

DECEMBER 2022

SOUTH AFRICA



**Implementation
of the
Revised Convention on the Recognition
of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas,
Degrees and Other Academic
Qualifications on Higher Education in
African States
(Addis Convention)**



higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Higher Education as defined in the Addis Convention includes all PSET qualifications, part-qualifications, programmes and courses which are recognised by the relevant authorities, viz. SAQA, CHE, Umalusi and QCTO

BACKGROUND

The **Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications on Higher Education in African States** (Addis Convention) was adopted on 12 December 2014 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Addis Convention entered into force on 15 December 2019 and is bound for implementation at the national level by ratifying State Parties.

South Africa deposited the ratification instrument with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on 4 September 2019. Other countries that ratified the Addis Convention are Burkina Faso, Congo, Djibouti, Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritius, Mauritania, Senegal, Seychelles, Togo, and the Holy See.

The Addis Convention establishes a legal framework for the fair and transparent evaluation of higher education qualifications in the African region to facilitate inter-university cooperation and exchange through the mobility of students, researchers and faculty.

Supporting academic mobility and exchange within the African States not only strengthen trust and capacity building in the quality enhancement of institutions and systems, but also provides a pivotal network for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets for equitable access in the region.

UNESCO continues assisting the Africa region to implement and monitor the implementation of the Convention and to promote further ratifications to Member States in the region in synergy with the Global Convention and cooperation with States Party to other regional recognition Conventions.

In November 2019, the **Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education** (Global Convention) as adopted by the 40th session of the UNESCO General Conference, becoming the first United Nations treaty on higher education with a global scope.

The Global Convention establishes universal principles for fair, transparent and non-discriminatory recognition of higher education qualifications and qualifications giving access to higher education and offering avenues for further study and employment. With provisions on non-traditional learning modes, the Global Convention also facilitates the recognition of qualifications, prior learning and study periods earned remotely. In addition, it promotes the recognition of refugees' qualifications, even in cases where documentary evidence is lacking.

By ratifying the Global Convention, countries commit to strengthening international cooperation in higher education, raising its quality at home and worldwide, and helping make academic mobility and the recognition of qualifications a reality for millions around the world.

The Global Convention received its 20th ratification on 5 December 2022, and will enter into force on 5 March 2023. As of January 2023, 21 countries have ratified.

South Africa is in the process of ratifying the Global Convention. On 19 October 2022 Cabinet approved the submission of the Global Convention to Parliament for ratification.

**SYNERGY WITH THE
GLOBAL CONVENTION
ON THE RECOGNITION
OF QUALIFICATIONS
CONCERNING HIGHER
EDUCATION**

Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications on Higher Education in African States

SECTION I DEFINITIONS

SECTION II AIMS OF THE CONVENTION

SECTION III OBLIGATIONS OF THE PARTIES

SECTION IV IMPLEMENTATION

SECTION V FINAL CLAUSES

Section 1 Definitions



In an attempt to clarify and bring consistency to the use of standard terminology in the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) system, a glossary of terms (NQF-pedia) was developed. It draws on existing and emerging legislation, and policies, as well as on common understandings which have been agreed upon within the broader NQF community. International use of terms has also been considered.

The purpose of the NQF-pedia is primarily to provide a comprehensive list of the most up-to-date terms used in the NQF environment. This glossary is regularly updated to ensure that most recent developments are included. Alignment of the definitions used in the PSET system with the definitions of the Addis Convention is being undertaken.

The NQF-pedia is widely distributed (also in printed formats) and is available at: <https://www.saq.org.za/documents/references/nqfpedia>.

Section 2 Aims of the Convention

South Africa supports the Aims of the Addis Convention, viz.:

- Strengthening and promoting inter-regional and international co-operation in the field of recognition of qualifications;
- Defining and putting in place effective quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms at the national, regional and continental levels;
- Encouraging and promoting the widest and most effective possible use of human resources available in Africa and of the diaspora in order to speed up the development of their respective countries and to limit African brain-drain;
- Facilitating the exchange and greater mobility of students, teachers and researchers of the continent and the diaspora, by the recognition of qualifications delivered by other Parties in order to pursue higher education;
- Furthering the setting up of high-level joint training and research programmes between higher education institutions and supporting the award of joint degrees;
- Improving and reinforcing the collection and exchange of information for the purpose of implementing this Convention across the Continent;
- Contributing to the harmonisation of qualifications, taking into account current global trends; and agreeing to take all necessary steps at the national and regional levels with a view of achieving the goals defined in the present Article.

