

The 4th Annual

DHET RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM:

Enhancing the Implementation of the South

African NQF

Colloquium Proceedings



higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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February 2018



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ACRONYMS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ACCA	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
AET	Adult Education and Training
AgriSETA	Agricultural Sector Education and Training Authority
ANC	African National Congress
APPETD	Association of Private Providers for Education, Training and Development
ASCHP	Association for Supportive Counsellors and Holistic Practitioners
ASDSA	Association for Skills Development in South Africa
ATSA	Accounting Technician South Africa
Bank SETA	Banking Sector Education and Training Authority
BBBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
BCom	Bachelor of Commerce
BUSA	Business Unity South Africa
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CATHSSETA	Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority
Cedefop	Centre for Development of Vocational Training
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CET	Community Education and Training
CETA	Construction Education and Training Authority
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CHIETA	Chemical Industries Education and Training Authority
CIPS	Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply
CPD	Continual Professional Development
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
CUT	Central University of Technology
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
DUT	Durban University of Technology
ECSA	Engineering Council for South Africa
ETDP SETA	Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority
EWSETA	Energy and Water Sector Education and Training Authority
FASSET	Finance and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority
FEDUSA	Federation of Unions of South Africa
FM&P SETA	Fibre Processing Manufacturing Sector Education and Training Authority
FoodBev SETA	Food and Beverage Manufacturing Industry Sector Education and Training Authority
FPI	Financial Planning Institute of Southern Africa
GET	General Education and Training
GENFETQA	General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance
GFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEMIS	Higher Education Management Information Systems
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Council
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
HRDC	Human Resource Development Council
HSRC	Human Science Research Council
HWSETA	Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority
ICB	Institute of Certified Bookkeepers
ICITP	Institute of Chartered Information Technology professionals
IIASA	Institute of Internal Auditors South Africa
INSETA	Insurance Sector Education and Training Authority
IODSA	Institute of Directors South Africa
IWH	Institute at Work at Heights
KZN	Kwa Zulu Natal
LGSETA	Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority
LMIP	Labour Market Intelligence Partnership

MA (SA)	Marketing Association of South Africa
MerSETA	Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority
MICT SETA	Media, Information and Communication Technologies Sector Education and Training Authority
MIS	Management Information System
MOOCs	Massive Open Online Courses
MOTI	Management of Technology and Innovation
MQA	Mining Qualifications Authority
NAMB	National Artisan Moderation Body
NATED	National Accredited Technical Education
NCOP	National Council of Provinces
NC(V)	National Certificate Vocational
NDA	Non-Disclosure Agreement
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database
NMU	Nelson Mandela University
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSA	National Skills Authority
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSF	National Skills Fund
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NWU	North West University
OASA	Ocularists Association of Southern Africa
OER	Open Educational Resources
OPSA	Office Professionals of South Africa
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework
PFTC	Professional Firearm Trainers' Council
PHASA	Professional Hunters Association of South Africa
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PoPI	Privacy of Personal Information

PSET	Post-School Education and Training
PSETA	Public Service SETA
QA	Quality Assurance
QC	Quality Council
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
REAL	Centre for Researching Education and Labour
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SACAP	South African Council for the Architectural Profession
SACNAPS	South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions
SACP	South African Communist Party
SACPO	South African College Principals' Organisation
SAGC	South African Geomatics Council
SAIDE	South African Institute of Distance Education
SAIPA	South African Institute of Professional Accountants
SAITP	South African Institute of Tax Professionals
SANREN	South African National Research Network
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SASCOC	South African Sports Conference and Olympics Committee
SASSETA	Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority
SAUS	South African Union of Students
SAVC	South African Veterinary Council
SBA	School Based Assessment
Services SETA	Services Sector Education and Training Authority
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SPOCs	Small Private Online Courses
SSACI	Swiss-South African Cooperative Initiative
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
SU	University of Stellenbosch
ToC	Theory of Change
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UCT	University of Cape Town

UFS	University of the Free State
UJ	University of Johannesburg
UKZN	University of Kwa-Zulu Natal
UL	University of Limpopo
UNISA	University of South Africa
UNIZULU	University of Zululand
USA	United States of America
USAf	Universities South Africa
UWC	University of the Western Cape
VUT	Vaal University of Technology
W&RSETA	Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority
Wits	University of Witwatersrand

BACKGROUND

The fourth annual DHET Research Colloquium, took place on 12-13 September 2017, at Emperor's Palace in Kempton Park, Gauteng. The theme of the Colloquium was the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The selection of this theme was motivated by an evaluation study of the NQF currently being undertaken by the DHET in partnership with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME). This evaluation has been commissioned to the service provider, DNA Economics, and it seeks to unpack and evaluate the implementation of the NQF Act. The Colloquium befittingly, therefore chose *Enhancing the Implementation of the South African NQF* as its topic.

The overall purpose of the 2017 Colloquium was to engage with the preliminary findings of the evaluation study on the NQF, share insights, reflections and interpretations of the NQF Act, while simultaneously creating a platform for identifying possible gaps, and brainstorming towards finding practical solutions for bridging these gaps, with the aim of enhancing the implementation of the NQF.

Some of the objectives of the 2017 Research Colloquium were to:

- Engage with the initial findings of the evaluation study on the implementation of the NQF;
- Engage on matters pertaining to the NQF; and
- Recommend suggestions for the improvement of the NQF.

STRUCTURE OF COLLOQUIUM

The Research Colloquium comprised seven sessions, spread out over two days. Session 1 on Day 1 of the programme set the scene for the Colloquium and featured the opening address by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande. Session 2 featured the first panel of respondents which included responses from key industry stakeholders, including SAQA, CHE, Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi), the Quality Council on Trades and Occupations (QCTO), the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) (as represented by CHIETA). The second panel of respondents, in session 3, featured DPME's overall feedback on the preliminary findings of the study. This was followed by responses from the National Economic Development and Labour (NEDLAC) representatives, the South African Union of Students (SAUS), the South African College Principals' Organisation (SACPO) and Universities South Africa (USAf).

Day 2 comprised four further sessions, starting off with the keynote address in session 4 where Mr Jens Bjornavold, a senior expert from the European Centre for Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), offered an international perspective of NQFs. Session 5 and 6 were dedicated to parallel commissions, and this is where detailed discussions on topics such as Articulation, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and NQF Governance took place. Session 7 took the form of a report back session from commissions, including closing remarks and vote of thanks by the DHET Deputy Director-General: Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Mr Firoz Patel.

It is important to note that the findings of the draft report were only shared with the respondents and presenters a week before the event and only upon the signing of a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA). The report was not shared with delegates or the public given that it still needs to be approved by Cabinet.

The full programme for the event is available in **Appendix 1**. Kindly also note that all presentations shared at the Colloquium can be found on the following website: www.lmip.org.za. Kindly search for the title of the presentation or name of a particular presenter to access the specific presentation. Refer to the programme in **Appendix 1** of this document for the presentation titles and presenter names.

ATTENDEES

More than 200 delegates attended the Research Colloquium with many key stakeholders represented. Some of the categories present were as follows:

- **Public Universities:** The University of Limpopo (UL); Durban University of Technology (DUT); Central University of Technology (CUT); University of Zululand (UNIZULU); University of South Africa (UNISA); Nelson Mandela University (NMU); University of Stellenbosch (SU); Vaal University of Technology (VUT); University of the Free State (UFS); University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN); the University of the Western Cape (UWC); Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT); University of Johannesburg (UJ); the University of Witwatersrand (Wits), and North West University (NWU)
- **TVET Colleges:** Maluti TVET College; College of Cape Town; Gert Sibande College; Port Elizabeth TVET College; Tshwane South TVET College; Vhembe TVET College; Buffalo City TVET College; Esayidi TVET College; Waterberg TVET College; Coastal Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN) TVET College; Ekurhuleni West TVET College; Flavius Mareka TVET; College of Cape Town; and Orbit College
- **Community Education and Training (CET) Colleges:** KZN CET College
- **Private Institutions and Providers:** Monash South Africa; Da Vinci Institute of Technology; Richfield College; Worker's College; Southern Business School; Hotel School; Akademie Reformatoriese Opleiding en Studies; and Inscape Education Group
- **SETAs:** MQA, W&RSETA; INSETA; MerSETA; FASSET; CHIETA; Services SETA; HWSETA; Bank SETA; Agricultural SETA (AgriSETA); Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA); Fibre Processing Manufacturing SETA (FM&P SETA); Food and Beverage Manufacturing Industry SETA (FoodBev SETA); Local Government SETA (LGSETA); Energy and Water SETA (EWSETA); Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport SETA (CATHSSETA); Public Service SETA (PSETA); Education, Training and Development Practices SETA (ETDP SETA); Media, Information and Communication Technologies SETA (MICT SETA); and Safety and Security SETA (SASSETA)

- **Government Departments:** DHET (including the National Skills Authority – NSA; National Skills Fund – NSF; and the Human Resource Development Council – HRDC); DPME; DBE; Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA); National Department of Tourism; and National Treasury
- **Research Organisations and Centres:** Centre for Researching Education and Labour (REAL); DNA Economics; JET Education Services; Swiss-South African Cooperative Initiative (SSACI); Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC); South African Institute of Distance Education (SAIDE); and Mzabalazo Advisory Services
- **Professional bodies:** Institute at Work at Heights (IWH); Financial Planning Institute of Southern Africa (FPI); South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions (SACNAPS); Accounting Technician South Africa (ATSA); Institute of Internal Auditors South Africa (IIASA); South African Institute of Tax Professionals (SAITP); South African Veterinary Council (SAVC); the Institute of Certified Bookkeepers (ICB); Association of Office Professionals of South Africa; Engineering Council for South Africa (ECSA); Institute of Chartered Information Technology professionals (ICITP); South African Council for the Architectural Profession (SACAP); Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS); South African Geomatics Council (SAGC); Professional Hunters Association of South Africa (PHASA); Ocularists Association of Southern Africa (OASA); Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA); the South African Institute of Professional Accountants (SAIPA); Association for Supportive Counsellors and Holistic Practitioners (ASCHP); Professional Firearm Trainers' Council (PFTC); Association for Skills Development in South Africa (ASDSA); the Institute of Directors South Africa (IODSA); and the Marketing Association of South Africa [(MA (SA)]
- **Employer Bodies, Business Organisations and Trade Unions:** Chamber of Mines; Business Unity South Africa (BUSA); Allan Gray; and Federation of Unions of South Africa (FEDUSA)
- **Quality Councils:** CHE; QCTO, and Umalusi
- **Institutional Affiliations:** SACPO; USAf; Association of Private Providers for Education, Training and Development (APPETD)

- **Other:** NEDLAC; SAUS; ADvTECH Group; Adult Learning Forum; and Africa Film Drama Art; SAQA; Statistics South Africa (Stats SA); National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS); and the South African Sports Conference and Olympics Committee (SASCOC)

1. SESSION 1: OPENING

Programme Director: Ms Brenda Ntombela, Head: HRDC Secretariat

The programme director welcomed delegates to the 4th annual DHET Research Colloquium, acknowledging the presence of the Minister of Higher Education, Dr Blade Nzimande. She then proceeded to introduce the chairperson of the first session.

Chairperson: Dr Nkosinathi Sishi, Deputy Director-General: Planning, Policy and Strategy: DHET

Biography: *Dr Sishi was head of KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and the Chief Director for Schools, TVET Colleges and Adult Basic Education Examinations, assessment and measurement in South Africa. He is currently also the chairperson of the Interdepartmental Steering Committee on the NQF. He has a Doctorate in Philosophy with a focus in educational assessment and curriculum policy in South Africa.*

1.1 Welcome and Introduction to the Minister

Dr Sishi welcomed all participants and guests, including Chief Executive Officers from SAQA and the Quality Councils (QCs), SETAs, the international presenter, Mr Jens Bjornavold, and other key stakeholders of the NQF family. He recognised the DPME for its role in partnering with the DHET to facilitate the study pertaining to the evaluation of the NQF. He highlighted the purpose and objectives of the Colloquium, and reiterated that South Africa's first democratically elected government places high significance on an integrated, nationwide approach to education and training. This approach sought to encourage lifelong learning for all South African citizens.

He mentioned that the NQF traces its origins to the labour movement of the early 1970s when black trade union demands for a living wage were repeatedly rejected by employers, on the grounds that workers were unskilled; therefore, their demands were unwarranted. Their need for improved training and skills became the means for achieving their demands for better wages.

Concurrently, the demand for changes in the Bantu education system, epitomised during the Soweto student uprising of 1976, turned attention to the education sector and its substantial shortcomings. The increased need for skilled workers eventually resulted in an emphasis on qualifications that persists to the present day.

Dr Sishi reminded the delegates that the SAQA Act was promulgated in 1995 as one of the first pieces of the post-apartheid education and training legislation. The SAQA Act provided for the establishment

of the NQF. The 1995 White Paper on Education and Training is an important point of reference in understanding how the NQF has evolved in South Africa.

As the focus of the event was the implementation of the NQF, Dr Sishi noted that it was important to take note of the many stalwarts who have contributed to an improved education and training system. This includes the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, who was the first chairperson of the Education Portfolio in the democratic South Africa.

