

THE SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

# **Guidelines for the Assessment of NQF registered Unit Standards and Qualifications**

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*Please refer any queries or comments in writing to:*

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SAQA

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RE: *Guidelines for the Assessment of NQF registered  
Unit Standards and Qualifications*

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# Chapter

# 1

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## Introduction

Purpose of this Document

The Need for this Document

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## Purpose of this Document

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The purpose of this document is to **provide guidelines** for the **assessment policies, systems and procedures** of SAQA accredited Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (*ETQAs*) and their constituent providers.

These guidelines are applicable to the assessment of education and training qualifications and standards registered on any level of the *NQF* and offered in any learning site in the education and training sector.

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

These guidelines are flexible and are intended to provide opportunities for *ETQA* and provider innovation and creativity.

Broadly, the guidelines cover the following areas:

- Good **assessment practice** as it relates to the *NQF*;
- The **role of** registered **assessors**;
- The **assessment process**; and
- **Moderation** of assessment.

## The Need for this Document

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The South African Qualifications Authority (*SAQA*), Act No 58 of 1995, stipulates the primary functions of *SAQA* as being:

- *To oversee the development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)*
- *To formulate and publish policies and criteria for:*
  - The registration of bodies that are responsible for establishing standards and qualifications, that is National Standards Bodies (NSBs) and Standards Generation Bodies (SGBs)*

- ii) *The accreditation of bodies responsible for the monitoring and auditing of the quality of the teaching and learning provision for the achievement of registered standards and qualifications, that is Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQAs).*
- *To oversee the implementation of the NQF which includes:*
  - i) *Registering SGBs, NSBs, and standards and qualifications*
  - ii) *Accrediting ETQAs.*
- *To ensure international comparability of registered standards and qualifications.*

In order to enable SAQA to carry out these functions within a regulatory framework, SAQA has formulated and published the following regulations:

**The National Standards Bodies Regulations No 18787 of 28 March 1998;**

and

**The Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies Regulations No 19231 of 8 September 1998.**

The *ETQA Regulations* are one layer of an enabling and regulatory framework for the development and implementation of the *NQF*. SAQA is now in the process of formulating operational criteria and guidelines for the implementation of the processes and systems of the *NQF*, hence the publication of these guidelines.

The following guidelines fall within the quality assurance functions of *ETQAs*.

The *ETQA Regulations* state in section 9 (1) – **Functions of Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies** that an *ETQA* shall:

- (d) *Evaluate assessment and facilitate moderation among constituent providers;*
- (e) *Register constituent assessors for specified registered standards or qualifications in terms of the criteria established for this purpose;*
- (f) *Take responsibility for the certification of constituent learners.*

Furthermore, the *ETQA Regulations* specify – as a criterion for the accreditation of providers – evidence of the provider’s quality management systems, which include **policies and practices for the management of assessment.**

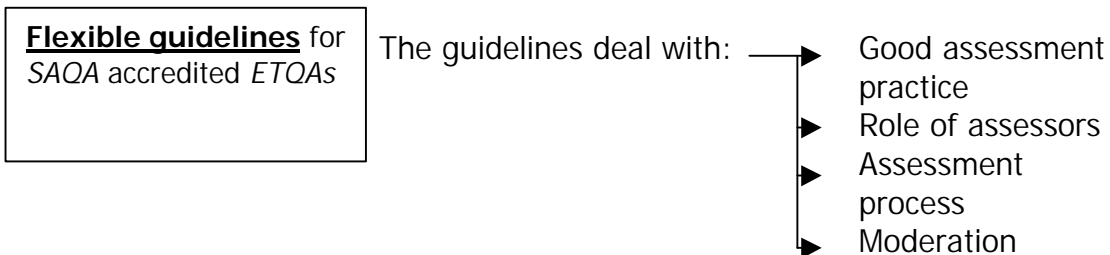
However, it is not only the imperatives contained in the Act and the Regulations that necessitate these guidelines.

The *NQF* is an outcomes based education and training framework for education and training standards and qualifications. As such, the assessment practices and procedures for the *NQF* have to be aligned to those of an outcomes based education and training system.

Furthermore, the objectives of the *NQF* contain principles particular to the transformation imperatives of the new and emerging education and training system in South Africa. Therefore, assessment practices and procedures for the *NQF* need to be aligned accordingly.

To summarise:

This document contains –



This document is based on –



This document is intended to be an enabling and regulatory framework so that *ETQAs* can –

- (d) **Evaluate assessment** and **facilitate moderation** among constituent providers;
- (e) **Register constituent assessors** for specified registered standards or qualifications in terms of the criteria established for this purpose;
- (f) Take responsibility for the **certification** of constituent learners.

This document talks to providers' quality management systems, in particular to the –

Policies and practices for the **management of assessment**

Also, this document takes as its point of departure –

The **assessment practices and procedures** for an outcomes based education and training system

Lastly, this document contains particular principles relating to –

The **transformation imperatives** of the new and emerging education and training system of South Africa

# Chapter 2

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## Assessment and the *NQF*

The Principles of the *NQF* and Assessment

The Objectives of the *NQF*

1. INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT
  2. RECOGNITION OF ACHIEVEMENTS
  3. ACCESS, PROGRESSION, PORTABILITY, ARTICULATION
  4. RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING
  5. LEGITIMACY AND CREDIBILITY
  6. FLEXIBILITY
  7. GUIDANCE OF LEARNERS
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## The Principles of the *NQF* and Assessment

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In addition to outcomes based education and training (OBET), being the framework for assessment policies, systems and procedures for *NQF* registered standards and qualifications, the underlying principles and objectives of the *NQF* should underpin such policies, systems and procedures.

The *NQF* is a framework for transformation of which **quality enhancement** is an integral part.

The rationale for the establishment of the *NQF* is rooted in:

- The history of South Africa and the reconstruction and development goals of the new democratic government of this country;
- The need to align the South African education and training system to emerging international trends of best practice in the provision of quality education and training and lifelong learning.

The *NQF* is also a response to the unjust education and training policies of the previous dispensation. The principles of the *NQF* embody the social, political and economic goals of the new democratic order, which are in the government's reconstruction and development policies.

These principles carry notions of **transformation** and point to transformation imperatives.

They also carry notions of **quality** and point to quality assurance practices that should be **internationally comparable**.

Finally, they carry the notion of the *NQF* as a vehicle for:

- The **eradication of unjustness**;
- The **achievement of reconstruction and development goals**; and

- The **transformation and the promotion of quality** in education and training.

## The Objectives of the *NQF*

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The objectives of the *NQF* are to:

- *Create an integrated national framework of learning achievements;*
- *Facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths;*
- *Enhance the quality of education and training;*
- *Accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities, and thereby*
- *Contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large.*

The principles that underpin the objectives of the *NQF* are:

<b>PRINCIPLE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
Integration	To form part of a system of human resources development which provides for the establishment of a unifying approach to education and training
Relevance	To be and remain responsive to national development needs
Credibility	To have international and national value and acceptance
Coherence	To work within a consistent framework of principles and certification
Flexibility	To allow for multiple pathways to the same learning ends
Standards	To be expressed in terms of a nationally agreed framework and internationally acceptable outcomes
Legitimacy	To provide for the participation of all national stakeholders in the planning and co-ordination of standards and qualifications
Access	To provide ease of entry to appropriate levels of education and training for all prospective learners in a manner which facilitates progression
Articulation	To provide for learners, on successful completion of accredited prerequisites, to move between components of the delivery system
Progression	To ensure that the framework of qualifications permits individuals to move through the levels of national qualifications via different appropriate combinations of the components of the delivery system
Portability	To enable learners to transfer credits of qualifications from one learning institution and/or employer to another
Recognition of Prior Learning	To, through assessment, give credit to learning which has already been acquired in different ways
Guidance of learners	To provide for counselling of learners by specially trained individuals who meet nationally recognised standards for educators and trainers

The above-mentioned *NQF* principles should inform assessment policies, systems and procedures in the following ways:

## 1. **INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT**

- In unit standards, assess specific and critical cross-field outcomes (see glossary for definition of terms)

For example, the following are assessed simultaneously:

**SPECIFIC OUTCOME:**

Describe typical ways that the departments (in an average business) depend on each other

**CRITICAL CROSS-FIELD OUTCOME:**

Evaluate relationships between oneself and others in the immediate environment and suggest potential improvements

(Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems)

- In whole qualifications, assess learning outcomes which have a defined purpose/purposes, including specific and critical cross-field outcomes

For example, the following are assessed simultaneously:

**PURPOSE**

This qualification has been developed for the accommodation industry. It brings together all aspects of housekeeping and basic supervision. This qualification will professionalise the industry and is applicable to all sectors, from small bed and breakfasts to large-scale hotels. The qualification leads to the accommodation services diploma and provides articulation with Gaming, Travel and other Tourism industries

**LEARNING OUTCOME**

Maintain the housekeeping service

**SPECIFIC OUTCOME**

Maintain the cleaning programme for own area of responsibility

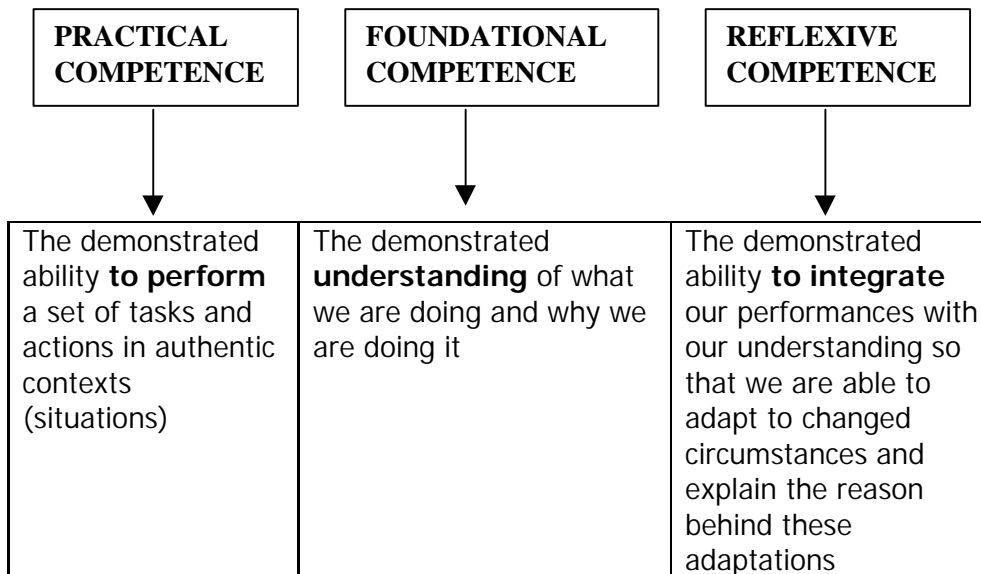
**CRITICAL CROSS-FIELD OUTCOME**

Plan, organise and monitor work in own area of responsibility

Maintain effective working relationships with other members of staff

- In both of the above, assess applied competence which is a combination of practical competence, foundational competence and reflexive competence

Look at the diagram:



- Use formative and summative assessment (see glossary for definition of terms – described in detail in chapter 3)
- Use a variety of assessment methods and instruments (discussed in detail in chapter 3)

## 2. **RECOGNITION OF ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Assess what the learner knows and can do
- Credit what the learner knows and can do

## 3. **ACCESS, PROGRESSION, PORTABILITY, ARTICULATION**

To enable progression through the levels of the framework:

- Credit achievements
- Allow the building of credits
- Enable the transference of credits from one learning situation or site to another

#### 4. **RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

- Allow for accelerated access to further learning
- Assess and give credit for evidence of learning that has already been acquired in different ways

The process of recognising of prior achievements is about:

<b>Identifying</b>	what the learner knows and can do
<b>Matching</b> →	the learner's skills, knowledge and experience to specific standards and the associated criteria
<b>Assessing</b>	the learner against those standards
<b>Crediting</b>	the learner for skills, knowledge and experience built up through formal/informal/non-formal learning that occurred in the past

#### 5. **LEGITIMACY AND CREDIBILITY**

Be transparent in terms of the standard expected, that is:

- What the learner is expected to achieve
- What criteria will be used to assess achievement
- What the learner will have to do to show achievement
- How it will be assessed
- The conditions under which and, or the situation in which the assessment will take place
- The underpinning knowledge that will have a bearing on ensuring achievement
- The amount, complexity and type of evidence that will be required
- How moderation will be done
- When the assessment will take place

To illustrate, look at the unit standards for ABET 4 dealing with Technology:

UNIT STANDARD	DESCRIPTION
<p><b>Specific outcome #3:</b> Select and use types of energy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What the learner is expected to achieve</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Assessment criteria:</b> 3.1 Selection of energy source for a particular purpose is motivated, described and applied Note: (e.g. electric, wind, solar, wood, gas, coal) 3.2 Energy management reflects environmental considerations and cost effectiveness Range: home, work and transport</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What criteria will be used to assess achievement</i></li> <li>• <i>What the learner will have to do to show achievement</i></li> <li>• <i>The conditions under which and/ or the situation in which the assessment will take place</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Notes:</b> KNOWLEDGE NB: Natural Science SO#1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law of Conservation of Energy</li> <li>• Nature of Energy (Importance to society)</li> <li>• Types – hydro-electric, wind, solar, tidal, chemical, bio-chemical, electrical, magnetic, electro-magnetic, radiation (light, heat, ultra-violet, infra-red)</li> <li>• Forms – kinetic and potential</li> <li>• Sources – renewable – hydro-electric, wind, solar, tidal; non-renewable – wood, fossil (oil, gas and coal), nuclear, animals</li> <li>• Concept of cost of energy</li> <li>• Transformation of kinetic to potential and vice versa</li> <li>• Transfer and efficiency of energy transfer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The underpinning knowledge that will have a bearing on ensuring achievement</i></li> <li>• <i>The amount, complexity and type of evidence that will be required</i></li> </ul>

## 6. **FLEXIBILITY**

- Use a variety of assessment approaches, methods and instruments. However, ensure that the chosen approach(es), method(s), instrument(s) are fair, reliable, valid and practicable (this will be discussed in detail in chapter 3).

