GUIDELINES FOR THE REVIEW, MAINTEINANCE (REVISION) AND ROLLOVER OF QUALIFICATIONS REGISTERED ON THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR NAMIBIA

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ACRONYMS

NQA	Namibia Qualifications Authority
NQF	National Qualifications Framework

GLOSSARY

For the purpose of the use of this document, it is significant that users acquaint themselves with the following terminologies.

Qualifications	means any award which represents the attainment, following robust assessment processes, of a coherent cluster of specified outcomes of learning to prescribed standards of performance.
Review of Qualifications	refers to actions taken to ensure that NQF registered qualifications remain fit for their intended purpose and that they continue to express the competences to be demonstrated in order for recognition to be given.
Maintenance of Qualifications	commonly known as the revision. Refer to the actions taken to rectify any inaccuracies in content that have been identified by the NQA, the body responsible for the qualification(s), and/or any other stakeholder, and that have little bearing on the description of what is required for NQF Credits to be awarded. Inaccuracies involving format and spelling, etc, may also be corrected at any time.
Rollover of Qualifications	a term commonly used when the scheduled review date may have lapsed or is due to pass shortly and the body responsible for the qualifications may not be in a position to recommend re-registration of the qualifications. In such cases, the body responsible for the qualifications can request that the NQA Council extend the scheduled review date shown on the qualifications. This would be the only change able to be made to the qualification documents unless maintenance actions are also carried out at the same time as the rollover is processed.

NQF	means the National Qualifications Framework established in terms of regulation 2 setting-up the national qualifications framework for Namibia.
NQF Credit	refers to the quantum of learning recognised through qualifications and unit standards registered on the NQF shall be measured in terms of NQF credits where one credit equates to 10 hours of notional learning time which is inclusive of directed and self-directed learning and assessment.
NQF level	refers to the different levels of difficulty or complexity of learning. There are 10 (ten) level on the framework for Namibia (ranging from, NQF level 1 to 10) and not the years spent learning.
Scheduled review date	refers to the date for which the review is intended to commence for a qualification.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document serves as a guideline to assist the body(ies) responsible for the development of qualification(s), accredited training providers, relevant stakeholders and any party involved in the review process for qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Further, the document outlines key activities and key issues that should be taken into consideration before a qualification is re-registered on the NQF. The document is primarily intended for the review of qualifications (mainly registered on the NQF of Namibia). In the same vein, the document provides guidelines on the maintenance (revision) as well as the rollover processes of qualifications registered on the NQF. Such distinction may provide guidance to all the users of the qualification to determine the appropriate methods to be applied on the qualification in question. This document is applicable to both unit standard-based and non-unit standard-based qualifications registered on the NQF for Namibia.

Prior to the review of a qualification(s), a full consultation with the industry, users and all the relevant stakeholders is required. These are people such as providers who have developed courses learning materials aligned to them, assessors, moderators, professional bodies and employers. All changes arising from a review must be formally reported.

In accordance with the NQF, the review of qualifications is crucial to ensure that assessments lead to certification that is current and relevant.

It is advised that this document should be read in conjunction with the NQF Regulations of 2006.

This document is valid for a maximum period of five (5) years after its approval by the NQA Council; thereafter this document shall be subjected to review.

SECTION 1

1. REVIEW PROCESSES

In accordance with the NQF for Namibia, qualifications registered should be reviewed. A review for a qualification is a planned process undertaken regularly to ensure that the qualifications registered on the NQF still remain fit for the intended purpose. Qualifications should be registered on the NQF for a maximum period of 5 years and thereafter should be reviewed. Given that, a review will result in the qualifications being:

- Re-registered on the NQF in their existing or an amended form,
- Withdrawn from the NQF as no longer being available or valid for certification,
- Replaced.

Note:
The body responsible for any qualifications must formally apply to the NQA for any qualification to be re-registered on the NQF.

