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## GOVERNMENT NOTICES • GOEWERMENTSKENNISGEWINGS

## DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

NO. 299

31 MARCH 2017

**HIGHER EDUCATION ACT, 1997 (ACT NO. 101 OF 1997) AND  
NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK ACT, 2008 (ACT NO. 67 OF 2008)****Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to  
Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development  
Educators**

I, Bonginkosi Emmanuel Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education and Training, after consulting the Council on Higher Education, have determined national *Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators* in terms of section 3 of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997), read with section 8(2)(b) of the National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008).

The *Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators* aligns with *The Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework, 2013*, published by Notice No. 549, in *Government Gazette No. 36721 of 2 August 2013*.

The qualifications described in the *Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators* replace all formerly approved professional qualifications for Early Childhood Educators.



**Bonginkosi Emmanuel Nzimande, MP**

**Minister of Higher Education and Training**

Date: 23/03/17



**higher education  
& training**

Department:  
Higher Education and Training  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

# **Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators**

**MARCH 2017**

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ECD	Early Childhood Development
ETDP SETA	Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority
FETC	Further Education and Training Certificate
HCert	Higher Certificate
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualification Sub-framework
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LoCC	Language of Conversational Competence
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
MRTEQ	Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications
NASCA	National Senior Certificate for Adults
NCF	National Curriculum Framework for Children from Birth to Four, 2015
NCV	National Certificate (Vocational)
NDP	National Development Plan: Vision 2030
NELDS	National Early Learning Development Standards
NIECD	National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
PGDip	Postgraduate Diploma
PQM	Programme and Qualifications Mix
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAIDE	South African Institute for Distance Education
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SASL	South African Sign Language
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UMALUSI	Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training
WIL	Work-integrated Learning

## Glossary

**“Child-minders”:** Persons who provide care and early learning for six children or fewer, typically in their own homes. Also in some contexts referred to as “day mothers”.

**“Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)”:** A term chosen as a qualifier to name some of the qualifications in this Policy that are intended to develop educators who are able to support and promote early learning and development for babies, toddlers and young children. According to the Higher Education Qualification Sub-framework (HEQSF) (Council on Higher Education [CHE], 2013, p. 19), qualifiers indicate a field of specialisation, in this case ECCE. The use of a qualifier requires that at least 50% of the credits in the qualification and at least 50% of the credits at the exit level of the qualification must be in the field of specialisation.

**“Early Childhood Development Educators”:** Individuals who hold appropriate qualifications that enable them to deliver or support the delivery of structured early childhood education programmes for babies, toddlers and young children effectively. Such programmes are focused on stimulating early learning, including formal curricula such as the National Curriculum Framework for Children from Birth to Four, 2015 (NCF).

**“Early Childhood Development Practitioners”:** Persons who provide early childhood development (ECD) services through formal ECD programmes; family services and playgroups; and training, as well as those providing management support services to these workers.

**“Early Childhood Development Programmes”:** Programmes that provide one, or a collection of, daily care, development and early learning services and support to a child from birth until the year before she/he enters school. These programmes include, but are not limited to:

- Community-based play groups operating for specific hours.
- Outreach and support programmes for young children and their families/caregivers at a household level.
- Parenting support and enrichment programmes.
- Support for the psychosocial needs of young children and their families.
- ECD programmes provided at partial care facilities and child and youth care centres as contemplated in section 91(1) of the *Children’s Act, Act 38 of 2005*.
- Any other programme that focuses on the care, development and early learning of children from birth to school-going age and/or their families.

**“Early Childhood”:** The period of human development from birth to the year before a child enters Grade R/formal school.

**“Early Childhood Development Services”<sup>1</sup>:** Services or support provided to infants and young children or to a child’s parent or caregiver by a government department or civil society organisation with the intention of promoting the child’s early emotional, cognitive, sensory, spiritual, moral, physical, social and communication development.

**“Grade R”:** An institutionalized year of learning for children in the year before Grade 1.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 91 (2) of the *Children’s Act, Act 38 of 2005* refers to services intended to promote early childhood development and provided by a person other than the child’s parent or caregiver, on a regular basis, to children up to school-going age.



The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has identified three models of provision of Reception Year/Grade R: those within the public primary school system, those at community-based sites and the independent provision of reception year programmes.

**“Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)”**: Universities and private HEIs accredited by the CHE to offer higher education programmes.

**“Initial Professional Qualifications”**: Qualifications that lead to recognition as a beginning professional in a profession.

**“Post-professional Qualifications”**: Qualifications that enable further development in a field or profession for people who already hold an initial professional qualification.

## 1. Background to the Policy

### 1.1 Early childhood development (ECD) in historical context

1.1.1 In South Africa, there have been historical shifts in the way in which early childhood has been defined and understood (Department of Education [DOE], 2001; Ebrahim, 2010). During the apartheid era, the definition of early care and education gained its currency from service provisioning based on race. Custodial care became associated with provisioning in black pre-schools that received very little government support.

1.1.2 Early education was associated with privilege and quality provision, with strong government support widely available to the white population group but much less so for other groups.

1.1.3 To address the polarisation of care and education, the concept of Educare was used to emphasize the need for a focus on education, health, nutrition and protection (Rickards, 1991).

1.1.4 The advent of democracy in 1994 led to the reconstruction of ECD to deal with the inequities of the past. The areas for intervention were captured in the definition of ECD, namely “an umbrella term, which applies to the processes by which children from birth to nine years grow and thrive physically, mentally, emotionally, morally and socially” (DOE, 1995, p.33).

1.1.5 Section 91(1) of the *Children’s Act, Act no 38 of 2005* (effective from 2010), defines ECD as the “process of emotional, cognitive, sensory, spiritual, moral, physical, social and communication development of children from birth to school-going age”.

### 1.2 An evolving early childhood development policy environment

1.2.1 ECD for the period from birth up to and including the year before children enter formal schooling has emerged as a priority in terms of several government policies and programmes, and the *Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators* has been developed against this backdrop.

1.2.2 Recognizing the need for, and benefits of ECD for nation building, reconstruction and development, the first democratically elected Government of South Africa committed itself to the expansion of ECD provisioning in the *White Paper on Education and Training* of 1995 and the 1997 *White Paper for Social Welfare*. In 1996, the DOE released the *Interim Policy for Early Childhood Development*.

1.2.3 *Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education*, (DOE, 2001, p.2) puts forward a number of compelling arguments for investing in ECD, including, among others:

- The early years are critical for the development of the potential of human beings as they form the fundamental pillars of later or lifelong learning.
- South Africa's position in the global economy depends on the competencies of its people and these competencies are developed and set early in life.
- Intervening in the earliest years help to reduce the social and economic disparities and race and gender inequalities that divide South African society.

1.2.4 The *Children's Act, Act 38 of 2005*, and its regulations provide a comprehensive framework for the provision of social services for children in South Africa. It includes a dedicated chapter (Chapter 7) on ECD programmes. Norms and standards for the provisioning of programmes are stipulated in the regulations to the Act, which state that programmes must aim to help children realize their full potential.

1.2.5 The National Early Learning Development Standards (NELDS), published by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in 2009, is a curriculum-related policy initiative focusing primarily on the learning needs of children from birth to four years.

1.2.6 Several more recent South African government initiatives point to high-level awareness of the importance of ECD for human and social development and national productivity. These initiatives include significantly increased funding for ECD by the National Treasury and recognition of the importance of the early years in the *National Development Plan: Vision 2030*, 2012 (NDP).

1.2.7 The NDP emphasizes that: "Delays in cognitive and overall development before schooling can often have long-lasting and costly consequences for children, families and society. The most effective and cost-efficient time to intervene is before birth and the early years of life. Investment in Early Childhood Development should be a key priority." (National Planning Commission, 2011, p.274.)

1.2.8 The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for Children from Birth to Four (DBE, 2015) provides guidance to those developing programmes and working with babies, toddlers and young children from birth to age four.

