SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION FRAMEWORK GUIDE

“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.”

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
Ikamva Lisezandleni Zethu is a South African non-profit organization focussed on the empowerment of youth through education, e-literacy training and career guidance.

The materials in this publication was purchased from Striving Mind Training Support, reworked and edited by Pepe Hendricks, and Zoe Mann provided final review and proof reading. Cover design was done by Hetile Mabunda.

Published by IkamvaYouth

47 Westminster Road, Salt River, Cape Town, 7925
Website: http://ikamvayouth.org/
Email: info@ikamvayouth.org
Tel: +27 (0) 21 820 7444
Fax: +27 (0) 865 147 197

© 2017, IkamvaYouth, intellectual property of Striving Minds Training Support
# Table of Contents

Icons ................................................................................................................................. 7  
Acronyms and abbreviations ............................................................................................ 8  
Course overview ............................................................................................................... 9  
Section 1: Key elements of Outcomes-Based Education and Training .......................... 11  
1  Introduction .................................................................................................................. 11  
   1.1 The concept of an outcome (SO 1; AC 1) ............................................................... 12  
   1.2 Different approaches to outcomes-based education and training (SO 1; AC 2) .... 13  
      1.2.1 OBET Principles ............................................................................................... 14  
      1.2.2 OBET Purpose ................................................................................................. 15  
   1.3 Assessment role in the learning process (SO 1; AC 3) ........................................... 17  
   1.4 The impact of Outcomes-Based Education and Training (SO 1; AC 4) ............... 18  
   1.5 Outcomes-Based Education and Training key terminology (SO1; AC 5) ............. 20  
Section 2: The form and function of the National Qualifications Framework ............... 23  
2  Introduction .................................................................................................................. 23  
   2.1 History, rationale, objectives, principles and aims of the NQF (SO2; AC 1) ........ 24  
   2.2 The current National Qualifications Framework (SO2; AC 5) .............................. 26  
   2.3 Mechanisms of the NQF and their purposes (SO 2; AC 2) .................................... 27  
3  Structures for the implementation of the NQF (SO2; AC 3) ...................................... 30  
   3.1 The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) ............................................. 30  
   3.2 The role of Quality Assurers .................................................................................. 33  
   3.3 Roles and responsibilities of people and organisations in the NQF (SO2; AC 4) .... 33  
4  Challenges with implementing OBET in the NQF (SO 2; AC 6) ............................... 35  
Section 3: Standards within the context of the National Qualification Framework .......... 37  
5  Introduction .................................................................................................................. 37  
   5.1 The features and uses of standards (SO3, AC 1, AC 2, AC 3) ............................... 38  
      5.1.1 Unit standards .................................................................................................... 38  
      5.1.2 Components of a unit standard ......................................................................... 39  
   5.2 Processes and principles of design and registration of standards (SO4, AC 4) ....... 42  
Section 4: Qualifications purpose and use .................................................................... 44  
6  Introduction .................................................................................................................. 44  
   6.1 Features, uses, design and registration of qualifications (AC 1 - AC 4) ................. 44  
References ....................................................................................................................... 49
## Icons

For ease of reference, an icon will indicate different activities. The following icons indicate different activities in the manual.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Learning Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Note!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td></td>
<td>Summaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTE!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

IkamvaYouth: A guide to the SA education system

Page 7 of 52
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AC: Assessment criteria which states the type and quality of performance against which the candidate is assessed.

Assessment: A process in which evidence of performance is gathered and evaluated against agreed criteria.

Competence: Showing proof of knowledge, skills and understanding that is needed to meet a set national standard.

Direct Evidence: Evidence submitted by the candidate about the candidate.

DoE: Department of Education

ETDP: Education, Training and Development Practitioner

ETQA: Education and Training Quality Assurer

Feedback: Information about an individual’s performance, broken down into useful components for the listener.

Indirect Evidence: Evidence presented by other people about the candidate seeking a target qualification.

Moderator: A person who is qualified to moderate the assessment decision(s) made by an assessor.

NQF: National Qualifications Framework: The South African education, training and learning system that aims to join together academic, technical, commercial and occupational learning that is open to all South Africans. It is essentially a quality assurance system with the development and registration of standards and qualifications as the first important step in implementing a quality education and training system in SA.

NSB: National Standards Body

OBET: Outcomes-Based Education and Training

QMS: Quality Management System

SAQA: South African Qualifications Authority

SDA: Skills Development Act

SETA: Sector Education and Training Authority

SGB: Standards Generating Body

SO: The specific outcome (SO) reflect and capture the purpose of the unit standard in ways that are measurable and verifiable. There are usually between 4 and 6 specific outcomes.

US: A unit standard (US) can be described as a set of statements of desired education and training and their associated assessment criteria as registered with the education authority - a segment of learning within a qualification.
COURSE OVERVIEW

How to use this guide

This guide belongs to you. It is designed to use for the duration of your training programme and as a resource for after the time.

It contains readings, activities, and application aids that will assist you in developing the skills and knowledge stipulated in the specific outcomes and assessment criteria.

Follow along in the guide as the facilitator takes you through the material, and feel free to make notes and diagrams that will help you to clarify or retain information. Jot down things that work well or ideas that come from the group and note any points you would like to explore further.

Participate actively in the group work activities, as they will give you an opportunity to gain insights from other people’s experiences and to practice the skills. Share your experiences so that others can learn from you too. The training methods include presentations, readings, individual activities, group discussions, and skill application exercises.

There are additional materials and resources, including an in-depth National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Reader, available on the IkamvaYouth Zone to explain various concepts in more depth. In order to do this, go to: http://www.ikamvayouthzone.org/

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to develop underpinning knowledge and understanding that will inform actions and decisions with regard to implementation of outcomes-based education and training (OBET) and the NQF. It is for those involved in the education, training and development sector - especially after-school - and it is aligned to the NQF under the unit standard, Demonstrate understanding of the outcomes-based education and training approach within the context of a National Qualifications Framework (US ID 114924).

This unit standard consists of four specific outcomes (SO), namely:

- Describing key elements of outcomes-based education and training (OBET);
- Describing the form and function of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF);
- Describing and explain standards within the context of the NQF; and
- Explaining the purpose and use of qualifications

---

1 The NQF is essentially a quality assurance system with the development and registration of standards and qualifications as the first important step in implementing a quality education and training system in SA.
2 A unit standard (US) can be described as a set of statements of desired education and training and their associated assessment criteria as registered with the education authority.
3 The specific outcomes together reflect and capture the purpose of the unit standard in ways that are measurable and verifiable. There are usually between 4 and 6 specific outcomes.
The reader consist of four primary sections summarised below.

a. **The elements and approaches of OBET**

This section explores the terminology, concepts, assessment, and approaches of OBET in the context of the NQF. It highlights the benefits for learners, organisations, and other relevant stakeholders.

b. **The form and functions of the NQF**

This section describes the history, rational, objectives and functions of the NQF. It looks at its mechanisms and regulatory nature that impacts on the various stakeholders in the learning process. Finally it engages the challenges associated with implementation.

c. **The standards that impacts on the NQF context**

The features of standards are identified and explained in terms of the learning process. The processes and principles are outlined in line with SAQA regulations.

d. **The purpose and use of qualifications**

This section explains the features of qualifications and its relationship with others and how it impacts on the learning process. It ends by looking at the design and registration requirements in line with the regulatory framework.
SECTION 1: KEY ELEMENTS OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION AND TRAINING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On completion of this section you will be able to describe the key elements and approach of outcomes-based education and training (OBET).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This specific outcome shall cover the following assessment criteria:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The concept of an outcome is explained as a means of defining learner achievements and/or desired results of learning within the context of education, training and development. (SO 1, AC 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Different approaches to outcomes-based education and training are explored and compared to recognise the different forms of learning and assessment. (SO 1, AC 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Assessment is explained in terms of its role in the learning process within an OBET approach. (SO 1, AC 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The impact of OBET is described in terms of potential benefits to learners, employers, industry and society at large. (SO 1, AC 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Key terminology associated with OBET is used appropriately and in context. (SO 1, AC 5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 INTRODUCTION

Outcomes based education and training (OBET) is a process that involves the restructuring of curriculum, assessment and reporting practices in education to reflect the achievement of high order learning and mastery rather than the accumulation of course credits (Tucker, 2004). Thus the primary aim of outcomes based education and training is to facilitate desired changes within the learners, by increasing knowledge, developing skills and by positively influencing attitudes, values and judgment.

