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5 September 2012

Chairperson
Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training
P O Box 15
CAPE TOWN
8000

ATTENTION: Mr Anele Kabingesi

BY E-MAIL: akabingesi@parliament.gov.za

Dear Sir

**INVITATION FOR INPUTS ON THE HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING LAWS AMENDMENT BILL
AND THE FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGES AMENDMENT BILL**

In response to the invitation by the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training for inputs on the Higher Education Laws Amendment Bill and the Further Education and Training Colleges Amendment Bill, SAQA's comments are attached hereto.

Should you have any further queries to these comments, please do not hesitate to contact:

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(Chief Executive Officer)

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Yours faithfully

J S SAMUELS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

SAQA'S MISSION

"To ensure the development and implementation of a National Qualifications Framework that contributes to the full development of each learner and to the social and economic development of the nation at large"

HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING LAWS AMENDMENT BILL, 2012

Amendment of Section 13 of the National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008 (NQF Act):

SAQA supports the amendment of Section 13(2) of the NQF Act to amend the date by which the Annual Report and Financial Statements must be submitted to the Minister, in order for that date to be in accordance with the prescripts of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (PFMA), being by the end of **August** annually.

FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGES AMENDMENT BILL, 2012

Insertion of Chapter 7 (A): South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training

Specific Comments – Section 43B (1) Functions of the Institute:

SAQA understands the rationale for the establishment of the Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education. The following specific comments are offered in respect of the envisioned functions of the Institute:

1. Section 43B(1)(c) provides for assistance and support to colleges in the development of learning, teaching, and assessment materials. SAQA agrees that public colleges need support in this regard. The use of open, and distance education resources be beneficial in this respect.
2. SAQA supports the principle that the Institute does research, as contemplated in Sections 43B (f) and (g), but cautions that such research will have to be co-ordinated so that there is no duplication in research, or that it does not encroach on the research mandates of other bodies.
3. The move for the institute to develop material for career guidance (Section 43B (i)) is appreciated, although the capacity and funding required for this enormous task should be further investigated. A more feasible phrasing of the clause might be: *contribute career guidance material to the national career guidance system*. The use of open resources may also be useful to access and make accessible material to the national career guidance system.
4. It is noted that the Institute must also *“develop capacity and upgrade college teaching staff skills in vocational and continuing education and training”*. SAQA strongly supports that this support is given to colleges, however, thought must be given to the role of the Universities of Technology, as this responsibility has also been assigned to them.
5. The current phrasing of Section 43B(1)(l) is not quite appropriate, and we propose that it is amended to read: *“Facilitate access to management, leadership, and operational training at all levels for Sector Education and Training Authorities ...”*
6. SAQA acknowledges the need to facilitate dialogue between professional bodies (*councils*) and education and training institutions and the Department of Higher Education and Training, but SAQA’s and the Quality Councils’ roles according to the NQF Act, should not be overlooked.

General Comments

1. It is noted that a wide scope is proposed for the Institute, and care will need to be taken that it does not overlap with the mandates of other organisations and Departments.
2. Lastly, it is suggested that the financial and resource implications of the establishment of the Institute, especially considering its wide scope be further investigated