

THE SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
*Level Descriptors for the South African
National Qualifications Framework*



November 2012



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List of abbreviations

NQF	National Qualifications Framework
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority

Foreword



The Level Descriptors were developed by SAQA and agreed to by the Quality Councils (Council on Higher Education; General and Further Education and Training Quality Council (Umalusi) and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations). They were published in the government gazette in November 2011. Their primary focus is qualifications experts who are involved in developing and implementing the South African NQF. Others who will benefit from the Level Descriptors are the users including learners and skills development practitioners. The Level Descriptors focus on the challenges involved in taking the objectives of the NQF forward at national level.

The NQF Act, No 67 of 2008, makes provision for a ten-level framework where levels of learning achievement are arranged in ascending order from one to ten. One of the ways through which SAQA aims to advance the objectives of the NQF, in establishing a single integrated national framework for learning achievement, is the Level Descriptors.

An important purpose of the Level Descriptors is to support the design and implementation of qualifications and part qualifications within the NQF. They have been designed to contribute to coherence in learning achievement and facilitate evaluation criteria for comparability and thus articulation within the NQF.

Quality Councils, who recommend qualifications for registration on the NQF, must use the NQF Level Descriptors as a key reference in a transparent manner.

The Level Descriptors reflect a broad agreement on the potential benefits of the South African NQF for promoting lifelong learning.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Samuels'.

Joe Samuels
Chief Executive Officer
SAQA

Level Descriptors for the South African National Qualifications Framework

Purpose and philosophical underpinning

1. The purpose of level descriptors for Levels One to Ten of the National Qualifications Framework is to ensure coherence in learning achievement in the allocation of qualifications and part qualifications to particular levels, and to facilitate the assessment of the national and international comparability of qualifications and part qualifications.
2. In order to advance the objectives of the NQF, the South African Qualifications Authority is responsible for the development of the content of the level descriptors for each level of the NQF in agreement with the three Quality Councils: The Council on Higher Education, Umalusi and the Council for Trades and Occupations.
3. The philosophical underpinning of the National Qualifications Framework and the level descriptors is applied competence, which is in line with the outcomes-based theoretical framework adopted in the South African context.
4. Ten categories are used in the level descriptors to describe applied competencies across each of the ten levels of the National Qualifications Framework:
 - Scope of knowledge
 - Knowledge literacy
 - Method and procedure
 - Problem solving
 - Ethics and professional practice
 - Accessing, processing and managing information
 - Producing and communicating of information
 - Context and systems
 - Management of learning
 - Accountability.

Definitions

5. In these level descriptors any word or expression to which a meaning has been assigned in the National Qualifications Framework Act (Act 67 of 2008) shall have such meaning unless the context indicates otherwise. A basic set of definitions is given below, while further definitions and help in the interpretation of particular words or phrases used in the level descriptors are given in separate guidelines which will be developed by each of the Quality Councils.
6. “Applied competence” has three constituent elements: foundational competence embraces the intellectual/academic skills of knowledge together with analysis, synthesis and evaluation, which includes information processing and problem solving; practical competence includes the concept of operational context; and reflexive competence incorporates learner autonomy.
7. “Field” means a particular area of learning used as an organising mechanism for the NQF.

8. “Level” means one of the series of levels of learning achievement arranged in ascending order from one to ten according to which the NQF is organised and to which qualification types are pegged.
9. “Level descriptor” means that statement describing learning achievement at a particular level of the NQF that provides a broad indication of the types of learning outcomes and assessment criteria that are appropriate to a qualification at that level.
10. “National Qualifications Framework” is a comprehensive system approved by the Minister for the classification, registration, publication and articulation of quality assured national qualifications.
11. “Sub-framework” means one of three coordinated qualifications sub-frameworks which make up the NQF as a single integrated system: The Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework, the General and Further Education and Training Sub-Framework and the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework.

