

The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework

Umalusi

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Table of contents

1. THE GENERAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK IN CONTEXT	5
A single qualifications framework for a diverse system	5
The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework and the National Qualifications Framework	11
Standard setting in General and Further Education and Training	13
Qualifications, volumes of learning and achievement of credits	17
Accumulation of credits towards qualifications	18
2. THE GENERAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK	20
Characteristics	20
Scope and application	20
Number of levels and level descriptors	21
Qualification types	22
Qualification descriptors	23
Naming of qualifications	23

Qualifications and subject or learning area statements, and verification	26
Admission to General and Further Education and Training qualifications	27
Admission to qualifications in Higher Education and on the Occupational Qualifications Framework	27
Progression within the framework	27
 3. IMPLEMENTATION	
Implementation date	29
Qualifications and curricula	29
Full compliance	29
General and Further Education Management Information System	31
APPENDIX 1	31
GENERAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING QUALIFICATION DESCRIPTORS	32
 4.	

1. THE GENERAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK IN CONTEXT

A single qualifications framework for a diverse system

1. In terms of the National Qualifications Framework Act, Act no 67 of 2009, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is an overarching framework of **ten levels encompassing three sub-frameworks**: a General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework, an Occupational Qualifications Framework, and a Higher Education Qualifications Framework.
2. In 2001 Umalusi, the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training, was mandated by parliament, in its founding Act, *The General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, 2001* (Act 58 of 2001) as the quality assurance body for Levels 1 – 4 of the National Qualifications Framework¹. Its responsibility is to quality assure programmes; exit point assessments and provision in schools, FET colleges and for adult basic education and training centres, as provided for under the-
 - South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996)
 - Further Education & Training Colleges Act, 2006 (Act 16 of 2006 amended 2010), and
 - Adult Basic Education & Training Act, 2000 (Act 52 of 2000 amended 2010).
3. The promulgation of the *NQF Act*, Act 67 of 2008, constitutes Umalusi as the Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training, as provided for in the amended GENFETQA Act of 2008. It serves as one of three Quality Councils, alongside the Council for Higher Education (CHE) and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), required to collaborate with the South African Qualifications Authority and the other Quality Councils (QCs), subject to the *National Education Policy Act (Act No 27 of 1996)*, the *NQF Act*, and its founding Act. In addition to the

¹ The South African education system is now divided into the Basic-, and Further- as well as Higher Education and Training. Umalusi's responsibilities lie currently with all twelve years of Basic Education (which subsumes General Education and a portion of Further Education) and Further Education. The legal redefinition of the various sectors within education must precede the final naming of this framework which is responsible for institutional learning across these sectors.

responsibilities outlined in its founding Act, and which are set out in subsequent paragraphs, the Council is responsible for the sub-framework of qualifications for general and further education and training. In terms of Paragraph 27 of the NQF Act, Umalusi as a QC must, in respect of its sub-framework:

- 3.1 Develop and manage its sub-framework of qualifications;
 - 3.2 Advise and make recommendations related to the sub-framework to the relevant Minister;
 - 3.3 Consider and agree to level descriptors, and ensure that they remain current and appropriate;
 - 3.4 Propose policy for the development, registration, and publication of qualifications for its sub-framework in accordance with requirements outlined in the NQF Act, as well as;
 - 3.5 Ensure the development of such qualifications—and part-qualifications—as are necessary for the sector, including indication of appropriate measures for the delivery and assessment of learning achievement, and recommend them to SAQA for registration;
 - 3.6 Propose policy for quality assurance within the sub-framework;
 - 3.7 Ensure the autonomy, integrity, and credibility of quality assurance for qualifications registered on its sub-framework;
 - 3.8 Maintain a database of learner achievement and related matters;
 - 3.9 Conduct or commission and publish research on issues relevant to the development and implementation of the sub-framework;
 - 3.10 Provide information regarding the sub-framework to the public; and
 - 3.11 Perform any other functions required by the NQF Act, or functions consistent with this Act which the relevant Minister may determine.
4. In terms of *The General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, Act 58 of 2001*, as amended in 2008, Umalusi is also required—in terms of its quality assurance of assessment responsibilities—to:
- 4.1 Ensure the necessary quality assurance work is undertaken by the QC itself or by a body to which such powers have been delegated, and that the outcomes of such work are reported;

- 4.2 Develop policy for assessment, including internal assessment where such contributes to the final marks, and standardization;
 - 4.3 Ensure and verify the implementation of such policy by the assessment bodies responsible;
 - 4.4 Report irregularities which may jeopardize the integrity of an assessment or its outcome to the relevant Director-General; and
 - 4.5 Issue certificates to learners who have achieved qualifications or part-qualifications.
5. Also in terms of its founding act, as amended in 2008, Umalusi is required to undertake the following quality assurance of provision responsibilities:
 - 5.1 Develop policy, which must be regulated by the Minister, for the accreditation of assessment bodies, other than departments of education, and accredit assessment bodies accordingly;
 - 5.2 Develop policy and criteria for the quality assurance of private education institutions, including independent schools, private colleges and private adult education and training centres;
 - 5.3 Ensure that any institution required to register as a private school, FET college, or AET centre complies with the quality assurance policy and criteria determined by Umalusi; and affirm or withdraw the accreditation status of the private institution concerned.
 6. Umalusi undertakes the statutory responsibilities in respect of quality assurance, accreditation, research and the development of its sub-framework and the qualifications registered on that framework in terms of the position explicated in this policy.
 7. This policy framework needs to be read in conjunction with the following legislation:
 - a) Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996
 - b) The National Education Policy Act, Act no 27 of 1996
 - c) The National Qualifications Act, Act no 67 of 2008
 - d) The General and Further Education and Training Act. Act no 58 of 2001 and as amended in 2008 and 2010
 - e) Skills Development Act, Act no 97 of 1998 and as amended in 2008
 - f) Adult Basic Education and Training Act, Act no 52 of 2000 and as amended in 2010

- g) Further Education and Training Colleges Act, act no 16 of 2006 and as amended in 2010
 - h) The South African Schools Act, Act no 84 of 1996 and as amended in 2010
 - i) Higher Education Act, 1997 and as amended in 2008 and 2010
 - j) The Higher Education Qualifications Framework, 2007.
8. The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework, a sub-framework of the National Qualifications Framework, coordinates with the two sub-frameworks developed and managed by the Quality Council for Higher Education and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations.
 9. The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework is a register of general educational qualifications. These qualifications may be academic, in nature, as is the case with the *National Senior Certificate* and the *National Senior Certificate for Adults*, or they may be general vocational in nature, as is the case with the *National Certificate (Vocational)* and the *National Independent Certificate*.
 10. All these qualifications are hallmarked by the fact that they are discipline-based and include foundational learning designed to support further learning. Foundational learning is intended to provide learning opportunities for proficiency in one or more languages as well as proficiency in some form of mathematics or mathematical literacy, and in some cases, this is extended to general vocationally oriented subjects e.g. technical drawing that is applied across contexts, for example, the National Technical Certificates (N-courses)
 11. The qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework cater for two distinct learner groups: children and adolescents, involved in the acquisition of a basic education, and adolescents and adults who may be involved in learning that ranges from adult basic education and training (ABET) to making a new attempt to achieve a school-leaving certificate. The groups overlap substantially and yet have distinct needs.
 12. Umalusi is responsible for quality assuring basic schooling, from Grades R – 12. Basic schooling thus combines General and Further Education. There is currently no qualification which marks the transition from General to Further Education, but provision is made on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework for such an eventuality. Further Education has, since 2007, included two distinct but complementary pathways for adolescent learners: a general academic pathway, represented by the

National Senior Certificate, and a general vocational pathway, represented by the *National Certificate (Vocational)*. Both pathways are specifically designed for adolescents in the 16 – 19 year age group, and provide differentiated quality learning for that age group both in schools and FET Colleges.

