

MEDIA STATEMENT

SAQA, QCTO, CHE and Umalusi addresses areas of common interest

Today, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) partners - the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA), Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), Council on Higher Education (CHE), and Umalusi briefed the nation through the media to address the matters of common interest.

New developments in the NQF space

Concerning the International Secondary Certificate (ISC), which was developed in South Africa by the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) and offered outside the country, Umalusi highlighted that it does not get involved in the quality assurance of this qualification. This is because the ISC is neither registered as a qualification on the NQF under the custodianship of SAQA nor accredited by Umalusi or any other quality council established through the amended NQF Act (67 of 2008). The fact is that Umalusi has accredited the IEB solely as a private assessment body to administer the GETC: ABET and NSC within the borders of South Africa. SAQA submitted its support in relation to this matter and pledged to work together with Umalusi to ensure that stakeholders understand the consequences around the issues.

The QCTO indicated that South Africa is transitioning from outdated pre-2009 qualifications to **modern, occupational qualifications** that are aligned with industry needs and the demands of today's economy. All qualifications already achieved remain valid. However, learners who have not yet completed their pre-2009 qualifications must act now according to the following timelines:

- **Last date for enrolment:** 30 June 2025 (extended to June 2026 with approval).
- **Completion deadline:** Between June 2027 and June 2029, depending on the approved teach-out period.

Learners still completing pre-2009 qualifications should speak to their training provider about transitioning to an occupational qualification through the **Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT)** system.

This transition is not simply a replacement exercise; it is about aligning qualifications with the current industry needs and creating pathways into future-focused careers. The QCTO further indicated that it has over 900 occupational qualifications/part qualifications registered on the NQF, including qualifications that support the Just Energy Transition such as green hydrogen, solar photovoltaic service and renewable energy.



Authentication of qualifications

It is common cause that section 32A(1) of the amended NQF Act “places a legislative obligation on all employers, prior to an appointment, to authenticate that the applicant’s qualifications are registered on the national learners’ records database, and if not, to refer the matter to the...SAQA for verification...Where a qualification is found to be inauthentic, misrepresented or fraudulent, the SAQA must refer this finding to the relevant professional body.” (www.cliffedekkerhofmeyr.com, accessed 4 December 2025). During the presser, the NQF partners urged employers, institutions of higher learning and the communities at large to verify the authenticity of qualifications and/programmes by visiting the website of each of the partners. For occupational qualifications and skills programmes, visit www.qcto.org.za; for CHE-accredited qualifications visit www.che.ac.za; for Umalusi visit www.umalusi.org.za; for SAQA, visit www.saqa.org.za.

Unaccredited institutions

In relation to unaccredited institutions, SAQA indicated that they have invested on awareness campaigns such as #TAKINGTHENQFTOTHEPEOPLE, which aims to ensure broader education on these issues. It further indicated that collaborations such as the joint media briefings go a long way in helping the public to identify unaccredited institutions, avoid unregistered private colleges and verify the registration status of institutions and qualifications. These campaigns align with SAQA’s mandate to protect learners, parents, institutions, and employers.

For institutions offering QCTO-accredited programmes, the QCTO advises the public to ask for an official accreditation letter printed on the QCTO letterhead. This letter must include:

- A unique accreditation number matching the one listed on the QCTO website
- Accreditation start and end dates
- The physical address where training is provided
- The title of the accredited qualification or programme
- A duly signed authorisation from the QCTO

The QCTO encourages learners and parents to request the providers’ accreditation letter and verify its details on the QCTO website at www.qcto.org.za before committing to any programme.

Umalusi added its voice by urging all stakeholders to check the accreditation status of independent or private schools and TVET colleges before making a decision to register with them. That can be done by done on the Umalusi website (www.umalusi.org.za).



The CHE urged prospective students to exercise due diligence when selecting an institution. Legitimate qualifications **are those that are** accredited by the CHE and registered with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

Students are encouraged to consult the **Register of Private Higher Education Institutions** on the Department of Higher Education and Training website, and to verify that qualifications are registered on the SAQA website. The CHE cautions students to avoid bogus institutions whose programmes are not accredited and registered on the National Qualifications Framework.

The CHE extends its best wishes to the matric class of 2025 and welcomes those entering higher education whether through public universities, private institutions, or public colleges such as agricultural, nursing, veterinary, and emergency medical care colleges, which are now formally transitioning into the higher education sector.

Several important developments are underway in the higher education landscape and the CHE, including:

- Implementation of the **2025 Policy on Institutional Types**, introducing universities, university colleges, and higher education colleges.
- A revised **Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework**, soon to be published.
- The development of a new policy enabling **joint or collaborative qualifications** between local and international institutions.
- A national **review of hybrid and blended teaching modalities** across the sector.
- A national **review of all initial teacher education qualifications**, including the Bachelor of Education and PGCE.

The CHE remains committed to strengthening the quality, credibility, and accessibility of higher education in South Africa.

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#NQFdevelopments #VerifyBeforeYouRegister