1.1 The Need for Review

The main purpose of reviewing a qualification is to ensure it remains useful and relevant and continues to meet the needs of the learners, industry and stakeholders for which it was initially developed. It is, however, worth noting that a review may be triggered by various factors such as:

- ✓the qualification having reached its scheduled review date
- ✓Identified duplication of qualification(s) registered on the NQF
- ✓Changes in legislation or government policy
- ✓Lack of use of a particular qualification (s)
- ✓On request by qualification developer, accredited training provider(s), and/or by affected stakeholder(s) or
- ✓Institutional policy guiding the review of programmes and resultant qualifications or depending on the nature of programme
- ✓Other development that may warrant a review.

The review process of qualifications requires analysis, consultation and endorsement processes and should be conducted in the similar fashion as to those followed in initial development of the qualifications. There should be a formal consideration that is inclusive of the engagement of the relevant stakeholders and their subsequent endorsement of the review decisions.

1.2 Matters for Consideration When Reviewing Qualification(s):

- should utilize any information arising from comments made by appropriately accredited providers, employers, candidates, and the public at large
- must be cognisant of any technological, legal, economic and/or social developments in the sector since the registration of the unit standards and/or that are anticipated in the near future
- may involve analysis workshops or other activities to derive or confirm required outcomes of learning, structure, levelness and credits associated with the qualification.

1.3 Stakeholders in the Review Process: their Roles and Responsibilities

1.3.1 Responsibilities of the NQA:

- ✓ notifying the body responsible for qualification (s), training provider (s) on the scheduled review date for qualification(s)
- ✓ conducting the quality assurance processes similar to those undertaken for the registration of qualification on the NQF. That is, the qualification (s) will be given a registration check. This is to ensure that:

    - the qualification documents continue to meet the Registration Criteria for qualifications as specified in Annexure G of the NQF Regulations of 2006
    - a valid review category has been assigned to each qualification
    - any new qualification arising from the review also meet the Registration Criteria
    - relevant stakeholders have been party to the review and have indicated their agreement to the outcomes of the review
    - there are no excessive, adverse effects of the outcomes of the review.

- ✓ initiating and tracking each qualification review
- ✓ identifying and liaising with the body responsible for qualification(s), (where a group of qualifications is being reviewed together)
- ✓ considering and approving recommendations for changes to qualification (s) as a result of a review
- ✓ following-up and work with the body responsible for qualification(s) who choose not to participate in a scheduled review to determine the status of their existing qualification(s) on the NQF following the outcome of the review.
- ✓ providing technical guidance and support to body responsible for qualification(s), training providers and any relevant party involved in the review of the qualification.

1.3.2 Body Responsible for the Qualification:

- ✓ plan and conduct periodic reviews of qualifications developed in line with the NQF criteria
- ✓ submit the review report for qualification to NQA in accordance with the NQF requirements
- ✓ liaise with all relevant stakeholders impacted by the review of a qualification i.e. professional bodies/regulatory bodies and
- ✓ report the outcomes of the review and recommendations to NQA and implement the approved recommendations.

1.4 Notification on the Review Date

NQA will notify the body responsible for qualification (s) as each review is initiated for a maximum period of eighteen (18) months before the review date of the qualification. Accredited users of a qualification may also request NQA to initiate a qualification review. Such request should be done through the body responsible for the qualification (s).

1.5 Timeframe Set for Completing the Review Process

The approval of reviewed qualification(s) should be granted at the last NQA Council meeting of the same year in which the review is scheduled for. Implementation of recommended changes to qualifications will then follow the review. Failure to meet this timeline without a reasonable explanation may result in the status of the qualification(s) on the NQF being changed to expire.

1.6 Costs of a Review

The cost incurred during the review process of qualifications is the responsibility of the developer or the reviewer. The NQA will not be liable for any of costs incurred.

1.7 Review Report

Body responsible for the review of the qualification, must submit to the NQA a review report indicating the nature of the changes made (if any). Further, the review report must also inform the NQA of how any consequences of the review decisions are to be or should be accommodated. Such report must be in a form that is able to be published by the NQA.

Upon the approval by the NQA Council on the recommended actions arising from the review, the NQA shall publish any re-registration of the qualifications by way of General Notice in the Government Gazette and through its website. The notice shall indicate that a review report is available from the NQA website.