## 7. **GUIDANCE OF LEARNERS**

Through the use of a variety of approaches, methods and instruments, and through continuous formative assessment, inform learners about:

- What they know and can do already
- What they need to know and do
- How they can achieve what they need to know and do
- When they are ready to be assessed for qualification purposes
- How they can use the results of assessment

# Chapter 3

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## Overview of Assessment

**Introduction**

**The Principles of good Assessment**

1. FAIRNESS
2. VALIDITY
3. RELIABILITY
4. PRACTICABILITY

**OBET and Assessment**

**Criterion-referenced Assessment**

**Formative and Summative Assessment**

**Assessment Methods and Instruments**

**Evidence**

**Quality of Evidence**

**Types of Evidence**

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## Introduction

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In general, assessment in education and training is about **collecting evidence** of learners' work so that judgements about learners' achievements, or non-achievements, can be made and decisions arrived at.

The decisions may have to do with the learner –

- Is the learner able to do a certain job?
- Is the learner able to embark on a particular course of study?
- What other learning does the learner need to do in order to be deemed qualified?

It may also have to do with the learning programme –

- What is the quality of the programme?
- What improvements or changes are needed?

Decisions may need to be made about the education and training system itself, and judgements made in the process can inform such decisions.

The most important use of assessment though, is to judge the performance of learners in education and training so that qualifications may be awarded.

SAQA views assessment as:

'A structured process for gathering evidence and making judgements about an individual's performance in relation to registered national standards and qualifications'.

## The Principles of good Assessment

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As assessment is central to the recognition of achievement, the quality of the assessment is therefore important to provide credible certification. Credibility in assessment is assured through assessment procedures and practices being governed by certain principles.

These principles are:

- Fairness
- Validity
- Reliability
- Practicability

These principles help to allay the concerns and anxieties of users of assessment results. The learners, parents, employers, learning institutions and the general public want the assurance that the assessment results are credible. This is because these results often affect personal, social and economic progression and mobility in society. In addition, the results provide accurate information about the individual.

The above-mentioned principles are looked at more closely below:

### 1. **FAIRNESS**

An assessment should not in any way **hinder or advantage** a learner.

Unfairness in assessment would constitute:

- Inequality of opportunities, resources and appropriate teaching and learning approaches in terms of acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Bias in respect of ethnicity, gender, age, disability, social class and race in so far as that the assessment approaches, methods, instruments and materials do not take into account these differences.

- Lack of clarity in terms of what is being assessed.
- Comparison of learners' work with other learners, particularly in terms of diversity of learning styles, home language, values, gender, race, life experiences, etc.

Fairness in assessment would constitute:

- The above-mentioned influences are taken into account and addressed.
- The assessment process is clear, transparent and available to all learners.
- Appeal mechanisms and re-assessments are accessible to all learners.

## 2. **VALIDITY**

Validity in assessment refers to **measuring what it says it is measuring**, be it knowledge, understanding, subject content, skills, information, behaviours, etc.

Validity in assessment would constitute:

- Assessment procedures, methods, instruments and materials have to match what is being assessed.

For example:

A learner is assessed on research skills.  
 However, a learner's ability to write may not necessarily provide evidence that the learner has the ability to do research.  
 The assessment must assess the **learner's ability to perform**.  
 In this case, the learner should be assessed on the various activities of the stages of research, namely –  
 Formulation of the research question  
 Literature review  
 Development of research instruments  
 Collection of data  
 Analysis of data and writing a report

Therefore, the assessment should stay within the parameters of what is required – not less than the unit standard or qualification, nor more than the unit standard or qualification.

In order to achieve validity in the assessment, assessors should:

- State clearly what outcome(s) is/are being assessed
- Use an appropriate type or source of evidence
- Use an appropriate method of assessment
- Select an appropriate instrument of assessment

**NOTE:**

When designing an assessment, the assessor must look at the specific outcome(s), the assessment criteria and the range so as to determine the kind and amount of evidence required from the learner.

The kind and amount of evidence will also determine the assessment method and instruments to be selected and used.

The assessment criteria, the range, contexts and underpinning knowledge indicated in the unit standard, will inform these decisions.

(Refer back to chapter 2 – look at the example of an ABET 4 unit standard dealing with Technology.)

### 3. **RELIABILITY**

Reliability in assessment is about **consistency**. Consistency refers to the same judgements being made in the same, or similar contexts each time a particular assessment for specified stated intentions is administered.

Assessment results should not be perceived to have been influenced by variables such as:

- Assessor bias in terms of the learner's gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, like/dislike, appearance and such like

- Different assessors interpreting unit standards or qualifications inconsistently
- Different assessors applying different standards
- Assessor stress and fatigue
- Insufficient evidence gathered
- Assessor assumptions about the learner, based on previous (good or bad) performance

To avoid such variance in judgement (results), assessments should ensure that each time an assessment is administered, the same or similar conditions prevail. Also, that the procedures, methods, instruments and practices are the same or similar.

In addition:

- Assessors should be trained and competent in administering assessments
- Assessors should give clear, consistent and unambiguous instructions
- Assessment criteria and guidelines for unit standards and qualifications should be adhered to
- Assessors should meet and talk to each other
- Assessors should be subject experts in their learning field(s)
- Where possible, more than one assessor should be involved in the assessment of one learner
- Assessors should use checklists, or other objective forms of assessment, in addition to other assessment instruments
- Internal and external moderation procedures for assessment should be in place
- Clear and systematic recording procedures should be in place

#### 4. **PRACTICABILITY**

Practicability refers to ensuring that assessments take into account the **available financial resources, facilities, equipment and time.**

Assessments that require elaborate arrangements for equipment and facilities, as well as being costly, will make the assessment system fail.

##### **NOTE:**

Where the ideal assessment requires specialised equipment and facilities, such assessment could be done by means of a simulation or by means of collecting evidence in the workplace.

To conclude:

**FAIRNESS + VALIDITY + RELIABILITY + PRACTICABILITY = CREDIBILITY**

The critical overriding principle of assessment is that of **ethics.**

Because the results of an assessment can lead to an increase in pay, improved career prospects and the like, the principles of assessment should be applied ethically and responsibly.

### **OBET and Assessment**

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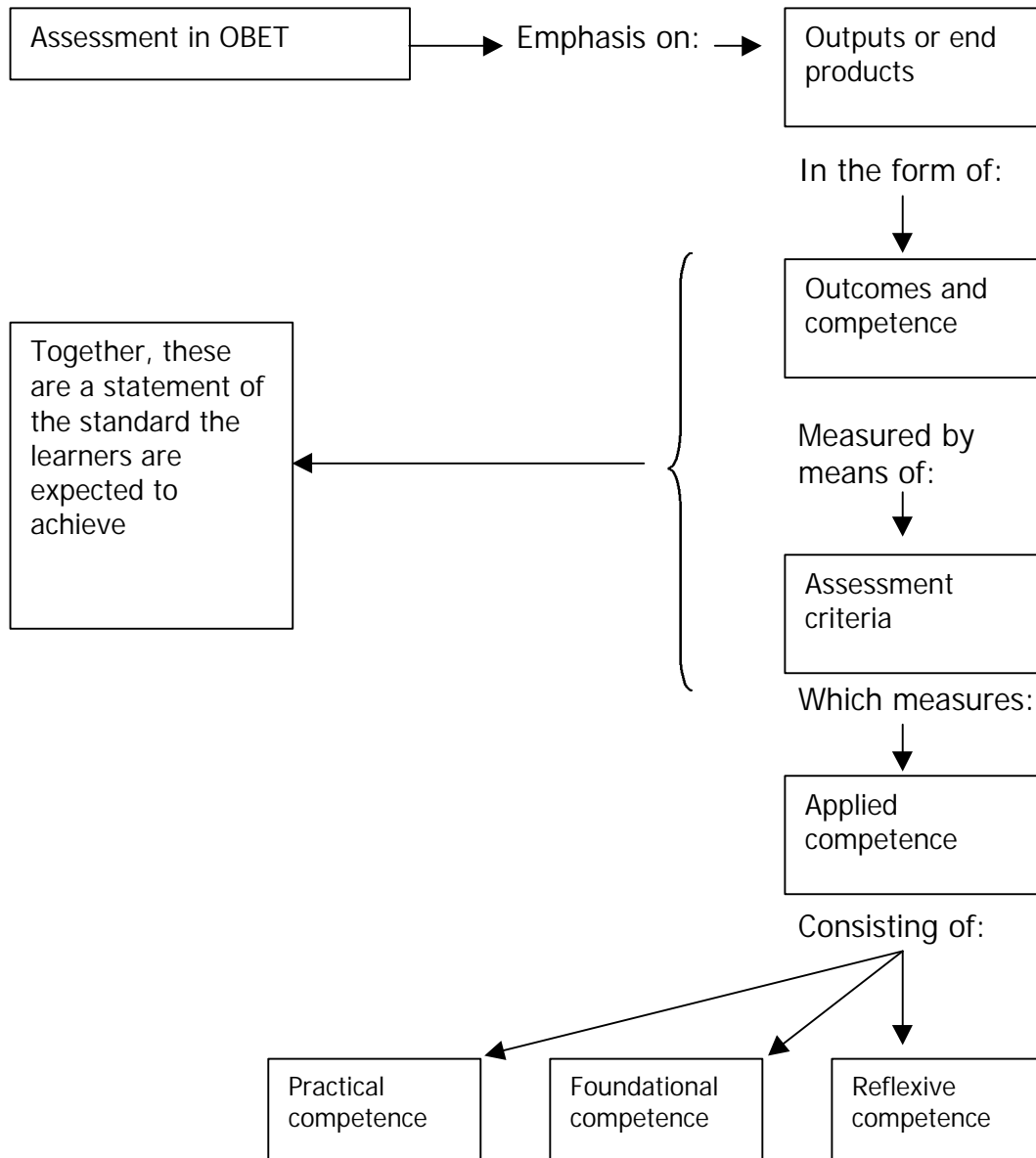
Assessment in OBET emphasises the assessment of outputs and end products.

These are expressed in outcomes and competence.

The assessment of the achievement (or non-achievement) of outcomes and competence is done against assessment criteria.

The statement of outcomes, competence and assessment together, is a statement of the standard that the learners are expected to achieve, and are therefore assessed against.