1.2.9 The *National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy* (NIECD), published by the Department of Social Development in 2015 sets, as a medium-term goal, the availability and accessibility of age-appropriate and developmentally stage-appropriate essential components of a comprehensive, quality ECD programme to all infants and young children and their caregivers by 2024.

1.2.10 One of the key indicators for the attainment of this goal is:

“Sufficient qualified ‘human resources’ to secure universal availability and equitable access to early childhood development services through the expansion of the size and diversity of the workforce to meet the assessed needs, ensuring that the workforce is qualified and has the necessary skills...” (NIECD, 2015, p.69.)

1.2.11 Research (Biersteker, 2008; South African Institute for Distance Education [SAIDE], 2011; Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority [ETDP SETA], 2013) has highlighted the lack of defined career pathways and opportunities for ECD educators and practitioners, and that existing ECD programmes are neither producing the number, nor the kind of educators/ practitioners needed for the diverse ECD context.

1.2.12 The *Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators* has been developed as part of the policy environment described above. It takes cognizance of the fact that the provision of quality ECD services relies on the availability of a committed cadre of appropriately qualified and passionate employees in the sector.

1.2.13 The education sector, e.g. civil society, government and universities, has a responsibility to:

- Design and offer qualifications that will afford professional status and recognition to ECD educators.
- Standardize the training and qualifications of and provide a career pathway for ECD educators.
- Develop quality programmes to equip ECD educators with information, knowledge and skills to support the implementation of the NCF.

## **2. Purpose and Scope of the Policy**

2.1 The *Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators* puts in place a set of qualifications for ECD educators who are delivering or assisting in delivering ECD programmes, including formal curricula such as the NCF, with guidelines for the programmes that lead to such qualifications

2.2 In terms of the *NQF Act, Act 67 of 2008*, quality councils are responsible for developing qualifications and part-qualifications for the different sub-frameworks that are necessary for the sector and for recommending qualifications or part-qualifications to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) for registration.

2.3 The Council on Higher Education (CHE) is responsible for the framework for the development of qualifications and standards in the higher education sector. The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the CHE quality assures and accredits the offering of such qualifications and standards by HEIs.

2.4 The Higher Education Qualifications Framework was gazetted as policy in 2007 and subsequently reviewed to align with the 10 level National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and was replaced by the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-framework (HEQSF) published in Notice No. 549, Government Gazette No. 36721 of 02 August 2013.

2.5 The *Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators* is based on the HEQSF and is subject to it and to any revisions of the HEQSF. It meets all the requirements of the HEQSF.

2.6 The *Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators* is a policy that puts in place qualification programmes for prospective and existing ECD educators who deliver or support the delivery of the NCF in any workplace where public and state-supported ECD learning programmes are delivered. The programmes described in the Policy can also be used for the development of professionals working in other ECD contexts, e.g. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college lecturers, university lecturers and officials and policy makers in government departments, where such professionals require competences similar to those that will be developed through these programmes.

2.7 The specification of a set of minimum requirements for programmes leading to ECD educator qualifications is, in part, aimed at ensuring that the higher education system, in offering these qualifications, contributes to the initial professional education and further continuing professional development of ECD educators.

2.8 The *Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators* follows the nested approach of the HEQSF and:

- selects suitable qualification types from the HEQSF for ECD educators, identifies possible qualifiers for the qualifications and, as such, identifies the purposes of programmes leading to the qualifications;
- describes a knowledge mix that is appropriate for the programmes leading to the different ECD qualifications aligned to the purpose of the programme and qualification; and
- sets minimum credit values for learning programmes leading to qualifications in terms of the knowledge mix and different levels.

2.9 The *Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators* provides a basis for the construction of core curricula for programmes leading to initial professional and post-professional qualifications for ECD educators.

2.10 *Initial professional qualifications* refer to qualifications that prepare the holders thereof to facilitate learning in the ECD context with confidence. *Post-professional qualifications* refer to qualifications that enable the development of new or advanced knowledge and skills and that will enable the holders to have a deeper understanding of their professional practice at a higher level and/or to take on new roles to support early learning and development within the ECD sector.

2.11 The qualifications described in the *Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators* are not appropriate for teaching in the schooling sector and should not be used for that purpose. However, ECD educators who wish to enter a career in teaching in schools could, with credit recognition, complete a recognised qualification for employment as a teacher in schools. Similarly, appropriately qualified school teachers who wish to become ECD educators could complete a suitable additional qualification to develop the required competences. However, programmes developed against the qualifications described in this Policy should be forward-looking and able to develop ECD educators' awareness of what is expected in the Foundation Phase and Grade R.

2.12 The *Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators* will be used in a variety of ways:

- It will be used by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to develop programmes for ECD educators.
- It will be used by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to determine whether proposed programmes for ECD educators submitted by public universities conform to the Policy for the approval of funding and inclusion in their Programme and Qualifications Mix (PQM).
- It will be used by the DHET to evaluate programmes for ECD educators submitted by private HEIs for registration, enabling them to offer the programmes.
- It will be used by the CHE's HEQC in accreditation and quality assurance processes.
- It will be used by appropriate professional bodies in their determination of qualification requirements for professional registration.
- It will be used by employers of ECD educators.

Through these processes, the Policy will be used to regulate programmes for ECD educators offered by HEIs.

2.13 Since the qualifications described in this Policy are qualification types located on the HEQSF, they may only be offered by HEIs that have been accredited by the CHE.

### **3. Principles Underpinning the Policy and its Implementation**

3.1 The principles that underpin the NDP, *Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Development* (2001), the *White Paper on Social Welfare* (1997), the NELDS and the NCF, also inform this Policy and must guide its implementation, including the design and offering of learning programmes leading to the qualifications described in the Policy.

3.2 Principles that are specifically relevant to the development of ECD educators and their work in ECD programmes include the following:

- Embracing the concept of lifelong learning; recognizing that learning takes place throughout a person's life and in many forms.
- Recognizing the specific, holistic nature of learning, which includes the cognitive, emotional, social and cultural aspects of learning.
- Promoting the values that underpin an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality, fairness and freedom.
- Respecting and encouraging democracy and fostering a culture that promotes human rights and children's rights.
- Pursuing excellence and promoting the full realization of the potential of every child, tolerance of ideas and appreciation of diversity.
- Promoting optimal opportunities for culturally responsive pedagogies that are transformative in nature and inclusive.
- Recognizing quality early learning and development as a way of ensuring the optimal development of babies, toddlers and young children, and laying the foundations for lifelong success in education, employment and responsible citizenship.
- Recognizing babies, toddlers and young children as competent people whose learning and development are important and who need strong connections with adults.

3.3 The *Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators* embraces a spirit of openness and inclusivity, and seeks to enable articulation and access rather than constraint and exclusion.

### **4. Developing Purposeful Programmes through an Appropriate Knowledge Mix for Different Programmes**

4.1 Facilitating early learning is a specialized activity and requires access to a range of knowledge, both in depth and in breadth. Educator practice in an ECD context is more about providing stimulation for early learning and development outcomes through free play and

especially guided play, stimulation, and related pedagogies, and ensuring a conducive and supportive environment that encourages such learning and development, than about direct teaching.

4.2 For the purposes of this document, the terminology “facilitating early learning” is used to describe the interactive and exploratory engagement among educators and babies, toddlers and young children that leads to learning and development. This engagement is understood to be characterized by, among others: stimulation, play-based methodology, participation, modeling and communication.

4.3 Knowledge forms do not exist in isolation from one another; nor are they applied independently. Rather, they are most usefully learnt and applied in an integrated fashion. The notion of integrated and applied knowledge or strategic knowledge is therefore an overarching organising concept that should be understood as being both the condition for and the effect of scrutinizing, fusing together and expressing different types of knowing in the moment of practice.