Dr Sishi pronounced a warm welcome to the Minister to provide the opening address, acknowledging his presence at the event as a special privilege.

1.2 Opening

Dr Blade Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education and Training: DHET

Biography: *Dr Blade Nzimande was the first Minister of Higher Education and Training appointed by President Zuma in 2009, and again in 2014. He also holds the position of the General Secretary of the South African Communist Party (SACP). He was a Member of Parliament and the first Chairperson of the Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Education in the democratic South Africa between 1994 and 1999. Dr Nzimande has served in many non-government organisations supporting the mass and labour struggles in the 1980s. Since 1994, Dr Nzimande has made an enormous contribution in the reconstruction and development of South Africa. He holds a doctoral degree in philosophy from the then University of Natal.*

The Minister recognised that the first day of the Colloquium was a significant day, being the 40th anniversary of the brutal murder of Bantu Stephen Biko, a hero of the struggle and a great South African. He welcomed all guests to the Colloquium and encouraged all to engage critically and extensively on the topic of the NQF.

The Minister then provided a brief history of the NQF Act, indicating that it was established as a mechanism to remove barriers in the education and training system, enabling citizens to pursue their desired careers and lifelong learning pathways. This Act was promulgated to establish a NQF which would be responsive to Labour Market Intelligence, sustainable development goals and become a driver of change in education systems. He questioned whether the NQF has fulfilled this role, and is aware that there is a big debate around its role. Furthermore, the NQF has its proponents and opponents which the Minister hoped would both be represented at the Colloquium to help take the NQF forward.

The Minister noted that the evaluation study into the implementation of the NQF Act is timeous and necessary at this critical juncture of planning PSET, considering that some have been asking whether the NQF has a role to play in a world where change is constant.

The Minister concluded by highlighting that the evaluation report and the Colloquium provided participants the opportunity to look at the NQF through a critical lens and evaluate the extent to which it has fulfilled its role.

The full speech is located in **Appendix 2**.

1.3 Background and Methodology

Dr Hersheela Narsee, Director: DHET

Biography: *Dr Narsee is responsible for the coordination of policy, research and evaluation in the Department. She has managed large-scale research and evaluation projects, such as the Department's current Labour Market Intelligence Project and the evaluation of the NQF Act. She obtained her Doctorate in Philosophy (Education) from UP.*

Dr Narsee provided a background to the NQF evaluation study by sharing the reasons and motivations behind it, its purpose, scope, key evaluation questions and the methodology applied.

She indicated that the White Paper for PSET identified several NQF areas where development is required, including the simplification of the NQF, articulation, governance, certification, assessment and RPL. She confirmed that the evaluation study assisted in identifying the kind of interventions that are required to improve NQF implementation.

Dr Narsee highlighted that the study aimed to:

- assess whether the NQF Act is being implemented in line with its goals and objectives;
- identify successes and challenges; and
- offer recommendations to improve implementation.

The evaluation review covered the period from 2009 to 2015 and included NQF associated policies and regulations. However, it did not examine the effects of the NQF on final beneficiaries, for example, learners and workers, as it was not intended to serve, primarily, as an impact study.

The study was guided by the following key evaluation questions:

- To what extent is the intervention logic inherent in the NQF Act, and the assumptions underlying the Act, adequately robust?
- To what extent has the implementation of the NQF Act been effective in achieving its policy goals, objectives and intended outcomes?
- To what extent has the implementation of the NQF Act been efficient?
- What is the emerging impact of the NQF, if any (likelihood of achieving change)?

- What must be done to improve the implementation of the NQF Act, and which aspects of the NQF Act must be reviewed?

Once Dr Narsee had concluded the background to the evaluation, Dr Shirley Lloyd was given an opportunity to present on the key findings of the study. The summary of this presentation is provided, below.

1.4 Key Findings

Dr Shirley Lloyd, Director: DHET

Biography: *Dr Shirley Lloyd is currently the Director of the NQF Directorate at DHET. In this position, she is responsible for the overarching support and advice to the Minister about NQF matters, and all other matters related to policy development, monitoring and evaluation and implementation of NQF. Dr Lloyd has a Philosophiae Doctorate in Management of Technology and Innovation (MOTI) from the Da Vinci Institute, Johannesburg.*

Dr Lloyd presented the findings and recommendations of the evaluation study for all sectors of the NQF in relation to the five criteria used to evaluate the NQF, viz., its relevance (for example, its ability to enhance the quality of education and training as well as redress past unfair discrimination), coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact.

In her presentation, Dr Lloyd addressed some of the following areas related to the implementation of the NQF: a) the lack of proper funding; b) the importance of clarifying the roles of outside stakeholders (such as education and training providers); c) the need for accountability and clear leadership pertaining to all participating NQF bodies; d) the need for better communication and expression in the TVET system (i.e. amongst the QCTO; historically disadvantaged, tertiary educational institutions; and traditional, well-established universities); and e) concerns regarding the restrictive policies of CHE on RPL. In addressing these areas, Dr Lloyd provided some detailed recommendations as highlighted in the study.

According to Dr Lloyd, the analysis illuminated the fact that in light of the many obstacles encountered by an extended period of serious policy reform, it remains for time to tell whether the NQF will achieve its intended objectives. The likelihood of its future success has been greatly encouraged by the embedment of the reforms it introduced in some parts of the country's education and training system, as evidenced by increased Quality Assurance (QA) capacity with some providers, as well as emerging partnerships (between Sub-Frameworks).

Although there is room for improvement, especially in relation to guidance, leadership and coordination (particularly in the TVET and Community College sectors), the NQF appears to have gained widespread acceptance within the country's education and training system. The NQF warrants every effort to be made by all relevant parties in order to render it free from the risks that high degrees of policy and funding instability pose to achieving its objectives and sustainability.

One of the achievements of the NQF, as highlighted by Dr Lloyd, can be seen in Figure 1, below which demonstrates a steady growth of registered qualifications over eight years. It shows that the number of qualifications registered on the qualifications register has an average growth rate of about 7% per year between 2009/10 and 2015/16. However, the number of unit standards registered has remained stagnant since 2011/12.

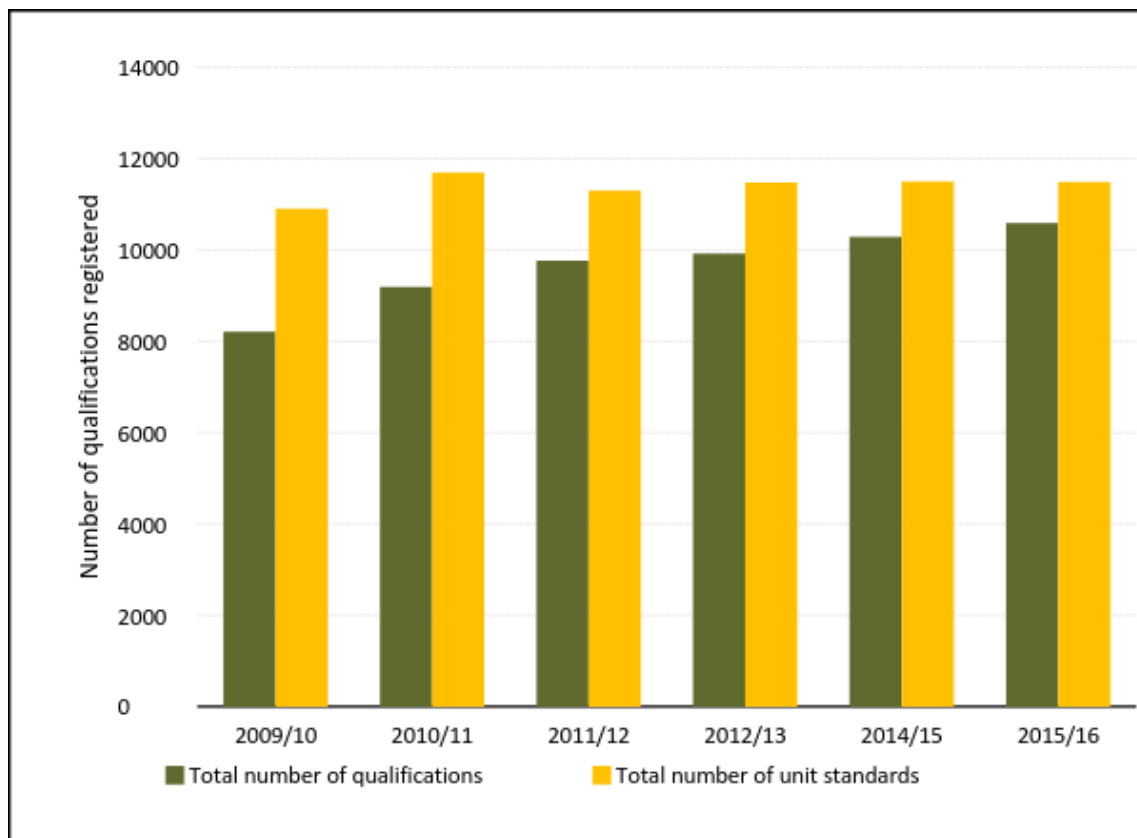


Figure 1: Complete register of quality qualifications

Although challenges remain, the NQF has made progress in reforming South Africa's education and training system.

2. SESSION 2: FIRST PANEL OF RESPONDENTS

Following the introductory session which provided a synopsis of the study, its background, findings and recommendations, was the first of two respondent panels. Session 2 featured key industry respondents who presented their inputs on the findings of the report. This session was again directed by Dr Sishi where he introduced each respondent before their respective presentations on the NQF evaluation findings. Session 2 featured responses from SAQA, CHE, QCTO, SETAs and DBE; as summarised, below.

2.1 South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)

Mr Joe Samuels, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Biography: *Mr Samuels is a specialist in Educational Policy and Education Change, Qualifications Frameworks, Standards Setting, QA and Adult and Community Education. He holds a Bachelor of Science (Honours) degree, and a Master of Philosophy degree from UWC.*

Mr Samuels highlighted that the report must be dealt with in its own right. He continued to respond to the key elements of the evaluation. On the element of relevance, he indicated that the NQF is increasingly becoming accepted as a key part of South Africa's educational architecture. He continued that education and training institutions are generally positive, however, there are concerns about the clarity of direction for the TVET sector.

Responding to the element of effectiveness, he acknowledged that there is goodwill between NQF partners, adding that most of the published policies and stakeholders recognise that SAQA and the QCs have invested a lot of effort in developing the NQF Policy Framework. Moreover, there is considerable policy alignment, even though there are some differences between DHET and SAQA policies on the one hand, and the policies of the QCs on the other. He asserted that the system of collaboration is working. There is also growth in the register of qualifications (as seen in Figure 1). He continued that Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) is widely accepted in principle, and institutions have developed inter-institutional agreements to accommodate the transfer of students.

On the matter of efficiency, Mr Samuels noted that the NQF Act helped to clarify the roles of DHET, DBE, SAQA and QCs, but reporting lines need to be clearer.

He highlighted the following as areas to consider for further development and improvement:

- Adult Education and Training (AET) routes to NQF level 4 in General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFETQSF);
- Coordination of TVET policy development;

- Length of certification time in TVET;
- Vocational/professional pathways in/between Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) and Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF);
- Time taken for accreditation; and
- Time taken to develop qualifications

In addressing emerging impact, Mr Samuels spoke to the reforms introduced by the NQF Act which he noted were being embedded in the education and training system. There is evidence of partnerships being built to enable articulation between the NQF Sub-Frameworks, but there is a need for more guidance

He urged all NQF partners to recognise the road already travelled, and commented that the following recommendations in the evaluation, for example, need to be clarified and analysed further.

- **Recommendation 4:** DBE is a crucial stakeholder in the NQF. Its roles and responsibilities should be specified in the policy framework.
- **Recommendation 8:** The National Learners' Record Database (NLRD) is used to track and monitor key policy changes and developments across the NQF. The indicators and performance metrics could be defined by the NQF Forum, after consultation with the Inter-Departmental NQF Steering Committee.
- **Recommendation 15:** The DHET, DBE, SAQA, QCs should agree on a five-year costed implementation plan that is achievable with available resources. The implementation plan should align with the broader PSET implementation plan, and include: A Detailed description of the activities and outputs that will be delivered; the roles and responsibilities of different institutions; the costs of implementation; and an approach to monitoring and evaluation.
- **Recommendation 21:** Whereas there is some evidence that RPL is gaining traction in certain parts of the education and training system, its implementation remains hamstrung by a lack of funding. If RPL is to become a policy reality, the DHET must consider funding this priority in a sustainable manner.
- **Recommendation 22:** Organise forums to allow for collaboration between public and private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), TVET colleges and SDPs to support the design of qualifications that can articulate from a NQF Level 4 to Level 5 across the Sub-Frameworks.

- **Recommendation 25:** The DHET, DBE and Umalusi must publish a joint directive that outlines the role of Umalusi in the quality assurance of public schools. This should include consideration for the creation of an independent examination body.

