



QCTO
Quality Council for Trades & Occupations

**Policy on Accreditation of
Skills Development Providers**
for Qualifications and Part qualifications on the Occupational Qualifications Sub-
Framework (OQSF)

14 March 2019

Disclaimer

The QCTO does not endorse any learning material for use by Skills Development Providers. QCTO is not mandated to endorse any learning material as the learning standards are encapsulated in QCTO curriculum documents. The awarding of accreditation by the QCTO should not be misinterpreted as an endorsement of any learning material and/or other activities that prospective SDPs might be associated with.

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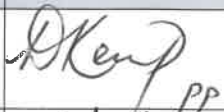


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List of acronyms

AQP	Assessment Quality Partner
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
EISA	External Integrated Summative Assessment
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OQLMS	Occupational Qualifications Learner Management System
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-framework
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
SDA	Skills Development Act
SDP	Skills Development Provider

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accreditation	Official approval awarded to a Skills Development Provider that meets the minimum quality standards by QCTO to offer qualification registered on the OQSF
Accreditation scope	The list of occupational qualifications and part qualifications for which a SDP is accredited to provide learning and internal assessment.
Amendment of scope	This refers to reducing the number of qualifications in the accreditation scope of skills development provider
Assessment	The process of collecting evidence of a learners' achievement to measure and make judgments about the competence or non-competence of specified occupational qualifications or 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 trades and occupational qualifications or part qualifications and part qualifications.
Institutional Audit	An improvement-orientated, external evaluation of institutional arrangements for assuring quality in teaching and learning.
Extension of Scope	This refers to addition of qualifications in the accreditation scope of skills development provider
Formative Assessment	On-going assessments, reviews, and observations which would be a range of formal and informal assessment procedures applied during the learning process in order to modify teaching and learning activities and to improve learners' attainment;
Internal Assessment	Final formal assessment conducted per module internally by an SDP which must be recorded for the issuing of a statement of results Internal self-evaluations done by the provider to monitor its general performance on the training delivery and formative assessments
Occupational Qualification	A qualification associated with a trade, occupation or profession, resulting from work-based learning, developed and quality assured under the auspices of the QCTO and consisting of the knowledge, practical skills and work experience

standards and requires an external integrated summative assessment.

Occupational Qualifications Learner Management System (OQLMS)

QCTO's Learner Management System available to all providers in order to ensure standardised uploads of learner information and required quality assurance evidence, to assist the QCTO with on-line monitoring.

The OQLMS will be provided by the QCTO to each accredited SDP upon successful completion of the accreditation process. However, should the SDP not want to make use of the QCTO's OQLMS, it will have to demonstrate the ability for learner information and quality assurance evidence to be uploaded from their own system into the QCTO's MIS at the accreditation site visit. If not successful, the SDP would have to make use of the QCTO's OQLMS.

Skills Development Provider (SDP)

A legal entity accredited by the QCTO to offer occupational qualifications or part qualifications registered on the Occupational Qualifications Sub Framework

Preamble

The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) was established in 2010 in terms of section 26G of the Skills Development Act, of 1998 as a juristic person. It was listed as a public entity in Government Gazette No 33900 of 31 December 2010 effective from 1 April 2010 to establish the Sub-framework for Trades and Occupations. It is responsible for the development, maintenance and quality assurance of standards and qualifications within its sub-framework.

Accreditation of Skills Development Providers is an integral and critical component of the QCTO's quality assurance system with regards to the provision of learning and internal assessments that prepares learners for External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA).

Occupational qualifications or part qualifications comprise three components: knowledge/theory, practical skills and work experience. Each occupational qualification or part qualification has an associated occupational curriculum, downloadable from the QCTO website, to guide implementation.

Only Skills Development Providers accredited by the QCTO are authorised to deliver occupational qualifications and part qualifications registered on the OQSF.

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the accreditation of Skills Development Providers (SDPs) who wish to offer occupational qualifications and/or part qualifications that are registered on the Occupational Qualifications Sub-framework (OQSF).

2. Legislative and regulatory framework

This policy is informed by the following legislative documents and policies:

2.1 National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act 67 of 2008;

2.2 Skills Development Act (SDA), (Act 97 of 1998);

2.3 Occupational Qualifications Sub-framework Policy (OQSF);

2.4 Article 29(3) of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996)*

2.6 RPL Policy

2.7 Assessment Policy

2.8 Approval of results Policy

2.9 Guideline for e-assessment

2.10 QCTO quality standards for qualifications and part qualifications registered on the OQSF

3. Scope and Application

This policy applies to legal entities that seek accreditation or SDPs already accredited as Skills Development Providers to offer occupational qualifications and/or part qualifications registered on the OQSF.

