NAMIBIA QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

BOOKLET ON ACCREDITATION
TO BE USED BY SUBJECT MATTERS EXPERTS (SMEs)

1. Introduction

This booklet is a guide to persons who will assist the NQA in processing applications for accreditation made by persons, institutions and organizations offering education services in Namibia. In terms of Section 1(f) of the NQA Act, the NQA "*may enter into agreements with any person, body, institution, organisation or interest group upon such conditions as the NQA and that person, body institution, organisation may agree".*

The booklet covers:

- the legal definition of accreditation as used in Namibia,
- the purpose of accreditation,
- the accreditation business process
- the role of the Subject Matter Expert (SME), and
- the Accreditation Standards mainly to be employed by the SME.

2. Accreditation

Accreditation is a formal status granted by the Council of the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) under Section 13 of the NQA Act confirming that an education and/or training institution in Namibia has the capacity to provide a course or courses of instruction or training and to assess the performance of persons partaking in such a course or courses.
The purpose of accreditation is:

- To ensure quality education programs through the use of standards and rigorous evaluation criteria
- To stimulate institutions toward higher levels of quality and efficiency
- To provide a system for public trust and accountability.

Accreditation helps people make important decisions about education:

- students choosing an educational program;
- parents seeking assurance of a quality education;
- institutions seeking to improve the education provided by their programs; and
- employers recruiting well-prepared graduates.

3. The Accreditation Process

In terms of the NQA's business processes of accreditation, the prospective applicant

- submits an application for a specified scope of services to be covered by their accreditation. This scope could be specified as:
    - a course or courses
    - a NQF qualification or Unit Standard (s)
    - named learning areas of the NQF up to specified NQF level(s)

- provides the NQA with the necessary evidence that the institution meets the requirements.

The NQA checks for the completeness of the application and notifies the applicant about the status of the application.
If completeness of the application is confirmed, the NQA identifies which subject matter experts are needed for the scope of accreditation sought for (**Flowchart of Accreditation may be requested for more information on the process of accreditation**).

4. The Role of the Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

Subject Matters Experts may be engaged by the NQA after signing an agreement stipulating duties and responsibilities. This document is signed by both the SME and NQA before the commencement of duty by the SME.

A *Subject Matter Expert* is a person generally acknowledged as having expert knowledge in a particular content area or areas. They are often referred to by the acronym, SME.

SMEs provide professional and /or for a technical opinion on a subject matter based on their background. Such opinion would be derived from the desk evaluation and the site-visit to the institution. The technical opinion would be provided as comment compiled by the SME and submitted to the NQA after the site visit to the institution.

During the period of his/her engagement with the NQA, the SME will work under the direction and supervision of the Manager (Accreditation, Assessment and Audit) of the NQA, who will provide clarity on the accreditation process and any other relevant issues. The SME is expected to observe a high level of confidentiality regarding the disclosure of any information observed to any party other than the NQA.

During the site visit, the SME shall work under the direction of the Lead Auditor assigned by the NQA.

5. The Accreditation Standard

Requirements set out as Appendix B of the Regulations for Accreditation are the basis for any accreditation decision in Namibia. Accreditation is granted by the NQA

Council for a specified scope of education services for a period not exceeding three years.

The SMEs are expected to focus only on the following areas of requirements of the *Accreditation Standard*:

Areas of Focus

2.2 Course design and documentation
2.4 Staff appointment and development
2.5 Learning facilities, resources and contexts
2.6 Delivery of Courses
2.8 Assessment of Learner Performance and
2.10 Research

The SMEs are advised to record their observations about the requirements in the blank spaces of the working document starting on page 4 of this booklet.
They are also required to maintain a log of any time spent on the assignment.

NQA	**Namibia Qualifications Authority**

Accreditation – Documentation Evaluation and Site Visit Recording Form to be used by Subject Matter Experts

This form is to be used by NQA appointed Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) involved in the processing of the application for accreditation. This form is to be used to record details pertaining to the consideration of applications seeking Accreditation.

Section A: Applicant Information	
Operating Name:	
Street Address Central Site:	

Section B Evaluator Details	
NQA Evaluator	**Sector Expert**
Name:	Name:
	Organisation:
	Position:
	Focus of Involvement:

Event	Expert Date(s)	Time Spent
Document Evaluation		
Site Visit(s)		
Follow-up		

Report on the Provider and Programmes in Relation to the NQA's Standard for Accreditation as set outlined in Government Notice: No. 124 of 2006.

4.3 Evaluation on Course Design and Documentation Requirements

Criteria
Requirement: Documented Processes for Course Design
a. Describe the processes by which the course were developed, reviewed and evaluated. To what extent was the academic and administrative staff involved in this process?
b. How was the needs assessment for the course done? Was there a clear and effective synergy between the Provider and potential future 'employers' of any graduates? Were the stakeholder input considered? Is there evidence that stakeholder views are incorporated into the process of course design?
c. Evaluate how the designed courses meet substantiated national, regional or local economic, social, cultural, and/or technological needs and align with international standards.
Requirement: Course Statements
d. Do the course or programme descriptions or statements clearly state: • the rationale for the course • proposed outcomes of learning that will be achieved and the performance standards to be attained • entry requirements • the mode, sequence and weighting of teaching and learning methodologies • the composition of the programme or course in terms of modules or significant learning activities • key resources required • assessment methodologies, and the mix and relative weighting of each methodology
e. Assess whether the course descriptions are sufficient to enable prospective learners to make informed decisions on the suitability of any course for their personal needs and goals.
Requirement: Integration of any "off-site learning or Assessment Activities
f. Comment on the off-site and / or workplace components. Are there written agreements between the parties to such components? If yes, evaluate the content of such agreements.
Requirement: Statement of Articulation and Cross-crediting
g. Comment on the articulation and cross-crediting arrangements with other accredited provider in order to enhance the progression of learners.