He concluded that the way forward towards enhancing NQF implementation needs to include: (a) adequate resourcing of NQF entities, and mindful use of resources; (b) establishing clear foci in relation to addressing the NQF goals/specific gaps and specific responsibilities for each of the NQF entities involved; (c) recognising realistic timelines, given the size and complexity of the system; (d) better coordination of the developmental initiatives and implementation plans; and (e) overall guidelines, advocacy, and monitoring.

2.2 Council on Higher Education (CHE)

Professor Narend Baijnath, CEO

Biography: *Professor Baijnath has extensive experience in Higher Education policy, planning, quality assurance, and management. In addition, he has occupied numerous governance roles and served two terms on the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). He holds a Master's Degree from Durham University, and a Doctorate from UWC.*

Professor Baijnath stated that the NQF Policy Framework is targeted at the right problems and has succeeded in not “re-inventing the wheel”, so as to avoid major upheavals in the education and training system that could cause more harm than good. Education and training providers understand the legislation and see the benefit and value of the NQF. He said that, although no significant external barriers hinder the implementation of NQF policies, greater capacity and skills are needed to implement the policy and legislation.

On issues of horizontal policy coherence, some interviewees in the evaluation study suggested that the NQF's established three Sub-Frameworks, each with its own nomenclature, create confusion and complicate articulation. There were notable differences between policies at national level, SAQA policies and those of the QCs regarding, for example, RPL and articulation. In practice, the parity of esteem between academic and vocational/occupational routes aimed at by existing NQF policies, has not yet been achieved.

Professor Baijnath explained that many Professional Bodies are uncertain about their role in the QA process. Statutory bodies, in particular, are granted powers to approve or accredit learning programmes in terms of their governing legislation, while there are other non-statutory bodies with a long history of accrediting qualifications and programmes.

Professor Baijnath seemed confident that the QA system for the Higher Education sector is well-understood and entrenched. The QA system, he said, has also created a sense of parity of esteem between public universities and private HEIs. He believes that the peer-reviewed approach is seen as appropriate to the sector, and beneficial to historically disadvantaged universities as well as comprehensive universities. However, articulation between historically disadvantaged universities and traditional universities remain a challenge.

Professor Baijnath views evaluation as valuable in providing renewed impetus to the work of implementation. He stated that evaluation is penetrating in conceptualisation and meticulous in execution.

2.3 Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi)

Dr Mafu Rakometsi, CEO

Biography: *Dr Rakometsi has served in multiple roles in the education sector. He has served as Director and Chief Director for Educational Development and Professional Services at the Free State Department of Education, and Head of Department at the Free State Department of Education. These career opportunities have exposed him to leadership at provincial, national and international levels. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree in History and History of Education.*

Dr Rakometsi acknowledged that the delineation of roles and responsibilities between the DBE and Umalusi must be strengthened, and mentioned that the NQF Act omits any mention of the DBE, which reduces its power as a central coordinating mechanism in the system. Furthermore, the report notes that Umalusi's role in the public system is narrowly focused on examinations while its mandate in the public space extends to QA and monitoring of School Based Assessment (SBA), curriculum analyses and approval, certification of learner achievements, and research.

Dr Rakometsi referred to some factual errors in the report that may have a bearing on the findings. The report found discrepancies between NLRD and DBE statistics, but he explained that the final dataset for certified candidates is housed at Umalusi, not at the DBE. The report also, erroneously, notes that the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance (GENFETQA) Act, that was responsible for establishing Umalusi, was promulgated in 2008, which was, in fact, the date of emendation of the 2001 Act. Also, while Umalusi agrees that articulation opportunities for National Certificate (Vocational) (NC(V)) candidates may be lacking or unclear, the report is incorrect to suggest that NC(V) candidates are enrolling for Trade Tests.

Dr Rakometsi recognised that the NQF Act enabled Umalusi to function properly and that it succeeded in clarifying and solidifying roles and mandates of the QCs. The Act provided the impetus for large-scale policy creation around assessment, RPL and CAT.

Dr Rakometsi mentioned that the NQF Act, in its current form, instructs that every programme that leads to a qualification must be registered at the NQF if the programme is offered in South Africa. This requirement creates several challenges for Umalusi, like the potential for proliferation of qualifications in the GFETQSF. It is unclear whether the NLRD would be able to mirror this function, since the detailed certification data is generated at Umalusi, and the NLRD does not seem to be designed as a verification database.

Dr Rakometsi recommended that factual errors in the report be addressed, with each QC providing specialist insight. Also, the role of the NLRD in verification should be clarified, and a mechanism to protect against a possible flood of foreign qualifications being registered on the NQF should be examined.

2.4 Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)

Mr Vijayen Naidoo, CEO

Biography: *Mr Naidoo previously held the post of Chief Director for Occupational Quality Assurance at QCTO. He has also worked for Umalusi as the Senior Manager for Quality Assurance of Assessments. At Umalusi, he was responsible for managing the development and implementation of the Umalusi QA systems to support the introduction of the National Certificate Vocational (NC(V)) in 2007 and the National Senior Certificate (NSC) in 2008.*

The QCTO agrees with recommendations 17, 18 and 19 of the draft report. These recommendations deal with the alignment of qualifications to the HEQSF and OQSF, a NQF-wide workflow system and duplications in regulation, respectively. Mr Naidoo explained that, due to the limited level of capacity, the QCTO has had to follow a delegation model where key functions of qualifications development and QA are delegated to bodies with the necessary capacity, expertise and funding to execute these functions.

Vision 2020 is being implemented to give effect to the centralisation of qualifications development and QA. The QCTO agreed that qualification development has taken some time to gain momentum, largely due to the delegation model and lack of capacity.

The QCTO is pleased with the survey finding that, on average, 70% of respondents rate the occupational qualification development as successful or highly successful, and welcomes survey results which suggest that the QA system does indeed contribute to improved quality.

Mr Naidoo stated that the NQF is a construct for managing qualifications and issues of articulation, and should avoid becoming a construct for delineating institutional types and creating artificial boundaries that will divert from its main functions.

Mr Naidoo recommended that the NQF should recognise and embrace the fact that the three Sub-Frameworks are disparate, and, instead of pursuing a “one-size-fits-all” approach to policies, it should provide an accommodating framework that will mitigate the negative effects normally associated with a bureaucratic, rigid and highly legislated framework (e.g. becoming bogged down in work that does not directly relate to achieving its original objectives that will result in valuable time, manpower, monetary and other resource wastage).

He pointed out that NQF should provide an overarching framework for education and training and should not be utilised, selectively, to manage particular aspects of the evolving education and training space.

2.5 Chemical Industries Education and Training Authority (CHIETA)

Ms Kedibone Moroane, Executive Manager: Research and Skills Manager

Biography: *Ms Moroane has worked in the skills development, research and skills planning both in the public and private sectors, and has 10 years’ experience in the skills development arena. She holds a Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) Degree (Business Management and Industrial Psychology) from Vista University, and a post graduate diploma in Public and Development Management from the Wits School of Governance.*

Ms Moroane remarked that, although the evaluation report found that the NQF Act was drafted as a compromise solution to resolve both systemic and structural challenges present in the system at the time, CHIETA believes that the NQF has succeeded in creating a coherent framework for qualifications and learning achievements.

She acknowledged that the SETAs have learned valuable lessons during the course of implementing the NQF and emphasised that the process of actual implementation of the NQF should receive serious focus and attention as it appears that some parties thought that the NQF’s mere existence would, somehow, miraculously solve all identified challenges within the system, without any real application/execution of its strategies and policies.

Ms Moroane noted that articulation remains a serious challenge for the SETAs. In addition, different QCs are facing challenges with the implementation of qualifications across NQF levels. In addition, the SETAs are confined to a single QC, thus limiting its effectiveness. Ms Moroane believes that, during the implementation of the NQF and in redressing the legacy of the past, the integrated nature of skills interventions, as well as the important role of partnerships and collaborations, were neglected, which hindered successful implementation.

Ms Moroane approved of the evaluation study's review of the implementation of the NQF Act and offered firm and pragmatic recommendations. She pointed out that formalised and accredited training is not necessarily meeting most employer needs. Basic Education and training is critical to the process. She stated that the NQF failed to bring all relevant SETA stakeholders on board during the conceptualisation and implementation of the framework.

2.6 Department of Basic Education (DBE)

MS CAROL NUGA-DELIWE, Chief Director: Sector Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

Biography: *Ms NUGA- DELIWE has over two decades of experience in education planning and evidence use, including information systems development and analysis of large data sets to supplement administrative data.*

Ms NUGA-DELIWE noted that the 'Training' in General Education and Training (GET) is not provided for in the DBE and the sector, therefore, does not benefit from the provisions of the NQF Act. The DBE still needs to conceptualise and clearly define the Theory of Change (ToC)¹ that informs the introduction of the Three-Stream Model in line with the NQF. Moreover, there is currently no coordination and cooperation between DBE and DHET institutions to ensure articulation and portability between programmes. Therefore, the proposed establishment of a Task Team should include QCs and other bodies to oversee the Three-Stream Model.

Ms NUGA-DELIWE admitted that the NQF clarified the role functions of DHET and DBE through the Sub-Frameworks, and the fragmentation between education and training has been addressed, to some extent. Conversely, vocational education is not adequately addressed in the Basic Education sector, resulting in learners exiting with a NSC (NQF Level 4) and re-entering a TVET College at NQF Level 2 to attain a vocational qualification. Additionally, there is a lack of alignment and articulation between the NSC and the NC(V) with regard to vocational education. Also, too few learners are

¹ A Theory of Change makes visible the assumptions and hypotheses underpinning how the policy will bring about change (for example, If A is undertaken, then B will happen).

accessing and succeeding in Trade and Occupational pathways. She further noted that having the Schooling Sector fall exclusively under Umalusi as a QC is restrictive in terms of Technical Vocational and Occupational Education and Training qualifications.

In view of the need to rationalise Technical Vocational and Occupational Education and Training Qualifications across the Basic Education and Higher Education and Training sector, Ms NUGA-DELIWE stated that it would be valuable to have a less rigid delineation between the Sub-Frameworks overseen by Umalusi and the QCTO, respectively.

She called for more research into the progression of learners from formal schooling into Vocational and Occupational Pathways. Moreover, focused attention is needed on the 'workplace training' requirement at GET level. The possibility of a 'Technical Team' from DBE that would work with the NQF Directorate at DHET should be raised.

3. SESSION 3: SECOND PANEL OF RESPONDENTS

Session 3 was chaired by Mr Mvuyisi Macikama from the NSF. This session featured presentations from second panel of respondents, including DPME, NEDLAC, SAUS, USAf and SACPO. The programme director first introduced the chairperson who in turn introduced each of the respondents before they presented.

Chairperson: Mr Mvuyisi Macikama, Executive Officer: National Skills Fund (NSF)

Biography: *Mr Macikama has worked as tax specialist for different organisations. He has worked as Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at the Department of Community Safety and was Head of Group Tax Compliance at Metropolitan Life. Mr Macikama has been actively involved in the development of the Khayelitsha community. He holds a BCom. (Accounting) from UWC.*

3.1 Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME)

Mr Antonio Hercules, Senior Specialist: Evaluation

Biography: *Mr Hercules has been a Commissioner and Manager of the Evaluations in DPME for 5 years. He is also responsible for coordinating capacity building in support of the National Evaluation system for National & Provincial Departments. He holds three degrees and has a committed interest in Education, Skills and Development, besides his current role in Evaluation.*

Mr Hercules presented a brief background of the evaluation process relating to the implementation of the NQF. He explained that the evaluation process was initiated in the national evaluation system

and commended the DHET for proposing it, emphasising its significance in the current educational landscape. He focused on the characteristics of implementation evaluation, viz., assessment of programme delivery, strategies, procedures and processes.

He defined implementation evaluation as an assessment of a policy/programme's (or part thereof) performance to date, that can take place at any point in time during or after policy/programme implementation, and forms an essential part of effective programme management.

Mr Hercules presented the key questions that an implementation evaluation seeks to answer, as described below.

- **Relevance and appropriateness** - is the policy or programme relevant and aligned with related policies and frameworks? Is it appropriate in terms of context and especially in relation to the intended beneficiaries and stakeholders?
- **Effectiveness** - is the policy or programme working? Is it achieving the initial goals or objectives? Is the design appropriate?
- **Efficiency** - is the organisational design appropriate to deliver on intended goals or objectives? Are there adequate systems and resources? Is there reasonable value-for-money, and comparability with similar policies or programmes, at least in the government sector? Are management and accountability mechanisms effective?
- **Sustainability** - is the policy or programme being institutionalised in a given ministerial capacity or sector? Is there sufficient funding in the foreseeable future?
- **Impact** - what do we need to do *now* in order to prepare for an impact evaluation in the future?

He mentioned that one of the consequences of an evaluation conducted in the national system is its inaccessibility to the public; circulation is permissible only with stringent confidentiality agreements firmly in place. It is incumbent upon the DHET to consult extensively, via the official approval of a number of internal structures, comprising a particular cluster of government departments. These structures are tasked with receiving the presentation of the evaluation, as well as consider the official DHET management response, followed by presentation to cabinet, upon whose approval a public presentation of the entire final document (with the exception of the NLRD) is possible.