13. The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework also caters for the general academic and general vocational needs of adults, as well as for their basic literacy needs. The framework is designed to build a post-compulsory, post-schooling Further Education and Training environment that supports a wide range of adult needs which complements the occupational qualifications which are the responsibility of the QCTO.
14. The qualifications for adults on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework are not occupational in nature and are offered at institutions such as public and private adult learning centres as well as public and private FET colleges: the *National Senior Certificate for Adults* represents a general academic option for adults while the *National Independent Certificate* fulfills the need for a general vocational learning opportunity for adults wishing to learn, but who may not be in a workplace.
15. This policy provides the basis for integrating existing disciplinary-based qualifications offered at institutions—schools, FET colleges and adult education and training centres—both public and private—into the National Qualifications Framework, as well as a means for developing and integrating such new qualifications as may be required by emerging learning needs into the National Qualifications Framework. Furthermore this policy, read in conjunction with Umalusi Council policy entitled *Standard Setting and Quality Assurance for General Further Education and Training* (June 2008, revised November 2010), explicates its approach to standard setting and quality assurance. It improves the coherence within a more unified education system for General and Further Education and Training, and facilitates the articulation between qualifications, thus allowing for greater ease of access and the possibility of credit transfer for learners.
16. The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework assists in a common understanding of the achievements represented by qualifications on the sub-framework, and their relationship to one another, and has been designed to be readily understood and to ensure a consistent use of qualification titles. The framework establishes parameters and criteria for the design of qualifications. Through these parameters and criteria, it facilitates general comparability of qualifications across the

system. Actual comparability is established through more rigorous evaluative processes.

17. The purpose of this policy is to provide a coherent framework for the development and provision of general and further education qualifications. Such a framework fosters the development of a single yet diverse general and further education and training sector that serves the needs of the individual, South African society and the economy.
18. The policy is intended to strengthen the grounds for articulation with qualifications residing on the two other sub-frameworks which comprise the NQF namely the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) and the Occupational Qualifications Framework (OQF).
19. This policy is intended to provide information that enables public understanding of the achievements represented by the qualifications in general and further education and training. Such understanding is a prerequisite for confidence in the academic standards of the sector.
20. This qualifications framework provides the rationale for the development and use of qualification titles in the sub-framework by describing common parameters and criteria for the development of qualifications. These common parameters allow for innovation and variety while retaining a small number of highly identifiable qualification types.
21. The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework is constituted as a register of qualification types. Qualification types allow for the registration and/or the development of designated variants and/or part-qualifications. Qualification variants are designed to share a common structure while allowing some flexibility for learner interest and preference. All qualifications are underpinned by a curriculum for the subjects within the qualifications. The subjects are quality-assured through external assessment.
22. Through qualification development and through setting standards for the intended, enacted and examined curricula of qualifications on the sub-framework, and the careful monitoring of these, Umalusi discharges its statutory standard setting and quality assurance responsibilities for the sub-framework.
23. The policy applies to all general and further education and training offerings leading to a qualification, or part-qualification, offered in both public and private educational institutions in South Africa.

The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework and the National Qualifications Framework

24. The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework forms an integral part of the NQF, as it is defined in the NQF Act, Act no 67 of 2009.
25. In terms of the proclamation, *Transfer of administration and powers and functions entrusted by legislation to certain cabinet members in terms of Section 97 of the constitution*, (Government Gazette 32367, 1 July 2009), the Minister of Higher Education and Training has overall responsibility for National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 27 of 2008) and so for the regulation of the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework, including the responsibility of approval of qualifications in further education and training colleges, and qualifications designed for adults.
26. The Ministry of Basic Education has overall responsibility for qualifications relating to schooling.
27. The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework consists of a hierarchy of qualification types, located upon an identified level of the NQF. The qualification **types** specify broad requirements for qualifications and create the basis for the development of specific qualifications (**designated variants**). Designated variants will be described with a qualifier. The National Certificate (Vocational) is a designated variant of the National Certificate at Level 4 on the NQF. Designated variants may, in turn, have identifiable programmes. Thus, the National Certificate (Vocational): Civil Engineering and Building Construction is a programme under the NC(V).
28. All qualifications are further specified at least at the level of curriculum. Qualifications and part-qualifications may both be registered on the sub-framework.
29. Qualifications are regulated by the Minister, and are submitted, on approval, to SAQA for registration on the National Qualifications Framework.
30. The NQF Act of 2008 requires Umalusi to be the Quality Council for the General and Further Education and Training sector, in terms of learning

which takes place in institutions, as identified in the Acts referred to in Paragraph 2 of this document.

31. The word 'qualification' denotes the formal recognition, through certification, of learning achievement, and is awarded by an appropriate quality assurance body. A qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework is defined as the broad specifications and combinations of units of learning which must be achieved by learners, but which can also reflect individual learners' preferred learning needs, as expressed within those specifications. In the South African context, the word signifies, too, that an individual learner has successfully completed a coherent and purposeful programme of learning (at a particular level on the NQF) (Section 8(1) of the *Regulations under the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995* (Act no. 58 of 1995), and that the learner has been assessed—in terms of the exit-level outcomes—as qualified.
32. A part-qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework means that a substantive unit² or units of learning are registered as part of a qualification. Candidates may be assessed against such a unit or units of learning and have their achievement formally recognized.
33. A programme is defined as a meaningful combination of subjects, organized in terms of one of the Organising Fields Identified by SAQA, which conform to the requirements of a particular qualification. Programmes generally identify an area of specialization. So, for example, the vocational field, Information Technology and Computer Science, is determined as a programme in the NC(V).
34. A curriculum is the necessary underpinning documentation provided for a qualification to facilitate a more general understanding of its implementation in an educational system. The curriculum for a qualification provides a more detailed description in terms of the depth, breadth and level of difficulty and cognitive demand of what is required for the purpose of the qualification to be fulfilled through its enactment. Syllabi for the necessary subjects form an integral part of the curriculum. The standard of a qualification is determined through the enactment of and an examination of its associated curricula. The curriculum and its syllabi provide the information necessary for the development of learning programmes and the necessary framework for assessment.

