Programme will be issued with a certificate.

5.7 The OQSF recognises multiple routes (including but not limited to, apprenticeship, learnership, internship and RPL) towards the attainment of an occupational qualification or part-qualification.

5.8 Competency is demonstrated through the successful completion of an EISA. Access to the EISA process can be obtained via the relevant qualifications as well as through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

5.9 The OQSF provides for:

5.9.1 Flexibility and options with respect to trade, occupational and professional related qualifications.

5.9.2 Post-school opportunities comparable to those in the Higher Education Sub-Framework. OQSF qualification offerings differ in nature from, but are cognitively comparative to, HEQSF qualifications - which create the potential for parity of esteem between qualifications across the Sub-Frameworks of the NQF.

5.9.3 Part-qualifications which represent sets of employable skills as well as a mechanism for the recognition and credentialing of skills within the informal economy.

5.9.4 Integrating all occupational qualifications and part-qualifications into the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). It provides a basis for standards development and quality assurance as well as a mechanism for improving the coherence in the skills development system.

5.9.5 System flexibility by creating learning pathways from part-qualifications to qualifications over time or from one learning programme to another as learners pursue their careers.

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5.9.6   Occupational standards for industry and labour market confidence through defining the learning outcomes and learning associated with   occupational   qualifications and part-qualifications. The OQSF is designed to ensure consistent use of qualification titles and their designators and qualifiers. The   OQSF comprises the standards determined by industry or a profession, based on standards recognised by industry or the profession.

5.9.7   More differentiated OQSF qualifications.

6. STANDARDS IN THE OQSF

6.1   Occupational Standards

6.1.1 The development of standards for occupational qualifications contributes to the successful implementation of the OQSF.

6.1.2 Occupational standards are statements of work performance that reflect the ability to successfully execute the functions and apply the required knowledge, skills and understanding in an occupation. Occupational standards are used to provide   a reference point for identifying the modules (knowledge/theory, practical and work experience that should be included in each qualification, together with the learning outcomes to be achieved. The occupational standards are developed in a collaborative way by partner groups approved by the QCTO, which   comprise expert representatives from industry, institutions of education and training, training providers, labour representatives and professional bodies concerned - which ensures the deep relevance of lifelong learning and work as well as of qualifications with their constituent modules and rules of combination.

6.2   Setting and maintaining standards for the QQSF

The standards for occupational qualifications and part-qualifications are established and maintained in the:

6.2.1   Development and review of occupational qualifications and part-qualifications;

6.2.2   Provisioning of occupational qualifications and part-qualifications through approval of quality assurance partners;

6.2.3   Final external integrated summative assessment of a learner's occupational competence; and

6.2.4   Certification of occupational qualifications and part-qualifications.

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7. QUALIFICATIONS, VOLUMES OF LEARNING AND CREDITS

7.1 To be consistent with the NQF, as a whole the OQSF uses notional hours as a general measure of the amount of learning required by the average learner to demonstrate competence in an occupational qualification or part-qualification, which is stated as the number of credits required to achieve the qualification or part-qualification.

7.2 The duration of training and learning is specified in credits per module for the knowledge/theory and application (practical skills/work experience/simulated work experience) components. The allocation of credits follows the NQF requirement of ten (10) notional hours as equivalent to one (1) credit.

8. ACCUMULATION OF CREDITS TOWARDS QUALIFICATIONS

Credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) is the process whereby a learner's achievements are recognised and contribute to further learning even if the learner does not achieve a qualification or part-qualification. In terms of the CAT principles, any and all credits for an incomplete qualification or part-qualification may be recognised as meeting part of the requirements for another qualification or part-qualification.

