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Education Evaluation Commission



الإطار السعودي للمؤهلات

Saudi Arabia Qualifications Framework

SAQF Qualification Standards for Registration

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Contents

Key Terms.....	3
Introduction	8
SAQF Definition	8
SAQF Aims	8
Qualifications and SAQF Registration	9
Responsible Officer	9
Scope	10
Purposes	10
Fitness for Purpose.....	10
Relationship of SAQF Qualification Standards and Level Descriptors	11
SAQF Qualification Register	13
Advantages of Qualification Registration	14
Qualification Standards, Criteria, Guidance and Evidence	15
Qualification Standards for Registration	15
Criteria	16
Guidance	16
Evidence	16
Qualification Standards, Criteria, Guidance and Evidence	19
Standard 1: Eligibility	19
Standard 2: Purpose	20
Standard 3: Stakeholder Involvement	22
Standard 4: Learning Outcomes	23
Standard 5: Performance Criteria	25
Standard 6: Learning Credits	26
Standard 7: Titling	27
Standard 8: Entry Requirements	28

Standard 9: Progression	29
Standard 10: Certification	31
Guidance on the Qualification Registration Process	33
Registration Team	33
Registration Management Committee	33
Registration Period	33
Assessment Report	34
The Registration Application Phases.....	36
Pre-Conditions	36
Phase 1: Qualification Development.....	36
Phase 2: Application	37
Phase 3: Review of Application	37
Phase 4: Decision on the Application	38
Qualification Status Changes.....	38
Re-Registration.....	39
Appeal	40
The Follow-Up Process	41
Verification and Review Report.....	42
Annex A: Role of the SAQF Responsible Officer	43
Annex B: Learning Credits	45
Annex C: Verification and Review Report	46

Key Terms

ASOC Code	Arab Standard for Occupations Code.
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 SAQF registered qualifications.
Awarding Body Register	Awarding Bodies that comply with the SAQF standards and listed in the Awarding Body Register.
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.
Education and Training Provider	The institution that provides delivers a qualification that is accredited 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 .

ISCED	International Standard Classification for Education. A code for the classification of qualifications by discipline.
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 Hours	The length of time that a learner takes to complete a learning activity.
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.
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.
NOSS	National occupational skills standards that defines the level of competence expected of a skilled worker with several years' experience.
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	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.
Qualification Component	A unit, module or course within a qualification that represents a definable block of learning related to stated learning outcomes.
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.
Qualification Handbook	A supplementary guide to the SAQF Qualification Standards that provides further guidance, details and explanation of the SAQF standards in practice.
Qualification Revision	The process of reviewing the need for, purpose and learning content of a qualification towards the end of its period of registration with SAQF, to ensure that it is still fit-for purpose.
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 <i>what is done</i> (fitness of purpose) and <i>how it is done</i> (fitness for purpose).

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.
Registered Qualifications	Qualifications that comply with the SAQF standards and listed in the Qualifications Register.
Registration	The formal administration process for registering Awarding Bodies and qualifications through the internal SAQF registration 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 or individual Qualification 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 Awarding Body internal process that aims at assessing if a qualification complies with the SAQF standards to determine its readiness for SAQF registration application
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.
Verification and Review Report	A report that must be submitted at the point of qualification registration and re-registration that identifies any changes or

improvements to the qualification and is part of the quality assurance review against the SAQF qualification standards.

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.

Qualifications and SAQF Registration

This document outlines how the SAQF aims are achieved in the relation to SAQF Qualification standards and how this must be applied to the development of qualifications for SAQF registered by Awarding Bodies.

SAQF Awarding Bodies are the organizations directly responsible for the design and development of nationally recognized qualifications offered within the Kingdom Saudi Arabia.

Responsible Officer

Every Awarding Body will have a responsible person with whom SAQF will communicate on general matters and issues arising from applications for qualification registration. This person will hold a senior position in the Awarding Body and might be expected to have wider quality responsibilities. The SAQF Responsible Office role in relation to the SAQF Qualification standards would be expected to include:

- to co-ordinate the registration and re-registration applications for individual qualifications;
- planning for the training of staff in the use and implementation of the SAQF across the portfolio of qualifications. This will include:
 - developing learning outcomes; and
 - creating performance criteria;
- identifying suitably qualified and experienced staff to participate in self-evaluation and verification processes;
- convene self-evaluation and verification teams;
- be the local expert on matters relating to the SAQF registration processes.

A more complete list of roles is provided in **Annex A**.

