هيئــة تقويــم التعليــم
Education Evaluation Commission

الإطار السعودي للمؤهلات
Saudi Arabia Qualifications Framework

SAQF Awarding Body Standards for Registration

Version 5

Contract No: 469

Contents

Key Terms

Accreditation	Formal certification by a recognized authority that a program or an institution meets required standards. To be accredited, institutions or programs must comply with accepted standards of good practice.
Assessment	The process used to determine a learner's achievement of intended learning outcomes for a given qualification and includes evaluation of a range of appropriate evidence.
Assessment Methods	The methods used to determine a learner's achievement of intended learning outcomes for a given qualification.
Assessment Report	A report created by the SAQF Registration Team that states their recommendations on registration, and outlines the key factors and reasons for their decision.
Awarding Body	A competent body entitled by its establishing legislation or any other formal mandate from a regulatory authority, to regulate, quality assure, and approve, within its remit, the development and awarding of programs/ qualifications.
Awarding Body Handbook	A supplementary guide to the SAQF Awarding Body Standards that provides further guidance, details and explanation of the SAQF standards in practice.
Awarding Body Register	Awarding Bodies that comply with the SAQF standards and listed in the Awarding Body Register (ABR).
Candidate Organization	An organization that is in the process of applying to become an SAQF Registered Awarding Body.
Certification	The formal authentication of a learner's achievement of a qualification.
Classification of Qualifications	Categorization on the basis of education sector, size, level and learning outcomes.
Component Design Specification	The documents which describe the specific details of the learning outcomes, performance criteria and assessment method of qualifications. They are used by education and

	training providers to structure the learning experience. Common terms used for this in KSA are course, unit, or module.
Conflict of Interest	A situation where a person in an official position or role decides on issues in which he/she might have vested (private) interests.
Education and Training Provider	The institution that provides delivers a qualification that is certificated by an Awarding Body (in case the Awarding Body itself is not a provider).
Evaluation	The ability to judge the value of material for a given purpose based on definite criteria. See also **Self Evaluation**.
Key Tasks of an Awarding Body	The essential primary tasks of an Awarding Body consisting of: qualification development, qualification certification, learner assessment oversight, data management and qualification review.
Learning Credit	Credits are a measure of learning volume. 1 credit equals 10 learning hours. Credit is accumulated through the achievement of learning outcomes as a learner makes progress through a learning program.
Learning Outcomes	Learning outcomes identify what the learner will know and be able to do as the result of learning towards the achievement of a unit, course or qualification. The expression of the set of knowledge, skills and competences a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.
Lifelong Learning	Learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences, within a personal, civic, social and or employment related perspective.
Oversight	A process of monitoring and assuring that the associated education and training provider carries out all the necessary activities so that the qualification meets the SAQF Standards.
Partial Achievement	Achievement of a single or multiple component[s] of a qualification that was verified through assessment.

Performance Criteria	A statement that defines the level of performance required for the achievement of a learning outcome.
Progression	The process that allows learners to move through SAQF qualification levels either horizontally, at the same level, or vertically, to a higher level, through accumulating the required number of learning credits.
Progression Routes	The vertical and horizontal routes through the SAQF that learners can choose and take to navigate through their learning experience and gain qualifications.
Qualification Design and Development	The process of building the learning content and component structure of a qualification that addresses an identified need that is supported by stakeholders.
Qualification Design Specification	The document that broadly describes the relevance, purpose and structure of a qualification – the end product of the qualification design process. Common terms used for this in KSA are program, course.
Qualifications	The formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.
Qualifications Register	The list or database of all registered qualifications and units or courses based on their specified characteristics.
Quality	The degree to which a product or process satisfies a specified set of attributes or criteria. SAQF standards describe the level of expected quality of a qualification and the operations of Awarding Bodies.
Quality Assurance	Processes and procedures for ensuring that qualifications, assessment and program delivery meet registration standards. The activities that aim at safeguarding quality. Quality assurance assesses *what is done* (fitness of purpose) and *how it is done* (fitness for purpose).

Quality Assurance System	A collection of processes and procedures by which an institution ensures that the quality of educational processes is maintained and the institution is able to satisfy itself and its stakeholders.
Recognition of Prior Learning	An assessment process that involves the evaluation of relevant prior learning and experience (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) of an individual, to determine if any specific qualification learning outcomes have already been achieved.
Registered Awarding Body	Organizations that comply with the SAQF standards and listed in the Awarding Body Register (ABR).
Registered Qualifications	Qualifications that comply with the SAQF standards and listed in the Qualifications Register (QR).
Registration	The formal administration process for registering Awarding Bodies and qualifications through the internal SAQF organizational team.
Registration Management Committee	A high level management group consisting of senior personnel from SAQF and external stakeholders.
Registration Period	The number of years which an Awarding Body and Qualifications will be registered on the SAQF.
Registration Team	The SAQF department that is responsible for the management, planning and administration of the registration procedures.
SAQF Responsible Officer	A senior person within the Awarding Body that serves as the authoritative point of contact in relation to all SAQF matters.
Self-Assessment	An internal process that aims at assessing if a candidate organization complies with the SAQF standards in order to determine its readiness for SAQF registration application
Self-Evaluation	An evaluation process that an Awarding Body performs of its own operations in order to identify its strengthens and areas for improvement in relation to the SAQF standards.

Standards	Specifications and criteria which detail prescribed outcomes for qualifications or qualification institutions.
Verification	A process for proving a policy, procedure or statement is true or accurate.

Introduction

SAQF Definition

The Saudi Arabia Qualifications Framework is a unified inclusive system that raises the quality of national qualifications. It sets criteria and procedures for the development and classification of qualifications based on learning outcomes for national and international recognition.

SAQF Aims

The Saudi Arabia Qualifications Framework aims to:

1. Build an integrated national framework that includes all qualifications in the education and training sectors.

2. Set national unified criteria for learning outcomes based on knowledge, skills and competences.

3. Articulate a common language to ensure the transparency of quality criteria and assist comprehension.

4. Support comparison of the different types of qualifications to ensure consistency and accuracy of qualifications.

5. Contribute to improving employment capabilities and enhance workforce competitiveness to participate in the social and economic development.

6. Raise the quality and increase the trust of qualifications.

7. Gain national and international recognition and promote lifelong learning.

8. Develop flexible educational, training and employment progression routes by facilitating enrolment, progression and transferability.

9. Use classifications to assemble similar qualifications in unified levels to help know the quality, the strength, and the purpose of these qualifications.

