RESPONSE TO THE NQF EVALUATION

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Clarifying concepts

The **NQF** is a **regulatory framework** that organizes and classifies qualifications hierarchically and illustrates progression pathways

The **NQF Act** is the **policy** that articulates specific objectives and makes provision for those entities that will give substance to the framework by implementing it as a regulatory and quality assurance system that can be applied to the provision of educational programmes in education and training institutions

The evaluation is not of the NQF itself but of its **implementation**. Has it produced the expected outputs, outcomes and impact?

From the perspective of universities….

❑ **Output**: advantage of a **single sub-framework** and a **single quality council** governing the universities and other HE providers – replaced separate qualification structures for universities, technikons and colleges

❑ **Outcome**: Huge gains made in establishing **consistency** and **coherence**
- Compatible with international qualifications frameworks
- Simple, clear, easy to understand, user-friendly
- Expanded range on the NQF (from 4 levels to 6) – much clearer differentiation between qualification types
- Reduced range of recognised qualification types – much smaller number, far easier to navigate
- Consistent naming conventions in nested approach (level; qualification; designator; qualifier/specialisation)
- Distinction between volume of learning (credits) and complexity of learning (levels)

Implementation: massive exercise of alignment of all university programmes with the HEQSF

➢ Undertaken in phases over a number of years

➢ Consistent design principles and criteria for evaluation for all HE qualifications

➢ Enhanced quality of programmes through deepening and spreading understanding of good programme and curriculum design – large number of academics involved

➢ More consistent use of credit values as indication of *volume* of learning

➢ Provision made for professional master's and doctoral qualifications in line with international practice and demands of modern economies

➢ Strengthened mobility in the system and public confidence in credibility of HE qualifications

Not sure that the NQF Evaluation fully acknowledges the impact of this exercise – significant learning experience for university community

So what are the big issues for the university sector?

Most have been identified by the NQF evaluation:

1. Time delays.
   ◦ Long and cumbersome process of accreditation of new programmes. Already being addressed by CHE but undoubtedly related to severe underfunding. (Recommendations 13 & 14)
   ◦ Would the universities be prepared to pay for applications to the CHE? Sector may very well resist this suggestion. Responsibility of the state to properly fund its own quality assurance councils.

2. Clarification of roles and jurisdictions
   ◦ Ambiguities in respective roles of quality councils and professional bodies (considerable duplication in the accreditation criteria). Need to define more clearly what is specific to the function of a professional body for professional registration of graduates. (Recommendation 19)
   ◦ Clarification of SAQA'a role. Appears to be applying it's own set of criteria before registration of programmes on NQF and again creates time delays.

3. Articulation
   ◦ From school to university very effective.
   ◦ Process for transfers between universities in operation for a long time (statement about HDUs and traditional universities in report is confusing). Usually involves some level of curriculum matching.
   ◦ Articulation from NCV provided for in admission requirements.
   ◦ Articulation from other programmes much more problematic. (Recommendation 22: forums? NQF4 to NQF5?) Do we need to create the knowledge required for entry into academic programmes within occupational certifications? Danger of undermining purpose of programmes if transfer/articulation is made the primary goal.

4. RPL and CAT
   ◦ RPL policies in place but practice is complex and usually involves evidence and some kind of assessment.
   ◦ CAT occurs when students transfer mid-qualification. Success depends fundamentally on curriculum structure.

Ngiyabonga
Baie dankie
Ke a leboga
Thank you