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**DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING****NO. 373****30 MARCH 2016****NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK ACT, 2008 (NO. 67 OF 2008)****DRAFT ARTICULATION POLICY**

I, Bonginkosi Emmanuel Nzimande, MP, Minister of Higher Education and Training, hereby, in terms of section 8(2)(b) of the National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act 67 of 2008) publish the Draft Articulation Policy for public comment.

The public comments should reach the Department within 60 days of publication of this notice for the attention of Dr S Lloyd, National Qualifications Framework (NQF), Tel: 012 312 5178/5081, Email: [Lloyd.s@dhet.gov.za](mailto:Lloyd.s@dhet.gov.za)



**Dr BE Nzimande, MP**

**Minister of Higher Education and Training**

Date: 24/02/2016

**DRAFT ARTICULATION POLICY**

**For Public Comment**

**January 2016**

## ARTICULATION POLICY

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CEO Committee	Chief Executive Officers' (of SAQA and the QCs, and Chairperson of the Inter-departmental NQF Steering Committee) Committee
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
IDNQFSC	Inter-departmental NQF steering committee
ILO	International Labour Organization
LLL	Lifelong Learning
NAMB	National Artisan Moderation Body
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
QCs	Quality Councils
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAIVCET	South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETAs	Sector Education and Training Authorities
ToR	Terms of Reference
UIL	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural organization (UNESCO) Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)
UMALUSI	Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training
WP PSET	White Paper for Post-school Education and Training

*A well-articulated system is one in which there are linkages between its different parts; there should be no silos, no dead ends. If a student completes a course at one institution and has gained certain knowledge, this must be recognized by other institutions if the knowledge gained is sufficient to allow epistemological access to programme(s) that they want to enter (Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr B E Nzimande, 15 February 2013).*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1. This Articulation policy is issued in terms of section 8(2)(b) of the NQF Act. No. 67 of 2008 and is foregrounded by the relevant legislation and outlines the purpose, intention scope and philosophical framework of the policy.
2. The **Articulation Policy** is subject to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act and any revision to it.
3. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act, gives the Minister overall executive responsibility for the NQF, the *South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)*, the Quality Council (QC) for *General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi)*, the QC for *Higher Education (CHE)* and for the QC for *Trades and Occupations (QCTO)*. An efficient post-school education and training system requires a high level of articulation within and between the sub-frameworks, learning programmes and institutions.
4. This policy is informed by a number of Department of Higher Education and Training Policy documents, reports and research reports which support the need for improved articulation. These include:
  - 4.1 The report and proposals of the *Ministerial Committee on Articulation Policy*;
  - 4.2 The *SAQA proposed Principles of Articulation*;
  - 4.3 The *White Paper for Post-school Education and Training (WP): Building an expanded, effective and integrated post-school system*;
  - 4.4 The *Draft Research Report on Workplace-based Learning*;
  - 4.5 The *National Development Plan (NDP)*; and

#### 4.6 The *Addis Convention (2014)*

5. This policy is further informed by published SAQA Policies on:

5.1 *Level Descriptors for the South African National Qualifications Framework;*

5.2 *Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) within the National Qualifications Framework;*

5.3 *National policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for the NQF Qualifications and Part-Qualifications and Professional Designations in South Africa;*

5.4 *Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part-Qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework;*

5.5 *Policy and Criteria for recognizing a professional Body and Registering a Professional Designation for the Purposes of the National Qualifications Framework Act, Act 67 of 2008;*

5.6 *Principles and Guidelines for learning that does not lead to a qualification.*

## 2. PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNING

6. Education and training must be situated within the framework and value systems of lifelong learning, education for democracy and social justice, and active, innovative participation in the economy. This articulation Policy will facilitate movement of learners between and within the three sub-frameworks of the NQF, and between institutions and also within institutions in order to enable access, progression and mobility.