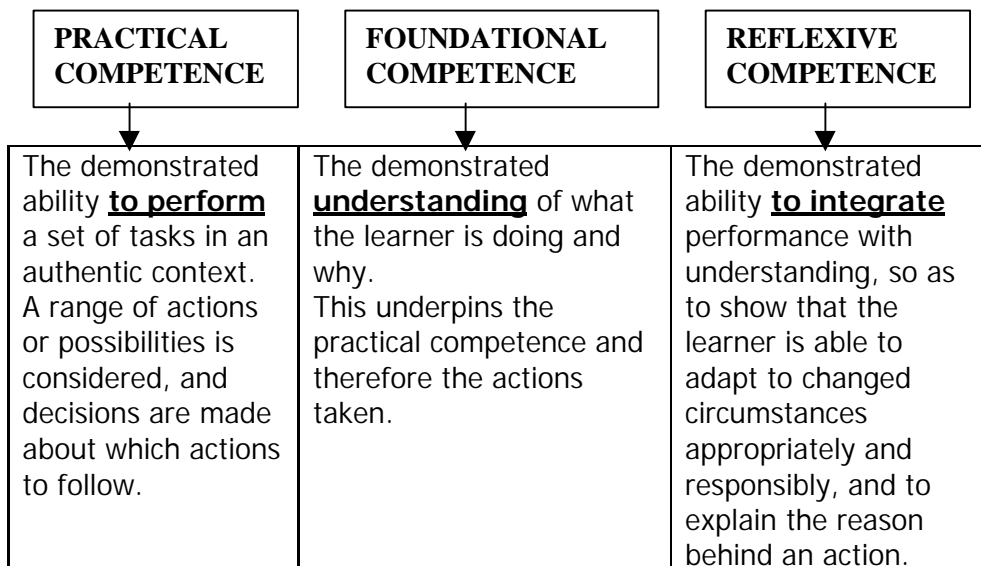
Look at the diagram:



Below is an exploration of the meaning of **applied competence** (also refer to the table in chapter 2 for a short description and summary):

Competence in SAQA terms is **applied competence** – the union of practical, foundational and reflexive competence.

Look at the previous diagram dealing with 'applied competence' again:



(This explanation is based on a description of applied competence as developed by Education, Training and Development Practices Project.)

Following is a description of **outcomes**:

Outcomes are **the demonstrable and assessable end products** of a learning process. They are statements regarding elements of competence.

However, outcomes go beyond the specification of subject content and can include reference to:

- Actions, roles, knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes that a learner has to perform to demonstrate competence
- The criteria against which these will be assessed
- The particular contexts for performance of these
- The assessment of the performance of these

**Assessment criteria** are used to assess learners. Following is a closer look at assessment criteria:

Assessment criteria are statements that describe **the standard** to which learners must perform the actions, roles, knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes stated in the outcomes.  
They are a **clear and transparent expression of requirements** against which successful (or unsuccessful) performance is assessed.

The assessment criteria should specify:

- The knowledge, understanding, action(s), roles, skills, values and attitudes that a learner has to display in order to provide evidence that outcomes and competence have been achieved
- The level of complexity and quality of these
- The context of and conditions under which demonstrations should occur.

Assessment criteria are therefore statements whereby an assessor can judge whether the evidence provided by a learner is sufficient to demonstrate competent performance.

The next aspect to explore is the **unit standard**:

A unit standard is a description of the **end points of learning** for which the learner will get credit. A unit standard is therefore **a statement of expectation and/or aspiration**. It also provides a basis for the judgements or assessments that are made.

The standard in OBET is usually held in:

- The statement of competence
- The statement of outcomes
- The assessment criteria

Therefore, a unit standard describes:

A coherent and meaningful outcome (milestone/end point) of learning or training that is formally recognised	<b>UNIT STANDARD TITLE</b>
The title, which is broken down into smaller, more manageable outcomes	<b>SPECIFIC OUTCOMES</b>
The associated standard of performance used by the assessor to determine whether the outcome has been met	<b>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</b>
The context(s) in which the individual is expected to perform	<b>RANGE</b>

**Unit standards are the parts which qualifications are made of.** A qualification in SAQA terms are made up of a cluster of unit standards, including standards for fundamental learning, core learning and elective learning – this is to ensure that learners are not only competent in a particular field, but that they are developed holistically, with competence in inter alia, communication and numeracy, etc.

To summarise:

The explicit and transparent specification of competence, outcomes and assessment criteria is intended to ensure **fairness of assessment**:

- All learners know what they are expected to demonstrate in order to achieve credits
- All assessors know what skills, knowledge, understanding, values, attitudes, etc. are expected from a learner
- There is clarity on tasks and activities that learners have to perform
- There is clarity on the level of complexity, quality, kinds and range of skills, knowledge, understanding, values, attitudes, etc. expected from the learner
- There is clarity on the context of and the conditions under which assessment will occur

In addition, the explicit and transparent specification of competence, outcomes and assessment criteria is intended to ensure **validity and practicability of assessment**:

- The nature of assessment methods and instruments should match the assessment criteria specified.

For example:

A learner is assessed in reading competence.  
The method of assessment is observation and questioning.  
The assessment instruments are oral questions and assignments.  
When assessing, the assessor should not be checking for spoken language criteria during oral responses to questions – the assessment is about reading competence.  
Also, the assessor should not be checking for grammar in written responses – the assessment is about reading competence.  
(However, if an integrated assessment clearly require all of these, as set out in the assessment criteria, it will be reflected in the assessment methods and instruments)

Furthermore, the explicit and transparent specification of competence, outcomes and assessment criteria is also intended to ensure **reliability of assessment**:

- The standards, outcomes and the assessment criteria are the basis upon which assessments are planned and administered.
- These remain constant regardless of who is assessing or who is being assessed
- The specific nature of these aspects makes it incumbent upon the assessor to use them as a guide to planning, developing and administering assessments
- The clear nature of these aspects is an in-built mechanism to avoid assessor deviation, inconsistency and error

## **IMPORTANT:**

Assessment in OBET is not only focused on what learners can do, but intends to **develop learners holistically**. In other words, learners are also required to demonstrate certain **life-skills**, which will not only enhance their learning, but will also ensure that these skills are transferable to their private lives.

These skills are referred to as **'generic abilities'** and are expressed as **'critical cross-field outcomes'** in the qualifications. The following critical cross-field outcomes must be included and assessed in each qualification:

- Identify and solve problems in which responses display that responsible decisions, using critical thinking, have been made
- Work effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation or community
- Organise and manage oneself and one's activities responsibly and effectively
- Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information
- Communicate effectively using visual, mathematical, and/or language skills in the modes of written and/or oral presentation
- Use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others
- Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation
- Contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the society at large, by making it the underlying intention of any programme of learning to make an individual aware of the importance of:
  - i) reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively;
  - ii) participating as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities;

- iii) being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts

(Refer back to the examples of unit standards in chapter 2 to see how the critical cross-field outcomes are included in assessments.)

However, the **assessment of knowledge** (i.e. content), is still very important. Therefore, the assessment practices which were traditionally used for knowledge and input-based education and training systems, are still useful in OBET assessment. This means that **exit level summative assessments (examinations)**, and **norm-referenced assessments (grading and averaging)**, will still be used as part of a more integrative assessment. It will however, no longer be the only and decisive form of assessment.

## Criterion-Referenced Assessment

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OBET assessment is associated with criterion-referenced assessment, particularly in terms of the assessment of the individual and his/her achievement.

Criterion-referenced assessment is often explained in opposition to norm-referenced assessment.

Compare the two:

Criterion-referenced Assessment	Norm-referenced Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes judgements about learners by measuring learners' work against set criteria</li> <li>• An individual is assessed</li> <li>• The criteria are pre-determined and are part of the standard</li> <li>• The criteria are objective and attempts to be as clear as possible in terms of the nature of the assessment</li> <li>• Where grading is used, learners are graded against the criteria for assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes judgements about learners by measuring them against each other</li> <li>• A group of learners are assessed</li> <li>• Assessments are curriculum-based</li> <li>• Associated with grading and ranking of learners</li> <li>• Associated with averaging of scores or grading of learners</li> <li>• Associated with adjustment of scores to fit the profile of the learner group</li> </ul>

Thus in OBET, assessment is done to the standard that is stated in terms of the specified outcomes and the accompanying assessment criteria laid down. The achievement (or non-achievement) of other learners undergoing the same assessment is not the major issue. A learner is deemed competent or not competent on the basis of their assessment against the standard set.

However, as indicated under 'Principles of good Assessment', this does not mean that norm-referenced assessments are not to be used under any circumstances. Exit level public examinations are still the cheapest form of assessment for large numbers of learners. Therefore, it is still useful to OBET in the following ways:

- To assess large numbers of learners in a cost-effective way
- To test content knowledge
- To draw statistics, i.e. compare one year's performance with that of the previous year to evaluate standards
- To determine the quality of teaching
- To determine the quality of the learning programme
- To make comments about the national curriculum and trends
- To analyse strengths and weaknesses to assist in programme planning and evaluation

To safeguard against the misuse of norm-referenced assessments, designers of assessment should not rely on this form of assessment only. It should therefore be part of a range of assessments that incorporates best practice in assessment, i.e. criterion-referenced assessment, self-referenced assessment and norm-referenced assessment.

Also, as in the case of any other form of assessment, the purpose of the assessment should be clear and transparent.

## Formative and Summative Assessment

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OBET makes use of formative and summative assessments.

**Formative assessment** refers to assessment that takes place during the process of learning and teaching.

**Summative assessment** is assessment for making a judgement about achievement. This is carried out when a learner is ready to be assessed at the end of a programme of learning.

Compare the two forms of assessment:

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT	SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Designed to support the teaching and learning process</li><li>• Assists in planning future learning</li><li>• Diagnoses the learner's strength and weaknesses</li><li>• Provides feedback to the learner on his/her progress</li><li>• Helps to make decisions on the readiness of learners to do a summative assessment</li><li>• Is developmental in nature</li><li>• Credits/certificates are not awarded</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• At the end of a learning programme (qualification, unit standard, or part qualification)</li><li>• To determine whether the learner is competent or not yet competent</li><li>• In knowledge and inputs-based systems, this usually occurs after a specified period of study, e.g. one year</li><li>• In OBET, learner-readiness determines when assessments will take place</li><li>• Is carried out when the assessor and the learner agree that the learner is ready for assessment</li></ul>

### NOTE:

Results initially collected as results for formative assessment, can be used for summative assessment with the agreement of the learner. This will prevent having to assess outcomes twice.

The organisation of **the learning programme will inform decisions on when summative assessments** can take place, e.g. a learning programme can be organised around one outcome or a set of outcomes, depending on what

is appropriate in terms of ensuring learner success. Summative assessments are administered when a learner has gone through such a programme and is ready to be assessed. On declaration of competence, credit is then given, recorded and reported.

This is also true for qualifications. In *SAQA* terms a qualification is:

A planned combination of learning outcomes with a defined purpose(s) that is intended to provide qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning.

In this case, the educator may organise learning programmes around one outcome (or a set of outcomes), and therefore assess at the end of each learning programme developed for this unit, or assessment could take place at the end of all the outcomes of the qualification.

This understanding of a learning programme makes it possible for **summative assessments** to be done on **a continuous basis** throughout the learning experience. It can be carried out at any of the given points of the total learning experience.

This notion of summative assessment therefore **does not confine assessment to a written examination** that can only assess a sample of learning within a limited time (e.g. 3 hours). It allows for the use of **a range of assessment methods** (observation, product evaluation, written and oral questioning), and for a range of assessment instruments (practical, role plays, written assignments, tests, examinations, demonstrations, projects, case studies, simulations, etc.) Also, by using a range of methods and instruments, evidence can be collected from **a variety of sources** (more about this in the next section).

This is applicable to both formative and summative assessment with the proviso that the assessment method and instruments match what is being assessed and that appropriate and sufficient evidence has been collected.

**NOTE:**

Transparency is imperative: it must be clear to the learner whether he/she is undergoing formative or summative assessments. When summative assessment is carried out, it must be clear that the results of the assessment will be recorded and reported as a credit gained or not gained. The learner must also be clear about what he/she is being assessed on, by whom, and when.

Finally, every outcome and its associated assessment criteria specified in a unit standard or qualification has to be assessed for credit purposes.

## **Assessment Methods and Instruments**

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This document refers to assessment methods and assessment instruments.

**Assessment methods** refer to the activities that an **assessor** engages in as he or she assesses a learner and the learner's work.

Normally these activities are:

- Observation – observing the learner while he/she is carrying out tasks, real or simulated, as defined in an outcome or outcome statement
- Evaluation of a product – evaluating something the learner has produced after the task has been completed
- Questioning – asking questions orally or in writing which are answered orally or in writing. The questions could relate to the observation or to the product. This is done to check the learner's understanding of why certain activities were carried out or test the learner's ability to work within contexts required in the range statements or in other contingencies suggested by the assessment criteria.

Questioning is also an important means of establishing the learner's underpinning knowledge and understanding.