² A substantive unit of learning would be one that was assigned a minimum of 20 credits, and constitutes a minimum of 200 notional hours of learning.

35. A programme of learning is defined as a structured and purposeful set of learning experiences, based on a curriculum. Such a programme of learning is organized to assist learners to achieve a qualification. The nature of a particular programme of learning is determined by the qualification it serves. Programmes of learning, while serving the ends of the qualification, do not form a part of the qualification itself. Programmes of learning are nevertheless subject to their own quality assurance processes through the accreditation process, and are informed by the curriculum and assessment associated with the qualification. Programmes of learning are distinct from qualification programmes, as defined in paragraph 34 (above).
36. This policy determines the qualifications structure for General and Further Education qualifications which are not occupational qualifications. It is recognized that professional bodies have a distinct role, derived from legislation or undertaken in terms international professional conventions or agreements, to set requirements for professional registration, membership or licensing, and to regulate professional conduct. Professional bodies may be consulted to determine whether a particular qualification—current or proposed—meets the requirements for professional registration, membership or licensing. Such matters, which fall outside the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education and Training and Umalusi Council, are not dealt with in this policy.
37. Traditionally Umalusi has quality assured (but not certificated) certain NQF Level 5 qualifications that are extensions of NQF 4 qualifications that were in the education system prior to the advent of the NQF. Where such qualifications continue to exist and where similar new theory-based qualifications are required at this level, Umalusi develops and quality assures such. In this manner Umalusi plays a meaningful connective function between the respective frameworks.

Standard setting in General and Further Education and Training

38. Umalusi is responsible for the standards in General and Further Education and Training insofar as this relates to qualifications, which are not occupational, and which are offered at registered, and Umalusi-accredited, institutions in terms of the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, as amended.
39. More specifically Umalusi is responsible for the setting of standards for all qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training

Qualifications Framework, and for ensuring that such qualifications meet the necessary criteria for registration on the NQF in terms of Section 27 (h) (i) – (iv) of the NQF Act, 2008, (Act No 67 of 2008).

40. Standards for qualifications on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework must have a common, well-understood meaning to ensure credibility and legitimacy. To this end, Umalusi has developed policy for the development, evaluation, implementation and quality assurance of the curricula; criteria for the implementation of learning programmes and assessments leading to qualifications, and criteria for the accreditation of the institutions Umalusi quality assures. Further, the Council puts in place the necessary standards and procedures to ensure the integrity of standard setting and quality assurance. Through these measures, Umalusi safeguards the integrity of standards-development and quality assurance processes. In discharging these responsibilities, Umalusi may work in collaboration with the relevant statutory bodies, with the relevant professional bodies, where such is required, with the relevant public and private institutions of learning, and with interested stakeholders in General and Further Education and Training. The Council may also recommend further policy emanating from this policy to the Minister of Higher Education and Training and/or the Minister of Basic Education for approval.
41. Prescribed qualification specifications, evaluation of curriculum statements or syllabuses, the verification of the quality of external examinations, and monitoring of provision are all significant and relatively cost-effective ways of establishing standards, and measuring, and improving quality in the education and training system. Such considerations are critical when a Quality Council is responsible for maintaining the necessary standards in a large-scale educational system.
42. The NQF level forms the most generic specification of the qualification, taking into cognizance the level descriptors developed by SAQA. In addition, placement of qualifications on the sub-framework is in part determined by comparative evaluations with existing qualifications on the sub-framework. The level of qualifications is determined through research into the critical curricula underpinning the qualifications, and through an evaluation of the quality and depth of the concomitant assessment.
43. On the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework, a coherent standard is maintained by associating a single qualification type with each of the NQF levels. The type is determined by the educational, socio-political, cultural and economic imperatives that require fulfillment in the education system of the country. The qualification specifies the level of the qualification, its minimum credit rating and its

purpose and characteristics. A qualification is required to meet at least the generic competencies associated with the level at which the qualification has been pegged. The basic qualification types are used as points of reference for the development of specialized qualifications.

44. A qualification type may have one or more *designated variants*.
45. Certain designated variants may be further specified, producing a qualification specialization called a *programme*. This specialization is expressed in the *qualifier*. For example, the combination of subjects specified for the programme, National Certificate (Vocational): Finance, Economics and Accounting, meets the basic requirements for the NC(V), but also includes specialized learning in the field of Information Technology. Qualification specializations are expressed as a maximum of five words after the name of the qualification. The description of the programme—the *qualifier*—is separated from the qualification type by a colon.
46. Developing and monitoring standards and quality assurance for the framework also resides in ensuring that these qualifications are all accompanied by acceptable prescribed curricula. Development of the qualifications framework may include strengthening existing qualifications through recommendations to the relevant Minister of Education, developing new qualifications, as well as evaluating new qualifications which are proposed for inclusion on the framework. Umalusi may evaluate, develop, or assist in the development of one or more qualifications and the associated curricula should a need for a new qualification be identified. The maintenance and development of the qualifications and their curricula for the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework is a significant means of improving quality in South African education.
47. Qualification descriptions must specify at least the following information:
 - 47.1 a rationale explaining the function of the qualification in education and training, and the kind of need it is intended to address
 - 47.2 a broadly-stated purpose, explaining in general terms the knowledge and skills the learner will have mastered on completion, that fits within the general purpose of the qualification type;
 - 47.3 the rules of combination for the qualification;
 - 47.4 a description of how the qualification articulates horizontally and vertically with other specific qualifications;

- 47.5 wherever relevant, the duration of the qualification (length of time in which the qualification must be completed, if appropriate);
 - 47.6 supporting curriculum statements or syllabuses which clearly specify the content and skills to be mastered in the qualification; and
 - 47.7 core skills as captured in the critical cross-field outcomes
 - 47.8 assessment requirements for the award of the qualification
 - 47.9 accreditation requirements to be met for the provision and certification of the qualification
48. The qualification specifications prescribe the learning to be attained, and which combinations accord with the qualification structure. Each qualification must identify a number of possible units of learning (such as subjects or learning areas). Some units are compulsory for some qualifications; other units of learning are selected from lists associated with the qualification itself.
49. The relevant Ministry of Education determines the inception date of qualifications on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework, on advice from Umalusi. Should a qualification no longer be servicing a need in the system, the relevant Ministry of Education, together with Umalusi, likewise determines a termination date for a qualification on the sub-framework, and puts into effect transitional arrangements. Furthermore, Umalusi may recommend to the relevant Ministry the extension of a qualification or part-qualification for which transitional arrangements were previously made. A qualification should not be terminated until such time as an alternative is available for persons wishing to study.
50. Both qualifications and the associated curriculum may be reviewed and revised from time to time should there be a need to do so. Umalusi may advise the relevant Minister for the need to review a qualification and/or its curricula. Conversely, a Ministry of Education may approach Umalusi recommending a review. Reviews of qualifications and/or curricula are subject to Umalusi policy governing these activities.
51. Certificates are issued for qualifications that have at least a 50% component of suitably quality-assured external assessments, based on approved syllabuses or curriculum statements: the monitoring of provision (and the accreditation) of educational institutions is based on quality assurance of the enacted curriculum and internal assessment, as well as their participation in properly conducted and monitored external assessments.