This policy outlines the criteria and guidelines for the accreditation of skills development providers

- 3.1 Once an SDP has been accredited by the QCTO, that accreditation status is not transferrable to another SDP or site.
- 3.2 An accredited SDP may not offer qualifications or part qualifications for which it is accredited outside the borders of South Africa, unless there is a recognised agreement between the relevant authorities of the two countries.

4. Fees payable

The QCTO may charge for services, according to the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 as amended.

4.1 Accreditation application fees

The QCTO may charge an accreditation fee which covers the following:

- a) Processing and evaluation of SDP application for accreditation
- b) Site visit for Programme Delivery Readiness and
- c) Fees for accessing Occupational Qualification Learner Management Information System (OQLMS)

4.2 Annual Fees

An annual fee will include the following:

- a) Once accredited, an annual accreditation fee will be payable by accredited Skills Development Providers to submit an annual evaluation in order to maintain their accreditation effective from the following year for the period of the accreditation.
- b) SDP professional development training
- c) Annual access to the OQMLS

The fees charged by the QCTO will be determined by the Council from time to time.

5. Responsibilities of accredited Skills Development Providers

5.1 An accredited SDP must, in respect of the occupational qualification and/or part qualification for which it is accredited:

- a) Ensure that quality learner support materials aligned to the QCTO approved curriculum documents are available;
- b) provide and deliver occupational learning as specified in the relevant curriculum document irrespective of the mode of delivery
- c) have access to competent and sufficient human resources, financial and physical resources to provide learning and internal assessments relevant to the curriculum document;
- d) enrol learners for registered occupational qualifications and part qualifications in a format prescribed by the QCTO
- e) Record learner data on the OQLMS and upload relevant quality assurance evidence in the format requested by the QCTO.

- f) conduct relevant internal assessments per module as specified in the relevant curriculum document. of which the summative assessment must be recorded in the manner prescribed by the QCTO (all modules of the Knowledge, Practical and Workplace Components) in order for the Skills Development Provider to issue the Statement of Results. Thus the SDP will assess and record final results for the Knowledge and Practical modules, and enter the competencies achieved in the workplace (found in the curriculum document), as signed off by the supervisor or mentor.
- g) internally moderate at least 25% of the final internal assessments conducted;
- h) ensure the statements of results are issued to learners for modules completed for all three components
- i) assist and ensure that enrolled learners meet the entry requirements of the qualification, and record all formal results per module, in order for the learner to gain admission to the External Integrated Summative Assessment in accordance with QCTO requirements, as per the Assessment Policy;
- j) report on learner enrolments and performance in the form and manner required by the QCTO;
- k) adhere to all quality assurance requirements including monitoring and evaluation activities as prescribed by the QCTO;
- l) manage learner information and performance records in the format as prescribed by QCTO;
- m) renew accreditation with the QCTO in accordance with QCTO requirements.;
- n) ensure that the workplace experience requirement as per qualification (based on the competencies of the workplace component in the curriculum) and is evaluated on completion of the simulated or real workplace experience and recorded on the OQLMS
- o) ensure that learners are exposed to some form of workplace simulated or real experience and collaborate with workplaces (learner placement)

6. Responsibilities of the QCTO

- 6.1 The QCTO will evaluate and verify the information on the SDP's application for accreditation;
- 6.2 The QCTO will make a decision as to whether to accredit the SDP or not;
- 6.3. The turnaround time to accredit SDPs will be:
 - An average of 90 working days after receiving the application for occupational qualifications (excluding the fees process);
 - An average of 40 working days after receiving the application for recorded trades and NATED report 190/1 (N4 – N6 programmes) Part Qualifications.
- 6.4 The QCTO will place on its website criteria and guidelines for the accreditation of Skills Development Providers;
- 6.5 The QCTO will maintain and make available from the website a database of accredited Skills Development Providers;
- 6.6 If accreditation is withdrawn, the QCTO will inform the SDP. The details of the de-accredited SDP will not be removed but will be reflected as a de-accredited SDP on the QCTO database.
- 6.7 The QCTO must ensure that Skills Development Providers have access to the OQLMS, or a successful alternative LMS that complies with QCTO requirements.

