



# **Skills Development Facilitator**

## **Handout 16**

### **Role of the QCTO**

## **THE ROLE OF THE QUALITY COUNCIL FOR TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS (QCTO)**

The QCTO will manage and co-ordinate qualifications in the **occupational qualification's framework in terms of development, provision, assessment and impact**. Its scope will be the development and quality assurance of fit-for-purpose occupational qualifications and unit standards as required by the labour market for work and employment purposes.

The QCTO will develop fit-for-purpose occupational qualifications that will be certificated as National Occupational Awards or National Skills Certificates. The awards will name the relevant occupation that the learner is competent to practice. The focus of occupational qualifications will be the development of occupational competence, which in turn will contribute to increased employment rates and workplace productivity.

The envisaged structure and functions of the QCTO reflect a new approach to quality assurance, in which quality assurance permeates all activities and is not seen as a separate function altogether. This model was developed in response to appeals to bring qualifications development and quality assurance under one banner or roof. The quality assurance of the learning process for the QCTO's qualifications can be visualised as a structure in which the banner or roof are supported by two pillars:

- design and development;
- assessment of occupational competence.

The system is quality managed from the banner or roof representing monitoring and evaluation through data analysis and research. This entire structure illustrates the quality assurance model.

<b>MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b>	
<b>DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL COMPETENCE</b>

### **BENEFITS ARISING FROM THE QCTO**

The system has been designed to be more responsive to labour market (includes industry and all types of businesses, as well as the informal and public sectors) skills needs. In addressing several the NQF implementation challenges and problems, the QCTO provides an excellent opportunity to find viable and powerful solutions, some of which are highlighted below:

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- **A Quality Council that Provides a Framework for all Role-players**

The many role-players and structures active in the labour market today, including SETA's, SGBs, providers, assessors, moderators and various professional bodies, have created a situation that is confusing, over complex and sometimes inefficient. The QCTO provides a co-ordinating framework to support these role-players so that they can focus on what they do best and give coherence to these activities.

- **An Improved Qualification Model that Suits Occupational Learning**

Workers need to be competent in three areas of learning in order to be able to practice an occupation effectively, namely:

- knowledge and theory component;
- practical skills component;
- work experience component.

The new model values each of these components equally. It differs from the previous qualification model in that it includes a structured work experience component.

### **A Qualifications Design Process that is Responsive to Labour Market Skills Needs**

The new model will analyse the relevant occupations listed in the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO) and will identify the skills and tasks associated with each occupation and the kind and scope of work experience required to develop competence. This process will therefore result in occupational curricula and occupational qualifications that are directly linked to labour market skills needs and requirements.

### **Curricula for Guiding the Creation of Occupational Learning Programmes**

Each occupational qualification will be derived from an occupational curriculum. The purpose of the curriculum is to simplify and strengthen the development and assessment of the qualification as:

- It will specify the inputs needed by unpacking the occupational profile;
- It will be used as the basis for the accreditation of providers and the approval of workplaces to offer the work experience component;
- It will ensure that overlaps across qualifications are recognised, and this will assist learning programme design, materials development and learner mobility.

## **Reconceptualised Unit Standards that Reflect the Three Forms of Learning**

The outcomes will be specified in unit standards reflecting each of the curriculum components, namely knowledge standards, practical standards and work experience standards. Many of the more generic knowledge and practical standards will appear in several different qualifications. A minimum credit value will be set for unit standards to ensure meaningful units of learning.

## **Qualification Assessment Specifications for Standardising Assessments**

An external, nationally standardised assessment for each of its occupational qualifications will be introduced (a prerequisite for certification). A “Qualification Assessment Specifications” document will be supplied for each qualification and will specify the overall assessment strategy for the external assessment of occupational competence. The QCTO will appoint and/or recognise suitable organisations as quality partners in the design and management of these external assessments. To avoid varying interpretations of standards across sectors and sites, criteria for the registration of constituent assessors and moderators, and the requirements for accreditation of assessment centres or registration of assessment sites where appropriate, will be provided.

## **Revised Rules of Combination that Reflect the Differing Requirements of**

### **Different Occupations**

Learners will have to demonstrate enough foundational competence in communication and mathematical literacy to cope with occupational learning demands and to benefit from the learning process. Additional language, mathematics or knowledge and theory requirements in other subject areas will be determined by the needs of each specific occupation and will be fit-for-purpose. These will be incorporated into the common or core learning requirements of the qualification.

Furthermore, the blanket fundamental requirements that existed before were time consuming and often resulted in the accumulation of credits that were not relevant to the occupation. The new model thus removes a previous barrier and relates the educational requirements to the job. Electives will now be replaced by specialisations.

## **COMBINING ETQAs TO STREAMLINE QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES**

The establishment of the QCTO will significantly increase the efficiency of the current ETQA system, merging 21 SETA ETQAs into one. This means that quality assurance activities can be better co-ordinated and managed.

All occupational unit standards will be quality assured by the QCTO.

## **ACCREDITATION PROCESS THAT PROMOTES SELF IMPROVEMENT**

Previously there was an overemphasis on accreditation as the key to quality assurance. The QCTO will simplify the accreditation process by applying criteria which are stated in each curriculum and are fit-for-purpose for each specific qualification.

The process will begin with self-evaluation and will promote quality improvement. Overlapping accreditation, registration and verification requirements that are currently causing major delays and frustrations as well as escalating costs, will no longer be applicable.