Look at the example:

<b>Specific outcome #3:</b>	Select and use types of energy
<b>Assessment criteria:</b>	Selection of energy source for a particular purpose is motivated, described and applied <i>Note: (e.g. electric, wind, solar, wood, gas, coal)</i>
The learner has decided to demonstrate the use of energy by building a windmill to mill grain. He motivated the use of wind as a source of energy and demonstrated the use of the mill.	
The assessor asks questions of the learner around the demonstration to determine understanding and underpinning knowledge in this particular example, e.g. Why did you choose this form of energy? What are the benefits of this form of energy? What are the disadvantages of this form of energy?	
Also, because it is impossible to set up an assessment for all the different sources of energy, the assessor sketches different scenarios and questions the learner around that. This can be done by means of oral testing, written tests or other appropriate forms of assessment.	

**Assessment instruments** refer to the **nature of the assessment task** given to **the learner** to do.

The table below lists different assessment methods and instruments:

INSTRUMENT	OBSERVATION	PRODUCT EVALUATION	QUESTIONING WRITTEN/ORAL
Alternative response questions			✓
Assertion/reason questions			✓
Assignments		✓	✓
Aural/oral tests			✓
Case studies		✓	✓
Completion questions			✓
Examinations/tests		✓	✓
Extended response questions			✓
Grid questions			✓
Logbooks		✓	✓
Matching questions			✓
Multiple choice questions			✓
Oral questions			✓
Personal interviews	✓		✓
Practical exercises/demonstrations	✓	✓	✓
Portfolios		✓	✓
Projects	✓	✓	✓
Questionnaires		✓	✓
Restricted response questions			✓
Role-plays	✓		✓
Simulations	✓		✓
Short answer questions			✓
Structured questions			✓

Following is a description of the use of each of the above-mentioned instruments. The principles of assessment should be kept in mind when deciding to use a particular instrument, i.e. the assessment instrument should ensure fairness, should be reliable, valid and practical.

These are some of the different types of questions that can be used:

#### Alternative response questions

True/False; Yes/No questions

Possible uses:            Recall of information  
                                 Ability to discriminate

#### Assertion/reason questions

Consists of an assertion and supporting explanation.

The learner has to decide whether the assertion and explanation are true, and if true, whether the explanation is a valid reason for the assertion. Sometimes the learner is asked to select his/her answer from a list of possibilities, e.g. True; True + Valid; True + Invalid.

Possible uses:            Ability to weigh up options and to discriminate

#### Aural/oral tests

These are mainly used to generate evidence on learners' ability to listen, interpret, communicate ideas and sustain a conversation in the language of assessment.

Possible uses:            Interpretation of ideas  
                                 Expression of ideas

#### Completion questions/short answer questions

Learners are presented with a question with a pre-determined answer consisting of a few words, or may be given a statement where key words are omitted.

They are then required to complete the statement by filling in the word(s). Such questions may also involve the use of numbers, diagrams and graphs.

Possible uses: Recall of factual information  
Test understanding and application of knowledge, e.g. in mathematical concepts

### Examinations/tests

These usually consist of a range of questions. Learners are required to respond to questions within a specified time.

Possible uses: Recall of information  
Cognitive skills such as problem solving or analyses

### Extended response questions

These are usually in a written form. There are few restrictions on the content and form of the response. Continuous prose is normally required, but there may be limits on the length and/or time allocated.

Possible uses: Open-ended debates or other responses  
Arguments  
Reports

### Grid questions/matching questions

Grid questions and matching questions are variants of each other. The learner is presented with two lists – a set of statements and a set of responses. The learner is required to indicate which response from the second list corresponds or matches each statement in the first list.

Grid questions are presented in grid format.

They differ from the other selected-response assessment instruments in that each question may have more than one correct response and each response may be used more than once.

Possible uses: Recall of information  
Application of knowledge

### Multiple-choice questions

Multiple-choice questions consist of an incomplete statement or a question, followed by plausible alternative responses from which the learner has to select the correct one.

Outcomes involving higher order analytical skills are probably more validly assessed by means of free-response assessment instruments such as extended response questions, but multiple choice questions can be useful if carefully constructed.

Possible uses:            Recall of information  
                                  Check understanding; analyses

### Oral questions/restricted response questions

The form and content of the response is limited by the way in which the question is asked. These questions do not have pre-determined correct answers (as in short answer questions, etc.) and the assessor has to exercise his/her professional judgement when interpreting learners' responses.

Possible uses:            Allows for self-expression when questions are oral  
                                  Supports observation of tasks where underpinning  
                                  knowledge and understanding are tested

### Personal interviews

A personal interview is probably the oldest and best-known means of eliciting information directly from learners. It combines two assessment methods, namely observation and questioning. An interview is a dialogue between the assessor and the learner, creating opportunities for learner questions.

Possible uses:            A range of applications using different forms of questions,  
                                  particularly open-ended questions  
                                  Guidance and support to the learner

### Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a structured written interview consisting of a set of questions relating to particular areas of performance. Unlike a personal interview, it is administered and judged under standard conditions.

Possible uses:       Assessment of outcomes particularly concerned with attitudes, feelings, interests and experiences

### Structured questions

A structured question consists of a stem (which describes a situation), followed by a series of related questions. The stem can be text, a diagram, a picture, a video, etc.

Possible uses:       Recall of information  
                          Application of knowledge and understanding  
                          Analyses  
                          Debates  
                          Arguments

### **NOTE:**

Most assessors are very familiar with the different types of questions that can be used. However, there are many other assessment instruments that should be used to achieve a fuller picture of the learner's abilities. Following is a discussion about these instruments:

### Assignments

A problem-solving exercise with clear guidelines and a specified length.

More structured and less open-ended than projects, but they do not necessarily involve strict adherence to a prescribed procedure and they are not concerned exclusively with manual skills.

Possible uses:       Problem-solving around a particular topic

### Case studies

A description of an event concerning a real-life or simulated situation, usually in the form of a paragraph or text, a video, a picture or a role-play exercise. This is followed by a series of instructions to elicit responses from learners. Individuals or small groups may undertake case studies.

Possible uses:       Analyses of situations  
                              Drawing conclusions  
                              Reports on possible courses of action

### Logbooks

A useful means of assessing learner's progress and achievements. It should have clear instructions for use and give guidance on how essential information is to be recorded.

Possible uses:       In a workplace – monitor and check activities; record processes; record of achievements

### Practical exercises/demonstrations

An activity that allows learners to demonstrate manual and/or behavioural skills. The assessment may be based on the end-result of the activity (the product), or the carrying-out of the activity (the process), or a combination of both.

Possible uses:       Demonstration of skill

### Portfolios

A collection of different types of evidence relating to the work being assessed. It can include a variety of work samples. Portfolios are suitable for long-term activities.

It is important that the evidence in the portfolio meet the requirements of sufficiency and currency.

The learner and assessor usually plan the portfolio jointly as sources of evidence may vary. The learner is then responsible for the collection of evidence and the compilation of the portfolio.

Possible uses:        Recognition of prior learning and experience  
                                 Assessment of long-term activities related to each other  
                                 Assessment where direct observation may be difficult

### Projects

A project is any exercise or investigation in which the time constraints are more relaxed. Projects are:

- Practical
- Comprehensive and open-ended
- Tackled without close supervision, but with assessor guidance and support

Projects can involve individuals or a group of learners.

The choice of the project is directed by the assessor, usually by providing the learner with a topic or brief for the investigation.

Possible uses:        Comprehensive range of skills can be assessed  
                                 Integration of activities within and across unit standards or  
                                 different parts of a qualification

### Role-plays

Learners are presented with a situation, often a problem or an incident, to which they have to respond by assuming a particular role. The enactment may be unrehearsed, or the learner may be briefed in the particular role to be played.

Such assessments are open-ended and are person-centered.

Possible uses:        Assessment of a wide range of behavioural and inter-  
                                 personal skills

### Simulations

Simulations mirror actual activities or conditions. They are suitable for assessments where demonstrations and observation will provide reliable and valid results, but where, for a number of reasons, it is difficult or not practicable to assess under actual conditions.

Possible uses:            Assessments of actions under 'safe' conditions, e.g. operating machines which could be dangerous or where the breakdown of such a machine will cause a halt in production or endanger lives

### **NOTE:**

All the assessment instruments mentioned above have been used successfully in a variety of contexts. However, to encourage learners to be reflective of their own learning, the following assessment instruments may also be used:

### Reflective journal

A reflective journal gives learners the opportunity to critically reflect on their own learning, to express their thoughts and experiences and to present this in an acceptable way. Even though it is a form of self-assessment, it can be submitted for assessment.

Possible uses:            It gives the assessor a unique opportunity to follow the thought-processes of a learner and to monitor the way a learner thinks and grows  
Critical evaluation of progress by the learner

### Self-assessment

A checklist, questionnaire completed by a learner, notes jotted down or other forms of structured self-assessment undertaken after an action, demonstration, oral examination, etc.

Possible uses:            Critical evaluation of progress by learner

### Peer assessment

Assessment by the learner's peers, usually in the form of a checklist.

Possible uses:      Assessment of paired or group activities  
                                 Assessment of teamwork

### **NOTE:**

Assessors should move away from the idea that assessment is only a final form of evaluation. Assessment is integral to the teaching and learning process, i.e. assessment could be diagnostic (i.e. determining any gaps in teaching and learning), formative (i.e. determining the progress towards the outcomes) and summative (determining whether the outcomes have been reached).

## **Evidence**

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All the different forms of assessment have one thing in common: **the collection of evidence**. Evidence can be defined as:

The proof produced by a learner that shows that he/she complies with the requirements of the criteria of the standard they wish to gain credits for
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Evidence can come from **a variety of sources**. It is the responsibility of the assessor to ensure that enough (and the appropriate) evidence has been collected to make an accurate judgement about a learner's competence.

Even though the unit standards and qualifications indicate the scope, context and level for the demonstration of outcomes to be achieved, the assessor has to check the quality of evidence before making an assessment decision.

## Quality of Evidence

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### 1. VALIDITY OF EVIDENCE

Does the evidence relate to the specific outcomes and criteria to be assessed?

Evidence is not automatically valid (or invalid) – evidence should be **appropriate** to what is being assessed.

Look at the example:

If a practical skill such as keyboard skills is assessed, evidence by answering questions on the use of the keyboard, will not be valid evidence, as only the demonstration of the skill will prove competence. Questions may be asked to check underpinning knowledge and understanding of the demonstration, but cannot replace it.

### 2. AUTHENTICITY OF EVIDENCE

Can the evidence be attributed to the learner? **Is the evidence the learner's own work?**

In written assessments, safeguards against dishonesty have long been in place. In OBET, there is no difficulty in checking authenticity where the assessor is observing the learner directly. However, where indirect evidence is produced, or where group work was undertaken, the assessor has to verify that the evidence is the learner's own work, and in the case of group work, that he/she has made a fair contribution to the end-result.

### 3. SUFFICIENCY OF EVIDENCE

**Is there enough evidence to meet all the criteria** needed to certify the learner as competent? Is the assessor confident that the performance can be repeated?

The use of various sources of evidence and a variety of assessment activities assist in ensuring that the evidence is sufficient. This will ensure that enough evidence is being provided to meet all the criteria and the applicable range statements.

Look at the example:

In assessing keyboard skills, the range requires competence on manual and automatic machines. Evidence will therefore only be sufficient if the learner can prove competence on both types of machines.

#### 4. **CURRENCY OF EVIDENCE**

##### **Is the evidence related to current competence?**

Currency refers to the applicability of skills, knowledge and understanding in the present circumstances. In some fields of study, currency of experience and training is of the utmost importance.

Look at the example:

A computer programmer hasn't been involved in the field for three years, but has worked in the industry the preceding five years. This evidence does not mean that the learner is necessarily up to date with the latest developments and skills required for computer programming.

## **Types of Evidence**

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The best type of evidence is that which can be observed directly by the assessor. This means that evidence should be collected from activities that are as similar as possible to actual conditions. However, there are other types of evidence that are also valid if checked and verified. There are three main types of evidence:

### Direct evidence

Direct evidence is actual evidence produced by the learner. This is the most valid type of evidence. Direct evidence also easily establishes authenticity. This should be the assessor's primary source of evidence. Examples of direct evidence include:

- Direct observation of tasks, activities, etc
- Questioning, i.e. oral, written
- Product and output evaluation

It may be necessary to corroborate evidence (for example a written assignment or a product) to ensure that it is the learner's own work.