7. Accreditation requirements for Skills Development Providers

The QCTO will accredit an entity or institution as an SDP for a specific occupational qualification or part qualification provided the following requirements are complied with. The Application Form and process outlined on the QCTO's website must be followed when applying for application. During Phase 1 the QCTO will conduct a desktop evaluation based on the application form and institutional data and submitted. The institutional data will be stored safely in QCTO archives

7.1 Institutional compliance criteria (Phase 1 desktop evaluation):

- a) be a juristic person registered or established in terms of South African law;

- b) have a valid tax clearance certificate issued by the South African Revenue Service, if applicable;
- c) prove financial sustainability to offer training services;
- d) have sufficient human resources to perform the functions of an SDP;
- e) have a learner support policy, assessment policy as well as occupational health and safety policy; and
- f) demonstrate that it has administrative resources for managing learner information.

7.2 Programme delivery readiness criteria (Phase 2 verification visit):

- a) provide evidence of suitably qualified personnel to facilitate learning and formative assessments as specified in the curriculum;
- b) be in possession of or have access to the required physical resources required as reflected in curriculum document of the occupational qualification or part qualification as to where training/facilitation will take place;
- c) provide evidence of learning material, internal assessment guidelines ; as well as internal moderation guidelines for the delivery of knowledge and practical components for the occupational qualification or part qualification applied for;
- d) have a learner placement strategy in relation to the programme/s of the occupational qualification or part qualification applied for;
- e) provide evidence of compliance with relevant standards for occupational health and safety for the occupational qualification or part qualification applied for as applicable; and
- g) provide evidence of systems to manage learning and track learner performance;
- h) have an RPL Policy aligned to QCTO's RPL Policy

8. Different modes of delivery

The advent of educational technologies has brought about profound change in how education is delivered. One of the advantages of using technology is that it has great opportunity to expand access, it increases openness and flexibility thereby making it possible to attract and retain a broader range of learners. The QCTO is cognisant of the above hence SDPs are accredited to deliver occupational qualifications either via face to face contact mode or via a blended mode of delivery with contact and distance delivery. However, there are specific additional delivery requirements for the blended mode of delivery stipulated as stipulated in the eLearning Policy and Guidelines.

The QCTO also acknowledges the trend of mobility of training or provisioning. Should an accredited SDP wish to provide training at another venue, e.g. workplace, the SDP must inform the QCTO thereof in writing at least 1 month prior to such event taking place, providing institution name and address, and submit a valid OHS Report prior to training learners there. Written permission by the QCTO must be provided prior to such training. Should this process not be followed, the accredited SDP will be de-accredited with immediate effect.

During the accreditation application phase the SDP will compile and submit his/her delivery strategy so that the site visit verification be accommodated accordingly.

9. Misrepresentation of information

SDPs have a responsibility to provide accurate information to the QCTO and the general public. Information such as correct accreditation details, offering qualifications the SDP is accredited for. Any misrepresentation will be regarded as an offence and will lead to the following:

- De-accreditation of the SDP
- Suspension of accreditation for a certain period
- Be reported to the Minister of Higher Education and Training

10. Duration of accreditation

10.1 Accreditation of the SDP, as an institutiton, is valid:

- a) For as long as the SDP complies with the quality standards of the QCTO; the registration period of the qualification and adheres to the accreditation criteria, subject to successful annual self-assessments and QCTO monitoring; or
- b) until the SDP is de-accredited in terms of Section 12 of this policy.
- c) in cases where a QCTO accredited SDP has not enrolled and exited learners on an occupational qualification for a period of three years, the SDP will be de-accredited and be removed from the QCTO list of accredited SDPs.

11. Change of scope for accreditation

11.1 Extension and amendment of scope of accreditation

The scope of accreditation entails the increase or decrease in the number of occupational qualifications or part qualifications accredited for. Change of address is deemed an important amendment, and an accreditation application in this regard must be made to the QCTO prior to the change of address taking effect.

11.2 The QCTO may award an extension of scope to a SDP if the institutional compliance requirements as stipulated under 7.1 are met, and the SDP also meets the programme delivery readiness requirements of accreditation for the occupational qualification or part qualification applied for as stipulated under 7.2. The QCTO may amend the scope of accreditation awarded to the SDP based on the monitoring visits to the SDP that prove failure to comply or a request from the SDP to remove occupational qualifications or part qualifications from its scope of accreditation;

11.3 In all cases of a change of scope of an SDP, the SDP will inform the QCTO thereof;

11.4 The QCTO will extend the scope of accreditation of an SDP to a maximum of six qualifications including part qualifications. During this period the SDP must prove

its dedication to skills development by enrolling and exiting learners at relevant intervals.

12. Withdrawal of accreditation of Skills Development Providers

12.1 Accreditation of an SDP may be withdrawn by the QCTO based on monitoring visits reports where the SDP was found to be noncompliant to the QCTO policy requirements or any misconduct which provides reasonable grounds for such withdrawal.