9. QUALIFICATION TYPES

9.1 The OQSF has eight qualification types mapped onto the first eight levels of the 10-level South African NQF. The OQSF comprises the following qualification types:

Type	NQF Level
General Occupational Certificate	1
Elementary Occupational Certificate	2
Intermediate Occupational Certificate	3
National Occupational Certificate	4
Higher Occupational Certificate	5
Occupational Diploma	6
Advanced Occupational Diploma	7
Specialised Occupational Diploma	8

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9.2 The eight qualification types and their designated variants are expected to accommodate present occupational certificates, but the list is not immutable. The Minister of Higher Education and Training, on the advice of SAQA in consultation with the QCTO, may approve a new qualification type and its unique descriptor when a proven need arises as a result of developments in knowledge, production, skills development, or acknowledged international good practice. The Minister may also, and where appropriate, approve the relocation of certain qualification types to other sub-frameworks of the NQF. The use of qualification types in the occupational qualifications context, is regulated by this policy. An occupational qualification type may only be used if the qualification fulfils the specifications for the type.

9.3 Each occupational qualification and part-qualification type is fully described in Section 22 of this policy.

9.4. If the need arises the QCTO may extend its scope to include occupational qualifications and part-qualifications at NQF levels 9 and 10 with the approval of the Minister.

10. QUALIFICATION DESCRIPTORS

10. 1 The QCTO occupational qualifications (full and part-qualifications) as per Government Gazette No. 36006 can be registered from Levels 1 to 8 of South Africa's 10-level NQF.

10.2 The South African NQF Level Descriptors provide coherence for applied competences and learning outcomes in qualifications and part-qualifications, at particular levels of complexity; they provide guidelines for differentiating the increasing levels of complexity, for qualification development and delivery, for assessment, and for international comparability. Ten categories are used in the NQF Level Descriptors, to describe the applied competences at the 10 NQF levels. The 10 categories of competence at each level are: (a) scope of knowledge, (b) knowledge literacy; (c) method and procedure; (d) problem-solving; (e) ethics and professional practice; (f) accessing, processing and managing information; (g) producing and communicating information; (h) understanding systems and context; (i) managing learning; and (j) accountability.

10.3 The OQSF qualification **descriptor** reflects the occupational title or specialisation in a full qualification (e.g. Occupational Certificate: Plumber).

10.4 Where required, a **qualifier** may be added to delineate the context of the qualification (e.g. Electrician (High Voltage).

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11. NAMING OF QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALIFICATION TYPES

11.1 The naming convention of full occupational qualifications is designated as follows:

11.1.1　Firstly, by the **Type**: e.g. General Occupational Certificate, Elementary Occupational Certificate, Intermediate Occupational Certificate, National Occupational Certificate, Higher Occupational Certificate, Occupational Diploma, Advanced Occupational Diploma, and Specialised Occupational Diploma.

11.1.2　Secondly, by the **Qualification Descriptor**: e.g. occupational title or specialisation title as per the Organising Framework for Occupations document which is used as a guiding document, or part-qualification title as defined by industry (e.g. Occupational Certificate: Plumber).

11.1.3　Thirdly by the **NQF Level** to indicate the level of complexity of the qualification, e.g. National Occupational Certificate: Rigger NQF Level 4.

11.1.4　Fourthly **Credits** to indicate the duration of learning required to complete the qualification.

11.2 The naming convention of part-qualifications is designated as follows:

11.2.1　Firstly, by the **Type**: i.e. Occupational Award.

11.2.2　Applicable for that part qualification as defined by industry (e.g. Occupational Award: Assistant Plumber).

11.2.3　Thirdly by the **NQF Level** to indicate the level of complexity of the qualification.

11.2.4　Fourthly **Credits** to indicate the duration of learning required to complete the qualification.

11.3　The naming convention of skills programmes is similar to that of part-qualifications.

12. ALTERNATIVE ACCESS TO AND PROGRESSION IN OCCUPATIONAL LEARNING

12.1 All occupational qualifications on the OQSF specify the minimum entry requirements, which includes the possibilities for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as well as Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT).

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12.2 The QCTO recognises national policies and guidelines with regard to RPL and CAT. The QCTO will publish its sub-framework policies for RPL and CAT that are aligned to Ministerial and/or national policies for RPL, CAT and articulation.