1.7.1 The Review Report must include the Following:

- reasons for the review or revision (maintenance) of the qualification(s)
- brief outline of who was involved
- brief outline of how the review was conducted
- provide summary of the main changes to the structure and/or requirements, and
- proposed review category for each qualification

- impact of the review (if any)
- a statement of any **transition arrangements** arising from the changes made from the previous to the new version of the qualifications.

1.8 Transition Arrangements

The transition arrangements are required for candidates who have an incomplete qualification when a new qualification, or a new version of a qualification, is registered on the NQF. This is to ensure that no learner is unreasonably disadvantaged by:

- the replacement of an existing qualification by a new qualification
- the review of a registered qualification and/or its registered components, or
- the replacement or discontinuance of a NQF qualification.

1.8.1 Transition Arrangements must Show:

- any time limits for the completion of existing learning programmes or pathways
- any credit transfer arrangements
- any credit exemption arrangements
- an appeals mechanism, and
- how the arrangements shall be managed.

1.9 Review Classification Categories

There are four (4) classification categories for the review of qualification registered on the NQF. These are presented in an alphabetic format namely A, B, C and D. Details on each of these classifications are elaborate below:

Category	Description	Actions
A	• The qualification is still considered as being fit for purpose in its previously registered form. • There will be no changes at all to be made to the qualification.	• The qualification is re-registered and published with the same NQF Id as in its previous registered form. • A new scheduled review date shall be inserted onto the registered copy of the qualification. • The whole number of the version number on the currently registered qualification will be increased by one. That is, version 1.0 shall become version 2.0, version 3.0 will become version 4.0. • No transition arrangement will be required.
B	• Changes have been made to the contents, rules or components of the qualification. However these changes do not	• A qualification is re-registered with its previous NQF Id. • A new scheduled review date shall be inserted as proposed

	represent a significant change in the abilities being described in the previous version. • Holders of the new and the previous versions are deemed to be equivalent.	by the body responsible for the qualification in the application document. • The whole number of the version number on the currently registered qualification will be increased by one. That is, version 1.0 shall become version 2.0, version 3.0 will become version 4.0. • Transition arrangements will be required if candidate must gain extra or different credits for the new version (re-registered version).
C	• In this case, the qualification is to be withdrawn and will be replaced by another qualification(s). • Major changes are made on the qualification especially in terms of the structure, components, qualification type (i.e. certificate being replace by a diploma), or the level of certification may change.	• The registered qualification shall be marked as *Expiring* on the NQF. Information regarding the NQF Id for any qualification(s) replacing the expiring qualification will also be shown. • The NQA shall publish a notification of the last date for achievement. When the last date for achievement has passed, the NQA shall remove the qualification from the NQF and archive the latest version of the qualification.

	• Holders or people with the replacement qualification are deemed to be different from those with the replaced qualification	• A last date for enrolment for the programme associated with the qualification should also be suggested. • There will be no change made to the NQF Id number or version number of the registered qualification that is to expire.
D	• Qualification is no longer fit the purpose and thus should be withdrawn from the NQF and will not be replaced.	• The registered qualification shall be marked as *Expiring* on the NQF. • The NQA shall publish a notification of the last date for achievement. When the last date for achievement has passed, the NQA shall remove the qualification from the NQF and archive the latest version of the qualification. • A last date for enrolment in programme associated with the qualification should also be suggested.

1.9.1 Summary Note:

Re-registration requires a formal decision to be made by the NQA Council following a consideration of all quality assurance check and the review report by the Qualifications Committee. Re-registration treats all qualifications as if they are ‘new’ qualifications.

SECTION 2

2. MAINTENANCE (REVISION) OF QUALIFICATIONS

2.1 Reasons for Maintenance

Qualifications may be revised or maintained to ensure that they represent a high level of technical and publishing correctness and accuracy at all times.

As opposed to the review process, qualifications may be maintained mainly to address various errors in the registered version such as:

- spelling mistakes or omissions
- grammatical mistakes
- format mistakes
- transcription mistakes – i.e., any change to such things as NQF Level, NQF Credit, or text that was agreed during the final stages of the quality assurance processes leading to registration had not been effected as agreed
- review of the standards that has impacted on the qualification
- due to change in the legislation or policy.