### Indirect evidence

Indirect evidence is evidence produced about the learner from another source. This is usually in the form of reports of third party sources, i.e. sources other than the assessor. Indirect evidence can be used to verify the authenticity of other forms of evidence. In addition, it may be necessary to corroborate these forms of evidence. Sources of indirect evidence include:

- Team outputs
- Work completed at an earlier stage
- Performance appraisals
- Training records
- Testimonials
- Reviews and commendations
- Certificates and qualifications
- Medals, prizes and trophies
- Customer/client ratings

## Historical evidence

This type of evidence tells the assessor what the learner was capable of doing in the past. It is the least valid form of evidence because it does not necessarily prove current competence. Historical evidence usually needs to be checked for authenticity, but it is still a useful supplement to the assessment process.

However, historical evidence should not be confused with an 'extended assessment'. There is, in principle, no time limit for evidence collection, and depending on the nature of the activity, assessment can take place in one day or over several months, but this does not mean that the evidence is historical.

Some examples of historical evidence are:

- Projects and portfolios
- Video/audio-taped performance/photographs
- Documentary evidence completed by the learner
- Completed work (products)
- Performance appraisals
- Training records
- Testimonials
- Reviews and commendations
- Certificates and qualifications
- Medals, prizes and trophies
- Customer/client ratings

## Chapter

# 4

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### **NQF Standards and Assessment**

Unit Standards and Assessment  
The Qualification and Assessment  
Recognition of Prior Learning

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## Unit Standards and Assessment

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The standard in the *NQF* system is held in the unit standard. A unit standard is the **smallest unit that can be credited to a learner**. Unit standards can **stand alone**, but are generally **part of a qualification** (refer to the description of a unit standard in chapter 3).

A unit standard consists of the following elements as it appears in the *NSB Regulations*:

- The purpose of the unit standard
- The learning assumed to be in place before the unit standard is commenced
- The specific outcomes to be assessed
- The assessment criteria, including essential embedded knowledge
- The accreditation process (including moderation) for the unit standard
- The range statements as a general guide for the scope and context for the performance of outcomes of the unit standard
- The notes category which includes the critical cross-field outcomes, and may include reference to essential embedded knowledge, if this is not addressed under assessment criteria, and may include other supplementary information

The unit standard is the **basis upon which assessments are designed** and indicates to the learner what to expect when being assessed, in the following way:

- **In the purpose** of the unit standard the expected applied competence that should be achieved and will therefore be assessed, is stated:

<b>Purpose:</b>	This unit standard is intended for people who are responsible for the safekeeping of formal and informal security documents. People credited with this unit standard are able to log records in and to withdraw records from a filing location, to provide copies of documentation in custodianship and to maintain the image and accuracy of the library.
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- **In the outcome or outcomes** of the unit standard, the specific actions, roles, knowledge, understanding, skills, values, attitudes that a learner has to perform in assessment, are stated:

<b>Specific outcome 1:</b>	Log security records in
<b>Specific outcome 2:</b>	Withdraw security records from filing location
<b>Specific outcome 3:</b>	Provide, on request, copies of security documents in custodianship
<b>Specific outcome 4:</b>	Maintain the image and accuracy of the library

- **In the assessment criteria** the level of complexity and quality of the learner's performance expected in the assessment, are stated:

<b>Specific outcome 1:</b>	Log security records in
<b>Assessment criteria:</b>	
1.1	Approved security records and/or documentation are received for safekeeping according to company specifications
1.2	The content of the record is verified and completeness is confirmed in accordance with company specific requirements
1.3	Records received for safekeeping are recorded according to company specific requirements
1.4	Records are filed in accordance with the specifications of the filing/storage system in use and type of security

- **In the range statement** the particular scope and range of contexts for the learner's performance and assessment, the kinds of methods and activities applicable and the kinds of evidence to be collected, are stated:

<b>Range Statements for -</b>	
<b>Specific outcome 1:</b>	New records, individual documents, re-entering existing documents
<b>Range Statements for –</b>	
<b>Assessment criteria 1.3:</b>	Recording includes, but are not limited to manual recording e.g. registers; use of technology, e.g. imaging; storage tracking system and acknowledgement of receipt.

- **The accreditation process and moderation** of the assessment process to ensure fairness, validity, reliability and practicability, are stated:

**Accreditation Process (Including Moderation):**

- i) Anyone assessing a learner against this unit standard must be registered as an assessor with the relevant *ETQA*
- ii) Any institution offering learning that will enable achievement of this unit standard or assessing this unit standard, must be accredited as a provider with the relevant *ETQA*
- iii) Moderation of assessment will be overseen by the relevant *ETQA* according to the moderation guidelines in the relevant qualification and the agreed *ETQA* procedures

- **In the notes category** the critical cross-field outcomes supporting the achievement of the outcomes that will be assessed, the essential embedded knowledge that will be assessed and any other factors of information that will have a bearing on the assessment, are stated:

**Critical Cross-Field Outcomes:**

- The learner is able to identify and solve problems when locating records; ensuring records are only reported as lost/misfiled once all possibilities had been considered.
- The learner is able to organise and manage his/her activities responsibly and effectively, ensuring that all security records are filed accurately and timeously
- The learner is able to use technology effectively, ensuring the effective completion of the task at hand
- The learner is able to demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between internal departments

**Embedded Knowledge:**

Learners are able to:

- Differentiate between types of documents – formal and informal securities
- Explain the process for registering security records
- Explain the use, layout and principles of company specific manual and/or electronic filing systems
- Realise the importance of adhering to security regulations
- Interpret requests and instructions and determine the necessary actions required
- Use of company specific administration equipment, e.g. photocopier, fax, scanning machine

## The Qualification and Assessment

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As is the case with the unit standard, the standard in the *NQF* is also held in the qualification as specified in the *NSB Regulations*. The standard is in the following elements of the format of the qualification (also refer to an earlier definition of a qualification):

- The **planned combination of learning outcomes** which has a defined **purpose** or purposes, and which is intended to provide qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning
- Value added to the qualifying learner in terms of enrichment of the person through the provision of status, recognition, credentials and licensing; enhancement of marketability and employability; and opening up access routes to additional education and training
- Benefits to society and the economy through enhancing citizenship, increasing social and economic productivity, providing specifically skilled/professional people and transforming and redressing legalities of inequity
- Compliance with the objectives of the *NQF*
- Inclusion of both specific and critical cross-field outcomes which promote lifelong learning
- International comparability
- Integrated assessment appropriately incorporated to ensure that the purpose of the qualification is achieved, and use a range of assessment methods and instruments such as portfolios, simulations, workplace assessments, written and oral examinations in both formative and summative assessment
- Indication whether the qualification may be achieved in whole or in part through the recognition of prior learning that may have been achieved through formal, non-formal and informal learning and work experience

The design of assessment for qualifications should, as in the case of assessments for unit standards, take into account the following:

- The applied competence that the learner will be assessed on (refer to previous section – ‘Unit Standards and Assessment’)
- Specific and critical cross-field outcomes to be assessed (refer to previous section – ‘Unit Standards and Assessment’)

In addition to these, the design of assessment for qualifications should also take into account:

- The skills the learner will have – the status, recognition, credentials and licensing of the qualifying learner; the learner’s marketability and employability and the further learning that the learner may access
- The equivalence of skills, status, recognition, etc. with learners elsewhere who have acquired the same or similar qualification
- Formative and summative assessments and the range of assessment methods and instruments
- The integration of roles, actions, skills, behaviours, etc. as specified in the learning outcomes, and whether the integration of these is evidence of understanding of the purpose of the qualification and the achievement of applied competence
- Where applicable, recognition of learning already in place and the method(s) of ascertaining that such learning are in place.

## Recognition of Prior Learning

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Recognition of prior learning (RPL), is a key principle of the *NQF* particularly in as far as **accelerated learning and ensuring the redress of past inequities** is concerned, though it is not confined for use in these instances. It can be defined as:

Recognition of prior learning is **giving credit** to what learners already **know and can do** regardless of whether this learning was achieved formally, informally or non-formally

The *NQF* recognizes that learning takes place in a variety of settings, for example:

- Formal education and training programmes
- Formal and informal on the job education and training
- Self-study for enjoyment or improvement of qualifications
- Informal experience gained in the workplace or community
- Non-formal in-house education and training

Where appropriate, such learning should be recognized and credited.

Assessment policies of *ETQAs* and their constituent providers have to contain policies and procedures for RPL.

### **NOTE:**

There is no fundamental difference in the assessment of previously acquired skills and knowledge and the assessment of skills and knowledge achieved through a current learning programme. The learner seeking credits for previously acquired skills and knowledge, still has to comply with all the requirements as stated in the unit standard and will be assessed to determine competence.

The only difference is that this learner will not need to go through a learning programme. Credentialing in OBET is not dependent on time spent in a learning programme, rather on the learner's readiness to demonstrate competence.

A learner who feels ready can present himself/herself for assessment and/or submit the necessary evidence as required by the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Exactly the same principles, i.e. currency of evidence, sufficiency of evidence, validity of evidence and authenticity of evidence, apply in an assessment of prior knowledge.

Assessment for the recognition of prior learning, is therefore, as for any assessment, subject to the following principles:

- The application of *NQF* principles
- The application of the principles of credible assessment
- The application of the principles of the collection of and quality of the evidence
- The assessment being planned and designed on the basis of understanding the requirements of the unit standard, part qualification or qualification that the learner is seeking credit for
- Sourcing types of evidence as suggested
- The use of various methods and instruments mentioned
- The application of the assessment process outlined
- The application of moderation requirements

## Chapter

# 5

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### The Assessor

**Introduction**

**The Role of the Assessor**

**The Expertise of the Assessor**

**Who should assess?**

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## Introduction

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For SAQA, an assessor may be any practitioner who will be responsible for the assessment of the achievement of learning outcomes.

The assessor can therefore be a practitioner-assessor, i.e. the learning facilitator (teacher, lecturer and trainer), who has traditionally administered assessment in addition to facilitating learning. The assessor can also be a workplace supervisor, manager or a team leader, provided that they are skilled in the process of assessment and are registered as an assessor with the relevant ETQA.

## The Role of the Assessor

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The OBET system differs fundamentally from previous knowledge and inputs-based systems in the sense that the learner, not the content or the curriculum, is at the centre of the learning. Look at the following:

Learning is no longer something that is 'done to' the learner, but something that the learner is actively involved in. As such, the **role of the assessor** has changed: from being a 'gate-keeper', who uses assessment to prevent learners from developing further, to a **supportive guide** who has the success of the learner at heart – so that the learner can gain access to further learning.

Therefore, the role of the assessor (in terms of the learner) is to:

- Inform the learner about the qualification's or unit standard's requirements
- Support and guide the learner in the collection of evidence
- Help the learner plan for the assessment
- Inform the learner about the timing of the assessment
- Conduct the assessment and provide feedback

To be able to fulfill in these roles, the assessor has to (in terms of the assessment process):

- Become familiar with the qualification and the unit standards that he/she will be assessing
- Plan and design the assessment (or source appropriate assessment methods and instruments and modify these if necessary)
- Collect evidence of the learner's performance in accordance with the relevant *ETQAs* principles and policies
- Evaluate and judge the evidence
- Authenticate the evidence
- Make an assessment decision, i.e. 'competent, or not yet competent'

Once an assessment decision has been made, the assessor has to (in terms of the *ETQA* requirements):

- Meet all documentation and recording requirements
- Forward the results to the relevant *ETQA* for certification
- Comply with the *ETQAs* moderation requirements
- Review the assessment process and implement changes where required

## **The Expertise of the Assessor**

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Clearly, assessors need to acquire certain skills and expertise in order to be competent assessors. Generally, assessors need expertise in the following three areas:

### Interpersonal skills

It is important for the assessor to have good interpersonal skills and to be able to communicate effectively with learners. The assessor needs to establish a trusting relationship with learners – not only so that they can perform optimally

during an assessment, but also so that the learners will trust that the assessor has their interests at heart, i.e. that:

- The assessment is fair
- The assessor acts with integrity
- The assessor maintains confidentiality
- The assessment is conducted according to the principles of a good assessment

### Subject matter expertise

Assessors must be proficient in the subject matter of the learning area in which they are assessing. Also, they should be experts in their knowledge of the unit standard requirements or qualifications for which they are registered to assess. In addition, the assessor's subject matter knowledge should be at least of a level higher than the learner who is being assessed.

### Assessment expertise

Assessors should be proficient in the process of assessment. This means that they should:

- Be familiar with the unit standards that they will be assessing
- Be familiar with and use the assessment guides
- Plan the assessment, which includes the selection, design and implementation of assessment activities.
- Follow the assessment process, i.e. plan and agree on the assessment with the learner; guide the learner in the collection of evidence; conduct the assessment; provide feedback to the learner about the assessment decision
- Record and report on assessment results
- Participate in moderation processes
- Review the assessment and make appropriate changes

## Who should assess?

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SAQA regulations require that:

Anyone who assesses for the purposes of making a judgement about an achievement that will result in credits towards unit standards or qualifications, has to be registered with the appropriate *ETQA*.