12.3 Within the context of the OQSF, RPL addresses the principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated, and assessed, for the purposes of:

a) alternative access and admission to qualifications and/or part- qualifications on the OQSF; and/or

b) alternative access to the External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA).

13. WORK EXPERIENCE LEARNING

13.1 Work experience or simulated work experience is learning that occurs in a work environment or a place replicating a work environment or any place determined by the qualification to be a work environment.

13.2 Work experience learning must be integrated with theory/knowledge and practical learning.

14. RECOGNITION OF COMPLETED TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT

14.1 All Occupational qualifications are certified by the QCTO and indicate the achievement of the occupational qualification or part-qualification. This comprises two parts, namely (1) evidence of internal assessment conducted and (2) successful completion of the EISA at an accredited assessment centre.

15. QUALIFICATION DEVELOPMENT

15.1 Occupational Qualifications, Part-Qualifications and Skills Programmes will be developed based on market demand or potential market demand supported by reputable research conducted on Informal and Formal economies.

15.2 Skills Development Providers offering Occupational Qualifications or Part-Qualifications registered on the OQSF or Skills Programmes recorded on the QCTO MIS outside the borders of the Republic of South Africa should seek registration with the Department of Higher and Training and QCTO will conduct accreditation processes to ensure compliance to the accreditation policy of QCTO.

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15.3 Foreign Qualifications similar to OQSF Occupational Qualifications or Part-qualifications or Skills Programmes offered in the Republic of South will have to be brought to the attention of QCTO. Skills Development Providers offering these qualifications or skills programmes will have to apply to QCTO for accreditation.

16. QUALITY ASSURANCE

16.1. Quality assurance within the OQSF covers all aspects of the qualifications, from qualification design and development to the implementation of the occupational qualifications and part-qualifications, the accreditation of skills development providers, the external integrated summative assessment and certification of successful learners. Its primary goal is to ensure the standardisation of processes and continuous compliance to set standards so that credible certificates are issued to qualifying learners.

16.2 Quality assurance is elaborated upon in the QCTO quality assurance framework and policies.

17. CERTIFICATION

17.1 Certification is the formal recognition of the learner having completed all aspects of an occupational qualification or part-qualification.

17.2 The requirements to achieve the qualification inform the certification process.

17.3 The entire quality assurance cycle culminates in the issuing of a certificate.

17.4 The QCTO is responsible for the issuing of certificates for all occupational qualifications and part-qualifications and to ensure that the certificates issued are credible.

17.5 An integral part of the QCTO certification responsibilities is to:

17.5.1 Develop, maintain, implement and monitor policies and directives for certification;

17.5.2 Maintain acceptable standards for awarding certificates, and

17.5.3 Maintain a certification system and infrastructure that includes appropriate security arrangements.

17.6 The QCTO is further responsible for verifying the authenticity of the certificates that it has issued.

17.7 Language of qualification certificates and statement of results issued:

17.7.1 The QCTO promotes multilingualism; and

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17.7.2 To enable employers, skills development providers, parents and others to understand the achievements and attributes represented by a qualification title, a certificate must be issued in English, or on special request with valid reasons, in any other official language.

18. QCTO MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

Details of occupational qualifications and part-qualifications on the OQSF and information on accredited skills development providers, including learner achievements, will be recorded on the QCTO management information system for submission to the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD).

19. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Registered occupational qualifications stipulate legal requirements for compliance with legislation relating to specific occupations.

20. IMPLEMENTATION AND TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

20.1 Historically registered qualifications or part-qualifications, Nated Report 191 Part 2, Qualifications (N4-N6), and the National N Diploma registered on the OQSF may be offered until they are replaced by an occupational qualification or part-qualification or reach the end date of their registration period, i.e. the last date of enrolment and last date of achievement. The qualifications remain valid, but may not be offered once they are replaced or reach the end of their registration period.

20.2 Records of learner achievements for qualifications or part-qualifications that have reached the, last date of enrolment and last date of achievement remain valid.

21. IMPLEMENTATION DATE

The implementation date for the revised OQSF policy will be the date on which it is published by the QCTO as a policy document in the Government Gazette.