10. Provide a national register of qualifications and Awarding Bodies that have met SAQF standards.

Awarding Body and SAQF Registration

An Awarding Body is a SAQF nationally registered competent body entitled by its establishing legislation or any other formal mandate from a regulatory authority, to regulate, quality assure, and approve, within its remit, the awarding of SAQF registered qualifications.

The SAQF registration gives an organization the status of Awarding Body, thus an organization can be referred to as "**Awarding Body**" only upon registration. Until then it is referred to as the candidate organization.

Awarding Body Key Tasks

A SAQF registered Awarding Body is responsible for the management of the following key tasks:

- developing qualifications;
- managing qualifications;
- reviewing qualifications;
- quality assuring qualifications;
- certification of qualifications;
- learner registration; and
- providing advice and guidance to education and training providers and learners.

Scope

The SAQF Awarding Body standards for registration are applicable to candidate organizations that are aspiring to award qualifications in general education, higher education, and technical and vocational education and training (including those offered by employers).

Purposes

The SAQF Awarding Body standards for registration, do not aim at uniformity but allow for a diversity of approaches within a unified, integrated and transparent system. The main purposes of the SAQF Awarding Body standards for registration are therefore to:

- provide a framework for consistent and systematic arrangements that an Awarding Body must ensure for the development, review and certification of qualifications;

- strengthen public confidence in the value and credibility of Awarding Bodies and the qualifications they offer;

- increase cooperation between the Awarding Bodies and stakeholders (especially employers) in developing and reviewing qualifications;

- promote transparency and flexibility in the pathways leading to the attainment of qualifications; and

- promote the alignment of Awarding Bodies with modern, international best practice in the area of qualifications frameworks, adapted to the specific context of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Fitness for Purpose

Fitness for purpose is a key principle of the Awarding Body standards for registration. It refers to *being well equipped to do the job or perform the tasks for fulfilling the designated role or purpose.* In the registration process the candidate organization will have to demonstrate the fulfilment of criteria that make it fit to perform its key tasks. Thus, the registration team will verify that the arrangements of the candidate organization are fit for achieving the aims and outcomes that the candidate organization is supposed to pursue. The ways in which different Awarding Bodies will achieve fitness for purpose might vary. The fitness for purpose principle applies also directly to qualifications and quality assurance. In this respect the candidate organization will be asked to demonstrate that it has in place a quality assurance system for its qualifications and that assessment procedures and methods verify whether the stated learning outcomes of a qualification correspond to what the learners achieve.

Relationship of an Awarding Body to other Institutions

An Awarding Body is an organization that is empowered to develop, review and award qualifications. This function should not be confused with similar functions such as

accreditation, recognition of qualifications or license to practice, which reside with certain professional organizations or other governmental entities.

The SAQF registration of Awarding Bodies does not require information with regard to the development and management of teaching, curriculum, learning environment, human resources (including teaching staff), accessibility, learner support services, finance, planning, partnerships, or the governance and management of any delivery aspects. These are aspects that concern the education and training provider and their external quality assurance agency, in the sectors where it exists.

However, there are activities that are integral to the maintenance of the quality of qualifications. Hence, in case an Awarding Body itself is not an education and training provider, it is expected to monitor any associated education and training provider[s] in order to assure the standards for the registration of qualifications are maintained and implemented.

SAQF Awarding Body Register

Candidate organizations that meet the SAQF Awarding Body standards will be listed on the SAQF Awarding Body Register. The registration is valid for 3 years. Prior to the expiry date, the Awarding Body must undergo the re-registration process in order to retain the status of the Awarding Body. SAQF authority reserves the right to revise the registration expiry date.

The registration of the Awarding Body is pursued in order for the organizations to register and award registered qualifications. Besides the SAQF Awarding Body Register, the SAQF also maintains a register for Qualifications offered in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Qualification Register is a database that holds the details of all registered qualifications that are awarded by a Registered Awarding Body. Qualification registration follows the same principles as the registration of an Awarding Body. A registered qualification is a confirmation that it has undergone a qualitative review process. Each registered qualification complies with the SAQF Qualification Standards and includes referencing an SAQF level and a calculation of the learning credits (the amount of learning hours) required for achievement of stated learning outcomes.

The Qualification Register may be used to identify and authenticate a qualification, and is expected to become the primary source of information for prospective learners, their parents and other advisors for career guidance.

Advantages of Awarding Body Registration

A registered Awarding Body provides stakeholders with a guarantee of quality in its systems and operations for the development, review and monitoring of qualifications. The registration process assures that an Awarding Body is compliant with the 10 standards and their detailed criteria. Hence, the registration is a confirmation of the fulfillment of minimum standards required for developing, reviewing and awarding qualifications.

The SAQF register ensures that the Awarding Body qualifications are fit for purpose and the organizations meets the SAQF national standards. This is beneficial for enhancing public trust in qualifications and assist stakeholders in the use of qualifications for various purposes. The Awarding Body Register is of special benefit to learners when planning their learning or career pathways, and to employers in recruitment processes and staff planning.

Awarding Body Standards, Criteria, Guidance and Evidence

To become a SAQF nationally recognized Awarding Body, the candidate organization must comply with 10 standards which outline the characteristics of expected quality and performance, and confirm its fitness-for-purpose.

The Awarding Body registration is an evaluative review process initially carried out by the candidate organization as a self-assessment exercise, and then scrutinized for compliance with SAQF standards. A registered Awarding Body must ensure that its processes and procedures, operational practices, the design of its qualifications and quality assurance practices, comply with the principles, standards and procedures of the SAQF. An Awarding Body must award qualifications registered in the SAQF Qualification Register. If they fail to submit qualifications for registration within the designated period after obtaining the status of Awarding Body, the registration status may be suspended (see below the Guidance on the SAQF Registration of the Awarding Bodies).

Awarding Body Standards for Registration

A major function of the SAQF is to set standards for the way in which qualifications are developed, managed, reviewed and certified in order to maintain their validity and consistency. These standards relate to the registration of an Awarding Body that carries out these tasks as well as to the qualifications themselves. Awarding Bodies are evaluated against the SAQF registration standards to ensure they are 'fit for purpose'.

The standards address three main categories:
1. Awarding Body arrangements and formal requirements.
2. Qualification management.
3. Ensuring quality.

The SAQF Awarding Body standards for registration has been established to ensure that appropriate systems are in place to develop, manage, review and certify qualifications. However, there are further aspects relating to the quality of Awarding

Bodies that go beyond the requirements of the SAQF. These requirements would normally be assessed, evaluated or accredited by other authorities and agencies (e.g. external quality assurance agencies), which are looking at a wider scope of an Awarding Body activities.

