

1. What is SAQA's role in quality assurance?

In the South African education and training system quality assurance focuses on the improvement of inputs (the quality of provision) and outputs (the achievements of the learners): that is, the focus is on the quality assurance of teaching, learning and assessment, in compliance with the requirements of those bodies charged with this function. SAQA describes the quality cycle as:

'... all the critical points in the quality process, namely:

- The product or outcome: awards, achievement of standards or qualifications; accreditation.
- The inputs: learning provision; programmes; learning and learner resources; life or experiential learning;
- The process: the quality of the learning and assessment interactions; the quality of the monitoring and auditing interactions. (Criteria and Guidelines for ETQAs. Policy Document. SAQA, 2001)

Each Education & Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQA) has been accredited by SAQA for the purpose of ensuring that its specific standards and requirements for quality education and training are met. Through its Quality Assurance and Development Directorate, SAQA interacts closely with the following ETQAs in order to ensure that the provision is quality assured.

- The Council for Higher Education (CHE), which handles quality assurance through the Higher Education Quality Committee, and has overarching responsibility for Higher Education
- Umalusi, the General and Further Education Council, which has the overarching responsibility for General and Further Education.
- ETQAs from each Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA).
- Some professional bodies like the Engineering Council of South Africa which have been accredited by SAQA.

(You will find a complete list of ETQAs on the SAQA website www.saqa.org.za under Accredited ETQAs).

ETQAs have several statutory functions laid down by SAQA. Each ETQA reports to SAQA, which in turn reports to the Ministers of Education and Labour. The quality assurance functions are concerned with the improvement of the quality of education and training through the following activities:

- the accreditation of providers (by setting and monitoring minimum requirements in term of inputs)
- the evaluation of learning programmes (also by setting and monitoring minimum requirements in term of inputs)
- the quality assurance of learner achievements and award of credits and/or qualifications (verifying provider assessments by monitoring required systems and processes and/or conducting external moderation, in varying combinations)
- the registration of assessors (in all SETA ETQAs: this supports the other activities outlined above.)

SAQA conducts regular audits of ETQAs against various criteria. Individual reports are compiled by SAQA, and the results of these audits are broadly covered in the SAQA Annual Report.

[Answer to FAQ 1, Understanding and Implementing the NQF, the NQF Gateway]