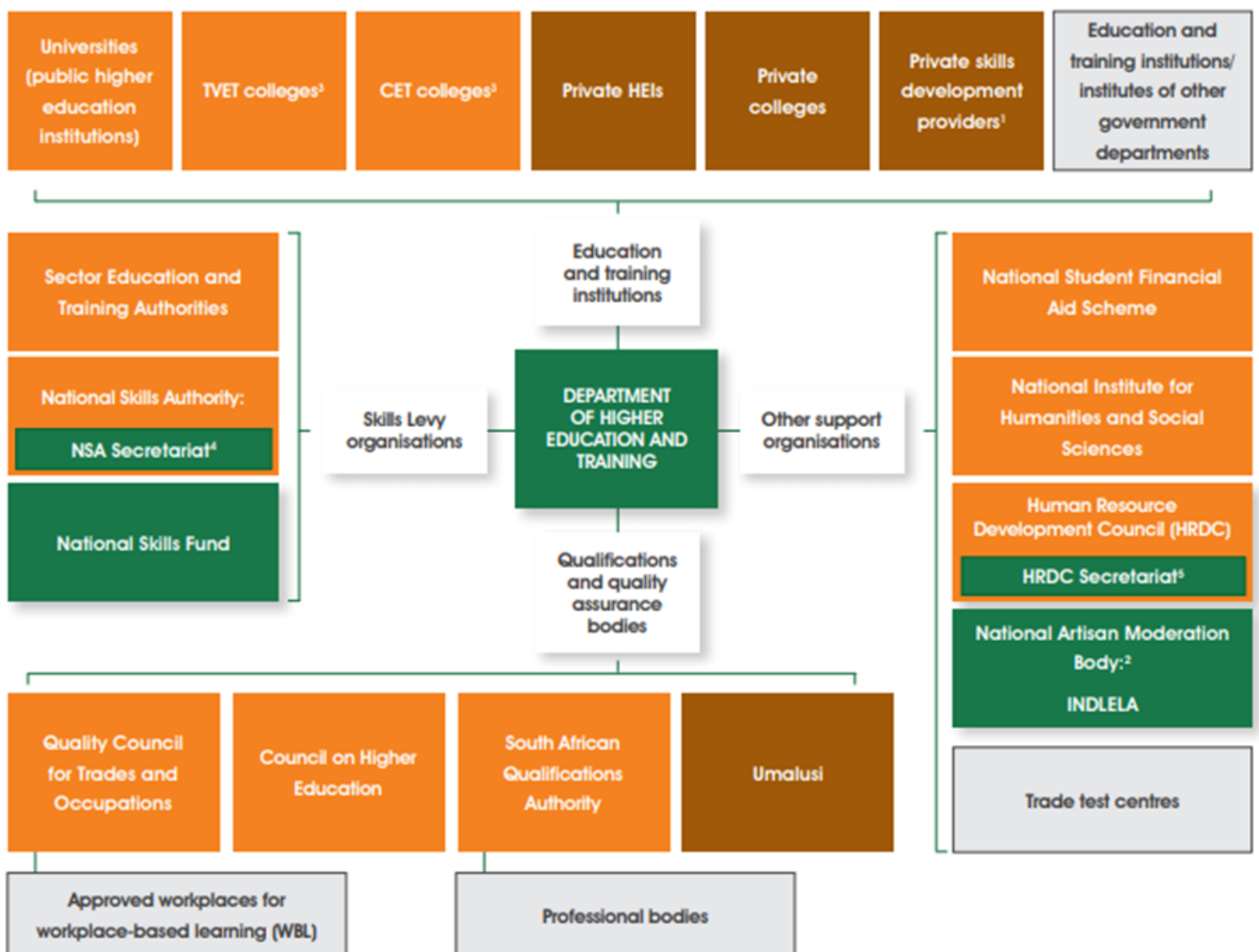
Section 3 Obligations of the Parties

Article III.1 - General Provisions

- Applies to **qualifications** obtained in **public or private PSET institutions** registered/deemed registered by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) located within or outside its national boundaries and in compliance with South African legislation, viz. the NQF Act (Act 67 of 2008), the Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997), the Continuing Education and Training Act (Act 16 of 2006), General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (Act 58 of 2001) and the Skills Development Act (Act 97 of 1998)
- The recognition of a qualification is contingent upon the fulfilment of all the requirements of the NQF and of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the 3 Quality Councils (QCs)
- The provisions apply to all forms of of education and training in the Post-School Education and Training System (PSET) System