Outcomes based education and training embodies the idea that the best way to learn is to first determine what needs to be achieved. Once the end goal (product or outcome) has been determined the strategies, processes, techniques, and other ways and means can be put into place to achieve the goal.
The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and quality assurers will be discussed later, but all NQF-aligned training that is conducted by a training service provider must be done in line with the OBET approach. It is recommended that service providers are, or become, accredited with a recognisable quality assurer in order for them to be able to provide training activities that are recognized by the NQF.

1.1 THE CONCEPT OF AN OUTCOME (SO 1; AC 1)

Outcomes are clear learning results that learners have to demonstrate at the end of any significant learning experiences (i.e. what learners can actually do with what they know and have learned). Outcomes are actions or performances that embody and reflect learner competence in using content, information, ideas and tools successfully.

Geyser (1999) says when learners do important things with what they know they have taken a significant step beyond knowing itself.

Vella, Berardinelli and Burrow (1998) remind us of the importance of accountability mechanisms (learner assessment) that directly reflect learner performance and help learners “know what they know”. Thus outcomes describe the results of learning over a period of time—the results of what is learned versus what is taught.

Examples of Outcomes

Example 1

In particular, people credited with this unit standard will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of outcomes-based assessment;
- Prepare for assessments;
- Conduct assessments;
- Provide feedback on assessments; and
- Review assessments.

Example 2

When participants complete this course they will be able to:

- Plan and prepare for facilitation;
- Facilitate learning; and
- Evaluate learning and facilitation.

---

4 Training service provider refers to any public or private institution, company or body that provides education, training and development services to internal or external learners.
Learning Activity

In groups, complete the following activities:

a) What is an outcome? Use examples to support your answer.

b) Define and explain the term outcome-based education and training, different approaches and also provide examples. Your discussion should include:
   ♦ Purposes of the approaches.
   ♦ Principles underpinning the approaches.
   ♦ Processes for defining outcomes.
   ♦ Approaches to learning design and delivery.
   ♦ Approaches to assessment

c) Share in plenary what an outcome is and provide the examples that you have discussed. Then share what you have explored and the different approaches that you have compared of outcomes-based education and training to recognise the different forms of learning and assessment.

1.2 DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION AND TRAINING (SO 1; AC 2)

OBET can be regarded as a theory (or a philosophy) of education (Killen, 2000). Within OBET there are a certain set of beliefs and assumptions about learning, teaching and the systemic structures within which activities take place.

Spady (1994) proposes three basic assumptions: all learners can learn and succeed; success breeds success; and teaching institutions and schools control the conditions of success.

Killen (2000) defines two basic types of outcome. The first includes performance indicators often measured in terms of tests results, completion rates, and post course employment. It emphasizes learner mastery of traditional subject-related academic outcomes/content and some cross discipline outcomes (such as problem solving or working cooperatively). The second is less tangible and usually expressed in terms of what the learners know, are able to do or are like as a result of their education. It stresses long term, cross-curricular outcomes which relate to future life roles of the learner (such as being a productive worker, a responsible citizen or parent). These two approaches are what Spady (1994) respectively calls traditional (content-based) and transformational (outcomes-based) learning systems.
## Content Based Learning versus Outcomes Based Learning

(Source: Spady, 1994)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>TRADITIONAL</strong></th>
<th><strong>TRANSFORMATIONAL</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Content Based Learning System)</td>
<td>(Outcomes Based Learning System)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive students</td>
<td>Active learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment process – exam and grade driven</td>
<td>Continuous assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rote learning</td>
<td>Critical thinking, reasoning, reflection and action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content based/broken into subjects</td>
<td>Integration knowledge, learning relevant/connected real life situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbook/worksheet focused and teacher centred</td>
<td>Learner centred and educator/facilitator use group/teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See curriculum as rigid and non-negotiable</td>
<td>Learning programmes seen as guides that allow educators to be innovative and creative in designing activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers/trainers responsible for learning - motivated by personality of teacher</td>
<td>Learners take responsibility for their learning, learners motivated by constant feedback/affirmation of worth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis what teacher hopes to achieve</td>
<td>Emphasis outcomes – what learner becomes and understands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content placed in rigid time frames</td>
<td>Flexible time frames - learners work at own pace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay in single learning institution until complete</td>
<td>Learners can gather credits from different institutions until they achieve qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous knowledge and experience in learning field ignored – Each time attends whole course</td>
<td>Recognition of prior learning: after pre-assessment, learners credited outcomes demonstrated or transfer credits elsewhere</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1.2.1 OBET Principles

According to Spady (1998) the basic principle of transformational OBET is the clarity of focus. Thus the curriculum development, implementation and evaluation should be designed according to the outcomes that needs to be achieved.

Four principles guide the transformational OBET approach, taken together they strengthen the conditions for both learner and facilitator success, namely:

- Clarity of focus;
- Design down;
- High expectations; and
- Expanded opportunities.
The transformational OBET approach

(Source: Spady, 1994; Killen, 2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBET Principles</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Application to practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of focus</td>
<td>◆ Focus on what learners are able to do successfully</td>
<td>◆ Help learners develop competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Enable predetermined significant outcomes</td>
<td>◆ Clarify short and long term learning intentions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Focus assessments on significant outcomes</td>
<td>◆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design down</td>
<td>◆ Begin curriculum design with a clear definition of the significant learning that learners are to achieve by the end of their formal education</td>
<td>◆ Develop systematic education curricula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Develop systematic education curricula</td>
<td>◆ Trace back from desired end results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Identify “learning building blocks”</td>
<td>◆ Link planning, teaching and assessment decisions to significant learner outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Engage deeply with issues are learning</td>
<td>◆ Push beyond where normally have gone - learners are supported to reach higher level of performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Expanded opportunities provide for a flexible approach in time and teaching methodologies matched against the needs of the learner</td>
<td>◆ Provide multiple learning opportunities matching learner’s needs with teaching techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High expectations</td>
<td>◆ The principle of high expectations elicits high level of standards.</td>
<td>◆ Engage deeply with issues are learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Establish challenging performance standards</td>
<td>◆ Push beyond where normally have gone - learners are supported to reach higher level of performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Expanded opportunities provide for a flexible approach in time and teaching methodologies matched against the needs of the learner</td>
<td>◆ Provide multiple learning opportunities matching learner’s needs with teaching techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanded opportunities</td>
<td>◆ Do not learn the same thing in the same way in the same time</td>
<td>◆ Provide multiple learning opportunities matching learner’s needs with teaching techniques</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2.2 OBET Purpose

Spady (1994) emphasizes that the decision of what and whether the learners learn is more important than when it happens and through what means (how) they learn it. He therefore identifies two key aims for OBET:

◆ Ensure learners are successful in that they are equipped with the knowledge, skills and qualities (values and attitudes) required after they exit the educational system; and

◆ Achieve and maximize selected outcomes for all students by structuring and operating education facilities to be success oriented.
Spady notes that all learners learn and succeed, but they do not all necessarily do so at the same time because they learn at different rates and have different learning styles. Further since successful learning breeds more successful learning the importance of having a stronger cognitive and psychological foundation of prior learning cannot be underestimated. And since the conditions directly affecting learning are under the “educational system’s control”, learning is dependent on the willingness of teachers and others to believe in the approach and support learners in their learning. As OBET philosophy requires educators focus more broadly on accomplishing results versus simply providing a service. These differences are outlined below.