3.2 National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC): Business

Ms Bev Jack, NEDLAC Representative

Biography: *Ms Jack has a long history of involvement and contributions to the PSET landscape, ranging from management of a leading private educational institution, participating as a member of the European Union Project Steering Committee which enabled the establishment of the SETA structures, and Deputy Chair of the NSA.*

Ms Jack welcomed the opportunity for business to engage with other NQF stakeholders. After perusing and engaging with the findings and recommendations of the evaluation study, BUSA recommended that the NQF be simplified and requested more control of proliferation of qualifications. In addition, all qualifications and part-qualifications offered in South Africa are expected to be registered at the NQF. Regarding articulation, BUSA suggested that barriers to acceptance and credit transfer should be avoided. Furthermore, assessment and QA systems should not stifle providers and the National Artisan Moderation Body (NAMB) should be absorbed into the QCTO at an opportune time.

Ms Jack also elaborated on BUSA's 10 core principles, including, among others, simplification, quality focus and resource management.

3.3 National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC): Community

Ms Conti Matlakala, NEDLAC Representative

Biography: *Ms Matlakala is currently a project coordinator for the Women's National Coalition. She served in National Executive Committee of the South African Youth Council. She holds a Bachelor of Education Honours degree in Assessment and QA from UP and a Certificate in Monitoring and Evaluation from the Wits School of Governance.*

Although Ms Matlakala did not attend the Colloquium, she responded, in writing, to the NQF evaluation report. Her inputs are reflected below.

According to Ms Matlakala, South Africa is well-skilled at policy development, but needs to improve in the area of policy implementation in order to reach desired timeframes.

Although some policies are viewed as unfavourable due to the fact that they are borrowed, NQF policies appear to remain very attractive. She suggested that the number of policies and their complexity should be reduced.

Ms Matlakala proposed developing an NQF that aligns with economic policy, able to address implementation capacity, stakeholder commitment, inclusivity and collaboration processes for policy development. She further recommended developing an implementation plan that will guide planners, for example, via baselines, performance indicators, desired outcomes, targets, responsibilities and timeframes.

She acknowledged that the ToC is a new concept, and many of the departments lacked a monitoring and evaluation system. Utilising the ToC and its logframe² will assist in effectively communicating ideal policy strategies for achieving desired outcomes, resulting in enhanced participation of relevant stakeholders.

Ms Matlakala confirmed that the Community Constituency agreed with the study's findings, including proposed amendments to the Act in consultation with NEDLAC.

3.4 South African Union of Students (SAUS)

Mr Misheck Taurayi Mugabe, National Treasurer General

Biography: *Mr Mugabe was chairman of the house committee, leader of South African Students Congress, speaker of student parliament, and Student Representative Council President in 2015-16 at Walter Sisulu University. He is currently pursuing a Master's degree (Commerce in Business Management).*

Mr Mugabe highlighted both successes and challenges from SAUS's perspective. He acknowledged the increase in enrolment quotas in most institutions of higher learning across the country. He confirmed that the TVET sector has grown remarkably over the years and that the number of black students and black academics attending institutions of higher learning have increased substantially.

SAUS also recognised the successful registration of national qualifications and noted that public credibility and QA demonstrate the NQF's positive impact during the past 8 years. However, Mr Mugabe continued to note that the implementation of the NQF Act still faces many obstacles, such as: (a) the attitude of some academic staff towards students as well as a lack of qualified lecturers; (b) commodification of education; (c) continuous protests at universities; (d) the increase in fly-by-night and bogus colleges; (e) alarmingly high drop-out rates; and (f) lack of political will by stakeholders in the Higher Education sector.

Mr Mugabe recommended developing strict measures to curtail non-adherence to the NQF Act and proposed that a monitoring and evaluation unit should be included as part of the framework. The NQF

² A Logframe is a tool used to improve planning, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of projects (undc.org). It often comprises elements such as inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes and impact.

Act must be amended to address the issue of articulation and to clarify the role of the private sector/industry. He emphasised the need for effective communication strategies to improve awareness.

Mr Mugabe stated that SAUS appreciates that most of the recommendations of the evaluation study are sensible and provide direction. However, he expressed the importance of employing practical instruments for measuring progress pertaining to the implementation of said recommendations with clear timetables. For example, one of the recommendations mention that NQF bodies need more funding to execute their mandates, but fails to mention actual monetary figures, thereby negating any real progress on the subject or the ability to manage or monitor it.

3.5 Universities South Africa (USAf)

Ms Trish Gibbon, USAf Representative

Biography: *Ms Gibbon is Senior Director for Institutional Planning, Evaluation and Monitoring at UJ in which role she is responsible, among other things, for the alignment of all the university's academic programmes with the HEQSF. She continues to contribute to national policy debates and developments and currently sits on the Higher Education Task Team for the development of a new national plan for PSET.*

According to Ms Gibbon, speaking from the perspective of universities, the NQF in and of itself has no agency. It is the implementers who have the agency to give substance to the NQF. Universities have been in a particularly privileged space. They have offered a number of qualifications for many years long before the NQF. The introduction of the NQF provided a single Sub-Framework and a single QC governing universities and other Higher Education providers. The NQF is compatible with inter-NQFs. It is simple, clear, easy to understand and user-friendly. There is an expanded range of NQF levels under the NQF Act – we moved from eight to 10 levels - which provides a much clearer differentiation between qualification types.

She continued that implementation has proven a grand exercise of alignment of all university programmes with the HEQSF and has been undertaken in phases over a number of years. The NQF enhanced the quality of programmes through deepening and spreading understanding of good programme and curriculum design, involving a large number of academics. Ms Gibbon referred to an increase in the consistent use of credit values as an indication of the volume of learning taking place. Mobility in the system and public confidence in the credibility of Higher Education qualifications have been strengthened.

Ms Gibbon mentioned the following HEQSF-related issues that have been identified by the NQF Evaluation Study:

- A long and cumbersome process of accreditation of new programmes (This is already being addressed by CHE and is undoubtedly linked to severe underfunding);
- Clarification of roles and jurisdictions;
- Process for transfers between universities in operation for a long time;
- Problematic articulation from some programmes;
- Complex RPL practices; and
- CAT success depends, fundamentally, on the curriculum structure.

3.6 South African College Principals' Organisation (SACPO)

Mr Louis Van Niekerk, Western Cape Chairperson

Biography: *Mr Van Niekerk was the Superintendent of Education at the Department of Education and Culture Ex Administration. He was Vice-Rector and became the Rector of the Western Province Technical College before being appointed as the CFO of the College of Cape Town. He has a Master's degree in Business Management Administration. He is currently the Principal of the College of Cape Town.*

Mr Van Niekerk highlighted a number of challenges, specifically in the TVET sector (as the sector is mentioned in the report). The TVET sector is sandwiched between well-established school and university systems, and equipped with the necessary qualification authorities to handle its unique position on the education platform. Students entering college, enter into the system with particular objectives, either to articulate into further education or to exit into the world of work. Sometimes students entering the system are unsure which career path they would eventually like to follow.

Mr van Niekerk explained that students are entering a maze because various obstacles make it difficult to articulate into Higher Education. These barriers must be removed because their repetitive nature frustrates students. The other group of students interested in the TVET system are aiming to enter the world of work, but qualifying as an artisan is time-consuming. In contemporary times, the average age to qualify as an artisan is ± 27 years, compared to ± 21 years in the past.

He noted that Report 191³ contains obsolete National Accredited Technical Education (NATED) courses. The QCTO programmes will probably absorb some of those programmes or they will be incorporated by the TVET sector; clarity is needed from DHET in this regard.

NC(V) programmes that are designed by the DBE could result in programme duplication. The sector requires a strategic vision. Mr van Niekerk indicated that involving the TVET sector in QCTO programmes is desirable, but the idea is handicapped by a lack of funding. He emphasised the importance of providing students with needed clarity and guidance. He concluded that SACPO associates itself with the general theme of the report, is ready to contribute and looks forward to future engagements to address these challenges.

End of Day 1

³ This report is the policy document on formal technical college instructional programmes in the Republic of South Africa. Report 191 (2001/08), contains the programme requirements for current technical college education in the Republic of South Africa.

Day 2 started with Session 4 of the programme. The programme director, Ms Melissa Erra, welcomed the delegates and introduced the first session of the day before welcoming the session chairperson, Dr Whitfield Green.

Chairperson: Dr Whitfield Green, Chief Director: Teaching and Learning, DHET

Biography: *In his current role, Dr Green has a function of developing a teacher education system within Higher Education that is able to produce sufficient numbers of high quality teachers for all education sub-sectors, including pre-schooling, schooling and post-schooling. The Chief-Directorate also develops and monitors the implementation of policy that directs the use of state resources to support quality teaching and learning at universities. Dr Green holds a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in Science Education from SU.*

4. SESSION 4: KEYNOTE ADDRESS

4.1 NQFs in the Global Context

Mr Jens Bjornavold, Senior Expert, Centre for Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop)

Biography: *Mr Bjornavold has been working with European and international education and training issues since the mid-90s and has held posts both in the Centre for Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) and the European Commission. He is currently the Brussels representative of Cedefop, located to the European Commission, the Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs. Mr Bjornavold has been actively involved in the development and implementation of the European Qualifications Framework from the start in 2004.*

Mr Bjornavold addressed the gaps that would be created by the absence of NQFs, whether NQFs are impacting individual citizens and how their impact is measured. He indicated that NQF numbers were increasing globally, with the exception of the United States of America (USA).

Mr Bjornavold explained that the first generation of frameworks (1980s and 1990s) were ambitious and set high goals, as illustrated by the South African NQF. Earlier frameworks emphasised regulation, policy transformation and harmonisation of qualifications systems. He continued that imposing uniform regulations (one-fit-for-all) to be applied across diverse institutions and sectors created resistance towards NQFs. He added that much research on NQFs seems to relate to these early experiences, overlooking later adjustments and developments. Emerging frameworks, established after 2000, emphasise transparency and communication rather than regulation. They seek to embrace the diversity of education and training systems, institutions and providers.

Mr Bjornavold affirmed that the NQF is an ideal tool for internationalisation; to obtain international recognition for qualifications is one of its key objectives. As demonstrated by Cedefop studies in 2009 and 2016 respectively, NQFs are the single most important contributing factor to the major shift to learning outcomes experienced throughout Europe, the long term effect of which will prove significant.

During the development and implementation stages of NQFs, a broad group of stakeholders, notably involving the labour market and private stakeholders, were included; thus offering a platform for dialogue and communication between different stakeholders in the education and training field and the labour market.

The Importance of the South African Experience

In view of the fact that, with the possible exception of Scotland, no European NQF has undergone the same kind of systematic, extensive, long term evaluation as the NQF in South Africa. The South African analytical model warrants a high level of attention, interest and relevance. Evaluations carried out in England and Wales, as well as Denmark and Ireland, cannot compare to the evaluation carried out in South Africa; in scope or in depth.

The relevance of a formal evaluation of the European Qualifications Framework, conducted in 2013, was impaired by the system's youth - at only five years after adoption, its impact at national or European level was difficult to identify. However, annual Cedefop reviews of European NQFs have made some progress towards assessing impact, gradually deepening its reviews and channelling its focus to gain better understanding of what NQFs in Europe mean and are accomplishing.

Mr Bjornavold concluded by introducing the outline for a European baseline, that demonstrates NQFs' contributions to shared objectives, currently being considered but not yet adopted.

4.2 Key Discussion Points

The discussion was mainly a comparison of the South African NQF to European NQFs with responses noted from delegates as reflected below.

Dr Nkosinathi Sishi (DHET) appreciated Mr Bjornavold's presentation and pointed out that in South Africa, the NQF has a transformational purpose. He asked Mr Bjornavold if European NQFs are trapped in a liberal paradigm or if there were also egalitarian emphases in these NQFs.

Ms Amanda Jitsing (DNA Economics)⁴asked Mr Bjornavold to elaborate on how Europe creates qualifications that achieve parity of esteem between academic and vocational qualifications as South Africa struggles with this.

Ms Shirley Walters (UWC) asked how European NQFs support job creation or add skills development for people to gain employability.

Ms Bev Jack (NEDLAC) asked about the extent to which learners can move across country borders in a time of globalisation. She added that since European NQFs have 8 levels and South Africa has 10, how much ease is there in terms of portability and recognition? The question was about ease of portability and recognition where an international platform is created, particularly economic migrants trying to move across borders and needing their qualifications recognised to create access to the labour markets.

Ms Thandi Lewin (DHET) asked Mr Bjornavold to respond to his initial question in the presentation which was: what would be lost if NQFs did not exist? - as he only responded to whether they are making a difference. She asked Mr Bjornavold, when he spoke about the effects of European NQFs, if he was perhaps over-attributing to the NQF some of the things that were influenced by other issues.