When a qualification is ‘maintained’ their period of registration on the NQF is not extended. The scheduled review date will not be amended (except if maintenance actions are undertaken at the time of any approved rollover of the qualification).

A qualification may not be withdrawn from the NQF as a result of ‘maintenance’ actions.

2.2 Maintenance Report

Body responsible for the maintenance of the qualification, must submit to the NQA a maintenance report. Such report must be in a form that is able to be published by the NQA.

2.2.1 Maintenance Report must include the Following:

- reasons for the maintenance of the qualification(s)
- summary of the main changes made
- impact of the review (if any).

2.2.2 Steps for Maintaining Qualification(s)

When the need for maintenance has been confirmed, the NQA shall:

- check and/or confirm with the body responsible for the qualification that the maintenance is needed or desirable
- make the required changes to the text of the registered qualification
- amend the sub version of the qualification – i.e., the whole number will not change. Thus, Version 1.0 will become 1.1, etc but it cannot become Version 2.0
- notify the maintenance of the qualification to the NQA Council
- confirm the maintenance of the qualification having been completed with the body responsible for the qualification.

Note:

Excessive maintenance of the qualifications should be avoided. A high sub-version number (e.g. 1.5) may indicate a lack of care and attention during the quality assurance processes that led to the registration of the qualification. Therefore, 'maintenance' should not be a regular activity.

Agreement should be reached between the NQA and the body responsible for the qualification that 'maintenance' is really justified. It may be that the maintenance could be held over until the review of the qualification. *In essence, the question 'Can the error be lived with for the time being?' should be central to any consideration to the conduct of 'maintenance.*

Maintenance of the qualification must retain compliance of the qualification with the NQF Registration Criteria.

SECTION 3

3. ROLLOVER PROCESS FOR QUALIFICATIONS

The NQA in collaboration with the body responsible for any qualification should monitor the 'life' of any qualification registered on the NQF. In particular, the NQA should alert any relevant qualification developer that the scheduled review date for qualifications is a maximum of eighteen (18) months away. The NQA should remind the particular body of the need for some actions regarding the qualification that they want to rollover as required in the NQF Regulations.

3.1 Reasons for Rolling-Over the Qualifications could be:

- insufficient use of the qualifications
- delays in preparing any support materials relating to the qualifications
- industry, developers and relevant stakeholders feel the qualification still remain fit for the purpose, hence no changes will be required.

3.2 Main Steps in Rolling-Over Qualification(s)

- should the body responsible for the qualifications, believes that any review process may not generate the required information to validly determine the ongoing fitness of the qualifications for their intended purpose, the body may write to the NQA Council to request that the qualifications be rolled over so that additional time is created for such information to become available.

- the body responsible for the qualifications must give the NQA Council the reasons for a Rollover. These reasons must be reasonably compelling. If the qualifications have not been used the NQA Council shall query whether the qualifications are, in fact, needed in the sector.

The NQA Council may agree to the request or it may not agree. If the Council agrees to the Rollover, then:

- the NQA will amend the scheduled review date shown on each of the registered qualifications. This new date will not be more than two years beyond the scheduled review date shown on the registered version of the qualification
- each qualification will be sub re-versioned – that is, Version 1.0 will become 1.1, Version 1.3 will become 1.4, etc
- a notification will be published by the NQA that the qualification(s) have been Rolled Over. Such notification should be done through the NQA's website and through the General Gazette Notice
- the NQA will confirm the rollover and the new scheduled review date with the body responsible for the qualifications.

Note:

The NQA Council will only agree to one request for a rollover of any qualifications without them being reviewed (in a review, the whole number in the Version number changes – ie, Version 1.0 becomes Version 2.0, Version 3.0 becomes Version 4.0, etc).

Should the NQA Council not agree to the request for the rollover of the qualification, the body responsible for the qualification could:

- appeal such a decision through the NQA Council
- initiate a review of the qualifications
- request that the qualifications be withdrawn from the NQF.

In case of the latter, the body must indicate a date after which credits should no longer be awarded for the qualifications. This date must be a reasonable time into the future (but not more than two (2) years) so as to allow any potential candidates who are in their training to complete their learning, be assessed, and have any opportunities for reassessment as per the stated policies of the assessing body.