**Learning Systems: Content Based versus Outcomes Based**

(Source: Spady, 1994)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning System Characteristics</th>
<th>Content Based (Traditional)</th>
<th>Outcomes Based (Transformational)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Framework</strong></td>
<td>♦ Predefined curriculum, assessment and credentialing in place</td>
<td>♦ Curriculum, instructional strategies, assessment and performed standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>♦ Structures “ends”, no defined learners’ outcomes</td>
<td>♦ Structures support outcomes, flexible and a means to define “learning ends”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>♦ Inflexible constraint for educator and learner schedule controls learning and success</td>
<td>♦ Used alterable source – match needs of educator and learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance standards</strong></td>
<td>♦ Comparative and competitive approach</td>
<td>♦ Learners potentially able receive credit for achieving performance standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>♦ Linked to predetermined “curve” or quota of possible successes</td>
<td>♦ No quotas and standards pursued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning assessments</strong></td>
<td>♦ Continuous testing and permanent grading</td>
<td>♦ Macro view learning and achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>♦ Mistakes on permanent record; best grades and records fast and consistent performers; slower learners never catch up</td>
<td>♦ Mistakes inevitable steps in development, internalizing and demonstrating high level of performance capabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>♦ Never assess/ document what learners can ultimately do successfully</td>
<td>♦ Ultimate achievement what able to do</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3 Assessment role in the learning process (SO 1; AC 3)

Assessment is a process in which evidence is gathered and evaluated against agreed criteria in order to make a judgment of competence for developmental and/or recognition purposes. In other words, assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving learning. It involves making expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analysing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance.

When it is embedded effectively within larger institutional systems, assessment can help us focus our collective attention, examine our assumptions, and create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education. (Angelo, 1995)

The purpose of assessment

Assessment serves a number of purposes:

- a. It gives information about the knowledge, values, skills and attitudes learners have acquired.
- b. It determines the level of competence that learners have acquired, and whether they can apply that knowledge.
- c. It can help in providing high-quality instruction to learners enrolled in a course if it is built into the learning process. Moreover, the assessment process is to gather enough evidence to prove all course outcomes were achieved.

Assessment should happen on a continuous basis to provide a more accurate and complete picture of the learner's level and have a positive impact on the learning process. It can take the form of daily work (e.g. essays, quizzes, presentation and participation in class), projects/term papers and practical work (e.g. laboratory work, fieldwork, clinical procedures, drawing practice).

Types of assessment

Assessment is predominantly subdivided into three types, namely baseline, formative and summative assessment. These are discussed in the portion that follows.

a) Baseline assessment

This happens as part of the commencement of a learning process. The learner completes a pre-assessment, which varies slightly according to the different regional contexts and factors of the learner, but within the scope of a relevant unit standard or qualification. Diagnostic tools are used to determine what learners already know and where there are gaps and misconceptions. This establishes current competency levels of learners and ensures that a needs-based learning programme is developed that is within the scope of SAQA regulations.
b) **Formative assessment**

This is assessment for learning. It is used from the beginning and during the learning process as practitioners’ check the understanding and progress of learners. The information gained guides practitioners’ to decide how to enhance teaching and learning. Formative assessment enables learners to learn through the process of feedback and provides opportunities to monitor, reflect, practice and improve.

c) **Summative assessment**

This is assessment of learning. It is used at the end of the learning period. Practitioners document the culmination of learners’ learning achievements through tasks that invite learners to demonstrate their mastery and knowledge of the course content. Summative assessment data provides practitioners with information about how effective learning and teaching strategies have been, time needed for instruction and how to improve teaching and learning for future learners. In simple terms, summative assessment is used to indicate the extent of a learner's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a course or learning programme.

Assessment needs to be an integral part of a learning programme’s teaching and learning activities. This infers that it should be part of a curriculum and learning programme development. We cannot assess in an integrated way if we do not teach and learn in an integrated way, because integrated learning comes before integrated assessment. Integrated assessment at qualifications level enables learners to show that they are able to integrate concepts, ideas and actions across unit standards to achieve competence that matches the purpose of the qualification (LGWSETA, 2004: 13).

1.4 **THE IMPACT OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION AND TRAINING (SO 1; AC 4)**

Outcomes-based education has a number of advantages for facilitators, administrators, learners and society, including:

- Providing a strategic way to enhance the quality of teaching and learning;
- Helping to ensure the approval and accreditation of new and existing programs;
- Providing a mechanism for ensuring accountability and quality assurance;
- Helping learners to take responsibility for their own learning;
- Providing a means for learners to articulate the knowledge, skills and experience acquired during their program;
- Providing a framework for collaborative curriculum planning;
- Providing a tool for evaluating and improving the curriculum; and
- Encouraging continuity between undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing education.
Outcomes Based Education and Training has potential benefits to learners, employers, industry and society at large. The portion that follows provides a summary of outcomes-based learning as compared to content based learning.

**Advantages to the learner**

First and foremost, outcomes based learning focuses on the learner as an individual. It provides opportunities for each individual to develop skills at their own pace, collaborate with others, collect evidence of learning, and become successful lifelong learners. Competency based learning empower learners to:

- Understand the competencies they need to master to achieve their goals;
- Progress through learning processes without time constraints;
- Explore diverse learning opportunities;
- Collaborate in learning activities with communities of peers and mentors;
- Create learning artefacts that represent their competencies;
- Reflect on their own learning achievements;
- See what they have mastered, what they still need to accomplish, and where to improve; and
- Develop an academic identity, including the ability to manage competencies and portable evidence of learning from multiple sources.

**Advantages to employers**

- Learners can bring in fresh enthusiasm and new ideas;
- A means of tackling shelved projects to take them forward;
- Work-based projects may help inform the future development needs of organisations;
- A cost effective solution to an organisation’s recruitment needs;
- A good way to test a potential new recruit;
- Increases employee performance and productivity; and
- Improves efficiency within the early year’s sector resulting in a better educated and more informed workforce.

**Learning activity**

Work in groups.

a. Explain the key words in assessment in terms of its role in the learning process within an OBET approach.

b. Identify and describe the potential benefits of outcomes-based education to learners, employers, industry and society at large.

c. What is the importance of integrated assessment?
1.5 Outcomes-Based Education and Training Key Terminology (SO1; AC5)

This section explains the key terminology used in outcomes-based education and training.

a. Criteria and Guidelines for Short Courses and Skills Programmes

It is important to understand the following terms to differentiate skills programmes from other programmes. The following list was provided by SAQA in the “Criteria and Guidelines for Short Courses and Skills Programmes”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBET Terms</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme</td>
<td>Programme means a coherent set of courses, leading to a certain qualification (SAQA, 2000:5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Learning Programme</td>
<td>The term Short Learning Programme describes all short programmes, whether credits are awarded or not, and is inclusive of skills programmes, credit-bearing short courses and non-credit-bearing short courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Programme</td>
<td>A Skills Programme is occupationally based and when completed will constitute credits towards a qualification registered on the NQF. Provisioning is undertaken by a training provider accredited by an ETQA (Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998). A skills programme is a type of short learning programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short course</td>
<td>A short course is a type of short learning programme through which a learner may or may not be awarded credits, depending on the purpose of the programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit-bearing short course</td>
<td>A Credit-bearing short course is a type of short learning programme for which credits, in relation to the course’s contribution to a unit standard and/or (part) qualification, are awarded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-credit-bearing short course</td>
<td>A non-credit-bearing short course is a type of short learning programme for which no credits are awarded in relation to unit standards or (part) qualifications depending on the purpose and/or assessment of the programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Course refers to content of a short learning programme whereby learners may progressively attain the knowledge as described in unit standards and/or qualifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Programme</td>
<td>Learning Programme means the sequential learning activities, associated with curriculum implementation, leading to the achievement of a particular qualification or part qualification (SAQA, 2000:5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accreditation</td>
<td>Accreditation means the certification, usually for a particular period of time, of a person, a body or an institution as having the capacity to fulfil a particular function in the quality assurance system set up by SAQA in terms of the Act (No. 58 of 1995).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Additional OBET terms

