

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, INNOVATION, YOUTH, SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE

NATIONAL POLICY ON QUALIFICATIONS STANDARDS

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The National Policy on Qualifications Standards has been developed through collaborative efforts between the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) and the Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture (MEIYSAC), taking into account feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders.

This Policy Document has been shaped over several months through extensive consultations involving Offices, Ministries and Agencies (O/M/As), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Education and Training Providers (ETPs) and Professional Bodies (PBs) with a vested interest in the National Policy on Qualifications Standards.

To this end, the NQA wishes to extend its sincere gratitude to all stakeholders who contributed their invaluable insights and expertise during the formulation of the National Policy on Qualifications Standards. Special acknowledgement is reserved for the MEIYSAC for their unwavering support and contributions throughout the development process. Additionally, heartfelt thanks are extended to the National Planning Commission(NPC) for their guidance, which was instrumental in bringing this Policy Document to fruition.

Finally, the NQA expresses appreciation to its dedicated staff for their leadership in preparing, reviewing and facilitating extensive stakeholder consultations.

The NQA remains hopeful that the commitment and effort demonstrated by all stakeholders in this Policy Document will be sustained throughout its implementation.

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FOREWORD

The Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture (MEIYSAC) has embarked on its mandate to ensure that quality higher education is delivered to all Namibians through the advancement of quality programmes and credible projects. Furthermore, the foundational pillars on which the MEIYSAC is premised on, namely Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture are designed to foster economic growth, sustainable development and poverty alleviation, in accordance with the dictates of Vision 2030. The attainment of Namibia's national development goals is explicitly detailed in various policy frameworks, including Vision 2030 as implemented through the National Development Plans and the SWAPO Party Manifesto Implementation Plan 2025-2030. Vision 2030 articulates a vision for Namibia to be transformed into an industrialised country with equal opportunities, self-sufficiency through its human resources, global competitiveness and the realisation of its full growth potential in a sustainable manner, resulting in an improved quality of life for all its citizens.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, it is imperative for the country to establish a well-informed qualification system that facilitates the development of relevant skills and knowledge creation. Therefore, it is my distinct honour to introduce the first version of the National Policy on Qualifications Standards. This Policy Document is derived from the mandates of the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) as outlined in the NQA Act, Act 29 of 1996.

Namibians today encounter a vast array of choices that demand a solid foundation of knowledge, relevant skills and a positive mindset to navigate through numerous opportunities. As they strive to overcome challenges, the goal is to select paths that lead to progress and growth.

The MEIYSAC remains confident that Namibians will take advantage of both existing and new opportunities by obtaining qualifications that are responsive to the current socio-economic demands of the nation.

In this context, I urge all people in Namibia to respond to the call of setting up standards for all qualifications in the country, to constantly participate and contribute by sharing of expertise and resources for a better Namibia.

Hon. Dr. Sanet L. Steenkamp (MP)
Minister of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACQF	African Continental Qualifications Framework
AU	African Union
CEPF	Commonwealth Education Policy Framework
ETP	Education and Training Provider
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HPP II	Harambee Prosperity Plan II
MEIYSAC	Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
NDP 5	National Development Plan 5
NDP 6	National Development Plan 6
NPC	National Planning Commission
NQA	Namibia Qualifications Authority
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSSC	National Standards Setting Committee
NTA	Namibia Training Authority
PB	Professional Bodies
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SADCQF	Southern Africa Development Community Qualifications Framework
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations

DEFINITIONS

Academic qualification means a degree, diploma or certificate awarded to individuals by a recognised and accredited school, college or university through a rigorous, systematic and methodical approach, typical of scholarly or intellectual work related to education and scholarly investigation conducted within a specific field.

Curriculum Standards means the guidelines or criteria set by educational authorities or institutions defining objectives, knowledge, skills and competencies that students are expected to know and be able to achieve within a particular subject or grade level leading to a qualification or other awards.

National Standards in relation to a qualification means such occupational standards and curriculum standards that the NQA may set for such qualification.

National Standards Setting Committees mean various designated committees established by the NQA consisting of expert representatives from specific occupational fields which are entrusted with the systematic setting of qualification standards across educational and professional domains.

Occupational Standards means a statement by the NQA describing the competencies required to fulfil the duties of any occupation, job, post or position, and the criteria to be used to determine that such competencies have been achieved.

Professional qualification means an advanced certification or credential awarded to individuals who have demonstrated a certain level of expertise, knowledge and skills in a specific profession or field.

Programme means the sequential learning activities, associated with curriculum implementation, leading to the achievement of an appropriate qualification.

Qualification means any award that represents the attainment following robust assessment processes of a coherent cluster of specified outcomes of learning to prescribed standards of performance. It can be either an academic or professional qualification or both.

Qualification standards means a description of the minimum requirements necessary to perform work of a particular occupation successfully and safely. These minimum requirements may include specific job-related work experience, education, medical or physical standards, training, security and/or licensure. They are not designed to rank candidates, identify the best qualified for a particular position or substitute for an analysis of an applicant's knowledge, skills, and abilities/competencies.

Steering Committee means a committee established by the NQA to oversee, monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy at the national level.