Criteria

Each SAQF standard encompasses one or more criteria that set out in more detail the conditions to be fulfilled in order for a candidate organization to be registered and achieve the status of Awarding Body. Once a candidate organization fulfills all the criteria under each SAQF Awarding Body standards for registration, then the organization will become a SAQF nationally recognized and registered Awarding Body.

Guidance

The SAQF Awarding Body standards and criteria for registration are accompanied by guidance. The purpose of the guidance is to inform the process and requirements that a candidate organization must fulfil in order to be registered as an Awarding Body. They assist in interpreting criteria and give examples, descriptions and explanations of the standards and criteria.

The guidance supports a consistent and coherent interpretation and implementation of the standards for registration, in order to ensure the reliability and authority of an Awarding Body registered on the SAQF and thereby a minimum level of quality exists throughout the education and training system within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Further supportive guidance on the SAQF Awarding Body standards is supplemented by the **SAQF Awarding Body Handbook**, which provides a more detailed explanation to the overall requirements of the registration and re-registration process.

Evidence

The candidate organization will have to submit evidence of compliance with each of the listed criteria. In order to assist the candidate organizations in collecting and selecting the appropriate evidence, the guidance in this document is supplemented by suggested typical evidence. It should be noted that the evidence type varies pending on the nature of the awarding body. Therefore, the provided examples are just illustrative and do not prescribe the exact evidence to be submitted.

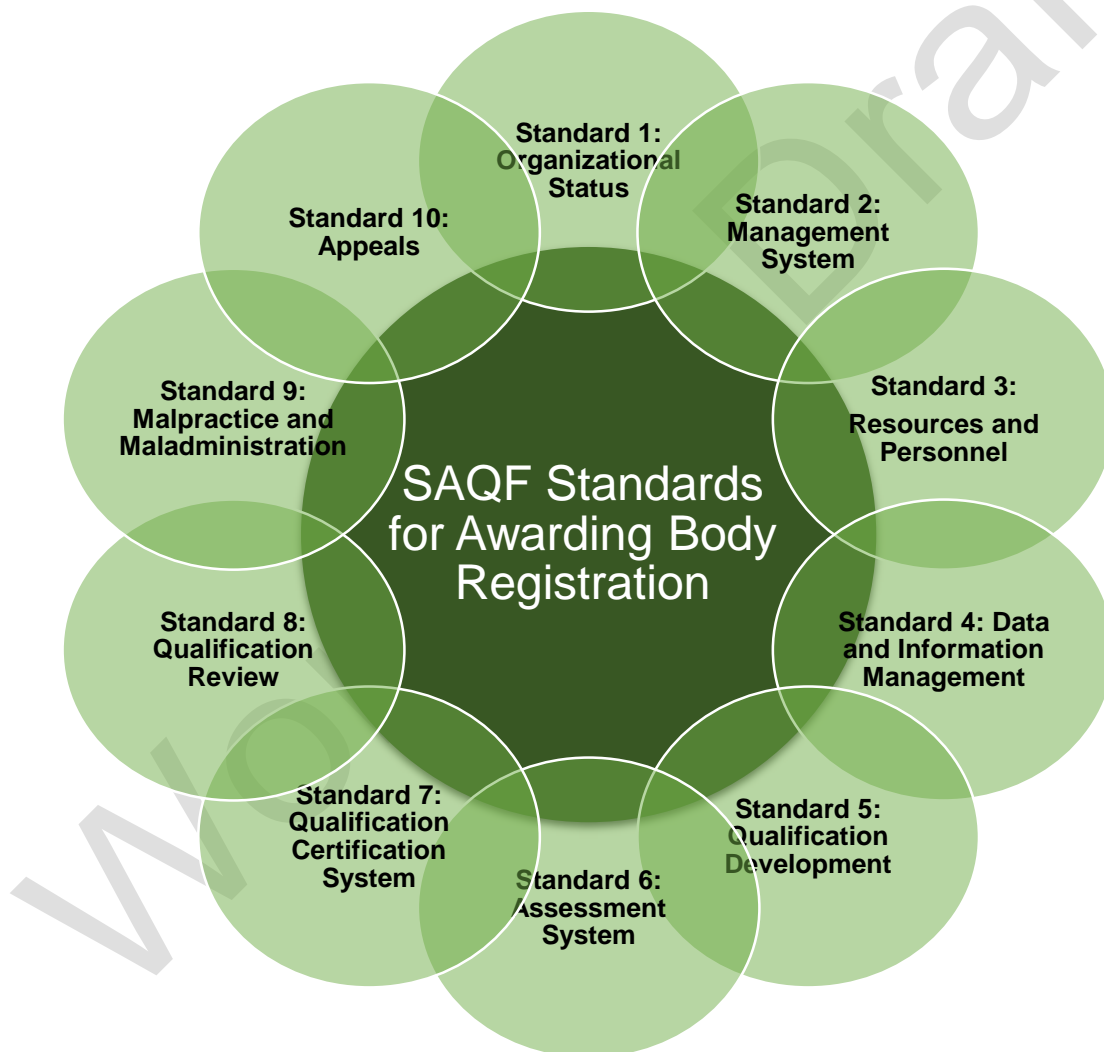**SAQF Awarding Body Standards for Registration**

Figure 1: Schematic model of standards underpinning Awarding Body Registration

Awarding Body Standards, Criteria, Guidance and Evidence

This section is concerned with listing the standards, criteria and identifying the typical range of evidence that should be presented to support compliance with each of the awarding standards. The framework lists each of the standards and their individual criteria provides some general guidance; and an indication of typical evidence necessary to validate compliance with them. Where it may be useful, reference is made to the SAQF Qualification Standards.

Standard 1: Organizational Status

Awarding Bodies must be officially established organizations involved in education or training within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
1.1	The organization must be officially established in accordance with all legal conditions and regulations allowing it to operate in KSA.	A public or private entity must demonstrate that it is officially established within the legal system of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is the whole organisation as a legal entity that must make the application to be registered as an SAQF Awarding Body.	The public entity must provide the copy of the founding act (resolution) or a similar founding document. The private entity must provide a copy of the commercial register or license, including all the major information as brand (trade/company) name, address of the headquarter, commercial registration number or license number,

			validity of the commercial registration or license.
1.2	The organization must be involved in educational or training activities as part of its activities.	The Awarding Body must have some sort of educational or training purpose (role, goal), even if only a branch of the whole legal entity is dealing with education and/or training.	A copy of the commercial register or license which enable to conduct activities/operations in the educational and/or training sectors.