Geyser (1999) provides the definitions below for important OBET terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBET Terms</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Exit Outcomes**  | ♦ Highest level and most complex  
                       ♦ Formulated using high powered performance verbs  
                       ♦ Can impact learners, organisations and instructional process  
                       ♦ Refer to applied competencies learners should demonstrate |
| **Programme Outcomes** | ♦ Reflects all exit outcomes |
| **Specific Outcomes** | ♦ Formulate for each exit outcome  
                       ♦ Serve as basis to establish what competencies to be mastered  
                       ♦ Achievement process as important as reaching exit outcomes  
                       ♦ Used to derive assessment criteria |
| **Practical Competence** | Demonstrated ability to consider range of options and make decisions about:  
                       ♦ Facilitating learning in diverse learning groups and one-to-one basis  
                       ♦ Learning needs and requirements of individuals, organisations and communities  
                       ♦ Strategic management leadership – internal work environment in relation to work organisation and restructuring, information and communication systems, staffing and labour, quality improvements systems  
                       ♦ Designing and developing learning systems across institutions and sectors  
                       ♦ Evaluating strengths and limitations - processes, materials, media, programmes and systems |
| **Functional Competence** | Demonstrated understanding of:  
                       ♦ Learning - holistic, creative and life-long process, different knowledge forms and life worlds  
                       ♦ Socio-cultural, language and literacy differences in groups, communities and broader society  
                       ♦ Relevant concepts, principles, and procedures are acknowledged in making informed decisions |
| **Reflexive Competence** | Demonstrated ability to:  
                       ♦ Evaluate career practice and collaborative practice with other professionals  
                       ♦ Integrate learner performance  
                       ♦ Learn from own action  
                       ♦ Adapt to changes or unforeseen circumstances |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBET Terms</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Criteria (for integrated competence)</td>
<td>Learner should: ♦ Generate, explore and consider options for appropriate action ♦ Identify appropriate action - particular context, topic, learner group/ level, and resources ♦ Explain particular session selection ♦ Perform identified action ♦ Continuously monitor and adapt performance as required ♦ Explain reasons for performance ♦ Evaluate performance and identify areas for improvement ♦ Reflect on learning and performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range Statements</td>
<td>Exact details of what and how much learning ♦ Mark acceptable level of statements ♦ Increase in complexity and sophistication ♦ Not required for all assessment criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Units/Modules</td>
<td>♦ Breakdown of whole programme ♦ Varying lengths ♦ Three types – fundamental, core and elective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this section you described the key elements of the outcomes-based approach to education and training (OBET).
SECTION 2: THE FORM AND FUNCTION OF THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On completion of this section you will be able to describe the form and function of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This specific outcome shall cover the following assessment criteria:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Descriptions of the history, rationale, objectives, principles and aims of the NQF are given to demonstrate understanding of the intent of the NQF as a transformative vehicle. (SO 2, AC 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ The descriptions given of the mechanisms of the NQF and their purposes are consistent with the current regulatory framework. (SO 2, AC 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Structures responsible for implementation of the NQF are described in terms of their composition, role, function and relationships in line with the current regulatory framework. (SO 2, AC 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ The roles and responsibilities of individuals and organisations in implementing the NQF are described in relation to the impact on personal, social and economic development and transformation. (SO 2, AC 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ The concept of levels of the NQF is described in relation to the increasing complexity of learning and levels of progression. (SO 2, AC 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Challenges associated with the implementation of OBET in the NQF are described in terms of resource implications, management and the impact on the learning and assessment processes and practices. (SO 2, AC 6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 INTRODUCTION

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is a single integrated system for “classification, registration, publication and articulation of quality-assured national qualifications”, as indicated in Section 4 of the NQF Act, 2008 (Act No 67 of 2008). In this section, we will describe the form and function of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).
2.1 **History, Rationale, Objectives, Principles and Aims of the NQF (SO2; AC 1)**

In October 1995, the South African Qualifications Authority Act (No. 58 of 1995) was promulgated to establish the authority, whose main task was to establish the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The authority started operations in May 1996. By 2001 the NQF was under review, and after that the 1995 SAQA law was replaced by the National Qualifications Framework Act (No. 67 of 2008). The authority remained in place and so did the updated NQF.

### Rationale and need for the NQF

Various factors contributed towards the development of the National Qualifications Framework. Some of these points are listed below.

a) The South African *apartheid* system denied many people access to opportunities to gain information, skills and experience to develop and to allow for economic growth.

b) Many inequalities and restrictions were found in the education and training systems.

c) Past educational practices (e.g. Bantu education systems) did not allow for creativity, or analytically and critical thinking.

d) Learners were trapped in unfair learning situations.

e) Much of learning in schools and colleges were not very useful or valid.

f) Matric - was not a guarantee for further study or post-matric work opportunities.

g) The majority of workplace training related only to one job.

h) Dismal record of productivity and job performance were recorded.

i) There was a preference for academic qualifications rather than technical or vocational skills training and development.

j) Increasing dissatisfaction in trade and industry because education and training lagged far behind international organisations in similar industries.

k) There was a lack of technological competencies in a demanding and competitive global economy.

l) The knock-on effect of poor education and training was a high unemployment rate.

A nationally integrated system was proposed to transform the education and training system to link one level of learning to another and enable learners to progress to higher levels from any starting point in the education and training system. The integration of the education and training system is done through the NQF. Learning and skills that people have acquired through experience and informal training could also be formally assessed and credited towards qualifications through the process of the recognition of prior learning (RPL).

The NQF accommodates all those who are in schools, colleges, universities, and in work-based programmes to receive equal acknowledgement. Education and training must be a lifelong learning process to enhance the quality of life for all!
The objectives of the NQF

The objectives of the NQF, as outlined in Section 5 of the NQF Act, are listed below.

a) Create a single integrated national framework for learning achievements.

b) Facilitate access to education and training that provides improved career pathways, which are also secured mobility and progression within the education system.

(c) Enhance the quality of education and training.

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

The objectives of the NQF are designed to contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the socio-economic development of the nation at large.

The principles that underpin the objectives of the NQF are provide in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>To form part of a system of human resource development which provides for the establishment of a unifying approach to education and training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>To be and remain responsive to national development needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>To have international and national value and acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coherence</td>
<td>To work within a consistent framework of principles and certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>To allow for multiple pathways to the same learning ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards</td>
<td>To be expressed in terms of a nationally agreed framework and internationally acceptable outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy</td>
<td>To provide for the participation of all national stakeholders in the planning and co-ordination of standards and qualifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>To provide ease of entry to appropriate levels of education and training for all prospective learners in a manner which facilitates progression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulation</td>
<td>To provide for learners, on successful completion of accredited prerequisites, to move between components of the delivery system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progression</td>
<td>To ensure that the framework of qualifications permits individuals to move through the levels of national qualifications via different appropriate combinations of the components of the delivery system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portability</td>
<td>To enable learners to transfer credits of qualifications from one learning institution and/or employer to another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of Prior Learning</td>
<td>To, through assessment, give credit to learning which has already been acquired in different ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance of learners</td>
<td>To provide for counselling of learners by specially trained individuals who meet nationally recognized standards for educators and trainers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The aims of the NQF

The NQF principles were developed, refined, and found expression in the various laws that emerged from policy discussions. The SAQA Act states that the purpose of the NQF is to:

- Create an integrated national framework for learning achievements;
- Facilitate access, mobility and progression within education and career pathways;
- Enhance the quality of education and training; and
- Accelerate redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities.

2.2 The current National Qualifications Framework (SO2; AC 5)

The current NQF levels range from Level 1 to Level 10. Below we show you how SAQA matches qualifications to NQF Levels. For example, if have a Matric, Grade 12, or any National Senior Certificate, your qualification is rated as being at NQF 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th>NQF Level</th>
<th>Qualification Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education and Training</td>
<td>NQF 10</td>
<td>Doctorates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NQF 9</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NQF 8</td>
<td>Honours Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post-Graduate Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NQF 7</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degrees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NQF 6</td>
<td>Diplomas Advanced Certificates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NQF 5</td>
<td>Higher Certificates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further Education and Training</td>
<td>NQF 4</td>
<td>National Senior Certificate - Grade 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced National Certificate (Vocational)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NQF 3</td>
<td>National Senior Certificate - Grade 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced National Certificate (Vocational)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NQF 2</td>
<td>National Senior Certificate - Grade 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced National Certificate (Vocational)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education and Training</td>
<td>NQF 1</td>
<td>General Education and Training Certificate - Grade 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ABET Certificate - Level 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The difference in having a NQF 5 or NQF 6 rated qualification lies in the degree of difficulty as determined by SAQA Level Descriptors. It may be related to qualification credits allotted - for example 120 credits for NQF 5 and 240 or 360 credits for NQF 6. It may also be that the credits may refer to study duration, namely a 2-year post-matric certificate or diploma may qualify for 240 credits and a 3-year post-matric certificate or diploma may qualify for 360 credits.
2.3 MECHANISMS OF THE NQF AND THEIR PURPOSES (SO 2; AC 2)

The NQF has set in place mechanisms for transforming education and training. The following mechanisms of the National Qualification Framework are briefly discussed below, namely:

- Standards setting and qualification design;
- Credit accumulation;
- Accreditation of training service providers;
- Registration of assessors and moderators; and
- Recognition of achievements through the award of credits.

a. Standards setting and qualification design

In the introduction of this section you were introduced to standards setting and quality assurance. It was noted that arrangements in the formal education system is different to those for workplace-based or occupationally directed training. However, setting standards are there to serve the purpose of ensuring that all learning conforms to similar specific outcomes and assessment criteria that are required for a qualification or unit standard.

i. A qualification

This is the evidence that a learner has achieved a certain level of competence. It may take the form of a certificate, a diploma, or a degree. It is a form of currency, or exchange, between an individual and an employer, or between an individual and an education and training provider. It describes the level of knowledge and skills that a person has to offer in the labour market, or in applying ongoing learning.

ii. Unit standards

These are the building blocks of each qualification that consists of a particular “package” of information or skills. A learner or worker will complete programmes to earn a specified number of unit standards in order to gain a particular qualification.

iii. Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

This is the evidence from past experiences that are equivalent to a qualification or unit standard.