Vocational qualification also known as a vocational credential or vocational certification means a type of certification which focuses on developing practical skills and knowledge related to a specific occupation, trade or industry through formal, non-formal and informal learning methods.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Policy on Qualifications Standards represents a pioneering initiative designed to address the provisions outlined in sections 3(d), (i) and (j) of the NQA. These provisions outline the objectives of the NQA, which include establishing the curriculum standards necessary to meet the occupational standards for specific careers, positions or roles; assessing whether a particular qualification aligns with national standards; and providing guidance to individuals, organisations, institutions or interest groups regarding qualifications in accordance with the NQA Act.

This Policy Document aims to address the current challenges and opportunities encountered by Namibians through the training and qualifications system. It establishes a broad framework that enables all stakeholders to collaborate and effectively contribute to the development of quality qualifications programmes. The primary objective of this Policy Document is to set national standards for all programmes leading to academic, vocational and professional qualifications in Namibia. This will be achieved through several key policy objectives: the establishment of National Standards Setting Committees; the facilitation and regulation of qualification standards development in compliance with the National Qualifications Framework and the professional standards of respective occupations; the inspection on the implementation of qualifications standards and compliance by training providers; continuous research to keep abreast with the latest developments to accelerate innovation and technology; and the promotion of emerging fields while monitoring and evaluating the supply and demand of graduates.

The legal framework and guiding principles established by the Namibian Government were taken into consideration in the development of this Policy Document. Consequently, the National Policy on Qualifications Standards is designed to achieve the anticipated outcomes of various foundational documents, amongst others, the Namibian Constitution, Namibia Vision 2030, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Africa 2063 Agenda, NDP 5 and Harambee Prosperity Plans.

The Implementation Action Plan (see Annexure 1) focuses on key objectives aimed at addressing the challenges identified within the training and qualifications system, thereby facilitating the implementation of this policy. As a strategic document, this policy sets a common priority for key interventions and ensures that policy implementation is aligned with the education and training institutional responsibilities. It also underscores the importance of coordination and collaboration among relevant stakeholders, embodying in the spirit of “Harambee” a Swahili term that translates to mean “all pull together”.

1. INTRODUCTION

The NQA is mandated by the Namibia Qualifications Authority Act 29 of 1996 ("the NQA Act") with the responsibility for quality assurance of education and training, as well as overseeing the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

The NQA Act further assigns to the NQA the obligation to set and develop national standards for qualifications within the education and training sectors. The structural and transformational aspects of the NQF enhance the graduate-related information as articulated in recognised qualifications and enable meaningful comparisons to be made about the similarities and differences between qualifications. The primary aim of setting qualifications standards is to effectively support the successful implementation of the NQF, as these standards serve as benchmarks that guide the development, implementation and quality assurance of programmes leading to qualifications. It is essential that the qualifications standards approved for education and training must have credibility, legitimacy and be widely understood by the stakeholders.

In this context, it should be noted that qualifications standards are intended to serve as developmental and generative guides for the design and implementation of programmes, rather than as prescriptive and rigid instruments for enforcing compliance. This approach underscores that the processes for setting qualifications standards must be inclusive and transparent. It is at this juncture that the NQA proceeds with its mandate.

Moreover, the interpretation of the NQA's role in the development of qualifications standards is crucial. The NQA does not possess the intention of capability to independently develop standards on its own. Instead, the NQA secretariat will spearhead or cooxrdinate the qualifications standards development processes by identifying the lead team from within the NQA, as well as engaging experts from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), government agencies, regulators, industries, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), international experts and professional bodies. These groups of experts will form National Standards Setting Committees (NSSCs) that will be approved by the NQA to set qualifications standards.

The setting of qualifications standards will occur alongside other NQA statutory responsibilities in the areas of quality assurance, including the evaluation of qualifications, accreditation, re-accreditation and the expansion of the scope of programmes and institutions or training providers. It is important to recognise that the simultaneous management of these responsibilities in the same body puts the NQA in a unique position to improve the objectives of the NQF within the Namibia higher education sector. Therefore, it is essential to emphasise that qualifications standards will not constitute an additional mechanism of the quality assurance function. Instead, these qualifications standards will provide benchmarks agreed upon by stakeholders and build confidence in order to inform and guide the design, approval and improvement of programmes leading to the award of qualifications.

The development of this Policy adopted a qualitative method through the literature and analytical studies, document review and stakeholder consultation. The literature and analytical studies included scientific and academic research papers as well as analytical reports. The document review included examinations of national socio-economic plans, policies and reports, such as the Provisional National Policy on Qualification Standards 2002, National Development Plans and the Human Resource Plan 2010-2025 along with Namibia Student Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF) priority areas of studies among others. The outcome of the literature and analytical studies

and documents review had informed and contributed to the development of a national policy plan. Subsequently, nation-wide consultations were held to gather public input from all fourteen regions. A validation process was conducted to ensure that the public could verify the incorporation of their inputs and to formally endorse the Policy.