4.5 Evaluation on Staff appointment and development

Requirement: Documented Recruitment, Selection, Induction, Appraisal and Development of Staff
Criteria
a. Comment on the recruitment and selection policies and procedures of the Provider. How is this information communicated and disseminated to prospective applicants?
b. Evaluate the mechanisms that are in place to ensure that the recruitment and selection processes are adhered to and are effective.
c. Evaluate the qualifications of management members, all academic / professional staff. Confirm and comment in terms of their qualifications, experience and expertise. Comment on the procedures and criteria for their selection and appointments.
d. Is there an induction process that assists new staff become familiar with their new surroundings, organizational values, and policies and procedures?
e. Evaluate the policies and procedures for staff appraisal. How are they implemented and documented?
f. Appraise the policies, evidence of, and mechanisms and procedures for professional development of the staff.
g. Is there a staff development plan and is staff development opportunities made available to all staff members?
h. Are the staff development processes and priorities responsive to the rate of knowledge and / or technological change in the subject area taught and assessed, and ensures that the skills, knowledge and abilities of all staff remain current and relevant to their role and position?

4.6 Evaluation on Learning Facilities, Resources and Context

Criteria
Requirement: Adequate and Appropriate Buildings and Facilities
a. Does the Provider have regular legal rights and/or access to any sites and premises required to deliver the education services offered?
b. Does the Local authority zoning laws permit the conduct of the education services offered? Does the premise meet building, health, environment and safety regulations set by local and/or national authorities?

c. Comment on the cleanness / clutter and maintenance of the premises.
d. Evaluate the adequacy, appropriateness and suitability of the premises for the type and range of education services offered and the number and profile of staff and learners.
e. Evaluate the adequacy of the library hours, services, holdings, staff and facilities. Does it meet the needs of learners and staff?
f. Are the learner's amenities consistent with enrolment numbers and learner profiles? Are there sufficient operational ablution facilities for the number of staff and learners on site at any one time?
g. Are the workshops, specialist rooms and teaching facilities sufficient for the number and type of courses offered, learner numbers and maximum capacity levels? Are all buildings and facilities capable of accommodating the needs of persons with disabilities?
h. Comment on the condition, nature, size and type of housing or accommodation units, where applicable, for learners.
Requirement: Adequate and Appropriate Teaching and Learning Materials and Equipment
a. Evaluate the adequacy of financial provision to provide for the acquisition and maintenance of equipment and specialist materials and equipment that is relevant to the outcome of learning being developed.
b. How appropriate are teaching and learning materials and equipment? Are they of a kind that matches that currently used in the industry settings and relevant to the intended outcomes of each course?
c. Does the Provider maintain an assets register?

4.7 Evaluation on Delivery of Courses

Criteria
Requirement: Instruction and facilitation of Learning
a. Comment on the teaching and learning methods used by the teaching staff. Are they responsive to the different learning styles of their learners? Does the teaching staff use a variety of learning and teaching techniques?

b. Comment on the planning, organizing, coordinating and monitoring of teaching and learning activities.
Requirement: Systematic Review of Courses
c. Appraise the processes by which the courses are established, reviewed and evaluated. How do the academic and administrative staff and the governing board get involved in this process?
d. Comment on the system of course planning, implementation, evaluation and management. Where does the responsibility for these activities reside?
e. Is the review process inclusive of learners and stakeholders? Are the views of learners and stakeholders taken into account?

4.9 Evaluation on Assessment of Learner Performance

Criteria
Requirement: Documented Assessment Plans and Adherence to Principles Governing Good Assessment
a. Comment on the variety of assessment methods. How does the Provider ensure the validity, reliability and fairness of the assessment system and their consistency across programmes?
b. Comment on how practical training is assessed.
c. Is the assessment method both summative and formative? Does it cover both theoretical and practical components of the programme?
d. Comment on how assessment methods are reviewed to ensure currency.
e. Comment on the documentation and dissemination of learner assessment methods. Are the assessment methods clearly stated, adequately published, disseminated on time and widely understood by learners and staff?

f. Comment on how learner assessment is supervised. How does the Provider protect the confidentiality of the assessment system? How is the security of assessment documented and records ensured?
g. Is assessment carried it out by staff with proven knowledge, skills and expertise to conduct assessments and make sound assessment decisions?
Requirement: Comprehensive Internal and External Moderation
a. Is there a planned and systematic process to identify what must be internally moderated, when, and what the size of any sample used in the moderation process?
b. Comment on the composition, role and qualifications of the moderators.
c. Is there a planned and systematic process to identify what must be externally moderated, when, and how? Are there formal arrangements with external moderators?
d. How are findings from external moderation activities used to enhance assessment process and practice?

4.11 Evaluation on Research

Criteria ***Note: This sub element is required to be met only by those providers who wish to be accredited for courses that contribute to the award of degree-level qualifications, including graduate and post-graduate certificates and diplomas.***
a. Comment on the policy and planning of research activities of the Provider. Is the teaching staff actively engaged in significant and verifiable research related to creating or extending knowledge or the application of existing knowledge to new contexts relevant to their discipline area?
b. Comment on the major research activities and the involvement of teaching staff in the last few years.
c. Comment on how the interaction between research and education is reflected in the curriculum. How does it inform current teaching and prepare students for engagement in research?