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22. OCCUPATIONAL QUALIFICATION DESCRIPTORS AND QUALIFICATION TYPES

A. GENERAL OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATE

Type specifications
NQF Exit Level: 1 (The NQF Level allocation will be as per the SAQA level descriptors)
Minimum total credits: ranging from 120-180
Minimum credits at Exit Level: 60 %.

Type
General Occupational Certificate

Descriptor
Occupational title or specialisation title as per the OFO document which is used as a guiding document. Example: General Occupational Certificate: Footwear Hand Lacer and Hand Inter-lacer, NQF Level 1

Abbreviations
Gen. Occ. Cert: Footwear Hand Lacer and Hand Inter-lacer

Purpose and characteristics
This is an entry level occupational qualification. The qualification is primarily occupational, with a strong industry-oriented focus. The qualification also serves to provide learners with the basic knowledge/theory and application techniques for occupational studies in their chosen field of study.

This qualification signifies that the learner has attained a basic level of occupational knowledge and application in a particular occupation and is capable of applying such knowledge and competence in an occupation or role in the workplace with supervision. The General Occupational Certificate typically includes simulated work experience.

Minimum admission requirements
The minimum entry requirement is stipulated in each registered General Occupational Certificate.

Progression
Completion of the General Occupational Certificate meets the minimum entry requirement for admission to a cognate qualification example: Elementary Occupational qualification on the OQSF or similar qualifications on the GFETQSF.

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B. ELEMENTARY OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATE

Type specifications
NQF Exit Level: 2 (The NQF Level allocation will be as per the SAQA level descriptors)
Minimum total credits: ranging from 120 -180.
Minimum credits at Exit Level: 60 %

Type
Elementary Occupational Certificate

Descriptor
Occupational title or specialisation title as per the OFO document which is used as a guiding document. Example: Elementary Occupational Certificate: Weaving Machine Operator, NQF Level 2

Abbreviations
Elem. Occ. Cert: Weaving Machine Operator

Purpose and characteristics
This is an elementary level occupational qualification. The qualification is primarily occupational, with a strong industry-oriented focus. The qualification also serves to provide learners with the elementary knowledge/theory and application techniques for occupational studies in their chosen field of study.

This qualification signifies that the learner has attained an elementary level of occupational knowledge and application in a particular occupation and is capable of applying such knowledge and competence in an occupation or role in the workplace with minimal supervision. The Elementary Occupational Certificate typically includes a simulated work experience and some practical experience.

Minimum admission requirements
The minimum entry requirement is stipulated in each registered Elementary Occupational Certificate.

Progression
Completion of the Elementary Occupational Certificate meets the minimum entry requirement for admission to a cognate Occupational Certificate on the OQSF or similar qualification on the GFETQSF.

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C. INTERMEDIATE OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATE

Type specifications
NQF Exit Level: 3 (The NQF Level allocation will be as per the SAQA level descriptors)
Minimum total credits: ranging from 120-180
Minimum credits at exit level: 60 %

Type
Intermediate Occupational Certificate

Descriptor
Occupational title or specialisation title as per the OFO document which is used as a guiding document. Example: Intermediate Occupational Certificate: Functional Yard Operator, NQF Level 3

Abbreviations
Interm. Occ. Cert: Functional Yard Operator

Purpose and characteristics
This is an intermediate level occupational qualification. The qualification is primarily occupational, with a strong industry-oriented focus. The qualification also serves to provide learners with the basic knowledge/theory and application techniques for occupational studies in their chosen field of study.

This qualification signifies that the learner has attained an intermediate level of occupational knowledge and application in a particular occupation and is capable of applying such knowledge and competence in an occupation or role in the workplace. The Intermediate Occupational Certificate typically includes a simulated work experience without supervision and practical experience.

Minimum admission requirements
The minimum entry requirement is stipulated in each registered Intermediate Occupational Certificate.

