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GENERAL NOTICE

NOTICE 891 OF 2013

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK ACT, 2008 (ACT 67 OF 2008)

GENERAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING QUALITY

ASSURANCE ACT, 2001 (ACT 58 OF 2001)

HIGHER EDUCATION ACT, 1997 (ACT 101 OF 1997)

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ACT, 1998 (ACT 98 OF 1998)

AMENDMENT TO THE DETERMINATION OF THE SUB-FRAMEWORKS THAT COMPRISE THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

1. I, Bonginkosi Emmanuel Nzimande, MP, Minister of Higher Education and Training, having considered the advice of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) in accordance with s. 8(2)(e) of the National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act 67 of 2008) (“the NQF Act” or “the Act”) hereby amend the determination of the three sub-frameworks that comprise the National Qualifications Framework. The amended sub-frameworks of the NQF are shown diagrammatically in the Schedule.
2. This Notice comprises policy in terms of s. 8(2)(b) of the Act.

Introduction

3. On 14 December 2012 I published my determination of the NQF sub-frameworks in Notice 1040 of 2012 (*Government Gazette*, No. 36003).
4. In the course of my determination I issued certain directives to SAQA and the Quality Councils (QCs) to undertake investigations and provide me with advice with a return date of six months from the date of publication. On 14 June 2013 SAQA submitted its advice to me. SAQA’s advice has been posted for public information on the website of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET): www.dhet.gov.za.
5. I thank the chairperson, board members, chief executive officer and staff members of SAQA and their counterparts in the QCs and professional bodies who worked so hard to provide the advice I requested within the time limit.

6. I have carefully considered SAQA's advice and accordingly make the following amendments to the policy published on 14 December 2012.

General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF)

7. I directed SAQA in collaboration with the Quality Councils to investigate the merits of Umalusi's wish to include a national Further Certificate qualification type at level 5 on the GFETQSF.
8. The post-school education and training system requires suitable qualifications at levels 5 to 6 of the NQF to meet the need for intermediate level skills in the workplace and for bridging into more advanced higher education programmes. Currently the NQF provides for workplace-based Occupational Certificates at level 5 on the Occupational Qualifications Sub-framework (OQSF) and Higher Certificates at level 5 on the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-framework (HEQSF). Several Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges provide vocationally-directed Higher Certificate programmes in partnership with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and by arrangement with the Council on Higher Education (CHE), since such programmes are quality assured by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). This development is a practical application of the principle of articulation and it is strongly supported by the DHET.
9. Any proposed new qualification type must have a clear and distinct purpose which differentiates it from qualification types at the same level on other sub-frameworks. SAQA's advice suggests that Umalusi's proposed Further Certificate qualification type is not significantly different in purpose from the Higher Certificate which has already gained ground in TVET colleges. A further consideration is important. Umalusi proposes that a Further Certificate would be a national qualification supported by a national curriculum. At present the DHET does not have the capacity to take on the development of such a curriculum in addition to its work on the revision of the National Certificate (Vocational) and the National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA).
10. I have given careful consideration to SAQA's proposal that a level 5 Further Certificate on the GFETQSF could be piloted in order to test its feasibility. This suggestion has much to commend it. However, the NQF Act makes no provision for a qualification type to be piloted. Given that Umalusi's scope is limited to NQF level 4, such a pilot could only be designed and managed on the HEQSF, not the GFETQSF. Moreover, in any pilot there are consequences for the participating learners. It would not be acceptable to invite learners to participate in a programme whose legal foundation is absent and whose future acceptance and recognition is uncertain.
11. The GFETQSF therefore remains a sub-framework at levels 1 to 4 of the NQF as provided in the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act,

2001 (Act 58 of 2001). However, SAQA and Umalusi are invited to keep the situation under review.