4.4 The knowledge and practice competences required by educators working in ECD extend beyond and differ from the knowledge and practice competences required for facilitating learning in other contexts. Working as an educator in an ECD context demands high-level skills and deep knowledge over a wide range of areas.

4.5 Working with babies, toddlers and young children requires that ECD educators possess and are able to demonstrate specific dispositions, including patience, love, care and an intense concern for the welfare, safety and development of babies, toddlers and young children, as well as virtues such as respect for truth, reasonableness, objectivity and fairness. ECD educators must be keenly knowledgeable about human cognitive, emotional, physical, creative, communication, social, spiritual and moral development in the early years, know how to identify barriers affecting early learning and development and how to differentiate learning opportunities for each child in their care. They must also know how and where to refer children when specialist support is required.

4.6 Facilitating early learning depends on the acquisition, integration and application of different types of knowledge.

4.7 If integrated and applied knowledge is understood to be the overarching goal that will enable quality mediation of learning, the types of learning associated with the acquisition, integration and application of knowledge for educators and practitioners that should be contained in first professional qualifications (at exit Levels 6 and 7) for the development of ECD educators, will be the following:

- Fundamental learning.
- Educational learning.



- Disciplinary learning.
- Pedagogical learning.
- Situational learning.
- Practical learning.

4.8 Fundamental learning is about functional literacies and in the South African context it refers to learning to communicate at a basic level in a second official language that must be one of the official African languages or South African Sign Language (SASL); the ability to use Information Communication Technology (ICT) competently and the acquisition of academic literacies, including academic reading and writing, and numerical literacies that lay the foundation for effective learning in higher education contexts.

4.9 Educational learning is the study of education and its foundations, including but not limited to the philosophy, psychology, politics, economics, sociology and history of education, which are often learnt and taught in an integrated fashion. This enables a degree to be designated as a degree in education. Professional ethics and issues related to knowledge of, and relationships between self and others in the life and work of an ECD educator are cross-cutting themes that are, theoretically, located within the study of education and its foundations.

4.10 Disciplinary learning is the study of specialized subject matter relevant to ECD that will enable and support effective practice as an ECD educator. It includes, but is not limited to, a theoretical study of:

- Varied constructions of children and childhood.
- Identity development, inclusive of the cognitive, physical, emotional, social, linguistic, moral, spiritual, creative and psychological development and well-being of babies, toddlers and young children.
- Inclusive education.
- Nutrition, health and well-being.
- Physical and motor ability and their development.
- Critical thinking, problem solving, concept formation and their development.
- Multilingualism.
- Communication and language development, and early and emergent literacy and their development.
- Mathematical concepts, and early and emergent numeracy and their development.
- Basic knowledge of the social and natural sciences, technology and the creative arts.

4.11 Pedagogical learning in the ECD context refers to a study of the principles, practices and methods of facilitating early learning to enable effective learning. It incorporates general pedagogical knowledge, which includes knowledge of babies, toddlers and young children in ECD learning contexts, and learning, curriculum and general instructional and assessment strategies; and specialized pedagogical content knowledge, which includes knowing how to

represent the concepts, methods and rules of a subject or field to create appropriate learning opportunities for babies, toddlers and young children, and how to evaluate their progress. Inclusive education and an understanding of the barriers to learning, working with diversity, and curriculum differentiation to address individual learning needs all form important aspects of both general pedagogical knowledge and specialized pedagogical content knowledge. ECD educators must have specialized knowledge of pedagogical approaches that are relevant to and suitable for facilitating early learning and working with babies, toddlers and young children in ECD contexts. These include, but are not limited to:

- The ability to use appropriate<sup>2</sup>, play-based pedagogies to support the development of early learning, such as using oral and written stories; play; rhyme; fantasy; exploration; music; arts and crafts; and movement.
- The ability to stimulate the development of executive functioning as a set of cognitive processes that includes attentional control, inhibitory control, working memory, cognitive flexibility, reasoning, problem solving and planning.
- Balancing child-initiated and educator-guided learning opportunities.
- Using appropriate technologies to support early learning and development, including appropriate use of ICTs.
- Developing resources to support early learning and development.
- Curriculum differentiation.
- Inviting/stimulating babies, toddlers and young children to participate.
- The ability to assess and report on the achievement of early learning and development.
- Early identification, assessment and intervention for babies, toddlers and young children with special education needs.
- Managing and administering ECD contexts, including the ability to use age-appropriate disciplinary techniques that are not physically and/or emotionally abusive.
- The ability to promote health, hygiene, nutrition and to create safe, nurturing environments for babies, toddlers and young children.
- Working with parents, caregivers, families and communities.

ECD educators must be able to embrace a transformative pedagogy which respects the contributions of families and culture in the lives of babies, toddlers and young children; which views children, educators and families as learners, which considers learning as occurring through a co-constructed, collaborative and interactive process and which views the child as competent in communication, context and culture, and respected for who he/she is and who he/she will become.

4.13 ECD educators must be knowledgeable about disabilities and how to mediate learning in ways that take such disabilities into account. They must be able to provide disability-specific additional support in the learning environment for babies, toddlers and young children with

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<sup>2</sup> The use of play as pedagogical mechanism to stimulate early learning and development is particularly important in ECD contexts and the NCF is rooted in play-based learning for ECD.

disabilities. This includes being knowledgeable about *The Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) Policy*, (2014) and being able to implement it effectively.

4.14 Practical learning or work-integrated learning (WIL) involves learning in and from practice. Learning from practice includes the study of practice using discursive resources to analyse different practices across a variety of contexts, and drawing from case studies, video recordings, real-time observations and so on, to theorize practice and form a basis for learning in practice. Learning in practice involves working in simulated environments, such as simulated early learning environments at universities, and in environments where ECD programmes are offered.

Practical learning is an important condition for the development of tacit knowledge, and an essential component of facilitating learning. Practical learning provides the context in which all other learning can be developed and reinforced.

4.15 Situational learning refers to knowledge of the varied learning situations, contexts and environments of education, as well as all prevailing policies, political and organisational contexts relevant in and to the ECD context. These include, but are not limited to, understanding and critical analysis of the complex and differentiated nature of South African society and learning to work in nuanced ways with the diverse challenges faced by babies, toddlers and young children and their families, for example:

- unemployment;
- poverty;
- malnutrition;
- HIV and AIDS;
- dealing with diversity, including gender and cultural issues;
- promoting inclusivity; and
- education for sustainable development.

Ethical considerations and an understanding of codes of conduct are important aspects of situational learning, relevant in and to the ECD context.

4.16 The knowledge mix concept refers to weightings afforded to different kinds of learning in integrated learning programmes leading to qualifications intended to achieve a specific purpose. Typically, qualification programmes for ECD educators would integrate the various types of knowledge and learning that have been described above into specific programmes in varying ratios to suit the purpose of the qualification. This is aligned to the notion of purposeful qualifications, a principle embedded within the HEQSF.

4.17 This Policy also describes the basic competences that professionally qualified ECD educators should be able to demonstrate after completing a programme leading to an initial professional qualification. The competences are listed in Appendix 1. Part of the purpose of a

programme leading to an initial professional qualification will be to develop these competences. This means that the knowledge mix in programmes leading to initial professional qualifications for ECD educators must be selected so that the learning in the programme leads to the development of these competences.

## **5. Recognition of Prior Learning**

5.1 Many of the students who enter ECD educator programmes will already be working in ECD contexts and/or have gained knowledge as a result of learning in the workplace and in other settings.

5.2 It is possible to recognise relevant prior learning that is already in place. A key principle that must inform recognition of prior learning (RPL) practice is that learning outcomes must not be compromised as a result of RPL. This means that RPL must take place on an individual, student-by-student basis and must involve an assessment/professional judgment of the prior learning.

5.3 RPL for access and advanced credit standing must be conducted by the admitting institution in accordance with national policies, quality council policies and institutional policies.