Progression
Completion of the Intermediate Occupational Certificate meets the minimum entry requirement for admission to a cognate Occupational Certificate on the OQSF or similar qualification on the GFETQSF.

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D. NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATE

Type specifications
NQF Exit Level: 4 (The NQF Level allocation will be as per the SAQA level descriptors)
Minimum total credits: ranging from 120-180
Minimum credits at Exit Level: 60%

Type
National Occupational Certificate

Descriptor
Occupational title or specialisation title as per the OFO document which is used as a guiding document. Example: National Occupational Certificate: Strata Control Practitioner: Electrician, NQF Level 4

Abbreviations
Nat. Occ. Cert.: Electrician

Purpose and characteristics
This is an equivalent qualification to the National Senior Certificate or to the National Certificate (Vocational) 4 where similar theoretical subjects have been covered. Additional theoretical competence may be required where a learner wants to use the Occupational Certificate for admission to other sub-frameworks. This is an occupational qualification, with a strong industry-oriented focus. The qualification also serves to provide learners with the knowledge/theory and application techniques for occupational studies in their chosen occupations. It emphasises selected general knowledge/theory together with a more specific application.

This qualification signifies that the learner has attained a secondary level of knowledge/theory and application in a particular occupation, is capable of applying such knowledge and competence in an occupation or role in the workplace, and supervise other learners with similar or lower qualifications. The National Occupational Certificate includes simulated or actual work experience and practical experience.

Minimum admission requirements
The minimum entry requirement is stipulated in each registered National Occupational Certificate.

Progression
Completion of the National Occupational Certificate meets the minimum entry requirement for admission to an appropriate Higher Occupational Certificate. Accumulated credits may also be presented for admission into a cognate Higher Occupational Certificate or similar qualification in the HEQSF.

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E. HIGHER OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATE

Type specifications
NQF Exit Level: 5 (The NQF Level allocation will be as per the SAQA level descriptors)
Minimum total credits: ranging from 120-180
Minimum credits at Exit Level: 60%

Type
Higher Occupational Certificate

Descriptor
Occupational title or specialisation title as per the OFO document that is used as a guiding document. Example: Higher Occupational Certificate: Contact Centre Manager; NQF Level 5

Abbreviations
Higher. Occ. Cert.: Contact Centre Manager

Purpose and characteristics
This is an entry-level post-secondary occupational qualification. The qualification is occupational, with a strong industry-oriented focus. The qualification also serves to provide learners with the cognitive introductory knowledge/theory, conceptual tools and practical techniques for occupational education studies in their chosen field of study. It emphasises selected general principles together with procedures that are more specific and their application.

This qualification signifies that the learner has attained a post-secondary level of occupational education knowledge/theory 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 Occupational Certificate includes simulated work experience.

Minimum admission requirements
The minimum entry requirement is stipulated in each registered Higher Occupational Certificate.

Progression
Completion of the Higher Occupational Certificate meets the minimum entry requirements for admission to an appropriate Occupational Diploma. Accumulated credits may also be presented for admission into a cognate qualification registered on the HEQSF.

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F. OCCUPATIONAL DIPLOMA

Type specifications
NQF Exit Level: 6 (The NQF Level allocation will be as per the SAQA level descriptors)
Minimum total credits: ranging from 240- 280
Minimum credits at Exit Level: 60%

Type
 Occupational Diploma

Descriptor
Occupational title or specialisation title as per the OFO document that is used as a guiding document. Example: Occupational Diploma: Nuclear Power Plant Process Controller, NQF Level 6

Abbreviations
Occ. Dip.: Nuclear Power Plant Process Controller

Purpose and characteristics
This qualification is primarily 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 a particular career or occupational context, while equipping them to undertake more specialised and intensive learning. Programmes leading to this qualification tend to have a strong occupational or career focus and learners and holders of this qualification are normally prepared to enter a specific niche in the labour market. Occupational Diploma qualifications include applications which have work experience learning or simulated work experience.

Minimum admission requirements
The minimum entry requirement is stipulated in each registered Occupational Diploma.