7. The conceptual and organizational incongruities in the post-school education and training system are recognized as barriers to articulation, in particular:

- a) Lack of parity of esteem between academic and vocational qualifications;
- b) Inadequate response to the varied needs of the current socio-economic context;
- c) Lack of definition and order in learner progression routes and articulation arrangements;

- d) The registration of a host of qualifications on the NQF that are dead end in nature;
  - e) Promoting the concept of vocational education as human capital learning or instrumental learning to ensure the exclusive acquisition of a relatively narrow band of employment-related or job-specific skills and competencies;
  - f) Inadequate building of coherence between the NQF sub-frameworks; and
  - g) Absence of robust articulation arrangements between the different programme and institutional types.
8. Articulation is both *systemic* and *specific*, where *systemic* articulation is based on legislation, national policy (such as this articulation policy) and formal requirements within the education and training system. *Specific* articulation (also referred to as articulation in practice) is based on formal and informal agreements within the education and training system, mostly between two or more education and training sub-systems, between specific institutional types, and guided by policies, and accreditation principles. Institutional accommodation of individual needs also falls into the category of *specific articulation*.
9. The Policy will apply nationally to all articulation arrangements by recognized education and training providers. The principles establish articulation parameters to ensure measurable improvement over time and provide a benchmark against which progress can be monitored and reported.
10. Whilst it is agreed that educational opportunities do not create jobs, if there is a mismatch between the needs of the labour market and the nature of the country's skills and educational programmes then people will tend to remain unemployed.

### 3. THE LEGISLATIVE MANDATE PROVIDED THROUGH THE NQF ACT

11. This articulation policy is determined as the overarching national articulation policy to frame other policies and guidelines developed by SAQA, the Quality Councils (QCs). This is in accordance with the NQF Act, section 8(2)(b) which requires the Minister to determine policy on NQF matters in terms of the NQF Act, and to publish the policy in the *Gazette*.
12. SAQA is also mandated by the NQF Act, to develop policy and criteria, after consultation with the QCs for RPL, assessment, and credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) (NQF Act, Section 13 (1) (h) (iii)). The QCs are mandated to develop and implement policy and criteria for assessment, RPL and CAT, taking into account the policy and criteria contemplated in the NQF Act.
13. The legislative mandate provided for in the NQF Act has been relied upon to develop and gazette this policy.
14. This Policy builds on enabling mechanisms provided by the NQF; these include: NQF levels and level descriptors; qualification types with clear articulation route; and a credit and notional hours' convention.
15. The NQF itself is premised on an outcomes-based approach in which learning outcomes are used to describe the exit level outcomes of qualifications and part qualifications. Clear articulation requirements and possibilities, quality assurance requirements, a purpose statement, the scope of the qualification or part qualification, and the accrediting and certifying quality council are stated in the registered qualifications or part qualifications. All these elements of the NQF enable comparisons and equivalence mapping to be done, even at the curriculum level, especially in cases where qualifications or part qualifications have been registered on different sub-frameworks or on regional or international NQFs.



16. The current situation in the post-school education and training system is that articulation blockages still pose a challenge to a truly integrated and articulated post-school system. Even though the NQF has enabling features to promote articulation, unfair and irrational barriers to access, articulation and credit transfer still exist.
17. This articulation policy is a strategic policy which places articulation firmly on the national education and training agenda, and holds SAQA and the QCs accountable to perform their roles in relation to articulation as stated in the NQF Act and the White Paper for Post-school Education and Training.

#### 4. THE PURPOSE AND INTENT OF THE ARTICULATION POLICY

18. The *purpose* of this articulation policy is to provide overarching principles and policy statements to enable the implementation of credible articulation across the South African education and training system.
19. The intention of the policy is to ensure that articulation happens within and between the three qualifications sub-frameworks across all levels of the NQF, and within and between education and training and skills development institutions.
20. This Articulation policy strengthens the implementation of the NQF objectives, especially to:
- a) Facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within education and training and career paths, (section 5 (1)(b) of the NQF Act); and
  - b) Accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities ((section 5 (1) (d) of the NQF Act).

#### 5. THE SCOPE OF THE ARTICULATION POLICY

21. The *scope* of this policy covers the education and training and skills development systems in South Africa, which includes all providers of education and training whether they are public, private, workplace-based or skills development providers. Learning, whether theoretical, simulated or applied needs to be viewed as different

types of learning reflected in dichotomies such as theory-praxis; education-training; workplace learning-class based learning; and so on. The different types of learning that define the post-school system form this continuum and the scope of this policy accommodates this continuum.

