

SABPP FACT SHEET

NUMBER 1: JANUARY 2013

GAINING QUALIFICATIONS IN THE HR PROFESSION

Introduction

It is often difficult to understand the relative value of educational opportunities in South Africa given the highly complex nature of the skills development legislation. This Fact Sheet is designed to set out in a clear way a hierarchy of qualifications and short courses offered by various institutions within the HR field.

The general principles outlined in this Fact Sheet can also be applied to the recognition of qualifications in any other field, so HR professionals can use this in evaluating qualifications of applicants for positions in any field.



**PLEASE FORWARD THIS SHEET TO
OTHER HR PROFESSIONALS AND
STUDENTS!**

WELCOME TO THE OUR NEW SERIES OF HR FACT SHEETS:

By popular demand, we are launching this month a new series for Fact Sheets for HR Professionals and line managers. This type of reference resource is considered to be very valuable and HR departments typically like to build up a library of them. Fact sheets are aimed at providing a brief, factual and comprehensive description on a specific topic within the HRM field or in fields intersecting with HRM.

We will issue a Fact Sheet each month with the newsletter. We are busy preparing a schedule of topics to be covered over the next 11 months of this year and will issue this once we have finalised it. If you have a specific request for a topic, please let us know on marius@sabpp.co.za.

The hierarchy

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is the hierarchy. All statutorily recognised qualifications are assigned to one of these levels.

NQF Level	Qualification Type
HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING CERTIFICATE (HETC)	
10	Post-doctoral research degrees Doctorate
9	Master's degree
8	Professional qualifications Honours degrees
7	Diplomas National First Degrees
6	Higher Certificates
5	National certificates and Occupational Awards
FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING CERTIFICATE (FETC)	
4 Grade 12	National skills certificates & Occupational Awards
3 Grade 11	2 Grade 10
GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING CERTIFICATE (GETC)	
1	Grade 9 Abet level 4 GET certificate

¹ Downloaded from <http://www.skillsportal.co.za/page/education/771697-NQF-Levels> January



Join us on Twitter - @sabpp1

Managing the NQF

There are three bodies (Quality Councils) which manage recognised courses and qualifications in South Africa under the jurisdiction of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA):

- At the higher levels NQF levels 6 – 10, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees are awarded by universities and colleges under the auspices of the Council on Higher Education (CHE).
- The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) controls NQF level 1 - 6 diplomas, certificates and short courses related to skills required for trades and occupations (including professions) which offer NQF credits¹.

(Note: short courses may be offered by any training provider and may or may not be formally recognised under the Skills Development legislation and therefore may or may not carry credits towards formal qualifications.)

- The General and Further Education and Training system (NQF levels 1 – 4) is managed under Umalusi and this Fact Sheet does not deal with that system.

Accreditation under the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

- **For Higher Education;** NQF accredited means a qualification accredited by the CHE, registered on the NQF by SAQA and offered by a provider that is registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). As a professional body setting standards for the HR profession, SABPP also accredits the professional content of HR curricula at universities.
- **For the Trades and Occupations sector;** NQF accredited means a qualification accredited by the Quality Council on Trades and Occupations (QCTO), registered on the NQF by SAQA and offered by institutions that are accredited by the appropriate authority (these are the SETA Quality Assurance bodies and SABPP for HR).
- **For General and Further Education and Training;** NQF accredited means a qualification accredited by Umalusi, registered on the NQF by SAQA and offered by a provider that is registered with the DHET or by the Head of the Provincial Department of Education.

¹ A “qualification” is a set of modules, grouped together in an approved way, carrying a total of minimum 120 credits per year. A “short course” is a type of short learning programme through which a learner may or may not be awarded credits, depending on the purpose of the programme.

Diplomas and certificates are awarded under the NQF, based on the achievement of minimum 120 credits per year for each particular diploma or certificate. Each of these qualifications must be registered with an Education and Training Quality Assurer (ETQA). These ETQAs are now in transition, under the latest legislation, towards becoming QCTO Assessment Quality Partners. SABPP has fulfilled the quality assurance role for HR qualifications since 2002.

A Skills Programme is shorter than a full qualification, it may contain several modules and when completed will give credits towards a qualification registered on the NQF. A training provider accredited by an ETQA will offer the Skills Programme. Details of these training providers are available on each SETA's website, and, in the case of HR skills programmes, on the SABPP website. –

www.sabpp.co.za

At the next level, short courses can be accredited under the NQF with credits less than 120. Each certificate issued by a training provider must show the number of credits that the specific course carries. A certificate for a course that does not show the number of credits is therefore a short, unaccredited course. Paraphrasing from the SAQA website: A credit-bearing short course is a type of short learning programme for which credits are awarded towards a particular programme, unit standard and/or (part) qualification. A credit-bearing short course contains less than 120 credits. These courses often have the word Programme in their title.