Standard 2: Management System

Awarding Bodies must have a management system that ensures compliance with the SAQF standards.

Standard 2 is addressing the organization as an Awarding Body and is the most comprehensive and extensive of the standards for the registration. It covers the overall management system that an Awarding Body is expected to have in place in order to fulfill the SAQF standards. The criteria refer to the organizational structure, policies, procedures and responsibilities in relation to the following areas that are referred in the criteria and guidance as "**key tasks**":

- **qualification development;**
- **qualification certification;**
- **learner assessment oversight;**
- **data management;** and
- **qualification review.**

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
2.1	Structures supporting the performance of the **key tasks** in the management of qualifications must be in place.	It is expected that the Awarding Body has suitable structural arrangements in relation to its activities, especially enabling the performance of the **key tasks**. e.g. designated departments, committees, commissions, sections, roles etc.	A description of the organization structure including an overview of business functions and operations as they relate to the key tasks (e.g. an organigram, flowcharts etc.). The correspondence of the structure to specific key tasks must be clear.

2.2	Policies for performing the **key tasks** in the management of qualifications must be in place.	The Awarding Body must have in place and implement policies that guide the internal processes and activities. Policies are the means by which an organization declares/states goals and thereby undertakes commitments in compliance with the SAQF Awarding Body standards. One policy document can cover several key tasks, or one key task can be covered in more than one policy document.	Policy documents or other documents containing policies covering the key tasks. If one policy document covers more key task areas, the location of each policy must be clearly marked.
2.3	Procedures for performing the **key tasks** in the management of qualifications must be in place.	Procedures must describe how the policies are implemented. Therefore, the Awarding Body must contain instructions how the key tasks are carried out in accordance with the SAQF Awarding Body standards, including a description of steps in the process of accomplishing the key	A description of the procedures for fulfilling key tasks (e.g. an organigram, flowcharts etc.).

		tasks.	
		It is up to the Awarding Body to choose the most suitable arrangements. However, it must be demonstrated that they are in line with the SAQF Awarding Body standards.	
2.4.1	Responsibilities for performing the **key tasks** in the management of qualifications must be clearly defined.	Responsibilities must refer to the key tasks. It must be clearly defined: • How the organization has delegated key tasks to specified individuals or organizational departments; • How the supervision of the personnel or departments and reporting lines are organized.	A document outlining the hierarchical structure of the organization including the division of responsibilities. If an organigram is presented, it has to be clearly indicated who is responsible for which key task.
2.4.2	An individual must be appointed to act as the SAQF **responsible officer**.	The responsible officer serves as the authoritative point of contact in relation to all SAQF matters.	The statement on the responsible officer appointment, position, job specification and name (refer to **Annex A** for further details).

| 2.5 | Appropriate procedures must be in place to oversee the activities of **associated education and training providers** related to compliance of its qualifications with the SAQF standards. | In the case where the Awarding Body contracts associated education and training providers, it is the responsibility of the Awarding Body to ensure that the associated education and training providers are fit for purpose.

Supervision must make sure that the performance criteria are correctly used in assessing the achievement of learning outcomes; that the assessment is consistent and equal; and that the associated provider collects appropriate data for verification of ascribed learning credits and learning outcomes.

The Awarding Body must pay attention to the financial capacity of the | A list of all associated education and training providers.

The agreement between the candidate organization and the associated education and training provider.

A description how the oversight function is working in practice. |

		associated provider. In the event that the associated provider withdraws from its role in delivering a qualification, the Awarding Body must take all reasonable steps to protect the interest of learners.	

Standard 3: Resources and Personnel

Awarding Bodies must demonstrate financial and human resources, facilities and IT solutions in order to carry out all activities in relation to the SAQF standards.

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
3.1	Personnel must be competent to perform their duties in relation to the SAQF standards.	The Awarding Body must have in place a systematic approach to ensure that its staff are appropriately trained and thoroughly acquainted with SAQF Awarding Body standards. Therefore, the organization must demonstrate that they have sufficient capacity of experienced staff to perform the duties of an Awarding Body. The Awarding Body must also regularly review ongoing human resource requirements (as part of internal Quality Assurance process) and adequately plan any new developments accordingly.	Staffing strategy and succession plan. Description/presentation of continuous training and professional development plans that are based on a systematic approach to the identification of needs in relation to qualification development and management.

3.2	Sufficient resources must ensure financial sustainability for carrying out SAQF related activities.	The Awarding Body must be able to demonstrate financial sustainability of its SAQF related activities. It must be financially ensured that qualifications can be offered at least until the graduation of last enrolled generation of learners.	Budgets and Financial plans, audit report or other documents outlining the top level financial figures.
3.3	Facilities and equipment must adequately support all the activities related to the SAQF standards.	The Awarding Body must ensure that they have sufficient facilities to enable development, assessment and certification of qualifications in accordance with the SAQF standards. The facilities include the premises, interiors, adequate office environment, and IT equipment.	The evidence of ownership or rental of the premises. Other evidence may include diagrams of office layouts, maps of the campus and premises etc. Evidence that ensures that the organization has adequate equipment that supports the activities related to qualifications

Standard 4: Data and Information Management

Awarding Bodies must have reliable systems for collecting, collating, maintaining and securing information and data in relation to qualifications and learners.

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
4.1.1	Information and data relating to **qualifications** must be collected and collated into a comprehensive database system and appropriately administered.	The data management for an Awarding Body should encompass the process of oversight of the information generated about its qualifications. The administrative procedures and policies must address how qualifications data is acquired, validated, stored, protected and processed. This includes the appropriate management and administration of data and information for qualifications, specifically for the following: • storing qualification data in a secure location;	A document (policy, procedures) outlining the methods and systems for managing data and archives including: • a description of the data backup and recovery system; and • a statement on the access and editing of data policies. The above documents can also be in a form of user instructions, manuals or handbooks for IT administration of data.

		• creating backups and ensuring reliable recovery • reporting required for quality assurance;	
4.1.2	Data and information related to the **learner administration** must be collected and collated into a comprehensive database system and appropriately administered.	The learner administration must include information relating to learners' registration, achievements and certification. In addition to the items listed in the guidance of criterion 4.1.1, learner administration must include: • maintaining secure learner records for current use and historical review; • retrieving data required for certification. Sufficient evidence of assessment decisions must be retained to monitor qualifications over time. Data storage should include the following learners' assessment records:	Documents (policies and procedures) on the system/method of collection, collation, maintenance and securing of data, including: • a description of the collection, collation and maintenance of assessment materials; and • a description of the rules for access to assessment materials.