This Policy applies to the NQA, qualifications developers, users and the broader community in setting up the national standards for all qualifications that will be registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

2. BACKGROUND

The NQA is mandated by the NQA Act to set the curriculum standards necessary for attaining the occupational standards for a given occupation, job, post or position in a career structure. Consequently, the standards for qualifications in Namibia are mandatory requirements. Despite the approval of the 2002 provisional policy on the setting of standards for qualifications in Namibia (NQA, 2002), this policy was not implemented. Hence, a need for its revival through the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for Namibia. The NQF for Namibia was established in 2006 under the auspices of the NQA Act and it is based on the principles to organise the NQF level of national competency standards in education and align them to the hierarchy of job classifications (job occupations).

The NQF Regulations provide sufficient clarity that allows the NQA to verify the compliance of qualifications submitted for registration with the structural requirements of the NQF. However, the Regulations complicate the NQA's ability to assess the suitability of qualifications for the labour market, particularly when it comes to confirming the validity of the specific learning outcomes detailed in each qualification document. In November 2013, a stakeholder review of the NQF for Namibia was conducted, which has expressed ongoing support for the NQF and its regulatory requirements. While some structural amendments were proposed to enhance clarity of requirements, there were no calls for comprehensive reforms to be made regarding the nature of qualifications eligible for registration or their public representation. Nonetheless, concerns were raised regarding the ease of inclusiveness of stakeholders in qualification development, especially at the higher levels of the NQF. Such concerns had also been previously expressed at other stakeholder forums facilitated by the NQA, the Namibia Training Authority (NTA) and the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). In addition, the NQA staff frequently questioned the definition of a stakeholder, the evidence required for meaningful engagement in the development of qualifications (as well as courses and programmes), and the nature of evidence that represented expressions of support for a qualification being submitted for registration on the NQF. Despite these efforts, there have been no tangible improvements, given that the review process was not executed.

Furthermore, the NQA Council has established the strategic objective of the "NQF Development and Implementation", which focuses on the Setting of Professional Standards for Occupations and Programmes (NQA Strategic Plan 2015-2020). As a result, in 2017, the NQA secretariat developed a "draft policy for setting standards for qualifications in higher education" which was subsequently approved as guidelines. Nevertheless, a significant challenge has emerged, as numerous professions do not have professional or statutory bodies. The NQA Council is still resolute that there is a need for qualification standards due to the fact that it has been and is approving learning programmes with different learning content leading to the same or equivalent award by different education and training providers. This has prompted the Council to strategise and prioritise the setting of qualification standards since 2021 as required by

the NQA Act, to its current integrated strategic plan 2023–2028 aimed at modernising the NQF for Namibia.

Namibia's education system comprises three distinct levels; basic formal education, technical training and vocational education training (TVET) and higher education. Basic education adheres to established qualification standards (NIED, 2016) and TVET education has its own set of qualification standards. Despite having TVET qualification standards, a notable challenge arises from the emergence of new private TVET training providers that implement their own standards, which differ from those set by the NTA and are reflected in the list of accredited institutions by the NQA. It has also been observed that the low priority assigned to the TVET sector seems a common thread in most African countries including Namibia. This sector faces numerous challenges, including a significant lack of practical relevance, inadequate responsiveness to labour market needs, insufficient infrastructure and outdated equipment. Extremely low throughputs, which can be attributed to poor quality in teaching, further exacerbates the situation. Moreover, the TVET sector is also perceived as being inferior to general education, primarily aimed at alleviating youth unemployment (NTA, 2020). This state of affairs underscores the urgent need for formalised qualification standards. On the other hand, higher education also lacks qualification standards. In addition to this, there has been a consistent increase in the number of qualification developers and education and training providers, which has further highlighted the necessity for qualification standards.

The NQF serves as a comprehensive set of regulations that delineates various types of qualifications along with their respective characteristics. Since its inception, the NQA has assessed and registered qualifications on the NQF and has found disparities in terms of qualification and course titles, contents of learning, outcomes of learning, NQF Credits and Levels across similar or related learning programmes. An internal analysis undertaken by NQA in April 2023 on pre and junior primary teaching and nursing qualifications registered on the framework revealed notable discrepancies in the learning content for nursing programmes, despite all programmes being sanctioned by the same professional body. These findings contribute to many more general complaints towards graduate competency in the job markets and the quality of training at institutions of higher learning in the country (African Peer Review Mechanism [APRM], 2022; and Namibia 4IR Task Force, 2022). To address these concerns, the national competency-based standards are required. Against this background, the formulation of a policy to guide and regulate the setting of standards for all qualifications in Namibia is imperative.

3. RATIONALE

This Policy Document is designed to provide direction to the NQA's legislative objective by serving as a roadmap for the setting of qualifications standard that must be incorporated into any qualification intended to give access to a specified and related job, role, occupation or post. Industry experts will set qualifications standards for the field of learning and qualifications, ensuring that all qualifications align to the set standards for registration on the NQF. As indicated in this policy, the relevant internal and external committees will coordinate the standards for the programmes linked to NQF registered qualifications.