In responding to the above questions, **Mr Jens Bjornavold** highlighted that in the European setting, some countries link NQFs to the neo-liberal agenda, but for most countries, the primary goal is lifelong learning. In Europe, lifelong learning has become relevant as 80 million people have qualifications at the lower NQF levels, therefore finding it difficult to enter the labour market. NQFs are useful for up-skilling. Therefore, while there is a broad transformative agenda in South Africa, this does not apply in the European context.

On the issue of parity of esteem, Mr Bjornavold responded that it is also a problem in the European setting, but the relationship between academic and vocational qualifications is not an issue. Even though countries like Germany and Switzerland have strong vocational education and training systems, the decision to use the framework to signal the equivalence between vocational and academic qualifications created several years of debate. It was not an easy discussion. He continued that the outcomes and competence approaches helped because they were showing that some qualifications were focusing on theoretical knowledge while others focused on practical skills. Other qualifications were focusing on the competencies needed to be an independent skilled worker in the labour market. He stated that the learning outcomes approach has helped advance the debate on

⁴ DNA Economics is the service provider that was commissioned to undertake the implementation evaluation of the NQF.

parity of esteem. However, the issue of parity of esteem is an ongoing discussion; it is not something that can easily be resolved.

On job creation, Mr Bjornavold remarked that the visibility of NQFs in the labour market is still low, but this is improving. Although learning outcomes help, NQFs are still not sufficiently linked to the labour market.

With regard to what would be lost if NQFs did not exist, he said a lot would be lost in terms of communication in the European and international setting, the systematic development and common language between countries. NQFs are critical in supporting progression in learning, and he saw no reason to abolish them. Mr Bjornavold concluded that the debate of whether NQFs will survive is not relevant. NQFs are here to stay.

5. SESSION 5: FIRST SET OF PARALLEL COMMISSIONS

Following the key note address in Session 4 was the first set of parallel commissions, where delegates were free to select one of three NQF related areas of focus. The first set of parallel commissions featured the following themes in which there were presentations made by key industry experts and representatives, followed by further audience discussion and engagement.

5.1 Articulation

Commission Facilitator: Professor Peliwe Lolwana: Wits

Commission Scribe: Ms Mmaphake Ramasodi: DHET

A. DBE Three-stream Model and Envisaged Articulation Opportunities

Ms Marie Schoeman, Chief Education Specialist: DBE

Biography: *Ms Schoeman coordinated the development of the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support, the development of Resourcing Norms and Standards for Inclusive Education and is currently coordinating the Programme for the introduction of the Technical Occupational Stream in the Basic Education Sector. She serves on the South African Council of Educators.*

A summary of Ms Schoeman's presentation is offered below, together with the key issues raised and recommendations emanating from the commission.

Summary of Presentation

Ms Schoeman highlighted that two million learners are 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET), having never completed matric. Additionally, curriculum offerings are not meeting learners'

interests and aptitudes, causing them to drop out at Senior Phase, and the success rate in artisan training is relatively low.

Key Issues Raised

- The definition of articulation must be revisited.
- The exclusion of the informal sector is defeating articulation (articulation must be inclusive).
- Lack of understanding of the NQF will impede articulation (parents and the student community).
- Articulation should not be limited to class activities but extend to extra-mural expertise.
- The relevant people must assist with articulation.
- Articulation is dependent on relationships: collaboration between the DBE and DHET is very important.
- Articulation should be treated as an intellectual exercise instead of a technical exercise.
- Career guidance is not adequate.
- The implementation of the Three-Stream Model requires a clear strategy.
- Consultations on the Three-Stream Model must be broadened.
- Does the Three-Stream Model signal whether all learning leads to Higher Education?

Recommendations

- It is recommended that Basic Education be divided into a 60/40 percentage split: 60%: Technical Vocational stream and 40%: Academic stream.

B. Learning Pathways: Actual Student Movements As Seen in the NLRD Data

Ms Omotola Akindolani, NLRD Deputy Director: SAQA

Biography: *Ms Akindolani is in charge of the data analysis and quantitative research function of the NLRD.*

She holds a Master of Science degree in Mathematical Statistics from Wits.

A summary of Ms Akindolani's presentation is offered below, together with the key issues raised and recommendations emanating from the commission.

Summary of Presentation

Ms Akindolani stated that academic routes from NSC to HEI appear to be working well. However, there is limited articulation between HEQSF and OQSF. Furthermore, articulation can be systemic/specific

and focus on supporting learners as they encounter barriers. There is movement from QQFS to GFETQSF, and GFETQSF to HEQSF.

Key Issues Raised

- Without integrated curriculum planning and the partnerships needed to do this work, articulation will not be possible.
- A more detailed analysis is required to pinpoint specific areas that must be targeted for in-depth attention.

Recommendations

- An inclusive definition of articulation must be formulated.

5.2 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Commission Facilitator: Mr Ntokozo Bhengu: CHE

Commission Scribe: Ms Bellinah Molaudzi: DHET

A. RPL for Undergraduate and Post-Graduate Studies in HEIs

Mr Alan Ralphs: Researcher: UWC

Biography: *Mr Ralphs' research focus is on RPL. He recently headed up a national study on RPL and is one of the authors and co-editor of the book 'RPL as Specialised Pedagogy: Crossing the Lines (HSRC Press, 2016). He holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree and a Master's in Education from Wits.*

A summary of Mr Ralph's presentation is offered below, together with the key issues raised and recommendations emanating from the commission.

Summary of Presentation

Mr Ralphs indicated that RPL has been a subject of discussion and interest since the early years and has been built in the trajectory since the trade union proposals of the late 80s. In addition, there has been a growth in RPL related initiatives from 2008 to 2016. This period was marked by a strengthened RPL policy framework. In 2014, SAQA revised and replaced its 2002 RPL Policy, the QCs developed RPL policies from 2014 to 2016 and the DHET published the RPL Coordination Policy in March, 2016. A Ministerial RPL Task Team addressed legal barriers to a national RPL system, and over 20 national RPL initiatives were supported at national level. Insights concerning changes that are needed in order for RPL to become more optimally inclusive were shared. Mr Ralphs also shared effective practice

approaches in mediating complexities of knowledge recognition and certification in and across different learning pathways and communities of practice in a differentiated but interdependent NQF.

Key Issues Raised

- RPL processes could include guidance and counselling as well as extended preparation for assessment.
- Issues of RPL's role for access to undergraduate study were raised.
- Concerns around issues of coherence, efficiency, impact and sustainability were raised as well as issues around gender experience and knowledge in adult learning.
- Matters pertaining to the DHET RPL Coordination Policy centred around which NQF body will be responsible for driving key matters, such as policy, funding and fund management, professionalisation, etc.

Recommendations

- The National Strategy and Coordination Policy must ensure that the RPL implementation fund is sustainable.
- Rejected students need guidance on where to obtain information and support. Can a case be argued for RPL pathways, networking and eProfiling?

B. RPL in South African Sports Coaching

Ms Desiree Vardhan: South African Sport Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC)

Biography: *Ms Vardhan leads the sports coaching programme at SASCOC and is the driving force behind the establishment of the South African Coaching Framework and the recently recognised Professional Body for Sports Coaching. She was influential in establishing a Master's Degree programme for sports coaching which commenced in 2017.*

A summary of Ms Vardhan's presentation is offered below, together with the key issues raised and recommendations emanating from the commission.

Summary of Presentation

Ms Vardhan explained how the South African Coaching System functions. Issues concerning National and Provincial funding of programmes were discussed. The South African Coaching Commission of 2009 has been replaced by a Professional Body of Sports Coaching in 2017. She explained how Federations operated. The process of sport coaching is viewed as vocational. However, the Da Vinci Institute offers a Master's programme in Sports Coaching. Ms Vardhan noted the roles that SAQA and

the DHET have played and the support they have provided to the Da Vinci Institute on their RPL journey. The SA Coaching Pathway for coaches and coach developers was explained.

Ms Vardhan highlighted some of the challenges the sector faces. The current Sports Coaching curriculum does not address the needs of coaches as it was designed and developed without their input. There is a need for skilled and qualified sport coaches as well as the need for RPL in sports and sports coaching in particular. Although many sport coaches are not formally qualified and do not possess a NSC or NQF Level 4 qualification required for entry into Higher Education, they offer a wealth of experience that should be recognised and properly utilised through engaging the relevant people when developing qualifications. She stated that it is difficult to find suitable individuals who are trained to deliver RPL and sports coaching qualifications. In addition, RPL is administratively burdensome and tedious, and funding for it remains a challenge. It is also difficult to develop the RPL system through the CHE as it presents more barriers to the process than support and guidance. Most universities act as gatekeepers and the pedagogic agencies create a blockage.

Key Issues Raised

- The importance of Professional Bodies and the role that they play in making or breaking RPL was highlighted.
- Professional Bodies represent the voice of the recipients of RPL.
- SASCOC envisions an effective, inclusive, cohesive and ethical coaching system that promotes transformation and excellence in an active and winning nation.
- Designations and academics are complicated to navigate; the SASCOC project was met with many challenges that required the assistance of SAQA and DHET.
- Building the bridge for RPL: SASCOC is aiming at transforming the South African Sports system through sports coaching by promoting transformation, collaboration, cooperation and communication.

Recommendations

- All relevant stakeholders must work together to ensure that the RPL system impacts the South African Coaching Framework successfully.
- Although UWC has developed a Postgraduate Diploma in RPL, the issue of professionalisation of RPL as a practice requires more discussion and deeper attention.
- The understanding of the Sports Coaching Designations, as well as underpinning qualifications, must be advanced.

- The responsibilities of the National Federations, Sports Coaches and Professional Bodies must be clear and well understood.
- Understanding and trust among all stakeholders and role players must be promoted, and the way in which UWC transfers designations into academic streams, must be communicated and presented for evaluation.
- Previous research lacks statistics pertaining to RPL by private providers. Future research must include both public and private provision.
- Dialogue between experts in the working world and experts in academia is vital to enable successful RPL and must be encouraged.
- The CHE Policy may present problems in future and must be revisited.

5.3 Credibility, Mobility and Authenticity of South African Qualifications

Commission Facilitator: Dr Heidi Bolton: SAQA

Commission Scribe: Ms Qaqamba Matha: DHET

A. The Impact of the NQF on a Profession: The View of a Professional Body

Lelané Bezuidenhout, Head of Certification: Financial Planning Institute (FPI)

Biography: *Ms Bezuidenhout is responsible for setting and running of the Board Exams for all approved FP) designations, approval of Continuing Professional Development Providers and continuous improvement of related Continual Professional Development (CPD) processes, setting of and maintaining Certification Standards, continuously improving the mentorship programme to suit the needs of the ever-changing Financial Services Industry and stakeholder engagement with SAQA, INSETA, QCTO, DHET, etc.*

A summary of Ms Bezuidenhout's presentation is offered below, together with the key issues raised and recommendations emanating from the commission.

Summary of Presentation

Ms Bezuidenhout offered an overview of what constitutes a Professional Body and its primary functions. She reflected on the recommendations and findings of the NQF evaluation draft report. NQF policies and definitions were discussed as per the NQF evaluation draft report. She stated that Professional Bodies are seen as gatekeepers. However, issues of Professional Bodies were seen as the key success area under the NQF. Also, there were duplications between QCs and professional bodies and those duplications need to be addressed.

Key Issues Raised

- Gatekeeping on the part of the Professional Bodies.
- Duplications between QCs and Professional Bodies must be addressed.
- The needs of the workplace constitute the single most important factor that has been omitted by the NQF Act.
- Funding for RPL is needed.
- The registration of qualifications process takes too much time and creates many confusing duplications.

Recommendations

- All stakeholders involved must know what is expected of them.
- Funding is required to implement the NQF Act.
- Detailed planning and legislation alignment is needed.
- Qualifications registration processes must be streamlined.

B. Usefulness of NQF for the Marketing and Communications Profession

Mr Sechaba Motsiela, Chairman: Marketing Association of South Africa [MA (SA)]

Biography: *Mr Motsiela is highly regarded in the Marketing Industry. He is also the Chairman of the Council of the Da Vinci Institute. The Institute's qualifications are accredited by the CHE and its qualifications are recorded with SAQA. He holds an Honours Degree in Social Science (Organisational Psychology) from the University of Cape Town (UCT) and is also a Chartered Marketer.*

A summary of Mr Motsiela's presentation is offered below, together with the key issues raised and recommendations emanating from the commission.

Summary of Presentation

Mr Motsiela highlighted the importance of revisiting the industry's demands and all that it entails in the local as well as global context, considering the dynamic nature of the industry

Key Issues Raised

- The QCTO's engagement with the industry is inadequate and must be rectified.
- All relevant parties must acknowledge and embrace the fact that it is unreasonable to expect the NQF (as per the white paper) to cover everything, especially in this rapidly changing environment.

- 'Just-in-time' courses can be useful to industry, but are negated by forcing all courses to form part of the NQF via Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Codes.
- The NQF needs to be aligned with industry and offer a dynamic system that will be able to cater to rapid changes in industry.
- Funding has been compromised; the industry budget needs to be revised.