5.4 SAQA's *National Policy for the Implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning* (SAQA, 2013), provides for the implementation of RPL in the context of the *NQF Act, Act 67 of 2008*, and it describes how providers should implement RPL in respect of all qualifications and part-qualifications in South Africa.

5.5 The RPL policy of the CHE must be taken into account in the interpretation of this Policy.

5.6 *The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Coordination Policy* (2016) provides a strong enabling policy environment for the further development and implementation of RPL across the post-school education and training system, and across all levels of the NQF.

## **6. Credit Accumulation and Transfer**

6.1 Many of the students who enter ECD educator programmes will already hold prior qualifications or part-qualifications that could be considered for credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) purposes. These include credits gained at Level 5 and upwards through the completion of qualifications or part-qualifications that are developed and delivered under the mandate and quality assurance of the CHE, the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations

(QCTO) and the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (UMALUSI).

6.2 For prospective students holding credits gained through relevant prior qualifications or part-qualifications, it is possible to provide recognition for credits earned in the prior qualification, provided that there is equivalence between the learning for which credits have been achieved in the prior qualification and the learning that will be 'credited' in the new qualification, both in terms of the learning content and the NQF level at which it is pitched.

6.3 The HEQSF (2013, p.11) provides that "any and all credits for an incomplete qualification may be recognised by the same or different institution as meeting part of the requirements for a different qualification, or may be recognised by a different institution as meeting part of the requirements for the same qualification".

6.4 The HEQSF (2013, p.11) also provides that "a maximum of 50% of the credits of a completed qualification may be transferred to another qualification, provided also that no more than 50% of the credits required for the other qualification are credits that have been used for a completed qualification".

6.5 CAT must be applied in alignment with the HEQSF and with the CAT policy of the CHE.

## **7. Advanced Standing**

7.1 RPL and CAT can lead to advanced credit standing.

7.2 The HEQSF (2013, p.22) emphasizes the general principle that the admitting institution must be "satisfied that the applicant has competence in the appropriate field of intended study at the appropriate entry level of the target qualification".

7.3 The HEQSF (2013, p.22) also requires that "the point of entry into a target programme must be such that candidates complete at least all the required credits at the exit level of the qualification".

## **8. Work-integrated Learning**

8.1 Practical learning or Work-integrated Learning (WIL) involves learning in and from practice. Concerning learning to be an ECD educator, learning from practice includes the study of practice using discursive resources to analyse different practices across a variety of contexts and drawing from case studies, video recordings, real-time observations, and so on, to theorize practice and form a basis for learning in practice.

Learning in practice also involves working in simulated environments. The learning-in-practice, workplace-based component of ECD educator qualifications should take place in ECD environments where registered or conditionally registered programmes in terms of section 95 or 98 of the *Children's Act, Act 38 of 2005*, are offered. Where such programmes are offered in a partial care facility (also known as an ECD centre), such a centre must be registered or conditionally registered in terms of section 80 or 83 of the *Children's Act, Act 38 of 2005*. Where a programme and, where applicable, a partial care facility is not registered, valid proof must be provided that applications for registration as contemplated in the aforementioned sections had been lodged during the previous six months.

8.2 It is the responsibility of the institution offering the qualification to arrange formal WIL opportunities for students in line with the requirements of the qualification as described in this Policy. It is also the responsibility of the institution to assess whether the WIL environment is suitable to support student learning.

8.3 All students shall be cleared in terms of the provisions of the *Children's Act, Act 38 of 2005* as persons suitable to work with babies, toddlers and young children as contemplated in section 97 (3) and duly verified against Part B of the National Protection Register in accordance with section 126 of the said Act.

8.4 It is the responsibility of the institution offering the programme to ensure that suitably qualified and/or trained persons supervise, mentor and assess WIL.

## **9. Language Proficiency Requirements for Programmes Leading to Initial Professional Qualifications for Early Childhood Development Educators**

9.1 The promotion of multilingualism forms an important basis for strengthening the development of a multicultural society.

9.2 All ECD educators who successfully complete a learning programme leading to an initial professional qualification should be proficient in the use of at least one official South African language as a language of learning and teaching (LoLT) and partially proficient (i.e. sufficient for purposes of basic conversation) in at least one other official South African language. Students who are not proficient in an indigenous African language<sup>3</sup> must take one such language at the level of language of conversational competence (LoCC). South African Sign Language (SASL) can be developed as a LoLT or as a LoCC.

9.3 Qualification certificates must be endorsed to indicate the holder's level of competence in specific languages by using appropriate labels, for example: LoLT (English) and LoCC (isiZulu).

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<sup>3</sup> IsiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi (Sesotho sa Leboa), Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga.

## 10. Programmes Leading to Qualifications for Early Childhood Development Educators

10.1 The table below shows the suite of higher education qualifications that have been selected from the HEQSF for ECD educators.

10.2 The term, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), was chosen as a qualifier to name the qualifications in this Policy that are intended to develop educators who are able to support and promote early learning and development for babies, toddlers and young children. According to the HEQSF (CHE, 2013, p. 19), qualifiers indicate a field of specialisation, in this case ECCE. The use of a qualifier requires that at least 50% of the credits in the qualification and at least 50% of the credits at the exit level of the qualification must be in the field of specialisation.

**Table 1: Qualifications selected from the HEQSF for ECCE educators and practitioners**

NQF Exit Level	Certificates	Degrees	Diplomas	
10		Doctorate		
		Professional Doctorate		
9		Master's		
		Professional Master's		
8		Bachelor of Education Honours		Postgraduate Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education
7		Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Care and Education		Advanced Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education
6	Advanced Certificate in Early Childhood Care and Education		Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education	
5	Higher Certificate in Early Childhood Care and Education			

10.3 Admission requirements for the qualifications listed in this table and articulations between them are described in the sections that follow.

10.4 Articulation from historical and/or current ECD qualifications into the qualifications listed in the table is described in Appendix 2.

## **11. Entry Level Qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education**

### **11.1 Higher Certificate in Early Childhood Care and Education**

#### **Purpose**

This is an entry-level qualification that is intended to provide learners with basic introductory knowledge, cognitive and conceptual tools and practical techniques to enable further study in ECD. It aims to develop learners who are capable of applying such beginning knowledge and competence as early childhood educators.

There are no specific specialisations developed in the higher certificate (HCert) as it is intended to develop a broad orientation to the field of ECCE. The qualifier for the HCert is ECCE.

The qualification includes a WIL component.

A Higher Certificate (HCert) in ECCE serves as an entry level/introductory qualification to the study of ECD education in a higher education and training context and will qualify graduates as educators. Graduates who successfully complete the HCert (ECCE) and who want to become professionally qualified must enter and successfully complete the Diploma (Dip) in ECCE or the Bachelor of Education (BEd) in ECCE.

#### **Qualification Type Specifications:**

NQF Exit Level 5

Minimum total credits: 120

Minimum credits at Level 5: 120

**Designator:** None

**Qualifiers:** One

**Approved Qualifier:** ECCE

#### **Endorsements on Certificate:**

LoLT

LoCC



*Example:*

Higher Certificate in Early Childhood Care and Education

*Abbreviation:*

HCert (ECCE)

*Endorsement on certificate:*

LoLT: English

LoCC: IsiZulu

**Minimum Admission Requirements:**

A National Senior Certificate (NSC) or Senior Certificate (SC) or a National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA) or a Level 4 National Certificate (Vocational) or an appropriate Level 4 Certificate in ECD.

**Knowledge Mix:**

The knowledge mix for programmes leading to this qualification must comply with the following minimum requirements:

- All credits should be allocated at Level 5.
- At least 50% of the credits (60C) must be focused on developing the ECD specialisation (including relevant disciplinary, pedagogical and practical learning).
- At least 50% of the credits (60C) must be spread across education learning (foundations of education), general pedagogical learning, fundamental learning and situational learning.
- A minimum of six weeks or 16 to 24 credits of supervised and assessed WIL is required.