22. The scope of this policy extends to regional qualifications frameworks and bilateral agreements between countries to recognize each other's qualifications. These regional, multinational or international bilateral agreements are based on the recognition that knowledge and skills development needs are met both in South Africa and through teaching and learning undertaken beyond South Africa's borders.
23. This Policy directs the implementation of Articulation especially as regards the roles and functions of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), SAQA, the QCs, public and private higher education institutions, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) Colleges, community education and training (CET) colleges, private colleges and workplace training centres and skills development centres. That is all institutions established, accredited and/or registered in terms of the Higher Education and Training Act, The Continuing Education and Training Act and the Skills Development Act.
24. The scope of the policy affects directly or indirectly the following departments, organizations and individuals:
  - a. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to establish principles and guidelines for articulation;
  - b. SAQA, in its overarching coordinating role of the three sub-frameworks, which must provide guidance on articulation between the three sub-frameworks and must ensure that institutions avoid unfair and irrational barriers to acceptance and /or credit transfer;
  - c. The *three QCs* namely the CHE, Umalusi, and the QCTO to actively work in collaboration with each other across the sub-frameworks to ensure articulation and to develop, foster and maintain an integrated and

transparent national framework for the recognition of learning achievements;

- d. Other Government Departments;
- e. Employers;
- f. Education and training institutions; and
- g. Learners

## 6. THE POLICY

25. This section of the Articulation policy will deal with the Policy principles, the Policy statements, the roles and functions of the DHET, SAQA and the QCs, and providers of education and training to the applicable policies of the QCs on articulation affecting.

### 6.1 Articulation Policy Principles

26. These principles are established to address, *inter alia*, the socio-economic inequality, and exclusionary practices which remain a characteristic of our society. Our current education and training system has not provided sufficient solutions to the deeply embedded inequalities of opportunity. Further, this policy must be used to improve the efficiency of progressing up the NQF, for example the repetition qualifications on the same NQF level must be avoided as much as possible.

**Principle 1: Meet the needs of the economy:** there is a clear and unambiguous requirement that the education and training system must meet the needs of the economy. The education and training and skills development system must address the skills shortage directly and with vigor and pathways must be established for individuals to migrate through the system, engaging in new skills development and educational opportunities. This policy must be used to ensure that there will be seamless, on-going, lifelong learning approaches to learning so that it retains flexibility and relevance.

**Principle 2: Address ongoing lifelong learning:** Simple access to ongoing, lifelong learning to address social, community and labour market needs must be available through clear articulation routes.

**Principle 3: Address unemployment:** This policy must be used to ensure that unemployed or underemployed people have a route into the education and training system to gear them up for new employment opportunities. The education and training system must be accessible to individuals who are out of work so that they have the best possible opportunity to get into work or so that they can engage in productive labour in self-employment opportunities.

**Principle 4: Address inequality and establish systemic flexibility:** This policy must be used to ensure that the post-school education and training system has sufficient flexibility to facilitate migration of learners, especially those who remain significantly disadvantaged through deeply embedded inequalities of opportunity, through different parts of the system so that individuals have the opportunity to explore their potential and follow their occupational or career pathways unhindered. Such flexibility requires a fully articulated post-school system of education and training.

**Principle 5: Ensure equity and inclusiveness:** This policy must be used to ensure that every person has the right to access and engage in any form of learning suited to his/her personal, economic and community needs, and have his/her learning outcomes made visible and valued.

**Principle 6: Programmatic versus institutional articulation:** programmes must articulate and not institutions. The fact that programmes are offered by institutions must not determine whether programmes articulate or not.

**Principle 7: Enable success:** Articulation must be a very serious intervention in contributing to students' improved success, beyond only access into institutions and/or learning programmes. It is widely recognized that our education and training system is very wasteful with very high dropout rates, very low throughput rates in senior secondary, further and higher education and unnecessary repetition of learning, (such as post-Grade 12 students being placed in NC(V) Level 2). The current

system is not geared to allow students to find multiple pathways to success. The Adult Education and Training (AET) system has similar impediments. This policy must ensure that students are able to take multiple pathways to reach their preferred education destinations. Pathways must exist to allow students to build towards their education destinations

**Principle 8: Address exclusionary practices:** Arrangements for articulation must not unfairly advantage or disadvantage either the students entering courses and programmes of study with credit transfer or those students who enter directly without credits for prior learning. The education and training system must be accessible to individuals who are out of work so that they can have the best possible opportunity to get into work or so that they can engage in productive labour in self-employment opportunities.

