



*S Manyaka and delegates at a capacity building workshop – KZN*



*Delegates at a capacity building workshop – Limpopo  
H Letoka (standing)*



*P Laka assists a visitor with her CEEQ application*

It is SAQA's responsibility to guarantee quality qualifications for a learning nation and SAQA therefore fosters a culture of quality qualifications in education and training by means of the:

- accreditation of Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQAs) to ensure the quality of delivery of specific qualifications and unit standards;
- monitoring of the ETQAs to ensure continuous improvement of the processes that deliver quality qualifications; and
- quality auditing of ETQAs to determine the extent to which they comply with their statutory obligations.

During the period under review, SAQA focused on the following strategies:

- the increased uptake of qualifications and unit standards by ETQAs;
- ensuring of proper quality auditing of ETQAs;
- ongoing monitoring and support of ETQAs to review quality and contribute to their improvement of assurance practices;
- conducting of capacity building workshops to assist education and training providers in meeting the requirements for accreditation; and
- promoting quality by means of publications and ETQA forums.

These strategies allowed SAQA to continue its evaluation of the existing systems and to encourage improvements where necessary. By continuing to facilitate the delivery of quality assurance in education and training, SAQA contributed positively towards building a learning nation.

### Uptake of qualifications and unit standards

Extension of scope of Accreditation was granted to various ETQAs to include an additional 198 qualifications and the associated unit standards. The Extension of Accreditation for these qualifications and unit standards provides for the quality assurance and increased delivery of quality qualifications, creating a platform for building a learning nation by providing wider access to education and training for learners.

### The auditing of Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies

During the period 2004/05, an additional 20 ETQAs were quality audited, bringing the total to 30. The quality auditing of the balance of accredited ETQAs will take place in the third year of accreditation as stipulated in the ETQA Regulations.

Every three years the education and training quality auditing of ETQAs is carried out. These quality audits ensure that learners have access to quality education and training. Such a quality audit comprises a full descriptive analysis of the ETQA's compliance to the Regulations to ensure that it meets quality standards in accordance with SAQA's established criteria.

To generate an audit report, relevant information, and additional available evidence is matched against set criteria. The publication *The Procedure for the Monitoring and Auditing of ETQAs (Schedule C)* lists the compliance requirements of the ETQAs' statutory functions. The auditing of ETQAs has provided an accurate reflection of their level of compliance. It has identified areas of excellence, highlighted those requiring improvement and contributed to strengthening the system. It has identified how and where SAQA can assist to improve quality assurance that will result in quality delivery by ETQAs.

## SAQA Quality Audit Report

The categories of audit report given by SAQA are based on the audit being of a compliant nature.

The following categories of audit reports are issued:

- **Favourable Audit Report:** A favourable audit report is issued when it can be demonstrated, at audit, that the ETQA has carried out its regulated functions effectively over the period audited. No material non-compliance with Schedule C has occurred;
- **Qualified Audit Report:** a qualified audit report is issued when, at audit, some of the legislative requirements of the ETQA can be demonstrated to have been met, but not all. The relationship of materiality applies in that when materiality is high, then audit risk is high. Hence the commission or omission of a legislative requirement by an ETQA in a single instance can result in a qualified audit report; and
- **Adverse Audit Report:** an adverse audit report is issued when it can be demonstrated, at audit, that most of the legislative requirements of the ETQA have not been met. Such a report is issued when the effect of the disagreement is so material and pervasive and/or fundamental to the operation of the ETQA that the auditor concludes that a qualification report is not adequate to disclose the misleading or incomplete nature of the failure to meet the legislative requirement.

Upon receiving their quality audit reports, ETQAs with non-compliances are required to submit their development plans to SAQA, indicating how they intend to close their non-compliances. SAQA assists ETQAs to gather evidence and to track progress on the closure of non-compliances. SAQA has taken the position of co-operative support to strengthen the system of quality assurance.

## Capacity building workshops

SAQA embarked on a project aimed at bringing more providers into the quality assurance cycle through building the capacity of provincial providers of education and training. Capacity building workshops were conducted to assist providers to attain accreditation with their relevant ETQAs, thereby ensuring that as SAQA builds a learning nation, it is based on quality qualifications.

Two workshops per province were conducted in the Eastern Cape, the Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, and Limpopo. The objective of these workshops was to inform emerging providers, rural communities, and other interested stakeholders about accreditation requirements, about SAQA's mandate and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

## Discussion forum on the recognition of Prior Learning

To further embed the practice of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) a discussion forum was established on the SAQA website to introduce the concept and highlight its importance as a principle underpinning the NQF. The forum aims to enhance the understanding of RPL, to determine its impact on the education and training system and the extent to which it is understood and implemented.

## Quality promotion

SAQA uses the quarterly ETQA forums as vehicles for quality promotion. The aim is to discuss best practice, share experiences, and generally improve the quality assurance system. These forums foster a spirit of co-operation among stakeholders and contribute to a unified approach to quality assurance. The interaction between the various stakeholders results in valuable inputs that help to improve the delivery of quality qualifications to a learning nation.

Another aspect of quality promotion was the release of various publications. For example, in July 2004 *Trends Emerging from the Monitoring of Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies* was published. Publications support SAQA's quest to deliver quality qualifications. They are useful in sharing information, encouraging best practice and improving the system of qualification delivery.

## Challenges

SAQA identified the following challenges in building an NQF that ensures quality:

- the need to move from a compliance model of auditing to a performance model - this is a challenge because auditing tools have to be reviewed and not all the ETQAs are at the same level of compliance;
- the need to work towards the solution of the disjuncture in the policies and regulations framework within the education and training sector as a whole - the current statutory inconsistencies between relevant Acts are systemic issues placing the delivery of quality qualifications at risk;
- the need for a systemic moderation of the NQF - this is a new area for the Directorate: Quality Assurance and Development (DQAD) and thorough groundwork will have to be done; and
- the necessity to balance diverse sectoral interests while at the same time trying to attain an integrated NQF.

## Providing evaluation service for educational qualifications

In building a learning nation, an important aspect of SAQA's work is to facilitate international learner mobility.

The Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Qualifications (CEEQ) promotes SAQA as the national reference point for advice on the recognition of qualifications, foreign and domestic, through a comprehensive evaluation service which generates, manages and shares information about qualifications.

This service supports decision-making when foreign learners need to be placed in South Africa (and to a lesser extent when South Africans need to be placed overseas) and ensures that South Africa is open to foreign qualification holders who want to contribute to the country's socio-economic growth.

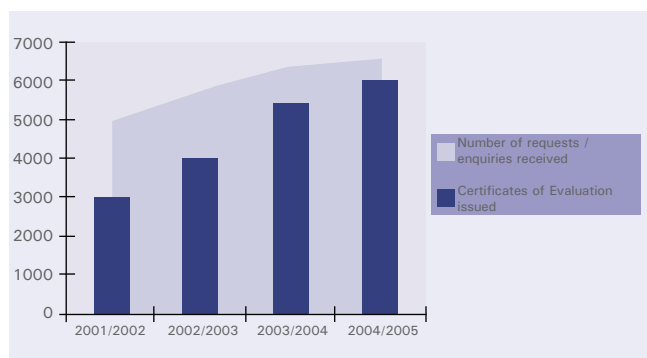
During the reporting period the CEEQ achieved this objective in two major ways:

- meeting the need for the evaluation service; and
- developing the evaluation function.

### Meeting the need for the evaluation service

As depicted in the table below, the demand for the CEEQ service increased by 30% from 2001/2002 to 2004/2005.

Increase in the demand for the CEEQ service



The following can be concluded from the above trend:

- there is a growing interest in the ranks of foreign qualification holders to pursue employment or study in South Africa and therefore to be appropriately placed in the South African system;
- education and training providers and employer organisations increasingly need to be empowered both to understand foreign qualifications and to make decisions with regard to the most suitable placement of prospective students and workers who hold foreign qualifications; and
- the growth in the number of Certificates of Evaluation issued in relation to the requests received and the 100% increase in the number of certificates issued from 2001/2002 to 2004/2005.
- the Centre is positioning itself better to meet the increasing demand.

## Developing the evaluation function

The Centre improved its evaluation function through capacity building, developing *Criteria and Guidelines for Evaluating Foreign Qualifications* and completing the pilot phase of a comprehensive database.

### Capacity building

The Centre focused on developing its resources and systems in a number of ways so as to be able to deliver effective and efficient service. The creation and filling of two Assistant Credential Evaluator positions introduced a semi-professional level in the staff composition and served to extend the credential evaluation skill. It also enabled the unit to gradually improve its service delivery.

As part of the Centre's contribution to building a learning nation, a Contact Centre learnership at NQF level 2 was introduced. Two learners offered the CEEQ clients a helpdesk service.

During the development phase of the document *Criteria and Guidelines for the Evaluation of Foreign Qualifications*, six consultative workshops were held with stakeholders in various regions of the country. The workshops were valuable as they made the Centre more aware of the needs of stakeholders and helped clarify the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders and of the CEEQ.

A mini-workshop facilitated discussions, the sharing of experiences and transfer of skills between the CEEQ and its Botswana counterpart. The CEEQ also held discussions with the UK National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC), to explore ways in which NARIC and the CEEQ could support each other.

### Criteria and Guidelines: Evaluation of Foreign Qualifications

The Centre compiled the document *Criteria and Guidelines for the Evaluation of Foreign Qualifications* as a conceptual framework for the *evaluation* of foreign qualifications, in relation to the general *recognition* of these in South Africa. The aim was to:

- establish credible and coherent evaluation methods leading to recognition decisions that are consistent and interchangeable among various jurisdictions;
- enhance collaboration among all interested parties, each clearly understanding its own and the others' roles, as well as the various relationships;
- address issues emerging from the recognition of foreign qualifications; and
- promote and meaningfully facilitate the international mobility of learners and workers.

### A database to support the function and its stakeholders

During the period under review, the pilot phase in the development of a database for CEEQ was completed. The objective was to develop a model system to consolidate the Centre's operations, to better secure and re-use the data collected and to address the needs of stakeholders by providing critical information on the evaluation of qualifications. The next phase of the project is to be developed in 2005/2006.