Contextual application of the level descriptors

12. The following principles underpin the application of the level descriptors across the three sub-frameworks of the NQF:
 - There is one common set of level descriptors for the NQF to be used in different contexts
 - The level descriptors incorporate ten competencies
 - The level descriptors are designed to meet the needs of academic as well as occupational qualifications
 - There must be correlation between qualification levels and occupational levels in the world of work
 - The Critical Cross-Field Outcomes of SAQA are embedded in the level descriptors
 - Level descriptors are cumulative i.e. there is progression in the competencies from one level to the next
 - Level descriptors are applicable to the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
 - Level descriptors are descriptive and not prescriptive
 - The nomenclature for qualifications is dealt with in the sub-frameworks of the NQF.
13. Level descriptors embrace learning in a wide variety of contexts (vocational, occupational, academic and professional) and environments (classroom, laboratory, field, clinic, community, etc.). Contextual interpretation of the level descriptors within each of the three sub-frameworks across academic, professional and occupational contexts is encouraged. In this regard, separate guidelines will be developed for each sub-framework.
14. Level descriptors provide a scaffold from which more specific descriptors can be developed by a variety of different sectors and practitioners, for example discipline- or profession-based. It is also recognised that in the processes of curriculum design and development, the interpretation of these generic level descriptors will be influenced by, for example, field-, discipline- and context-specific nuances.
15. The nomenclature for qualifications is dealt with in the sub-frameworks of the NQF.
16. Level descriptors are designed to act as a guide and a starting point for, *inter alia*:
 - Writing learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria for qualifications and part qualifications

- Pegging a qualification at an appropriate level on the NQF, used together with purpose statements, outcomes and assessment criteria
 - Assisting learners to gain admission through RPL at an appropriate level on the NQF
 - Making comparisons across qualifications in a variety of fields and disciplines pegged at the same level of the NQF
 - Programme quality management, used together with purpose statements, outcomes and assessment criteria.
17. Level descriptors provide a broad indication of learning achievements or outcomes that are appropriate to a qualification at that level.
18. The competencies listed at a particular level in the framework broadly describe the learning achieved at that level, but an individual learning programme may not necessarily meet each and every criterion listed.
19. Level descriptors do not describe years of study.
20. In the level descriptors, the accessing, analysing and managing of information and communication in terms of reading, listening and speaking will, where applicable, include Braille and sign language to accommodate learners with special needs. In the case of sign language, listening and speaking refer to receptive and productive language use.

Level descriptors

21. The following level descriptors describe the learning achievement at a particular level of the NQF that provides a broad indication of the learning achievements or outcomes that are appropriate to a qualification at that level.

22. NQF Level One

- a. Scope of knowledge, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate a general knowledge of one or more areas or fields of study, in addition to the fundamental areas of study.
- b. Knowledge literacy, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate an understanding that knowledge in a particular field develops over a period of time through the efforts of a number of people, and often through the synthesis of information from a variety of related sources and fields.
- c. Method and procedure, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to use key common tools and instruments, and a capacity to apply him/herself to a well-defined task under direct supervision.
- d. Problem solving, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to recognise and solve problems within a familiar, well-defined context.
- e. Ethics and professional practice, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to identify and develop own personal values and ethics, and the ability to identify ethics applicable in a specific environment.
- f. Accessing, processing and managing information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to recall, collect and organise given information clearly and accurately, sound listening and speaking (receptive and productive language use), reading and writing skills, and basic numeracy skills including an understanding of symbolic systems.

- g. Producing and communicating information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to report information clearly and accurately in spoken/signed and written form.
- h. Context and systems, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate an understanding of the context within which he/she operates.
- i. Management of learning, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to sequence and schedule learning tasks, and the ability to access and use a range of learning resources.
- j. Accountability, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to work as part of a group.

23. NQF Level Two

- a. Scope of knowledge, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate a basic operational knowledge of one or more areas or fields of study, in addition to the fundamental areas of study.
- b. Knowledge literacy, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate an understanding that one's own knowledge of a particular field or system develops through active participation in relevant activities.
- c. Method and procedure, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to use a variety of common tools and instruments, and a capacity to work in a disciplined manner in a well-structured and supervised environment.
- d. Problem solving, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to use own knowledge to select and apply known solutions to well-defined routine problems.
- e. Ethics and professional practice, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to apply personal values and ethics in a specific environment.
- f. Accessing, processing and managing information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to apply literacy and numeracy skills to a range of different but familiar contexts.
- g. Producing and communicating information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the basic ability to collect, organise and report information clearly and accurately, and the ability to express an opinion on given information clearly in spoken/signed and written form.
- h. Context and systems, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate an understanding of the environment within which he/she operates in a wider context.
- i. Management of learning, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the capacity to learn in a disciplined manner in a well-structured and supervised environment.
- j. Accountability, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to manage own time effectively, the ability to develop sound working relationships, and the ability to work effectively as part of a group.

24. NQF Level Three

- a. Scope of knowledge, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate a basic understanding of the key concepts and knowledge of one or more fields or disciplines, in addition to the fundamental areas of study.
- b. Knowledge literacy, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate an understanding that knowledge in a field can only be applied if the knowledge, as well as its relationship to other relevant information in related fields, is understood.