**Principle 9: Value learning outcomes achieved through different routes equally:** The equal value of similar learning outcomes achieved through formal, non-formal and/or informal learning must be recognized and validated. Competences that every individual has accumulated through non-formal and informal learning should be treated on par with those obtained through formal learning towards the achievement of a qualification or part qualification.

**Principle 10: The nature of the qualification determines the relevant QC:** Quality promotion, assurance and management are essential threads through the post-school education and training system. Three Quality Councils are established. *The scope* of the QCs can be adjusted, whereby a QC may have an extended remit in the sense that they can quality assure qualifications on NQF levels from which they were previously restricted. *The nature and purpose* of the qualification will determine on which qualifications sub-framework the qualification or part qualification is registered. All basic and schooling qualifications must be registered on the General and further education and training qualifications sub-framework (GFETQSF); All academic/formative/professional/vocational qualifications and part-qualifications offered in the higher education sphere from NQF levels 5 to 10 must be registered on the higher education qualifications sub-framework (HEQSF); and all occupational,



and trade qualifications and part qualifications must be registered on the Occupational Qualifications Sub-framework (OQSF). Where there is uncertainty over which QC should quality assure a particular qualification, SAQA must, after consultation with the relevant QCs and the institution/s, speedily resolve the issue.

**Principle 11: Parity of esteem is an entrenched principle:** Parity of esteem among institutions requires the ability and commitment to communicate diplomatically, offering constructive suggestions, avoiding dictating of terms, and providing justification where articulation cannot happen.

**Principle 12: The education and training continuum:** learning, whether theoretical or practical must be considered a single continuum even though dichotomies are built into the ways that we discuss education - theory-praxis, education-training, workplace learning-class-based learning, and so on. The different types of learning that define the post-school system form this continuum. All programmes offered in the system must contain general education elements that will ensure the programmes that have a vocational bent will also provide students with the knowledge and learning tools to migrate into and out of different pathways of education and training.

**Principle 13: Simplicity:** The system must be a simple one with simple rules so that the educational and skills pathways are easily understood and accepted. Programmes must articulate and not institutions. The fact that programmes are offered by particular institutions must not determine whether programmes articulate or not. The number of qualifications registered on the NQF must be simplified. For example there are cases where 10 to 12 different qualifications have been developed around the sub-field. The qualifications themselves should be designed with exit level outcomes that are comparable with other similar qualifications, and comply with the requirements of the NQF level descriptors. Institutional-specific curriculum design must address diversification and differentiation aspects of the registered qualifications. This would avoid duplication of qualifications registered on the NQF, and barriers to articulation.

**Principle 14: Curriculum and articulation:** For articulation to work there must be effective articulation at the systemic, programmatic and curricular levels. Curriculum design teams in consultation with employer groups must design broad curriculum guidelines on a programme-by-programme basis so that articulation is optimized. Programmes must be designed with horizontal, vertical and diagonal articulation so as to ensure that they do not become 'dead-ends'. SAQA is to ensure that all qualifications (new and those being re-registered) have a statement on the articulation opportunities and possibilities.

**Principle 15: Ensure credible and fair procedures and practices for validating learning:** Criteria, procedures and practices for assessing, and validating learning must be credible, relevant, reliable, fair and transparent.

**Principle 16: Compare courses based on credible methods:** Equivalent means "equal in value, amount, importance, corresponding, having the same meaning or result". It is unlikely that a course, programme or qualification offered at different institutions will ever be the same; at best they could be comparable. In assessing equivalence, the degree to which content and outcomes match is crucial and the level descriptors will assist in this instance. The discipline and programme contexts also dictate the relative importance of the similarity.