Scope

The SAQF Qualification standards for registration are applicable to SAQF registered Awarding Bodies involved in all education and training sectors (including those offered by employers) across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Purposes

The SAQF qualification standards 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 Qualification 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 international best practice in the development of qualifications in the context of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Fitness for Purpose

Quality assurance involves activities that aim to safeguard and enhance quality. The main objective of quality assurance is to assess *what is done* (fitness of purpose) and *how it is done* (fitness for purpose). A principle feature of quality assurance is to ensure that SAQF Qualification standards are complied with. The SAQF Qualification standards provide the baseline or threshold criteria that a have to be met in order to gain registration.

The SAQF standards are underpinned by a comprehensive quality assurance system to provide optimum value to the education system within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

and support continuous quality improvement. The qualification registration standards set the minimum criteria by which quality is measured.

Relationship of SAQF Qualification Standards and Level Descriptors

The SAQF is an instrument that supports a shared understanding by stakeholders of the expected outcomes of a learning program leading to the award of a qualification. The level descriptors provide an agreed reference point with which to make comparisons between qualifications and their learning programs. They describe in broad terms the increasing complexity (using levels from 1 to 10), of what a learner should be able to know and do at each level, using a common vocabulary for use by all stakeholders. This ensures that the focus of comparison is concerned with the outcomes of learning rather than the resource inputs or the actual learning process.

As generic summaries, the level descriptors promote transparency across different education sectors, across disciplines, and support the recognition of learning achievement in all contexts.

The SAQF level descriptors support:

- the general design of a new qualification to correspond with a level;
- the construction of learning outcomes to correspond with a level;
- the benchmarking of existing qualifications to a SAQF level;
- the recognition of learning in various contexts.;

Each SAQF level (1-10) has its own generic descriptor that covers the following three domains:

- Knowledge;
- Skills; and
- Competence.

The specific description at each level is a generic summary - it is not intended to be a comprehensive statement for use in individual qualifications. The purpose is for

comparison – a benchmark with which to reference the outcomes included in a qualification to a level.

It is important to accept that not all outcomes of a descriptor level will be relevant or included in a qualification. It is also important to accept that the comparison process cannot be exact – it is a qualitative comparison with the aim of establishing the most suitable and optimal level alignment. The comparison process for individual learning outcomes will determine a level on the scale of 1 to 10.

SAQF Qualification Register

The SAQF Qualification Register is a list of nationally registered qualifications and is available only to registered Awarding Bodies. Besides the SAQF Qualification Register, the SAQF also maintains a register for Awarding Bodies, which are the organizations that are responsible for submitting qualifications for SAQF registration.

The main purpose of the SAQF Qualification Register is to provide stakeholders with all relevant information about registered qualification. It offers the opportunity to compare qualification levels and assist learners and others stakeholders to determine the options available to them.

The Qualification Register is a database that holds the details of all national registered qualifications. Qualification registration is an evaluative review process initially carried out by SAQF registered Awarding Bodies as a self-assessment exercise, and then scrutinized for compliance with SAQF standards. The 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, other advisors for career guidance and as a reference for employers. A qualification on this register is a confirmation that it has undergone an independent quality assurance process.

The registration period of a qualification is valid for 3 to 5 years (depending on the qualification type). Prior to the expiry date, the Awarding Body must undergo the re-registration process in order to retain the status of the SAQF registered qualifications. SAQF authority reserves the right to revise the registration expiry date.

If an Awarding Body becomes de-registered or suspended, all qualifications it offers will no longer be listed or visible on the SAQF Qualification Register.

Advantages of Qualification Registration

Registered qualifications provide stakeholders and the public, with a guarantee of quality of both the qualification and its Awarding Body. The registration process assures qualifications are fit for their purpose and compliant with the SAQF standards and their detailed criteria as outlined in this document.

The SAQF register ensures that Qualifications are fit for purpose and the Awarding body as met 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 SAQF Qualification Register is of special benefit to learners when planning their learning or career pathways, and to employers in recruitment processes and staff planning.

Qualification Standards, Criteria, Guidance and Evidence

The SAQF Qualification standards reflect best practice in international qualification design and development. They support the aims of the SAQF and promote wider stakeholder collaboration and opportunities for progression, which are the foundation on which the SAQF qualification standards have been constructed.

The design of the SAQF, and its standards, has the following characteristics:

- standards for the Awarding Bodies who design and develop qualifications;
- standards for way in which qualifications are described;
- a set of generic level descriptors (1 to 10), summarizing increasing learning complexity;
- learning is defined in terms of outcomes and performance criteria; and
- learning volume is expressed as learning credit.

To conform to SAQF standards, a qualification must be designed, described and delivered to learners with adherence to the above characteristics.