**Progression:**

A completed HCert (ECCE) meets the minimum entry requirement for admission and credit recognition to/in a Dip (ECCE) or to/in a BEd (ECCE). A qualification may not be awarded for early exit from an HCert programme.

## **12. Initial Professional Qualifications for Early Childhood Development Educators**

The Dip (ECCE) and the BEd (ECCE) are described as initial professional qualifications. Initial professional qualifications are qualifications that can lead to professional recognition in a field or profession.

The qualifier for the diploma and degree is ECCE.

Facilitating early learning is the main competence to be developed for all students undertaking a Dip (ECCE) or a BEd (ECCE). However, the development of a holistic ECD educator requires that all the competences listed in Appendix 1 must be included in programmes leading to initial professional qualifications.

### **12.1 Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Dip (ECCE) is to develop professionally competent educators who can demonstrate the general principles, focused knowledge and skills that are appropriate for facilitating learning in ECD contexts. The qualification requires in-depth specialisation of knowledge, as well as practical skills and experience required in an ECD context. The learning programme must, as a minimum requirement, lead to the development of all the ECD educator competences described in Appendix 1.

The qualification includes a WIL component.

#### **Qualification Type Specifications:**

NQF Exit Level: 6

Minimum total credits: 360

Minimum total credits at Level 6: 120

**Designator:** None

**Qualifier:** One

**Approved Qualifier:** ECCE

#### **Endorsements on Certificate:**

LoLT

LoCC

*Example:*

Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education

*Abbreviation:*

Dip (ECCE)

*Endorsement on certificate:*

LoLT: English

LoCC: IsiZulu

**Minimum Admission Requirements:**

The minimum entry requirement is National Senior Certificate (NSC) or Senior Certificate (SC) or a National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA) or a Level 4 National Certificate (Vocational) with a diploma entry endorsement or equivalent. A Level 4 Occupational Certificate in ECD can also be presented for consideration for admission and a Level 5 certificate or diploma can be presented for consideration for admission and assessment pertaining to advanced credit standing.

**Knowledge Mix:**

The knowledge mix for programmes leading to this qualification must comply with the following minimum requirements:

- For all knowledge areas, credits should be allocated and distributed from Level 5 to Level 6 to ensure adequate progression in the programme, with the exception of fundamental learning, which is limited to Level 5.
- 50% of the credits (180C) must be focused on developing the ECD specialisation (including relevant disciplinary, pedagogical and practical learning). At least 60 of these credits should be at Level 6.
- 50% of the credits (180C) must be spread across education learning (foundations of education), general pedagogical learning, fundamental learning and situational learning. At least 60 credits, focused on foundations of education, should be at Level 6.
- Fundamental learning credits must be pegged at Level 5 and cover a *maximum* of 72C. Students who enter the programme with competence in specific areas, for example ICT competence, or multilingual competence, should not be required to include all these credits in their programmes. In such cases, credits must be utilised in other areas of their learning programmes at appropriate levels to ensure high-quality learning and develop excellence in mediating learning in ECD settings. These credits cannot be advanced towards the award of the qualification by RPL.
- Workplace-based learning and assessment must form an integral part of the WIL component. ECCE workplace-based WIL, including supervised and assessed practice, is an essential part of the diploma programme.
- Workplace-based WIL must comply with the following:
  - Students must spend a minimum of 18 weeks and a maximum of 24 weeks in formally supervised and assessed workplace-based practice spread over the duration of the three years (full-time) of the diploma. The university must take full responsibility for the summative assessment.
  - In any given year, a maximum of eight such weeks should be spent in workplace-based settings, and at least three of these should be consecutive.
  - In a part-time or distance mode, students may be physically in workplace-based settings for longer periods, for example, if they are already employed as ECD educators/practitioners. However, the same amount of supervised and assessed workplace-based practice in a designated WIL period is required.

- WIL must comply with the requirements described in section 8 of this Policy. ECD educators must be knowledgeable about, and skilled in the early identification of barriers to learning, as well as in curriculum differentiation and adaptation for multiple learning needs.
- ECD educators must be able to integrate ICTs into their practice.

**Progression:**

Completion of a Dip (ECCE) meets the minimum entry requirements for entry into an Advanced Diploma (AdvDip) in ECCE.

Accumulated credits can also be presented for admission and credit recognition and transfer into a BEd (ECCE).

A qualification may not be awarded as an early exit from a Dip (ECCE).

**12.2 Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Care and Education Degree**

The BEd (ECCE) will require institutions that offer it to take into account a range of complex issues, including the following:

- The BEd comprises 480C that, when delivered in a part-time mode to accommodate in-service ECD practitioners who are mainly in possession of qualifications at Level 5 or lower, will take at least six years to complete. Some ECD practitioners may prefer to upgrade their qualifications through smaller steps that will provide the possibility of recognition and reward in shorter time-frames, for example, by first completing a Dip (ECCE), followed by an AdvDip (ECCE).
- Both the BEd degree and the Dip (ECCE) have been provided for in this Policy. For this reason, institutions that wish to offer both the BEd (ECCE) and the Dip (ECCE) should ensure that these are designed cognately to allow for maximum overlap between the two qualifications to enable maximum credit transfer should ECD educators wish to move from the Dip (ECCE) to the BEd (ECCE), or vice versa.

**Purpose**

The BEd degree has the primary purpose of providing a well-rounded education that equips graduates with the required disciplinary knowledge, educational theory and methodology that will enable them to demonstrate competence and responsibility as academically and professionally qualified ECD educators. Principles and theory are emphasized as a basis for progressing in a professional career as an ECD educator. The learning programme must, as a minimum requirement, lead to the development of all the ECD educator competences described in Appendix 1.

The degree is intended to develop qualified ECD educators who can demonstrate focused knowledge and skills related to the care and education of children from birth to four years of age.

The degree requires a specific depth and specialisation of knowledge, together with practical skills and workplace experience to enable successful students to apply their learning as ECD educators. They should be able to demonstrate initiative and responsibility in a professional environment. The degree requires intellectual independence and the development of some level of research competence in the field of ECD to provide a basis for postgraduate study in the field of ECD.

**Qualification Type Specifications:**

NQF Exit Level: 7

Minimum total credits: 480

Minimum total credits at Level 7: 120

**Designator:** Education

**Qualifiers:** Maximum of one

**Approved Qualifier:** ECCE

**Endorsements on Certificate:**

LoLT(s)

LoCC(s)

*Example:*

Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Care and Education

*Abbreviation:*

BEd (ECCE)

*Endorsements on certificate:*

LoLT: English

LoCC: IsiZulu

**Minimum Admission Requirements:**

The minimum entry requirement is a National Senior Certificate (NSC) or Senior Certificate (SC) or a National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA) or a Level 4 National Certificate (Vocational) with endorsement for entry into Bachelor studies, or equivalent, with appropriate subject combinations and levels of achievement as prescribed by institutions

accredited to offer learning programmes that lead to the attainment and awarding of the qualification.

Prospective students, who are in possession of recognised Level 4 or 5 vocational, occupational and academic qualifications, including a certificate or diploma in ECD/Educare, or in another relevant field, including relevant qualifications offered by TVET colleges, can present their qualifications for consideration for admission to a BEd degree with a possibility of transfer of credits for cognate previous study. Assessment of prior learning could also lead to entry or advanced credit standing.