**Principle 17: Award credit transfer based on similarity:** This principle refers to the act of awarding credit on transfer and implies the acceptance of a course in place of a course offered at the receiving institution, or in place of an institutional or programme requirement. Together with the principle of equivalence, this principle underscores the fact that the course to be transferred does not have to be identical to the course for which transfer credit is granted.

**Principle 18: There must be a core curriculum for each subject in learning programmes** which leads towards the achievement of NQF Level 4 qualifications; i.e. NATED programmes/National certificates such as the National Certificate Vocational (NC(V)); National Senior Certificate (NSC); the Amended Senior Certificate; the National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA), and Trade and Occupational certificates will be underpinned by a core curriculum where the emphasis is on a

continuum from general/formative to vocationally-oriented to vocational. This principle supports the notion that NQF levels 4 and 5 qualifications play a critical role in creating an articulated system.

**Principle 19: The curriculum must be modularized** to enable and enhance the opportunities for people who work and learn to do so seamlessly and exit a module/short course with credits. This arrangement will also simplify the time-tabling process in TVET and CET colleges to accommodate two or even three sessions per day.

**Principle 20: The theoretical, practice and work-based learning components** must be weighted in terms of notional hours and credits to ensure articulation and CAT opportunities.

**Principle 21: Standardized admission requirements for similar pathways must be introduced.** Unfair discrimination should not be practiced. Admission requirements into the different institutions such as TVET colleges and Universities or CETCs must be fair and transparent. The requirements for admission into higher certificates, diplomas and degrees for candidates holding a NCV at NQF level 4 are regarded by many as being discriminatory against such learners, in terms of the different requirements for those with a NSC at NQF level 4. Provisions and restrictions placed on applicants for certificate, diploma and degree programmes must be fair, transparent, and academically defensible.

**Principle 22: Centrality of the NQF Level 5 qualifications:** NQF Level 5 qualifications are central to the post-education and training system; therefore each of the QCs has to develop Level 5 qualifications with sufficient flexibility and articulation to meet the enormous demand for them.

## 6.2 Articulation Policy statements

27. The post-school education and training system must be articulated by design rather than by default. The NQF creates a framework for articulation between and within the three sub-frameworks, but articulated learning pathways across NQF levels and sub-frameworks are minimal. Qualifications and part qualifications submitted to



SAQA for registration must indicate articulation routes which underpin learning pathways and career pathways.

28. Articulation must be a key mechanism to enable implementation of the NQF objectives. The objectives of the NQF are designed to contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large. The objectives are to:
- a) Create a single integrated national framework for learning achievement;
  - b) Facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths;
  - c) Enhance the quality of education and training; and
  - d) Accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities.
29. Articulation comprises a number of related policies and processes; these are RPL, CAT and career and learning pathway planning and development towards lifelong learning. Articulation must be an essential component of an education and training system that operates as the centre-piece of an egalitarian society with a complex multi-dimensional economy.
30. Articulation must be a key mechanism to construct a fully articulated education and training system that resonates with the human development skills required in a democratic society, vibrant communities. Articulation is important to address challenges of building a more equitable society and providing all South Africans with the opportunity to grow to their full potential.
31. For articulation to work across the post-school education and training system there must be effective articulation at the systemic, programmatic and curricular levels. Clear steering mechanisms include the roles and functions of the stakeholders and role-players, such as DHET, SAQA, CHE, Umalusi, and the QCTO, and the education and training and skills development institutions.

32. SAQA and the Quality Councils must re-align their articulation policies to this policy. Their respective policies must provide clear mechanisms and principles for a national roll-out plan which actively engages all post-school teaching and learning institutions in recognizing, agreeing to and implementing articulation principles stated in the policies of SAQA and the QCs.
33. Articulation must be multi-dimensional and must cut across sub-frameworks and institutional types. Its purpose must be to provide access to and from the sub-frameworks, rather than viewing articulation as uni-directional in narrow terms of vertical and linear progression in a learning pathway.
34. Occupational or career pathways are not linear in nature, and therefore neither are the associated learning pathways. The articulation policies of SAQA and the QC's must align with the Minister's Articulation Policy, must create learning pathways within and across the three sub-frameworks to address the critical knowledge and skills shortages in the country. SAQA, in collaboration with the DHET, must ensure that credible and sustainable regional, African continental and global articulation agreements are established.
35. A key enabler of movement into more advanced levels of study is the creation of an adequate conceptual platform at earlier levels in the learning pathway. The strengthening of *curricula* to enhance procedural knowledge with underpinning knowledge principles is important and must be addressed in the transitional phase of development of articulation pathways and occupational pathways.
36. Both recognition of prior learning (RPL) and credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) are enabling mechanisms for articulation and must be primary focus areas when designing the articulation apparatus and mechanisms.
37. Quality assurance plays a significant role in the delivery of teaching and learning, and must be improved to ensure the credibility of qualifications at all institutions to enable articulation to happen. The articulation policy of SAQA and those of the QCs must support the notion of equivalence and/or parity of esteem in terms of

