



## Recording education and training achievements

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Hopes and dreams are raised as the NQF reaches further into the national consciousness. The National Learners' Records Database (NLRD) records how close South Africa is to reaching those dreams, in terms of tracking the lifelong learning of the people of South Africa.

### Providing valuable information for decision making

The number of qualifications awarded to Black Engineering, Science and Technology learners tripled from 22% in 1995 to 63% in 2004. This is one of the findings of the report, Trends in Public Higher Education in South Africa 1995 to 2004, which was completed in March 2007. This was the update to the report that spanned the period 1992 to 2001. The report tracked trends in higher education and also analysed the changes in availability data, calculating the best estimate of how many people in South Africa are qualified in each of 50 work-related fields of study at NQF Level 6 and above. Other interesting facts in the report include the finding that the broad field of study showing the highest growth over the decade was Business and Management, followed by Natural Sciences, then Health Sciences, then Engineering Sciences and Technology, with Social Sciences and Humanities showing the lowest growth.

Valuable information for policy makers and stakeholders alike is available from SAQA's searchable databases, the latest of which went live in July 2006. This database separates the qualifications and unit standards that are registered and current, from those that were registered previously, but have passed their end date. These include the 550 provider-based qualifications for which no requests for reregistration from 1 July 2006 were received from their providers. A total of 6 680 provider-based qualifications were indeed reregistered, and 540 provider-based learning programmes were recorded against generic qualifications. Further enhancements to the searchable databases went live in March 2007, with each unit standard showing the qualifications linked to it, and each qualification showing the learning programmes linked to it.

SAQA's investigation into opportunities for research, publication and information provision for the NLRD was concluded. Action was taken on the recommendations that could be implemented immediately; some were already in place, whereas others were not appropriate to the requirements of the NQF. The rest will be implemented in the longer term.

### Client service

SAQA continued to offer a service to subscribers enabling them to download the full records of registered qualifications and unit standards, and to provide the web address where subscribers could access specific NLRD publications.

Building on the service of sending out alerts when information on qualifications or unit standards was corrected, this was expanded to include announcements about replacement qualifications and unit standards.



## Data analysis for JIPSA

In response to a JIPSA request, SAQA commenced a project to fast-track obtaining data on artisans and engineers to contribute to the information available to JIPSA. This entailed obtaining and loading "legacy" artisan data from the Department of Labour, contributing to the current national projects to track new artisan training, and contacting engineering faculties at universities. The project will be completed during the next reporting period. The analyses of data submitted to SAQA by 12 of the 23 ETQAs also contributed to the research of the Employment Promotion Programme (EPP), to be submitted to the Presidency.

## Verification of learner achievements

The service of the verification of learner achievements continued to expand, and 35 subscriber agreements (for organisations, especially employment agencies) were in place by 31 March 2007. Over the past year, 616 individual achievement records were examined for 488 people (approximately half of these were individuals confirming their own records on the NLRD). The bulk verification service also continued.

Negotiations for SAQA to assist the Department of Labour with its project on the Employment Services of South Africa (ESSA) were also concluded. It was agreed that NLRD information would be used to verify the achievement data on the ESSA database of work seekers.

## Assisting the ETQAs to submit their data

The quality and quantity of data submitted to SAQA by ETQAs, for loading onto the NLRD, both improved dramatically in the past year, and the number of ETQAs that achieved the minimum standard for data submissions increased from 7 to 19 during this reporting period.

A major contributor to the success was the provision to ETQAs of the Edu.Dex software that enables them to do their own data testing and rectify data before submitting it. SAQA purchased the licence to distribute Edu.Dex to all the ETQAs after realising that the information the ETQAs were required to house in their information systems and transmit to SAQA continued to increase in scope, volume and complexity. SAQA also hosted a workshop to distribute the software and train the users, with excellent results. A secondary contributor to the success was the NLRD Partners Forum, which held a well-attended meeting every two months, providing a forum for ETQAs and other data suppliers to discuss their information systems and share solutions for problems impeding their data integrity.

## Learnership

The Information Administrator learnership, hosted by the NLRD at SAQA, completed its second two-year cycle at the end of February 2007. Five of the original eight learners completed the learnership, and only one of them was required to repeat a module. Four of the learners went directly into further employment. Before leaving, the outgoing learners handed over to the new intake of eight learners, who had been welcomed at SAQA at the beginning of February 2007.

## Maintenance and development

The maintenance and development of the NLRD continued. SAQA staff and external service providers jointly ensure that it is well supported, that database administration is of the highest quality, that the required enhancements and developments are correctly specified and implemented, and that the NLRD system continues to function robustly.

## Summary of the information held on the NLRD as at 31 March 2007

### Learners: 7 534 633

- Qualification achievements of these learners: More than 20 million
- Of these, 27 415 are achievements submitted by 16 SETA-ETQAs against 180 SGB-generated qualifications.

### Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs):

- Currently registered: 74
- Have completed their registration periods: 111
- Proposed: 28
- Deregistered or withdrawn: 60

### New Qualifications:

- Currently registered: 771 (including 272 reregistered)
- Have completed their first cycle without being reregistered (some have been replaced): 130
- Increase in current registrations during this reporting period: 126

Provider-based qualifications and learning programmes: 7 878

Qualifications used in Learnerships: 640

### New unit standards:

- Currently registered: 8 826 (including 3 107 reregistered)
- Have completed their first cycle without being reregistered (some have been replaced): 2 013
- Increase in current registrations during this reporting period: 401

Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies (ETQAs): 31

ETQA Accreditations to quality-assure qualifications: 7 816

(751 SGB qualifications and 7 078 Provider-based qualifications and learning programmes, mostly Higher Education linked to CHE)

Provider Accreditation to offer qualifications: 4 694 Providers accredited to offer 6 683 qualifications

(234 SGB qualifications and 6 449 Provider-based qualifications and learning programmes, mostly Higher Education linked to CHE)



NLRD learners get to grips with data



NLRD strikes a pose at the year-end function



From left to right, Pinkie Masholengu, Lungile Fakude, Lucas Seshotli, Tumelo Modisane and Bertha Mthethwa at the NLRD Faranani in September 2006