The development of qualifications and unit standards is not the same as curriculum development and programme delivery. In fact, a feature of the NQF is that qualifications and unit standards are developed independently of curriculum and programmes. Once a qualification has been designed and registered on the NQF, any provider of education and training can use it to develop curriculum and programmes.

All learning programmes must meet certain quality assurance criteria as set down by SAQA. The competency could also be earned through a RPL process.
Each qualification has exit level outcomes, which are determined from set unit standards and must specify certain things, such as:

- Learning outcomes that are:
  - **Fundamental** (relating to basic numeracy, literacy, communication skills and life skills);
  - **Core** (referring to the main knowledge and skills required for a particular area of work or study); and
  - **Elective** (electives are modules that deal with specialist topics in which some learners may be interested);
- Critical cross-field outcomes (generic skills that learners and learners need, such as problem solving skills);
- A description of learning that has to be in place (what learners or workers have to know before entering a programme); and
- The assessment criteria that will be used to conduct assessment and award credits.

**b. Credit accumulation**

Credit accumulation means the totalling of general credits required to complete a qualification or a part of a qualification that is usually limited to specific programmes, often within a particular institution.

**c. Accreditation of providers**

Training service providers of education and training must apply for accreditation with an Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) body under the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). All providers of education and training offering full qualifications must be registered with the Department of Education. The education and training provider has to offer unit standards and/or qualifications that fall within the primary focus area of the ETQA body of the relevant Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) or professional body.

**d. Registration of assessors and moderators**

All registered bodies must make use of accredited assessors and moderators who are registered with the necessary ETQA to ensure quality services. This must be done in line with organisational and regulated policies and legislation.

Assessment has been previously discussed and is the process of gathering and weighing evidence in order to determine whether or not learners can demonstrate outcomes specified in unit standards and/or qualifications registered on the NQF. Assessors are individuals who are suitably qualified to plan and conduct learner assessments against NQF requirements.

Moderation is the process that checks that assessments are done according to acceptable standards and is the process of ensuring that assessments have been conducted in line with agreed practices so that results are fair, valid and reliable.
SAQA’s criteria for the registration of assessors is as follows:

i. All registered assessors must have met the requirements of the assessor unit standard “Conduct outcomes-based assessments”, and should be certified by the Education and Training Development Quality Assurance Body (ETQA).

ii. This requirement will be enforced from the end of May 2004, by which time all assessors should be able to demonstrate competence against the new standard, either through participating in a training and assessment programme or through undergoing a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process. Once the system is fully operational, the status of certified assessors can be checked on the National Learner Records Database (NLRD).

iii. All accredited assessors are registered to assess using specific unit standards and/or qualifications and must be able to demonstrate competence in relation to these specific unit standards and qualifications at, or above, the level of the one in question.

iv. All registered assessors must have met any additional requirements laid down by their constituent ETQA. The status of the registered assessor can be checked on the appropriate ETQA database or website.

e. Recognition of achievements through the award of credits

A learner who has met all the requirements of a unit standard or qualification should be awarded credits to be deemed competent by:

♦ Assessing what the learner knows and can do; and
♦ Crediting what the learner knows and can do.

Feedback to the learner must be confidential and per outcome or criteria in a constructive manner. The learner must take note that in order to validate the verification process, it will be necessary for some of the role players to be present during the feedback session. Permission is required for at least the moderator and ETQA verifier to be present during feedback.
Learning Activity

In groups, complete the following activities:

a) Define and explain the term National Qualification Framework with examples.

b) Outline the history, rationale, objectives, principles and aims of the NQF.

c) Describe the concept of levels of the NQF in relation to the increasing complexity of learning and levels of progression.

d) Identify and describe all the mechanisms of the NQF clearly outlining their purposes.

3 STRUCTURES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NQF (SO2; AC 3)

This portion explains the structures responsible for the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework.

3.1 THE SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY (SAQA)

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) came into being through the SAQA Act and is the body responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the NQF. SAQA is appointed by both the Minister of Education and of Labour.

It has a two-fold function, namely, to oversee the development and implementation of the NQF, by:

a. Formulating and publishing policies and criteria for the registration of bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications and for the accreditation of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of such standards and qualifications; and

b. Ensuring the registration, accreditation and assignment of functions to the bodies referred to above, as well as the registration of national standards and qualifications on the framework. It must also take steps to ensure that provisions for accreditation are complied with and where appropriate, that registered standards and qualifications are internationally comparable.
South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)

SAQA is a statutory body appointed by the Minister of Education in consultation with the Minister of Labour and reports to parliament. It is responsible for overseeing the development and the implementation of the NQF with a national education and training stakeholder membership that is also comprised of registered unit standard and qualifications.

The NQF tenets for standards setting and quality assurance

a. It is the belief of the NQF that knowledge, relevant for the current world, is created through partnerships between and amongst varied groupings in society.

b. The national system of education must balance the need for quality education for all its citizens with the need for flexibility to cater for the wide-ranging circumstances that face learners and the wide-ranging options in what constitutes relevant education and qualifications (i.e. a balance between society’s needs and the needs of the individual).

The structures of SAQA

The SAQA structure was designed to promote the creation of knowledge, which endorses the NQF’s commitment to provide outcomes-based education and training. The NQF ensures that unit standards and qualifications are delivered through a participatory process and that qualifying learners have no doubts as to what is expected of them.

SAQA has created Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQAs) to ensure that the delivery quality unit standards and qualifications by registered and accredited training service provider. SAQA’s ensures that learners who are awarded a registered and accredited NQF-qualification or unit standard are able to demonstrate its outcomes in accordance with the set criteria and requirements. Hence the ETQAs evaluate the provider and its learning programmes. This assures learners, and other users of the system, that any learner who has been deemed competent after participating in that learning programme has displayed the required learning outcomes.

SAQA has two “arms”, namely:

- Standards Setting; and
- Quality Assurance.

The sub-structures in the standards setting arm are the National Standards Bodies (NSBs) and the Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs), while the substructures in the quality assurance arm are the Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQAs) bodies.
Standard setting and quality assurance has been previously mentioned, but it is graphically displayed below and briefly explained. The text boxes on the left are the standard setting and the boxes on the right are quality assurance arms. There are however inter-relationships between the different bodies.