South African Post-School Education and Training System

South African PSET Institutions include Universities (public Higher Education Institutions), Public Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges, Public Community Education and Training (CET) Colleges, Private Higher Education Institutions, Private Colleges, Private Skills Development Providers and Education and Training institutions/institutes of other government departments



National Qualifications Framework

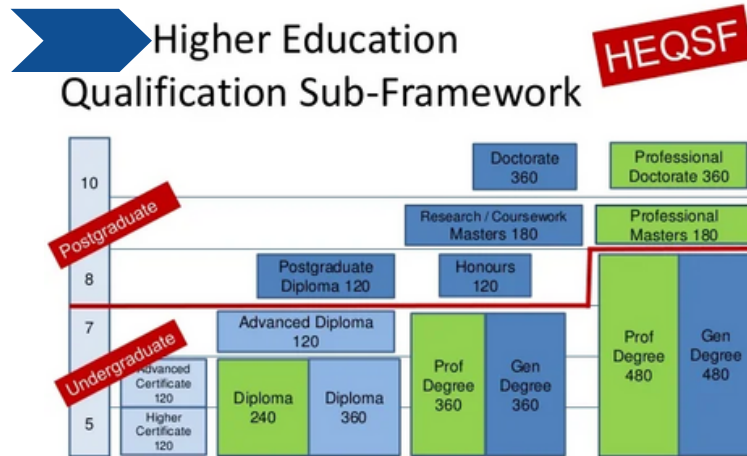
The South African NQF is a comprehensive, integrated and formalised mechanism of national qualifications and part-qualifications approved by the Minister.

It:

- guides the development, classification, registration, publication and articulation of quality assured national qualifications and part-qualifications;
- promotes access to, and mobility and progression within the broader national education and training system; and
- facilitates local and international verification and recognition of national qualifications and part-qualifications.

NQF Sub-Framework/ Quality Council	NQF Level	NQF Sub-Framework and Qualification Type		NQF Sub-Framework/ Quality Council
Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF)/ Council on Higher Education (CHE)	10	Doctoral Degree Doctoral Degree (Professional)		Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)
	9	Master's Degree Master's Degree (Professional)		
	8	Bachelor Honours Degree Post Graduate Diploma Bachelor's Degree	Specialised Occupational Diploma	
	7	Bachelor's Degree Advanced Diploma	Advanced Occupational Diploma	
	6	Diploma Advanced Certificate	Occupational Diploma Advanced Occupational Certificate	
	5	Higher Certificate	Higher Occupational Certificate	
General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFEQSF)/ Umalusi	4	National Certificate	National Occupational Certificate	
	3	Intermediate Certificate	Intermediate Occupational Certificate	
	2	Elementary Certificate	Elementary Occupational Certificate	
	1	General Certificate	General Occupational Certificate	

The NQF consists of three coordinated qualifications sub-frameworks as determined by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, viz. the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF); the General and Further Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (GENFETQSF) and the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF).



https://www.ru.ac.za/media/rhodesuniversity/content/institutionalplanning/documents/HEQSF_2013.pdf



GENFETQSF

https://www.umalusi.org.za/docs/policy/2014/gfetq_subframework.pdf



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

<https://www.dhet.gov.za/NQF%20Directorate%20Documents/OQSF%20Policy%202021.pdf>

South African Qualifications Authority SAQA



The statutory authority established in terms of the SAQA Act (Act 58 of 1995) and continuing in terms of the NQF Act (Act 67 of 2008), which oversees the further development and implementation of the NQF, the achievement of the objectives of the NQF, and the co-ordination of the three Sub-Frameworks.

SAQA is the oversight body of the NQF and the custodian of its values and quality character.

The role of SAQA, as stipulated in the NQF Act, is to advance the objectives of the NQF, oversee the further development and implementation of the NQF, and co-ordinate the Sub-Frameworks. SAQA's functions are set out in section 13 of the NQF Act, which in summary, mandates SAQA to:

- Oversee NQF implementation and collaborate with the Quality Councils;
- Develop and implement NQF policies and criteria;
- Register qualifications and part-qualifications on the NQF;
- Recognise professional bodies and register professional designations;
- Undertake research and collaborate with international counterparts;
- Maintain the National Learners' Records Database;
- Provide an evaluation and advisory service with respect to foreign qualifications;
- Inform the public about the NQF; and
- Provide advice to the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation.