Recommendations

- A holistic response to all the recommendations is required to close the identified gaps in the implementation of the NQF.
- Industry's voice must be included in this process in order to avoid ending up with an inadequate, underperforming, irrelevant system.
- The conceptualisation and meaning of part-qualifications should be properly defined, outlined and communicated, and allow learners to participate in the process which will enable them to be flexible or to build upwards.
- Funding issues must receive urgent attention as per the NQF evaluation draft report.

6. SESSION 6: SECOND SET OF PARALLEL COMMISSIONS

Following the first set of parallel commission was the second set in Session 6, where delegates were once again free to select one of three NQF related areas of focus. The second set parallel commissions featured the following themes in which there were presentations made by key industry experts and representatives, followed by further audience discussion and engagement.

6.1 Simplification and Integration of the NQF

Commission Facilitator: Ms Brenda Ntombela: HRDC

Commission Scribe: Ms Refiloe Mohlakoane: DHET

Professor Ahmed Bawa, CEO: USAf

Biography: *Professor Bawa was Vice-Chancellor and Principal of DUT. He served on a number of policy development teams in the post-1994 period and was an inaugural member of the National Advisory Council on Innovation till 2002. He serves on several international advisory boards. Professor Bawa holds a PhD. in Theoretical Physics from the University of Durham.*

A summary of Professor Bawa's presentation is offered below, together with the key issues raised and recommendations emanating from the commission.

Summary of Presentation

Regarding articulation and progression, Professor Bawa examined the PSET system and sub-systems from an NQF perspective versus an institutional/curriculum perspective. He indicated that the complexities that require simplification must be identified. He added that attention must be focused on the applicable principles, for example, learner-centeredness. He continued that the NQF had failed on articulation, and the NQF is not a solution to the current problems South Africa is facing in education.

On the matter of integration, the importance of integrating diversity, differentiation, historical legacies and trajectories were discussed in light of new fragmentation and restrictions (e.g. levels of offering) introduced by the NQF. He concluded that specific fragmentation that needs to be addressed must be identified.

Key Issues Raised

- Does the NQF represent a tool that reflects reality; or an ideal to which reality must conform? The NQF is not the (only) solution.
- PSET is not the same as NQF.
- Issued of curriculum development: occupational qualifications; other national curricula were raised.
- Funding is important; policy mandates must be funded. All systems are underfunded.
- Communication amongst institutions, departments and various bodies is important.
- Education and the world of work: Can education create jobs?
- There's a need for data cf., Labour Market Intelligence Partnership (LMIP), TVET Management Information System (MIS) and tracer studies.

Recommendations

- The most important question to ask is whether the NQF is working for learners. Evaluating the NQF's performance on the basis of its learner-centeredness, its ability to enhance learner mobility and its ability to enhance labour market absorption should be top priority.
- Some recommendations in the report are excellent, but care must be taken not to encourage institutions to innovate and follow a risk-based approach. Other recommendations such as NQF-PSET alignment, and the HEQC charging publics for accreditation, are questionable and should be approached with caution.

Ms Thandi Lewin, Chief Director: DHET

Biography: Ms Lewin coordinates the development of a National Plan for PSET. She has previously worked at a senior level in government, as a Chief Director for Equity in Education and later for University Policy. She is a PhD student in the Centre for Research on Higher Education and Development at UFS.

A summary of Ms Lewin's presentation is offered below, together with recommendations emanating from the commission.

Summary of Presentation

Ms Lewin addressed the need to simplify and integrate the NQF in the National Plan for PSET. She gave a brief background from the White Paper and the National Development Plan concerning the PSET system.

Key Issues Raised

- The NQF is part of our education and training landscape – it is one tool/framework for the growth and development of our education and training system. However, it does not stand alone.
- A range of mythologies and expectations around the NQF have been created that, on the one hand, attribute more to the NQF than is realistic. On the other hand, they create unrealistic expectations of what the NQF is able to achieve. The NQF is not a system in and of itself.

Recommendations

- The role of the NQF needs to be made clearer.
- Resources must follow what we are planning to do. Funding norms and processes must support what must be achieved.
- No framework or law must prevent us from providing more meaningful offerings to learners.

6.2 Open/Blended Learning and the NQF

Commission Facilitator: Ms Trudi Van Wyk: DHET

Commission Scribe: Mr Mike Adendorff: DHET

A. Open Learning and the Implementation Evaluation of the NQF Act

Ms Jenny Glennie, Founding Director: South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE)

Biography: Ms Glennie was appointed by the Higher Education Minister in 2013 to oversee the establishment of Sol Plaatje University. She was an active participant in the establishment of South Africa's

first HEQC, and served for 10 years as the Deputy Chairperson. Ms Glennie has a Bachelor of Science (Honours) degree in Mathematics from Wits and a Master's degree from the University of London.

A summary of Ms Glennie's presentation is offered, below, together with the key issues raised and recommendations emanating from the commission.

Summary of Presentation

Ms Glennie stated that open learning is a set of principles, not a mode of provision. She outlined that key open learning principles require: a) an increase in access to meaningful opportunities for lifelong learning; and removing barriers, offering more flexible provision of learning; b) enabling learner success: creating conditions for a fair chance of learner success through learner support, contextually appropriate resources and sound pedagogical practices; and c) accumulating success: recognising prior learning and experience wherever possible; facilitating credit transfer and articulation between qualifications.

She continued that South Africa is beginning to move from thinking of educational provision on a continuum (face-to-face, through mixed mode, to distance education) to using a grid to represent geographical distribution (on campus to off campus) and degrees of dependence on digital support and the Internet (fully offline to digital support, to fully online). Clear distinctions between distance education and contact education are increasingly blurred and, to some extent, meaningless.

Key Issues Raised

- Open Learning aligns with key NQF outcomes, viz., improved learner access, portability, progression and articulation of qualifications.
- Access should not be prioritised above success.
- The 2014 White Paper for PSET, and its emphasis on *Opening learning through diverse modes of provision*, mandate the establishment of a network of providers and a network of learning centres, resulting in digital connectivity, for example:
 - The installation of optic fibre undersea cables is providing increasingly enhanced connectivity.
 - The South African National Research Network (SANREN) is spreading connectivity across the country's tertiary institutions, making it possible for the majority of students to enjoy bandwidth connectivity.

Recommendations

- Learners must be actively encouraged to enrol at *different* institutions for some of their courses.
- QCs need to become familiar with diverse modes of provision and how to quality assure them (the CHE has already explored this).
- Providers and QCs must find ways to make recognition of such arrangements a robust and routine process instead of the exception.
- The three QCs should not develop new, separate criteria for different modes, but rather explore ways of interpreting high-level criteria for *all* modes of provision.
- The three QCs need to recognise that the promotion, generation and use of Open Educational Resources (OER)⁵ will likely lead to *improved* learning resources and materials and they should not approach the subject with presupposed fears that quality will decrease.

B. From Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) to Small Private Online Courses (SPOCs) and Everything in Between: Digitisation of Learning and How it Links to the NQF

Dr James Keevy, CEO: JET Education Services

Biography: *Dr Keevy has conducted and overseen various initiatives related to national, regional and inter NQFs in Africa. His responsibilities at JET include working with government, the private sector, international development agencies and education institutions to improve the quality of education, and the relationship between education, skills development and the world of work.*

A summary of Dr Keevy's presentation is offered below, together with the key issues raised and recommendations emanating from the commission.

Summary of Presentation

Concerning recognising and recording learning beyond qualification, Dr Keevy stated that South Africa must endeavour to retrieve its NQF leadership position with regard to credentialing, and how fast-developing technology is impacting forms of credentialing internationally.

The path South Africa is following in terms of the recognition of learning can be described as follows:

- The divide between formal, non-formal and informal learning is becoming more blurred;
- Regional qualification frameworks and global reference levels are gaining ascendancy;

⁵ OER depend on a system of *open licensing*: the author does not lose copyright, but allows the copyright holder to allow free use, re-use, adaptation and redistribution, under certain restrictions determined by the copyright holder.

- Digital credentials are becoming mainstream (e.g. Commonwealth of Learning, New Zealand) and more flexible.
- Inventive forms of representation are, to some extent, replacing formal credits in job applications;
- Since the global workplace often prioritises a range of soft skills, a more flexible, innovative representation is beginning to compete with formal credits in job applications.

The trend towards the digitisation of credentials, which accommodates Open Learning, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), Small Private Online Courses (SPOCs), open degrees, digital badges, digital repositories and digitisation standards, must be recognised and answered. The NLRD has been serving South Africa for years: can it be taken to the next level? New technology now makes validation possible (block chain validation) across borders. South Africa enjoys an advantage in terms of the verification and evaluation of qualifications due to its centralisation when compared to countries such as the United States where these functions are normally outsourced to a range of private companies. Can the NLRD accommodate the trend towards the digitisation of credentials, and new technology now making validation possible?

National databases do not enable inter-operability (which is distinct from forced or reluctant compatibility), preventing data from being shared across different databases. Open standards (instead of prescribed standards) that can be shared across (for example, Higher Education Management Information Systems – HEMIS, NLRD, etc.), must be encouraged in order to render our databases interoperable.

The USA is applying a credentials framework rather than a mere qualifications framework.

Key Issues Raised

- Radical changes are frequently brought about by technological innovation, but these prophesied changes often offer few results within universities, begging the question: how realistic are such prophecies?
- Questions concerning ways in which the fine line between digital security, the Privacy of Personal Information (PoPI), and stretching the possibilities for databases of lifelong learning and credentials can be successfully navigated, warrant definitive answers.
- Flexibility is important, not only in terms of digitisation, but also in terms of other factors such as more open admission procedures and longer library opening hours.

- The notion of “examinations whenever you like” presents huge implications for administration, requires sophisticated measures and is expensive to offer.
- Insistence on too much openness could lead to fragmentation.
- Although credentialism is gaining momentum, it must be recognised that well-planned qualifications continue to provide successful results.
- The NLRD could be utilised more extensively.
- Spending on textbooks is excessive, especially when considering that, in South Africa, textbooks do not always prove to be as relevant as intended.
- The impact of developing full courses through OER for TVET colleges, to curb expenses, warrants research.
- Professional Bodies could be helpful as pro bono agents to ensure relevance and responsiveness to the real workplace.

Recommendations

- The NLRD should be used to track and monitor key policy changes across the NQF, and to explore the incorporation of new technologies and new ways of considering individual competence.
- Indicators and performance metrics could be redefined by the NQF Forum.
- South Africa should continue to embrace international changes where possible.
- South Africa should move beyond a fixation on formal qualifications and onto the full-on use of “big data” approaches and algorithms in order to generate new information based on credentials and qualifications.

6.3 NQF Governance

Commission Facilitator: Dr Julie Reddy: SAQA

Commission Scribe: Mr Biki Lepota: Umalusi

A. NQF Implementation Evaluation and NQF Governance:

Antonio Hercules, Director: DPME

(See Mr Hercules’ biography on page 28)

A summary of Mr Hercules’ presentation is offered below, together with the key issues raised and recommendations emanating from the commission.

Summary of Presentation

Mr Hercules explained that governance falls under the third NQF criteria, viz., efficiency. King IV⁶'s definition of corporate governance was used to explain governance. He highlighted that appropriate qualifications enable individuals to serve on a Board of Directors in the private sector and formal training affords individuals the opportunity to do the same in corporate governance. The basic structure of companies in the private corporate sector, as a way to draw parallel comparisons with government, was outlined. The following aspects were touched on:

- Fiduciary (deals with issues related to finances);
- Corporate strategy;
- Funding / revenue;
- Operational performance;
- Internal policies and risk management; and
- Public accountability (portfolio committees): citizens-based monitoring, which is meant to inform improvements.

In the public sector, the Board of Directors are replaced by the Minister and Management Executives, who report to National Legislature and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) that exercise political oversight. Evaluations are important sources of information (Evaluation Performance Reports, other research) to government. Multiple departments and multiple spheres rely on a functioning government.

Key Issues Raised

- Trust of citizens, due process of law, efficiency, democracy and ability to attract investment are key characteristics of good governance.
- Governance is fundamental to ensure strong sectors and institutions.
- Every problem is not necessarily systemic, or focused in one policy.
- Governance capacity is not what it should be.
- The essence of sound governance is sound strategic management.

⁶ The King IV Code sets out the philosophy, principles, practices and outcomes which serve as the benchmark for corporate governance in South Africa.

Recommendations

- Coordination with regard to the governance of NQF-related activities is currently lacking and warrants attention.
- The NQF Forum is ineffective and non-functional, which damages accountability, and must be addressed.
- To what extent is the CEO Committee dealing with operational management?
- Transparency pertaining to the handling and managing of Monitoring Reports is required.
- Sector Departments: Several efficiency and effectiveness issues plague monitoring and reporting, as well as policy management, and must be rectified.
- The departments involved in monitoring and reporting are not in sync and are not working together as they should.
- Corporate Strategy: Sector guidance, institutional role clarity, ToCs and logframes need attention.
- Funding: Sector plus funding streams, sustainability (under-funding of institutions) need attention.
- Operational performance: Discussions around sector yardsticks ToC and institutional key performance indicators must be communicated sufficiently.