Qualification Standards for Registration

The registration of a qualification by SAQF is determined by compliance with the 10 standards which outline the characteristics of expected quality and performance, and confirm its 'fitness-for-purpose'. Qualifications that meet the standards are listed on the SAQF Qualifications Register.

The standards address three main categories:

1. Eligibility and quality assurance.
2. Qualification development and review.
3. Achievement.

The SAQF Qualification standards for registration has been established to ensure that appropriate systems are in place to uniform the design, development, review and certify qualifications.

Criteria

Each SAQF standard encompasses one or more criteria that set out in more detail the conditions to be fulfilled in order for a Qualification to gain SAQF registration. Once an Awarding Body fulfills all the criteria under each SAQF Qualification standard, the qualification will be listed on the SAQF Qualification Register.

Guidance

The purpose of the guidance is to inform and assist an Awarding Body in the development of a qualification within its own context. It describes the specific requirements necessary to prepare a competent application for qualification registration.

The SAQF encourages creativity and innovation in qualification design and their curricula. The SAQF recommends that guidelines be followed in the preparation of qualification specification documents, outlined in the supplementary **SAQF Qualification Handbook**. However, the SAQF does not prescribe:

- the number of learning outcomes in a whole qualification;
- the number of learning outcomes and performance criterion per individual component;
- the method of developing the curriculum (and delivery of learning outcomes);
- describe any specific pedagogical practice; and
- the study duration.

The guidance supports a consistent and coherent interpretation and implementation of the standards for registration. The supplementary **SAQF Qualification Handbook** also provides a more detailed explanation to the overall requirements of the registration and re-registration process.

Evidence

Awarding Bodies will already have formal processes that generate and verify qualification information. It is expected that the responsible officer will ensure SAQF standards are incorporated into these existing processes (where not currently

present), and that they are appropriately evidenced in the information supplied to support registration. Most of this information will be contained within the formal documents that describe the qualification. The SAQF distinguishes two types of document for this purpose:

The Qualification Design Specification This is the document that broadly describes the relevance, purpose and structure of a qualification.

The Component Design Specification This document (or set of documents) describe the specific details of the learning and assessment content of qualifications. They are often used to explain the structure the qualification and expected learning. Common terms used to represent a component within Saudi Arabia education and training landscape are subject, unit or module and course.

Awarding Bodies, through the responsible officer, must therefore ensure the SAQF standards are integrated in qualification development systems, policies and procedures. This should routinely generate compliance evidence within the above documents which are then expected to be made available to SAQF by uploading through an online registration system.

The qualification development process will be concluded by an Awarding Body with a systematic verification exercise to ensure that an application for registration is competent and complete, that meets the evidence requirements for each qualification standard.

The verification exercise is an internal matter for the Awarding Body. However, it would typically require personnel with knowledge and understanding of:

- the SAQF qualification standards;
- the SAQF level descriptors;
- quality assurance of education and training providers; and
- expert knowledge of the discipline.

If an Awarding Body is subject to an external quality assurance process by a quality assurance authority or accreditation body, and has already produced a self-evaluation report or an accreditation report for the qualification, this may be referenced in the process of SAQF registration application, provided that it contains relevant and current information that demonstrates compliance with SAQF standards.