		• assessment materials such as test and assignment briefs, examinations etc.; • assessment processes including the supervision of tests, verification of work etc. • learner work such as assignments, practical tests, exam scripts, project work.	
4.2	Security and reliability system for collecting, collating and retaining data and information is ensured.	The data sets and information (especially on the awarding of qualifications, learner records, and education and training providers) should be protected by security measures and oversight on who can access and edit the data. Measures to prevent unauthorized access should be in place.	IT security, data protection and maintenance policy (manuals, handbooks). A description of security measures for data protection and data recuperation in case of sudden failure of the system.

| | | Reliable and secure data management depends on a software package designed to define, manipulate, retrieve and manage data in a database, and restore the electronic data in case of an unexpected disruption.

Learners must have access to accurate information on qualification and on possibilities of progression after obtaining it. | |

Standard 5: Qualification Development

Awarding Bodies must have a system for the development of qualifications in line with the *SAQF qualification standards.*

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
5.1	A coherent system for the identification of **purposes** of qualifications must be in place including procedures and methods.	The development of qualification is a central function of the Awarding Body in meeting the needs of learners, society and the economy. The needs and the rationale for a qualification can be identified through a range of methods and processes, such as stakeholders' consultations, labor market analyses, social and economic trends, agreements with employers, analyses of data, statistics, etc. The qualifications might also respond to national agendas, policies, strategies and reforms.	A suitable document demonstrating the system used for identification of the purposes of qualifications, including a description of the process in e.g. flow charts, diagrams, procedures etc. Cases of practice in identifying the purpose of qualification in the past (e.g. minutes from meetings with employers, proceedings from conferences etc.).

		The extent of stakeholder involvement will depend upon the type of qualification and the specific detail of its purpose and learning outcomes.	
5.2	A coherent system for allocating **learning credits** to qualifications must be in place.	The Awarding Body must have a systematic approach to determine the learning credits for its qualifications and all components. This includes a coherent methodology for ascribing and verifying the typical learning time needed for achieving learning outcomes.	Documents containing policies or/and procedures for ascribing learning credits. A description of the system/process of ascribing and verifying learning credits (e.g. flowcharts, diagrams etc.).
5.3	A coherent system for formulating, specifying and verifying **learning outcomes** must be in place.	Learning outcomes describe what a learner should know, understand and be able to do by achieving a qualification. Formulating adequate learning outcomes requires a thorough analysis, testing, constant reviewing,	Policies or/and procedures for formulating and verifying learning outcomes and performance criteria. A description of the system/process of formulating learning outcomes in e.g. flowcharts, diagrams, etc. and the involvement of stakeholders in the

		verifying and the cooperation with relevant stakeholders and subject matter experts.	process. A description of the systems/ processes for assessment verification and moderation.
5.4	A coherent system for ensuring progression options and flexible learning pathways within qualifications must be in place.	Qualifications should be designed in a way that they allow for different learning pathways and thus progression options. Therefore, an Awarding Body should systematically take the identification of learning pathways and learners' progression (including entry and exit points) into account in the process of qualification development, including in terms of procedures.	Documents containing procedures on ensuring progression options and flexible learning pathways within qualifications. A description of the process of identifying and ensuring progression and flexible learning pathways (e.g. flowcharts, practice etc.)

Standard 6: Assessment System

Awarding Bodies must have a systematic approach to ensure that the assessment methodology of qualifications is fit for purpose, consistent and equal.

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
6.1	Procedures must be in place to verify that the development of assessment methods and associated arrangements are coherent and consistent with the stated learning outcomes.	The Awarding Body must have a system in place to develop assessment arrangements that effectively validates what the qualification is expected to deliver in terms of learning outcomes. The development of assessment methods must be valid and correspond with the learning outcomes stated in the qualification design specification. In other words, the Awarding Body must develop assessment methods that verifies (using performance criteria) the achievement of the stated learning outcomes. Learners must be aware of	The document containing procedures on development of assessment methods. A description how the assessment methods including the procedures of verification are developed and implemented (including e.g. flowcharts, diagrams).

		the assessment method[s] that are associated with learning outcomes.	
6.2	Procedures must be in place to ensure that the assessment methods are reliable, consistent, and equal for all learners.	The Awarding Body must systematically ensure through its policies and procedures that assessment methodology is consistent and equal for all learners. Consistency and equality means that assessment arrangements and assessor decisions are moderated, that is, they are free from assessor bias or discriminatory circumstances. There must be a system in place that verifies and moderates' assessment decisions. All relevant information relating to the assessment methods and process should be available to learners prior to assessment commencing. This also includes schedules and learner	The document containing policy or/and procedure on assessment. A description how the assessment methods are developed so that they are consistent, reliable and equal (including e.g. flowcharts, diagrams).

		responsibilities in relation to assessment.	
6.3	Procedures must be in place to ensure that the assessment for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) is carried out in line with the SAQF RPL assessment principles (in the case that RPL is applied).	The Awarding Body can opt for offering a system of RPL. When recognizing prior learning, the Awarding Body is only concerned with the assessment, as the learning has taken place elsewhere. Therefore, it must have in place effective and well-structured procedures and assessment methods for recognition of prior learning. The RPL must be conform to the SAQF RPL assessment principles which are included in the SAQF qualification specification design guide.	The document containing RPL assessment procedure. A description of how the system for ensuring that recognition of prior learning is carried out consistently and in line with the SAQF qualification specification design guide.

Standard 7: Qualification Certification System

The Awarding Body must ensure that qualification certificates or the documentation of partial achievement meet the requirements of the SAQF qualification standard.

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
7.1	Procedures for the certification of qualifications must be transparent, clear.	The Awarding Body must have a system in place that accurately identifies the point at which a learner has completed the requirements for a qualification. The Awarding Body must use a transparent and systematic approach to certification of qualification. It must be ensured that the certificates are accurate and completely reflect the overall assessment results. The Awarding Body should ensure that the design of each certificate complies with the certification requirements of	A suitable document containing the procedures on the certification of qualifications.

		the SAQF Qualification Standards for Registration.	
7.2	Procedures for issuing the documentation of partial achievements must be in place.	Partial achievement of a qualification must be identified by an appropriate document. Partial achievement is not referring to single learning outcomes, but to whole component[s] of a qualification. This should be in the form a transcript of learner achievement records or similar documents. Partial achievements of qualifications must be recorded by the data management IT system.	A suitable document containing procedures for documentation of partial achievement.
7.3	Appropriate security measures for issuing certificates must be in place to prevent potential fraud and mistakes.	The Awarding Body must have in place safeguards against potentially fraudulent or mistaken claims for certificates. The Awarding Body must revoke any certificate if the information on the certificate is false because of	Documents containing policies and procedures on ensuring authenticity and safeguarding from fraudulent claims. A description how the security against

		fraudulent action, or is revealed to be inaccurate in an appeal process.	fraud and other forms of abuse/infringement is achieved.

