

SAQA generates and registers unit standards and qualifications that are nationally recognised, internationally comparable and range from Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) to NQF level 8, which is masters and doctoral studies. These standards and qualifications cover the full spectrum of learning and skills development required by South Africans in building a learning nation.

SAQA set out the following strategy for its standards setting operations in 2004:

- focus on both quality and quantity in its delivery of unit standards and qualifications;
- use the government's Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategy as the key focus in the generation of qualifications and standards;
- set up and maintain firm partnerships with Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and the Department of Labour (DoL);
- speed up the standards generation process;
- give information and assistance to providers while facilitating the uptake of qualifications and standards;
- use Standards Setting Structures as advocacy vehicles; and
- develop staff capacity to provide strong leadership and support to Standards Setting Structures.

Achievements

More qualifications and standards registered

A major achievement during the period under review was the registration of more qualifications and unit standards in 2004 than in any other year. The 184 qualifications and 3 789 standards that were registered, brought the total number of qualifications and standards on the NQF to 8 174 and 7 845 respectively. The increase in registered qualifications means that more learners' qualifications are recognised – a definite contribution to building a learning nation.

The quality of qualifications and standards registered was evident, because they complied with the stipulated registration requirements. These include compliance with NSB Regulations, SAQA criteria and guidelines for the registration of qualifications and standards, level descriptors and the needs of prospective learners. Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs) conducted in-depth international comparability studies to ensure that the South African NQF-registered qualifications and standards are comparable to the best generated internationally.

SAQA succeeded in decreasing the time taken to register qualifications and standards – another milestone. Between February and December 2004, the period needed to register qualifications and standards decreased from 9.4 months to 3.8 months. This reduction in processing time was due to NSB co-ordinators providing more support for SGBs and task teams during the qualification generation phase. Running some of the generation and evaluation procedures in parallel without compromising stakeholder involvement or the consultation process also reduced the time spent on the registration process.



M Rakgosi, C Smith, I Isaacs, K Msweli, H Msumza, J Hlahane, R Nel and A Lekgetha - the Youth Development level 5 Task Team



Z Mabaso, D Nkayi, A Mdakane and B Perumal - Youth Development level 4 Task Team

Joint Implementation Plans signed with various stakeholders

Joint Implementation Plans (JIPs) are mechanisms used both to facilitate the development and ultimate registration of qualifications and standards within a given timeframe and to manage the funding of the process in a consistent manner. JIPs also promote partnerships with critical stakeholders in the education and training sector. Funding remains a major obstacle for those SGBs not fortunate enough to benefit from a JIP. SAQA has been able to channel funds freed up by various JIPs to prioritised unfunded SGBs.

During 2004/2005, a total of 27 of the following SETAs and other education and training bodies signed JIPs:

- Armaments Corporation of South Africa (ARMSCOR);
- Diplomacy, Intelligence, Defence and Trade Sector Education and Training Authority (DIDTETA);
- Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA);
- Financial and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority (FASSET);
- Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (H&W SETA);
- Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA);
- Local Government, Water and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (LG&W SETA);
- Media, Advertising, Publishing, Printing and Packaging Sector Education and Training Authority (MAPPP SETA);
- Police, Private Security, Legal and Correctional Services Sector Education and Training Authority (POSLEC SETA);
- Services Sector Education and Training Authority (Services SETA); and
- Transport Education and Training Authority (TETA);

The JIP with the Services SETA enabled various SGBs and task teams to generate 62 qualifications and sets of unit standards. These are for use in learnerships and skills programmes offered by providers accredited by the Services SETA. Another milestone was the signing of a JIP between SAQA, the South African Police Service (SAPS), and POSLEC SETA. This will generate qualifications and standards for the training of all police ranks in all branches of the SAPS. This JIP emphasises the determination of the SAPS that its members should provide the public with a professional service at all times.

The decision by SAQA to register the National Certificate: Statutory Intelligence Practices represents another major step forward for the NQF. This is the first national qualification to be registered in the field of national intelligence. Undoubtedly, South Africa's HRD Strategy will benefit significantly from the qualifications and standards generated by these JIPs.

New standards and qualifications registered

Registered SGBs

During 2004, 246 SGBs were active.

New unit standards

During 2004, a total of 3 789 new unit standards were registered compared to the 1 409 registered in 2003, and 1 992 in 2002. This figure forms part of the 8 194 unit standards recorded on the NLRD.

New qualifications

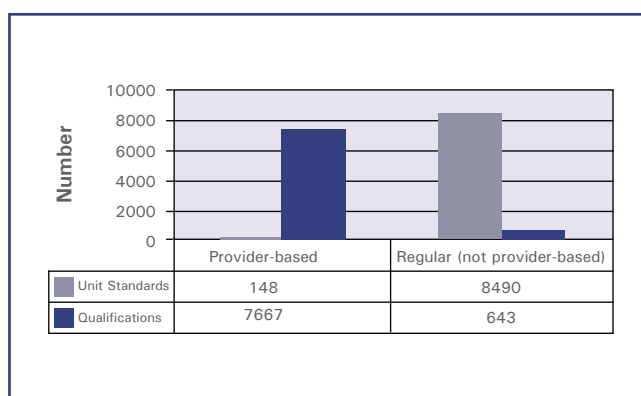
During 2004, 184 new qualifications were registered compared to the 119 that were registered in 2003. In the higher education band, the rationalisation of qualifications was undertaken rather than the development of new qualifications and standards.

SGB briefs

SGBs completed 70% of their briefs during 2004. The percentage of completed SGB briefs is calculated from the number of qualifications completed and registered by the respective SGBs.

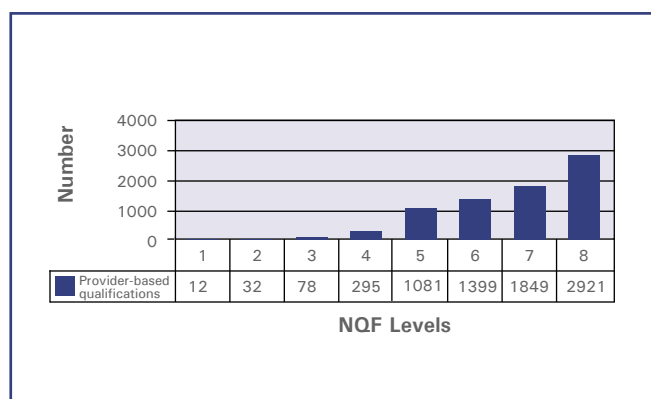
Qualifications and unit standards on the NQF

The NQF accommodates unit standards-based and non-unit standards-based qualifications, and unit standards. A further distinction can be drawn between qualifications existing prior to the advent of the NQF (provider-based qualifications), and those developed through the SAQA standards setting processes (newly registered or regular qualifications and unit standards). Graph 1 below depicts qualifications and unit standards on the NQF:

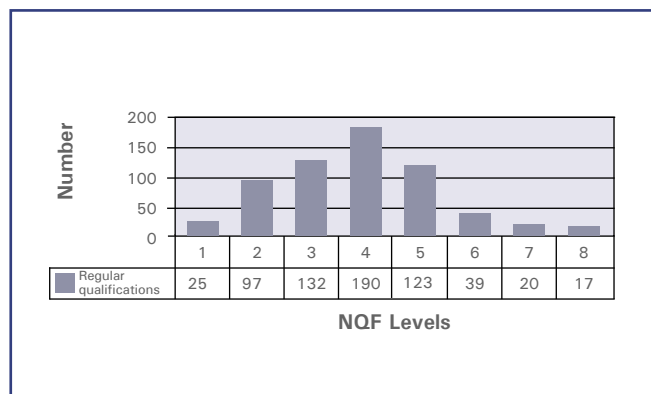


Graph1: Qualifications and Unit standards

Graphs 2 and 3 below illustrate a significant movement towards unit standard development and towards the development of qualifications predominantly at NQF levels 3, 4 and 5. The graphs also illustrate that provider-based qualifications registered on the NQF (generated prior to NQF establishment) are predominantly at the higher NQF levels. This demonstrates that the NQF has succeeded in preparing learners for vocational pursuits, in contrast to the previous system, which focused on academic achievement.



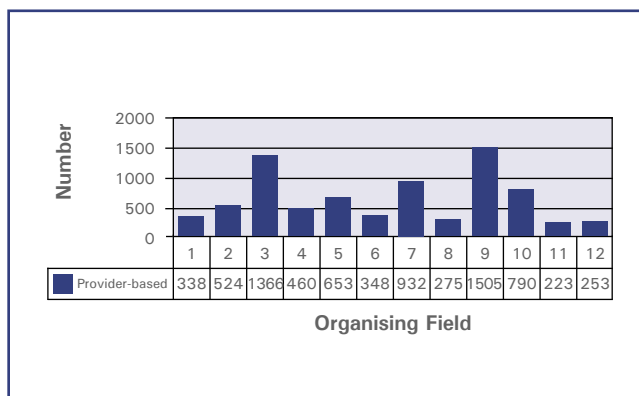
Graph 2: Provider-based qualifications and NQF levels



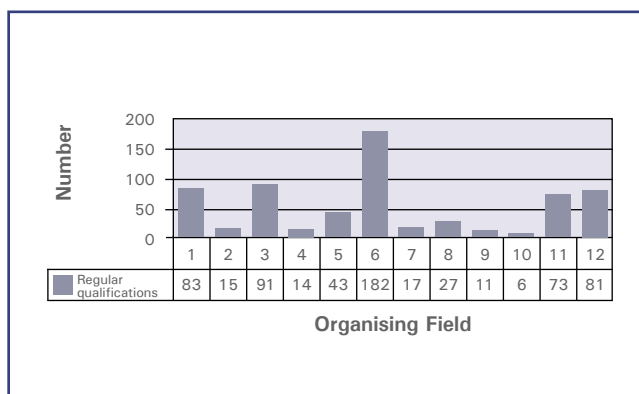
Graph 3: Regular qualifications and NQF levels

The decision by the Authority (after consultation with stakeholders such as the Council on Higher Education [CHE] and the Department of Education [DoE]) to register generic degrees has also had an impact on this situation. The registration of the generic, formative three-year BA degree has resulted in a multitude of provider qualifications being covered by a single NQF qualification.

The graphs below illustrate the number of qualifications according to their class (provider-based or regular) and Organising Fields



Graph 4: Provider-based qualifications and Organising Fields



Graph 5: Regular qualifications and Organising Fields

The 12 NQF Organising Fields are:

- 1 Agriculture and Nature Conservation
- 2 Culture and Arts
- 3 Business, Commerce and Management Studies
- 4 Communication Studies and Language
- 5 Education, Training and Development
- 6 Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology
- 7 Human and Social Studies
- 8 Law, Military Science and Security
- 9 Health Sciences and Social Services
- 10 Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences
- 11 Services
- 12 Physical Planning and Construction