Reasonable grounds may include, but are not limited to:

- a) failure to comply with specified accreditation criteria and policy requirements;
- b) inability of the SDP to perform its functions adequately;
- c) failure to conduct training over the stipulated period without reasonable grounds to do that;
- d) failure or refusal to comply with the QCTO reporting requirements including but not limited to:
 - i) inaccurate statements of results;
 - ii) poor record keeping;
 - iii) poor internal moderation; and
 - iv) poor throughput rate or learner achievements

Upon audit findings, the QCTO may at its discretion reduce the scope of accreditation or rescind the accreditation awarded.

12.2 If the SDP fails to renew its accreditation well before it expires, the SDP will be declared unaccredited and will stop operating on the expiry date showing on the accreditation letter/certificate. The SDP will have to re-lodge the accreditation request in a normal way done by any applicant applying for accreditation.

12.3 The SDP may appeal the decision to withdraw accreditation as per section 12 of this policy.

13. Handling disputes and appeals

13.1 In the event of a dispute arising between the QCTO and the SDP, all parties must endeavour to negotiate in good faith with a view to settling the dispute amicably.

13.2 The aggrieved SDP must notify the QCTO in writing within 7 working days of an accreditation decision dispute. The aggrieved should forward the letter to the CEO of the QCTO.

13.3 If the negotiations fail, the dispute must be referred to the QCTO Appeals Committee of Council for resolution.

14. Monitoring of SDP Performance

14.1 The QCTO will monitor SDPs for compliance and performance in terms of this policy and conduct site visits at any time within a five year cycle;

14.2 conduct an audit of an SDP's performance in a five year cycle or when the public raised concerns about the provider; and

14.3 a collaboration of monitoring SDPs with SETAs as quality partners will continue until the process of transitioning quality assurance from them to QCTO is completed.

15. Re-accreditation of SDPs

15.1 At the beginning of the final year of accreditation an SDP must apply for re-accreditation if so required. Failure to renew accreditation will result in the accreditation lapsing and the SDP will be de-accredited

15.2 QCTO will conduct a performance audit prior to awarding the re-accreditation.

16. Collaboration with Professional Bodies and SETAs

The QCTO is mandated to accredit SDPs for occupational qualifications on its Sub-Framework. The QCTO recognises the role of Professional Bodies in ensuring quality education and training in their respective industries. Whilst the SETAs are currently QCTO quality assurance partners and have direct links with their industries for skills planning and workplaces, the QCTO is embarking on working very closely with them in transitioning the landscape to the QCTO.

17. Quality Assurance and Monitoring of Policy Implementation

- 17.1 The effectiveness of the policy on the accreditation of skills development providers for all qualifications on the OQSF shall be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis against the set quality assurance standards and associated performance indicators to identify and implement appropriate amendments aimed at improving the effectiveness, efficiency, economy and impact of the said policy and procedures;
- 17.2 Best practices in the occupational space for policy implementation will be identified and best practice models will be used to benchmark the practice amongst QCTO accredited SDPs;
- 17.3 In cases where the QCTO appointed an Accrediting Agency to manage the accreditation of SDPs for a particular cohort of occupational qualifications the Accreditation Agency will sign a Service Level Agreement with the QCTO. This provides a schedule for implementation of the QCTO model of accreditation, stating conditions and requirements to be met during the period of appointment;
- 17.4 In addition, the QCTO has a standardised data reporting template which must be completed and submitted quarterly. This provides specified quantitative data to the QCTO;
- 17.5 Each year the Skills Development Provider must also complete and submit a qualitative report, which serves the dual purpose of a self-evaluation, assisting the

- QCTO and Assessment Partner in strategic planning for the coming year, and of providing the QCTO with the basis for continued monitoring, evaluation and review;
- 17.6 The quality standards set by professional bodies for their occupations will be upheld and recognised as part of the overall quality assurance of the Skills Development Provider accreditation quality assurance process;
- 17.7 All SDPs will be monitored and evaluated against QCTO approved quality standards.

18. Registration of Skills Development Providers (SDPs) by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)

In terms of Article 29(3) of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996)*:

“Everyone has the right to establish and maintain, at their own expense, independent educational institutions that are registered with the state”.

This means that the Skills Development Providers must be registered with the state, in this case, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and maintain standards that are comparable to public educational institutions.

Therefore, in terms of this policy and Communique 1 of 2016 Skills Development Providers (SDPs) will apply to be accredited for their occupational qualifications of choice by the QCTO and also apply to be registered by the Department of Higher Education and Training in order to meet the state requirements.