52. The standard of the qualification is determined—and maintained—through the design specifications of the qualification; and the quality of the assessment, which in turn is designed to assure the standard of the enacted curriculum, as evidenced in the accreditation processes.
53. The standard associated with the qualification also depends on the quality of the learning, teaching and assessment that happens in institutions of learning. The necessary regime of quality assurance processes and procedures upholds and strengthens these standards: the value of the final certificate is seen to depend on maintaining high ethical standards in the final, high-stakes, and high-security processes of setting and marking exams, standardizing marks and processing them for certification. The value of the qualification is equally seen to depend on the foundation documents which underpin the required learning. Both the qualification itself and the curricula underpin the necessary quality assurance processes which ensure quality teaching and learning.
54. The successful achievement of a qualification or part-qualification on the sub-framework is formally recognized and certified by Umalusi.
55. Establishing and using new and innovative ways to set and strengthen educational standards forms part of Umalusi's responsibility in setting standards for the sub-framework and are actively researched and pursued.

Qualifications, volumes of learning and achievement of credits

56. The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework consists of the NQF levels, as determined by SAQA; the main qualification types, their descriptors and qualifiers; the units of learning (subjects or learning areas), and their associated curricula.
57. The framework recognizes credits as a general measure of volume of learning required for a qualification, quantified as the number of notional study hours required for achieving the learning required by the qualification. The credit rating is independent of the mode of delivery of learning, and the attainment of the expected learning is established through the appropriate assessment of the learning outcomes.
58. The credit rating system rates 10 notional study hours as equivalent to 1 credit. Credit ratings specified on the framework are currently expressed as minima, but qualifications on the sub-framework also require a maximum specification to minimize overload.

59. The volume of learning required for a qualification is specified in terms of the total number of credits required. On the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework, the standard number of credits associated with a unit of learning, expressed in terms of a curriculum, is 20 credits, and qualifications range between 80 and 120 credits or more. Part-qualification credit values depend on the number of units of learning to be included.
60. Each unit of learning is associated with a curriculum statement, or syllabus, which outlines the selection, sequencing, and pacing of key knowledge areas as well as skills and abilities to be mastered in each of the units of learning that make up the qualification, and prescribes how the curriculum will be assessed. In other words, in order to be registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework, qualifications are to be considered with their accompanying curriculum standards or curriculum statements as necessary for *all* units of learning that can count towards the qualification at hand, as well as the specification for external assessment for all units of learning. For new qualifications where there has been no history of external examinations, exemplars of proposed external assessment form a part of the extended curriculum description.
61. To obtain a qualification or unit-of-learning/subject statement, a learner *must* be examined by a public examination body or an accredited private assessment body. The assessment policy for each qualification must include a measure or set of measures that allows the generation of a report on a learner's achievement, as achievement is necessarily taken into account in progression decisions.

Accumulation of credits towards qualifications

62. Credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) is the process whereby a learner's achievements are recognized and may provide access to further learning. Furthermore, credits previously obtained may be recognized as meeting the requirements for a different qualification, and where, subject to limits, the credits achieved towards one qualification may be recognized as meeting part of the requirements for another qualification.
63. Umalusi certification processes recognize partial achievement of qualifications, through the issue of subject statements, and, under the

prerequisite conditions, allow the combination of partial achievements to result in a full qualification.

64. Umalusi Council has policy regarding credit recognition, accumulation and transfer and the recognition of prior learning, as these are practised in a large-scale, massified education system.

2. THE GENERAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

Characteristics

65. The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework is designed to:

- 65.1 be sufficiently flexible to accommodate different types of general and further education needs and to enable a variety of public and private institutions to pursue their teaching and learning obligations responsibly;
- 65.2 facilitate the education of learners, whether they are of school-going age or beyond, so that they will ultimately contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of South Africa;
- 65.3 provide qualifications that can be benchmarked credibly against similar qualifications internationally;
- 65.4 allow for the development of new qualification variants or programmes as the need arises;
- 65.5 be simple, clear, easy to understand and user-friendly; and
- 65.6 facilitate as far as possible the articulation between qualifications within the framework and across the NQF to qualifications developed and managed by the other Quality Councils.

Scope and application

66. The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework applies to all general and further education institutions, both public and private. These include schools, FET colleges and adult learning centres. This policy complements other policies of the Departments of Basic Education and Higher Education and Training.

67. The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework regulates and specifies all general and further education qualification types in general and further education and training, and the manner in which the qualifications are designed and relate to one another.

Number of levels and level descriptors

68. The National Qualifications Framework has ten levels.
69. In terms of the definition offered in the GENFET Amendment Act, General Education and Training 'means all learning and training programmes leading to a qualification on Level 1 of the National Qualifications Framework'. The definition offered in the same Act for Further Education reads 'all learning and training programmes leading to qualifications on Levels 2, 3 and 4 of the National Qualifications Framework.'
70. Level 1 of General Education and Training as well Levels 2 – 4 of Further Education and Training are subsumed in the term Basic Education. The term 'Basic Education' refers to that portion of the system pertaining to schooling. It also refers to the alternative general vocational qualifications, the National Certificate (Vocational), which is a meaningful alternative to the National Senior Certificate, available to adolescents in the 16 – 19 age group. Although this qualification, being in Further Education and Training, is formally lodged with the Department of Higher Education and Training, the NC(V) conceptually forms one of the options for the completion of the Basic Education phase, and has been quality-assured from its inception by Umalusi.
71. The term, 'Further Education and Training', also—and primarily—refers to that portion of the education system which deals with the needs of young people not in employment, education or training (sometimes called the NEET youth) and adults. Further Education and Training is a post-schooling system, which has as its focus those people whose schooling opportunities were curtailed or unsuccessful. As a learning sector, Further Education and Training extends from Level 1 through to Level 5, a learning space that includes post-school education which is not tertiary in nature: the so-called 'post-matric' year being a case in point. Further Education and Training is a critical sector providing connections between the foundation (offered by schooling and FET colleges, in the case of the NC(V)), and learning beyond and outside-of school: an extended FET environment that caters for a wide variety of adult learning needs. Learning in Further Education and Training also creates additional opportunities for accessing skills and knowledge which help prepare learners in a general way for the workplace. Further Education and Training is an opportunity for learners to acquire additional knowledge, skills and experience which may prepare them for access into certain streams of Higher Education. All of these functions are distinct from the purpose served by Higher Education in the national system of education

and training, and qualitatively different to those of the more purely occupational nature.

Qualification types

72. The framework of qualifications for General and Further Education is summarized in the table on page 22. The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework covers five levels of the NQF, in order to allow for the quality assurance of certain qualifications associated with post-school and further education rather than with higher education. The qualifications on the sub-framework serve children, adolescents, and adults. The qualifications on the other two frameworks primarily service the learning needs of adults.