B. Reflections on NQF Governance

Professor Shirley Walters, Professor Emerita: UWC

Biography: *Professor Walters is Professor Emerita at UWC where she has been Professor of Adult and Continuing Education for 30 years; and the founding Director of the Centre for Adult and Continuing Education and the Division for Lifelong Learning. She was Chair of the SAQA Board from 2004-2010 and continues to serve on the SAQA Research Committee.*

A summary of Professor Walters' presentation is offered below, together with the key issues raised and recommendations emanating from the commission.

Summary of Presentation

Professor Walters unpacked NQF governance from various stances and highlighted various shortcomings and challenges facing the system and policy. She emphasised the importance of achieving realistic measures of collective cooperation between all relevant entities and parties if the NQF is to attain to its goals.

Key Issues Raised

- The NQF is an ecology of learning throughout life.
- Learners and all relevant parties must be considered as opposed to handing complete control and responsibility to a selected few in top positions.
- Society is made up of competing interests and includes a number of different power blocks.
- Tensions and power struggles as a normal part of the course must be accepted.
- The relationship between the NQF Act and PSET White Paper must be kept in mind.
- The operational plans for the PSET must adopt a nuanced understanding and learn from completed research studies if the NQF is to be managed effectively.
- Achieving excellent cooperation between various NQF bodies will require hard work by all connected entities.
- Employers and universities must work together and must understand each other's motivations.
- Relational expertise is required to build common knowledge and enable cooperation across differences.
- Collective resourceful leadership and collaborative relationships are critically important for the successful implementation of the NQF.
- Significant fault-lines that will need urgent attention from a governance perspective are as follows:
 - Roles and responsibilities of the DHET and DBE need to be clarified;
 - Status and responsibilities of the NQF Directorate in the DHET must be reviewed and duplication with SAQA and other entities must be avoided;
 - The omission of DBE in the Act needs to be rectified, but the implications for the system as a whole may be enormous.
 - The importance of systems collaboration to build and manage relationships in order to support implementation of the Act must be emphasised and strengthened to attract key players on a regular basis;
 - SAQA, in its role as apex, needs strengthening to provide leadership as mandated. QCs should report directly to the Director Generals;
 - The QCTO's funding model must be revised;

- Serious under-funding of the NQF entities must be addressed; the RPL unfunded mandate is unsustainable and hinges the NQF's success on a knife-edge;
- A mechanism for appeals, e.g. an Ombud, as mooted by SAQA, should be considered.

Recommendations

- The drive towards recommitment to the project must be initiated, and measures aimed at creating organisational buy-in related to the NQF system, policy and objectives by all key players must be established and implemented.
- The complexities of the NQF system must be recognised and respected.
- Communication and collaboration must be encouraged.
- Collective resourceful leadership is needed at all levels and must be prioritised.
- Purposeful passion and patience are needed and should be cultivated by all legitimate, available means.

7. SESSION 7: WAY FORWARD

Ms Erra introduced the session chairperson, Mr Patel.

Chairperson: Mr Firoz Patel, Deputy Director-General: Technical and Vocational Education and Training: DHET

Biography: *In his current position, Mr Patel, plans, develops, implements, monitors, maintains and evaluates national policy, programmes, assessment practices and systems for the TVET sector. Prior to his current position, he was the Deputy Director-General responsible for Human Resource Development, Planning, Information and Monitoring Coordination in the newly established DHET.*

Mr Patel invited each of the facilitators to offer a summary of their commission presentations, issues raised and recommendations which have been captured in detail in the individual commission sub-sections above. The facilitators who provided the report back are listed as follows:

- Dr James Keevy (JET) on behalf of Professor Peliwe Lolwana
- Mr Ntokozo Bhengu
- Dr Heidi Bolton
- Professor Thierry Luescher (HSRC) on behalf of Ms Brenda Ntombela
- Mr Michael Adendorff (DHET) on behalf of Ms Trudi Van Wyk
- Dr Julie Reddy

Discussion

- **Ms Bev Jack** (NEDLAC) indicated that Business, as a whole, has not had an opportunity to engage with the NQF evaluation report due to a NDA. The report had not been released at the Colloquium either, and the 26 recommendations have not yet been detailed. She confirmed that the report has been deemed very valuable and that those who have read it found it useful. She concluded by requesting guidance on how to proceed and clarification on the report's release date. Ms Jack also complimented the DHET and the international speaker, Mr Bjornavold, who shared his expertise. She emphasised that South Africa needs to focus on learning outcomes. She further explained that, although often criticised for it, business prefers working with specific institutions, but they have their reasons for doing so: business understands the learning outcomes that are linked to qualifications. South Africa must ensure that learning outcomes are articulated.
- **Mr Joe Samuels** (SAQA) responded that it is important that the report be read by all in order to ensure that thoughts can be shared from an informed and enlightened viewpoint, and to avoid assumptions and speculations that could create confusion or inadvertently misconstrue relevant facts.
- **Mr Antonio Hercules** (DPME) reiterated that the Steering Committee will receive the report and consult extensively before publishing the final version. Stakeholders who may have been missed during the research period are afforded an opportunity to contribute to the report at this draft stage; access to the report being granted on condition of signing a NDA. The Steering Committee will make a decision in this regard and advise accordingly.
- **Ms Amanda Jitsing** (DNA Economics) commented that part of what the report identifies is the need for granular planning, based on evidence. She expressed concern at the fact that about 40% of learners who enrolled in NC(V) level 2 possessed an NSC, and requested clarity from NQF policy makers and bodies on how they plan to address and rectify the situation. Are policy makers happy with this statistic? She encouraged problem-focused policy making. She also encouraged policy-making which identifies specific problems that can be resolved through the collective effort of institutions in the PSET system. She stated that if no action is taken, this number will increase as it has been. The collective effort of institutions is required, in the PSET system, to resolve these issues.
- **Mr Firoz Patel** (DHET) indicated that the QCTO must always be representative of organised labour, business and the state. The NSA must play a meaningful role with regard to overseeing the QCTO in order to ensure a truly responsive education and training system. Also, Business needs to describe responsiveness in order for students to gain decent, employable skills.

Conclusion

Many key issues and expectations were raised at the Colloquium in relation to the NQF. Such issues and expectations require a cohesive education and training system, with clearly defined and agreed upon focus areas to enable it to deliver on national expectations and priorities. What emerged from the participating stakeholders at the Colloquium was that, despite challenges such as uncoordinated planning, poor alignment and discrepancies in the implementation of the NQF Act, there is still strong support for its objectives as part of the broader transformation of the education and training system.

Way Forward

Dr Sishi provided the way forward, recognising the work of SAQA and the QCs and encouraging them to continue with their sterling leadership in advancing the objectives of the NQF. He reminded all that the NQF evaluation is a constructive way to strengthen, enhance and advance the implementation of the NQF and is not intended to undermine it in any way or form. He emphasised that the NQF evaluation report is currently at first draft stage and will be reviewed by the Steering Committee on 10 October 2017. He added that the NQF Forum should commence meetings again in the near future.

Going forward, all partners and stakeholders will be responsible for dealing with the issues that were raised as well as future issues that are bound to arise.

Vote of Thanks

In closing, Mr Patel recognised the contribution of all those involved in the organisation of the Colloquium, including DHET entities and partners, particularly the SETAS and their members, as well as the Research Forum and Working Group. He also made special mention to the DHET officials responsible for coordinating the event as led by Dr Narsee and Dr Lloyd from the Department. He concluded by thanking sponsors of the Colloquium, the Minister, Dr Sishi and the PSET sector as a whole.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Research Colloquium Programme



2017 DHET RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM:

Enhancing the implementation of the South African National Qualifications Framework

COLLOQUIUM PROGRAMME

12-13 September 2017, Emperors Palace, Kempton Park

The Department of Higher Education and Training, in collaboration with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), is conducting an Evaluation of the Implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). This Evaluation is intended to strengthen the implementation of the NQF, and to guide future processes pertaining to the review of the NQF Act.

The objectives of the DHET 2017 Research Colloquium are to:

- Reflect on, and engage with the findings and recommendations of the evaluation study on the NQF;
- Share experiences of NQF successes and challenges, and
- Identify gaps in relation to the NQF, and make recommendations for improvements to the NQF

DAY 1: Tuesday 12 September 2017

Programme Director: Ms Brenda Ntombela, Head of Secretariat: Human Resource Development Council (HRDC)

8h00-9h00	Registration
9h00-10h30	SESSION 1: OPENING <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Chairperson: <i>Dr Nkosinathi Sishi, Deputy Director-General: Planning, Policy and Strategy, Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)</i>❖ Opening <i>Dr Blade Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education and Training: DHET</i>❖ Background to the evaluation of the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) <i>Dr Hersheela Narsee, Director: DHET</i>❖ Key findings from the implementation evaluation of the NQF <i>Dr Shirley Lloyd, Director: DHET</i> Discussion
10h30-11h00	TEA
11h00-13h00	SESSION 2: FIRST PANEL OF RESPONDENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Chairperson: <i>Mr Zukile Mvalo, Deputy Director-General: Skills, DHET</i>❖ <i>Mr Joe Samuels, Chief Executive Officer: South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)</i>❖ <i>Professor Narend Bajinath, Chief Executive Officer: Council on Higher Education (CHE)</i>❖ <i>Dr Mafu Rakometsi, Chief Executive Officer: Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi)</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Mr Vijayen Naidoo, Chief Executive Officer: Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)</i> ❖ <i>Ms Kedibone Moroane, Executive Manager: Chemical Industries Education and Training Authority (CHIETA)</i> ❖ <i>Ms Carol NUGA-DELIWE, Chief Director: Department of Basic Education (DBE)</i> <p>Discussion</p>
13h00-14h00	LUNCH
14h00-16h30	<p>SESSION 3: SECOND PANEL OF RESPONDENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Chairperson: Mr Mvuyisi Macikama, Executive Officer: National Skills Fund (NSF)</i> ❖ <i>Ms Bev Jack: NEDLAC Representative (Business)</i> ❖ <i>Ms Conti Magdeline Matlakala: NEDLAC Representative (Community)</i> ❖ <i>Mr Misheck Mugabe, Treasurer General: South African Union of Students (SAUS)</i> ❖ <i>Mr Louis van Niekerk, Western Cape Chairperson: South African College Principals' Organisation (SACPO)</i> ❖ <i>Ms Trish Gibbon: Universities South Africa (USAf) Representative</i> <p>Discussion</p>
16h30	Closure of Day 1

DAY 2: Wednesday 13 September 2017

Programme Director: Ms Melissa Erra, Director: DHET

8h00-8h30	Registration		
8h30-9h15	SESSION 4: KEYNOTE ADDRESS		
	<p>❖ Chairperson: Dr Whitfield Green, <i>Chief Director DHET</i></p> <p>❖ National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs) in the global context <i>Mr Jens Bjornavold, Senior Expert: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP)</i></p> <p>Discussion</p>		
9h15-9h30	Briefing on Commissions		
9h30-9h45	Transfer to Commission Venues		
9h45-11h00	SESSION 5: FIRST SET OF PARALLEL COMMISSIONS		
	<p>BREAKAWAY A: ARTICULATION</p> <p><i>Purpose: To reflect on the preliminary findings of the NQF evaluation with regard to articulation</i></p> <p>Facilitator: Professor Peliwe Lolwana, University of the Witwatersrand (WITS)</p> <p>Scribe: Ms Mmaphake Ramasodi, DHET</p>	<p>BREAKAWAY B: RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)</p> <p><i>Purpose: To reflect on the preliminary findings of the NQF evaluation with regard to RPL</i></p> <p>Facilitator: Mr Ntokozo Bhengu, CHE</p> <p>Scribe: Ms Bellinah Molaudzi, DHET</p>	<p>BREAKAWAY C: CREDIBILITY, MOBILITY, AND AUTHENTICITY OF SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS</p> <p><i>Purpose: To reflect on the preliminary findings of the NQF evaluation with regard to Credibility, Mobility and Authenticity of South African Qualifications</i></p> <p>Facilitator: Dr Heidi Bolton, SAQA</p> <p>Scribe: Ms Qaqamba Matha, DHET</p>