programme delivery, assessments and clear quality assurance systems. The principle of parity of esteem of qualifications at NQF levels 4 and 5 must be stated and implemented. A more integrated and standardized approach with less distinction between programmes at NQF levels 4 and 5 must be addressed in the transition phase of implementing this policy.

38. Articulation affects learners not qualifications. This must be a key reason for parity of esteem to be addressed, using the NQF levels and level descriptors, learning outcomes and curriculum considerations in the curriculum design phase, as mechanisms to establish parity of esteem for articulation purposes.
39. The Articulation policies of SAQA and the QC's must put checks and balances in place to ensure that girls and women, specifically in rural communities, victims of gender-based violence, and other social challenges are given adequate support and encouragement to access into, and participate in learning programmes.

### **6.3 Roles and responsibilities for the implementation of Articulation**

40. This national Articulation Policy provides for roles and responsibilities for a number of role-players and stakeholders. These are the DHET, SAQA, the three QCs and education and training providers and institutions.
41. SAQA and the QCs must ensure that their articulation policies hold their users accountable to implementing the principles and policies of articulation. These users include but are not limited to: education and training providers; qualification and curriculum developers; assessing and examining bodies; skills development providers; and professional bodies.
42. The post-school education and training system must have a clearly laid out philosophy and set of policies and procedures that guide the construction of an articulated system. Any other policies and procedures that the DHET or any other

department formulates must take cognizance of and provide support for articulation policies and procedures.

### 6.3.1 Responsibilities of DHET

43. DHET will be responsible to:

- a) Monitor and evaluate the measure to which articulation is implemented across the post-school education and training system, based on this Policy and the NQF Implementation Plan 2016/17 to 2019/20; the annual Ministerial Guidelines and reports from SAQA and the QCs;
- b) Provide the policy framework, policy and guidelines for articulation to occur across the post-school education and training system.
- c) Simplify and clarify the roles and functions of the entities responsible to further develop and implement articulation in an evolving post-school education and training system;
- d) Establish and publish articulation principles, and review these when required;
- e) Require articulation in occupational and career pathways and associated learning pathways which straddle sub-frameworks and NQF levels horizontally, diagonally and vertically;
- f) Commission research into new theory and emerging praxis regarding articulation development and implementation across the education and training system;
- g) Provide guidelines to improve articulation implementation;
- h) Actively implement career development and advice based on clear articulation principles; and
- i) Work with other government departments to remove outdated policies and legislation which hampers articulation.
- j) Consider advice from SAQA and the QCs about all aspects related to the further development and implementation of articulation to ensure that the objectives of the NQF Act are achieved.
- k) Receive and respond to reports from SAQA and the QCs about the implementation of articulation.

- l) Lobby the Department of Labour to ensure that parity of esteem of qualifications are taken into account in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act so that for example the minimum qualifications required for appointment to a job must include qualifications that are able to articulate to those listed as a requirement. For example if a National Senior Certificate is required, the requirement should include all equivalent qualifications such as the NCV, NASCA and the Trade Certificate.