4. ALIGNMENT

The National Policy on Qualifications Standards establishes a unified framework that

aligns with several key frameworks, namely the Namibian Constitution, the objectives of Vision 2030 aimed at fostering a knowledge-based economy, the emphasis on quality education outlined in the UN 2030 Agenda (SDG 4), the educational standards set forth in the AU Agenda 2063, the regional qualification harmonisation promoted by the SADC Protocol and the cross-national recognition systems articulated in the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework. This comprehensive alignment guarantees that Namibian qualifications embody constitutional principles, advance national development goals as envisaged in NDP5 and the Harambee Prosperity Plan II (HPPII), contribute to sustainable development, facilitate mobility within the region and across the continent, align with the standards of neighbouring countries and achieve international recognition. By adopting this integrated strategy, this Policy Document creates educational and training pathways that address local needs while positioning Namibia within the larger regional and global educational landscape, ultimately enhancing the relevance, quality and international reputation of Namibian qualifications.

4.1 National Policy Frameworks

4.1.1 The Constitution of the Republic of Namibia

Article 20(4)(b) of the Namibian Constitution requires that the standards maintained by private schools, colleges or institutions of tertiary education are not inferior to the standards maintained in comparable schools, colleges or institutions of tertiary education funded by the State.

4.1.2 Namibia Vision 2030

The Namibia Vision 2030 has a target of implementing an assessment-based national accreditation system under an integrated NQF that should facilitate the establishment of a national quality assurance system led by a strong national inspectorate. It further envisions that the schools and tertiary institutions are enhancing skills and other competencies.

4.1.3 The Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6) 2025/2026-2030/2031

As a point of reference, the NDP5's social transformation pillar focused on human capital development through early childhood development, basic education, technical vocational education and training and higher education. Subsequently, NDP6 under its pillar 2; human development and community resilience, is envisaged to focus on accessible, equitable and inclusive quality education for a tolerant, skilled, productive and competitive nation that promote research and lifelong learning opportunities for all aiming for skilled graduates aligned and responsive to industry demands. This will respond to the policy objectives that are aiming for: to promote continuous research to keep abreast of the latest developments to accelerate innovation and technology, and to promote the emerging fields of studies and monitor and evaluate the supply and demand of graduates.

4.1.4 SWAPO Party Manifesto Implementation Plan (SMIP) (2025-2030)

Chapter 1 of the SMIP highlights various priority areas, of which priority area 4 focused on building a better future; quality education and training. This priority area requires initiatives to revise HEI and TVET curriculum to cater for future jobs. Furthermore, this area requires investment in the construction of new facilities for critical skills training and modernise the existing infrastructure to meet global education standards. This

policy through setting up the NSSCs will develop minimum body of knowledge and skills that will cater for new emerging areas of learning and respond to new global education and future job demand through research and development.

4.1.5 The Namibia Qualifications Authority Act (Act No. 29 of 1996)

This Policy Document will serve as the implementation framework for the NQA Act, specifically sections 3(d), (i), and (j), which outlines the objectives of the NQA. These objectives include setting the curriculum standards necessary to meet the occupational standards for specific occupations, jobs, posts, or positions within a career structure; assessing whether a particular qualification aligns with national standards; and providing guidance to any persons, bodies, institutions, organisations or interest groups regarding qualifications and national standards for qualifications (NQA, 1996:4). Furthermore, this policy will establish the national qualifications standards that will be in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as outlined in the NQA Act, section 3(a) read with the NQF Regulations (Regulations Setting-up the National Qualifications Framework for Namibia, 2006).

4.1.6 The Higher Education Act (Act No. 26 of 2003)

The National Policy on Qualifications Standards aligns to Section 25(2)(a) of the Higher Education Act which provides that "the registrar must register an institution as a private higher education institution if the registrar is satisfied that such institution or the facilities to be provided by such institution are suitable and adequate and not inferior to that provided by a comparable public higher education institution funded by the State". Section 25(2)(c)(ii) further states that "the higher education programmes to be provided by such institution are of such a quality, that it will enable the institution to provide a standard of education that is not inferior to the standard of education provided by a comparable public higher education institution funded by the State". Therefore, this policy will operate on the principle of inclusivity and ensure that quality assurance for higher education is maintained in all public and private training insitutions which has a direct impact on the quality of the qualifications produced in the country.

4.1.7 National Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Policy

Policy Objective 2 of the TVET Policy aims to enhance quality and relevance of TVET programmes and entails the provision of TVET that is based on the standards industry demands. The sector is facing challenges in providing adequate quality and relevant skills. These challenges include inadequately qualified technical teachers and trainers; curriculum developers and managers; technological disparities between industry and TVET provider institutions; a lack of consolidated quality in the management sector; weak linkages with the mainstream education sector; and weak mechanisms to communicate clearly defined pathways for TVET qualifications and how they align with the NQF.

4.2 Regional Policy Frameworks

4.2.1 SADC Protocol on Education

Article 1 of the SADC Protocol on Education defines "Standardisation" to mean agreed arrangement of fixed same levels of educational competence and quality attached to whole education and training systems. Its Article 3 aims to progressively achieve the equivalence, harmonisation and standardisation of the education and training

systems in the Region, which is the ultimate objective of the Protocol. Lastly, Article 4 aims at increasing equitable access, improving the quality and ensuring the relevance of education and training; achieving comparability, equivalence and standardisation of education and training systems.