73. The General and Further Education and Training sub-framework has five qualification types:

General and Further Education and Training

- 73.1 Level 1: General Certificate
- 73.2 Level 2: Elementary Certificate
- 73.3 Level 3: Intermediate Certificate
- 73.4 Level 4: National Certificate
- 73.5 Level 5: Further Certificate

74. These qualification types operate as a broad framework to regulate teaching, learning, and assessment at the various levels. Although there are just 5 types of qualifications, they are expected to be sufficient to accommodate a diverse range of needs. Umalusi may review the Qualifications Framework and introduce a new qualification type should a proven need arise as a result of developments in knowledge production or acknowledged international practice.

75. Existing designated variants are listed below each qualification type on the table. Proposed designated variants, which Umalusi proposes to develop, are likewise listed.

76. In the event of the need to formulate a new qualification type, Umalusi consults with the other QCs and SAQA before the development of such a qualification begins, particularly in the event that such a qualification

potentially impacts upon the sphere of responsibility of one of the other QCs.

Qualification descriptors

77. Each qualification type has a unique descriptor stating its purpose and how it relates to other qualification types. Qualification descriptors include the specifications such as:

- 76.1 the NQF exit level
- 76.2 the qualification credit rating
- 76.3 the purpose and characteristics of the qualification types recognized by the framework.

78. Each descriptor serves as an initial point of reference which enables comparisons with other qualifications, and provides a basis for designing, evaluating, approving and reviewing qualifications and their associated curricula.

79. All qualifications using the same qualification type (and where appropriate, the designated variant) in their titles must be consistent with the descriptor for each qualification type as defined in this policy.

80. Descriptors for the qualification types recognized by the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework are provided in Annexure 1.

Naming of qualifications

81. The *qualification type* is the name given to a qualification. Existing qualifications, while belonging to the type, may already have names which differ from the type name. Umalusi determines the name given to any future qualifications in accordance with the qualification type.

82. The *designator* is the second name given to a qualification to indicate its broad area of study or discipline. Umalusi determines the designator for qualifications.

83. The third name given to the qualification is the *qualifier*. Qualifiers may be used to indicate a field of specialization. A colon appears between the qualification type or its designator and the programme (or specialization). In order to use a qualifier, at least 50% of the total credits for the

qualification must be in the field of specialization denoted by the qualifier. Umalusi determines the qualifier for a qualification type or variant.

84. In registering qualifications on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework, SAQA ensures that the naming of qualifications in the Framework is consistent with this policy.

Table 1: The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework

NQF level	Qualification types and qualifications					Certificates for units of learning
Level 1: Qualification type	General Certificate (GC)					Subject (LA) certificates for adult learners
Designated variants	General Education Certificate (GEC)	General Education and Training Certificate: ABET				
Level 2: Qualification type	Elementary Certificate (EC)					Subject certificates towards one or more qualification designated variants
Designated variants		National Certificate (Vocational) 2)		Elementary Certificate		
Level 3: Qualification	Intermediate Certificate (IC)					Subject certificates towards one or more qualification designated variants
Designated variants		National Certificate (Vocational) 3)		Intermediate Certificate		
Level 4: Qualification	National Certificate (NC)					Subject certificates towards one or more qualification designated variants N1 - N3
Designated variants	Senior Certificate and National Senior Certificate (Colleges)	National Senior Certificate (NSC)	National Certificate (Vocational) 4	National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA)	National Independent Certificate (NIC)	
Level 5: Qualification	Further Certificate (FC)					Subject certificates N4 – N6
Designated variants				National Certificate (Vocational) 5	Further Independent Certificate	

Qualifications and subject or learning area statements, and verification

85. A qualification is awarded to mark the achievement of the necessary learning stipulated in the qualification and its associated curriculum.
86. Certification is thus the formal recognition of learner's having successfully completed a qualification, part-qualification or unit of learning. Umalusi is mandated to issue such certificates at exit points in General and Further Education and Training. It also undertakes the quality assurance and certification of non-exit level qualifications, where necessary.
87. A subject- or learning area statement (that is, 'a subject statement') is issued by Umalusi if a candidate has not met with the full certification requirements for the qualification. It provides a record of what the candidate has achieved at a particular date. Umalusi may issue several subject statements as records of learner achievement. A candidate may request, through an assessment body, for a combination of the subject statements, should these now fulfil the requirements for the qualification. A subject statement, as a record of learning, may be the vehicle for credit accumulation and transfer.
88. Umalusi is obligated to ensure that the certificates it issues are credible both nationally and internationally.
89. In order to issue certificates, Umalusi has the capacity to:
- a) develop and maintain policies and directives for certification;
 - b) maintain acceptable standards for awarding certificates; and
 - c) maintain a certification system and infrastructure including appropriate security arrangements.
90. Part of Umalusi's function as the body responsible for awarding certificates to successful candidates is also to be responsible for verifying the authenticity of certificates, and for issuing replacement certificates under certain conditions.
91. Qualification certificates and subject statements within General and Further Education and Training are issued in English.

Admission to General and Further Education and Training qualifications

92. All qualifications on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework specify minimum admission requirements where applicable.

Admission to qualifications in Higher Education and on the Occupational Qualifications Framework

93. The NQF is intended to facilitate articulation between general, further and higher education, and between qualifications registered by SAQA on behalf of Umalusi and those registered by other Quality Councils.
94. The National Senior Certificate, whose specifications are approved by the Minister of Education in national policy, constitutes the minimum requirement for admission to higher education.
95. Additional minima, declared by the Minister as policy in the *Minimum Admission Requirements for Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree Programmes requiring a National Senior Certificate*, published in the *Government Gazette*, Vol 482, No 27961, August 2005, must be met by all applicants in order to be considered for entry into higher education qualifications.
96. Additional minima, declared by the Minister as policy in the *Minimum Admission Requirements for Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree Programmes requiring a National Certificate (Vocational)*, published in the *Government Gazette*, No 32743, November 2009, must be met by NC(V) applicants in order to be considered for entry into higher education qualifications.

Progression within the framework

97. The General and Further Education and Training framework is designed, where possible, to facilitate vertical, horizontal and diagonal progression within and across the National Qualifications Framework as a whole and the sub-framework in particular. Vertical progression is regarded as the default assumption, and the minimum requirements for progression between the qualification types are stipulated in the descriptors of the qualification type. Progression is also possible horizontally between qualifications if candidates meet the minimum requirements for admission to the target qualification.

Diagonal progression between qualifications is possible if candidates present a completed qualification or credits toward a related qualification as a means of meeting the admission requirements for the target qualification

3. IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation date

98. Certain qualifications may need to be phased out over time, so there will be a transition period to full compliance. The Minister of Education, advised by Umalusi, shall determine the date by notice in the Government Gazette.