Progression
Completion of the Occupational Diploma meets the minimum entry requirement into a cognate Advanced Occupational Diploma on the OQSF of similar qualifications on the HEQSF.

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G. ADVANCED OCCUPATIONAL DIPLOMA

Type specifications
NQF Exit Level: 7 (The NQF Level allocation will be as per the SAQA level descriptors)
Minimum total credits: ranging from 240 - 280
Minimum credits at Exit Level: 60%

Type
Advanced Occupational Diploma

Descriptor
Occupational title or specialisation title as per the OFO document which is used as a guiding document. Example: Advanced Occupational Diploma: Finance Market Practitioner, NQF Level 7

Abbreviations
Adv. Occ. Dip.: Financial Market Practitioner

Purpose and characteristics
This qualification primarily has an occupational orientation, which includes industry specific knowledge that provides a sound understanding of general theoretical principles as well as a combination of general and specific knowledge/theory and their application.

The purpose of the Advanced Occupational Diploma is to develop learners who can demonstrate focused knowledge and skills in a particular field and who have gained experience in applying such knowledge/theory and skills in a workplace or simulated workplace context. An in-depth knowledge, together with practical skills and experience in the workplace, enables successful learners to enter a number of career paths and to apply their learning to particular employment contexts from the outset. Advanced Occupational Diploma programmes include an appropriate application of work experience learning or simulated work experience.

Minimum admission requirements
The minimum entry requirement is stipulated in each registered Advanced Occupational Diploma.

Progression
Completion of an Advanced Occupational Diploma meets the minimum entry requirement for admission to a Specialised Occupational Diploma on the OQSF. Accumulated credits may also be presented for admission into a cognate qualification on the HEQSF.

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H. SPECIALISED OCCUPATIONAL DIPLOMA

Type specifications
NQF Exit Level: 8 (The NQF Level allocation will be as per the SAQA level descriptors)
Minimum total credits: ranging from 240 – 280
Minimum credits at Exit Level: 60%

Type
Specialised Occupational Diploma

Descriptor
Occupational title or specialisation title as per the OFO document which is used as a guiding document. Examples: Specialised Occupational Diploma: Energy Management Advisor, NQF Level 8; Specialised Occupational Diploma: Internal Audit Manager, NQF Level 8; and Specialised Occupational Diploma: Tax Professional, NQF Level 8.

Abbreviations
Spec. Occ. Dip.: Internal Audit Manager, Spec Occ. Dip.: Energy Management Advisor

Purpose and characteristics
This qualification has a number of different purposes, depending on a learner's circumstances and the nature of the qualification. It may provide entry-level professional preparation or specialisation for Bachelor 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 BCom Accounting graduate might register for a Specialised Diploma (Occupational): Tax Professional in order to enter the field of tax revenue and budgets; a BSc (Hon) graduate might register for a Specialised Diploma (Occupational): Energy Management Advisor in order to become an energy management advisor, or a BCom (Hons) graduate might register for a Specialised Diploma (Occupational): Internal Audit Manager in order to become an Auditor in the auditing industry.

Skills Development providers offering this qualification are therefore particularly suitable for continuing professional development through the inculcation of a deep and systematic understanding of current thinking, practice, theory and work experience learning in an area of specialisation. This qualification may also be designed to prepare learners for postgraduate study through the deepening of their knowledge and understanding of theories, work experience and practices in specific occupational disciplines and fields as well as the development of their ability to formulate, undertake

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and resolve more complex theoretical, practice-related problems and work experience tasks through the selection and use of appropriate methods and techniques.

Minimum admission requirements

The minimum entry requirement is stipulated in each registered Specialised Occupational Diploma.

Progression

Completion of a Specialised Occupational Diploma may be presented for entry into a cognate qualification on the HEQSF.

23. NOTES

23.1   Part-qualifications derived from paragraph 21 of the above qualification descriptors will always be known as Occupational Certificates.

23.2   Skills Programmes derived from paragraph 21 of the above qualifications descriptors will be known as Skills Programmes Certificates.

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