Therefore, essentially anyone who meets the requirements can be an assessor.

Assessors can come from a number of sources:

- Trainers/teachers/lecturers
- Colleagues/peers
- Supervisors
- Managers
- Designated workplace assessors
- External assessors, i.e. external to the learning site be it the workplace or education and training provider's site

To register as an assessor, individuals have to meet the criteria for assessors as set out by the Standard Generating Body (*SGB*) dealing with the generation of unit standards and qualifications for assessors.

Such a person will have to provide evidence that they have the expertise, knowledge and experience in assessment and the assessment process, as well as prove that they are able to assess a particular unit standard, set of unit standards, or qualification. Such evidence may be based on:

- Assessment/assessor training completed
- Recognition of experience as practitioner-assessor.
- On the job training

In future, assessment training will be done as part of qualifying as an education and training practitioner and/or through additional study of the unit standards or qualification relating to assessment.

The following is a summary of the draft unit standard that assessors have to comply with:

<b>Title:</b>	Plan and Conduct Assessment of Learning
<b>Specific Outcome 1:</b>	Plan and prepare for assessment
<b>Specific Outcome 2:</b>	Prepare candidates for assessment
<b>Specific Outcome 3:</b>	Conduct assessment and document evidence
<b>Specific Outcome 4:</b>	Evaluate evidence and make assessment judgements
<b>Specific Outcome 5:</b>	Provide feedback to relevant parties
<b>Specific Outcome 6:</b>	Review assessment

**NOTE:**

Assessors are registered by the relevant *Education and Training Quality Assurance Body* and can also be de-registered if they do not comply with the *ETQA* requirements for assessors.

# Chapter 6

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## The Assessment Process

Introduction  
Steps in the Assessment Process  
Reassessment and Appeals  
Integrated Assessment  
Language and Assessment

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## Introduction

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All assessments, regardless of the subject matter, follow the same basic procedure, i.e. the planning of the assessment with the learner, the conducting of the assessment and on completion of the assessment, the feedback to the learner. However, before the assessment can take place, the assessor has to plan, design and prepare assessments. This includes making decisions about the method of assessment, the instruments to be used, the activities to be structured and the extent to which more than one learning outcome can be assessed simultaneously.

The Steps in the Assessment Process will explain this in more detail:

## Steps in the Assessment Process

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The Steps in the Assessment Process are broadly divided into two areas:

### **The Preparatory Phase** and **The Assessment**

#### 1. **PREPARATORY PHASE**

- ***The assessor becomes familiar with the unit standard and/or qualification that he/she is going to assess***

The assessor has to understand the requirements for each component of the unit standard. He/she has to be very clear on how the purpose, specific and critical outcomes, assessment criteria, the range and any other relevant information, will impact on the design of the assessment.

- ***The assessor plans the assessment, making decisions about the assessment methods, assessment instruments, activities, type and amount of evidence required, etc.***

At this stage it will be helpful to link with other assessors in the same learning area and to agree on the interpretation of the unit standards, as well as on the type and amount of evidence needed.

Also, the assessor has to keep in mind the credibility of the assessment, i.e. the principles of fairness, validity, reliability and practicability, must be at the forefront during planning.

This stage in the preparation for assessments can be sub-divided into three smaller areas:

#### Discussion with other assessors

Apart from the obvious advantages of sharing the planning for the assessment, these meetings can also serve as moderation meetings where assessors review each other's plans and materials and discuss issues such as assessment strategies, evaluation of past assessment materials, new approaches and strategies and the possibilities for the use of more than one assessor, e.g. where 'team-marking', or 'double marking' will be used.

#### Discussion with the learning facilitator

Where the assessor is not the learning facilitator, the assessor would need information about the learning programme, the types and frequency of formative assessments, the available equipment and material that may be used in the assessment and the readiness of learners for the assessment.

## Decide on the timing of assessment

The timing of assessments will depend on the following factors:

- the rationale for assessments at certain points in the learning programme (formative or summative), i.e. will learners be at a logical end-point of learning, or at a point where a diagnosis needs to be made?
- the sharing of facilities with other assessors
- the extent to which workplace learners will be able to undertake assessments

### **NOTE:**

Assessments are not conducted after time spent in a learning programme, but are conducted **when learners will reasonably be ready to be assessed**.

This is based on the **notional hours of a unit standard**. However, notional hours is given as the time it would take an 'average' learner to complete and meet the requirements. The ideal would be to offer assessments on demand, but practicability will play an important part in a decision of this kind.

- ***The assessor designs the assessment by selecting the appropriate methods, instruments and designing the appropriate materials (e.g. a test paper)***

On the basis of the assessor's knowledge and understanding of the unit standards/qualification, he/she decides whether to design tasks that require observation, evaluation of products or questioning (or a combination of methods). The situation or contexts for performance will also be clarified at this stage. Appropriate assessment instruments are decided upon and the assessment tools and materials, e.g. checklists, are designed.

## **NOTE:**

Where possible, more than one learning outcome should be assessed simultaneously. Also, the use of more than one method of assessment will ensure that the learner not only demonstrates achievement, but will also be required to prove underpinning knowledge and understanding, as well as the ability to adapt to changed circumstances.

For example:

Where the outcome describes a practical competence, then the most obvious **assessment methods** to use are observation and evaluation of products. However, this could be combined with questioning to check understanding, underpinning knowledge and the ability to adapt to changed circumstances. **Appropriate instruments** would then be a practical exercise and/or the submission of a product. This is followed by a written or oral test to cover the full range of contexts. **Assessment tools and materials** for this assessment could include checklists for the observation of the skill and the evaluation of the product and a question paper for the written or oral test.

## 2. **THE ASSESSMENT**

- ***The assessor informs the learner about the requirements for the assessment***
- ***The assessor reaches an agreement with the learner on how the evidence is to be collected and presented***
- ***The assessor explains the roles and responsibilities of the learner with regard to his/her assessment***

It is important that learners understand from the outset what their roles and responsibilities are in terms of their assessments. Also, learners must understand the process of assessment and why it is done in a particular way. They will also need to know what they can expect from the assessor and what the assessor expects from them.

Assessments are meant to be as clear and transparent as possible, therefore learners should know:

- the kinds of assessment activities that they would be asked to perform
- the standard and level of performance expected
- the type and amount of evidence to be collected
- their responsibility regarding the collection of evidence.

In addition, the learner and assessor should both be satisfied that the timing of the assessment is suitable, that the opportunities identified are suitable, and the venue of the assessment is fit for purpose.

**NOTE:**

This discussion is also important in that, in cases where mature learners are involved, the learner may be able to alert the assessor to assessment opportunities that the assessor had not been aware of.

Also, the clearer the learner is on the assessment, the less likely an appeal against the assessment decision can be brought.

- ***The assessor conducts the assessment and collects the evidence***

The assessor should ensure that the assessment is conducted in an appropriate and non-threatening environment.

The requirements of the tasks at hand should be appropriately and clearly communicated.

- ***The assessor makes a judgement about the evidence against the criteria of the unit standard***
- ***The assessor provides feedback to the learner with regard to the assessment decision***

The judgement of the evidence can only take place against the pre-determined assessment criteria. The assessor must guard against including superfluous

information or evidence in the assessment and against ignoring the criteria due to pre-conceived ideas about the learner. It is here where the skill of the assessor will be tested.

On completion of the assessment the learner has to be informed about what was done correctly and the credits achieved (if any).

In summative assessments, the learner should be clear on whether he/she is competent (or not yet competent) and if not, should be given guidance on how to proceed further.

Formative assessments are developmental in nature – the learner must be clear on what their strengths and/or weaknesses are, and on what and how they can improve.

**NOTE:**

Not all learners going through the same learning programme will reach competency at the same time. Assessors should be cognisant of this.

Furthermore, some learners may never be able to achieve competence. This has to be explained to them, but also advice must be given on other possibilities (which may include changing to another learning programme).

- ***The assessor completes the administration according to the ETQA requirements***

The assessor has to record the results of the assessment in compliance with the requirements of the provider institution, the *ETQA* and *SAQA*. The records, the assessment instruments and materials have to be stored safely in case of appeals and for quality assurance purposes, i.e. moderation.

- ***The assessor evaluates the process***

The evaluation of the process could involve:

- consulting the learner for feedback about the assessment and how the process could be improved

- reviewing the entire process with other assessors
- making appropriate changes which could include recommendations regarding changes to the unit standard or the qualification
- using the assessment results to evaluate the learning programme and strategies used

## Reassessment and Appeals

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The assessment process has to have a built-in process for reassessment. When learners have to undergo reassessment, they have to be given feedback so that they can concentrate on areas of weaknesses. Ideally, continuous formative assessments should minimize the need for reassessment as the assessor and the learner agree on a summative assessment only when they both feel that the learner is ready for it.

Reassessment should comply with the following conditions:

- Reassessment should take place in the **same situation or context** and under the same conditions
- The **same method and assessment instrument** may be used, but the **task and materials should be changed**. However, they should be of the same complexity and level as the previous one(s). Where the methods and instruments are changed, they must be appropriate for the outcomes specified.

### NOTE:

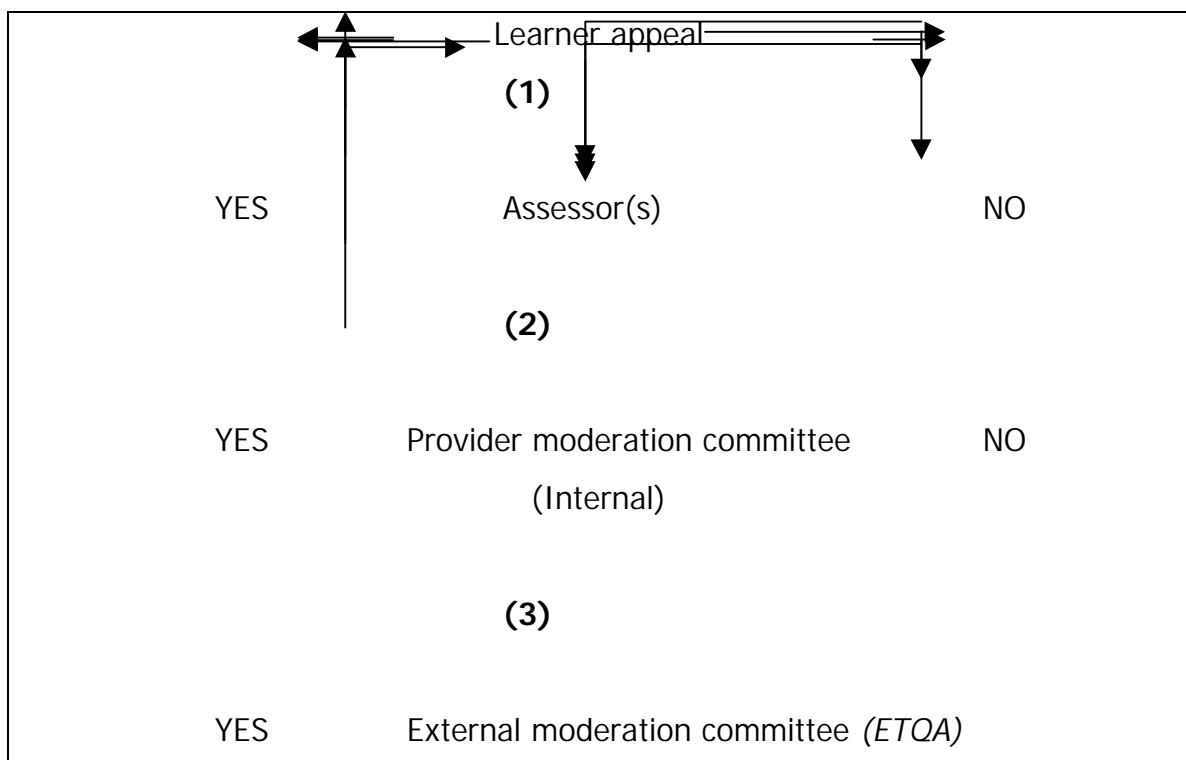
Where several outcomes have been assessed and some, but not all, were achieved successfully, a decision has to be made about the credits for the successful outcomes, i.e. will the learner be able to retain these credits without having to be reassessed? If so, what would the assessment consist of then?