Occupational Qualifications Sub-framework (OQSF)

12. As I observed in Notice 1040 of 14 December 2012, the QCTO has hitherto assumed that its sub-framework would range from levels 1 to 10 on the NQF, as envisaged in the 2007 joint policy statement of the Ministers of Education and Labour. Given the sparse number of registered occupational qualifications beyond NQF level 6, I directed SAQA in collaboration with the QCs and recognised professional bodies to undertake a study of the justification for workplace-based occupational qualifications as defined in the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act 98 of 1998) beyond NQF level 6.
13. It is clear from SAQA's investigation that the demand for occupational qualifications is greatest at NQF levels 1 to 6 and I agree that the QCTO should focus the major part of its work at those levels. However, certain recognised professional bodies require occupational qualifications or part-qualifications at levels 7 and 8 for the purposes of their registered professional designations. I accept SAQA's advice that the QCTO should work with the recognised professional bodies concerned to develop and quality assure such qualifications in close co-operation with the Council on Higher Education (CHE) according to a process managed by SAQA. In doing so the QCTO must give priority to occupational qualifications or part-qualifications that were developed at levels 7 to 8 prior to my determination on 14 December 2012.
14. SAQA's advice provides no evidence of a justified demand for occupational qualifications at NQF levels 9 to 10. If in due course the QCTO considers that a need has arisen for an occupational qualification type at level 9 or level 10 of the NQF, the QCTO must advance a case for extending the scope of the OQSF after consultation with any parties whose interests might be affected. The case must be discussed with SAQA and the CHE and considered by the CEO Committee comprising the chief executives of SAQA and the QCs with representatives of the Inter-departmental NQF Steering Committee. Thereafter, if it is considered that the OQSF needs to be amended to accommodate level 9 or level 10 the Minister must be advised by SAQA accordingly.
15. For the time being, therefore, I determine that the OQSF should extend from NQF levels 1 to 8.

Professional designations

16. I directed SAQA, after consulting the QCs and recognised professional bodies concerned, to advise me on how the relationship between professional designations and the sub-frameworks should be clarified. The NQF Act, at section 30, requires a recognised professional body to apply to SAQA to register its professional designation "on the NQF", while the Act at section 7 describes the NQF as "a single integrated

system which comprises of three sub-frameworks". SAQA advises that the relationship of a professional designation to the sub-frameworks of the NQF is determined by the qualification or qualifications that underlie the professional designation concerned, as contemplated in SAQA's *Policy and Criteria for Recognising Professional Bodies and Registering Professional Designations for the Purposes of the National Qualifications Framework Act, Act 67 of 2008* (2012). SAQA also points out that it maintains a register of professional designations on the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD) in terms of s. 13 (1) of the NQF Act.


17. The DHET will examine whether the NQF Act needs to be amended in order to clarify the relationship of professional designations to the sub-frameworks of the NQF.

Articulation

18. The subject of articulation within and between the sub-frameworks, on which SAQA has also advised me, is addressed in another Notice.

Coming into effect

19. This policy amends Government Notice 1040 of 2012. It comes into effect on the date of publication in the *Gazette* and remains in effect until it is repealed or amended by notice in the *Gazette*.



DR BE NZIMANDE, MP
MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

DATE: 09/08/13

SCHEDULE

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK		
LEVEL	SUB-FRAMEWORK AND QUALIFICATION TYPES	
10	DOCTORAL DEGREE DOCTORAL DEGREE (PROFESSIONAL)	*
9	MASTER'S DEGREE MASTER'S DEGREE (PROFESSIONAL)	*
8	BACHELOR HONOURS DEGREE POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA BACHELOR'S DEGREE	OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATE (LEVEL 8)
7	BACHELOR'S DEGREE ADVANCED DIPLOMA	OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATE (LEVEL 7)
6	DIPLOMA ADVANCED CERTIFICATE	OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATE (LEVEL 6)
5	HIGHER CERTIFICATE	OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATE (LEVEL 5)
4	NATIONAL CERTIFICATE	OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATE (LEVEL 4)
3	INTERMEDIATE CERTIFICATE	OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATE (LEVEL 3)
2	ELEMENTARY CERTIFICATE	OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATE (LEVEL 2)
1	GENERAL CERTIFICATE	OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATE (LEVEL 1)

*Qualification types beyond level 8 on the QSF have not been determined.

Key to sub-frameworks

Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework	Occupational Qualifications Sub- Framework
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