### SAQA - the statutory constituted body

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arm 1: Standard setting</th>
<th>Arm 2: Quality Assurance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Standards Bodies (NSBs)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Responsible for recommending standards and qualifications to SAQA.&lt;br&gt;  - 12 organising fields of learning&lt;br&gt;  - Equitable representation through 6 stakeholder categories&lt;br&gt;  - Accountable to constituencies and authorities to develop unit standards and qualifications&lt;br&gt;  - Ensure unit standards consist of clear statements of learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria together with requisite moderation and accreditation criteria&lt;br&gt;  - Ensure quality (relevance, credibility and legitimacy) of unit standards&lt;br&gt;  - Ensure review of registered standards and development of standard setting processes</td>
<td><strong>Education and Training Quality Assurers (ETQAs)</strong>&lt;br&gt;  - Accountable to SAQA for ensuring standards of learning achievements and provision in its primary focus&lt;br&gt;  - Assure quality of learning achievements for specific standards and qualifications through:&lt;br&gt;    - Registration of assessors&lt;br&gt;    - Accreditation of providers&lt;br&gt;    - Quality Management Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Responsible for generating standards and qualifications to NSB&lt;br&gt;  - Representative of key education and training stakeholders in sub-field&lt;br&gt;  - Update and review standards&lt;br&gt;  - Recommend criteria for registration of assessors and moderators&lt;br&gt;  - Perform other functions delegated by its NSB</td>
<td><strong>Providers</strong>&lt;br&gt;Responsible for provision of learning according to requirements of registered standards and qualifications accredited by the ETQA to provide learning programmes and services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderating bodies</strong>&lt;br&gt;Appointed by SAQA if necessary to ensure that assessment of learning outcomes are fair, valid and reliable across the NQF and makes recommendation to SAQA.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 THE ROLE OF QUALITY ASSURERS

According to Jewison (2008) there are three Qualification and Quality Assurance Councils (QCs) that will ultimately be responsible for all aspects of quality assurance - from qualification design, to institutional and programme accreditation, quality assurance of programmes, and learner achievements, namely:

- The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC),
- The Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi), and
- The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO).

The HEQC and Umalusi have been operational since the early stages of the introduction of the NQF. It is however, envisaged that there may be minor changes since they have evolved.

It is envisaged that some of the implementation functions may be delegated to SETAs by the three QCs, but responsibility will be at QC level. In order to implement this change in the NQF, the Skills Development Act (as well as other laws) will have to be amended.

It is clear that what is starting to emerge is a revised NQF that has a number of features that are different to those intended and planned. These include:

- Standards setting and quality-assurance arrangements in the formal education system will be different to those for workplace-based or occupationally directed training.
- There will be three qualifications sub-frameworks (one each for general and further education, higher education, and trades and occupations), with three different sets of rules for their development, implementation and management.
- There will be a move away from integration to working towards linkages between the different sub-systems in order to find ways of improving access, portability, and the currency or value of the different qualifications.

3.3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS IN THE NQF (SO2; AC 4)

The NQF is the set of principles and guidelines by which records of learner achievement are registered to enable national recognition of acquired skills and knowledge, thereby ensuring an integrated system that encourages life-long learning. Individuals and organisations are responsible for the implementation the NQF.

Learners should ensure that they are receiving quality education that will be useful in the development of our nation and the world at large. Organisations are responsible for providing mechanisms that supports outcomes-based education and learning in order to promote lifelong learning. Below is how the implementation of the NQF impacts different stakeholders.
Benefits for Learners

The NQF has a number of benefits for the learner, namely:

- It enables learners to enter learning at the appropriate level;
- As the qualifications are standards based, it allows learners to access and exit learning at various levels of those qualifications;
- It allows learners learning opportunities at various places such as a place of work or at a formal institution;
- The NQF provides recognition of prior learning (RPL) opportunities for learners as their prior learning, whether achieved formally or informally, may be assessed and recognised against a national unit standard or qualification;
- It allows learners to transfer qualification or credits earned from one place of learning to another; and
- Learners benefit from quality education and the provision of accredited qualifications enjoying national recognition and, where appropriate, international comparability.

Benefits for Organisations

There are several benefits, including:

- Workplace training, which is more, focused on organisation-specific requirements, and standards and qualifications capture competencies required in the workplace;
- Integrating formal instructional learning and workplace experience whereby learning provision prepares learners for the world of work;
- Unit standards outline workplace skills and are recognised across the sector;
- Workers benefit from the establishment of clear learning pathways in the qualification structure that facilitate and support life-long learning and consequent career pathing or advancement; and
- Employers benefit from a competent workforce having skills and attitudes required in the competitive global economy of which South Africa is a part.

Society and the nation

Society benefits from being part of a proud, learning nation that has the intellectual capacity to adapt swiftly to change and, especially, to technological change. The nation benefits from an integrated education and training system which acknowledges the achievements of all learners equally and supports the ideal of a learning nation.
Learning activity

Discuss the following in groups:

a) Identify and describe structures responsible for implementation of the NQF in terms of their composition, role, function and relationships in line with the current regulatory framework.

b) Describe the roles and responsibilities of individuals and organisations in implementing the NQF in relation to the impact on personal, social and economic development and transformation.

4 CHALLENGES WITH IMPLEMENTING OBET IN THE NQF (SO 2; AC 6)

Some challenges associated with the implementation of outcomes-based education and training (OBET) in the NQF include the ones mentioned below.

a) The main problem with implementation of outcome based education is the broad definition of outcome based education itself. While it emphasises the achievement of outcomes, this also refers to the achievement of learning outcomes (LO) for a particular course. The normal operation for an academic programme is to further map the courses LO to the programme outcomes in order to observe the accumulative sum of LO contributing to the achievement of programme outcomes.

b) The concept of OBET does not provide for any specific procedure or follow a single idea in achieving the outcomes which led to confusion to how best implement an OBET curricula.

c) The original concept of OBET should include the cyclic continual improvement with meaningful revision of teaching and learning pedagogies, delivery and assessment methods. There is, however, confusion extended during the construction of learning outcomes for a particular course.

d) According to the Northern Province Department of Education policy document (2000), overcrowding in classrooms and shortage of resources are some of the problems that can be encountered during assessment. The educators complained about effectiveness of assessment in larger classes, lack of facilities and multicultural classrooms.

e) The language innovation associated with OBET is too complex, confusing and at times contradictory (Jansen and Christie, 1999). If organisations do not understand the language used in OBET, it will be difficult for them to effectively implement OBET.
Content and academic critique of OBET and the NQF offered by Jewison (2008)

♦ An academic critique is that there is a generally accepted view that the entire system is complex, bureaucratic, difficult to access, wasteful of resources, often managed by people who do not have the required skills, and whose accountability mechanisms are generally not working.

♦ OBET and the NQF separate the outcomes (qualifications and unit standards) from the inputs (curriculum, programmes, teaching and learning, and institutional capacity). Training providers, funders and learners are expected to create an economic market, such as mobilising resources to achieve the NQF outcomes. South Africa is a developing country, so the capacity of providers are limited, the inputs are low, and thus the results tend to be poor. Thus the quality of education and training is likely to be low regardless of how good the set standards are, or how effective the quality assurance mechanisms are. It is suggested that the government should focus on institutional capacity rather than on outcomes as outcomes will improve if there is quality inputs (particularly teaching).

♦ A traditional public-administration approach depends on state institutions like schools and colleges to produce quality education and training in line with policies determined by government. It is thus suggested to increase choices through more training contracts being awarded by government (e.g. the Department of Labour) and parastatals (e.g. SETAs). This increased choice is believed to generate greater competition, consumer markets, and accountability that will deliver quality education programmes.

♦ Some educationists believe that the current NQF emphasises unit standards with narrow and occupationally-directed outcomes and that training standards are being sacrificed to meet narrow economic goals. They argue that it is wrong for the education system and skills-related training. Furthermore, the narrow focus on skills relating to a specific work context is believed to disadvantage workers because they will not have the broader educational foundations required to meet the changing needs of the labour market.

Learning Activity (Individual-theory based)

Identify and describe challenges associated with the implementation of outcomes-based education and training in the National Qualifications Framework.

In this section you described the form and function of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).
### Section 3: Standards within the Context of the National Qualification Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On completion of this section you will be able to describe and explain standards within the context of the National Qualification Framework.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This specific outcome shall cover the following assessment criteria:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The features of standards are identified and explained in terms of their purpose, and relationship to one another. (SO 3, AC 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The use of the standard is explained in terms of how it informs the content of the learning process. (SO 3, AC 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Standards are described in terms of their various uses and relationship to qualifications. (SO 3, AC 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Knowledge of the processes and principles concerning the design and registration of standards are provided in line with SAQA regulations. (SO 3, AC 4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5 Introduction

Qualifications, together with standards, are seen as the central pillar of an outcomes-based system and serve the following main purposes:

- Define the expectations of learners/practitioners as identified by stakeholders, including but not limited to employers, learning providers, trade unions, learners and civil society;
- List the assessment requirements; and
- Describe achievements of holders of the qualifications.

In this section, we will describe and explain standards within the context of the National Qualifications Framework.
5.1 THE FEATURES AND USES OF STANDARDS (SO3, AC 1, AC 2, AC 3)

**Standard:** is written definition, limit, or rule, approved and monitored for compliance by an authoritative agency or professional or recognized body as a minimum acceptable benchmark.