4.3 Continental Policy Frameworks

4.3.1 AU Agenda 2063

The African Union's Agenda 2063 aims to, inter alia, expand universal access to quality early childhood, primary and secondary education; build and expand an African knowledge society through transformation and investments in universities, science, technology, research and innovation; and through the harmonisation of education standards and mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications; establish an African Accreditation Agency to develop and monitor educational quality standards, with a view to expanding student and academic mobility across the continent; and harness universities and their networks and other options to enable high quality university education.

4.4 International Frameworks

4.4.1 United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Goal 4 of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". This policy will ensure that learners will acquire harmonised skills and knowledge, removing barriers to articulate to high levels of learning and this will enhance opportunities for lifelong learning.

4.4.2 The Commonwealth Education Policy Framework

The Commonwealth Education Policy Framework (CEPF) aims to provide member countries with a comprehensive approach to enable policy development that simultaneously addresses the challenges of equity and quality in a sustainable way and enhances the relevance of education across all SDGs; through the four cornerstones of quality, equitable access, relevance, and sustainability which are the guiding principles that drive a Commonwealth view of what constitutes a good education system.

5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The National Policy on Qualification Standards typically sets out key principles and guidelines for ensuring quality, consistency and relevance in the development and recognition of qualifications in Namibia. Policy principles are fundamental guidelines or beliefs that underpin the development, implementation and evaluation of policies. They serve as the foundation upon which policies are formulated and are intended to guide decision-making, actions and outcomes in a consistent and coherent manner.

The following guiding policy principles constitute the spirit and core basis upon which this policy was formulated:

1. **Quality assurance:** Ensuring that qualifications meet established quality standards and criteria, including relevance, validity, reliability and comparability to maintain the integrity and credibility of the qualification system.

2. **Transparency and accessibility:** Promoting transparency in qualification frameworks, processes and criteria to facilitate understanding, comparison and recognition of qualifications by stakeholders, including learners, employers, educational institutions and regulatory bodies. Ensuring that qualifications are accessible to all individuals, regardless of background, through inclusive and equitable policies and practices.

3. **Flexibility and diversity:** Recognising the diversity of learning pathways, contexts and experiences thereby providing flexible qualification frameworks that accommodate different learning styles, needs and goals. Emphasising the value of lifelong learning and recognising both formal and informal learning experiences.

4. **Alignment with labour market needs:** Ensuring that qualifications are responsive to the evolving demands of the labour market, industry trends, technological advancements and economic priorities. Facilitating partnerships and collaboration between education and training providers, employers, industry associations and other stakeholders to identify skill gaps, develop relevant qualifications and promote workforce development.

5. **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** Recognising and valuing prior learning, skills and competencies acquired through formal, non-formal, and informal means, including work experience, volunteering and self-directed learning. Establishing mechanisms for assessing and accrediting prior learning to facilitate educational and occupational mobility and improve access to further education and employment opportunities.

6. **Quality assurance mechanisms:** Implementing robust quality assurance mechanisms such as accreditation, assessment and monitoring processes to ensure the consistency, reliability and credibility of qualifications. Engaging stakeholders, including educational institutions, employers, professional bodies and regulatory agencies in quality assurance activities to promote accountability and continuous improvement.

7. **International recognition and mobility:** Promoting international comparability, recognition, and portability of qualifications through alignment with international frameworks, standards and conventions. Facilitating the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad and supporting the mobility of learners, workers and professionals across borders.

These principles provide a framework for designing, implementing and evaluating national qualification systems that are responsive to the needs of learners, employers and society, that contribute to economic development, social inclusion and lifelong learning.

6. POLICY DIRECTION

6.1 Vision

Standardised and harmonised qualifications enhancing skills development required for socio-economic enhancement through the National Qualifications Framework.

6.2 Mission

To effectively coordinate the development of national standards for all programmes

leading to all types of qualifications in Namibia.

6.3 Policy Goal

To set national standards for all programmes leading to all types of qualifications in Namibia.

7. POLICY OBJECTIVES

This policy will strive to achieve the following objectives:

i. To set up the National Standards Setting Committees (NSSCs).
ii. To facilitate and regulate the development of the qualifications standards in compliance with the National Qualifications Framework requirements.
iii. To conduct inspection on the implementation of qualifications standards and compliance by education and training providers.
iv. To promote continuous research to keep abreast of the latest developments to accelerate innovation and technology.
v. To promote the emerging fields of studies and monitor and evaluate the supply and demand of graduates.

8. POLICY STRATEGIES

POLICY OBJECTIVE 1: TO SET UP THE NATIONAL STANDARDS SETTING COMMITTEES (NSSCs).	
STRATEGIES	**ACTIVITIES**
i. Qualification standards setting	Revise the existing professionals, qualifications, fields of studies and sub-fields.
	Set guidelines and procedures to govern and regulate the NSSCs.
	Determine and develop the NSSCs' incentives and allowance structure for remuneration.
	Identify and set up appointment criteria and terms of reference for NSSCs.
	Develop and advertise the call for expression of interest to serve in NSSCs.
	Consult professional bodies and institutions to second person(s) to serve in NSSCs.
	Establish committees of qualified academic and career experts with outstanding performance.
ii. TVET standards setting	Established a TVET NSSC to operate through a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with NTA in setting up vocational qualifications' standards.
iii. Stakeholders engagement	Conduct public awareness on qualifications standards.
	Solicit for funds to cater for standards setting.