Qualifications and curricula

New qualifications and curricula

99. A new qualification or curriculum is one which has not existed before, or one which has been so significantly changed that there is less than a 50% overlap between the former and the current forms. New qualifications submitted for registration on the General and Further Education Qualifications Framework must conform to the requirements of this policy.
100. A qualification or designated variant may be proposed for development by a number of agencies such as professional bodies, a single large national provider and/or a cluster of providers, or an assessment body, including the National Departments of Education or its provincial counterparts,
101. Several options for developing qualifications exist. Umalusi may undertake to develop the qualification under its own aegis, or Umalusi and another of the QCs may develop the qualification in partnership. Umalusi may also work in partnership with the proposers of the new qualification, or delegate the qualification development to the relevant proposers, subject to the provisions of the NQF Act.
102. Whatever the circumstances of a qualification's development, on its submission for evaluation and approval, it must contain *all* the elements discussed previously in this document and as well as information about the proposer of the qualification, the composition of the group that designed the qualification, and the process followed.
103. Umalusi, the Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training, is required to approve a qualification with its associated documentation. On approval, the qualification is submitted for regulation

by the Minister and, on approval by the Minister, to SAQA for registration on the NQF.

104. Umalusi quality assures and certificates learner achievement only for qualifications and part-qualifications which are registered on the Framework.

105. Umalusi, examines the possibilities of developing and using new forms of standard-setting and quality assurance on an ongoing basis.

106. For any qualification to be recognized and certificated by Umalusi, the following must be demonstrated unequivocally:

108.1 the qualification is in keeping with the purpose of respective qualification type on the Qualifications Framework;

108.2 the qualification is fully described by a curriculum which will support implementation of the qualification;

108.3 that the curriculum leads to successful assessment by an Umalusi-recognized/ accredited assessment body or process; and

108.4 that the providers of the qualification and curriculum are registered with an assessment body approved or recognised by Umalusi and are themselves accredited by Umalusi as a provider.

107. Evaluation of both the intended as well as the examined curriculum of any qualification on the Framework is regarded as a necessary part of ensuring the required quality standards.

Such evaluations are supplemented by system-wide monitoring of provision through the accreditation process, which would provide verification of the standard of delivery of the enacted curriculum. Through making judgments on and supporting the development of all three of these aspects of the education system, Umalusi will determine the overall quality of the standards of education offerings provided to large numbers of learners. *A focus on national standards to ensure comparability of achievements across different providers* is seen as one of Umalusi's key responsibilities.

Full compliance

108. All General and Further Education and Training qualifications and

curricula must comply with this policy by a date to be determined by the Minister by notice in a Government Gazette.

General and Further Education Management Information System

109. Umalusi collaborates with SAQA in respect of maintaining a national learner's records database comprising registers of qualifications, part-qualifications, learner achievements for formal learning, and any other associated information.

ANNEXURE 1

GENERAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING QUALIFICATION DESCRIPTORS

General Certificate (GC)

Type specifications

NQF Level 1

Grade 9 certificate (schooling), and

Exit level qualification for adults

Minimum total credits:	120 (schooling, GETC (Adults))
	80 (non-school usage, e.g. GEC for adults)

Minimum units of learning (Subjects):	6 (schooling; GETC (Adults))
	4 (GEC (Adults))

Designated variants: General Education Certificate; General Education and Training Certificate

Designated variants are named within the qualification type to indicate differences in educational intent

Programmes: General Education and Training Certificate: Adults

The word or words separated from the designated variants may indicate either the target group for whom a qualification is intended (e.g. *adults*), or may indicate an area of qualification specialization (e.g. a general vocational area such as *Education and Development*)

Abbreviations

For example: GEC; GETC: ABET (Level 4)

Purpose and characteristics

Level 1 (grade 9) theoretically serves to mark the end of general education for school-going learners. It could be used as an indicator of learner strengths at the end of Grade 9. The qualification will provide guidance regarding future study, that is, whether a general academic or a more vocational route ought to be followed for the final three years of schooling.

The goal of general education—whether marked by a formal record or achievement or not—is the development of literacy and numeracy, and a

sound basic understanding of important knowledge areas, including languages, mathematics, natural and social sciences, arts and culture, life orientation, economic and management sciences, and technology.

Supplementary goals are to produce learners who are confident, independent, multi-skilled, compassionate, environmentally respectful, and able to participate in society as critical and active citizens. These supplementary goals should also be achievable through the knowledge areas—and associated skills—listed above.

The broad social goals of adult education at level 1 are to develop literacy and numeracy and to provide an introduction to the natural and social sciences as the basis for further learning and informed citizenship. Additional subjects may enrich the curriculum. The acquisition of vocational skills as a supplement to a broad basic education can be incorporated into the structure of the qualification. The possession of this qualification indicates that an adult learner, through systematic study and engagement, has achieved foundation learning and is equipped to benefit from further education and training programmes.

The needs of adults and children are very different, which means that the curricula for the two variants are different, and provision must be organized and delivered appropriately.

Minimum admission requirements

Were the GEC for adolescents to be introduced, the typical entrance requirement would be a minimum of eight years of schooling and satisfactory progress in the achievement of the outcomes for grade 8, as defined in the relevant policy.

The minimum entry requirements for adults into a Level 1 qualification would be a record of satisfactory achievement in at least two learning areas at ABET level 3. Institutions may, however, make use of suitable diagnostic tests to satisfy themselves that a candidate has sufficient prior learning to embark meaningfully on a course of study at NQF Level 1.

Progression

Successful completion of the GC indicates that the candidate meets the minimum entry requirement for entrance into Grade 10, or certain Level 2 qualifications, provided that the candidate has the necessary requirements for admission into that qualification.

Accumulated credits may be presented for consideration of admission into a related qualification.

Elementary Certificate (EC)

Type specifications

NQF Level 2

Exit level qualification (college; post school)

Minimum total credits: 120 (schooling and colleges)

Designated variants: Elementary Certificate of Education; Elementary Certificate of Education and Training

Designated variants are named within the qualification type to indicate differences in educational intent

Programmes: Elementary Certificate of Education: Adults ;
National Certificate (Vocational) (Level 2): Safety in Society

The word or words separated from the designated variants may indicate either the target group for whom a qualification is intended (e.g. *adults*), or may indicate an area of qualification specialization (e.g. a general vocational area such as *Safety in Society*; *Primary Agriculture*)

Abbreviations

For example: ECE; ECET

Also for, example, NC(V) (Level 2): Mechatronics;

Purpose and characteristics

The EC as a qualification type provides general foundational and vocational learning. Its purpose is to provide learners with certain discipline-related knowledge and applied theory skills in a number of subjects. In addition, this Level 2 qualification, the Elementary Certificate, contributes towards equipping learners for citizenship, and in a general sense, for the workplace by further developing literacy and numeracy as foundational learning.