- c. Method and procedure, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate operational literacy, the capacity to operate within clearly defined contexts, and the ability to work within a managed environment.
- d. Problem solving, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to use own knowledge to select appropriate procedures to solve problems within given parameters.
- e. Ethics and professional practice, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to comply with organisational ethics.
- f. Accessing, processing and managing information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the basic ability to summarise and interpret information relevant to the context from a range of sources, and the ability to take a position on available information, discuss the issues and reach a resolution.
- g. Producing and communicating information, in respect of which a learner is able to produce a coherent presentation and report, providing explanations for positions taken.
- h. Context and systems, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate an understanding of the organisation or operating environment as a system, and application of skills in measuring the environment using key instruments and equipment.
- i. Management of learning, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to learn within a managed environment.
- j. Accountability, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the capacity to actively contribute to team effectiveness.

25. **NQF Level Four**

- a. Scope of knowledge, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate a fundamental knowledge base of the most important areas of one or more fields or disciplines, in addition to the fundamental areas of study, and a fundamental understanding of the key terms, rules, concepts, established principles and theories in one or more fields or disciplines.
- b. Knowledge literacy, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate an understanding that knowledge in one field can be applied to related fields.
- c. Method and procedure, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to apply essential methods, procedures and techniques of the field or discipline to a given familiar context, and the ability to motivate a change using relevant evidence.
- d. Problem solving, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to use own knowledge to solve common problems within a familiar context, and the ability to adjust an application of a common solution within relevant parameters to meet the needs of small changes in the problem or operating context with an understanding of the consequences of related actions.
- e. Ethics and professional practice, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to adhere to organisational ethics and a code of conduct, and the ability to understand societal values and ethics.
- f. Accessing, processing and managing information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate a basic ability in gathering relevant information, analysis and evaluation skills, and the ability to apply and carry out actions by interpreting information from text and operational symbols or representations.
- g. Producing and communicating information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to communicate and present information reliably and accurately in written and in oral or signed form.

- h. Context and systems, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate an understanding of the organisation or operating environment as a system within a wider context.
- i. Management of learning, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the capacity to take responsibility for own learning within a supervised environment, and the capacity to evaluate own performance against given criteria.
- j. Accountability, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the capacity to take decisions about and responsibility for actions, and the capacity to take the initiative to address any shortcomings found.

26. NQF Level Five

- a. Scope of knowledge, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate an informed understanding of the core areas of one or more fields, disciplines or practices, and an informed understanding of the key terms, concepts, facts, general principles, rules and theories of that field, discipline or practice.
- b. Knowledge literacy, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the awareness of how knowledge or a knowledge system develops and evolves within the area of study or operation.
- c. Method and procedure, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to select and apply standard methods, procedures or techniques within the field, discipline or practice, and to plan and manage an implementation process within a well-defined, familiar and supported environment.
- d. Problem solving, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to identify, evaluate and solve defined, routine and new problems within a familiar context, and to apply solutions based on relevant evidence and procedures or other forms of explanation appropriate to the field, discipline or practice, demonstrating an understanding of the consequences.
- e. Ethics and professional practice, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to take account of, and act in accordance with, prescribed organisational and professional ethical codes of conduct, values and practices and to seek guidance on ethical and professional issues where necessary.
- f. Accessing, processing and managing information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to gather information from a range of sources, including oral, written or symbolic texts, to select information appropriate to the task, and to apply basic processes of analysis, synthesis and evaluation on that information.
- g. Producing and communicating information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to communicate information reliably, accurately and coherently, using conventions appropriate to the context, in written and oral or signed form or in practical demonstration, including an understanding of and respect for conventions around intellectual property, copyright and plagiarism, including the associated legal implications.
- h. Context and systems, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to operate in a range of familiar and new contexts, demonstrating an understanding of different kinds of systems, their constituent parts and the relationships between these parts, and to understand how actions in one area impact on other areas within the same system.
- i. Management of learning, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to evaluate his or her performance or the performance of others, and to take appropriate action where necessary; to take responsibility for his or her learning within a structured learning process; and to promote the learning of others.

- j. Accountability, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to account for his or her actions, to work effectively with and respect others, and, in a defined context, to take supervisory responsibility for others and for the responsible use of resources, where appropriate.