Standard 8: Qualification Review

Awarding Bodies must have a system in place for the review of qualifications in line with the SAQF qualification standards.

	Criteria	Guidance	Evidence
8.1	Effective policies and procedures must be in place for the review of qualifications in line with the SAQF standards.	Qualifications need to be reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis in order to ensure that they are meeting the needs of learners. Therefore, an Awarding Body needs to have a system in place that ensures that the process of review is consistently applied for all qualifications offered. Review consists of two dimensions: 1. The continuous self-assessment, collecting external feedback and improvement; 2. Periodical review for SAQF re-registration. The review process needs to relate to the SAQF Qualification Standards for	Internal documents such as procedures, standards, guidelines for review and quality assurance of qualifications. A description of the review process (including procedures and responsibilities) in e.g. flowcharts, diagrams, organigrams.

registration and ensure that they are met. This includes that:

- Learning outcomes and performance criteria remain coherent and relevant to the purpose;
- Learning Credits are reflecting the time needed for a typical learner to achieve the learning outcomes;
- Progression routes are adequately supported.

| 8.2 | Quantitative and qualitative indicators are used in the review process. | Quantitative and qualitative measures help in the process of qualification review, as they provide progress indicators that can be used for measuring quality. Indicators or benchmarks can be:
- Qualification completion and retention rates;
- Drop-out rates; | A document outlining how the review system of qualifications works. |

| | | • Learner surveys/feedback; • Employers surveys/feedback; • Employment rates after graduation. Ideally the findings from ongoing review should result in a regular self-evaluation of the qualifications offered. | |

Standard 9: Malpractice and Maladministration

Awarding Bodies must have systems in place that prevent and address malpractice and maladministration in the development, delivery, assessment and certification of qualifications.

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
9.1	Policies, procedures and structures must be in place to prevent, identify, investigate and address any malpractice and maladministration.	Malpractice and maladministration refers to any instance of improper professional conduct or administrative procedures. An Awarding Body must develop, maintain, and comply with its own policies for the prevention, identification, investigation and addressing of suspected or alleged malpractice and maladministration. Risk assessment for malpractice and maladministration in relation to the SAQF standards must be undertaken. If such a risk is identified, procedures must be in place that prescribe steps to prevent the incident from occurring.	Documents containing policy and procedures on malpractice and maladministration. A description how malpractice and maladministration are prevented, identified, investigated and addressed (e.g. flowcharts, listing steps). A document on risk assessment in relation to malpractice and maladministration.

The procedures on dealing with malpractice and maladministration on the part of those involved in the development, review or certification of qualifications, including learners, education and training staff must:

- ensure that the investigations are carried out rigorously and by persons of appropriate competence who have no personal interest in the investigation's outcome;

- include evidence requirements for any investigation;

- ensure the recording and reporting of any suspected malpractice and maladministration;

- ensure follow-up procedures and remedial actions for malpractice and maladministration;

| 9.2 | Policies and procedures for identifying, monitoring and resolving the conflicts of interest must be in place. | A conflict of interest exists where a person's or a group's interests make them act contrary to the interests of the Awarding Body in the development, review, assessment and certification of qualifications. E.g. a person that is responsible for assessment cannot be in the same time an owner or employee of a company that offers preparation for assessment.

The Awarding Body must identify or monitor any activity within its scope of tasks where it is reasonably foreseeable that a conflict of interest might arise and take adequate measures to prevent or resolve it. | Documents containing policy and procedures for monitoring, identifying and resolving conflicts of interest. |
| 9.3 | An oversight mechanism regarding malpractice and maladministration | If an Awarding Body has associated education and training providers, it must oversee the arrangements for | A description of the oversight methods and plans regarding associated education and training providers. |

within associated education and training providers needs to be in place.

addressing/preventing malpractice and maladministration put in place by the associated provider. Should malpractice or maladministration occur by an associated education and training provider, the Awarding Body must assess whether such can be prevented in the future and if not disassociate from that provider. This standard does not apply to the Awarding Bodies that do not have associated providers.

Standard 10: Appeals

Awarding Bodies must have a transparent appeals system in place.

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
10.1	Appeals procedures that address qualification related decisions, including those of associated education and training providers must be in place.	An appeals process must exist for educational decisions, assessments, disciplinary actions, admissions, recognition and other decisions related to qualifications. An Awarding Body must publish relevant information on appeals processes. An Awarding Body must have a procedure in place for handling appeals on issues arising from associated education and training providers.	The document containing procedures on appeals A description of the appeals system.

Guidance on the Registration Process

The registration procedure is in this document described for the purpose of guidance and better understanding of the process of registration. It should be noted that also the **SAQF Terms and Conditions** apply**.**

Registration Team

The SAQF Registration Team is the group responsible for the management, planning and administration of the registration procedures. Their primary role is to review all Awarding Body applications against the SAQF standards, and make a recommendation to the Registration Management Committee who will make the final decision on registration. Registration Team is also the main point of contact for candidate organizations and registered Awarding Bodies.

Registration Management Committee

The Registration Management Committee is a group consisting of senior personnel and external stakeholders of SAQF. The Registration Management Committee considers the recommendations from the Registration Team, and makes the formal decision on registration and re-registration.

The Registration Management Committee can also decide to revoke or suspended an Awarding Body registration status. If this occurs, then the Awarding Body and associated qualifications will not be visible on the SAQF Registers.

Registration Period

Successful registration of an Awarding Body will be granted for a period of **3 years**, but may be reviewed at any time at the discretion of the Registration Management Committee. The decision on the registration, revoking or suspending of the Awarding Body status is always taken by the Registration Management Committee.