(www.saq.org.za)

SAQA has been continually active in the implementation of the Addis Convention. Foremost and as part of Article IV (1-6), SAQA has been implementing the recognition of foreign qualifications (validation & comparison to South African qualifications and the NQF) on a regular basis as it's core mandate. Specifically, within the recognition of foreign qualifications SAQA has been working tirelessly to eradicate all forms of fraudulent practices. In this regard SAQA keeps a list of misrepresented qualifications and SAQA Certificates of Evaluation; and shares the findings with the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (Article IV.2). Furthermore SAQA is a key player in the implementation of a pilot project that is currently testing methodologies in the recognition of academic qualifications of legitimate refugees, asylum seekers, and other displaced persons in the country.

Quality Council for Trades and Occupations QCTO



The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) is a Quality Council established in 2010 in terms of the Skills Development Act (Act 97 of 1998) as amended in 2008. The QCTO is responsible for quality assurance and the oversight of the design, accreditation, implementation, assessment and certification of occupational qualifications, part-qualifications and skills programmes. The QCTO also offers guidance to skills development providers (private and public) and assessment centres who must be accredited by the QCTO in order to implement occupational qualifications. The QCTO is the council for quality assurance or Trades and Occupations, mandated by the NQF Act (Act 67 of 2008) to achieve the objectives of the NQF and to develop and manage the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework.
(www.qcto.org.za)

Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training UMALUSI



The Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi) was established by the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (Act 58 of 2001). Umalusi sets and monitors standards for general and further education and training in South Africa in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework Act No 67 of 2008 [as amended] and the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act. Umalusi is tasked with the development and management of a sub-framework of qualifications for general and further education and training and for the attendant quality assurance.
(www.umalusi.org.za)

Council for Higher Education CHE



The CHE is established in May 1998 as provided for by Section 4 of the Higher Education Act (Act No. 101 of 1997, as amended), and it also functions as the Quality Council for Higher Education in terms of the NQF Act (Act No 67 of 2008, as amended). It is responsible for advising the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation on all Higher Education policy issues, and for quality assurance in Higher Education. The CHE is mandated by the NQF Act (Act 67 of 2008) to achieve the objectives of the NQF and to develop and manage the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework.
(www.che.ac.za)



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Section 3

Obligations of the Parties

Article III.2 - Obligations Related to the Recognition of Qualifications

- South Africa has a well-established **Policy Environment** for the recognition of qualifications and the mobility of students across the continent.
- South Africa recognises, for the purpose of access to each of its higher education programmes, the qualifications issued by other countries' institutions that meet the requirements for access as set by SAQA and executed through the formal process of '**Evaluation of Foreign Qualifications**'.
- Other mechanisms include: international and regional conventions and protocols, multi- and bi-lateral agreements, '**Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Agreements**' between countries and institutional agreements.
- South Africa facilitates access to PSET institutions for graduates of other African countries through these mechanisms.
- SAQA is the custodian of criteria and procedures for the evaluation of foreign qualifications.
- Government has put in place criteria and procedures to ensure that relevant and authentic foreign qualifications are **recognised for employment**.
- SAQA has established appropriate procedures to refugees and asylum seekers to recognise their qualifications

Article III.3 - Recognition of Partial Studies

SAQA is currently implementing the **Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part-Qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework** (as amended, 2022). Further, South Africa has started exploring partial studies within the broader exploration of micro-credentials. This clause will be fully implemented over the next 3-5 years.

Article III.4 - Validation of Acquired Relevant Experience and Prior Learning

South Africa has adopted procedures, criteria and standards for the **recognition of prior learning** (RPL) for access to higher education programmes.

Policy Environment

South Africa has a well-established Qualifications and Quality Assurance Policy Environment. It is guided by the **NQF Act (Act No. 67 of 2008)** as amended (which replaced the SAQA Act No. 58 of 1995). The NQF Act establishes the **National Qualifications Framework (NQF)** with its objectives of access, redress, progression (mobility), quality, and transparency. It also , establishes SAQA (relevant recognition body).