**Knowledge Mix:**

The knowledge mix should comply with the following minimum requirements:

- For all knowledge (learning) areas, credits should be allocated from Level 5 to Level 7 to ensure adequate progression in the programme, except for fundamental learning, which is limited to Level 5.
- 50% of the credits (240C) must be focused on developing the ECD specialisation including disciplinary, pedagogical and practical leaning. At least 120 of these credits should be at Level 6 and 60 at Level 7.
- 50% of the credits (240C) must spread across educationally focused disciplinary learning (foundations of education), general pedagogical learning, fundamental learning and situational learning. At least 60 credits, focused on education foundations of ECD, should be at Level 7 to justify the use of ECCE as a qualifier.
- A maximum of 72 credits pegged at Level 5 may be allocated to fundamental learning. These credits cannot be advanced towards the award of the qualification through RPL, and if they are not used for fundamental learning, they must be used elsewhere in the learning programme. Students, who enter the programme with fundamental learning competence in a specific area, for example, ICT competence or multilingual competence, should not be required to include all these fundamental learning credits in their programmes. In such cases, credits must be utilised in other areas of their learning programmes at any level, even at Level 8 if appropriate, to ensure a high-quality learning programme and to develop excellence in mediating learning in ECD settings.
- Workplace-based learning and assessment must form an integral part of the WIL component. ECCE workplace-based WIL, including supervised and assessed practice, is an essential part of the BEd degree programme. Workplace-based WIL must comply with the following requirements:
  - In a full-time contact programme, students must spend a minimum of 20 weeks and a maximum of 32 weeks in formally supervised and assessed workplace-based practice. The university must take full responsibility for the summative assessment.
  - In any given year, a maximum of 12 such weeks could be spent in workplace-based settings, and at least three of these should be consecutive.

- In part-time or distance mode programmes, students may be physically in workplace-based settings for longer periods, for example, if they are employed as educators/practitioners in centres offering ECCE programmes. However, the same amount of supervised and assessed ECCE programme-based practice is required.
- WIL must comply with the requirements described in section 8 of this Policy.
- ECD educators must be knowledgeable about, and skilled in the early identification of barriers to learning, as well as in curriculum differentiation and adaptation for multiple learning needs.
- ECD educators must be able to integrate ICTs into their practice.

**Progression:**

Completion of a BEd (ECCE) meets the minimum entry requirements to a 120-credit NQF Level 7 AdvDip (ECCE) or, vertically, for admission to a cognate 120-credit NQF Level 8 BEd (Honours) degree or cognate Postgraduate Dip (ECCE) programme.

A qualification may not be awarded for early exit from a BEd degree.

## **13. Post-professional Qualifications for Early Childhood Development Educators**

### **13.1 Advanced Certificate in Early Childhood Care and Education**

**Purpose**

The Advanced Certificate (AdvCert) in ECCE emphasises the general principles and application of ECD. The qualification provides students with a sound knowledge base and with the ability to apply their knowledge and skills to practise in ECD contexts while equipping them to undertake more specialised and intensive training. Programmes leading to this qualification tend to have a strong professional focus.

The qualification includes a simulated work experience and a workplace-based WIL component.

The AdvCert is specifically included in this Policy as a transition qualification that enables prospective ECD educators who have qualified to teach in other education sub-sectors (e.g. schooling) to retrain as ECD educators, should they wish to do so.

**Qualification Type Specifications:**

NQF Exit Level: 6

Minimum total credits: 120

Minimum credits at Level 6: 120

**Designator:** None

**Qualifiers:** One

**Approved First Qualifier:** ECCE

**Endorsements on Certificate:**

LoLT(s)

LoCC(s)

*Example:*

Advanced Certificate in Early Childhood Care and Education

*Abbreviation:*

AdvCert (ECCE)

*Endorsements on certificate:*

LoLT: English

LoCC: IsiZulu

**Minimum Admission Requirements:**

A recognised professional teaching qualification is required for entry into the AdvCert (ECCE). Prospective students can present a professional BEd degree or a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (or a former Higher Diploma in Education Postgraduate) for admission to the AdvCert. Teachers in possession of a three-year Diploma in Education, or a completed National Professional Diploma in Education can also be admitted to an AdvCert (ECCE).

**Knowledge Mix:**

The knowledge mix for an AdvCert (ECCE) must focus on facilitating early learning and be adapted to fit the specific needs and purpose of the qualification, i.e. the development of educators who practise in ECD contexts.

The knowledge mix must comply with the following minimum requirements.

- A maximum of 16 credits must be allocated to the study of ECD and its foundations, as well as general pedagogic learning and situational learning.
- A minimum of 96 credits covering specialised ECD pedagogical learning and practical learning are required.



- A minimum of 16-24 credits must be allocated to supervised and assessed WIL, which should be used to integrate and apply different forms of learning.
- Fundamental learning is not a requirement. However, all ECD educators are expected to be ICT competent and students entering the programme without ICT competence should be required to develop this competence through completing an additional 12 credits at Level 5 over and above the minimum of 120 credits required at Level 6.

**Progression:**

Holders of the AdvCert (ECCE) can proceed vertically from the AdvCert to an AdvDip in a cognate area on the basis that they already held a professional teaching qualification prior to completing the AdvCert.

Accumulated credits for an AdvCert can also be presented for admission to a Dip (ECCE) or a BEd (ECCE).

A qualification may not be awarded for early exit from an AdvCert programme.

**13.2 Advanced Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education****Purpose**

The AdvDip (ECCE) is used as a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) qualification to further strengthen and enhance the ECD specialisation, or to develop a new role or practice to support learning in the ECD sector. The qualification offers intellectual enrichment and/or intensive, focused and applied specialisation that meets the requirements of a specific niche in education, for example, in the case of a new role such as mentorship; inclusive education; toy librarian; programme leadership and management; deaf education, and so on. Programmes leading to this qualification will provide an AdvDip graduate with a deep and systemic understanding of current thinking, practice, theory and methodology in the area of specialisation.

**Qualification Type Specifications:**

NQF Exit Level: 7

Minimum total credits: 120

Minimum credits at Level 7: 120

**Designator:** None

**Qualifiers:** Maximum of two

**Approved First Qualifier:** ECCE

**Second Qualifier:**

There will be a wide variety of second qualifiers, which will indicate the area of specialisation. Acceptable qualifiers are indicated in the Classification of Education Subject Matter (CESM) catalogue. The second qualifier should be indicated as an endorsement on the certificate.

**Endorsements on Certificate:**

Area of specialisation (second qualifier)

LoLT(s)

LoCC(s)

*Example:*

Advanced Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education

*Abbreviations*

AdvDip (ECCE)

*Endorsement on certificate:*

Area of specialisation: ECCE Programme Leadership and Management

**Minimum Admission Requirements:**

A BEd (ECCE), an AdvCert (ECCE), a Dip (ECCE) or the National N Diploma (Educare) can be presented for admission to an AdvDip (ECCE).

**Knowledge Mix:**

All 120 credits may be flexibly allocated at NQF Level 7 according to the purpose of the qualification. All credits must be focused on the development of the specialisation. Fundamental learning credits will not be applicable. However, all ECD educators are expected to be ICT competent. Educators who enter the programme without ICT competence should be required to take an additional 12 credits at Level 5 to develop this competence.

**Progression:**

ECD educators who have completed an AdvDip (ECCE) may proceed horizontally to another advanced diploma or vertically to an honours degree or to a postgraduate diploma in ECCE or in another cognate field.

A qualification may not be awarded for early exit from an AdvDip (ECCE).

**13.3 Postgraduate Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education****Purpose**

The Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) in ECCE serves to strengthen an educator in ECD in general or in a niche area thereof. The primary purpose of the PGDip is to enable professional

ECD educators to undertake advanced reflection and development by means of a systematic survey of current thinking, practice and research methods in the area of specialisation in their profession or in a niche area thereof. A PGDip demands a high level of theoretical engagement and intellectual independence. A sustained research project is not required, but the qualification may include conducting and reporting research under supervision, which can then provide access to a cognate Master's degree.