27. NQF Level Six

- a. Scope of knowledge, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate: detailed knowledge of the main areas of one or more fields, disciplines or practices, including an understanding of and the ability to apply the key terms, concepts, facts, principles, rules and theories of that field, discipline or practice to unfamiliar but relevant contexts; and knowledge of an area or areas of specialisation and how that knowledge relates to other fields, disciplines or practices.
- b. Knowledge literacy, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate an understanding of different forms of knowledge, schools of thought and forms of explanation within an area of study, operation or practice, and awareness of knowledge production processes.
- c. Method and procedure, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to evaluate, select and apply appropriate methods, procedures or techniques in investigation or application processes within a defined context.
- d. Problem solving, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to identify, analyse and solve problems in unfamiliar contexts, gathering evidence and applying solutions based on evidence and procedures appropriate to the field, discipline or practice.
- e. Ethics and professional practice, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate an understanding of the ethical implications of decisions and actions within an organisational or professional context, based on an awareness of the complexity of ethical dilemmas.
- f. Accessing, processing and managing information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to evaluate different sources of information, to select information appropriate to the task, and to apply well-developed processes of analysis, synthesis and evaluation to that information.
- g. Producing and communicating information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to present and communicate complex information reliably and coherently using appropriate academic and professional or occupational conventions, formats and technologies for a given context.
- h. Context and systems, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to make decisions and act appropriately in familiar and new contexts, demonstrating an understanding of the relationships between systems, and of how actions, ideas or developments in one system impact on other systems.
- i. Management of learning, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to evaluate performance against given criteria, and accurately identify and address his or her task-specific learning needs in a given context, and to provide support to the learning needs of others where appropriate.
- j. Accountability, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to work effectively in a team or group, and to take responsibility for his or her decisions and actions and the decisions and actions of others within well-defined contexts, including the responsibility for the use of resources where appropriate.

28. NQF Level Seven

- a. Scope of knowledge, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate integrated knowledge of the central areas of one or more fields, disciplines or practices, including an understanding of and the ability to apply and evaluate the key terms, concepts, facts, principles, rules and theories of that field, discipline or practice; and detailed knowledge of an area or areas of specialisation and how that knowledge relates to other fields, disciplines or practices.
- b. Knowledge literacy, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate an understanding of knowledge as contested and the ability to evaluate types of knowledge and explanations typical within the area of study or practice.
- c. Method and procedure, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate an understanding of a range of methods of enquiry in a field, discipline or practice, and their suitability to specific investigations; and the ability to select and apply a range of methods to resolve problems or introduce change within a practice.
- d. Problem solving, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to identify, analyse, evaluate, critically reflect on and address complex problems, applying evidence-based solutions and theory-driven arguments.
- e. Ethics and professional practice, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to take decisions and act ethically and professionally, and the ability to justify those decisions and actions drawing on appropriate ethical values and approaches within a supported environment.
- f. Accessing, processing and managing information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to develop appropriate processes of information gathering for a given context or use; and the ability to independently validate the sources of information and evaluate and manage the information.
- g. Producing and communicating information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to develop and communicate his or her ideas and opinions in well-formed arguments, using appropriate academic, professional, or occupational discourse.
- h. Context and systems, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to manage processes in unfamiliar and variable contexts, recognising that problem solving is context and system bound, and does not occur in isolation.
- i. Management of learning, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to identify, evaluate and address his or her learning needs in a self-directed manner, and to facilitate collaborative learning processes.
- j. Accountability, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to take full responsibility for his or her work, decision-making and use of resources, and limited accountability for the decisions and actions of others in varied or ill-defined contexts.

29. NQF Level Eight

- a. Scope of knowledge, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate knowledge of and engagement in an area at the forefront of a field, discipline or practice; an understanding of the theories, research methodologies, methods and techniques relevant to the field, discipline or practice; and an understanding of how to apply such knowledge in a particular context.
- b. Knowledge literacy, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to interrogate multiple sources of knowledge in an area of specialisation and to evaluate knowledge and processes of knowledge production.

- c. Method and procedure, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate an understanding of the complexities and uncertainties of selecting, applying or transferring appropriate standard procedures, processes or techniques to unfamiliar problems in a specialised field, discipline or practice.
- d. Problem solving, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to use a range of specialised skills to identify, analyse and address complex or abstract problems drawing systematically on the body of knowledge and methods appropriate to a field, discipline or practice.
- e. Ethics and professional practice, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to identify and address ethical issues based on critical reflection on the suitability of different ethical value systems to specific contexts.
- f. Accessing, processing and managing information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to critically review information gathering, synthesis of data, evaluation and management processes in specialised contexts in order to develop creative responses to problems and issues.
- g. Producing and communicating information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to present and communicate academic, professional or occupational ideas and texts effectively to a range of audiences, offering creative insights, rigorous interpretations and solutions to problems and issues appropriate to the context.
- h. Context and systems, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to operate effectively within a system, or manage a system based on an understanding of the roles and relationships between elements within the system.
- i. Management of learning, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to apply, in a self-critical manner, learning strategies which effectively address his or her professional and ongoing learning needs and the professional and ongoing learning needs of others.
- j. Accountability, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to take full responsibility for his or her work, decision-making and use of resources, and full accountability for the decisions and actions of others where appropriate.