The policy environment includes:

Policies

- Department of Higher Education and Training:
 - White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (GG No. 11 of 15 January 2014)
 - Recognition of Prior Learning Coordination Policy (GG No. 39876 of 31 March 2016)
 - Articulation Policy for the Post-School Education and Training System (GG No. 40545 of 13 January 2017)
- SAQA:
 - Level Descriptors for the South African NQF (November 2012)
 - Policy and Criteria for Recognising a Professional Body and Professional Designations for the purposes of the NQF Act of 67 of 2008 as amended (September 2020)
 - Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part-Qualifications on the NQF (amended 2020)
 - National Policy and Criteria for the Implementation of the RPL (amended 2019)
 - Policy and Criteria for Credit Accumulation and Transfer within the NQF (amended 2021)
 - National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF-Qualifications and Part-Qualifications and Professional designations in South Africa (July 2017)
 - Policy and Criteria for Evaluating Foreign Qualifications within the NQF (amended March 2017)
 - Foreign Qualifications Evaluation Appeal Policy (March 2017)
 - Foreign Qualifications Evaluation Revocation Policy (March 2017)
 - Addendum on the Recognition of Qualifications of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (March 2019)
- CHE:
 - Higher Education Qualifications Sub-framework (HEQSF) (GG No. 38116 of 17 October 2014)
 - Policies on RPL, Credit Accumulation and Transfer and Assessment in Higher Education (August 2016)
- QCTO:
 - Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) Policy (GG No. 45401 of 29 October 2021)
 - Accreditation Policy (4 March 2022)
 - RPL Policy (4 March 2022)
 - Quality Assurance Policy (4 March 2022)
 - Policy on Development and Review of Occupational Qualifications (4 March 2022)
 - QCTO Policy for Verification of Trades and Occupational Qualifications (November 2021)
 - QCTO Policy for the Certification of Learner Achievements Trades and Occupational Qualifications (November 2021)
 - Assessment Policy (4 March 2022)
 - Certification Policy (November 2021)
 - Learner Achievements for Trades and Occupational Qualifications on the OQSF (Date?)
 - E-assessment of Qualifications & Part Qualifications on the OQSF Policy (Date??)
 - QCTO Policy for Printing and Storage of Certificate Paper (November 2021)
- Umalusi:
 - Policy for the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GENFETQSF) (September 2014)
 - Policy for Credit Accumulation and Transfer, Exemption, Recognition and Transfer (21 August 2015)

Determinations

- Determinations of the Sub-Frameworks that comprise the NQF (GG No 44031 of 24 December 2020)

Regulations

- Regulations for resolving a dispute in terms of the NQF Act (GG No 33483 of 27 August 2010)
- Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) Workplace Based Learning Programme Agreement Regulations, (GG No 42037 of 16 November 2018)
- Trade Test Regulations, (GG No 38758 of 8 May 2015)

Directives

- Department of Public Service and Administration Directive on the Clarification of Degrees and Diplomas Registered on level 6 and 7 on the National Qualifications Framework (Circular 35 of 2020) [DPSA]
- Directives for Certification: Trades listed on the NQF (April 2019)

Ministerial Guidelines

- Guidelines on Strategy and Priorities for the National Qualifications Framework, 2011/2012
- Guidelines on Strategy and Priorities for the National Qualifications Framework, 2012/2013
- Guidelines on Strategy and Priorities for the National Qualifications Framework, 2014/2015
- Guidelines on Strategy and Priorities for the National Qualifications Framework, 2015/2016
- Guidelines on Strategy and Priorities for the National Qualifications Framework, 2017/2018
- Guidelines on Strategy and Priorities for the National Qualifications Framework, 2018/2019

Other documents

- National Qualifications Framework Implementation Framework 2021 - 2025
- System of Collaboration (2013)
- NQF-pedia (updated 2017)

Evaluation of Foreign Qualifications

South Africa has an established policy framework to provide evaluation and advisory service in respect of foreign qualifications, consistent with the NQF Act.

These policy documents are:

- **Policy and Criteria for Evaluating Foreign Qualifications within the NQF** (as amended March 2017) which provides the criteria and principles that SAQA adheres to in evaluation processes. The aim of the criteria and principles is to promote consistency in the evaluation of foreign qualifications. The evaluation process involves locating foreign qualifications within the South African NQF, indicating the priority of the South African NQF legislation in the process.
- **Foreign Qualifications Evaluation Appeal Policy**'s purpose is to outline the principles and processes upon which SAQA receives and deals with appeals; and
- **Foreign Qualifications Evaluation Revocation Policy** that outlines the principles upon which SAQA revokes Certificates of Evaluation that it has issued and hence annul decisions made regarding the recognition of a foreign qualification. Furthermore it stipulates the rights and obligations of qualification holders in the event of such revocation.