**Qualification Type Specifications:**

NQF Exit Level: 8

Minimum total credits: 120

Minimum credits at Level 8: 120

**Designator:** None

**Qualifier:** Maximum of two

**Approved First Qualifier:** ECCE

**Second Qualifier:**

The second qualifier must indicate the specialisation(s) studied by the graduate. There will be a wide variety of second qualifiers, which will indicate the area of specialisation and a nested specialisation in a further subfield of the first qualifier. Acceptable qualifiers are indicated in the CESM catalogue. In instances where there is a second qualifier, it must be indicated as an endorsement on the diploma certificate.

**Endorsement on Certificate:**

Area of specialisation

*Example:*

Postgraduate Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education

*Abbreviation:*

PGDip (ECCE)

*Endorsements on certificate:*

Area of specialisation: ECCE Programme Leadership and Management

**Minimum Admission Requirements:**

The minimum admission requirement to the PGDip (ECCE) is an approved and recognised Level 7 qualification in ECD, which follows appropriate cognate qualifications at lower levels, comprising at least a total of 480 credits, for example, a 360C Level 6 Dip (ECCE) followed by a 120C Level 7 AdvDip (ECCE) or a 480C Level 7 BEd (ECCE).

**Knowledge Mix:**

All 120 credits may be flexibly allocated at NQF Level 8 in accordance with the purpose of the qualification.

**Progression:**

Completion of a PGDip (ECCE) meets the minimum entry requirements to a cognate 180C Level 9 Master of Education degree or a Professional Master of Education degree. There is no early exit qualification from a PGDip (ECCE).

**14. Postgraduate Degrees in Early Childhood Development**

14.1 The HEQSF makes provision for Level 8 to Level 10 qualifications to either have a strong professional focus or a strong academic focus. For example, the PGDip (ECCE) at Level 8 has a strong professional focus, while the Honours degree at Level 8 has a strong academic focus. The same holds for the Master's and Professional Master's degrees, and the Doctor's and Professional Doctor's degrees.

14.2 A BEd (Honours) degree, a Master of Education degree/Professional Master's degree or a Doctor's degree/Professional Doctor's degree in ECD may be offered in accordance with the requirements for postgraduate degrees as described in the HEQSF, as revised in 2013.

**15. Implementation of the Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators**

15.1 All HEIs interested in offering new professional qualifications for ECD educators are required to develop new qualifications in line with this Policy. This does not constitute a mere technical change or some minor changes in the curriculum of existing qualifications.

15.2 The last date for entry of students in currently approved qualification types for ECD educators on non-HEQSF aligned programmes will be 2019. With effect from the 2020 academic year, all students wishing to obtain higher education qualifications in ECD should be admitted to accredited, and approved new programmes aligned to this Policy.

15.3 Holders of historic and currently approved qualifications for ECD educators will continue to receive full recognition of their approved, completed qualifications. They might, however, be required to update their qualifications from time to time as determined by their basic conditions of employment and in line with the principle of lifelong learning.

## **16. Approval and Accreditation of New Programmes Leading to the Qualifications Described in this Policy**

16.1 Programmes leading to a specific professional qualification for ECD educators must be designed in accordance with the minimum requirements for the qualification, as set out in this policy document. Learning programmes must also comply with all the accreditation criteria and requirements of the HEQC of the CHE.

16.2 New professional ECD educator qualification programmes offered by public HEIs must comply with this Policy for approval by the DHET, for inclusion on a particular institution's PQM and for recognition for employment in posts where the state is the employer.

16.3 New professional ECD educator qualification programmes offered by private HEIs must comply with this Policy for approval by the DHET as part of the requirements to be met for the institution to be registered with the DHET as an accredited provider of the programmes, and for recognition of the qualification for employment, where applicable, in posts where the state is the employer.

16.4 Institutions requiring further information should contact the Department at:

Directorate: Teaching Qualifications and Policy  
123 Francis Baard Street  
Private Bag X 895  
Pretoria  
0001  
Tel: 012 312 5101 Fax: 012 323 6589  
E-mail: [TQP@dhnet.gov.za](mailto:TQP@dhnet.gov.za)

## Appendix 1

### Basic Competences for Professionally Qualified Early Childhood Development Educators

The following are the minimum set of competences required of professionally qualified ECD educators:

1. Demonstrate highly developed listening, speaking, reading, writing and reasoning skills in at least one LoLT.
2. Display basic interpersonal communication skills and competence in more than one language.
3. Use ICT effectively for the purposes of academic study, professional practice, and for mediating learning.
4. Recognise and interpret development and learning achievements; respect individual differences; and understand the various influences that affect development, based on a thorough multidisciplinary knowledge and understanding of the theories and processes of child growth and development and learning, including developmental domains, brain architecture and psychosocial development.
5. Create an effective learning environment, including arranging suitable physical space, where needed, designed to foster learning through exploration, play and appropriately challenging experiences in a context that respects diversity in backgrounds, family structure and the special development needs of babies, toddlers and young children.
6. Promote children's agency and executive functioning.
7. Possess a strong knowledge base to enable the development of early literacy, early mathematics explorations and beginning knowledge in a range of appropriate areas, such as social and natural sciences; technology; and the creative arts.
8. Plan integrated programmes with age-appropriate, play-based learning activities.
9. Design, select and make appropriate learning materials and equipment.
10. Mediate learning by nurturing active engagement in learning through appropriate play-based methods among babies, toddlers and young children.
11. Facilitate the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children with barriers to learning, vulnerable children and learners with special needs by adopting an inclusive, anti-bias approach based on knowledge and understanding of inclusive education practices and diverse contexts.
12. Select and use appropriate methods and procedures for assessing young children's progress, use the results of assessment to improve learning and report on this to parents, caregivers and other stakeholders.
13. Demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding of health, hygiene, safe environments and nutrition, including assisting young children to develop self-help skills concerning health, hygiene, nutrition and their own safety.
14. Collaborate with colleagues, families and community systems to create, maintain and enhance environments in which babies, toddlers and young children develop and learn

optimally in all areas of functioning, including referrals to services for support and enrichment, noticing children's needs, and so on.

15. Follow and model a professional code of ethics; integrate high-quality standards and practices in the care and education of babies, toddlers and young children; and demonstrate commitment to acquiring and maintaining current professional knowledge and to ongoing professional development.
16. Demonstrate the ability to reflect on classroom practices, experiences and actions to transform and build pedagogical knowledge.
17. Be able to apply basic leadership and managerial skills to manage ECD learning environments.
18. Be capable of mentoring and supporting others in ECD learning environments to improve standards of learning through play.
19. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of child protection issues, and the ability to identify signs of child abuse and how to refer such cases to the relevant authorities.

## Appendix 2 Articulation of Historical and Current ECD Qualifications into the Qualifications Described in this Policy

Name of Qualification and SAQA ID (where available)	NQF Level	Number of Credits	Accrediting Body	Entrance Requirements	Offered by	Nature /Status of Qualification	Articulation with Qualifications Described in this Policy Document
National Certificate: ECD: Pre-school Phase ID 14406	1	120	ETDP SETA	This qualification is designed to provide access to those already working with young children. No prior learning or competence requirements apply. Students experienced in working with children should receive RPL.	Private providers/ ETDP SETA.	Phased out in 2007 and replaced with the Basic Certificate: ECD.	No immediate admission to any qualifications in this Policy.  An appropriate NQF Level 4 qualification that provides admission to the Dip (ECCE) or the BEd (ECCE) must be completed first.
Basic Certificate: ECD ID 23144	1	120	ETDP SETA	This qualification is designed to provide access to those already working with young children. No prior learning or competence requirements apply.	Private providers/ ETDP SETA.	Provided a pathway for students who had not completed basic schooling to become ECD practitioners. Phased out, with last enrolment in 2010.	No immediate admission to any qualifications in this Policy.  An appropriate NQF Level 4 qualification that provides admission to the Dip (ECCE) or the BEd (ECCE) must be completed first.
National Certificate: ECD ID 23116	4	120	ETDP SETA	This qualification provided an opportunity for: • Existing practitioners/educators who have acquired a Level 1 ECD qualification to further their career paths in ECD. • Potential educators who have acquired a General Education and Training Certificate	Private providers/ ETDP SETA.	Replaced the Level 4 National Certificate: ECD (Pre-school Phase). Phased out, with the last date for achievement November 2011. Replaced by the FETC: ECD.	Can enable admission to the Dip (ECCE) or the BEd (ECCE).