30. **NQF Level Nine**

- a. Scope of knowledge, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate specialist knowledge to enable engagement with and critique of current research or practices, as well as advanced scholarship or research in a particular field, discipline or practice.
- b. Knowledge literacy, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to evaluate current processes of knowledge production, and to choose an appropriate process of enquiry for the area of study or practice.
- c. Method and procedure, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate a command of and the ability to design, select and apply appropriate and creative methods, techniques, processes or technologies to complex practical and theoretical problems.
- d. Problem solving, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate: the ability to use a wide range of specialised skills in identifying, conceptualising, designing and implementing methods of enquiry to address complex and challenging problems within a field, discipline or practice; and an understanding of the consequences of any solutions or insights generated within a specialised context.

- e. Ethics and professional practice, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to make autonomous ethical decisions which affect knowledge production, or complex organisational or professional issues, and the ability to critically contribute to the development of ethical standards in a specific context.
- f. Accessing, processing and managing information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to design and implement a strategy for the processing and management of information, in order to conduct a comprehensive review of leading and current research in an area of specialisation to produce significant insights.
- g. Producing and communicating information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to use the resources of academic and professional or occupational discourses to communicate and defend substantial ideas that are the products of research or development in an area of specialisation; and use a range of advanced and specialised skills and discourses appropriate to a field, discipline or practice, to communicate with a range of audiences with different levels of knowledge or expertise.
- h. Context and systems, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to make interventions at an appropriate level within a system, based on an understanding of hierarchical relations within the system, and the ability to address the intended and unintended consequences of interventions.
- i. Management of learning, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to develop his or her own learning strategies, which sustain independent learning and academic or professional development; and can interact effectively within the learning or professional group as a means of enhancing learning.
- j. Accountability, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to operate independently and take full responsibility for his or her own work, and, where appropriate, to account for leading and initiating processes and implementing systems, ensuring good resource management and governance practices.

31. NQF Level Ten

- a. Scope of knowledge, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate expertise and critical knowledge in an area at the forefront of a field, discipline or practice; and the ability to conceptualise new research initiatives and create new knowledge or practice.
- b. Knowledge literacy, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to contribute to scholarly debates around theories of knowledge and processes of knowledge production in an area of study or practice.
- c. Method and procedure, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to develop new methods, techniques, processes, systems or technologies in original, creative and innovative ways appropriate to specialised and complex contexts.
- d. Problem solving, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to apply specialist knowledge and theory in critically reflexive, creative and novel ways to address complex practical and theoretical problems.
- e. Ethics and professional practice, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to identify, address and manage emerging ethical issues, and to advance processes of ethical decision-making, including monitoring and evaluation of the consequences of these decisions where appropriate.

- f. Accessing, processing and managing information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to make independent judgements about managing incomplete or inconsistent information or data in an iterative process of analysis and synthesis, for the development of significant original insights into new, complex and abstract ideas, information or issues.
- g. Producing and communicating information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to produce substantial, independent, in-depth and publishable work which meets international standards, is considered to be new or innovative by peers, and makes a significant contribution to the discipline, field, or practice; and the ability to develop a communication strategy to disseminate and defend research, strategic and policy initiatives and their implementation to specialist and non-specialist audiences using the full resources of an academic and professional or occupational discourse.
- h. Context and systems, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate an understanding of theoretical underpinnings in the management of complex systems to achieve systemic change; and the ability to independently design, sustain and manage change within a system or systems.
- i. Management of learning, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to demonstrate intellectual independence, research leadership and management of research and research development in a discipline, field or practice.
- j. Accountability, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to operate independently and take full responsibility for his or her work, and, where appropriate, lead, oversee and be held ultimately accountable for the overall governance of processes and systems.

Review period

32. The level descriptors will be reviewed at least every five years by SAQA, in consultation with the three Quality Councils.

Short title

33. This document must be referred to as the Level Descriptors for the National Qualifications Framework.



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