More information is available at: <https://www.saqg.org.za/evaluation-foreign-qualifications>

Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Agreements

South Africa has various mechanisms and tools at different levels for the recognition of foreign qualifications.

The following diagram is an attempt to outline the 4 different mechanisms and levels of recognition of international qualifications agreements:



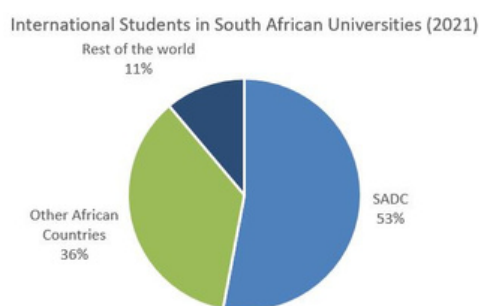
The intent to recognise foreign qualifications between South Africa and another country is included in bilateral agreements that are signed by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation.

An MRQ Agreement signed with a country is a specific framework that facilitates recognition and accreditation of qualifications between the country and South Africa. The agreement ensures that the holders of qualifications (certificates, diplomas and degrees) in one country are eligible to be considered for admission and recognition purposes in the other's higher education and training institutions. MRQ agreements do not exempt the holders from the obligation to comply with the admission requirements to educational institutions of the country and to comply with the requirements for professional practice as contained in the legislations where admission is requested.

Currently, South Africa does not have any signed MRQ Agreements with African Countries. A process to draft bilateral agreements between South Africa and the Kingdom of Lesotho, as well as with the Arab Republic of Egypt is underway.

Access to PSET institutions for graduates of other African countries

South African Higher Education Institutions cater for growing number of international students, particularly at post-graduate level. In 2021, of the total number of international students (47 594), 25 203 (53%) are from South African Development Community (SADC) Countries, 17 087 (36%) from other African countries and 5 304 (11%) from the rest of the world. International students account for 4.5% of the total student population in South Africa.



South Africa facilitates access to PSET institutions for graduates of other African countries mainly through the **Protocol on Education and Training in the SADC** (1997). In line with the SADC recommendation, South African higher education institutions reserve more than the required 5% of their admissions for students from other SADC countries. Standardisation of entrance requirements, harmonisation of academic years, ease of credit transfer, provision of in-state tuition and fee rates to students from other SADC countries, the establishment of joint academic programme, and the easing of immigration formalities are some of the mechanisms that South Africa is using to facilitate the mobility of students (and of academic staff).

Other regional and supra-national policies, statements and initiatives relevant to the mobility of students and staff are the:

- SA-EU Strategic Partnership (2006);
- African Higher Education and Research Space (AHERS) (2013);
- African Union's Agenda 2063 (2014);
- Brasilia Declaration 2015);
- African Higher Education Summit (2015) where the African research Universities Alliance (ARUAo) was established; and
- Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA) 2024.

The **Policy Framework for Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa** (2019) provides high level principles and guidelines; sets broad parameters and provides a national framework for Internationalisation of higher education within which higher education institutions can develop and align their institutional Internationalisation policies and strategies.

South Africa has from 2022 participated in the SADC Scholarship Programme. In 2022 SADC awarded 5 scholarships to citizens within SADC for 3 Masters and 2 PhDs.

Access to PSET institutions for South African Students

There is a growing number of opportunities for student and staff mobility available to South African citizens to study or work in other countries. The DHET, through national and international agreements and collaboration, provides a range of International Scholarships to South African students.

The DHET has approved **International Scholarships Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures**. These guide procedures and processes with regard to all scholarships that the DHET administer or are involved in. They govern how student uptake and nominations are done and include student contracts and code of conduct, as well as the Department's scholarship obligations and that of the scholarship awardees. The Guidelines detail pre-departure, while out of the country on a scholarship and post-scholarship requirements and support that the Department provides to the awardees to ensure increased uptake and success.

South Africa is currently developing **Inter-governmental International Scholarships Guidelines** into national policy by the end of 2023/24 as part of the Department's strategy to deal with the coordination and management of opportunities.

These Guidelines are aimed at enabling collaboration and coordination of international scholarships implemented by all spheres of government; promoting access and uptake of available international scholarship opportunities; and ensuring that assessment and implementation of international scholarships are in accordance with standard criteria.