Outside the NQF, many training providers offer short courses, which are not credit-bearing towards an NQF qualification. As a rule of thumb, if the course brochure does not state what NQF credits are awarded to this course, then it is probably not a credit-bearing course. This is not to say that the course has no value. The 2012 Green Paper on the Higher Education and Training system issued by the Department of Higher Education and Training emphasised that such short courses are valuable in that they focus on immediately transferable skills and therefore meet employers' and employees' needs for training linked to workplace needs. An example here might be a course on interviewing skills. Short courses can be used very valuably for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) purposes – in this case, the short course should be recognised by the appropriate professional body. SABPP encourages training providers to apply for recognition for courses, which are suitable for CPD.

However, marketing of courses can be misleading and imply that a course leads to a qualification. This is particularly true when the course is entitled Certificate or Diploma. Firstly, this can only be true if credits are awarded to the course and secondly, the course must carry a total of 120 credits per year. Lastly, it is not possible to simply add up credits from short courses or skills programmes and get a qualification when they total 120. The credits must relate to the requirements of a specific qualification. So, for example, a credit-bearing Certificate might only be given say 2 modules credit by a university for a Bachelors degree.

Non-credit-bearing Certificates and Diplomas are not recognised NQF qualifications and, more importantly, cannot be taken into account if a person later applies, for example, for a B Com. The nature of any course can be ascertained through checking on the SAQA website or through the appropriate SETA.

Quality assurance of HR related qualifications and skills programmes

The SA Board for People Practices controls the accreditation of HR and Productivity diplomas and certificates leading to specific qualifications, namely:

Qualification NQF ID	Qualification Title	NQF Level
49691	FET Certificate: HR Management & Practices Support	4
66069	National Certificate: Generic Management: Skills Development Management	5
49692	National Diploma HR Management and Practice	5
49793	National Certificate: Productivity	5
49794	National Diploma: Productivity	5
58802	Diploma: Disability Employment Practice	5
67511	FET Certificate: Human Resources Management (non unit standard based)	4

All of these qualifications are unit standard based except for ID 67511. It is possible to offer the full qualification and/or a combination of one or more unit standards as a skills programme.

A number of training providers have been accredited to offer these qualifications. Visit www.sabpp.co.za to see the list of training providers. Only their courses bearing the names of the qualifications as above will be the full recognized qualifications, and these are listed on the SABPP official list. Other courses offered by the same training providers may be credit bearing or non-credit-bearing.

Credit-bearing courses will be based on certain unit standards. The SABPP also controls some unit standards, namely:

Unit Std ID	Unit Standard Title	NQF Level
15217	Develop an organisational training and dev. plan	5
15218	Conduct an analysis to determine outcomes of learning for skills development and other purpose	6
15221	Provide information and advice regarding skills development and related issues	5
252041	Promote a learning culture in an organisation	5
15227	Conduct skills development admin in an organisation	4
15228	Advise on the establishment & implementation of a QMS for skills development practices in organisations	5



Join us on Twitter - @sabpp1

The Education, Training and Development Practices (ETDP) SETA controls the accreditation of diplomas and certificates in some training and development qualifications, namely:

Qualification NQF ID	Qualification Title	NQF Level
50332	FET Certificate: Occupationally-Directed Education, Training and Development Practices	4
48873	Higher Certificate: Occupationally-Directed Education, Training and Development Practices	5
48870	National Certificate: Occupationally-Directed Education, Training and Development Practices	4
50334	National Certificate: Occupationally-Directed Education, Training and Development Practices	5
50331	National Certificate: Occupationally-Directed Education, Training and Development Practices	6
50333	National Diploma: Occupationally-Directed Education, Training and Development Practices	5
48869	National Diploma: Occupationally-Directed Education, Training and Development Practices	5

www.sabpp.co.za

Skills programmes controlled by the ETDP SETA are:

Qualification NQF ID	Qualification Title	NQF Level	Category
0001	HR in Higher Education	9	Skills Programme
	Mentoring and Coaching	7	Skills Programme
	Facilitate a learning programme	5	Skills programme
	Learning Programme and Materials Design	5	Skills Programme
SDF1	Skills Development Facilitator	5	Skills Programme

A list of unit standards controlled by the ETDP SETA is available at <http://datanet.etdpseta.org.za/USIndex.asp>

Accreditation of University degrees

Although there is no legal requirement for a university to have its courses accredited by a professional body, it is accepted good practice for this to be done as it ensures close cooperation between educational institutions and the professions and it encourages the universities to keep their courses up to date and at the right standard to promote professional practice.

