

4. What are the Critical Cross-field outcomes (CCFOs) and how do they relate to learning programmes?

The CCFOs express qualities that should be achieved in all qualifications and to some extent in any unit standard. These outcomes demand evidence of problem-solving, the ability to work with others, to access information, understand the consequences of one's actions and so on.

SAQA defines CCFOs as “those generic outcomes that inform all teaching and learning” (Ref: SAQA Website – Glossary of Terms). According to SAQA, CCFOs 'are those outcomes deemed critical for the development of the capacity for life-long learning'. It is compulsory for standards setters to incorporate some of the critical outcomes into standards as they are developed, and qualifications must contain all of the critical outcomes at the appropriate level on the NQF.

These are the critical outcomes adopted by SAQA:

- i. Identify and solve problems in which responses demonstrate that responsible decisions using critical and creative thinking have been made.
- ii. Work effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation, community.
- iii. Organise and manage oneself and one's activities responsibly and effectively.
- iv. Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information.
- v. Communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written presentation.
- vi. Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and health of others.
- vii. Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

SAQA also identified five developmental outcomes which were defined as follows:

In order to contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the society at large, it must be the intention underlying any programme of learning to make an individual aware of the importance of:

- i. reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively;
- ii. participating as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities;
- iii. being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts;
- iv. exploring education and career opportunities;
- v. developing entrepreneurial opportunities.

There are many debates around how the critical outcomes can be integrated into learning programmes. The meaning of the outcomes (and how they can be applied) is highly context- and discipline- dependent. Their integration into learning programmes can only be achieved through embedding these outcomes in the programme materials, and in the methodology in which facilitators are trained. In general, the approach is to design activities which explicitly encourage some of the process skills implied by the outcomes. In terms of methodology, the emphasis would be on the promotion of active, exploratory and self-directed learning.

For more information refer to SAQA publications:

- 'The NQF and Curriculum Development (2000)'
- 'Developing Learning Programmes for NQF-registered qualifications and unit standards (2005)'
- 'The impact of the Critical Outcomes on curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in ABET (2008)'

[Answer to FAQ 4, The NQF and Learning Programme, the NQF Gateway]