In the NC(V), the teaching and learning, while providing a suitable theoretical grounding is intended also to teach basic vocational skills in a manner which integrates 'academic knowledge' with 'the practical skills and values that are specific to a particular vocational area'. This level 2 qualification signifies that the learner has attained 'the necessary knowledge, practical skills, applied

competence and understanding required for employment at an elementary level of a particular occupation or trade, or class of occupations or trades'.

In prospect, the Elementary Certificate, provides an alternative qualification for adults at this level, and is designed to fulfill needs similar to the NC(V) but provides greater flexibility to deal with divergent learning needs. This qualification specifically anticipates the need for articulation with artisan- and other occupational training in order to accommodate learners, already in employment who require formal additional skills.

Minimum admission requirements

For adolescents, the entrance requirement would be a minimum of nine years of schooling, and record of satisfactory performance in Grade 9, which would indicate successful progress in the achievement of the outcomes as defined in relevant policy.

The minimum entry requirements for adults into the EC would be satisfactory achievement in the GETC:ABET; and, in prospect, the GCE(Adults) or the GCET (Adults).

However, institutions may make use of suitable diagnostic tests to satisfy themselves that a candidate has sufficient prior learning to embark meaningfully on a course of study at NQF Level 2.

Progression

Successful completion of the EC indicates that the candidate meets the minimum entry requirement for entrance into some form of Level 3 qualification, provided that the candidate has the necessary requirements for admission into that qualification

Accumulated credits may be presented for consideration of admission into a related qualification.

Intermediate Certificate (IC)

Type specifications

NQF Level 3

Qualification (college learners/adults)

Minimum total credits: 120

Designated variants: Intermediate Certificate of Education; Intermediate Certificate of Education and Training

Designated variants are named within the qualification type to indicate differences in educational intent

Programmes: Intermediate Certificate of Education: Adults
National Certificate (Vocational) (Level 3): Tourism

The word or words separated from the designated variants may indicate either the target group for whom a qualification is intended (e.g. *adults*), or may indicate an area of qualification specialization (e.g. a general vocational area such as *Hospitality*)

Abbreviations

For example: ICE; ICET; ICE: Adults

Also, for example, NC(V) (Level 3): Office Administration

Purpose and characteristics

The Intermediate Certificate as a qualification type provides general foundational and vocational learning. Its purpose is to provide learners with certain discipline-related knowledge and applied theory skills in a number of subjects. In addition, this Level 3 qualification, the Intermediate Certificate, contributes towards equipping learners for citizenship, and in a general sense, for the workplace by further developing literacy and numeracy as foundational learning.

In the NC(V) at Level 3 on the NQF, the teaching and learning, while providing a suitable theoretical grounding is intended also to teach basic vocational skills in a manner which integrates 'academic knowledge' with 'the practical skills and

values specific to each vocational area'. This level 3 qualification signifies that the learner has attained 'the necessary knowledge, practical skills, applied competence and understanding required for employment at an intermediate level of a particular occupation or trade, or class of occupations or trades'. In addition, the Intermediate Certificate contributes towards equipping learners for citizenship, and for the workplace.

The IC, the Intermediate Certificate, as a proposed qualification for adults, provides an alternative qualification at this level designed to fulfill needs for adults similar to those served by the NC(V) Level 3 but provides greater flexibility to deal with divergent learning needs. This qualification specifically anticipates the need for articulation with artisan- and other occupational training in order to accommodate learners, already in employment who require formal additional skills.

Minimum admission requirements

For adolescents, the entrance requirement would be a minimum of ten years of schooling, and satisfactory performance in Grade 10, which would indicate progress in the achievement of the outcomes for grade 10, as defined in the relevant NSC or NC(V) documentation.

The minimum entry requirements for adults would be satisfactory achievement in the EC.

However, institutions may make use of suitable diagnostic tests to satisfy themselves that a candidate has sufficient prior learning to embark meaningfully on a course of study at NQF Level 3.

Progression

Successful completion of the NC(V) Level 3 indicates that the candidate meets the minimum entry requirement for entrance into NC(V) Level 4, or some form of Level 4 qualification, provided that the candidate has the necessary requirements for admission into that qualification.

Similarly, the completion of the adult IC would allow access to some form of Level 4 qualification, provided that the candidate has the necessary requirements for admission into that qualification.

Accumulated credits may be presented for consideration of admission into a related qualification.

National Certificate (NC)

Type specifications

NQF Level 4

Exit level qualification

Minimum total credits: 120 (6 units of learning of 20 credits each)

Designated variants: National Senior Certificate; National Senior Certificate for Adults; National Certificate (Vocational) (Level 4); National Independent Certificate

Designated variants are named within the qualification type to indicate differences in educational intent

Programmes: National Certificate (Vocational) (Level 4): Management
National Independent Certificate: Business Studies (Financial Practice)

The word or words separated from the designated variants may indicate either the target group for whom a qualification is intended (e.g. *adults*), or may indicate an area of qualification specialization (e.g. a general vocational area such as *Education and Development*). It is also possible for a programme to be additionally specified by means of up to five words in brackets after the programme name, for example National Independent Certificate: Business Studies (Human Resource Management).

Abbreviations

For example: NSC; NASCA; NIC; NC(V); SC; NSC (Colleges)

Also, for example: NC(V) (Level 4): Electrical Infrastructure Construction;

NIC: Hospitality (Lodging Management)

Purpose and characteristics

The National Certificate is the exit level qualification for schooling as well as for the NC(V) at FET Colleges.

The National Senior Certificate (NSC) is primarily a discipline-based qualification where all subjects are determined through curricula expressed in the relevant policy. Its purpose is to allow for progression from General Education and Training and to provide learners a school-leaving certificate with the possibility of access to Higher Education. The qualification expresses 'what South Africans regard as

knowledge skills and values worth learning' during the final three years of education.

The NSC thus provides an opportunity for learners to focus on more specific skills and knowledge in a smaller number of more academically oriented subjects than in general education. Within the NSC, the teaching and learning is overtly intended to be more academic in nature, and has the potential to provide access to higher education or other forms of post- secondary education.

The NC(V) at Level 4 on the NQF enables students to acquire the necessary knowledge, practical skills, applied competence and understanding required for employment in a particular occupation or trade, or class of occupations or trades, or, given the necessary achievement levels, entrance into Higher Education. Its purpose is thus to foster a suitable theoretical grounding in a vocational area, and to provide more advanced vocational skills. As an exit level qualification, it provides access to occupational qualifications on the OQF and also provides the possibility of access to certain qualifications in Higher Education. This qualification signifies that the learner has attained more extensive knowledge, cognitive and conceptual tools and (practical) skills for progression in further education. It provides progression into artisan-education and training.

The Senior Certificate will remain on the General and further Education and Training Qualifications Framework until the NASCA and the NIC have taken their respective roles in the FET learning environment. Only selected SC subjects are being examined during the phase out period. The final phasing out of the Senior Certificate will relate to the transitional arrangements for the NASCA.

The NASCA, the National Senior Certificate for Adults, is designed as a comparable qualification to the NSC but offered and delivered in ways that will suit the needs of adults and young, out-of-school people who cannot return to the school environment.