These guidelines are not intended to deter provincial and national governments from participating in international scholarships, but rather to strengthen and enable a process of coordination and collaboration, and to address a range of issues and challenges that have emerged. It provides tools to plan for and assess scholarship opportunities to ensure that they add value or contribute to the country's development objectives and strengthening South African government resources allocated to international scholarships. It attempts to provide better coordination of responding to the country's skill gaps.

The Department is also developing a national information repository of scholarship recipients and areas undertaken by different government entities.

The Department is only involved in two International Scholarships that support students to study in Africa.

Recognition of qualifications of refugees and asylum seekers

In South Africa, the Recognition of Qualifications of Refugees and Asylum Seekers is managed by SAQA, through the **Addendum on the Recognition of Qualifications of Refugees and Asylum Seekers** (2019) (<https://www.saqa.org.za/documents/policies-and-criteria/addendum-recognition-qualifications-refugees-and-asylum-seekersmarch-2019>). Through this document South Africa recognises the peculiarity of circumstance for refugees and asylum seekers in the application of evaluation and SAQA assists refugees and asylum seekers in the process of recognising and evaluating their qualifications. The addendum is in compliance with the **Policy and Criteria for Evaluating Foreign Qualifications within the South African National Qualifications Framework** (2017).

SAQA, supported by the DHET and the World Education Services (WES) signed a partnership agreement to initiate a pilot project ensuring a special dispensation for the recognition of qualifications of eligible refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa. The first phase of the pilot focused on testing a methodology and process for this special dispensation. Implementation of the pilot has been completed in the Western Cape and Gauteng Provinces. Forty (40) applicants have so far been interviewed and evaluations of their qualifications are being undertaken by SAQA (<https://www.saqa.org.za/media/media-statements/south-african-qualifications-authority-and-world-education-services-partner-facilitate-qualifications-recognition-refugees-and-displaced-people-south-africa>).

Critical Skills Work Visas

The DHET is responsible for the publication of the **National List of Occupations in High Demand** (<https://www.dhet.gov.za/SiteAssets/Latest%20News/November%202020/Gazette-%202020%20National%20List%20of%20Occupations%20in%20High%20Demand.pdf>). It also conducts research on critical skills needed in South Africa.

A **Critical Skills List** is published by the Department of Home Affairs (DOH) (<http://www.dha.gov.za/images/PDFs/47182-2-8-CriticalSkillsDHA.pdf>). The list is developed in conjunction with the National List of Occupations in High Demand and the research on scarce skills published by the DHET. The Critical Skills List enables highly skilled foreigners to work in South Africa.

The DOH has amended the Immigration legislation that came with various changes, which led to the introduction of **Critical Skills Work Visas** (CSWVs). CSWVs enable South Africa to achieve the objectives of programmes such as National Development Plan (NDP), Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP) and New Growth Plan (NGP). The main objective of the CSWV is to assist the government to realise the achievement of the National Infrastructure Project, the Strategic Infrastructure Projects and Key National Strategic Projects in support of the Department of Trade and Industry (<http://www.dha.gov.za/index.php/immigration-services/scarce-skills-work-permits>).

Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in South Africa is defined as "the principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated and assessed, for the purposes of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development". RPL is one of the main attributes of the education and training policy discourse since 1994 towards socio-economic transformation, lifelong learning, accreditation, and the NQF.

Since 2013 RPL policies were promulgated, which can commonly be referred to as 'RPL implementation policies' by inter alia SAQA in 2013, 2016 and 2019; the QCTO in 2014; CHE in 2016; the DHET in 2016; institutions and providers of higher education and training; professional bodies; and government departments.

Individuals (learners/students/apprentices/professionals/employees) may seek RPL for various reasons and depending on various contexts. There are two main forms of RPL which reflect the different purposes and different processes within which RPL takes place, viz.:

- RPL for credits is used to provide for awarding credits by a provider for:
 - completing a qualification when a learner change study programmes or institutions (by institution/provider); or
 - advance standing/exemption from modules/courses making up a qualification (by institution/provider); or
 - towards granting a full qualification (by institution/provider). However, institutions, due to unfavourable legislative environment, are not readily implementing this.
- RPL for access:
 - into a learning programme/qualification - provides an alternative access route into a programme/course of learning/qualification for those who do not meet the formal minimum requirements for admission. RPL for access applies to learning programmes offered by a registered/accredited education institution, skills development provider or workplace based training provider (by institution/provider); or
 - into the External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA) of Occupational Qualifications – provides the evaluation and acknowledgement of the knowledge and skills by the Assessment Quality Partner (education institution or skills development provider) that a candidate has gained to enable access to the EISA (by QCTO Assessment Quality Partner); or
 - to a trade test through Artisan RPL (ARPL) (by Trade Test Centre) – provides an active pathway to full Artisan Trade Occupational Qualifications registered on the NQF, linked to listed trades in all sectors of the economy. ARPL is applied at an accredited Trade Test Centre for the trade which is being applied for; or
 - into Professional Designations (by Professional Body) – provides an alternative access route to Professional Designations awarded by Professional Bodies; or
 - recognition and promotion in the workplaces (RPL for advancement) (by employer) – provides an alternative access route to employment by an employer, when a candidate does not have the requisite qualifications for a specific job or occupation.

Section 4 Implementation Process for the Recognition of Qualifications

Article IV.1

- **Recognition of Foreign Qualifications** takes into account quality assurance mechanisms of the QCs and the accreditation of programmes and institutions issuing qualifications.

Article IV.2

- SAQA has adopted Standard Operating Procedures to ensure that applicants of recognition of foreign qualifications have adequate access to assessment of the application in a timely manner.
- SAQA verifies an application for recognition of qualifications by ensuring the authentication of the issuing body, the institution, and the qualification, as well as comparing the foreign qualification with the relevant South Africa qualification on the NQF considering the structure and the outcomes of the foreign qualifications (incl. knowledge, skills and competences achieved).
- South Africa has adopted measures to eradicate all forms of fraudulent practices regarding higher education qualifications.

Article IV.3

- Procedures and criteria used in the assessment and recognition of qualifications in South Africa are transparent, coherent, reliable, fair and non-discriminatory,
- Procedures and criteria applied by SAQA are available on the SAQA website.

Article IV.4

- South Africa's recognition and evaluation of foreign qualifications regime are made in accordance with Article IV.4 of the Addis Convention.

Section 4 Implementation Information, Timeframes, Implementing Structures and Cooperation

Article IV.5

- Information on the South African PSET System and the criteria and procedures for the recognition of foreign qualifications are available on the DHET and SAQA's websites.

Article IV.6

- Decisions on recognition of qualifications are made within timeframes specified SAQA and is published on their website.
- Decisions are communicated and explained.
- Measures to dispute and appeal decisions from SAQA are in place.

Article IV.7, 8 & 9

- South Africa is actively participating in Implementing and cooperation structures of the Addis Convention.

The Department of Higher Education and Training is the implementation agency of the Addis Convention. A draft workplan for the implementation of the Addis Convention has been developed and is being consulted with stakeholders.

South Africa's representation on the Convention structures include:

- National Focal Point: Ms Trudi van Wyk, Chief Director: Social Inclusion and Quality, Department of Higher Education and Training, Private Bag X174, Pretoria, 0001 (vanwyk.t@dhet.gov.za), with her alternate, Ms Bellinah Molaudzi, Director: National Qualifications Framework (NQF), Department of Higher Education and Training (molaudzi.b@dhet.gov.za).
- SAQA is acting as the South African 'National Information Centre on the Recognition of Qualifications'. The contact person is: Ms Nadia Starr, Chief Executive Officer, SAQA, PostNet Suite 248, Private Bag X06, Waterkloof, 0145 (nstarr@saqa.org.za), with her alternate Mr Navin Vasudev, Manager: Business Development and Stakeholders, SAQA (nvasudev@saqa.org.za).
- Nomination for the Working Group on the African Network of National Structures for the Implementation of the Convention: Ms Trudi van Wyk, with her alternate, Ms Bellinah Molaudzi.
- Nomination for the Working Group on Quality Assurance: Ms Nadia Starr, with her alternate Mr Navin Vasudev.

These structures are related to SAQA's participation in the African Qualifications Verification Network (AQVN) that has as its goal, to strengthen qualification verification/validation practice at the Pan-African level. SAQA was also nominated as Chair for the AQVN.

The Department and SAQA have been active in the SADC Qualifications Framework discourse, especially in the SADC Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA), and in the development of the SADC Qualifications Framework (SADCQF).

In addition SAQA is heavily engaged in the development African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF).

National Implementation Structures

NQF CEO Committee
acts as
National Addis Convention Implementation Structure



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