The SAQF Ten Qualification Standards for Registration

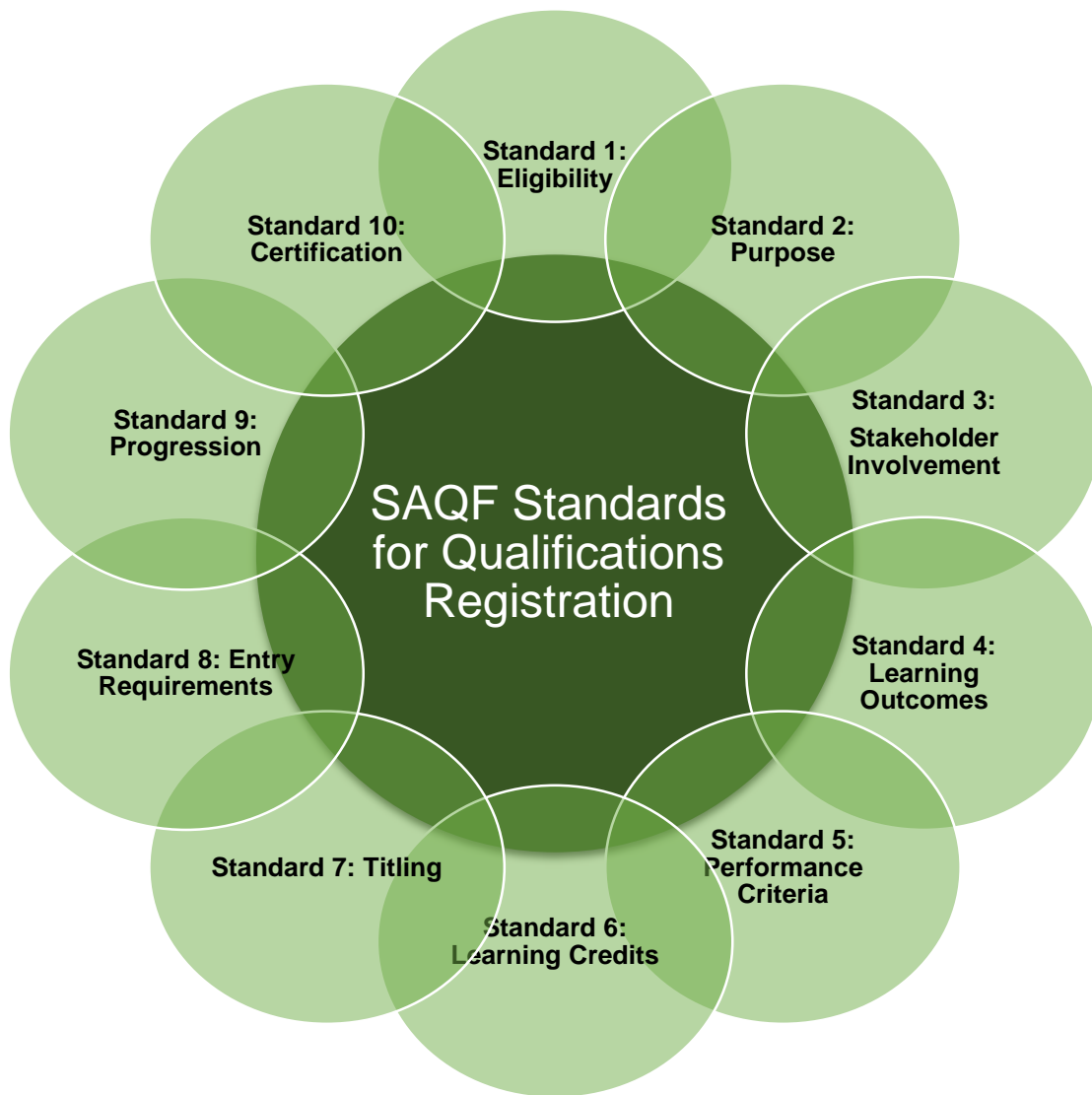


Figure 1: Schematic model of standards underpinning Qualification Registration

Qualification 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 qualification 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 Awarding Body Standards.

Standard 1: Eligibility

Qualifications must belong to an SAQF registered Awarding Body.

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
1.1	The Awarding Body must be registered on the SAQF Awarding Body Register.	Only Awarding Bodies registered on the Awarding Body Register, are eligible to submit qualifications for registration.	Reference to the Awarding Body Register.
1.2	The level of the qualification stated in the application for registration, must correspond to the levels for which the Awarding Body has been registered.	The Awarding Body cannot seek registration for a qualification higher or lower than the levels for which they are approved.	Reference to the Awarding Body Register.

Standard 2: Purpose

Qualifications must have a clearly defined purpose that describes the reasons why the qualification was developed.

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
2.1	Qualifications must be developed for a clearly defined purpose and expressed in language that is understandable by stakeholders.	The purpose should consist of a range of statements that informs and assists all stakeholders to understand the broad characteristics of the qualification.	Purpose statements contained within the Qualification Design Specification document.
2.2	The purpose of a qualification must be based upon identified needs.	A broad needs analysis should describe the specific reasons why the qualification has been developed.	Within the Qualification Design Specification, a description of the needs analysis, identifying job market, business, social or academic needs and the reasons why this qualification will meet them.
2.3	The purpose of each component must reflect the overall purpose of the qualification.	Qualifications must be designed with a component structure containing learning content that is aligned with the overall purpose and needs of the qualification.	Within the Qualification Design Specification, a description of the qualification component structure and how this contributes to the overall purpose of the qualification.

Component Design Specifications.

Standard 3: Stakeholder Involvement

Qualifications must be developed and reviewed with engagement from appropriate stakeholders and subject matter experts.