Standards include:

- Those found in national curriculum statements;
- Unit standards;
- Exit level outcomes; and
- Qualifications.

5.1.1 Unit standards

A unit standard is a document that describes:

- A coherent and meaningful outcome of learning (title) that we want recognised nationally;
- The smaller more manageable outcomes that make up the main outcome (specific outcomes);
- The standards of performance required as proof of competence (assessment criteria); and
- The scope and contexts within which competence is to be judged.

Unit standards specify the outcomes that a learner will need to achieve by indicating:

- What a learner must be able to do;
- How well they must do it; and
- Within what parameters (scope or context) it must be done.

The SAQA Act, No. 58 of 1995 defines unit standards as “registered statements of desired education and training outcomes and their associated assessment criteria”.

Unit standards are currently developed by Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs) whose work is overseen by Standards Advisory Panels who in turn recommend the registration of unit standards to SAQA. SAQA is responsible for the registration of unit standards on the NQF. A unit standard is the most basic component against which recognition can be gained on the NQF. Qualifications may consist of a number of unit standards equalling a total of a minimum of 120 credits.

**Credit:** Each unit standard has credits assigned to it. Credits refer to the weight assigned to a unit standard – it indicates the time an average learner would take to achieve the unit standard. 1 credit = 10 notional hours of learning.
**Notional Hour:** A notional hour is the amount of hours an average learner would require to master a unit standard.

The purpose of a unit standard is to provide guidance to the:

- Assessor as to the evidence that must be gathered during assessment;
- Learner as to the learning outcomes that must be achieved; and
- Provider and/or materials designer as to the learning materials or learning experiences to be prepared to assist learners in reaching competence.

### 5.1.2 Components of a unit standard

A unit standard will always start with a table that will contain the following information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAQA Logo</td>
<td>Used to indicate that the unit standard has been approved by SAQA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit Standard Title</td>
<td>The outcome of learning or training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit Standard ID Number</td>
<td>Allocated by SAQA, used as a reference number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NQF Level</td>
<td>The level at which a unit standard is pitched based on the eight levels of the NQF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credits</td>
<td>Credits refer to the weight assigned to a unit standard; it indicates the time an average learner will take to achieve the unit standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGB Name</td>
<td>Name of the SGB involved in compiling the unit standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field and Subfield</td>
<td>Indication of where in the 12 fields of learning identified, this unit standard falls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration Start Date</td>
<td>Date on which the unit standard is registered by SAQA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration End Date</td>
<td>Date on which the unit standard registration expires.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAQA Decision No.</td>
<td>Decision number used by SAQA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the table, the following information will appear:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose of the Unit Standard</strong></td>
<td>States what a learner will be capable of upon completion of the specific unit standard (should be read in conjunction with the unit standard title). It provides an indication as to whom the standard is aimed at.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Assumed to be in Place and RPL</strong></td>
<td>Indicates knowledge and skills that is a prerequisite of this unit standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range Statements</strong></td>
<td>Defines the context and scope of the unit standard as a whole and / or the specific outcomes and assessment criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Component</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Outcomes</td>
<td>Indication of what the learner will need to achieve within the context of the job or task the unit standard is written for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Criteria</td>
<td>Used to assess learners. Provides guidelines on what is expected from a Specific Outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accreditation and Moderation options</td>
<td>These options include the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Accreditation: Specifies requirements that the provider should meet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Assessment: Specifies requirements that the Assessor should meet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Moderation: Specifies moderation requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential Embedded Knowledge</td>
<td>Summarises the underlying knowledge learners require to master the unit standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Cross-field Outcomes</td>
<td>Consist of qualities the NQF identified for development in learners, these outcomes apply across all learning fields.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unit standards are the building blocks for qualifications and may be combined into different pathways and qualifications to meet the needs of different learners. Unit standards are a collection of knowledge, skills and attributes in which a learner must prove competence in a structured assessment to gain credit on the NQF. Unit standards describe the result of learning as well as what should be assessed but do not dictate the process of learning, i.e. they do not describe how learning should be enabled (e.g. a particular training medium) or how the outcomes should be assessed (e.g. interview, case study).

**Specific Outcomes**

Specific outcomes are statements regarding elements of competence. They indicate what the learner will need to achieve within the context of the job or task the unit standard is written for. These outcomes will not only refer to subject content, but will also include actions, roles, knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes that a learner has to perform to demonstrate competence (SAQA, 2001). The criteria provided indicating how these outcomes will be assessed are the assessment criteria for those outcomes.

**Assessment Criteria**

Assessment criteria are statements whereby an assessor can judge whether the evidence provided by a learner is sufficient to demonstrate competent performance for each related outcome.

Learners have access to the assessment criteria and are thus prepared for assessment - they know what is expected of them to achieve outcomes and competence.
Critical Cross-field Outcomes (CCFOs)

All unit standards contain critical cross-field outcomes (CCFOs). CCFOs consist of qualities the NQF has identified for development in learners, they are essential life skills and act as the foundation upon which other skills are built. CCFOs are generic and apply to learners across all fields of learning.

There are eight critical cross-field outcomes:

i. Identify and solve problems using critical and creative thinking.
ii. Work effectively in a team.
iii. Organise and manage oneself and one’s activities.
iv. Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information.
v. Communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in oral or written form.
vi. Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others.
vii. Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

CCFOs contribute to the full personal development of an individual through awareness of:

- How to learn more effectively;
- How to be a more responsible citizen;
- How to be culturally and aesthetically aware;
- How to explore education and career opportunities; and
- How to develop entrepreneurial opportunities.

Most unit standards do not use all 8 critical cross-field outcomes because:

- Only the CCFOs that relate to the purpose, specific outcomes and essential embedded knowledge of the unit standard are incorporated in the unit standard; and
- CCFOs are adapted in each unit standard to relate to that specific unit standard (i.e. learners are required to produce evidence that they can identify and solve problems in the context of the unit standard).

Assessors need to ensure that their learners have addressed the CCFOs appropriately at the level of the unit standard.

Finding Unit Standards

All unit standards are published on SAQA’s website at www.saqa.org.za.

If you would like to find a unit standard on a specific topic, you can visit this website.
From the options provided, you can select to search for:

a) Qualifications and Unit Standards; or
b) Registered Qualifications and Unit Standards; or
c) Unit Standard.

You can then enter the topic for which you would like to find a unit standard under Unit Standard Title.

If you do a search using a specific word, only unit standards with that word in their title will appear, so you may have to play around with synonyms or similar concepts. If you know the NQF level on which the unit standard should be, you can enter the NQF level to limit your search. Should you have the unit standard ID number, you will be able to find the unit standard by entering this number under unit standard ID.

The SAQA website lists both expired and current unit standards as well as qualifications.

### 5.2 Processes and Principles of Design and Registration of Standards (SO4, AC 4)

Unit standards are the foundation of the NQF and the standards generation process and the role of various stakeholders should be understood in terms of their roles within this process. Unit standards are developed by functional analysis. The key functions in an occupational area are broken down to produce units of competence which, in turn, are analysed to generate elements of competence. Elements, together with performance criteria and range indicators, define the outcomes expected of a competent performer in the role.

When designing unit standards, it is advised to follow the process described by SAQA.

In brief, the process is as follows:

a) Systems analysis (scoping the sector).
b) Outcomes analysis (scoping the outcomes for unit standards generation).
c) Narrow consultation (of the initial scoping exercises).
d) Standards generation (writing the actual unit standards).
e) Wide consultation (unit standards put out for public comment).
f) Revision (unit standards reworked to incorporate feedback)
g) Submission to the relevant SGB to submit to SAQA via the NSB (for registration by SAQA). The submission should consist of:
   ♦ A report describing the processes followed in generating the qualifications and a systems analysis indicating the conceptualisation, development and design of the qualifications; and
   ♦ The actual unit standards, in SAQA-approved format as per the template referred to above.
h) Follow up the registration status of the unit standards until they are registered.
Learning activity

In groups, respond to the following:

a) Identify and explain the features of unit standards in terms of their purpose, and relationship to one another.
b) Explain the use of the unit standard in terms of how it informs the content of the learning process.
c) Describe unit standards in terms of their various uses and relationship to qualifications.
d) Describe the processes and principles concerning the design and registration of unit standards in line with SAQA regulations.