Further Education and Training (FETC) Certificate: Early Childhood Development ID 58761	4	140	ETDP SETA	qualification or its equivalent to embark on a career in ECD (entry point). Communication and Mathematical Literacy at NQF Level 3, Grade 11 (Std. 9) and a Second South African language at NQF Level 2, Grade 10 (Std. 8).	Offered by private providers/ETDP SETA and TVET colleges.	An entry-level qualification for those wanting to enter the field of education, training and development, specifically within the ECD sub-field.	Can enable admission to the Dip (ECCE) or the BEd (ECCE).
Early Childhood Development Practitioner ID 97542	4	131	QCTO with ETDP SETA	NQF Level 2 or relevant ECD experience.	Will be offered by public and private providers.	Replaces the Level 4, 140C FETC: ECD.	Can enable admission to the Dip (ECCE) or the BEd (ECCE).
Higher Certificate: Early Childhood Development ID 64649	5	120	ETDP SETA	Grade 12 (Std.10) with English and Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy and a second official South African language at Grade 11 (Std. 9), plus evidence of applied competence as outlined in the core unit standards of an ECD NQF Level 4 qualification.	Mostly offered by private providers/ETDP SETA.	Represents the first year of the ECD National Diploma, NQF Level 5.	Can enable admission to the Dip (ECCE) or the BEd (ECCE) with the possibility of CAT.
Certificate: Pre-school Education ID 96675	5	124	CHE	This qualification assumes that the student is competent in the language of instruction of the provider and has successfully completed Grade 12.	Embury Institute for Teacher Education.	Registered in 2009 to provide access to further study in the Diploma in Pre-school Education and Foundation Phase Teacher Assistant Training. Registration lapsed on 30 June 2015.	Can enable admission to the Dip (ECCE) or the BEd (ECCE) with the possibility of CAT.

Certificate: Education: Early Childhood ID 62111 (recorded against Qual ID 61972)	5	120		This qualification can be achieved in part through the recognition of relevant prior learning and/or experience as a practitioner in one of the sub-fields of education, training and development.	University of the Free State.	Serves as an introduction to the practice of education, and is a first step towards qualifying as an educator in schooling. Last date for enrolment was 30 June 2016.	Can enable admission to the Dip (ECCE) or the BEd (ECCE) with the possibility of CAT.
National Certificate: Early Childhood Development: Pre-school Phase ID 15985	5	120	ETDP SETA	This qualification provides ECD-specific education and training opportunities for: • educators with a primary teaching certificate or diploma to obtain an ECD certificate, either in the pre-school phase or specializing in reception-year teaching; • educators with a Level 4 certificate in ECD to further their professional development by providing access to higher education and training qualifications and/or to specialise in aspects of ECD or specific roles.	University of the Free State. Was also offered by former Vista University.	Last date for achievement was 2007. Replaced by the Basic Certificate ECD Level 1 (now also phased out).	Can enable admission to the Dip (ECCE) or the BEd (ECCE) with the possibility of CAT.
National Diploma: Early Childhood Development ID 64650	5	240	ETDP SETA	Grade 12 certificate (Matric) or equivalent qualification, e.g. Level 4 FETC: ECD. A letter of employment and total number of years' related work experience (minimum 3 to 5 years of experience).	Mostly offered by private providers/ETDP SETA.	Designed to provide access to higher education for many experienced and skilled ECD practitioners and trainers who do not have recognised	Can enable admission to the Dip (ECCE) or the BEd (ECCE) with the possibility of CAT.

Diploma: Pre-school and Foundation Phase Teacher Assistant ID 22034	5	240	CHE	This qualification assumes that the student is competent in the language of instruction of the provider and has successfully completed Grade 12 at school level.	Embury Institute for Teacher Education (2009).	Was registered in 2009. Not a learning programme according to SAQA.	Can enable admission to the Dip (ECCE) or the BEd (ECCE) with the possibility of CAT.
Diploma: Education: Early Childhood ID 9675	5	120	CHE	Matriculation exemption/ Senior Certificate.	University of Venda.	Was registered in 2009. Not a learning programme according to SAQA. 2016 was the last date for enrolment.	Can enable admission to the Dip (ECCE) or the BEd (ECCE) with the possibility of CAT.
Diploma: Education: Early Childhood Development and Education ID 15261	5	240	CHE	Grade 12 Certificate and Teacher's Diploma (M+2).	Former Rand Afrikaans University.	Last date for achievement was June 2014.	Can enable admission to the Dip (ECCE) or the BEd (ECCE) with the possibility of CAT.
National N Certificates N4-N6	5		QCTO	Grade 10.	May only be offered at DHET-registered public and private TVET colleges.	On completion, students receive National Certificates at N4, N5 and N6. On completion of 18-months in-service training, a National N Diploma is awarded.	Can enable admission to the Dip (ECCE) or the BEd (ECCE) with the possibility of CAT.

Pre-primary Teacher's Certificate	5	120	National and provincial education departments	Std 8/Senior Certificate.	Former Colleges of Education.	Phased out.	Can enable admission to the Dip (ECCE) or the BEd (ECCE) with the possibility of CAT.
Nursery School Teacher's Certificate	5	120	National and provincial education departments	Std 8/ Senior Certificate.	Former Colleges of Education.	Phased out.	Can enable admission to the Dip (ECCE) or the BEd (ECCE) with the possibility of CAT.
Upgrading Certificate in Education (Pre-primary)	5	120	National and provincial education departments	Std 8/ Senior Certificate.	Former Colleges of Education.	Phased out.	Can enable admission to the Dip (ECCE) or the BEd (ECCE) with the possibility of CAT.
Diploma in Education (Pre-primary)	5	240	National and provincial education departments	Senior Certificate.	Former Colleges of Education.	Phased out when the colleges were closed.	Can enable admission to the Dip (ECCE) or the BEd (ECCE) with the possibility of CAT.
National N Diploma: Educare ID 67050	6		QCTO	Grade 10.	May only be offered at DHET-registered public and private TVET colleges.	On completion, students receive National Certificates at N4, N5 and N6. On completion of 18-months in-service training, a National N Diploma is awarded. Currently offered by TVET colleges.	Can enable admission to the Dip (ECCE) or the BEd (ECCE) with the possibility of CAT.
Further Diploma: Education: Early Childhood Development and Education	6	240	CHE	Senior Certificate and Teacher's Diploma (M+3).	Former Rand Afrikaans University	Last date for achievement was 2013.	Can enable admission to the Dip (ECCE) or the BEd (ECCE) with the possibility of CAT.

ID 15289	6	120	National and provincial education departments	Diploma in Education (Pre-primary).	Former Colleges of Education.	Phased out when the colleges were closed.	Can enable admission to an AdvDip (ECCE).
Higher Diploma in Education (Pre-primary) 1 yr – upgrading	6	360	National and provincial education departments	Senior Certificate.	Former Colleges of Education.		Can enable admission to an AdvDip (ECCE).
Higher Diploma in Education (Pre-primary) 4 yrs	7	480	CHE	Senior Certificate with a pass that meets BEd admission requirements. NCV level 4 with a pass that meets BEd admission requirements.	Universities.	BEd degrees for school teachers that have a joint ECD/ Foundation Phase focus are being phased out and replaced by BEd degrees that focus on Foundation Phase Teaching (Grades R-3).	Can enable admission to a BEd Honours (ECCE) or a PGDip (ECCE).
Bachelor of Education: ECD: Foundation Phase ID 15531 ID 62453							





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