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
3.1	Stakeholders must be involved in the development of the qualification and its components.	A broad range of relevant stakeholders must be involved in the development of a qualification, for determining the purpose, needs, structure and content.	Within the Qualification Design Specification, a descriptive overview detailing how stakeholders have been involved.
3.2	Subject matter experts must be involved in the development of the qualification and its components.	Subject matter experts must be involved in the design and development of a qualification, to determine the structure and content.	Within the Qualification Design Specification, a descriptive overview detailing the involvement of subject matter experts.
3.3	Stakeholders and subject matter experts must be involved in the review of the qualification and its components.	Qualification review processes must include input from relevant stakeholders and subject matter experts to ensure that it is still 'fit-for-purpose'	Within the Qualification Design Specification, a summary of past reviews that the Awarding Body has conducted for the Qualification which may have contributed to recommending change.

Standard 4: Learning Outcomes

Qualification content must be expressed in learning outcomes, and assigned a SAQF level.

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
4.1	Each component must contain a coherent set of learning outcomes and related performance criteria.	All components must contain learning outcomes that describe what learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do as a result of undertaking the learning.	Component Design Specifications.
4.2	A SAQF level must be assigned to the qualification and all its individual components, and be verified by the Awarding Body.	<p>The SAQF level corresponding to the expected complexity and breath of learning required must be assigned to both the overall qualification and every component in its structure.</p> <p>The initial design nomination of the level must be verified as part of a self-assessment exercise undertaken by the Awarding Body.</p>	Qualification Design Specification and Component Design Specifications. Verification and Review report.

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
4.3	Learning outcomes must reflect any appropriate professional or occupational standards.	Any relevant professional or occupational standards, such as a National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS), should be identified and reflected in the construction of qualification learning outcomes.	Reference to standards used in the Qualification Design Specification and Component Design Specifications.
4.4	Valid methods of assessment must be used to determine the achievement of learning outcomes.	Assessment planning and methodologies must correspond with the learning outcomes.	Component Design Specifications.
4.5	Component design specifications must contain assessment guidance for education and training providers.	The component design specification document must provide information concerning the type of evidence requirement and/or standard, that corresponds with the achievement of the learning outcomes.	Component Design Specifications.

Standard 5: Performance Criteria

Qualifications must use transparent and measurable performance criteria to validate the achievement of learning outcomes.

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
5.1	Performance criteria must be linked with each learning outcome for all components.	The component design specification document/s should contain performance criteria for each learning outcome.	Component Design Specifications.
5.2	Performance criteria must correspond with the achievement of learning outcomes.	<p>Performance criteria must provide the information a learner needs to know about how learning outcomes are achieved.</p> <p>The qualification learning outcomes and its performance criteria must fully describe the learning achievement for which learning credit will be awarded.</p>	Component Design Specifications.

Standard 6: Learning Credits

All qualifications and their components must identify and verify a number of learning credits.

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
6.1	Learning credits must be assigned to the qualification and all its individual components.	Learning credits indicate the typical time learners require to complete all the learning outcomes of a qualification.	Qualification Design Specification and Component Design Specifications.
6.2	Learning credits must be inclusive of all the learning hours required for the assessment and achievement of the qualification and be verified by the Awarding Body.	Learning credits must comprise of all learning activities required to successfully achieve a qualification, inclusive of contact hours, self-study, preparation for exams, internships etc. The estimation of learning hours should be verified by a self-assessment exercise undertaken by the Awarding Body.	Verification and Review report which includes a list of how the learning hours are allocated for the different forms of learning anticipated in the delivery of the qualification. See Annex C for an exemplar form.

Standard 7: Titling

Qualifications must use appropriate titles that clearly identify the discipline.

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
7.1	The qualification and its components must have titles that are clear and concise that relates to the learning content.	The title must reflect the content of the component. The title should be meaningful in its own right and does not make reference to any information outside the qualification.	Qualification Design Specification and Component Design Specifications.
7.2	Abbreviations must be recognizable and unambiguous.	If abbreviations are used, they need to be clearly understandable and be based on international practice, for example PhD, MSC, BA etc.	The Qualification Design Specification should state how the qualification can be abbreviated.

Standard 8: Entry Requirements

Qualifications must clearly state the entry requirements.

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
8.1	The minimum entry requirement relating to prior experience, academic or occupational level must be clearly stated.	<p>The entry requirement indicates the minimum acceptable standard for enrolment to the qualification.</p> <p>If there are no entry requirements, then this must also be clearly stated.</p>	The Qualification Design Specification should state the entry requirements.
8.2	Entry requirements must consider access through the Recognition of Prior Learning (if applicable).	Prior experience and knowledge of a learner must be considered for equivalence recognition to the stated minimum requirement.	Within the Qualification Design Specification, a statement on how the Recognition of Prior Learning could apply.

Standard 9: Progression

Qualifications must support flexible progression pathways.