POLICY OBJECTIVE 2: TO FACILITATE AND REGULATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUALIFICATIONS STANDARDS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS	
STRATEGIES	**ACTIVITIES**
i. Standards regulations and quality assurance	Set uniform entry/admission requirements for qualifications.
	Set uniform qualifications requirements for lecturers.
	Develop the assessment criteria and guidelines.
	Review the standards after every 3 years. Develop review guidelines for standards.
ii. Transformation and transition	Conduct training workshops with stakeholders.
	Review the qualifications to align with standards.

POLICY OBJECTIVE 3: TO CONDUCT INSPECTION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF QUALIFICATIONS STANDARDS AND COMPLIANCE BY EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS.	
STRATEGIES	**ACTIVITIES**
i. Implementation, inspection and compliance	Develop monitoring and evaluation tools to check compliance and actions to be taken against non-compliant institutions.
	Establish the NQA team to inspect institutions on a yearly basis.

POLICY OBJECTIVE 4: TO PROMOTE CONTINUOUS RESEARCH TO KEEP ABREAST OF THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS TO ACCELERATE INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY	
STRATEGIES	**ACTIVITIES**
i. Conduct research, development and innovation	Conduct tracer studies to determine the absorption of graduates by the job market and create a database to indicate priority areas.
	Conduct reference to SADC qualifications framework (SADCQF) and African Continental Qu alifications Framework (ACQF).
ii. Professional development	Identify and develop continuous professional development programmes

POLICY OBJECTIVE 5: TO PROMOTE THE EMERGING FIELDS OF STUDIES, MONITOR AND EVALUATE THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF GRADUATES.	
STRATEGIES	**ACTIVITIES**
i. Emerging learning foundations	Identify new emerging fields of studies
	Advocate for professional/regulatory bodies for all critical professions.
	Conduct annual conference/symposium with stakeholders to deliberate and recommend emerging areas of studies/global skills trends
ii. Conduct career advice and awareness campaigns	Develop career advice strategy.
	Conduct career advice and awareness campaigns.

9. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS/FRAMEWORK

9.1 Institutional Arrangements/Framework

9.1.1 The Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture (MEIYSAC)

MEIYSAC shall ensure that sufficient budgetary allocations are made for the implementation of this policy.

9.1.2 Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA)

The NQA shall be responsible for qualifications standards in Namibia and shall be the custodian of the National Policy on Qualifications Standards. The NQA shall coordinate, disseminate and implement the National Policy on Qualifications Standards through:

i. Establishing and appointing members of the National Standards Setting Committees;
ii. Creating awareness and capacity on qualifications-related issues;
iii. Mobilising stakeholders and financial resources for the implementation of the National Policy on Qualifications Standards;
iv. Revising the National Policy on Qualifications Standards; and
v. Establishing a Steering Committee on the implementation of the National Policy on Qualifications Standards.

9.1.3 Education and Training Providers (ETPs)

The ETPs shall ensure the achievement of an effective and sustainable system of skills development that is aligned with the labour market; to provide the skills that are needed for accelerated development; to develop the competencies needed for productivity; and promote access, equity and quality in education and training.

9.1.4 Professional Bodies (PBs)

The PBs shall nominate representatives who shall be mandatory members of the National Standards Setting Committees for professional qualifications.

9.1.5 Namibian Standards Institution (NSI)

The NSI shall promote standardisation and quality assurance in the industry, commerce and the public sector with the aim of improving product quality, industrial efficiency and productivity and to promote trade, to achieve optimum benefits for the people of Namibia in general.

9.1.6 Organisations, Ministries and Agencies (O/M/A's)

All other O/M/A's shall support the NQA in the implementation of this policy, particularly when activities align with their respective mandates and financial resources. Consequently, the NQA will collaborate with these entities to achieve the objectives of this policy.

9.2 Legal and regulatory arrangement

9.2.1 National Standards Setting Committees (NSSCs)

The NSSC's shall be appointed and authorised by the NQA in terms of the policy objectives outlined in paragraph 7(i) above, that will develop qualifications standards within the criteria set and submit to the NQA Council for approval. The NSSCs shall comprise of experts from various HEIs, government agencies, professional bodies, employers and any relevant interested parties to serve for five (5) years.

10. RESOURCE MOBILISATION

All relevant stakeholders responsible for contributing to the successful implementation of the strategies of the National Policy on Qualifications Standards should streamline their budget allocations to include activities aligned with the implementation of this policy. A costed implementation action plan is annexed hereto outlining the budgetary requirements for the implementation of the National Policy on Qualifications Standards.

11. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK

The NQA through its Steering Committee shall oversee, monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy. The policy strategies contained herein call for data collection processes to be revamped into efficient systems that can translate into monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems and/or records management. Efficient M&E systems make it easier to track and report progress.