Care should be taken regarding **how often reassessment can be taken**, and the length of time between the original assessment and the reassessment.

A learner who is repeatedly unsuccessful should be given guidance on other possible and more suitable learning avenues.

The *ETQA* should ensure that there is **an appeals procedure** in place, i.e. appeals against an assessment decision. Learners should be secure in the knowledge that they can appeal against an unfair assessment.

The provider has to develop an appeals procedure in line with the requirements of the *ETQA*, for example:



(PLEASE NOTE: The above is an example only)

Appeals can be brought against:

- Unfair assessments
- Invalid assessments
- Unreliable assessments
- The assessor’s judgement, if considered biased
- Inadequate expertise and experience of the assessor if it influenced the assessment
- Unethical practices

## Integrated Assessment

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Integrated assessment refers to:

- Assessing a number of outcomes together
- Assessing a number of assessment criteria together
- Assessing a number of unit standards together
- Using a combination of assessment methods and instruments for an outcome/outcomes
- Collecting naturally occurring evidence (such as in a workplace setting)
- Acquiring evidence from other sources such as supervisors' reports, testimonials, portfolios of work previously done, logbooks, journals, etc.

Sometimes, it may not be necessary to assess outcomes and/or assessment criteria separately. In fact, in doing so, it could result in:

- Assessment taking too long
- Assessment being a burden and stressful to the learner
- Giving no real assurance of overall applied competence
- Giving a disjointed learning experience

For example:

<b>Title:</b>	Issue credit cards
<b>Purpose:</b>	This unit standard is intended for people who are responsible for embossing blank cards with customer details. People credited with this unit standard are able to prepare for embossment of blank cards, to oversee the embossing process and to prepare card items for delivery.
<b>Specific outcome 1:</b>	Prepare for embossment of cards
<b>Specific outcome 2:</b>	Emboss blank cards
<b>Specific outcome 3:</b>	Prepare card items for delivery

The applied competence in this unit standard will be achieved if learners are able to:

- operate embossing and sealing machines in accordance with manufacturers' specifications
- recall approved delivery methods
- explain the procedures and requirements per delivery method used, e.g. post office, courier services and 'for collection'
- troubleshoot and solve basic operating problems/faults, e.g. removing defective cards
- recognise the implications of incorrectly embossed and delivered cards

It is clear that the learning will be disjointed if each specific outcome is assessed separately as this unit deals with a logical progression of tasks.

In this case, the assessor could **observe** the operation of the embossing machine, which includes the interpretation of an order and the correct usage of the machine. The assessor can then use **oral questioning** to ascertain that the learner knows how to correct basic operating problems if this is not clear from the observation and lastly, ask the learner to hand in a **written assignment** about the delivery methods and implications of incorrectly embossed and delivery of cards.

In the above example, the assessor will be able to:

- Assess a number of outcomes together
- Assess a number of assessment criteria together
- Use a combination of assessment methods and instruments for an outcome/outcomes
- Collect naturally occurring evidence (such as in a workplace setting)

However, in a unit standard based qualification, the learner can achieve and collect credits for single units. Therefore, a single assessment across unit standards may not be the most appropriate form of assessment.

For example:

<b>Title:</b>	Follow trading procedures in a treasury
<b>Purpose:</b>	This unit standard is intended for people who trade on the various desks. People accredited with this unit standard will be able to display an understanding of internal and external regulations; initiate, conduct and reconcile deal; adhere to and display an understanding of trading limits in order to follow trading procedures.
<b>Specific outcome 1:</b>	Display an understanding of internal and external regulations pertaining to the relevant trading environment
<b>Specific outcome 2:</b>	Initiate, conduct and reconcile deal
<b>Specific outcome 3:</b>	Adhere and display an understanding of trading limits
AND	
<b>Title:</b>	Perform administrative functions in the back office of a treasury
<b>Purpose:</b>	This unit standard is intended for people who work in the back office of a treasury. Learners will be able to complete the confirmation, settlement, recording and accounting processes.
<b>Specific outcome 1:</b>	Complete confirmation process
<b>Specific outcome 2:</b>	Complete settlement process
<b>Specific outcome 3:</b>	Complete recording and accounting procedures

Even though the two unit standards above are both part of the qualification: Certificate in Banking (*NQF* level 2), it is clear that an assessment covering both these units will not be appropriate because these units cover two distinct areas.

Where possible, assessments should make **use of naturally occurring performance** (as in the examples above) because this provides **authentic evidence** of a learner's skills. Other sources of evidence, other than the assessor's own observations and evaluations will support and add value to the final decision. A learner's self-assessment can also be included.

Finally, integrated assessment allows for the integration of knowledge and skills, theory and practice. It goes a long way towards assessing applied competence, i.e. practical, foundational and reflexive competence.

Ultimately, it is the achievement of applied competence that is the concern of *NQF* registered unit standards and qualifications.

## Language and Assessment

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Learners should, generally, be able to be assessed in a language that they are most proficient in. In South Africa in particular, this is important. In Chapter 1, Section 6 of the Constitution, it is stipulated that:

- The official languages of South Africa are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tsivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu.
- Measures must be taken to elevate the status and advance the use of the historically diminished status of indigenous languages
- All languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably

Furthermore, in Chapter 2, the Bill of Rights, Section 29, it is stipulated that:

- Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions, taking into account equity, practicability and the need for redress.

These constitutional provisions give learners the right to determining the language(s) of learning and teaching. Assessment policies, therefore, should ensure, as far as possible and is practicable, that this right is upheld for all learners.

# Chapter 7

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## Moderation

**Introduction**

**How does Moderation occur?**

**Responsibilities of SAQA and its associated bodies**

**Planning for Moderation**

**Designing a Moderation System**

**The Management Structure**

**Components of a Moderation System**

**Moderation Methods**

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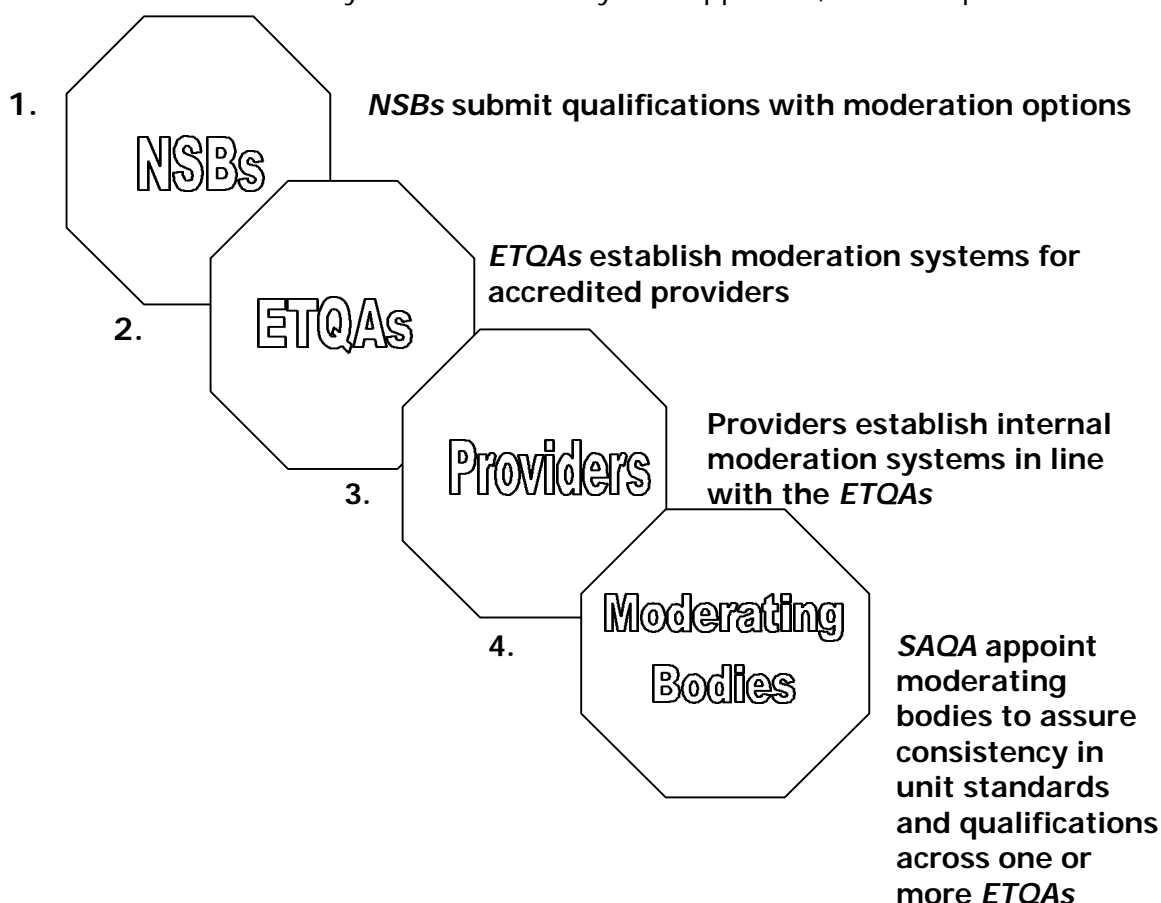
## Introduction

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Moderation ensures that people who are being assessed are **assessed in a consistent, accurate and well-designed manner**. It ensures that all assessors who assess a particular unit standard or qualification, are using comparable assessment methods and are making similar and consistent judgements about learners' performance.

Moderation of assessment occurs at both the level of the provider (internal moderation), and at the level of the *ETQA* (external moderation).

The *SAQA* moderation system follows a layered approach, for example:



**NOTE:**

The *NQF* system is one in which centralised, mainly public examinations at exit levels (final examinations), as we know them, are a small part of the assessment system. A substantial amount of **assessment is devolved to the provider** and individual assessors. The importance of moderating systems can therefore not be over-emphasised. This will ensure that the system is credible and that assessors and learners behave in ethical ways.

Furthermore, moderation in the *NQF* is a means for professional interaction and upgrading the skills of practitioners so as to continuously improve the quality of assessment.

Therefore, the main functions of moderation systems are:

- To verify that assessments are fair, valid, reliable and practicable
- To identify the need to redesign assessments if required
- To provide an appeals procedure for dissatisfied learners
- To evaluate the performance of assessors
- To provide procedures for the de-registration of unsatisfactory assessors
- To provide feedback to the *NSBs* on unit standards and qualifications

## How does Moderation occur?

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Moderation systems combine external and internal moderation. Both external and internal moderation systems must ensure that all assessors produce assessments that are credible, fair, valid, reliable and practicable.

### 1. **INTERNAL MODERATION**

Internal moderation ensures that assessments conducted in a single learning provider, are consistent, accurate and well-designed. The three main stages to internal moderation are:

### Design:

The choice and design of assessment methods and instruments are appropriate to the unit standard and qualifications being assessed.

### Implementation:

The assessment is appropriately conducted and matches the specifications of unit standards and qualifications. This includes ensuring that the appropriate arrangements have been made and that there are regular discussions among assessors.

### Review:

Any lessons learnt from the two previous stages are considered and the necessary changes are made.

### **NOTE:**

Accredited providers should have individuals that manage their internal moderation systems. These internal moderators should:

- Establish systems to standardise assessment, including the plans for internal moderation
- Monitor consistency of assessment records
- Through sampling, check the design of assessment materials for appropriateness before they are used, monitor assessment processes, check candidates evidence, check the results and decisions of assessor for consistency
- Co-ordinate assessor meetings
- Liaise with external moderators
- Provide appropriate and necessary support, advice and guidance to assessors

Providers would have to show that they have the capacity to implement an internal moderation system that will facilitate and ensure that these activities will be carried out effectively and efficiently in order to gain accreditation.

The roles of the internal moderators who are designated such in learning institutions/sites should be experienced assessors who other assessors have confidence in. They should also have undergone training in internal moderation and have knowledge of the learning area.

## 2. **EXTERNAL MODERATION**

External moderation is a means of ensuring that two or more providers delivering programmes to the same unit standards and qualifications, are assessing consistently to the same standard, and in a well-designed manner.

External moderation systems are managed by the *ETQAs*.

External moderation involves:

- Checking that the systems required to support the provision of learning programmes across the institution/learning site are appropriate and working effectively
- Providing advice and guidance to providers
- Maintaining an overview of provision across providers
- Checking that all the staff involved in assessment are appropriately qualified and experienced
- Checking the credibility of assessment methods and instruments
- Checking internal moderation systems
- Through sampling, monitoring and observing assessment processes and learners' evidence to ensure consistency across providers
- Checking assessors' decisions

Individuals who will be external moderators should be experienced, know the learning area well, have undergone training for moderation, and have credibility among assessors and within their area of knowledge and expertise. A high level of personal and interpersonal skills are also required.