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
9.1	The progression routes and credit requirements throughout the qualification must be described.	<p>Progression refers to the incremental achievement of learning credit as progress is made through a qualification.</p> <p>If a qualification consists of compulsory and optional components, these need to be clearly identified. The potential progression paths need to be easily understandable to learners.</p>	<p>Qualification Design Specification document.</p> <p>Description of the achievement pathways and significant milestones for the qualification.</p>
9.2	Learning credits must be transferable between qualifications and between Awarding Bodies.	<p>Learners should not need to repeat learning that has already been achieved.</p> <p>Learning credits must be capable of being transferred between</p>	<p>Statement on the Policy for Credit Transfer with the Qualification Design Specification document.</p>

Criteria	Guidance	Evidence
	<p>qualifications and education and training providers, subject to correspondence with the learning outcomes and framework level of the receiving qualification.</p>	

Standard 10: Certification

The achievement of a qualification must result in the issue of a certificate, which includes the relevant title, level and number of learning credits. The partial achievement of a qualification must be evidenced by an appropriate document.

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
10.1	The successful completion of a qualification must be certified.	The title of qualification must appear on the certificate awarded to successful learners.	An exemplar certificate for the qualification.
10.2	The certificate must contain all essential information relating to the qualification.	The certificate should include the name of the registered Awarding Body, the title of the qualification, name of the learner and date of issue. Optionally, the Awarding Body may include the SAQF level, and the learning credits	An exemplar certificate for the qualification.
10.3	The partial achievement of a qualification must be appropriately documented.	Learners who do not complete a qualification but have completed one or more components should receive written confirmation of the achievement. This might be in the	An exemplar document or transcript of partial achievement.

Criteria		Guidance	Evidence
		form of a formal document or transcript.	
10.4	Certificates or documentation for partial completion must be issued in a timely manner.	There must be no undue delay in the issue of the certificate.	A statement confirming the application of the general policy for awarding certificates.

Guidance on the Qualification Registration Process

The registration procedure described below, provides guidance and better understanding of the process of registration. It should be noted that 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 Qualification 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 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 of qualifications.

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 a qualification will be granted for a minimum period of **3 years**, to a maximum period of **5 years** at the discretion of the Registration Management Committee. The period will be determined based upon the environment within which the qualification is used. This includes consideration of the qualification type, discipline or industry, and how it has historically been affected by technological change, innovation, research outcomes, or changes to professional or occupational standards. Other considerations might be the demand trend, or review of the outcome statistics for learners.

Assessment Report

The Registration Team will create an assessment report which outlines the recommendation 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
<p>Registration</p> <p>Evidence is sufficient and qualification is recommended for registration</p>	<p>Any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application is comprehensive, supporting documents are complete, and the evidence validates the standards. • There is sufficient evidence that the qualification meets the relevant needs of stakeholders. • No significant gaps or weaknesses in the application and or evidence provided.
<p>Conditional Registration</p> <p>Evidence is almost sufficient – but needing a degree of clarification or further information - qualification will be registered when conditions are met</p>	<p>Any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application is competent but some clarification or additional document or evidence is required. • There is insufficient evidence that the qualification meets the relevant needs of stakeholders • Minor gaps or weaknesses in the application or evidence provided
<p>Non-Registration</p> <p>Evidence is not sufficient and registration application refused</p>	<p>Any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature, quality and/or integrity of the evidence does not sufficiently address the relevant standards or evidence requirement.

- The nature, quality and/or integrity of the evidence does not sufficiently address the relevant needs of stakeholders.
- 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

Pre-Conditions

Awarding Body registration must have been completed, and recorded on the SAQF Awarding Body Register. This includes the naming of the SAQF Responsible Person as the primary contact person who can delegate all responsibilities as required and has the authority to nominate suitable representatives on their behalf.

It can be expected that an internal design proposal will include a target SAQF level and credit value, and provide an outline of the need and purpose of the qualification. After internal assessment of the proposal has been undertaken the development phase will commence.

Phase 1: Qualification Development

The Awarding Body proceeds with the full design and development of the qualification. In this process the Awarding Body can use the **SAQF Qualification Handbook**. The SAQF level descriptors should be taken into account in the construction of corresponding learning outcomes, criteria and their assessment arrangements, and their sufficiency in terms of learning credit. It can be expected that this will involve a cycle of review and amendment.

The final development step by the Awarding Body is the internal verification of the nominated level and credit value for the qualification. A report which confirms the nominated level and credit (the Verification and Review Report), is required as evidence for the next phase.