The NIC, the National Independent Certificate, is designed to provide greater flexibility to deal with divergent learning needs. This qualification is designed specifically for adults and enables people wishing to acquire some basic knowledge and skill in a broad vocational area to do so. This general vocational learning will assist in making learners potentially more employable than they would be if they had no knowledge at all in that general area of work. The NIC could also enrich the person, already in employment, who requires formal additional knowledge to enhance their contribution in the workplace.

In addition, all forms of the NC contribute towards equipping learners for citizenship.

Certain of the N1 – N3 certificates (NATED 190/191)³ have been reinstated and require revision. The N3 is regarded as a part-qualification at NQF 4. Four N3 subjects may be combined with the Business Languages (at Home or FAL level) in order to be awarded the National Senior Certificate (Colleges). However, access to higher education has required the completion of the N4 certificate. The N4 plus the necessary language is thus akin to the NSC with university admission.

Minimum admission requirements

For adolescents, the entrance requirement for entrance into the final year of the NSC or into NC(V) Level 4 would be a minimum of 11 years of schooling, and satisfactory performance in the achievement of the outcomes for grade 11, as defined in the NSC or NC(V) policies.

However, institutions may make use of suitable diagnostic tests to satisfy themselves that a candidate has sufficient prior learning to embark meaningfully on a course of study at NQF Level 4.

Entry into the Senior Certificate, which is currently being phased out, is previous registration for one or more SC subjects.

In the case of candidates selecting to register for the examinations associated with the NASCA, no minimum admission requirements will be enforced. There are, however, advisory guidelines which indicate the likelihood of readiness.

Progression

Successful completion of any of the forms of the National Certificate indicates that the candidate has achieved the qualification outcomes specified. For the NSC and the NC(V), prescribed levels of achievement are able to indicate that candidates have met the entry requirements for admission to various forms of study in further and higher education. Details are provided in the Minister of Education's policy on *Minimum Admission Requirements for Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree Programmes requiring a National Senior Certificate (2005)*. The entry requirements to Higher Education for candidates who have achieved the NC(V) are contained in the Minister of Higher Education and Training's policy on *Minimum Admission Requirements for Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree Programmes requiring a National Certificate*

³ The N1 – N3 (Engineering Studies) has been granted an extension period before being phased out. (Gazettes 28677, 29 March 2006; and 33793, 23 November 2010 refer). A fuller discussion of the N3 certificate occurs as an endnote to this description of Level 4 qualifications.

Vocational(2009). The minimum admission policy for higher education programmes does not at present refer to the NASCA.

In addition, the NC may provide access into certain other qualifications on the NQF. The NIC however, may not on its own provide access for learners to higher education, but may be supplemented through credit accumulation from the NSC or NC(V) or through the Further Certificate at NQF level 5.

Accumulated credits may also be presented for consideration of admission into a related qualification.

Endnote:

The National Certificate: N3: Engineering Studies

The N3 is a certificate which is offered in FET colleges. Learners are required to offer:

- a. A trade theory, or a technological instructional offering (Category A subjects)
- b. A mathematics category subject (Category B)
- c. A science category subject (Category C); and
- d. A drawing category subject (Category D).

Non-apprenticed learners are required to pass any *three* of the subjects offered.

The N3 programme is envisaged to be completed in a trimester of full-time tuition in a college.

The certificate thus allows learners access to subjects in three general subject categories—mathematics, science and drawing—which were originally contextualized to draw on the workplace experience of indentured apprentices. So, for example, learners enroll for a science module that was tailored to their needs: Industrial Chemistry, Building Science, Engineering Science. These four applied discipline-based subjects service almost 50 Category A subjects, while N3 Mathematics appears to be a generic prerequisite except for the Water Treatment programme. Similarly, 5 more-or-less generic drawing programmes service the 50 Category A subjects. The only subjects that are directly occupationally focused are the Category A subjects which form a quarter of the entire institutional offering.

The function of the college-based N courses is to provide a modest theoretical base for people training to become artisans. The reason for their institutional location is that the knowledge to be acquired is not the sort that can be readily acquired 'on the job'. The purpose of the N-courses is precisely to offer

apprentices an opportunity to engage with the disciplinary discourses that underpin the work they do in order to provide a different sort of insight than that achieved in work. Decisions about *what* mathematics or *what* science needs to be learned may be influenced by the nature of the work the apprentice-learner is acquiring, but it is determined by the discipline itself. It is the disciplinary focus that determines the nature of the learning, and its location in a formal institution.

In the past, each of these subjects, briefly taught in a college environment, would have been supplemented by 9 months of practical experience, which would have made these subjects something more akin the amount of learning associated with year-long qualifications. The N3 certificate has, however, once more been made available to people without their being enrolled as apprentices, which means the N-courses stand alone as rather modest, dated offerings.

Umalusi standardizes the N1 – N3 on behalf of the Department of Higher Education and Training. It certifies N3 in order to allow for its combination with two languages in order to allow candidates to receive the National Senior Certificate (Colleges) (Report 191).

The end of the extension for the N1 – N3: Engineering studies requires consultation with Umalusi.

Further Certificate (FC)

Type specifications

NQF Level 5

Exit level qualification

Minimum total credits: 120

Designated variants: Further Independent Certificate;

Programmes: Further Independent Certificate: Business Studies (Human Resource Management) ;

The word or words separated from the designated variant indicates an area of qualification specialization (eg a general vocational area such as *Education and Development*). It is also possible for a programme to be additionally specified by means of up to five words in brackets after the programme name, for example Further Independent Certificate: Business Studies (Human Resource Management).

Abbreviations

For example: FIC: Business Studies (HRM)

Purpose and characteristics

The Further Certificate (FC) is primarily a post-schooling, further education qualification. The FC is vocational and/or workplace-oriented, and is intended to build on vocational skills already acquired in the NC(V) Level 4 and NIC.

The Further Independent Certificate will relate closely to a NIC developed at Level 4, providing the possibility of specialization in certain learning areas. The FIC is designed to help locate certain provider qualifications in Further Education and Training and to facilitate articulation with qualifications on the OQF that require a workplace component.

Achievement of this qualification signifies that a student has attained the equivalent of a basic level of higher education knowledge and competence in a particular field and is capable of applying such knowledge and skill in the workplace. The FC includes an integrated workplace learning (WL) component and/or simulated work experience.

Minimum admission requirements

The minimum entrance requirement may be a NC—the NSC, or NC(V)—with appropriate subject combinations and levels of achievement, or a NIC with appropriate subject combinations.

Institutions may make use of suitable diagnostic tests to satisfy themselves that a candidate has sufficient prior learning to embark meaningfully on a course of study at NQF Level 5.

Progression

Completion of the FC indicates that the candidate has successfully achieved the qualification outcomes. In addition, the FC may provide access into certain other qualifications on the NQF.

The successful completion of a FC may contribute credits to a qualification on the HEQF. Such accumulated credits may be presented to an institution of Higher Education for consideration of admission into a related higher education qualification.