

9. What do the terms vision, mission and values mean?

A **vision** is the dream, or idea, the long-term goal that the institution or organisation wants to achieve. While there should be a measure of challenge or 'stretch' to the Vision, it should not be an unattainable ideal. An organisation must ensure that its Vision is in line with the overall goals of the Department of Labour and the Department of Education. A very important aspect of a Vision should be that it is a 'real' Vision, and not a paper document dreamed up by one or two people. A 'real' Vision is developed collaboratively and 'lived' in the institution by being manifested in many actions and discussions.

A **mission** is like the pathway, the steps to be taken in order to enable the institution to achieve its Vision. Typically, a Vision can be broken down into a number of steps or aspects, and it can be introduced by saying, 'In order to achieve our Vision, we will ...followed by a series of clearly stated actions.

Let us return to the definition of **values** from the Working Group on Values in Education. The report defines values as 'desirable qualities of character, such as honesty, integrity, tolerance, diligence, responsibility, compassion, altruism, justice and respect.' Organisational values should also be informed by the principles and values underpinning the NQF.

[Answer to FAQ 9, The NQF and Strategic Governance, the NQF Gateway]