Once the qualification has been fully developed and verified by the Awarding Body and all evidence submitted online, the registration application can be submitted (also online).

During phase 1 there will be an opportunity to communicate with the Registration Team and discuss in more detail the registration process and alternative support options that may be available.

Phase 2: Application

A full application will be submitted and reviewed against the SAQF standards. The Awarding Body must submit all the evidence of criteria fulfillment including the Verification and Review Report as part of the Qualification application which will be reviewed by the Registration Team.

If the Awarding Body has undergone an external quality assurance or an accreditation process for qualifications, it may use this as supporting evidence against the relevant standards or criterion. However, it is the responsibility of the Awarding Body to mark and sort the evidence to match the SAQF requirements.

The Registration Team will notify the Awarding Body within 5 working days that the Qualification 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 Application

Upon notice of the application, the SAQF Registration Team will review the submitted evidence against the SAQF qualification standards and criteria.

The following broad parameters are used as the basis for the qualification application review process:

- compliance with the 10 standards;
- purpose is accurate, realistic and achievable;
- the need for the qualification is justified and will have sufficient learner demand;
- intended learning outcomes support the achievement of the qualification purpose and is supported by stakeholders;
- the entry requirements are appropriate;
- has been correctly aligned with a level and credit point value as per SAQF guidelines; confirmed by the Awarding Body Verification and Review Report;
- the methods and forms of assessment are valid, reliable and fair.

The Registration Team, may require the assistance of qualification review experts, that will collectively produce an assessment report with a recommendation for registration to the SAQF Registration Management Committee.

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 regarding the qualification registration decision using the online system and provide a copy of the assessment report.

If the registration decision by the Registration Management Committee is successful, the Registration Team will upload the Qualification details onto the SAQF Qualification Register. The date from which the Qualification will be registered on the SAQF will be identified.

If the Registration Management Committee decides that the application is 'Conditional Registration', the Registration Team will provide the Awarding Body with the assessment report and discuss the redeemable actions and timescales that must be undertaken.

Qualification Status Changes

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

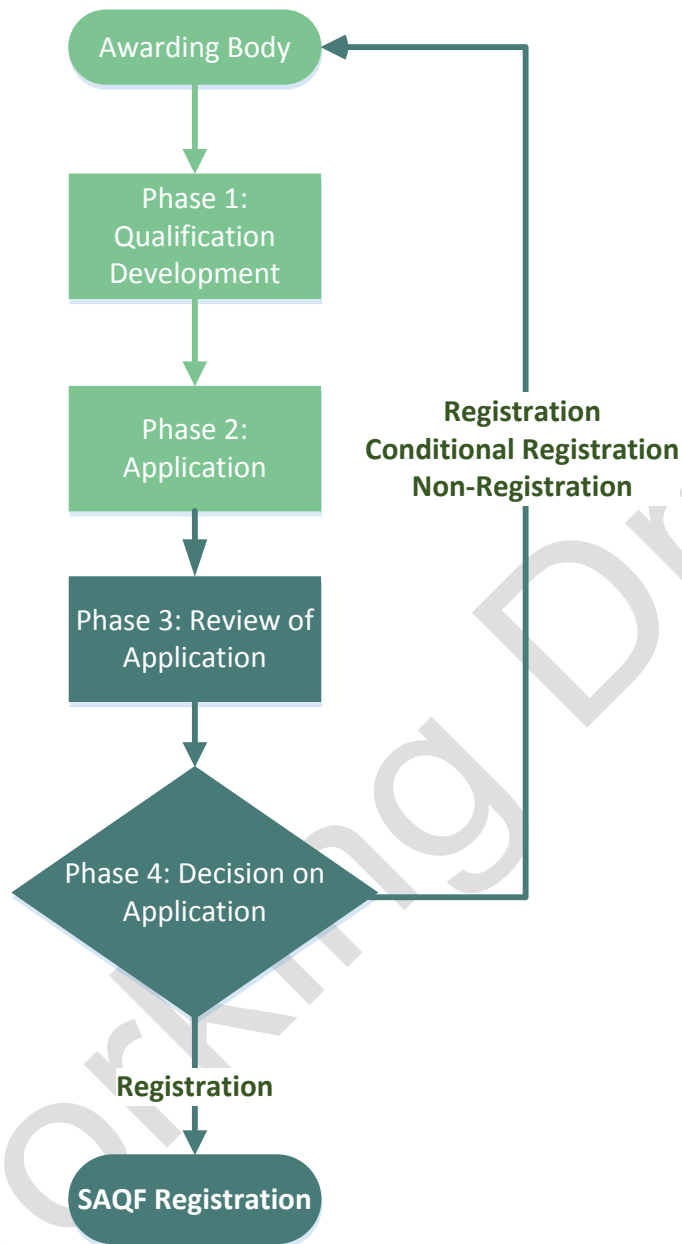
- The nature of the qualification is changed as a result of new improved practices, technological advancements or impact from new regulations or legislative requirements;
- Changes to learning outcomes, performance criteria or variances in learning credits;
- A new additional qualification component is required;
- The qualification is no longer valid or required.