To ensure this Policy is executed, an implementation plan shall be developed with clear targets that shall be negotiated with the different stakeholders. Monitoring shall be done on a regular basis through consultation. An implementation evaluation shall be conducted two years after the Policy is promulgated. It shall be followed by an impact evaluation in preparation for its review. The implementation evaluation shall indicate whether the Policy is being implemented as planned and shall institute remedial action if necessary. Frequent progress reports on the implementation of the Policy shall be compiled by the Steering Committee for the Minister's presentation to Cabinet.

12. COORDINATION, ADVOCACY AND DISSEMINATION (COMMUNICATION STRATEGY)

The NQA Secretariat, through its designated officer/section, will spearhead all development activities, including the identification and appointment of experts, resource allocation and approval of standards. It will also conduct training workshops and upload them on the websites of MEIYSAC, NQA and NPC.

13. IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

The Implementation Action Plan shall be developed and presented together with this policy.

14. CONCLUSION

The process of developing the National Policy on Qualification Standards has been extensive and has incorporated the perspectives and aspirations of the target audiences and stakeholders, culminating in this policy. While it is acknowledged that the policy may not address every issue related to qualifications and their development, it is anticipated that its implementation will lead to more constructive and detailed discussions that could further refine the policy's objectives and strategies.

Consequently, it is expected that users will adopt a proactive approach to achieving the policy outcomes for future reference, as the policy is intended for implementation during the financial years 2026/2027 to 2036/2037 and will undergo a review every five years in accordance with the NQA Act, the Regulations establishing the National Qualifications Framework for Namibia, and the Regulations for the Accreditation of Individuals, Institutions, or Organisations.

The successful implementation of this Policy is expected to make a significant contribution to the realisation of various targeted objectives outlined in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Vision 2030, NDPs and the Harambee Prosperity Plan II, among other critical policies for the Namibian Nation.

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Implementation Plan for the National Policy on Qualifications Standards

Cabinet Number : 30th/25.11.25/002

Strategy	Activity	Output	Key Indicators	Baseline	Timelines and Targets per year					Budget (NAD)					Actors/ Responsible Entity
					2026/ 2027	2027/ 2028	2028/ 2029	2029/ 2030	2030/ 2031	2026/ 2027	2027/ 2028	2028/ 2029	2029/ 2030	2030/ 2031	
Policy Objective 1: To set up the National Standards Setting Committees.															
Qualification standards setting	Revise the existing professionals, qualifications, fields of studies and sub-fields.	Register of occupation, fields and subfield of learning developed and approved.	# of registers of occupation, fields and subfield of learning revised	1 register of 12 Approved fields of learning and .... subfields	1 (New register)	-	-	-	1 (Reviewed register)	1 000 000	-	-	-	1 000 000	NQA
	Set guidelines and procedures to govern and regulate the NSSCs.	Guidelines and procedures developed and approved	# of guidelines and procedures developed and approved.	0	1 (New)	-	-	-	1 (Reviewed)	-	-	-	-	-	NQA
	Determine and develop the NSSCs' incentives and allowance structure for remuneration.	Incentive policy developed and reviewed.	# of incentive policies developed and reviewed.	0	1 (New)	-	-	-	1 (Review)	200 000	-	-	-	200 000	NQA (Lead entity)/Ministry of Finance (Supporting entity)
	Identify and set up appointment criteria and terms of reference.	Criteria and terms of reference set and approved	# of recruitment criteria and terms of reference developed and approved.	0	2	4	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	NQA
	Develop and advertise the call for expression of interest to serve in the NSSCs.	Call for expression of interest developed and advertised.	# of Call for expression of interest developed and advertised.	0	2	4	6	-	-	150 000	160 000	170 000	180 000	190 000	NQA
	Consult professional bodies and institutions to second person(s) to serve in NSSCs.	Professional Bodies and Institutions consulted	# of professional bodies and institutions consulted.	0	2	4	6	6	6	100 000	100 000	100 000	100 000	100 000	NQA
TVET standards setting	Establish a TVET NSSC to operate through a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with NTA in setting up vocational qualifications standards	TVET NSSC established	# of TVET NSSC established	NTA has 11 Skills Committees	1 (umbrella TVET NSSC for the existing Skills Committee)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	NQA and NTA