Assessment Report

The Registration Team will create an assessment report which outlines recommendations for registration. The Registration Management Committee will consider the recommendations made by the Registration Team and make their final decision. The assessment report recommendations are based on the following rubric:

Recommendations	Application Review Findings
Registration Evidence is sufficient and the candidate organization is **recommended for registration**	**Any of the following:** • The application is comprehensive, supporting documents are complete, and the evidence validates the standards. • There is sufficient evidence to support the application. • No significant gaps or weaknesses in the application or evidence provided.
Conditional Registration Evidence is almost sufficient – but needing a degree of clarification or further information – **Awarding Body will be registered when conditions are met**	**Any of the following:** • The application is competent but some additional clarification, documentation or evidence is required. • There is insufficient or weak evidence to support some specific criteria. • Minor gaps or weaknesses in the application or evidence provided.
Non-Registration Evidence is not sufficient and **registration application refused**	**Any of the following:** • The nature, quality and/or integrity of the evidence does not sufficiently address or meet the SAQF standards.

	• The application and/or evidence has significant gaps or weaknesses.

Note: If the Registration Management Committee decision is 'Conditional Registration', the assessment report will indicate the areas that must be remedied and the timescale required to complete them.

The Registration Application Phases

The administration and management of the registration process will be carried out by the SAQF Registrations Team. The registration process is divided into four phases:

Phase 1: Expression of Interest

The candidate organization will offer the rationale for their application with information on the nature of their operation, the education sector, types of qualifications and at which levels they will award.

At this stage the candidate organization will be informed on the SAQF and the role and functions of an Awarding Body. The Registration Team will supply the organization with all the necessary documentation pertaining to both the Awarding Body and Qualification registration including both the **SAQF Awarding Body** and the **Qualification Handbooks**. The primary purpose of the Phase 1 is informing candidate organization about the standards and requirements for registration in order for the interested organizations to make a self-assessment judgment whether they are ready to continue with a full application for the Awarding Body status.

During Phase 1 there will be an opportunity to attend a clarification session to further explain the registration process in more detail and discuss alternative support options.

Phase 2: Application

A full application will be submitted and reviewed against the SAQF standards. The candidate organization will submit evidences of criteria fulfillment and a plan of qualification development (including the envisaged number of qualifications to be submitted for registration) for the following year to the Registration Team.

If the candidate organization has undergone an external quality assurance process it may use this as supporting evidence against the relevant standards or criterion, thus limiting the additional burden on the candidate organization to duplicate reports. However, it is the responsibility of the candidate organization to mark and sort the evidence to match the SAQF requirements.

The Registration Team will notify the candidate organization within 5 working days that the Awarding Body application has been received and provide an indication of the expected timescale for the final decision by the Registration Management Committee.

Phase 3: Review of the Application

A full review of the candidate organization application against the SAQF Awarding Body Standards for Registration will be carried out by the Registration Team. An assessment report will be compiled and presented to the Senior Management Committee as the basis for the recommendation about the decision for SAQF registration.

Phase 4: Decision on the Application

The Registration Management Committee will decide on registration. The decision will be based on the assessment report submitted by the Registration Team.

The final decision will be communicated back to the Registration Team. The Registration Team will notify the Awarding Body of the decision using the online system and provide a copy of the assessment report.

If the registration decision by the Registration Committee is successful, the Registration Team will upload the Awarding Body details onto the SAQF Awarding Body Register. Awarding Bodies will become eligible to submit qualifications for registration on the SAQF. The date from which registration will apply will be identified and arrangements will be made in relation to qualification application and registration.

Note: The Awarding Body must begin the process of qualification registration within **6 months** of the achievement of Awarding Body status, otherwise the Registration Management Committee may decide to revoke or suspend registration pending review of the circumstances (please refer to the SAQF Terms and Conditions).

If the Registration Management Committee decides that the application is 'Conditional Registration',

the Registration Team will provide the candidate organization with the assessment report and discuss the redeemable actions and timescales that must be undertaken.

Status Changes and Ceasing of Existence

It is mandatory for all Awarding Bodies to inform SAQF immediately when:

- The organizational status of the Awarding Body is changed, no matter if it will be caused by merger or partnership with other entity.
- Private sector entity closure or liquidation.
- Withdrawal from the commercial register or expiry of the license which enable the conduct of activities/operations in the educational and training sectors.

Re-Registration

All SAQF Awarding Bodies have a registration expiry date. This is to ensure that Awarding Bodies are periodically reviewed against the SAQF and provide assurance that the organization is still 'fit for purpose'. Along with evidence of fulfilling criteria, also a **Self-Evaluation Report** and **Action Plan** must be submitted. It is the responsibility of an Awarding Body to apply for re-registration in a timely manner.

The Self-Evaluation Report must describe the on-going performance of the Awarding Body in relation to the SAQF standards and outline the challenges, shortcomings, weaknesses, progress, strengths, improvements, and supported by an Action Plan in the period since the previous registration.

Awarding Body Registration Process
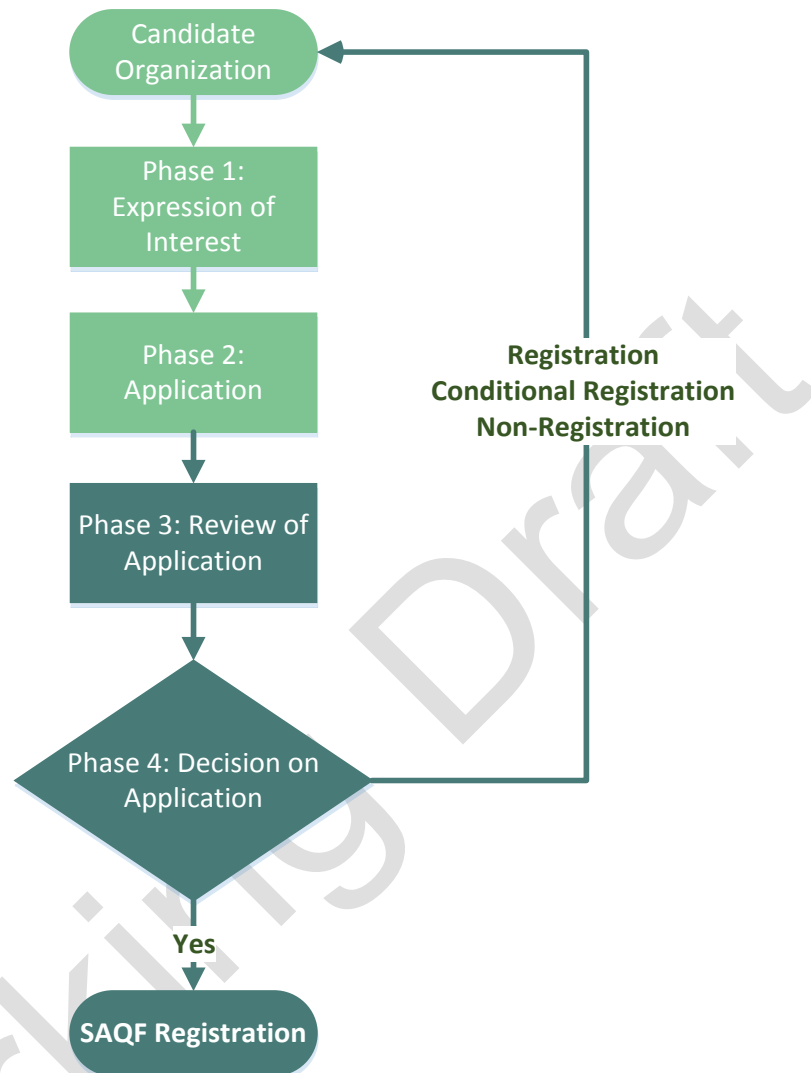
Appeal