Re-Registration

All registered qualifications will have a registration expiry date. This is to ensure that qualifications are periodically reviewed by the Awarding Body to ensure it is still 'fit for purpose'. It is also an opportunity to evaluate the impact of the qualification, in terms of the actual outcomes for learners and stakeholders.

During the re-registration the Awarding Body must submit a Qualification **Verification and Review Report** prior to the expiry date, and present evidence that the qualification purpose and relevance continues to be supported by stakeholders and subject matter experts. If necessary, amended Qualification Design and Component Design Specifications must be provided. If an Awarding Body decides not to re-register a qualification, it will be removed from the register.

Qualification Registration Process



Appeal

The Awarding Body 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 Qualification will be registered on the SAQF Qualification Register for a period between 3 to 5 years. The SAQF reserves the right to revise the expiry date in the event of significant changes that may impact on the qualification.

There will be a regular exchange between the Awarding Body and the SAQF department in charge of any follow-up process on the basis of the assessment report 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.

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).

Note: The Awarding Body must submit an annual qualification development plan as part of the SAQF Awarding Body application process.

Verification and Review Report

An Awarding Body should continually review the effectiveness of its qualifications. As a requirement for qualification re-registration, the Awarding Body must submit a **Verification and Review Report** that provides a descriptive review of the qualification against the SAQF standards and identify any areas for improvement, challenges, or changes in the structure of the qualification.

Verification and Review Report should:

- be analytical and not simply descriptive;
- be up to date for the SAQF re-registration process;
- demonstrate a review in relation to all standards for the SAQF registration;
- be evidence based and focus on challenges, improvement or proposed amendments;
- be an integral part of the Awarding Body commitment to ensure quality improvement;
- be signed off by the responsible person or other authority for registration evidence.

The purpose of Verification and Review Report 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 an Awarding Body undertakes a self-evaluation exercise or accreditation process from an external quality assurance agency, the resulting report can be used as a basis as the Verification and Review Report. 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 Qualification standards.

Annex A: Role of the SAQF Responsible Officer

Every Awarding Body will have a primary contact - the 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.

Working Draft

Annex B: Learning Credits

Calculating Learning Credits

All components of a qualification must contain a learning credit value. The sum of each required component will be the total amount of learning credit allocated to the qualification.

1 Learning Credit = 10 hours of learning

Learning Credits are calculated by dividing the total hours of learning by 10.

For example:

If a component is judged as containing a 120 learning hours, then the following formulae is applied:

$$120 \text{ learning hours} \div 10 = 12 \text{ Credits}$$

If a qualification contains 4 components with 12 learning credits each, then the total amount of learning credits for the qualification will be 48 Learning Credits.

The SAQF does not prescribe a minimum or maximum level of credit, either for a qualification or for a component. It is up to the Awarding Body to decide the credit values, taking into account pedagogical approaches and the modes of study in which the qualification may be obtained.

A form may be used by Awarding Bodies to present evidence of verification for this standard. This form should be used to document the credit calculation for each qualification component. An example is provided in the example Verification report which follows.

Annex C: Verification and Review Report

Verification of SAQF Level and Learning Credit	
Qualification Title	
Faculty or department	
Chairperson	
Names of persons involved	

Components			
Component Name	Component Number	SAQF Level	Learning Credits
<add further rows as necessary>			
		Total	

Verification Statement	
Verification Statement	The verification committee has evaluated the SAQF level and learning credit for the above qualification and its components and agree that they are an accurate representation of the qualification learning outcomes.
Verification Comments	
Signed	
Date of verification	

The learning credit verification should include an assessment of the learning hours for **each component**. This may be recorded by the following table:

Learning Time Calculation	
Qualification Title	
Component Title	
Faculty or department	
Names of persons involved	
Date Completed	

Learning Activity	Description (if required)	Typical time (hours)
Induction activities		
Formal taught hours		
Tutorials		
Expected research		
Independent study/ reflection		
Online/ICT activities		
Workplace learning		
Practical/project activities		
Revision estimate		
Formative assessment		
Summative assessment		
Other		
Total learning hours		
Learning Credit (Total learning hours / 10)		
Issues arising:		