

AN OPEN LETTER TO LEARNERS

FROM UMALUSI

What should learners know before enrolling for a study programme or qualification?

Before you register for any qualification or programme

Ensure that:

- You fully understand the accreditation status of the institution offering the qualification and that
- You fully understand the status of the qualification or programme.

Use the following information when considering **Where** to enrol and **What** to enrol for.

Umalusi (the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training) is an official body that accredits private providers to offer particular qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework at levels 1-4.

Umalusi accredits:

- Private FET colleges
- Independent schools
- Private adult education and training providers

NB: Public providers such as public schools, public adult learning centres and public FET colleges are not required to seek accreditation

Registration and Accreditation of Private Providers

To ensure that you enrol with a credible provider

- Make sure that the institution is registered by the appropriate Department of Education and
- Secondly, it is accredited by Umalusi or another Quality Council or body such as a Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA)

These are two separate, but related processes

Firstly

All private providers of education and training **MUST** be registered with the state in order to operate legally in South Africa. This means that independent schools must register with the appropriate Provincial Department of Education and private FET colleges must register with the Department of Higher Education and Training in Pretoria.

Note: An exception has been made for private providers that offer short courses and skills programmes exclusively- these do not have to register.

Private providers are required to display their registration certificate publicly and you, as a prospective client, MUST ask to see the certificate of registration. The certificate of registration will include the national qualifications which the provider is registered to offer.

Secondly

Private providers must be accredited either with Umalusi or another quality assurance body to offer a specific qualification. Quality assurance bodies issue letters or certificates accrediting a provider. You should check whether a provider is accredited to offer the national qualification you wish to enrol for and ask for the accreditation number.

A list of private institutions accredited by Umalusi can be found on our website at www.umalusi.org.za

If you want to check on a provider accredited by a SETA (Sector Education and Training Authority) go to the website of the South African Qualifications Authority at www.saqa.org.za and click on the links with the various SETAs where you can access lists of accredited providers.

Qualifications offered by Private Providers

Private providers may provide a range of qualifications. These may include formal credit-bearing NOF registered qualifications (which they must be accredited to offer), and non-formal provider programmes. Also, some institutions offer foreign programmes, which are quality assured by foreign bodies.

Note: Offering provider programmes is not at this time illegal, except if the institution wrongfully claims that provider programmes are formal qualification registered on the National Qualifications Framework.

Students must therefore, before they enrol for a qualification, ascertain whether the qualification they are registering for, is a formal national qualification, or a non-formal provider programme.

Umalusi certifies a number of formal qualifications offered by both public and private providers; and consequently accredits such providers to offer these qualifications. These are:

- The National Senior Certificate(NSC)
- The National Certificate Vocational (NCV)
- The National Technical Certificate (N3) Engineering as well as
- The NSC (Vocational)
- The General Education and Training Certificate: Adult (GETC)

Qualifications and Programmes

Private providers generally offer three main types of qualifications, namely

- National Qualifications
- Provider Programmes and
- Agent Qualifications

National Qualifications

National Qualifications are formal qualifications registered on the national qualifications framework (NOF), which is a centralized register of all the nationally recognized qualifications in South Africa.

National qualifications are quality assured by a sector education and training authority (SETA or Umalusi; they carry national credits and are certificated by the SETA or Umalusi), not by a provider. Examples of such qualifications are:

- The National Senior Certificate as offered by most high schools in South Africa
- The GETC: adult as offered by many adult education and training providers
- The National Certificate Vocational (NCV) offered by public FET colleges and some private colleges
- Further Education and Training Certificates of various kinds also offered by FET colleges, such as Perishable Produce Exportation or Mechanical Engineering: Pipe-Fitting or Small Business Management and so forth

There are many such qualifications registered on the NQF

NB: to check whether a qualification is registered on the NQF go to the website of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) at www.saqa.org.za

Please keep the following in mind before you enrol for a National Qualification:

- If you wish to enrol for a nationally recognised qualification ask the provider for written proof that the qualification is registered on the NQF – the NQF ID number should be in evidence or check whether it is registered by going to www.saqa.org.za.
- Ask for evidence that the provider is registered with the Department of Education to offer specific national qualifications – a certificate should be publicly displayed.
- Ask for evidence that the provider has approval or accreditation from the relevant SETA or Umalusi or the Council for Higher Education (CHE) to offer the qualification.
- If you are enrolling for an N Certificate / NCV or National Senior Certificate, keep in mind that you will write national examinations set by the Department of Education. Providers are not allowed to set their own examinations or issue certificates for these qualifications. These qualifications are certified by Umalusi.

Provider Programmes

- If you are enrolling on a Provider Programme remember that they serve a different purpose to National Qualifications. Provider Programmes are usually designed to address specific education, training and development needs that may not necessarily be addressed by National Qualifications, for example courses for self-enrichment, continuous professional development, self-employment, or orientation to a specific career.
- Provider Programmes are quality assured and certified by the provider, i.e. the college, itself.; they are not registered on the NQF; do not carry any national credits; and do not lead to a National Qualification.

Agent Qualifications

- Some providers offer qualifications and programmes on behalf of professional or foreign awarding bodies. Some of these qualifications are national qualifications registered on the NQF while others are not, and some are foreign qualifications. The provider acts as an agent of the professional or awarding body. Examples include qualifications and programmes examined and certified by Pitmans, CompTia, Cambridge, Microsoft, IMM, ICSA (professional body), City and Guilds, Edexcel and so forth etc.

Please remember: it is not illegal to offer agent qualification, providing the provider is licensed to offer them by a foreign awarding body or a professional body and the provider is registered with the Department of Education.

To summarise:

- Decide what kind of programme or qualification you wish to enrol for, i.e. national

qualification, provider programme or agency qualification, remembering to also establish what the certificate will mean once you have completed it - Will it be recognized nationally? Will it ensure a job? Will it be recognized internationally? Will it provide enrichment or professional development?

- Is the provider accredited either with Umalusi or a SETA to offer the national qualification you wish to register for? A list of providers accredited with Umalusi can be found at www.umalusi.org.za; SETA accredited providers can be found on the SETA websites and also accessed through the SAQA website at www.saq.org.za
- Is the provider registered with the Department of Education? For FET colleges check on the following website: www.education.gov.za ; for independent schools contact the appropriate provincial department of education.

IF YOU NEED ADVICE OF ANY KIND, CALL OR VISIT

NQF helpline at:

0860 111 672 (0860 111 NQF) available from 08:00 – 16:00

Walk in centre: SAQA House

1067 Arcadia Street, Hatfield (5th Floor)

Office hours: 08:00 – 16:30

E-mail: help@nqf.org.za

Website: www.nqf.org.za

ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS:

- CHE: Council for Higher Education – the ETQA that accredits and quality assures higher education providers and qualifications such as universities and other higher education providers
- FET: Further Education and Training – refers to a level on the NQF from NQF 2-4 (Grades 10-12)
- NQF: National Qualifications Framework – a list of nationally recognised qualifications at different levels of the system namely general education; further education and higher education Certificate: National Technical Certificates N1-N3 – qualification offered in FET colleges but being phased out
- NCV: National Certificate Vocational – new vocational qualification developed by the Department of Education to replace the National Technical Certificate
- SAQA: South African Qualifications Authority – the body established to oversee the establishment and maintenance of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)
- SETA: Sector Education and Training Authority – every industrial sector in South Africa has a SETA that ensures that training for the sector is funded and delivered in terms of the Skill Development Act. A SETA also has a quality assurance section that will accredit providers to offer national qualifications of skills programmes for the sector

To contact us

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