### 6.3.2 Responsibilities of SAQA:

44. SAQA will be responsible to:

- a) In terms of Section 13 ((h)(i) and (ii) of the NQF Act and after consultation with the QCs, determine the criteria for articulation and consider whether these criteria have been applied in qualifications and part qualifications submitted to SAQA for registration on the NQF;
- b) On a date arrived at in consultation with the Minister, SAQA is to ensure that all new qualifications, and those submitted for re-registration, have statements about articulation by the QCs. If no articulation possibilities exist, reasons must be provided by the QCs;
- c) Provide overarching leadership to the QCs in terms of articulation processes and practices to ensure that an integrated and articulated education and training system is in place;
- d) Monitor and evaluate the implementation of articulation by receiving reports from the QCs and provide annual reports to the Minister, after consultation with the QCs;
- e) In terms of Section 13(1)(a) (b) (e) and (f) of the NQF Act, resolve systemic challenges and incongruities as they occur, address deficiencies to produce a well-articulated system that brings about linkages between its different parts, where there are no silos and dead ends. Where the need arises, advise the Minister about possible amendments to legislation or the publication of regulations;

- f) Harmonize and coordinate the work of the Quality Councils to ensure that conflicts are eliminated or managed in terms of articulation as they occur;
- g) Build a well-articulated system by providing guidance on articulation between the three sub-frameworks by within 12 months of publication of this policy or on full motivation, a date arrived at in consultation with the Minister;
- h) Register qualifications which provide credible learning pathways supporting occupational and career pathways; and
- i) Make recommendations to the Minister about appeals through which decisions of SAQA, QC's and users in regard to articulation are heard and resolved as they occur.

### 6.3.3 Responsibilities of the QCs

45. The QCs will be responsible to:

- a) Work collaboratively with SAQA, within 12 months of publication of this policy or on full motivation a date arrived at in consultation with the Minister, to review all current qualifications to ensure they contain clear articulation routes. Where articulation is not possible, reasons must be given;
- b) In terms of Section 27 (h) (iii) and (iv) of the NQF Act, ensure that all new qualifications and part qualifications submitted to SAQA for registration contain clear articulation routes. Where articulation is not possible reasons must be provided;
- c) Work towards simplifying the NQF by controlling the proliferation of institutional qualifications submitted for registration towards more generic qualifications which provide for curriculum diversification;
- d) Work with education and training institutions to develop and implement new progressive access, articulation and CAT policies within 12 months from the publication of this policy;
- e) Monitor, evaluate and report on implementation of articulation across the education and training system annually to the Minister and SAQA;
- f) Ensure that Articulation is included as a principle within their quality assurance policy frameworks and assessment frameworks;



- g) Require the removal of unnecessary and outdated access and CAT policies in the institutions within 12 months of the publication of this policy or on full motivation a date arrived at in consultation with the Minister;
- h) Monitor and evaluate the quality, validity and relevance of curriculum development by institutions to enhance articulation opportunities;
- i) Identify and eliminate dead-ends for learners as they occur;
- j) Work with DHET to develop coordinated occupational and learning pathways;
- k) Work directly with the accredited education and training providers to ensure that these providers have and are implementing fair and credible articulation policies in line with this articulation policy and guidelines within 12 months from the publication of this policy or on full motivation at date arrived at in consultation with the Minister; and
- l) Provide quarterly reports to SAQA for inclusion in the Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) Committee report about the implementation of articulation across their accredited provider base. The first report must be provided at the end of the first full financial quarter after the publication of this policy due by end of the month succeeding this quarter and quarterly thereafter.

46. SAQA and QCs articulation policies aligned to this policy outlining the responsibilities of education and training providers, and qualifications developers must be published within 1 financial year after the publication of this policy.

#### **6.3.4 The Responsibilities of education and training providers**

47. Education and Training providers must develop institutional Articulation policies, which must address but are not limited to the following:
- a) Support for articulation, RPL and CAT by a date to be determined in consultation with their QCs, but no later than one (1) financial year after the publication of the SAQA and the QCs articulation policies;
  - b) Establish inter-institutional partnerships and arrangements through which vertical, lateral or diagonal articulation between two or more (cluster) institutions are anchored on articulation agreements. These agreements will be dependent on parity of esteem principles and the mutual esteem of institutions

for each other, in terms of degree of equivalence, programme quality, assessment and quality assurance.