**NOTE:**

*ETQAs* will have to prove that they have the capacity to manage an external moderation system that facilitates and ensures that these activities can be done effectively and efficiently before they can gain accreditation.

*ETQAs* will have to ensure that moderation systems established are consistent with capability and means. The external moderation system could be centralised and directive, or it could consist of a system of local networks.

If a centrally directed system is set up by an *ETQA*, it could allocate the moderation function to one or a combination of agents. The following are examples of agents (answerable to the relevant *ETQA*):

- A panel established to oversee the assessment of unit standards or qualifications
- A national professional association
- An individual provider or consortium of providers
- Private consultants

**NOTE:**

In a centrally designed system, agents must comply with agreed upon requirements developed in consultation between the *ETQA* and the agent.

If a system of local networks is the choice, providers could design the moderation system. Local user group representation could be included in this option.

## Responsibilities of SAQA and its associated bodies

The following diagram outlines how SAQA and its associated bodies will relate to each other in terms of moderation:

<b>SAQA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes <i>NSBs</i>, which it may also de-establish</li> <li>• Accredits <i>ETQAs</i>, which it may also de-accredit</li> <li>• Appoints moderating bodies to quality assure across <i>ETQAs</i></li> <li>• Appoints moderating bodies to investigate problem areas to assessment, as and when necessary</li> </ul>	
<b>NSBs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define sub-fields</li> <li>• Establish or recognise <i>SGBs</i> in sub-fields</li> <li>• Recommend standards and qualifications (with accompanying moderation options) to <i>SAQA</i></li> <li>• Propose criteria for the appointment of moderating bodies</li> <li>• Liaise with <i>ETQAs</i> in reviewing, adapting, changing, establishing standards and qualifications</li> </ul>	<b>ETQAs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accredite providers</li> <li>• Monitor and audit providers</li> <li>• Register assessors</li> <li>• Ensure moderation among providers</li> <li>• Facilitate moderation across constituent providers</li> <li>• Facilitate moderation across <i>ETQAs</i></li> </ul>
<b>SGBs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generate standards and qualifications</li> <li>• Update and review standards</li> <li>• Submit standards and qualifications to <i>NSBs</i> for evaluation and recommendation for registration</li> </ul>	<b>Providers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are accredited by an <i>ETQA</i> and may have their accreditation withdrawn</li> <li>• Deliver learning programmes</li> <li>• Manage assessment and internal moderation</li> <li>• Are monitored by <i>ETQAs</i> and moderating bodies</li> </ul>
	<b>Assessors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are registered by an <i>ETQA</i> and may be de-registered</li> <li>• Assess in accordance with established criteria</li> <li>• Are monitored by <i>ETQAs</i> and moderating bodies</li> </ul>

Changes in standards and qualifications may be suggested by:

- *NSBs* and *SGBs*
- *ETQAs* (and thus assessors in provider institutions)
- Moderating Bodies

## Planning for Moderation

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The following table details questions to stimulate thought when planning a moderation system:

<b>WHAT?</b>	Will all registered standards be moderated? Will all candidates be moderated? If not, what percentage? Will all assessments be moderated? If not, what percentage? Will all training programmes be moderated?
<b>WHO?</b>	Who will conduct the moderation? ( <i>ETQA</i> moderators, private consultants, agents of the <i>ETQA</i> , professional bodies?)
<b>HOW?</b>	How will moderation be done? Moderation of assessment methods, instruments and materials - before assessment? - post assessment? - both? "Rolling" over a five-year period with moderation of different aspects each year?
<b>WHEN?</b>	Continuously? Monthly? Quarterly? Annually?
<b>COST?</b>	Who will pay? Cost-effective ways of moderation?
<b>REPORTS?</b>	Who provides information? To whom? (Internal moderator, external moderator, <i>ETQA</i> ?)
<b>EVALUATION?</b>	What system will be put in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the moderation system itself?

## Designing a Moderation System

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Whether centralised, decentralised or a mix of both, the form of the moderation systems which are established, will be **determined by the capacity at operational level** in terms of management structures and functions which can be allocated satisfactorily to *ETQAs* and providers of education and training.

SAQA will need to consider NSBs moderation proposals in the light of the management structures it assumes will be available, the functions allocated to the moderation system and the moderation methods proposed.

The key question to be asked is:

What is the **minimum amount of moderation needed** to ensure that assessments are fair, valid, reliable and practicable?

When designing a moderation system, the following points must be considered:

- The management structure of the moderating body (*ETQA*, agent, etc.)
- The functions allocated to the moderation system
- The components of the moderation system
- The moderation methods to be used

## The Management Structure

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The following questions highlight the kind of management structure in a sector or organisation that will most likely have the capacity to undertake moderation satisfactorily:

1. **REQUIREMENTS**

- Who within the sector/organisation will draw up policies for particular standards and qualifications, and how will this be done?
- Who within the sector/organisation will implement these policies and how will this be done?
- Who within the sector/organisation will evaluate policies and implementation and how will this be done?

## 2. **RESOURCES**

- What will the costs of setting up and operating a moderation system most likely be?
- Who will pay for this?
- How will the best use of resources be achieved?

## **Components of a Moderation System**

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The components of a moderation system include:

- Appropriate timing
- The extent of the moderation
- Moderation materials
- Personnel

## 1. **TIMING**

### **When will moderation take place?**

Moderation can take place at different intervals.

However, all assessment guides should be moderated prior to the assessments.

Recently trained assessors may require more regular moderation of their ability to conduct assessments than more experienced assessors, but all assessors need to be moderated at designated intervals.

## 2. **EXTENT**

### **What and how much of the assessment is to be moderated?**

Each unit standard and qualification, assessment material and assessor falls within the moderation process.

Moderation activities need to be sufficient to protect the integrity of standards and qualifications. The quality of the registered assessors and internal moderation systems will be a key factor.

Initially, fairly frequent moderation might be a requirement and there may be a need to conduct spot checks on a case-by-case basis in an evolving system. This could taper off once providers have earned the right to conduct decentralised assessments by proving (over time) that they have the capacity to maintain credible assessment systems.

**NOTE:**

The *ETQA* has to make a decision on how much of the candidate's evidence needs to be scrutinised to ensure a true reflection of assessments done.

### 3. **MATERIALS**

#### **What materials do moderation activities require?**

Materials might include the following:

- Assessment activities or assessment activity exemplars
- Assessment guides or assessment guide exemplars
- Case studies or exemplars
- Assessed learners' work samples

**NOTE:**

Providers need to know in advance when these materials are to be made available for external moderation.

Where the materials have to be in a specified format, e.g. a portfolio of evidence, the requirements should be negotiated with providers. For the system to function well, *ETQAs* must avoid making unreasonable demands or avoid intruding on the academic freedom of providers.

#### 4. **PERSONNEL**

##### **Who will be appointed as moderators?**

Moderators can be drawn from the providers and companies where assessments are being conducted, or they can be external appointees.

Regardless of where moderators are drawn from, they have to be of good standing and should have unquestionable skill in the curriculum and assessment practices.

Also, they should have a good understanding of the expectations of all users.

Any person who is appointed as moderator or chair of a moderation panel, should have sound communication and interpersonal skills. Criteria and procedures for the selection of moderators must be established.

##### **NOTE:**

An appeal can also be brought against a moderation decision.

It may therefore be useful for providers and *ETQAs* to have an informal stage of discussion before any formal processes are invoked.

##### **Moderation Methods**

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It will be necessary to plan for the moderation systems to evolve and develop.

This will require changing the methods used over time.

The range from which one or the other combinations of methods is used, could include:

- Revising exemplars of assessments and benchmarking materials against established criteria
- Doing statistical moderation

- Conducting external assessments which will serve as a moderating instrument and could possibly justify less moderations
- Common assessment activities and assessment guides
- Having external moderators undertake site visits
- Having external moderators conduct panel meetings
- Establishing site consultative committees

Whatever the form the moderation system takes, it is to be regularly reviewed at *NSB, ETQA* and *SAQA* level to ensure that it meets the expectations, and that the proposed arrangements are efficient, accessible and makes optimum use of resources.

## Terms and Definitions

**“accreditation”** means the certification, usually for a particular period of time, of a person, a body or an institution as having the capacity to fulfil a particular function in the quality assurance system set up by the South African Qualifications Authority in terms of the Act;

**“Act”** means the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (Act No 58 of 1995);

**“applied competence”** means the ability to put into practice in the relevant context the learning outcomes acquired in obtaining a qualification;

**“assessment”** means a structured process for the gathering of evidence and making judgements about an individual's performance in relation to registered national standards and qualifications;

**“assessment instrument”** means the nature of the assessment task;

**“assessment method”** means the act the assessor engages in;

**“assessor”** means a practitioner who will be responsible for the assessment of the achievement of learning outcomes;

**“constituent assessor”** means belonging to the defined or delegated constituency of an organisation or body;

**“core learning”** means that compulsory learning required in situations contextually relevant to the particular qualifications;

**“credit”** means that value assigned by the Authority to ten (10) notional hours of learning;

**“critical outcomes”** means those generic outcomes which inform all teaching and learning;

**“Education and Training Quality Assurance Body”** means a body accredited in terms of section 5(1)(a)(ii) of the Act, responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of national standards and qualifications;

**“elective learning”** means a selection of additional credits from which a choice may be made to ensure that the purpose of the qualification is achieved;

**“ETD Practitioner”** is an Education, Training and Development Practitioner, which includes the whole spectrum of educators, trainers, teachers, facilitators, tutors, markers, lecturers, development officers, mentors and the like;

**“exit level outcomes”** means the outcomes to be achieved by a qualifying learner at the point at which he or she leaves the programme leading to a qualification.

**“field”** means a particular area of learning used as an organising mechanism for the National Qualification Framework;

**“fundamental learning”** means that learning which forms the grounding or basis needed to undertake the education, training or further learning required in the obtaining of a qualification;

**“integrated assessment”** means that forms of assessment which permits the learner to demonstrate applied competence and which uses a range of formative and summative assessment methods;

**“learning programme”** means the combination of courses, modules or units of learning (learning materials and methodology) by which learners can achieve the learning outcomes for a qualification;

**“moderation”** means the process which ensures that assessments of the outcomes described in National Qualifications Framework standards or qualifications is fair, valid and reliable;

**“moderating body”** means a body specifically appointed by the Authority for the purpose of moderation;

**“National Standards Body”** means a body registered in terms of section 5(1)(a)(ii) of the Act, responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications, and to which specific functions relating to the registration of national standards or qualifications have been assigned in terms of section 5(1)(b)(i) of the Act;

**“notional hours of learning”** means the learning time that it is conceived it would take an average learner to meet the outcomes defined, and includes concepts such as contact time, time spent in structured learning in the workplace and individual learning;

**“outcomes”** means the contextually demonstrated end-products of the learning process;

**“primary focus”** means that activity or objective within the sector upon which an organisation or body concentrates its efforts;

**“professional body”** means a statutory body registered as such in terms of the legislation applicable to such bodies, or a voluntary body performing the functions contemplated in the legislation for such bodies but not registered as such;

**“provider”** means a body which delivers learning programmes which culminate in specified National Qualifications Framework standards or qualifications and manages the assessment thereof;

**“qualifying learner”** means a learner who has obtained a qualification;

**“quality assurance”** means the process of ensuring that the degree of excellence specified is achieved;

**“quality audit”** means the process of examining the indicators which show the degree of excellence achieved;

**“quality management system”** means the combination of processes used to ensure that the degree of excellence specified is achieved;

**“recognition of prior learning”** means the comparison of the previous learning and experience of a learner howsoever obtained against the learning outcomes required for a specified qualification, and the acceptance for purposes of qualification of that which meets the requirements;

**“registered standards”** means standards of qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework;

**“sector”** means a defined portion of social, commercial or educational activities used to prescribe the boundaries of an Education and Training Quality Assurance Body;

**“specific outcomes”** means contextually demonstrated knowledge, skills and values which support one or more critical outcomes;

**“Standards Generating Body”** means a body registered in terms of section 5(1)(a)(ii) of the Act, responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications, and to which specific functions relating to the establishing of national standards or qualifications have been assigned in terms of section 5(1)(a)(ii) of the Act;

**“unit standard”** means registered statements of desired education and training outcomes and their associated assessment criteria together with administrative and other information as specified in the regulation.