

A new way TO LEARN

The transition to occupational qualifications.
By Jacomien de Klerk



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Since the establishment of the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations in 2010, the government has been promoting the development of occupational qualifications to replace the qualifications that have been used for learnerships and skills programmes – broadly referred to as credit-bearing training – in workplace skills development in SA since the early 2000s. They're now generally referred to as "legacy" qualifications.

The plan was for legacy qualifications to be replaced over time by occupational qualifications, with registrations of legacy qualifications lapsing as they were replaced, resulting in a gradual transition. The transition was, however, much slower than planned.

In February 2022, The Minister of Higher Education announcement that registrations of all legacy qualifications would lapse on 30 June 2023. It was made clear that this

decision was irrevocable and that there would be no exceptions and no extensions for any reason. It was also announced that learners could still be enrolled for credit-bearing training using legacy qualification until 30 June 2024, with a teach-out period until 30 June 2027.

Therefore, from 1 July 2024 all credit-bearing training done in SA will have to make use of occupational qualifications.

What do you need to know and do about this transition?

Beware the 30 June 2024 deadline for learner enrolment

If you are planning training using legacy qualifications, you must have all learners enrolled before 30 June 2024. From 1 July 2024, it will no longer be possible on the DHET enrolment systems. You will then have until 30 June 2027 to complete training, assessment, and moderation for these learnerships or skills programmes.

Learn more about occupational qualifications and training implementation

There are significant differences between occupational qualifications and legacy qualifications. These differences impact directly on how credit-bearing training is implemented. The most important differences are:

- Legacy qualifications were typically 120 or 240 credits, with learnerships implemented over one or two years. Occupational qualifications can have any credit value (minimum 120), so the learnership period varies between qualifications.
- Legacy qualifications had unit standards that might have included a practical component. Occupational qualifications consist of knowledge modules, skills modules, and workplace modules.
- Legacy qualifications were facilitated by SETA-accredited skills development providers (SDPs). Occupational qualifications are facilitated by QCTO-

accredited SDPs and workplace modules are implemented at approved workplaces.

- Legacy qualifications used formative and summative assessments. Occupational qualifications introduce the External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA).
- To date, skills programmes could be made up from unit standards belonging to legacy qualifications. Now skills programmes are structured qualifications, developed and registered like full qualification.

It is critical that SDPs and employers learn all they can about how to best implement this new form of learning.

Learn what occupational qualifications are available for your industry

The development of occupational qualifications is driven by industry bodies, in response to demand from employers and learners. Contact your industry body to find out what qualifications have been developed for workplace learning in your industry, and to ensure they are informed about remaining gaps.

Start the process for QCTO accreditation and/or workplace approval

Occupational qualifications can only be facilitated by SDPs accredited by the QCTO, and it is important that all SDPs start the accreditation process as soon as possible, so that they are ready for 2024. Workplace approval involves a process similar to accreditation. If you want to implement occupational learnerships at your workplace, you need to start the workplace approval process as soon as possible.

A successful transition to occupational qualifications will be beneficial to the agricultural sector, providing opportunities for many learners to access the specific knowledge and skills they need to find work and build careers in agriculture. If we inform ourselves and work together, we can make it happen. 

Lonende resultate



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