With the new SAQA policy on professional bodies and the 2008 NQF Act, the role of professional bodies has become critical in the higher education dispensation.

The SABPP accredits universities' courses through its Higher Education Committee, and the process is essentially one of peer review by fellow university professors together with senior practicing professionals. From 2013, SABPP requests universities to align their curriculum with the new National HR Competency Model.

The HR, HRD and/or Industrial Psychology programmes of the following universities have recently been accredited by the SABPP:

- Stellenbosch University
- University of Cape Town
- Vaal University of Technology
- Cape Peninsula University of Technology
- North-West University.

Other universities have been accredited further back in time and are in a cycle of re-accreditation with the SABPP.

Business Schools

Business Schools offer a variety of programmes, ranging from full post-graduate qualifications to diplomas to short courses. Some Business Schools have HR programmes and most general management programmes contain HR related modules.

Short courses at Universities and Business Schools

This extract from the UNISA website explains the nature of the programmes and points out that they are not formal qualifications.

Unisa Short Learning Programmes

Short Learning Programme Information

Short Learning Programmes offered by UNISA focus on “just in time” and “just enough” learning to meet a specific learning need identified by society.

This need can focus on enabling access to other Short Learning Programmes or to improve access to the study of formal qualifications at UNISA, or it can address a specific need in the workplace.

Short Learning Programmes can update or broaden skills and knowledge in a specific area to enable life-long learning. In this manner, Short Learning Programmes assist students with their continuing professional development by upgrading their skills and knowledge in newly developed areas or by sharing the results of research.

It is important to note that Short Learning Programmes are by nature short. They are not formal qualifications.

Please note that UNISA is a public higher education institution established in terms of the Higher Education Act (Act 101/1997) and does not have or require a provider registration number at the Department of Education or SAQA.

Recognition of qualifications for the purposes of professional registration

The SABPP requires the attainment of certain levels of education in order to register at the various levels in the professional career ladder, namely:

- For HR Technician level, a 1 year certificate. This means a full 120 credits course, at NQF level 4 or 5.
- For HR associate level, a 2 year diploma. Again, a full 120 credits per year course, at NQF level 6 (240 credits in total).
- For HR Professional level, a 3 year degree or diploma. As above, a 120 credits per year course, at NQF level 7 (360 credits in total).

Applicants who do not have these qualifications but who have appropriate HR experience can be registered through the Recognition of Prior Learning route, on submission of a portfolio of evidence to an SABPP assessor. However, the SABPP encourages everyone working in the HR field to obtain a qualification to provide the necessary theoretical underpinnings for the profession. Access to such courses is plentiful, with institutions such as UNISA or BMT offering various programmes through distance learning.

Matrix of HR qualifications

The SABPP will have available on its website from second quarter 2013 a full matrix of HR qualifications showing the institutions and programmes and the associated level of those programmes.

Latest Development

Late in 2012, some universities in the United States released their full tuition materials onto the Internet for free access. In South Africa, Regenesys is the first institution to do so, and is the first Business School in the world to do so. Clearly, having read the materials on the Internet does not qualify a person to be awarded a qualification, but this is an interesting step towards free mass education. A person can apply to write examination, on a paid service basis.¹

Conclusion

A full understanding of the nature and value of HR qualifications and courses will not only assist HR practitioners with their own career development but also assist them to understand the whole NQF and how it can be applied to skills development within organisations.

Performance development processes should support continuous learning for all individuals and especially for people in professional positions such as HR. Continuous Professional Development is a requirement for professional registration.

SABPP encourages all HR practitioners to obtain HR qualifications, and line managers to study HR and people management modules. We believe also that it is important to obtain HR post-graduate qualifications to build HR knowledge and contribute towards sound research and professionalism. A well-qualified HR professional community with an extensive and up to date body of knowledge is critical for advancing the HR profession nationally.

¹ <http://regenesys.co.za/free-edu/>

COMPILED AT THE SA BOARD OF PEOPLE PRACTICES BY:

- **MARIUS MEYER – CEO**
- **PENNY ABBOTT – HEAD OF RESEARCH**
- **NAREN VASSAN – HEAD OF LEARNING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE**