



Council on Higher Education and South African Qualifications Authority

Joint Communiqué 1 of 2024: Registration of historical qualifications and re-registration of HEQSF-aligned qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) has previously issued Communiqué 4 of 2023 dated 06 June 2023 on Regulatory Requirements for Offering Higher Education Programmes¹. The Communiqué reminded institutions of the regulatory requirements that must be met by programmes on offer by higher education institutions for the programmes to be valid. The Communiqué further requested that institutions should approach the CHE where they had any concerns regarding their offerings.

This Joint Communiqué addresses registration of historical qualifications and re-registration of HEQSF-aligned qualifications on the NQF.

1. Registration and records of historical qualifications

- 1.1.** Institutions are reminded that in line with the Government Gazette No. 40123 of 6 July 2016, the last date of enrolment into qualifications that were not aligned to the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) was 31 December 2019².
- 1.2.** It is the responsibility of higher education institutions to ensure that all qualifications against which there have been achievements are registered on

¹ Council on Higher Education (2023). Communiqué 4 of 2023: Requirements of The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) regarding the offering of higher education qualifications and programmes. CHE, Pretoria.

² Department of Higher Education and Training (2016). Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act 101 of 1997): notice of last date of enrollment for first time entering students into non-HEQSF aligned qualifications. Government Gazette No. 40123 of 6 July 2016.

the National Qualifications Framework Management and Information System (NQFMIS) and are on the National Learner Records Database (NLRD).

- 1.3. In 2019, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) noted that institutions had been submitting records to the NLRD via the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) against qualifications with no SAQA IDs. The SAQA carried out a project of registration of these historical qualifications provided they were on the historical (2006) Programme Qualifications Mix (PQM) with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). Following this process, some of these qualifications are now on the NLRD but are not available on the searchable database.
- 1.4. The only proof of the validity/historical record of these qualifications is the 2006 PQM, and institutions are therefore urged to liaise with the DHET and SAQA for queries related to these qualifications.
- 1.5. Institutions are further urged to take stock of their historical and current offerings and ensure that they have records of SAQA IDs to ensure that they can assist students and graduates as necessary when queries arise.

2. Requests to Extend Last Dates of Achievement on Historical Qualifications

- 2.1. The Council on Higher Education (CHE) has, on a case-by-case basis at the request of institutions, requested extension of the last date of achievement for non-HEQSF-aligned qualifications where these are available on the searchable database of the SAQA.
- 2.2. For qualifications that are available on the searchable database of the SAQA, the CHE will continue to support requests to enable pipeline students to complete, with the provisos that:
 - 2.2.1. Institutions confirm that all students concerned were enrolled into the qualifications prior to 31 December 2019 to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Ministerial Gazette. Institutions should take note that for qualifications that had reached their end-registration dates prior to the Ministerial Determination of 6 July 2016 and had last date of achievement of 31 December 2019, the understanding of the CHE and SAQA is that there are no pipeline students for these qualifications. As such no request for extensions for last date of achievement will be considered for these qualifications.

- 2.2.2.** The “pipeline” students concerned meet the requirements of already being in the system and wishing to continue with their studies in the same qualification they originally registered for and on condition that studies were not interrupted.³
- 2.3.** Institutions are reminded that in addition to the normal programme duration (N years), pipeline students are allowed an additional two years to complete qualification (N +2)⁴.
- 2.4.** Taking this into account the last date of achievement in non-HEQSF aligned qualifications, with a duration of 3 years, should be 31 December 2024.
- 2.5.** Institutions are requested to take stock of non-aligned qualifications that still have pipeline students and report on the number of students by qualification with SAQA ID numbers and with confirmation that all students concerned were enrolled prior to the 31 December 2019 cut-off date. The information should be submitted to mheqsf@che.ac.za within two months of publication of this Communique.
- 2.6.** Institutions will need to have strong justification to request an extension of the last date of achievement on these qualifications. The HEQC will decide on the last date of achievement that can be considered for these requests.
- 2.7.** Institutions that have students who require extension beyond the date to be set by the HEQC will be urged to move them to HEQSF-aligned programmes following institutional policies.

3. Re-Registration of HEQSF-qualifications on the NQF

- 3.1.** As indicated in Communique 4 of 2023, the CHE requested SAQA to extend the registration end date of HEQSF-aligned qualifications whose end registration date was 30 June 2023 to 30 June 2024.
- 3.2.** The CHE is aware of the risks posed by this fast-approaching end registration date of 30 June 2024 to institutional enrolment planning and student recruitment for 2025.

³ South African Qualifications Authority (2023). Guidelines for the Development and Evaluation of Qualifications and Part-Qualifications for Registration on the National Qualifications Framework. SAQA, Pretoria.

⁴ South African Qualifications Authority (2023). Guidelines for the Development and Evaluation of Qualifications and Part-Qualifications for Registration on the National Qualifications Framework. SAQA, Pretoria

3.3. Table 1 shows the categories that the qualifications fall into and the steps that are being taken to enable their continued registration.

Table 1: Categories of HEQSF-aligned qualifications still to be re-registered on the NQF

Category	Process to be followed
A group of 2263 qualifications that were found to meet the requirements of SAQA's Policy and Criteria for Registration of Qualifications and Part-Qualifications.	SAQA has confirmed that the Qualifications Committee approved that these qualifications can be reregistered on the NQF until 30 June 2027. Institutions will be appraised of their qualifications on this list and a letter will be sent to each institution by 15 th June 2024.
2924 qualifications that do not meet SAQA's Policy and Criteria because of missing content or outdated content.	<p>Institutions will be required to submit content and any other outstanding information required. These qualifications will be evaluated in a joint CHE-SAQA evaluation process.</p> <p>In the interim, SAQA has been requested to register these qualifications until 30 June 2027 with status "data under construction."</p>
622 qualifications that passed end registration date in 2021 and should have been registered then.	<p>Institutions will be required to submit content and any other outstanding information required. These qualifications will be evaluated in a joint CHE-SAQA evaluation process.</p> <p>In the interim, SAQA has been requested to register these qualifications until 30 June 2027 with status "data under construction."</p>
540 HEQSF-aligned qualifications that were previously recorded as learning programmes against Standard-Generating Body (SGB) qualifications or in the notes of non-HEQSF qualifications.	<p>The CHE and SAQA have agreed on a process of delinking these qualifications from the "parent" qualification. Where content is still needed for the qualifications, institutions will be requested to submit it. These qualifications will be evaluated in a joint CHE-SAQA evaluation process.</p> <p>In the interim, SAQA has been requested to register these qualifications until 30 June 2027 with status "data under construction."</p>

3.4. SAQA and the CHE will arrange workshops on the Policy and Criteria for Registration of Qualifications to support institutions in this process. Details will be communicated in due course.

4. General

4.1. The regulators are concerned that many students can be adversely impacted because of challenges with the management of qualification and programme offerings by institutions. Institutions are requested to note that the regulators are not able to engage with institutions on these matters on a piece-meal approach following challenges that arise with specific qualifications.

4.2. As already communicated by the CHE, where institutions have concerns related to HEQSF-aligned records, the re-registration process or other concerns related to their record of qualification offerings, they are urged to approach the CHE no later than 30 June 2024. The regulators will strive to provide support, but the onus is on institutions to ensure the integrity of their records, and to proactively identify any issues that need attention.

Dr W. Green
Chief Executive Officer: CHE



DATE: 09/05/2024

Ms Nadia Starr
Chief Executive: SAQA



DATE: 09/05/2024