Strategy	Activity	Output	Key Indicators	Baseline	Timelines and Targets per year					Budget (NAD)					Actors/ Responsible Entity
					2026/ 2027	2027/ 2028	2028/ 2029	2029/ 2030	2030/ 2031	2026/ 2027	2027/ 2028	2028/ 2029	2029/ 2030	2030/ 2031	
Stakeholders engagement	Conduct public awareness on qualifications standards.	Awareness campaigns conducted	# of awareness campaigns conducted.	0	1	1	1	1	1	300 000	300 000	300 000	300 000	300 000	NQA
	Solicit for funds to cater for standards setting.	Budget and funding proposal developed and approved.	# of budget and funding proposal developed and approved.	0	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	MEIYSAC and NQA
Policy Objective 2: To facilitate and regulate the development of the qualifications standards in compliance to the National Qualifications Framework and quality assurance requirements.															
Standards regulations and quality assurance	Set uniform entry/admission requirements for qualifications.	Standardised entry requirements developed	# of Standardised entry requirement approved	Various entry require-ments from different institutions	2	4	6	-	-	600 000	800 000	1 000 000	800 000	600 000	NSSCs
	Set uniform qualifications requirements of lecturers	Standardised lecturers requirements developed	# of Standardised lecturers requirements approved		2	4	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	NSSCs
	Develop the as-sessment criteria and guidelines.	Assessment criteria and guidelines developed and approved	Assessment criteria and guidelines developed and approved	Accredita-tion regulations	2	4	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	NSSCs
	Develop review guidelines for standards	Review guidelines developed and approved	# of review guide-lines document developed and approved	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	NQA/NSSCs
	Review the stan-dards after every 3 years	Standards reviewed and approved.	# of standards reviewed and approved.	0	-	-	2	4	6	-	-	600 000	600 000	1 000 000	NSSCs
Transfor-mation and transition	Conduct training workshops with stakeholders	Training workshops conducted	# of training work-shops conducted.	0	-	2	4	6	6	-	200 000	200 000	300 000	200 000	NQA
	Review the qualifi-cations to align to standards.	Qualifications reviewed.	# of qualifications reviewed.	0	-	-	To be informed by the NQFIMS	To be informed by the NQFIMS	To be informed by the NQFIMS	-	-	-	-	-	Education and Training Providers

Strategy	Activity	Output	Key Indicators	Baseline	Timelines and Targets per year					Budget (NAD)					Actors/ Responsible Entity
					2026/ 2027	2027/ 2028	2028/ 2029	2029/ 2030	2030/ 2031	2026/ 2027	2027/ 2028	2028/ 2029	2029/ 2030	2030/ 2031	
Policy Objective 3: To conduct inspection on the implementation of qualifications standards and compliance by training providers.															
Implementation, inspection and compliance	Develop monitoring and evaluation tools to check compliance and actions to be taken against non-compliant institutions.	Monitoring and evaluation tools developed and approved.	# of Monitoring and evaluation tools developed and approved.	0	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	NQA/NSSCs
	Establish the NQA team to inspect institutions on a yearly basis	Inspection teams established and approved	# of Inspection teams established and approved.	0	-	-	-	4	6	-	-	-	-	-	NQA
	Conduct inspection visits.	Reports of inspection visits prepared and presented.	# of inspection visit reports	0	-	-	-	1	1	-	300 000	300 000	300 000	300 000	NQA/Inspection Teams
Policy Objective 4: To promote continuous research to keep abreast with latest development to accelerate innovation and technology.															
Conduct research, development and innovation	Conduct tracer studies to determine the absorption of graduates by the job market and create a database to indicate priority areas.	Tracer studies planned and conducted.	# of tracer studies planned and conducted	0	1	1	1	1	1	300 000	300 000	300 000	300 000	300 000	MEIYSAC (NCHE)/Education and Training Providers/NTA
	Conduct reference to SADC qualifications framework (SADCQF) and African Continent Qualifications Framework (ACQF).	Annual review conducted	# of annual reviews conducted.	0	1	1	1	1	1	200 000	200 000	200 000	200 000	200 000	NQA
Professional development	Identify and develop continuous professional development programmes.	Professional development programmes identified and developed.	# of professional development programmes identified and developed	0	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	Educations and Training Providers and Professional Bodies
Policy Objective 5: To promote the emerging areas of studies and control the number of graduates in saturated fields of studies.															
Emerging learning foundation	Identify new emerging areas of studies.	Emerging areas identified and published.	# of emerging areas identified and published.	0	-	1	1	1	1	200 000	100 000	100 000	100 000	100 000	MEIYSAC(NCHE)/NSFAF/NQA/ NTA/Education and Training Providers

Strategy	Activity	Output	Key Indicators	Baseline	Timelines and Targets per year					Budget (NAD)					Actors/ Responsible Entity
					2026/ 2027	2027/ 2028	2028/ 2029	2029/ 2030	2030/ 2031	2026/ 2027	2027/ 2028	2028/ 2029	2029/ 2030	2030/ 2031	
	Advocate for professional/regulatory bodies for all critical professions	Consultation engagement with emerging critical professional planned and conducted	# of engagements with emerging critical professions.	0	-	1	1	1	1	200 000	100 000	100 000	100 000	100 000	NQA
	Conduct annual conference/ symposium with stakeholders to deliberate and recommend on emerging area of studies/global skills trends.	Conference/symposium planned and conducted	# of conferences/ symposium planned and conducted.	0	1	1	1	1	1	800 000	800 000	800 000	800 000	800 000	NQA and Education and Training Providers
Conduct career advice and awareness campaigns	Develop career advice strategy	Career advice strategy developed.	# of career advice strategies developed	0	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	MEIYSAC, NQA and Ministry of Justice and Labour Relations
	Conduct career advice and awareness campaigns.	Career advice and awareness campaigns conducted.	# of career advice and awareness campaigns conducted	0	1	2	3	4	5	200 000	200 000	200 000	200 000	200 000	MEIYSAC, NQA and Ministry of Justice and Labour Relations

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