The candidate organization has the right to appeal against the decision of the Registration Management Committee. The appeal will be submitted to, and considered by, the Appeal Committee. The Appeal Committee is composed by renowned and reputable representatives of stakeholder organizations, larger public or private entities or other people that have public trust. Members of the appeal committee will not be involved in any stage of SAQF Registration Process.

The Follow-Up Process

Once the registration process is completed, the Awarding Body will be registered on the SAQF Awarding Bodies Register for three years. However, the SAQF reserves the right to revise the expiry date. There will be a regular exchange between the Awarding Body and the SAQF department in charge of the follow-up process.

The SAQF personnel will collaborate with the Awarding Body on the basis of the assessment report that was compiled by the SAQF Registration Team in phase 3 of the registration process and explain the exact stages and requirements in the follow-up process. These stages and requirements should become part of an *action plan*.

The action plan should clearly outline the activities that an Awarding Body needs to undertake to maintain its compliance with the SAQF registration standards. The action plan should vary in accordance with the recommendations from the assessment report.

The action plan might also incorporate more specific issues to be addressed and activities to be undertaken if for example the Awarding Body needs to improve arrangements in order to enhance the performance in relation to a specific standard and underlying criteria. In that case, a more targeted action might be required in order to allow the Awarding Body to maintain its registration (see phase 3 of the registration process above).

As part of the follow up process, the Awarding Body must submit an annual qualification development plan including the number of qualifications that are planned to be submitted to SAQF registration. This must be done on an annual basis after registration or re-registration.

Note: As outlined in Phase 2, the candidate organization must submit its first qualification development plan as part of the application process.

Should the Awarding Body not comply with the follow-up requirements, the SAQF Registration Team will inform the Registration Management Committee, which may decide to revoke the registration (please refer to the SAQF Terms and Conditions).

Self-Evaluation and Internal Quality Assurance

An Awarding Body should continually review the effectiveness of its services and systems. As the first step towards SAQF registration, the candidate organization is encouraged to carry out a critical and analytical **self-assessment** against the requirements of the registration standards. In the case of re-registration, the Awarding Body must submit a **self-evaluation report** that reflects the experience, challenges, improvements and assurance of quality in all the processes and activities covered by the SAQF standards. This exercise considers the available evidence for policies, structures, procedures and responsibilities.

The outcomes of a self-evaluation are expected to include:

- A **Self-Evaluation Report** which includes findings and recommendations for improvement.
- An **Action Plan** which sets out the implementation of improvements that address the report's findings.

Self-evaluation should:

- be analytical and not simply descriptive;
- be up to date for the SAQF registration process;
- demonstrate a review in relation to all standards for the SAQF registration;
- result in a report and action plan which is evidence based and focuses on improvement;
- outline what is working well, what is not and why;
- show where risk has been identified and which corrective or preventative action has been taken;
- be an integral part of the Awarding Body commitment to quality improvement;
- be signed off by the accountable individual or group for registration;
- include the detailed report on realization of the qualification development plans that had been submitted yearly to the SAQF Registration team and provide a rationale, should the plans not be fulfilled.

The purpose of self-evaluation is to explore, reflect and report on the effectiveness of qualifications, development and awarding processes, including the quality assurance system, which supports them. In doing so, existing good practices can be identified and maintained while areas needing improvement can be addressed.

Where a candidate organization or Awarding Body undertakes a self-evaluation exercise from an external quality assurance agency, the resulting report can be used as a basis. However, it must be supplemented with essential information ensuring that it covers the SAQF Standards for Registration and the related criterion. The report must clearly explain and identify how the output relates to the SAQF Awarding Body standards. The self-evaluation must be accompanied by **an action plan** that includes the description of envisaged adjustments, improvements and changes based on the findings of the self-evaluation.

Annex A: Role of the SAQF Responsible Officer

As per Criterion 2.4.2 of Standard 2, each Awarding Body must have an SAQF Responsible Officer, with sufficient authority to undertake the following role:

- to be the main point of contact between SAQF and the Awarding Body in relation to the implementation of SAQF standards;

- to perform the role of the expert on matters relating to the SAQF registration processes and the use of the SAQF guidelines.

- to communicate effectively with other Awarding Body staff and education and training providers to ensure they are aware of what is expected of them in relation to the SAQF standards;

- to ensure that the SAQF key principles and standards are reflected in relevant Awarding Body systems, policies and procedures;

- to ensure that policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and updated in line with current SAQF principles and guidance;

- to submit a yearly qualification development plan, including the envisaged new qualifications to be submitted to the SAQF on an annual basis;

- to participate in the SAQF registration and re-registration processes for Awarding Bodies;

- create or ensure that documentation for the internal Awarding Body processes supporting qualification development and review, incorporates SAQF standards;

- to ensure that the most current version of all documentation is used;

- to co-ordinate the SAQF registration applications for individual qualifications;

- to enable internal verification processes for qualification registration applications;

- identifying suitably qualified and experienced staff to participate in self-evaluation and verification processes;

- convene self-evaluation teams;

- to support the sharing of best practice in relation to the implementation of SAQF standards;

- to circulate the Registration Team reports and registration decisions to relevant staff;

- to ensure that any required actions and development points identified in a registration team report are acted upon.
- ensure that appropriate training in the use and implementation of the SAQF is available to relevant staff. This will include:
  - developing learning outcomes;
  - creating assessment criteria;
  - building the evidence base for the qualification;
- to engage with SAQF and others to share good practice.