	<p>Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Three-stream model and envisaged articulation opportunities <i>Ms Marie Schoeman: DBE</i> ❖ Learning Pathways: Actual student movements as seen in the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD) data <i>Ms Tola Akindolani: SAQA</i> <p>Discussion</p>	<p>Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ RPL into under- and post-graduate studies in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) <i>Mr Alan Ralphs: University of the Western Cape (UWC)</i> ❖ RPL in South African sports coaching <i>Ms Desiree Vardhan: South African Sport Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC)</i> <p>Discussion</p>	<p>Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The impact of the NQF on a profession – a professional body's view <i>Ms Lelane Bezuidenhout: Financial Planning Institute (FPI)</i> ❖ Usefulness of NQF for the marketing and communications profession <i>Mr Sechaba Motsiela: Marketing Association of South Africa – CMA (SA)</i> <p>Discussion</p>
11h00-11h30	TEA		
11h30-13h00	SESSION 6: SECOND SET OF PARALLEL COMMISSIONS		
	<p>BREAKAWAY A: SIMPLIFICATION AND INTEGRATION OF THE NQF</p> <p><i>Purpose: To reflect on the preliminary findings of the NQF evaluation with regard to the simplification and integration of the NQF</i></p> <p>Facilitator: <i>Ms Brenda Ntombela: HRDC Secretariat</i></p> <p>Scribe: <i>Ms Refiloe Mohlakoana: DHET</i></p>	<p>BREAKAWAY B: OPEN/BLENDED LEARNING AND THE NQF</p> <p><i>Purpose: To reflect on the preliminary findings of the NQF evaluation with regard to open/blended learning</i></p> <p>Facilitator: <i>Ms Trudi van Wyk: DHET</i></p> <p>Scribe: <i>Mr Mike Adendorff: DHET</i></p>	<p>BREAKAWAY C: NQF GOVERNANCE</p> <p><i>Purpose: To reflect on the preliminary findings of the NQF evaluation with regard to NQF governance</i></p> <p>Facilitator: <i>Dr Julie Reddy: SAQA</i></p> <p>Scribe: <i>Mr Biki Lepota: Umalusi</i></p>

	<p>Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Reflections on the preliminary findings of the NQF evaluation in relation to the simplification and integration of the NQF <i>Professor Ahmed Bawa: USAf</i> ❖ Proposals to simplify and integrate the NQF in the national plan for Post-School Education and Training (PSET) <i>Ms Thandi Lewin: DHET</i> <p>Discussion</p>	<p>Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ An open learning perspective on the NQF Report <i>Ms Jenny Glennie: The South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE)</i> ❖ Digitisation of learning and how it links to the NQF <i>Dr James Keevy: JET Education Services</i> <p>Discussion</p>	<p>Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ NQF implementation evaluation and NQF governance <i>Mr Antonio Hercules: Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME)</i> ❖ Reflections on NQF governance <i>Professor Shirley Walters, Professor Emerita: UWC</i> <p>Discussion</p>
13h00-14h00	LUNCH		
14h00-16h00	<p>SESSION 7: REPORT BACK & WAY FORWARD</p> <p><i>Chairperson: Mr FY Patel, Deputy Director-General: Technical and Vocational Education and Training, DHET</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report back from parallel sessions (x 6 - 10 min each) • Discussion • Way forward • Vote of thanks 		
16h00	CLOSURE		

Appendix 2

Minister's Speech

2017 DHET Research Colloquium

Minister's Speech

EVALUATION STUDY INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NQF

Programme Director, Chairperson of the session, Dr Sishi, Mr Qonde, the Director-General of the Department, Mr Jens Bjornavold, Dr James Keevy, CEO of the Joint Education Trust (JET), Chairpersons of the Boards and CEO's of the SAQA (SAQA), the CHE (CHE), the QC for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) and Umalusi, CEOs of SETAs, CEO of Universities South Africa (USAf), CEOs and Principals of TVET and Community Education and Training Colleges, Vice-chancellors of Universities, Officials of the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), the Departments of Basic Education and of Higher Education and Training, esteemed ladies and gentlemen.

I welcome you to this research Colloquium in which, for the next two days, we are going to listen to, discuss, and provide final input into this very extensive evaluation research into the implementation of the NQF Act, from 2008 to 2016.

At a *Legotla* of the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) of South Africa in April 2015, the Deputy President of South Africa, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa asked where South Africa as a country wanted to be in 20 years' and what do South Africans hope to achieve? He encouraged the nation to have "wild dreams", and emphasized that "young people must have access to programmes and opportunities".

The development of the South African NQF (NQF) has been built on a long developmental trajectory dating back to the proposals in the African National Congress (ANC) policy document for a post-apartheid education and training system, and the proposals from the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in the late 1980's.

South Africa needed to build a credible, and sustainable education and training system, which would remove the divisions created by 17 different education and training departments, which were established to implement the Apartheid era education and training system. What finally emerged, as Dr Sishi has told us, was a vision of a NQF system which would be transformational, and become one of the key mechanisms for redress, skills development, personal, and community development through the teaching and learning of quality and credible qualifications.

This mechanism would remove barriers to access, mobility and enable people to embark on career pathways and lifelong learning pathways. To do this we needed to publish legislation and policies to guide what became

known as the NQF and to establish credible and accountable organisations to implement the NQF Act. This Act would establish a NQF which would be responsive to labour market intelligence, sustainable development goals and itself become a driver of change on education and training systems. At the time of the promulgation of the then SAQA Act in 1995, I was the Chairperson of the Education Portfolio Committee in Parliament, and was deeply involved in steering the process towards the promulgation of the SAQA Act, which was the first piece of legislation to be promulgated in after our democracy was achieved in 1994.

Now, as Minister of Higher Education and Training, I have overall executive responsibility for the NQF, for SAQA and the three QCs (QCs), and for all matters related to the NQF as set out in the NQF Act.

The PSET system is in the midst of a transformation “tsunami”, of which the NQF is part. I **have** to be concerned about how the South African NQF is positioned in the overall PSET plan, and how the NQF will continue to matter. This evaluation research into the implementation of the NQF Act, therefore, is timeous and necessary at this critical juncture of planning the PSET system.

This research is contextualized within a current critical global discourse about NQFs (NQFs), as the extensive literature review in this research report signifies. Questions are being asked whether and how NQFs have a role to play in a world where change is constant and trends emerge which shape the operational, transactional and contextual elements of the systems.

This research project, which has been a joint venture between the DPME and ourselves as DHET, is part of our journey on which we listen, contemplate and grow our practices in the NQF space.

Disparity between beneficiaries of education and training in South Africa is still evident, mainly because we are still dealing with the legacy of an Apartheid-driven education and training system. The effects of this disparity are still evident and experienced by many black people especially in the over-35 age group. Schools, TVET colleges and Universities of Technology and Universities which were once part of the homelands, self-governing territories, and Black, Colored and Indian Departments pre-1994, still have disparity legacy issues to deal with, such as financial well-being, governance, and resources. We view the NQF as a mechanism, through especially Articulation and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), OER and lifelong learning opportunities to close the disparity gaps.

The erstwhile SAQA Act, of 1995 expressed these earlier policy directives of the ANC and the labour movement, and the development and implementation of the NQF became the core component of the work of SAQA.

So, this evaluation research report and this Colloquium provides us with the opportunity now to look through a critical lens at the NQF and evaluate to what extent the dreams we had for the NQF as an enabling mechanism have been realized, and what we need to do to ensure the NQF remains one of our key tools to drive social inclusion, equity, transformation and redress.

I recognize that there is still a lot of work to be done. The PSET system in South Africa is characterised by current conceptual and organizational incongruities, in particular:

- Lack of parity of esteem between academic and vocational qualifications;
- Inadequate response to the varied needs of the current socio-economic context;
- Lack of definition and order in learner progression routes and Articulation arrangements;
- Incorrectly viewing vocational education as human capital learning or instrumental learning focused on the acquisition of a relatively narrow band of employment-related or job-specific skills and competencies;
- Inadequate building of coherence between the NQF Sub-Frameworks; and
- The absence of robust Articulation arrangements between the different programme and institutional types, and mainstreamed implementation of RPL across our system.

The South African NQF is a “living NQF”, which has to be dynamic and responsive to current changes in education and training. **Living NQFs** enable the value systems of lifelong learning, education for democracy and social justice, and active, innovative participation in the economy to be realized by participants in the education and training system. Living NQFs are designed to contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large.

The South African NQF comprises 10 levels, starting at NQF level 1 which is the level of schooling at grade 9, or the exit level of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), and continues to NQF level 10 (the PhD level). In the **post-school system**, the NQF applies across all the levels, from 1 to 10. It comprises qualifications and part-qualifications which range in scope, purpose and range. These qualifications “relate” to one another by virtue of their design, their learning outcomes and the level descriptors, which are building blocks of a NQF.

I am intrigued that we can register qualifications for artisans, for hairdressers, chefs, secretaries, hotel receptionists and tourist guides, and sports coaches to name a few, which are offered in our public and private colleges and community education and training colleges; while our NQF also comprises higher certificates, diplomas, and degrees right up to doctoral degrees offered in our universities. These are all connected through mechanisms which allow for Articulation and recognition of prior learning, access and lifelong learning across a range of institutional types and models of teaching, learning and assessment. This is part of the dynamism of the South African NQF, which is an integrated NQF.

At the time that the South African NQF was first being reviewed, Nkomo (2000: 14) suggested that “We need systemic change, (in education and training); not just curriculum or pedagogic change; we need a new driving vision for our system, not just a new paradigm for curriculum design and delivery in the classroom”. He also suggested that we needed a new vision for our education and training system. The policy challenge was to find an acceptable mechanism for managing educational transition effectively.

This is one of the reasons that it is the right “season” now to take a step back, to research and reflect on the findings of the evaluation of the implementation of the NQF so that we ensure the NQF grows in ways that benefit all of us.

A broad operating environment is acknowledged as the NQF operates in a variety of contexts, such as education and training policy environments, provider contexts, QA bodies, learner communities, workplaces and non-profit organizations. I contend that central factors in successful NQF implementation include the establishment of a quality culture and QA.

NQFs are not built and do not function in a simple or linear environment. The transactional environment comprises a number of actors, such as communities, shareholders, creditors, customers, suppliers, associations, unions, competitors. Some of these could also be legislated relationships, such as the relationship between SAQA and the DHET (DHET), or SAQA and the three QCs. The **shareholders** I suggest are the learners, including those who have participated in non-formal and informal learning and ABET offerings. The QA bodies are also shareholders, as are the partners in development and implementation.

The contextual environment and relationships comprise political, economic, ecological, technological, and socio-cultural forces. It is plausible that NQFs could have a value-add role to support economic growth and sustainable development by developing and implementing enabling policies such as those for RPL, Articulation and credit accumulation and transfer (CAT).

Using the institutional delivery mechanisms, previously untapped ‘pipelines’ of knowledgeable and skilled people could become economically active and employed in a shorter space of time, and, it is suggested, at a considerably lower cost to a Fiscus, through RPL and Articulation. People with scarce and critical skills and knowledge, acquired through non-formal, informal and experiential on-the-job learning would be available for a labour market with ever-changing skills needs.

Economic growth imperatives are forcing countries to explore ways to provide the skilled people to work and become part of the economic growth solution, and it is possible that NQFs provide one of the credible routes to resolve some of these challenges.

The NQF Act exerts influence on a system that is complex, involves multiple institutions, that are interdependent, processes that are intertwined and deals with intangible concepts such as quality. Given the nature and role of the NQF, it's hard therefore to **attribute** any changes brought about by the Act to the outcomes and impacts

emerging from this Evaluation research. Rather, this evaluation emphasises the **contribution** of the NQF Act to improvements in the outcomes.

An important question therefore, is; how do we transition the NQF from its current state to a new state, where it continues to matter for lifelong learning and pertinent and relevant skills development?

It is not possible to speak about qualifications frameworks without putting them into a broader context which includes the trends that trigger changes in labour markets, education and training, economies, and society in general. What can qualifications and qualifications frameworks contribute in future to socio-economic development, and community development and *vice versa*.

Scholars in teaching and learning and NQFs are clear that formal education is not equipped well enough anymore to fulfil the growth in expectations and learning and skills development needs of individuals and communities in the rapidly changing global society and changing economies.

For example, there is a growing demand by adults and young people for recognition, validation and formal awards for the knowledge, skills and competences they have acquired in a variety of learning contexts, including non-formal and informal learning environments.

Fenwick (2010) stated that the critical problem lies in mistaking learning as a single object, when in fact it is enacted as multiple objects, as very different things in different logics and practice. Traditional forms of education which have been based on formal schooling, college and university education resulting in qualifications awarded for these learning programmes, have discounted the value of learning acquired by millions of people through formal and informal workplaces, in communities, and the informal education sector.

How should a NQF adapt and incorporate the new power of technology-driven learning for the next generation? The transformation of the education and training system is being driven by the digital revolution.

One of the key goals for sustainable development in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 2030 agenda is that which aims *to ensure the quality of education and training, and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*. This is the ambition set for the next 15 years. An important question to consider is that of *how education and training qualifications frameworks* can contribute to achieving these objectives.

Globally NQFs are now being seen as “policy tools for reform, and at improving transparency and recognition.

In closing, then this report provides the findings and recommendations of the implementation evaluation of the NQF Act, which was jointly commissioned by DPME and DHET.

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide an independent and objective examination of the implementation of the NQF Act relative to its goal(s) and objectives in the period of review, including its associated policies and regulations. The evaluation also seeks to identify the successes and challenges in the implementation of the Act and offer recommendations regarding improvements to the implementation of Act in the future.

So I welcome you to this research Colloquium, and trust that you will engage honestly with the report, its findings and recommendations, and will be courageous enough to acknowledge the significant strides we have made, where these are evident, but also brave enough to call for change where this will improve education and training opportunities for all South Africans. I ask you to continue to ensure that the South African NQF, which was designed to contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large, actually does this, through your agency over the next two days.