Practical activity

Complete this activity in groups of 4 or 5.

Access the unit standard “Develop outcomes-based learning programmes” (ID: 123394) on SAQA’s website and analyse it according to the sections discussed above.

In this section you described and explain standards within the context of the National Qualifications Framework.
SECTION 4: QUALIFICATIONS PURPOSE AND USE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On completion of this section you will be able to explain the purpose and use of qualifications.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria (AC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This specific outcome shall cover the following assessment criteria:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ The features of qualifications are explained in terms of their purpose, and relationship to one another. (SO 4, AC 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ The use of the qualification is explained in terms of how it informs the content of the learning process. (SO 4, AC 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Qualifications are described in terms of to their various modes of delivery and their benefits to specific contexts. (SO 4, AC 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ The requirements, rules, processes and principles relating to the design and registration of qualifications are explained in line with current regulatory framework. (SO 4, AC 4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 INTRODUCTION

A qualification is a document that defines a planned combination of outcomes of learning that has a defined purpose or purposes and that recognises competence and/or ability. This includes qualifications based on unit standards and qualifications not based on unit standards. Generally a qualification is a planned combination of learning outcomes with a defined purpose(s) that is intended to provide qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning. In this section we will explain the purpose of qualifications.

6.1 FEATURES, USES, DESIGN AND REGISTRATION OF QUALIFICATIONS (AC 1 - AC 4)

A qualification is a learning outcome, made up of a cluster of unit standards, including fundamental, core and elective learning. This is to ensure that learners are not only competent in a particular field, but that they are developed holistically with competence in inter alia, communication and numeracy, etc. This is subject to the definition and rules of combination as defined in Section 8(1) of the National Skills Body Regulations. A qualification is characterised by learning outcomes critical cross-field and specific outcomes which provide the learner with opportunities for further (lifelong) learning.
Qualifications can be either unit standard or outcomes based and are registered with SAQA.

a) Unit Standard Based Qualifications: Qualifications made up of unit standards equalling a minimum of 120 credits. Each qualification specifies the amount of credits needed for that specific qualification. Qualifications as with unit standards are registered by SAQA on the NQF and SAQA accredits a specific SETA to act as quality assurer for a qualification.

b) An outcomes based qualification does not consist of unit standards. Such qualifications list exit level outcomes that a learner has to achieve together with associated assessment criteria. These are sometimes registered on the NQF as a way of “bridging” qualifications from this format to unit standard based qualifications. It is foreseen however that some professional qualifications will remain purely outcomes based.

Qualifications can be delivered in various ways, but in order to be recognised it must be provided by an accredited training service provider that has registered with the relevant Education Training Quality Assurer as specified by SAQA. A specialised qualification that is built with a great emphasis on practical, or workplace learning is a learnership.

A learnership is a structured learning process for gaining theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the workplace leading to a qualification registered on the NQF. Learners have to attend classes at a college or training centre to complete classroom-based learning, and they have to complete on-the-job training.

The workplace experience must be relevant to the qualification.

Section 1 explained courses and skills programmes. A learning programme consists of learning and assessment activities derived from the outcomes that make up the qualification. This is what the provider designs, based on sound educational principles (for example, learner centeredness). The learning programme is really the what, the when and the how of implementation. It is about what happens in the classroom: the teaching/ learning and assessment activities associated with achieving outcomes. It is clearly the task of providers to structure exciting, challenging and innovative learning and assessment experiences for learners, while it is the job of the ETQA to consider whether providers have offered learners a fair opportunity to acquire the outcomes by monitoring the learning programme and quality assuring the learning achievement. When designing a qualification you must address:

i. Who is the qualification aimed at?
ii. What is the purpose of the qualification?
iii. What is the level of the qualification? Have a look at the level descriptors for this level.
iv. What is the access requirement for the qualification?
v. How could “integrated assessment” be done within the context of this qualification?
vi. Look at the spread of credits across the fundamental, core and elective categories. Decide on one implication this would have for you.
vii. Look at moderation options and its implications for your institution.
viii. Use the list of outcomes and assessment criteria to identify what kind of physical resources (i.e. equipment, materials, stationery etc.) this qualification would require you to have.
SAQA guidelines outline the following areas as being important with regard to a qualification.

The combination of learning outcomes should be consistent with and fulfil the purpose of each qualification. In addition, the designed qualifications should support the strategic objectives of the sector and the need for formal recognition of individuals.

Strategic objectives are broadly defined objectives that a sector must achieve to make its strategy succeed.

Qualifications should lead to the attainment of formal recognition for individuals. There should be a purpose for learning: attainment of formal recognition. For example, in order to practise as a medical doctor, one should obtain a medical qualification. After the completion of the qualification and achievement all learning outcomes, one will be deemed competent to practise as a medical doctor.

Not all people are born or want to be accountants. It is therefore important to put this into consideration when developing qualifications. A qualification should allow sufficient flexibility and choice to meet a variety of needs of individuals.
In addition, a qualification should be made up of cores, fundamentals and electives. All cores are compulsories should be covered when developing a qualification. When selecting electives, it is important to choose those that are directly linked to the qualification/cores to ensure sequential flow of information and attainment of a qualification that will be useful to the learner.

A qualification should:

- Represent a planned combination of learning outcomes which has a defined purpose or purposes, and which is intended to provide qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning; and
- Have both specific and critical cross-field outcomes which promote life-long learning

Applied competence means the ability to put into practice in the relevant context the learning outcomes acquired in obtaining a qualification.

In addition, in terms of the regulations, the learning outcomes for a qualification have to be described in terms of three categories:

a) **Fundamental learning** - learning that forms the grounding or basis needed to undertake the education, training or further learning required in the obtaining of a qualification.

b) **Core learning** - compulsory learning required in situations contextually relevant to the particular qualification.

c) **Elective learning** - a selection of additional credits at the stipulated NQF level from which a choice may be made to ensure the purpose of the qualification is achieved.

When designing the qualification ensure that it provides clear descriptions of options and requirements for award. In particular, the compulsory, elective and specialisation areas should be defined using clearly stated rules of combination. In addition, qualifications should be developed in accordance with sectoral and/or national process criteria, with particular regard for adequate consultation. Qualifications should conform to the regulations and policy of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and meet the needs of individual learners in specific contexts. Not only do the qualifications have to reflect the applied competence for a specific purpose, they also have to be constructed in such a way that they support:

- **Portability** (transfer of credits and qualifications across contexts);
- **Articulation** (movement between components of the delivery system) into other fields of learning;
- **Progression** (movement through levels) within a coherent framework; and
- **Coherence** (consistent framework).
This can only be achieved by consulting various stakeholders during the development of qualifications. Stakeholder requirements should be met during qualifications development. Examples of stakeholders may include learners, assessors, facilitators moderators, providers, SAQA, ETQA bodies etc. Moderation and accreditation is one way of ensuring that qualifications address stakeholder requirements.

Before implementing the qualification, a moderator should check if it meets SAQA or NQF guidelines. All unit standards, specific outcomes, range statements, CCFOs and essential embedded knowledge should be covered in the qualification. In addition, the qualification should meet assessment requirements. A moderator or an evaluator can provide a report to validate if the qualification addresses stakeholder requirements.

**Learning activity**

Discuss the following in groups:

a) Explain the features of qualifications in terms of their purpose, and relationship to one another.

b) Explain the use of a qualification in terms of how it informs the content of the learning process.

c) Describe qualifications in terms of to their various modes of delivery and their benefits using examples.

d) Explain the requirements, rules, processes and principles relating to the design and registration of qualifications in line with current regulatory framework.

In this section you explained the purpose and use of qualifications.
REFERENCES


Christoph Vorwerk (2002), Contextual Qualifications Model: A new approach to designing NQF qualifications

Developing Learning Programmes for NQF-registered qualifications and unit standards

Developing Learning Programmes for NQF-registered qualifications and unit standards


Young M (1st 2013), Implementing National Qualifications Frameworks across 5 Continents (H/C), Author: Publisher: Taylor and Francis, EAN Number: 9780415833301

Young M, (1st 2006), Knowledge Curriculum and Qualifications for SA Further Education, Publisher: Blue Weaver Marketing, EAN Number: 9780796921543
Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.

Marian Wright Edelman