- c) Establish intra-institutional articulation which can be one course to another, one programme to another, or one department/faculty to another. Such arrangements must be anchored in articulation agreements and must be dependent on the mutual esteem of institutions or faculties and departments in terms of equivalence, programme quality, assessment and quality assurance;
- d) Develop progressive quality assurance policies and processes aligned to the SAQA and QCs CAT and assessment policies; and
- e) Ensure that learning and career pathway opportunities are included in inter-and intra-institutional collaborative partnerships.

## **7. ARRANGEMENTS TOWARDS FULL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

- 48. The DHET will support or invest in a dedicated articulation sub-directorate or articulation office within the DHET for the purposes of guiding implementation, enhancing continuous policy improvements, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of articulation across the system, based on reports coordinated by SAQA in consultation with the QCs.
- 49. SAQA and the QCs must be re-imagined to give sustenance to articulation rather than the other way around. At a systemic level there is a critical need for SAQA to emerge as the overarching body responsible to ensure that qualifications and part qualifications submitted for registration on the NQF comprise clear articulation opportunities and routes, or mitigating reasons re provided if articulation is not possible;
- 50. The QCs consult with one another on the formulation of qualifications after consultation with relevant bodies and industries to find common ground for articulation.



51. SAQA and the QCs to ensure that their policies provide for curriculum articulation which could require curriculum design teams, in consultation with employer groups must design broad curriculum guidelines on a programme by programme basis so that articulation is optimized. Curriculum design teams should take this policy, as well as SAQA and QC's policies on articulation into account when they conduct their work.
52. Prior to 2018, an environmental scan must be undertaken, to identify which policies and processes need to be re-aligned across the post-school education and training system.
53. Research must be conducted by DHET, in collaboration with SAQA and the QCs, to identify current praxis in diverse modes of teaching and learning, open learning, massive online open courses (MOOCs) to inform institutions about best practice, and to encourage institutions to implement these modes of delivery in a phased-in approach.
54. The entry points for NQF level 2 must be clarified between SAQA and the QCs, and the sub-frameworks amended to ensure articulation routes can be implemented. It is proposed that the entry point for NQF level 2 pathways must be either Grade nine (9) or the General Education and Training Certificate (GETCA). The GETCA especially must ensure articulation pathways into TVET programmes offered at CETs and into the skills development programmes offered through the SETA skills development system.
55. Clarity must be provided by SAQA and the QCs, especially the QCTO, and widespread advocacy and communications must be done by the Career Development Services, SAQA, the QCs and education and training providers, to inform learners about occupational and vocational learning pathway opportunities for learners who exit school at the end of compulsory schooling, i.e. at the end of grade 9 or the end of NQF level 1. Access will be into NQF Level 2.

56. SAQA and the QCs must ensure that the quality assurance regime is simplified for the delivery and assessment of post-school qualifications and part qualifications. The SAQA assessment policy must underpin quality assurance by QCs and within institutions.
57. SAQA must provide the Minister with advice, after consultation with the QCs, about re-allocation of quality council mandates in terms of the following envisaged scope:
- a) The quality council responsible for Grades 10, 11 and 12 in the schooling system must remain Umalusi working with the Department of Basic Education (DBE);
  - b) The quality council for NATED programmes N1 to N3 (or envisaged new programmes) and the NC (V) programmes must be the QCTO. The QCTO is already the quality council for the N4 to N6 programmes;
  - c) In a phased approach, replace the NATED N1 to N6 programmes with occupational certificates from NQF level 2 to 6; and
  - d) The learning programmes delivered at TVET colleges and CETs must comprise theory and simulated practice and then articulate into a workplace-based component.

## 8. CONCLUSION

58. A system is envisaged that is made up of a diverse range of educational institutions and institutional types that will expand considerably over the next years to cater for the millions of people who need its benefits. It will be a system that must provide paths for articulation between various qualifications, and there should be no dead-ends for students; there should always be a way for someone to improve their qualifications without undue repetition. Meeting the needs of learners for all ages and levels must be a central purpose of an integrated and articulated education and training system.
- 59 Core drivers of the articulation policy are lifelong learning, simplicity, flexibility, credibility, recognition and quality. The articulation policy framework, and the principles and guidelines contained in this articulation policy are meant to support

these core drivers. Its main policy directive is to guide all stakeholders and role-players about articulation to contribute to building a developmental state with a post-school system that can assist in building a fair, equitable, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.